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University of Cape Town



School of Management Studies

**TALENT MANAGEMENT VERSUS STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT. A  
CASE OF EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?**

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION:**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Signature

Date: 2013/05/09

Signed by candidate

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## **Abstract**

### **Context and Background**

Fundamental to Strategic Human Resource Management is that human capital significantly contributes to the organisations competitive advantage. Talent Management and all the attention it has been receiving appears to have taken over this role. The objective is to investigate the theoretical and practical differences between Talent Management and Strategic Human Resource Management and whether Talent Management in is in fact any different to Strategic Human Resource Management.

Qualitative research was utilised to explore Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management practises in industry through the experiences and opinions of expert Executive Talent Managers. In-depth face to face interviews and a semi-structured interview was utilised to obtain specific information about the perspective, views and social contexts of the research participants. The data was subjected to qualitative content analysis in order to make valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use.

Although defined differently by industry, there appears to be a common understanding of what Talent Management is in practise. Talent Management processes includes segmented typical Human Resources Management practises, processes, functions and share underlying business and strategic principles of Strategic Human Resources Management. Talent Management cannot be translated to competitive advantage without Strategic Human Resource practice which is viewed as an implementing agent for Talent Management.

Leaders and managers need to view Talent Management holistically and manage the employment life cycle of scarce skills by attracting, retaining and deploying talented individuals. Vital to the successful implementation of Talent Management is Top Management buy-in and related skills, whether the organisation is Talent Management ready and solid Human Resources infrastructure. Organisations can immensely benefit from Talent Management practices with optimally utilising Strategic Human Resources Management.

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## CHAPTER 1

### GLOBAL CONTEXT

#### 1.1 GLOBAL CONTEXT

Globalisation is defined as the accelerated movement of goods, services, capital, people and ideas across national borders (Chen, 2009). The phenomenon of globalisation arose due to the internationalisation of markets and cultures a millennium ago. It was identified as a central theme emanating from economic/financial, technological, political, education and labour market, social and environmental drivers that would change the way organisations operate (Eichinger & Ulrich, 1995).

How organisations operate and adapt against the backdrop of globalisation has since been informed by global business trends. Organisations should master technology, source and retain talent, operate in global market politics, operate in new markets, adapt to change faster, recognise new factors to maintain a competitive advantage and learn to compete globally (Eichinger & Ulrich, 1995).

In order to compete globally, business environment demands the workforce to be where their customers and business partners are so that they can react to problems and opportunities in an efficient and effective manner. As organisations become global players and expand operations into foreign countries, they seek to hire skilled people working in other firms (Elegbe, 2010). Tucker, Kao and Verma, (2005) however add that changes in birth-rates, retirement trends, loosened cultural norms, eased trade barriers, communication advances and the knowledge economy are producing a highly mobile and global workforce.

The impact of globalisation therefore has implications for how and when people work and the demographic, economic and societal shifts combined with technological advances are constantly changing the way people work and are managed (Fox, 2010). Tucker et al. (2005) agree that the guidelines for managing people are changing since globalisation is driving the most drastic workforce changes in decades creating a workforce that's more diverse, mobile, informed and in demand than ever before. Organisations have to find ways to operate and identify new factors to remain and maintain a competitive advantage.

A competitive advantage can be simply defined as anything that gives an organisation an edge over the competitors in its market. Organisations constantly need to seek competitive advantage; testing new practises, models and staying abreast with the latest trends. Wellins, Smith and Erker (2009) however discuss that most competitive advantages like technology, practices and processes can be adopted by competitors. Abraham (2011) states that in order to maintain a competitive advantage, organisations have looked at numerous sources of advantage. One common source recognised as a competitive advantage is talented individuals and those employees who have scarce skills.

Replicating a highly engaged workforce that possess high levels of talent and skills is near impossible and that the ability to hire, retain, deploy and engage talent is the only competitive advantage organisations truthfully possess (Wellins, et al., 2009). Meyer (2005) agrees and states that "... the quality of skills and talent is almost the only point of leverage that a firm has to create competitive advantage". Cheese, Thomas and Craig (2008, p. 9), offer a solution that "...the secret to sustained competitive success in the new economic world is to build a talent-powered organization that sustains and builds all the skills needed to compete".

Talent is "...the sum of a person's abilities... his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive" (McKinsey, 2008). According to Porter (2005) unique talents among employees may include superior performance, high productivity, flexibility, innovation and personal customer service and are examples of how employees can provide a critical ingredient and improve an organisations competitive position.

Elegbe (2010) however states that there is a low supply of employees with scarce skills and talent in a global labour market that has a high demand, particularly for knowledge workers and indicates that organisations are aggressively seeking the same kind of talent implementing a variety of strategies that attract and hire talent.

For many years the acquisition, retention and development of skills and talent have fallen within the ambit of Human Resources Management. Human Resources Management functions, practices and procedures should be utilised by organisations who are concerned with developing counter strategies to deal with external pull factors that attract talent and internal push factors that make talented employees leave (Elegbe, 2010).

A Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) survey however revealed that most Human Resources (HR) leaders are spending less than 25% of their time preparing for the workforce of the future and that few organisations believe that HR has the skills required to manage a diverse and global workforce (Tucker et al. 2005). The current recruitment drivers that enable firms to attract employees with scarce skills and hire Talent may therefore be insufficient to engage and retain these employees (Elegbe, 2010).

Munsamy et al. (2009) proposed that when an organisation is focused on the retention of talent and scarce skills the following factors are identified as vital

for organisations to retain skills and talent, i.e. development opportunities, allow for independent and flexibility to plan work, potential for growth in the industry and progressive leadership that allows for sharing in the profits of the firm and initiative. Additional factors include compensation and rewards, job security, training and development, supervisor support culture, work environment and organisation justice.

A global survey conducted by Deloitte Consulting (2011) offers similar insight into the forces that will drive the labour market over the next decade. Findings indicate that a lack of career progression, compensation, job security and trust in leadership are the leading factors that will result in the intention to leave and inability to retain employees with scarce skills. These are underlying functions and objectives of Strategic Human Resource Management as well as the most recently talked about Talent Management.

The emphasis on talent management practices represents a shift from more traditional human resource practices and Strategic Human Resource Management associated with competitive advantage to the direction of talent management specifically suited to the current dynamic global and competitive environment.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the theoretical and practical differences between Talent Management (TM) and Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM). The objective was to further investigate whether TM is in fact different from SHRM.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The rationale for the study is due to the growing popularity of Talent Management over a decade of debate and hype. Secondly, the review is important since there is "...a disturbing lack of clarity regarding the definition,

scope and overall goals of talent management” (Lewis & Heckman, 2006, p. 139).

Iles, Preece and Chuai (2010) raised a question as to whether the discourse of Talent Management will be the future of Human Resources or just old ideas re-packaged. This is a view which also prevails in the practitioner and academic literature.

Iles et al. (2010) state that there are instances where a popular management concept represent nothing more than old techniques that has been re-invented or re-discovered. Iles, et al. (2008) further agree that the connotations of Human Resources related concepts are not significantly distinct from each other and question whether this may be the case with Talent Management.

The term Talent Management is widely used, however in academic research; it is rather fragmented since it includes various aspects of Strategic Human Resources Management (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Bhatnagar, 2007). Cooke (2008) also noted limited academic literature and empirical research regarding what Talent and Talent Management is, whether it conceptualised in the literature and operationalised by practitioners and organisational practice. In addition he questions whether Talent Management possesses features which are in fact distinct from Human Resources Management (Cooke, 2008).

Research clearly identifies interchangeable practices and processes between Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) and Talent Management (TM). Lewis and Heckman (2006) identify Talent Management as a collection of typical Human Resources Management practices and suggests that SHRM is more credible in recruiting and retaining talent.

Collings and Mellahi (2009) states that the field of Talent Management is in its infancy and a significant degree of theoretical advancement is required.

