THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

in the subject

Industrial and Organisational Psychology

at the

University of South Africa

Supervisor: Professor N. Martins

2025

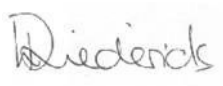
DECLARATION

I, Liezl Diedericks, declare that "**The development of a model for the identification of high-potential talent**" is my own work and that all the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged to the best of my ability by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to the appropriate originality detection software, which is endorsed by Unisa, and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

I further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology (see Appendix A), University of South Africa. I declare that the study has been carried out in strict accordance with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa. Great care was taken to conduct the research with the highest level of integrity, taking into account the Policy for Infringement and Plagiarism of the University of South Africa.



2025/11/06

SIGNATURE DATE

Liezl Diedericks

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to everyone who contributed to the completion of my PhD journey. Your support was crucial to reaching this significant milestone. I am deeply grateful to each and every one of you. I want to especially acknowledge the following people:

- Professor Martins, for his steadfast and patient supervisory support. Thank you for always offering encouragement and essential guidance. Your dedication throughout the years is deeply appreciated;
- Dr Liezel Korf, who assisted with the statistical analysis and helped me to make sense of the complex statistical output;
- Ms Teresa Kapp for her meticulous language editing, which significantly enhanced the quality of the final document;
- The University of South Africa, for affording me the opportunity and support to complete a PhD;
- My colleagues in the Department of Human Resource Management, who offered unwavering support and encouragement;
- Every other knowledgeable individual who contributed, even in minor ways, to the completion of this research project;
- My parents, with whom I had the privilege of sharing this journey. They know the challenges of postgraduate studies and offered their consistent encouragement and interest to fuel my progress. Thank you, Pappa and Mamma, for your support;
- My dearest husband, who supported me in his patient and practical manner. Never have you discouraged me from taking on the next challenge, consistently providing the grounding and assurance I need to attempt what I am uncertain I will be able to do; and
- My three wonderful children—it is a tremendous privilege to share my life with you. Being your mother is my life's pride and joy. Thank you for sharing in my achievement.

Above all, to God be the glory. He gave me the strength and equipped me with the fortitude to undertake this research and complete it. He is my friend and father, to whom I owe everything.

For God did not give us spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

ABSTRACT

Organisations have, at their core, the drive to improve their performance and increase their financial gain. This drive relates to talent management, in that organisations strive to identify and develop those employees who will benefit them the most, referred to as ‘high-potential’ talent. Academic literature on the identification and development of high-potential talent, also referred to as ‘HiPo’ talent, remains limited, notwithstanding strong interest from practitioners and consultants. Despite substantial investment in HiPo programmes, research reveals high failure rates and low confidence in the success of the programmes amongst HR professionals. The aim of this study was to address these gaps by expanding the theoretical knowledge on high-potential talent, with a specific focus on an African context, and developing an empirically grounded model for the identification of high-potential talent. This mixed-methods study used qualitative and quantitative methodologies to realise the research objectives. Following an in-depth literature review of the talent management landscape, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to develop a set of behavioural items to measure high-potential talent in employees. The resulting HiPo Scale was tested through a rigorous statistical process utilising structural equation modelling. Five statistically significant constructs indicating HiPo talent were identified, and a comprehensive model for the identification of high-potential talent was subsequently developed. This model incorporates a cultural contextual perspective of high-potential talent. It provides organisations and academics with a comprehensive structure with which to conceptualise and identify HiPo talent.

KEYWORDS: talent management; high-potential talent; talent philosophy; cultural context; mixed-methods research; scale development; HiPo Model

OPSOMMING

Organisasies het as kernstrewe om hul prestasie te verbeter en hul finansiële wins te verhoog. Hierdie strewe hou verband met talentbestuur, aangesien organisasies daarna streef om daardie werknemers te identifiseer en te ontwikkel wat die meeste waarde vir hulle sal toevoeg, bekend as hoë-potensiaal talent. Akademiese literatuur oor die identifisering en ontwikkeling van hoë-potensiaal talent bly beperk, ten spyte van ’n sterk belangstelling van praktisyns en konsultante. Ten spyte van aansienlike beleggings in HiPo-programme, toon navorsing hoë mislukkingsyfers en lae vertroue in die sukses van hierdie programme onder menslike hulpbronpraktisyns. Hierdie studie het gepoog om hierdie leemtes aan te spreek deur die teoretiese kennis oor hoë-potensiaal talent uit te brei, met ’n spesifieke fokus op ’n Afrika-konteks, en deur ’n empiries gefundeerde model vir die identifisering van hoë-potensiaal talent te ontwikkel. Hierdie gemengde-metode studie het kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe metodologieë gebruik om die navorsingsdoelwitte te bereik. Na ’n deeglike literatuuroorsig van die talentbestuurslandskap is semi-gestruktureerde, in-diepte onderhoude gevoer om ’n stel gedragsvrae te ontwikkel om hoë-potensiaal talent in werknemers te meet. Die HiPo-skaal is getoets deur middel van ’n streng statistiese proses wat strukturele vergelykingsmodellering gebruik het. Vyf statisties beduidende konstrukte wat op hoë-potensiaal talent dui, is geïdentifiseer. Daarna is ’n omvattende model vir die identifisering van hoë-potensiaal talent ontwikkel. Hierdie model sluit ’n kulturele kontekstuele perspektief van hoë-potensiaal talent in. Dit bied aan organisasies en akademici ’n omvattende struktuur wat hulle in staat stel om hoë-potensiaal talent te konseptualiseer en te identifiseer.

SLEUTELWOORDE: talentbestuur; hoë-potensiaal talent; talentfilosofie; kulturele konteks; gemengde-metode navorsing; HiPo Talentmodel

TSHOBOKANYO

Mekgatlho e na le, mo moding wa yona, maikaelelo a go tokafatsa tiragatso le go godisa poelo ya matlole. Maikaelelo ano a amana thata le taolo ya ditalente, mo e leng gore mekgatlho e leka ka natla go supa le go tlhabolola badiri ba ba tlileng go e tswela mosola thata, ba gantsi ba bidiwang ditalente tsa 'bokgoni jo bo kwa godimo' (HiPo). Dikwalo tsa thuto tse di ka ga temogo le tlhabololo ya ditalente ya bokgoni jo bo kwa godimo (HiPo) di sa ntse di lekanyeditswe, le fa go na le kgatlhego e kgolo go tswa mo baitseanapeng le mo bagakoloding. Le fa go beeleditswe madi a mantsi mo mananeong a HiPo, dipatlisiso di bontsha dikelo tse di kwa godimo tsa go retelewa le tshepo e e kwa tlase mo katlegong ya tsone mo baitseanapeng ba Metswedithuso ya Setho (HR). Maikaelelo a thutopatlisiso eno e ne e le go rarabolola diphatlha tseno ka go atolosa kitso ya tiori ka ga talente e e nang le bokgoni jo bo kwa godimo, ka tsepamo e e rileng mo bokaong jwa Aforika, le ka go tlhama sekao se se theilweng mo maitemogelong sa go supa talente e e nang le bokgoni jo bo kwa godimo. Go ne ga dirisiwa ka bobedi mekgwa ya khwantitafi le ya khwalitatifi go fitlhelela maitlhomo a patlisiso. Morago ga tshekatsheko e e tseneletseng ya dikwalo tsa seemo sa taolo ya ditalente, go ne ga dirwa dipotsolotso tse di rulagantsweng ka bontlhabongwe go tlhama sete ya dintlha tsa boitshwaro tsa go lekanya ditalente tse di nang le bokgoni jo bo kwa godimo mo badiring. Sekale sa HiPo se se bonweng se ne sa lekwa ka thulaganyo e e gagametseng ya dipalopalo go dirisiwa popo ya tekatekanyo ya popego. Dikago tse tlhano tse di botlhokwa go ya ka dipalopalo tse di supang talente ya HiPo di ne tsa supiwa, mme morago ga moo go ne ga tlhamiwa sekao se se akaretsang sa go supa talente e e nang le bokgoni jo bo kwa godimo. Sekao seno se akaretsa pono ya setso le ya bokao, e e tlamelang mekgatlho le barutegi ka letlhomeso le le nonofileng la go tlhama dikgopolo le go supa talente ya HiPo.

MAFOKO A BOTLHOKWA: taolo ya talente; talente e e nang le bokgoni jo bo kwa godimo; filosofi ya talente; bokao jwa setso; patlisiso ya mekgwa e e tlhakaneng; tlhabololo ya sekale; sekao sa HiPo

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	analysis of variance
AVE	average variance extracted
BBBEE	broad-based black economic empowerment
CFA	confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	comparative fit index
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CMIN	chi-square minimum discrepancy
CPA	Cognitive Process Assessment
CPP	Cognitive Process Profile
CR	composite reliability
EFA	exploratory factor analysis
EPA	exploratory principal axis
EQ	emotional quotient (emotional intelligence)
HCI	Human Capital Institute
HIPO Scale	High-potential Talent Measurement Scale
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HPTI	High-potential Trait Indicator
HR	human resources
HRD	human resource development
HRM	human resource management
HSD	honestly significant difference (Tukey HSD test)

IQ	intelligence quotient
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (measure of sampling adequacy)
MM	mixed methods
MMR	mixed methods research
OPQ	Occupational Personality Questionnaire
PLS	partial least squares
QUAL	qualitative research
QUAN	quantitative research
RMSEA	root mean square error of approximation
SEM	structural equation modelling
SHL	SHL Consultants
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
SPSS–	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRMR	standardised root mean square residual
SRS	simple random sampling
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
TM	talent management
UNISA	University of South Africa

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study that was undertaken to develop a model for the identification of high-potential talent. It starts with background on the identification of high-potential talent and proceeds to describe the problem statement and motivation for conducting the research. The research questions are summarised, followed by context to the research through a description of the research paradigms and methodological views held by the researcher. The research methodology, incorporating the mixed methods approach that was used, is described, and the process by which the research project was executed is summarised. Lastly, the chapter layout is presented.

1.2 BACKGROUND

On the one hand, organisations experience immense pressure to increase profits and continuously achieve more from less, which makes it crucial that they are able to identify those employees most worthy of investment. On the other hand, social responsibility and moral values dictate that all employees are equally important and have a role to play in the future success of an organisation. Thus, organisations need to identify high-potential talent effectively while not alienating other employees.

Unfortunately, identifying and developing high-potential employees is a complex process that, although extremely important, most companies are attempting haphazardly in the hopes that they will be successful (Kehoe et al., 2023). Companies around the world are struggling with the identification of high-potential talent, and even though they declare it a top priority, they acknowledge the immaturity of their assessment procedures and the need for more objective and generalisable guidelines (De Haro et al., 2023; Dries & Pepermans 2008; Kehoe et al., 2023; Markus, 2012). The development of high-potential talent is becoming increasingly important as companies struggle in difficult economic climates (Scott & Reynolds, 2010). Organisations are forced to deliver the same output with ever-decreasing resources. Thus, identifying, nurturing, and growing high-potential talent makes business sense. Research indicates that high-potential employees are twice as valuable to organisations as other employees (Burke et al., 2014).

In most cases, high-potential development programmes identify and develop employees who

are most likely to be the most successful in strategically important roles, with organisations leveraging limited budgets by focusing on high-potential candidates (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Kehoe et al., 2023), also referred to as 'Hi-Po talent in this thesis. Martin and Schmidt (2010) note that HiPo programmes are usually organised annually and populated through some form of nomination or selection process. These programmes typically encompass systematic identification, socialisation, and development of employees seen as having high potential for strategically important management positions or advancement to a higher level in the organisation (Dries & De Gieter, 2013). Accepted employees are often exposed to targeted leadership development opportunities, special job rotations, and stretch assignments. There is growing interest in the identification of high-potential talent (Kehoe et al., 2023) to support organisations in the successful operationalisation of Hi-Po programmes, and academic research should provide knowledge and prescriptions that practitioners and organisations can apply (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Talent management has emerged as a strategic imperative for organisations seeking to maintain competitiveness and resilience in a rapidly evolving global economy. While practitioner interest in talent management has long been high (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Dries, 2013), academic engagement with the topic has historically lagged behind. Early reviews of the literature revealed a lack of clarity and coherence in definitions, scope, and theoretical frameworks (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014), and although academic interest has grown in recent years (Collings et al., 2019; Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022), the field remains fragmented and underdeveloped.

Within the broader talent management landscape, the identification and development of high-potential employees is a particularly under-researched area (Kehoe et al., 2023). Despite widespread implementation of HiPo programmes in organisations, research indicates that many of these initiatives are ineffective (Kehoe et al., 2023; Martin & Schmidt, 2010). This is compounded by the fact that 50% of human resource (HR) professionals lack confidence in their HiPo programmes (Kehoe et al., 2023), suggesting a critical need for more rigorous and evidence-based approaches to identification of high-potential talent.

Although consulting firms have developed various models and tools for the identification of high-potential talent, academic literature on empirically validated frameworks remains limited (Dries et al., 2012b; Juhdi et al., 2012; Silzer & Church, 2009). Constructs such as job

performance, learning agility, and job engagement have been proposed as indicators of potential but these are often applied inconsistently and without sufficient empirical support. Moreover, the lack of a universally accepted definition of ‘talent’ and ‘high potential’ further complicates the development of reliable identification models (Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Nijs et al., 2014).

The South African context presents additional challenges. Most research on talent management is conducted in Western settings but there is growing recognition of the need for culturally appropriate models that reflect local realities (Chu et al., 2024; Garavan et al., 2021). South African organisations operate within a unique socio-cultural environment, where collectivist values such as *ubuntu* may influence perceptions of talent and fairness in talent management practices (Karsten & Illa, 2005; West, 2014). This underscores the importance of developing a model that is not only theoretically sound but also contextually relevant.

The present study was aimed at addressing the described gaps by developing a model for the identification of high-potential talent by providing a comprehensive understanding of how high-potential talent should be defined and identified, as well as clarifying the constructs underlying high-potential talent. It provides empirical evidence to support the effective development of HiPo programmes. The proposed model offers organisations a research-based framework to guide the identification and development of high-potential employees, thereby enhancing the strategic value of talent management practices.

The next section lists the main research aim, followed by the supporting research questions and research objectives.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM, QUESTIONS, AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this research is to develop a model for the identification of talent or high-potential employees. The study thus had to expand theoretical knowledge on the subject of high-potential talent by investigating how high-potential employees should be identified. This information was used to develop a theoretical model for the identification of high-potential employees. The theoretical model was tested by developing a behaviour-based scale grounded in the theoretical model. The scale was used to measure the reliability and validity of each construct anticipated to be relevant in the identification of high-potential employees, resulting in an empirically tested HiPo Model for the identification of high-potential talent. The overall aim of the study was achieved by answering the following research questions.

1.4.1 Research questions for the literature review

The following questions were formulated for the literature review:

RQ1: How are high-potential talent and related concepts conceptualised?

RQ2: How are identification models used across various application settings?

RQ3: What models have been developed to identify high-potential talent?

RQ4: What constructs indicate or predict high-potential talent?

RQ5: What should a theoretical model for the identification of high-potential talent encompass?

1.4.2 Research questions for the empirical study

The following research questions were formulated:

RQ6: What does industry view as high-potential talent?

RQ7: What are the predicting dimensions or constructs of high-potential talent as viewed by industry?

RQ8: What are typical behaviours displayed by high-potential talent?

RQ9: What are the validity and reliability of each high-potential talent construct?

RQ10: Which dimensions or observable behaviours are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent?

RQ11: What should a model to identify high-potential talent, tested by means of structural equation modelling, encompass?

RQ12: What recommendations can be made for the disciplines of organisational psychology and HR management regarding the identification of high-potential talent?

1.4.3 Research objectives for the literature review

The research objectives for the literature review were:

RO1: To conceptualise high-potential talent and related concepts;

RO2: To identify models that have been developed to identify high-potential talent;

RO3: To conceptualise how identification models are used across various application settings;

RO4: To identify the constructs that indicate or predict high-potential talent; and

RO5: To conceptualise a theoretical model for the identification of high-potential talent.

1.4.4 Research objectives for the empirical study

The objectives for the empirical study were as follows:

RO6: To determine what industry views as high-potential talent;

RO7: To identify the predicting dimensions or constructs of high-potential talent as viewed by industry;

RO8: To identify the typical behaviours displayed by high-potential talent;

RO9: To determine the validity and reliability of each high-potential talent construct;

RO10: To determine statistically which dimensions or observable behaviours are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent;

RO11: To develop a model, tested by means of structural equation modelling, to identify high-potential talent; and

RO12: To make recommendations for the disciplines of organisational psychology and human resource management on the identification of high-potential talent.

The next section elaborates on the significance of the study.

1.5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This study addresses the increasing need for evidence-based talent management practices, thereby making a notable and novel contribution to industrial and organisational psychology. It addresses the ongoing disconnect between academic theories and their practical application in identifying high-potential talent. Although there is significant interest from practitioners, the academic literature on identifying high-potential talent is still fragmented and underdeveloped. This research presents a comprehensive model based on both theoretical insights and

empirical data, specifically designed for the South African context. The contribution made by the study is summarised in terms of the theoretical, empirical, and practical level.

1.5.1 Theoretical contribution

Theoretically, this study advances the field of talent management by introducing a talent management continuum, a system for categorising existing research on talent management and clarifying the complex landscape of talent-related literature. It challenges the notion of a singular definition of talent by proposing four distinct organisational definitions: talent, organisational talent, high-potential talent, and high-value talent. This nuanced conceptualisation acknowledges the multidimensional nature of talent and provides a more accurate lens through which organisations can view and manage their employees. Furthermore, the study presents a theoretical model for high-potential talent identification, offering a structured, literature-based framework that reflects the multifaceted criteria organisations should consider when identifying and developing high-potential employees.

1.5.2 Empirical contribution

The study contributes original data and insights into how South African organisations perceive and identify high-potential talent. Through qualitative interviews and quantitative testing, the research identifies five key constructs, *Professional confidence*, *Team impact*, *Positive engagement*, *Learning agility*, and *Drive* as indicators of high-potential behaviour. These constructs were identified through rigorous testing and validation, and informed the development of the Hi-Po Scale that can be used to measure and assess high-potential traits in employees. The study also presents the contextually relevant HiPo Model, which incorporates cultural and organisational factors unique to South Africa, thereby enhancing the applicability and relevance of the findings in the local context.

1.5.3 Practical contribution

This research bridges the gap between academic theory and organisational application by providing a tested model that practitioners can use to identify high-potential talent. Unlike many existing tools used by consultants, which might lack empirical grounding, the proposed scale and model are based on statistically validated constructs. This empowers organisations to make informed, objective decisions in their talent management processes. The study responds directly to critiques in the literature regarding the lack of practical contributions in talent

management research (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022) by offering tools that are not only theoretically sound but also implementable in a real-world organisational context.

This research was conducted within a set of beliefs that shaped the way in which the research was approached and executed. The paradigm perspectives related to this research is discussed in the next section.

1.6 PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION AND RESEARCH PARADIGMS

This section provides and overview of the study's philosophical orientation, followed by the paradigms that underpinned each phase of the research.

1.6.1 Philosophical orientation

This study was guided by a pragmatic philosophical orientation, which emphasizes the use of paradigms and research methods that best address the research problem (Robson, 2011; Shan, 2022). Some researchers have started favouring a more pragmatic approach, a paradigm referred to as pragmatism (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Hampson & McKinley, 2023; Krauss, 2005; Robson, 2011; Shan, 2022). Research underpinned by the pragmatic paradigm emphasises multimethod strategies that focus on the particular problem's demands rather than on a precise set or combination of methods (Robson, 2011). There has been an increasing propensity to combine the use of different methods and different research strategies in order to take advantage of their respective strengths and compensate for weaknesses" (Denscombe, 2014).

Pragmatism has elements of both positivism and interpretivism, and draws liberally on both qualitative and quantitative assumptions (Creswell, 2021; Hampson & McKinley, 2023; Krauss, 2005; Robson, 2011; Shan, 2022). It is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality (Creswell, 2021). Pragmatism could be seen as an 'anti-philosophical' philosophy, as it advocates focussing on the realities of the research, rather than philosophising (Robson, 2011). Pragmatists believe that what works best for the research situation is most important, and that researchers have a freedom of choice with regard to methods, techniques, and procedures best meet their needs (Creswell, 2021; Denscombe, 2014). Creswell (2021) describes pragmatism as:

- concerned with the consequences of actions;
- the researcher taking a problem-centred approach;

- pluralistic; and
- real-world practice-oriented.

Taking a pragmatic philosophical approach enables the researcher to use the philosophical and methodological approach that works best for the particular research problem (Robson, 2011; Shan, 2022). It opens the door for the mixed-method researcher to research within different paradigms and use different forms of data collection and analysis, based on what is dictated by the specific research phase (Creswell, 2021; Shan, 2022). With regard to the present study, a pragmatic philosophical orientation meant it was acceptable to make use of qualitative research within a constructivist paradigm and quantitative research within a post-positivist paradigm (Tashakkori et al, 2021).

1.6.2 Research paradigms

Research paradigms are the models or frames of reference that researchers use to categorise observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2020). Mouton and Marais (1994) explain that paradigms refer to the intellectual climate and variety of beliefs underlying the theories and models that form the context of this research. A paradigm is a researcher's worldview (Creswell, 2015; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) of the nature of the world, the individuals in it, and the relationships between the world, parts of the world, and the individuals in it. Creswell (2021) explains that, in planning a research project, researchers should think through the philosophical worldview assumptions that they hold. Both the research design and the method of inquiry that translate the approach into practice are linked to this worldview (Creswell, 2021). Research paradigms are important in that they provide perspective on how the researcher approached the research project. It gives crucial context to readers to better understand the research approach and design that was selected, as well as how findings were interpreted (Babbie, 2020; Creswell, 2021; Tashakkori et al., 2021).

Ontology reflects social reality—the nature of being, and epistemology reflects the nature of knowledge and how to gain it (Creswell, 2015). Ontology thus involves the philosophy of reality, and tries to answer the question of whether the social world is regarded as something external in which people are functioning, or as something that people are in the process of developing (Boeije, 2009; Krauss, 2005). Epistemology is the philosophy of how knowledge is crafted—how we come to know. It is concerned with whether there is one single route to truth, or whether diverse methods are needed to grasp the meaning of social experiences (Boeije, 2009; Krauss, 2005). These two dimensions are intertwined; they influence one another and

inform research paradigms. They communicate how a researcher sees the world and why the researcher chose to conduct a research project within a certain research paradigm.

Two other dimensions that can influence the research paradigm within which research is conducted are methodology (Krauss, 2005; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999) and axiology (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Axiology involves beliefs about the role of values or ethics in research (Tashakkori et al., 2021; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Methodology refers to how research is carried out in line with the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study (Quinlan, 2011).

For the current research project, an initial literature study was undertaken to understand high-potential talent and existing selection models or frameworks. The researcher interpreted the body of knowledge on high-potential employee identification and related aspects to develop a semi-structured interview guide for the first empirical (qualitative) phase of the project and to inform the model tested in the second empirical (quantitative) phase.

Phase 1, a qualitative investigation of current practices used to identify high-potential talent, was conducted within a constructivist paradigm. In-depth interviews were conducted with senior specialists and industrial psychologists experienced in HiPo programmes, talent management, and related concepts. Their input was interpreted to meet the phase's research aim, which was the development of the HiPo Scale. The specialists contributed a perspective shaped by their experience of high-potential talent. Rather than establishing a single true practice for identifying high-potential candidates, this phase focused on learning from varied views to develop a combined understanding of high-potential talent in a South African context.

Phase 2 was conducted within a postpositivist paradigm. A behaviour-based scale, the HiPo Scale, developed from the literature review and findings from the semi-structured interviews, was administered to a sample of employees to test the constructs statistically. Constructs of high potential were evaluated using structural equation modelling, and relationships between constructs were examined. Constructs with low predictive validity were removed. The remaining constructs were incorporated into the final HiPo Model for the Identification of High Potential. Table 1.1 summarises the research paradigms adopted in this study.

Table 1.1

Summary of Research Paradigms

Research Phase	Research Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology	Methodology
Phase 1: Qualitative enquiry	Constructivist (Constructing knowledge through experience and context)	Multiple realities exist. Realities are shaped by social and cultural context and constructed by individuals or groups.	Knowledge is generated through interaction and meaning-making.	Researcher and participant values are integral to the process.	Semi-structured interviews
Phase 2: Quantitative enquiry	Postpositivist (critically examining reality through empirical inquiry)	Reality exists but can only be imperfectly apprehended due to human limitations.	Knowledge is conjectural and refined through falsification- and critical testing	Research acknowledges potential bias, and strives for objectivity through reflexivity.	Survey using a structured instrument and statistical analysis

The next section provides an overview of the disciplinary context of the study.

1.7 DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted within the discipline of industrial and organisational psychology, which relates to the application of psychological principles, theory, and research to the work setting. Thus, it is concerned with the study of human behaviour related to work (Aamodt, 2015; Landy & Conte, 2009; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). There are various sub-specialisation areas within the discipline of industrial and organisational psychology (Macqueen & Machin, 2022). This research was conducted within the sub-discipline of personnel psychology and organisational psychology.

Personnel psychology involves the scientific study of individual differences in work settings and how an employee's efficiency and effectiveness can be improved through selection and training (Porter & Schneider, 2014). It is an applied discipline that focuses on individual differences in behaviour and job performance and on methods of scientifically measuring and predicting such differences to enhance the quality of personnel decisions (Cascio & Aguinis, 2008).

This study was conducted within the sub-field of organisational psychology, referring to talent management as an organisational system and the purpose of this system being to improve the organisation's performance. Organisation psychology is the field of research related to leadership, employee motivation, organisational communication, organisational change, conflict management, and group processes in an organisation (Aamodt, 2015). The literature on talent management is discussed in Chapter 3, while Chapter 4 homes in on high-potential talent. The present study's setting was South African organisations, and the focus was on professional and management employees. The next section introduces the methodology followed in conducting the study, which is elaborated on in Chapter 4.

1.8 INTRODUCTION TO TALENT, TALENT MANAGEMENT, AND HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

This study is anchored in three interrelated bodies of literature namely talent management, talent as a construct and high-potential talent. Each of these fields has developed along its own trajectory, yet together they provide the theoretical grounding and conceptual orientation required to understand how organisations define, differentiate and identify high-potential talent. Considerable conceptual ambiguity continues to characterise scholarship in this domain, which necessitated clarifying the literature that informs the study and position its contribution (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013).

The first foundational area of inquiry is talent management, a field that has moved from strong practitioner influence toward an increasingly recognised academic discipline (Cappelli & Keller; Collings et al., 2015). The literature reflects sustained growth over the past decade, accompanied by persistent debates regarding the definition, nature, and scope of talent management, as well as the philosophical assumptions that shape differing approaches (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014). A substantial stream of research explores the conceptual boundaries of talent management, the organisational outcomes it seeks to achieve, and the practices through which talent is identified, developed, and retained (Sonnenberg et al., 2014; Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Within this discourse, the distinction between inclusive and exclusive approaches remains central (Gelens et al., 2013; Stahl et al, 2012), as does acknowledgement of the role of culture, organisational context, and strategic intent in shaping how talent decisions are made (Garavan et al., 2021; Illes, 2013). Despite the growing body of work, talent management remains marked by definitional fragmentation and theoretical divergence, particularly in regions such as South Africa where contextual influences necessitate more nuanced, empirically grounded interpretations (Chu et

al., 2024; Groenewald et al., 2024).

An equally important domain concerns talent as a construct, which forms the conceptual foundation upon which talent management practices rest. The literature shows a long-standing struggle to reach consensus on what constitutes talent, with scholars adopting widely differing perspectives ranging from giftedness to strengths-based, competency-based, performance-based, and potential-based viewpoints (Meyers et al., 2013; Nijs et al., 2014). The divergent perspectives give rise to critical debates about whether talent is innate or acquired, stable or malleable, context-bound or transferable, and whether it should be conceptualised at the level of individual attributes (object) or as a category of people (subject) identified by the organisation (Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). The absence of a shared understanding of talent has significant implications for organisational practice, as definitions shape assessment, categorisation, development pathways, and the broader talent culture within an organisation. Current scholarship thus increasingly emphasises the need for organisations to formulate coherent, context-appropriate talent philosophies that align definition, strategy, and culture (Dries, 2022; Meyers et al., 2020)

The third, and most central, area of literature relates to high-potential talent, the focal construct of this study. Although the identification and development of high-potential employees have become an established organisational priority, the academic literature on high potential remains comparatively underdeveloped (Church & Silzer, 2014; Dries & Pepermans, 2012). Key themes emerging from the field include the organisational drivers behind cultivating high-potential employees (Kelly, 2013; McDonnell, 2011), ongoing distinctions between high-performance and high-potential (Downs, 2015; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013), and the pervasive tendency to equate potential with leadership capability (Church & Rotolo, 2013; Tansley, 2011). Scholars highlight the challenges associated with the absence of a shared definition of potential, the wide variability in organisational identification processes, and the influence of political dynamics, managerial subjectivity, and cultural context on high-potential decisions (Chamorro-Premuzic & Bhaduri, 2017; Rebeták & Farkašová, 2015). Although several indicators of high-potential talent have been proposed, such as learning agility, cognitive ability, aspiration, commitment and leadership-related behaviours, empirical evidence validating these indicators remains uneven (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000; Silzer & Church, 2010; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). Most existing frameworks stem from practitioner models rather than academically tested approaches, pointing to a substantial gap in rigorous, research-based methodologies (De Haro et al., 2023; Kabalina & Osipova, 2022).

The literature reveals a landscape characterised by conceptual uncertainty, methodological inconsistency, and significant sensitivity to contextual influences. For South African organisations in particular, cultural diversity, organisational realities and societal imperatives interact in ways that may challenge or reshape global assumptions about talent, potential, and differentiated development (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). This study responds to these gaps by integrating insights from these three fields to conceptualise and refine a model that can guide the more consistent, valid, and contextually relevant identification of high-potential talent.

1.9 OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

The study followed a mixed-methods approach conducted in two phases, i.e., a sequential mixed-methods design. In Phase 1, the qualitative phase, the findings from the literature review informed the development of a set of questions related to the behaviours of high-potential talent, which informed the interview questions for the semi-structured interviews conducted with purposively selected experts in the field. The data were analysed inductively, using content analysis, and the findings informed the development of the Hi-Po Scale. In Phase 2, the quantitative phase, the Hi-Po Scale was administered as a survey. The data were analysed statistically, and the results informed the development of the Hi-Po Model for the identification of high-performance talent.

1.10 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters in this study are presented in the following manner:

Chapter 2: Review of Literature on Talent Management

This chapter provides an overview of the talent management landscape, including its historical development, current research trends, conceptualisation, intended outcomes, and key practices. Various talent management models and frameworks are discussed to establish a theoretical foundation.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature on Talent and High-potential Talent

This chapter explores the concept of high-potential talent, including definitions, theoretical perspectives, identification processes, and assessment techniques. It presents models and constructs that predict high-potential talent, and proposes a theoretical framework for the

identification of such individuals.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter details the research philosophy and the approach followed in each phase of the study, together with details on the methods employed to select research participants and gather and analyse the data. This is followed by discussions of the strategies employed to ensure academic rigour and the ethical principles that were upheld throughout the study.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Findings

This chapter reports the findings of the qualitative phase of the research that were derived using content analysis of organisational perspectives on the identification of talent and high-potential talent, as well as indicators of high-potential talent, which informed the development of the HiPo Scale.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Results

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative phase of the research. It includes the demographic analysis of participants, statistical evaluation of the HiPo Scale, reliability and validity assessments, and hypothesis-testing.

Chapter 7: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations

This chapter summarises the findings, draws conclusions, and reports on the achievement of the research objectives. This is followed by recommendations for practice. Subsequent sections review the study's theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions, as well as the study's limitations, together with recommendations for future research.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of and background to the research study and its setting, which had as main aim the development of a model for the identification of high-potential talent. It outlined the problem that motivated the study, presented the research questions and objectives, and summarised the theoretical, empirical, and practical significance of the research. The chapter situated the study within the discipline of industrial and organisational psychology, specifically the field of talent management. This was followed by a brief introduction to the pragmatist paradigm in which the two phases of this mixed-methods study

was anchored, namely constructivism and post-positivism, together with the methods employed in each phase to select participants and gather and analyse the data. Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of the literature on talent management.

CHAPTER 2: TALENT MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was high-potential talent and its identification. High-potential talent is a widely recognised and used concept but consensus about the meaning of high-potential talent has not been established. To grasp the concept of high-potential talent and develop a definition to explain the term fully, it is imperative to understand the context within which high-potential talent is identified, managed, and developed. Understanding talent management prior to reviewing the literature on talent and high-potential talent is essential. This chapter thus starts with an overview of the broader talent management landscape and the history and growth of talent management as a research field, followed by various conceptualisations of talent management, a working definition, and a review of some practical models of talent management.

2.2 THE TALENT MANAGEMENT LANDSCAPE

There seems to be consensus in academic and practitioner literature that the challenge of effective talent management is one that most organisations perceive as extremely important to address (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Mellahi & Collings, 2010; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014) Di Prima et al. (2024) recently confirmed this by stating that talent management is now extensively recognised as one of the important aspects for organisations to get right to improve outcomes such as effectiveness and resilience. Effective talent management represents an organisation's ability to gain and sustain competitive advantage in the difficult economic circumstances that characterise today's global economy (Groenewald et al., 2024), and numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of effective talent management (Kwon & Jang, 2022).

Practitioner interest in the area of talent management abounds (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Di Prima et al., 2024; Dries, 2013), and business and consulting firms have been driving the discourse on talent management (Al Ariss et al., 2014). Practitioners understand the current need for clarification on practical talent management issues now more than ever (Di Prima et al., 2024). Practitioner interest in talent management has been strong for quite some time but it is only recently that empirical research and academic interest in this area of management has grown (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). Lewis and Heckman (2006) pointed out that a review of the literature on talent management revealed a lack of clarity regarding the definition, scope,

and overall goals of talent management. The theoretical and empirical knowledge base on talent management seems fragmented and sparse (Meyers et al., 2013; Sparrow, 2019).

It seems that the field of talent management is steadily growing. Dries (2013) presented evidence to support this notion by indicating that published, peer-reviewed articles on talent management had grown from 1 252 in 2005 to 7 421 in 2013. Collings et al. (2015) indicated that they had little doubt that talent management had been one of the fastest-growing areas of academic research over the previous few years. Vaiman et al. (2021) postulated that the growth in talent management research has been the strongest in the past decade. A search of the Scopus database shows that academic, peer-reviewed articles published on talent management have increased year-on-year since 2015, with four total published on the topic in 2015, growing to 233 articles in 2024.

To fully grasp the talent management landscape and create a sound foundation from which to examine high-potential talent, it is important to review the history and development of talent management as a research area and then propose a working definition for talent management for this study.

2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF TALENT MANAGEMENT AS A RESEARCH AREA

Collings and Mellahi (2009) asserted that since a group of McKinsey & Company consultants referred to “the war for talent” in an internal company report, the topic of talent management has been gaining more attention from both the business world and academia.

Practitioners keenly promoted talent management long before it became an area of academic interest (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Collings et al., 2019; Di Prima et al., 2024; Dries, 2013; Sparrow, 2019). The literature is very clear about the importance and benefits of effective talent management (Di Prima et al., 2024; Groenewald et al., 2024), with practitioners considering talent management both vital and urgent (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022). However, agreement on what exactly talent management encompasses has remained somewhat elusive (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013; Huang & Tansley, 2012; Kwon & Jang, 2022; McDonnell et al., 2017; Vaiman et al., 2021). Tansley (2011) explains that almost every survey of executives indicates an interest in talent management, and leading consulting firms have suggested numerous ways of identifying, developing, and managing talent in organisations. It would, however, seem that the widespread practitioner interest in talent management stood in stark contrast to the limited academic interest (Cascio

& Aguinis, 2008; Sparrow, 2019), until approximately 2015, when academic interest seems to have started to increase.

Academic interest in talent management has been steadily growing following initial concerns by some authors that talent management is nothing more than a management fashion (Dries, 2013). Dries (2013) was joined by numerous other authors (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2015; Sparrow, 2019; Vaiman et al., 2021) who indicate that talent management is a growing research field. Talent management, as an area of academic research focus, has been gradually growing. Although it cannot be considered a mature area of research, evidence suggests that research on talent management is increasing (Collings et al., 2019; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Groenewald et al., 2024; Schiemann, 2014; Sparrow & Makram, 2015).

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) published a bibliometric analysis of talent management literature in the Human Resource Management Review. Their research, in essence, studied talent management as a phenomenon by using bibliometric and content analysis. They indicate that they followed the notion of phenomenon-based research in management and organisational science to investigate the state of talent management as a discrete field of study. Von Krogh et al. (2012) identified three developmental stages of a phenomenon, namely embryonic, growth, and mature.

In their review, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) analysed 139 talent management articles, published after 2006, based on various criteria. Prior to 2010, more theoretical than empirical articles were published. From 2010 onwards, it seems that empirical research has been steadily growing to where there is now decidedly more empirical evidence available on talent management. In a more recent article, Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2022) confirm the growth of talent management as a research field but highlight various shortcomings in the research focus. They specifically emphasise the lack of a practical contribution by talent management authors—authors fail to deliver empirical research that can be used by talent management practitioners (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022). Although talent management as a research field is steadily growing, an overemphasis on theory and conceptualisation has deepened the gap between academia and practice. There is a need for more empirical studies that produce statistically rigorous evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of talent management (Kwon & Jang, 2022).

In all probability, talent management as a field of research is in a growth phase, and is moving towards maturity (Collings et al., 2019; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). In the mature phase,

the phenomenon has grown to the extent that it is visible to a broader research community (Von Krogh et al., 2012). Research on a phenomenon in the mature state is characterised by journals publishing special issues on the phenomenon to assess the state of the current literature. This stage is furthermore characterised by the establishment of a central group of researchers that serves as a point of reference for new scholars entering the field. A scientific community devoted to studying the phenomenon is thus established (Von Krogh et al., 2012).

Talent management has grown from an emergent field of study in the 1990s (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015) to a recognised and developing research field in the 2000s (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). The focus has shifted from establishing talent management as a recognised research field to investigating the contribution made by researchers in terms of the practical application of talent management practice (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022; Kaliannan et al., 2023). Various authors have suggested further research on specific topics with regard to talent management (e.g., Al Ariss et al., 2014; Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Collings et al., 2019; Dries, 2022; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Groenewald et al., 2024; McDonnell, 2011; Sparrow, 2019), indicated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Suggested Further Research on Talent Management

Author(s)	Suggested Areas of Research
Al Ariss et al. (2014)	• What further theoretical insights might contribute to the future development of talent management? • What models of talent management might evolve in the future? • What are the effects of inclusive and exclusive approaches to talent management, and how are they perceived by employees who are or are not considered 'talent' by the organisation? • What mechanisms might foster linkages between global diversity management and talent management? • What is the individual, organisational, and macro-contextual barriers to talent management in the present and future, and how can these be overcome? • What roles might HR management (HRM) practitioners and organisational leaders play in fostering ethical and sustainable local, regional, and global talent management? • What forms does talent management take in medium- and small-size organisation, and how are these models likely to look in the future? • What theoretical bridges exist (if any) between expatriation and talent management? • In terms of employee engagement, what can be learned from cross-national and cross-organisational comparisons of talent management policies and practices?

Author(s)	Suggested Areas of Research
	• What is the role of stakeholders such as corporate leaders, governments, NGOs, universities, and international institutions in shaping talent management?
Cappelli & Keller (2014)	• How do employees think about talent management in practice? To what extent does talent management rely on ad hoc responses (e.g., waiting for a vacancy and then weighing the options available for filling it)? • How do employers think about the make-versus-buy choice? Why do some decide to promote from within, whereas others rely on outside hiring? • How do the institutions and vendors in the field of talent management—executive and contingent search companies, staffing, and temporary staffing agencies, and recruiting process outsourcers, amongst other, operate? • How do structures such as internal job boards work in practice? • What does career progression mean in practice inside organisations? • How do organisations assess potential, and how effective is this process? • How do organisations plan for the future when there is uncertainty surrounding the future attributes of strategic jobs and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required?
Collings et al. (2019)	• Establish talent management as a legitimate intellectual field of study. • Focus research on the integration of human capital with talent management.
Chu et al. (2024)	• Develop more culturally appropriate models of talent management and scales to measure talent management aspects that reflect cultural views other than those of Western nations.
Di Prima et al. (2024)	• Investigate into how HR analytics can be used to measure and predict the contribution of talent management to organisational performance.
Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen (2022)	• The authors call for more rigour in academic research. • More research is needed to enlarge the body of evidence required to provide unbiased advice to practitioners. • Academic research should offer knowledge and practical recommendations for practitioners.
Kwon & Jang (2022)	• More rigorous research is required to confirm the talent management–performance link and empirically prove the contribution and importance of talent management. • Research is needed on how talent management should be shifted from individual competencies to the management of organisational capabilities. • Talent management should be researched making use of Fourth Industrial Revolution modelling techniques and emerging data analyses.
Sparrow & Makram (2015)	• Research is needed on the contribution of particular talent in team settings. • The value of talent management has to be determined in longitudinal studies. • Research should link social network analysis and the position of talent within key positions in such a network to the question of value. • Study the contribution of individual talent and broader talent management architectures to changes to the relative capital of individuals and teams within a frame of knowledge management. • Broaden assessment of the value of talent and important practices within talent architecture by looking at the impact of poor decisions regarding talent and of the impact of talent over time.

Author(s)	Suggested Areas of Research
	• Study the risk-dependence of talent management and talent management practices. • Study the interplay between talent giving their knowledge and competitive advantage, or protecting their intellectual capital and property more closely. • Determine ways in which talent management architecture can create the most mutually beneficial exchange. • Examine the life cycle of talent: how talent may be more or less at specific times, the cost of talent failures, and the connection between talent management and engagement.
Dries (2022)	• Empirical research is required to bridge the gap between talent management as a philosophy and a construct.
Kehoe et al. (2023)	• Research diversity in talent identification and -management. • Incorporate cross-cultural issues in research. • Study technological developments and their impact on hi-potential employees.
Hendrawan et al. (2024)	• Conduct research on talent management and work engagement. • Focus on talent identification. • Examine high potential to understand the construct better.

Note. Researcher's own compilation

It is clear that numerous aspects of talent management require more research. It would seem that the suggested areas of research focus largely on the practicalities of talent management within organisational settings. It is to be expected that a field that has been developed mainly by practitioners will have established practices that might not have been adequately researched but that have become common knowledge and practice for the fraternity of practitioners.

Researching talent management should thus begin with discerning what is already common practice and has been shown to be effective through trial and error. This would be especially critical for differing countries and economies. By far the biggest contributors to talent management research have been Europe and the United States of America (USA). With specific reference to South Africa, it is important that we discern how South African companies practise talent management, in an effort to add to the body of theoretical knowledge on Africa. Chu et al. (2024) postulated that more research is needed to understand how organisations situated outside of Western cultures understand and approach talent management. South Africa has unique challenges and a very different employee base than Europe and the USA. It could also be argued that South African culture is not distinctly Western, and that Africanism should be considered. Crafting appropriate talent management practices grounded in solid theory, based on our specific South African environment and culture, is important to advance the field in Africa. Findings of studies conducted in South Africa could then be used as a basis

for further development of the field. From the above, it is clear that there are various opportunities for further research on talent management. A focus of the current study was the conceptualisation and defining of talent management. This is addressed in the following section.

2.4 THE CURRENT STATE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT AS A RESEARCH AREA

The talent management arena was characterised by a lack of researched theory, definitions, and theoretical frameworks (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014; Nijs et al., 2014). This led to a myriad of interpretations and definitions of and approaches to talent management (Gelens et al., 2013). Although research on the nature of talent management over the past 10 years has been extensive, there remains some ambiguity around the concept (Groenewald et al., 2024; Kwon & Jang, 2022).

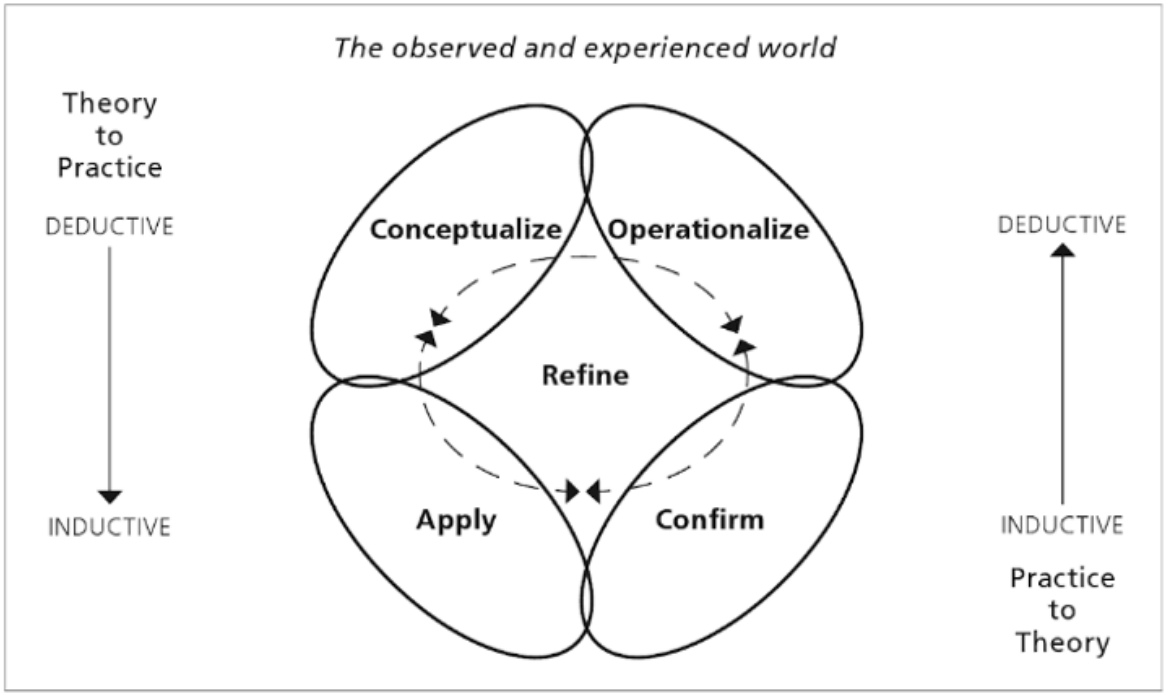
To execute this study successfully, a working definition of talent management had to be proposed. It was also imperative that the existing theory on talent management be examined and scrutinised to create a model within which the theory emanating from this study could be positioned. To this end, the next section provides an overview of various talent management approaches, philosophies, practices, and processes, as described in literature. Grasping the full talent management landscape by investigating the various facets of talent management is, however, a challenge, as articles on talent management tend to vary based on the interest of the researchers and their research focus areas. Authors convey differing viewpoints, philosophical orientations, and findings regarding specific issues in talent management in an effort to describe the phenomenon. The wording is inconsistent, with no clear distinction between, for example, a talent philosophy and a talent value system. Having previously indicated that talent management as a research field is in a growth phase (Dries, 2022; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Hendrawan et al., 2024), it was to be expected that the theoretical base had remained somewhat muddled.

To investigate the current literature on talent management, it was necessary to identify or create a classification system that would enable systematic scrutiny in order to convey current knowledge on each facet of talent management. Dries (2013) noted that more empirical work, from a phenomenon perspective or a theory perspective, was needed and proposed use of the protocol developed by Von Krogh et al. (2012). Von Krogh et al. (2012) postulated that phenomenon-based research could be conducted using the following research activities:

distinguish, explore, design, theorise, and synthesise. Von Krogh et al. (2012) linked their proposed process to the stages of maturity of the phenomenon being investigated, and, in doing so, provided direction on the type of research that should be done with regard to talent management. However, the process does not serve as a sufficient conceptual framework within which to group the existing body of talent management knowledge. Lynham (2002) proposed an alternative process. Lynham (2002) wrote an insightful article about the process of theory-building in applied disciplines, specifically human resource development (HRD) (Lynham, 2002), noting that the purpose of theory is to discuss the significance, characteristics, and difficulties associated with understanding commonly encountered yet largely unexplained phenomenon in our world. Lynham (2002) developed a general method of theory-building, proposing that it is particularly apt for applied science environments where the theory has to tie closely to practical implementation. A useful way to conceptualise applied theory-building is as a recursive system of five distinct phases: conceptual development, operationalisation, confirmation or disconfirmation, application, and continuous refinement and development (Lynham, 2002). These phases are graphically depicted in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

General Method of Theory-building



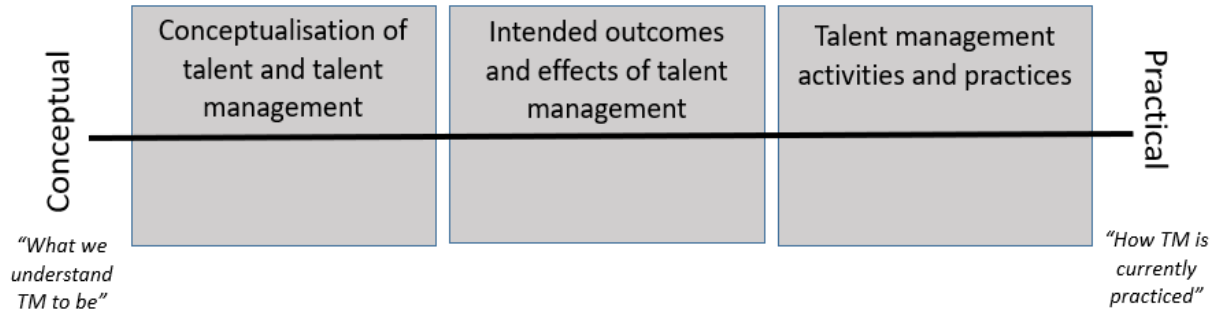
Note. Lynham (2002, p.231)

The general method of theory building (Lynham, 2002) and the protocol proposed by Von Krogh et al. (2012) are meant to guide researchers in building theory to explain a phenomenon. Although both models allude to the type of research that should be done to adequately define a phenomenon, neither provides a framework within which current literature can be classified. There are distinct similarities between the two methods, the most important being that theory-building is seen as being either conceptual or more practical or concrete.

In an effort to create a model in which talent management literature can be positioned, the present researcher suggests that the researched constructs on talent management be plotted on a continuum. The continuum displays conceptual areas of interest on the one end and more concrete and practical areas of interest or research on the other. Thunnissen et al. (2013) suggest that the academic literature on talent management focuses on three aspects: the conceptualisation of talent and talent management, the intended outcomes and effects of talent management, and talent management activities and practices. In order to efficiently categorise talent management research, the three areas identified by Thunnissen et al. (2013) are positioned along the talent management research continuum. This is intended to ease the identification and classification of research areas in talent management research and differentiate between more conceptual themes or research focus areas and more practical research areas. Figure 2.2 depicts the proposed continuum for talent management research.

Figure 2.2

Talent Management Research Continuum (a)



The remainder of this chapter is structured according to the above continuum, with each of the three sections of the continuum described separately, and the talent management research continuum is updated accordingly.

Before continuing with a discussion on literature about each of the three research areas as

indicated on the talent management research continuum, it is necessary to provide an overview of research that investigated talent management across all the research areas. A summary is provided of articles that focused on reviewing the talent management landscape and research done on talent management. It is accepted that the articles discussed here only present an overview of research areas as a starting point from which to investigate the talent management landscape. The literature reviews summarised the research on talent management and endeavoured to identify areas of research focus across the talent management continuum.

2.4.1 Systematic literature reviews on talent management

Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) conducted a rigorous review of 96 empirical articles on talent management, and identified almost similar categories of research. They identified key topics of empirical research in the articles surveyed, from the most to the least prevalent. Three distinct topics in talent management research were identified, namely talent management practices (46 articles), talent conceptualisation (20 articles), and talent (14 articles). The remaining 16 articles addressed several less prevalent topics (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016).

De Boeck et al. (2018) reviewed the operationalisation and measurement of talent management as described in literature, and identify six talent management constructs that they position at various degrees of abstraction to describe the differing views of operationalisation and measurement of talent in literature. The more philosophical the construct, the fewer empirical articles De Boeck et al. (2018) found in literature. These six constructs identified by De Boeck et al. (2018) are described as follows:

Talent philosophies (eight articles): This refers to the fundamental views that managers and researchers hold regarding the nature of talent. It also describes the theoretical viewpoints that role players hold about talent and talent management.

Talent management objectives (three articles): This refers to the reasons why organisations practise talent management and the type of value that organisations wish to unlock with the implementation of talent management.

Degree of workforce differentiation (12 articles): This centres around the extent to which organisations will allocate resources to develop selected employees. Most of the literature focuses on the ‘inclusive vs exclusive’ debate, with some researchers also now advocating for

hybrid approaches.

Talent management system (nine articles): This refers to the system that organisations utilise to practise talent management, and includes the flow of practices that organisations consider important in order to effectively execute talent management.

Talent management practices (22 articles): This refers to employees' perceptions of implemented talent management initiatives. In other words, these types of articles focus on the evaluation of various practices in the talent management system (such as leadership development) by people involved in these practices.

Talent status (25 articles): This refers to the research regarding employees being identified as talent.

De Boeck et al. (2018) concluded that, even though more articles were published on the theoretical or abstract aspects of talent management in an effort to conceptualise talent management, more empirical articles were published about practical talent management activities and processes. This suggests that it is challenging to conduct empirical research on abstract concepts, although this is what is needed to grow talent management as a research area (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022).

Collings et al. (2022) provide an overview of the past decade of developments in talent management research, and they identify a number of talent management themes that have emerged. These themes are discussed in no particular order but provide some insight into elements that are being researched and that will support the establishment of talent management as a research field and independent theory. The areas of talent management that Collings et al. (2022) discuss include the following.

Conceptualisation and intellectual boundaries of talent management: this theme centres around our understanding of what talent management is;

International talent management: focuses on global talent management and the impact of corporate HR functions in global organisations;

Understanding the context of talent management: the environment within which talent management is practised, which includes public sector talent management and talent management for small and medium enterprises;

Fostering a critical perspective of talent management: research emerging in this area focuses on active criticism of talent management concepts that have been developed, and questions developing theory on talent management; and

Contemporary issues in talent management: research increasingly focuses on flexible working conditions, hybrid or remote working, work structuring, talent recruitment, onboarding, development, performance management and retention.

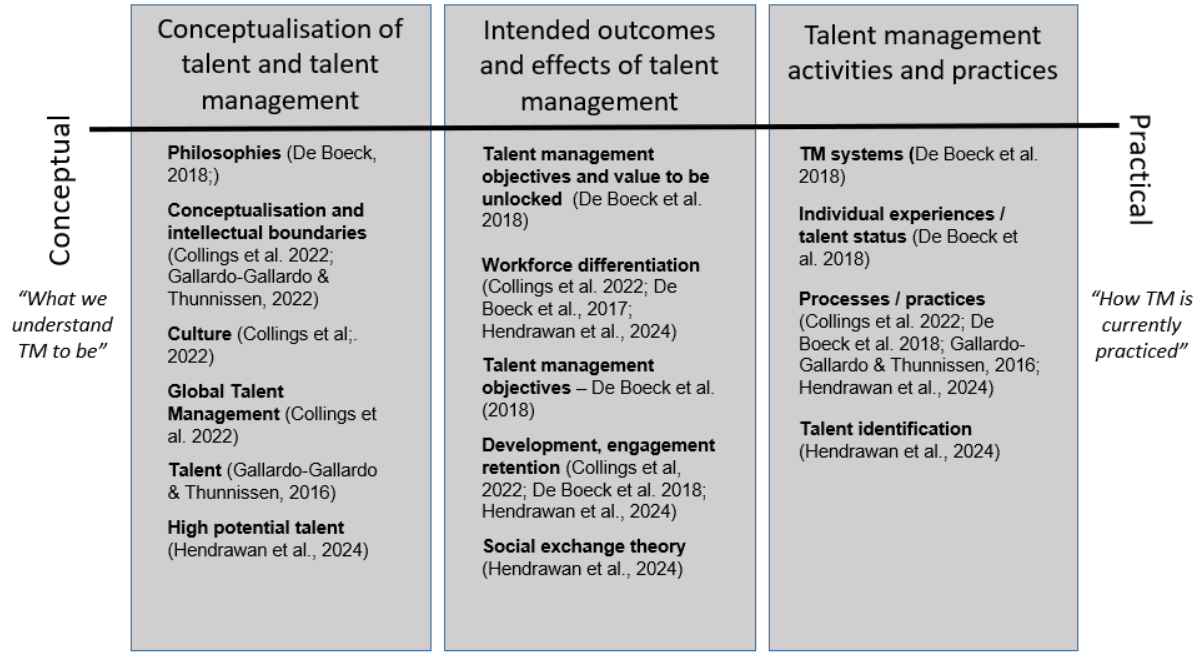
Hendrawan et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive bibliometric literature review of talent management literature published between 2003 and 2023, and identified 29 talent management constructs in the talent management landscape. According to the authors, a total of 1 415 articles on talent management were published during this period. Although the analysis did not evaluate the content of the included articles, it nevertheless provides insight into the themes being researched and developments in the field of talent management research. Hendrawan et al. (2024) note that talent management literature has grown by almost 30% annually since 2003.

It would not be appropriate to include all 29 constructs identified by Hendrawan et al. (2024) in the talent management continuum, as their analysis did not evaluate the content of the reviewed articles. Thus, no meaning was attached to the identified constructs, and their inclusion was based purely on keyword frequency and co-occurrence. From the 29 constructs Hendrawan et al. (2024) identified, six themes emerged, namely talent management practices, work engagement, social exchange theory, talent identification, high potential, and workforce differentiation.

The research focus areas identified by researchers in the literature and discussed in the preceding section were mapped on the talent management continuum to provide an overview of areas of talent management research.

Figure 2.3

Talent Management Research Continuum (b)



The next section discusses various talent management philosophies, viewpoints, and models used in the evaluation and research of talent management in order to add to the conceptualisation of talent management. Concepts not already represented on the talent management research continuum are discussed and added to provide a more comprehensive view of current talent management research focus areas.

2.4.2 The conceptualisation of talent management

Talent management as a research field is still developing. It is a multifaceted idea that can only be understood if investigated from different perspectives. One perspective is the philosophical view, where the nature of talent management as the object of investigation is questioned (Dries, 2022). Dries (2022) furthers the discourse on the nature of talent management by questioning the various philosophical views of talent management research.

2.4.2.1 Talent management philosophies

The English Oxford Living Dictionary describes a philosophy as a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for the behaviour exhibited by people. In other words, a philosophy encompasses the orientation that we hold with regard to a phenomenon, which we use to

determine our behaviour regarding that certain aspect. As with many other research areas, researchers in the field of talent management also hold certain philosophies. Dries (2022) underscores the importance of seeing talent management as a phenomenon rather than a construct. If talent management is viewed as a construct, it is important that researchers agree on a definition and an understanding of talent management, as this will enable researchers to conduct in-depth research on the construct (Dries, 2022). HR practitioners, however, hold very different views of what talent management entails (Meyers et al., 2020), which led to Dries (2022) promoting talent management as a phenomenon and not as a construct. Viewing talent management as a phenomenon creates space for organisations and researchers to define their own talent philosophy and implement talent management practices that match the talent philosophy they value (Dries, 2022).

Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014) identify four talent philosophies that they argue could influence researchers' and practitioners' perceptions of talent and, consequently, the practices they propose concerning talent management. Viewing talent as rare vs universal or stable vs developable influences whether an inclusive or exclusive approach is followed (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014). How researchers view talent is elaborated on in Chapter 3. Suffice it to say that identifying a talent philosophy is important for both practitioners and researchers (Dries, 2022; Meyers et al., 2020; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014). De Boeck et al. (2018) indicate that the majority of non-empirical literature they reviewed focused on the contrast between talent being practised as an exclusive or inclusive organisational initiative. This contrast is discussed in the next section.

2.4.2.2 Talent Management as an inclusive or exclusive practice

Stahl et al. (2012) investigated 18 international companies' talent management practices, and concluded that there are two distinct approaches to talent management, namely an inclusive and an exclusive approach. This view is widely supported in literature (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Boudreau, 2013; Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Cerdin & Brewster, 2014; Dries, 2022; Festing et al., 2013; Gelens et al., 2013; Gelens et al., 2014; Groenewald et al., 2024; Inkson, 2008; Kwon & Jang, 2022; Meyers et al., 2020; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014; Thunnissen et al., 2013).

An inclusive approach to talent management refers to the view that all employees have the potential to display talent and are entitled to equal investment by the company (Gelens et al., 2014; Kwon & Jang, 2022). These companies also hold the view that too much emphasis on the high-flyers may have a negative impact on employee morale (Stahl et al., 2012). An

exclusive approach, on the other hand, signifies an approach where there is differentiation between employees based on the value or potential value that they could add to the organisation and the strategic importance of the positions they currently fill or may fill in the future (Gelens et al., 2014; Kwon & Jang, 2022). Because of the differentiation, these employees receive focussed investment to maximise their potential and the organisation's strategic advantage (Gelens et al, 2013; Kwon & Jang, 2022). Cappelli and Keller (2014) note that an inclusive approach to talent management probably developed during the 1960s and 1970s but that exclusive approaches had increasingly come to dominate literature (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). One of the most distinct elements of talent management is the concept of differentiation; most articles seem to agree that the distinguishing trait of talent management is its focus on pivotal positions and employees (high potentials and high performers). This phenomenon is also referred to as 'workforce differentiation' (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015), and may be linked to the increased focus on strategic HRD and employee differentiation, as organisations were expected to focus resources on employees and positions that were the most strategically significant rather than accepting that all individuals had to be developed (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Gelens et al., 2014).

Several authors have challenged the practice of differentiation. De Boeck et al. (2018) note that non-empirical literature on talent management has seen a trend towards the motivation of inclusive approaches to talent management. Some advocates for more inclusive approaches base their views on new social dispensations, where there is a move towards valuing all employees, irrespective of their relative value to the organisation (Di Prima et al., 2024). While not all organisations have talent management programmes, the organisations that practise talent management usually do not offer this to all employees (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020; Gelens et al., 2014; Lacey & Groves, 2014). Lacey and Groves (2014) point out that allocating development resources to only a few selected employees, is in stark contrast to the enormous commitment most US organisations have made to corporate social responsibility. Many organisations engage in corporate social responsibility as a strategic imperative (Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Kwon & Jang, 2022). An inclusive approach would be one that supports the notion of social corporate responsibility and one could argue that it is irresponsible of companies to offer talent management only to a select few (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020; Lacey & Groves, 2014). When employees are included in talent management to the degree that they individually wish to be, they perceive the corporation as acting in a socially responsible manner (Lacey & Groves, 2014).

Gelens et al. (2014), in investigating the role of perceived organisational justice in talent

management, reiterate this view, drawing attention to the micro effect of differentiation between employees on the emotions and behaviours of both those included in and excluded from talent management. Employees experience negative emotions when they are not given access to development resources or not identified as high-potential talent, especially if they perceive the process of identification as unfair (Gelens et al., 2013).

De Boeck et al. (2018) challenge the assumption of the negative effect of an exclusionary approach, and refer to the ongoing debate around whether the practice of identifying and developing key employees is desirable for companies and their employees. It is largely unknown what real effects differentiation in terms of talent management has on organisations and their employees but it seems that there are two assumptions on which talent management practices are generally based (De Boeck et al., 2018). The first assumption is that employees identified as talent will react positively to their identification, and the second assumption is that the exclusive approach to talent management creates differences between employees (De Boeck et al., 2018; Groenewald et al., 2024). These created differences motivated inclusive talent management practices (Cadigan et al., 2023; Lacey & Groves, 2014; Swailes et al., 2014).

However, De Boeck et al. (2018) argue that these assumptions have not been empirically proven. In their research, a literature review, they found that talented employees may also react negatively to talent management and further argue that positive and negative feelings are not mutually exclusive. Those identified as talent may experience negative emotions such as stress or insecurity whilst, at the same time, experiencing increased motivation to succeed. With regard to the second assumption, De Boeck et al.'s (2018) review showed that there is no definitive evidence that employees not identified as talent will experience negative emotions. Another relevant point with regard to whether talent management should be an inclusive or exclusive practice is the shift in the power relations between employees and employers, as noted by Dries (2013) and Anlesinya and Amponsah-Tawiah (2020). Employees who are labelled as talent gain greater influence and bargaining power because the designation shapes their expectations of fair treatment and signals their value to the organisation, clearing relational shifts that challenge traditional employer dominance. In contrast, when employees are not identified as talent, the imbalance of power becomes more visible, prompting calls for more inclusive and responsible talent management practices that emphasize equity, organisational justice, and shared decision-making (Dries, 2013; Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Some researchers question the fact that employees are sometimes seen as organisational resources rather than valuable talent (Collings & Mellahi,

2013; Sharma, 2021).

Kaliannan et al. (2023) advocate an approach that reflects the non-hierarchical, network-oriented organisation where employees take responsibility for their own careers and are seen as equal partners in the working relationship. However, Ali (2021) cautions that psychological contracts rarely rest on balanced power, instead, they are better understood as negotiated exchanges shaped by power asymmetries, making reciprocity an unreliable assumption in typical employment relationships. The increased focus on the value of employees and an equal partnership has seen a shift to a position where employees might exhibit a 'consumerist attitude' (Dries, 2013; Dries, 2022), and may view the organisation as a resource to be used in their own quest for career growth and upward movement. This increases the pressure on organisations to include all employees in talent development initiatives. Organisations run the risk of employees not included in talent programmes viewing the organisation as not providing adequate opportunities for career growth, causing them to seek alternative employment (Kaliannan et al., 2023).

Apart from some researchers supporting an exclusive approach and others an inclusive approach, there are those who suggest that the two philosophies of talent management need perhaps not be mutually exclusive, and that a responsible approach should be followed (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020; Gelens et al., 2013; Gelens et al., 2014; Stahl et al., 2012; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Stahl et al. (2012) note that the two approaches to talent management are not incompatible and that many of the companies that they examined rely on a blend of both. A hybrid approach to talent management may be an appropriate solution, as it allows for differentiation while also allowing for the more socially responsible viewpoint of all employees being important to the organisation (Stahl et al., 2012). This gives the organisation the opportunity to follow different approaches, depending on the talent pool, career paths, and development strategies that are pertinent. Thunnissen et al. (2013) support this view, suggesting that the challenge for HR managers would be to follow an exclusive approach while still looking after the desires and preferences of employees not identified as members of the talent pool. Thunnissen et al. (2013) refer to their approach as a multi-level, multi-value approach that seeks to find a balance between inclusivity and exclusivity.

The approach suggested by Thunnissen et al. (2013) is similar to the differentiated architecture approach proposed by Collings and Mellahi (2009). Gelens et al. (2013) support exclusive talent management in principle but warn against not allocating development resources to employees who are not part of the identified high-potential talent groups. This will cause less

talented employees to be more inclined to perceive distributive injustice (resources not allocated fairly), and might develop a negative attitude toward the company (Gelens et al., 2013). Organisations are encouraged to develop and implement fair procedures in the allocation of development resources (Gelens et al., 2014).

In furthering the inclusive/exclusive debate, Swailes et al. (2014) identified four typologies of talent management that are based on various combinations of inclusion or exclusion. The various forms are dictated by organisations' choices regarding employee inclusion. Swailes et al. (2014) describe the four typologies of talent management as follows:

Partially exclusive talent management is a form of talent management where only a small, specific portion of employees are identified to take part in talent management. This can be, for example, only senior managers or only employees in a certain section of the organisation.

Partially inclusive talent management is also a form of exclusive talent management but the initial pool from which employees are identified to take part in talent management initiatives is inclusive. Scanning and selection are used to determine who takes part in talent management programmes.

Fully inclusive talent management is a form of talent management where the organisation puts systems in place to recognise the full range of talent in the organisation and to assist all employees in developing their talent. This may, however, mean assisting employees in finding other careers outside of the organisation. In this approach, organisations apply the principle that those employees who need more help to function at their best get the help they need.

Elite talent management is a type of talent management where only key people with obvious high potential are targeted. Here, the intention is to fill all key roles needed for strategic success with top talent.

Swailes et al. (2014) support fully inclusive talent management, which, they argue, is grounded in positive psychology and the capability approach. Anlesinya and Amponsah-Tawiah (2020) also support an inclusive talent management approach, which they consider responsible talent management. Although the typology proposed by Swailes et al. (2014) suggests various different conceptual frames in which talent management could be practised in an organisation, it does not necessarily guide organisations as to which type is best or when to use a certain type of talent management. They also do not address the contextual and cultural complexities associated with the implementation of any one philosophy on talent management. Swailes et

al.'s (2014) typology nevertheless adds to the understanding and categorising of conceptual viewpoints that organisations can take regarding talent management. Thus, research on mediating and moderating factors (De Boeck et al., 2018) of talent management should be conducted to accurately inform organisation's decisions.

Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) note that, despite the increase in research articles published on talent management, consensus on the definition, theoretical backgrounds, and scope of talent management remains elusive. Talent management is researched from various theoretical standpoints (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016). Although this type of research does not add to a common understanding of talent management, it does expand our understanding of the various facets of talent management. Contextualisation of talent management as a concept is important in furthering our understanding of talent management (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020; Chu et al., 2024). A number of theoretical frameworks, such as culture, talent as a resource, talent as a global approach, and talent as a process where strategic jobs are filled, are discussed in an effort to expand our understanding of talent management theory.

2.4.2.3 The role of culture in talent management conceptualisation

The issue of culture or nationality is an aspect that should be considered when a decision is made to follow an inclusive or exclusive approach to talent management (Garavan et al., 2021). Organisational culture may affect a company's philosophical view of talent management (Cascio & Collings, 2022; Dries, 2022). Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) postulated that talent could be a subject or an object. When one considers talent an object, the inclusive-vs-exclusive debate becomes relevant. Iles (2013) comments on the article by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), noting that, although the article makes several useful contributions to talent management theory, there is a crucial shortcoming concerning the view on talent management. Iles (2013) indicates that Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) propose analysing talent management from various contexts to decide whether talent should be seen as an object or a subject but points out that Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) do not propose how talent and talent management carry specific cultural connotations. Definitions of talent seem to be somewhat culturally based, so that in more collectivist cultures, such as Spain and Poland, companies seem averse to differentiating a small group of employees for the purposes of preferential treatment or additional development (Iles, 2013).

Iles (2013) is of the opinion that examining talent management as a process in which industry

and organisational conditions intersect within institutional and cultural influences to shape how talent management is practiced, is a potentially fertile research area. Chu et al. (2024) confirm this notion by noting the importance of recognising and contextualising talent management in non-Western settings. Most research on talent management emanates from researchers in Western countries and reflects Western cultural contexts (Chu et al., 2024). Understanding the influence of cultural context on the conceptualisation of talent management and talent management practices is important (Garavan et al., 2021). It would seem particularly relevant for South Africa, as the practices and policies in South African organisations are probably influenced more by African culture than Western society. In most South African organisations, the vast majority of employees are of African descent and, as such, it is pertinent to determine how they see talent and the identification of talent. Organisational culture can also play a role in the talent management philosophies that companies hold. Practitioners should take note of the relationships between talent management, business strategy, and organisational culture (Tansley et al., 2013).

2.4.2.4 Strategic job identification

Cappelli and Keller (2014) support an exclusive approach to talent management, where a talent pool is identified and managed to fill specific strategic jobs that will render the most advantage to an organisation in future. A new concept that Cappelli and Keller (2014) highlight is strategic job identification. Cappelli and Keller (2014) see talent management as exclusive in nature, and support a focus on differentiation and strategic job identification. Cappelli and Keller (2014) concluded that dominance of the job perspective, where differentiation and resource allocation take placed based on the strategic importance of the job, was apparent in literature. Talent management is thus a process whereby companies identify strategic jobs in which to appoint individuals with the potential to differentially contribute to the company's performance in those jobs. Based on the article by Cappelli and Keller (2014), talent pools, strategic job identification, and recruitment processes should be considered in our understanding of talent management.

2.4.2.5 Resource-based view of talent management

It is clear from literature that talent management can be researched from a resource-based view (e.g., Collings & Mellahi, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016). The resource-based view (Barney,1991) postulates that people can be a source of sustained competitive advantage, and should be managed as an extremely valuable

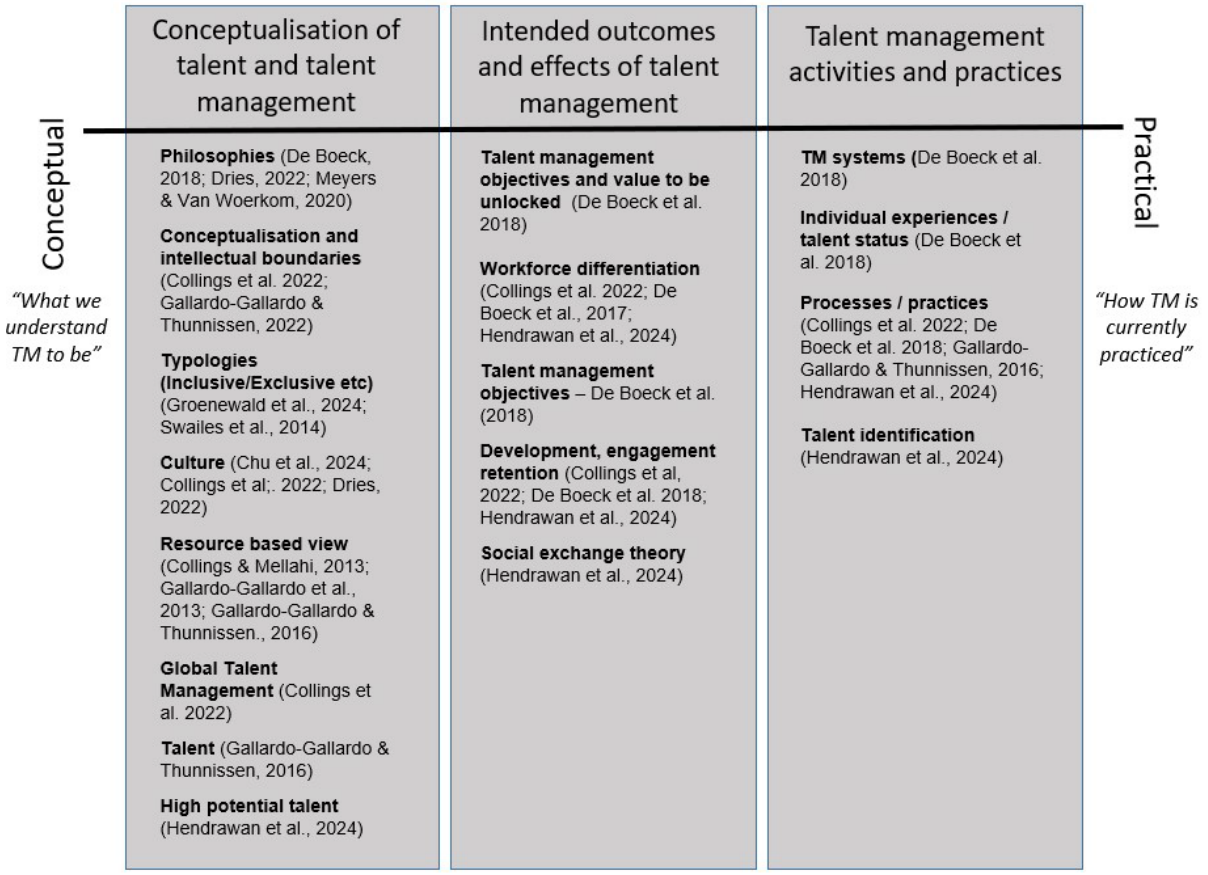
resource. Talent management should be practised in such a manner that it contributes toward achieving this goal (Collings & Mellahi, 2013).

2.4.2.6 Global talent management as a focus area of international HRM

The term *global talent management* is used mostly in the realm of international HRM research (Vaiman & Collings, 2014). Global talent management studies tend to study both typical talent management practices, applied at an international level, and talent management practices that are specific to the context of multinational corporations, such as the management of high-potential expatriates (Bonneton et al., 2022; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). In essence, global talent management deals with the same conceptual aspects as talent management but the application thereof is on an international level. The talent management continuum was updated with the above aspects.

Figure 2.4

Talent Management Research Continuum (c)



The approaches to viewing talent management discussed above assist in creating windows from which talent management can be explored and understood. Talent management is, however, also researched based on the intended outcome for the organisation. This is discussed in the next section.

2.4.3 The intended outcome of talent management

Sparrow and Makram (2015) refer to the talent management philosophies identified by Collings and Mellahi (2009) in answering the question: 'What is the value of talent management?' Sparrow and Makram (2015) note that the various talent management philosophies identified by Collings and Mellahi (2009) should not be seen as competing or alternative approaches. Rather, these "reflect different and alternative dimensions of a more strategic approach to talent management" (Sparrow & Makram, 2015:250). Sparrow and Makram (2015:250) maintain that each of the philosophical approaches to talent management makes different contributions to the study of the value of talent management, and outline four crucial value-driven processes for talent management:

- Talent management as value creation;
- Talent management and value capture;
- Talent management and value amplification (or leverage); and
- Talent management and value protection (retention and preservation).

Within these processes, Sparrow and Makram (2015) suggest 14 research propositions with regard to talent management as a tool to create value for the organisation, noting that these propositions would sharpen future research in the field of talent management. The proposed research that, according to Sparrow and Makram (2015), is still to be done on talent management as a value-creation tool can be positioned in the realm of talent management research that focuses on the intended outcomes and effects of talent management. Effective talent management, in this sense, clearly adds value to an organisation. Exactly what the value is and how it is captured and managed are to be investigated further. De Boeck et al. (2018) also refer to the value of talent management when they describe three distinct advantages with specific reference to employees. Talent management is implemented to produce three desired employee reactions. First, talent management is argued to motivate talented employees, which will lead to increased job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment to the organisation. Second, talent management is supposed to improve the process of talent

development, and, lastly, talent management is supposed to improve talent retention by lowering the turnover intention of talented employees (De Boeck et al., 2018). Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) note that improved organisational performance is an outcome of talent management.

2.4.4 Talent management activities and practices

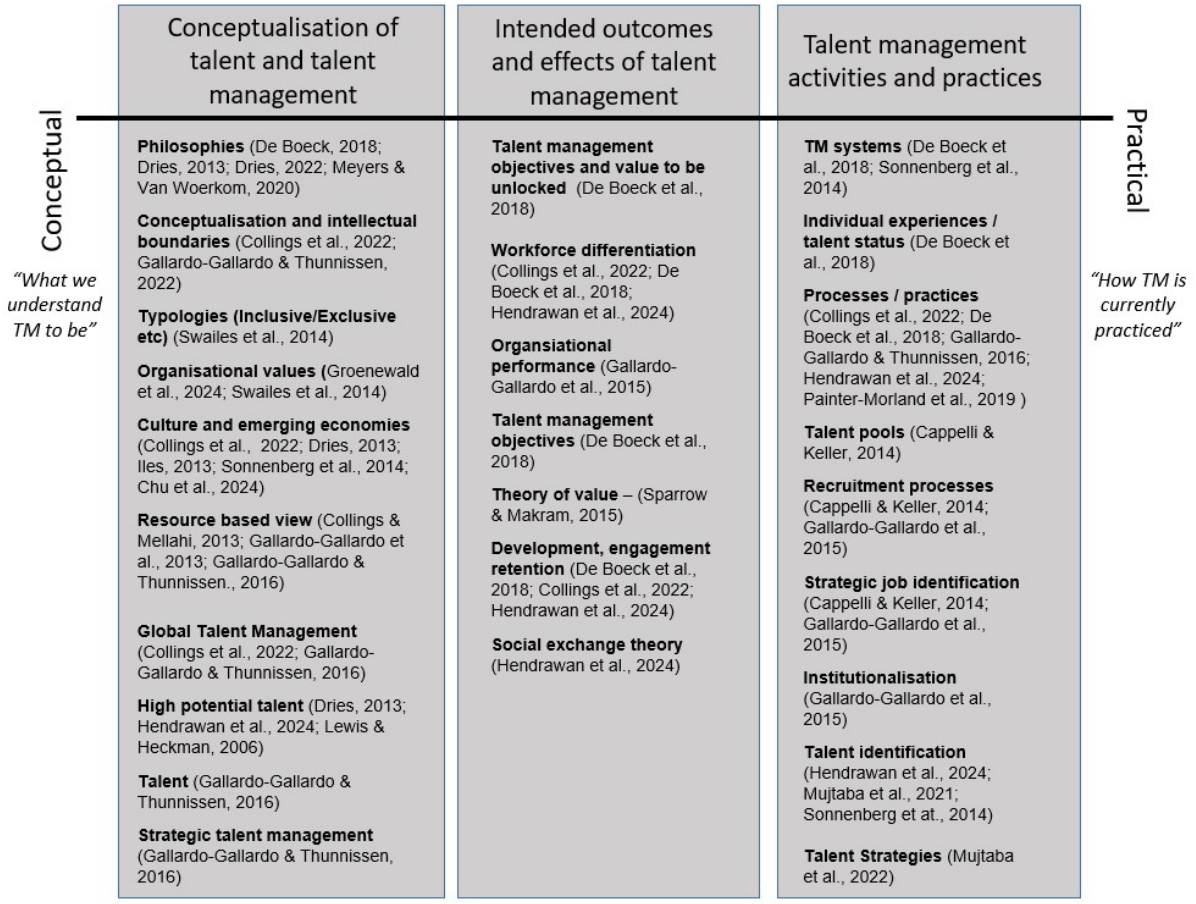
Research on the activities and practices of talent management tend to focus on practical aspects and the implementation of talent management in organisations. Concepts that are generally researched under this heading include:

- Talent management systems (De Boeck et al., 2018; Sonnenberg et al., 2014);
- Individual experiences of talent management (De Boeck et al., 2018);
- Processes and practices (Collings et al., 2022; De Boeck et al., 2018; Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Hendrawan et al., 2024; Painter-Morland et al., 2019);
- Talent pools (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015);
- Recruitment processes and employee assessment (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015);
- Strategic job identification (Cappelli & Keller, 2014);
- Institutionalisation (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015);
- Employee assessment and talent identification (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Sonnenberg et al., 2014); and
- Talent strategies (Mujtaba et al., 2022).

Thus, understanding talent management from various viewpoints is actively researched. Talent management is a multifaceted construct that can be understood only by investigating all elements that impact the success of talent management in organisations. If the preceding discussion and talent management concepts are taken into account, the continuum of talent management research can be updated to include constructs identified by the various authors and grouping them based on the research areas identified by Thunnissen et al. (2013). An updated continuum is depicted in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5

Talent Management Research Continuum (d)



The talent management research continuum is an attempt to categorise the various elements of talent management that have been researched and are currently receiving research attention. Selected authors were included, as the purpose of this continuum was only to establish the topics being researched and to form a perception of the landscape of talent management. The next section looks at definitions of talent management proposed in literature.

2.5 DEFINING TALENT MANAGEMENT

For purposes of this study, it was important to establish a working definition of talent management. Cappelli and Keller (2014) note that the term talent management has resisted a clear, agreed-upon definition, and virtually every article they encountered on the subject

opens with anxious debate about where its conceptual boundaries lie. Various definitions of talent management are found in literature. The term has been in use for some time, albeit used mainly by practitioners (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). The focus of empirical research in the field of talent management has mainly been the process of talent management on an operational level (De Boeck et al., 2018). It would seem that a standard, accepted definition of talent management still eludes the scientific community (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Schiemann, 2014). In the present study, various definitions were considered, and a working definition of talent management is proposed.

A comprehensive study by Dries (2013) lists existing definitions of talent management, shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Definitions of Talent Management

Reference		Definition of Talent Management
2003	Sloan et al.	“Managing leadership talent strategically, to put the right person in the right place at the right time” (p. 236).
2004	Pascal	“Talent management encompasses managing the supply, demand, and flow of talent through the human capital engine” (p. 9).
2005	Ashton & Morton	“TM [talent management] is a strategic and holistic approach to both HR and business planning or a new route to organizational effectiveness. This improves the performance and the potential of people—the talent—who can make a measurable difference to the organization now and in future. And it aspires to yield enhanced performance among all levels in the workforce, thus allowing everyone to reach his/her potential, no matter what that might be” (p. 30).
2005	Duttagupta	“In the broadest possible terms, TM [talent management] is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization. Its purpose is to assure that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time based on strategic business objectives” (p. 2).
2006	Warren	“In its broadest sense, the term can be seen as the identification, development, engagement, retention and deployment of talent, although it is often used more narrowly to describe the short- and longer-term resourcing of senior executives and high performers” (p. 26).
2007	Jerusalim & Hausdorf	“High potential identification and development (also known as talent management) refers to the process by which an organization identifies and develops employees who are potentially able to move into leadership roles sometime in the future” (p. 934).
2008	Cappelli	“At its heart, talent management is simply a matter of anticipating the need for human capital and setting out a plan to meet it” (p. 1).
2009	Collings & Mellahi	“We define strategic talent management as activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the

Reference		Definition of Talent Management
		development of a talent pool of high potentials and high-performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization" (p. 2).
2010	Silzer & Dowell	"Talent management is an integrated set of processes, programs, and cultural norms in an organization designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy, and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs" (p. 18).