Talent Management in industry has however and continues to experience popularity in a shorter period of time arguing equal and improved practices as an impetus to retain talent and improve an organisations competitive advantage.

Hence the interest as to whether there any difference in the theory and application of Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management?

The next chapter outlines the evolution of Human Resources to Strategic Human Resources Management. It entails the definitions, functions, processes and underlying principles that establish Strategic Human Resources as a discipline within industry and academia. The chapter further discusses Talent and Talent management definitions, practices and advancement, if any, in industry and academia. The purpose of the chapter to highlight similarities and/or differences between Strategic Human Resources Management and Talent Management which appears to have gained much attention and favour in industry.

## CHAPTER 2

### **2.1 EVOLUTION FROM HUMAN RESOURCES AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT TO STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

#### **2.1.1 Human Resources**

Schweyer, (2004) states that the Human Resources function and processes has evolved but continues to reshape employment relationships. Inyang (2010) describes the evolution of Human Resources in relation to organisation advancement from the industrial revolution to scientific management period, the human relations movement through to the present strategic business partner.

Inyang (2010) explains that over the past 100 years the reason for these changes in functions and processes was to suit the business environment, the changing political environment and economic pressure which have continuously added new dimensions to Human Resources, including new labels and designations. Currently, Strategic Human Resources Management appropriately describes the current global climate. However having witnessed the evolution of the Human Resources profession, it will be fitting to discuss that it originated and evolved from Personnel Management to Human Resources Management and then to Strategic Human Resources Management.

Personnel Management was defined as "...a responsibility of all those who manage people as well as being a description of the work of those who were employed as specialists" (British Institute of Personnel Management, 1963). Inyang (2010) highlights that the objective of Personnel Management was to ensure efficiency, justice, organisational development, enhance individual and collective contributions to organisational success.

The Personnel manager was responsible for employee's welfare at work, loyalty to employer, conformity to organisational and external cultures as well

as adjusting the organisation to the challenges of its environments. Whilst Personnel Management stood for fair terms and conditions at work, labour practice at the time was focused on organisational survival and not on the welfare of workers (Guest, 1990).

Personnel Management was stigmatised as transactional in nature concerned with providing administrative support in terms of staffing, recruitment, compensation and benefits (Rowden, 1999; and Wei, 2006). Ulrich (1997) agrees that the Human Resources function was an administrative function headed by personnel whose roles were essentially focused on cost control and administrative activities.

The administrative aspects of Personnel Management led to the emergence of a new generation of value-added core responsibility or functions of Human Resources. Some scholars consider a natural development of Personnel Management practices in the face of changing economic and business environment leading to the actual management of human resources, i.e. Human Resources Management (Armstrong 2004).

Human Resources Management is defined as a "...formal system for the management of people within the organization" (Bateman & Zeithaml, 1993, p. 346). For Inyang (2001, p. 8) Human Resources Management is simply an "...organization's activities, which are directed at attracting, developing and maintaining an effective workforce". Irshad (2010) stated that Human Resources Management practices in compensation and rewards, job security, training and development, supervisor support culture, work environment and organisation justice can help to reduce absenteeism, employee retention and better quality work. This translates to the transactional or administrative activities, i.e. training and development, staff motivation, compensation, staff commitment and quality performance, to be carried out effectively to influence the achievement of organisational objectives and achieve competitive advantage (Inynag, 2008).

Guest (1987) differentiates between Personnel management and Human Resources Management in terms of the psychological contract, locus of control, employee relations, organisation principles and policy goals. Human Resources Management favoured reciprocal commitment, flexibility and a decentralised administration. A further difference between Personnel Management and Human Resources Management is the role of the Human Resource manager that evolved from administrative to strategic, staffing to recruitment and selection, training to developing employees, evaluation to appraisal and managing relationships and change. (Analoui & Karami, 1999).

Boxall and Purcell (2008) state that achieving competitive advantage through Human Resources Management has evolved from managing employment relations, which emphasises that leveraging people's capabilities through a distinct set of employment policies, practices or programmes qualifies as Human Resources Management bundles. Human Resources Management bundles are defined as hard and soft Human Resources Management.

Hard Human Resources Management is principles underlying human relations and includes employee compliance, managers, tasks, quantitative output and the development of the organisation. Negotiation, flexibility, employment relation's rights and performance underlie soft Human Resources Management and are principles of personnel management. Guest (1987) believed that Human Resources Management favours mutual commitment, considers the organic nature of institution and that the policy goals of Human Resources Management aims for an adaptive work force leading to effectiveness.

Organisations could only be effective if there is strategic integration, functional flexibility, communication, adaptable organisational structure and high commitment and capacity. An all-encompassing quality Human Resources

Management considers selection, better rewards, planning and appraisal as leading to effectiveness (Beardwell, Holden & Claydon, 2004).

Human Resources Management have been encouraged to adopt an approach to their work and focus on adding value to organisations through its impact on better management of the workforce resulting in enhancing its own credibility (Martin, Gollan & Grigg, 2009). Sparrow, Hesketh, Hird, Marsh and Balain, (2008) argue that for Human Resources Management it must ensure that all of its activities are tied to supporting changes in the business model by helping design the organisational architecture and to make it work through, among other activities, appropriate future-proofing of talent management and employer branding, keys concern of theirs to gain credibility.

It is important to illustrate that Human Resources Management has frameworks and models that have been scientifically researched and provides empirical evidence for the discipline. Ivo (2006) highlights the Harvard, Michigan, Guest comparative model and the Choice model which have been utilised to support the impact of Human Resources Management to achieve an organisation that promotes efficiency and innovation.

The Harvard model was designed on the premise that employees had to be competent, cost-effective and congruent and is viewed as the soft aspect of Human Resources Management which strives toward employee commitment. Although the model is criticised for distorting cost minimisation and profit maximisation as it may be in conflict with the organisation's focus, the advantage of this system indicates that high employee commitment leads to better job performance (Ivo, 2006; Legge, 1995; Armstrong; 1987).

Two areas of the Harvard model focuses on the reward system that is organised to attract and motivate in order to retain employees (performance appraisal was not utilised as an evaluation tool) and the criteria for selection is based on competence that embraces the element of suitability and flexibility

utilising the best employee fit which lead to effectiveness (Beardwell et al, 2004).

The Michigan model reflects a hard Human Resources Management approach based on the principles of market performance and organisational growth (Ivo, 2006). It highlights that people should be considered as any other resource and obtained cheaply and exploited fully. Selection, appraisal, development and rewards were geared towards organisational performance. The disadvantages is that the model ignores environmental factors, stakeholder interests and the notion of strategic choice and the focus is not on current and future employment requirements but on business requirements (Cusworth & Franks, 1993).

The Guest comparative model is based on an integrated set of Human Resources Management practises which is believed to result in superior individual and organisational performance (Purcell, 1999). The model looks at various Human Resource practises for example training, selection, rewards which lead to quality outcomes, commitment and flexibility. It is envisaged that innovation will be achieved, productivity will increase and this will reduce conflict or customer complaints, absence and turnover. The model has been criticised due to the inconsistency of Human Resources Management used interchangeably with Human Resources policies (Ivo, 2006).

The Choice model is an integrated model for Human Resources Management and focuses on drivers that formulate Human Resources Management policies and frameworks. The Choice model refers to three sources i.e. the organisation, personal and external (Analoui, 2002). The personal sources include ideology, frame of reference, and awareness. The external sources include political, socio-economic and cultural. The organisation includes mission and strategy, technology, policies and procedures.

The Choice model allows that mission and strategy, technology, policies and procedures provide input to the Human Resources Management formulation that leads to Human Resources Management policies and frameworks, which cascade to line management with outcomes at individual, organisation and society level. This lends credibility to using Human Resources Management as an international function improving performance, quality and effectiveness. The model is seen to be effective as it allows the firm to meet the demands of stakeholders, the ability to analyse intervention environments, represents long term strategic Human Resources Management and employees are seen to have active roles. The Choice model supports flexible organic structures and an adaptive workforce which is linked to improving performance (Ivo, 2006). The criticism of the model is that it is reliant on senior management for effective Human Resources Management which may result that employees can be seen as costly.

Ivo (2006) highlights that whilst traditional Human Resources Management practices have had an impact on a firm's performance, effectiveness and bottom line, the paradigm shift to Strategic Human Resources Management paradigm offers a more value added responsibility since it integrates all traditional Human Resources practices with business strategy.

### **2.1.2 From Human Resources Management to Strategic Human Resources Management**

Inyang (2010) states that Strategic Human Resources Management is a systematic approach which involves the integration of human factors to the strategic business goals of the firm with the aim to contribute to competitive advantage. Armstrong and Urlis (2004, p.105) states that Strategic Human Resources Management is essentially "...concerned with the relationship between human resource management and strategic management of the firm". Following from this, Armstrong and Urlis (2004) defines Strategic Human Resources Management as "...the overall direction the organization wishes to pursue in order to achieve its goals through people".

The shift to Strategic Human Resources Management emphasises a change from operating efficiency of individual employees to managerial efficiency of the entire organisation. Ivo (2006) emphasise that Strategic Human Resources Management is a more flexible arrangement to manage employment relations with an emphasis to leverage people's capabilities that are critical to achieve a competitive advantage.

Boxell and Purcell (2008) states that Strategic Human Resources Management influences organisational performance and competitive advantage through Human Resources Management and that if the approach is the management of people, Strategic Human Resources Management seeks to ensure that the approach is planned and integrates organisational goals with policies and action sequences.

The emphasis is on a systematically planned Human Resource practice that has a positive impact on a firm's performance when properly implemented. Integration or fit is essential to Strategic Human Resources Management and implies the utilisation of Human Resource to enhance the attainment of organisational goals and leads to the competitiveness of an organisation.

Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, Andrade and Drake (2009) in a review covering thirty years, presents an evolutionary and sequential viewpoint on the development of Strategic Human Resources Management. They identify seven themes that influenced development of the field of Strategic Human Resources Management:

- Explaining contingency perspective and fit,
- Shifting from a focus on managing people to creating strategic contributions,
- Elaborating Human Resource system components and structure,
- Expanding the scope of Strategic Human Resources Management,
- Achieving Human Resource implementation and execution,

- Measuring outcomes of Strategic Human Resources Management, and
- Evaluating methodological issues.

According to Aswathappa (2004, p.39), "...the advent of Strategic Human Resources Management has brought forward the issues of linkages between the employer-employee relationships and wider organisational strategies and corporate objectives".

There still however appears to be challenges for Strategic Human Resources Management in terms of its definition and rank identity, the latter creating a problem for developing a systematic theory. Definitions of Strategic Human Resources Management vary and include aspects of the management of organisational change, elements of Human Resource planning and policies for business strategy and the coordination mechanism of organisations.

A common understanding among the various definitions is that Strategic Human Resources Management is based on the relationship between business strategy and Human Resource practices as well as the function to design and implement internal sets of policies and practices with the aim that human capital of a firm contributes to the achievement of the firm's objectives.

Collins and Mellahi (2009) state that Strategic Human Resources Management literature has pointed to the potential of Human Resources as a source of sustainable competitive advantage and argues that the resources and capabilities are directly related to the capabilities of talented individuals who make up the organisation's human capital pool (Cheese, Thomas & Craig 2008; Becker & Huselid, 2006; Schuler & Jackson, 2000). Seyedjavadin and Zadeh (2008) state that a firm's capabilities are built on combinations of abilities, behaviours and knowledge which human capital apply in their jobs that become for strategic goals.

### **2.1.3 Strategic Human Resources as Strategic Model**

Inyang (2010, p.20) indicates that strategy refers to "...the pattern of organizational moves and managerial techniques or approaches used to attain organization objectives and to pursue the organization's mission". In order for firms to achieve success and competitive advantage, they must choose and follow diverse approaches.

According to Armstrong, et al. (2004, p.108), the aim of the Resource Based View (RBV) is utilised to strengthen the strategic argument for Strategic Human Resources Management i.e. "...is to improve resource capability - achieving strategic fit between resources and opportunities, and obtaining added value from the effective deployment of resources". The RBV of the firm is that the resources are diverse and are unlikely to be identical. These resources if valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable can assist it to achieve sustained competitive advantage.

A vital factor for competitive advantage is the ability to differentiate what a business supplies to its customers from what is supplied by its competitors (Inyang, 2010). A distinction that can be achieved by having Human Resources strategies, policies and practices which when properly employed ensures that firms have a higher quality of people than its competitors, a firm is able to develop and nurture the unique intellectual capital, organisational learning is encouraged and the organisation is bound together by specific values and a culture which when combined ultimately provides its focus.

Becker and Huselid (1996) argue that it is the fit between the Human Resources architecture, strategic capabilities and business processes that implement strategy which is the basis of Human Resources contribution to competitive advantage.

Ulrich (1997) defines the strategic business partner model for Human Resources with four roles, that of Strategic Partner; Administrative Expert;

Employee Champion and Change Agent. The model was refined to include Employee Advocate; Human Capital Developer; Functional Expert; Strategic Partner; and Human Resources Leader. A further revision took into account the context and external world in which organisations operate and this shift in paradigm. Ulrich, Allen, Brockbank, Younger and Nyman (2009) concentrates more on Human Resources as working outside and being a more externally facing function that is more aware of the external marketplace, focusing on outcomes and capabilities rather than the internal Human Resources structure.

Vosburgh, (2007) on the other hand has taken an historical analysis leading to the proposition that the role of Human Resources has fundamentally shifted to that of internal consultant with a focus on TM. Illes, et al. (2008) state that throughout the history of the Human Resources profession, we have witnessed several concepts from Personnel Management to Strategic Human Resources Management, until the currently discussed concept of Talent Management and Talent.

## **2.2. TALENT MANAGEMENT**

### **2.2.1 Definition of Talent**

Talent can be categorised as key to economic resources leading to a source of creative power in science, technology, business, arts and culture, other activities or as an inherent trait (Solimano, 2006).

Talent refers to a natural endowment, ability, mental power, an aptitude, a natural capacity or a special gift (Elegbe, 2010). Talent is an individual's intrinsic gifts and includes an individual's ability to learn and grow (Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod 2001). Talent alone does not make the individual stand out and is the development and utilisation of Talent that enables individuals to achieve astonishing results (Elegbe, 2010). Cheese, Thomas and Craig (2008, p.46) write the following about talent "...traditional use of the word talent usually refers to a special gift. Talent has varying definitions,

however, commonly it is agreed, that talent is inborn and not acquired (Elegbe, 2010).

In business Talent has come to capture all the various attributes of employees. Essentially, Talent means the total of all experiences, knowledge, skills, and behaviours that a person has and brings to work. Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001) state that talent is "...the sum of a person's abilities, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive". Smart (2005) defines talent as "A players [that] are the top 10% of talent available in all salary levels, best of class." According to Iles, et al. (2010, p.5) talent is defined as "...those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance, either through immediate contribution or longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential". Talent therefore is used as an all-encompassing term to describe the human resources that organisations want to acquire, retain and develop in order to meet their business goals.

In the achievement of business goals processes every employee can pursue developmental experiences that contribute to the organisation by proactively taking on new responsibilities and getting involved in new activities. Such employees become an asset to the organisation and can be termed as talent.

Solimano (2006) states that talent can be an effective resource for production (e.g., information technology experts and engineers), a source of wealth creation (entrepreneurs), a source of knowledge (scientists), provide a social service (nurses, physicians) or cultural work (artists). Talented individuals usually have influence at national and international levels as they are well networked, shape ideas, values and beliefs. In turn, many of them are decision makers in the private sector or government (Solimano, 2006).