Note. Dries (2013)

Dries (2013) concluded that the authors all accepted that talent management adds greater value than other strategic HRM practices. From the definitions quoted by Dries (2013), above, it is apparent that talent management involves a process that is specifically focused on ensuring that the correct employees are available in the organisation to perform the necessary duties.

Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) reviewed 96 empirical articles, and provide a summary of definitions of talent management found in these articles. Noteworthy to mention is that, in 46% of the articles reviewed by Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016), the authors quoted other authors' definitions of talent management, or provided their own definitions of talent management. A total of 27% of the reviewed articles did not present any definition of talent management, 17% presented vague and indirect definitions, and a further 9% presented an overview of definitions without clearly advocating one (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016). Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) mention that the most-cited definitions were those of Collings and Mellahi (2009) and Scullion et al. (2010). Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) also note that the vast majority of definitions were grounded in a strategic and exclusive approach to talent management (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016). The definitions offered by Gallardo-Gallardo are summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Summary of Definitions of Talent Management

Author(s)	Definition
Collings & Mellahi (2009, p.	"We define strategic talent management as activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially

Author(s)	Definition
304)	contribute to the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high-potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation."
Scullion et al. (2010, p. 106)	"Global talent management includes all organizational activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles (those roles necessary to achieve organizational strategic priorities) on a global scale. Global talent management takes into account the differences in both organizations' global strategic priorities as well as the differences across national contexts for how talent should be managed in the countries where they operate."
Stahl et al. (2007, p. 2)	"talent management refers to an organization's efforts to attract, select, develop and retain talented key employees".
Collings & Scullion (2008, p. 102)	Global talent management is defined as: "the strategic integration of resourcing and development at the international level that involves the proactive identification, development and strategic deployment of high performing and high-potential strategic employees on a global scale".
Lockwood (2006, p. 270)	"talent management, which is 'the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining, and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs'".
Kontoghiorghes & Frangou (2009, p. 70)	"Talent management can be defined as the implementation of integrated human resource strategies to attract, develop, retain and productively utilize employees with the required skills and abilities to meet current and future business needs."
Lepak & Snell (1999, p. 271)	"Talent management is the differential management of employees based on their relative potential to contribute to the competitive advantage of their organizations."
Bethke-	"a distinctive process that focuses explicitly on those persons who have the

Author(s)	Definition
Langenegger et al. (2011, p. 527)	potential to provide competitive advantage for a company by managing those people in an effective and efficient way and therefore ensuring the long-term competitiveness of a company".
Chadee & Raman (2012, p. 463)	"For the purposes of this research, we refer to talent management as the deliberate and organised efforts by firms to optimally select, develop, deploy and retain competent and committed knowledge employees for key positions which bear significant influences on the overall performance of the organisation."
Hajikaimisari et al. (2010, p. 68)	"Talent management may be defined as a core sub-system of an organization's strategic management system, to develop a human resource asset base that is capable to support current and future organizational growth directions and objectives."
Peet et al. (2010, p. 83)	"Talent Management takes a strategic, comprehensive approach to identifying, evaluating, developing and leveraging the talent resources that help the organisation perform at its best: talent strategy and planning, recruiting, performance management, learning and development, succession planning, and leadership development."
Raman et al. (2013, p. 336)	"For the purposes of this research, we refer to talent management as top management's deliberate and organized efforts to optimally select, develop, deploy and retain competent and committed employees who bear significant influence on the overall performance of the organization."
Tymon et al. (2010, p. 109)	"there has been little research taking a comprehensive view of talent management in emerging markets—i.e., the best practices for the attraction, onboarding, development, appraisal, motivation, retention and/or redeployment of professional talent".

Note. Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen (2016)

In conducting a literature search of research on talent management, the following further definitions were identified.

Table 2.4

Further Definitions of Talent Management in HRM Literature

Definition	Author(s)
"Global talent management includes organisational initiatives that contribute to attracting and selecting developing and keeping the best employees in the most important roles worldwide."	Vaiman et al. (2012, p. 925)
"the process through which organisations anticipate and meet their needs for talent in strategic jobs".	Cappelli & Keller (2014, p. 307)
"talent management is a unique function that integrates all of the activities and responsibilities associated with the management of the talent lifecycle regardless of geography—from attracting and acquiring talent to developing and retaining it".	Schiemann (2014, p. 282)
"Talent management at its core is broadly concerned with an identified pool of high-preforming individuals with potential to contribute to business performance."	King (2015, p. 275)
"the differential management of employees according to their relative potential to contribute to an organisation's competitive advantage".	Swailes et al. (2014, p. 531)
"Fully inclusive talent management (FITM) is the recognition and acceptance that all employees have talent, together with the ongoing evaluation and deployment of employees in positions that give best fit and opportunity (via participation) for employees to use those talents."	Swailes et al. (2014, p. 533)
"the systematic activities to attract, identify, develop, and retain individuals who are considered to be 'talented".	Meyers & Van Woerkom (2014, p. 192)
"an organisation's ability to attract, select, develop and retain certain key employees (in a global context)."	Stahl et al. (2012, p. 263)
"Talent management is an integrated set of processes, programs and cultural norms in an organisation designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs."	Silzer & Dowell (2010, p. 18)
"Talent Management is the use of integrated science-based theory, principles and practices derived from I-O Psychology to design strategic human resource systems that serve to maximise organisational capability across the full talent lifespan of attracting, developing, deploying, and retaining people to facilitate the	Church & Conger (2018, p. 180)

Definition	Author(s)
achievement of business goals."	
"Global talent management is (1) the systematic identification of pivotal positions that differentially contribute to an organization's sustainable competitive advantage on a global scale, (2) the development of a talent pool of high-potential and high-performing incumbents who reflect the global scope of the MNE [Multinational Enterprises] to fill these roles, and (3) the development of a differentiated HR architecture to fill these roles with the best available incumbents to ensure their continued commitment to the MNE."	Collings et al. (2019, p. 543)
"Talent management refers to the use of essential human resource (HR) management practices to ensure that talent is available to solve complex problems and help an organisation achieve its strategic goals."	Hendrawan et al. (2024, p. 1)

Note. Researcher's own compilation

When the definitions and the literature discussed above are scrutinised, the following is apparent:

- There are definitions that clearly denote an inclusive approach to talent management (Hajikaimisari et al., 2010; Lockwood, 2006; Raman et al., 2013; Schiemann, 2014) and those that reflect an exclusive approach to talent management (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Scullion et al., 2010; Stahl et al., 2007; Swailes et al., 2014).
- Talent management refers to the process of flow of employees through the organisation.
- Talent management is closely linked to strategic HRM.
- Talent management and global talent management seem to follow the same principles and practices but global talent management has a unique focus, in that it concentrates on the distinctive challenges associated with the management of talent on a worldwide scale, specifically in multinational organisations.
- Most authors who propose an exclusive approach argue that talented employees have specific skills, abilities, or potential that will benefit the organisation specifically; as such, these authors rely heavily on the concept of differentiation.
- Key or strategic positions are noted, and the emphasis is on filling only these positions

in managing talent.

- Researchers supporting an inclusive or hybrid approach do so on the basis of corporate social responsibility in terms of the organisation regarding all its employees as equally entitled to development resources.
- Collectivist cultures may be averse to differentiating a small group of employees for preferential treatment.
- Talent management is seen as a process that ensures that capable employees are available in key positions in order to improve organisational performance.

The research on talent management shows that researchers tend to investigate talent management from their own perspective, through a certain lens. Lenses or views are based on values and principles that the researchers hold. Talent management should perhaps then rather be viewed, as Dries (2022) points out, as a phenomenon and not as a construct. A phenomenon is not something that is separate from the environment in which it is practised; it is influenced by the environment.

Most South African multinational companies portray a Western organisational culture and practises. However, a large portion of the South African workforce comprises black African people, who may hold strong African, collectivist cultural values despite having adopted Western organisational behaviour. The concept of *ubuntu* is not new, and is accepted in South African businesses as a way to promote an inclusive orientation where employees are accepted as a part of the whole. *Ubuntu* is described by Karsten and Illa (2005) as the community that defines the person as a person. *Ubuntu* summarised by the Xhosa expression *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, which means the person is a person through others (Karsten & Illa, 2005). “All explanations of Ubuntu emphasise its nature as a communitarian ethic, and it is often contrasted with Western individualism” (West, 2014, p 48). Due to this collectivist culture, South African companies might face an additional challenge in implementing exclusive talent management. This then begs the question whether an exclusive approach to talent management, even though it is overwhelmingly the most prevalent approach worldwide (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016), can be implemented successfully in South African organisations. Nevertheless, South African organisations have to compete in a global economy, and, as such, resources with high potential should be developed and utilised to their full extent. A resource-based orientation towards talent management thus still remains relevant to organisations in South Africa, as they all strive to make a profit in a global economy.

The following definition of talent management is proposed for this study:

Talent management is a strategic management approach informed by a unique talent philosophy that takes cognisance of culture and organisational context. It consists of activities that optimise the flow of employees into, through, and out of the organisation by implementing specific actions to attract, develop, and engage talented individuals in an organisation.

The next section provides a brief overview of select talent management models and systems.

2.6 TALENT MANAGEMENT MODELS

Limited models were found in the academic literature that was scrutinised and it would seem that these models were developed mainly by professionals who specialise in talent management. An overview of some models is provided in subsequent sections.

2.6.1 The CRF Talent Management System

Ashton and Morton (2005) proposed an integrated system of talent management, the Conversations, Feedback, Recognition (CFR) Talent Management System, which they developed in association with the Corporate Research Forum. Ashton and Morton (2005) proposed the integration of five elements linked to talent management, namely:

Need—the business need derived from the business model and the desire for a competitive advantage;

Data collection—the data and intelligence critical to effective talent decisions;

Planning—talent planning, guided by data analyses;

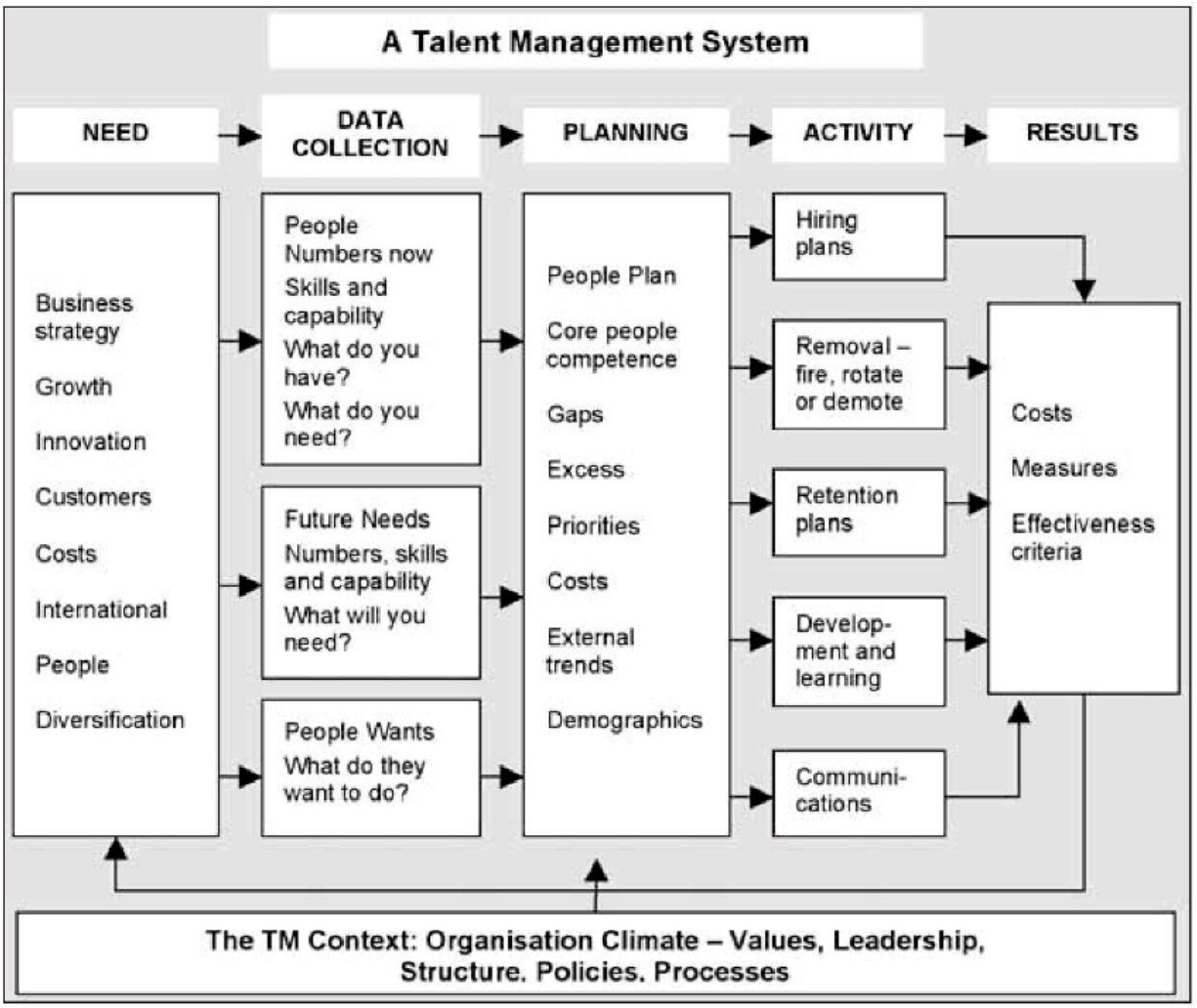
Activities—the conversion of plans into integrated sets of activities; and

Results—costs, measures, and effectiveness criteria to judge the value and impact of talent management.

The model presented by Ashton and Morton (2005) represents the process of talent management and how it should be executed in an organisation. It explains the various aspects that organisations can use to inform and direct their talent management decisions. Figure 2.6 provides a graphic representation of the talent management system proposed by Ashton and Morton (2005).

Figure 2.6

The CFR Talent Management System



Note. Ashton & Morton (2005, p.31)

The model of Ashton and Morton (2005) explains how talent management can be linked to organisational processes such as hiring, retention, and communication, amongst others. It also indicates that organisational context should be considered in making decisions regarding the talent management system. The model is, however, fairly simplistic in the sense that it only represents a system of talent management on an operational level.

2.6.2 Berger and Berger's talent management building blocks

Berger and Berger (2004) proposed that organisations seeking to develop a talent management system should focus on four building blocks, namely competencies,

performance management, evaluating employee potential, and recruiting 'super keepers.'

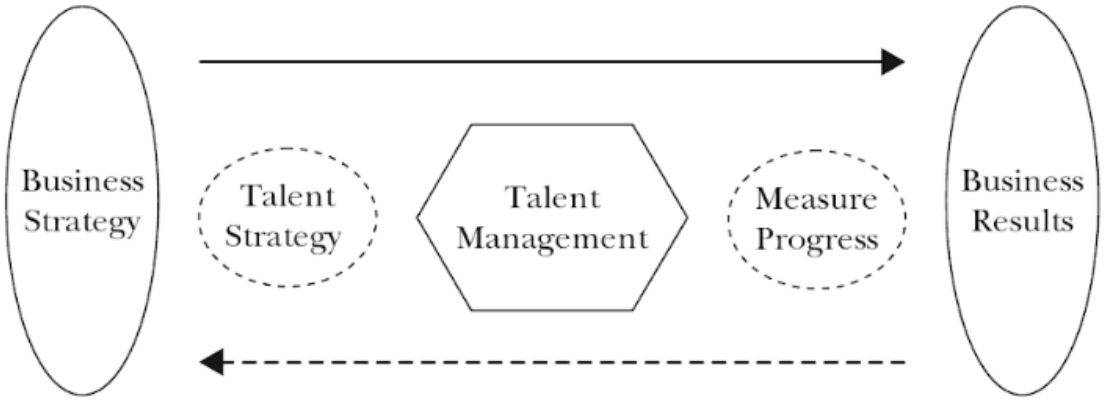
Based on the building blocks, it seems that Berger and Berger (2004) support an exclusive approach to talent management but view talent management as more than just managing the flow of employees through the organisation, as their model also includes performance management. The building blocks model of Berger and Berger (2004) contributes to the conceptualisation of the elements that might be involved in talent management. It also denotes a process, as it provides organisations with aspects that they should identify and manage, should they want to develop and retain talented employees. The model denotes an exclusive view of talent, and thus only focuses on aspects that should be considered in managing high-value employees. It does not provide information on managing and growing all employees, leaving practitioners with limited guidance in this regard.

2.6.3 Silzer and Dowell's Talent Management Framework and Model

Silzer and Dowell's (2010) Talent Management Framework and Model highlight the link between organisational strategy and strategic talent management. Talent management, according to Silzer and Dowell (2010), is not a stand-alone activity, and should always flow from the organisational strategy. The talent management framework is depicted in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7

Silzer and Dowell's Talent Management Framework



Note. Silzer & Dowell (2010, p. 10)

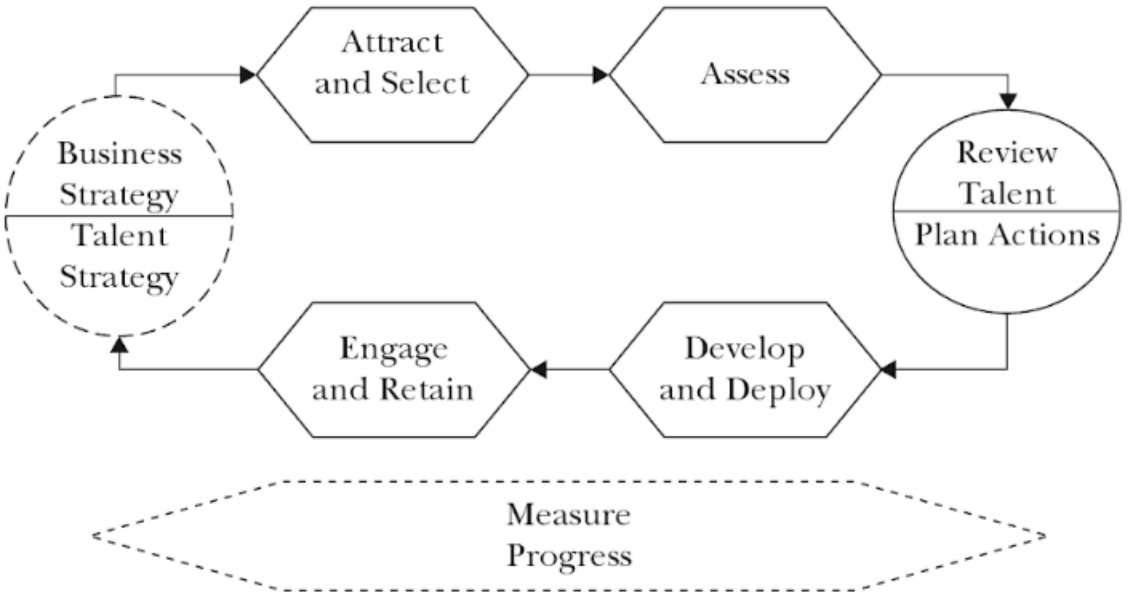
Silzer and Dowell (2010) propose five processes that should be implemented to ensure that the organisation is able to provide the talent that is needed to reach its strategic objectives:

1. Attract and select talent;
2. Assess competencies and skills in talent;
3. Review talent and plan talent actions;
4. Develop and deploy talent; and
5. Engage and retain talent.

The talent management model of Silzer and Dowell (2010) is depicted graphically in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8

Silzer and Dowell's Talent Management Model



Note. Silzer & Dowell (2010, p. 122)

The framework and model of Silzer and Dowell (2010) position talent management as a construct in the broader strategy of an organisation, and also shows the process or flow of actions in the process of managing talented employees. The conceptualisation of talent management as presented in the framework and the process indicated by the model contribute to talent management on a practical level. Neither, however, clearly distinguishes talent management from typical staffing or employee management processes. Silzer and Dowell

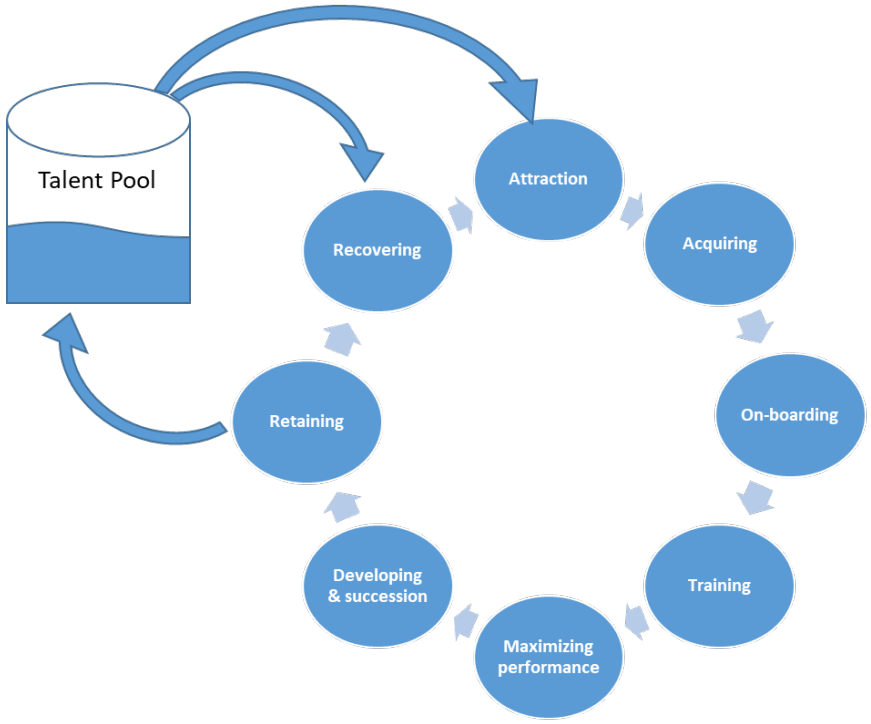
(2010) do not present talent management as a unique concept or process different from established HRM processes.

2.6.4 Schiemann's Talent Life Cycle

Schiemann (2014) added to the theoretical body of knowledge on talent management by introducing the notion of a talent life cycle. Schiemann (2014, p. 282) notes that the talent life cycle "encompasses all of the stages of interaction between an organisation and its human capital". Schiemann's (2014) Talent Life Cycle is depicted in Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9

Schiemann's Talent Life Cycle



Note. Schiemann (2014, p.282)

Schiemann (2014) explains that the talent life cycle is the path upon which most people interact with the organisation, and that talent management is the way in which the life cycle is managed. Schiemann (2014) proposes that organisations move from merely managing talent, to a talent optimisation orientation. This means that, instead of merely managing the different elements in the talent cycle, the focus should be on optimising the cycle in order to leverage its talent investments, to achieve the highest return on investment. Schiemann (2014, p. 282)

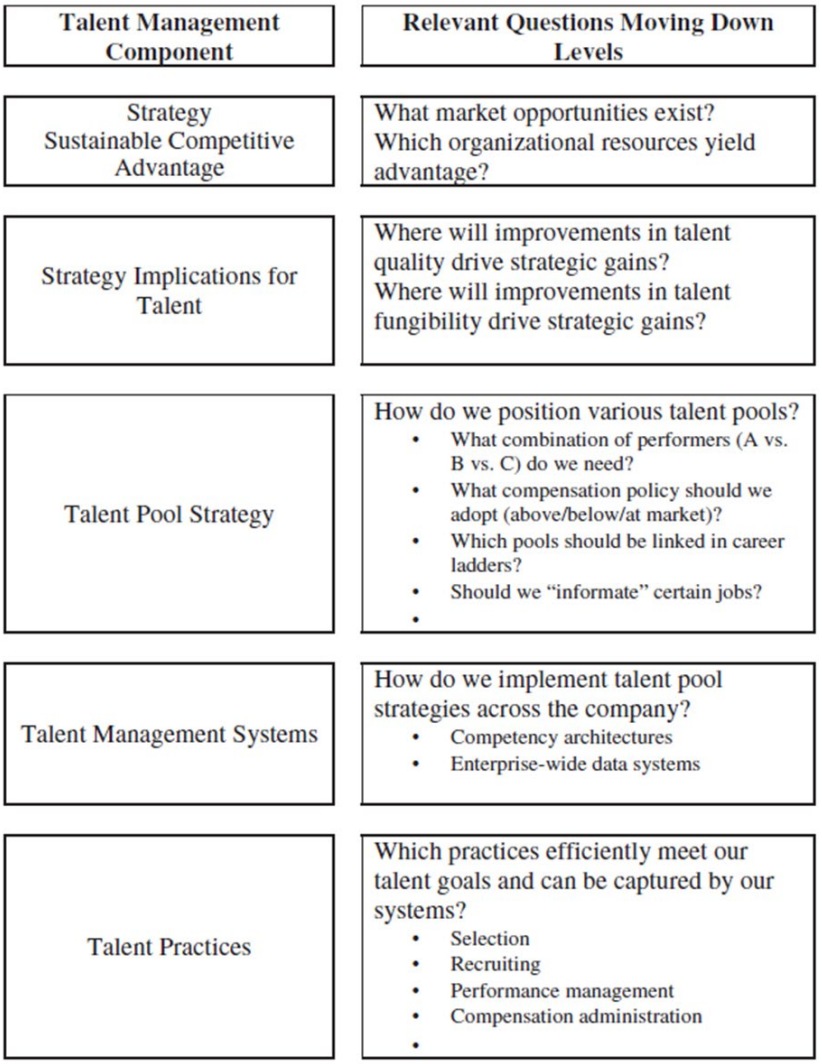
states: “Talent optimization means that the organisation has balanced talent acquisition, development, performance and retention strategies, processes and policies so that it maximizes the outcomes of those investments.” The contribution made by Schiemann (2014) was shifting the focus of talent management from single points of management to the flow of the process. Schiemann (2014) does not conceptualise talent management as a construct but explains it as a process to be executed in the organisation. It is clear that Schiemann (2014) views talent as a resource to be used by the organisation to optimise organisational performance, and emphasises the importance of having a strong talent pool and maintaining the strength of the talent pool by effectively managing the talent management process. Schiemann (2014) follows an exclusive approach, and does not mention what impact the model and proposed process might have on employees who are not part of the talent pool.

2.6.5 Lewis and Heckman’s Talent Management Hierarchy

Lewis and Heckman (2006) proposed a high-level hierarchy of the components of a strategic talent management process. Lewis and Heckman (2006) point out that their high-level hierarchy reflects components of a high-level strategic talent management process. They note that “it is a conceptual framework that begins to separate the questions that have been addressed in the talent management and strategic human resource literature to provide perspective” (Lewis & Heckman, 2006, p. 149). This hierarchy is depicted in Figure 2.10.

Figure 2.10

Lewis and Heckman's High-level Depiction of the Talent Management Hierarchy



Talent Management Component	Relevant Questions Moving Down Levels
Strategy Sustainable Competitive Advantage	What market opportunities exist? Which organizational resources yield advantage?
Strategy Implications for Talent	Where will improvements in talent quality drive strategic gains? Where will improvements in talent fungibility drive strategic gains?
Talent Pool Strategy	How do we position various talent pools? • What combination of performers (A vs. B vs. C) do we need? • What compensation policy should we adopt (above/below/at market)? • Which pools should be linked in career ladders? • Should we "informate" certain jobs? •
Talent Management Systems	How do we implement talent pool strategies across the company? • Competency architectures • Enterprise-wide data systems
Talent Practices	Which practices efficiently meet our talent goals and can be captured by our systems? • Selection • Recruiting • Performance management • Compensation administration •

Note. Lewis & Heckman (2006, p. 149)

The hierarchy developed by Lewis and Heckman (2006) is aimed at explaining talent management on a conceptual level by identifying the elements of a talent management system. As can be seen in the graphic depiction of the hierarchy, the talent management components are indicated on the left, and the relevant questions that may be asked by talent management practitioners or managers are listed on the right. The hierarchy suggests questions that should be answered by an organisation to make decisions about the talent philosophy that will suit the organisation. This hierarchy thus takes context and organisational culture into consideration, which is different from most of the models discussed earlier. The

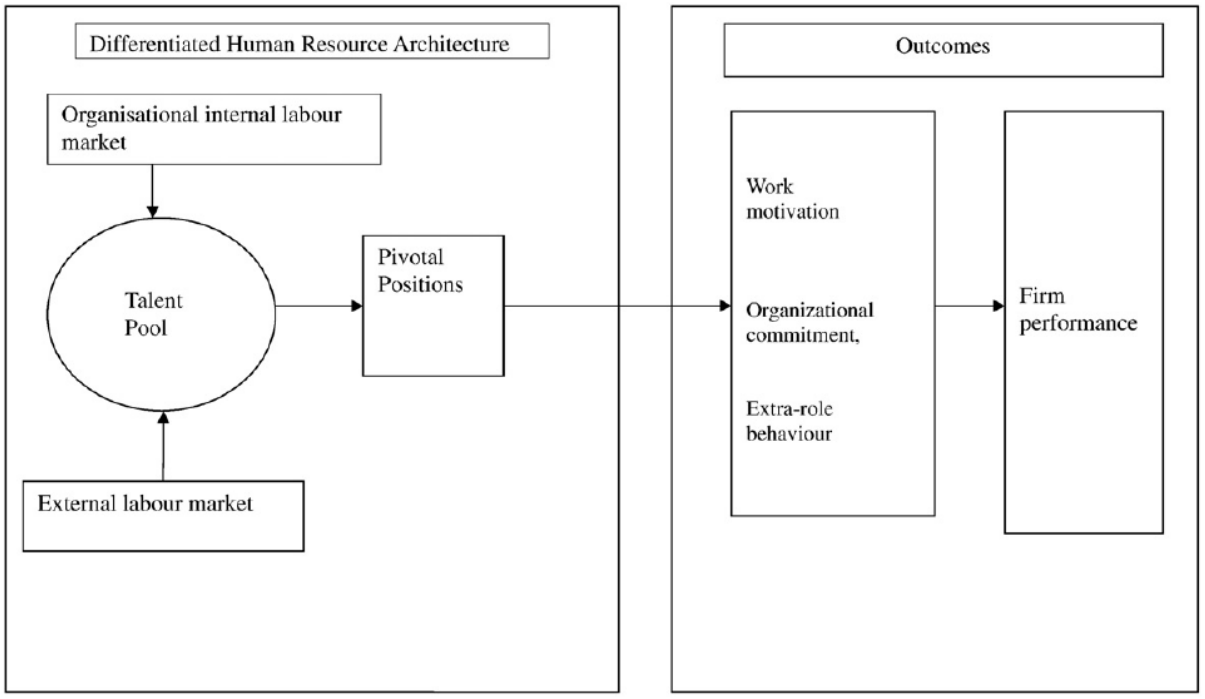
hierarchy, unfortunately, does not provide definitive direction regarding the implementation of talent management. The hierarchy seems to be exclusive, as reference is made to talent pools.

2.6.6 Collings and Mellahi's Model of Strategic Talent Management

Collings and Mellahi (2009) developed a theoretical model of strategic talent management based on their definition of strategic talent management. The model incorporates the four aspects they consider the most important in strategic talent management, namely identification of pivotal talent positions, development of a talent pool, creation of a differentiated HR architecture, and the outcomes of talent management. Collings and Mellahi (2009) support an exclusive approach to talent management, and explain that this is one of the key differentiating factors between strategic HRM and strategic talent management. Where strategic HRM includes all employees in the organisation, strategic talent management focuses only on a selected talent group. Collings and Mellahi (2009) further note that the model explains what talent management is, rather than indicating the talent management process that should be followed. The model is presented in Figure 2.11.

Figure 2.11

Collings and Mellahi's Model of Strategic Talent Management



Note. Collings & Mellahi (2009, p. 306)

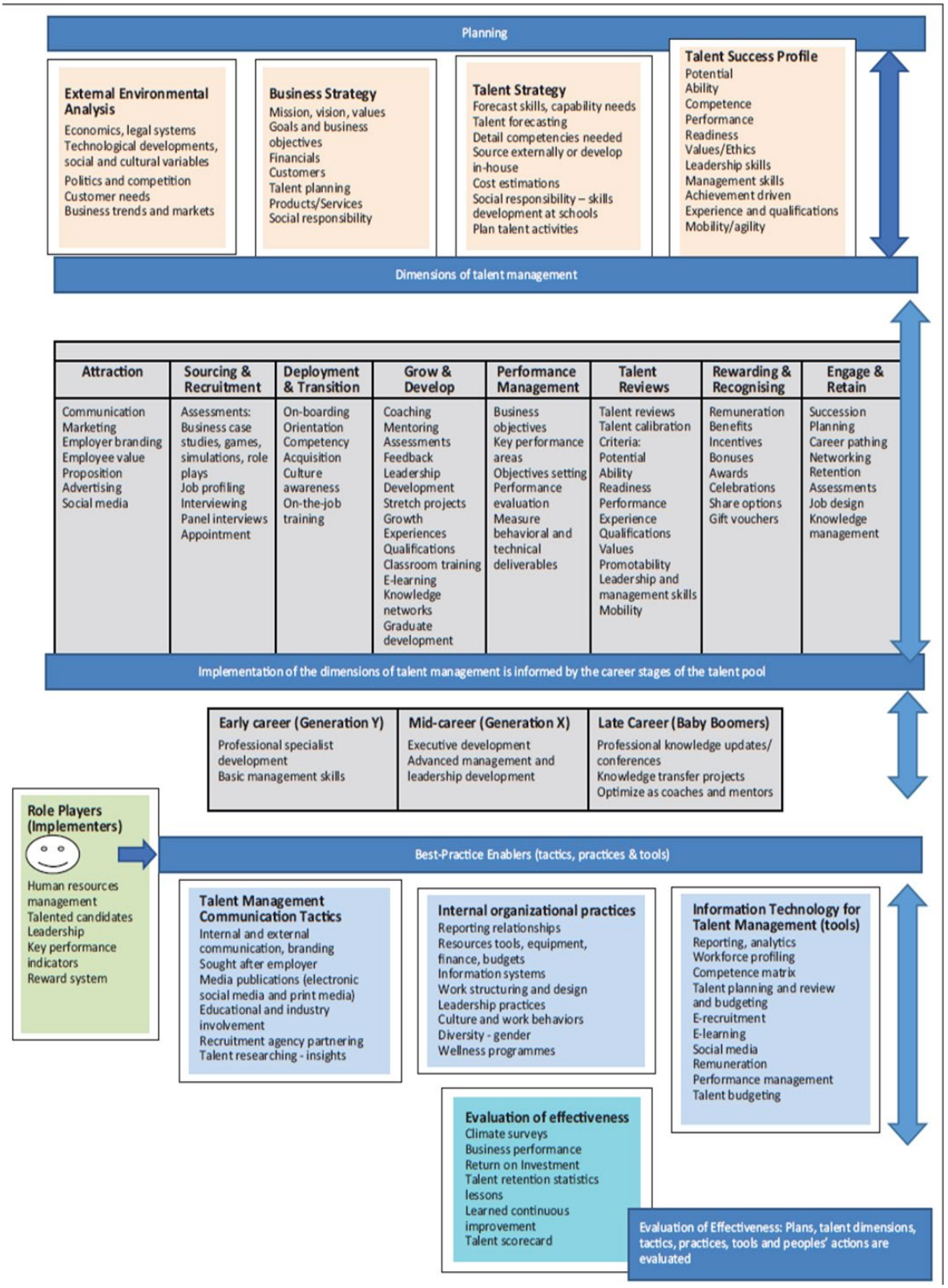
The model developed by Collings and Mellahi (2009) distinguishes talent management from HRM in an effort to establish talent management as a separate, crucial strategic function. They underscore an exclusive approach that proposes that talent management efforts should only be directed at employees who have been identified as part of the talent pool. Their model is conceptual, and adds to the understanding of talent management but does not contribute to a process by which talent management can be executed effectively.

2.6.7 Van Zyl's Talent Management Framework for the Private Sector

Van Zyl et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study on two private organisation in South Africa, which explored the nature of talent management with the specific aim of developing a framework for talent management that can be used in private organisations. Van Zyl et al.'s (2017) proposed framework is shown in Figure 2.12.

Figure 2.12

Van Zyl et al.'s Talent Management Framework for the Private Sector



Note. Van Zyl et al. (2017, p. 16)

As can be seen from the graphic representation above, the framework proposed by Van Zyl et al. (2017) also refers to talent management as a process that represents the flow of employees into and through organisations. Van Zyl et al. (2017) refer to elements of the process as the dimensions of talent management. These dimensions are:

- Attraction;
- Sourcing and recruitment;
- Development and transition;
- Growth and development;
- Performance management;
- Talent reviews;
- Rewarding and recognising; and
- Engagement and retention.

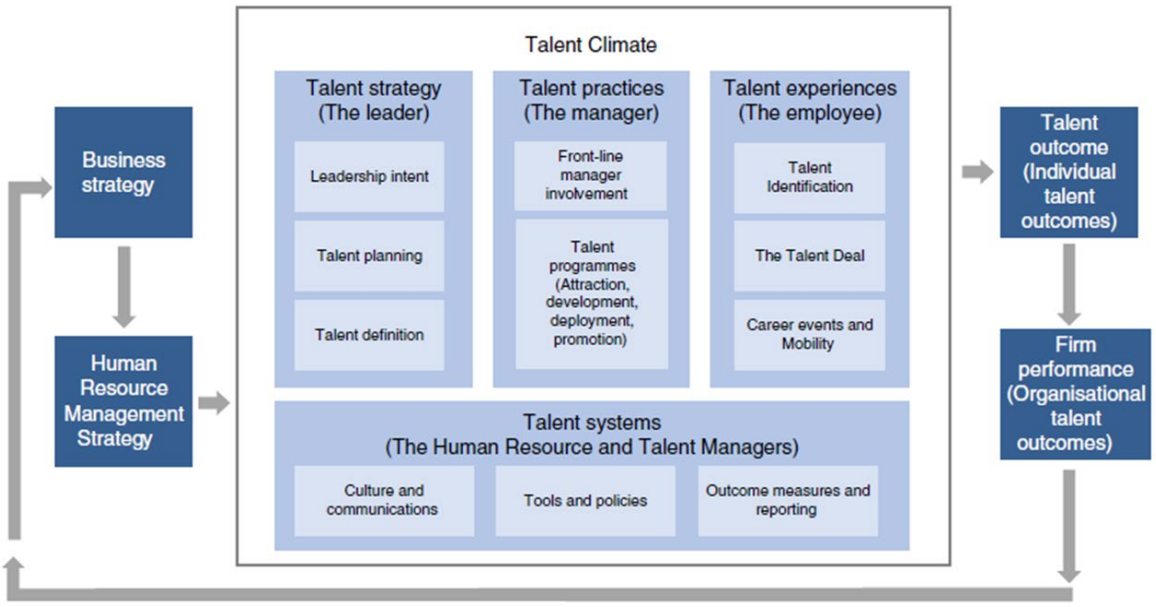
The authors note that they constructed this model from available talent management literature and constructs brought forward by the participants in their study (Van Zyl et al., 2017). Van Zyl et al. (2017) do not indicate whether their framework represents an inclusive or exclusive talent management system but do refer to 'talent pools' and 'high-potential talent', and it can thus be deduced that their approach is exclusive. Given that they conducted their research in only two organisations, and the participants were from various groupings of employees (management, talented employees, and talent management practitioners), the legitimacy of the talent dimensions may be questioned. The article nevertheless provides some insight into how talent might be managed practically.

2.6.8 King's Global Talent Management Strategic Framework

King's (2015) Global Talent Management Strategic Framework presents a holistic view of a talent system. King (2015) argues that it is important that various role players are involved in talent management. King's (2015) framework is depicted in Figure 2.13.

Figure 2.13

King's Global Talent Management Strategic Framework



Note. King (2015, p. 279)

King (2015) explains that this framework, conceptualises global talent management as an integrated, business -embedded system that aligns talent strategy, practices, experiences and HR systems to organisational goals. It emphasises the coordinated involvement of four key role players, leaders, managers, HR/talent professionals and employees, who co-create the talent system and drive both individual and organisational outcomes.

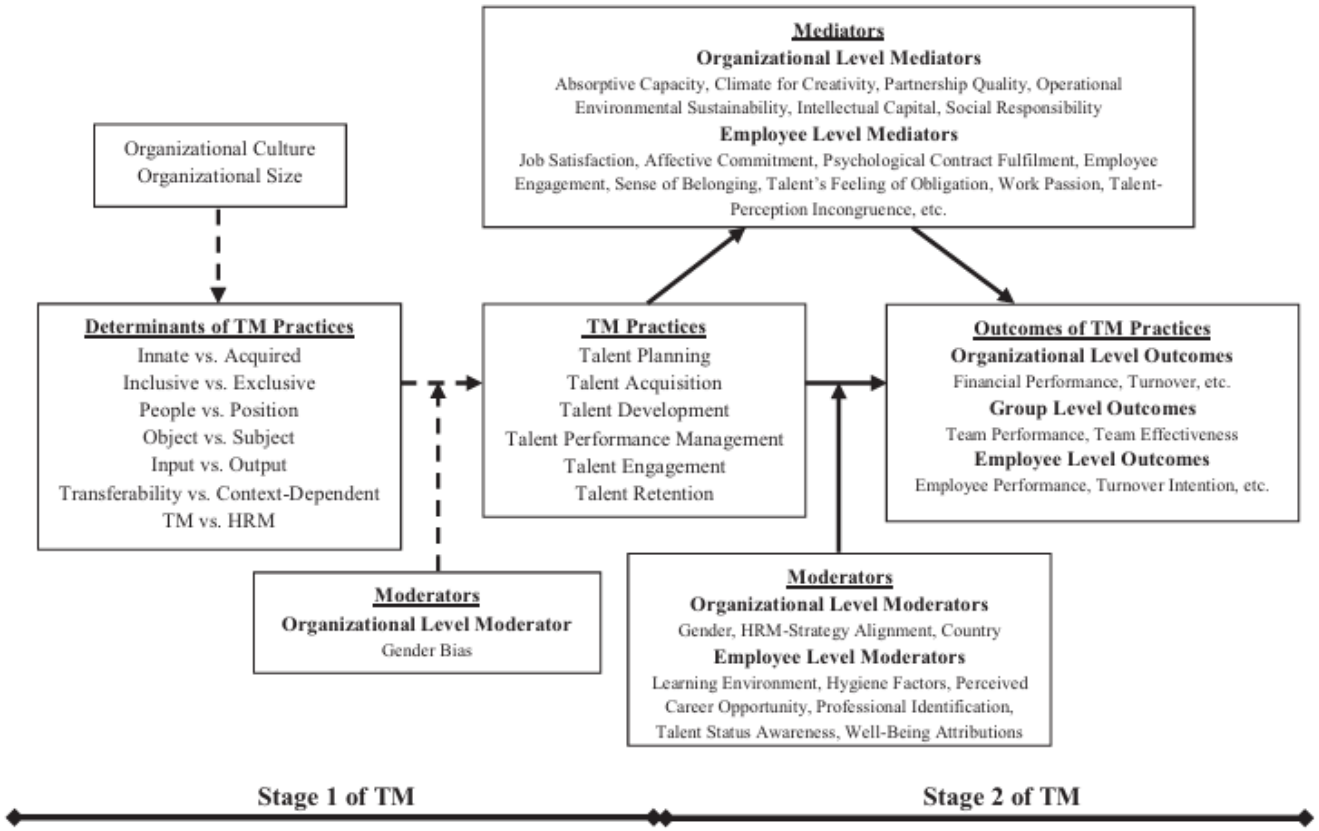
It is important to note that King's (2015) framework depicts a system that explains talent management's place and function within the organisation. It does not offer a process with which to manage talent effectively. King's (2015) framework nevertheless makes a contribution by identifying the role players involved in a talent management system, and also indicates the elements that should be taken into consideration when talent management is implemented. This includes the talent climate and a definition of talent management that is unique to the organisation.

2.6.9 Aljbour et al.'s Multilevel Framework of Talent Management

Aljbour et al. (2022) developed the Multilevel Framework of Talent Management with the purpose of consolidating research evidence in order to present a comprehensive framework of the landscape of talent management. They identify determinants of talent management, which they also refer to as perspectives, and postulated that these perspectives have an impact on the talent management practices in an organisation. The framework is shown in Figure 2.14.

Figure 2.14

Aljbour et al.'s Multilevel Framework of Talent Management



Note. Aljbour et al. (2022, p. 3361)

Although the framework does not describe the implementation of talent management, it provides a 'map' of the constructs researched in the talent management space and how these relate to one another. The value of this framework lies in the perspectives that the authors identified as crucial input in determining organisational practices. It underscores the

importance of organisations determining their talent philosophy prior to planning a talent management system.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the talent management landscape and decisions regarding high-potential employees. It provided insights into the growth and development of talent management as a concept and research field. Various conceptualisations of talent management were discussed, and a working definition for this study was provided. Lastly, the chapter provided an overview of frameworks and models of talent management proposed in literature. The next chapter delves deeper into the concept of talent and how it is conceptualised within the broader psychological environment and within an organisational context. The chapter continues with a review of literature on high-potential talent, highlighting the differences between how talent and high-potential talent are viewed. An examination of talent and high-potential talent informs the conceptualisation of these constructs within the broader psychological domain and in an organisational context. This inquiry culminates in a theoretical formulation of the HiPo Model, which is introduced in Chapter 3 and further elaborated upon in the subsequent chapters of the study.

CHAPTER 3: TALENT AND HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an in-depth review of talent management as the realm within which high-potential talent identification and management are practised. More specifically, the focus of this study was high-potential talent. Therefore, this chapter defines high-potential talent, commencing with a review of literature on how organisations view talent.

3.2. TALENT

Tansley (2011), in an article titled "What do we mean by the term 'talent' in talent management?", highlights the ambiguity surrounding talent management, as well as the various interpretations of talent management as a construct, which are also noted in literature (e.g., De La Calle-Duran et al., 2021; Dries, 2013; Dries, 2022; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Kwon & Jang, 2022). Reilly (2008) noted that the question concerning the nature of talent had been largely left unanswered, and stated that this unanswered question was at the root of the conceptual vagueness that characterised the talent management field. Dries (2022) postulated that the question of the nature of talent has dominated academic literature in this field for many years but especially from 2010 to 2015. Ansar and Baloch (2018) reiterate the opinion of Reilly (2008), suggesting that *talent* is evolving as a concept but is not yet established as a separate construct in business literature (Ansar & Baloch, 2018). It would seem that talent is still not well defined, despite almost twenty years' research on the topic (Groenewald et al., 2024; Tobon & Luna-Nemecio, 2020).

Operationalising and assessing talent is one of the main challenges facing the talent management research field (Groenewald et al., 2024; Nijs et al., 2014; Reilly, 2008; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Organisations are of the view that, in order for them to be able to outperform their competition and maintain a competitive advantage, they have to be able to maximise and manage their talent effectively (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Hongal & Kinange, 2020; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014; Nijs et al., 2014). However, researchers and practitioners are rarely in agreement about what they mean when they refer to *talent* and *talent management* (Dries, 2022; Tansley, 2011; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Tansley (2011) noted that this was a concern, explaining that an agreed-upon definition of the term is the foundation of robust talent management policies and procedures. Reilly (2008) postulated that it is important to understand talent as the 'who affects the how', meaning that

how talent is defined and who is seen as talented has an immense impact on how it is managed. Meyers et al. (2013) concur when they suggest that thorough theoretical research on the nature of talent and talent management is needed to address conceptual uncertainties about talent and ultimately make the management of talent more effective in practice.

In a commentary on the positions of the abovementioned authors, Tansley et al. (2013) refer to research by Tansley et al. (2007) on behalf of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and explain that the researchers found that the definition of talent management used by organisations varies based on the size and complexity of organisations. The definitions change over time to allow for changes in the environment and context (Tansley et al., 2013). Tansley et al. (2013) note that this has led to varying definitions of talent and talent management in practice. Tansley et al. (2013) concur with Thunnissen et al. (2013) that it is necessary to have a broader view of talent and talent management, one that can be applied across varying situations and contexts.

Given the lack of a clear definition of talent in literature and the impact that context and environment seemingly have on talent as a construct (Dries, 2022; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015), it was important to put forward a definition of talent for this study. To better understand talent as a concept and develop a definition for the present study, the linguistic history of talent was explored as a starting point, followed by theoretical perspectives on talent and how various researchers understand it. The articles discussed in subsequent sections were selected based on the specific focus of the articles on talent as a construct and later a phenomenon.

3.2.1 Linguistic history of the word *talent*

Tansley (2011) considered the historical, linguistic, and organisational development of talent, and pointed out that the word *talent* originally referred to a unit of weight and then money. In the Middle Ages, the meaning changed, and it was then used as a term to indicate aptitude or special ability. This special ability referred to more than just skill (Tansley, 2011). Meyers et al. (2013) point out that, irrespective of whether talents referred to money or unique abilities, it is clear that it was seen as something valuable that should not be squandered. Hawkins (1990) described talent as a special natural gift or capability, superior intellectual capacity, an individual or individuals possessing notable talent.

The Oxford Living dictionary (Oxford University Press, n.d.) describes talent as:

1 *[mass noun]* Natural aptitude or skill *'he possesses more talent than any other player'*

Meyers et al. (2013) indicate that *talent* refers to a skill or ability that one exhibits without being taught. This specific aspect of talent is also described in the Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press, n.d.), where talent is defined as follows:

Talent: *noun* (NATURAL ABILITY)

From the above definitions, the following could be said about talent from a linguistic perspective:

- It refers to the natural ability of a person;
- It enables the person to perform better or be more successful than others at something; and
- It is not taught, although it might be possible to develop a talent further.

Defining talent from a linguistic perspective seems simple because it refers to one concept within one area of application. In reality, however, the concept of talent is multifaceted and dependent on the context, environment, and application within an organisational setting, which has led to various different perspectives on talent (De La Calle-Duran et al., 2021).

3.2.2 Theoretical perspectives on talent

Various authors have endeavoured to describe talent (Dries, 2022; Groenewald et al., 2024; Kwon & Jang, 2022). Silzer and Dowell (2010), note that talent can refer to any of the following in an organisation:

- A person's specific ability, knowledge or skill;
- A person; or
- A group in the organisation.

Several articles have endeavoured to summarise current literature on talent and describe talent as a multifaceted construct in an organisational setting. Silzer and Dowell (2010) conducted literature searches, and their articles convey summaries of the descriptions of talent in literature. This section reviews perspectives on talent in order to gain insight into how talent is currently viewed within a work context, and to highlight conflicts in the discourse on the meaning of talent. Deciding on exactly what talent is and how it can be viewed in an

organisation is an important first step in deciding how to manage talent. Thus, for each article discussed, the authors' views and understanding of talent are described. Following these descriptions, talent as a concept is summarised, and a working definition is ultimately proposed.

Tansley (2011) investigated talent as a construct, and published an article specifically focussed on the meaning of the term *talent* in a work context. Tansley (2011) remarks that one of the biggest challenges facing studies on talent management is the ambiguity related to working definitions of talent. Tansley (2011) suggests that talent can be explained on three levels in most organisations:

- The organisational level—most organisations want to formulate their own definition of talent, one that is specific to the organisation and the industry in which it competes;
- The group level—here talent is used to refer to specific groups in the organisation, and includes those characteristics that the organisation would want to attribute to that group of employees. The groups could include leadership talent, key talent groups, core talent groups, and peripheral talent groups; and
- The individual level—on which level talent is seen as something unique and special to a specific person. Specific perspectives of talent in organisation on an individual level can be defined as behavioural aspects, knowledge, skills, or certain competencies.

Tansley (2011) highlights that:

- a balanced perspective on talent is needed, one that recognises that talent can be both innate and acquired;
- that many employees are not included in talent management programmes, and that this should be recognised; and
- that there is a need for organisations to recognise the importance of those with functional knowledge and perhaps also include them in talent management programmes.

Tansley (2011) did not report on any empirical research to support these views but the author is referenced in the majority of recent articles scrutinised for the present study. Although the title of the article creates expectations with regard to a definition of talent management, Tansley (2011), unfortunately, did not propose a definition.

Meyers et al. (2013) also investigated talent, specifically with the emphasis on the theoretical implications of talent and the implications for talent management. Meyers et al. (2013) identified the five most salient approaches to talent in various literature streams, and postulated that talent can be seen as giftedness, strengths, competencies, potential, or performance, as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Summary of Important Talent Approaches and Main Characteristics

	Approach to talent				
	Giftedness	**Strengths**	**(Meta-) Competencies**	**Potential**	**Performance**
Science domain	Education	Positive psychology	HRM	HRM	HRM
Seminal authors	Ericsson, K.A. Gagné, G. Galton, F., Sir Renzulli, J. Sternberg, R.J. Terman, L.	Biswas-Diener, R. Buckingham, M. Kashdan, T.B. Peterson, C. Seligman, M.E.P.	Boyatzis, R.E. Briscoe, J.P. Eichinger, R.W. Hall, D.T. Lombardo, M.M. Mahoney, J.D. Spreitzer, G.M.	Church, A.H. Silzer, R. McCall, M.W.	Altman, Y. Welch, J. Grote, D.
Population of interest	Children, adolescents, adults	Children, adolescents, adults	Working adults	Working adults (mostly younger workers)	Working adults
Position in nature-nurture debate	Ongoing debate about nature vs nurture; several approaches highlighting interactions	Innate basis, yet to some extent developable	Knowledge and skills can be developed; abilities and some other personal characteristics are innate	Mainly based on innate factors, but can (and needs to be) developed	
Position in inclusive-exclusive debate	(Highly) exclusive (approximately from 1 to 10% of the population)	Inclusive	As concerns knowledge and skills: rather exclusive; as concerns abilities: rather exclusive	(Rather) exclusive	Exclusive

Note. Meyers et al. (2020, p. 307)

A short summary of each of the main approaches to talent in the classification that Meyers et al. (2013) is provided below, which differentiates between innate and acquired talent.

Talent as giftedness positions talent as individuals who perform extraordinarily well in a specific area, for example, sports, maths, or music. These individuals possess a specific talent that they were born with that enables them to outperform others in a specific area.

Talent as strengths falls within the scientific field of positive psychology, and strengths are conceptualised as trait-like constructs that are partially inborn but can also be developed (Meyers et al., 2013).

Talent as competencies suggests that individuals exhibit certain behaviours that suggest that they have knowledge, skills, and certain abilities that enable them to perform in a certain way. Abilities are mostly inborn but knowledge and skills can be learned. Underlying the development of competencies are so-called meta-competencies (Briscoe & Hall, 1999), such

as general intelligence, emotional intelligence, and learning agility.

Talent as high potential suggests that talent may be latent and not yet visible, suggesting a combination of innate talents that have to be developed in order to be visible to others.

Talent as high performance is observable talent that is evident in the actions and behaviours of individuals. Meyers et al. (2013) suggest that talent can be measured as an output in terms of an employees' performance.

Meyers et al. (2013) note that only the last three literature streams are relevant to organisational settings but, irrespective of the literature stream, talent, in each specific instance, can be identified as innate or acquired. Silzer and Davis (2010) recommend that a distinction be made between natural abilities and learned behaviour. Meyers et al. (2013) concur, and conclude that talent is defined as inborn in the realms of talent recruitment, identification, and retention, and as acquired in the context of talent development.

Talent can be mapped on a continuum, with the construct being innate at the one end and learned at the other. Where an organisation positions itself on this continuum is influenced by various factors. A single definition of talent with reference to the entire continuum is, however, improbable (Meyers et al., 2013). Meyers et al. (2013) argue that there are different ways of defining talent, and that each organisation should decide how it wants to view talent. Furthermore, how talent is defined may differ depending on the HR practice in question. For example, where recruitment and selection are concerned, talent is viewed as an innate concept, and where HR development is concerned, talent may be viewed as acquired. Meyers et al. (2013) alludes to the various sources of talent but do not offer a concrete definition. Gallardo-Gallardo et al., in 2013, also reported that no widely agreed-upon definition of talent existed.

The nature of talent and how it is understood by different researchers become apparent when scrutinising the definitions listed by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013). The following deductions can be made:

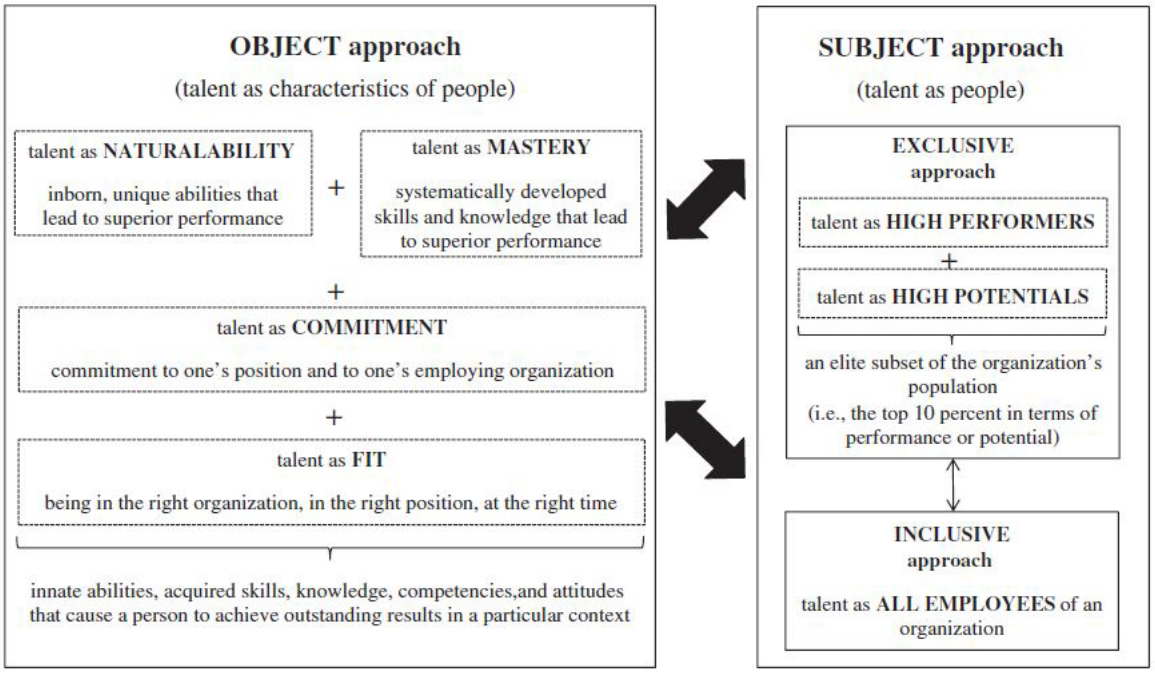
- The definitions refer to ability, skills, competence, or behaviours that cause the individual displaying them to be perceived as more able and successful at what they are doing than others.
- There are varying opinions regarding whether talent refers to all employees or to only certain employees.

- Opinions vary with regard to whether talent includes only innate qualities or also learned qualities.

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) concluded that talent can be described as either an object, thus, a characteristic, or a subject—the person. The authors, however, do not offer a definition of talent. Instead, they conclude that there is a fundamental lack of consensus on what talent means in the workplace. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) note, that although various assumptions regarding and approaches to talent are presented in the literature, there is little empirical evidence of their accuracy. As an alternative to a definition, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) offer a framework for the conceptualisation of talent within the world of work, shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2

Framework for the Conceptualisation of Talent within the World of Work



Note. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013, p. 297)

In their framework, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) refer to talent as either an object meaning a characteristic, or a subject, referring to talent as people. This view shows similarities with that of Tansley (2011), who notes that talent can be presented on an organisational, group, and individual level. In the framework of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), the object approach

refers to the individual level described by Tansley (2011), and the subject approach links to the group level described by Tansley (2011).

According to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), talent in the object approach can be either a natural ability (innate) or mastery (learned). Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) concur with Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) in maintaining that talent also has an element of commitment. Talented individuals are committed to their positions and organisations, and talent will not come to fruition without commitment (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). Lastly, in the object approach, talent can also be seen as fit. In other words, individuals are considered talented when their abilities or skills are a good fit for the organisation at a specific time.

Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2013) subject approach suggests that organisations can take an exclusive or inclusive approach to who they deem talented. An exclusive approach means that only some employees are talented. Here, the performance-vs-potential debate is relevant. Organisations must decide whether the talent includes current performers or only focus on employees with potential for performance in future roles. An inclusive approach denotes a stance where the organisation views all employees as talented and, thus, all should have equal access to resources for developmental purposes. Iles (2013) delivers direct commentary on the article, and notes that it makes several useful contributions to talent management theory. Iles (2013) seems to agree with the notions of talent put forward by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), and how talent can be defined but provides some new insight into the inclusive-vs-exclusive approach of organisations to talent management.

An article by Sonnenberg et al. (2014) sheds some light on how talent is understood by investigating the possible incongruence between employees' perceptions of talent and the perceptions of the organisation about talented employees. Sonnenberg et al. (2014) believe discussions around talent management focus on the organisational level, also described by Tansley (2011). Sonnenberg et al. (2014) discuss various aspects regarding how talent is perceived, including talent referring to a group of people or to an attitude or behaviour, and the view of talent referring to high-potentials vs high-performance employees. The discussion of these aspects, however, only served to create context for their research, which focused on the communication to employees who had been identified as talented and the impact that this knowledge had on employees (Sonnenberg et al., 2014). Apart from highlighting similar facets of talent discussed by other authors, Sonnenberg et al.'s (2014) article does not share any empirical evidence to clarify the understanding of talent. It is, however, interesting to note that their findings indicate how clearly an organisation defines who it considers to be 'talent' directly

shapes how effective its talent management practices will be. Their study proves that discord in talent perception has a significant impact on the effectiveness of talent management. Employees who do not fully understand what their organisation means when it identifies certain individuals as talented and others as not become demotivated (De La Calle-Duran et al., 2021). Sonnenberg et al. (2014) indicate that incongruence affects employees' attitudes and behaviours because it is linked to lower psychological contract fulfilment. Lastly, Sonnenberg et al. (2014) point out that an exclusive talent strategy, also referred to by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) and Dries (2013), causes fewer misinterpretations about who is talent and who not, and thus increases the effectiveness of talent management practices.

In summary, Sonnenberg et al. (2014) motivate the identification of talent as being understood on either an organisation, group, or individual level. They support the view that talent can be innate or acquired, and that an inclusive or exclusive approach can be taken. In terms of better understanding talent and the talent management landscape, the article by Sonnenberg et al. (2014) adds invaluable perspective to the debate. It should, however, be noted that their research was conducted amongst a rather homogeneous group with regard to gender and culture. Although the study was large, involving 21 large organisations in Europe and comprising 2 660 completed questionnaires, 69% of respondents were male and 88% were of Dutch descent (Sonnenberg et al., 2014). This, unfortunately, detracts from the generalisability of their findings to other cultures and situations where the employees represent a more complex demography.

Dries (2013) performed a comparative analysis of theoretical perspectives on talent by examining six literature streams, summarised in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3

Theoretical Perspectives on Talent

Literature stream	Operationalisation of talent	Main criterion	Main contribution	Main gap
HRM	Talent as capital	Contribution of organization	Links individual talent to organisational context	Lack of theory and empirical evidence
I/O Psychology	Talent as individual difference	Predictive validity	Long research tradition in personnel selection, promotion systems and performance appraisal	Criterion problem – talent for what?
Educational psychology	Talent as giftedness	Domain-specific excellence	Strong (causal) theoretical frameworks	Mostly conceptual work; no research in adult populations
Vocational psychology	Talent as identity	Self-concept - crystallisation	Recognition of the dynamic nature of talent, as a construct, over the course of a person's life	Mostly narrative research; difficult to reconcile with more positivistic approaches
Positive psychology	Talent as strength	Self-actualisation	Treat positive outliers as research subjects of choice, rather than measurement error	Assumption of strength-based approach as win-win for individuals and organisations
Social psychology	Talent as perception of talent	Rater accuracy	Brings in element of social perception – i.e., talent that is not acknowledged does not "exist"	Generalization of experimental findings to real-life setting?

Note. Dries (2013, p. 275)

Dries (2013) identified five 'tensions' where further research is needed due to divergent viewpoints of talent held by researchers and practitioners, noting that these contribute to the lack of a concrete definition of talent. The tensions noted by Dries (2013) are summarised in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4

Tensions around Talent in the Literature

Key point of discussion	Practical TM issue	Tensions	Implications for TM policies and practices
What (or who) is talent?	What should TM manage?	Object	Competence management, knowledge management
		Subject	Organisational career management, succession planning
How prevalent is talent in the population?	By which principle should organisations allocate their resources?	Inclusive	Strength-based approach
		Exclusive	Workforce differentiation
Can talent be taught (or learned)?	How can organisations tackle labour market scarcities?	Innate	Selection, assessment, identification
		Acquired	Development, experience, learning
Is talent more about ability or motivation?	What should organisations select for?	Input	Effort, motivation, ambition, career orientation
		Output	Output, performance, achievement, results
Is talent conditional on its environment?	Should organisations recruit externally or internally?	Transferable	Recruitment – identification prior to entry
		Context dependent	Fit – identification only after certain socialization period

Note. Dries (2013, p. 278)

Dries (2013) arrived at a conclusion similar to that of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013),

Sonnenberg et al. (2014), and Cappelli and Keller (2014), indicating that either an inclusive or exclusive approach can be taken to talent, and that talent can be viewed as an object or a subject. Dries (2013) further notes that talent could be either innate or acquired, as postulated by Meyers et al. (2013), Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), Sonnenberg et al. (2014), and Silzer and Davis (2010).

Dries (2013) introduced two concepts to the talent debate that were not mentioned by the other authors. The first is the tension between talent being seen as an input or an output. Dries (2013) explains that the debate centres around whether talent depends on ability or motivation. This refers to whether talent is seen as an input, and thus effort, motivation, ambition, and career focus, or output, that is, performance, achievement, and results. Companies focus on an output orientation rather than an input orientation (Dries, 2013). Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) contend that talent can be described using a fairly simple formula: Talent = Competence x Commitment x Contribution. Dries (2013) arrives at a similar conclusion, arguing that input in the form of commitment is important.

The last aspect Dries (2013) identifies as contributing to our understanding of talent is the tension between talent being deemed transferable or context-dependent. Dries (2013) points out that the view of talent being transferable is the popular view in recruitment and selection. In other words, a high-performing individual should be able to perform equally well in a new environment. Dries (2013), however, notes that research shows that this is not always the case, and that there have been reports of situations where high-performing individuals did not perform at the same levels in the new environment, taking some time to reach their prior levels of performance.

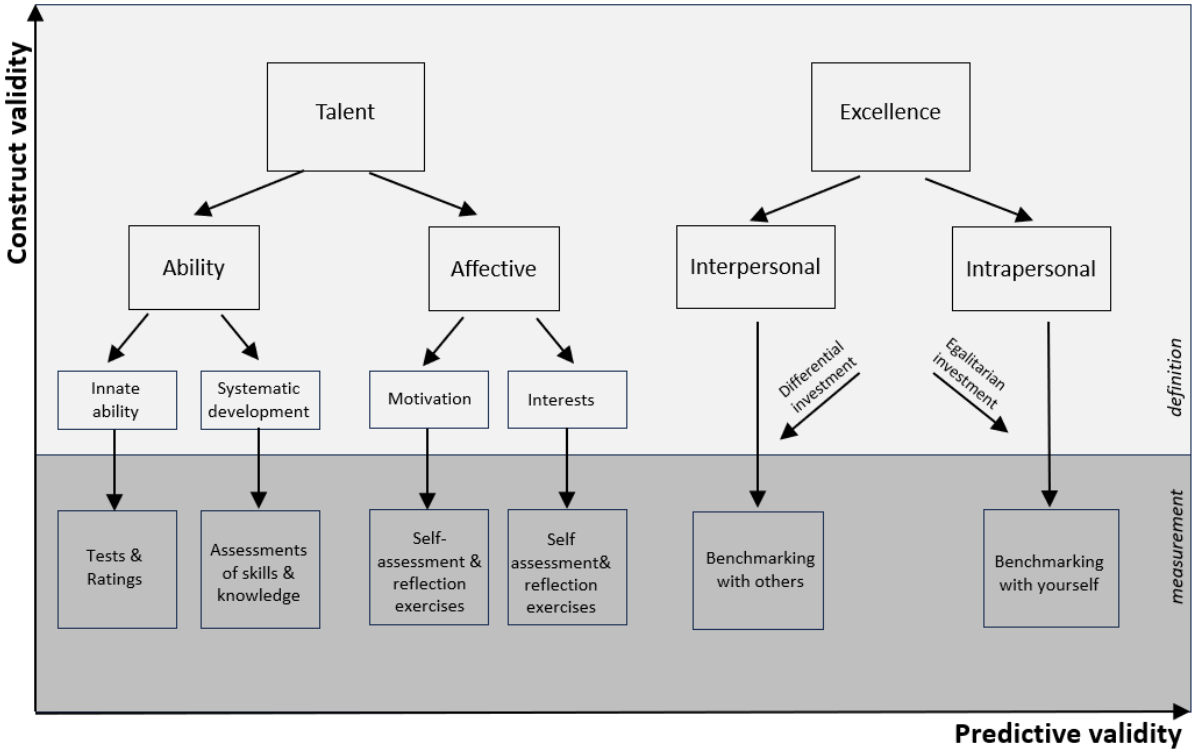
Boudreau (2013) commented on the article by Dries (2013), noting that the article offers a provocative expression of how disparate the conceptions of talent can be, even amongst closely related disciplines. Boudreau (2013) agrees with most of what Dries (2013) proposes but cautions that the conclusion that Dries (2013) draws, namely that talent management research and practice require a common definition to move forward, may not be accurate. Boudreau (2013) is of the opinion that a complete and shared talent definition is not necessary to improve talent management practices and systems in organisations, or to forward research in this field. Boudreau (2013) proposes a review of talent management applications by redefining talent within the context of specific business fields, e.g., supply chain management and inventory analysis. Although Boudreau (2013) believes that Dries's (2013) call for a uniform definition is not necessary to continue research and improve talent management

practices, it seems logical that organisational strategy to execute or improve a process cannot be effectively crafted if that process or construct is not adequately defined.

Nijs et al. (2014) offered a summary of the research on talent, extracted from 161 articles in four literature streams, namely HRM literature, giftedness literature, vocational psychology literature, and positive psychology literature, to assist in the development of a stronger theoretical basis for talent management through a definition of talent. Nijs et al. (2014) noted that, although they cannot claim that the articles included in the study represent all views on the topic, they are confident that it is at least representative of what has been published within the talent domain. Based on their scrutiny of the articles, Nijs et al. (2014) developed a conceptual model, shown in Figure 3.5, that depicts the definition, operationalisation, and measurement of talent.

Figure 3.5

Conceptual Model for Defining, Operationalising, and Measuring Talent



Note. Nijs et al. (2014, p. 182)

Nijs et al. (2014) elaborated on the concept of talent by explaining that talent is a term used to describe individuals' methodically cultivated natural abilities that are used in pursuits they

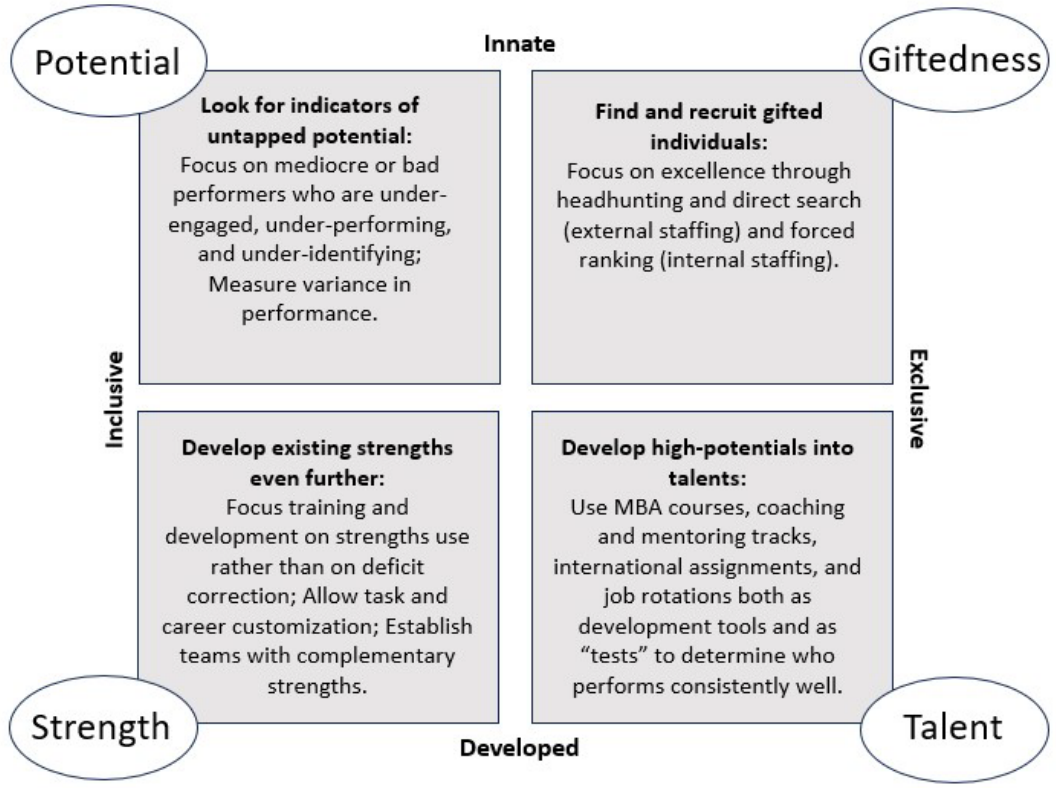
enjoy, believe are significant, and to which they wish to devote their energy. It makes it possible for people to succeed in one or more areas of human functioning by consistently achieving their personal best performance or outperforming people of the same age or experience (Nijs et al., 2014). This explanation of talent correlates with other researchers' descriptions. The conceptualisation of talent by Nijs et al. (2014) focuses on the subject level as described by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013); Nijs et al. (2014) do not postulate a definition for talent on an object level.

Dries (2022) explains the difference between talent as a construct and talent as a phenomenon. Not conceding the opinion about a uniform definition of talent, Dries (2022) proposes four constructs to replace 'talent' that will enable the research community to structure and categorise their collective work: giftedness, talent, potential, and strength.

Dries (2022) presents a graphic that incorporates and explains the relationships between the tensions identified in talent management in an earlier article (Dries, 2013). The opinions that practitioners or organisations hold regarding talent will influence their talent philosophies. Dries's (2022) representation of talent constructs and how they relate to talent philosophies are shown in Figure 3.6

Figure 3.6

Talent Constructs Relating to Talent Philosophies



Note.

Dries (2022, p. 28)

The identification of constructs found in the talent research space and the relation of the constructs to talent philosophies establishes a framework within which talent management research might move to a more mature research field (Dries, 2022).

Dries (2022) is of the opinion that, for organisations to effectively manage talent, talent has to be defined on group-, organisational, and individual levels, as all these levels are relevant in the operationalisation of talent in the workplace. Nijs et al. (2014) explain that their conceptualisation of talent has a definite ability element but that talent should also be developed. Companies accept that there is an innate part to talent (De La Calle-Duran et al., 2021). Nijs et al. (2014) propose a balanced view, slightly different from that proposed by other researchers (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Meyers et al., 2013; Sonnenberg et al., 2014; Tansley, 2011). Nijs et al. (2014) postulated that the ability component of talent is innate and that it has to be (or has been) systematically developed (Nijs et al., 2014). Nijs et al. (2014) add a motivational element to their description of talent by pointing out that there is an affective

part of talent that is critical if an individual is to be successful. Talented employees should be motivated to complete the task set before them, and should also be interested in it (Nijs et al., 2014). Dries (2022) categorises the different views on talent into a single framework, to establish definitions of each concept within each area of application.

Defining talent within an organisation is imperative for strategy implementation. How companies understand talent and talent management is influenced by culture and economic climate. Thus, further scrutiny of the definition of talent and high-potential talent is needed.

3.2.3 Defining talent

It has been established that limited consensus exists regarding the definition of talent and talent management (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). A definition of talent was coined by Gagné (2000, p. 67): “talent is the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills) and knowledge in at least one field of human activity, to a degree that places an individual within the top 10% of age peers who are (or who have been) active in that field”.

Nijs et al. (2014, p. 182) proposed the following definition:

> *Talent refers to systematically developed innate abilities of individuals that are deployed in activities they like, find important and in which they want to invest energy. It enables individuals to perform excellently in one or more domains of human functioning, operationalised as performing better than other individuals of the same age or experience, or as performing consistently at their personal best.*

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) listed the definitions of talent found in literature, shown in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7

Definitions of Talent

Authors	Definition
Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001)	"Talent should refer to a person's recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behaviour that can be productively applied." (p. 21)
Michaels et al. (2001)	"(…) the sum of a person's abilities—his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow." (p. xii)
Lewis and Heckman (2006)	"(…) is essentially a euphemism for 'people'" (p. 141)
Tansley, Harris, Stewart, and Turner (2006)	"Talent can be considered as a complex amalgam of employees' skills, knowledge, cognitive ability and potential. Employees' values and work preferences are also of major importance." (p. 2)
Stahl et al. (2007)	"a select group of employees– those that rank at the top in terms of capability and performance– rather than the entire workforce". (p. 4)
Tansley et al. (2007)	"Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential." (p. 8)
Ulrich (2007)	"Talent equals competence [able to do the job] times commitment [willing to do the job] times contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their work]" (p. 3)
Cheese, Thomas, and Craig (2008)	"Essentially, talent means the total of all the experience, knowledge, skills, and behaviours that a person has and brings to work." (p. 46)
Silzer and Dowell (2010)	"(…) in some cases, 'the talent' might refer to the entire employee population." (p. 14)
Silzer and Dowell (2010)	"In groups talent can refer to a pool of employees who are exceptional in their skills and abilities either in a specific technical area (such as software graphics skills) or a competency (such a consumer marketing talent), or a more general area (such as general managers or high-potential talent). And in some cases, "the talent" might refer to the entire employee population." (pp. 13–14)
Silzer and Dowell (2010)	"An individual's skills and abilities (talents) and what the person is capable of doing or contributing to the organization." (p. 14)

Note. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013, p. 291)

It is accepted that companies will probably want to develop their own definitions of talent that fit with their strategies, organisational culture, and the industries in which they operate (Meyers et al., 2013).

McDonnell et al. (2023) identifies four categories of talent as an object:

- Talent as an innate ability: Inborn or 'gifted' special skills that result in exceptional performance and are frequently apparent at a young age;
- Talent as mastery: Emphasises the necessity of gradually and methodically building competencies, and valuing an organisation's learning and development capacity to support the development of competencies.
- Talent as commitment: A strong desire to stay in one's position and organisation, as well as tenacity and discretionary effort in one's work. If commitment is present, turnover is negatively predicted.
- Talent as fit: This category considers the context of an employee's work, with a

particular emphasis on the right person, at the right time, in the right place. It also considers the alignment of the operating environment, strategic priorities, and organisational culture.

As with all theories and definitions, best practice and research dictate some elements that should be included in definitions, irrespective of the industry or organisational culture. These elements of the definitions are dictated by the theory that underpins practice in organisations. The following table summarises the areas of consideration with regard to talent as identified in the reviewed literature.

Table 3.1

Summary of Talent Perspectives

Areas of consideration	**Author(s)**
Talent on an organisation-, group-, or individual level; can be seen as an object/subject	Dries (2013); Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013); Pinto dos Reis et al. (2021); Silzer & Dowell (2010); Sonnenberg et al. (2014); Tansley (2011); Thunnissen et al. (2013)
Talent is innate or acquired	Dries (2022); Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013); Kaliannan et al. (2023); Meyers et al. (2013); McDonnell et al. (2023); Nijs et al. (2014); Silzer & Dowell (2009); Tansley (2011)
Talent can include leadership talent and professional talent	Chien & Chen (2007); Collings & Mellahi (2009); Tansley (2011)
Talent has a motivation/commitment component	Dries (2013); Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013); Nijs et al. (2014); Thunnissen et al. (2013); Ulrich & Smallwood (2012)
Talent must fit with organisational strategy	Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011); Collings & Mellahi (2009); Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013); Kaliannan et al. (2023); King (2015); McDonnell (2011); McDonnell et al. (2023); Schuler & Tarique (2012)
Talent may include high performance and high-potential individuals	Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011); Dries (2013); Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013); McDonnell et al. (2023); Sonnenberg et al. (2014)

Note. Researcher's own compilation

The above elements should be considered in establishing a working definition of talent, which

should be empirically tested. Taking into consideration the literature discussed above, the following working definitions of talent on different levels are proposed:

Talent

An innate ability of an individual that has been developed to the extent that it empowers individuals to outperform their peers, should they be motivated to do so.

This definition takes an object approach to talent (see McDonnell et al., 2023). In this definition, talent is seen as a combination of an innate quality and some development or growth. Talent enables individuals to perform better or to be more successful than the people against whom they are measured but the individual must be motivated and committed to using the talent.

A distinction should be made between talent that is appropriate for current positions or organisational levels and talent that will be useful in future positions or on a higher hierarchical level. Talent can thus take the form of high-value talent or high-potential talent. The difference is a focus on the current or future state of the organisation. High-value employees are a grouping of employees who exhibit talents that are valuable to the organisation at the current time. The following definition is postulated for these employees:

High-value talent

Employees who possess innate abilities that have been developed to such an extent that they empower individuals to perform better than their peers in their current positions, should they be motivated to do so.

Talent on the group- or organisational level should, however, also be defined, and the following definition is proposed:

Organisational talent

Employees in the organisation with the ability to perform to a level that realises the organisation's strategy.

This definition clearly supports an inclusive strategy, where all employees are seen as talent. Some scholars may argue that using talent to denote all employees in the organisation adds no value, as the term *talent* then becomes merely a synonym for *employees*. It is, however, the opinion of the researcher that using the word *talent* rather than *employees* denotes a

specific focus on the ability of all employees to perform at the expected levels. When all employees are referred to as 'talent', a talent culture can be established in the organisation. Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) hold the view that all employees should be considered talent, evident from their formula that defines talent:
talent = competence x commitment x contribution.

Some employees' talents may be more relevant to the organisation in a specific phase (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). Employees who exhibit more potential to fulfil future roles may be deemed high-potential talent, and these are the employees in which an organisation would want to invest, as they have the potential to secure the organisation's future.

The purpose of defining individual talent and group talent is to create context within which high-potential talent can be positioned and developed. The next section takes a closer look at high-potential talent.

3.3 HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

Robinson et al. (2009) explain that a significant but often misinterpreted question in talent management is how to effectively recognise employees with high potential. The identification and development of high-potential employees has been recognised by both practitioners and researchers as one of the major challenges faced by the HR function in the twenty-first century (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). Academic literature on high-potential talent and the identification thereof, however, remains scarce (Rotolo et al., 2018). Industrial and organisational psychologists (I-O psychologists) have been researching tools and processes of individual assessment for years but it is only somewhat recently that identifying high-potential talent emerged as a unique classification in talent management (Rotolo et al., 2018). Chamorro-Premuzic and Bhaduri (2017) write that few topics have sparked more intense debate in talent management than the concept of potential.

This section starts with an overview of the factors that are enticing organisations to identify and develop high-potential talent. Companies apparently want to identify and develop high-potential talent even though there seems to be limited justification for this practice from the perspective of research literature. The section continues with an overview of what high potential is and the various contentious views held by practitioners and researchers regarding high potential. As a background to developing a definition of high-potential talent, the processes of identifying high potentials is discussed, and the perceived characteristics of high-

potential employees are noted. This section concludes with definitions of high potential from literature and the working definition for the present study.

3.3.1 Motivation for developing high-potential talent

The complex and challenging business world in which organisations must function today is forcing organisations to rethink their HR processes in order to establish and maintain a competitive advantage (McDonnell, 2011). This is especially true with regard to the identification and development of high-potential employees who are extremely valuable resources in the fight for business survival (Church & Silzer, 2014; Dries & Pepermans, 2012; McDonnell, 2011; Rebeťák & Farkašová, 2015). High-potential employees are instrumental in ensuring a competitive advantage, and are considered the foundation of companies' strategies to grow from within (Kelly, 2013). It is thus important that organisations determine which roles will have the greatest strategic impact, and then develop and distribute resources accordingly (McDonnell, 2011).