Based on various definitions, a challenge exists that assumes that individuals who have talent will perform exceptionally well in all situations. Talent should

therefore be explained with reference to the relationship between the environment and the individual. It is further suggested that talent be socially defined as it can best be understood through behaviour and should therefore be viewed in context relevant to a given situation or role. Kehinde (2012) states that although organisations may not define talent in a similar way, the confidence in talent and its influence on the bottom line are at the heart of Talent management.

### **2.2.2 Definition of Talent Management**

Talent management is defined as “...the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organization” (CIPD, 2009, p.2). Elegbe (2010) highlights a survey of 518 people that were conducted that included a review by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) in collaboration with the Institute for Corporate Productivity that adopted the following definition of Talent management:

*“... a holistic approach to optimizing human capital which enables an organization to drive short and long-term results by building culture, engagement, capability, and capacity through integrated talent acquisition, development, and deployment processes that are aligned to business goals”.*  
(Cited in Paradise, 2009, p.68)

Talent management is also described as an integrated and comprehensive approach to managing the abilities, competencies, skills, needs, concerns, careers, fears and expectations of the people that an organisation values and needs to make it great and highly effective. In addition it has also been described as an integrated system comprising systems to improve workforce planning, competency management, recruitment, on-boarding, employee engagement, performance management and strategic business objectives (Abrahams, 2011).

Talent management focuses on the ability to attract, develop and utilise employees to get superior business results. Darvish, Najafi and Zare (2012) agree that the future of most businesses is reliant on the acquisition, development and retention of talented people to create the leadership capacity and talent required to implement new strategies so as to meet current and future business needs.

Talent management includes individual and organisational development in response to a changing and multifaceted operating environment. It includes the creation and maintenance of a supportive and people oriented organisation culture. The focus of Talent management is on people who can contribute to organisational goals and all employees work towards achievement of organisational objectives.

The purpose of talent management is to ensure that a firm has the right talent with the right skills at the right time, yet what may have been the right skills in the past may not be all that is required in the future and many things change presenting new challenges that require new skills (Meyer, 2005). It is therefore vital that before organisations recruit or develop existing talent, it identifies the future strategy of the business and the competitive environment in order to identify what the success criteria will be for people in the future (Meyer, 2005).

Talent management is the added management process and opportunity that is made available to people in the organisation who are considered to be talent (Ashridge consulting, 2007; Likierman, 2007). For Duttagupta (2005, p.2) "...TM is a lot more than yet another HR process; the talent mind set is not just another Human Resources fad. In the broadest possible terms, Talent management is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organisation".

### **2.2.3 Strategic Talent Management**

Lepak and Shaw (2008) argue that Strategic Talent Management is meant to stimulate desired role behaviours among the organisation's talent pool and assist in realising the organisations' strategic objectives, i.e. financial and organisational performance linkage. Collings and Mellahi (2009, p.2) 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 development of a talent pool of high potential 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".

Collings and Mellahi (2009) provides a theoretical framework which identifies vital talent positions and suggests a top down approach with the objective to determine potential output or the potential for roles to contribute to a firm's strategic intent. Secondly, the framework suggests that talent pools must be developed in order for firms to utilise and fill the talent positions. Thirdly, the framework proposes creating a differentiated Human Resources architecture that acknowledges differential contributions made by specific individuals to the firm's performance. Finally, vital individual and firm outcomes are considered by introducing variables that mediate relations between input and output. Collings and Mellahi (2009) discuss motivation, organisational commitment and extra-role behaviours in order to predict the effects of Talent Management of the firm's overall performance.

### **2.2.4 Strategic Talent Management as a Strategic Model**

Lewis & Heckman (2006) discusses two models; namely the Resource Based View (RBV) and the Human Capital (HC) Bridge that overcome the criticism of a Strategic Talent Management strategic approach.

Scott-Jackson (2009) state that RBV is a highly influential theory of strategy with a view that organisations can achieve sustainable competitive advantage through owning and deploying valuable unique resources. This model has

also been used in Human Resources Management which could imply similarities between the two concepts.

The second model is the HC bridge framework which addresses decisions at three independent levels of analysis, namely 1) impact, 2) effectiveness and 3) efficiency whilst considering the firm's tools, practices and resources that affect those decisions.

Impact refers to the idea of identifying vital talent pools for jobs critical to yielding returns for strategic measures and goals. Effectiveness affects the behaviours of those identified in the talent pools and is the degree to which interventions affect these behaviours. It is noted that the interventions can address either the capacity of the talent or the aligned actions, i.e. processes and practices of talent. This is quite common in Human Resources as effectiveness measures target improvement of a capability or process. Lewis and Heckman (2006, p.147) state that efficiency "...is the measure of the amount of activity generated for the investment". The decision to invest in a given intervention because it is effective (it will drive the behaviors the organisation considers important) is independent of impact (the extent to which the intervention targets strategically important pivotal talent pools). The study by Lewis and Heckman (2006) identifies that for Talent Management to have long term contribution to Human Resources, it needs to be grounded in a strategic framework that guides developing system models, talent decisions and allows for reliable, valid and theoretical measures.

Boudreau and Ramstad (2007) outline the conditions under which analytics can yield valid organisational inferences with their "LAMP" framework. The framework outlines the Logic structure, Analytics, Measures, and Process considerations necessary to influence decisions around Talent.

Firstly, a logical structure or conceptual model linking talent pools to an organisation's competitive advantage is necessary to generate meaningful

questions regarding Talent. Analytics is viewed as a competence in general research skills rather statistical analysis, i.e. it draws on statistics and research design and includes standards and enhancing the analytical competencies of Human Resources throughout the organisation (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007). Measures include typical Human Resources measurements such as headcount and turnover rates (although the exacting measures may not increase the quality of talent decisions). Finally, the change management process is required for inferring measures and necessary to implement decisions.

Balancing attention to the four elements of the LAMP framework is crucial. Boudreau and Ramstad (2007) note that analytics is not a new business intelligence or a dashboard concept however that it is a limited conceptual model to guide analyses, or a process for implementing the results, the practitioner focus is to address the needs of talent decision-makers.

It is inadequate to attract the right talent and then not invest in the development of the talent. Developing talent involves more than sending people on courses or paying for their studies. Meyer (2005) states that since there are so many competing demands for talent, it is valuable to make a committed learning plan concrete in the same way as a performance contract. Personal development plans are informed by two processes. The performance management system will provide information on the skills acquisition necessary to better perform in a current role, while the talent system will provide learning to prepare people for other, future roles. Both are equally important (Meyer, 2005).

Recent research by Stahl, Bjorkman, Farndale, Morris, Stiles, Trevor, and Wright (2007) focuses on context in a study of Talent Management strategies in a sample of organisations renowned for their international scope, reputation, and long-term performance. This research suggests that companies that excel at Talent Management ensure internal consistency and

reinforce the practices they employ to attract, select, develop, evaluate and retain talent, as well as closely align those practices with the corporate culture, business strategy and long-term organisational goals.

A long term global business strategy requires alignment of people and Talent Management strategies. Senior business managers with talent specialists need to be identified and thereafter firms need to expand their talent pool. It is suggested that firms implement development programs to accommodate future leaders based on levels of experience and seniority and advice that firms have tailor made solutions to retain its talent through the Employee Value Proposition (EVP). The study by Stahl et al. (2007) reveals that leading companies have a Talent Management process with multiple owners including the CEO, Managers (at all levels) and Human Resources Practitioners.

More recently, companies have moved away from looking at Talent Management initiatives on an individual basis and instead are aligning multiple processes with strategic plans. The new approach, known as Integrated Talent Management (ITM), treats talent management processes as a system of interrelated parts that helps companies to strategically leverage talent. By distinguishing the interconnected nature of Talent Management, companies are able to better develop, promote, and retain their talent to meet current and future business needs. ITM initiatives include adjusting to changing workforce demographics, build bench strength, build talent pipeline, create a consistent message around talent, create a performance-based culture, identify and develop leadership talent to place people in the right jobs at the right time. When creating an ITM strategy, companies evaluate their human capital and determine which aspects of Human Resources will have the greatest impact on achieving talent and business goals (Hughes & Qutob, 2010).

### **2.2.5 Conclusion**

The trend for global attraction and retention is increasing at an alarming rate and a concern around future scarce skills is intensified. In order to operate as a global organisation or retain local talent, global strategies and practices are required in order to compete for talented individuals. The study therefore explores how practitioners define Talent, Talent Management and/or Strategic Human Resources Management in practise as well as the importance of each discipline in the business and global context.

The literature review provides research based evidence and insight into Strategic Human Resources Management whilst Strategic Talent Management has limited empirical research and one may ask why all the attention on Strategic Talent Management. Surely if incorporated and optimally utilised, Strategic Human Resources Management offers the same objectives. The study will explore whether there are differences on how Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management is conceptualised in academic literature and by practitioners, the factors that influence the implementation of Talent Management and or Strategic Human Resources Management as well as challenges experienced for implementation by both disciplines.

Strong research based evidence exist that suggests that Strategic Human Resources Management is more credible in recruiting and retaining talent, yet Talent Management in industry has experienced popularity in a shorter period of time arguing equal and improved practices as an impetus to retain talent and improve an organisations competitive advantage. The study will explore whether Talent Management possesses features which are distinct from Strategic Human Resources Management, i.e. processes, roles and skills of Human Resources and Line Managers. In addition, how effective the overall Human Resources function is in implementing Talent Management in practise.

Research clearly identifies interchangeable practices and processes between Strategic Human Resources Management and Talent Management. Organisations must however have a congruent approach as to which strategy

will best suit their environment in order to retain talent and reduce the intention of employees to leave. The study will also explore how organisations identify, develop and retain talented employees in practise to understand whether there are differences in practices and processes between Strategic Human Resources Management and Talent Management.

The next chapter describes the research design, the technique and measuring instrument utilised during the study in order to better answer and understand the differences and or similarities between Talent management and Strategic Human Resources Management in practise. The chapter outlines the participants selected as well as the procedure that was followed to analyse and interpret the data.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

Due to the already confusing and interchangeable definitions of Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources in industry and among academics, the purpose of the study was to investigate the theoretical and practical differences between Strategic Human Resources Management and Talent Management.

The research design, procedure and data analysis were carefully considered and selected to ensure that it explores Talent Management and optimally achieves the objective of the study, i.e. highlight differences or similarities between Strategic Human Resources Management and Talent Management. The participants were purposefully sampled to ensure that their experiences and reality of Talent management in practise be explored.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design utilised was exploratory and qualitative in nature. The purpose of utilising explorative research was to investigate a relatively unknown research area in order to gain new insight into the phenomenon being studied (Malterud, 2001).

Qualitative research was chosen as it sought to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the research participants chosen. The intention was to gather opinions of experts or participants of talent management and strategic human resources management. It was especially effective in obtaining specific information about the values, opinions, behaviour's, and social contexts of the research participants. The data collected in a qualitative study comprises more than words and includes attitudes, feelings, vocal and facial expressions and behaviors of the phenomenon being investigated.

A qualitative technique was further selected because of the view that research participants were knowledgeable about their situations and would best describe and verbalise their experiences through conversation (Groenewald, 2004). This is unlikely to be the result of quantitative methods which maps data numerically in order to analyse them statistically.

A further advantage for having used qualitative research is that it resulted in additional data that could only be obtained by asking additional questions to further probe answers and to accommodate the exploratory nature of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The approach encouraged the kind of flexibility which allowed the researcher an opportunity to change a line of inquiry and move in new directions for more information and a better understanding of relevant data to be acquired (Blumer, 1969).

Qualitative research was also used since inductive reasoning could be used to generate ideas from data obtained as opposed to the quantitative approach which employs deductive reasoning in order to confirm a hypothesis (Naoum, 1999). Anderson (2004) suggested that an inductive approach would be more appropriate since existing theories may not reflect the true perceptions, views, experiences and interpretations of people. In addition, there is a smoother transition from data analysis to interpretation.

Whilst qualitative research may be considered subjective in nature, the objective of the method and data collected included empirical evidence, values, meanings and experiences (Longwe, 2010).

The study utilised an in-depth face to face interview technique with research participants who met certain criteria which is discussed in the next section. The in-depth interview was an authoritative means for uncovering the experience of the research participant and a powerful tool for uncovering knowledge (Broom, 2005). An in-depth interview was optimal for collecting data on participants' perspectives and experiences and was chosen as an interpretative approach was adopted for the study. Lofland and Lofland (1995)

suggested that face-to-face interaction would be the most complete technique available to explore the thoughts and perceptions of individuals.

More information is typically obtained from in-depth face to face interviews than from, as an example, surveys. The objective of the study was not just to look at key words, structures and summarises of verbal statements of the data (White & Marsh, 2006). In-depth face to face interviews allowed this study to explicitly consider individual cases and special characteristics (White & Marsh, 2006). The researcher was able to observe whether the respondents understood the question, could clarify questions where necessary and was guaranteed a higher response and completion rate in comparison to surveys. In addition the researcher was not relying on respondents having the time and the motivation to fill in surveys. This method allowed for the exploration of emergent themes and ideas rather than relying only on concepts and questions defined in advance as is the case with surveys.

The semi-structured interview as a data collection tool was considered a good method for probing research participant's perceptions and the meaning they attached to reality (Punch, 2005). The method of semi-structured interviews was chosen as it incorporates the qualitative discussion element of strategic conversations whilst using a framework of standard open ended questions that are prepared in advance (Ratcliffe, 2002).

The intention was to maximise the opportunities for collecting meaningful information and allow for the probing of complex issues. The rationale for utilising a semi-structured interview was the value of the data that could be obtained by asking additional questions as well as the flexibility to further probe answers which could assist to accommodate the exploratory nature of the study. Smith (2008, p.57) states that "...we could summarize the advantages of the semi-structured interviews. It facilitates rapport/empathy, allows a greater flexibility of coverage and allows the interview to go into novel areas, and it tends to produce richer data." Semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to talk about their perspectives on a particular subject (Saunders,

Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

A further advantage of this method are that it is simple, efficient and a practical way of getting data about things that cannot be easily observed, it has high validity as respondents are able to talk about things in detail and depth (Longwe, 2010).

Hopf (2004, p.204) states that semi-structured and focused interviews allow "...combining a reserved, non-directive management of a conversation with an interest in very specific information and the opportunity for an object-related explanation of meaning" and "...they are therefore superior to other interview variants".

One drawback of any interview approach is the retrospective nature of the accounts given. Chell (2004, p.58), however notes that interviewees accounts "...are partial; but partial or not, biased or not, such accounts constitute their reality, and, arguably it is the way they view the world which shapes their future actions." Given it is this reality being explored, the interview approach appeared appropriate as the investigation method.

The researcher also needed to be mindful of research bias which could have had limitations as a result of errors (in the manner of interviewing or by errors in sampling). In qualitative research this can be problematic, since by definition the qualitative researcher is part of the process and all researchers are different. In this study, this was overcome since there was only one researcher which ensured consistency in the approach and purposeful sampling was conducted to avoid errors in sampling.