Inclusive and exclusive approaches to talent management were discussed in detail in previous sections, and it was noted that, regardless of which approach companies subscribe to, there seems to be increased external pressure, such as changing workforce demographics, the impact of globalisation and technology, and increased scrutiny from investors and boards of directors, to allocate at least some portion of the budget to the development of employees who are deemed important players in the company's future (Church & Silzer, 2014). "Talent management initiatives, such as strategic development and high-potential programs, relate to sustained competitive advantage and financial performance (Bush & Skiba, 2016, p. 103). Other factors motivating the need to identify and develop high-potential employees are the expected increase in demand for future leaders, the need to retain talented employees, and the pressure to increase organisational performance (Kelly, 2013).

Most companies are concerned about their ability to grow leaders fit for their future (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2014). According to the Corporate Executive Board, high-potential employees are twice as valuable to an organisation as others (CEB, 2014). They are 75% more likely to succeed in senior positions (Downs, 2015), and are usually in the top 5% of employees in an organisation (Zenger & Folkman, 2017), although Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) estimate that 10% to 15% of employees can be high-potential talent. The demand for high-potential talent increased due to growth and competitive pressure (Kelly, 2013), and companies are instituting formal Hi-Po programmes in order to help employees prepare for leadership roles (Zenger &

Folkman, 2017).

Apart from external economic pressure to identify and develop high-potential talent, employees are pressuring organisations to implement practices that accelerate their development. There are definite advantages to being a member of an elite talented group, and most employees want to be part of such a group, as employees who are identified as high potential normally have access to better and more varied career opportunities (Church & Conger, 2018).

3.3.2 Defining high-potential talent

Silzer and Davis (2010) note that the definitions of high potential in literature are highly context-specific, as the question in identifying such potential is: 'Potential for what?' It is thus vital that companies clearly define what they mean when they refer to high potential, as this determines the course and structure for the identification and development of high potential. The literature offers definitions of high-potential talent, shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Definitions of High-potential Talent

Author(s)	Definition
Church & Conger (2018, p. 18)	"A highly valuable contributor with a great deal of stretch capability within the organisation".
Chamorro-Premuzic & Bhaduri (2017, p. 4)	"Key drivers of organisational performance that will consistently generate exorbitant output levels that influence the success or failure of their organisations".
Kelly (2013, p. 3)	"High-potential employees are those who have been identified as having potential, ability and aspirations to hold successive leadership positions in an organisation".
Cappelli & Keller (2014, p. 314)	"Employees found in talent pools who have the potential to fill strategic jobs in the future".
Derr et al. (1988, p. 275)	"Employees with ultimate potential to move up the hierarchy into increasingly important management positions and eventually reach those positions close to the top".
Dries & Pepermans	"High-potentials then are those core employees whose skills are high in value and

Author(s)	Definition
(2012, p. 342)	in uniqueness from the point of views of their particular employers."
Tansley (2011, p. 272)	"Someone with the ability, engagement and aspiration to rise to and succeed in more senior, more critical positions".
Campbell & Smith (2010, p. 5)	"High-potential talent is an employee who is assessed as having the ability, organisational commitment, and motivation to rise to and succeed in more senior positions in the organisation."
Cerdin & Brewster (2014, p. 250)	"Those employees whom the organisation invests in as part of its succession-planning program".
Dries & Pepermans (2008, p. 94)	"High-potentials are part of an elite workforce segment expected to advance upwardly within the organization."
Rebeťák & Farkašová (2015, p. 867)	"those employees who are identified as having excellent skills for filling the key positions in the company in the future".
Kotlyar & Karakowsky (2014, p. 1035)	"those employees viewed as possessing the talents and abilities necessary for advancement in the organisation".
Church & Rotolo (2013, p. 205)	"someone below the VP [vice president] level who is seen as having the capacity to progress into leadership positions two or more levels beyond their current role".
Dries et al. (2012, p. 272)	"as a rule, this applies to high-performing employees with high leadership potential (usually called high-potentials)".
Church & Conger (2018, p. 18)	"your capacity to step into a role that is two levels or more above the one you currently hold".

Note. Researcher's own compilation

Based on the literature and the definitions that were scrutinised, the following definition of high-potential talent is proposed for the purposes of the present study.

High-potential talent

High-potential talent refers to those employees who possess innate abilities that have been developed to such a level that the individuals, should they be motivated to do so, can potentially perform better than their peers in future key positions, to ensure the organisation's

strategic success.

This definition does not reflect only leadership positions but allows for any strategic position to be a possible role for a high-potential employee. It also does not necessarily imply upward movement in an organisation's hierarchy but rather denotes key positions that the organisation has identified.

3.3.3 Description of high-potential talent

Dries and Pepermans (2012) indicate that the process of identifying and developing high-potential employees is commonly referred to as 'talent management.' Cappelli and Keller (2014) also seem to use a definition for talent management that includes clear differentiation and identification of a select group of employees: "Talent management is the process through which organisations meet their needs for talent in strategic jobs and talent as those individuals who currently or have the potential to differentially contribute to firm performance by occupying strategic jobs" (p. 307). There is, however, a dearth of discussions on descriptions of high potential in available literature.

From the articles on high-potential talent that were scrutinised, there seem to be two schools of thought in terminological preference with regard to *talent* and *high-potential talent*. Researchers and practitioners following an exclusive approach to talent management prefer the term *talent* in referring to a select group of employees. Proponents of the term *high-potential talent* also refer to such a select pool of employees, and refer to other employees in the organisation as *talent* (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012), or make no mention of how these employees relate to the rest of the workforce or other talent in the organisation (Church & Silzer, 2014). Although limited literature is available on what constitutes high-potential talent (Church & Silzer, 2014), two themes allude to the nature of high potential discussed below.

3.3.3.1 High performance is not high potential

High potential should not be confused with high performance (Jooss et al., 2021). An important aspect to address in identifying high-potential employees is to clearly define the differences between high performers and high potentials, and to define the process and data used to identify who in the organisation will be deemed high-potential talent (Downs, 2015; Rebeťák & Farkašová, 2015). Sometimes the label of high potential is given to employees based on past or current performance (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Literature is, however, clear that

the ability to perform in a current position does not mean that an employee has high potential (Church & Silzer, 2014; Downs, 2015; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Rebeťák & Farkašová, 2015).

Downs (2015) proposed distinguishing high-potential employees from high-performance employees by thinking in terms of depth and breadth. High-performance employees tend to be experts in their specific functional areas. They excel at performing in their jobs, and enjoy the admiration of colleagues due to their wealth of knowledge about their area of specialisation. High-potential employees, in contrast, typically tend to be promotable outside their current work environment, and are able to deal well with ambiguity and complexity (Downs, 2015). Dries and Pepermans (2008) also propose this approach when they draw a distinction between high-flyers and high potentials. They explain that *high potential* denotes promise—something that is yet to be achieved. Successful managers who are performing on an above-average level in their current positions are referred to as *high-flyers* (Dries & Pepermans, 2008).

Downs (2015) further notes that employees who perform at an above-average level in their current job do not necessarily have potential to perform at two or three levels higher in the hierarchy, and thus cannot automatically be deemed of high potential. “High performers are not always high-potentials, though most high-potential employees tend to be high performers” (Downs, 2015, p.350). Potential is however associated with possibilities for the future rather than with current performance (Church & Silzer, 2014). Being recognised as a high-potential is by no means a reward for past performance but rather a focus on future potential to contribute to the organisation (Rebeťák & Farkašová, 2015).

3.3.3.2 High potential does not only mean leadership potential

A number of authors refer specifically to leadership potential when they discuss the identification and management of high-potential talent (e.g., Church & Conger, 2018; Church & Silzer, 2014; Downs, 2015; Dries & Pepermans, 2008; Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2014; Tansley, 2011; Zenger & Folkman, 2017). However, some authors argue that high potential should also refer to potential to perform in higher-level positions of a technical or specialist nature. In a study conducted by Chen-Fu Chien and Li-Fei Chen (2007), two industrial engineers from Taiwan, on the recruitment and retention of high-potential talent for semiconductor manufacturing, stated that “recruiting and retaining high-potential specialists is crucial for semiconductor companies to maintain competitive advantage in a knowledge-based

economy" (Chien & Chen, 2007, p. 528).

Not all employees are motivated to climb the corporate ladder as managers but that does not mean that these employees, so-called specialists, should not be deemed high potentials. When considering talent management as the identification of specific strategic positions and the high potentials to fill those positions (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Scullion et al., 2010) in engineering and mining companies, employing high-potential employees in specialist positions is of cardinal importance to companies' competitive advantage (Stahl et al., 2012; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). Although talent management and the development of high-potential employees tend to focus on leadership positions only, there may be functional and technical roles that are closely tied to an organisation's business strategy (McDonnell, 2011).

3.3.4 Process of identification of high-potential talent

Despite several I-O developed tools being available, most companies have mixed results in selecting hi-potential talent, and some even report poor results in their Hi-Po programmes (Chamorro-Premuzic & Bhaduri, 2017; Downs, 2015; Kelly, 2013; Rotolo et al., 2018). It has been reported that approximately 40% of designated high potentials do not do well in the future (Chamorro-Premuzic & Bhaduri, 2017). Furthermore, according to Cappelli and Keller (2014), more than 40% of HiPo assessments end in failure, and more than 40% of employees in HiPo programmes do not belong there (Zenger & Folkman, 2017).

Despite these dismal performance figures, organisations still invest in efforts to accurately identify high-potential employees (Campbell & Smith, 2010; Church & Rotolo, 2013). Several factors impact the success or failure of a HiPo development programme and the management of high-potential employees (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2014; Rebeťák & Farkašová, 2015) but investigating all these factors falls outside of the scope of the present study. The process of identification of high-potential candidates and the assessment tools available, however, warrant further investigation.

Although research has examined HiPo practices in organisation, much of it has been limited to describing existing practices rather than providing analytical or explanatory insight (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2014; Silzer & Church, 2010). "Unfortunately practice in this area has far outpaced theory and research" (Church & Conger, 2018, p. 17). Silzer and Church (2010) initiated a survey of 20 major companies in the USA to better understand organisational practices in identifying and managing high-potential talent, and found that organisations follow

varied approaches. Some organisations have structured, formal processes, while others follow semi-formal or informal processes. Church and Rotolo (2013) note that, while the identification of high-potential talent is widely believed to be extremely important, not all companies follow formal identification processes, and some rely on informal, ungrounded methods. Although diversification of assessment methods occurred in recent years, the more common assessment measures can be classified as cognitive ability tests, personality tests, multisource feedback (such as 360º feedback), assessment centres, and simulations (Church & Rotolo, 2013). Most companies who value talent management and do well in this area extensively and consistently use multi-method assessment processes for identifying both high-potential talent and potential senior executives (Church & Conger, 2018; Church & Rotolo, 2013).

Campbell and Smith (2010) surveyed 199 leaders attending the Centre for Creative Leadership's development programmes and reported that 65% of the participants in the study indicated that their organisations had formal processes for identifying high-potential employees (Campbell & Smith, 2010). Campbell and Smith (2010) found a positive relationship between being formally identified as a high-potential employee and emotional commitment to the organisation. Employees who were not formally identified reported a much higher likelihood of leaving the organisation for better opportunities. Thus, "[t]he level of transparency and formality in identifying high-potential talent has an impact on retention" (Campbell & Smith, 2010, p. 17).

A process of identification of high-potential employees was suggested by Derr et al. (1988), who report on the practices of 33 USA corporations regarding the management of high-potential employees. Derr et al. (1988) stated that the three most clearly defined phases of managing high potential consist of identifying candidates (Stage 1), developing them (Stage 2), and advancing the employees through the organisational hierarchy via succession planning (Stage 3) (Derr et al., 1988). Derr et al. (1988), in their summary of the selection processes followed by these USA firms, reported the following practices and characteristics:

- a large pool of potential (but no more than 20% of the company's managerial or professional workforce);
- 19% are recruited from select schools;
- high-performance individuals, based on three to eight years' experience in the company;

- capable of advancing two to three levels beyond their current position;
- taught general management skills in generic programmes; and
- focussing on functional managers, product champions, idea innovators.

Silzer and Church (2010) identified typical steps followed by organisations in the identification of high-potential talent:

1. Agreement on categories and definitions of high potential;
2. Solicitation;
3. Nomination;
4. Assessment;
5. Review and acceptance; and
6. Development.

Kelly (2013) suggests that organisations incorporate the following steps in their HiPo programmes:

Step 1: Plan for the future;

Step 2: Define high-potential criteria;

Step 3: Make high-potential criteria measurable; and

Step 4: Identify potential candidates.

Silzer and Davis (2010) suggest that the following considerations are important in assessing potential:

- Use a clear definition of potential;
- Include rich data;
- Conduct professional assessments;
- Match the individual to the definition and criteria of potential;
- Identify development needs and experience gaps; and
- Assess potential over time.

Cappelli and Keller (2014) note that, traditionally, assessments of potential relied mainly on the measurement of personality and intelligence quotient (IQ). More recently, employers have reverted to the use of the nine-box (nine-block) grid made popular by General Electric, where supervisors and senior managers plot employees' on a grid according to their potential and work performance (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Church & Silzer, 2014; Robinson et al., 2009). Tansley (2011) explains that the box matrix is a common feature in companies, as the system links potential with performance. While not the only tool employed, the nine-box grid is also widely used in South Africa to inform succession planning. The definition of and what constitutes high potential is, however, not clear, and most companies use their own definitions or those provided by consultants. Cappelli and Keller (2014) posit that, due to the lack of a definition of potential in organisations and academic literature, there is no reason to accept the validity of the nine-box grid, despite its widespread use. Robinson et al. (2009) are more accepting of the use of the nine-box grid but believes it should be revised as most organisations would clearly benefit from having a more rigorous framework for making these vital decisions (Robinson et al., 2009).

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (3013) posit that the practice of identifying or selecting high-potential employees is, by nature, exclusive. Some researchers critique this practice, arguing that the secret identification of participants by the organisation is elitist, and that all employees who want to pursue their career with passion should be allowed to participate in HiPo programmes (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Lacey & Groves, 2014). Transparency of the high-potential identification process and communication of high-potential status is a contentious issue.

3.3.4.1 Communication of high-potential status

Research indicates that current communication practices may create information asymmetry, where organisations run the risk of achieving the opposite of the goals they had for their HiPo programmes by negatively impacting the psychological contract between the organisation and high-potential employees (Dries & De Gieter, 2013; Jooss & Krebs, 2024). Derr et al. (1988) reported that most of the participants in their study indicated an aversion to the public identity of a high-potential employee. Several reasons were noted for this stance, including concerns about possible legal repercussions if an employee were to be removed from the list at a later stage, as well as changes in the management of these employees (Derr et al., 1988). Although most of the participants reported that they would want to keep their status a secret, some admitted that it would be difficult, as their status could be deduced from their assignments and job placements.

Transparency of high-potential identification and status is also valued (Kelly, 2013; Ready et al., 2010). Ready et al. (2010) reported that the percentage of companies that communicated the high-potential status of certain employees rose from 70% to 85% in the previous decade. Campbell and Smith (2010) found that 91% of the participants reporting on the high potential identification practices in their organisations thought that high-potential employees had knowledge of their status, even though 37% of the companies followed informal processes of identification. In some programmes, even the selected employees are not informed of their status. However, most employees learn about their status as a high-potential or a non-high-potential, regardless of the level of transparency and formality of the HiPo management programme. Irrespective of whether their status is formally shared with other employees, it is important that the process of identification be clearly communicated (Rebeťák & Farkašová, 2015). There seems to be no clear route in communicating high-potential status to the selected employees and the rest of the organisation (Downs, 2015). Downs (2015) notes that this should be a judgement call, made in line with the organisation's culture and leadership team.

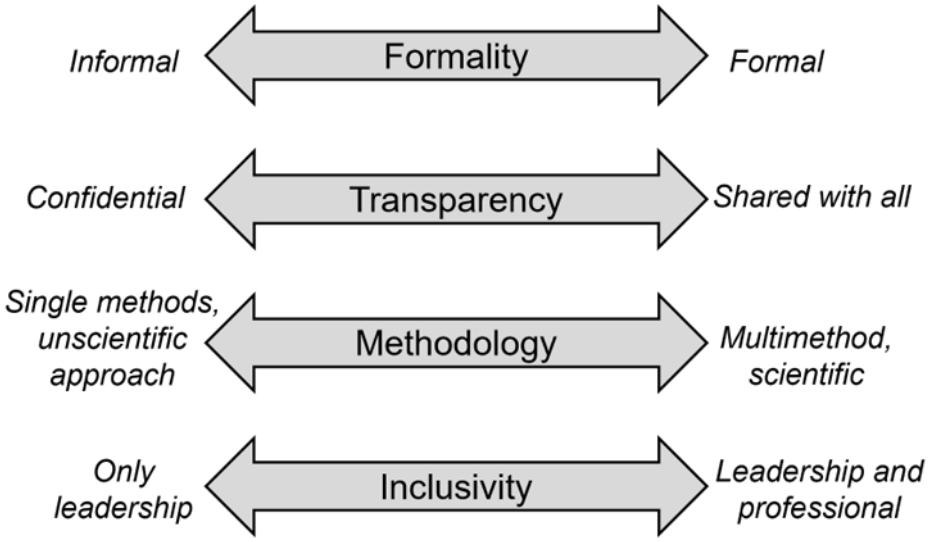
Regarding the processes to be followed in identifying high-potentials, literature suggests that companies should be clear on at least four elements. Companies should define where they position themselves in terms of formality, transparency, methodology, and inclusivity. Each of these elements can be measured on continuums indicating the:

- the level of formality of the identification process;
- the level of transparency of the identification process;
- the level of integration of identification tools applied (the multimethod approach seems to be suggested); and
- the level of inclusivity of the process.

The considerations are illustrated in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8

Aspects to be Considered in Developing a High-potential Identification Process



Note. Researcher's own

The above model is an attempt at a theoretical description of the aspects that should be considered when organisations craft their high-potential employee identification strategies. Various techniques are used to identify high-potential talent. These techniques, discussed in the subsequent section, take the above elements into consideration.

3.3.5 Assessment techniques to identify high-potential talent

Various techniques are available to assess the performance of employees on the abovementioned indicators of potential, as well as characteristics of high-potential employees. Silzer and Davis (2010) provide a summary of best-practice techniques for identifying potential, listed in Table 3.3. It should be noted that the article of Silzer and Davis (2010) does not specifically focus on high-potential talent but on potential in general. Silzer and Davis (2010) consistently stress the importance of organisations deciding what type of potential they are assessing. The tools listed by Silzer and Davis (2010) can thus also be useful in the identification of high-potential talent.

Table 3.3

Assessment Techniques Used to Identify Potential

	Tests and inventories	Interviews	Multi-rater feedback surveys	Immediate manager evaluations	Special rating scales	Behaviour samples	Performance measures
Foundational							
Cognitive	X	0		0	X	X	
Personality	X	X		0	X	X	0
Growth							
Learning	X	X	0	X	X	X	0
Motivation	X	X	X	X	X	0	0
Career							
Leadership		X	X	X	X	X	X
Performance		X		X	X		X
Knowledge	X	X	0	X	X	X	X

Note. Silzer & Davis (2010, p.394); X – most useful assessment techniques; 0 – secondary assessment techniques

Limited information is available on what methodologies or assessment techniques organisations prefer in measuring potential.

3.3.6 Aspects that hinder the identification of high-potential talent

Zenger and Folkman (2017) investigated three companies regarding their HiPo programmes and the performance of high potentials participating in these programmes. They noted that the HiPo employees in the companies that they investigated included below-average and under-achieving employees. Upon further investigation, they found that employees were being allowed into the HiPo programmes based on four characteristics that may not in all cases truly indicate high potential. It would thus seem that, in some instances, organisations think they have identified high potential but their understanding of what constitutes high potential is incorrect. These characteristics, as described by Zenger and Folkman (2017), include the following:

- Technical and professional expertise

Zenger and Folkman (2017) argue that the most successful engineers, scientists, and accountants are the employees who are noticed and valued. It is then easier for these employees to be accepted into HiPo development programmes, even though the employees do not necessarily have potential to perform in a leadership role or on a level higher.

- Taking initiative and delivering results

  Zenger and Folkman (2017) report that the respondents in their study consistently noted that a focus on delivering and driving results were very important. However, Zenger and Folkman (2017) caution that proficiency in a technical field does not guarantee success in a leadership role (Zenger & Folkman, 2017).

- Consistently honouring commitments

  Respondents in the study conducted by Zenger and Folkman (2017) reported that it was imperative that employees deliver on their commitments and promises. Again, exhibiting a drive to achieve results does not guarantee potential for performance at a higher organisational level (Zenger & Folkman, 2017).

- Fitting into the culture of the organisation

  Zenger and Folkman (2017) reported that underperforming high potentials, in many instances, exhibit a trait that is highly valued by the organisation but is not necessarily a high-potential indicator.

Managers and executives easily fall into the trap of assuming that employees who exhibit the qualities described by Zenger and Folkman (2017) possess high potential to perform in leadership positions in the future. Dweck (2006) refers to the dogmatic mindset that some managers might have about potential; they regard potential as an attribute that one either has or does not have. These managers evaluate employees based on their own perceptions of what constitutes potential, and do not think that potential can be developed. They also often confuse potential with attributes. This links with what Zenger and Folkman (2017) found regarding set attributes that do not equate to an employee having the potential to perform on a higher level.

Chamorro-Premuzic and Bhaduri (2017) believe that high-potential identification processes may be influenced negatively by organisational politics that underpin six identification practices:

- The politics of intuition refers to organisations depending on direct managers and executives to make judgements about employees' potential. Most organisations rely on leaders' subjective evaluations of employees, and limited objective measures are used.
- The politics of self-interest refers to the tendency of managers to be more interested in their own careers when making recommendations regarding their subordinates' high-potential status. It is seldom that managers will support subordinates' nomination at a cost to their own careers.
- The politics of avoidance refers to managers nominating employees to take part in HiPo programmes to avoid conflict or uncomfortable situations.
- The politics of favouritism refers to the practice of managers choosing familiar candidates for HiPo programmes, based largely on irregular information.
- The politics of ageism refers to the age of high-potential candidates influencing their nomination for programmes.
- The politics of gender refers to the unfortunate situation where women are still deemed less competent than men, and thus being less likely to be nominated.

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

The concepts of talent and high-potential talent are intertwined and used interchangeably in literature. In all the literature surveyed for this study, only one article describes the distinction between talent and high-potential talent. Silzer and Davis (2010) explain that talent is different from high-potential talent or high-potentials, because 'talent' usually refers to knowledge, skills, and abilities that are already visible and proven, whereas 'potential' refers to the capacity to develop such knowledge, skills and abilities in the future.

Each construct was investigated separately in this chapter. In conducting this literature review, it was found that there exists ambiguity in the terminologies used in research, as noted by Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen (2017). Some researchers use the term *talent* (e.g., McDonnell, 2011; Thunnissen & Van Arensbergen, 2017), while others prefer the term *high-potential talent* (e.g., Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). In essence, these

researchers are all addressing the same phenomenon, namely the management of certain employees who seem to be more valuable to the organisation than others. Scullion and Collings (2011, p.) explain that “Talent management involves the identification, development, appraisal, deployment, and retention of high-performing and high-potential employees.”

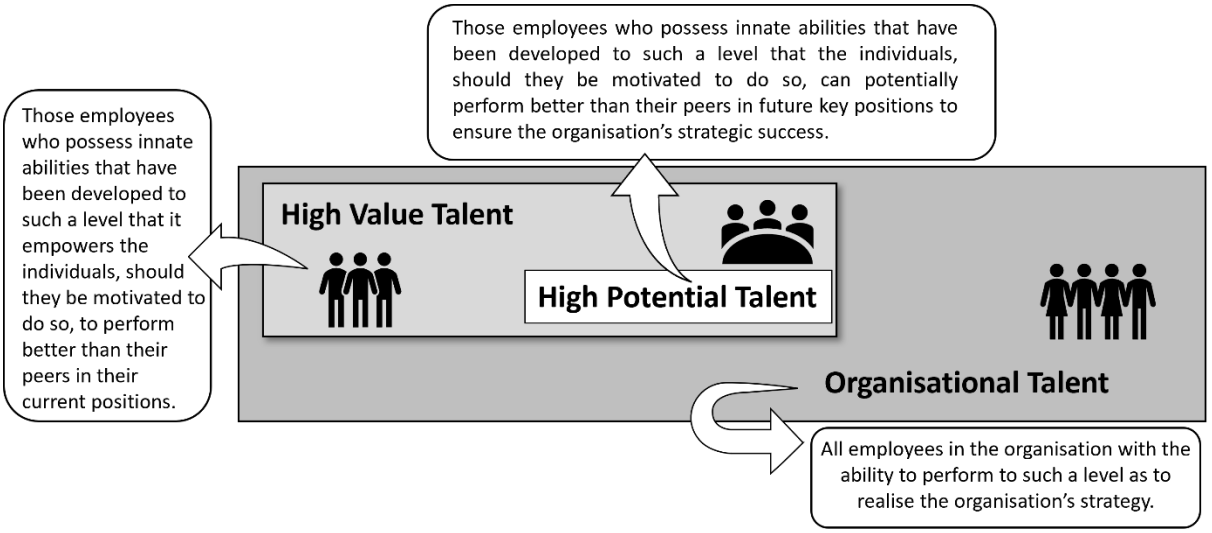
Most authors on the topic of talent management and high-potential talent are proponents of an exclusive approach (e.g., Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016). “The inclusive approach to TM [talent management] is definitely not often adopted” (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016, p. 45). The terms *talent* and *high-potential talent* are thus used within an exclusive talent management context to refer to the same group of employees. Proponents of the term *high-potential talent* use it to refer to unique employees grouped together, often in a talent pool (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Fulmer et al., 2009; Silzer & Church, 2010; Silzer & Davis, 2010; Silzer & Dowell, 2010), mainly as part of an organisation’s succession planning initiative (Cerdin & Brewster, 2014). Limited reference is made by these authors to other employees in the organisation and their talent management needs.

Some authors refer to talent but, being proponents of an exclusive approach, the term *talent*, in this case, refers to only a select few employees who are deemed to possess certain qualities that qualify them as talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017; McDonnell, 2011). An inclusive approach to talent management is seldom adopted (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016), and, as such, limited literature is available on what terminology (talent or high-potential talent) should be used within this context. Organisational leaders often approach talent management as if it applies only to a small number of elite employees. However, Boudreau (2013) avers that there is no reason why all the employees in an organisation should not benefit from the positive effects of focused talent management.

In reflecting on the definitions of high-value talent, organisational talent, and high-potential talent proposed in this chapter, it is clear that it would be advantageous for an organisation to define all three within the specific organisational context. A graphical representation of how the terminologies fit within the context of a typical organisation is provided in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9

Talent Terminologies Relevant to Organisations



A model used by organisations to identify high-potential talent would have to incorporate all the aspects discussed in this study. The next section discusses existing models for identifying talent.

3.5 MODELS FOR IDENTIFYING HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

Empirical research on models for the identification of high-potential talent is minimal. Some authors suggest processes to be followed to identify high-potential talent (e.g., Kelly, 2013; Silzer & Church, 2009; Silzer & Davis, 2010), while others focused on the tools and assessments, including the nine-box grid, IQ tests, performance assessment, potential assessment, and competency assessment (e.g., De Haro et al., 2023; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 3013; Kabalina & Osipova, 2022; Lacey & Groves, 2014). Kabalina and Osipova (2022) identified the use of tests and inventories, interviews, multi-rater feedback surveys, immediate-manager evaluations, special rating scales, behaviour samples, performance measures, and various other methodologies to identify high-potential talent. These tools and tests were developed by business consultants, HR practitioners, and I-O consulting firms, with no proof of sound development practices, probably in an effort to protect their intellectual property and, thus, their competitive advantage.

The present researcher found numerous models to identify high potential on practitioners' websites and in consultant documentation. These models focus on competencies, leadership potential, and performance indicators. The Society for Human Resource Management, SHL

Consultants, the Corporate Leadership Council, the Association for Talent Development, Thomas International, Hogan Assessments, the Human Capital Institute, and Hay Group are examples of organisations that propose processes for identifying high-potential talent. The academic grounding of the models and proposed processes, methods, and tools are not publicly available, and can thus not be independently validated. It would, therefore, serve no purpose to discuss these models and suggested processes here. Suffice to say that literature on academically tested models or frameworks to identify high-potential talent is extremely limited. Furthering research and developing a model for the identification of high-potential talent is thus crucial. The first step in developing such a model in the present study was the identification of constructs described in literature that indicate or predict high-potential talent status.

3.6 CONSTRUCTS THAT INDICATE OR PREDICT HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

Once organisations decide how they want to approach the identification of their high-potential employees, several aspects could be considered to indicate or predict high-potential status. An overview of the literature describing various indicators of high-potential is provided in the next section.

3.6.1 Indicators of high-potential talent

Various authors propose indicators that could be evaluated to show high-potential talent (e.g., De Haro et al., 2023; De La Calle-Duran et al., 2021; Derr et al.,1988; Downs, 2015; Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Jooss et al., 2021; Kabalina & Osipova, 2022; Kelly, 2013; Kotlyar, 2018; Silzer & Church, 2010). Downs (2015) refers to various tools, such as performance appraisals, organisational talent reviews, individual development plans, career plans, and feedback from managers and colleagues that can be used in identifying high-potential talent. Silzer and Church (2010) also list several factors that they propose can be used in identifying high-potential talent. They list the factors in order of frequency from the most frequently used to the least used:

- leadership competencies;
- performance records;
- career drive or motivation to advance;
- mobility;

- adaptability or flexibility;
- specific experience;
- learning ability;
- commitment to company;
- personality variables;
- specific abilities; and
- career-growth potential for future requirements.

Silzer and Church (2010) note that, based on the feedback from organisations they surveyed, the most widely used identification factors are leadership competencies, past performance, and career aspirations. Other frequently considered factors are adaptability, commitment, specific experience, mobility, and learning ability. Kelly (2013) indicates that the UNC Kenan-Flagler Leadership Survey found commonalities amongst companies with regard to what they look for in identifying high-potential candidates. Most companies look for future performance potential, strategic thinking ability, culture fit, and commitment to the organisation (Kelly, 2013).

It has been established that high performance does not equate to high potential. However, almost all the authors reviewed state that current performance should be considered when assessing potential (e.g., Jooss & Krebs, 2024). Juhdi et al. (2012) posit that excellent performance is, in fact, the best indicator of potential, and that excellent performance should be a prerequisite when considering an employee's high-potential status. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) note that the high-potential designation is frequently assigned based on historical performance. Dries and Pepermans (2012) also indicate that high performance may be a precondition to being identified as high-potential talent; however, their research showed that learning agility is an overriding criterion in separating high-potentials from non-high-potentials. High-potential employees have excellent performance appraisals and strive to go above and beyond what is expected of them (Middleton, 2011). They are also learning-oriented, displaying strong learning agility, and exhibit leadership potential (Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Juhdi et al., 2012).

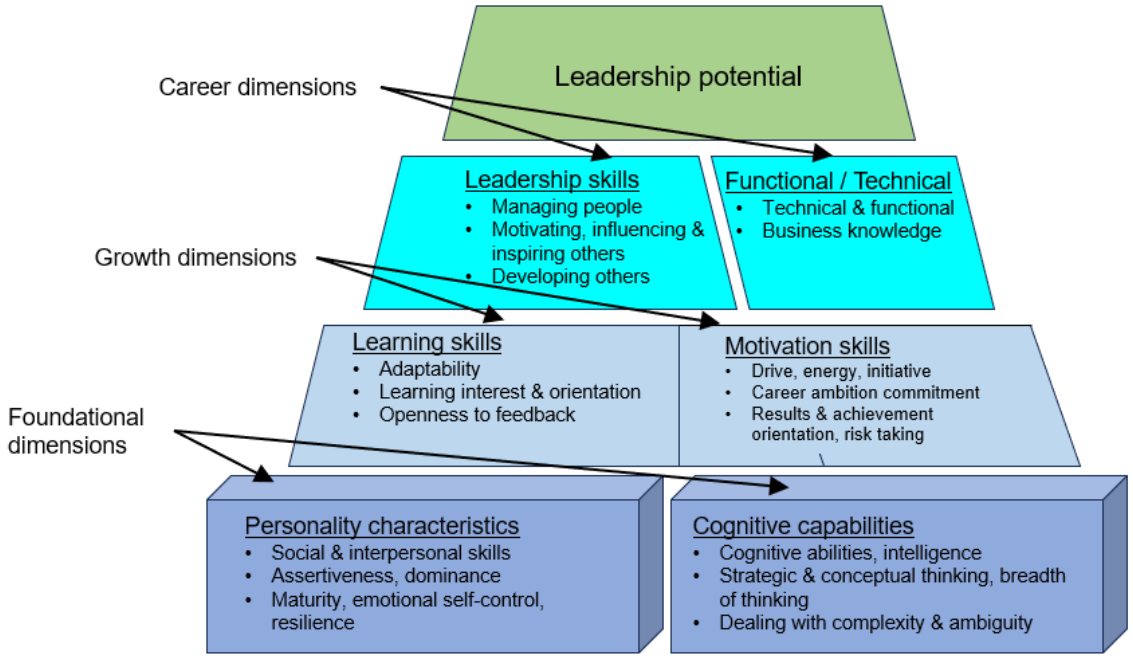
Learning agility is considered important in the identification of high-potential employees (Buckner & Marberry, 2018; Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Jooss & Krebs, 2024). Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) are of the opinion that learning agility is more important than current performance in determining potential to perform in the future. They regard the ability to learn

from experience as the defining indicator of what is considered high-potential (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000).

A comprehensive framework for identification of high potentials was developed by Church and Silzer (2014); however, it pertains specifically to managerial or leadership potential in organisations. It has been established that in some instances it is important to also identify high-potential specialists to ensure competitive advantage. An overview of Silzer and Church's (2014) Leadership Potential Blueprint is relevant for this discussion. Silzer and Church, in 2009 published a comprehensive, integrated, and somewhat prescriptive approach to understanding leadership potential, specifically developed to help practitioners and organisational leaders understand and make critical decisions about high-potential identification and leadership development. Church and Silzer (2014) refer to the terms *talent* and *potential* from the perspectives of exclusive talent management and leadership. In their original article, when Silzer and Church (2009) refer to *talent*, they mean a pool of select employees with potential to be developed to a strategic leadership level. Their article refers to potential only in the context of leadership. In their later article, Church and Silzer (2014) introduce the Leadership Potential Blueprint with the purpose of assisting organisations in the identification of high-potential talent, which shows a refining of constructs and terminology. Church and Silzer (2014, p. 52) describe the Blueprint as follows: "[I]t outlines an overall framework of three types of dimensions and six building blocks that provide a framework of the skills and abilities that make up leadership potential in total." The framework is depicted in Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10

Leadership Potential Blueprint



Note. Church & Silzer (2014, p. 53)

As can be seen in the depiction, the framework of Church and Silzer (2014) comprises three types of dimensions with two building blocks each. The building blocks complement one another but can also function independently. Individual measures or indicators of high-potential talent have also been emphasised by other authors (listed in Table 3.4); however, the information available in literature is mostly based on survey data, and is, thus, a reflection of practice. The indicators and their relative worth have not been validated through research.

Table 3.4

Indicators of High-potential Talent

Indicator	Author(s)
Current job performance	Derr et al. (1988); Dries & Pepermans (2008); Dries & Pepermans (2012); Downs (2015); Jooss & Krebs (2024); Juhdi et al. (2012); Middleton (2011)
Learning agility	Buckner & Marberry (2018); Dries & Pepermans (2012); Juhdi et al. (2012); Lombardo & Eichinger (2000); Middleton (2011); Silzer & Church (2010)
Intelligence/Cognitive capabilities	Lombardo & Eichinger (2000); Church & Silzer (2014)

Indicator	Author(s)
Aspiration or engagement/Motivational skills/Career-driven	Church & Silzer (2014); Jooss & Krebs (2024); Juhdi et al. (2012); Silzer & Church (2010)
Alignment with company values	Middleton (2011)
Positive evaluation on the nine-box grid, management evaluation/organisational talent reviews	Downs (2015); Jooss & Krebs (2024); Robinson et al. (2009)
Technical or functional skills	Church & Silzer (2014); Silzer & Church (2010)
Leadership skills	Church & Silzer (2014); Downs (2015)
Mobility	Jooss & Krebs (2024); Silzer & Church (2010)
Experience	Silzer & Church (2010)
Commitment/loyalty to the company	Jooss & Krebs (2024); Kelly (2013); Silzer & Church (2010)
Culture fit	Jooss et al. (2021); Kelly (2013)

Note. Researcher's own compilation

This section provided an overview of the indicators or measurements that might indicate high-potential talent. Some indicators, however, reflect aspects that may also be classified as characteristics, and literature is not clear about the difference. There is thus an overlap between this section and the next, where some researchers refer to an indicator but list characteristics, and vice versa. Nevertheless, for the sake of being thorough, it is important to list as many indicators and characteristics as possible to provide the best possible theoretical base for this study. Characteristics of high-potential employees are discussed in the next section. The characteristics also allude to the building blocks of definitions found in literature, which are discussed later in this chapter.

3.6.2 Characteristics or attributes of high-potential employees

Although the definition of high potential may vary greatly from company to company, literature is limited because few studies have quantitively measured the dimensions of employee potential (Juhdi et al., 2012). This chapter investigated the concept of high potential and the processes used to identify high-potential talent. One of the indicators of high-potential talent that is mentioned by various researchers is personality traits or characteristics. A significant number of articles on high-potential talent specifically refer to and list characteristics or personality traits of high potentials, which traits are reviewed in this section.

Dries and Pepermans (2008) list the following characteristics of high-potentials:

- Innately more talented than others, mostly in terms of leadership and interpersonal skills;
- Proactive, and take the initiative in their career;
- Possess leadership skills; and
- Interpersonal skills.

Tansley (2011) list characteristics most frequently associated with talented individuals:

- High levels of expertise;
- Leadership behaviours;
- Creativity; and
- Initiative stemming from a ‘can do’ attitude based on self-belief.

Ready et al. (2010) identify four ‘x’ factors of high-potential employees:

- A drive to excel;
- A catalytic learning ability;
- An enterprising spirit; and
- Dynamic sensors.

Chamorro-Premuzic et al. (2017) identify three general markers of high-potential through a review of literature, namely ability, social skills, and drive, described as follows:

- Ability: cognitive ability, strategic thinking, vision and imagination, entrepreneurial mindset, creativity, and an aptitude for systems thinking;
- Social skills: the ability to manage oneself and the ability to manage others. High-potential employees are able to establish and maintain strong working relationships with colleagues; and
- Drive: High-potential employees have the will and motivation to work hard, achieve, and do whatever it takes to get the job done. Other terms that might reflect drive is a high work ethic and ambition.

Tansley (2011) refers to an organisation that produced a guide to identifying high potential. The characteristics referred to in the guide correspond with the definition of high potential provided by Tansley (2011), and the guide is a model developed by the Corporate Leadership

Council, also referred to in the study of Silzer and Church (2010). Silzer and Church (2010) explain that the model has three core components, which are also listed by Tansley (2011). Tansley (2011) states that employees exhibiting high-potential talent have the following commonalities:

- Ability: A combination of the innate characteristics and learned skills that employees utilise to carry out their day-to-day work, including innate characteristics, mental or cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, and learned skills;
- Aspiration: The extent to which an employee wants or desires prestige and recognition in the organisation, advancement and influence, financial rewards, work–life balance, and overall job satisfaction;
- Engagement:
    - Emotional commitment: the extent to which employees value, enjoy, and believe in their organisation;
    - Rational commitment: the extent to which employees believe that staying with their organisations is in their interest;
    - Discretionary effort: employees' willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty;
    - Intent to stay: employees' desire to stay with the organisation; and
    - Passion and motivation.

Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) provide a synthesis of characteristics of high potentials:

- Ambition: a personal drive to succeed and willingness to pay the price of success;
- Ability: the ability to learn from past mistakes;
- Interpersonal skills: open to new ideas and able to adapt to new situations;
- Agility: able to learn and grow, which includes mental agility, people agility, change agility, and results agility; and
- Achievement orientation: a pattern of achievement.

The reviewed characteristics of high-potential employees are summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Characteristics of High-potential Talent

Characteristic/Indicator	Dries & Pepermans (2007)	Tansley (2011)	Ready et al. (2010)	Chamorro et al. (2017)	Silzer & Church (2010)	Ulrich & Smallwood (2012)
More talented than others/high level of expertise	X	X				
Proactiveness and career initiative taking/enterprising spirit, can-do attitude/drive to excel/achievement orientation	X	X	X	X		X
Aspirations/ambition					x	x
Leadership skills and behaviours	X	X				
Interpersonal skills/dynamic sensors/social skills	X		X	X		X
Creativity		X				
Learning agility			X			X
Cognitive ability/strategic thinking				X	X	
Emotional intelligence					X	
Engagement					X	

Note. Researcher's own compilation

The constructs and characteristics identified in this section provided a basis from which a model for the identification of high-potential talent for South African organisations was developed. The theoretical framework for the model is discussed in the next section.

3.7 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

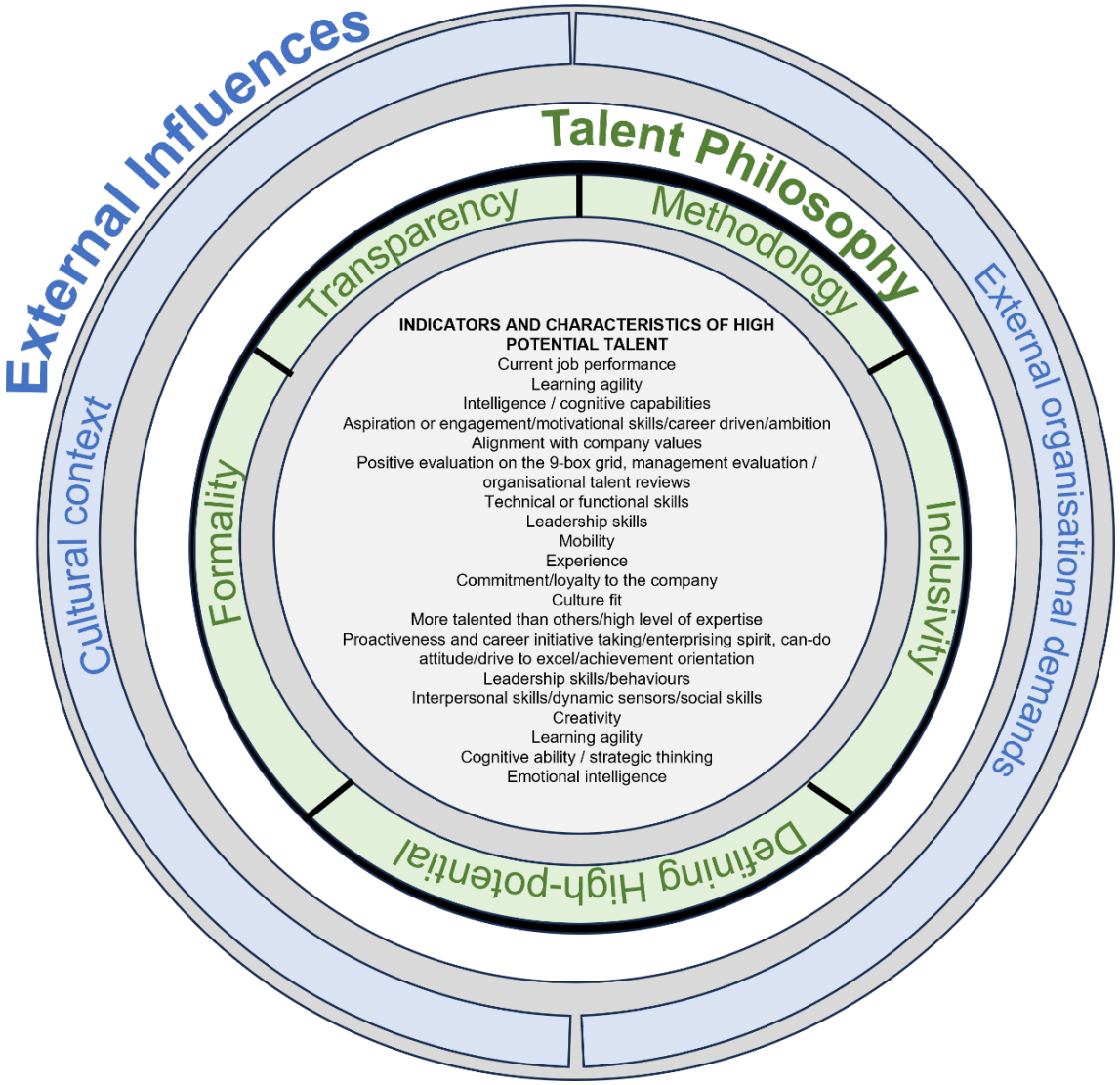
From the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, it was clear that a framework to identify high-potential talent would have different contextual layers. One layer is cultural context. If an organisation wants to identify high-potential talent in an effective manner, cognisance should be taken of whether the organisation is rooted in a collective or individualistic society. Other external organisational demands, such as industry trends, the competitive landscape, and

regulatory requirements, should be noted. Regulatory demands with regard to employment equity and quotas may have an impact on how organisations choose to identify and develop high-potential talent.

The next layer involves aspects internal to the organisation. Here, the talent philosophy of an organisation is an important consideration. An organisation should make clear how it defines talent (Church, 2015), organisational talent, high-value talent, and high-potential talent. The organisation should also be transparent regarding the identification of high-potential talent, the methodology used to identify such talent, whether high-potential talent is limited to leaders or also includes professional talent, and the formality of the identification process. These decisions should be underpinned by the organisation's values, and may be influenced by the HR development philosophy or strategy. The theoretical framework is depicted in Figure 3.11.

Figure 3.11

Theoretical Framework for the Identification of High-potential Talent (a)



External and internal high-potential indicators were identified in literature and included in the framework. The framework indicates that organisations have to consider the external environment when developing a talent management strategy. Considering the cultural context is imperative, as it reflects the value that employees may place on inclusivity. Organisational performance demands influence the future requirements placed on organisations and, thus, employees and leadership. A talent philosophy should be crafted that describes what the organisation perceives as talent and high-potential talent. Formality, transparency, methodology, and inclusivity should be considered in developing a strategy to identify high-potential talent.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an in-depth look at two important constructs, namely talent and high-potential talent. Both were investigated and discussed at length in order to establish a theoretical base for the empirical phase of the present study. Although it is clear that there is a lack of agreement on terminology in the talent management field, an attempt was made to better understand the views taken in extant literature. The knowledge gleaned from the literature review, reported on in Chapters 2 and 3, informed the development of the interview questions for the semi-structured interviews conducted in the qualitative phase of this study. The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of the methodology followed in conducting the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was followed in the execution of this study, commencing with the research paradigms underpinning each of the two phases (qualitative and quantitative) of the study. Subsequent sections detail the research approach for each phase, together with the research design and the methods applied in selecting participants, collecting data, and analysing the data. The chapter concludes with the strategies employed to ensure rigour and the ethical principles that were upheld throughout the study.

4.2 OVERALL AIM OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of the present study was to develop a model for the identification of high-potential talent. In academic literature, the words *model* and *framework* are often used interchangeably. However, for the purpose of this study, a distinction is made between the two. Nilsen (2015) explains that a model is a deliberate simplification of a phenomenon or a specific aspect of it, often used to describe and guide processes such as translating research into practice. Tomhave (2005) notes that a model can represent a set of variables and show the relationships between the variables. Cariani (2022) notes that models are specific, often proposing testable relationships that can be empirically validated.

In contrast, a framework is described as a structure or system composed of descriptive categories such as concepts, constructs, or variables and the relationships between them. Frameworks are primarily used to organise and categorise phenomena, and do not provide explanations or have predictive capacity (Nilsen, 2015). Frameworks are conceptual in nature, and are not empirically tested and validated (Salawu et al., 2023). While frameworks are critical for organising thought and guiding research, they are broader, and may not propose testable hypotheses in the same precise manner as models do (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2022).

Based on the above explanations, it is clear that the outcome of this study, the HiPo Model, is a representation of both measured and theoretical elements. Some elements of the HiPo Model were empirically tested, while others were based on the literature review alone. Given the empirically tested components of the HiPo Model, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the term *model* was deemed more appropriate. The elements of the model that were not empirically tested provide an opportunity for further testing and refinement.

As noted in Chapter 1, the present study was situated within a pragmatist philosophical orientation. Pragmatism is an appropriate philosophical orientation for mixed-methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Shan, 2022; Tashakkori et al., 2021; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). It focuses attention on the research problem in social sciences research using pluralistic approaches (Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The next section details the research paradigm underpinning each phase of this two-phased study.

4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Research paradigms reflect the researcher's frames of reference with regard to the nature of reality and how knowledge could be gained on a research problem, including categorisation of observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2020). It provides background against which findings should be interpreted and understood (Denscombe, 2014). Mouton and Marais (1994) explain that paradigms refer to the intellectual climate and variety of beliefs underlying the theories and models that form the context of research. Thus, paradigms are worldviews (Creswell, 2015; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) that define the nature of the world, the individuals in it, as well as the relationships between the world, parts of the world, and the individuals. Creswell (2021) explains that, in planning a research project, researchers should consider the assumptions of their philosophical worldview, as it influences the approach and methodology selected for the study (Creswell, 2021). Clarifying a study's research paradigm is important, as it provides perspective on how the researcher approached the research project, how the research approach and design that was selected, and how data were interpreted (Babbie, 2020; Creswell, 2021; Tashakkori et al., 2021). Four aspects commonly discussed with regard to paradigms are ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Tashakkori et al., 2021).

Ontology reflects social reality, and epistemology reflects the nature of knowledge (Creswell, 2015). Ontology involves the philosophy of reality and tries to answer the question of whether the social world is regarded as something in which people function, or as something that people are in the process of developing (Boeije, 2009; Krauss, 2005). Epistemology is the philosophy of how knowledge is crafted—how we come to know. It is concerned with whether there is one single route to truth or whether diverse methods are needed to grasp the meaning of social experiences (Boeije, 2009; Krauss, 2005). These two dimensions are intertwined; they influence one another and inform the research approach and methodology (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

4.3.1 Phase 1: Qualitative

Phase 1, the qualitative phase, was based in a constructivist paradigm, which holds that reality is subjective and context-dependent, and that knowledge is co-constructed through interpretation. In a constructivist paradigm, social reality is viewed as subjectively constructed based on people's thoughts and actions, and has as aim to understand and interpret social phenomena (Denscombe, 2014; Robson 2011). The aim of this research phase was to gather data on the realities of participants regarding high-potential talent, and to make sense of the various viewpoints. The integration of two paradigms was not merely to enable a combination of approaches and methods but a deliberate strategy to comprehensively address the research problem (see Creswell, 2021; Denscombe, 2017).

4.3.2 Phase 2: Quantitative

Phase 2 of the study was anchored in a postpositivist philosophy, which holds that reality can be measured but can also be understood imperfectly and probabilistically (Carpiano & Daley, 2006). A postpositivist approach was considered more apt than a positivist paradigm for the quantitative phase, as causation was considered more important than establishing universal laws of knowledge. Nevertheless, the researcher has to remain as objective as possible and rely on the empirical data to create knowledge and come to conclusions (Carpiano & Daley, 2006).

4.4 RESEARCH APPROACHES

A mixed-methods research approach was selected for this study, as the study was aimed at both better understanding talent and high-potential talent, as well as the behaviour of high-potential talent. The qualitative phase was aimed at identifying constructs that may indicate high potential, while the quantitative phase measured the constructs in an effort to provide a model for predicting high-potential behaviour.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) define mixed-methods research as "a class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study". It is postulated that mixed-methods research is a third research movement that moves past the paradigm debate by offering a practical alternative to having to choose between either a qualitative or quantitative approach (Dawadi et al., 2021; Feilzer, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori et al., 2021). Leavy (2017) describes mixed-methods research as research that

involves integrating qualitative and quantitative data in a single research project, thereby providing a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the aspects under study.

“Mixing methods has become a popular way of thinking about how to approach research questions in a variety of fields” (Robson, 2011). It has almost become a distinctive approach in its own right, with a number of authors discussing its fundamentals rather than treating it as merely a hybrid qualitative–quantitative approach (e.g., Bryman 2012; Creswell, 2015; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixed methods has emerged as an alternative to the traditional qualitative and quantitative traditions where research could be done only in either the positivist or the constructivist paradigm, respectively (Tashakkori et al., 2021).

Multi-strategy, multi-phased, or mixed-methods research as described by Creswell (2015), Robson (2011), and Tashakkori et al. (2021) differs somewhat from the description provided of multi-method research by Brewer and Hunter (2006). Brewer and Hunter (2006) refer to multi-method research as research conducted using a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approach, where different measures are combined to measure the same subject in order to ensure greater validity of the research findings by means of triangulation (Creswell, 2015; Denscombe, 2017; Mouton & Marais, 1994; Neuman, 2002). Although triangulation could very well be one of the goals of mixing-methods research, the purpose of triangulation is to use multiple methods of data collection with the view to increasing the reliability of observations, and does not link directly to the research question. Thus, while triangulation has assumed particular significance in the field of mixed-method research, based on the understanding that a research question can be better answered if it is studied from more than one perspective (Denscombe, 2017), triangulation is not, in itself, the reason for following a mixed-methods research approach.

According to Denscombe (2017) the mixed methods approach has distinct characteristics that set it apart from a single (qualitative or quantitative) research approach. The researcher has the ability to view the research problem from a variety of perspectives by combining both a qualitative and a quantitative approach in a single project, and is thus able to select additional methods appropriate for addressing the specific research problem (Denscombe, 2017). According to Tashakkori et al. (2021), there are three areas in which mixed-methods research is superior to either a quantitative or a qualitative approach. Mixed-methods research provides the opportunity to integrate the outcomes of both a quantitative and a qualitative phase. It provides the researcher the opportunity to address a range of questions, exploratory, explanatory and confirmatory, in one study. In addition, the researcher is able to address the

research problem from more than one angle and offer a greater variety of viewpoints on the topic under study. The characteristics described by Denscombe (2017) and the advantages of using mixed methods described by Tashakkori et al. (2021) provided the rationale for the selection of a mixed-methods approach, as comprehensively answering the research questions and developing a model required a variety of perspectives. The qualitative empirical phase involved in-depth interviews to identify behaviour constructs associated with high-potential talent. These constructs informed the development of the behaviour-based HiPo Scale, which was tested in the quantitative empirical phase. The linking of the phases ensured that the scale was grounded in empirical insights (see Creswell, 2021).

4.4.1 Phase 1: Qualitative

Qualitative research aims to gain insight into a phenomenon (Forman & Damschroder, 2008). Corbin and Strauss (2014) note that there are many reasons why researchers choose qualitative research, and list the five main reasons:

- To explore the inner experiences of participants;
- To explore how meanings are formed and transformed;
- To explore areas not yet thoroughly researched;
- To discover relevant variables that later could be tested through quantitative methods; and
- To take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the study of a phenomenon.

The last three reasons are particularly relevant to the present study. The purpose of qualitative research, most often conducted within the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm (Ritchie et al., 2013), is to discover information and learn more about a phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Forman & Damschroder, 2008). Robson (2011) notes that such data are generally analysed inductively, with theory-building following inductive logic.

4.4.2 Phase 2: Quantitative

In this phase, the behaviour-based Scale developed from the information gathered Phase 1 was administered to a sample of employees, in order to test the constructs. The data were analysed statistically, specifically structural equation modelling. The relationships between the various constructs were investigated, and constructs with low predictive validity were

eliminated. The remaining constructs were integrated in the final HiPo Model for the Identification of High-potential Talent.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Babbie and Mouton (2001) explain that a research design is a plan or an outline of how the researcher intends to conduct a study. Thus, the research design addresses the planning of a scientific inquiry (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Easterby-Smith et al. (2002, p. 43) note that "research designs are about organizing research activity … in ways that are most likely to achieve the research aims".

The present study followed an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, which is more than simply a matter of combining a qualitative and a quantitative approach. A number of researchers have written on the manner in which mixed methods approaches are combined (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Denscombe, 2017; Harrits, 2011; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Robson, 2011; Tashakkori et al., 2021; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), and various typologies of mixed-methods research have been developed (e.g., Denscombe, 2017; Tashakkori et al., 2021). One of the first researchers to develop specific mixed methods design typologies was Morgan (1998), who identified four basic families of research designs depending on the principal research method and whether the complementary research method occurs as a preliminary or follow-up to the principal research method (Morgan, 1998). Morgan (1998) referred to this as the priority-sequence model in which four cells describe the various mixed-methods designs as determined by the described elements.

Since Morgan's (1988) research, many design possibilities have been suggested by various scholars, and numerous typologies catalogue alternative designs for mixed-methods research (Denscombe, 2017). Guest (2013) indicates that typologies are designed to bring order to complex phenomena for instructive, organisational, and communication purposes. Researchers differ in their opinions of the nature of these typologies. Some researchers, such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), are strong proponents of structured, intricate typologies. Nastasi et al. (2010) identified six kinds of typologies, and note that the ordering of the typologies refers to a number of factors, including complexity of mixing, considerations about the number of research strands (phases), priority of methods and data, and considerations about the integration or synthesis of research approaches (Nastasi et al., 2010). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) distinguish between across-stage mixed-model design and within-stage mixed-model design, resulting in nine

different mixed-method designs. Guest (2013), however, is of the opinion that typologies suggested by these researchers do not provide the desired benefits and cannot adequately capture the complexity of many contemporary issues. Tashakkori et al. (2021) seem to agree with Guest's (2013) notion of strict typologies being obsolete. They argue that, although typologies can provide guidance, they should not be seen as 'menus' from which the correct typology should be chosen. Although a number of typical typologies have been developed, the complexity of mixing qualitative and quantitative research approaches is such that an immeasurable number of mixed-methods studies could be developed (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Tashakkori et al. (2021) nevertheless propose eight criteria that can be distinguished in mixed-methods research typologies, and they explain the typical research questions that the typologies answer.

The typical system that is used in mixed-methods studies to elaborate on and explain the design of the studies was developed by Morse in 1991 (Tashakkori et al., 2021). It follows a conventional approach in which:

- QUAL stands for qualitative data in the form of text or pictures, and the design provides the basis for interpretation of the meaning the data convey;
- QUAN stands for quantitative data in the form of numbers that provide objective measurements of observed events (Creswell, 2015; Denscombe, 2014; Tashakkori et al., 2021).

Denscombe (2017) further explains that following aspects of a sequential mixed-methods design should be explained:

- The sequence of the quantitative and qualitative components;
- The relative importance attached to the components or the importance of the research paradigm; and
- The purpose of linking the components.

The above aspects are also alluded to by numerous researchers (e.g., Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Feilzer, 2010; Guest, 2013; Harrits, 2011; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Leavy, 2017; Maxwell, 2016; Tashakkori et al., 2021).

4.5.1 Choice of typology

The three basic aspects identified by Denscombe (2017) are discussed in further detail to motivate the choice of typology that was identified as the most appropriate for the present study.

4.5.1.1 Sequencing of the design

It is important to describe the sequencing of the research methods or strategies when a research design is based in different research paradigms (Creswell, 2015; Denscombe, 2017). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) refer to this decision as the time-ordering decision, where the researcher has to make a decision regarding the order of the qualitative and quantitative research phases. The sequencing of phases reflects the researcher's convictions about how the combination of methods and strategies are best suited to answering the research questions (Denscombe, 2017). The purpose of the respective qualitative or quantitative research phases determines the sequencing. With regard to sequencing, two types of studies are identified. Sequential studies, where one phase is followed by another, and simultaneous or concurrent studies, where the qualitative and quantitative phases are conducted concurrently (Denscombe, 2017; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Morgan (1998) does not identify concurrent studies, and only distinguishes between complimentary methods, identifying two types of complementary methods, namely preliminary design and follow-up design (Morgan, 1998). Based on the relative importance of the qualitative and quantitative phases of the project, Morgan (1998) suggests that research projects can be classified further into mainly quantitative or qualitative studies. This classification introduces the second aspect as identified by Denscombe (2017), which has an impact on the choice of typology, namely the relative importance of the phases of the study.

4.5.1.2 Relative importance of mixed-method phases

"Research designs that incorporate aspects of both QUAL and QUAN need not necessarily attach equal weight to the two" (Denscombe, 2017, p. 151). The relative importance of the qualitative and quantitative phases is another cardinal element that should be taken into consideration (Creswell, 2015; Denscombe, 2017; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 1998). As indicated above, Morgan (1998) refers to a priority decision that has to be made in addition to the sequencing decision, explaining that a study can either be mainly qualitative or mainly quantitative. The main phase of the study will then either be preceded or followed up

by the complementary phase. Based on the sequencing and priority decisions, Morgan identifies four mixed-method typologies.

Qualitative preliminary	qual → QUANT
Quantitative preliminary	quant → QUAL
Qualitative follow-up	QUANT → qual
Quantitative follow-up	QUAL → quant

Creswell (2015), Denscombe (2017), Robson (2011), and Tashakkori et al. (2021) concur with Morgan (1998) but indicate that it is possible for the qualitative and quantitative phases of a project to also carry equal weight and, thus, have equivalent status in terms of relative importance, indicated as: QUAL → QUANT or QUANT → QUAL, all in capital letters (Tashakkori et al., 2021).

Creswell's (2015) three primary models of mixed-methods research take into consideration that qualitative and quantitative phases can be carried out simultaneously and can be equally important, and show similarities with Morgan's (1998) typologies. The three primary typologies identified by Creswell (2015) are:

- Convergent parallel mixed methods or convergent concurrent design, where quantitative and qualitative data are merged in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem;
- Explanatory sequential mixed methods, where the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyses the results, and then builds on the results by conducting a qualitative study in order to explain the quantitative results in more detail; and
- Exploratory sequential mixed methods, a design in which the researcher first conducts qualitative research by exploring the participants' views, and the data are then analysed, and the information is used to develop a second phase of quantitative research.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) introduces three core mixed-methods designs:

- The convergent design, previously referred to as the 'concurrent' or 'parallel' design, when the researcher wants to combine qualitative findings and quantitative results in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the problem;

- The explanatory sequential design, also referred to as an ‘explanatory design’, where the study has two distinct research phases (QUANT and QUAL). The study starts with the quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase; and
- The exploratory sequential design, also referred to as an ‘exploratory design’, where there are again two distinct phases but the qualitative phase is executed first, followed by the quantitative phase.

Tashakkori et al. (2021) also alluded to the above typologies, listing the following possibilities:

- Conversion mixed-methods designs, in which only one round of data collection is done. The data are then analysed using traditional analysis methods, and the researcher draws initial inferences. The data are then transformed and analysed again, using the other selected analysis method;
- Parallel mixed-methods designs, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously. This design normally includes at least two strands of data that are relatively independent;
- Sequential mixed-methods designs, where two or more strands of data are collected in chronological phases. The findings from the earlier strand are normally used to formulate the design components for the following phase; and
- Hybrid mixed-methods designs, which incorporate a combination of features from two or more of the basic design families.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie’s (2004) mixed-method design matrix is identical to that of Creswell (2015), although the labels of the typologies and quadrants differ. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) indicate that, although their model pays less attention to the paradigm and focuses on time-ordering of the phases, various other ways of viewing mixed-methods research exist. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) specifically refer to the degree of the mixture and also where the mixing should occur. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) indicate that there are many possible ways in which studies could involve mixing because of the potential classification dimension. As a result, they did not attempt the development of further typologies. Other researchers, however, examined this further and developed intricate typologies based on various aspects (e.g., Denscombe, 2017; Guest, 2013; Nastasi et al., 2010; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007). Denscombe (2017) refers to this as the purpose of the linking of the phases.

4.5.1.3 Purpose of the link between phases

Mixed methods research entails more than merely placing qualitative and quantitative components of research side by side in a single study (Denscombe, 2017). The ultimate aim of rigorous mixed-methods research is to link the two research components in a way that facilitates the best results in answering the research question. Denscombe (2017) identifies three possibilities:

- Comparison of findings, where the findings from the components (QUAN and QUAL) are compared as a means of cross-checking the findings, which could be referred to as triangulation;
- Building on findings, where one component builds on or adds to the findings of the other; and
- Developing the findings, where specific parts of the research inform the direction that the research should take or informs the decision regarding parts of the research to be used in subsequent phases. In addition, the findings of a follow-up phase are used to explain the findings of a previous phase.

Based on the more complex integration aspects, several researchers developed more intricate typologies (e.g., Nastasi et al., 2010; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Onwuegbuzie et al. (2007) developed a Mixed Analysis Matrix by taking into account the purpose of conducting mixed analysis and the type of mixed analysis. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) developed eight mixed-method designs based on the three criteria, namely level of mixing, time orientation, and emphasis of approaches. Nastasi et al. (2010) developed an inclusive framework of design typologies, which they refer to synergistic, partnership-based and fully integrated mixed-methods research. The framework was intended to be comprehensive in its representation of variations in mixed-methods research for achieving a range of purposes (Nastasi et al., 2010).

Considering the above aspects, the most appropriate design for this study was an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design. The choice was justified by the need to explore participants' perspectives before developing a measurement instrument. Both empirical phases were equally important, and their interaction was essential to achieving the research objectives comprehensively (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Denscombe, 2017). The two phases had to be conducted in a sequential manner, as the qualitative phase informed the development of the instrument used in the quantitative phase (see Denscombe, 2017). While both phases

were considered equally important to achieving the research objectives, the qualitative phase had to be conducted before the quantitative phase, hence the exploratory nature of this mixed-methods research. To achieve the main aim of this research project, which was to develop a model for the identification of high-potential talent, a scale had to be developed to objectively measure high-potential talent. The HiPo Scale forms part of the proposed model. The present study's research design discussed in greater detail in the next section.

In summary, the data gathered from the in-depth interviews during the qualitative phase of the research were used to inform the constructs to be included in the behaviour-based HiPo Scale, used to gather data in the quantitative phase. Tashakkori et al. (2021) note survey development as an example of a design in the sequential mixed-methods family. The QUAL and QUAN phases were considered equally important (see Tashakkori et al., 2021), and the development of the HiPo Scale spanned both the qualitative and quantitative phases, thus linking the phases.

4.6 METHODS

This section details the methods applied in conducting each research phase, commencing with a description of the study population, followed by the sampling method and the methods of data collection and -analysis.

4.6.1 Phase 1: Qualitative

In Phase 1, qualitative data were collected in the form of words, transcribed to text, from research participants.

4.6.1.1 Population and sampling

Leavy (2017) explains that a study population comprises all units of interest to a researcher, from which the researcher selects a sample for study (Carpenter, 2018). For the qualitative phase of the present study, the population comprised South African experts in the field of talent management who had had previous exposure to talent measurement or talent management. These experts were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, which means that not every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected for participation in the study. In using purposive sampling, also known as 'judgement sampling, participants are selected based on the researcher's judgement of their ability to contribute valid, well-informed perceptions regarding the constructs under investigation (Coyne, 1997;

Robinson, 2014). The sample comprised managers, specialist consultants, and specialist researchers with experience in the field of I-O psychology who met the following inclusion criteria:

- working knowledge of high-potential employee development programmes by either being involved in such programmes or developing and managing such programmes;
- experience working in the human sciences field with specific reference to understanding human behaviour and psychological constructs that may underlie such behaviour;
- at least 10 years' experience in the talent management environment at a middle- or senior management level;
- personal experience of procedures implemented by organisations to identify high-potential talent or classify talent for purposes of succession planning; and
- at least 10 years' experience working in or consulting in the formal business sector.

Sampling procedures in qualitative research have a profound effect on the quality of the research (Coyne, 1997; Robinson, 2014). The number of years that participants had worked directly in the field of talent management, the positions they occupied, and their professional qualifications were considered. Three prospective participants, known to the interviewer, were approached via an email invitation to take part in the study. Thereafter, snowball sampling, also known as 'chain sampling' (Leavy, 2017) was used to expand the sample, whereby the initial participants were requested to refer the researcher to other participants which they felt could make a valuable contribution to the study. A total of nine interviews were conducted, at which point data saturation, the point at which no new information emerges from the iterative process of data collection and analysis (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), had clearly been reached. The sample size of nine participants is appropriate for empirical research aimed at achieving data saturation (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

4.6.1.2 Data collection

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to gather data on the perceptions of participants regarding talent management, high potential, high-potential employees, and related concepts. "An interview is a method of data collection in which one person (the interviewer) asks questions to another person (the interviewee)" (Tashakkori et al., 2021, p. 221). An interview guide (see Appendix C) containing open-ended questions was developed

based on the findings of the literature review. It was considered important to develop a structure for the interviews to ensure that the various objectives of the qualitative phase were achieved. To avoid participant discomfort, the interviews were voice-recorded only, as video footage was considered unnecessary to achieving the objectives of this phase. The voice recordings were transcribed by a professional transcription service, which transcripts were then used in the analysis.

4.6.1.3 Data analysis

The collected data were analysed using content analysis, which is widely used in qualitative research in social sciences (Babbie, 2020; Forman & Damschroder, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) noted that traditional content analysis is often used in research designs aimed at describing phenomena, especially in cases where there is limited existing theory or literature on the subject. Unlike Babbie (2020), who restricts content analysis to written texts, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) support its use in analysing in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe content analysis as focused on the subjective interpretation of the content of text data by systematically coding and identifying themes or patterns. In addition, in employing content analysis, the researcher indicates the frequency or 'groundedness' of codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Content analysis is an iterative analysis process comprising three steps: primary-cycle coding, secondary-cycle coding or axial coding, and synthesising and making meaning from codes in order to derive themes (Leavy, 2017; Roulston, 2014; Tracy, 2019). The process was aided by Atlas.ti during coding, which was also used to create graphic representations of relationships between constructs. Forman and Damschroder (2008) divide data analysis into steps, which were followed in the present study: immersion, reduction, and interpretation. Immersion in the data precedes coding, and requires the researcher to grasp the dataset as a whole before focusing on codes. Reduction involves narrowing raw data to address research questions by organising the data into themes. Interpretation entails evaluating the data to draw conclusions and interpret the findings.

4.6.1.4 Reporting

Boeije (2009) identifies four different writing styles: realistic, confessional, subtle-realistic, and narrative. The qualitative findings are reported in the subtle-realistic style. In using this style, the researcher does not merely report participants' views but also provides interpretations if

deemed necessary. In this process, researchers have to reflect on their own work to ensure they maintain an awareness of quality issues and demonstrate self-criticism. Readers then receive pertinent information, enabling them to assess the research's worth (Boeije, 2009).

Following completion of qualitative data analysis, a scale, the HiPo Scale, was developed to statistically test the high-potential constructs that were identified from the interview data. The process that was followed in developing the HiPo Scale is discussed in the next section. It is important to note that the development of the HiPo Scale spanned both the qualitative and quantitative phases. The development of the scale is discussed here to align the discussion with the order in which the study was executed.

4.6.2 Development of the HiPo Scale

In order to statistically assess the high-potential constructs that emanated from the qualitative data, a scale had to be developed, which addressed RO9 to RO12. It is considered best practice to use both a deductive and an inductive process in developing a scale (Boateng et al., 2018). The procedure used to develop the HiPo Scale was based mainly on the process suggested by DeVellis (2017) but also incorporated more detailed steps recommended by other authors, discussed below. The scale was then operationalised in the quantitative phase of this study. The final scale is presented in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 6.

It is accurate to refer to the questionnaire developed for the present study as a scale. A scale, according to DeVellis (2017), is a measurement tool that contains theoretical variables that may be challenging to identify otherwise. A scale is made up of numerous components that are combined to form a composite score. Scales are aimed at capturing not directly visible latent notions with a series of concrete assertions (Carpenter, 2018).

Various researchers suggest processes to develop surveys, scales, and tests (e.g., Boateng et al., 2018; Carpenter, 2018; DeVellis, 2017; Foxcroft, 2004; Kyriazos & Stalikas, 2018; Morgado et al., 2017). The process proposed by Barry et al. (2011) is presented as a 'scale development decision tree', and includes steps in which the researcher also considers whether there is even a need to develop a new scale, or whether pre-existing measures could be used to achieve the research aim. For the development of a new scale, Barry et al. (2011) suggest the following phases: Phase 1: Outline the constructs; Phase 2: Develop scale design and structure; Phase 3: Generate sample items; and Phase 4: Pre-test the scale.

Phase 4, according to Barry et al. (2011) consists of five stages: Stage 1: Assess content

validity; Stage 2: Assess cognitive and motivational qualities; Stage 3: Conduct a pilot study; Stage 4: Ask, 'Did we do something silly?'; and Stage 5: Evaluate the scale items.

Kyriazos and Stalikas (2018) recommend the following steps in scale development: Step 1: Definition of the instrument's purpose, domain, and structure; Step 2: Determining the response scale format; Step 3: Item generation to construct an item pool; Step 4: Item selection based on expert panel reviews and/or pre-testing to maximise instrument reliability with item analysis; and Step 5: A large-scale validation study to establish construct validity with supplementary item analysis and factor analysis, and to standardise the scale scores.

The present study followed DeVellis's (2017) eight-step process for scale development:

Step 1: Determine clearly what it is that you want to measure;

Step 2: Generate an item pool;

Step 3: Determine the format for measurement;

Step 4: Have the initial item pool reviewed by experts;

Step 5: Consider the inclusion of validation items;

Step 6: Administer the scale to a development sample;

Step 7: Evaluate the items; and

Step 8: Optimise scale length.

The process recommended by DeVellis (2017) was augmented by the very specific steps proposed by Carpenter (2018) to statistically test the scale. Carpenter (2018) suggests a comprehensive 10-step process with a specific focus on the statistical processes that should be incorporated in developing a scale:

Step 1: Research the intended meaning and breadth of the theoretical concept;

Step 2: Determine the sampling procedure;

Step 3: Examine data quality;

Step 4: Verify the factorability of the data;

Step 5: Conduct common factor analysis;

Step 6: Select factor extraction methods;

Step 7: Determine number of factors;

Step 8: Rotate factors;

Step 9: Retain and delete items based on a priori criteria; and

Step 10: Present results.

Boateng et al. (2018) examined the processes involved in developing and validating scales for health-, social, and behavioural research, and offer a summary of practices for scale development in researching complex phenomena. The process follows three phases comprising a total of nine steps:

Phase 1: Item development

Step1: Domain identification and item generation;

Step 2: Content validity—evaluation by experts and evaluation by target population;

Phase 2: Scale development

Step 3: Pre-testing;

Step 4: Sample size and administering;

Step 5: Item reduction and item difficulty index

Step 6: Extraction of factors (factor analysis);

Phase 3: Scale evaluation

Step 7: Test of dimensionality;

Step 8: Test of reliability; and

Step 9: Test of validity.

Morgado et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review of published literature pertaining to scale development, and the findings align with the basic flow of the steps recommended by Barry et al. (2011) and Kyriazos and Stalikas (2018). Morgado et al. (2017) highlight the fact that all the scholars they consulted concurred that the process of developing a scale can be broken down into three steps:

Step 1: Item generation

In this step, the researcher offers theoretical justification for the initial item pool, referred to as ‘item generation.’ Item-generation techniques can be deductive, inductive, or a combination of both. A deductive approach entails the creation of items based on a thorough assessment of

the literature and existing scales. Inductive methods, such as focus groups, interviews, and surveys, produce qualitative data on a construct, which data inform the development of test items.

Step 2: Theoretical analysis

In this step, the researcher evaluates the new scale's content validity to make sure the initial item pool accurately captures the desired construct(s). The researcher asks for second opinions on the operationalised items, to check content validity. The opinions can come from target population judges (potential users of the scale) or expert judges (experts in the development of scales or in the target construct), allowing the researcher to make sure that the hypothesis accurately represents the construct of interest.

Step 3: Psychometric analysis

In the final step, psychometric analysis, the researcher determines the construct validity and reliability of the new scale. Construct validity refers to the items of the instrument indeed measuring what they were intended to measure. This represents the extent to which conclusions about the theoretical constructs that these observations are designed to reveal may be drawn from the observed scores. Exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, convergent, discriminant, predictive/nomological criteria, and internal and external validity can all be used to evaluate construct validity. As a measure of score consistency, reliability is typically determined using the internal consistency, test-retest reliability, split-half, item-total correlation, inter-item reliability, and inter-observer reliability methods.

In the present study, all three steps described by Morgado et al. (2017) were followed. Step 1 was addressed in the qualitative phase, and Steps 2 and 3 were addressed in the quantitative phase. Although the steps described by Morgado et al. (2017) include all the necessary aspects of scale development, there was a need to define each step in more detail to ensure that a comprehensive, rigorous scale development process was followed.

Carpenter’s (2018) process expands on Step 7 of DeVellis’s (2017) steps by providing detailed steps that should be executed in statistically evaluating a scale. DeVellis’s (2017) process was followed in the development of the HiPo Scale but was expanded on by adding the specific steps of statistical analysis proposed by Carpenter (2018). The suggestions made by Boateng et al. (2018) were also incorporated in the final process that was followed in developing the HiPo Scale.

Table 4.1 explains how the processes proposed by Morgado et al. (2017), Boateng et al. (2018), DeVellis (2017), and Carpenter (2018) were integrated into the process followed for present study. In the table, the phases of the project as captured in the research design correlate with the three scale-development processes noted. The final column in the table indicates the process that was followed in the present study.

Table 4.1

Summary of Scale Development Processes

Research Phase	Morgado et al. (2017)	Boateng et al. (2018)	DeVellis (2017)	Carpenter (2018)	Scale development process
Qualitative phase	**Step 1:** Item generation	**Phase 1:** Item development	**Step 1:** Determine clearly what is it that you want to measure	**Step 1:** Research the intended meaning and breadth of the theoretical concept	**Step 1:** Conceptualisation of high-potential talent and related concepts
		Step1: Domain identification Item generation	**Step 2:** Generate an item pool		**Step 2:** Generate HiPo item pool
		Step 2: (content validity) Evaluation by experts	**Step 3:** Determine the format for measurement		**Step 3:** Determine the format for measurement
	Step 2: Theoretical analysis	Evaluation by the target population	**Step 4:** Review of initial item pool experts		**Step 4:** Review of initial item pool by experts
			Step 5: Consider the inclusion of validation items		**Step 5:** Consider inclusion of validation items
Quantitative phase	**Step 3:** Psychometric analysis	**Phase 2:** Scale Development			**Step 6:** Pilot test/review by members of the target population
		Step 3: Pre-testing			
		Step 4: Administration	**Step 6:** Administer items to a development sample	**Step 2:** Determine the sampling procedure	**Step 7:** Administer the scale to a sample

Research Phase	Morgado et al. (2017)	Boateng et al. (2018)	DeVellis (2017)	Carpenter (2018)	Scale development process
		Sample size			
		Step5: Item reduction (inter-item and item-total correlations) Item difficulty index	**Step 7:** Evaluate the items Internal examination of Items' performances Dimensionality Reliability	**Step 3:** Examine data quality. Data cleaning	**Step 8:** Data screening and preparation for analysis
				Step 4: Verify the factorability of the data. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (≤ .05) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy (≥ .60) Inspect correlation matrix (≥ .30)	**Step 9:** Verify the factorability of the data Bartlett's test of sphericity (≤ .05) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (≥ .60) Inspect correlation matrix (≥ .30)
		Step 6: Extraction of factors/ Factor analysis		**Step 5:** Conduct common factor analysis	**Step 10:** Exploratory factor analysis
				Step 6: Select factor extraction methods	
				Step 7: Determine number of factors	

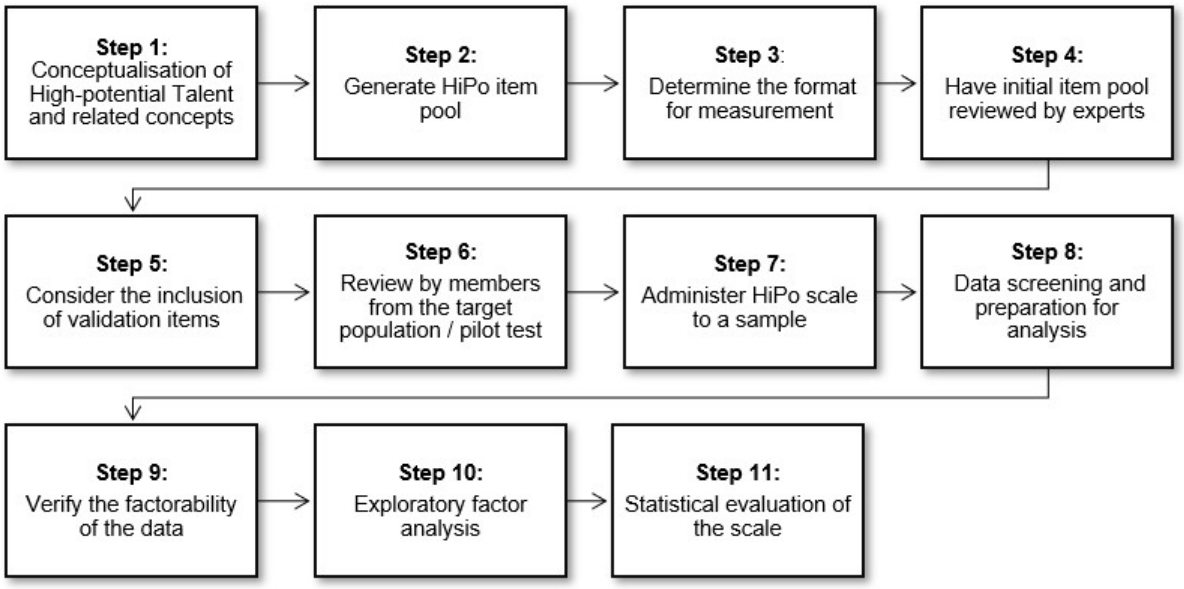
Research Phase	Morgado et al. (2017)	Boateng et al. (2018)	DeVellis (2017)	Carpenter (2018)	Scale development process
				Step 8: Rotate factors	
				Step 9: Retain and delete items based on a priori criteria	
		Phase 3: Scale evaluation	**Step 8:** Optimise scale length		**Step 11:** Statistical scale evaluation Confirmatory factor analysis/ Dimensionality Validity Reliability
		Step 7: Test of dimensionality			
		Step 8: Test of reliability			
		Step 9: Test of validity			
				Step 10: Present results	

Note. Adapted from Morgado et al. (2017), Boateng et al. (2018), DeVellis (2017), and Carpenter (2018)

The accurate and successful development of a scale requires that a strict development process be followed to ensure satisfactory validity and reliability of the scale (DeVellis, 2017). The steps followed in developing the HiPo Scale are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

The HiPo Scale Development Process



HiPo Step 1 was to determine clearly what was to be measured. DeVellis (2017) indicates that a thorough understanding of the theory that underpins a scale is invaluable. “Theory is an aid to clarity” (DeVellis, 2017, p. 105). In the present study, the theory supporting the development of the HiPo Scale was intensely investigated through a thorough literature study. The qualitative data from the interviews also informed the development of the scale items.

HiPo Step 2 was item generation. Various aspects should be taken into consideration when developing an item pool (DeVellis, 2017):

- Choose items that reflect the purpose of the scale;
- It is better to be more inclusive and generate more items than are needed;
- The larger the item pool, the better—at least 50% larger than the final scale but preferably three to four times as many items;
- Items should be unambiguous;
- Exceptionally lengthy items with elaborate wording should be avoided;

- Reading difficulty level of items should be considered;
- Double-barrelled items (items that convey two or more ideas) should be avoided;
- Avoid ambiguity in sentence structure and wording; descriptions of nouns that cause confusion should be avoided; and
- Avoid mixing positively and negatively worded items.

All these guidelines were adhered to in generating the item list.

HiPo Step 3 was to determine the format of measurement. There are several different scales that can be used in measuring constructs, including scales with weightings built into them, such as Thurstone and Guttman scales, and scales with equally weighted items, such as Likert scales, semantic differential scales, visual analogue scales, and binary options (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; DeVellis, 2017; Maree, 2016). After carefully considering all the options, it was decided that a four-point Likert-type scale was most appropriate. When a Likert scale is used, “the items are presented in declarative sentences, followed by response options that indicated varying degrees of agreement with or endorsement of the statement” (DeVellis, 2017, p. 127).

HiPo Step 4 was review of the initial item pool by experts. The initial item list was distributed to 12 experts with specific experience of psychometric instruments and talent management. Seven experts provided detailed feedback. Following the feedback from the experts, the item list was amended to form a scale that could be distributed to an initial small group of respondents that took part in a pilot study (DeVellis, 2017).

HiPo Step 5 was consideration of the inclusion of validation items. DeVellis (2017) explains that it may be valuable to include validation items to help determine the validity of the scale being developed. DeVellis (2017) identifies two types of validation items, i.e., items to measure social desirability and items to measure construct validity. To measure social desirability, items can be included that correlate substantially with social desirability. A brief but useful 10-item social desirability scale developed by Strahan and Gerbasi (1972) is suggested by DeVellis (2017). As the HiPo Scale already consisted of 69 items at this point, and contained items that were very specific to the topic of high-potential behaviour, it was decided not to add to the item pool. The second category of validation items could be used if the construct being measured relates closely to other constructs. It may be feasible to incorporate measures of pertinent constructs at this point, rather than launching a separate validation effort after creating the final scale. The pattern of associations that emerges can be used to support assertions of

validity or, conversely, or may offer hints that the set of items does not behave as expected (DeVellis, 2017). This second type of validation item was also not considered relevant to the development of the HiPo Scale.

HiPo Step 6 entailed review of the scale by members of the target population, i.e. pre-testing. Pilot-testing or pre-testing was conducted to ensure that respondents understood the items and could answer them appropriately. A review of the scale development process of Morgado et al. (2017) showed that this step is seldom conducted in scale development. Morgado et al. (2017) note that future research in scale development should consider not only reviews by experts but also opinions of the target population.

The review of the scale by members of the target population should not be confused with a pilot test. The literature is not consistent in this regard. Some researchers, such as DeVellis (2017) and Kyriazos and Stalikas (2018), refer to the pilot study as the distribution of the scale to the development sample, and do not mention of a review of the scale by the target population or a small-scale pilot test. Literature has, however, shown that having members of the target population review the scale prior to administering the scale forms the basis of determining content validity (Bastos et al., 2010). Prior review of the scale by people in the target group is crucial. Prior to the scale being used, researchers could discover and address any potential issues by using pre-test or pilot-study processes to ascertain respondents' opinions and reactions to each item in the scale (Morgado et al., 2017).

The HiPo Scale, along with a questionnaire for evaluation of the scale, was administered to 15 employees in the participating organisation. Amendments were made to the scale based on the feedback from the review sample. Details of the process, as well as the changes were made to the final scale, are provided in Chapter 5.

The qualitative phase was concluded with the finalisation of the HiPo Scale to the satisfaction of the researcher and in alignment with suggested best-practice guidelines. This represented Steps 1 to 6 of the scale development process. Steps 7 to 11 are discussed in the section describing the quantitative research phase. The quantitative phase, which commenced with administering the survey to a small group of respondents as part of a pre-test, is discussed in the next section.

4.6.3 Phase 2: Quantitative

Phase 2 of this study entailed collecting and analysing quantitative data gathered by means of the HiPo Scale.

4.6.3.1 Population and sampling

The study population in the quantitative phase of the research comprised professional and managerial employees who worked in South African organisations and were part of a talent pool. These individuals were, thus, the unit of analysis, which is the individual or unit about which conclusions are drawn in a study (Hair et al., 2014).

Respondents for the quantitative phase of this study were selected using simple random sampling. When using simple random sampling, every member of the research population has an equal probability of being chosen for participation (Leavy, 2017). The gatekeeper of the organisation sent an invitation via email to 849 employees who were participants in the formal talent management system of the organisation. Embedded in the email invitation was a link to the HiPo Scale. In compliance with the company's information technology protocols, the scale was populated in Google Forms.

The sample size when developing a scale is important, as certain sample size criteria should be met to be able to conduct factor analysis. Insufficient sample sizes result in unstable factors and decreased generalisability (Carpenter, 2018). Most researchers recommend a sample size of at least 300 (Carpenter, 2018) or, alternatively, 10 completed responses for each item (Tompson, 2004). Comrey (1988) suggested a sample size of at least 200 respondents. Scholars, however, differ on the recommended sample size, and there are numerous aspects that should be considered when evaluating sample size (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2024). While these general guidelines may not fully capture the complexity of the relationship between sample size and the validity of factor analytical solutions, they will likely be helpful to investigators in most cases (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). Factor analysis in scale development is often conducted with smaller samples (e.g., 150 subjects). That being said, it is true that factor analysis conclusions are more broadly applicable when larger samples are used (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). The realised sample for this phase of the study was 287 respondents.

4.6.3.2 Data collection

The HiPo Scale was administered to the sample (**HiPo step 7:** Administer scale to a sample), and the data were gathered electronically and summarised on the Google Forms platform. The data were then transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by the gatekeeper, and the Excel spreadsheet was uploaded to SPSS for analysis.

Both biographical and demographic data were gathered from the respondents. Biographical

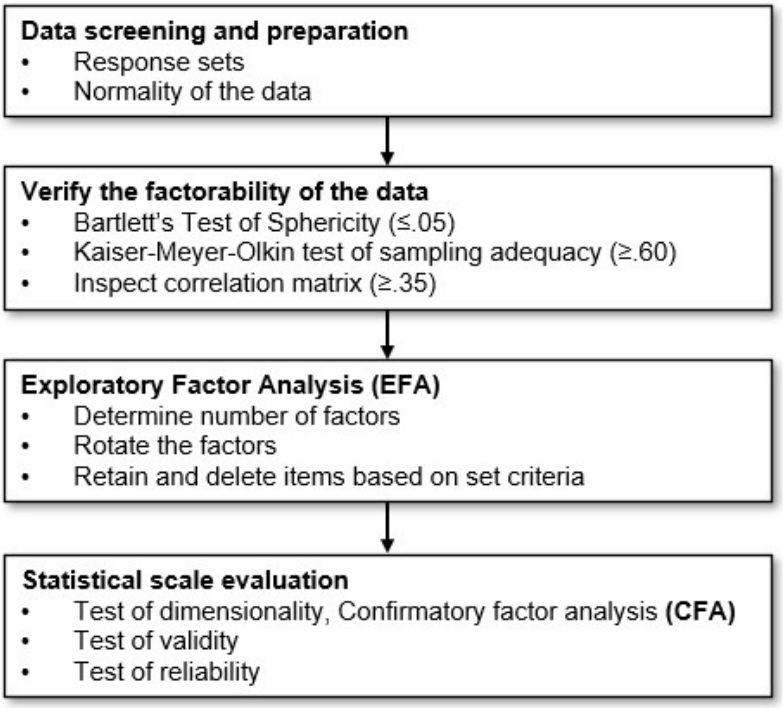
data included age and gender. Initially, the demographic data collection would have included occupation level, organisational level, level of education, potential rating, and performance rating. Following input from the gatekeeper, it was decided not to gather data on the respondents' organisational level. It was thought that respondents may not be able to provide accurate answers. Respondents were not asked to provide information regarding ethnicity, tenure, potential rating, or performance rating; this information was obtained from the organisation, to ensure accuracy.

4.6.3.3 Data analysis

The data gathered using the HiPo Scale were analysed statistically using various methods. Robson (2011) explains that data analysis techniques are divided into two broad types, namely exploratory and confirmatory. The purpose of exploratory analysis is to explore the data to try and find out what it tells the researcher, while confirmatory analysis seeks to establish whether the data confirm what the researcher postulated or hypothesised (Maree, 2016). Three main types of statistical analysis can be conducted on data, namely descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, and multivariate analysis (Babbie, 2020; Maree, 2016; Robson, 2011). All three were performed in the present study, the process of which is depicted in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Statistical Analysis Process



- Data screening and preparation for analysis (HiPo Step 8)

Before conducting statistical analyses, data screening was performed to ensure that all the data were genuine, reliable, and usable. In screening the data, the researcher assesses the effect of missing data, spots outliers, and verifies the assumptions behind most procedures (Hair et al., 2014). With regard to verifying statistical assumptions, Hair et al. (2014) note the importance of investigating normality, which is the shape of the distribution of an individual metric variable and its correspondence to a normal distribution (Hair et al., 2014). Normality incudes two aspects, namely skewness and kurtosis (Hair et al., 2014). Other aspects that are also relevant in data screening are the mean and standard deviation.

Normal distribution means that the scores of the variable are clustered around the mean in a symmetrical pattern, known as a bell-shaped or normal curve (Hair et al., 2014). The mean is the most-used measure of location, and is calculated as the arithmetic average of all the data values (Maree, 2016) or a straightforward statistical model of the centre of a score distribution (Field, 2009). Thus, the mean is the mathematical average of individual scores (Leavy, 2017; Maree, 2016). Standard deviation is calculated using the same units of measurement as the original data, to estimate the average variability (spread) of a dataset (Field, 2009). It is the square root of variance (Maree, 2016). The variability of the results is described by calculating

the distance between each score and the distribution mean as a reference point. The standard deviation is minimal if scores are grouped closely around the mean but if the standard deviation is high, it indicates that results are widely dispersed from the mean (Leavy, 2017; Maree, 2016).

Kurtosis is a measurement of how flat or peaked a distribution is, compared to a normal distribution. A positive score denotes a distribution that has a slight peak, whereas a negative value denotes a distribution that has a slight flattening (Hair et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). According to Awang (2012), kurtosis should not be greater than 3.0 (Awang, 2012); however, Scholten et al. (2017) support the more cautious argument that it should not be greater than 7.0 for samples larger than 300. When compared to a normal distribution, skewness can be used as a gauge of a distribution's symmetry (Hair et al., 2014), as it describes how the distribution is balanced. Positive skewness causes the distribution to shift to the right, whereas negative skewness causes it to shift to the left (Hair et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). Awang (2012) asserts that the absolute value of skewness should not exceed 1.0 but Scholten et al. (2017) propose a value of 2.0 for large sample sizes.

Steps 9 and 10 in the development of the HiPo Scale are discussed below. The HiPo Scale was developed making use of both exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Factor analysis was utilised to establish the underlying structures amongst the variables (Hair et al., 2014).

- Factorability of the data (HiPo Step 9)

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy and Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity were used to examine the dataset's factorability. Bartlett test has to be significant ($p < 0.05$) for factor analysis to be considered suitable, and the KMO index should be at least 0.6 in order to be effective (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2020). Both tests look for correlations between the variables (Hair et al., 2014). The following criteria were used to evaluate the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy:

a score in the 0.90s was considered marvellous;

in the 0.80s, meritorious;

in the 0.70s, middling;

in the 0.60s, mediocre;

in the 0.50s, miserable; and

a score below 0.50 was considered unacceptable (Hair et al., 2014; Kaiser, 1974).

The results of both tests showed that the dataset was adequate for factor analysis.

- Exploratory factor analysis (HiPo Step 10)

Factor analysis provides a way to look for structure between several different variables (Hair et al., 2014), establish the practical importance of the factors, and determine if they are worthwhile considering for further analysis. The factor loadings of the items were also examined. The relationship between an original variable and its factor is represented by a factor loading (Hair et al., 2014). Hair et al. (2014) provide guidelines for identifying significant factor loadings based on sample size. For a sample size of 250, factor loadings of .35 are needed to indicate significance (Hair et al., 2014).

There are three primary methods for determining the number of factors to extract from a dataset (Carpenter, 2018), namely the Kaiser criterion, a scree plot, and Horn's (1965) parallel analysis. Normally, the first two analyses are adequate but, in some cases, it might be necessary to evaluate the data using Horn's (1965) analysis. All three processes were conducted in the present study.

Kaiser criterion: A factor's eigenvalue, or total variance explained by that component, is a measure of the amount of information it can hold. Only variables with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or above were retained (see DeVellis, 2017; Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2020).

Scree test: An eigenvalue plot serves as the foundation for a scree test. When this data are shown, the vertical section (high eigenvalues) on the left transitions to the horizontal portion (right) (low eigenvalues). The factors should have a location where the information transitions from vertical to horizontal, denoting an elbow. Only elements above the elbow were retained for consideration (see DeVellis, 2017; Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2020).

Horn's (1965) parallel analysis: Should the previous two processes not produce a satisfactory result, Horn's (1965) analysis may be used. The researcher must methodically compare the eigenvalue obtained by SPSS with the corresponding initial value from the outcomes of the parallel analysis to apply Horn's (1965) analysis (Hair et al., 2014).

The data provided by the EFA had to be refined. To do this, the factors were rotated.

Factor rotation is important in determining how many factors should be retained. Factor rotation presents data in an easily interpretable manner and demonstrates logical groupings of elements that share an important attribute (Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2020). Rotation is done to identify the scale's factors or dimensions (Carpenter, 2018).

Two types of rotation methods are available, namely orthogonal rotations (such as the varimax rotation) and oblique rotations (such as oblimin rotation) (Carpenter, 2018). Orthogonal rotations force the factors not to correlate, and thus produce uncorrelated factors (Carpenter, 2018). Oblique rotations assume that factors correlate with one another. In most psychological and social sciences research, there will be some degree of correlation between factors (Carpenter, 2018). Thus, in the present study, it was assumed that the factors would correlate. Direct oblimin rotation allows for correlation between factors (Carpenter, 2018). This was the appropriate approach to follow in rotating the factors of the HiPo Scale.

Following the rotation of factors, it is important to determine which items should be retained and which should be deleted (Carpenter, 2018; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). Carpenter (2018) suggests that scholars evaluate items based on a number of criteria but that cross-loadings and significant loading magnitude levels are the most widely-applied criteria. For the present study, the main criterion was the minimum factor loading per item. Carpenter (2018) recommends a significant cut-off level of 0.32, indicating that any number between .30 and .40 is supported. A cut-off of .40 was set as a cut-off point for this study, as the sample size was relatively small.

The statistical measures and criteria used for each measure are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Summary of Measures and Criteria Used in EFA

Measure/Index	Description	Criteria
Sample size	The number of cases selected to include in a sample	For exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the sample size should be as large as possible. *n* = 50: Very poor *n* = 100: Poor *n* = 200: Fair *n* = 300: Good *n* = 500: Very good *n* = 1 000: Excellent
KMO measure of sampling	The KMO test is a statistical measure that indicates the	0.00–0.49: unacceptable

Measure/Index	Description	Criteria
adequacy (Kaiser, 1970, 1974)	suitability of data for factor analysis.	0.50–0.59: miserable 0.60–0.69: mediocre 0.70–0.79: middling 0.80–0.89: meritorious 0.90–1.00: marvellous A KMO-value ≥ 0.6 indicates that the data are suitable for factor analysis.
Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity	This is a test of the assumption of sphericity. It examines whether a variance-covariance matrix is proportional to an identity matrix.	For factor analysis to be considered appropriate, the requirement of $p < 0.05$ should be met.
Kaiser-Guttman criterion (Guttman, 1954; Kaiser, 1960)	This test indicates the applicable number of factors to be considered, based on eigenvalues.	All factors with an eigenvalue > 1 should be retained.
Scree test (Cattell, 1966)	This is simply a line representation of the eigenvalues.	The factors to be retained are shown to the left of the scree-plot line's elbow.
Horn's (1965) parallel analysis	This is a statistical method whereby the researcher systematically compares the eigenvalue with the corresponding first value that was generated through parallel analysis.	Factors exceeding the values generated by parallel analysis are retained.
Factor loadings	The regression coefficient of a variable for the linear model that described a latent variable in factor analysis	For samples larger than 200, factor loadings of 0.4 are regarded as significant.
Cross-loadings	Cross-loading exists when a variable has two or more factor loadings that exceed the minimum cut-off point that was determined to retain factors.	Factors (variables) that loaded significantly on other factors (both ≥ 0.40) were not retained

Note. Values in the *Criteria* column represent commonly accepted thresholds for exploratory factor analysis. Adopted from Field (2009), Hair et al. (2014), and Pallant (2020).

- Confirmatory factor analysis (HiPo Step 10)

The next step was to test the dimensionality of the data and evaluate the validity and reliability of the scale. Validity refers to whether the scale measures what it was intended to measure, and reliability relates to the extent to which the scale measures a specific construct consistently (Hair et al., 2014). Dimensionality was tested by means of confirmatory factor analysis, which is a somewhat intricate set of techniques used to confirm set theories regarding the underlying structure of a scale (Pallant, 2020). This assists in determining whether the researcher's conceptual grasp of the components matches the theoretical understanding of the constructs (Carpenter, 2018).

A series of confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to determine the factor structure of the HiPo Scale, using Stata (Version 18). An effort was made to develop and test models for the full HiPo Scale, representing all the constructs or factors that were identified during exploratory factor analysis. Unfortunately, no acceptable models could be produced for all the constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis was subsequently conducted for each individual factor of the HiPo Scale, in an effort to statistically test the relationships between the variables. Each construct was modelled separately in order to achieve ROs 9, 10, and 11.

The statistical measures and criteria used for each measure are summarised in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Summary of Measures and Criteria used in CFA

Measure/Index	Description	General Rule for Acceptable Fit
Chi-square (X^2 or CMIN)	A test statistic that indicates a factor model's quality of fit, it contrasts a theoretically suggested covariance matrix with the observed covariance matrix.	A model is supported if the computed X^2 is not statistically significant ($p \geq 0.05$).
Normed chi-square (X^2/df or CMIN/DF)	If X^2 relative to the degrees of freedom (*df*) is significant, it indicates that the observed and implied variance-covariance	An acceptable model fit is indicated by a X^2 to *df* ratio of ≤ 3.

Measure/Index	Description	General Rule for Acceptable Fit
	matrices are different.	
Comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990)	Measures the relative improvement in the fit of a researcher's model over that of a baseline model	≥ 0.95 is considered acceptable, and is preferable. A CFI value of ≥ 0.90 may be deemed a good fit.
Tucker-Lewis (1973) index (TLI)	The measure is based on the premise of comparing the proposed factor model with a model in which no interrelationships amongst the items are presumed.	A perfect fit model has a TLI of 1. Values of ≥ 0.95 are considered an acceptable fit but a TLI value of ≥ 0.90 is traditionally associated with a good fit model. Values > 0.10 indicate poor fit, and are unacceptable.
Root mean square error of approximations (RMSEA) (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Steiger, 1990)	RMSEA measures the estimated difference between population and model-implied population covariance matrices per degree of freedom.	Lower RMSEA values suggest better fit. RMSEA ≤ 0.05 indicates close fit, and a value of ≤ .06 indicates good model fit. An upper limit of 0.07 is generally accepted.
Standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR) (Hu & Bentler, 1999)	The overall difference between the observed and expected correlations	Lower SRMR value suggests better fit. The threshold for acceptable fit is ≤ 0.08.

Note. Adopted from Boateng et al. (2018), Field (2009), Hair et al. (2014), Hooper et al. (2008), and Hu and Bentler (1999)

Harman's post hoc one-factor analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003) was utilised prior to confirmatory factor analysis to statistically detect and control for possible common method variance. Harman's post-hoc test consists of an exploratory factor analysis where all the items assumed to be affected by the common method variance are loaded and a forced single-factor solution is produced (Howard et al., 2024). If the total variance extracted by one factor is more than 50%, common method bias is present.

- Validity and reliability

Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it was intended to measure (Boateng et al., 2018; Maree, 2016). Maree (2016) identifies three different kinds of validity:

Face validity refers to the extent to which an instrument ‘looks’ legitimate. Although face validity cannot be scientifically measured, it is communicated by the feedback received from experts. In the present study face, face validity was confirmed through scrutiny of the items by a panel of experts.

Content validity refers to how well the instrument captures all the information within the construct it was designed to measure. Ample examples covering the various facets of a construct should be provided. This ensures that the instrument's content is valid. Before finalising an instrument, the researcher typically offers a draft version to subject-matter experts for feedback, to ensure the instrument's content validity. In the present study, content validity was confirmed by examination of the items by a panel of experts.

Construct validity is needed for standardisation, and refers to the degree to which several sets of related items measure the constructs measured by the instrument. Construct validity can be determined when confirmatory factor analysis is conducted and theoretical models subsequently tested and validated (Boateng et al., 2018; Maree, 2016). Boateng et al. (2018) explain that there are four indicators of construct validity: convergent validity, discriminant validity, differentiation by known groups, and the result of correlation analysis.

Considering various other factors pertinent to the present study, such as sample size and the somewhat limited groupings that took part, it was decided to examine convergent validity by investigating factor loadings and calculating average variance extracted. Significant standardised factor loadings were indicated by a factor loading value of, ideally, > .7 but > .5 was considered acceptable. The theoretical motivation and evaluation of items were also considered. Average variance extracted provides an indication of the average percentage of variation explained by the items for a construct. A value of 0.50 or higher was considered acceptable to indicate adequate convergent validity (see Awang, 2012; Hair et al., 2014).

When the same entities are measured under various circumstances, a measure must be reliable to yield consistent findings. This is referred to as reliability (Field, 2009). A reliable instrument is one that behaves in a consistent, predictable way (DeVellis, 2017). There are several different types of reliability (Maree, 2016). Internal reliability or internal consistency is used when items are created to measure a specific construct and it is anticipated that the items will be similar, since they are all intended to measure the same thing (Maree, 2016).

A reliability test commonly used to check the internal consistency of scales is Cronbach’s alpha (DeVellis, 2017; Leavy, 2017; Santos, 1999). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is based on inter-item correlations. The alpha coefficient will be close to 1 if the items have a high degree

of internal consistency with one another. However, if the items are poorly constructed and have weak correlations, the alpha coefficient will be close to zero (Maree, 2016). According to Maree (2016), a Cronbach alpha score of 0.90 indicates high reliability, 0.80 indicates moderate reliability, and 0.70 indicates low reliability. Hair et al. (2014) suggest that the lower limit of Cronbach's alpha should be 0.70, although it may decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research. Raykov's rho or composite reliability, which is debated to have advantages over Cronbach's alpha, is becoming increasingly popular (Boateng et al., 2018). Composite reliability was also calculated as a measure of reliability and convergent validity.

The statistical measures to establish the validity and reliability of measurement models are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Validity and Reliability of the Measurement Models

Measure/Index	Description	General Rule for Acceptable Fit
Factor loadings	Standardised loading estimates for all observed variables were inspected.	All loadings should be significant, ideally > 0.7 but > 0.5 is acceptable.
Average variance extracted (AVE)	Provides an indication of the average percentage of variation explained by the items in a construct	AVE should be ≥ 0.5 to suggest adequate convergent validity.
Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha	This is an indication of internal consistency reliability.	α ≥ 0.9 indicates items with a high degree of internal consistency with one another; 0.90: high reliability; 0.80: moderate reliability; 0.70: low reliability. Hair et al. (2014) suggest that the lower limit of Cronbach's alpha be 0.70.
Raykov's rho/Composite reliability (CR)	Raykov's rho is an indication of the reliability of a scale, and ranges between 0 and 1.	The higher the value, the more reliable the scale is. A reliability of ≥ 0.7 is considered acceptable.

Note. Adopted from Boateng et al. (2018) and Hair et al. (2014)

- Statistical measures to test hypotheses

Five research hypotheses were developed to guide the realisation of the main research aim. These hypotheses were set based on the theoretical model that was developed at the commencement of the research.

Hypothesis 1 measured the relationship between work performance and the status of an individual as a high-potential employee:

H1: High-potential employees exhibit higher work performance than capable and remain-in-role employees.

The participating organisation made available the performance scores of employees, as well as their status with regard to being high potential, promotable, capable, or to remain in role. These scores were used to conduct a chi-square test for independence, which is a statistical test to explore the relationship between two categorial variables (Pallant, 2020). The test compares the values that would be predicted in the absence of any correlation between the two variables being assessed, with the observed frequencies or proportions of cases that occur in each of the categories (Pallant, 2020).

Hypotheses 2 to 5 theorised the relationships between theoretical constructs assumed to be indicators of high potential and the high-potential status of the respondents:

H2: High-potential employees are more engaged than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H3: High-potential employees exhibit higher levels of learning agility than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H4: High-potential employees are more positive about their ability to work in a team than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H5: High-potential employees are more ambitious than capable and remain-in-role employees.

All of the constructs that were anticipated at the start of the project were identified and confirmed during the statistical testing of the HiPo Scale. When comparing the average scores of more than two groups, analysis of variance is applied. One independent variable with

several levels is used in one-way analysis of variance. This method was used to test Hypotheses 2 to 5.

4.7 TIME HORIZON

The present study followed a cross-sectional rather than a longitudinal time horizon; therefore, the data were collected and analysed at a specific point, rather than intermittently in order to make comparisons of outcomes over time. The next section details the strategies employed to ensure academic rigour in the qualitative and quantitative phases, respectively.

4.8 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE RIGOUR

Approaches to evaluating the quality of a mixed methods study have traditionally been to evaluate the quality of the quantitative and qualitative phases separately, using existing criteria known to be appropriate (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Despite this approach being fairly simple and dependable, it, unfortunately, assumes that a mixed-methods study is merely a combination of two types of approaches (O'Cathain et al., 2008). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) indicate that a mixed-methods study's rigour is pragmatically assessed, with the focus on how well it answers the research questions. In a mixed-methods study, the qualitative and quantitative strategies intertwine continuously; thus, evaluating its quality according to the two approaches individually is insufficient (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). It is important to evaluate how well the two approaches interface, referred to by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) as the inference quality of a mixed-methods study. Although some existing frameworks and guidelines for evaluating the quality of mixed-methods studies have been developed (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Guest, 2013; Leech et al., 2010; O'Cathain et al., 2008), no widely accepted evaluation criteria exist (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; O'Cathain et al., 2008).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) suggest a framework to measure the quality of a mixed-methods study, which includes deciding whether rigorous mixed methods were used, identifying the purpose of the mixed research approach, and establishing whether the study's author(s) present information regarding challenges that may have arisen during the study. A comprehensive framework is suggested by Dellinger and Leech (2007). They propose a validation framework that they describe as a useful and unified method that uses traditionally accepted concepts to determine validity in both the qualitative and quantitative phases but adds newer ideas regarding determining validity in mixed-methods research (Dellinger & Leech, 2007). In addition to the traditional approaches, Dellinger and Leech (2007) include

the following considerations:

- Foundational elements: These reflect a researcher's prior understanding of the construct and/or phenomenon under study.
- Inferential consistency: This refers to whether the inferences in a study are consistent, given what is known from prior understanding or past research and theory.
- Utilisation/historical element: Here, a judgement is made with regard to the appropriateness of the use of measures and inferences.
- Consequential element: This final element is determined by judging the social acceptability of consequences of using a study's findings, measures, or inferences.

Although the validation framework developed by Dellinger and Leech (2007) is comprehensive, the complexity of the model makes its application difficult. Another intricate measure of the quality was developed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), who refer to the step in the mixed-methods research process where quality is determined as the legitimisation step. The Quantitative Legitimation Model (Onwuegbuzie & McLean, 2003), contains 50 sources of invalidity for the quantitative component, and the Qualitative Legitimation Model (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007) consists of 29 elements of legitimation for the qualitative component.

A more recent quality framework that focuses on the integration of the qualitative and quantitative strands was proposed by O'Cathain et al. (2008). This framework suggests that the quality of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation should be evaluated, in addition to traditional ways of ensuring quality in qualitative and quantitative studies. O'Cathain et al.'s (2008) framework considers the integration of qualitative and quantitative elements of the study. The recommendations that were adhered to in the present study are summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Framework for Ensuring Qualitative Rigour

Stage of the Study	Domain of Quality	Domain Items	Item Definition	Adherence	Explanation
Undertaking	Design quality	Design transparency	Description of design type from known typology, or key aspects of design if known typologies do not describe the design used	√	The research design is discussed and motivated in detail in Chapter 4.
		Design suitability	The design is appropriate for addressing the overall research question, matches the reason for combining methods, and is appropriate for the stated paradigm	√	A mixed-methods approach was appropriate for achieving the overall research aim.
		Design strength	The strengths and weaknesses of methods are considered in order to minimise shared bias and optimise the breadth and depth of the study	√	Qualitative research was used to identify the constructs that were tested during the quantitative phase.
		Design rigour	Methods are implemented in a way that remains true to the design	√	Both the QUAL and the QUAN streams adhered to rigorous methodological design, explained in detail in Chapter 4.
	Data quality	Data transparency	Each of the methods is described in sufficient detail, including its role within the study	√	Both the QUAL and QUAN methods are described in detail in Chapter 4.
		Data rigour/design	The extent to which methods are	√	Measures to ensure the quality of the qualitative and

Stage of the Study	Domain of Quality	Domain Items	Item Definition	Adherence	Explanation
		fidelity	implemented with rigour		quantitative phases were implemented.
		Sampling adequacy	The sampling technique and sample size for each method are adequate in the context of the design	√	Sampling for both the qualitative and quantitative phases was deemed adequate. Sampling methods are described and reported on in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.
		Analytic adequacy	Data-analysis techniques are appropriate for the research question, and were undertaken properly.	√	Described in Chapters 4, 5, and 6
		Analytic integration rigour	Integration during the analyses, e.g., data transformations, is defensible	n/a	No data integration was done.
Interpreting	Interpre-tive rigour (conclu-sions are based on the findings)	Interpretive transparency	It is clear which findings have emerged from which methods	√	The findings of each phase are discussed thoroughly.
		Interpretive consistency	Inferences are consistent with the findings on which they are based	√	Inferences or conclusions are comprehensively elaborated on in Chapter 7.
		Theoretical consistency	Inferences are consistent with current knowledge or theory	√	The theory on talent management and high-potential talent is thoroughly explained.
		Interpretive agreement	Others are likely to reach the same conclusions based on the findings presented	√	Adhered to

Stage of the Study	Domain of Quality	Domain Items	Item Definition	Adherence	Explanation
		Interpretive distinctiveness	The conclusions drawn are more credible than any other conclusions.	√	Adhered to
		Interpretive efficacy	Meta-inferences from the whole study adequately incorporate inferences from the qualitative and quantitative findings and inferences.	√	The qualitative and quantitative findings are integrated in Chapter 7.
		Interpretive bias reduction	Explanations are given for inconsistencies between findings and inferences.	√	Adhered to
		Interpretive correspon-dence	Inferences correspond to the purpose of the study, the overall research aim, and the research questions and -objectives.	√	Adhered to

Note. Adopted from O'Cathain et al. (2008)

Apart from ensuring that the above quality aspects regarding the integration of methodology and inferences made were adhered to in this study, traditional measures to ensure quality were also implemented for each phase of the research, discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.8.1 Qualitative rigour

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) elaborate on the history and development of measures to ensure rigour in qualitative research, explaining that, prior to 1990, the criteria of objectivity, reliability, and internal validity were used to assess qualitative research. In 1985, Lincoln and Guba proposed the criteria of trustworthiness, which are widely employed. In more recent years, however, there have been increasing suggestions to modify the criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985) to ensure greater alignment with those used in quantitative studies, with various researchers offering their own sets of criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Qualitative research has been criticised for not adhering to the same requirements of reliability and validity in quantitative research. This indeed is difficult in qualitative research, as each project is different (Leavy, 2017). Some researchers indicate that the same requirements for validity, reliability, and generalisability apply in principle to both quantitative and qualitative research, and that it is only the nature and type of process that differ (e.g., Leung, 2015). Leung (2015) refers to two schools of thought in this regard. The first is that of Dixon-Woods et al. (2004), who promote rigour in methodology; the other is that of Lincoln et al. (2011), who stress the importance of rigour in interpretation. Others, however, argue that the essence and goals of quantitative and qualitative research differ so much that it not appropriate to apply the same criteria (Cypress, 2017). In the present study, the criteria of trustworthiness were strictly adhered to in both methodology and interpretation (see Lincoln et al., 2011; Maxwell, 2016; Tashakkori et al., 2021).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) suggest that the issue of quality in a mixed-methods study is rather controversial, one that authors approach in various different ways. One way of dealing with quality in mixed-methods studies is to look at the quality standards for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods separately (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Tashakkori et al. (2021) note the importance of evaluating and maximising the quality of the research inferences in mixed-methods research. Tashakkori et al. (2021) propose that data quality should be differentiated from inference quality, and that the latter aspects should also receive focussed attention in a mixed-methods study. In the present study, strategies to ensure the quality of the qualitative phase, quantitative phase, and then the study as a whole (mixed methods) were employed. The methods used to ensure rigour in the qualitative phase are reported on in this

section.

Tashakkori et al. (2021) discuss approaches to ensuring inference quality in the qualitative phase of a mixed-methods study, and refer to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) early definition of validity in qualitative studies, referred to as trustworthiness. Tashakkori et al. (2021) also refer to Maxwell (2016), who explains three major types of validity for qualitative research. Maxwell (2016) explains that there are broad categories of phenomena to which validity in qualitative research can refer, namely "description; meaning/interpretation and explanation" (p. 124). Descriptive validity refers to the truthfulness of the information provided by the researcher. Interpretative validity is the accuracy with which the researcher captures the subjective meaning, perspectives, and insider opinions of the study participants. Theoretical validity refers to the extent to which the study's interpretations make sense, given the empirical evidence (Maxwell, 2016).

Various suggestions on how to enhance the descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity of the qualitative stream of a mixed-methods study are provided by Tashakkori et al. (2021). Tashakkori et al. (2021) specify that trustworthiness is a global qualitative concept, introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985), and both propose several strategies to enhance trustworthiness, namely prolonged engagement and persistent observation of participants, multiple sources of evidence, member-checking, thick descriptions, and reflexive journaling, which are widely applied in research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) summarise trustworthiness as the inquirer being able to convince the audience that the findings are worthy of attention. The four dimensions of trustworthiness described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are explained below, together with elucidations of how this was achieved in the qualitative stream of the present study.

Credibility refers to the findings of the study being based in and reflective of participants' views (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Methods to enhance credibility in the study included the following (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015):

- Prolonged engagement with participants, which entailed comprehensive in-person interviews until indicated as producing no new information. A total of nine interviews with an average duration of sixty minutes were conducted, and data saturation was achieved.
- Peer debriefing was conducted, where the initial findings were discussed with experts (close colleagues, a fellow registered I-O psychologist, and the study supervisor).
- Referential adequacy refers to the ability of the researcher to prove the existence

of the raw data. To address this criterion, the findings are supported with verbatim quotes from the interview transcripts.

- Member checks were conducted, where participants were asked to confirm the accuracy of their data. Only three participated in member-checking but all three confirmed that their data and the interpretation thereof were accurate.

Transferability refers to whether the findings can be applied in other contexts, which requires measures to ensure that the reader is able to come to this conclusion. Transferability was enhanced through 'thick' descriptions of the study context, the study problem, the participants, and the methodology followed in conducting the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; ; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Dependability refers to the extent to which a process of enquiry is reliable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that, in their opinion, there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability). Dependability was enhanced by a detailed audit trail of the execution of the study (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Tashakkori et al. (2021) specify that a dependability audit can be done to evaluate the process of inquiry, including the appropriateness of decisions taken in conducting the research. No dependability audit was conducted in the present study but all the raw data, including notes, recordings, and other material, have been saved and are available, should the need arise to conduct a credibility audit.

Confirmability is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and participants' views, untainted by the researcher biases and preconceived notions, i.e. the parallel of objectivity in quantitative research. As advised by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the present researcher continually practised reflexivity through self-awareness and critical review of the findings, to ensure that any personal biases did not affect the interpretation of the data. The researcher was personally involved in gathering and analysing the data. While the aim is to remain objective in this process, especially in interpreting the data, the researcher is an instrument in this phase of the research, which underscores the importance of reflexivity to avoid bias.

4.8.2 Quantitative rigour

Quality in quantitative research is determined statistically, specifically by means of validity and reliability analyses (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). The validity and reliability of the HiPo Scale were tested thoroughly, the results of which are reported in Chapter 6. The next section details

the ethical principles that were upheld throughout the study.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The overarching concern in research involving humans is the physical and emotional welfare of the participants. Strict ethical protocols, as prescribed by the overseeing academic institution, were followed in both research phases. Preissle et al. (2015) explain that, in a mixed-methods study, ethical considerations apply to each phase and to the mixing of approaches. Preissle et al. (2015) propose that ethical considerations should be adhered to with regard to the research purpose and design, sampling and selection, research relationships, data collection and analysis, and in reporting. Specific steps were taken during both the qualitative and quantitative phases to ensure the adherence to ethical standards in research.

Ethics clearance for both the qualitative and the quantitative phases was granted by the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at UNISA (see Appendix A). Permission to conduct the study was received from the participating organisation (see Appendix H). Third party confidentiality agreements were signed by the transcriber, statistician, and language editor.

In the qualitative phase, participants were fully informed of the aim of the study and what participation would entail, and had to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix B) prior to commencement of the interview, which were recorded with their consent. Participants were assured of anonymity and that they could withdraw from the study at any point, without consequences. In addition, no personal identifiers were used in reporting the findings.

In the quantitative phase, the aim of the study and details regarding participation were disseminated via a gatekeeper. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary, and that clicking on the link to the HiPo scale constituted informed consent. Respondents were also assured of anonymity, and could withdraw from the study at any point before submitting their data electronically.

The dataset is stored securely on a password-protected device to which only the researcher and study supervisor have access. The data will be destroyed fifteen years after completion of the study. Copies of relevant ethics documents have been attached as appendices. Documents not attached, in an effort to not unduly lengthen this document, will be made available upon request.

4.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reiterated the main aim of the study, followed by details of the constructivist paradigm of the qualitative phase and the postpositivist paradigm of the quantitative phase. Subsequent sections detailed the qualitative research approach followed in Phase 1, in which participants were purposively selected for in-person semi-structured interviews, the data of which were analysed using content analysis. The discussion of Phase 2 included the use of simple random sampling to select respondents to complete the HiPo scale and the methods of statistical analyses used to analyse the data. The research methodology and processes followed were discussed in alignment with the order of execution of the study, namely the qualitative phase, development of the HiPo Scale, and the quantitative phase, in which the hypotheses were tested. The subsequent sections detailed the strategies employed to ensure rigour in each phase of the study and in mixing the two approaches, followed by the ethical principles that were upheld throughout the research. The next chapter, Chapter 5, reports the qualitative findings; the quantitative results are reported in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the findings of the qualitative phase of this study. The discussion commences with the pertinent research objectives, followed by a biographical profile of the participants, and the findings, where details of the code groups are provided, together with graphical representations. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the indicators of high-potential talent, which informed the development of the HiPo Scale.

5.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives in this, the qualitative phase of the empirical study, were the following:

RO6: To determine what industry views as high-potential talent; and

RO7: To identify the predicting dimensions or constructs of high-potential talent as viewed by industry.

5.3 PARTICIPANT PROFILE

A total of nine semi-structured interviews were conducted, which generated approximately 230 pages of transcribed data. A summary of the demographic details of the participants is provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Participant Profile

Participant number	Gender	Ethnicity	Current position/occupation	Type of organisation	Professional qualifications	Years' experience in talent management
1	M	C	Group Head: HR	Multinational	MBA	15–20
2	F	I	Executive Head: HR	National	Master's degree & MBA; industrial psychologist	15 - 20

Participant number	Gender	Ethnicity	Current position/occupation	Type of organisation	Professional qualifications	Years' experience in talent management
3	M	W	Independent consultant	Various	Master's degree; industrial psychologist	11–15
4	F	W	Professor (talent management)	University	PhD	11–15
5	F	W	Independent consultant	Various	Master's degree; industrial psychologist	15–20
6	F	W	Manager: Talent and Resourcing	Multinational	Master's degree; industrial psychologist	> 20
7	M	W	Managing Director: Industrial Psychology Consultancy	Various	Master's degree; industrial psychologist	> 20
8	F	C	Group Manager: Talent and Leadership	Multinational	PhD	6 - 10
9	M	W	Head of Professional Services: Industrial Psychology Consultancy	Various	DPhil; industrial psychologist	> 20

Note. M = male; F = female; C = Coloured; I = Indian; W = white

The majority (67%) of participants were white; 33% were Coloured and Indian. No black African people participated in the qualitative phase. While this might be viewed as a limitation, experience in the field of talent management was the most important inclusion criterion. Eight participants had more than 10 years' experience working in talent management, and three had more than 20 years' experience. All participants held postgraduate qualifications, and six were registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as industrial psychologists. The gender distribution was four men and five women.

5.4 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The first phase of content analysis produced 563 quotations, which were grouped into 211 codes and further categorised into 17 code groups, which were crystallised into 5 themes. The code groups and themes are listed below.

The following code groups emerged from the data:

1. Benefits of a HiPo programme;
2. Business case for talent management;
3. Definition of high potential;
4. Definition of individual talent;
5. Definition of talent management;
6. Development for all employees;
7. Organisational talent inclusive/exclusive;
8. Talent-vs-potential debate;
9. Talent management is linked to organisational strategy;
10. High-potential identification process;
11. Psychometric used;
12. Succession planning;
13. Talent management process;
14. Challenges in talent management and -development;
15. Communication of high-potential status;
16. External indicators of high potential; and
17. Internal indicators of high potential.

The themes that emerged were the following:

Theme 1: The business case for HiPo identification and development;

Theme 2: Conceptualising high potential and talent-related constructs;

Theme 3: Understanding of HiPo talent is linked to organisation culture;

Theme 4: Organisational processes; and

Theme 5: Indicators of high-potential talent.

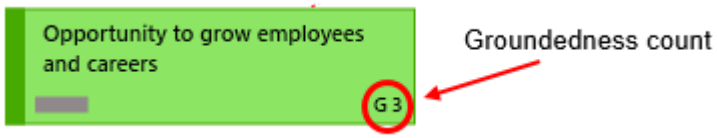
It is important to note that for the purposes of the data analysis, no clear distinction was made between the terms *talent* and *high-potential talent*. With regard to reporting, participants' references to these terms, which were used interchangeable, were reported verbatim.

Due to the volume of codes that were identified in Theme 5, it was necessary to create code sub-groups, which was done by grouping together relevant behavioural descriptors of internal indicators of high potential. This formed the basis for the scale that was developed and used in the quantitative phase.

Before continuing to discuss each theme in more detail, it is important to take note of the meaning of some of the abbreviations and symbols used in the graphical representations of the data. Each code is represented as a coloured block, and the code group is presented in the form of a mind-map, with the code blocks grouped around the code-group block. In the graphics, the letter "G" (G-count) indicates the frequency or groundedness of the view based on linked quotations from participant data. An example is provided in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1

Example of a Code Block



In some graphical representations of the themes and code groups, it was also relevant to indicate a relationship between codes, which is depicted by a line connecting codes. The relationships between codes are indicated by the following symbols:

<·>→ :→contradicts¶

lsa→ :→ is·a·¶

=·=·→ :→ is·associated·with¶

=·>·→ :→ is·cause·of¶

[]· → :→ is·property·of¶

→ :→ noname¶

The above symbols can be seen, where relevant, on the lines linking the codes in the graphical representations. If there is no relationship between the codes, the symbol is absent. The symbols clearly show that codes can contradict one another, or one code can be considered the cause of another. In the remainder of the chapter, each theme is discussed, together with relevant code groups and codes.

5.4.1 Theme 1: Business case for employee development

This theme focuses on the business case for the identification and development of high-potential talent. All nine participants indicated that there is a need and strategic imperative for the development of identified talent employees whom the company views as more valuable than others. Not one of the participants indicated that talent or high-potential talent identification and development was unnecessary. Interestingly, participants viewed the perceived benefits and advantages of a HiPo programme and talent management as very similar. Both talent management and HiPo development were seen as organisational processes that increase an organisation's business success and ability to grow. All the participants thus felt that identifying and developing high-potential candidates is a business decision.

This theme comprised two code groups: (1) Benefits of a HiPo programme and (2) Business case for talent management. The code groups and codes for this theme are displayed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Summary of Theme 1 Code Groups and Codes

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
	Benefits of a HiPo programme	Better-performing organisation
		Brand-building

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
Business case for employee development		Effective succession planning
		Employee engagement and loyalty
		Employee retention
		Opportunity to grow employees and careers
		Organisations know where to invest in terms of people potential
		Risk mitigation
	Business case for talent management	Part of the employee value proposition
		Retention tool
		Risk management
		Sustainability
		To attract the best employees
		To ensure and increase business success
		To manage talent
		To nurture talent
		To protect the money

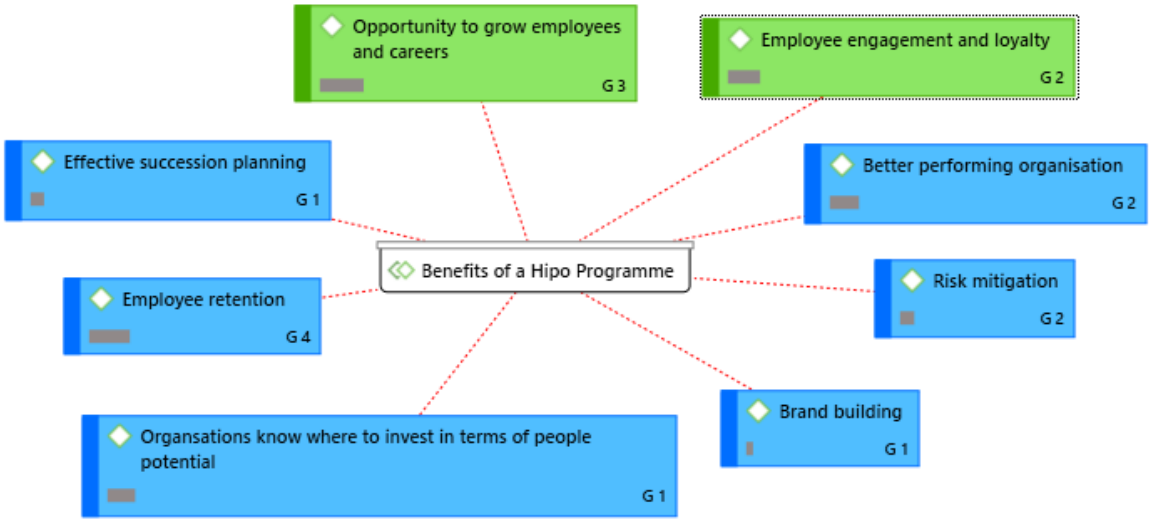
Participants commented on the advantages of high-potential development and why it is important to engage in talent management. Participants viewed high-potential development and talent management as offering the same advantages, with no clear distinction.

5.4.1.1. Code group: Benefits of a HiPo programme

The code group *Benefits of a HiPo programme* and the related codes are depicted in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2

Benefits of a HiPo Programme



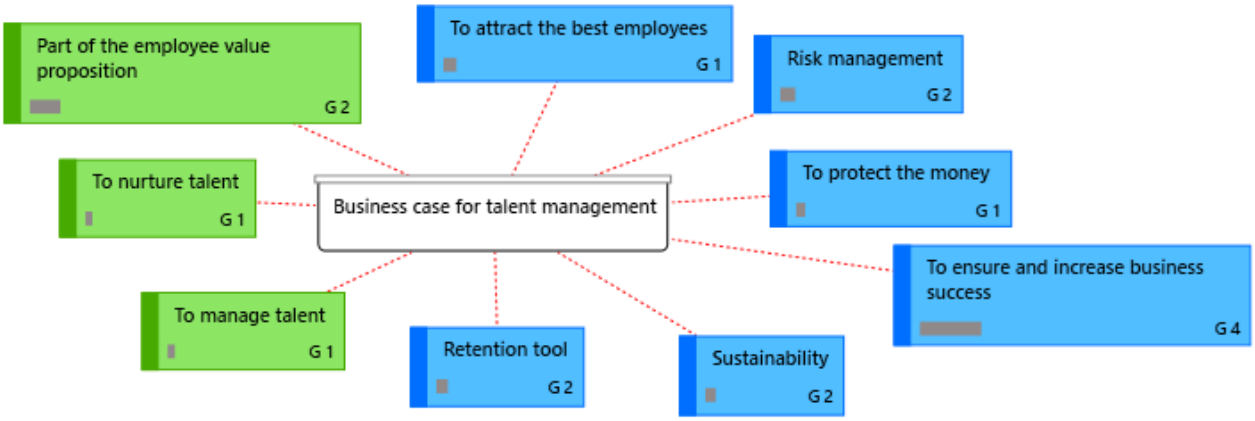
Participants saw definite benefits for the organisation in managing a high-potential development programme. The direct benefits are shown in blue, and indirect benefits are shown in green. Four participants noted that employees, especially high-value employees, are more easily retained if they are part of a high-potential development programme. Another perceived advantage is that such programmes provide opportunities for employees to grow their careers. Most responses regarding the benefits of a high-potential programme, however, centred around the organisation and how it can be an advantage to the organisation.

5.4.1.2 Code group: Business case for talent management

The code group *Business case for talent management* is depicted in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3

Business Case for Talent Management



Participants indicated the business need for talent management by noting the advantages for the organisation (blue blocks) in terms of monetary advantage and business survival, as well as indirect business advantages, which also hold advantages for employees (green blocks). Based on the responses of participants, talent management is something that is done, most importantly, to advance the business and ensure the company's success.

5.4.2 Theme 2: Conceptualising high potential and talent-related constructs

This theme comprised three code groups: (1) Definition of high potential, (2) definition of individual talent, and (3) definition of talent management.

Table 5.3

Summary of Theme 2 Code Groups and Codes

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
Conceptualising high-potential and talent-related constructs	Definition of high potential	Employees with high value and high impact
		High potential is not high performance
		High potential is influenced by country culture
		High potential is focussed on traits or elements that the organisation needs for strategic reasons
		High potential only for specific positions

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
		Focus on leadership
		Scarce or critical skills are part of high potential
		Specialists are high potential
		Specialists not high potential
		Specific skills needed by the organisation
		Future chief executive officers (CEOs)
	Definition of individual talent	Talent is based in personality and ability
		Talent starts with a gift, like Mozart
	Definition of talent management	Aids retention
		Communicates the talent philosophy
		Employee life cycle
		It is a fad, another name for HRM and HRD
		It is building a talent pipeline
		It is part of succession planning
		It is the integrated process of managing the flow of people through the organisation
		Management of critical roles
		Segmentation of employees
		Talent management for successors only
		Talent management is an integrated process
		Talent management targets only certain groups
		Talent mindset
		Talent management efforts focus on a certain level of employees and up
		Talent management from middle management to C upper

Overall, the interview data confirmed that there is limited consensus on the understanding of the talent management environment. Differing opinions were found regarding almost all the aspects investigated. What was particularly notable was that the terms *talent* and *high-*

potential talent were used interchangeably by participants.

Only one participant elaborated on the meaning of individual talent. It would seem that the theoretical concept of individual talent is not very important in the practical organisational environment. As only one participant shared a definition of individual talent, and that this code group consisted of only two codes, no graphical representation is provided. The two questions that elicited most of the comments regarding the definitions of high potential and talent management asked participants to explain how they saw these concepts.

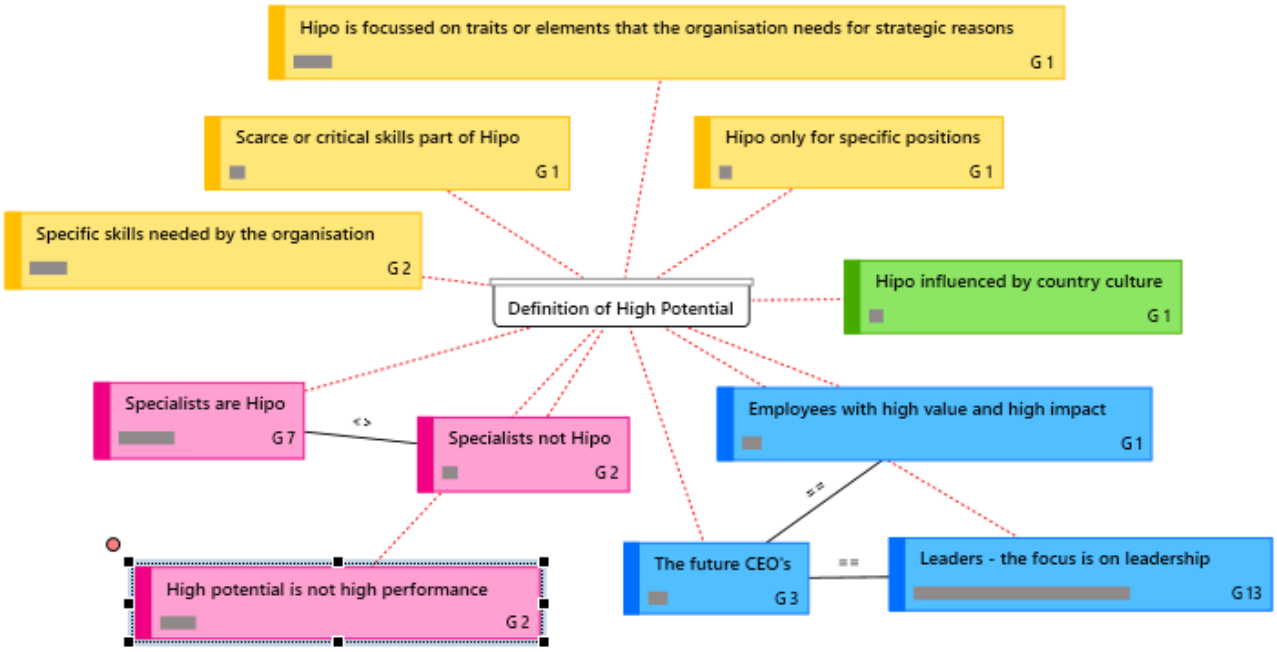
Participants were of the opinion that the concepts of high potential and talent management are, in many ways, unique to each organisation, and that organisations should define these concepts for their context prior to implementing such programmes. They also gave their opinions on how they viewed high potential and talent management.

5.4.2.1 Code group: Definition of high potential

As shown in Figure 5.4, the information gathered on the meaning of high-potential talent was rich and varying. The graphic representation of the codes for this code group was simplified by creating clusters of groups that could be considered sub-groups. Each sub-group or cluster of codes is presented in a different colour. The yellow codes show a belief that high-potential skills or talents refer to very specific talents that are critical to the organisation. The blue codes indicate a strong opinion that high-potential development focuses on leadership; thus, high potential links strongly to leadership skills. The pink codes represent two viewpoints; first, specialists can also be high-potential talent, and the focus should not be solely on leadership. Second, high potential is not high performance.

Figure 5.4

Definition of High Potential



Participants felt that high-potential programmes have strong links with organisational strategies and skills needed in the organisation. High-potential employees are those who possess specific skills that the organisation considers extremely important for the future of the organisation. These individuals are also linked to specific key positions. Participants strongly indicated that high-potentials are those individuals earmarked for leadership positions in the future, and that specialists could also be included in the pool of high-potentials.

One participant felt that specialists should not be included in high-potential programmes, while four participants indicated that high-potential employees could also be specialists. Figure 5.4 indicates the relationship between these two codes as contradictory. The codes that refer to the identification of high-potentials being focussed specifically on leadership roles (blue blocks) are indicated by '= =', which indicates an association.

The code indicating that our understanding of high-potential might be influenced by country culture (green blocks) was created from views of one participant. This participant worked for a company with a very strong international footprint, and was appointed in a position that provided the participant with intimate knowledge of the opinions of the business leaders in the respective world regions. The participant was of the opinion that culture indeed influences leaders' view of what a HiPo programme should look like, and specifically mentioned that the

South African way of viewing high potential tends to be more inclusive, as we prefer an *ubuntu* approach to managing employees. The participant noted that the American and, specifically, European leaders in the company were much more comfortable making strong distinctions between employees, where some are chosen as high-potentials and others not. The culture thus leans more towards a Western, individualistic way of thinking.

> Participant 1: *"…we want to include everyone because it is our culture; our culture is the ubuntu-type way. But it's America, and actually more in Europe, because they have a more Western way..., they easily tell employees that they are out the door."*

In saying that the employees are told that they are "out the door", the participant specifically referred to their high-potential status. Managers in countries with a more individual-oriented culture are more open to categorising employees as not having high potential. None of the other participants commented on this aspect but it has to be noted that none had such exposure to a multinational company on an executive level.

5.4.2.2 Code group: Definition of individual talent

Only two comments were made (by the same participant) about what individual talent is. The participant commented that individual talent is an inborn ability.

5.4.2.3 Code group: Definition of talent management

It was clear from the responses of participants that there are different views on exactly what talent management is, and no one definition could be identified. Participants held three broad views regarding what talent management is.

The first group (four participants) indicated that talent management refers to the cycle or process of moving employees into and upwards in the organisation. These codes are indicated in green in Figure 5.4. Although it might seem as if this definition dictates an inclusive view of talent management, none of the participants who held this view indicated that the talent management process was applied all employees and organisational levels.

> Participant 4: *"So, in order to answer your question… Is that talent management is not? … just attracting, developing and retaining people. There's a whole talent life cycle that we need to have in place, otherwise talent management won't work in an organisation."*

Three participants indicated that talent management was reserved for certain levels in the organisation (blue blocks), i.e. managerial or prospective managerial levels.

> Participant 3: *"I think what I've seen across the board is most people focus their talent-management efforts on a certain grading or a certain level of appointment upwards."*

This view dictates an exclusive view of talent. These participants viewed talent management as incorporating more specialised steps than general HR development.

Two comments (pink blocks) indicated that using the term *talent management* denotes a certain philosophy or mindset regarding the development of employees.

The codes in white in the graphic could not be grouped together but each had value as a viewpoint. It was interesting to note that some participants' views of talent management corresponded with others' views of why development of high-potential talent or talent management is important. These supporting quotes, "It is part of succession planning", "It helps with retention", and "It builds the talent pipeline", can be seen as explanations of what talent management represents to these participants, rather than definitions of the concept itself. Nevertheless, these were answers provided by participants when asked how they would define talent management.

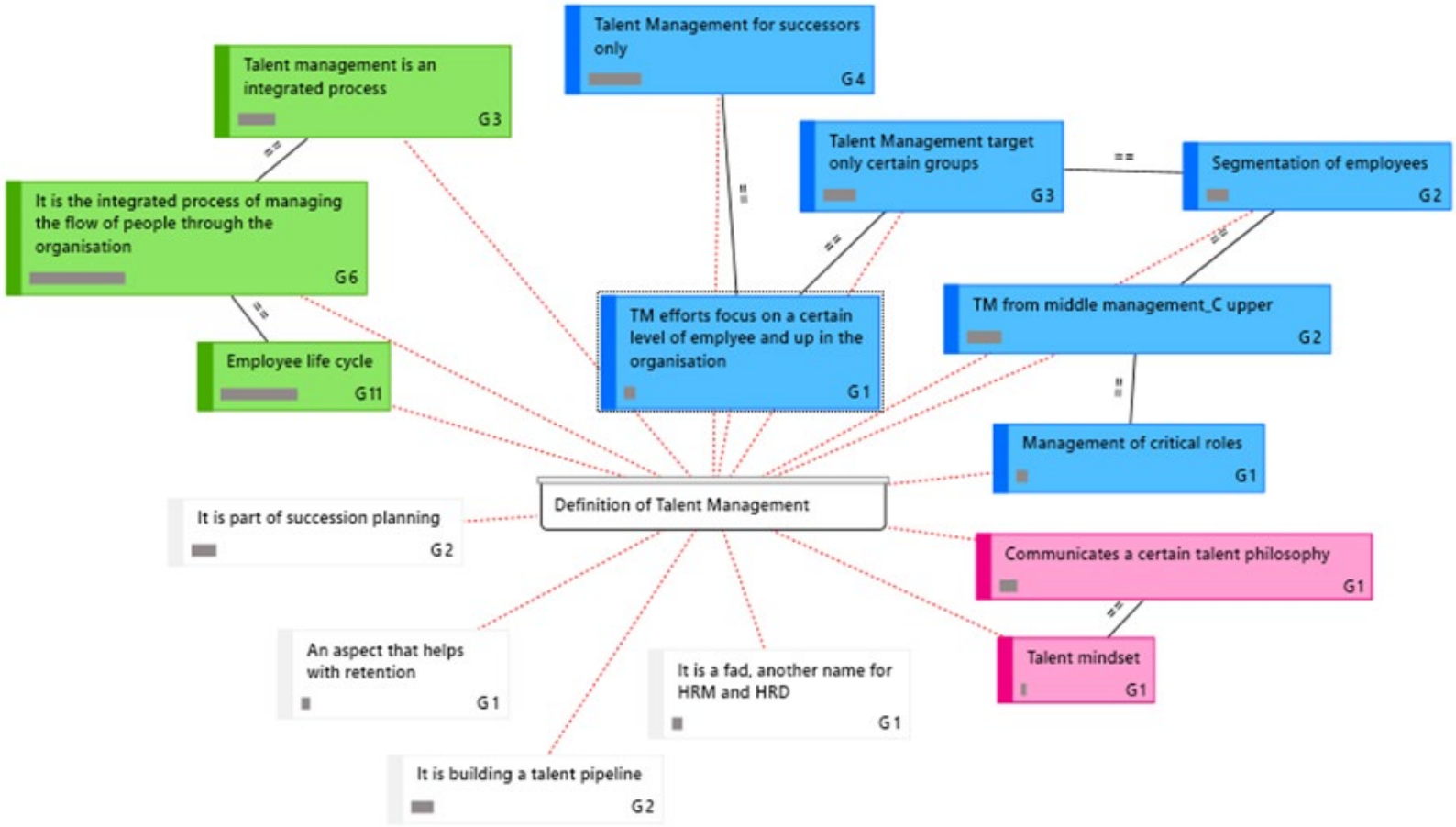
One participant believed talent management is a fad, and that it was just a replacement for previous terms such as HRD or people management.

> Participant 7: *"I think it's a little faddish, in the sense that we no longer wanted to talk about people, we didn't want to talk about human resource management. That's why we talk about people management. Then you say, 'No but think a bit. We in HR are at least grand, you know, we do, well, what is important to the organisation with respect to people. Now we do talent management.' What I mean by that is that talent, by definition, is something that has value."*

While the participants considered talent management a fad, the motivation for the opinion was insightful, in that the participant explained that, by using the term *talent management* instead of *HRD* or *people management*, HR practitioners are communicating the value placed on employees. The code groups of *Definition of talent management* are illustrated in Figure 5.5

Figure 5.5

Definition of Talent Management



5.4.3 Theme 3: Understanding of HiPo talent is linked to organisation culture

This theme ties in with the previous theme, specifically the fact that there are various opinions of what talent management is. Participants agreed that organisations hold unique views on what talent management and high potential are, which views are influenced by the culture of each organisation. Three code groups were identified as part of this theme. The first indicates an organisational view that all employees should be developed. The second relates to whether high-potential talent should be managed as inclusive or exclusive, where participants' views were especially influenced by organisational culture. The last code group pertains to talent and potential. It was found that participants' views on these two aspects were also influenced by their general understanding of the culture of the organisations to whom they had provided consulting services. The code groups and their respective codes are listed in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

Summary of Theme 3 Code Groups and Codes

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
Organisations' understanding of talent and high-potential talent is unique and linked to organisational culture	Development of all employees	All employees should be developed
		Leadership development, also for non-high-potentials
		Organisations also need good executors, and not all are high-potentials
		Overreliance on talent; also consider B players
		Should a company strive to have *all* high-potentials?
		Social justice
	Organisational talent: Inclusive vs exclusive	Talent, talent management, and high-potential development are unique for each company
		Talent is exclusive
		Talent is inclusive
		Talent management only for some employees
	Talent-vs-potential debate	All employees are talented

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
		Everyone has potential; it depends on the position
		High potential is talent in the correct setting
		High-potentials must fit the organisation engineer/industrial psychologist
		Not all employees are talent
		Organisational talent is potential within the right setting or position
		Potential for what—talent for what?
		Potential is inborn disposition
		Talent for what?; alignment with job
		Talent starts with a gift, like Mozart

The next section describes each code group in more detail.

5.4.3.1 Code group: Development of all employees

Three participants were of the view that all employees should be developed, and not only those employees who are deemed high-potentials. The other participants did not provide specific information regarding this but it should be noted that none communicated a strictly exclusive view of high-potential development or talent management. This code group is depicted in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6

Development of All Employees



An example of a typical view in this regard is:

> Participant 2: *"Yes, and even if you are in the left hand side [of the nine-block grid], you still have access to development. It is not as if we say, 'Well you're not high-potential, so we are not going to do anything for you.'"*

5.4.3.2 Code group: Organisational talent: Inclusive vs exclusive

Participants held differing views regarding whether talent management should be an inclusive or exclusive process. Four participants favoured an exclusive process, reserved for certain employees or organisational levels.

> Participant 3: *"So, I'd say most of the organisations view talent as the key people that contribute in an invaluable sense to the organisation."*

Two participants favoured an inclusive process, noting that all employees should be included.

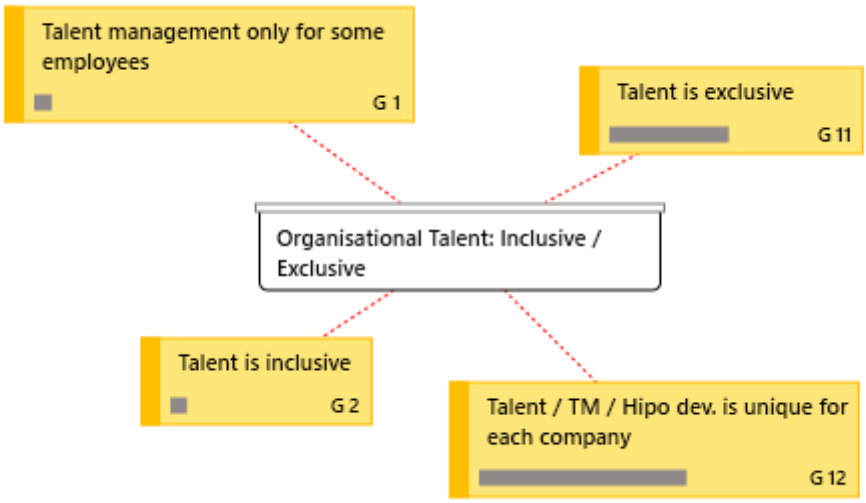
> Participant 2: *"So, currently as we see talent … it's everybody, right through to your Bargaining Unit, because the Bargaining Unit is also where, if you look at automating skills, if you look at automation in the mining industry, the skills need to change, people need to, conceptually, start thinking differently, using equipment differently etcetera. So, we start looking from there. We said, 'People are your talent; however, the focus of the*

succession plan focusses on your management specialist.'"

Participants, thus, did not agree on whether talent management should be an inclusive or exclusive process. Four participants indicated that the conceptualisation of talent and high potential are unique to organisations.

Figure 5.7

Organisational Talent: Inclusive vs Exclusive



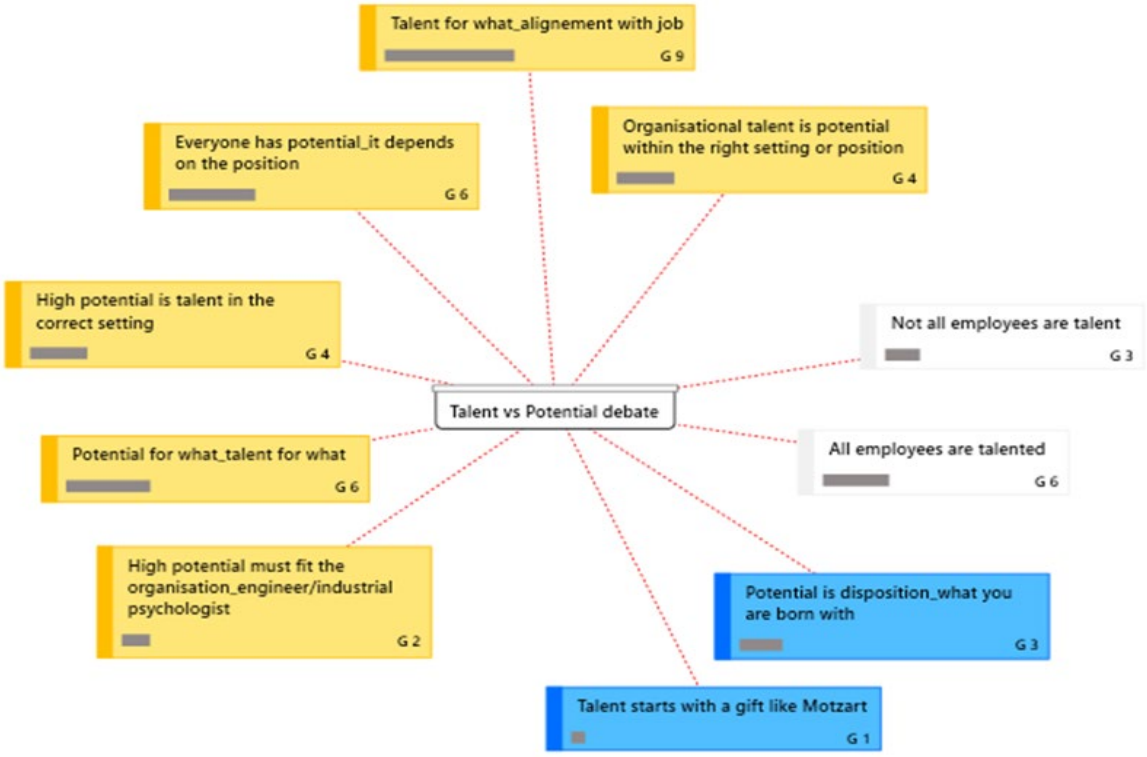
Organisations' talent philosophy—who the company deems as talent and how it defines talent—plays a considerable role in talent development being inclusive or exclusive. It should, however, be noted that none of the participants indicated that only talented or a certain section of employees should be provided an opportunity for development. All were of the opinion that all employees should be developed, which holds implication for the distribution of development resources.

5.4.3.3 Code group: Talent-vs-potential debate

There seems to be a lack of clarity regarding the concepts *potential* and *talent* and their relationships. A clear definition was further hampered by participants using the word *talent* to refer to various different things. The code group and codes are depicted in Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8

Talent-vs-Potential Debate



There is strong evidence that high potential is seen as talent that can be used in a specific position in the organisation or a specific setting (yellow blocks). Two codes that clearly speak to this are: “Organisational talent is potential within the right setting or position” and “High potential is talent in the correct setting”, which codes do not distinguish between organisational talent and high-potential talent. Upon further investigation, it became clear that these participants differentiated between organisational talent, a term referring to a group of employees, and talent, i.e., a skills or trait that an employee possesses. With regard to the code group “Organisational talent is potential within the right setting or position”, the participants referred to talent as employees in the organisation, and in the code group “High-potential is talent in the correct setting”, participants used the term to refer to a skill or trait.

Overall, participants felt that, to be viewed as an employee with high potential, the individual’s skills or traits should fit a certain key role in the organisation. Such an employee could then be deemed a high-potential in terms of adding value to the organisation or being a future CEO.

Examples of quotations supporting this code group are:

Participant 4: *"Everyone's got a talent. You can't get away from that."*

Participant 9: *"So. you might not be talent in this organisation, and you might not be performing but based on your—if we look back—it's possible that you can be talent in another environment or for another company."*

Two codes (white blocks) that seemingly contradict each other, "Not all employees are talent" and "All employees are talented", is understandable when considering a certain position and the unique applications of the word *talent*. The two codes could be rephrased as "Not all employees are organisational talent, meaning they have high potential only to perform in a certain role or position but all employees are talented, even though certain individuals' talents may not be required by the organisation."

A better way to explain this debate, and perhaps propose a solution, is to say that not all employees are high-potentials but those whose talents fit within a certain position or role may be deemed high-potentials for that specific position, and can thus be classified as organisational talent. One participant provided an opinion of talent on an individual level, noting that talent is an inherent attribute of an individual and that it can be developed (blue blocks).

5.4.4 Theme 4: Organisational processes

There are no relationships amongst the various code groups in this theme, other than that they all indicate aspects of the process of managing talent and identifying high-potential employees. As this theme is comprehensive, only the most relevant codes with the highest groundedness counts are indicated in Figure 5.9 and discussed in this section. A summary of Theme 4 code groups and codes is provided in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5

Summary of Theme 4 Code Groups and Codes

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
Organisational processes	Talent management is linked to organisational strategy	Balance the need of the organisation with the need of the individual Organisation decides process of talent management

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
		Organisational structure to support high-potentials' development
		Talent and talent management link to organisational strategy
		Talent, talent management, and high-potential development are unique to companies
		Talent management needs top-management's support
		Talent philosophy
		Talent value proposition
	High-potential identification process	Identification with regard to age and gender
		Identification through talent review process
		Identification through simulations
		Identification of high potential is subjective
		Identification of high potential without psychometrics
		Interview
		Key positions
		Leader group identifies high-potentials
		Manager involvement in identification
		Nine-block grid
		Nomination list
		Performance reviews
		Use of consultants to identify high-potentials
		Succession planning used to identify high-potentials
	Psychometric testing	Battery of tests
		Cognitive (Cognitive Process Profile [CPP] or Career Path Appreciations [CPA])
		Emotional intelligence _Bar on EQ

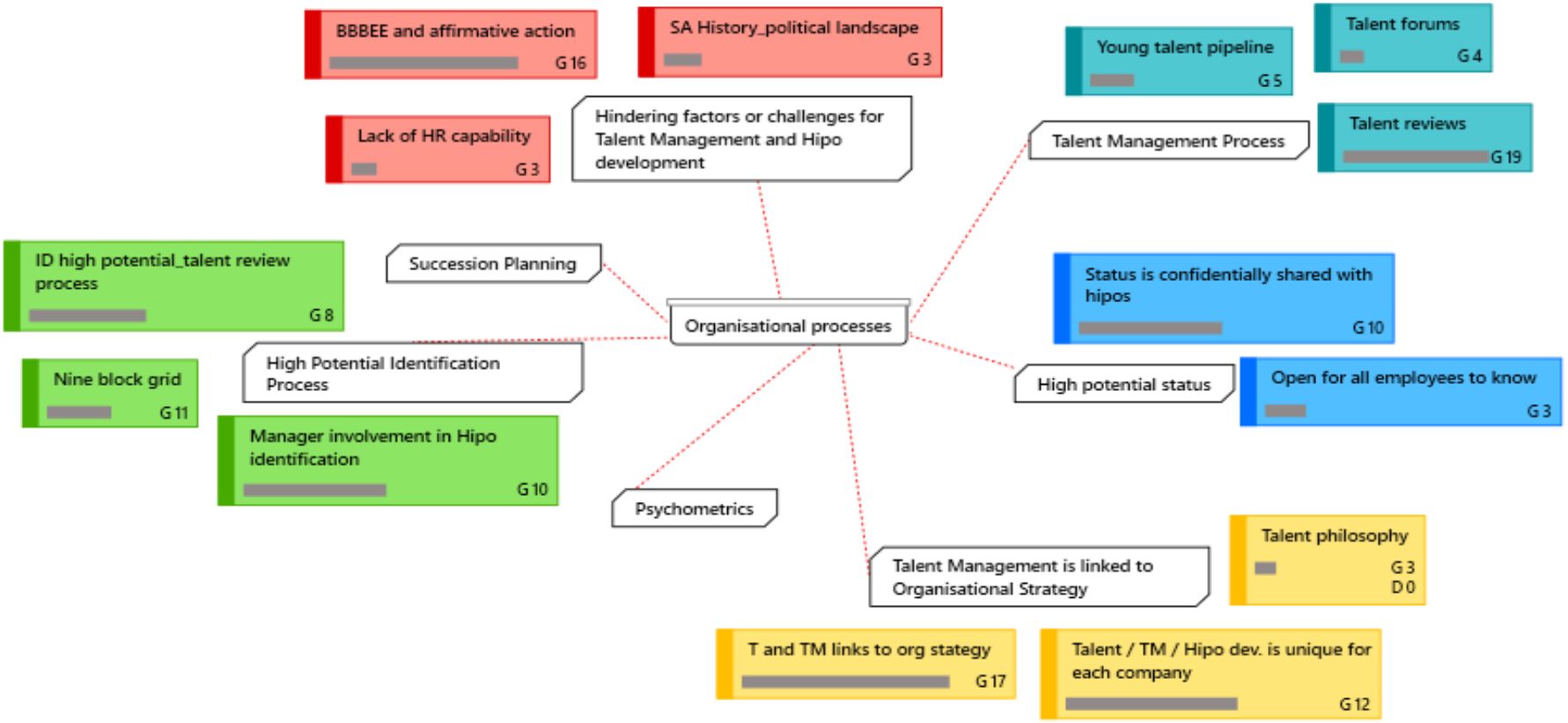
Theme	Code Groups	Codes
		Personality tests (Occupational Personality Questionnaire [OPQ])
		Psychometric results influence managers' perceptions of employees
		Psychometrics only for development-cost
		Psychometrics to identify leadership derailers
		Psychometrics used extensively
		Role of the psychologist
	Succession planning	Integrated computerised system
		Part of talent management
		Leadership positions
		Only for leadership roles
		Succession planning is risk management
		Talent management is part of succession planning
	Talent management process	Career pathing for lower levels (specialists)
		Employee buy-in
		Exit process and retirement planning
		Job analysis
		Recruitment (focus on succession planning)
		Succession planning is part of talent management
		Talent forums
		Talent management programme for all employees
		Talent reviews
		Technology (computer-based management system)
		Various programmes (engineer in training, apprentice, graduate in training)
		Young talent pipeline

Theme	Code Groups	Codes
	Challenges in talent management and high-potential development	Broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) and affirmative action
		Business environment (male, white)
		Constant change in business environment
		High cost of talent management
		Lack of HR capability
		South African history and political landscape
		Struggling economy
	Communication of high-potential status	Important to manage expectations
		Open for all employees to know
		Status is confidentially shared with high-potentials
		Transparent process

The theme and most pertinent code groups are depicted in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9

Theme 4: Organisational Processes



The code groups are discussed below.

5.4.4.1 Code group: Talent management is linked to organisational strategy

Almost all (eight) participants noted, in one way or another, that talent management is not a stand-alone organisational function but always flows from the organisation's strategy.

> Participant 1: *"So, talent management is quite important, and is a detailed part of our strategy."*

They also noted that talent and talent management are operationalised uniquely in companies, and should be defined by developing a company talent philosophy.

> Participant 9: *"So, really, what do we need? That's also defined in the criteria for talent. 'How does talent look like in our business?', which differs from company to company. So, yes, talent for one organisation might mean innovation, continuous improvement, forward thinking, new ideas, bla bla."*

> Participant 7: *"I think my plea for talent models will just be, I think you can come up with a model, there are a few of them, which are well-defined but the crux…, I think you would harm yourself if you don't build a chapter on how to identify what's important in the organisation. Here's a model of what talent can be … but that doesn't mean it's true for your business."*

One participant referred to a talent value proposition, which the company defines as the company's offering of talent development. The participant indicated that this value proposition is unique, and that the company uses it to attract and retain employees. Another participant was of the opinion that it is crucial that organisations craft a talent- or leadership philosophy.

5.4.4.2 High-potential identification process

Participants mentioned several tools that are used in the identification of high-potential employees. Although all the codes are listed in Table 5.5, only those with the highest groundedness counts are discussed.

Three participants admitted that the identification of high potential is a subjective process practised by the organisation. Most participants indicated that their companies used some form of psychometric testing, interviews, nomination lists, and/or performance ratings to identify high-potentials. However, participants had different opinions on which tools are most effective. What was apparent was that talent reviews are widely used. Four participants

specifically noted the importance of talent reviews. These four participants all had extensive experience of talent management in an organisation setting. What also was apparent was that leader group or managers are intensely involved in the process of identifying high-potentials, noted by six participants. Four participants noted use of the nine-block grid in talent identification and classification.

5.4.4.3 Psychometric testing

Only one participant indicated not using any psychometric testing. All other participants elaborated on the type of psychometric tests they and their client companies used. One participant noted that a battery of tests is preferable to a single test. Another participant noted using psychometric instruments extensively in identifying and developing high-potential employees. From the participants' interviews, it was gathered that three groups of tests are used to assist in identifying high-potential employees:

- Cognitive tests (CPP or CPA), mentioned by three participants;
- Emotional intelligence tests (Bar-on EQ), mentioned by one participant; and
- Personality tests (OPQ), mentioned by two participants.

Three participants noted that, although they used psychometric tests, the results were used only for developmental purposes and not to identify high-potential talent. Most participants viewed a combination of tests as the most effective in identifying high-potential talent.

5.4.4.4 Succession planning

Participants viewed succession planning as an integral part of the talent management process. They further noted that succession planning was done only for leadership positions. It would however seem that planning the talent management processes in such a manner that it incorporates succession planning, is important.

5.4.4.5 Talent management process

Four participants elaborated on talent forums (management discussion groups) and talent reviews (discussions with employees regarding their development) as components of the high-potential identification process.

> Participant 1: *"So, for those individuals, we have regular … talent reviews. We have just implemented a system, which actually works quite nicely."*

One participant specifically noted the importance of also creating a young talent pipeline to address the future needs of the organisation.

> Participant 8: *"The focus here, in my opinion, is on building a young talent pipeline, so you know that your pipeline is robust."*

5.4.4.6 Challenges in talent management and -development

Participants noted that the main hindering factors to effective talent management and high-potential identification and development are South Africa's current political landscape, B-BEEE, and affirmative action. Feedback from participants indicates that these aspects complicate the identification of high-potential individuals as companies are expected to prioritise certain race groups. One participant highlighted HR practitioners' lack of ability to effectively develop and manage talent management systems. This participant indicated that, in companies where there were no industrial psychologists, general HR practitioners struggle to manage talent effectively.

5.4.4.7 Communication of high-potential status

Most participants were of the view that the high-potential status of individuals should be shared only with that individual, and not made public in the organisation. They, however, agreed that the information regarding the process should be made available to all employees, as transparency in the process is important.

5.4.5 Theme 5: Indicators of high-potential talent

Various elements were identified that could be grouped as indicators of high-potential talent. These aspects were divided into two code groups, namely external indicators and internal indicators. External indicators are aspects such as age and gender, while internal indicators are aspects intrinsic to individual employees. The *External indicator* code group was developed in a similar manner to the previous code groups. Numerous participants mentioned various external indicators. The internal indicators, however, were developed a little differently, as participants used different terminologies to describe the same aspects. Each of these aspects was coded separately to ensure thoroughness and integrity of the data. No inferences were made at the coding stage, which resulted in a high number of codes, which were first grouped into sub-groups before code groups were developed. Summaries of the code groups and codes for Theme 5 are provided in Table 5.6 and Table 5.7.

Table 5.6

Summary of Theme 5 Code Groups and Codes: External indicators

Code Group	Codes
External indicators of high potential	Age and gender
	B-BBEE and affirmative action
	Employees and critical positions are considered
	Experience and exposure
	Stakeholder management
	Not job performance but experience is important
	Performance as indicator of high potential
	Potential for next hierarchical level
	Potential to move up two levels within the next five years
	Readiness
	Successor or not, and readiness
	Team performance
	Value of the person is based on performance

The internal indicators are summarised in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7

Theme 5: Indicators of high potential: Internal indicators

Code groups	Code Sub-groups	Codes
Internal indicators of high-potential	Ability to work with people	Ability to build relationships
		Ability to network
		Can energise others
		Can influence others positively
		Can work well as part of a team
		Can work with people
		Caring

Code groups	Code Sub-groups	Codes
		Collaborative
		Interpersonal skills
		Is pleasant to other people
		Enjoys engaging with others
		Social intelligence
		Willing to help others
	Action-oriented	Able to work independently
		Achievement-orientated and goal-focussed
		'Can do' attitude
		Commitment
		Conscientiousness
		Decision-making
		High achiever
		High-paced activity
		High work ethic
		Immersion in the job, effort
		Initiating action
		Proactive
		Problem-solving
		Want to do more than expected
		Willing to go the extra mile; do better
	Career ambition	Ability to rise through the ranks
		Aspiration and ambition
		Career-driven
		Stretch career goals
	Cognitive and thinking abilities	Ability to analyse information
		Ability: reasoning, numerical, verbal

Code groups	Code Sub-groups	Codes
		Ability to deal with complex environments
		Business acumen
		Cognitive ability
		Intellectual capacity
		Judgement
		Logical reasoning
		Multitasking
		Quick to grasp information
		Strategic thinking
		Verbal ability, persuasiveness
	Committed and engaged	Committed, wants to be here
		Energised by motivating factors in senior roles
		Engaged
		Interested in leadership
	Emotional maturity	Adaptability flexibility
		Cultural intelligence
		Emotional stability
		Emotional intelligence (EQ)
	Functional competence	Functional competence
		Technical skill
	Learning agility	Growth mindset
		Learning agility
		Questioning nature
	Ability to manage others	Comfortable with managerial control
		Makes decisions and gives direction

Code groups	Code Sub-groups	Codes
		Organised
		Plan, organise, control
	Personal impact	Ability to create rapport with others
		Displays a positive presence but is not necessarily extroverted
		Self-confidence
	Ethics and values	Ethical, principled, trustworthy
		Living the values

The internal indicator informed the dimensions of high-potential talent in the development of the HiPo Scale, which is discussed in detail later in this chapter. The external indicators are discussed below, followed by the internal indicators.

5.4.5.1 External indicators

External indicators are organisation-specific aspects that are external to the individual employees but are considered by the organisation in determining which employees are high-potential. These are mostly objective aspects that link strongly to organisational strategy, talent philosophy, and processes. These external indicators were not taken into account in the development of the HiPo Scale but were integrated into the model for the identification of high-potential talent.