### **3.2 PARTICIPANTS**

The study examined Talent Management from the perspective, views and perceptions of eight executive Managers who are directly responsible for Talent Management and or Human Resources Management (including Talent Management) in eight different organisations. These organisations were purposefully identified as they have all implemented Talent Management

processes and practices for some time (since 2005) which was around the time that Talent Management grew in popularity (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

The organisations selected were well established across various sectors and industries in the private sector and comprise the financial services, property, insurance, law, accounting, media and transport sectors. Each of the organisations operates locally and globally and competes for critical skills in both spheres. The organisations are either listed or form part of a group that is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). The companies were established between 1845 and 2000.

Seven of the eight companies are certified as part of the top best employers in South Africa for 2012/13 following objective research into their Human Resources policies on reward, benefits, culture management, and career development and working conditions. The one remaining company is well known in industry and globally due to its BEE status and world class development, programmes, automation and for investing millions to communities by offering bursaries.

| Respondent | Industry                           | Voted best employer to work for by:                                  | Position/Profile                                   |
|------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| R1         | Accounting/<br>Consulting Services | Fortune 2012   | Manager: HR and Talent                             |
| R2         | Insurance Service                  | CRF Institute 2012   | Head of Talent Management                          |
| R3         | Financial Services:<br>Property    | CRF Institute 2012   | Senior Manager : HR & Talent                       |
| R4         | Financial Services                 | CRF Institute 2012   | Talent Practice Manager                            |
| R5         | Financial Services                 | CRF Institute 2012   | COE Talent Management                              |
| R6         | Legal Services                     | Africa Investor's 2012 Legal Adviser                                 | Director and Team Leader: HR & Talent              |
| R7         | Media                              | Top rated listed Empowerment Media Company per Financial Mail Survey | Executive Director: HR (Including Talent)          |
| R8         | Transport                          | CRF Institute 2012   | Senior Consultant: Performance & Talent Management |

**Figure 1:** Participants and Industry

The organisations each have various yet similar challenges in competing for talent. The research participants were purposefully sampled and identified on the basis of the following criteria:

- The length of time they were employed within the organisation and their level of seniority;
- They were management and professional employees and occupy senior level positions within the organisation;
- Current involvement in the process of implementing talent management within their respective organisations;
- They all have talent management and human resources experiences in industry;
- They each have a minimum of seven years' industry experience (A six-year period appeared to be a reasonable benchmark for tenure, based on the P-E Corporate Services Survey conducted in 2001 (Sutherland, 2004));
- They would be in a better position to understand the constructs of talent management, talent attraction, retention, turnover and HR practices since this forms part of their key performance areas and daily functions;
- They have stayed long enough in organisations to have observed and formed perceptions and experiences of practices of talent management, talent attraction, retention, turnover and HR practices.

It was vital to select the calibre of participant respondents based on the above criteria and purposive sampling was used in terms of their roles and functions. Sampling was conducted in a deliberate manner in order to be inclusive, with a specific purpose in mind, namely to understand what the targeted group deemed the theoretical and practical differences to be between Talent Management and Strategic Human Resource Management and whether Talent Management is in fact different from Strategic Human Resource Management.

The selected research participants were contacted via a standardised e-mail that outlined the purpose of the research, the nature of the questions and the interview process. The research participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and afforded them the opportunity to pose questions before they committed to the interview, allowing them to elect not to participate if they so desired.

### **3.3 MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE USED TO COLLECT DATA**

Attached Appendix 1 is a semi structured interview questionnaire that was developed from past studies on Talent Management practices relating to Strategic Human Resources Management. The questions that were chosen from the various studies were particularly due to the interchangeable processes, functions and objectives contained in the literature review in order to highlight differences, if any between Strategic Human Resources Management and Talent Management. It was important to ask questions that would elicit experiences and responses regarding Talent Management practises industry versus Strategic Human Resources Management.

The research participants were informed prior that the interview would last between half an hour to one hour and that notes would be during the interview process. Their permission to have the interviews audio recorded was obtained as part of the initial engagement prior to the interviews. All participants were also informed that their consent to the use of their responses would be for the sole purpose of the study.

Three to four open-ended questions relating to Talent Management and Strategic Human Resource Management practices was asked during the interview and additional probing questions in order to obtain, refine and clarify responses. Appendix 1 contains additional probing questions that were asked to the research participants. The participants were encouraged to explore other interesting lines of enquiry as they emerged during the interview, whilst the researcher ensured that all the set questions were addressed.

Participants were asked to rate certain themes should they have arisen during the interview. Permission was also sought from them to contact them afterwards once all the interviews were concluded, should themes have arisen out of all interviews. The purpose would be for them to then provide input to rate potential themes.

Potential impressions and reactions were noted during the interview and accurate key notes were made. After each interview the recording was listened to and preliminary notes were taken on each question as well as key points. Each interview was transcribed and the results were verified with some of the participants to ensure alignment with what they had actually meant. The notes were used as a means of reflecting on the judgements relating to content of the interviews. The data then was analysed to identify themes individually and across cases.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a mass of collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). According to Zikmund (2003) data analysis is the application of reasoning to understand and interpret the data that is to be collected.

The collected raw data was subjected to the content analysis method. Content analysis is "...a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). The notion of inference is especially important in content analysis as the researcher used analytical constructs, or rules of inference, to move from the text to the answers to the research questions (White & Marsh 2006).

Qualitative content analysis has further been defined as "... a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns"

(Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). It is "...an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification" and "...any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (Mayring, 2000, p.2 & Patton, 2002, p.453).

This process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison (Patton, 2002). Burns (2000) agreed that the process involves the codification of the qualitative data into predefined categories in a systematic manner in order to identify themes, concepts and meanings.

Qualitative content analysis focuses on the unique themes that demonstrate the range of the meanings of the phenomenon rather than the statistical significance of the occurrence of particular texts or concepts (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). It is also useful for examining trends and patterns in documents.

The approach allowed the researcher to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Qualitative content analysis involved a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation.

Reliability and objectivity are criteria used to evaluate the quality of the research. As an interpretive method, qualitative content analysis differs from the positivist tradition in its fundamental assumptions, research purposes, and inference processes, thus making the conventional criteria unsuitable for judging its research results (Bradley, 1993). Recognising this gap, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for evaluating interpretive research work, i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility refers to the "...adequate representation of the constructions of the social world under study" (Bradley, 1993, p.436). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend a set of activities that would help improve the credibility of research results which include prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation and checking interpretations against raw data. To improve the credibility of qualitative content analysis, researchers not only need to design data collection strategies that are able to adequately solicit the representations, but also to design transparent processes for coding and drawing conclusions from the raw data (Weber, 1990).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the researcher's working can be applied to another context. It is not the researcher's task to provide an index of transferability; rather, he or she is responsible for providing data sets and descriptions that are rich enough so that other researchers are able to make judgments about the findings' transferability to different settings or contexts.

Dependability refers to "...the coherence of the internal process and the way the researcher accounts for changing conditions in the phenomena" (Bradley, 1993, p.437).

Lastly, confirmability refers to "...the extent to which the characteristics of the data, as posited by the researcher, can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results" (Bradley, 1993, p.437).

The major technique for establishing dependability and confirmability is through audits of the research processes and findings. Dependability is determined by checking the consistency of the study processes, and confirmability is determined by checking the internal coherence of the research product, i.e. the data, the findings, the interpretations and the recommendations. The materials to be used in these audits include raw data, field notes, and theoretical notes and so on. The audit process has five stages which include pre-entry, determinations of auditability, formal agreement,

determination of trustworthiness (dependability and confirmability), and closure (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The notes and recordings were analysed to establish codes and thereafter categories/themes. This process assisted to explore and make inferences regarding the relationships among data. The themes will be explored to investigate whether there are in fact differences between in theory and practise between Human Resources Management and Talent Management.

The next chapter outlines the responses from the respondents per question. The responses are categorised and compared to Strategic Human Resources Management per category. A summary of the responses per question is also provided and thereafter the discussion of the findings.