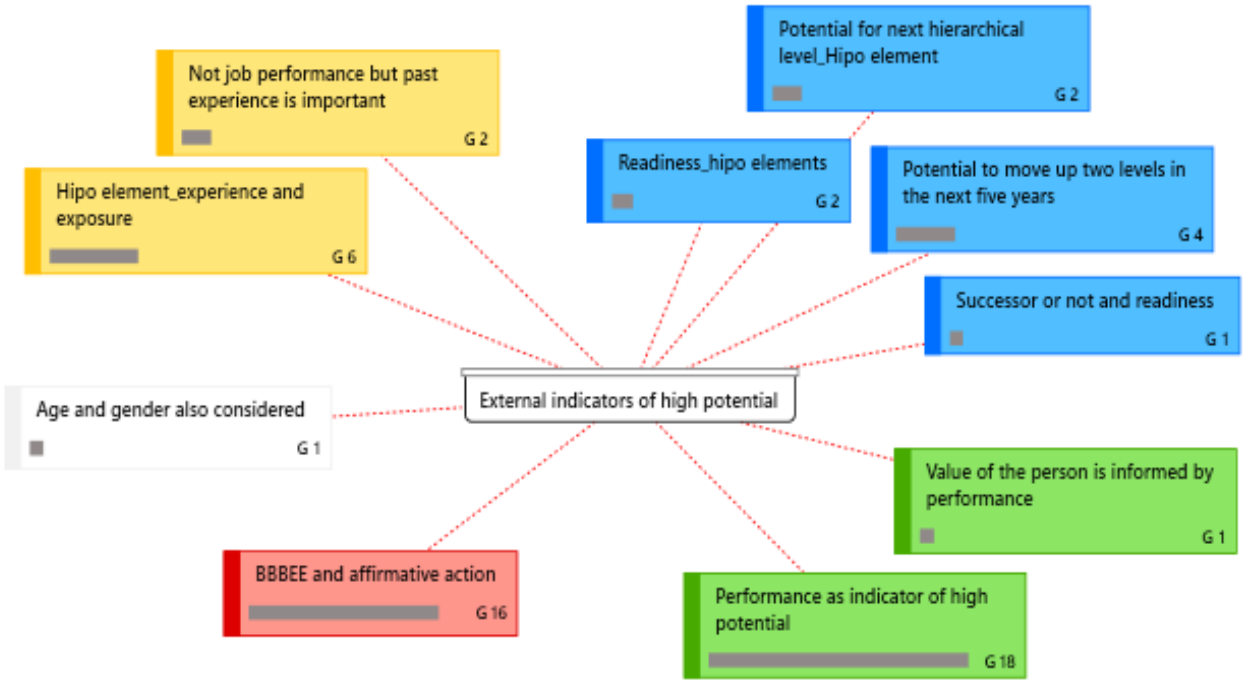
The two codes with the highest groundedness were *B-BBEE/affirmative action* (red block) and *Performance of the individual* (green block in Figure 5.10). While B-BBEE and affirmative action were also identified as hindering factors to effective high-potential development and talent management, these aspects cannot be ignored. Interestingly, despite the literature signifying that current job performance should not be considered an indicator of high potential, eight participants indicated that it should indeed be taken into consideration. Three participants, however, believed past experience and exposure to be much more important than performance.

Another aspect that was noted, and where the code groups were clustered (blue blocks), is that, in identifying high-potentials, consideration is given to the readiness of the employee to scale the hierarchically in the organisation. All the blue codes relate to such potential. One participant indicated that age and gender are also considered in identifying high-potential

talent. Figure 5.10 provides a mind map of the external indicator of high-potential candidates.

Figure 5.10

External Indicators of High Potential



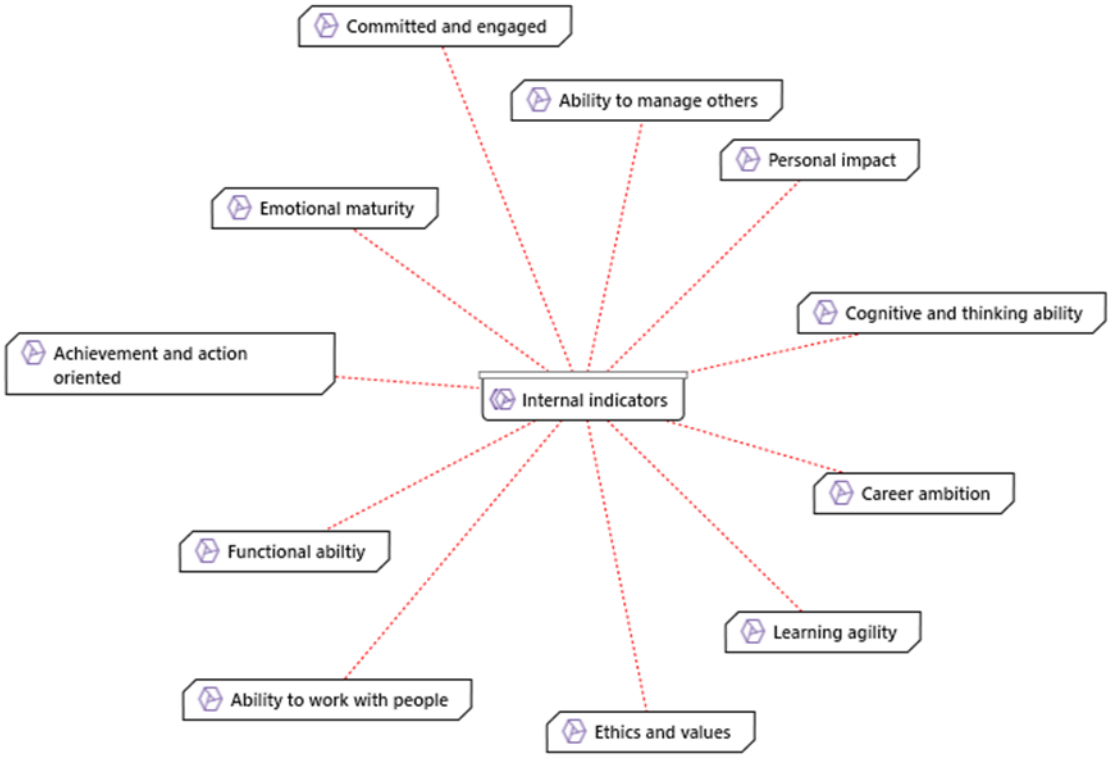
The next section discusses the internal indicators.

5.4.5.2 Internal indicators of high potential

A total of 67 codes were identified in this code group. The focus here was not to categorise information but to identify each and every consideration mentioned by the participants, hence the absence of groundedness counts in the figure. Once the codes had been identified, they were grouped into sub-groups of constructs, which were included in the HiPo Scale, and the codes were incorporated as behavioural descriptors for each sub-group. The code sub-groups are depicted in Figure 5.11.

Figure 5.11

Internal Indicators of High Potential



The next section provides a consolidation of the indicators of high potential.

5.5 CONSOLIDATION OF HIGH-POTENTIAL INDICATORS

A summary of characteristics and indicators of high-potential talent noted in literature was provided in Chapter 3. This section provides a consolidation of the characteristics and indicators noted in literature and the findings of the qualitative phase of this study. The literature does not distinguish internal from external indicators, which distinction emerged from the interviews with experts. The indicators identified in Chapter 3 are reiterated in Table 5.8 for ease of reference.

Table 5.8

Indicators of High-potential Talent from Literature

Indicator	Author(s)
Current job performance	Derr et al. (1988); Dries & Pepermans (2008); Dries & Pepermans (2012); Downs (2015); Jooss & Krebs (2024); Juhdi et al. (2012); Middleton (2011)
Learning agility	Buckner & Marberry (2018); Dries & Pepermans (2012); Juhdi et al. (2012); Lombardo & Eichinger (2000); Middleton (2011); Silzer & Church (2010)
Intelligence/cognitive capabilities	Church & Silzer (2014); Lombardo & Eichinger (2000)
Aspiration or engagement/motivational skills/career drive	Church & Silzer (2014); Jooss & Krebs (2024); Juhdi et al. (2012); Silzer & Church (2010)
Personality traits/characteristics/competencies	Church & Silzer (2014); Kelly (2013); Lombardo & Eichinger (2000); Middleton (2011); Silzer & Church (2010)
Company values	Middleton (2011)
Nine-box grid, management evaluation/organisational talent reviews	Downs (2015); Jooss & Krebs (2024); Robinson et al. (2009)
Technical or functional skills	Church & Silzer (2014); Silzer & Church (2010)
Leadership skills	Church & Silzer (2014); Downs (2015)
Mobility	Jooss & Krebs (2024); Silzer & Church (2010)
Experience	Silzer & Church (2010)
Commitment/loyalty to the company	Jooss & Krebs (2024); Kelly (2013); Silzer & Church (2010)
Culture fit	Jooss & Krebs (2024); Kelly (2013)

Note. Researcher's own compilation

The above list comprises both internal and external indicators. Literature notes numerous traits or characteristics that are indicative of a high-potential employee. Table 5.9 illustrates which characteristics were proposed by certain authors in literature.

Table 5.9

Characteristics of High-potential Talent in Literature

Characteristic/Indicator	Dries & Pepermans (2007)	Tansley (2011)	Ready et al. (2010)	Chamorro et al. (2017)	Silzer & Church (2010)	Ulrich & Smallwood (2012)
More talented than others/high level of expertise	X	X				
Proactiveness and career initiative taking/enterprising spirit, can-do attitude/drive to excel/achievement orientation	X	X	X	X		X
Aspirations/ambition					x	x
Leadership skills/behaviours	X	X				
Interpersonal skills/dynamic sensors/social skills	X		X	X		X
Creativity		X				
Learning agility			X			X
Cognitive ability / strategic thinking				X	X	
Emotional intelligence					X	
Engagement					X	

From the above, it is clear that all characteristics of high-potential talent identified from literature are internal indicators. The information gathered from literature and in the qualitative phase of the research were merged to create a consolidated list of external and internal indicators of high potential, which was included in the model. The internal indicators were incorporated into the behaviour-based HiPo Scale, which was tested in the quantitative phase. Table 5.10 provides the list of consolidated external indicators.

Table 5.10

List of Consolidated External Indicators

Literature Indicators	Qualitative findings : External Indicators
Current job performance	Performance
Learning agility	Age and gender

Literature Indicators	Qualitative findings : External Indicators
Intelligence/cognitive abilities	B-BBEE and affirmative action
Aspiration or engagement/motivational skills/career drive	Employees and critical positions are considered
Nine-box grid, management evaluation/organisational talent reviews	Experience and exposure
Personality traits/characteristics/competencies	Experience in stakeholder management
Company values	Experience (not performance)
Technical or functional skills	Potential for next hierarchical level
Leadership skills	Potential to move up two levels within the next five years
Mobility	Readiness
Experience	Successor, readiness
Commitment/loyalty to the company	Team performance
Culture fit	The value of the person is informed by performance

The following indicators, which were included in Table 5.8, were, following the data analysis, deemed internal indicators, and were omitted from the final list of external indicators and included in the list of internal indicators.

- Learning agility;
- Intelligence/cognitive capabilities;
- Aspiration or engagement/motivational skills/career drive;
- Personality traits/characteristics/competencies;
- Company values; and
- Leadership skills.

Following a process of inspection, whereby duplicate indicators were consolidated and internal indicators were eliminated, a final list of external indicators of high-potential talent was developed. The descriptions are based on the information gathered during the interviews.

Table 5.11

Final List of External Indicators of High-potential Talent

External Indicator	Description
Age and gender	Appropriate age and gender, considering the work environment (e.g., mining)
B-BBEE and affirmative action	The employee meets the requirements of B-BBEE and the company's affirmative action plan
Employee and critical position fit	The employee shows potential to occupy a critical position in future
Experience and exposure	The individual has the appropriate experience and exposure to be deemed a high-potential candidate
Stakeholder management	The individual has a track record of managing stakeholders
Job performance	High job performance in current and previous positions
Readiness to move	Readiness and potential to move to a higher hierarchical level
Team performance	High performance of teams previously managed
Mobility	Mobility to relocate in order to gain experience
Management evaluation per nine-block grid	
Company values	The employee lives the values of the company

The final consolidated list of internal indicators of high-potential was developed by merging the elements which were deemed internal characteristics, identified from literature, the elements which were identified from literature, and the internal indicators identified in the qualitative phase of the present study.

Table 5.12

Internal Indicators from Literature and the Qualitative Research Phase

Literature Characteristics	Qualitative Research Phase Internal Indicators
More talented than others/High level of expertise	Functional competence

Literature Characteristics	Qualitative Research Phase Internal Indicators
Learning agility	Learning agility
Interpersonal skills/Dynamic sensors/Social skills	Ability to work with people
Proactiveness and initiative/Enterprising spirit, Can-do attitude/Drive to excel/Achievement orientation	Achievement- and action-oriented
Aspirations/ambition	Career ambition
Leadership skills/behaviours	Ability to manage others
Cognitive ability/Strategic thinking	Cognitive abilities
Emotional intelligence	Emotional maturity
Engagement	Committed and engaged
Creativity	Personal impact
	Ethics and values

A final list of internal indicators of high-potential talent was developed by following a process of inspection and eliminating duplicates. All indicators identified during the interviews were originally identified in the literature review, with the exception of *Creativity* (Tansley, 2011). *Personal impact* and *Ethics and values* were identified from the interview data, and were not noted in the literature consulted.

As noted, the consolidated indicators were used to develop the behaviour-based HiPo Scale to measure high-potential behaviours displayed by employees in a work setting. As a first step in developing the scale, the dimensions were defined, together with a definition of each dimension. Creativity as an indicator was identified in only one literature source (Tansley, 2011), and was therefore not included.

Table 5.13

Final List of Internal Indicators of High-potential Talent

Internal Indicator	Description
Ability to work with people	A high-potential individual works well with others, behaving in such a manner as to foster long-terms relationships and collaboration.

Internal Indicator	Description
Achievement- and action-oriented	High-potential individuals are focussed on goal achievement. They have a 'can do' attitude that enables them to solve problems, even in difficult circumstances.
Career ambition	High-potential employees have ambition to progress up the hierarchy or reach a certain level in their careers.
Cognitive abilities	A high-potential employee displays strong cognitive abilities.
Committed and engaged	High-potential employees are committed to the organisation and engaged in their work.
Emotional maturity	A high-potential employee is emotionally mature, with a high EQ, and is able to adapt to and manage uncertain environments.
Functional competence	High-potential employees are competent in their functional area of expertise, yet are suitable for a leadership position
Learning agility	High-potential employees enjoy learning new things; they value the acquisition of knowledge, and excel at it.
Ability to manage others	A high-potential employee has excellent managerial skills.
Positive personal impact	A high-potential employee makes a positive impact on others through their presence. They are self-confident and relate well to others.
Ethics and values	High-potential employees maintain ethical conduct; they are trustworthy, and live the values of the organisation.

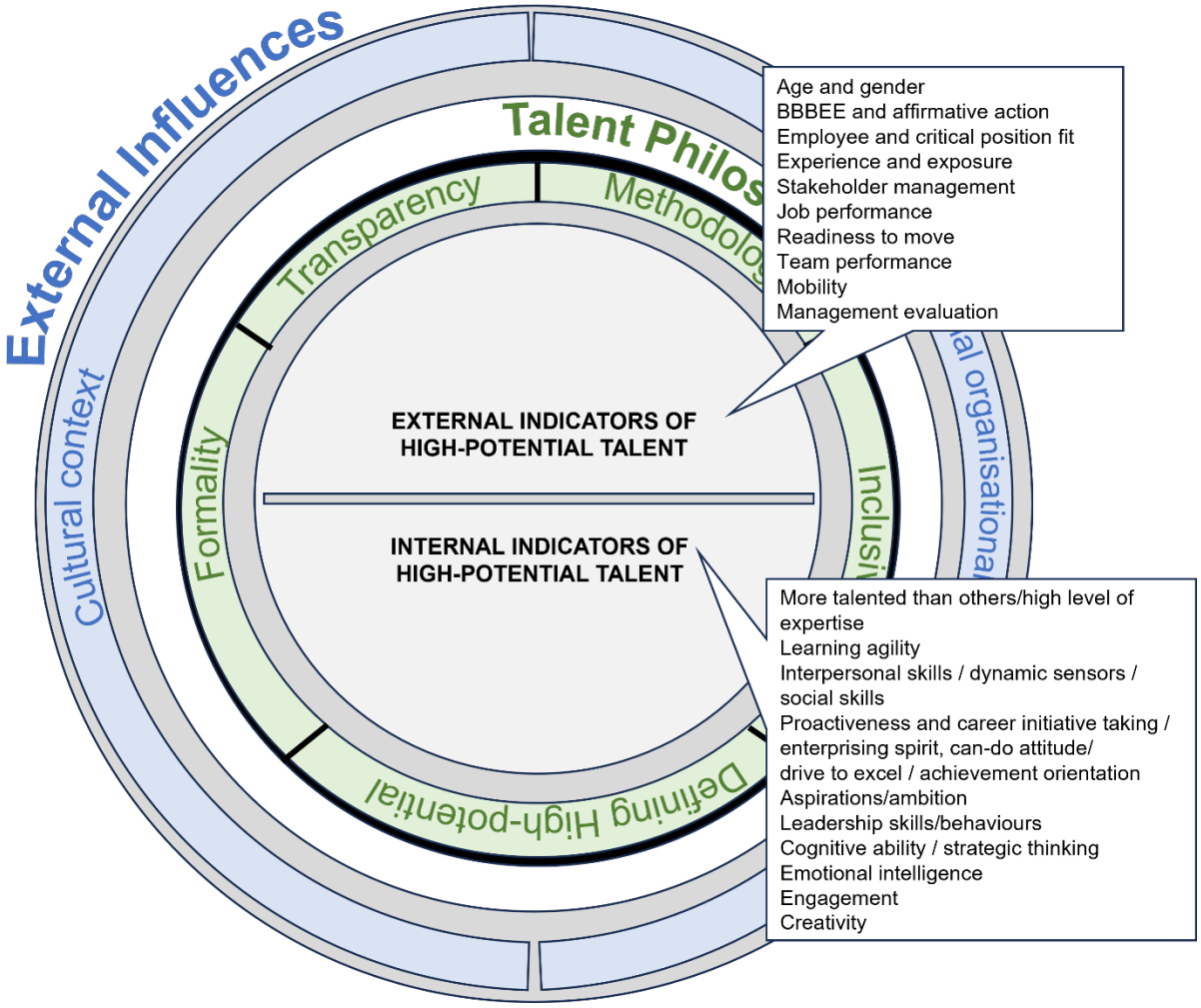
The remainder of this chapter describes the process that was followed in developing the HiPo Scale for measuring behaviours of high-potential talent, commencing with the updated model for the identification of high-potential talent.

5.6 UPDATED MODEL FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

The qualitative phase of the research expanded the understanding of high-potential indicators and characteristics initially identified from literature. The model for the identification of high-potential talent was subsequently updated to reflect the knowledge gained in the qualitative research phase. The updated model is shown in Figure 5.12.

Figure 5.12

Model for the Identification of HiPo Talent Reflecting the Qualitative Findings



The execution of the qualitative phase achieved RO6 and RO7; how industry views high-potential talent and the predictive indicators of high-potential talent were identified and described. The next section details the development of the HiPo Scale.

5.7 INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-POTENTIAL IDENTIFICATION SCALE

DeVellis (2017, p. 18) explains that “a scale is a measurement instrument that is a collection of items combined into a composite score and intended to reveal levels of theoretical variables not readily observable by direct means”. DeVellis (2017) further notes that a scale is able to measure phenomena that exist based on theoretical understanding but cannot be accessed directly.

A strict process of scale development should be adhered to in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the final scale. Several development processes (Boateng et al, 2018; Carpenter, 2018; DeVellis, 2017; Morgado et al., 2017) were considered for development of the HiPo Scale, which were reported on in Chapter 4, and the following process was implemented:

Step 1: Conceptualisation of high-potential talent and related concepts;

Step 2: Generate HiPo item pool;

Step 3: Determine the measurement format;

Step 4: Have initial item pool reviewed by experts;

Step 5: Consider the inclusion of validation items;

Step 6: Pilot test/review by member of the target population;

Step 7: Administer the scale;

Step 8: Data screening and preparation for analysis;

Step 9: Verify factorability of data;

Step 10: Perform exploratory factor analysis; and

Step 11: Perform statistical scale analysis (including confirmatory factor analysis).

The execution of Steps 1 to 6 is discussed below. Steps 7 to 11 are reported on in Chapter 6, which focuses on the quantitative results.

5.7.1 Conceptualisation of high-potential talent and related concepts

Step 1 was executed through the literature review and analysis of the qualitative data. High-potential talent and related aspects were conceptualised and defined. DeVellis (2017) contends that it is critical to specify exactly what will be measured, which is aided by a thorough grasp of the theory underpinning the scale. In the present study, an extensive literature review was conducted to gain a thorough understanding of the theory underpinning talent management and the identification of hi-potential talent. In addition, experts were consulted to gain insight into their lived experiences of the domain under study, and an item pool was subsequently developed.

5.7.2 Development of item pool

The qualitative phase yielded 11 constructs that could potentially be included as indicators of high-potential talent. Following discussions with two fellow industrial psychologists and

experienced psychometric test developers, the decision was taken not to include *Ethics and values* in the scale, as this construct is extremely complex, and it was feared that the items may generate socially desirable responses rather than respondents' honest opinions. The number of indicators was subsequently limited to 10.

Table 5.14

Final List of High-potential Talent Constructs

High-potential constructs
Ability to work with people
Achievement- and action-oriented
Career ambition
Cognitive abilities
Committed and engaged
Emotional maturity
Functional competence
Learning agility
Ability to manage others
Positive personal impact

DeVellis (2017) noted various aspects that should be taken into consideration in generating an item pool:

- Items should reflect the purpose of the scale.
- It is preferable to be comprehensive and generate more items than needed. The item pool should be at least 50% larger than the final scale but should preferably contain three to four times as many items.
- Items must be unambiguous.
- Exceptionally lengthy items with elaborate wording should be avoided.
- Reading difficulty of items should be considered.
- Double-barrelled items (items that convey two or more ideas) should be avoided.

- Ambiguity in sentence structure, wording and nouns that may cause confusion should be avoided.
- Avoid mixing positively and negatively worded items.

All the above were adhered to in developing the item pool.

5.7.3 Determine measurement format

DeVellis (2017) discusses scales that employ weightings (Thurstone Scale and Guttman Scale) and scales with equally weighted items (Likert scale, semantic differential scale, visual analogue scale, and binary options). After carefully considering all the options, it was decided to use a Likert-type scale as this scale type supported behavioural statements best. When a Likert scale is used, the items are formulated as declarative statements, each accompanied by a set of response options that reflect varying levels of agreement with, or endorsement of, the statement (DeVellis, 2017).

5.7.4 Review by experts

The list of items was emailed to 12 experts in the fields of industrial psychology and psychometric scale development, of which seven responded. The item list and instructions that was emailed to the industry experts are provided in Appendix D. The pool of items comprised 10 items per construct, amounting to a total of 110 items.

The experts were not interviewed during the first phase of the research, and, thus, had no previous exposure to the item pool or constructs. The experts were asked to evaluate the items' sentence structure and whether the items measured the relevant construct. They were invited to indicate whether items should be included or excluded, and to make suggestions for alternative wording. A summary of the experts' feedback is provided in Appendix E, which was used to refine the items.

DeVellis (2017) points out that, even though expert evaluation and feedback are invaluable, the researcher, as the scale developer, should decide which items are included. In evaluating the feedback from the experts, the present researcher considered two aspects:

1) Feedback on individual items: This feedback focussed mostly on the clarity and conciseness of the items but also included how the items related to other items in the same construct or other constructs. The experts commented on the wording of the

items and made suggestions. They also made suggestions regarding replacing items or moving an item to a different construct.

2) Frequency of an observation: The present researcher paid particular attention to observations and recommendations that were made repeatedly by different experts. It was interesting to note that the feedback from the experts was quite consistent. For example, five of the seven experts questioned the use of the word *trade* in Item 1, which focused on functional competence, and made various suggestions for consideration.

The item list was amended with consideration of the expert feedback and again carefully reviewed by the present researcher.

General feedback from the experts was also considered. Expert feedback led to the decision noted earlier to exclude the construct *Ethics and values* from the scale.

> Expert 5 noted: *"I understand the importance of ethics and values but people will always answer these type of questions in a social desirable [manner]. Perhaps rather look at this section from a maintaining standards point of view: I keep to my commitments, I am always on time, I respect confidentiality, I keep to my organisations' rules, I don't embarrass other people, I behave proper, I always see the best in other people, etc."*

While it may be important that high-potential employees adhere to high ethical standards, it is difficult to measure this behaviour using a self-report instrument.

The final list of items was developed:

Construct 1: Ability to work with people

1. I easily build positive relationships.
2. I enjoy being part of a team.
3. I am good at networking.
4. I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes.
5. My colleagues' well-being is important to me.
6. I enjoy engaging with others at work.
7. I find it easy to influence others.

Construct 2: Achievement and action orientation

1. Goal achievement is very important to me.
2. I feel satisfied when I deliver above-average work.
3. I can easily make decisions.
4. I enjoy high-paced working environments.
5. It is important to me to perform better than others.
6. I work hard to deliver an above-average output.
7. I try to balance work and personal life.

Construct 3: Career ambition

1. I have specific career goals.
2. I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career.
3. I am ambitious.
4. I set challenging goals for myself.
5. I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me.
6. Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals.
7. I value contribution more than achievement.
8. I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs.

Construct 4: Cognitive ability

1. I am good at analysing information.
2. I see complex problems as a positive challenge.
3. I easily grasp difficult concepts.
4. I understand my organisation's business environment well.
5. I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time.
6. I easily formulate logical arguments.
7. I have been told that I am more intelligent than the average person.

Construct 5: Committed and engaged

1. I want to be a leader in my organisation.

2. I enjoy my work.
3. I am proud of the organisation that I work for.
4. My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals.
5. I support my organisation's goals.
6. I am positive about my work.

Construct 6: Emotional maturity

1. I easily adapt to new situations.
2. Others think I control my emotions well.
3. I remain calm in challenging situations.
4. I rely on logic rather than feelings when making decisions.
5. I can regulate my feelings.
6. I get along with all my colleagues.
7. I can help others regulate their emotions.

Construct 7: Functional competence

1. I am seen as an expert in my profession.
2. Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems.
3. I give others advice on functional problems.
4. Others view me as a subject-matter expert in my functional area.
5. Others look up to me because of my professional knowledge.
6. My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters.

Construct 8: Learning agility

1. I enjoy learning new things.
2. I excel at formal learning.
3. I have a questioning nature.
4. I value acquiring new knowledge.
5. I quickly understand new information.

6. I make use of opportunities to learn new things.
7. Continuous learning is a priority for me.

Construct 9: Ability to manage others

1. Others see me as decisive.
2. I enjoy managing others.
3. I am organised in my work approach.
4. I can be effective in unstructured working environments.
5. I prefer working in well-organised environments.
6. I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others.
7. I like to plan in order to ensure performance.

Construct 10: Personal impact

1. I enjoy meeting new people.
2. Others say I make a positive personal impact.
3. I relate well to others.
4. I am confident in my ability to achieve what I set out to do.
5. I encourage others to be confident in themselves.
6. I instil confidence in others.

The items per construct ranged from six to eight.

5.7.5 Consider the inclusion of validation items

DeVellis (2017) suggests two categories of validation items. The first is items that measure social desirability, and the second is items that relate closely to constructs not specifically measured in the scale but that may have already proven valid in other instruments. This could give an indication of validity of the scale being developed (DeVellis, 2017). Neither of these two categories was considered relevant for the HiPo Scale. The scale already consisted of 69 items, and a decision was made not to add to this. A copy of the final scale, including biographical items, is attached as Appendix G.

5.7.6 Pilot test / review by members of the target population

The finalised scale was administered to members of the study population who met the study's inclusion criteria in a pilot test, to confirm that the scale was appropriate for the target population and that they understood all the items. The pilot study also allowed the researcher to test the electronic platform disseminating the survey to 15 employees in the participating organisation. The respondents completed the scale online, using Google Forms. Eleven completed HiPo Scales were returned. The respondents also completed a short questionnaire that gathered their feedback on the scale (see Appendix J). A summary of the feedback from the pilot study is attached as Appendix K.

Overall, the feedback on the pilot test was positive. All the respondents indicated that the invitation email was clear and easy to understand. They all confirmed that the instructions to complete the HiPo Scale were clear and that it was easy to complete the scale. One respondent indicated that a wider response scale would allow for more accurate responses. The fourth evaluation question required that respondents list items that were unclear or ambiguous. The items listed in Table 5.15 were identified.

Table 5.15

Items Identified as Unclear or Ambiguous

Item	Participant(s)	Comment
I value contribution more than achievement.	2 & 6	-
I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs.	5	Success can lead to significance.

Question 5 asked the pilot respondents to indicate which items they felt uneasy about answering, and the items listed in Table 5.16 were identified.

Table 5.16

Items that Created Unease amongst Pilot Respondents

Item	Participant(s)	Comment
Finding time to balance work and family.	4	Mind always at work
It is important for me to perform better	5	

than others.		
I excel at formal learning.	7	
I have been told that I am more intelligent than the average person.	7	
Other concerns	11	The questions are based on other people's views of me.

The pilot respondents, in addition, provided information about the layout and structure of the HiPo Scale. Overall, the respondents considered the layout of the scale attractive, and they provided positive feedback, summarised in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17

Comments about the HiPo Scale

Comments about the layout	General comments
"The survey had nice, bright background colours"	"Clear and easy to use"
"I like the general presentation of the survey"	"Questions were nice and short which allows the participant to answer immediately and not take too long to think"
"Fresh look to the scale and interesting"	"I feel it has a good range of an appropriate responses"
"Layout attractive"	"Easy, understandable questions with rating scale."

Four improvements to the items were made in response to comments from the pilot test, listed in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18

Questions Identified as Unclear or Ambiguous

Original wording	Changed wording	Note
I value contribution more than achievement.	I value making a contribution more than personal achievement.	Minor change to wording

I try to balance work and personal life.	I make time to relax. I prioritise work–life balance.	One item split into two
I have been told that I am more intelligent than the average person.	I am more intelligent than the average person.	Minor change to wording

The present researcher subsequently again reviewed the HiPo Scale, and decided to remove Item 8 (Construct 1: Interpersonal skills): "I easily develop positive relationships" due to ambiguity, despite the pilot test respondents not having expressed any concerns about it. A copy of the final HiPo Scale is attached as Appendix L. Steps 7 to 11 of the HiPo Scale development process are reported in Chapter 6.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reported on the findings of the qualitative phase of this study. It also described the development of a list of external and internal indicators of high potential by combining the findings of the literature review with the findings of the interviews with experts. Lastly, the chapter described the process of generating an item list as the basis for the development of a scale to measure internal indicators of high potential. The following chapter reports the results of the quantitative phase, including the remaining steps in the scale development.

CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 reports the statistical results and quantitative empirical findings of this study. The HiPo Scale that was developed in the qualitative phase was disseminated to respondents, who completed the scale online. The validity and reliability of the HiPo Scale were tested, and are also reported in this chapter. The next section reviews the study's quantitative research objectives and hypotheses, followed by an overview of the participating organisation. Subsequent sections report the statistical results, commencing with the sample's biographical characteristics and the statistical analyses that were performed on the dataset. The chapter concludes with conclusions regarding the research hypotheses and -objectives.

6.2 REVIEW OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

As noted earlier, the main aim of this research was to develop a model for the identification of high-potential talent. The qualitative elements of the model were identified during the first phase of the research. In the second phase, the HiPo Scale, which forms part of the model, was statistically tested and refined. Phase 1 of this study entailed gathering qualitative insights regarding industry's views of high-potential talent and the typical behaviour of high-potential employees, thereby addressing RO6 and RO8. The results of the qualitative phase informed the development of the HiPo Scale, which was tested in the quantitative phase, in order to address the following research objectives:

RO9: To determine the validity and reliability of each high-potential talent construct; and

RO10: To determine statistically which dimensions or observable behaviours are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent;

RO11: To develop a model, tested by means of structural equation modelling, to identify high-potential talent; and

This chapter reports on the achievement of RO9 to RO11.

In addition, this chapter addresses the five hypotheses developed for this study:

H1: High-potential employees exhibit higher work performance than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H2: High-potential employees are more engaged than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H3: High-potential employees exhibit higher levels of learning agility than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H4: High-potential employees are more positive about their ability to work in a team than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H5: High-potential employees are more ambitious than capable and remain-in-role employees.

It was important to test the scale in an organisation that had a well-designed talent management system in place. Although the company's name will not be mentioned, it is relevant to provide information on the organisations' talent management system, as the structure of the system has some impact on the deductions made from the data gathered from the HiPo Scale and the testing of the hypotheses. The next section provides information on the participating organisation.

6.3 OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATION

The organisation in which the research was conducted is an international provider of wood fibre-based renewable resources. The company has over 12 000 employees in over 35 countries around the world.

The organisation values employee development and succession planning, and has invested considerable effort and research into creating a talent management system able to identify and manage talent. The company follows an exclusive approach to talent development, as not all employees are included in the system. Talent management in the organisation is focussed on developing a leadership pipeline that will address the organisation's leadership needs.

The organisation's talent review system is highly structured and computerised. Talent reviews are conducted once every financial year. Team leaders evaluate their team, and are advised to include their whole team in the review process in order to gain a holistic view of team performance and potential. One of the objectives of the talent review system is effective succession planning; thus, employees on short-term contracts, such as trainees or interns, are not included in the talent review process.

The talent review system requires that line manager input five sets of information on each employee, which information informs decisions on the future potential of employees:

- demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, retirement age, and disability status. It also includes an overview of employees' career preferences, if they completed this on their profiles;

- competency results, if the employee has completed a formal competency assessment against a current or any other job's requirements;
- the employee's latest performance rating;
- the line manager's rating of the employee's potential, which ratings are well defined; and
- development recommendations—if the line manager wants to assign training, a project, assignment, or job rotation, a recommendation is created on the system and the employee's development plan is updated.

Performance-review scores are categorised in order to more easily determine the correct course of action with regard to employee development. The categories are indicated in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Performance-review Score Categories

Unsatisfactory	Developing	Effective	Outstanding

The *Effective* rating is further categorised into E+ or E-.

Line manager's rating of the employee's potential rating is subjective but line managers are required to explain the reasons for their ratings during the talent-review interview. Potential as defined by the organisation is not specifically related to an employee's readiness for any job or position. Rather, it refers to the employee's capacity to progress up the hierarchy within the next two to five years. The ratings of potential employed in the reviews are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

Rating Scale of Employee Potential

Remain in role	Capable	Promotable	High potential

Definitions of the above categories are provided in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3

Definitions of Potential Rating Categories

Category	Description
Remain in role	The employee performs to the expectations of the job but is unlikely to develop any further because for one of the following reasons: - the employee is unable to progress due to a lack of skills, experience, or capability; or - the employee has reached the ceiling in the job family; or - the employee does not wish to enter any other role, and has shared that information with the manager; or - the employee is near retirement.
Capable	The employee is performing well and is fully competent in the current role but is unlikely to be promoted in the foreseeable future. The employee may have the capacity to take on more responsibility in the current role, or would be able to take on a similar role in the same or different job family, at the same level of responsibility (i.e., a lateral move).
Promotable	The employee consistently demonstrates superior performance and competence in the current role. The employee demonstrates the right leadership competencies for the role, as well as the potential to take on more complex roles. The employee demonstrates the capacity to take on bigger responsibilities in the same or a different job family (i.e., can move up a level) in the foreseeable future.
High potential	A high-potential employee has the potential to move up two or more grades within the next five years. The employee consistently demonstrates outstanding performance and leadership competencies that are better developed than what is required at the employee's current level. The employee has the capacity to take on more complex and significantly different roles.

The organisation further takes the following into account:

- Readiness: how long it will take before the employee is ready for the next role;
- Probability of loss: how likely is the employee to leave the organisation; and
- Impact of loss: the consequences if the employee had to leave the organisation.

Using the information above, the manager plots each employee on a nine-box grid, in which process some of the performance- and potential categories are combined. The categories of the nine-box grid are indicated in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4

Nine-box Grid Combined Categories

Potential	Remail in role	Capable	Promotable/High potential
Performance	Unsatisfactory/developing	Effective-/Effective+	Effective+/Outstanding

Respondents in the present study were grouped into the above categories for data analysis purposes. From the above, the performance and potential ratings of the respondents can be considered reliable. While the ratings are the subjective opinions of supervisors, the rating system is highly structured with clear parameters for the various categories, which added to the face validity of the HiPo Scale (Boateng et al., 2018; Morgado et al., 2017). The next section discusses the administering of the HiPo Scale in the quantitative phase of the present study.

6.4 ADMINISTERING OF THE HIPO SCALE

The scale was administered to employees of the participating organisation (HiPo Step 7: Administer the scale to a sample of the population). The final HIPO Scale consisting of 69 items was electronically distributed via email by the organisation's gatekeeper. The total population of 849 employees was invited to take part in the research by completing the scale. The respondents were full-time employees in various middle- to senior-level positions, and all were part of the formal talent management system and had been rated. A total of 287 completed scales were received. Responses from the pilot test were not included. The next section reports the biographical and demographic details of the sample.

6.5 BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Biographical information was obtained with regard to gender, occupational level, age group, and highest level of education. This is reported on in the following tables.

6.5.1 Composition of sample by gender

Table 6.5 indicates the gender distribution of the sample.

Table 6.5

Gender Distribution

Gender	*n*	%
Male	185	64.5
Female	102	35.5
Total	**287**	**100.0**

Note. *n* = number of participants; % = percentage of total sample

The sample comprised 64.5% men, almost double the number of women (35.5%). This may have been due to the gender distribution of leadership in the organisation but may also have been due to the organisation's manufacturing context.

6.5.2 Composition of sample by age group

Table 6.6 indicates the age distribution of the sample.

Table 6.6

Age Distribution

Age Group	*n*	%
20–30 years	23	8.0
31–40 years	75	26.1
41–50 years	109	38.0
51–60 years	80	27.9
Total	**287**	**100.0**

Note. *n* = number of participants; % = percentage of total sample

The largest number of respondents (38.0%) were in the age group 41–50 years. A total of 75 were aged 31–40 years, and 80 fell in the group 51–60 years. Only 8% of respondents were aged 30 years or younger.

6.5.3 Composition of sample by occupational level

Table 6.7 indicates the occupational-level distribution of the sample.

Table 6.7

Occupation-level Distribution

Occupation Level	*n*	%
Senior management	16	5.6
Professional	157	54.7
Skilled & qualified workers (junior management)	114	39.7
Total	**287**	**100.0**

Note. *n* = number of participants; % = percentage of total sample

6.5.4 Composition of sample by level of education

Table 6.8 indicates the distribution of the sample according to level of education.

Table 6.8

Level of Education

Level of Education	*n*	%
No qualification	10	3.5
Matric/Grade 12	8	2.8
Qualified technician	17	5.9
National diploma/certificate	85	29.6
Bachelor's degree	71	24.7
Postgraduate diploma/certificate	26	9.1
Honours degree	30	10.5
Doctorate/Master's degree	37	12.9
Other	3	1.0
Total	**287**	**100.0**

Note. *n* = number of participants; % = percentage of total sample

A little over half of the respondents (54.3%) held a national diploma or bachelor's degree, and only 6.3% held no tertiary qualifications. A total of 32.5% of respondents held a postgraduate

qualification. The group labelled “Other” represented one respondent with a Grade 11 level of education, one with a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer: Internet qualification, and one respondent who was engaged in further education.

6.5.5 Composition of sample by potential rating

Table 6.9 indicates the distribution of the sample by potential ratings.

Table 6.9

Potential Rating

Potential Rating	***n***	**%**
High-potential	21	7.3
Promotable	135	47.0
Capable	97	33.8
Remain in role	34	11.8
Total	**287**	**100.0**

Note. *n* = number of participants; % = percentage of total sample

Only 7.3% of respondents were identified as high-potentials. This category is grouped together with employees who are rated as promotable on the organisation’s nine-box grid. However, as the study focused on high-potential employees, this category was separated. A total of 47% of respondents were rated promotable, and 33.8% were rated capable. Only 11.8% were rated as expected to remain in their current roles and unlikely to develop any further.

6.5.6 Composition of sample by performance rating

Table 6.10 indicates the distribution of the sample according to last performance rating.

Table 6.10

Performance Rating

Last Performance Rating	***n***	**%**
Outstanding	25	8.7

Effective +	153	53.3
Effective	99	34.5
Effective -	6	2.1
Unsatisfactory	4	1.4
Total	**287**	**100.0**

Note. *n* = number of participants; % = percentage of total sample

As shown in the table above, the participating organisation used five categories of performance rating. Almost 90% of the sample (87.8%) achieved a rating of *Effective* or *Effective* +. Only 8.7% achieved rating of *Outstanding*. A total of 3.5% of the sample comprised employees who had been rated *Effective*- or *Unsatisfactory*.

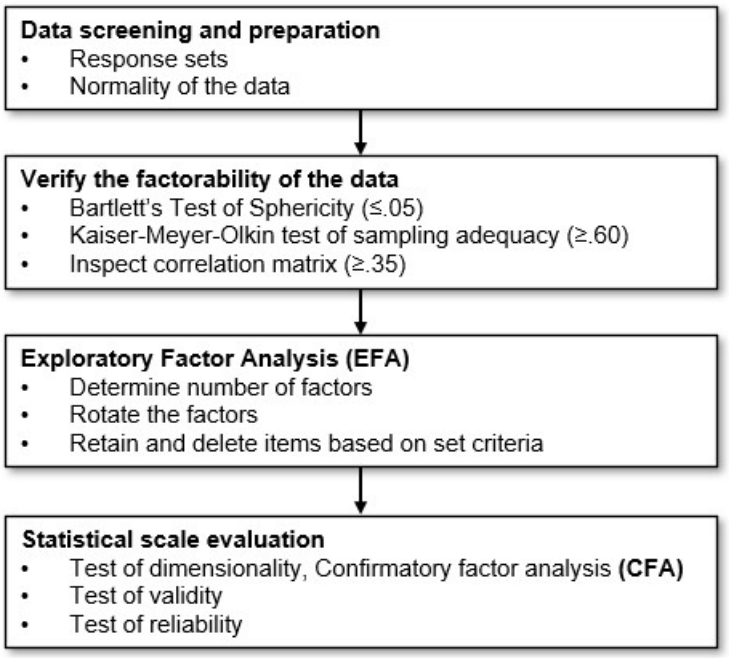
This concludes the reporting on the sample profile. The next section reports the results of the statistical analyses conducted in developing the HiPo Scale.

6.6 STATISTICAL ANALYSES

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to determine the construct validity, reliability, and structure of the HiPo Scale. The process followed in conducting the factor analyses is summarised in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

Statistical Analysis Process



Note. Researcher's own compilation

The first step in the statistical analysis process namely data screening and preparation, is discussed in the following section.

6.6.1 Data screening and preparation for statistical analysis

Data screening and preparation for statistical analysis was conducted as Step 8 of the development of the HiPo Scale. This section provides an explanation of how the data were controlled to increase data quality.

In total 287 completed scales were received. Case screening was conducted by doing a missing value analysis and examining the data for unengaged responses. All the respondents completed the scale, there were no cases with missing values. Further analysis was conducted to identify unengaged responses. The researcher performed an inspection to identify and exclude cases with a standard deviation (SD) of zero but no such cases were present. Thus, no completed scales were excluded from further analysis, and the sample size remained n = 287.

It was important to examine the data with regard to mean, SD, skewness, and kurtosis. This was done for each of the 69 items of the HiPo Scale (see Appendix N). Upon investigation of the data, two aspects were noticed. The first is the skewness of the items. All items were

negatively skewed and, thus, adversely biased. Given the type of items, this was to be expected. The items assessed aspects related to socially acceptable behaviour, and respondents may have viewed themselves in a more favourable light than they ought to have done. This limitation of self-reporting measures is described as social desirability bias (Morgado et al., 2017). As high-potential talent is a positive construct, it was to be expected that the distributions of the items would be negatively skewed. Within the context of the research topic, the skewness of the item distributions was not considered to have contaminated the data (King & Bruner, 2000).

The second aspect is the standard error of kurtosis (see Appendix N). There were 21 items with a ratio kurtosis divided by the standard error of kurtosis (K/SE) greater than 2. Ratio K/SE refers to the standard error of kurtosis. The ratio of kurtosis to its standard error is used as a test of normality. Normality can be rejected if the ratio is less than -2 or greater than 2. Non-normality was identified for 21 of the 69 items, which items showed extreme kurtosis. Of importance was Item 9, which was negatively skewed with a positive kurtosis. The ratio K/SE for Item 9 was 27.1 (see Appendix N). Upon examination of this item, it became clear that almost all the respondents selected “4” which represents “very true for me” in answering this item. The item read: “I feel satisfied when I deliver above-average work”. In hindsight, it was to be expected that most respondents would agree with this statement, as was done by 223 of the 287.

The kind of non-normality mentioned above occurs frequently in social sciences research. Blanca et al. (2013) found that, when skewness and kurtosis were considered together, most distributions involving smaller samples were non-normal. Only 5.5% of the distributions were near what would be predicted under a normal distribution. Most distributions (74.4%) showed either a little or moderate variation, while 20% displayed more extreme variance. Although non-normality of items could impact the validity of statistical findings (Hair et al., 2014), it is up the researcher to investigate and explain non-normality and decide whether the data should ultimately be compensated for or excluded. In the present study, the researcher decided that, the non-normal item distributions were acceptable within the context of the study. A decision was made to continue with statistical analysis but to bear in mind social desirability bias and non-normality of the distributions of some of the items.

6.6.2 Factorability of the data

In this step, the data were inspected to determine suitability to perform exploratory factor analysis (Pallant, 2020). Three aspects were considered to determine the factorability of the data, namely the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index, Bartlett’s test of sphericity, and the factor

loadings of the items.

6.6.2.1 KMO index

For factor analysis to be considered suitable, the KMO index should be 0.6 or above (Pallant, 2020). The HiPo Scale had a KMO score of 0.918, which is categorised as ‘marvellous’ (Hair et al., 2014).

6.6.2.2 Bartlett’s test of sphericity

Bartlett’s test of sphericity was 0.000, which aligned with the requirement for significance of $p < 0.05$ (Hair et al., 2014).

6.6.2.3 Significant factor loadings

Factor loadings measure the strength of the intercorrelations amongst items. It is the correlation coefficient for the variable and factor (Pallant, 2020). It is important that the strength of the relationship amongst the variables (or items) is significant for factor analysis to be done. The factor loadings on items were consistent with the recommended 0.35 for a sample size greater than 250 to be significant (Hair et al., 2014). Pallant (2020) indicates that, if there are not many correlation coefficients in the correlation matrix that meet the factor loading requirement, factor analysis should be reconsidered. This was not the case with the HiPo Scale. The correlation coefficients presented in the correlation matrix were inspected, and it was determined that the number of correlation coefficients above 0.35 was sufficient to continue with factor analysis. The KMO score, Bartlett’s test of sphericity, and the factor loadings indicated that factor analysis for the dataset was indeed appropriate.

6.6.3 EFA results

Following confirmation of the factorability of the data, the statistical analysis process was continued with the extraction of factors from the dataset. Pallant (2020) explains factor extraction as the process of finding the fewest factors that accurately represent the relationships between the variables. Ten constructs were identified during the qualitative research phase, and the scale items were based on these constructs. The constructs are provided again in Table 6.11 for ease of reference.

Table 6.11

Summary of the Original Factors Measured in the HiPo Scale

	Original Constructs
1	Ability to work with people
2	Achievement- and action orientation
3	Career ambition
4	Cognitive ability
5	Commitment and engagement
6	Emotional maturity
7	Functional competence
8	Learning agility
9	Ability to manage others
10	Personal impact

Appendix G lists the descriptions of the constructs (factors) measured by the HiPo Scale. All factors were defined by the researcher during the qualitative research phase.

Maree (2016) notes that factor analysis produces a factor loading matrix as its main output. This factor loading matrix can be inspected to determine the number of factors that should be extracted and used in further analysis. Several sets of information can be used in deciding how many factors to extract (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021; Pallant, 2020). According to Pallant (2020), the main methods are Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalue greater than 1), a scree plot, and Horn's parallel analysis. All three methods were used in determining the number of factors to extract for the HiPo Scale.

6.6.3.1 Determine number of factors

Factors were extracted using principal component analysis (PCA), the most widely used approach (Pallant, 2020). Initially, Kaiser's criterion or the eigenvalue rule was used to determine the number of factors to be extracted (see DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021; Irwing et al., 2018; Pallant, 2020). The initial eigenvalues for all factors are presented in Appendix M.

(a) Kaiser-Guttman eigenvalue criterion

The initial eigenvalues were examined using the Kaiser-Guttman rule or Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1960), which states that the number of factors that should be retained is equal to the number of factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. A total of 15 factors were identified, listed in Table 6.12 (see also Appendix M). The total variance explained by the 15 factors was 63.289%. The variance explained by each factor is shown in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12

Percentage of Variance Explained by Initial Eigenvalues after PCA

Component/ Factor	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	19.410	28.131	28.131
2	2.909	4.216	32.347
3	2.742	3.973	36.320
4	2.501	3.624	39.944
5	2.093	3.033	42.977
6	1.904	2.759	45.736
7	1.768	2.563	48.299
8	1.611	2.335	50.634
9	1.527	2.214	52.848
10	1.444	2.092	54.940
11	1.338	1.939	56.879
12	1.215	1.761	58.641
13	1.142	1.655	60.295
14	1.057	1.532	61.828
15	1.008	1.461	63.289

Note. Initial eigenvalues represent the amount of variance explained by each component before rotation.

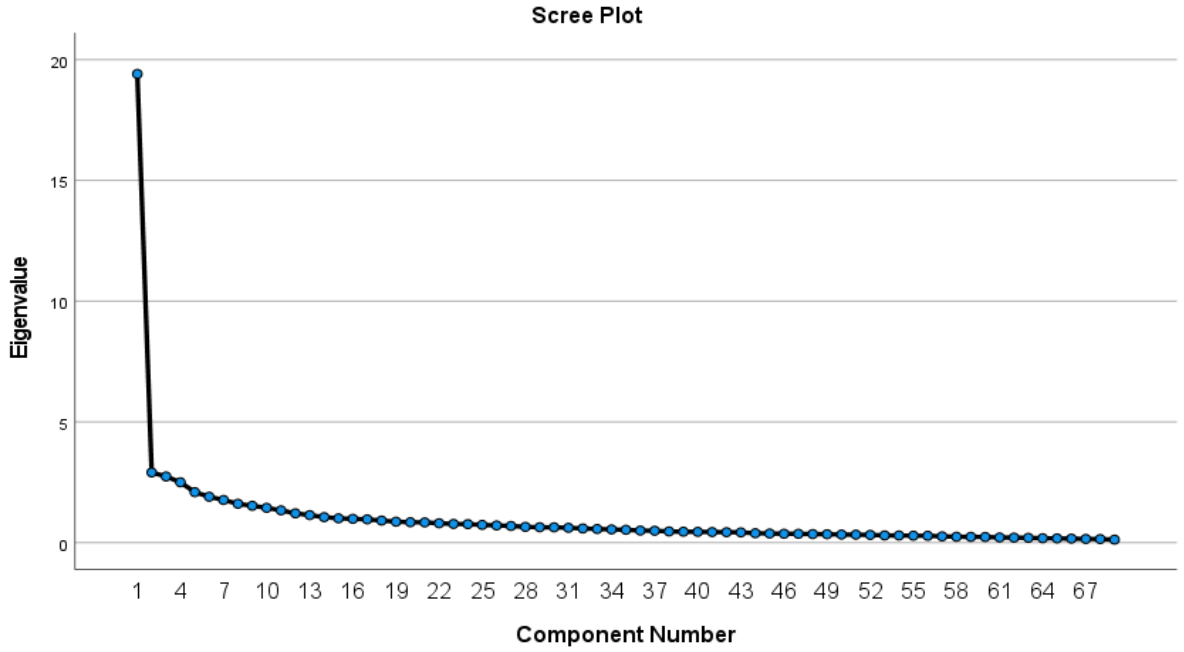
Unfortunately, the factor solution reached by applying the Kaiser criterion was not meaningful. Upon inspection of the pattern matrix generated as an output by SPSS, it was noted that four of the 15 factors had only one item loading on the factor, which was not acceptable.

(b) Scree plot

The next method used to determine the number of factors to extract was a scree plot (see DeVellis &Thorpe, 2021), which is a line of the eigenvalues (Maree, 2016). The number of factors, components, or constructs to be extracted is usually shown by the eigenvalues to the left of the line's elbow. The scree plot is depicted in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2

Scree Plot



Note. The sharp decline after the first component indicates the point of inflection used to determine the number of factors retained.

The scree plot showed a clear elbow with only one factor clearly indicated. Factor 1 captured 28% of variance. There was a small break after Factor 2, after which the line evened out gradually. It was not feasible to retain or extract only one component, and this solution was rejected.

(c) Horn's parallel analysis

Due to the unsatisfactory results of Kaiser's criterion and the scree plot, it was decided to use Horn's parallel analysis, which indicates the number of principal components. According to DeVellis and Thorpe (2021), Horn's analysis is based on the same premise as the Kaiser criterion but also considers sample fluctuations. In using Horn's analysis, the researcher is

required to systematically compare the eigenvalue generated by SPSS with the corresponding first value from the results produced by parallel analysis. If the researcher's value is greater than the criterion value from parallel analysis, the factor is retained. If it is less, the factor is rejected (Pallant, 2020). This process was followed for the factors of the HiPo Scale, and the decisions made are reflected in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13

Output from Parallel Analysis and Corresponding Decisions

Component Number	Eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from parallel analysis	Decision
1	19.410	2.0925 0567	Accepted
2	2.909	2.0019 0451	Accepted
3	2.742	1.9324 0362	Accepted
4	2.501	1.8689 0314	Accepted
5	2.093	1.8173 0288	Accepted
6	1.904	1.7747 0298	Accepted
7	1.768	1.7259 0287	Accepted
8	1.611	1.6832 0266	Rejected
9	1.527	1.6448 .0243	Rejected
10	1.444	1.6065 0226	Rejected
11	1.338	1.5689 0230	Rejected
12	1.215	1.5338 0213	Rejected
13	1.142	1.4997 0202	Rejected
14	1.057	1.4638 0199	Rejected
15	1.008	1.4335 0192	Rejected

Note. The criterion values were obtained through parallel analysis and compared with eigenvalues from PCA to determine factor retention. 'Accept' indicates components retained for further analysis; 'Reject' indicates components excluded.

Seven components or constructs' eigenvalues were higher than the values proposed by Horn, and were thus included. The eigenvalues for the seven factors are shown in Table 6.13. Factor 8 had an eigenvalue of 1.611, which was lower than Horn's proposed 1.6832 0266, and

was, thus, rejected.

The next step was to interpret the factors, which was done using factor rotation. While rotation does not change the underlying solution, it does present the pattern of loadings in a manner that is easier to interpret (Pallant, 2020).

6.6.3.2 Factor rotation

DeVellis and Thorpe (2021) state that the only goal of factor extraction is to choose factors suitable for further analysis. Rotating factors is an important step because the raw, unrotated factors have no meaning. Rotation is done to more clearly identify the scale's factors or dimensions (Carpenter, 2018).

Direct oblimin rotation allows correlation between factors (Carpenter, 2018), which method was appropriate because the psychological aspects measured were expected to be linked. Pallant (2020) advises inspection of the component correlation matrix to confirm the type of rotation to be used. The component correlation matrix shows the strength of the relationship between the variables that were retained, presented in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14

Component Correlation Matrix

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1.000	-0.276	-0.254	0.264	0.333	0.173	0.206
2	-0.276	1.000	0.331	-0.258	-0.341	-0.181	-0.162
3	-0.254	0.331	1.000	-0.197	-0.339	-0.118	-0.224
4	0.264	-0.258	-0.197	1.000	0.256	0.108	0.177
5	0.333	-0.341	-0.339	0.256	1.000	0.172	0.205
6	0.173	-0.181	-0.118	0.108	0.172	1.000	0.053
7	0.206	-0.162	-0.224	0.177	0.205	0.053	1.000

Note. The table displays correlations amongst extracted components after factor analysis. Values indicate the strength and direction of relationships between components.

The component correlation matrix showed that, although the correlations were quite low, a few factors correlated slightly more closely (Pallant, 2020). Pallant (2020) notes that, if the

correlations between the components are quite low, results from the varimax and oblimin rotations would probably produce very similar solutions. However, given that there were a few correlations higher than .3, oblimin rotation was appropriate (see Pallant, 2020). Rotation converged after 18 iterations, which revealed the presence of simple structure. The seven-component solution explained 48.229% of the total variance. In social sciences, it is not uncommon to consider less than 60% total variance explained satisfactory (Hair et al., 2014). The variance explained by each of the seven factors is shown in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15

Total Variance Explained by Factors Extracted Using Horn's Parallel Analysis

Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**			**Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings**
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	19.410	28.131	28.131	19.410	28.131	28.131	9.586
2	2.909	4.216	32.347	2.909	4.216	32.347	10.899
3	2.742	3.973	36.320	2.742	3.973	36.320	9.290
4	2.501	3.624	39.944	2.501	3.624	39.944	6.908
5	2.093	3.033	42.977	2.093	3.033	42.977	10.686
6	1.904	2.759	45.736	1.904	2.759	45.736	4.183
7	1.768	2.563	48.299	1.768	2.563	48.299	5.118

Note. Initial eigenvalues represent variance before rotation; extraction sums of squared loadings indicate variance explained by retained factors; rotation sums of squared loadings reflect redistributed variance after rotation

The seven-factor solution was accepted for further consideration and analysis. The next step was to determine which items to delete from each factor that was identified, investigate the component structure, and re-label the components to accurately represent their meaning.

6.6.3.3 Retain and delete items based on set criteria

Following factor rotation, decisions had to be made regarding which items to retain and which to delete. The criteria were minimum item loadings and the significance of cross-loadings, based on the results of factor rotation. Pallant (2020) notes that two tables are produced with

oblimin rotation. The pattern matrix table (see Appendix O) shows the factor loadings of each of the variables, and the structure matrix table (see Appendix P) indicates correlations between variables and factors (Pallant, 2020). The structure matrix table is unique to the oblimin output (Pallant, 2020). From the structure matrix, it was clear that there were numerous items that loaded on more than one component (see Appendix P).

The first criterion for deleting unacceptable items was the minimum cut-off point of .40. Hair et al. (2014) explain that factor loadings can be assessed using practical significance, where factor loadings in the range of ± .30 to ± .40 are considered to meet the minimum level for interpretation of structure (Hair et al., 2014). All items that showed factor loadings < .40 were eliminated from further analysis.

When the cross-loadings were inspected, it was noted that there were no items that showed significant cross-loadings where the loading was above .40 on more than one item. Hair et al. (2014, p.90) define a cross-loading as “a variable that has two or more factor loadings exceeding the threshold value deemed necessary for inclusion in the factor interpretation process”. Although some items loaded on more than one component, when the items with loadings lower than 0.4 were eliminated, no significant cross-loadings were evident. The retained items are presented in the pattern matrix (see Appendix O). A total of 24 items were removed from the HiPo Scale, listed in the Table 6.16.

Table 6.16

Items Removed from the HiPo Scale

Item No.	Statement
62	I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others.
40	I rely on logic rather than feelings when making decisions.
69	I can be effective in unstructured work environments.
10	I can easily make decisions.
65	Others say I make a positive impact.
67	I am confident in my ability to achieve what I set out to do.
68	I encourage others to be confident in themselves.
5	My colleagues' well-being is important to me.
27	I understand my organisation's business environment well.

Item No.	Statement
8	Goal achievement is very important to me.
23	I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs.
30	I am more intelligent than the average person.
19	I set challenging goals for myself.
11	I enjoy high-paced work environments.
22	I value making a contribution more than personal achievement.
9	I feel satisfied when I deliver above-average work.
51	I excel at formal learning.
52	I have a questioning nature.
20	I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me.
39	I remain calm in challenging situations.
41	I can regulate my feelings.
38	Others think I control my emotions well.
13	I work hard to deliver an above-average output.
28	I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time.

Based on the statistical analyses and shown in the outputs produced by SPSS, seven factors were identified. The factors were renamed to facilitate ease of use and to reflect their true nature. Carpenter (2018) and Pallant (2020) advise that researcher look for the highest factor loadings on each component to ensure accurate labelling. Although the original intention was to measure a certain aspect with the set of statements, another aspect emerged as the true meaning behind particular statements. The new factors identified were: Professional confidence, Team impact, Drive, Positive engagement, Learning agility, Balance, and Structured approach. Detailed information on the statement, original labels, and the new labels is provided in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17

New Labels for Extracted Factors

Item No.	Statement	Original Qualitative Construct	Updated label following factor analysis
47	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area.	Functional competence	Factor 1: Professional confidence
44	I am seen as an expert in my profession.	Functional competence	
46	I give others advice on functional problems.	Functional competence	
48	Others look up to me because of my professional knowledge.	Functional competence	
49	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters.	Functional competence	
45	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems.	Functional competence	
29	I easily formulate logical arguments.	Cognitive and thinking ability	
57	Others see me as decisive.	Ability to manage others	
66	I relate well to others.	Personal impact	Factor 2: Team impact
1	I easily build positive relationships.	Ability to work with people	
3	I am good at networking.	Ability to work with people	
64	I enjoy meeting new people.	Personal impact	
43	I can help others regulate their emotions.	Personal impact	
6	I enjoy engaging with others at work.	Ability to work with people	
42	I get along with all my colleagues.	Emotional maturity	

Item No.	Statement	Original Qualitative Construct	Updated label following factor analysis
2	I enjoy being part of a team.	Ability to work with people	
69	I instil confidence in others.	Personal impact	
7	I find it easy to influence others.	Ability to work with people	
4	I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes.	Ability to work with people	
37	I easily adapt to new situations.	Emotional maturity	
18	I am ambitious.	Career ambition	Factor 3: Drive
31	I want to be a leader in my organisation.	Committed and engaged	
21	Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals.	Career ambition	
16	I have specific career goals.	Career ambition	
17	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career.	Career ambition	
58	I enjoy managing others.	Ability to manage others	
12	It is important for me to perform better than others.	Achievement and action orientation	
33	I am proud of the organisation I work for.	Committed and engaged	Factor 4: Positive engagement
32	I enjoy my work.	Committed and engaged	
36	I am positive about my work.	Committed and engaged	
34	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals.	Committed and engaged	
35	I support my organisation's goals.	Committed and engaged	

Item No.	Statement	Original Qualitative Construct	Updated label following factor analysis
53	I value acquiring new knowledge.	Learning agility	Factor 5: Learning agility
50	I enjoy learning new things.	Learning agility	
56	Continuous learning is a priority for me.	Learning agility	
55	I make use of opportunities to learn new things.	Learning agility	
24	I am good at analysing information.	Cognitive and thinking ability	
26	I easily grasp difficult concepts.	Cognitive and thinking ability	
54	I quickly understand new information.	Learning agility	
25	I see complex problems as a positive challenge.	Cognitive and thinking ability	
15	I prioritise work–life balance.	Achievement and action orientation	Factor 6: Balance
14	I make time to relax.	Achievement and action orientation	
59	I am organised in my work approach.	Ability to manage others	Factor 7: Structured approach
61	I prefer working in well-organised environments.	Ability to manage others	
63	I like to plan in order to ensure performance.	Ability to manage others	

Hair et al. (2014) indicate that, when the number of factors extracted is larger than six, some of the factors have fewer than three measured items, and multiple low communalities are present, sample-size requirements may exceed 500 in order for structural equation modelling (SEM) to be conducted successfully for the total scale. For the HiPo Scale, even though the sample size was relatively small, the other circumstances described by Hair et al. (2014) were present.

6.6.4 Statistical scale evaluation

The next step in the development of the HiPo Scale was statistical evaluation of the scale, which included Harman's post hoc one-factor analysis and CFA. The scale's validity and reliability were also determined. The purpose of the CFA was to test whether the construct measurements were consistent with the researcher's conceptual understanding of the constructs. In conducting CFA, the hypothesised factor structure projected by EFA is evaluated (Boateng et al., 2018).

6.6.4.1 Harman's post-hoc one-factor analysis

Common method bias may be present when both the independent and the dependent variable are captured using the same response method (Podsakoff et al., 2003). When common method bias is present, there is a risk to the validity of the scale, as variance may be attributable to the measurement method rather than the constructs that the measures represent. Harman's one-factor test was conducted with all the measured items included, to establish if the main variance in the data could be ascribed to one general factor (see Podsakoff et al., 2003). Kock et al. (2021) explain that, if the unrotated solution produces one factor that accounts for more than 50% of the variance, common method bias is present. The result of the Harman's one-factor test indicated that 27.116% of total variance was ascribed to one factor. This was below the 50% threshold, and thus an indication that common method bias was not present.

With CFA, a structural model confirms specific relationships between latent variables or newly identified constructs (Schreiber, 2008). Following numerous attempts at conducting CFA for all factors of the HiPo Scale, it was determined that the process was unsuccessful. The data did not converge into a model representative of all the latent variables that could be tested statistically. Subsequently, measurement models were developed for each latent variable (Baharum et al., 2023). A measurement model in SEM usually shows the relationship of the latent variable to the observed variables (Schreiber, 2008). A decision was taken to report on the measurement models for each of the identified factors to, nevertheless, show the

relationship between the observed variables and latent variables for each identified factor.

It was important to evaluate the individual factors statistically by performing CFA, in order to achieve RO9 and RO10. Determining the reliability and validity of each construct and statistically determining the dimension of observable behaviours that are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent could only be done by conducting statistical analysis for each construct. A decision was made to commence with CFA each factor, using Stata (Version 18).

Upon inspection of the seven factors, in preparation for CFA, it was noted that Factor 6, Balance, had only two items or observed variables. Ideally, components should have at least three items (Hair et al., 2014). Although the researcher believed that the factor existed, it was decided to exclude this factor from further analysis and interpretation, as it was not supported by an adequate number of items. One-factor CFAs were conducted for each of the six remaining factors. The CFA results, validity, and reliability for each factor are reported in the next section.

6.6.4.2 CFA of Professional confidence

Professional confidence was originally conceptualised as *Functional competence* in the qualitative phase. When experts were approached to evaluate the items that measured this construct, the definition provided was: “A high-potential employee is seen as competent in his/her functional area of expertise, even though they might be appointed in a leadership position.” The functional area referred to the individual’s field of education or training, e.g., engineering, accounting, or marketing.

The original *Functional competence* had only six items linked to it. Eight items loaded on the new factor *Professional competence* following CFA. The items are summarised in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18

Items for Professional Confidence

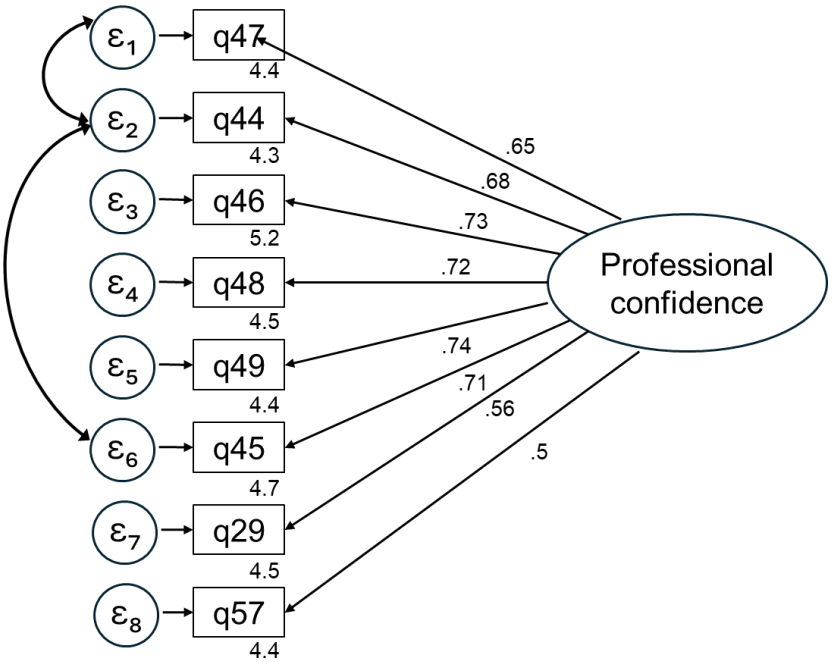
Item No.	Statement	Original qualitative construct
47	Others view me as a subject-matter expert in my functional area.	Functional competence
44	I am seen as an expert in my profession.	Functional competence
46	I give others advice on functional problems.	Functional competence

Item No.	Statement	Original qualitative construct
48	Others look up to me because of my professional knowledge.	Functional competence
49	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters.	Functional competence
45	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems.	Functional competence
29	I easily formulate logical arguments.	Cognitive and thinking ability
57	Others see me as decisive.	Ability to manage others

The original focus of *Professional confidence* was high-potential employees' ability to perform at an above-average level in their functional area or area of speciality. The assumption was that employees needed to demonstrate outstanding functional skills to be classified as high-potential employees. The statistical analysis revealed that, in addition to functional expertise, projecting the image of an expert through logical arguments and decisive decisions was also important. The *Professional confidence* measurement or path model was generated to show the relationship between the latent variable and the items generated for this variable.

Figure 6.3

Professional Confidence CFA Measurement Model



Note. The model illustrates standardised factor loadings for items measuring the latent construct *Professional confidence*. Error terms (ε) represent unique variance not explained by the latent factor.

The CFA path model shows the relationship between *Professional confidence* and each of the items that loaded on this construct, which had factor loadings are above .05. Boateng et al. (2018) posit that factor loadings should ideally be > 0.7 but that > 0.5 is acceptable. The factor loadings indicate the relationship strength between the latent variable and the observed variables (Boateng et al., 2018). In the case of the *Professional confidence* model, the loadings indicated that all the items measured the latent variable to some extent. The model further showed some correlation between error variables 1 and 2 and between 2 and 6. The model fit indices for *Professional confidence* are summarised in Table 6.19.

Table 6.19

Professional Confidence: Measures of Model Fit for CFA

	CMIN (*df*)	***p*-value**	**CMIN/*df***	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**
Threshold		≥ 0.05	< 3	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	≤ 0.05	≤ 0.05

	CMIN (*df*)	*p*-value	CMIN/*df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Professional confidence	27.389 (18)	0.07	1.52	0.99	0.98	0.04	0.03

Note. CMIN/*df* = chi-square divided by degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardised root mean square residual. Thresholds indicate commonly accepted criteria for good model fit.

As shown in the table above, the single-factor solution for *Professional confidence* was a good fit. All the model fit indices were within the set parameters, and no modifications were made to the model. Convergent validity and reliability were investigated, and are reported on in the next section.

6.6.4.3 Validity and reliability of Professional confidence

Convergent validity was measured by investigating the factor loadings of the variables, as well as calculating and examining the average variance extracted (AVE) for *Professional confidence*. The reliability was tested by means of Cronbach alpha and composite reliability (CR). The results are summarised in the Table 6.20.

Table 6.20

Validity and Reliability of Professional Confidence

		Factor loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha α	CR
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Professional confidence			**0.44**	**0.86**	**0.84**
Others view me as a subject-matter expert in my functional area.	I47	0.65			
I am seen as an expert in my profession.	I44	0.68			
I give others advice on functional problems.	I46	0.73			
Others look up to me because of my professional knowledge.	I48	0.72			

	Factor loading		AVE	Cronbach's Alpha α	CR
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Professional confidence			**0.44**	**0.86**	**0.84**
My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters.	I49	0.74			
Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems.	I45	0.71			
I easily formulate logical arguments.	I29	0.56			
Others see me as decisive.	I57	0.50			

Note. Factor loadings represent the strength of the relationship between each item and the latent construct. Thresholds indicate commonly accepted criteria for validity and reliability assessment.

Factor loadings were acceptable although the AVE, an indication of convergent validity, was below the threshold of 0.5. An AVE below 0.5 indicates that the variance is less than 50%, and, thus, that the validity of the construct and individual indicators is questionable. AVE is, however, a more conservative measure than CR. If the AVE is less than 0.5 but the CR is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Grover et al., 2006). Due to the risk of overfitting the model, and based on the acceptable CR, it was decided to retain the current model for *Professional confidence*. Cronbach's alpha (0.86) and CR coefficient (0.84) suggested internal consistency. Thus, the convergent validity of *Professional confidence* was confirmed.

6.6.4.4 CFA of Team impact

Team impact was not conceptualised in the qualitative phase but transpired as a combination of the original constructs of *Personal impact* (four items), *Ability to work with people* (six items), and *Emotional maturity* (two items).

Descriptions associated with these original constructs are:

- Personal impact: High-potential employees make a positive impact on others with their presence. They are self-confident and relate well to others.
- Ability to work with people: A high-potential individual works well with others, behaving in a manner that fosters long-term relationships and collaboration.

- Emotional maturity: A high-potential employee is emotionally mature, with a high IQ and the ability to adapt and manage uncertain environments.

A items that transpired as indicative of *Team impact* are listed in Table 6.21.

Table 6.21

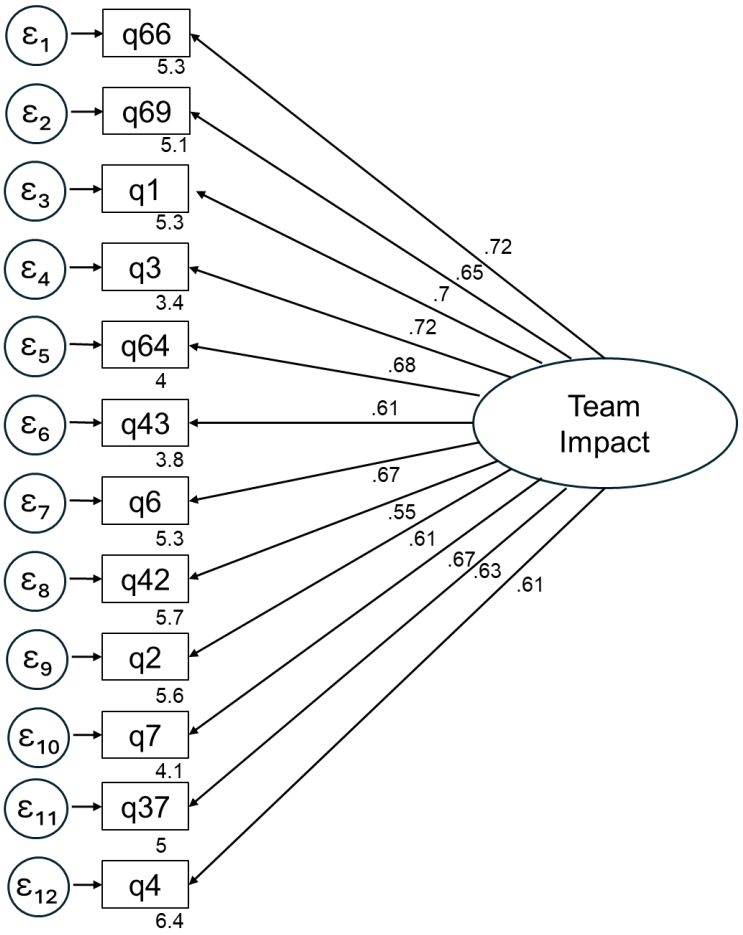
Items for Team Impact

Item no.	Statement	Original Quantitative Construct
66	I relate well to others.	Personal impact
1	I easily build positive relationships.	Ability to work with people
3	I am good at networking.	Ability to work with people
64	I enjoy meeting new people.	Personal impact
43	I can help others to regulate their emotions.	Personal impact
6	I enjoy engaging with others at work.	Ability to work with people
42	I get along with all my colleagues.	Emotional maturity
2	I enjoy being part of a team.	Ability to work with people
69	I instil confidence in others.	Personal impact
7	I find it easy to influence others.	Ability to work with people
4	I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes.	Ability to work with people
37	I easily adapt to new situations.	Emotional maturity

Based on the items and the grouping of the original constructs, a new label was formulated for this construct. *Team impact* accurately represented a combination of being able to work with others, getting along with them, and having a positive personal impact on them. A CFA path model was developed to show the relationships between the latent and observed variables, shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4

Team Impact CFA Measurement Model



Note. Standardised factor loadings are shown on the paths from observed indicators (q1–q69) to the latent construct *Team impact*. Error terms (ε_1–ε_{12}) represent measurement error for each indicator. All loadings were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

As can be seen from the generated path model, the 12 items that loaded on this construct all measured acceptable factor loadings (Hair et al., 2014). No correlation between error variables was apparent. The fit indices for the *Team impact* are provided in Table 6.22.

Table 6.22

Team Impact: Measures of Model Fit for CFA

	CMIN (*df*)	***p*-value**	**CMIN/*df***	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**
Threshold		≥ 0.05	< 3	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	≤ 0.06	≤ 0.05

	CMIN (*df*)	*p*-value	CMIN/*df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Team impact	109.746 (54)	0.00	2.03	0.96	0.95	0.06	0.04

Note. CMIN/*df* = 2.03 indicated acceptable fit (< 3). CFI = .96 and TLI = .95 met recommended thresholds (≥ .95). RMSEA = .06 and SRMR = .04 indicated good fit. All values were within acceptable ranges.

The CFA results for *Team impact* met the thresholds of acceptable fit for all the indices measured, although the results were not very convincing. The model fit the data adequately, with a standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) index of .04 indicating a well-fitting model and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.06 indicating good model fit (Farooq, 2016). Furthermore, the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) (.95) and CFI (.96) indices exceeded the thresholds recommended as indicators of good fit. The x^2-value was 109.746, and x^2/df was 2.03, with a *p*-value of 0.00. It was thus concluded that the model fit the data adequately. Both validity and reliability were tested for *Team impact*. The following table summarises the factor loadings, AVE, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability.

Table 6.23

Validity and Reliability of Team Impact

	Factor loadings		AVE	Cronbach's Alpha α	CR
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Team impact			**0.47**	**0.9**	**0.88**
I relate well to others.	I66	0.72			
I easily build positive relationships.	I69	0.65			
I am good at networking.	I1	0.70			
I enjoy meeting new people.	I3	0.72			
I can help others to regulate their emotions.	I64	0.68			
I enjoy engaging with others at work.	I43	0.61			
I get along with all my colleagues.	I6	0.67			

	Factor loadings		AVE	Cronbach's Alpha α	CR
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Team impact			**0.47**	**0.9**	**0.88**
I enjoy being part of a team.	I42	0.55			
I instil confidence in others.	I2	0.61			
I find it easy to influence others.	I7	0.67			
I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes.	I37	0.63			
I easily adapt to new situations.	I4	0.61			

Note. All factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of .50, supporting indicator reliability. AVE = .47 was slightly below .50, indicating marginal convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha (.90) and CR = .88 exceeded recommended thresholds (.70), demonstrating strong internal consistency and construct reliability.

The convergent validity of *Team impact* was established by first considering the factor loadings. All the factor loadings of the 12 items exceeded the threshold of 0.5, and were shown to be significant. The AVE was slightly below the 0.5 cut-off but the CR was well above 0.7. As with *Professional confidence*, the decision was taken to accept convergent validity as adequate, as the CR was higher than 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Grover et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha (0.9) and CR (0.88) suggested internal consistency. The convergent validity and reliability of the *Team impact* subscale was thus confirmed.

6.6.4.5 CFA of Drive

The third construct that materialised from the EFA was *Drive*, which was not originally theorised when the HiPo Scale was developed but emerged as a combination of items grouped together. *Drive* transpired as consisting of items originally grouped under the following constructs:

- Career ambition: High-potential employees have ambition to grow hierarchically in the organisation or grow to a certain level in their careers.
- Committed and engaged: High-potential employees are committed and engaged.
- Ability to manage others: A high-potential employee has excellent managerial skills.

- Achievement- and action orientation: High-potential individuals are focussed on goal achievement. They have a ‘can do’ attitude that enables them to solve problems, even in difficult circumstances.

The specific items and original constructs are listed in Table 6.24.

Table 6.24

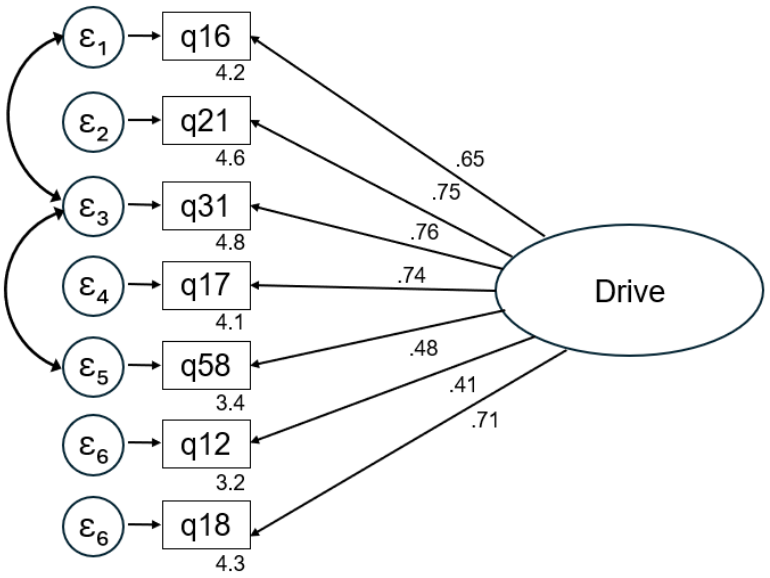
Items for Drive

Item no.	Item	Original Qualitative Construct
18	I am ambitious.	Career ambition
31	I want to be a leader in my organisation.	Committed and engaged
21	Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals.	Career ambition
16	I have specific career goals.	Career ambition
17	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career.	Career ambition
58	I enjoy managing others.	Ability to manage others
12	It is important for me to perform better than others.	Achievement- and action orientation

The majority of items originated from the *Career ambition* construct. The rationale was that high-potential employees have the ambition to achieve a high level of seniority, whether in a managerial or a specialist role. This assumption was supported by the four items from *Career ambition* that loaded on the new construct *Drive*. Item 31, which originally grouped under the *Committed and engaged* construct, did, in fact, reflect career ambition. The item reads: “I want to be a leader in my organisation,” and it was clear that this statement might relate more to career ambition than to commitment and engagement. The original approach in developing the item was focused on the relationship with the organisation, although the section regarding “being a leader” transpired to be more important. Two other items, Items 12 and 58, also loaded on *Drive*. Both items reflect an intention to drive one’s career further by ‘managing others’, probably referring to taking the lead and driving ahead. Item 12, which refers to a high-potential individual wanting to perform better than others, reflects career ambition and drive. The path model in Figure 6.5 provides a graphical view of the relationships.

Figure 6.5

Drive CFA Measurement Model



Note. Standardised factor loadings for the *Drive* construct are shown. Most indicators loaded strongly on the latent factor (≥ .65), supporting indicator reliability. However, two items (I58 = .48 and I12 = .41) fell below the recommended .50 threshold, suggesting weak contributions to the construct. Error terms (ε_1–ε_6) represent measurement error for each indicator. All loadings were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

As shown in the path model, all items loaded quite strongly on the *Drive* construct, except for Items 12 and 58. Although these two items also grouped under *Drive*, as explained above, the loadings were not above 0.5, and it was thus clear that the relationship was not very strong. An item with a relatively low factor loading, however, simply means that the causal effect or correlation between the observed item and latent variable is not very strong but can still be relevant for interpretation purposes (Stevens, 2002). In the case of *Drive*, Item 58 and Item 12 both had factor loadings below 0.5. When examining the item statements, it is clear that the statements might have a less obvious relationship with *Drive*. The indirect relationship thus makes theoretical sense. It could be argued that items with lower loadings are useless in measuring a construct but there are many reasons why items have lower loadings, such as ambiguous statements, double-meaning statements, sensitive statements, and biased statements. Deleting items may, however, affect the fit indexes of the model. In the case of *Drive*, the fit indices, reported in Table 6.25, were satisfactory; thus, based on the theoretical logic and model fit, the two items were retained. A correlation was noted between error variables 1 and 3 and between 3 and 5.

Table 6.25

Drive: Measures of Model Fit for CFA

	CMIN (*df*)	***p*-value**	**CMIN/*df***	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**
Threshold		≥ 0.05	< 3	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	≤ 0.06	≤ 0.05
Drive	8.846 (7)	0.26	1.26	0.99	0.99	0.03	0.03

Note. The chi-square statistic (CMIN = 8.85, *df* = 7, *p* = .26) was non-significant, indicating good absolute fit. The relative chi-square (CMIN/*df* = 1.26) was well below the recommended threshold (< 3). CFI = .99 and TLI = .99 exceeded .95, suggesting excellent incremental fit. RMSEA = .03 and SRMR = .03 were within acceptable limits, confirming strong overall model fit.

The model fit the data adequately, with an acceptable SRMR of 0.03. The other indices were all within the acceptable guidelines, with CFI and TLI both measuring 0.99. The RMSEA value suggested a good fit, 0.03, which is below the suggested threshold of 0.06. The x^2-value was 8.846 and x^2/df was 1.26 with a *p*-value of 0.26. All the measures indicated that the model fit the data adequately, supporting acceptable construct validity for *Drive*. Convergent validity and reliability were also determined. The results are shown in Table 6.26.