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## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are two phases expanded in this study. First, the responses are listed below for each of the four semi structured questions and then compared to Human Resources Management/Strategic Human Resources in a table according to categories/themes identified. The rationale for this is to draw comparisons between Talent management and Strategic Human Resources Management as described in the literature review with supporting evidence from the responses.

The responses begin with an understanding of Talent and Talent Management as defined by the Executive managers, then continues by eliciting how talented individuals are attracted, developed and retained in industry. It explores whether there are distinct differences in Talent Management versus Strategic Human Resources Management and finally the overall Human Resources (HR) function in implementing Talent Management. The semi-structured questions had sub/follow up questions, also included below, since it adds to their interpretation and provides insight to the experiences, perceptions and the meaning that the respondents each attach to their reality.

The second phase leads to the summary of the results and then the discussion of the findings. Throughout the analysis, the focus remains on whether there is any difference in the theory and application of TM and SHRM constructs.

In order to distinguish between respondent's, respondent 1 will be denoted as [R1], respondent 2 as [R2] and so on.

## 4.1 RESULTS

### Responses to Question 1

#### ***What is your definition of Talent, Talent Management (TM) and/or Strategic Talent Management (STM)?***

Talent has multiple definitions and there seems to be a challenge with the concept of Talent, Talent Management (TM) and TM models [R7]. The overarching theme of the responses indicate that different companies define TM differently [R3] and Talent should not be boxed into models/categories or definitions. Talent is a package of things not just for the present but into the future [R5].

#### ➤ **Talent is intrinsic**

Talent is a gift and something one can do naturally. Talent are those that add value to the organisation. [R8]

Talent is the ability, the potential and the ambition of employees who drive their careers forward. [R4]

Talent is ambition and competency since certain employees stand out and think differently. Organisations should instinctively know what Talent is (now and into the future). [R5]

Talent is the intellectual capital of the organisation and encompasses the entire asset of the human resources (HR) that drives the organisation. [R1]

#### ➤ **Talent Management involves processes**

Talent Management (TM) ensures attracting Talent with right skills, developing, retaining, performance management and or redeployment of skills. [R8]

TM is workforce planning, recruitment, on-boarding, development, career pathing, and performance management (PM). It includes managing Talent

through these processes but also the measurement and tracking/progress of the process, the wellbeing of the process and how well organisations manage the process, i.e. full dash board and matrix tracking the various phases. [R3]

TM is the end to process of managing individuals in an organisation with regard to the entire employment cycle with specific focus on development and what organisations do with regard to career movements. [R3]

TM is no more than Human Resources Management (HRM) (i.e. job profiling, recruitment, performance management and training and development), however it is more than just training and development and succession planning. [R7]

It involves their development and the fact that the organisation allows them the platform a road map for their career path. [R4]

Organisations need to forecast and prepare for skills/talent whether it is readily available or whether individuals require up skilling, i.e. processes in place (successors and readiness level of each individual), retention management and succession planning, mentorship and coaching. [R8]

TM refers to structured processes to manage talented employees e.g. Performance Management (PM). [R6]

Talent can be differentiated between support and professional staff since there are different levels between professional levels and should be managed accordingly. [R6]

➤ **Talent involves achieving business objectives**

Talent are those individuals that contribute to improving the bottom line of organisation, instead of those who just come to work or detract from the bottom line. Talent is not about a set individual but about what they contribute to improve the bottom line. [R1]

Organisations should instead optimally utilise what talented individuals offer in line with the objectives of the company. [R5]

***Sub question: How would you implement TM/STM and operationalise it with the objectives of the company?***

In order to operationalise Talent and TM one first needs to understand the company objective and vision and then implement TM practices for that period of time. Organisations and what they need to deliver constantly change therefore the skills required need to change as well. [R8]

Different business units should be empowered to implement TM differently according to their needs. [R2]

➤ **Talent is about achieving strategic objectives**

Talent Management is no more than HR strategy, the only difference between TM and Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) is that currently there is more of a focus on the open market to attract scarce skill, offer the right proposition and more brand awareness of companies. [R7]

Talent is defined by ensuring that the right employees are in the right roles at the right time and cost to enable the business to deliver on its current strategy and beyond. [R1]

From a business/strategic perspective talent is matching the ability, potential and the ambition of employees and their development in line with the business/strategic objectives. [R4]

Talent Management is the end to process of managing individual's line with growth and strategy. [R3]

Talent is individuals who have competent abilities compatible with the culture of the organisation. [R6]

Talent Management is a separate but intertwined discipline that needs to be managed and linked to strategic objectives of the company. It is imperative to Talent Management as a strategic initiative to drive the business. [R1]

Talent is about knowing your HR skills and leadership behaviours and what you need in order to achieve your strategic goals. [R5]

Table 1 compares the responses of the definition of Talent Management with Strategic Human Resources Management as described in the literature review with supporting evidence from the responses.

Table 1

*Definition of Talent, Talent Management and/or Strategic Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management?*

| <i>What is your definition of Talent, Talent Management (TM) and/or Strategic Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management?</i> |   |           |                 |
|---|---|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Categories/Themes</b>  | <b>Evidence from Responses</b>                                      | <b>TM</b> | <b>HRM/SHRM</b> |
| <b>Different definitions (Intrinsic and Organisation)</b>   | Talent is a gift that comes naturally.                              | X         |                 |
|   | Ability, potential and ambition of employees now and in the future. | X         | X               |
|   | The intellectual capital of the organisation.                       | X         |                 |
|   | Add value to the organisation                                       | X         | X               |
| <b>Talent Management involves processes</b>   | Foundations are in place e.g. job profiles and good competencies.   | X         | X               |
|   | Workforce planning, recruitment, on-boarding career pathing.        | X         | X               |

Table 1 (continued)

*Definition of Talent and Talent Management and/or Strategic Talent Management Strategic Human Resources Management?*

*What is your definition of Talent, Talent Management (TM) and/or Strategic Talent Management (STM)?*

| Categories/Themes                                     | Evidence from Responses  | TM | HRM/SHRM |
|---|--|----|----------|
|   | Measurement and tracking/ progress of the process.                                       | X  | X        |
|   | Employment cycle - development and career movements.                                     | X  | X        |
|   | Forecast and prepare skills - up skilling, successors, mentorship and coaching.          | X  | X        |
|   | Attracting, developing, retaining, performance management and or redeployment of skills. | X  | X        |
| <b>Talent involves achieving business objectives</b>  | Optimally utilise individuals according to business need                                 | X  | X        |
|   | Implementation according to business needs.  | X  | X        |
|   | Individuals that contribute to the bottom line of organisation.                          | X  | X        |
| <b>Talent is about achieving strategic objectives</b> | The right employees in the right roles at the right time and cost.                       | X  | X        |
|   | Matching the ability, potential and the ambition of employees to strategy.               | X  | X        |
|   | Managing individuals line with growth and strategy.                                      | X  | X        |

Table 1 (continued)

*Definition of Talent and Talent Management and/or Strategic Talent Management Strategic Human Resources Management?*

| <i>What is your definition of Talent, Talent Management (TM) and/or Strategic Talent Management (STM)?</i> |  |    |          |
|--|--|----|----------|
| Categories/Themes  | Evidence from Responses  | TM | HRM/SHRM |
|  | Individual competencies compatible with culture of the organisation. | X  | X        |
|  | Strategic initiative to drive the business.                          | X  | X        |
|  | Knowing your HR skills and leadership behaviours                     | X  | X        |
|  | EVP and Brand awareness  | X  | X        |

The table illustrates that there are commonalities in definition between Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management and that both disciplines share the same processes, business and strategic objectives.