Table 6.26

Validity and Reliability of Drive

		Factor loadings	**AVE**	**Cronbach Alpha α**	**CR**
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Drive			**0.45**	**0.82**	**0.84**
I am ambitious.	I18	0.71			
I want to be a leader in my organisation.	I31	0.76			
Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals.	I21	0.75			
I have specific career goals.	I16	0.65			

		Factor loadings	AVE	Cronbach Alpha α	CR
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Drive			**0.45**	**0.82**	**0.84**
I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career.	I17	0.74			
I enjoy managing others.	I58	0.48			
It is important for me to perform better than others.	I12	0.41			

Note. Most factor loadings exceeded .50, supporting indicator reliability, except for I58 (.48) and I12 (.41), which fell below the threshold, indicating weak contributions. AVE = .45 was slightly below the recommended .50, suggesting marginal convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha (.82) and CR = .84 exceeded .70, demonstrating strong internal consistency and construct reliability.

The convergent validity of *Drive* was established by first considering the standardised factor loadings. As noted above, two items had relatively low factor loadings but it made sense to retain the items, given the satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices. From a theoretical viewpoint, it was also logical to retain the two items. The AVE measured slightly below the suggested ≥ 0.5. As with *Professional confidence* and *Team impact* the decision was taken to accept convergent validity based on the CR value, which was substantially higher than 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Grover et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha was 0.82, suggesting internal consistency. The convergent validity of *Drive* was thus confirmed.

6.6.4.6 CFA of Positive engagement

Positive engagement was identified as the fourth construct in the HiPo Scale. The construct was originally titled *Committed and engaged*, defined as: "High-potential employees are committed and engaged." Following a re-evaluation of the name and the items linked to the construct, the researcher decided to rename the construct to *Positive engagement*. *Positive engagement* retained five of the six original items or items that were thought to be linked to this construct. The items are listed in Table 6.27.

Table 6.27

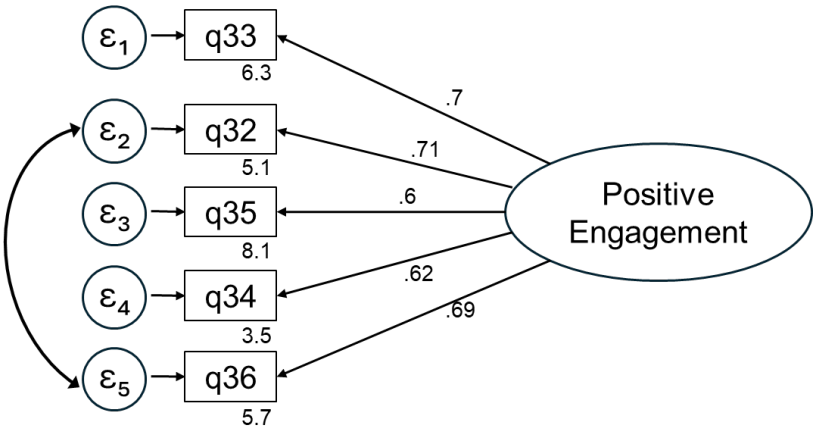
Items of Positive Engagement

Item No.	Statement	Original Qualitative Construct
33	I am proud of the organisation I work for.	Committed and engaged
32	I enjoy my work.	Committed and engaged
36	I am positive about my work.	Committed and engaged
34	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals.	Committed and engaged
35	I support my organisation's goals.	Committed and engaged

Item 31: “I want to be a leader in my organisation”, did not group under this construct, which was re-categorised under the *Drive* construct, as explained above. The path model developed for *Positive engagement* is shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6

Positive Engagement CFA Measurement Model



Note. Standardised factor loadings of the *Positive engagement* construct are shown. All indicators loaded above .60, supporting indicator reliability, with I33 (.70) and I32 (.71) showing the strongest contributions. Error terms (ε_1–ε_5) represent measurement error for each indicator. All loadings were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

As can be seen from the path model for *Positive engagement*, the five items that loaded on this construct all yielded acceptable factor loadings above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). A correlation between error variables 2 and 5 was apparent. “I enjoy my work” and “I am positive about my work” are similar in nature. The fit indices for *Positive engagement* are provided in Table 6.28.

Table 6.28

Positive Engagement: Measures of Model Fit for CFA

	CMIN (*df*)	***p*-value**	**CMIN/*df***	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**
Threshold		≥ 0.05	< 3	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	≤ 0.06	≤ 0.05
Positive engagement	14.952 (4)	0.005	3.74	0.98	0.95	0.1	0.03

Note. The chi-square statistic (CMIN = 14.95, *df* = 4, *p* = .005) was significant, which is common in smaller models. The relative chi-square (CMIN/*df* = 3.74) slightly exceeded the recommended threshold (< 3), suggesting moderate fit. CFI = .98 and TLI = .95 met recommended thresholds (≥ .95), indicating strong incremental fit. However, the RMSEA (.10) was above the acceptable limit (.06), signalling poor absolute fit, while the SRMR (.03) remained within the acceptable range, supporting residual-based fit.

With an x^2-value of 14.952 and x^2/df of 3.74, and a *p*-value of 0.005, the model was not perfect. The comparative fit index (CFI) and TLI index were acceptable, and an SRMR of 0.03 was measured, which is considered good. CFI and TLI were both acceptable, at 0.98 and 0.95, respectively. The RMSEA was, however, slightly above the acceptable threshold. Browne and Cudeck (1992) state that an RMSEA of 0.1 is indicative of poor fit between the model and hypothesised data. The addition of another covariance arrow would, however, have led to a saturated model. The current model was retained because all other fit indices were within acceptable limits.

Convergent validity and reliability were determined for *Positive engagement*, and the results are shown in Table 6.29.

Table 6.29

Validity and Reliability Measures for Positive Engagement

		Factor Loadings	**AVE**	**Cronbach Alpha α**	**CR**
Threshold		0.5	≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Positive engagement			**0.44**	**0.8**	**0.8**
I am proud of the organisation I work for.	I33	0.70			

		Factor Loadings	AVE	Cronbach Alpha α	CR
Threshold		0.5	≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Positive engagement			**0.44**	**0.8**	**0.8**
I enjoy my work.	I32	0.71			
I am positive about my work.	I35	0.60			
My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals.	I34	0.62			
I support my organisation's goals.	I36	0.69			

Note. All factor loadings exceeded .60, supporting indicator reliability. AVE = .44 was slightly below the recommended .50 threshold, indicating marginal convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha (.80) and CR = .80 exceeded .70, demonstrating strong internal consistency and construct reliability.

Convergent validity was again initially determined by investigating the standardised factor loadings for the observed variables. All the factor loadings were acceptable at above 0.5. As with the previous construct, the AVE was found to be slightly lower than 0.5. Convergence was, however, again accepted based on the CR value, which was substantially higher than 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Grover et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha showed a reliability of 0.8, well above the guideline of 0.6.

6.6.4.7 CFA of Learning agility

Learning agility in its current format transpired during the statistical analysis as a combination of items that were initially grouped under *Learning agility* and *Cognitive ability*. Five of the initial *Learning agility* items and three of the *Cognitive ability* and *Thinking ability* items were grouped together to form the final *Learning agility* construct. *Learning agility* was initially defined as: "High potential employees enjoy learning new things; they value the acquisition of knowledge and excel at it." Cognitive thinking ability was defined as: "A high-potential employee displays strong cognitive and thinking abilities." Eight items loaded onto this construct, shown in Table 6.30.

Table 6.30

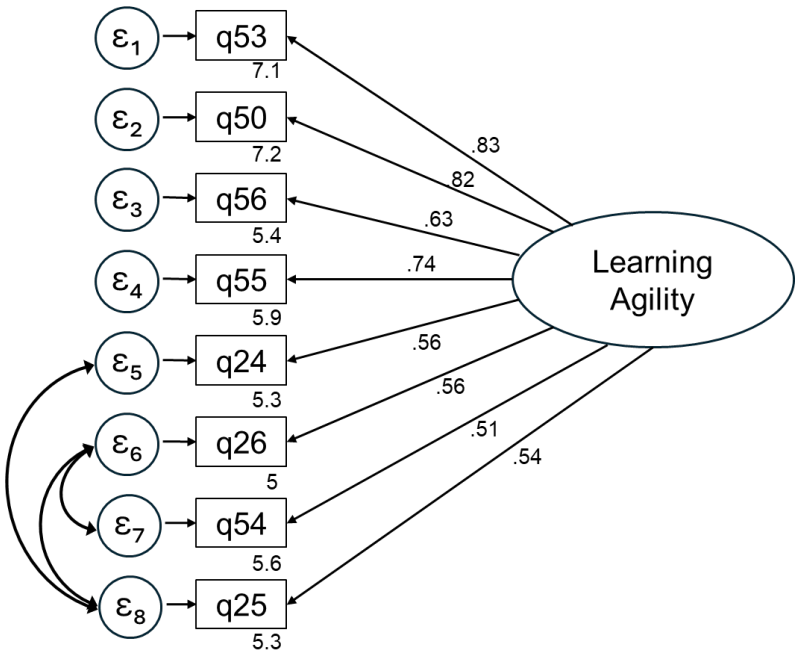
Items of Learning Agility

Item No.	Statement	Original Qualitative Construct
53	I value acquiring new knowledge.	Learning agility
50	I enjoy learning new things.	Learning agility
56	Continuous learning is a priority for me.	Learning agility
55	I make use of opportunities to learn new things.	Learning agility
24	I am good at analysing information.	Cognitive and thinking ability
26	I easily grasp difficult concepts.	Cognitive and thinking ability
54	I quickly understand new information.	Learning agility
25	I see complex problems as a positive challenge.	Cognitive and thinking ability

The developed path model shown in Figure 6.7 provides a graphical representation of the relationships between the variables.

Figure 6.7

Learning Agility CFA Measurement Model



Note. Standardised factor loadings for the *Learning Agility* construct are shown. Indicators I53 (.83), I50 (.82), I55 (.74), and i56 (.63) demonstrated strong contributions to the latent factor. However, items 24 (.56), 26 (.56), 54

(.51), and 25 (.54) were near or slightly below the recommended .50 threshold, indicating weaker contributions. Error terms (ε_1–ε_8) represent measurement error for each indicator. All loadings were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

As can be seen from the path model, all the items measured adequately *Learning agility*. The standardised factor loadings were all above the threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). Some correlations between error variables were noted. It was possible that these error variables correlated due to the similar nature of the items, resulting in overlaps in meaning or understanding. The model fit indices are summarised in Table 6.31.

Table 6.31

Learning Agility: Measures of Model Fit for CFA

	CMIN (*df*)	***p*-value**	**CMIN/*df***	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**
Threshold		≥ 0.05	< 3	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	≤ 0.06	≤ 0.05
Learning agility	47,338 (17)	0.00	2.78	0.97	0.95	0.08	0.05

Note. The chi-square statistic (CMIN = 47.34, *df* = 17, *p* < .001) was significant, which is common in larger models. The relative chi-square (CMIN/*df* = 2.78) was within the acceptable range (< 3), indicating reasonable fit. CFI = .97 and TLI = .95 met the recommended thresholds (≥ .95), suggesting strong incremental fit. However, the RMSEA (.08) exceeded the recommended limit (.06), indicating moderate absolute fit, while the SRMR (.05) was at the threshold, supporting residual-based fit.

Overall, the model was a good fit for the hypothesised data. The TLI (0.95), CFI (0.97), and SRMR (0.05) were all adequate or higher than the suggested thresholds. The RMSEA was slightly higher than 0.06 at 0.08. Browne and Cudeck (1992) suggest an RMSEA of ≥ 0.05 but advise ≤ 0.08 to show fair fit. The x^2-value was 47.338, and x^2/df was 2.78, with a *p*-value <.000. The indices supported acceptable construct validity for *Learning agility*. The convergent validity and reliability of *Learning agility* are reported in Table 6.32.

Table 6.32

Validity and Reliability of Learning Agility

		Factor Loadings	AVE	Cronbach Alpha α	CR
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Learning agility			**0.44**	**0.86**	**0.86**
I value acquiring new knowledge.	I53	0.83			
I enjoy learning new things.	I50	0.82			
Continuous learning is a priority for me.	I56	0.63			
I make use of opportunities to learn new things.	I55	0.74			
I am good at analysing information.	I24	0.56			
I easily grasp difficult concepts.	I26	0.56			
I quickly understand new information.	I54	0.51			
I see complex problems as a positive challenge.	I25	0.54			

Note. Most factor loadings exceeded .50, supporting indicator reliability, with I53 (.83) and I50 (.82) showing the strongest contributions. Items 54 (.51) and 25 (.54) were near the threshold, indicating weaker contributions. AVE = .44 was slightly below the recommended .50, suggesting marginal convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha (.86) and CR = .86 exceeded .70, demonstrating strong internal consistency and construct reliability.

Convergent validity was investigated by first evaluating the standardised factor loadings of the model, and all were found to be higher than 0.5. Convergence was accepted taking note of the slightly lower AVE (0.44) but acceptable CR (0.86). As explained earlier, AVE is a more conservative measure than CR. If the AVE is less than 0.5 but the CR is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Grover et al., 2006). At the risk of overfitting the model, and based on the acceptable CR, it was decided to retain the current model for *Learning agility*. Reliability was found to be acceptable, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86. Boateng et al. (2018) note that an acceptable threshold for reliability for psychometric quality of a scale is between 0.80 and 0.95.

6.6.4.8 CFA of Structured approach

The last construct that was identified was named *Structured approach*. Following scrutiny of

the items that correlated with this variable and evaluation of the construct name, it was decided that *Structured approach* would be a more apt description, as it reflected the true nature of the items. The original construct was called *Ability to manage others*, defined as: “A high-potential employee has excellent managerial skills.” The three items that formed part of this construct are shown in Table 6.33.

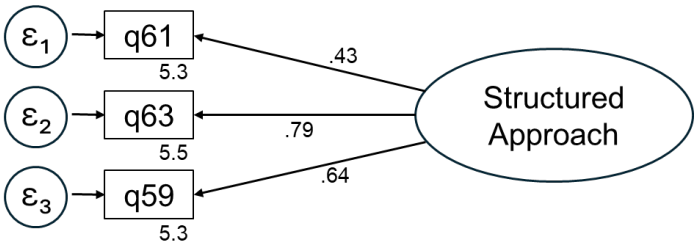
Table 6.33

Items of Structured Approach

Item No.	Statement	Original Qualitative Construct
59	I am organised in my work approach.	Ability to manage others
61	I prefer working in well-organised environments.	Ability to manage others
63	I like to plan in order to ensure performance.	Ability to manage others

A CFA path model was generated for this construct, shown in Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8 *Structured Approach CFA Measurement Model*



Note. Standardised factor loadings for the *Structured Approach* construct are shown. Item I63 (.79) demonstrated a strong contribution, while I59 (.64) was moderate and I61 (.43) fell below the recommended .50 threshold, indicating a weak contribution to the construct. Error terms (ε_1–ε_3) represent measurement error for each indicator. All loadings were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

The correlations between the latent variable (*Structured approach*) and the observed variables varied. Two factor loadings were acceptable but the third was below 0.5. An attempt was made to determine the goodness of fit of the model but the model was found to be saturated. A saturated model is the result when the same number of structural relationships are present as the number of possible construct correlations in the CFA (Hair et al., 2014). Saturated models do not convey any interesting information, as they cannot reveal more insights than the CFA

model already did. Good fit is necessary but not sufficient to prove a causal relationship. Construct validity could thus not be confirmed for *Structured approach*. Convergent validity and reliability were tested. The results are shown in Table 6.34.

Table 6.34

Validity and Reliability of Structured Approach

		Factor loadings	AVE	Cronbach Alpha α	CR
Threshold	0.5		≥ 0.5	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.7
Structured approach			**0.4**	**0.64**	**0.66**
I am organised in my work approach.	I61	0.43			
I prefer working in well organised environments.	I63	0.79			
I like to plan in order to ensure performance.	I59	0.64			

Note. Item 63 (.79) showed a strong contribution, q59 (.64) is moderate, while I61 (.43) falls below the recommended .50 threshold, indicating weak reliability. AVE = .40 was below the .50 threshold, suggesting poor convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha (.64) met the minimum acceptable level (.60) but CR = .66 was slightly below the recommended .70, indicating marginal internal consistency.

Both AVE (0.4) and CR (0.66) were below the threshold, and convergent validity could not be established. Reliability was also tested, and although the Cronbach's alpha was slightly above 0.6, it was not deemed acceptable for a psychometric measure (see Boateng et al., 2018). Thus, convergent validity and reliability could not be established for *Structured approach*.

6.6.5 Discussion of validity, reliability, and CFA results

The above statistical analyses were conducted to achieve RO9: To determine the validity and reliability of each high-potential talent construct. A total of 10 high-potential constructs were identified in the qualitative phase, and items were formulated for all 10 constructs. In the quantitative phase, the HiPo Scale was distributed to a sample of employees at the participating organisation. The data from the completed scales was statistically analysed and the constructs were refined to seven high-potential constructs. Upon inspection, it was noted that one of the constructs, *Balance*, had only two items linked to it and thus a decision was taken not to continue analysis for this construct. *Balance* was eliminated from the HiPo Scale.

CFA was conducted for the six remaining constructs to test the validity and reliability of each. The results are shown in Table 6.35.

Table 6.35

Validity and Reliability of High Potential Constructs

Construct	Number of items retained	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
Professional confidence	8	0.44	0.84	0.86
Team impact	12	0.47	0.88	0.9
Drive	7	0.45	0.84	0.82
Positive engagement	5	0.44	0.8	0.8
Learning agility	8	0.44	0.86	0.86

Note. AVE values for all constructs ranged from .44 to .47, slightly below the recommended .50 threshold, indicating marginal convergent validity. However, CR values (.84 to .88) and Cronbach's alpha (.82 to .90) exceeded recommended thresholds (.70 and .60, respectively), demonstrating strong internal consistency and construct reliability across all constructs.

Construct validity could not be confirmed via CFA for the construct *Structured approach*. The model was saturated, and goodness-of-fit-indices could not be determined. The decision was taken to exclude *Structured approach* from the HiPo Scale. The five remaining constructs produced AVE values below the 0.5 threshold but CR values above 0.7. Fornell and Larcker (1981) noted that AVE is a more sensitive measure than CR, and that convergent validity can be established based on CR values only. The Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs were all above 0.8, demonstrating good internal consistency (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

Five constructs, *Professional confidence*, *Team impact*, *Drive*, *Positive engagement*, and *Learning agility* were retained in the HiPo Scale.

6.7 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

For the quantitative phase of the research, hypotheses were developed in addition to the research objectives. The hypotheses were tested to achieve RO10: To determine statistically which dimensions or observable behaviours are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent.

It was important to statistically determine the strongest indicators of high-potential talent in

order to ultimately answer the main research question, which centred on the establishment of a model to identify high-potential talent in a work environment. It was also important to understand how the various constructs interacted with one another and determine the relationship between employee performance and high potential. H1 was tested using a chi-square test, while H2 to H5 were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results are reported below.

6.7.1 Test of H1

H1: High-potential employees exhibit higher work performance than capable and remain in role employees, examined the relationship between work performance and high-potential status. For the purposes of hypothesis-testing, employees identified as high potential and employees identified as promotable were grouped together. The high-potential group was extremely small, which would have made statistical testing challenging. Most organisations use performance as a predictor for high-potential talent, although concerns exist regarding such an assumption. This was explained in the literature chapters.

Although limited information is available in academic literature on the relationship between work performance and the high-potential status of employees, it is widely accepted that individuals who deliver above-average work should be considered high-potentials (Buckner & Marberry, 2018; Downs, 2015; Ready et al., 2010). In the present study, the participating organisation made available performance scores from the most recent performance evaluation cycle, as well as employees' ratings with regard to high potential. The relationship between these two variables was tested for all 287 employees who took part in the study.

The relationship was tested using a chi-square test for independence. The results of the chi-square test and cross-tabulation are shown in Table 6.36.

Table 6.36

Summary of Recorded Performance Scores Included in the Analysis

	N	%	%	%
Effective-/Effective	105	36.6%	37.1%	37.1%
Effective+	153	53.3%	54.1%	91.2%
Outstanding	25	8.7%	8.8%	100.0%
Missing (Unsatisfactory)	4	1.4%		

Note. Most participants were rated *Effective+* (*n* = 153; 53.3%), followed by *Effective-/Effective* (*n* = 105; 36.6%). A smaller proportion were rated *Outstanding* (*n* = 25; 8.7%), and only four cases (1.4%) were missing or unsatisfactory. These distributions indicate that the majority of participants performed at or above the effective level.

As seen in the table above, four records were excluded from the analysis. These were employees who were reported to show 'unsatisfactory' performance, and it did not make sense to include this group in the analysis, as the analysis would have violated the chi-square assumption of minimum expected cell frequency. This exclusion brought the total number of records to 283.

The chi-square assumption of minimum expected cell frequency was adhered to. Pallant (2020) explains that this assumption expects cell frequency to be greater than 5, or at least 80% of cells to have frequencies of 5 or more. The cross-tabulation between high-potential status and work performance is summarised in Table 6.37.

Table 6.37

Performance Recorded and High-potential Status Cross-tabulation

			Potential			**Total**
			Remain in role	Capable	Promotable/High-potential	
Performance recorded	Effective-/ Effective	Count	17	43	45	105
		% within Potential	51.5%	45.3%	29.0%	37.1%
	Effective+	Count	13	46	94	153
		% within Potential	39.4%	48.4%	60.6%	54.1%
	Outstanding	Count	3	6	16	25
		% within Potential	9.1%	6.3%	10.3%	8.8%
Total		Count	33	95	155	283
		% within Potential	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note. Amongst those rated *Effective-/Effective*, 51.5% were classified as *Remain in role*, while only 29.0% were identified as *Promotable/High-potential*. In contrast, participants rated *Effective+* had the highest proportion of *Promotable/High-potential* status (60.6%), indicating a strong link between higher performance and promotability. *Outstanding* performers accounted for 10.3% of those rated *Promotable/High-potential* despite representing a small share of the sample overall (8.8%).

Approximately 71% of promotable or high-potential employees exhibited high work performance, whereas only 49.3% of remain-in-role and capable employees exhibited above-average work performance. The results of the chi-square test are summarised in Table 6.38.

Table 6.38

Chi-square Test

	Value	*df*	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	10.462[a]	4	0.033
Likelihood ratio	10.536	4	0.032
Linear-by-linear association	0.008	1	0.931
n of valid cases	283		

Note. The Pearson chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 10.46$, $df = 4$; $p = .033$) and likelihood ratio ($x^2 = 10.54$; $p = .032$) indicated a statistically significant association between performance ratings and potential status at the .05 level. The linear-by-linear association test ($x^2 = 0.008$; $p = .931$) was non-significant, suggesting no consistent trend across ordered categories.

The chi-square value was significant at 0.03, notably smaller than 0.5. This confirmed that there is indeed a positive relationship between high-potential status and level of work performance. H1 was thus accepted.

6.7.2 Test of H2 to H5

H2 to H5 tested the statistical relationship between the factors identified during the statistical analysis as possible indicators of high potential that reflect the high-potential status of the participants. In other words, the researcher wanted to know which of the factors showed the strongest potential as indicators of high-potential status. The hypotheses read as follows:

H2: High-potential employees are more engaged than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H3: High-potential employees exhibit higher levels of learning agility than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H4: High-potential employees are more positive about their ability to work in a team than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H5: High-potential employees are more ambitious than capable and remain-in-role employees.

The hypotheses were developed at the start of the research during the planning phase. At that stage, the true meaning of the constructs was assumed, not known. Following EFA, the constructs were renamed to accurately reflect their nature. The labels were renamed as follows:

- *Engaged* was updated to *Positively engaged*;
- *Ambition* was updated to *Drive*;
- *Teamwork* was updated to *Team impact*; and
- *Learning agility* remained unchanged.

The updated construct labels were used in the reporting the ANOVA results, to align with the constructs in the HiPo Scale. A fifth construct, *Professional confidence*, was also reported on, although this construct was not hypothesised to be an indicator of high-potential talent.

When comparing more than two independent groups using a single quantitative measure or score, ANOVA can be conducted (Maree, 2016; Pallant, 2020). A one-way ANOVA was performed to compare the high-potential status of employees to four constructs that were hypothesised to be indicators of high-potential talent. The four constructs were identified in the literature review, together with evidence of these constructs possibly being indicators of high-potential talent.

The initial constructs theorised to be connected to high-potential talent were: *Work performance*, *Engagement*, *Learning agility*, *Teamwork*, and *Ambition*. A relationship between *Work performance* and *High-potential* was confirmed via a chi-squared test. The remaining constructs were tested by means of ANOVA. *Professional confidence* as a construct emerged during EFA, and was included in the ANOVA. The analysis of variance is reported by first providing a table with the descriptive statistics and, more specifically, the means for all four constructs. This is followed by the report on the results of the ANOVA.

Table 6.39

Descriptive Statistics for Group Comparisons

		n	**Mean**	**SD**
Team impact	Capable	97	3.3058	0.50571

		n	Mean	SD
	High potential/ Promotable	156	3.2911	0.44202
	Remain in role	34	3.2304	0.52105
	Total	287	3.2889	0.47283
Drive	Capable	97	3.2113	0.58210
	High potential/ Promotable	156	3.2361	0.54046
	Remain in role	34	3.0588	0.66904
	Total	287	3.2067	0.57164
Positive engagement	Capable	97	3.4412	0.50739
	High potential/ Promotable	156	3.5077	0.46302
	Remain in role	34	3.4235	0.53431
	Total	287	3.4753	0.48666
Learning agility	Capable	97	3.4446	0.47220
	High potential/ Promotable	156	3.4559	0.39293
	Remain in role	34	3.3456	0.45128
	Total	287	3.4390	0.42805
Professional confidence	Capable	97	3.1894	0.57427
	High potential/ Promotable	156	3.2572	0.43839
	Remain in role	34	3.0037	0.51812
	Total	287	3.2043	0.50221

Note. For all constructs, participants classified as *Promotable/High-potential* consistently show the highest mean scores (e.g., *Positive engagement* = 3.51; *Learning agility* = 3.46), indicating stronger alignment with high-potential characteristics. The *Remain-in-role* group generally had the lowest means (e.g., *Professional confidence* = 3.00), while the *Capable* group falls in-between. SDs were relatively small across constructs, suggesting limited variability within groups.

As is evident from the table, the mean scores for the groups were fairly close; there was no

evident difference between the groups. The fact that the scale was somewhat limited (only five points) and that social desirability may have played a role could have influenced the manner in which the respondents responded to the items.

Prior to conducting the ANOVA, the results for Levene's test for homogeneity of variance were inspected. The test for homogeneity tests whether the variance in scores is the same for each of the groups being tested (Pallant, 2020). Pallant (2020) advises that the significance value should be scrutinised, and if the number is greater than .05, the assumption of homogeneity of variance has not been violated. The results are shown in Table 6.40.

Table 6.40

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Team impact	Based on mean	2.274	2	284	0.105
Drive	Based on mean	1.045	2	284	0.353
Positive engagement	Based on mean	1.140	2	284	0.321
Learning agility	Based on mean	3.671	2	284	0.027
Professional confidence	Based on mean	4.248	2	284	0.015

Note. For *Team impact* (p = .106), *Drive* (p = .353), and *Positive engagement* (p = .321), variances were homogeneous (p > .05), meeting ANOVA assumptions. However, *Learning agility* (p = .027) and *Professional confidence* (p = .015) showed significant variance differences (p < .05), indicating that the assumption of equal variances was violated for these constructs.

The significance values for *Team impact*, *Drive*, and *Positive engagement* were all greater than .05. Homogeneity of variance was not violated for these three constructs. The significance values for *Learning agility* and *Professional confidence*, however, were both smaller than .05, and it can, thus, not be assumed that the variance is homogeneous between the groups for these two constructs. One-way ANOVA was performed on the HiPo Scale constructs to compare the high-potential status of respondents with the identified high-potential constructs. The scores are reported in Table 6.41 in the format presented in the SPSS ANOVA output table.

Table 6.41

ANOVA for High-potential Groups

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Team impact	Between groups	0.145	2	0.073	0.323	0.72
	Within groups	63.796	284	0.225		
	Total	63.941	286			
Drive	Between groups	0.881	2	0.440	1.351	0.26
	Within groups	92.575	284	0.326		
	Total	93.456	286			
Positive engagement	Between groups	0.367	2	0.184	0.774	0.46
	Within groups	67.367	284	0.237		
	Total	67.734	286			
Learning agility	Between groups	0.344	2	0.172	0.939	0.4
	Within groups	52.057	284	0.183		
	Total	52.402	286			
Professional confidence	Between groups	1.827	2	0.913	3.689	0.03
	Within groups	70.307	284	0.248		
	Total	72.134	286			

Note. For *Professional confidence*, the *F*-test was significant ($F(2, 284) = 3.69$; $p = .03$), indicating mean differences amongst groups. All other constructs (*Team impact*, *Drive*, *Positive engagement*, and *Learning agility*) showed non-significant results ($p > .05$), suggesting no statistically meaningful differences across groups.

If the significance value is equal to or less than .05, a significant difference between the group mean scores can be assumed. The one-way ANOVA revealed no significant difference between the groups of constructs that were hypothesised for this study. The additional construct, *Professional confidence*, however, was shown to be significant, as the significance value was less than .05. The test of homogeneity of variance was, however, violated, which made it appropriate to also refer to the Welch and Brown-Forsythe test scores. The results are presented in Table 6.42.

Table 6.42

Robust Tests of Equality of Means for Professional Confidence

		Statistic[a]	df1	df2	Sig.
Professional confidence	Welch	3.619	2	85.511	0.03
	Brown-Forsythe	3.366	2	131.294	0.04

a. Asymptotically F distributed

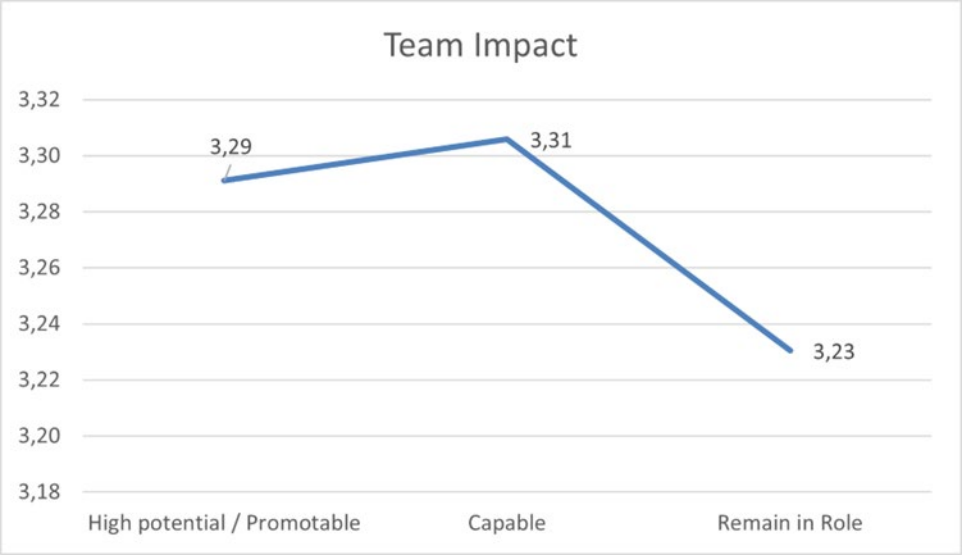
Note. Both Welch's test ($F(2, 85.51) = 3.62$; $p = .03$) and Brown–Forsythe test ($F(2, 131.29) = 3.37$; $p = .04$) were statistically significant, confirming that mean differences in *Professional confidence* across potential groups remained significant even when accounting for unequal variances.

The Welch- and Brown-Forsythe tests were significant for *Professional confidence*, as the significance score was below .05 for both.

Mean plots were produced for the five constructs. These plots might be misleading, as the difference in mean scores seems significant. In actuality, the differences in means are extremely small. The plots are nevertheless included in Figure 6.9, to provide a graphical representation of the mean scores for each construct per group.

Figure 6.9

Mean Plot: Team Impact

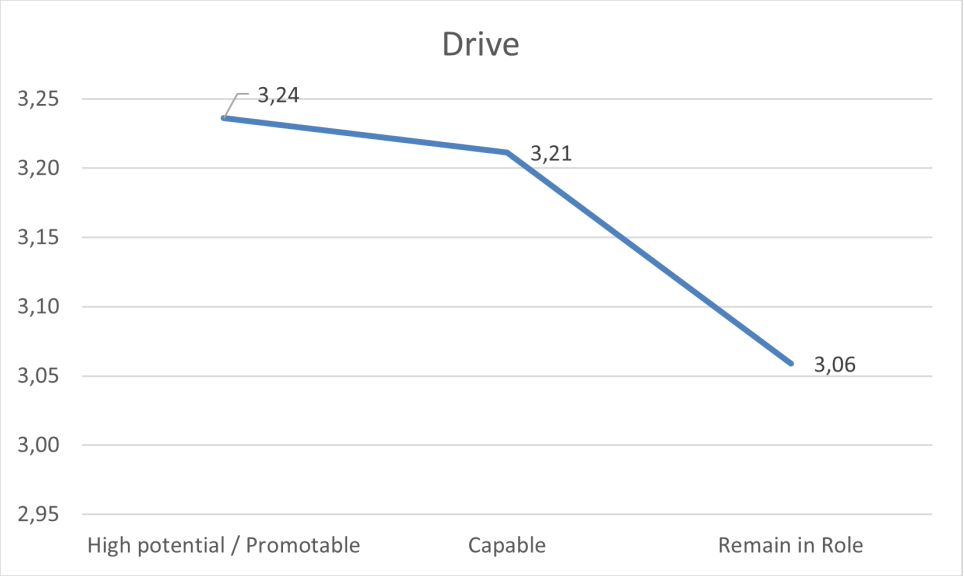


Note. The *Capable* group had the highest mean (M = 3.31), followed closely by *High potential/Promotable* (M = 3.29). The *Remain-in-role* group had the lowest mean (M = 3.23), indicating slightly weaker *Team impact* perceptions compared to other groups. Differences were small and consistent, with ANOVA results showing no

significant group effect.

Figure 6.10

Mean Plot: Drive

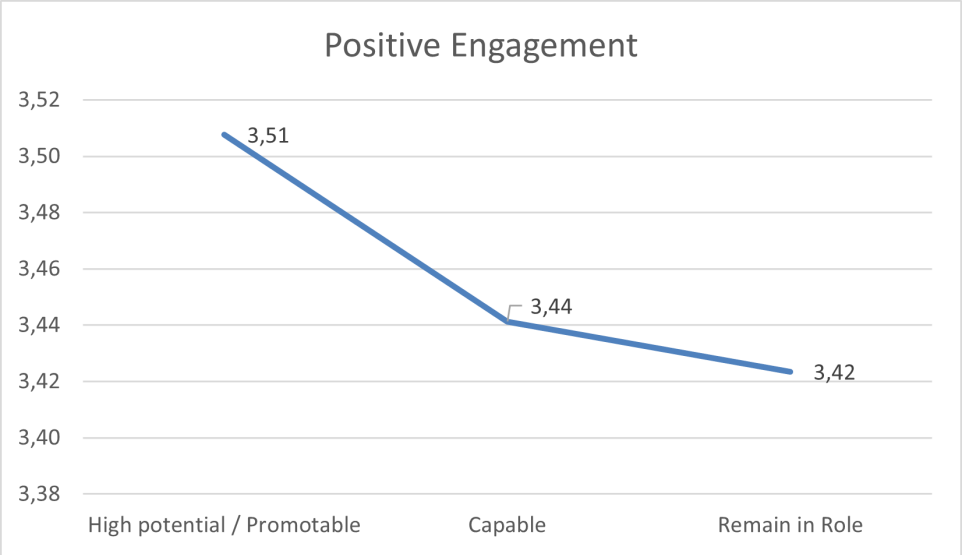


Note. The *High potential/Promotable* group had the highest mean (M = 3.24), followed by *Capable* (M = 3.21), while the *Remain-in-role* group had the lowest mean (M = 3.06). This downward trend suggests that higher potential status is associated with stronger drive, although the ANOVA results indicated that these differences were not statistically significant.

The mean plot for ***Positive engagement*** is shown in Figure 6.11.

Figure 6.11

Mean Plot: Positive Engagement

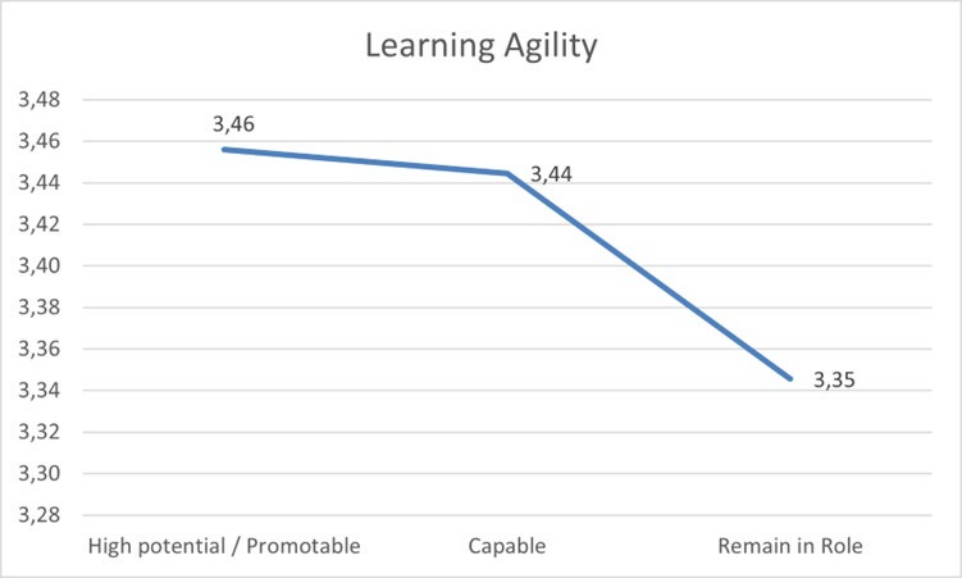


Note. The *High-potential/Promotable* group had the highest mean (M = 3.51), followed by *Capable* (M = 3.44), while the *Remain-in-role* group had the lowest mean (M = 3.42). This downward trend suggests that higher potential status is associated with greater positive engagement; however, the ANOVA results indicated these differences were not statistically significant.

The mean plot for *Learning agility* is shown in Figure 6.12.

Figure 6.12

Mean Plot: Learning Agility

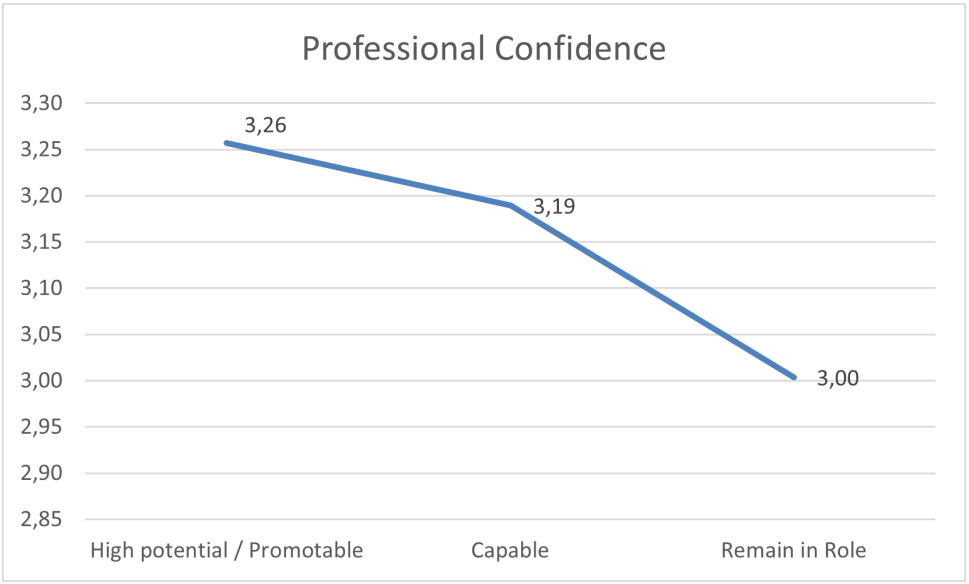


Note. The *High potential/Promotable* group had the highest mean (M = 3.46), followed by *Capable* (M = 3.44), while the *Remain-in-role* group had the lowest mean (M = 3.35). This downward trend suggests that higher potential status is associated with greater learning agility; however, the ANOVA results indicated these differences were not statistically significant.

The mean plot for *Professional confidence* is shown in Figure 6.13.

Figure 6.13

Mean Plot: Professional Confidence



Note. The *High potential/Promotable* group had the highest mean (M = 3.26), followed by *Capable* (M = 3.19), while the *Remain-in-role* group had the lowest mean (M = 3.00). This pattern reflects a steady decline in professional confidence as potential status decreases, with the largest drop occurring between *Capable* and *Remain-in-role*; however, the ANOVA results indicated these differences were not statistically significant.

Only *Professional confidence*, which emerged from the EFA analysis, achieved statistical significance. The differences in mean scores between the groups of *Team impact*, *Drive*, *Positive engagement*, and *Learning agility* were unsatisfactory. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was negligible for all the constructs except *Professional confidence*, which produced an eta squared of 0.03, representing a small effect size. The results are shown in Table 6.43.

Table 6.43

ANOVA Effect Sizes[a,b]

		Point Estimate
Team impact	Eta-squared	0.002
Drive	Eta-squared	0.009
Positive engagement	Eta-squared	0.005
Learning agility	Eta-squared	0.007
Professional confidence	Eta-squared	0.025

Note. Effect sizes ranged from $\eta^2 = .002$ (*Team impact*) to $\eta^2 = .025$ (*Professional confidence*), indicating very small effects across all variables. These values suggest that potential group membership explains only a minimal proportion of variance in the measured constructs. *a.* Eta-squared and epsilon-squared were estimated based on the fixed-effect model. *b.* Negative but less biased estimates were retained, not rounded to zero.

Epsilon-squared, omega-squared fixed-effect, and omega-squared random-effect tests were also run for the HiPo Scale constructs, and produced similar results to the eta-squared test. All the effect sizes were found to be negligible. The only construct that produced a small effect size was *Professional confidence*.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test were executed for all the constructs, and only *Professional confidence* showed significant differences between the high-potential and remain-in-role groups. The results are presented in Table 6.44.

Table 6.44

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) Potential	(J) Potential	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Team impact	Capable	High potential/Promotable	0.01471	0.06128	1.000	-0.1329	0.1623
		Remain in role	0.07545	0.09446	1.000	-0.1520	0.3029
	High potential/ Promotable	Capable	-0.01471	0.06128	1.000	-0.1623	0.1329
		Remain in role	0.06074	0.08970	1.000	-0.1553	0.2768
	Remain in role	Capable	-0.07545	0.09446	1.000	-0.3029	0.1520
		High potential/Promotable	-0.06074	0.08970	1.000	-0.2768	0.1553
Drive	Capable	High potential/Promotable	-0.02477	0.07382	1.000	-0.2026	0.1530
		Remain in role	0.15252	0.11379	0.544	-0.1215	0.4265
	High potential/ Promotable	Capable	0.02477	0.07382	1.000	-0.1530	0.2026
		Remain in role	0.17729	0.10806	0.306	-0.0829	0.4375
	Remain in role	Capable	-0.15252	0.11379	0.544	-0.4265	0.1215
		High potential/Promotable	-0.17729	0.10806	0.306	-0.4375	0.0829
Positive engagement	Capable	High potential/Promotable	-0.06646	0.06298	0.877	-0.2181	0.0852
		Remain in role	0.01771	0.09707	1.000	-0.2161	0.2515

Dependent Variable	(I) Potential	(J) Potential	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	High potential/ Promotable	Capable	0.06646	0.06298	0.877	-0.0852	0.2181
		Remain in role	0.08416	0.09218	1.000	-0.1378	0.3062
	Remain in role	Capable	-0.01771	0.09707	1.000	-0.2515	0.2161
		High potential/Promotable	-0.08416	0.09218	1.000	-0.3062	0.1378
Learning agility	Capable	High potential/Promotable	-0.01134	0.05536	1.000	-0.1447	0.1220
		Remain in role	0.09900	0.08533	0.741	-0.1065	0.3045
	High potential/ Promotable	Capable	0.01134	0.05536	1.000	-0.1220	0.1447
		Remain in role	0.11034	0.08103	0.523	-0.0848	0.3055
	Remain in role	Capable	-0.09900	0.08533	0.741	-0.3045	0.1065
		High potential/Promotable	-0.11034	0.08103	0.523	-0.3055	0.0848
Professional confidence	Capable	High potential/Promotable	-0.06778	0.06434	0.879	-0.2227	0.0872
		Remain in role	0.18576	0.09916	0.186	-0.0531	0.4246
	High potential/ Promotable	Capable	0.06778	0.06434	0.879	-0.0872	0.2227
		Remain in role	.25354*	0.09417	0.023	0.0267	0.4803
	Remain in role	Capable	-0.18576	0.09916	0.186	-0.4246	0.0531
		High potential/Promotable	-.25354*	0.09417	0.023	-0.4803	-0.0267

Note. The table shows pairwise mean differences between potential groups for five variables, with standard errors, significance levels, and 95% confidence intervals. No comparisons were statistically significant at the .05 level, except for *Professional confidence*, where *High potential/Promotable* scored significantly higher than *Remain in role* (p = .023)*. The mean difference was significant at the 0.05 level.

The Tukey HSD test showed that only *Professional confidence* showed a small difference between the *High-potential/Promotable* group (M = 3.26; SD = 0.44) and the *Remain-in-role* group (M = 3.00; SD = 0.52). No significant differences were noted between the *Capable* group and the other two groups with regard to the *Professional confidence* construct.

ANOVA was conducted to confirm or reject the hypotheses regarding the high-potential status of employees and constructs identified in the literature that could be indicators of high-potential status. The outcomes of the hypothesis testing are summarised in Table 6.45.

Table 6.45

Results of Testing H2 to H5

Hypothesis	Decision
H2: High-potential employees are more engaged than capable and remain-in-role employees.	Rejected
H3: High-potential employees exhibit higher levels of learning agility than capable and remain-in-role employees.	Rejected
H4: High-potential employees are more positive about their ability to work in a team than capable and remain-in-role employees.	Rejected
H5: High-potential employees are more ambitious than capable and remain-in-role employees.	Rejected

The hypotheses were tested statistically and subsequently rejected. None of the hypothesised constructs, i.e., *Engagement*, *Learning agility*, *Team impact*, or *Drive* (ambition) showed a significant statistical relationship with *High-potential status*. The last construct, *Professional confidence*, did however, show a small possibility that it might be an indication of high-potential status.

6.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 6 reported the quantitative results of the study, commencing with a review of the quantitative research objectives and the hypotheses that were formulated. An overview was then provided of the talent management system of the participating organisation, followed by a description of the dissemination of the HiPo Scale to the sample. Subsequent sections

reported the results of the statistical tests that were conducted and the testing of the hypotheses. The following chapter offers an integration and discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This study's overarching aim was to develop a model to identify high-potential employees in work settings in South Africa. The study was executed as a mixed-methods study because the research question demanded gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. The constructs *talent management*, *talent*, and *high-potential talent* are not well supported by empirical evidence in academic literature (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022; Kaliannan et al., 2023; Kwon & Jang, 2022), and this limited understanding of these concepts within the South African context poses a challenge to practitioners and researchers alike. This chapter synthesises the major learning points of this research project and presents recommendations to practitioners regarding talent management, talent, and high-potential talent. As with all research projects, this study has limitations, which are highlighted and explained in this chapter. The chapter concludes with an outline of the contribution of the study on a theoretical, empirical, and practical level. For ease of reference, the study's objectives are listed below, followed by discussions of how these were achieved.

7.2. RECONCILIATION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this research was to develop a model that could be used to identify high-potential talent in organisations. To achieve this objective, a number of research objectives were set.

The objectives for the literature review were:

RO1: To conceptualise high-potential talent and related concepts;

RO2: To identify models that have been developed to identify high-potential talent;

RO3: To conceptualise how identification models are used across various application settings;

RO4: To identify the constructs that indicate or predict high-potential talent; and

RO5: To conceptualise a theoretical model for the identification of high-potential talent.

The objectives for the empirical study were:

RO6: To determine what industry views as high-potential talent;

RO7: To identify the predicting dimensions or constructs of high-potential talent as viewed by industry;

RO8: To identify the typical behaviour displayed by high-potential talent;

RO9: To determine the validity and reliability of each high-potential talent construct;

RO10: To determine statistically which dimensions or observable behaviours are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent;

RO11: To develop a model, tested by means of structural equation modelling, to identify high-potential talent; and

RO12: To make recommendations for the discipline of organisational psychology and human resource management on the identification of high-potential talent.

The achievement of the research objectives and conclusions drawn from the two phases of the research are summarised below.

7.3. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions from the study are presented according to the phases of the study, commencing with the conclusions drawn from the literature review. It was important to initiate the research project with a comprehensive literature review that provided information on the current state of research regarding talent, talent management, and high-potential talent.

7.3.1 Conclusions from the literature review

The literature review focused on gaining an understanding high-potential talent and related concepts in the talent management landscape, including talent management, talent, organisational talent, high-potential talent, and high-value talent. It was vital to conceptualise high-potential talent to develop a model for the identification of high-potential talent. High-potential talent is a focal point in talent management. Understanding the landscape was thus a crucial first step.

7.3.1.1 Conclusions regarding RO1: To conceptualise high-potential talent and related concepts

To achieve RO1, which required the conceptualisation and definition of high-potential talent, the talent landscape had to be thoroughly understood.

The talent management landscape

The review of literature on talent management revealed that practitioner interest in the field has always been strong, and that research on talent management was mostly initiated and led by practitioners. Academic interest, although initially lagging behind practitioner interest, has grown tremendously over the past two decades, to the extent that it can now be described as a mature research field (Dries, 2022). In attempting to understand the various streams and focus areas of research on talent management, the present researcher developed a continuum on which talent management research could be mapped. The continuum summarises the talent management research landscape and plots talent management research focus areas on a continuum ranging from conceptual to practical.

Three main areas of talent management research were plotted on the continuum presented in Chapter 2. The first grouping includes studies and articles on the conceptualisation of talent and talent management. The second includes research focused on the intended outcomes and effects of talent management, and the last pertains to talent management activities and practices.

The purpose of the Talent Management Research Continuum was not to catalogue all the research available on talent management and related concepts but to develop a categorisation mechanism that allowed the researcher to understand the research landscape. Based on what was found regarding how research emerged in categories, it was clear that scholars created talent management research categories to suit their field of interest or focus. When talent management was still developing, research tended to be somewhat haphazard. As each research focus area developed, so did the talent management landscape. Understanding the talent management landscape laid the foundation for exploration of definitions of talent management and formulate a working definition for the present study.

Definition of talent management

Talent management encompasses a wide variety of functions and actions within the HRM

space. The talent management definitions put forward by scholars reflect their own views of talent management and the lens through which they choose to look at it. The following was observed regarding definitions of talent management in literature:

Some definitions represent an exclusive approach to talent management (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Scullion et al., 2010; Stahl et al., 2007; Swailes et al., 2014). Researchers who support this stance motivate it by postulating that talented employees possess unique talents, aptitudes, and potential that are beneficial to the organisation. Some researchers link talent management to key positions that need to be filled by talented employees to ensure the organisation's future.

Scholars who advocate for an inclusive or hybrid approach to talent management do so on the basis of corporate social responsibility (Hajikaimisari et al., 2010; Lockwood, 2006; Raman et al., 2013; Schiemann, 2014). They believe that all employees should have access to resources to enable professional growth. An approach where a small group of employees are differentiated and given preferential treatment is frowned upon by supporters of corporate social responsibility, and may also not sit well with organisations operating in collective societies.

In literature, talent management is linked to a number of closely related research topics, such as strategic HRM, global talent management, succession planning, and HRD, to mention a few. Despite these links, talent management seems to be a distinct, standalone phenomenon. Talent management denotes a process that involves the flow of employees into the organisation and up the hierarchy, and may thus incorporate various HRM processes. Examples of these processes include recruitment and selection, employee development, and succession planning. Some practitioners and researchers propose that key or strategic positions and the filling of those positions with above-average employees are the focus of talent management. Others view talent management as a broad concept that includes all employees, underpinned by HRD. There does not seem to be a supporting value orientation that directs practitioners' opinion about what talent management is. It is possible that the complexities of the talent management landscape are not understood by practitioners and not considered when they craft talent development and high-potential talent development programmes.

It was clear from the literature review that various definitions exist, and that talent management is viewed from a multitude of different viewpoints. No single agreed-upon definition exists in literature. Furthermore, it is challenging to craft one definition when talent management has

many underlying constructs that are not well defined. It was thus important to identify all the underlying and intertwined talent concepts and define them as well. Definitions for talent management, talent, organisational talent, high-value talent, and high-potential talent were developed, presented below.

Talent management

Talent management is a strategic management approach informed by a unique talent philosophy that takes cognisance of culture and organisational context. It optimises the flow of employees into the organisation and up the hierarchy through actions to attract, develop, and engage talented individuals.

The above definition incorporates the concept, practical process, and context of talent management for South African organisations.

Definition of talent, high-value talent, and organisational talent

To understand and define high-potential talent, it was imperative to first investigate talent as a concept. Various perspectives on talent exist in literature and it is seen as either an object or a subject (Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Pinto dos Reis et al., 2021; Silzer & Dowell, 2010; Sonnenberg et al., 2014; Tansley, 2011; Thunnissen et al., 2013. Scholars who define talent as an object postulate that it is a characteristic of an individual. Scholars who view talent as a subject (Cappelli & Keller, 2014), refer to talent as a grouping of people in the organisation. Talent is also described as either innate, in other words, something that a person is born with, or as an acquired competence, developed as part of the HRD process (Dries, 2022; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Kaliannan et al., 2023; Meyers et al., 2013; McDonnell et al., 2023; Nijs et al., 2014; Silzer & Dowell, 2009; Tansley, 2011). Some scholars are convinced that talent refers specifically to leadership talent, while others postulate that talent can refer to both leadership talent and specialist- or professional talent (Chien & Chen, 2007; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Tansley, 2011). Talent also has a motivational component (Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Nijs et al., 2014; Thunnissen et al., 2013; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012) and is linked to organisational strategy (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Kaliannan et al., 2023; King, 2015; McDonnell, 2011; McDonnell et al., 2023; Schuler & Tarique, 2012). It may include high performance individual and high-potential individuals (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; McDonnell et al., 2023; Sonnenberg et al., 2014).

Based on the literature review, the word *talent* describes various concepts that differ slightly based on the perspective from which the researcher or practitioner approaches the concept. Being cognisant of the combined nature, meaning a combination of individualistic and collectivist ethic cultures, of organisations in South Africa, it would not be practical to propose an absolute definition of talent to be used in organisational settings. The present researcher thus proposes that organisations use four distinct definitions of talent to incorporate its different aspects in talent management. These definitions define talent, high-value talent, organisational talent, and high-potential talent. Taking an exclusive approach, talent is seen as an innate ability that is a characteristic of an individual employee, defined as follows:

Talent

Talent is an innate ability of an individual, which has been developed to a level that it empowers the individual, should the individual be sufficiently motivated to perform better than peers.

When practitioners and researchers refer to talent as a subject, meaning the grouping of employees in the organisation, they should refer to them as *organisational talent*. Organisational talent is defined as follows:

Organisational talent

Organisational talent comprises employees with the ability to perform to the level required to realise the organisation's strategy.

This definition of organisational talent clearly supports an inclusive approach, where all employees are seen as talent that could contribute to the organisation. A distinction should be made between employees who are already adding value in their current positions and employees who have the potential to add value in the future, possibly at a higher hierarchical level and in a leadership position. The terms *high-value talent* and *high-potential talent* allow researchers and practitioners to make this distinction.

High-value talent

High-value talent refers to **employees** who possess innate abilities that have been developed to a level that they empower the individuals, should they be motivated to do so, to perform better than their peers in their current positions.

Definition of high-potential talent

High-potential talent as a construct was investigated and reported on in Chapter 3, which discussed the indicators and characteristics of high-potential talent, as well as various points of contention, such as whether high-potential includes high performance in a current position, and whether high-potential is exclusive to leadership. The present researcher concluded that the lens through which high-potential talent is viewed is crucial. A definition of high-potential talent should be a part of a broader talent philosophy in an organisation. The following definition of high-potential talent is proposed:

High-potential talent

High-potential talent refers to employees who possess innate abilities that have been developed to a level that the individuals, should they be motivated to do so, can potentially perform better than their peers in future key positions to ensure the organisation's strategic success.

The above definition takes an exclusive view of high-potential talent but recognises that talent can be developed. The focus in high-potential talent is on future performance, geared towards ensuring organisational success.

7.3.1.2 Conclusions regarding RO2: To identify models developed to identify high-potential talent

Academic literature on tested models to identify high-potential talent is sparse, if not non-existent, and there are few models for this purpose. There is, however, a myriad of business consultant websites and similar organisations that propose models or tools to identify high-potential talent. The majority of these practitioners are rooted in I-O psychology, and their models focus on psychometric measures. Thomas International promotes their High Potential Trait Indicator, which is a workplace personality assessment tool to identify individuals with leadership potential. Similar tools are promoted by SHL, Hogan Assessments, and the Hay Group. However, no models or processes for the identification of high-potential talent were found.

The available models define high-potential as leadership (Bouland-van Dam et al., 2021; Dries & Pepermans, 2012), and do not consider the context, or the fact that high-potential talent

may include specialists not in leadership positions. The above underscores the gap between academia and practice (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2022), and supports the call by Dries (2022) for more empirical research in this area. It also supports the significance of the present study. RO2 was, unfortunately, only partially achieved. Models to identify high-potential talent do exist outside of academia but the models are promoted by practitioners as part of a product offering to organisations, and the research that should underpin these models is not shared.

The lack of tested models was, to a degree, anticipated in the planning of the present study. To address this expected lack of tested models, a research objective was formulated to also scrutinise models, including those used in other industries or application settings, that could inform the development of a high-potential identification model, i.e., RO3.

7.3.1.3 Conclusions regarding RO3: To conceptualise how identification models are used across various application settings

This research objective proved to be a challenge. The aim was to investigate whether there were other models described in social sciences literature that are used to identify specific aspects in other settings than high-potential talent identification. This could have been aspects such as an employee's status as a leader, participation in specialist programmes, or selection for development interventions. No specific body of knowledge pertaining to the processes or models of identification of aspects across various application settings, was discovered. Thus, RO3 was not achieved.

7.3.1.4 Conclusions regarding RO4: To identify the constructs that indicate or predict high-potential talent

A thorough review of the literature on high-potential talent revealed several authors who have conducted research on the constructs that might indicate high-potential talent (De Haro et al., 2023; De La Calle-Duran et al., 2021; Derr et al.,1988; Downs, 2015; Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Jooss et al., 2021; Joos et al., 2024; Kelly, 2013; Kotlyar, 2018; Silzer & Church, 2010). Varying terminologies are used by researchers to refer to those aspects, including *indicators*, *characteristics*, *competences*, *abilities*, *personality traits*, and *work performance* (Kabalina & Osipova, 2022). An effort was made to classify and group the aspects that may allude to an employee being a high-potential, and an initial list of indicators was developed. Upon further investigation, it was noted that some researchers did research on what they referred to as the *characteristics* of high-potential employees. Literature does not make a clear distinction

between what is seen as an indicator and what is considered a characteristic. These aspects were reported on in Chapter 3.

Indicators of high-potential talent identified in literature, and discussed in Chapter 3, include current job performance, learning agility, intelligence/cognitive capabilities, aspiration or engagement/motivation, career aspirations, personality traits/characteristics, upholding company values; results of the nine-box grid/management evaluation/organisational talent reviews, technical or functional skills, leadership skills, mobility, experience, commitment/loyalty to the company, and culture fit (Buckner & Marberry, 2018; Church & Silzer, 2014; Downs, 2015; Jooss et al., Kelly, 2013; Middleton, 2011, Robinson et al., 2009; Silzer & Church, 2010). Characteristics that might allude to high-potential status include high-potential employees who are more talented than others or have a higher level of expertise, proactiveness and career initiative-taking/enterprising spirit, can-do attitude/drive to excel/achievement orientation, aspirations/ambition, leadership skills/behaviours, interpersonal skills/dynamic sensors/social skills, creativity, learning agility, cognitive ability and strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, and engagement.

The indicators and characteristics identified in the literature review in the execution of this study by no means represents a complete list of all the constructs that might indicate high-potential talent but it does establish a basis for further research. Thus, RO4 was achieved by determining the constructs in literature that are proposed to predict high-potential talent.

7.3.1.5 Conclusions regarding RO5: To conceptualise a theoretical model for the identification of high-potential talent

An initial theoretical model for the identification of high-potential talent was developed and presented in Chapter 3. The theoretical model was based on layers of context that should be considered when an organisation makes decisions about identifying high-potential talent. The following elements were identified to form part of the theoretical model:

- The external environment, comprising cultural context and organisational demands, should be considered as an initial step. Cultural context refers to the culture of the nation or country in which the organisation operates. Literature distinguishes between collective cultures and individualistic cultures (Allen & Vardaman, 2021; Etoom, 2022; Iles, 2013). Collective cultures are typically found in countries in Africa and South America, and in some European countries, such as Spain, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Italy.

Individualistic cultures include countries like the USA, the United Kingdom, Australia, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany. It is important to consider the cultural context in decisions on a strategy to identify high-potential talent (Etoom, 2022).

- Organisational demands such as industry trends, competition in the market, and regulatory requirements should be considered when planning a strategy to identify high-potential candidates, as these factors will influence the future of the organisation. Thus, identifying high-potential candidates who will be able to navigate the current and future organisational environment effectively is crucial (Van der Merwe et al., 2023).

- A talent philosophy should be crafted that incorporates the definition of high-potential talent and other groupings that the organisation involves in talent development (Dries, 2022). A statement sharing the organisation's view on a number of aspects should be incorporated in the talent philosophy, including:

    - Methodology: the tools and methods that will be used to identify high-potential talent (De Haro et al., 2023; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 3013; Kabalina & Osipova, 2022; Lacey & Groves, 2014);

    - Inclusiveness: an explanation of who will be included in the high-potential programme. High-potential talent can refer to only leadership candidates or may include specialists with no leadership responsibilities (Stahl et al., 2012; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012);

    - Transparency: The communication of high-potential status (Dries & De Gieter, 2013; Jooss & Krebs, 2024);

    - Formality: Whether the identification process be informal, e.g., nomination by management according to discretion, or a formal process that includes, e.g., a series of interviews (Dries, 2022).

A number of constructs or indicators of high-potential talent were identified in literature and discussed in detail in Chapter 3. These were then included in the theoretical model to identify high-potential talent, the development of which achieved RO5. The theoretical model formed the basis for further investigation of high-potential talent that was conducted during the qualitative phase of the research.

7.3.2 Conclusions from the qualitative phase

The second stage of the study had as its main goal to determine empirically what is considered high potential and to test the constructs of high-potential talent statistically, to determine which constructs are the best indicators of high-potential talent. The main outcome of the qualitative phase was an in-depth understanding of what industry views as high-potential talent and a list of constructs that, according to the experts, could possibly identify employees as high-potential talent. During the interviews, comprehensive data were also gathered on talent management and how it is executed in organisations. The next section discusses conclusions drawn regarding RO6 and RO7, as well as general conclusions drawn from the qualitative data gathered during the interviews.

7.3.2.1 Conclusions regarding RO6: To determine what industry views as high-potential talent

This research established that there is a strong need and strategic urgency for the establishment of a specific, recognised group that organisations consider to be more valuable than others. The identification of a selected group of employees to be developed for the benefit of the organisation is considered justified and acceptable (De Haro et al., 2023). The experts who participated in the research confirmed that identifying and developing high-potential talent is a necessity for an organisation. To be able to support industry in identifying and developing high-potential individuals, it was necessary to first understand what industry viewed as high potential. The literature provided some information but no viewpoints specific to South Africa. It was thus necessary to research the views of South African practitioners and researchers.

The following should be noted with regard to how industry in South Africa views high-potential talent based on the data gathered during the interviews:

- The definition of high potential used by an organisation has strong ties to the strategies and future planning of an organisation. It also links clearly to the culture and values of the organisation. High-potential talent is viewed as individuals who possess abilities that the organisation considers critical to its future success.
- High-potential individuals are employees destined for future leadership positions but specialists can also be included in the programme, depending on the nature of the organisation. An organisation competing in the mining industry might thus want to identify

geologists to include in a high-potential programme, as identifying ore reserves, e.g., is crucial to the company's future success and survival.

- An organisation's understanding of high-potential might be influenced by country culture. In countries with a more collectivist culture, such as South Africa, organisations might find it difficult to discriminate between employees. This can pose specific challenges for South African organisations, as most organisations in South Africa are managed according to individualistic business principles adopted from Western countries.

The definition that was developed for high-potential talent as an outcome of the literature review was scrutinised following the data gathered during the interviews. The definition allows for a high-potential employee to function either in the managerial stream or in the specialist stream. Both, however, require that individuals are leaders in their respective career streams and able to contribute to the future success of the organisation. It was decided that there was no need to amend the definition of high-potential talent developed based on the literature review, as it incorporated all the aspects referred to by the industry experts that were interviewed. The definition of high-potential allows for an exclusive view of high potential but if used in conjunction with the other definitions, such as organisational talent and high-value talent, it is the author's opinion that it will be acceptable within the South African environment. Thus, RO6 was achieved.

7.3.2.2 Conclusions regarding RO7: To identify the predicting dimensions or constructs of high potential talent as viewed by industry

This objective was achieved in the qualitative phase, and the information was incorporated to develop a final list of predicting constructs for the HiPo Scale. The experts made a clear distinction between internal and external indicators of high-potential talent. They explained external indicators as aspects outside of the employee, such as age, gender, and race for purposes of B-BBEE, job experience, and job performance. External indicators are closely linked to organisational strategy and planning, and may be influenced by time and context. Internal indicators are specific and inherent to individual employees, and can be developed. These include competencies, qualities, and characteristics.

The findings of the literature review and the qualitative data were consolidated to form the final lists of external and internal indicators of high-potential indicators, discussed in Chapter 5. The theoretical model for the identification of high-potential talent was updated based on the

findings of the qualitative phase of the research, and makes a clear distinction between internal and external indicators. The internal indicators of high-potential that were identified are:

- Ability to work with people;
- Achievement- and action-oriented;
- Career ambition;
- Cognitive abilities;
- Committed and engaged;
- Emotional maturity;
- Functional competence;
- Learning agility;
- Ability to manage others; and
- Personal impact.

Thus, RO7 was achieved.

7.3.2.3 Conclusions regarding RO8: To identify the typical behaviour displayed by high-potential talent

The typical behaviour displayed by high-potential talent was identified by administering the HiPo Scale. This required the formulation of behavioural descriptors for each of the initial HiPo constructs. The process of the development of the initial scale was discussed in detail in Chapter 4, and the development of the behavioural indicators was discussed in Chapter 5.

During the interviews, participants were questioned about their view of the behaviours associated with high potential. The behavioural descriptors provided by participants formed the basis for the HiPo Scale. An initial item list for a self-evaluation was developed. Thus, RO8 was achieved.

7.3.3 Conclusions regarding the quantitative phase of the empirical study

The main focus of the quantitative phase, which had three research objectives, was to

statistically test the high-potential constructs, to be able to identify which initial constructs statistically indicate high-potential talent. RO9 to RO11 were achieved via the testing of the HiPo Scale. The scale development process involved several steps that were elaborated on in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. Conclusions reached for RO9 to RO 11 are elaborated on below.

7.3.3.1 Conclusions regarding RO9: To determine the validity and reliability of each high-potential talent construct

This research project was a first step towards gaining an understanding of high-potential talent in the South African context. The quantitative phase was an important progression towards the identification of measurable, high-potential constructs, which were tested and validated by means of statistical analysis. Given the exploratory nature of this project, it was expected that the statistical analysis would bring challenges and possibly yield less-than-ideal results. Nevertheless, the statistical analysis provided insightful results that could certainly be used as a basis for future research.

Initially, 10 high-potential constructs were identified and included in the HiPo Scale. Items were developed for each construct, and the scale was administered to a sample of employees from the participating organisation. Following EFA, seven high-potential constructs emerged. Upon inspection, it was noted that one of the constructs, *Balance*, was associated with only two items, and it was subsequently discarded. CFA was performed on the remaining six constructs to statistically determine the validity and reliability of each. Construct validity, convergent validity, and reliability were established for five of the six constructs. The construct validity of *Structured approach* could not be proven. The model was saturated, and goodness-of-fit indices could not be calculated for this construct. *Structured approach* was subsequently excluded from the HiPo Scale.

Construct- and convergent validity were established for five high-potential constructs. Reliability was confirmed; all the Cronbach's alpha values indicated good reliability. The CR scores were high, indicating good reliability. Unfortunately, the AVE scores were below the threshold (.50) for all the constructs. This caused concern regarding the convergent validity of the constructs. The items might not have been capturing the underlying factors well. Despite this concern, convergence was ultimately accepted. AVE is a more conservative measure than CR. If the AVE is less than 0.5 but the CR is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Grover et al., 2006). Given the high CR

scores and the fact that this research was exploratory, the five HiPo constructs were deemed valuable and worthy of inclusion in the final scale. Thus, RO9 was achieved.

7.3.3.2 Conclusions regarding RO10: To determine statistically which dimensions or observable behaviours are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent

The five remaining constructs represent the typical behaviours displayed by high-potential individuals. Only observable behaviours with acceptable statistical results were retained in the HiPo Scale. The strongest behavioural indicators were listed in Chapter 6. Of the original 69 behavioural items in the HiPo Scale, only 40 items were retained. These statements represent typical behaviours displayed by high-potential talent, statistically determined to be the best indicators of high-potential talent. This confirmed partial achievement of RO10.

To fully achieve RO10, the constructs that were the strongest indicators of high potential also had to be identified. To achieve this, five hypotheses were developed to test the relationships between the high-potential constructs and to determine the strength with which each construct indicates high potential. The hypotheses were developed using categories of employees with high-potential status. The groupings in the organisation, per the talent development system, were used to guide hypotheses development. The five hypotheses' results are recapped below.

H1: High-potential employees exhibit higher work performance than capable and remain-in-role employees.

It is accepted that performance plays a role in the identification of an employee as high-potential talent. During the qualitative phase of the research, job performance was established as one of the aspects that companies consider when they identify high-potential talent. Job performance was thus included in the HiPo Model as an external indicator of high-potential talent. This research presented an opportunity to test the notion of job performance being relevant in the evaluation of high-potential status. H1 was tested by means of a chi-square test for independence, and the results showed a positive relationship between high-potential status and job performance. Job performance was thus retained as an important external indicator of high-potential status.

The remaining four hypotheses were the following:

H2: High-potential employees are more engaged than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H3: High-potential employees exhibit higher levels of learning agility than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H4: High-potential employees are more positive about their ability to work in a team than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H5: High-potential employees are more ambitious than capable and remain-in-role employees.

H2 to H5 were tested using ANOVA, and the results were discussed in detail in Chapter 6. H2 to H5 were all rejected. What is, however, important to note is that, even though all the hypotheses had to be rejected as the statistical relationships between high-potential status and each high-potential construct were not significant, it does not imply that the identified high-potential construct should be discarded. The limitations of this research project, such as the sample size, social desirability, a limited scale, and the fact that the HiPo-scale was a newly developed instrument, could have impacted the results.

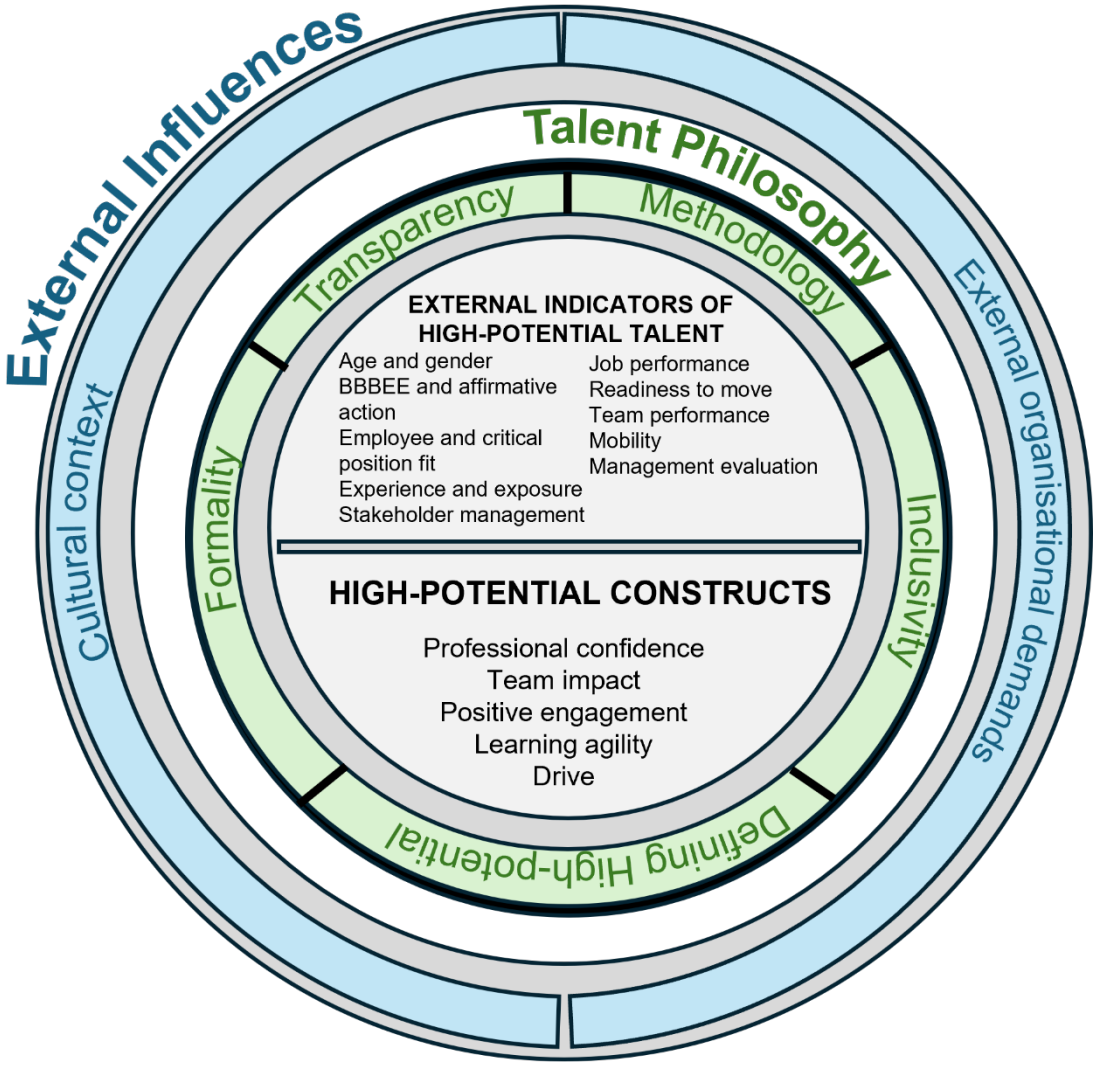
It can be concluded that job performance is related to high-potential status, and should be taken into account when high-potential talent is identified. The only other high-potential construct that was statistically shown to be significantly different between the groups was *Professional confidence*. For the remaining constructs, no significant difference was indicated between the high-potential groups and the other groupings in the sample. Thus, RO10 was achieved.

7.3.3.3 Conclusions regarding RO11: To develop a model, tested by means of structural equation modelling, to identify high-potential talent

The HiPo Model evolved from a theoretical model based on the data gathered during the literature review to a model based on qualitative data, following which the high-potential constructs were tested by means of statistical analysis. The final model is presented in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1

Final Model for the Identification of High-potential Talent



The HiPo Model for the Identification of High-potential Talent represents an integration of the literature review, qualitative phase, as well as the quantitative phase of the research. The model represents elements that were tested empirically, such as the high-potential constructs and the external indicators of high-potential talent. The study also confirmed that organisations should craft a talent philosophy. The exact elements that should be considered in crafting a talent philosophy, the cultural context, and the influence of external organisational demands were not empirically tested. The high-potential constructs are included in the model, and can be measured using the HiPo Scale. The next section provides an integration of the qualitative and quantitative data.

7.4. INTEGRATION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

Table 7.1 indicates how the qualitative and quantitative phases of the empirical part of the study contributed towards answering the research questions.

Table 7.1

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Phases

RO	Qualitative Phase	Quantitative Phase
RO6: To determine what industry views as high-potential talent	Conceptual information and qualitative data gathered from experts	Quantitative data gathered from respondents
RO7: To identify the predicting dimensions or constructs of high-potential talent, as viewed by industry	Conceptual information gathered from participants	Predicting dimensions empirically tested
RO8: To identify the typical behaviour displayed by high-potential talent	Conceptual information gathered, used to create the HiPo Scale	Behaviour as described by the various items in the scale was empirically tested
RO9: To determine the validity and reliability of each high-potential talent construct	Not applicable in this phase	Tested by means of statistical analysis
RO10: To determine statistically which dimensions or observable behaviours are the strongest indicators of high-potential talent	Not applicable in this phase	Dimensions and behaviours identified
RO11: To develop a model, tested using SEM, to identify high-potential talent	Not applicable in this phase	A model was developed based on the SEM results
RO12: To make recommendations for the discipline of organisational psychology and HRM on the identification of high-potential talent	Integrated findings	Integrated findings

The next section provides recommendations for practice based on the study findings.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This research yielded several learning points for industry and practice, thereby addressing RO12. The first recommendation is that industry and practitioners ensure that an organisation develops a talent philosophy that incorporates the aspects identified in this research before setting out to implement a high-potential identification process and development programme. How talent is viewed is influenced by numerous nuanced aspects, and the opinions that people in an organisation hold regarding how talent and high-potential talent should be identified and developed could differ. A unifying philosophy that underpins the practical strategy will direct the organisation in rolling out a HiPo programme.

Second, organisations should consider the culture of the country in which they are conducting business when designing a high-potential development programme. The matter of individualistic versus collectivist cultures was explained in detail. The culture of the country or the culture of the main grouping of employees in an organisation will probably influence how high-potential talent identification and development should be approached to have a greater chance of success. This poses a specific challenge to multinational organisations that conduct business in both collectivist and individualistic cultures.

Organisations are advised to establish clear, agreed-upon definitions of talent and high-potential talent. The present study found that the meaning of talent and high-potential talent differs vastly in literature, depending on the theoretical and value basis from which it is judged. The terms identified in this research, such as talent, organisational talent, high-potential talent, and high-value talent, should be clearly defined and communicated to employees. The vocabulary should include all the terminology used in the implementation of a HiPo programme, so that employees have clarity regarding the organisation’s intentions.

Organisations should be very clear on how their HiPo programme aligns with other HRM activities, such as succession planning and employee development. To avoid personal interpretation of how talent should be identification and developed, and to ensure transparency, organisations should be clear on their approach, what they are planning, and what they want to achieve with such a programme.

Organisations could use the proposed HiPo Model as a guideline in identifying high-potential

talent. This model provides a tested outline of the aspects that should be reflected on when an organisation is planning to identify high-potential talent for development. Organisations should consider and appropriately incorporate the external indicators of high potential that apply to the specific organisation and its context. The next section provides an evaluation of the present study.

7.6 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH

This section summarises the study's theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions.

7.6.1 Theoretical contribution

This study makes a contribution to theory through an exploration and sense-making of the talent management landscape and extant research. Through the Talent Management Continuum, this research created a system by which research on talent management can be categorised. The categorisation of current literature contributed to our understanding of the talent management research landscape, and provided context to enhance understanding of this complex phenomenon.

The study further contributed by suggesting that talent is a multidimensional concept, and that one definition is not sufficient to adequately describe all the facets of talent from an organisational perspective. Based on the literature review, definitions of four types were suggested, namely talent, organisational talent, high-potential talent, and high-value talent.

A theoretical HiPo Model for talent identification was developed based on the literature. The model represents the multifaceted approach that organisations should follow in implementing talent management, and specifically in identifying and developing high-potential talent.

7.6.2 Empirical contribution

On an empirical level, this research contributed to understanding the views of industry regarding talent and high-potential talent in the South African context. This study contributed an original model for the identification of high-potential talent in a South African context. The HiPo Scale incorporates cultural context, the complexities of aspects that should be considered when planning the implementation of a high-potential programme, and the external indicators of high potential that should be considered by organisations. This study identified,

via empirical research, five constructs that indicate high-potential talent, namely *Professional confidence*, *Team impact*, *Positive engagement*, *Learning agility.* The proposed HiPo Scale could be used to identify typical high-potential behaviour and, possibly, once refined, be used in the identification of high-potential talent.

7.6.3 Practical contribution

The research contributes towards closing the gap between academia and practice alluded to by Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2022), who point out researchers' lack of practical contributions to talent management. The present research makes a contribution by providing a model for the identification of high-potential talent that can be used by organisations in planning a HiPo programme and identifying high-potential talent.

Another practical contribution is the HiPo Scale, which can be used by practitioners and organisations to identify high-potential talent. Various independent consultants working in the industrial and organisational psychology field claim they can assist organisations with the identification of high-potential talent. Psychometric tests, amongst other tools, are used to assist organisations in the identification of high-potential talent. The constructs measured, however, are often based on questionable research or no research at all. This study contributes towards closing the gap by offering organisations objectively measured constructs of high-potential talent and a scale to measure these constructs.

The next section discusses the study limitations, together with recommendations for future research.

7.7 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As with most research, the present study has limitations. These are discussed below, together with recommendations for future research.

The literature reviewed for this project originated mainly from countries other than South Africa and outside of Africa, mainly Europe and the USA. Limited literature on high-potential talent is available that reflects an African viewpoint of talent, talent management, and high-potential talent. In addition, there is a lack of empirically tested high-potential identification models. Research should be conducted on the acceptance and practical application of the definitions of talent, high-potential talent, organisational talent, and high-value talent that were developed

in the present study. If talent management is a phenomenon, as described by Dries (2022), rather than a construct, the four definitions might add to organisations' understanding of talent management and high-potential talent.

This research project investigated high-potential talent and related concepts, and noted constructs that indicate high-potential talent and philosophical aspects that organisations should consider in developing their high-potential identification and -development strategies. The process of how high-potential talent should be identified was, however, not investigated in detail, presenting an avenue for future research.

Research into Afrocentric and Western-oriented organisations and the role that culture plays in the perceptions that organisations and practitioners hold regarding high-potential talent should be investigated. Existing questionnaires that measure collectivism and individualism could be used to determine the prevailing culture of South African organisations. Multinational corporations that also do business in South Africa face a unique challenge in that the business rules by which they have to operate are probably rooted in Western culture but the employees, specifically South African employees, may hold more collectivist values. This dichotomy will have implications for talent management and the identification of high-potential talent, which could be examined in future research.

The sample size for the quantitative testing of the HiPo Scale was not ideal. Large samples are associated with more accurate and, in some cases, more positive results. SEM produces less effective results with smaller samples. The sample size was small due to the absolute requirement that the scale be developed and tested in an organisation that had a well-established talent management system with a specific focus on high-potential talent. The fact that the participating organisation already distinguished between various categories of employees, including high-potentials, facilitated the successful completion of the statistical analysis, especially with regard to the testing of the hypotheses. This would not have been possible had different groups not already existed in the organisation. This limitation could be addressed in future research using larger samples.

Although technically not a limitation, the fact that the research was exploratory in nature had an impact on the statistical analysis and results. The HiPo Scale was developed as a new scale with new constructs and items. When the scale was developed, it was anticipated that including four options in the Likert scale would provide an adequate normal distribution to enable conclusions. In hindsight, it would have been preferable to use an eight- or 10-point

scale, as a wider range of responses would have enabled analysis of smaller increments, which could have influenced the results.

Social desirability may have played a role in participants' responses on the HiPo Scale. It was clear that respondents wanted to present a positive image of themselves, as they tended to choose options 3 and 4 of the Likert scale. However, it must be borne in mind that all the respondents had already been accepted into the organisation's talent management programme, and were, thus, in a sense, pre-selected as representative of talented employees.

This research project was exploratory in nature, and was a first attempt at developing a scale with which to identify high-potential talent. The process and results were not as refined as they could have been had more knowledge on high-potential talent been available. Limited empirical studies have been completed on high potential in South Africa, which forced the researcher to apply principles that are accepted in other parts of the world but might not always be applicable to the South African context. Future research could focus on addressing this gap in knowledge.

A further limitation is that the EFA and CFA were performed on the same dataset, which is not ideal for scale validation (Hurley et al., 1997). However, this approach is recognised as a pragmatic strategy during early scale development, particularly when sample constraints prevent dataset splitting (Floyd & Widaman, 1995; Gerbing & Hamilton, 1996). Pradhan and Hati (2019) conducted EFA and CFA on the same dataset when they developed and validated a scale to measure Employee Wellbeing. Given the limited and highly specific sample in this study, EFA was used to identify the latent structure of high-potential talent indicators, while CFA served to refine the model and retain the most robust indicators. Accordingly, the results should be interpreted as preliminary evidence of structural validity, and future studies should cross-validate the factor structure in an independent sample.

Even though construct and convergent validity were ultimately established for the five HiPo constructs, the AVE scores were below the threshold (.50) for all the constructs. This causes concern regarding the convergent validity of the HiPo constructs, and might be an indication that the items are not capturing the underlying factors well enough. Further research is required to refine and improve the HiPo Scale, which research could employ partial least squares SEM, which is an alternative in cases where sample sizes are relatively small and the normal distribution of the data is a challenge (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Hair et al., 2019).

Further refinement of the HiPo Scale presents an opportunity for further inquiry. Such research could focus on refining the scale items. Eliminating or replacing low-loading items should be considered, as well as measures to improve AVE. A final scale, where all the constructs can be tested and confirmed via SEM, should be developed.

The HiPo Model for talent identification should be researched further through application in organisations, including in international context. Specific focus should be placed on expanding on the cultural context of the model to integrate Ubuntu more prominently. This would contribute to our understanding of the differences in practical aspects of high-potential identification and development. Such studies could also incorporate the elements of the model that were not tested in the present study, such as cultural influence, external influences, and the elements that should be included in an organisation's talent philosophy, should be tested to improve on and enhance the validity of the total model.

7.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter synthesised the study's objectives and final conclusions, and delineated the principal recommendations, limitations, and avenues for future research. The study accomplished its overarching aim of developing a comprehensive, empirically substantiated model for identifying high-potential employees in South-African organisational settings. Employing a rigorous mixed-methods research design, the study conceptualised the constructs of talent and high-potential talent, incorporated industry perspectives to refine key behavioural indicators of high-potential talent.

Through this process the research clarified the multidimensional nature of talent, distinguished between internal and external indicators of high potential, and generated a practically applicable, theoretically defensible model tailored to the South African context. It furthermore produced a measurement scale, tested by means of statistical analysis, that can be considered for use in the identification of high-potential talent.

It is anticipated that the findings of this research will stimulate further research into culturally grounded talent philosophies, facilitate ongoing refinement and validation of the HiPo-scale, and promote more context-sensitive approaches to the identification of future organisational leaders. Ultimately, the HiPo Model is expected to provide a robust foundation for fair, transparent, and strategically aligned high-potential identification and development practices, both within South Africa and in broader international settings.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA IOP ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 26 January 2021

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference #: ***2020/CEMS/IOP/040***
Name : Ms L Diedericks
Student #: N/A
Staff #: 90222253

Dear Ms L Diedericks,

Decision: Ethics Approval from 01 February2021 to 01 February 2026

Researcher(s): Ms L Diedericks
diedel@unisa.ac.za, 083 274 8027

Supervisor (s): Prof N Martins
martinsn@mweb.co.za, 083 266 6372

Working title of research:

The development of a framework for the identification of high potential talent

Qualification: PhD Industrial & Organisational Psychology

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa IOP Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for a period of **Five (5) years**.

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on 26 January 2021 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The Ethics Application was approved on 01 February 2021.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. ***The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 Position Statement on research ethics dated 26 June 2020 which is attached.***

Open Rubric

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2. ***All data-gathering must adhere to and be aligned with restrictions applicable to the Government's current Lockdown Alert Levels.***

3. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
4. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.
5. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
6. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
7. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
8. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
9. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**01 February 2026**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **DiedericksL_2021_CEMS_IOP_040** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

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Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of IOP ERC

E-mail: vnieka2@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-8231



Signature

Executive Dean: CEMS

E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za

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APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Doctoral Study: The development of a framework for the identification of high potential talent
Ethical documentation: *Informed consent (Qualitative phase)*

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Please sign this document and hand it back to the researcher during the interview appointment

---

Dear Mr./ Ms (name of participant)

You have been identified as an expert practitioner in the field of talent management and have agreed to participate in an interview as requested by the researcher per email. The interview is expected to take approximately 1 hour.

The aim of this research is to develop a framework that can be used in the identification of high potential talent / employees in South African organisations. Various constructs are investigated and your opinion on these aspects will be very valuable in selecting constructs that truly indicate high potential.

Please note that your participation is voluntary and that you are under no obligation to take part in the study. Participation is also anonymous and your name as well as the name of your company will not be made known in the published documentation. The researcher will take notes during the interview and an audio recording will be made of the interview. This is purely for research and transcription purposes and will be dealt with under the strictest adherence to confidentiality requirements. This information will not be shared with anyone else than the transcriber which has signed a confidentiality agreement and will not be allowed to make known the content of the transcriptions to any other parties. The results of this study will be utilised for research purposes only and may be published as a research report, journal article or conference proceedings.

By signing this document:

- You confirm that you have been informed about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.
- You have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet attached to this email.
- You have carefully considered the information and are prepared to participate in the study.
- You are aware that the researcher will take notes during the interview as well as make an audio recording of the interview. This is purely for transcription and research purposes. Confidentiality will be ensured at all times.
- You understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable)
- You are aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings

It is not anticipated that participating in the study will harm you in any way. However, should you require further information or have any concerns, you are most welcome to contact me directly: diedel@unisa.ac.za or 083 274 8027

I, _____ *(print name)* hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this research study by agreeing to be interviewed by the researcher.

Signature or participant: _____

Date: _____

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APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR QUALITATIVE DATA GATHERING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

PARTICIPANT:			
DATE OF INTERVIEW:			
VENUE:		**PARTICIPANT NO.**	

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANT

- Welcome to the interview. I want to thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study.
- I also want to confirm that this interview is strictly confidential. Information that you share with me today will only be used for research purposes and will not be shared with any parties outside the research team.
- You will remain anonymous for all intent and purposes of the study.
- I e-mailed you a consent form that I asked you to complete prior to the interview. Could you please provide me with a signed copy of that form now? (collect the signed consent form from the participant).
- Do you have any questions or concerns about your participation and the consent that you provided?
- I attached a biographical information sheet to the e-mailed consent form. Did you manage to complete that? (collect the completed biographical form from the participant)
- I will be making a voice recording of this interview. The voice recording will only be heard by myself and the transcriber (who signed a confidentiality agreement) The only purpose of the recording is to have a record of the interview for research purposes.
- I will also be taking notes during the interview, for documentation purposes. Please do not let this deter you from sharing information. You should feel free to share information as you would have during a normal conversation.
- You are welcome to ask me questions during the interview if you are concerned about some aspect of the interview. Do you have any questions now? If you are comfortable then we can start:

NOTES

1. What is talent management?

- *Definitions*
- *Understanding of the concept*

2. Why does your organisation practice talent management? / Why do organisations practice talent management?

- *Are the motives different for SA companies than international companies?*
- *What drives the implementation of talent management?*

3. Please tell me more about your organisation's talent management system. / Please tell me more about what a typical talent management system, in your experience, looks like?

- *Structure of talent management system*
- *Alignment with org strategy? – how?*
- *Role players?*
- *Inclusive/ exclusive*

4. Describe the concepts "talent" and "high-potential talent". *(What is talent and what is high-potential talent?)*

- *Definitions of the concepts / Inclusive vs exclusive / Culture specific – SA context?*
- *Leadership / specialists? – talent for what?*

5. How does your company identify high-potential talent? (*What is the process and differentiation categories of employees?)* Positive / negative about current practice?

- *Differentiation categories*

6. What tools or psychometric instruments are used in identifying high-potential candidates and why have you chosen the specific tools or approach that you are following?

7. Once HiPo candidates have been identified, is their status communicated to them? Do employees know who is high potential and who not? Why is the status communicated / not communicated?

7.1 FOLLOW UP Q: What are the positive / negative aspects about the practice as you just described?

8. In your experience, what is typical HiPo behavior in a work context? How do you know this person is a high potential?—without any assessment measures of succession planning discussions.

- *HiPo behavioural traits*

9. What are the psychological constructs (that the company identified as being) relevant to the identification of high-potential candidates and what assessment tools do are used / should be used to identify high-potential talent?

_____

_____

10. What are the benefits that the company has realized by identifying high potentials and developing them?

_____

_____

11. What are the hindering or facilitating factors that have an influence on the practice of identifying and developing high-potential employees in a South African context? (Labour environment / economic challenges etc…)

_____

_____

12. Are there any aspects pertinent to talent management or high-potential talent identification and development that we have not discussed during this interview and that you feel is important to take note of?

_____

_____

- Before we end the interview, are there any questions or concerns regarding the interview and the process that will follow? Thank you again for your participation. I am happy to email you with the findings of this study, should you want me to.

_____

APPENDIX D: ITEM LIST DISTRIBUTED TO INDUSTRY EXPERTS

Dear expert evaluator,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my PhD study by acting as an expert evaluator. The role of the expert evaluator in the development of a questionnaire is crucial to ensure the quality of the final questionnaire to be distributed to a pilot sample of respondents.

Background to the study

Organisations identify individuals which they term “high potential” or “high-flyers” through various mechanisms. The goal of this study is to develop a model for the identification of high-potential talent. Part of the model is a questionnaire to measure typical high-potential behaviour in employees. The first phase of this study involved in-depth interviews where eleven constructs indicating high-potential behaviour were identified. An item list based on the behaviours described by participants during the interviews were developed and you are now asked to evaluate the items.

Respondents to the questionnaire will indicate their opinion as to their own behaviour on a 4-point Likert scale similar to the following:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Not true of me	Somewhat true of me	Moderately true of me	Very true of me

Instructions

The item, starting on the next page, consists of a total of 11 constructs, each with 10 proposed question statements. These statements are all possible items that might indicate high-potential behaviour. Your role is to review the items and suggest changes where it is deemed necessary. Items should be clear, well formulated and should, in your opinion, be structured in such a manner that it will adequately measure the construct as described. A definition of each construct as well as the codes that make up the construct are provided to inform your

opinion. Please see the **yellow block** for specific instructions on how to evaluate the items.

Please be critical in your assessment of the items and frank in your feedback.

Once you have completed providing feedback on the item list, please save the list and return it to me by sending a return email and attaching the evaluated item list. I need to save and keep each individual feedback form in order to preserve the audit trail.

Thank you for your willingness to assist with the development of this questionnaire.

CONSTRUCT 1: Ability to work with people				
Description: A high-potential individual can work well with other people, behaving in such a manner as to foster long term relationships and collaboration.				
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)				
Ability to build relationships Ability to network Can energise others Can influence others positively Can work well as part of a team		Can work with people Caring Collaborative Interpersonal skills		Is nice to other people Likes to engage with others Social intelligence Willing to help others
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire		• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box. (position you mouse over the block and left-click)* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
		Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification/reason for exclusion**
1	I easily build healthy relationships	☐	☐	
2	I enjoy being part of a team	☐	☐	
3	I am very effective at networking	☐	☐	
4	I can energise others	☐	☐	
5	I can work with others to achieve outcomes	☐	☐	
6	I care about my colleagues	☐	☐	

Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire		• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box. (position you mouse over the block and left-click)* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
7	I am an excellent team leader	☐	☐	
8	I enjoy engaging with other people at work	☐	☐	
9	I easily influence others to agree with me	☐	☐	
10	I am socially smart	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 2 Achievement and action orientation		
Description: A high-potential individual is focussed on goal achievement. They have a “can do” attitude that enables them to solve problems even in difficult circumstances.		
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)		
Able to work independently Achievement orientation and goal focussed Can do attitude Commitment Conscientiousness	Decision making High achiever High paced, high activity High work ethic Immersion in the job_ effort	Initiating action Pro-active Problem solving Want to do more than expected Willing to go the extra mile_ do better

Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire		• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
		Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1	I am committed to achieving goals	☐	☐	
2	Performing on an above average level makes me proud	☐	☐	
3	I can easily make decisions	☐	☐	
4	I enjoy high paced working environments	☐	☐	
5	I want to put in more effort than others	☐	☐	
6	I follow a pro-active approach	☐	☐	
7	I can initiate action	☐	☐	
8	I do more than what is expected of me	☐	☐	
9	I take ownership of my responsibilities	☐	☐	
10	I try to achieve a balance between work and my personal life	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 3 Career ambition				
Description: High-potential employees have ambition to grow hierarchically in the organisation or grow to a certain level in their careers.				
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)				
Ability to rise through the ranks Aspiration and ambition		Career driven Stretch career goals		
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire		• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
		Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1	I have specific career goals	☐	☐	
2	I plan to reach the top in my career	☐	☐	
3	I am ambitious	☐	☐	
4	I set stretch career goals for myself	☐	☐	
5	I want to achieve more than others	☐	☐	
6	I am willing to do more if I know that it will advance my career	☐	☐	
7	I want to work in a senior position	☐	☐	
8	I value contribution more than achievement	☐	☐	

9	I want to live a life of significance rather than of success	☐	☐	
10	I work to rise up the hierarchy of the company	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 4 **Cognitive and thinking abilities**				
Description: A high-potential employee displays strong cognitive and thinking abilities.				
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)				
Ability to analyse information Reasoning / numerical / verbal ability Ability to deal with complex environment Business acumen		Cognitive ability Intellectual capacity Judgement Logical reasoning		Multitasking Sharp - does not struggle to understand Strategic thinking Verbal ability_ persuasiveness
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire		• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
		Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1	I am good at analysing information	☐	☐	
2	My cognitive abilities are above average	☐	☐	
3	I think a complex situation is a positive challenge	☐	☐	

4	I easily grasp concepts	☐	☐	
5	I understand the business environment well	☐	☐	
6	I can focus on more than one task at the same time	☐	☐	
7	I easily formulate logical arguments	☐	☐	
8	I have been told that I am cleverer than the average person	☐	☐	
9	I understand things better than others	☐	☐	
10	I am quick to understand when something is explained	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 5 **Committed and engaged**		
Description: High-potential employees are committed and engaged.		
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)		
Committed_ wants to be here Energised by motivating factors in senior roles	Engaged Interested in Leadership	
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire	• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*	

		Include	Exclude	Suggested modification / reason for exclusion
1	I am committed to my organisation	☐	☐	
2	I am positive about being a leader in my organisation	☐	☐	
3	I am emotionally engaged in the work that I do	☐	☐	
4	My working environment is great.	☐	☐	
5	I am proud of the organisation that I work for	☐	☐	
6	My organisation supports my career goals	☐	☐	
7	I support my organisations goals	☐	☐	
8	In my organisation employees are encouraged to take initiative	☐	☐	
9	I am positive about my work	☐	☐	
10	I trust my immediate manager	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 6 Emotional maturity				
Description: A high-potential employee is emotionally mature with a high IQ and ability to adapt and manage uncertain environments				
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)				
Adaptability flexibility Cultural intelligence		Emotional stability EQ		
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire		• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
		Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1	I easily adapt to new situations	☐	☐	
2	I am sensitive to other cultures	☐	☐	
3	Others view me as emotionally stable	☐	☐	
4	I can remain calm in difficult situations	☐	☐	
5	I try to rely on logic rather than on feelings	☐	☐	
6	I understand how emotions work	☐	☐	
7	I can adapt to changing circumstances at work	☐	☐	
8	I regulate my own feelings easily	☐	☐	

9	I can work well with others despite cultural differences	☐	☐	
10	I can manage the emotions of others	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 7 Functional competence			
Description: A high-potential employee is also seen as competent in his/her functional area of expertise even though they might be appointed in a leadership position			
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)			
Functional competence Technical skill			
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire	• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
	Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1	I am seen as an expert in my trade	☐	☐
2	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with technical problems	☐	☐
3	I can give technical advice to others	☐	☐
4	I have a good understanding of my functional area	☐	☐

5	I give others advice about how to handle technical problems at work	☐	☐	
6	I am competent in my area of technical expertise	☐	☐	
7	I have thorough knowledge of my functional area.	☐	☐	
8	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area	☐	☐	
9	My subordinates look up to me because I have good technical knowledge	☐	☐	
10	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 8 **Learning agility**		
Description: A high-potential employee enjoys learning new things, they value the acquisition of knowledge and excel at it.		
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)		
Growth mindset Learning agility	Questioning nature	
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire	• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*	

		Include	Exclude	Suggested modification / reason for exclusion
1	I enjoy learning new things	☐	☐	
2	I excel in formal learning	☐	☐	
3	I have a questioning nature	☐	☐	
4	I value acquiring new knowledge	☐	☐	
5	I am quick to understanding new information	☐	☐	
6	I strive to learn continuously	☐	☐	
7	I make use of opportunities to learn new things	☐	☐	
8	I agree with the saying that you are never too old to learn new things	☐	☐	
9	Continuous learning is a priority for me	☐	☐	
10	I enjoy learning	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 9 **Ability to manage others**		
Description: A high-potential employee has excellent managerial skills		
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)		
Comfortable with managerial control Make decisions and give direction	Organised Plan, organise, control	

Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire		• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
		Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1	I easily give direction to subordinates	☐	☐	
2	Others see me as decisive	☐	☐	
3	I enjoy working in a managerial position	☐	☐	
4	I make decisions easily	☐	☐	
5	Others will describe me as organised	☐	☐	
6	I prefer working in a well organised environment	☐	☐	
7	I am comfortable working in a managerial role	☐	☐	
8	I enjoy leading others	☐	☐	
9	I easily take responsibility for others	☐	☐	
10	I like to plan in order to ensure performance	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 10 Personal impact			
Description: A high-potential employee makes a positive impact on others with their presence. They are self-confident and relate well with others.			
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)			
Ability to create rapport with others Displays a positive presence but not necessarily extroverted	Personal impact Self confidence		
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire	• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*		
	Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1 I am comfortable when meeting new people	☐	☐	
2 I enjoy meeting new people	☐	☐	
3 I am self-confident	☐	☐	
4 Others say I make a positive personal impact	☐	☐	
5 I relate well with others	☐	☐	
6 Other say I display a positive presence	☐	☐	
7 I have confidence in my abilities	☐	☐	

8	I take ownership of the responsibilities that I have	☐	☐	
9	I help my team to believe in their abilities	☐	☐	
10	I encourage confidence in others	☐	☐	

CONSTRUCT 11 **Ethics and values**				
Description: A high-potential employee maintains high levels of ethical conduct, they are trustworthy and live the values of the organisation				
Identified sub-constructs (from interviews)				
Ethical, principled, trustworthy Living the values				
Items considered for inclusion in the questionnaire	• *Please indicate whether you think an item should be **included** or **excluded** by ticking the appropriate box.* • *You can choose to include an item but suggest and amendment to that item. Please type the amended item in the space provided.* • *When you choose to exclude an item, please provide a reason for your suggestion in the space provided.*			
		Include	**Exclude**	**Suggested modification / reason for exclusion**
1	My behaviour is always ethical	☐	☐	
2	I am honest	☐	☐	
3	I live the values of our organisation	☐	☐	
4	I have high ethical standards	☐	☐	
5	I always try to do the right thing	☐	☐	

6	I do what I say I am going to do	☐	☐	
7	I honour my commitments	☐	☐	
8	I strive to live up to ethical expectations of my organisation	☐	☐	
9	I encourage others to maintain high ethical standards	☐	☐	
10	I reprimand others who do not behave ethically	☐	☐	

APPENDIX E: INTEGRATION OF FEEDBACK FROM EXPERTS ON ITEM LIST FOR FINAL QUESTIONS

CONSTRUCT 1: ABILITY TO WORK WITH PEOPLE									
	ITEM	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	FINAL QUESTIONS
1	I easily build healthy relationships	Different people may have different understandings of the word "healthy". I suggest that you replace healthy with something like "mutually beneficial" or "positive"							I easily build positive relationships
2	I enjoy being part of a team	Many high potential individuals don't necessarily enjoy being part of a team but over years have learned how to contribute positively to a team.							I enjoy being part of a team
3	I am very effective at networking	Networking could be perceived as a very "sociable" term – I would rather suggest something like: " I am able to purposefully collaborate with internal and external stakeholders"							I am good at networking
4	I can energise others				May fit better with construct 10 – personal impact?	Happy with question but perhaps more applicable under construct 2			
5	I can work with others to achieve outcomes	I collaborate with others to achieve outcomes							I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes
6	I care about my colleagues	My colleagues' well-being is important to me			Suggest to replace the word "care" with supportive as "care" can possibly be interpreted from a very emotional/intimate perspective				My colleagues' well-being is important to me
7	I am an excellent team leader	I think it is risky to include descriptive words like "excellent" etc. I would rather say something like: " I am able to encourage, motivate and inspire my team members."			Can this also be a project leader (or are specialists excluded as high potentials?)		Rather than "excellent" perhaps "I am an effective team leader"?		I am an effective team leader
8	I enjoy engaging with other people at								I enjoy engaging with others at work
9	I easily influence others to agree with me	Change to: " I find it easy to convince and influence others."			May fit better with construct 10 – personal impact?	Not perhaps part of construct 10, Personal impact			I find it easy to convince and influence others
10	I am socially smart	Change to: "I find it easy to interpret social cues and therefore regard myself as socially smart."			Concerned about misinterpretation (socially smart = manipulative?)	Perhaps: I am acting appropriately	Not sure what "socially smart" means. Perhaps something like "I have good social skills"?	I would not remove this item but rather re-phrase it as being socially smart includes many aspects but all the questions in this construct pertain to one aspect only.	
GENERAL FEEDBACK									

CONSTRUCT 2: ACHIEVEMENT AND ACTION ORIENTATION									
	ITEM	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	FINAL QUESTIONS
1	I am committed to achieving goals								Goal achievement is very important to me
2	Performing on an above average level makes me proud	Above average means different things to different people. Maybe change it to something like: "Exceeding performance expectations makes me				Is it an emotion of proud, or a feeling of satisfaction?	It makes me proud to perform above average work		I feel satisfied when I deliver above average work
3	I can easily make decisions	"I find it easy to make decisions decisively"							I can easily make decisions
4	I enjoy high paced working environments				Is it about the pace or the progression?				I enjoy high paced working environments
5	I want to put in more effort than others	"I walk the extra mile without anybody asking me to do so"		As soon as a person want to be seen they tend to focus on their own goals than that of the team.	Maybe implied in items 2, 6 and 8	Perhaps I enjoy to put in more effort			It is important to me to perform better than others
6	I follow a pro-active approach	Not sure what this means?							I follow a pro-active approach
7	I can initiate action	"I take initiative and likes to get things started"				Difference between pro-active and initiate action?			
8	I do more than what is expected of me	Very similar to question 5		As soon as a person want to be seen they tend to focus on their own goals than that of the team					
9	I take ownership of my responsibilities								I take ownership of my responsibilities
10	I try to achieve a balance between work and my personal life			I am two minded with this question. Is there something about balancing work/life? If the person is a family person does that make that they are not goal	May fits better with construct 6 – emotional maturity	Isn't having a balance counter to Achievement and action orientation?			I try to balance work and personal life
GENERAL FEEDBACK									

CONSTRUCT3: CAREER AMBITION									
	ITEM	**Expert 1**	**Expert 2**	**Expert 3**	**Expert 4**	**Expert 5**	**Expert 6**	**Expert 7**	**FINAL QUESTIONS**
1	I have specific career goals	" I have clearly defined career goals"							I have specific career goals
2	I plan to reach the top in my career	" I am committed to reach the top of my career"				Is relative question. What is top? For someone in corporate it is to be CEO. For a high potential specialist it is to be master in their field. Perhaps: I am driven to achieve the maximum from my career		I plan to rise through the ranks rather than reaching the top? / I plan to rise up the hierarchy of the company	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career
3	I am ambitious	" I regard myself as an ambitious person with clear aspirations"							I am ambitious
4	I set stretched career goals for myself	I set stretched career goals for myself	What is meant by "stretch" career goals?			Career and professional goals		It is unclear what it meant with "stretch" in this question	I set challenging goals for myself
5	A want to achieve more than others				Possible overlap with item 2 of construct 2?				
6	I am willing to do more if I know that it will advance my career	I am willing to take on more responsibilities if I know how it will contribute to advancement in my career							I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me
7	I want to work in a senior position	Being appointed in a senior role in an organisation is one of my career goals				Having a senior position is not always = career ambition			Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals
8	I value contribution more than achievement				May fits better with construct 6 – emotional maturity				I value contribution more than achievement
9	I want to live a life of significance rather than of success				May fits better with construct 6 – emotional maturity	Often career ambition is associate with success. What about live a life of significance AND success. They go hand in hand			I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs
10	I work to rise up the hierarchy of the					And my profession?			
GENERAL FEEDBACK		**Expert 3:** If the person is career orientated then the person might be ambitious in terms of their own career, I am just wondering will they be organisation orientated? Isn't this one of the reasons why organisations tend to have challenges with retention of highly talented employees?							

CONSTRUCT 4: COGNITIVE AND THINKING ABILITY									
	ITEM	**Expert 1**	**Expert 2**	**Expert 3**	**Expert 4**	**Expert 5**	**Expert 6**	**Expert 7**	**FINAL QUESTIONS**
1	I am good at analysing information	I am good at analysing and interpreting information				Perhaps effective in analysing			I am good at analysing information
2	My cognitive abilities are above average	How would they know that?						This would only be perception not a fact. What about replacing it with a question that pertains to the sub-construct of strategic thinking which is highly applicable to HPPs	
3	A think a complex situation is a positive challenge	To solve complex problems excites me.				Perhaps: I see a complex situation as a challenge			I see complex problems as a positive challenge
4	I easily grasp concepts							Difficult concepts?	I easily grasp difficult concepts
5	I understand the business environment well						I understand my organisation's business environment well		I understand my organisation's business environment well
6	I can focus on more than one task at the same time								I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time
7	I easily formulate logical arguments								I easily formulate logical arguments
8	I have been told that I am cleverer than the average person	Maybe replace it with something like: " I find it easy to grasp complex problems"	Consider: I have been told that I am **more intelligent** than the average person"		Overlaps with 2 which is worded better	Perhaps: Cleverer than other people vs. the average person			I have been told that I am more intelligent than the average person
9	I understand things better than others	*REPLACE with: I prefer to think long-term about issues and concepts"* added this to perhaps look at strategic thinking.			*REPLACE with:* I understand things in the context of the system (team, department and/or business)				
10	I am quick to understand when something is explained	Some as question 8 (recommendation) "I find it easy to grasp complex problems"			Does it have to be explained? Maybe item 4 can be changed to: I am quick to understand new concepts or information				I find it easy to understand complext problems
GENERAL FEEDBACK		**Expert 3:** I have been told that ….. (I like this as an introduction to the question because one can think they understand the business environment well but is it true from another's perspective?)							

CONSTRUCT 5: COMMITTED AND ENGAGED									
	ITEM	**Expert 1**	**Expert 2**	**Expert 3**	**Expert 4**	**Expert 5**	**Expert 6**	**Expert 7**	**FINAL QUESTIONS**
1	I am committed to my organisation	I am committed to the values of my organisation – or I am loyal to my organisation			*REPLACE with:* I am committed to make my best contribution to my organisation				I am loyal to the organisation that I work for
2	I am positive about being a leader in my organisation	I am proud to be regarded a leader in my organisation	Consider including another item that measures "interested in leadership"			And profession			I want to be a leader in my orgnisation
3	I am emotionally engaged in the work that I do							Consider also focusing on the sub-aspects of engagement – vigour, dedication and	I enjoy my work
4	My working environment is great.	"Great" different meanings to different people – maybe replace it with "conducive"	This item does not really measure behaviour.	My working environment is my first choice as an employer/ I do not consider to exit (or leave) my working environment.	I think high potentials need to be committed and engaged despite their working environments i.e. driven by an internal locus of control and in spite of circumstances	Not sure. Perhaps my working environment has a positive impact on my performance	My work environment is fulfilling	I enjoy my working environment rather than using the word great?	
5	I am proud of the organisation that I work for				Same comment as above. Maybe the item can focus on willingness to promote the employing organisation's goals? See suggested change to item 1.			Pride relates to the dedication aspect of engagement	I am prouod of the organisationa that I work for
6	My organisation supports my career goals	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals	This item does not really measure behaviour.		Is the focus on identifying hipo's or likelihood of staying/leaving current employer?			If this is the case would that imply that the person is committed and engaged? The link between the question and construct is not	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals
7	I support my organisations goals	My goals are aligned with the organisation's goals							I support my organisation's goals
8	In my organisation employees are encouraged to take initiative				Why questions that focus on the organisation? Is the purpose not to focus on identifying individual hipo's?			If this is the case would that imply that the person is committed and engaged? The link between the question and construct is not	
9	I am positive about my work	I feel positive about my work						Enthusiastic? (relates to dedication aspect of engagement)	I am positive about my work
10	I trust my immediate manager	I have a trusting relationship with my immediate manager.	Is trust an element of engagement and/or commitment?		*REPLACE with:* I work constructively with my immediate manager (if one is truly a hipo but working for a *&*!, you should be able to make it work?			This item does not seem to fit into the overall construct or the identified sub-constructs	
GENERAL FEEDBACK		**Expert 5:** Just a general note: Are High potentials engage and committed to a specific organisation, or are they in general more engaged and committed people irrespective of the circumstances/organisation/what are they busy with? The above questions measures organisational commitment							

CONSTRUCT 6: EMOTIONAL MATURITY									
	ITEM	**Expert 1**	**Expert 2**	**Expert 3**	**Expert 4**	**Expert 5**	**Expert 6**	**Expert 7**	**FINAL QUESTIONS**
1	I easily adapt to new situations								I easily adapt to new situations
2	I am sensitive to other cultures				Item 9 should cover this?	Is this emotional maturity or culture sensitivity?			
3	Others view me as emotionally stable	Stable is a clinical concept – rather say something like "Others think I control my emotions well"				Perhaps: Emotionally well adapted.			Others think I control my emotions well
4	I can remain calm in difficult situations							Would this question refer to an emotionally difficult situation (i.e. a conflict situation)? Or perhaps a technically challenging situation? Would challenging perhaps be a more appropriate	I remain calm in challenging situations
5	I try to rely on logic rather than on feelings	Add – when making decisions				Isn't this a sign of emotional un-maturity? Perhaps: I balance logic and feelings			I rely on logic rathen than feelings when making decisions
6	I understand how emotions work	I understand the origin of emotions and how it impacts on our lives.		I understand my own emotions or is the focus on that the person understand how emotions within their work context work?		Perhaps: I am sensitive to the emotions of other people			
7	I can adapt to changing circumstances at work	Very similar to question 1. Maybe something like: I am open and supportive of changing circumstances at			Overlaps with item 1				
8	I regulate my own feelings easily	Maybe not easily but "well"			*REPLACE with:* I maintain my composure despite challenging situations				I can regulate my feelings
9	I can work well with others despite cultural differences					Is this emotional maturity, or cultural agility?	I can work well with others who are culturally different		I get along with all my colleagues.
10	I can manage the emotions of others	You can't manage other people's emotions but only respond to it. So I would include it but change it to something like: I am able to respond well to the emotions of		I am able to take others emotions into consideration (I am not convinced that we can manage others emotions)	REPLACE with: I can calm or soothe others' emotions				I can help others to regulate their emotions
GENERAL FEEDBACK									

CONSTRUCT 7: FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCE									
	ITEM	**Expert 1**	**Expert 2**	**Expert 3**	**Expert 4**	**Expert 5**	**Expert 6**	**Expert 7**	**FINAL QUESTIONS**
1	I am seen as an expert in my trade	Change trade to profession.			*REPLACE with:* I am seen as an expert in my field	Trade/profession	I am seen as an expert in my functional area	Consider using the word job or occupation	I am seen as an expert in my profession
2	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with technical problems	Technical has a certain connotation to it (e.g. electrician etc) - change it to "Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with problems which need my technical/specialist				Work related problems	Replace technical with functional throughout		Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems
3	I can give technical advice to others	I can share my technical/specialist expertise and advice with others							I give advise on functional problems to others
4	I have a good understanding of my functional area		Will a layman know what "functional area" means?						I have a good understanding of my functional area
5	I give others advice about how to handle technical problems at				Duplication of items 2 and 3				
6	I am competent in my area of technical expertise	Technical/Functional or Specialist expertise			Overlaps with item 1 (does expert not imply competence?)				
7	I have thorough knowledge of my functional area.	I regard myself as an expert in my field of expertise							I regard myself as an expert in my field of expertise
8	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area				Duplication of item 1 (choose best wording between the two)				Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area
9	My subordinates look up to me because I have good technical knowledge	My direct reports (negative connotation with the word subordinates)							Others look up to me because of the professional knowledge
10	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters								My colleagues follow my advice regarding techincal matters
GENERAL FEEDBACK		**Expert 5:** General note: I think here are duplications. You are probably going to see high inter correlations between the items indicating that they measure the same thing. Perhaps adding things like I continuously develop my expertise, I read about new developments, I try out new solutions, although it is close to agility							

CONSTRUCT 8: LEARNING AGILITY									
	ITEM	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	FINAL QUESTIONS
1	I enjoy learning new things								I enjoy learning new things
2	I excel in formal learning	Not all HIPO's enrol in further formal training.		I know of people with talent that cannot excel in most educators minds due to learning difficulties, does this make them not suitable or a talented person? Indeed they are the once that excel in their work environment, even though they had difficulty for example on school or tertiary levels					I excell at formal learning
3	I have a questioning nature	Maybe questioning and inquisitive nature							I have a questioning nature
4	I value acquiring new knowledge				What about gaining or expanding experience?				I value acquiring new knowledge
5	I am quick to understanding new information	I quickly grasp new information		At times even I am not quick to understand new information or can we reconstruct the question by asking that "I am dedicated to ask for help when new information is shared"					I quickly understand new information
6	I strive to learn continuously				Duplication of item 9?	Not the same as question 1?			
7	I make use of opportunities to learn new things								I make use of opportunities to learn new things
8	I agree with the saying that you are never too old to learn new things				In light of items 1, 4 and 9, this items seems to lack clear focus				
9	Contiguously learning is a priority for me	Not sure if everybody will understand the term contigious (I had to look it up) ☺	What is meant by contiguous? Will a layperson understand the concept?			Same as 6 and 1?	I don't know what Contiguously learning means. Replace with a more common word?		Continuous learning is a priority for me
10	I enjoy learning	Very similar to question 1 – maybe something like " I like to expand and improve my knowledge"			Overlaps with items 1 and 4			This is very similar to question 1	
GENERAL FEEDBACK									

CONSTRUCT 9: ABILITY TO MANAGE OTHERS									
	ITEM	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	FINAL QUESTIONS
1	I easily give direction to subordinates	I find it easy to give direction to my direct reports						Would direction refer to delegating work or motivating subordinates?	I find it easy to infstructions to others
2	Others see me as decisive	Others view me as a decisive decision maker							Others see me as decisive
3	I enjoy working in a managerial position	I enjoy managing and coordinating others							I enjoy managing others
4	I make decisions easily	I make decisions without hesitation			Maybe the above average cognitive abilities, logical reasoning and decisiveness (item 2 above) will suffice?				
5	Others will describe me as organised	I am organised and planned in my work approach							I am organised in my work approach
6	I prefer working in a well organised environment	I prefer working in a well structured and organised work environment			I think hipo's should be able to work in ambiguous environments as well. Consider levels of work theory (if I have a very strong need for structure maybe I cannot deal with complex cognitive challenges and be optimally effective in senior management roles?)				I can be effective in unstructured working environments
7	I am comfortable working in a managerial role	Same as question 3			Possible overlap with item 3				
8	I enjoy leading others			I enjoy managing others (I am sceptic when we confuse leaders with managers. Some can manage but not all can be a leader).					I prefer working in well organised environments
9	I easily take responsibility for others	I am willing to take responsibility for the performance outputs of my team			*REPLACE with:* I am comfortable ro coordinate other's output. individual responsiblities. I think every individual should take responsibility for him- or herself. The leader is accountable for enabling, coaching, etcetera but may disempower if he/she assumes others' individual responsiblities				I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others
10	I like to plan in order to ensure performance			I am two minded about this sentence because it depends on whether the person is focused on their own career or the goal of the organisation?					I like to plan in order to ensure performance
GENERAL FEEDBACK		**Expert 5:** General note: What about Leadership? Didn't it came out? E.g. empowering, motivating, encouraging, coaching?							

CONSTRUCT 10: PERSONAL IMPACT									
	ITEM	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	FINAL QUESTIONS
1	I am comfortable when meeting new people								
2	I enjoy meeting new people	Maybe something like: Meeting new people contributes positively to my life experiences.			Does comfort (item 1) not surpass enjoyment?		No 2 is too close to No 1. I would change No 2 to "I am confident when working with new people"		I enjoy meeting new people
3	I am self-confident								
4	Others say I make a positive personal impact								Others say I make a positive personal impact
5	I relate well with others				Possible overlap with construct 1 – working with people?				I relate well with others
6	Other say I display a positive presence	Same as question 4. Maybe refer here to personal brand. "I project a strong personal brand"				Same as 4?			
7	I have confidence in my abilities				*REPLACE with:* I am confident in my abilities	What abilities? Does it necessary let you to have a better personal impact?			I am confident in my abilities to achieve what I set out to do
8	I take ownership of the responsibilities that I have	I take full ownership for my responsibilities.						This item does not seem to fit into the overall construct or the identified sub-	
9	I help my team to believe in their abilities	I encourage my team to believe in their own abilities.				Perhaps: Abilities to succeed			I encourage others to be confident in themselves
10	I encourage confidence in others	I instill confidence in others			Possible overlap with item 9. As leader, it seems more appropriate to empower my team members by boosting their confidence in their individual and our collective team abilities	Perhaps: I encourage others to be confident in themselves			I instill confidence in others
GENERAL FEEDBACK									

CONSTRUCT 10: PERSONAL IMPACT									
	ITEM	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	FINAL QUESTIONS
1	I am comfortable when meeting new people								
2	I enjoy meeting new people	Maybe something like: Meeting new people contributes positively to my life experiences.			Does comfort (item 1) not surpass enjoyment?		No 2 is too close to No 1. I would change No 2 to "I am confident when working with new people"		I enjoy meeting new people
3	I am self-confident								
4	Others say I make a positive personal impact								Others say I make a positive personal impact
5	I relate well with others				Possible overlap with construct 1 – working with people?				I relate well with others
6	Other say I display a positive presence	Same as question 4. Maybe refer here to personal brand. "I project a strong personal brand"				Same as 4?			
7	I have confidence in my abilities				*REPLACE with:* I am confident in my abilities	What abilities? Does it necessary let you to have a better personal impact?			I am confident in my abilities to achieve what I set out to do
8	I take ownership of the responsibilities that I have	I take full ownership for my responsibilities.						This item does not seem to fit into the overall construct or the identified sub-	
9	I help my team to believe in their abilities	I encourage my team to believe in their own abilities.				Perhaps: Abilities to succeed			I encourage others to be confident in themselves
10	I encourage confidence in others	I instill confidence in others			Possible overlap with item 9. As leader, it seems more appropriate to empower my team members by boosting their confidence in their individual and our collective team abilities	Perhaps: I encourage others to be confident in themselves			I instill confidence in others
GENERAL FEEDBACK									

APPENDIX F: FINAL ITEM LIST SUMMARY

CONSTRUCTS AND QUESTIONS									
Ability to work with people	**Achievement and action orientation**	**Career ambition**	**Cognitive and thinking ability**	**Committed and engaged**	**Emotional maturity**	**Functional competence**	**Learning agility**	**Ability to manage others**	**Personal impact**
I easily build positive relationships	Goal achievement is very important to me	I have specific career goals	I am good at analysing information	I am loyal to the organisation that I work for	I easily adapt to new situations	I am seen as an expert in my profession	I enjoy learning new things	I find it easy to give instructions to others	
I enjoy being part of a team	I feel satisfied when I deliver above average work	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career		I want to be a leader in my organisation		Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems	I excell at formal learning	Others see me as decisive	I enjoy meeting new people
I am good at networking	I can easily make decisions	I am ambitious	I see complex problems as a positive challenge	I enjoy my work	Others think I control my emotions well	I give advice on functional problems to others	I have a questioning nature	I enjoy managing others	
	I enjoy high paced working environments	I set challenging goals for myself	I easily grasp difficult concepts		I remain calm in challenging situations	I have a good understanding of my functional area	I value acquiring new knowledge		Others say I make a positive personal impact
I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes	It is important to me to perform better than others		I understand my organisation's business environment well	I am proud of the organisation that I work for	I rely on logic rather than feelings when making decisions		I quickly understand new information	I am organised in my work approach	I relate well with others
My colleagues' well-being is important to me	I follow a pro-active approach	I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me	I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals				I can be effective in unstructured working environments	
I am an effective team leader		Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals	I easily formulate logical arguments	I support my organisation's goals		I regard myself as an expert in my field of expertise	I make use of opportunities to learn new things		I am confident in my abilities to achieve what I set out to do
I enjoy engaging with others at work		I value contribution more than achievement	I have been told that I am more intelligent than the average person		I can regulate my feelings	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area		I prefer working in well organised environments	
I find it easy to influence others	I work hard to deliver an above average output	I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs		I am positive about my work	I get along with all my colleagues.	Others look up to me because of the professional knowledge	Continuous learning is a priority for me	I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others	I encourage others to be confident in themselves
	I try to balance work and personal life		I find it easy to understand complex problems		I can help others to regulate their emotions	My colleagues follow my advice regarding techincal matters		I like to plan in order to ensure performance	I instil confidence in others

Note: The orange-coloured blocks represent questions that were removed considering the feedback from expert reviewers. The grey-coloured blocks represent questions that were discarded by the researcher because they were duplicates of other questions or considered to be less relevant than the other questions

APPENDIX G: HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT QUESTIONNAIRE

HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire by clicking the appropriate box and following instructions when asked to provide typed information. This questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the correct box:

1. Gender	
	Male
	Female

2. Current organisational level	
	Senior Management
	Specialist / Professional
	Middle Management
	Junior Management
	Technical
	Graduate

3. Age	
	Please indicate exact age

4. Highest level of education	
	No qualification
	Qualified technician
	National diploma
	Bachelor's degree
	Post graduate diploma
	Honours degree
	Doctorate degree/ Master's degree
	Other (please specify)

SECTION B: BEHAVIOURAL DESCRIPTORS

Please indicate how TRUE the following statements are of you on a scale of 1 to 4 as indicated.

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Construct 1: Ability to work with people					
1	I easily build positive relationships				
2	I enjoy being part of a team				
3	I am good at networking				
4	I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes				
5	My colleagues' well-being is important to me				
6	I enjoy engaging with others at work				
7	I find it easy to influence others				
8	I easily build positive relationships				
Construct 2: Achievement and action orientation					
9	Goal achievement is very important to me				
10	I feel satisfied when I deliver above average work				
11	I can easily make decisions				
12	I enjoy high paced working environments				
13	It is important for me to perform better than others				
14	I work hard to deliver an above average output				
15	I try to balance work and personal life				
Construct 3: Career ambition					
16	I have specific career goals				
17	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career				
18	I am ambitious				
19	I set challenging goals for myself				

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
20	I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me				
21	Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals				
22	I value contribution more than achievement				
23	I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs				
Construct 4: Cognitive and thinking ability					
24	I am good at analysing information				
25	I see complex problems as a positive challenge				
26	I easily grasp difficult concepts				
27	I understand my organisation's business environment well				
28	I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time				
29	I easily formulate logical arguments				
30	I have been told that I am more intelligent than the average person				
Construct 5: Committed and engaged					
31	I want to be a leader in my organisation				
32	I enjoy my work				
33	I am proud of the organisation that I work for				
34	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals				
35	I support my organisation's goals				
36	I am positive about my work				
Construct 6: Emotional maturity					
37	I easily adapt to new situations				
38	Others think I control my emotions well				
39	I remain calm in challenging situations				
40	I rely on logic rather than feelings when making decisions				
41	I can regulate my feelings				
42	I get along with all my colleagues				

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
43	I can help others to regulate their emotions				
Construct 7: Functional competence					
44	I am seen as an expert in my profession				
45	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems				
46	I give advice on functional problems to others				
47	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area				
48	Others look up to me because of the professional knowledge				
49	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters				
Construct 8: Learning agility					
50	I enjoy learning new things				
51	I excel at formal learning				
52	I have a questioning nature				
53	I value acquiring new knowledge				
54	I quickly understand new information				
55	I make use of opportunities to learn new things				
	Continuous learning is a priority for me				
Construct 9: Ability to manage others					
56	Others see me as decisive				
57	I enjoy managing others				
58	I am organised in my work approach				
59	I can be effective in unstructured working environments				
60	I prefer working in well organised environments				
61	I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others				
62	I like to plan in order to ensure performance				
Construct 10: Personal impact					
63	I enjoy meeting new people				

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
64	Others say I make a positive personal impact				
65	I relate well with others				
66	I am confident in my abilities to achieve what I set out to do				
67	I encourage others to be confident in themselves				
68	I instil confidence in others				

APPENDIX H: DOCTORAL RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

[redacted]

LETTER OF PERMISSION

Attention: Departmental Ethics Committee
Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology
University of South Africa

Re: Doctoral research study: ***The development of a framework for the identification of high potential talent.***

To whom it may concern,

This letter serves to confirm that I, in my official capacity as designated officer for [redacted] hereby agrees to support Ms. Liezl Diedericks (student number: 57656711) in conducting her doctoral research project within our company.

We agree to assist Mrs. Diedericks in disseminating her questionnaire via email to the management and professional employees in our organisation. I have read and understand the information provided to me by Mrs. Diedericks in the document titled Permission Proposal. We agree to adhere to the requirements of confidentiality and anonymity as described in the proposal.

[redacted] understands that the results of this study will be utilised for research purposes only and may be published as a research report, journal article or conference proceedings. We request that the name of the company not be made public and that care be taken to ensure anonymity of the company when research is published. The company requires that the findings of the research be shared with the company once the study has been concluded.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Group Head Human Resources

APPENDIX I: EMAIL TO PROSPECTIVE RESPONDENTS—QUANTITATIVE DATA GATHERING

Dear prospective participant,

I have been granted permission by your employer to send this email to you and invite you to participate in a doctoral study by completing a questionnaire on high-potential talent.

The aim of this research is to develop a model that can be used in the identification of high-potential talent/employees in South African organisations. Various constructs are investigated and your opinion on these aspects will be very valuable in selecting constructs that truly indicate high potential.

Approval to conduct this research within your company has been granted to the researcher but it is important to note that your participation is voluntary and that you are free, at any point in the process, to withdraw from the study without offering any explanation. You do not need to share any information that you feel uncomfortable disclosing. It is not anticipated that completing the questionnaire will cause any discomfort or to respondents or have any negative impact. Some inconvenience in taking the time out of your busy work day to complete the questionnaire might be experienced.

All responses are completely anonymous and will not be traced back to a particular individual. The results of this study will be utilised for research purposes only and may be published as a research report, journal article or conference proceedings.

It should not take you more than 15 minutes to complete all the questions in this survey.

It is recommended that you complete the survey in one sitting but, if you are unable to do so, you may return to it later by clicking on the "Resume later" option at the bottom of the screen. If you click on the "Resume later" button, you will be asked for a username and password (create your own) that you can later use to continue the survey. When you wish to continue, simply click on the link to the survey (above) again and then click on the "Load unfinished survey" button. You will be required to insert the username and password that you created and will then be able to continue with the completion of the survey. Receiving an error message while completing the survey is usually due to internet connectivity problems. In the unfortunate event of this happening, please use the "back button" of your search engine to navigate back to the last screen, complete and proceed with the survey.

By clicking the link and accessing this questionnaire you are consenting to the following:

- You confirm that you have been informed about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.
- You have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.
- You have carefully considered the information and are prepared to participate in the study.
- You understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).
- You are aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

Should you require further information or have any concerns, you are most welcome to contact the researcher directly via email: diedel@unisa.ac.za

Thanking you in advance for your participation.

Yours faithfully

Ms Liezl Diedericks

Lecturer: Human Resource Development

Department of Human Resource Management

University of South Africa

diedel@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX J: PILOT TEST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

PILOT TEST EVALUATION: HIPO SCALE

The purpose of this short survey is to provide feedback on the construction and completion process of the HIPO questionnaire / scale.

This survey should be answered following your completion of the online HIPO Scale.

Please make notes of the following during the completion of the HIPO Scale (the online MSForms questionnaire) in order to provide feedback. Specific aspects that should be noted:

- How long it took you to complete the questionnaire
- Which questions you did not understand/ found difficult or ambiguous (write down the statement not just the question number)

PLEASE ACCESS THE ONLINE LINK AND COMPLETE THE SCALE NOW

Thank you for completing the HIPO Scale. Now, please answer the following questions:

1. Was the invitation email clear and easy to understand?

2. Were the instructions clear?

3. Was it easy to complete the questionnaire/scale?

4. Which of the questions were unclear or ambiguous? (please write down the question and NOT the number of the question)

5. Which questions did you feel uneasy about answering? (Please write down the question and NOT the number of the question)

6. Was the layout of the scale clear and attractive?

7. Any comments on the HiPo Scale?

Thank you for your valuable input.

APPENDIX K: SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM PILOT STUDY

PILOT TEST EVALUATION: HIPO SCALE

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The question that was asked as well as a summary of the feedback provided on each question is included. 11 Employees from the target population completed the questionnaire via exactly the same mechanism than will be used to distribute and collect that data in the actual data collection process. Each respondent completed an evaluation form where they provided feedback on the process of completion and the questionnaire itself.

1. Was the invitation email clear and easy to understand?

Respondent 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes	Yes, clear and understanding	Yes	Yes, very clear	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

2. Were the instructions clear?

Respondent 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes	Yes, very clear	Yes	Yes, 100%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

3. Was it easy to complete the questionnaire / scale?

Respondent 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes	Yes, very easy	Yes	Yes, very easy	Yes	Yes, questions are relevant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, however a longer range of answers would allow for more accurate responses

4. Which of the questions were unclear or ambiguous? (please write down the question and NOT the number of the question)

Respondent 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
None	I value contribution more than achievement	None	None	I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs? *Success can lead to significance*	I value contribution more than achievement	None	None	All clear	None	None

5. Which questions did you feel uneasy about answering? (please write down the question and NOT the number of the question)

Respondent 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
None	*No answer*	None	Finding time to balance work and family (Mind always at work)	It is important for me to perform better than others	None	I excel at formal learning. I have been told that I am more intelligent than the average person.	None	None	None	The question is based on other people's views of me

6. Was the layout of the scale clear and attractive?

Respondent 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, great layout	Yes, the survey had nice bright background colours	Yes, I like the general presentation of the survey questionnaire. The contrast of the blue and white are also good	Yes	Yes	Yes, fresh look to the scale and interesting	Yes	Layout attractive

7. Any comments on the HIPO Scale?

Respondent 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
No	*No answer*	*No answer*	Clear and easy to use	Questions were nice and short which allows the participant to answer immediately and not take too long to think	I feel it has a good range of an appropriate response	Easy, understandable questions with rating scale	No	None	None	None

APPENDIX L: FINAL HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT SCALE

Please complete this questionnaire by clicking the appropriate box and following instructions when asked to provide typed information. This questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the correct box:

1. Gender	
	Male
	Female

2. Current organisational level	
	Senior Management
	Specialist / Professional
	Middle Management
	Junior Management
	Technical
	Graduate

3. Age	
	Please indicate exact age

4. Highest level of education	
	No qualification
	Qualified technician
	National diploma
	Bachelor's degree
	Post graduate diploma
	Honours degree
	Doctorate degree/ Master's degree
	Other (please specify)

SECTION B: BEHAVIOURAL DESCRIPTORS

Please indicate how TRUE the following statements are of you on a scale of 1 to 4 as indicated.

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Construct 1: Ability to work with people					
1	I easily build positive relationships				
2	I enjoy being part of a team				
3	I am good at networking				
4	I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes				
5	My colleagues' well-being is important to me				
6	I enjoy engaging with others at work				
7	I find it easy to influence others				
Construct 2: Achievement and action orientation					
8	Goal achievement is very important to me				
9	I feel satisfied when I deliver above average work				
10	I can easily make decisions				
11	I enjoy high paced working environments				
12	It is important for me to perform better than others				
13	I work hard to deliver an above average output				
14	I make time to relax				
15	I prioritise work-life balance				
Construct 3: Career ambition					
16	I have specific career goals				
17	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career				
18	I am ambitious				
19	I set challenging goals for myself				
20	I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me				
21	Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals				

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	I value making a contribution more than personal achievement				
23	I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs				
Construct 4: Cognitive and thinking ability					
24	I am good at analysing information				
25	I see complex problems as a positive challenge				
26	I easily grasp difficult concepts				
27	I understand my organisation's business environment well				
28	I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time				
29	I easily formulate logical arguments				
30	I am more intelligent than the average person				
Construct 5: Committed and engaged					
31	I want to be a leader in my organisation				
32	I enjoy my work				
33	I am proud of the organisation that I work for				
34	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals				
35	I support my organisation's goals				
36	I am positive about my work				
Construct 6: Emotional maturity					
37	I easily adapt to new situations				
38	Others think I control my emotions well				
39	I remain calm in challenging situations				
40	I rely on logic rather than feelings when making decisions				
41	I can regulate my feelings				
42	I get along with all my colleagues				
43	I can help others to regulate their emotions				

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Construct 7: Functional competence					
44	I am seen as an expert in my profession				
45	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems				
46	I give advice on functional problems to others				
47	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area				
48	Others look up to me because of the professional knowledge				
49	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters				
Construct 8: Learning agility					
50	I enjoy learning new things				
51	I excel at formal learning				
52	I have a questioning nature				
53	I value acquiring new knowledge				
54	I quickly understand new information				
55	I make use of opportunities to learn new things				
56	Continuous learning is a priority for me				
Construct 9: Ability to manage others					
57	Others see me as decisive				
58	I enjoy managing others				
59	I am organised in my work approach				
60	I can be effective in unstructured working environments				
61	I prefer working in well organised environments				
62	I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others				
63	I like to plan in order to ensure performance				
Construct 10: Personal impact					
64	I enjoy meeting new people				

		Not true for me	Somewh at true for me	True for me	Very true for me
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
65	Others say I make a positive personal impact				
66	I relate well with others				
67	I am confident in my abilities to achieve what I set out to do				
68	I encourage others to be confident in themselves				
69	I instil confidence in others				

APPENDIX M: EIGENVALUES FOR ALL FACTORS

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	19.410	28.131	28.131
2	2.909	4.216	32.347
3	2.742	3.973	36.320
4	2.501	3.624	39.944
5	2.093	3.033	42.977
6	1.904	2.759	45.736
7	1.768	2.563	48.299
8	1.611	2.335	50.634
9	1.527	2.214	52.848
10	1.444	2.092	54.940
11	1.338	1.939	56.879
12	1.215	1.761	58.641
13	1.142	1.655	60.295
14	1.057	1.532	61.828
15	1.008	1.461	63.289
16	0.988	1.431	64.720
17	0.966	1.401	66.121
18	0.916	1.327	67.448
19	0.869	1.260	68.708
20	0.848	1.229	69.937
21	0.840	1.217	71.154
22	0.805	1.166	72.320

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
23	0.777	1.127	73.447
24	0.768	1.113	74.560
25	0.737	1.068	75.629
26	0.713	1.034	76.662
27	0.693	1.005	77.667
28	0.655	0.949	78.616
29	0.639	0.926	79.542
30	0.636	0.922	80.464
31	0.617	0.894	81.358
32	0.589	0.853	82.211
33	0.567	0.822	83.033
34	0.549	0.795	83.828
35	0.534	0.773	84.601
36	0.502	0.728	85.329
37	0.494	0.716	86.046
38	0.466	0.675	86.721
39	0.455	0.660	87.380
40	0.449	0.651	88.031
41	0.440	0.638	88.669
42	0.434	0.629	89.299
43	0.427	0.618	89.917
44	0.393	0.569	90.486
45	0.380	0.550	91.036
46	0.370	0.536	91.572

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
47	0.367	0.532	92.105
48	0.357	0.517	92.621
49	0.350	0.507	93.129
50	0.337	0.488	93.617
51	0.333	0.482	94.099
52	0.322	0.467	94.566
53	0.301	0.436	95.002
54	0.298	0.432	95.434
55	0.290	0.420	95.855
56	0.286	0.414	96.269
57	0.262	0.379	96.648
58	0.246	0.356	97.004
59	0.242	0.350	97.355
60	0.237	0.343	97.698
61	0.216	0.313	98.011
62	0.209	0.303	98.314
63	0.200	0.291	98.604
64	0.185	0.268	98.872
65	0.178	0.258	99.130
66	0.169	0.244	99.374
67	0.155	0.225	99.599
68	0.150	0.218	99.817
69	0.126	0.183	100.000

APPENDIX N: MEAN, SKEWNESS AND KURTOSIS RESULTS OF THE HIPO SCALE (ALL QUESTIONS)

Item	n	Min	Max	Mean		Skewness		Kurtosis		Ratio
				Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	K/SE
HiPo 1	287	2	4	3.41	0.641	-0.627	0.144	-0.583	0.287	2.0
HiPo 2	287	2	4	3.53	0.635	-1.017	0.144	-0.052	0.287	0.2
HiPo 3	287	1	4	2.93	0.856	-0.377	0.144	-0.591	0.287	2.1
HiPo 4	287	2	4	3.53	0.553	-0.632	0.144	-0.687	0.287	2.4
HiPo 5	287	2	4	3.60	0.557	-1.025	0.144	0.047	0.287	0.2
HiPo 6	287	1	4	3.43	0.649	-0.855	0.144	0.366	0.287	1.3
HiPo 7	287	1	4	3.06	0.745	-0.357	0.144	-0.408	0.287	1.4
HiPo 8	287	1	4	3.55	0.582	-1.000	0.144	0.592	0.287	2.1
HiPo 9	287	1	4	3.71	0.629	-2.666	0.144	7.783	0.287	27.1
HiPo 10	287	1	4	3.31	0.630	-0.523	0.144	0.213	0.287	0.7
HiPo 11	287	1	4	3.20	0.752	-0.692	0.144	0.149	0.287	0.5
HiPo 12	287	1	4	2.86	0.900	-0.337	0.144	-0.718	0.287	2.5
HiPo 13	287	1	4	3.61	0.569	-1.229	0.144	1.164	0.287	4.1
HiPo 14	287	1	4	2.97	0.904	-0.303	0.144	-1.002	0.287	3.5
HiPo 15	287	1	4	3.03	0.858	-0.428	0.144	-0.720	0.287	2.5
HiPo 16	287	1	4	3.24	0.775	-0.710	0.144	-0.162	0.287	0.6
HiPo 17	287	1	4	3.27	0.798	-0.936	0.144	0.376	0.287	1.3
HiPo 18	287	1	4	3.29	0.774	-0.969	0.144	0.579	0.287	2.0
HiPo 19	287	1	4	3.27	0.690	-0.666	0.144	0.291	0.287	1.0
HiPo 20	287	1	4	3.54	0.607	-1.133	0.144	1.194	0.287	4.2
HiPo 21	287	1	4	3.46	0.751	-1.373	0.144	1.513	0.287	5.3
HiPo 22	287	2	4	3.44	0.587	-0.491	0.144	-0.667	0.287	2.3
HiPo 23	287	1	4	3.43	0.649	-0.855	0.144	0.366	0.287	1.3

Item	n	Min	Max	Mean		Skewness		Kurtosis		Ratio
				Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	K/SE
HiPo 24	287	1	4	3.38	0.641	-0.694	0.144	0.244	0.287	0.9
HiPo 25	287	1	4	3.38	0.641	-0.694	0.144	0.244	0.287	0.9
HiPo 26	287	1	4	3.16	0.642	-0.234	0.144	-0.293	0.287	1.0
HiPo 27	287	2	4	3.48	0.572	-0.531	0.144	-0.695	0.287	2.4
HiPo 28	287	1	4	3.22	0.673	-0.438	0.144	-0.212	0.287	0.7
HiPo 29	287	1	4	3.21	0.710	-0.686	0.144	0.467	0.287	1.6
HiPo 30	287	1	4	2.67	0.836	-0.064	0.144	-0.605	0.287	2.1
HiPo 31	287	1	4	3.41	0.714	-0.975	0.144	0.261	0.287	0.9
HiPo 32	287	1	4	3.49	0.684	-1.269	0.144	1.320	0.287	4.6
HiPo 33	287	1	4	3.62	0.573	-1.310	0.144	1.342	0.287	4.7
HiPo 34	287	1	4	2.98	0.861	-0.523	0.144	-0.380	0.287	1.3
HiPo 35	287	2	4	3.73	0.459	-1.268	0.144	0.178	0.287	0.6
HiPo 36	287	1	4	3.55	0.628	-1.355	0.144	1.861	0.287	6.5
HiPo 37	287	1	4	3.31	0.663	-0.594	0.144	-0.028	0.287	0.1
HiPo 38	287	1	4	3.04	0.701	-0.421	0.144	0.191	0.287	0.7
HiPo 39	287	1	4	3.27	0.705	-0.793	0.144	0.672	0.287	2.3
HiPo 40	287	1	4	3.26	0.738	-0.728	0.144	0.059	0.287	0.2
HiPo 41	287	1	4	3.16	0.653	-0.322	0.144	-0.070	0.287	0.2
HiPo 42	287	1	4	3.48	0.613	-0.829	0.144	0.164	0.287	0.6
HiPo 43	287	1	4	2.89	0.769	-0.357	0.144	-0.152	0.287	0.5
HiPo 44	287	1	4	3.09	0.718	-0.421	0.144	-0.101	0.287	0.4
HiPo 45	287	1	4	3.29	0.697	-0.588	0.144	-0.301	0.287	1.0
HiPo 46	287	1	4	3.39	0.648	-0.737	0.144	0.227	0.287	0.8
HiPo 47	287	1	4	3.18	0.724	-0.617	0.144	0.211	0.287	0.7
HiPo 48	287	1	4	3.19	0.716	-0.588	0.144	0.117	0.287	0.4

Item	n	Min	Max	Mean		Skewness		Kurtosis		Ratio
				Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	K/SE
HiPo 49	287	1	4	3.18	0.717	-0.576	0.144	0.083	0.287	0.3
HiPo 50	287	2	4	3.66	0.509	-1.083	0.144	0.012	0.287	0.0
HiPo 51	287	1	4	2.99	0.791	-0.280	0.144	-0.650	0.287	2.3
HiPo 52	287	1	4	3.36	0.679	-0.656	0.144	-0.384	0.287	1.3
HiPo 53	287	1	4	3.67	0.520	-1.407	0.144	1.944	0.287	6.8
HiPo 54	287	2	4	3.28	0.592	-0.174	0.144	-0.560	0.287	2.0
HiPo 55	287	1	4	3.53	0.596	-1.050	0.144	1.135	0.287	4.0
HiPo 56	287	1	4	3.46	0.646	-0.948	0.144	0.522	0.287	1.8
HiPo 57	287	1	4	3.10	0.700	-0.511	0.144	0.340	0.287	1.2
HiPo 58	287	1	4	3.00	0.893	-0.594	0.144	-0.402	0.287	1.4
HiPo 59	287	1	4	3.37	0.640	-0.764	0.144	0.686	0.287	2.4
HiPo 60	287	1	4	2.99	0.838	-0.518	0.144	-0.304	0.287	1.1
HiPo 61	287	2	4	3.42	0.642	-0.661	0.144	-0.556	0.287	1.9
HiPo 62	287	1	4	3.19	0.777	-0.663	0.144	-0.123	0.287	0.4
HiPo 63	287	1	4	3.49	0.631	-1.007	0.144	0.748	0.287	2.6
HiPo 64	287	1	4	3.19	0.802	-0.681	0.144	-0.218	0.287	0.8
HiPo 65	287	1	4	3.34	0.660	-0.797	0.144	0.805	0.287	2.8
HiPo 66	287	1	4	3.39	0.637	-0.630	0.144	-0.170	0.287	0.6
HiPo 67	287	1	4	3.54	0.565	-0.876	0.144	0.434	0.287	1.5
HiPo 68	287	2	4	3.58	0.585	-1.062	0.144	0.134	0.287	0.5
HiPo 69	287	1	4	3.32	0.654	-0.509	0.144	-0.339	0.287	1.2

APPENDIX O: PATTERN MATRIX, FACTORS IDENTIFIED FOLLOWING EFA

	HiPo Items	Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area	0.732						
44	I am seen as an expert in my profession	0.687						
46	I give advice on functional problems to others	0.582						
48	Others look up to me because of my professional knowledge	0.569						
49	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters	0.564						
45	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems	0.564						
29	I easily formulate logical arguments	0.423						
57	Others see me as decisive	0.419						
66	I relate well with others		-0.718					
1	I easily build positive relationships		-0.703					
3	I am good at networking		-0.611					
64	I enjoy meeting new people		-0.609					
43	I can help others to regulate their emotions		-0.594					
6	I enjoy engaging with others at work		-0.585					
42	I get along with all my colleagues		-0.543					
2	I enjoy being part of a team		-0.522					
69	I instil confidence in others		-0.515					

	HiPo Items	Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I find it easy to influence others		-0.453					
4	I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes		-0.439					
37	I easily adapt to new situations		-0.406					
18	I am ambitious			-0.688				
31	I want to be a leader in my organisation			-0.682				
21	Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals			-0.639				
16	I have specific career goals			-0.631				
17	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career			-0.629				
58	I enjoy managing others			-0.484				
12	It is important for me to perform better than others			-0.417				
33	I am proud of the organisation I work for				0.766			
32	I enjoy my work				0.743			
36	I am positive about my work				0.626			
34	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals				0.506			
35	I support my organisation's goals				0.492			
9	I feel satisfied when I deliver above-average work							
53	I value acquiring new knowledge					0.796		
50	I enjoy learning new things					0.779		
56	Continuous learning is a priority for me					0.665		

	HiPo Items	Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55	I make use of opportunities to learn new things					0.629		
24	I am good at analysing information					0.562		
26	I easily grasp difficult concepts					0.493		
54	I quickly understand new information					0.491		
25	I see complex problems as a positive challenge					0.446		
15	I prioritise work-life balance						0.751	
14	I make time to relax						0.678	
59	I am organised in my work approach							0.664
61	I prefer working in well organised environments							0.629
63	I like to plan in order to ensure performance							0.565

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation

a. Rotation converged in 18 iterations

APPENDIX P: STRUCTURE MATRIX

HiPo Items		Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q47	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area	0.727						
q44	I am seen as an expert in my profession	0.723						0.328
q46	I give advice on functional problems to others	0.699	-0.339	-0.339	0.333	0.357	0.308	
q49	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters	0.683			0.413	0.389		
q48	Others look up to me because of my professional knowledge	0.662	-0.450					
q47	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems	0.658	-0.383		0.337	0.380		
q29	I easily formulate logical arguments	0.566		-0.343		0.436	0.367	
q57	Others see me as decisive	0.524					0.383	0.355
q65	Others say I make a positive impact	0.489	-0.460	-0.399		0.416	0,303	
q10	I can easily make decisions	0.487	-0.467	-0.314		0.339	0.403	
q62	I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others	0.487	-0.335	-0.419				
q67	I am confident in my abilities to achieve what I set out to do	0.446	-0.305			0.446		0.342
q40	I rely on logic rather than feelings when making decisions	0.441		-0.354	0.321		0.335	
q60	I can be effective in unstructured work environments	0.380	-0.376			0.308		

HiPo Items		Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q23	I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs	0.311			0.309			
q66	I relate well with others		-0.755			0.308		
q1	I easily build positive relationships		-0.722					
q3	I am good at networking		-0.694	-0.390		0.357		0.302
q64	I enjoy meeting new people		-0.680	-0.376		0.358		
q6	I enjoy engaging with others at work		-0.674	-0.321	0.308	0.418		
q43	I can help others to regulate their emotions	0.363	-0.651				0.329	
q69	I instil confidence in others	0.453	-0.646	-0.356		0.357		
q2	I enjoy being part of a team		-0.623	-0.365	0.369			
q7	I find it easy to influence others	0.466	-0.621	-0.427		0.366	0.310	
q42	I get along with all my colleagues		-0.598		0.463			
q4	I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes	0.388	-0.580			0.418		
q37	I easily adapt to new situations		-0.576	-0.384		0.556		
q68	I encourage others to be confident in themselves	0.371	-0.539	-0.349		0.356		
q5	My colleagues' wellbeing is important to me		-0.503		0.437			
q27	I understand my organisation's business environment well	0.343	-0.455		0.430	0.385		0.379
q31	I want to be a leader in my organisation	0.335	-0.365	-0.749		0.333		
q18	I am ambitious			-0.741		0.438		

HiPo Items		Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q21	Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals		-0.419	-0.720		0.340		
q17	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career		-0.337	-0.719	0.342	0.406		
q16	I have specific career goals			-0.693		0.357		
q8	Goal achievement is very important to me	0.302		-0.570	0.354	0.425		0.520
q58	I enjoy managing others	0.329	-0.363	-0.554				
q30	I am more intelligent than the average person	0.375		-0.509		0.394		
q11	I enjoy high-paced work environments	0.368	-0.412	-0.489	0.303	0.364		0.400
q12	It is important for me to perform better than others	0.388		-0.480				0.385
q32	I enjoy my work				0.760			
q33	I am proud of the organisation I work for				0.748			
q36	I am positive about my work		-0.316	-0.363	0.727	0.335		0.390
q35	I support my organisation's goals		-0.400		0.605			0.416
q34	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals			-0.378	0.570			
q22	I value making a contribution more than personal achievement		-0.369		0.482	0.434		
q9	I feel satisfied when I deliver above-average work				0.332			
q53	I value acquiring new knowledge		-0.330			0.802		
q50	I enjoy learning new things		-0.363			0.797		

HiPo Items		Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q55	I make use of opportunities to learn new things		-0.345	-0.334		0.708		0.335
q56	Continuous learning is a priority for me			-0.345		0.668		
q24	I am good at analysing information	0.472				0.640		0.331
q26	I easily grasp difficult concepts	0.462	-0.355	-0.409		0.637		
q25	I see complex problems as a positive challenge	0.443		-0.382		0.612	0,406	
q54	I quickly understand new information	0.407		-0.305		0.595		
q19	I set challenging goals for myself	0.381		-0.536	0.346	0.540		
q51	I excel at formal learning		-0.326	-0.460		0.521		
q52	I have a questioning nature	0.384				0.448		
q20	I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me	0.341	-0.332	-0.382	0,330	0.438		
q15	I prioritise work-life balance						0.732	
q14	I make time to relax						0.695	
q39	I remain calm in challenging situations	0.409	-0.352	-0.375		0.418	0.495	
q41	I can regulate my feelings		-0.382		0,326	0.359	0.466	
q38	Others think I control my emotions well	0.315	-0.324				0.447	
q59	I am organised in my work approach							0.719
q63	I like to plan in order to ensure performance				0.309			0.631
q61	I prefer working in well organised environments							0.607

HiPo Items		Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q13	I work hard to deliver an above average output	0.343			0.372	0.340		0.501
q28	I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time	0.308	-0.366					0.381

Etraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation.

APPENDIX Q: COMMUNALITIES FOR ALL FACTORS

Communalities				
		Initial	**Extraction** **Kaiser Criterion**	**Extraction** **Horn's Parallel Analysis**
q1	I easily build positive relationships	1.000	0.629	0.545
q2	I enjoy being part of a team	1.000	0.544	0.487
q3	I am good at networking	1.000	0.,653	0.550
q4	I can collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes	1.000	0.487	0.436
q5	My colleagues' wellbeing is important to me	1.000	0.551	0.367
q6	I enjoy engaging with others at work	1.000	0.629	0.518
q7	I find it easy to influence others	1.000	0.604	0.541
q8	Goal achievement is very important to me	1.000	0.623	0.549
q9	I feel satisfied when I deliver above-average work	1.000	0.681	0.198
q10	I can easily make decisions	1.000	0.635	0.457
q11	I enjoy high-paced work environments	1.000	0.596	0.460
q12	It is important for me to perform better than others	1.000	0.627	0.452
q13	I work hard to deliver an above average output	1.000	0.631	0.408
q14	I make time to relax	1.000	0.791	0.520
q15	I prioritise work-life balance	1.000	0.786	0.592
q16	I have specific career goals	1.000	0.608	0.514
q17	I am driven to achieve the highest level in my career	1.000	0.608	0.581
q18	I am ambitious	1.000	0.649	0.612
q19	I set challenging goals for myself	1.000	0.599	0.510

Communalities				
		Initial	Extraction Kaiser Criterion	Extraction Horn's Parallel Analysis
q20	I am willing to take on more responsibility than is required of me	1.000	0.627	0.366
q21	Working in a senior role in my profession is one of my career goals	1.000	0.662	0.570
q22	I value making a contribution more than personal achievement	1.000	0.588	0.399
q23	I want to live a life of significance rather than achieve success at all costs	1.000	0.528	0.314
q24	I am good at analysing information	1.000	0.608	0.564
q25	I see complex problems as a positive challenge	1.000	0.624	0.538
q26	I easily grasp difficult concepts	1.000	0.635	0.541
q27	I understand my organisation's business environment well	1.000	0.593	0.420
q28	I can effectively focus on more than one task at a time	1.000	0.615	0.281
q29	I easily formulate logical arguments	1.000	0.572	0.469
q30	I am more intelligent than the average person	1.000	0.580	0.387
q31	I want to be a leader in my organisation	1.000	0.762	0.605
q32	I enjoy my work	1.000	0.751	0.634
q33	I am proud of the organisation I work for	1.000	0.685	0.587
q34	My organisation supports me in achieving my career goals	1.000	0.610	0.412
q35	I support my organisation's goals	1.000	0.580	0.537
q36	I am positive about my work	1.000	0.774	0.654
q37	I easily adapt to new situations	1.000	0.624	0.518
q38	Others think I control my emotions well	1.000	0.655	0.366

Communalities				
		Initial	Extraction Kaiser Criterion	Extraction Horn's Parallel Analysis
q39	I remain calm in challenging situations	1.000	0.620	0.459
q40	I rely on logic rather than feelings when making decisions	1.000	0.625	0.433
q41	I can regulate my feelings	1.000	0.649	0.383
q42	I get along with all my colleagues	1.000	0.577	0.472
q43	I can help others to regulate their emotions	1.000	0.631	0.510
q44	I am seen as an expert in my profession	1.000	0.696	0.563
q45	Others ask me for guidance on how to deal with functional problems	1.000	0.616	0.523
q46	I give advice on functional problems to others	1.000	0.638	0.570
q47	Others view me as a subject matter expert in my functional area	1.000	0.676	0.552
q48	Others look up to me because of my professional knowledge	1.000	0.647	0.536
q49	My colleagues follow my advice regarding technical matters	1.000	0.635	0.544
q50	I enjoy learning new things	1.000	0.741	0.649
q51	I excel at formal learning	1.000	0.574	0.382
q52	I have a questioning nature	1.000	0.640	0.314
q53	I value acquiring new knowledge	1.000	0.742	0.671
q54	I quickly understand new information	1.000	0.658	0.423
q55	I make use of opportunities to learn new things	1.000	0.663	0.561
q56	Continuous learning is a priority for me	1.000	0.651	0.497
q57	Others see me as decisive	1.000	0.571	0.438

Communalities				
		Initial	**Extraction** **Kaiser Criterion**	**Extraction** **Horn's Parallel Analysis**
q58	I enjoy managing others	1.000	0.654	0.430
q59	I am organised in my work approach	1.000	0.683	0.553
q60	I can be effective in unstructured work environments	1.000	0.584	0.351
q61	I prefer working in well organised environments	1.000	0.584	0.415
q62	I easily take responsibility to coordinate the output of others	1.000	0.557	0.369
q63	I like to plan in order to ensure performance	1.000	0.585	0.465
q64	I enjoy meeting new people	1.000	0.666	0.512
q65	Others say I make a positive impact	1.000	0.586	0.441
q66	I relate well with others	1.000	0.627	0.581
q67	I am confident in my abilities to achieve what I set out to do	1.000	0.549	0.355
q68	I encourage others to be confident in themselves	1.000	0.648	0.389
q69	I instil confidence in others	1.000	0.693	0.525

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

APPENDIX R: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

This addendum provides information to support the qualitative results communicated in Chapter 5. As indicated in Chapter 5, 17 code groups were identified during the content analysis that was performed on the transcribed data. The initial phase of coding consisted open coding where, as a first phase, codes were identified. These codes were identified in Atlas Ti. The next phase, referred to as axial coding, produced 17 code groups. From the 17 code groups 5 themes emerged. In order to make it easier to reference between Chapter 5 and this addendum, page numbers for the addendum are listed below.

This appendix is structured around the five themes in order to increase readability and referencing to Chapter 5. For each theme, the code groups are listed and the subsequent codes and quotations are provided.

THEME 1: BUSINESS CASE FOR HIPO IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The code groups and codes as results of the in-depth interviews are reported on the next section. The code groups that were identified were:

- Benefits of a HiPo programme
- Business case for talent management

1.1. Benefits of a HiPo programme

Eight codes were identified and grouped together.

Better performing organisation (G = 2)

Participant 2: It is and then we see where there actually, where you can measure the ROI back. Is in terms of the savings on specific projects that there were. So if you look at for instance, if you did a project at Leeuwpan and there was a saving on an improvement project, then that is part of how you have allowed your talent to actually get exposed to something that they would not have got exposed to.

Participant 5: And then just, you know, the knock on productivity of better performing organizations from having stronger people moving to it. It's not necessarily a benefit, it's just

an interesting side note.

Brand building (G = 1)

Participant 4: So you will be able, because the youngsters and even other generations also, they're looking at an organisation that will invest in them and take them forward so that is going to be very good for your brand as well.

Effective succession planning (G = 1)

Participant 3: but then the other benefit is just that, as I mentioned earlier, on succession planning, you have contingency plans when something happens to someone or they resign. And you're sitting with a crucial role that you need to fill.

Employee engagement and loyalty (G = 2)

Participant 5: Those who are taken on board and engaged are hopefully not going to be disloyal, and you're building up a hype like that. So, I think, you know, those are sort of two of the, the sort of the key benefits of it.

Employee retention (G = 4)

Participant 3: What are the benefits that the companies, do you think, have realised by identifying high potentials and developing them? I think you spoke about retention.

Participant 6: They won't go. So you keep, you retain, then you've got the company benefit of having the right people in the right positions.

Participant 7: That's the main thing. About the sharing whether you're in the pipeline or not it's about retention, for us it's about retention.

Opportunity to grow employees and careers (G = 3)

Participant 2: I think if you look at where we have taken people to and allowed them to be creative and to be, to create new things because we are on a tenure journey with our new strategy, it is just amazing if you give people the opportunity that you actually see the real person. So I think that is the most humbling experience I suppose from a leader perspective. And you involve them in things and they bring about new ideas that exponentially they can take the company further. In terms of projects that they are involved in, in terms of savings

that they are involved in. Giving them, let's just take your millennials. You give them the opportunity to be on a due diligence on a company that we want to take over for instance and you can see how they grow in that experience, with inexperienced versus experienced people.

Participant 3: So it's not always just about the needs of the organisation. It's also about the needs of the individual and helping people to progress in their career and to reach their potential, ja.

Participant 3: but then the other benefit is you give people opportunity to grow in their careers.

Organisations know where to invest in terms of people potential (G = 1)

Participant 7: And I know it's a tough concept but, or-or okay, anyway it's a long story. My personal opinion is that no matter how anyone, everyone says, the engineers and auditors will always want to determine, where do I put my money.

Risk mitigation (G = 2)

Participant 3: on succession planning, you have contingency plans when something happens to someone or they resign. And you're sitting with a crucial role that you need to fill. Then you have options to [unclear 00:33:28]. So that's the one benefit, is you cover your risks but then the other benefit is you give people opportunity to grow in their careers.

Participant 5: So again, sort of, a lot of the work that we've done with organizations focused more on the managerial type leaders, and just the, you know, the cost of leadership transition that goes wrong. From a financial cost perspective, poor decision making, you know, the cost of replacing the person and fixing the bollocks that they made could be things. There's reputational damage as well, with all the scandals that's currently going on. You know, just sort of a decision was made that was really not a good decision for the company but it's got very public consequences.

1.2. Business case for talent management

Nine codes were identified and grouped together.

Part of the employee value proposition (G = 2)

Participant 2: I think the reason we practice is because we feel it is part of our employee

value proposition. That is what we offer people or we attract into the organisation and people that are here what allows them to be challenged in their work. That allows them the intent of creating a, it's a motivational factor basically.

Retention tool (G = 2)

Participant 3: It’s a retention tool as well because no one wants to work for a company, and then there’s no scope for development, there’s no scope for career growth.

Risk management (G = 2)

Participant 1: in selective positions you know, so you go outside to the market and buy and bring in a bit of new blood. But that's, that's it is so, talent management then is basically for us to help managing the risk and actually guiding the organization through this growth phase.

Sustainability (G = 2)

Participant 5: I suppose it’s linked to the business case, is sustainability of the organization. If you get a reputation for not really caring about your people, or you know, people are tools, then actually attracting good talent is going to be a problem. Keeping good talent is going to be a problem, and then the productivity is going to suffer and you know, the organization is going to struggle from that point of view.

To attract the best employees (n-1)

Participant 3: and I’ll unpack that now in a little while. And one of the other reasons is to ensure that you have the best people working for you.

To ensure and increase business success (G = 4)

Participant 4: No like, because it’s a way of competitive advantage you know, like it’s also a way of sustainability, like so it really gives organisations that competitive edge you know like above other organisations.

Participant 6: Yeah its long term planning for success. For business success because it’s about experience, critical experiences, institutional memory you know all of that so its performance.

Participant 6: It’s for the company to be successful.

To manage talent (G = 1)

Participant 9: The reason why they need to do talent management is actually to manage the talent in the organization and that's the part which I think that very few companies will really do.

To nurture talent (G = 1)

Participant 9: Companies that actually do talent management, I think is far and few in between. And they do it for the purpose really to nurture talent in the organization, do have long-term pipelines to really see who are the high- flyers so that they can take those high-flyers through very effective career planning in the organization, rotation between different departments etcetera.

To protect the money (G = 1)

Participant 3: I think one of the main reasons is obviously to protect the money.

THEME 2: CONCEPTUALISING HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS

Three code groups were identified for this group that are reported on below.

- Definition of high potential
- Definition of individual talent
- Definition of talent management

2.1. Definition of high potential

Eleven codes were identified and grouped together.

Employees with high value and high impact (G = 1)

Participant 3: Those would be the individuals that are identified throughout the talent review process as individuals that are really crucial and that the company would be willing to invest resources in retaining and developing.

High potential is not high performance (G = 2)

Participant 3: I think many people don't understand or they wrongly put someone as high potential when they're a solid performer.

Participant 3: …say that everyone that is a high potential should be a good performer but not everyone that is a good performer is high potential necessarily.

Hipo influenced by country culture (G = 1)

Participant 1: we want to include everyone because it is our culture, our culture is the Ubuntu type way. But is America and actually more in Europe, because they have a more Western way..., they easily tell employees that they are out the door.

Hipo is focussed on traits or elements that the organisation needs for strategic reasons (G = 1)

Participant 2: So clearly you are looking for specific characteristics in terms of not I am, I have a five degrees or whatever but do I have the rapport, do I live the values of the organisation, do I live the culture of the organisation. How do I behave in this organisation and that also brings about a specific dynamic that you still want as either a change champion or you want to immerse them in a project that we are busy with and we want to launch something that is different, and they think differently about these things.

Hipo only for specific positions (G = 1)

Participant 8: And so and the nice thing about digitizing our processes is that the system actually (calls?), so if you have identified successors, you need to identify 3, 1 person is ready now, 1 person will be ready in 1 - 3 years, and then the last individual that you identify is future talent. Future talent is also your high-potential.

Leaders—the focus is on leadership (G = 13)

Participant 1: Okay so specifically leadership and management… I Yes leadership and management.

Participant 3: …potential element would feed more into the leadership.

Participant 8: So, high potential is very much focused on leadership and management.

Participant 6: And then you've got on the other hand, how does he actually display leadership at work.

Participant 5: So is there a very specific focus on leadership?...I Ja.

Scarce or critical skills part of Hipo (G = 1)

Participant 8: The focus needs to also be on scarce and critical skills for the organisation.

Specialists are Hipo (G = 7)

Participant 2: So those in the three blocks that are now high potential, you said they are not just for leader positions, it is also for specialist, like a geologist or a specialist development.

Specialists not Hipo (G = 2)

Participant 3: is a lot of guys get identified as high potential but they meant to study engineering because they have a love for engineering, they like to work on the technicalities of engineering.

Specific skills needed by the organization (G = 2)

Participant 5: I think it could actually be something like that, because I think a lot of the work up until now has been very much focused on the organisation needs this.

The future CEOs (G = 3)

Participant 1: Look, you will, you will have to put special focus on the high-potential individuals, so those are typically people that you will see, that can become the future CEOs.

Participant 5: So from an organizational perspective, what I've tended to see with clients who have worked with HiPo, high-potential talent is your next CEO.

2.2. Definition of individual talent

Two codes were identified.

Talent comes down to personality and ability (G = 1)

Participant 7: So, if you define it so, it's actually a broad spectrum of things that are typically

centred in personality and ability. If you look at American research and actually just over the world, then it goes back to personality and cognitive type ability. And whether you call it learning agility and whether you call it emotionally intelligence, that stuff comes from the personality and ability. There are many guys who will argue about it but there is evidence that this is overwhelming.

Talent starts with a gift like Mozart (G = 1)

Participant 4: The 1st one is a gift—it's something that you're born naturally with. I mean it's like the Mozarts, I mean they're good at music. Okay, he has to practice but you can play tennis—it's something you just have. I mean it's something that you're just good at. But of course it comes with responsibility and it needs to be cultivated but that's a very basic requirement.

2.3. Definition of Talent Management

Fifteen codes were identified.

An aspect that helps with retention (G = 1)

Participant 3: So talent management is the function that is a facilitating element for retention for individuals working for a company as well.

Communicates a certain talent philosophy (G = 1)

Participant 3: Talent management is a term that most organisations use to describe the way that they think about the individuals that work for them.

Employee life cycle (G = 11)

Participant 4: Okay talent management starts with a whole apparent life cycle like with the branding of your organisation for example and your talent value proposition.

Participant 4: So in order to answer your question is that talent management is not just attracting, developing and retaining people. There's a whole talent life cycle that we need to have in place otherwise talent management won't work in an organisation.

Participant 5: So yeah, it's almost this process of how you facilitate and move them through,

and make sure that the organizations needs are met.

It is a fad, another name for HRM and HRD (G = 1)

Participant 7: I think it's a little faddish. I think it's a little faddish, in the sense that we no longer wanted to talk about people, we didn't want to talk about human resource management. That's why we talk about people management. Then you say no but think a bit, we in HR are at least grand, you know, we do well, what is important to the organization with respect to people, now we do talent management. What I mean by that is that talent, definition is something, that has value.

It is building a talent pipeline (G = 2)

Participant 8: But talent management you know is focusing on the future. Its creating that robust enough pipeline for the future.

It is part of succession planning (G = 2)

Participant 8: So I make a distinction between talent management and succession planning, a lot of people lump them together….and it is, in my opinion, talent management is part of succession planning…

Participant 6: … but recently we decided to shift the focus to realizing, to focus on succession. In other words, who has potential to operate on the next level.

It is the integrated process of managing the flow of people through the organisation (G = 6)

Participant 2: Okay so talent management for XXX is looking at the whole employee component of them being, as they enter the company, in terms of their initial selection process, looking at their development and tracking their performance in relation to their development based on their potential to either move vertically or horizontally.

Participant 8: So do you then see the whole process and everything as talent management?...Yes.

Participant 7: Now talent management has traditionally been in many of the organizations we work with is not actually recruitment, and is not really development, it is this tie-in succession

organizational effectiveness, you know, a little succession, little performance management, OD type of context, where OD doesn't really fit in with talent management. That definition does not include that.

Management of critical roles (G = 1)

Participant 3: So, it's to identify scarce and critical roles in an organisation that will very negatively influence the viability of an organisation if there's not a competent person in that role, and to make sure that you have a succession pipeline, ja.

Segmentation of employees (G = 2)

Participant 3: Talent pools that the bigger population can be divided into. For example, people have different terms for it but for example, your steady goers, the people that you know you can depend on but they don't necessarily show potential to move up into higher levels of the organisation.

Talent Management for successors only (G = 4)

Participant 6: Because it's important to have your talent pipelines. You find that there is high turnover in certain areas…you don't want to be caught in a situation where you don't have a pipeline…and then you've got to bring it in from outside.

Talent management is an integrated process (G = 3)

Participant 1: It runs within HR but it's part of, so HR is basically the owner of some of the processes…so we have got, we have put together quite comprehensive process. Let me take each one of them.

Talent management target only certain groups (G = 3)

Participant 6: So we use 3 levels that we do talent management for. We do for supervisor level which is D lower and then there's D uppers which is leads and superintendents and then for managers which is E lower. So managers in general or VP successors okay. Your superintendents to be E level successors, managers and then your supervisor to the superintendent successors and that's how we manage our talent now.

Talent mindset (G = 1)

Participant 4: And also then of course like is your talent mindset that come with that very important, and it must come from leaders because if you don't have leaders' buy-in into talent management it's not going to work.

TM efforts focus on a certain level of employee and up in the organisation (G = 1)

Participant 3: I think what I've seen across the board is most people focus their talent management efforts on a certain grading or a certain level of appointment upwards.

TM from middle management to C upper (G = 1)

Participant 1: Patterson grading will be typically from a C upper.

THEME 3: UNDERSTANDING OF TALENT AND HIPO TALENT IS LINKED TO ORGANISATION CULTURE

Three code groups were identified for this theme. These are:

- Development for all employees
- Organisational talent: Inclusive/exclusive
- Talent-vs-potential debate

3.1. Development for all employees

Six codes were identified and grouped together.

All employees should be developed (G = 5)

Participant 2: Yes and even if you are in the left hand side you still have access to development. It is not as if we say, well you not high potential you are not high potential so we are not going to do anything for you.

Participant 5: They still get a little bit of input in terms of their development but not as much as the people right there at the top.

Participant 5: so therefore if you have a person which is typical on the 9-box matrix which are good performers you develop them in terms of to make them better performers.

Participant 9: So if there's for instance technology changes or whatever the case might be you develop them to make them better performers but you don't necessarily develop them to become the next CEO. So you're not going to send them on an executive development program but you develop them in a different way. So you're utilizing their expertise in a different way than what you would utilize your expertise on a top level.

Participant 9: You do have the potential, remember it's about potential and talent. You do have potential but at this point in time you're not considered yet for the next role because you need A, B, C and D. So you still need to manage that group of people.

Leadership development also for non-HiPos (G = 1)

Participant 8: For our, mainly for our leadership development programmes just to see

R Okay but would that be HiPos or … so can you be part of a leadership development programme but not be HiPo?

I If you have been identified as somebody who is a successor to a role and who need to be ready within a year or two years or whatever.

Organisations also need good executers—not all are Hipos (G = 1)

Participant 9: Now you will find that probably a good 60 – 70 % of people working in organizations are not necessarily going to have an impact on the strategic direction of the organization. So what I mean, if we look at your people which again function on CPA levels one and two, complexity and service, or quality and service – they are not influencing the future of the organization. They are there to execute. So if you look at that calibre of people or that levels in your organization, how the organization of the future look like is probably less important because you need good executors.

Over reliance on talent—also B players (G = 4)

Participant 4: The other thing, very important is that, with talent is that and I quote: an over reliance on talent . So you have people who have been consistently been performing and that but you just leave them there. I think it's very important that we also come to a stage where we start coaching those individuals, they are already on the level but also take them forward and craft a career path for them.

Participant 5: And then where some, in cases where we actually engaged with the development programs, there were still, we recommended two development programs. One was your standard development program, and then the other was referred to as the stretch, stretch development program. And that was, I suppose you could say the high-flyers, people who were identified as being able to move sooner, necessarily than other necessarily, in the broader group.

Participant 5: We don't, you know? And I think also, one of the mistakes some of the companies make, is well; if you go through this process, you know, to identify potentials, then kind of disregarding the people who don't make it. Whereas the bulk of that are your solid performers that you need.

Participant 5: Because if everyone moves up, you still, you still need people carrying on with it and taking care of those people, you know. So that's I think, part of the challenge, saying; oh, well they're not high potential so I'm not going to invest any development in them. Morale and engagement drops, when they drop productivity is impacted. And you know, there's problems that can arise there too.

Should a company strive to have ALL high potentials (G = 1)

Participant 9: There is a balance thing so, not necessary because what are you going to do with all that talent? You're going to start losing them. So it's not a balance thing for me, it's rather how do you compare to your competitors. So if your competitors have got 25 % in the top quartile and you've got 5 % it means that you don't compete. Your people are not as strong as your competitor. So, bottom line is that's more what I am referring towards than to say that you should only have top potential in your organization. So that's for me, it's about competitiveness. Another reason why an organization should do that is to ensure long term viability, do they have the right people, do they plan for the future, it's basically do they plan for the future. So, can they ensure their long term growth and sustainability in terms of the people match.

Social justice (G = 4)

Participant 4: It is actually, the social justice is something that's mentioned in talent management. So what about the B players if you only focus on the A players. You have to have social justice.

Participant 5: We need CEO's, or we need chartered accountants, or we need whatever. But you know, you get some organisations where, I'm trying to think of an example now but where it's; we'll invest in you even if you do leave but we know that we've contributed to your career, and that's what's important. So I think we're starting to see a move from organizations being purely profit focused, to a broader responsibility.

Participant 5: And then an evaluation by the organisation saying; well can we offer that, can we reach that need? Yes, we can. Great. No we can't, let's see if we can support you and just be more, you know, ultimately you're building the country strength. So that's a contribution the organizations can make to growing the country's economy, growing them. But generally understanding everyone.

3.2. Organisational talent: Inclusive/exclusive

Four codes were identified and grouped together.

Talent/Talent management/Hipo dev. is unique for each company (G = 12)

Participant 3: If you talk about talent management from a broad perspective, there are different philosophies within companies that they take towards classifying what is seen as a talent.

Participant 3: just consulting in different companies doing this, is that there's not one tailor-made solution or one approach that's best for all companies.

Participant 9: So really what do we need? That's also defined in the criteria for talent, you know? How does talent look like in our business which is, which differs from company to company. So yes, talent for the one organization might mean innovation, continuous improvement, forward thinking, new ideas, bla bla.

Participant 7: So talent in company A will potentially look like talent in company B. Now if you argue high potential, and you say okay but which individuals, then you can define it in 2 ways. … So, if you define it so, it's actually a broad spectrum of things that are typically centred in personality and ability.

Participant 7: No, I think I have more or less said everything. I think my plea for talent models will just be, I think you can come up with a model, there are a few of them, which are well-

defined but the crux of the, I think you would harm yourself if You don't build a chapter on how to identify what's important in the organization. Here's a model of what talent can be or high-end but that doesn't mean it's true for your business.

Participant 7: Yes, its contextualisation

Talent is exclusive (G = 11)

Participant 3: the individuals and the skills and the knowledge and the capabilities that are critical to the survival and the success of the organisation.

Participant 3: So I'd say most of the organisations view talent as the key people that contribute in an invaluable sense to the organisation.

Participant 4: Our talent concept has 5 different blocks of which high potential is one. Okay so talent it starts with five things.

Participant 4: The 2nd one is about you know like, its having like having something that is unique—it's like your unique characteristics.

Participant 6: It's only a few.

Participant 6: Only a few…

Like I said…as we used to say, everybody is talent and we still say everybody is talent but the management of talent development is focused. The talent development is like a broad talent. Everybody in the organization, that goes through the training and development and performance management and coaching and kind of from the line manager's perspective.

Participant 7: Is very important to people, because now I'm now MD and a manager, and if I think now, you know what, I want to explain to you once and then get on with it, you know, and then show me that you want to do a little more than just what I told you. And let me say, here, wait a little, if we do that, what do you think? Isn't it going to work better? There is problem solving in it, there is achieving orientation in it, there is motivation in it, then you see, you want to be here because you actually want to make a contribution. Now you're talented.

Participant 7: I mean everyone, here are some guys here that I regularly [unclear] Here are one or two I think they shouldn't work here, because they break, you know, tasks, they take

energy and they break the systems, they don't do what they should do.

Participant 7: So, talent, talent for me is a strategic concept. These are guys who make a contribution to the system. You have many employees but not everyone has talent, in my definition.

Talent is inclusive (G = 2)

Participant 2: So currently as we see talent it's everybody right, right through to your bargaining unit because the bargaining unit is also where if you look at automating skills, if you look at automation in the mining industry, the skills need to change, people need to conceptually start thinking differently. Using equipment differently etcetera. So we start looking from there. We said people are your talent, however the focus of the succession plan focusses on your management specialist.

Participant 5: So that's interesting, I'm thinking now is that, so if we say talent management, are we sort of bringing in a certain value orientation to HR, and saying that; but we need to find what motivates everyone? More of a customized approach to our individuals, the individual workers in the organization and see how we manage each of their careers in terms of the talent that they have. And then the HiPo being talent that we specifically want.

3.3. Talent management only for some employees (G = 1)

Participant 4: You know but you have a gift. But remember what we said: talent management practice or talent management does not apply to everyone. Even though we say, as the two of us is sitting here—everyone has got gifts.

3.4. Talent-vs-potential debate

Eleven codes were identified.

All employees are talented (G = 6)

Participant 1: Okay alright so I understand the process. Do you differentiate at all between, okay so if we talk about talent management, it includes everyone, everyone in the organisation is seen as talent?

Yes, yes.

Participant 1: Yes, so but our, I must say we need to have that information because I think the people come to work, they want to be developed they want to have, it's amazing if you, there are some certain things. Not everyone is going to move or jump three levels in the organization. But other people are going to be quite happy but they would like to know, I have got a development plan, I can do some train that you, that you can do with it, so that's why, what we have said is what you call the two percent. That's a certain group of people that we have identified.

Participant 3: but in philosophy, I do agree that everyone has something to bring to the table.

Participant 9: You do have the potential, remember it's about potential and talent. You do have potential but at this point in time you're not considered yet for the next role because you need A, B, C and D. So you still need to manage that group of people.

Participant 4: Everyone's got a talent. You can't get away from that.

Participant 4: And I think what people need to realise is that it's not discriminating against somebody. I need to accept I will never be a medical doctor—I'm deadly scared of needles. I'm not good at mathematics but that doesn't make me not talented, and that is what we really try to change peoples' minds.

Everyone has potential—it depends on the position (G = 6)

Participant 9: So you might not be talent in this organization and you might not be performing but based on your—if we look back—it's possible that you can be talent in another environment or for another company.

Participant 9: They're looking for a different animal.

Participant 9: And I mean often you see that people just doesn't fit into a particular organisation, they don't fit that particular culture or environment or whatever the case may be and they go to another employer and they are quite successful there.

Participant 5: And, ja, so I think, you know, the broad category would still hold but exactly what they look like (intervenes). Would be different.

Participant 7: But what you actually say, everyone has potential, you just have to get the job, where they can show their potential.

Participant 7: Forward looking is for us but you will fit the post.

High potential is talent in the correct setting (G = 4)

Participant 7: So, there are many guys who say I am talent but just not here. You know, I want to grow, I want to make a contribution, I have potential in the sense that I can see greater problems. I can start to think bigger. I just don't want to do it here.

Participant 7: But what you actually say, everyone has potential, you just have to get the job, where they can show their potential.

Participant 7: There are guys who say, yeah, I want to keep this guy for somewhere because he has the kind of brain power and the will and the achievement orientation and the conscientiousness and the, kind of, man the old man, he just gets it.

High potential must fit the organisation—engineer/industrial psychologist (G = 2)

Participant 7: So, in many cases we are talking about 3 important components. The 1 is backward looking. You need to know, if you want to work here, you must be an industrial psychologist. You can't hire an engineer here. So, and the 1 fit definition of potential I must say but you are not potential for our business, because you are, you do not fit, the backward look and good.

Participant 7: Talent is a fit concept because it's about value.

Not all employees are talented (G = 3)

Participant 9: So you've got people in there who are good senior managers, in other words they have the talent to do the job, they are your talent. They are good senior managers they do their job. There are other people, now if you think about the 9-box matrix which do have the potential to become good managers, they need to be developed, nurtured, culture and all those types of things. But then you've got people there which should actually not be there because they don't have the potential and they also can't do the job.

Participant 9: No they are not talent and they also don't have the potential to develop into talent.

Participant 7: Well I wouldn't, I don't think you can say all talent is more, you can say all high

potentials are potential talent but I don't think you can say all people are talent.

Organisational talent is potential within the right setting or position (G = 4)

Participant 9: So therefore talent, potential remains the same. Because potential for me is you've got a certain level of conceptual capability, you've got a certain behaviour preferences but potential in one organization is also not necessarily potential in another organization because the conceptual capability, the conceptual part is still there but the required behaviour is may be different.

Participant 9: And quite often companies appoint, bring in the person who may have great potential, CPA level about 4 or 5 type of thing and it looks like the behaviours are in place and then they bring in the person. The person is not successful because they haven't succeeded in transferring that underlying potential for this position into talent that the organization can utilise.

Participant 7: Now guys, there are guys out there for fourteen years but I have been working with them for almost twenty years, and they don't want to do anything else. They don't have career aspiration; they just want to do those things. So okay, they call them typical as potential I will say applicant X has the potential to become a project co-ordinator, then I use it in that context. And then it's all about the right behavioural things, he's conscientious, he is structured, they can check well, understand more or less what the problems are, and can put together the [unclear]. So, they're going to fit that role. Then I could use the term potential. If you tell me and we're talking about foundational factors, so if you tell me, for example, I'm going and here are two guys in the business. The one is up there, he is a project coordinator, the other one is a consultant actually for senior consultants and I say, those people will still be far away. They have, they are driven and they are pretty smart, they understand the environment, they can make decisions by themselves, you can leave them. And you know, and then you could use the term, they are talent.

Participant 7: Forward looking is for us but you will fit the post. So, I can argue that foundationally, there are many guys with growth potential, they are pretty smart, they have emotional stability, they draw not on this type of stuff, call it now the other component is perhaps what we call growth potential is not learning agility. So, I'm going to say the person below and the person up there has both, foundationally they have both talent or high potential.

Potential for what—talent for what (G = 6)

Participant 5: So, if you think, you know, if you think the best performing sales person is promoted to sales manager, they've got no clue how to manage people. You know, double whammy, you've lost out on sales, and you've lost out on a good manager. So that I think is a shortcoming of how a lot of organizations view what high potential looks like. I think increasingly, the more I get involved in the, the more I'm starting to get involved in positive psychology, I would almost question; is there a distinction between talent and high-potential talent? And I think the key is really, potential for what. Because I think a lot of the work, that in the reviews these days, up until now is around high potential equals leadership.

Participant 5: You know, preparing for leadership roles. But the question then being what are those people interested in, what do those people want. It links back to do I want a specialist to become a manager, because that's the only way to advance in our organisation. Or do I want to be able to advance as a specialist, become an influential voice in my industry, you know, type thing. So yeah, does the individual want to pursue a track like that?

Participant 5: So, I think you can't really get away with, away from that high potential for what. And I think you do just have, and that's probably why it's pretty difficult to define it, because there are multiple definitions depending on where your focus is.

Participant 5: You may find that there's a huge overlap of commonalities between them, with a couple of nuances intentionally. So, if you think, you know, ability aspiration; whether you're on the managerial or specialist track you need ability but that ability might look slightly different. You need aspiration, that aspiration might be slightly different. For specialists it's maybe less about being in control, and being in charge but it's more about recognition as an expert, and steering and influencing. Whereas managerial is typically more about the power.

Participant 7: the question is potential for what?

Participant 7: Job analysis. You know, if you tell me potential for what.

Potential is disposition—what you are born with (G = 3)

Participant 9: So, potential for me it's really those dispositions which lies within a person. What you need to do is, and that – for me – is more talent, is actually to see but did people really utilize that particular set of potential? So are they now talent that I can utilise.

Participant 9: So, it's almost for me: you've got certain potential, you materialise that particular potential, then you become talent for that particular role.

Participant 9: So, potential for me is more the DNA part. Potential for me are more your dispositions which is very, very much based on your conceptual capability so in other words the amount of grey matters that you have got and then secondly it's in terms of your behaviours.

Talent for what—alignment with job (G = 9)

Participant 4: If we don't, if your job is not in line with your life purpose forget it. You know like you are not going to last there.

Participant 4: Like, for example, you know like, yeah, if I take myself you know, like so I like to be an academic, I like to write this stuff and so on but I cannot work, and I like to be autonomous. I cannot work in like corporate for an 8-to-5 job; it will never work for me. Whereas other people thrive in it. Or for example if I look in terms of, I told them the other day, is that I don't like speaking over a phone, so can I be a call operator? Can I go and work for an organisation where I can do—I like talking, no problem, I've got that there—but I cannot, I don't like talking over a phone. I can't be a call operator.

Participant 4: Exactly because in the organisation for example is that you know like, okay so I've got all my people there, they are good at something. However, I need X, Y and Z to take my organisation forward and that is where my focus will be.

Participant 4: And it's not about for example like I said I'm not a good athlete so why would you—and that's the mistake we're making is that a person has 20% potential and something. Now you want to push that person to an 80%. He will never get there. Sorry, that is just about capacity.

Participant 4: And I think again what people need to realise is that its context again. We tend to forget the context. You know everyone can be a talent everywhere. And I can also, some people—and it's also again about attitude—is that, I mean, if Roger Federer he can hit the ball but if he didn't invest in himself you know like leave school, he didn't complete school, he went to a tennis school so if he didn't invest in himself then you're going to stay where you are. And that's what's important for me in talent management.

Participant 4: No but high potential is not for everyone. It's context specific. So, for example, you can have high potential but if you then start performing then you are a talent for the organisation. Because the thing is I can have potential for something. Because what I also do is I show them a picture of a cat who wants to be a lion. I go like so there's a potential it can main, it won't really.

Participant 4: That is why high potential is a stepping stone to become a talent in the organisation.

Participant 5: Some people are more talent than others, yeah. What is the, it's a difficult question but it is because it's not really defined. I've not found one person who could tell me, well, I'm finding different opinion. So, and I think then I'd then come back to that high potential for what. I do believe, you know, all people have talent, what it is though may or may not align with the organizations' view, or organisations' requirements because they are pursuing certain goals.

Participant 5: So that's interesting, I'm thinking now is that, so if we say talent management, are we sort of bringing in a certain value orientation to HR, and saying that; but we need to find what motivates everyone? More of a customized approach to our individuals, the individual workers in the organization and see how we manage each of their careers in terms of the talent that they have. And then the HiPo being talent that we specifically want.

Talent starts with a gift like Mozart (G = 1)

Participant 4: The first one is a gift—it's something that you're born naturally with. I mean. it's like the Mozarts, I mean they're good at music. Okay [inaudible 18.27.5] okay, he has to practise but you can play tennis—it's something you just have. I mean, it's something that you're just good at. But of course it comes with responsibility and it needs to be cultivated but that's a very basic.

THEME 4: ORGANISATIONAL PROCESSES

This theme was made up of seven code groups.

- Talent management is linked to organisational strategy
- High potential identification process

- Psychometrics
- Succession planning
- Talent management process
- Hindering factors or challenges for talent management and HiPo development
- Communication of high-potential status

4.1. Talent Management is linked to organisational strategy

Eight codes were identified.

Talent/Talent management/Hipo dev. is unique for each company (G = 12)

Participant 3: So, I think it's a very unique thing to manage talent in a company. Obviously there, you can go and look at different roles [?] and different ways that people do it but I think every organisation needs to decide what's best for their people.

Participant 9: So really what do we need? That's also defined in the criteria for talent you know? How does talent look like in our business which is, which differs from company to company. So yes, talent for the one organization might mean innovation, continuous improvement, forward thinking, new ideas, bla bla.

Participant 7: No, I think I have more or less said everything. I think my plea for talent models will just be, I think you can come up with a model, there are a few of them, which are well-defined but the crux of the, I think you would harm yourself if You don't build a chapter on how to identify what's important in the organization. Here's a model of what talent can be or high-end but that doesn't mean it's true for your business.

Balance the need of the org with the need of the individual (G = 1)

Participant 3: So it's not always just about the needs of the organisation. It's also about the needs of the individual and helping people to progress in their career and to reach their potential.

Organisations decide process of talent management (G = 3)

Participant 3: So companies must try and identify who do they regard as talent. In other

words, the individuals and the skills and the knowledge and the capabilities that are critical to the survival and the success of the organisation. And the processes that the organisations take to nurture that talent or the skills capabilities and knowledge.

Organisational structure to support HiPo development (G = 3)

Participant 1: So we have over, I would say the last two years, we have changed the following policies. We have changed the re-location policy, we have changed our, our rental assistance policy. We have just changed our regional mobility policy. We have changed, what else?

Participant 1: Right so if you look at Ballito, there is just private schools there, there is no, there is one public school, which is a primary school. So now you send the person with family there, what do you do. So if you relocate him he needs to buy a new house, he is going to need to look for a private school, so what assistance do you give. Therefore, you need to look the peripherals.

Talent and talent management link to organisational strategy (G = 17)

Participant 1: So, so talent management is quite important and is a detailed part of our strategy.

Participant 3: I think everyone has to evaluate, first of all, the industry that they're in, the size of the company, the resources and the appetite that they have for developing people and getting involved in this type of thing.

Participant 8: So you know for me talent management is important because it aligns, it needs to align directly to your over-arching business strategy.

Participant 4: so very important it starts with a vision, the mission, the strategic objectives of your organisation and then with that, yes, we've got the balanced score card but there's also a talent score card. And that's what many organisations don't have. For example how do I get my talent with the balanced score card of the organisation – how do I get those together? And then drilling down from that you will get your policies, your practice and then the rest what I explained.

Participant 7: And you need to make sure the guys you bring on board and what you develop are the guys you need in the future and your strategy.

Talent/Talent management/HiPo is unique for each company (G = 12)

Participant 3: If you talk about talent management from a broad perspective, there are different philosophies within companies that they take towards classifying what is seen as a talent.

Participant 3: …just consulting in different companies doing this, is that there's not one tailor-made solution or one approach that's best for all companies.

Participant 9: So really what do we need? That's also defined in the criteria for talent you know? How does talent look like in our business which differs from company to company?

Participant 6: …What do you think is a high potential? ...We identified that. So, we sat in a room with really strong leaders in the business and we said what do you think?

Participant 7: I think you would harm yourself if you don't build a chapter on how to identify what's important in the organization. Here's a model of what talent can be or high-end but that doesn't mean it's true for your (every) business.

Talent management needs top management support (G = 12)

Participant 5: …And that's where also, sort of, the top dog support comes from...do I see my role models doing it, my leaders doing it? But then also so that the individual managers understand why it's important, why they should be doing it, and they also know how to do it.

Talent philosophy (G = 3)

Participant 8: …and what's nice about this one is, is that we've developed a leadership philosophy.

Talent value proposition (G = 2)

Participant 4: …like with the branding of your organisation for example and your talent value proposition. So for example you cannot start with talent management without knowing you know like what do you want…

4.2. High potential identification process

Fourteen codes were identified and grouped together.

Hipo identification—age, gender (G = 1)

Participant 6: We look at gender, ethnicity and we look at age. Reason being you can't spend that amount of time, money and resources on a 55 year old that's going to retire in three years.

Identification of high potential—talent review process (G = 8)

Participant 2: The whole intent of the way we position it in the organisation is we do it, we do it twice a year, we link it back to our performance management process. So when we have the initial performance discussion we look backwards and that is also something that we have got to start changing, to forward looking.

Participant 2: But we look backwards and we say this is how you performed and what potential positions you think you might be interested in, whether it is lateral or vertical. And then from there we, we give them last year's rating to say this is where you are and that is part of leaders development is to have crucial conversation, or to have conversations that are not really comfortable, or uncomfortable and you will know quickly as management, the executive, whether it went well or not. So when we consolidate everything at the Exco in say October the results go back to the business, to say now you can communicate, when you do your performance discussions, this will be the second phase, your courier, you succession, where we see you, and then you know if something is going bad, because it always comes back ahh but this person you know.

Participant 3: So talent review process can basically span over a few months in which it's a structured process by which the organisation goes through certain activities to identify where the individuals would be plotted in that population group.

Participant 8: So what I do is I send a note to our HR office to say guys the talent review process is starting, it normally happens round about March or so and then what they do is they sit with the various line managers and they will then identify their, so part of the conversation will be a discussion around critical skills, how to fill roles, identification of HiPos whether it be for leadership or whether it be for those critical skills. Because in my opinion a lot of the critical skills are around technical roles, nine times out of ten.

Participant 6: So we look at that and then we move into. I would almost say performance. I would say performance, we manage it to say, I divide it into 4 areas. So we rate each and every manager on four sets. The group does this. Okay yeah. So, the first one is leadership

on a five-point scale. From 1—really needs a lot of development to 5—excellent, 3—on par.

Participant 6: Liesl, because you have to remember they don't have to verify that. I would say 90% of the time those guys gut feels are very good because they work with them, they work with the person. Where else are you going to get that data from?

Identification of HiPos though simulations (G = 2)

Participant 4: No we don't use tools. You know what, I'm tired of traditional things like psychometric testing and interviews because that doesn't give the whole picture. I would rather do more practical things.

Participant 4: Scenario based things you know, like and also for example you know like pretend, you know I would put them in a real work situation and see how they operate you know in that because that is a good determinator of whether they will be surviving in an organisation. Give them that curve balls, not curve balls but the different things that can happen in a typical day and I will see how they can manage that.

Identification of high potential is a subjective process (G = 4)

Participant 2: That will actually be interesting. So except for, am I right if I say that the evaluation by the leader group in terms of high potential or not, and where people can move, is actually a little bit subjective?

Participant 2: So, we need to obviously take that in, so generally what you find is mainly your white male are in there due to the fact that the percentage of representation in the organisation that you can't actually get away from, so how do you actually also make sure you get the right transformational target or the employees to be in those blocks, even if they are not there yet but how are you going to develop them so that they can compete on an equal footing with your three eights, for instance.

Participant 6: Liesl, because you have to remember they have to very, that. I would say 90% of the time those guys gut feels are very good because they work with them, they work with the person. Where else are you going to get that data from?

Participant 5: Trying to but you can never remove subjectivity but trying to remove the biases that managers maybe try and unconsciously apply.

ID of hipos—no psychometrics (n-1)

Participant 4: No we don't use tools. You know what, I'm tired of traditional things like psychometric testing and interviews because that doesn't give the whole picture. I would rather do more practical things.

Interview (G = 1)

Participant 5: and then typically an interview type thing to assess the engagement and explore, you know, where do you see yourself, what are your goals, and kind of, how it aligns. So, that's the approach that we've typically taken.

Key positions (G = 1)

Participant 5: So the Board also reviews. So this month we did a complete talent review with the Board in terms of what happened, what does succession look like, you know for the different key positions and then we also service.

Leader group identifies HiPos (G = 2)

Participant 2: A leader's take on the role to identify them. So our current succession as you know it is performance and a readiness scope for promotion.

Participant 2: By the group yes. the leader group. And then it gets cascaded upwards to consolidate. So when we have like your high level sessions. We also then started looking at culture and behaviours and values and we look at how people live that and also how do they work in teams because teamwork becomes very critical to almost waiting your high potentials.

Manager involvement in HiPo identification (G = 10)

Participant 3: So there's a system called the manager-once-removed system which allows opportunity for all the individuals in the population that you'd like to plot, to have period discussions with their manager once removed. In other words, not their direct manager but two levels above, and that gives the opportunity to minimise bias and also for an objective view point. But then there's a rating that the manager would also give the individuals, and those two ratings, from the manager-once-removed and the direct manager is combined at the end of the day to give a more objective viewpoint.

Participant 8: On their own experiences and then what we also do is I've also asked the guys to kind of align that to our performance management process.

Participant 4: And then I can make my decision from that because, and I will do that to such an extent that they don't know that they're being observed or like I'm checking you know like up on them because then they will pretend you know. And you don't want that, and that is how I will go about it. I will test it in real life, real context.

Participant 5: Like me, I am a, with all due respect, a middle aged white male and I reckon my high potentials look like me, went to the same schools like me, dot, dot, dot.

Participant 5: So, then that can be a barrier to transformation or increasing diversity, and also, if the pool tends to look like, sort of, different to the people that you want to bring in, so in South Africa, people of colour, people with differing abilities, disabilities, gender, whatever the case may be. That could be off putting to say; I don't want to be included in that program because I, in order to succeed I've got to suppress myself and become like them. Or I'm just not going to be supported because I'm not like that.

Participant 6: We're linking again back into aspiration ability, what does that climate look like, a short, sort of, rating survey the manager completes of all their staff at whatever level, you know, you're kind of looking at. And then from that going; well, does the manager see the kinds of behaviours that we would look for.

Participant 5: Because it is picking up on the behaviours and not necessarily the managers set ideas of what (intervenes)

Nine block grid (G = 11)

Participant 1: Especially your Block nines, we will come back now to the Block 9's.

Participant 2: Do you do, you do that nine block grid.

Participant 3: Just to step back in the previous question, high potential, if you look, most people use the nine-box grid to determine,

Participant 9: Yeah, and they've got this fancy nine-box matrixes and complicated spreadsheets etcetera and then they're stuck or they don't do anything further around that and they lose momentum. And then they waste their money. So, those are the three pivots for me

from talent management.

Participant 9: So, you've got people in there who are good senior managers, in other words they have the talent to do the job, they are your talent. They are good senior managers they do their job. There are other people, now if you think about the 9-box matrix which do have the potential to become good managers, they need to be developed, nurtured, culture and all those types of things. But then you've got people there which should actually not be there because they don't have the potential and they also can't do the job.

Participant 9: I think that's probably where a lot of confusion come into and I think that's probably the area which is very difficult to clarify and to try to explain. But one must go back to see where the 9-box matrix originated from. It basically come from GM Jack Walsh. He was the creator of the 9-box matrix. Now I think it was a concept that have been almost, it was a concept that have been twisted and changed and put into different formats and I think that's where the confusion came from. So at that point in time what Jack Walsh did in terms of how he utilised the 9-box matrix was actually not to identify potential but rather to manage performance.

Participant 9: The focus was on the performance leg and I think over time we have actually used that potential model and we have done it into a potential model.

Participant 6: Because we have also we have the nine box. We don't really use nine box but we've got two axes

Nomination list (G = 1)

Participant 5: So, in cases where we try, where, times we've said that we can't, we don't have enough for this full thing, we have taken an approach where we almost use sort of a nomination survey but it's then, it's not just managers saying you know, these three people from my department (intervenes).

Performance reviews (G = 2)

Participant 2: The whole intent of the way we position it in the organisation is we do it, we do it twice a year, we link it back to our performance management process. So when we have the initial performance discussion we look backwards and that is also something that we have got to start changing, to forward looking.

Participant 2: But we look backwards and we say this is how you performed and what potential positions you think you might be interested in, whether it is lateral or vertical. And then from there we, we give them last year's rating to say this is where you are and that is part of leaders development is to have crucial conversation, or to have conversations that are not really comfortable, or uncomfortable and you will know quickly as management, the executive, whether it went well or not. So when we consolidate everything at the Exco in say October the results go back to the business, to say now you can communicate, when you do your performance discussions, this will be the second phase, your courier, you succession, where we see you, and then you know if something is going bad, because it always comes back ahh but this person you know.

Use of consultants to identify high potential (G = 5)

Participant 1: So, what we did was, Spenser Stuart did the process on basically three levels. The one level they did a detailed assessment according to their executive intelligence, to they typically got a score out of one hundred where they say this person is in the upper in the upper quarter or the middle or the bottom of that specific score.

Participant 8: So, this is our leadership that we developed for SAPPI. Globally we use these assessments. So our competencies we work with a service provider called Comm Feeding.

Participant 4: We're making a mistake to outsource things because the thing is we get people form outside, they don't know the organisation that well, they assess the person or they look at the CV and make a recommendation. That is not right.

Participant 6: So I go back, I take this, the review information, I take the psychometric information, we put it together and we've already calculated all of this through TTS.

Use succession process or planning to ID Hipos (G = 1)

Participant 2: So obviously they are in a current position, so you go through your normal succession processes.

4.3. Psychometrics

Nine codes were identified.

Battery of tests (G = 1)

Participant 3: I think the good approaches, battery of assessments, that gives you a realistic view of the individual but the CPP, CPA looks at cognitive capability.

Cognitive—CPP / CPA (G = 5)

Participant 3: that would include some scientific elements such as a psychometric assessment. A CPP or a CPO is often used to get in that sense of how an individual can manage complexity.

Participant 3: think the good approaches, battery of assessments, that gives you a realistic view of the individual but the CPP, CPA looks at cognitive capability.

Participant 3: But, obviously, things like OPQ or the MBTI can be used, and then often times in talent specifically, because it focuses on higher level individuals and EQ assessment is also very valuable because research just indicates that, well, the more leadership responsibility you have, the more critical EQ is to apply the competence. So, ja, the Bar-On EQ is the flagship EQ to be used in most cases.

Participant 9: CPA, CPP whatever the case may be.

Participant 6: We look at CPA.

Emotional intelligence_ Bar on EQ (G=1)

Participant 3: But, obviously, things like OPQ or the MBTI can be used, and then often times in talent specifically, because it focuses on higher level individuals and EQ assessment is also very valuable because research just indicates that, well, the more leadership responsibility you have, the more critical EQ is to apply the competence. So ja, the Bar-On EQ is the flagship EQ to be used in most cases.

Personality tests_ OPQ (G = 2)

Participant 3: But obviously, things like OPQ or the MBTI can be used, and then often times in talent specifically, because it focuses on higher level individuals and EQ assessment is also very valuable because research just indicates that, well, the more leadership responsibility you have, the more critical EQ is to apply the competence. So ja, the Bar-On EQ is the flagship EQ to be used in most cases.

Participant 5: Okay, so building, or using that model, aspiration ability, the sort of basic approach would be the occupational personality questionnaire, as well as the motivation questionnaire. So, the occupational personality questionnaire, to get a view of the individuals' preferences and styles. How that relates into the behaviour they're like to have. From an aspirational view; are they likely to set themselves stretching career goals? are they likely to take opportunities to advance towards those goals? Are they comfortable in the managerial leadership? are they comfortable being in control? taking control? those sorts of behaviours that you're looking for. Coupled with motivation to see whether, would they basically engage, sorry, energized by the kinds of motivators or opportunities for motivation that you get in your senior roles.

Psychometric results influence managers perceptions of employees (G = 2)

Participant 3: I think one of the dangers in psychometric assessments, and I've seen it happen, is that because the psychometric assessment results are often provided to the management team. Say for example, the discipline, when discussing an individual, and for people to, especially when plotting individuals, so applying judgement to a person in a little box.

Participant 3: it's a threat to the talent management function if you start to limit people's careers based on the outcome of one psychometric assessment.

Psychometrics only for development—cost (G = 7)

Participant 2: Firstly, due to costs.

Participant 8: No, for development yeah. And the other interesting thing that I started doing is our 360 assessment, I've started looking at group reports just to see kind of where is the focus and then I have overlaid that with a CPP assessment.

Participant 8: For our, mainly for our leadership development programmes just to see.

R Okay but would that be HiPos or … so can you be part of a leadership development programme but not be HiPo?

Participant 6: So, you divide it and then you discus the successions. After we've done this okay identifying the talent, the talent people then do assessments.

Psychometrics to identify leadership derailers (G = 2)

Participant 9: So identifying of potential and, sorry and then what I would like to add to that is—and if you talk about leadership, possible leadership derailers—so what are those things which can also cause you to derail from effectiveness. I think that's also quite important.

Participant 8: Yes, a typical open derailers you know when you are under stress you become absolutely too over exciting and you start throwing tantrums you become less effective. So, as well as in there for instance you can start adding emotional intelligence—those type of things which can actually cause you to derail from effectiveness.

Psychometrics used extensively (G=2)

Participant 1: Yes, we are going this as a standard practice. We said that the principle that we want to use is that we want to use as many data point as possible. That will provide us with information, so we did assessments (psychometric) on the Top 500 in the company and we combined this with 360 degree information so we have their leadership capabilities.

Participant 6: And psychometrics in competent.

Role of the psychologist (G = 1)

Participant 3: Oftentimes, misunderstood what it means to be on a barrel [?] processing level, on a strategic level, and then people can be limited or managers limit people if they do not have inputs from a [unclear 00:17:43] psychologist to help them understand it and apply the knowledge that comes from the psychometric assessments. I've sat in a meeting where the manager told the individual you are actually only a two on the CPP, so there's not much room for growth. And so they need to be educated on the role of psychometrics, and I think that they understand the instruments, ja.

4.4. Succession planning

Seven codes were identified and grouped together.

Integrated computerised system (G = 2)

Participant 1: So what it does, so we are weighing out in a systematic phase through the business and actually capturing the data and making sure that successes are ready. And all

of a sudden like in the past, we used to run it on spreadsheets.

Participant 1: No we, we get really good reports that indicates, right these are the positions, this person has been, this is a high-risk individuals. People that stay there. I nominated for a number of positions you know, which means you get one individual who has been tagged for like five different as a successor you know.

Is part of talent management (G = 2)

Participant 8: Succession planning is part of talent management but talent management includes other components as well.

Participant 9: And then start developing and that for me is the succession planning part.

Participant 3: I would say, is one of the big factors, and the other one is to protect the company, and by that, one of the core building blocks of talent is succession planning.

Leadership positions (G = 1)

Participant 2: We said people are your talent, however the focus of the succession plan focusses on your management specialist.

Only for leadership roles (G = 2)

Participant 2: However, the focus of the succession plan focusses on your management specialist.

Participant 2: We said people are your talent, however the focus of the succession plan focusses on your management specialist.

Succession planning is management of risk (G = 2)

Participant 8: Succession planning in a nutshell is management of risk. And so how do you manage risk? Well you need to do succession planning in my opinion for your critical roles and then also for, at SAPPI we focus on just three general areas. We do an executive succession, and then general management succession; and then we also do retirement planning under the retirement analysis all the way up to 25 years.

Participant 8: I pulled it out and said okay, at every single level who are the people that's

going to retire in the next little while, let's see who the successors are and also what's the strategy around replacement. Are we going to grow the successor, are we going to source from the market or are we going to build – what are we going to do? And so for me succession planning is management of risk.

Talent management is part of succession planning (G = 2)

Participant 8: So, I make a distinction between talent management and succession planning, a lot of people lump them together.

4.5. Talent management process

Twelve codes were identified and grouped together.

Career pathing for lower levels (specialists) (G = 2)

Participant 2: But we do career pathing at the lower levels.

Participant 8: Yes, and so we're now saying because we've have a very good and well-defined competency framework, competency dictionary it's all in our LME's we're also starting to do some new work around doing career pathing within the organization. In the past it was linked to pay but we're now saying maybe we need to think about it a little bit differently within the organisation in saying okay, if we have we well defined destructors pipeline over here what does mean for our specialist people?

Employee buy-in (G = 3)

Participant 2: And from there you need to take it up as an individual.

Participant 2: So, we give the platform and you need to engage with that platform. So your career is basically up to you.

Participant 2: So, you cannot come back and say you don't have the opportunity. There is always an opportunity, you just need to be enrolled into those opportunities.

Exit process and retirement planning (G = 1)

Participant 1: So, we have been actually doing a lot of planning around retirement and talent management plays an important part of that.

Job analysis (G = 1)

Participant 7: So, those job analysis components are becoming increasingly important in your talent management structure.

Recruitment (focus on succession planning) (G = 1)

Participant 3: I wouldn't see general recruitment as part of talent management but recruitment does play a role in succession planning where internal candidates to succeed a certain role is not available. Then pre-emptive headhunting or recruiting strategies can be used to identify individuals from outside and pre-emptively add them to the succession plan.

Succession planning is part of talent management (G = 1)

Participant 3: I think but I think the core elements of it is, first and foremost, succession planning. I think that's a big part of it, and then also feeding into succession planning is also development and training initiatives that goes hand in hand. And then in terms of managing, identifying talent pools and a process to talk about and to cluster individuals that are regarded as talent into the different talent pools.

Talent forums (G = 4)

Participant 6: So some candidates are five years, some are three to five, blah blah blah, and then we start talent forums. These talent forums.

Participant 6: So, we've got a production forum, we've got a maintenance forum and we've got a processing forum.

Participant 6: And we put the managers and the GMM there, they own the talent, I don't own it, I put the data together and we discuss each and every candidate that was identified as a successor in detail and then we develop a detailed development plan for them and we monitor it.

Talent management programme for all employees (G = 4)

Participant 1: And then we have basically the talent management program in that. So that will be, so other people that is not in the formal type of training program within the company.

Participant 1: So for those individuals we have regular performance, not performance, talent

reviews. We have just implemented a system, which actually works quite nicely. Corner stone learning management system. And we have enabled a talent management component of it and one day when you have time, you must actually come and have a look at it.

Participant 2: Okay so talent management for Exxaro is looking at the whole employee component of them being, as they enter the company, in terms of their initial selection process, looking at their development and tracking their performance in relation to their development based on their potential to either move vertically or horizontally.

Participant 2: Okay so if we talk about process, so our process is very much linked into our people strategy. So, talent management is a key area of not only leadership development but people development and people, what's the word I am looking for, not only development but performance management with it.

Talent reviews (G = 19)

Participant 1: Individuals we have regular performance, not performance, talent reviews.

Participant 1: So, for those individuals we have regular performance, not performance, talent reviews. We have just implemented a system, which actually works quite nicely. Corner stone learning management system. And we have enabled a talent management component of it and one day when you have time, you must actually come and have a look at it.

Participant 1: We do a talent review and then we do also, so talent review but we also we deal with a couple of key impediments that hampers the movement of people because talent managing should not be done in isolation.

Participant 1: The focus of the people review is really around succession planning so who's their leadership team who are they and who are the successors that they have identified and potential development gaps.

Participant 8: Yeah our talent reviews focused on leadership.

Participant 8: So, what I do is I send a note to our HR office to say guys the talent review process is starting, it normally happens round about March or so and then what they do is they sit with the various line managers and they will then identify their, so part of the conversation will be a discussion around critical skills, how to fill roles, identification of hipos whether it be for leadership or whether it be for those critical skills. Because in my opinion a lot of the critical

skills are around technical roles, nine times out of ten.

Participant 6: So, in the first place we have reviews bi-annually.

Participant 6: So, in that you can split in two. That's operational reviews as well as functional.

Participant 6: But in any case, we populate all the information we have. If it's a new person then we obviously don't have much so I put in all the names, all the background information, all the demographic information and then you sit around the table. So for instance at a mine, the GN will review the managers. He will sit with me and we will discuss them and we will identify the successors and we will discuss them in more detail.

Participant 6: So, you've got a maintenance discipline, we've got a production discipline, we've got an engineering and you have a planning discipline so that means we pool all our resources okay. So, now you've got pipelines in terms of readiness.

Participant 6: Sometimes, you find a person just joined 6 months, suddenly they show good potential or someone obtained their qualifications in the meantime and you can put them in the pipeline.

Technology—computer-based management system (G = 2)

Participant 5: Yeah, the sort of the flow, I think maybe something I didn't elaborate on there, is actually just the sharing of information, and from a system point of view, a technological system, or technology perspective, having a digital system to support that flow of information.

Participant 5: So experience with clients, you know, the recruitment assessment results and interview data goes in the file, or is destroyed, keeping in mind data protection policies now. But that just sits there, whereas if that is shared it can make on boarding and development process that much easier. The manager can understand, you know, how best to engage and work with this individual. You know, so there are benefits of actually sharing that interview, and that typically doesn't happen. So I think a typically digital platform that enables that sharing.

Various programmes (EIT, Apprentice, GIT) (G = 3)

Participant 1: We have the apprentice programs that is running, we have what you call the work integrated learner programs that's running. So that's like a feeder system into it so that

we just make sure continuously we are bringing in the right people and the philosophy similar like what we have in Kumba, the philosophy is about 80/20. So you will grow 80% of your own

Participant 1: So, we have EIT's, engineers in training program that runs on a two-year program. They get you know, move between the different operating units and then eventually they get appointed as fully-fledged engineers in the business.

Young talent pipeline (G = 5)

Participant 1: So, just from the young talent pipeline. So, you have got from a young talent pipeline, you have got bursars. We have got like about 45 bursary students in different universities and that you do continuously to say, these are the type of fields and then we do that. We have also got a, quite a deep, specifically in South Africa, forestry, forestry and trainer group of people and then you have, we have started with that process where we bring in what we call 'work-integrated learners'.

Participant 8: The focus here in my opinion is on building a young talent pipeline so you know that your pipeline is robust.

Participant 6: Basically the only thing that we also work on very hard is our graduates and you see young talent. So we work quite hard on that because they become your talent in the future.

4.6. Hindering factors or challenges for talent management and HiPo development

Seven codes were identified.

BBBEE and affirmative action (G = 16)

Participant 1: Look, the labour law is a challenge in South Africa, and that is why we went back to our recruitment policy. But the whole affirmative action thing is a component of the system, it is not a problem. This is why you have to get your feeding system right.

Participant 3: I think a tricky thing, and it's not necessarily a wrong thing but it is tricky to manage, is the fact that there is certain requirements placed on organisations to look at HDSA development. Specifically, also women in management roles and HDSA candidates across the board in leadership positions, which does complicate matters in terms of how do you objectively review everyone and place everyone that's under reviewing to the different talent

pools.

Participant 9: I think it is, I think we mustn't under-estimate the impact of affirmative action. I think that will be with us and we will always need to take into consideration that BEE will be almost a 4th leg or 3rd leg of a talent management process. So it will always, that's a South Africa reality, and I think if one can come up with a model performance / potential / on a 3rd dimension of people something about BEE that will almost complete the picture. And then I think that's a very, so the reality of BEE and the fact that organizations often take decisions based on BEE driven.

Participant 4: But our problems, you know, is how we apply our legislation in the workplace, because we're dealing with the Employment Equity Act and the Constitution. So you can't just apply a cherry-picking approach, because people will think, you know, oh goodness, you know, that you're discriminating against people. So it's not that simple, you know.

Participant 7: Extremely difficult because that's one thing that you can note. Your white talent tends to…they know they're not wanted and they know they're not going to be promoted so we've put limited places for white people to be promoted and the moment they find something better out in overseas or in another smaller company where it doesn't matter, they will jump ship and go.

Participant 6: You're an Indian here, you've got a ticket you're working your butt off but there's no possibility for you to get anywhere with your career. They're going to, they're going to move.

Participant 6: And your license demand stipulates that you've got to have a BBBEE score of five or higher, let's say. We're not even on an 8 so how do you get there? You've got to have a certain number of people on a certain level.

Participant 6: They prescribe it. So it's not like you're sitting there and thinking ahh I should appoint more black than whites. You have specific targets and let me tell you, its specified. Its white. Its coloured male/female, Indian male/female and its usually worked out for us for instance according to the economical active population of Mpumalanga so that population determines the target. For senior management its 70%, for middle management its 75% but for junior management its 85%.

Participant 7: We are the only country in the world where it is caught up in legislation, and the way it happens here.

Business environment—male and white (G = 1)

Participant 9: Think just the environment that we operate in—stereotyped male and white.

Constant change in the business environment

Participant 9: And the problem we are facing nowadays is constantly changing their jobs, they are constantly changing the way things are, and the big arguments at this stage in the banks, among other things, we still need job descriptions.

High cost of TM (G = 2)

Participant 9: I think what makes it more difficult is that its cost driven—it costs a lot of money. So I think cost plays a major role in terms of rolling out proper succession plans. I think a second main money area—and that's with all respect to colleagues which are typical HR people because they just don't understand it. So they are not capable to have those discussions with their line managers.

Participant 9: HR in organisations is not capable to actually position that on the agenda of the organization and therefor I think that's one of the major, major stumbling blocks why organizations are not doing talent management in companies, and cost-driven.

Lack of HR capability (G = 3)

Participant 9: So, I think probably the main reason why we don't see talent management works in South Africa is a lack of HR capability because they need to drive the process. And there I'm talking right from top to bottom. I think we, our HR people are operationally orientated. They look after payroll and that's it.

Participant 9: Because even if I look at just straightforward assessments for selection and their level of understanding and insight is shocking. And then I think, unfortunately, HR in organizations is not capable to actually position that on the agenda of the organization and therefor I think that's one of the major, major stumbling blocks why organizations are not doing talent management in companies, and cost-driven.

Participant 7: And then I think the second thing is, we have few HR departments who can do evidence base talent management because they are numbers, and we no longer train HR or industrial psychologists to keep track of measurement.

SA History—political landscape (G = 3)

Participant 4: They don't want to understand it and I think also it's a culture of taking everything personal and the thing is, it's like I said is that.

Participant 4: And the thing is also we've got the Employment Equity Act but there are some guidelines also. I think but like I said, I think at this point of time and we're going to struggle for a couple of years still but that's with the political situation. But I think, where I'm positive.

Participant 7: I think we have absolutely, I think, our two primary problems. One is that we have a significant leadership problem, and what you need, you need leaders, what, that values talent, to do talent management and high potentials. And we don't have enough, in the private sector, more but we don't have enough leadership leaders.

Struggling economy (G = 2)

Participant 6: So what makes it more difficult is like the rand dollar prices. The commodity that you're in.

Participant 6: You've got commodity you know so some commodities would do very well and then the next moment it falls or you've got labour unrest.

4.7. Communication of high-potential status

Four codes were identified.

Important to manage expectations (G = 1)

Participant 8: And so you know we try to make sure that there's not an expectation that this job is going to be mine you know.

Open for all employees to know (G = 3)

Participant 9: Everyone knows. You know you are playing for the national team and you know you're not being selected for the national team, and you know that if you are on the national team you can be kicked out tomorrow. So it is open, it's transparent. So therefore people should know. You, the reason why companies keep it secret because they don't have the difficult, they don't want to have the difficult discussions with those which are not included.

Participant 4: You know like so I think communicate it why not? You're proud of these people and the thing is if they deserve to be there if you've taken them, it's also responsibility from the organisation's side, if you've taken them through a process and they're the high potential communicate it, because the thing is: they've earned it.

Participant 4: I will definitely communicate.

Status is confidentially shared with HiPos (G = 10)

Participant 1: No, no but we will, in the, in the, that's why we have these one on one so we are now busy formulating the, the developments plans, so that's its appropriate to what they want to do. So we have been, I think we have already passed about the 100 now. Of people that we had one on one. So say okay with his manager, right that is your manager, you have been identified, let have a look at your development plan, what is in your development plan, and shockingly everyone just had like compliance training as part of their development plans. You know, so now all of a sudden it's like so, it's, what exposure do you need to get, so it is not about training programmes.

Participant 2: Know you give the opportunity for everyone. Oh so, so you do not necessarily, so it is all D1 and up. But the top three blocks, they get told, you are in the top...

Participant 3: Should absolutely be a confidential approach.

Participant 3: …think it's healthy if it's not common knowledge. I think it's inevitable that some of the information will come out, and sometimes, you need tell a person that they're a high potential in order to retain them. They might have job offer on the table, and to give an indication of the companies identified, there was high potential.

Participant 3: it's a bad thing for company culture to make information on talent pools available because it communicates inclusion and exclusion. And if you believe in the fact that everyone has potential, you want to create an environment where everyone can show potential. So just because they haven't shown potential in this round of talent reviews, next year might be different.

Participant 3: So, ja, I think if it can be confidential, that's better but it's inevitable that some of that information will come out.

Participant 8: And so, when the line manager sits with their person from a performance review

process or from a talent review process or whatever the case, or development process we encourage people to say in a very nice and cautious way that they have been identified as a potential HiPo, we do have our eye on you from a development perspective you know. You need to think about what your career options are—let's have that conversation.

Participant 6: So I did get benchmarking exercises and the best practice is to share it but it depends on the way you share it.

Participant 6: So, we don't go to you and say, 'Liesel, you're high potential, we would like to invest in you' and so on. We would rather have a discussion and it's a controlled discussion with HR in there and the manager and we sit down and we say, 'Liesl, we're interested in your career, we would like to offer you some development opportunities, what's your career aspiration?' We have the conversation and then based on that we say, we don't promise promotion but we say we would like to develop your career, so it's the way we say it.

Participant 5: …would recommend communicating it. Saying you are, you've been identified as one of our high potentials, you are in this pool, this is what it means, these are our expectations kind of things. And we've had also, we've had a couple of cases where companies have come back saying; well, we've lost half of our HiPos…

The process is transparent (G = 2)

Participant 1: Transparency in die proses.

Participant 2: So, we always give back, that feedback and so far it has been a very transparent process and we have tried to keep it as transparent as that and, and I think it is very well received in the organisation. Obviously those that are in your left hand side blocks are not always happy.

THEME 5: INDICATORS OF HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

Theme 5 consists of two code groups. A number of code sub-groups were identified for the second code group as this group was complex.

- External indicators of high potential
- Internal indicators of high potential

- Ability to work with people
- Achievement and action oriented
- Career ambition
- Cognitive and thinking abilities
- Committed and engaged
- Emotional maturity
- Functional competence
- Learning agility
- Ability to manage others
- Personal impact
- Ethics and values

5.1. External indicators of high potential

Thirteen codes were identified and grouped together.

Age and gender also considered (G = 1)

Participant 6: We look at gender, ethnicity and we look at age. Reason being you can't spend that amount of time, money and resources on a 55 year old that's going to retire in three years.

BBBEE and affirmative action (G = 16)

Participant 1: Kyk, labour law is 'n challenge in Suid-Afrika, en dit is hoekom ons terug gegaan het na die, na die recruitment policy toe, om te sê, 'Okay, wat gaan ons nou change in die recruitment policy?' En dan is dit 'n hele konsultasie process om te sê talent management wil laat werk en ons hoef nou net mense aan te stel sonder om recruitment proses te volg en dan is daar mos nou sekere mense wat mos nou afspraak maak op poste so jy weet dit mos ons en dit is nou ons nou net deur hierdie proses gaan. So ek dink dit is die een challenge van 'n legislation wat dit, wat dit, op jou talent management en ek dink nog spesifiek Suid-Afrika is altyd, maar ek dink nie dis 'n probleem nie. Maar die hele affirmative active action is 'n komponent, dit is nie 'n probleem nie, want jou hele, dit is hoekom jy jou, jou feeding system reg dryf.

Participant 3: I think a tricky thing, and it's not necessarily a wrong thing but it is tricky to manage, is the fact that there is certain requirements placed on organisations to look at HDSA development. Specifically, also women in management roles and HDSA candidates across

the board in leadership positions, which does complicate matters in terms of how do you objectively review everyone and place everyone that's under reviewing to the different talent pools

Participant 3: That's just the reality and it is objective that organisations need to drive this representation but I think that's an element that's unique to South Africa, that talent managers do consider, have to constantly report on HDSA levels in the talent pools. Labour laws, not so much that I have experience with. [Unclear 00:35:36] I think that's about it that I can think of at the moment.

Participant 9: I think it is, I think we mustn't under-estimate the impact of affirmative action. I think that will be with us and we will always need to take into consideration that BEE will be almost a 4th leg or 3rd leg of a talent management process. So it will always, that's a South Africa reality, and I think if one can come up with a model performance/potential/on a third dimension of people something about BEE that will almost complete the picture. And then I think that's a very, so the reality of BEE and the fact that organizations often take decisions based on BEE-driven.

Participant 9: I mean, last year with one of the organisations we graded assessments, I mean, they invited, and it was specifically a young white guy and they invite him to the assessments. He was by far the strongest assessment. At the end of the day they just say sorry, we are only accepting black females. So I think it was very, very unfair against that chap to fly him all the way up from Cape Town to expose him to the process, to create that particular expectations where he wasn't in the run right from the beginning.

Participant 9: And I think from a talent management point of the approach and I'm going to use the word and say that I think we do a lot of bullshitting. 'Great, you're talent we're going to look after you and so on and so on,' and you'll never get the position because BEE is a strong point.

Participant 4: Not to take a cherry-picking approach, you know, is very difficult, you know.

Participant 6: Extremely difficult because that's one thing that you can note. Your white talent tends to…they know they're not wanted and they know they're not going to be promoted so we've put limited places for white people to be promoted and the moment they find something better out in overseas or in another smaller company where it doesn't matter, they will jump ship and go.

Participant 6: You're an Indian here, you've got a ticket you're working your butt off but there's no possibility for you to get anywhere with your career. They're going to, they're going to move.

Participant 6: And your license demand stipulates that you've got to have a BBBEE score of five or higher, let's say. We're not even on an eight so how do you get there? You've got to have a certain number of people on a certain level.

Participant 6: They prescribe it. So it's not like you're sitting there and thinking ahh I should appoint more black than whites. You have specific targets and let me tell you, its specified. Its white. Its coloured male/female, Indian male/female and its usually worked out for us for instance according to the economical active population of Mpumalanga so that population determines the target. For senior management its 70%, for middle management its 75% but for junior management its 85%.

Participant 6: You've have got too many black women, it subtracts. It sets the target specifically and if you stick to that your overall your DTI score goes up. If you point. For instance today I had a session for finance. So finance were like okay, they now appointed 2 coloured ladies. They're very impressive themselves they're triple BEE. Then I put it into the calculator for them. Look at our data in the business, pull it from SAP, put it in the scores went down.

Participant 6: So, in that sense, also we use talent as a vehicle to achieve our triple BEE scores because if we don't do that, we lose our license to mines.

Participant 7: Watch transformation plays a role [unclear] because you can't necessarily have your mediocracy and we still believe [unclear] manager, a performance manager needs to be very strong [unclear] and you can't always do that but I Thinking in the past might have been worse, because you couldn't always get so much talent from specific groups of people. And I think it's different now.

Participant 7: We are the only country in the world where it is caught up in legislation, and the way it happens here.

Employees as well as critical positions are considered (G = 1)

Participant 1: So, it's a combination, so certain, so we do it at two levels right. So the Board will be very interested in succession at an executive level. So we will look at what the

succession looks like at the executive level, so group, South African, North America and because we organize according to regional model, with a small Head Office, right. So what does the succession look like in terms of those and it is just one level right, so if you say, let me use now an example Barry is the CEO for North America, so what does the succession look like for Barry and Barry's direct report. So we will do that. Then we have another group of people. That to say these people are somewhere in a business. They can be in cells, they can be engineering etc. but we need the Board to know that potentially these are the future lead team members that can, that can ...[intervened].

Hipo element—experience and exposure (G = 6)

Participant 9: So, therefore the model that we at TTSA utilise is we don't talk about performance we talk about backwards looking. So in other words what experiences do you have, what type of skills do you have got in place, what type of exposures did you have? For instance do you have ever managed people in a matrix organisation? Do you have geographical experience, have you managed people in a virtual organisation. When you speak to stakeholders what are you experience levels in terms of speaking to external/internal stakeholders on a high level? So there are different variations of the model. But where the confusion comes in is basically to say but we make a potential model out of the nine-blocks matrix, and the original intent was a performance model because he wanted to out-manage poor performers.

Participant 6: Sometimes, experience makes up for the cognitive ability.

Participant 6: So, we will say have you managed let's say managers, superintendents and specialists for a period of three to five years. Because you can manage them for two weeks and that man can help you.

Participant 7: The second is, and I think it's the other, maybe just a side note, the role that experience plays within the concept of potential. The other says, see Drotterts, Drottert's argument is that psychometric tests are actually nonsense, and I think it's just an American model that says, you're ready to do the next job when you start to do the next job.

Hipo element—stakeholder management (G = 1)

Participant 6: Then stakeholder management so that's your customers and your stakeholders.

Not job performance but past experience is important (G = 2)

Participant 9: So therefore the model that we at TTSA utilise is we don't talk about performance we talk about backwards looking. So in other words what experiences do you have, what type of skills do you have got in place, what type of exposures did you have? For instance do you have ever managed people in a matrix organisation? Do you have geographical experience, have you managed people in a virtual organisation. When you speak to stakeholders what are you experience levels in terms of speaking to external/internal stakeholders on a high level? So there are different variations of the model. But where the confusion comes in is basically to say but we make a potential model out of the nine-blocks matrix, and the original intent was a performance model because he wanted to out-manage poor performers.

Participant 7: The second is, and I think it's the other, maybe just a side note, the role that experience plays within the concept of potential.

Performance as indicator of high potential (G = 18)

Participant 2: It is done through the forums and it is also in terms of the performance management people. We want to start moving towards team assessments.

Participant 2: But other than that, a lot of, and if you look at people and organisations, a lot of where people get to is perceptions based. Yes they have to deliver at the end of the day but the fact that you know you get isolated as someone is someone's perception and perceptions are closest to reality.

Participant 2: No it's normally obviously at the initial stage when we select and then if they do come out as a high performer, then we will do development assessments

Participant 2: Whether you have potential or not, performance is the first thing we look at… That's right.

Participant 3: They can still fulfil, and then performance obviously looks at solid figures from performance management scores.

Participant 3: I would first look at the way that that person is performing in their current job, are they fulfilling the roles and the responsibility of their job fully, are they exceeding it already.

Participant 8: On their own experiences and then what we also do is I've also asked the guys to kind of align that to our performance management process.

Participant 8: their performance, from a performance perspective their performance is superior on a consistent basis, they get seconded to special projects.

Participant 9: and then you also now need to start looking at performance. So do they, have they demonstrated their professional skills, have they achieved their targets in the organization and are they actually doing things which are expected from people already on a higher level.

Participant 6: Yes, X is the actual performance as we rated it in that session.

Participant 5: And it also seems to be very much, who are the people that live and breathe the organisation.

Participant 5: So you have, there is a view between high performers are not necessarily high potential. But often organisations view their high performers as high potential.

Participant 5: Not necessarily so. So, research done by [indistinct 00:17:30] shows that typically it's around one in seven of your high performers are actually high potential.

Participant 5: Depending on your definition of high potential. And you know, the argument is that's why almost half of leadership transitions often fail. It's because you've used high performance as a proxy.

Participant 5: I could say training opportunities, strict assignments, and some things like that. We've seen manager nomination doesn't work very effectively, because going back to that high performing, high performance as a proxy for high potential. And managers don't always get that balance between the person is performing well know but doesn't have the potential to perform in the future.

Participant 7: He is going to bring value to me, is that he will be a good performer.

Potential for next hierarchical level—HiPo element (G = 2)

Participant 3: Potential is, if you have to isolate what it's about, it's about looking forward and looking into career growth and career possibilities, can this person function at a level higher than they already are functioning in.

Participant 9: Third area is how do you, do you demonstrate already the type of skills, knowledge and experience insights for a more senior role? So, can you add value already on what you typically expect from a person on a more senior level?

Potential to move up two levels in the next five years (G = 4)

Participant 8: And so, from a HiPo perspective what we said is that this person has the potential to move up two levels in the next five years.

Participant 8: So, has very much to do with the hierarchical growth in the organisation.

Participant 9: So, who are the people that you can promote by tomorrow or two, three, or in a year's time, there you need to have your typical career interviews, backwards reflecting, what are the careers all about?

Readiness—HiPo elements (G = 2)

Participant 3: Whether they're high potential or not is how ready are they to act in their manager's role. If tomorrow, the manager would go on leave, would they be able to step in and manage that role. So that would indicate that they already have skill and knowledge on the next level.

Successor or not and readiness (G = 1)

Participant 6: So, we kept it simple we said successor or not and readiness.

Team performance (G = 1)

Participant 2: We want to move away from individual performance rating or have the hybrid of individual versus teams. Because the thinking is that teams, if they have a common goal they are probably going to get high productivity versus a specialist. That is just an individual that can perform. So we are starting to pilot some of that work.

Value of the person is informed by performance (G = 1)

Participant 1: Is this a person that is valuable to the company. Is this person, so you go and I think that is being informed by the performance of the individual, you know and we get feedback.

5.2. Internal indicators of high performance

A total of 67 codes were identified. These codes were grouped in sub-groups for the purpose of the development of the questionnaire. The codes, grouped according to sub-code groups as explained in Chapter 5, and then in alphabetical order are listed below.

5.2.1. Ability to work with people

Ability to build relationships (G = 1)

Participant 2: Because you can be an introvert or an extrovert but you can still build relationships.

Ability to network (G = 4)

Participant 9: Another very important component for me is in terms of networking—to be able to network, to work in a network related type of organization because everything just becomes more virtual and virtual.

Participant 9: There are two things for me. You may not always get along with people but you may have a good network. So you know who you can ask and who you need to work together.

Can energise others (G = 1)

Participant 4: It's also for me a person who can energize you know, like people around them.

Can influence others positively (G = 1)

Participant 4: Influence others positively.

Can work well as part of a team (1)

Participant 7: So, if someone walks in here and is ashamed and does not like to talk, or they are not up for work, or they are not doing what they say they are going to do, or they are disruptive in the team and they are struggling to Understand what is going on, I would not necessarily describe it as potential but it is sort of basically the basics.

Can work with people (2)

Participant 4: …but also be able to work on a team.

Participant 6: …who can work with people.

Caring (1)

Participant 6: And they all said Alex Cronje, most of them and that's the guy that I work with on the projects. And I said why and then they would always say he knows us, he knows our children, he knows that each and every person as an individual.

Collaborative (G = 2)

Participant 5: So, from a relational perspective; supportive, collaborative.

Participant 5: Supporting team, or you know, being more a senior someone, more junior, someone from a completely different division reaching out saying; I would love to get more into my base, my world, the research and development space that you're working in, how could I, how would I go about doing that? What would I need to do, what would it look like? And going well cool, let's chat, I don't know you from a bar of soap but let's have a coffee and go, well, this is what the work we do typically looks like. This is the kind of qualifications and qualities we look for, for people who are becoming more of a researcher.

Interpersonal skills (G = 3)

Participant 2: Then you probably would get someone that is an extremely good relationship builder. So they can collaborate, they can bring solutions together, they can partner with whoever, so they have the interpersonal skill of just making it work almost.

Participant 4: and like also how do you inter-act, inter-personal relationships and all those other things that I've listed—I can work with that.

Participant 6: …knowing your people, really knowing the difference between your people and how to motivate them differently.

Is nice to other people (G = 1)

Participant 7: He must be nice to other people, you know you're looking for him.

Likes to engage with others (G = 4)

Participant 3: Social interaction, to what extent do they have good working relationships, are they diligent in working together in a team, do they deliver what's required by their colleagues etc.

Participant 3: The way that they interact with people.

Participant 7: So, if someone walks in here and is ashamed and does not like to talk, or they are not up for work, or they are not doing what they say they are going to do, or they are disruptive in the team and they are struggling to Understand what is going on, I would not necessarily describe it as potential but it is sort of basically the basics.

Social intelligence (G = 1)

Participant 4: It's a person who's got social intelligence.

Willing to help others (G = 1)

Participant 7: It's about problem solving, how you influence others, how do you change and deal with stress and get to the point and help others with that stuff, and how do you make sure you deliver, conscientiousness. And what's in it in it is personality and ability and a little motivational type of good and engagement and so on. Now, if you ask me potential for what, then I can say but this, here is a subset of behaviours that will tell me if someone is going to be good at a certain post. I can now go out of figures, which of these things is important so that you can function in that place I need you.

5.2.2. Achievement and action oriented

Able to work independently (G = 2)

Participant 4: For me it's a person who is innovative, who can work on their own, who can come up with new ideas, who can be creative, who have self-confidence and who I can leave alone who can go on on their own.

Participant 4: So, for its yes, being able to work independently.

Achievement orientation and goal focussed (G = 5)

Participant 9: The second component is do you achieve targets. So from a target point of view do you achieve your targets? So typical, do you achieve your KPAs and they are for me

on 3 levels it’s your individual KPA—so your KPA within your role and each person should have KPAs for their role. Then there’s how do you achieve your team objectives? How do you work together, collaborate in your team, add to your team, support your team?

Participant 7: The second factor is, you reach the goals of yourself, you reach your goals, you reach, I can send you the model but you achieve your goals, you reach the team's goals.

Participant 7: Is there a basic achievement orientation?

Can do attitude (G = 5)

Participant 1: But it is an attitude, it is an attitude of ok, lest do something. Not to shy away from action but to go ahead, speak to people.

Participant 1: Yes, they do have a presence and they go and do whatever they have to.

Participant 4: For me it’s a person who is innovative, who can work on their own, who can come up with new ideas, who can be creative, who have self-confidence and who I can leave alone who can go on on their own.

Commitment (G = 1)

Participant 5: Often you see the longer hours but I think we need to move away from hours as a proxy for commitment, and, ja, so another aspect would be commitment.

Conscientiousness (G = 2)

Participant 7: Then the guy must arrive for work, so he must, you know be conscientious and so on.

Participant 7: It's about problem solving, how you influence others, how do you change and deal with stress and get to the point and help others with that stuff, and how do you make sure you deliver, conscientiousness. And what's in it in it is personality and ability and a little motivational type of good and engagement and so on. Now, if you ask me potential for what, then I can say but this, here is a subset of behaviours that will tell me if someone is going to be good at a certain post. I can now go out of figures, which of these things is important so that you can function in that place I need you.

Decision making (G = 1)

Participant 6: Ability to make a decision

High achiever (G = 2)

Participant 2: It's probably high impact, high value, high achievers probably.

High paced, high activity (G = 2)

Participant 8: …got a lot of energy, don't know what to call that…

Participant 5: So, there it's typically things that you see as [indistinct 00:27:27] activity. You know, working, I have lots of stuff to do, high paced and that.

High work ethic (G = 1)

Participant 4: Okay it's a person who's got a high work ethic…

Immersion in the job—effort (G = 1)

Participant 5: And that's coloured by a certain thing. So, one of the other motivational drivers is emersion, you know, long hours, you know, work becoming live, and things like that.

Initiating action (G = 3)

Participant 3: Initiating action.

Participant 8: Action-orientated.

Participant 7: Task orientation.

Pro-active (G = 1)

Participant 8: They're also pro-active.

Problem solving (G = 5)

Participant 7: I always say, the guy must be able to solve a problem, there must be some brain cells.

Participant 7: It's about problem solving, how you influence others, how do you change and deal with stress and get to the point and help others with that stuff,

Want to do more than expected (G = 1)

Participant 7: You know, and then show me that you want to do a little more than just what I told you.

Willing to go the extra mile—do better (G = 3)

Participant 8: They put their hand up, they're willing to go the extra mile on a consistent basis.

Participant 5: Seeking ways to promote the organization. Seeking ways to you know, to improve, to better…

Participant 5: Yeah, yeah, ja, say like an example might be you know, on a sort of a department group or something, an email; here's a very interesting article about something, I think it could be great if we looked at how we could incorporate this into our particular practice.

5.2.3. Career ambition

Ability to rise through the ranks (G = 1)

Participant 5: Ability...have they got the ability to function, to do what's required … to proceed through the ranks.

Aspiration and ambition (G = 2)

Participant 5: That's okay, I think also just sort of, I'm trying to think for a different word for aspiration but striving so, and example.

Career-driven (1)

Participant 7: Now they define potential as a career driven person, in other words, the old will progress. He has general potential in that sense, he is with it.

Stretch career goals (G = 2)

Participant 5: From an aspirational aspect; are they likely to set themselves stretching career goals.

Participant 5: Are they likely to seize opportunities to advance towards those goals?

5.2.4. Cognitive and thinking abilities

Ability to analyse information (G = 2)

Participant 9: Then I think it's a quite, very important component for me lies in terms of ability to deal with information. And that's not conceptual. That's more from an analysis point of view because we deal with such a lot of information that one really must have the capability to sift through...

Participant 9: Sift through information. Thinking about that information, be able to analyse the information, be able to just you know, what are the important pieces of information that you need react on and that you need to respond on.

Ability: Reasoning/numerical/verbal (G = 2)

Participant 6: So, in the reviews we firstly check every person. So, we will go through the whole list and say what do you think about this school? In there firstly we check their abilities. So, if we have ability information about the person…

Participant 6: I will do it for the person. So, we look at their abilities.

Ability to deal with complex environment (G = 1)

Participant 6: …ability to handle complexity.

Business acumen (G = 1)

Participant 6: And then, lastly, we have business acumen.

Cognitive ability (5)

Participant 3: Cognitive capability.

Participant 3: And capability can be defined as your ability to apply judgement and make good decisions or make effective decisions in increasingly unfamiliar environments and complexity. So that's obviously critical to identify where the person is, has the cognitive capability to work in high levels of complexity…

Participant 9: Potential, for me, are more your dispositions, which is very, very much based on your conceptual capability so in other words the amount of grey matters that you have got.

Participant 9: Cognitive but not typical ability assessments. So ability assessments is more a fit towards the role. You need, you are in a financial position so therefore you need to have strong numerical capabilities so it becomes a fit for the role. If you're not in a financial position and you don't have numerical capabilities it's fine. So underlying conceptual capabilities rather for me is important so possibly or typically your level of complexity your reasoning with a level of complexity. CPA, CPP whatever the case may be.

Participant 7: But generally, if you can't do more than one thing at a time, now it's both a cognitive feature but it's also a personality dimension, of guys who like to be busy.

Intellectual capacity (G = 4)

Participant 6: Very much, it's about intellectual capacity.

Participant 6: Intellectual capability. It's about your ability to deal with no that's true and I Liesel, I have got scientific in my whole in business, not just my successors. The whole business through capability assessments and we did this whole process with them. I can give you scientific proof that people with low cognitive capability, low performance in complex situations. It's too complex.

Participant 7: I always say, the guy must be able to solve a problem, there must be some brain cells.

Participant 7: …want to explain to you once and then get on with it.

Judgement (G = 2)

Participant 3: Judgement is a big psychological construct.

Participant 3: So we said judgment is your ability to make decisions based on intuition, and that links back to a strategic capability also. People that apply good judgement, good logical reasoning traditionally are good strategically. And also, comfort, to be comfortable to work with less structure. So operational levels in an organisation deal with a lot of structure.

Logical reasoning (G = 1)

Participant 3: So, perhaps a little bit less detail-inclined, logical reasoning is very important in that sense.

Multitasking (G = 2)

Participant 7: So, the ability to do more than one thing at a time.

Participant 7: But generally, if you can't do more than one thing at a time, now it's both a cognitive feature but it's also a personality dimension, of guys who like to be busy.

Sharp—does not struggle to understand (G = 2)

Participant 7: So, if someone walks in here and is ashamed and does not like to talk, or they are not up for work, or they are not doing what they say they are going to do, or they are disruptive in the team and they are struggling to Understand what is going on, I would not necessarily describe it as potential but it is sort of basically the basics.

Strategic thinking (G = 3)

Participant 2: Another high potential is someone that leads with vision. Can share even if they are at a foreman level but they can share the goals or the objectives, they can resonate what the vision of the organisation is, without you telling them too much.

Participant 3: Strategic capability or strategic competence, in other words, to make decisions based on very little information and to think big picture.

Verbal ability—persuasiveness (G = 2)

Participant 3: …ability to verbalise a verbal adaptation is very important.

Participant 7: And then he must be able to open his mouth, you know, be a bit pervasive and so on. So, these are the basics.

5.2.5. Committed and engaged

Committed—wants to be here (G = 1)

Participant 7: The features are something like, man understand the guy, you know, I can see he thinks a little, you know. And it's not a bit, the old one, he gets it. The old one wants to be

here. He is committed, he wants to be here and he does his thing, and he is committed to doing so. And he's nice to work with. And in terms of leadership. He can, you know, make decisions and give direction, if I'm just the owner, and I think there is that type of trait that's just for everyone. The guy must be able to grow and be smart. At the end of the day, I think you know, something like action oriented, is actually achievement orientation.

Energised by motivating factors in senior roles (G = 1)

Participant 5: Coupled with motivation to see whether, would they basically engage, sorry, energized by the kinds of motivators or opportunities for motivation that you get in your senior roles.

Engaged (G = 5)

Participant 5: And the third element is engagement. Which is, you know, when they get there are they still going to be with the organisation.

Participant 5: And then the engagement piece comes in terms of are they currently engaged and motivated working within the organization. And can we keep them engaged and motivated so that we can retain them.

Participant 5: And again, work that we did showed, I think almost two thirds of highly engaged people, in the HiPo group, were more likely to, had a high intention to stay, compared to about a quarter of the low engaged people.

Participant 7: Is this someone who is engaged.

Interested in Leadership (G = 1)

Participant 3: interest also plays a role. If a person isn't interested in managing people, that's fine. Then they likely shouldn't be included in the high-potential group.

5.2.6. Emotional maturity

Adaptability flexibility (G = 1)

Participant 9: Conceptually it's in terms of a person's capability to function on levels of complexity. So I think that for me is a very strong differentiator. If I look at now personality

constraints there I see to move upwards or to show high levels of them, potential its actually in terms of adaptability and flexibility because we know we work in a very agile environment.

Cultural intelligence (G = 1)

Participant 4: It's a person who's got cultural intelligence for example embrace the cultural differences of other people.

Emotional stability (G = 1)

Participant 7: You're looking for emotionally stability and so on.

EQ (G = 1)

Participant 3: I think intra-personal awareness, your own emotions, inter-personal awareness, to understand others' emotions. And then also empathy, I think, is very important in leadership.

5.2.7. Functional competence

Functional competence (G = 5)

Participant 3: The one would be technical and functional competence. In other words, the discipline the individual is working in, to what extent are they competent in their technical functional knowledge.

Participant 8: They are seen as a subject-matter expert.

Participant 9: And there are three things. The first thing is, and I'll just briefly mention it, to what extent do you demonstrate your professional capabilities? Because irrespective of what you do, you do have a professional skill. So do you apply your specialist knowledge and experience?... So that's professional experience.

Participant 7: The one is backward-looking. You need to know, if you want to work here, you must be an industrial psychologist. You can't hire an engineer here. So, and the one fit definition of potential I must say but you are not potential for our business, because you are, you do not fit, the backward look and good.

Technical skill (G = 2)

Participant 6: The next thing you look at is technical skills, so are you okay in terms of how do you fare in terms of your technical skills, comments on that.

Participant 7: But there is this kind of stuff that we call technical competence. Now if you look at TTS as an organization, then at top management level you still need to be fairly large proportion of your competencies should be technical skills, and this is also pretty low in the business.

5.2.8. Learning agility

Growth mindset (G = 3)

Participant 5: To say, you know, comfortable is not good enough, comfortable is fine but what more. So that, I think, drive, thirst for learning, thirst for knowledge, how can we improve, you know?

Participant 5: But someone, I would sometimes rather take someone who's open to learn, take on board feedback, than someone who's supremely confident.

Participant 7: But now, above that, sit down, okay but have the guy a little bit, and we're talking about growth potential. So, is he open to learning?

Learning agility (G = 4)

Participant 3: …is your approach to learning. That also feeds into strategic competence but specifically, theoretical learning, not practical. So some people have to do something in order to learn but a person's capability to listen to something or to read something and to be able to assimilate that and to apply it is correlated to strategic competence also.

Participant 4: I can also say, it's a person who wants to learn and wants to acquire new knowledge.

Participant 4: If you don't, what I'll be looking for is like do you have a learning attitude?

Questioning nature (G = 1)

Participant 4: It's a person who questions everything who doesn't just accept the status quo.

5.2.9. Ability to manage others

Comfortable with managerial control (G = 1)

Participant 5: Are they comfortable in the managerial leadership, are they comfortable being in control, taking control? Those sorts of behaviours that you're looking for.

Make decisions and give direction (G = 1)

Participant 7: The features are something like, man understand the guy, you know, I can see he thinks a little, you know. And it's not a bit, the old one, he gets it. The old one wants to be here. He is committed, he wants to be here and he does his thing, and he is committed to doing so. And he's nice to work with. And in terms of leadership. He can, you know, make decisions and give direction, if I'm just the owner, and I think there is that type of trait that's just for everyone. The guy must be able to grow and be smart. At the end of the day, I think you know, something like action oriented, is actually achievement orientation.

Organised (G = 1)

Participant 6: …organised type of person.

Plan, organise, control (G = 1)

Participant 6: Ability to plan and organize and even on higher levels. I've seen there many unstructured managers fail because they don't have control. I'm not saying you should be detail focused. I'm just saying that you must have some kind of control and be able to put a system or a procedure or something in place.

5.2.10. Personal impact

Ability to create rapport with others (G = 1)

Participant 2: But do I have the rapport.

Displays a positive presence but not necessarily extroverted (G = 2)

Participant 1: And a lot of the time it is not the talkative people. Take a guy like Nelson, Nelson is a typical scientist right...but he still has a presence.

Personal impact (G = 1)

Participant 2: It's probably high impact, high value, high achievers probably.

Self-confidence (G = 1)

Participant 7: So if someone walks in here and is ashamed and does not like to talk, or they are not up for work, or they are not doing what they say they are going to do, or they are disruptive in the team and they are struggling to Understand what is going on, I would not necessarily describe it as potential but it is sort of basically the basics.

5.2.11. Ethics and values

Ethical, principled, trustworthy (G = 3)

Participant 4: It's also for me a person who's got solid values and principles, it's a person that I can trust and phew I said a lot.

Participant 6: And they all said Alex Cronje, most of them and that's the guy that I work with on the projects. And I said why and then they would always say he knows us, he knows our children, he knows that each and every person as an individual. He is fair, his word is his word. He doesn't backtrack when the more important person comes to the scene. He sticks with his word. He sticks to his word. He is brave enough to stand up for his people.

Participant 6: It's a mature value driven, person.

Living the values (G = 2)

Participant 2: Do I live the values of the organisation, do I live the culture of the organisation?

Participant 3: …are they embodying the values of the organisation.