***Sub Question: What factors do you think influence the manner in which TM/STM is introduced?***

➤ **Leadership and Top Management**

Successful implementation of TM can occur in a host of ways, however very importantly, it must come from the top. The leadership need to believe and invest in HR. Top management needs to drive Talent Management in companies in order to operationalise Talent Management and enhance the culture and institution to nurture Talent Management. Some organisations still believe that employees are employed to do their jobs and blatantly disregard employees. [R1]

Buy-in from leadership is vital and TM is unlikely to be implemented effectively and successfully unless senior manager provides an opportunity for implementation. TM is dependent on the culture, i.e. top management needs to walk the talk and actively value what TM has to offer. [R2]

There also needs to be a change in perception around TM, particularly business leaders. [R2]

TM will not be effective without top management buy-in. [R6]

➤ **Organisational Talent Management Maturity**

A further factor that influences the manner in which TM is introduced is time, i.e. businesses that are in start-up phase and in the process of trying to build their recruitment pipeline and should not be focusing on TM. [R2]

TM and STM in business are specific to the company and its own setting. [R1]

The question is whether your own company is ready to effectively implement TM in order to deal with Talent as a business strategy requires you to. [R2]

Table 2 compares the responses of the factors that influence the implementation of Talent Management with Strategic Human Resources Management as described in the literature review with supporting evidence from the responses.

Table 2

*Factors that influence the manner in which TM/STM is introduced*

| <i>What factors do you think influence the manner in which TM/STM is introduced?</i> |  |           |                 |
|--|--|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Categories/Themes</b>   | <b>Evidence from Responses</b>   | <b>TM</b> | <b>HRM/SHRM</b> |
| <b>Leadership and Top Management</b>   | Top management needs to drive, operationalise and enhance the culture. | X         | X               |

Table 2 (continued)

*Factors that influence the manner in which TM/STM is introduced*

| <i>What factors do you think influence the manner in which TM/STM is introduced?</i> |  |    |          |
|--|--|----|----------|
| Categories/Themes  | Evidence from Responses                                    | TM | HRM/SHRM |
|  | Change in perception from business leaders is required.    | X  | X        |
| <b>Organisational Talent Management Maturity</b>                                     | Specific to the company and its own setting.               | X  |          |
|  | Effective implementation in line with a business strategy. | X  | X        |
|  | Start-up phase and build recruitment pipeline.             | X  |          |

The table depicts that Top management and Leadership is essential for the implementation of both Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management and that it must be aligned with business strategy.

***Sub Question: Based on your knowledge, what do you think is the difference on how TM/STM is conceptualised in academic literature and by practitioners (i.e. operationalised in organizational practice)?***

There is no new in literature of what Talent and TM is, however in practise, the implementation is too slow and organisations tend to be reactive and do not identify critical skills in advance. They wait for staff to exit and then tell them how valuable they are by trying to make counter offers. Retention at the point of exit it is too late. Even though literature, research and policies, are available, organisations tend to be reactive. [R8]

Literature and best practise appears to have the same sentiment and the reality is that literature is not saying anything new, except for how companies are implementing TM. [R2]

In practise talent models, definitions and criteria of Talent end up with same names as HRM tends to over operationalise with templates, formats and checklists ensuring that candidates fall into categories. [R5]

Table 3 compares the literature and practise of Talent Management with Strategic Human Resources Management in industry.

Table 3

*Difference on how TM/STM is conceptualised in academic literature and by practitioners (i.e. operationalised in organizational practice)?*

| <i>Based on your knowledge, what do you think is the difference on how TM/STM is conceptualised in academic literature and by practitioners (i.e. operationalised in organizational practice)?</i> |   |    |          |
|--|---|----|----------|
| Categories/Themes  | Evidence from Responses   | TM | HRM/SHRM |
| <b>Reactive process</b>  | Do not identify critical skills in advance and Implementation is too slow.          | X  |          |
|  | Literature, research and policies are available, organisations tend to be reactive. | X  | X        |
| <b>Implementation of TM</b>  | Literature is not saying anything new, except for implementation.                   | X  |          |
|  | Over operationalise with templates and checklists.                                  | X  | X        |

The responses indicate that implementation of Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management tend to be reactive and can be over operationalised and administrative.

***Sub Question: What do you think the challenges are/would be to ensure that it is successfully implemented?***

It may be easy to find people with qualifications, but more challenging to find a combination of qualifications, experience and profiles for the future. Companies are looking for the same people/talent and have difficulty to retain

talent as it has become easy for talented individuals to move between organisations. [R5]

Previously employees would progress via promotions or high level job complexities whereas currently talented individuals want to move around, want diverse and exciting projects and experience across different fields. If companies are unable to accommodate this movement, it becomes challenging to retain talent. In practice the value of money overestimate the retention of talent. Talented individuals are not looking for the same things. Compensation, freedom in roles and the opportunity to do things their way/with their own ideas can retain skills. This can be a challenge for Corporates since Talent does not necessarily want a bigger portfolio, manager roles or to be in specialised fields. [R5]

A challenge for successful implementation of Talent Management is to obtain the best fit for positions, since qualifications are not always relevant or needed in position. Therefore assessment centres and competency based assessments must be done properly. [R8]

A mistake made is that the business strategy requires certain skills in order to deliver and often practitioners offer one size fits all initiatives. [R2]

Local talent is a challenge due to the education system which has limited the amount of potential and future pipeline. [R7]

Potential from the tertiary institutions have minimised and competing for a smaller group of skills in South Africa is reducing and will continue to reduce in the future. [R2]

Organisations do not always track return on investment of talent apart from bringing an individual on board, putting them through a development cycle instead of the effort/investment that goes into the individuals career. [R4]

The reality is that if you do not manage talented individuals you will lose it. Generation Y and X makes talent more mobile, employees have clearer views

on work life balance and managers have to keep up to date with what younger generation's need. Talent Management must be according to organisational strategies and can benefit the organisation and the individual. [R6]

Individuals fail to realise that they own their careers and it is not a given/entitlement or guarantee investing in their development needs. Age groups can play a role, e.g. generation X's are more career orientated, Y's experience a change in global needs and how they adapt to changes and open to change, baby boomers are stuck in the way things used to be done and are resistant to development, how better things can be done and are adverse to technology. [R4]

The younger generation is different and have no loyalty like the older generation. [R8]

Table 4 depicts and compares the challenges of successful implementation of Talent Management with Strategic Human Resources Management as described in the literature review with supporting evidence from the responses.

Table 4

*What do you think the challenges are/would be to ensure that it is successfully implemented?*

| <i>What do you think the challenges are/would be to ensure that it is successfully implemented?</i> |   |    |          |
|---|---|----|----------|
| Categories/Themes   | Evidence from Responses   | TM | HRM/SHRM |
| <b>Finding the right skills</b>   | Combination of qualifications and experience profiles.  | X  | X        |
| <b>Mobility/Diversity/Offering challenging work / Flexibility</b>                                   | Talent wants to move around, want diverse and exciting projects and experience across different fields. | X  | X        |

Table 4 (continued)

*What do you think the challenges are/would be to ensure that it is successfully implemented?*

| <i>What do you think the challenges are/would be to ensure that it is successfully implemented?</i> |  |    |          |
|---|--|----|----------|
| Categories/Themes   | Evidence from Responses  | TM | HRM/SHRM |
|   | Freedom in roles and less responsibility.  | X  |          |
|   | Corporates cannot accommodate flexibility.   | X  |          |
| <b>Compensation</b>   | Value of money overestimates the retention of Talent.  | X  |          |
| <b>Employee Expectations</b>  | Talented individuals are not looking for the same things.  | X  |          |
| <b>Assessment centres and competency based assessments</b>  | Assessment centres/ competency assessments.  | X  | X        |
| <b>One size fits all initiatives.</b>   | Business strategy requires certain initiatives - often practitioners offer one size fits all.              | X  | X        |
| <b>Potential and future pipeline</b>  | Local talent is a challenge due to the education system - limited amount of potential and future pipeline. | X  |          |
| <b>Track and measure return on investment</b>   | Organisations do not always track full return on investment.   | X  | X        |
| <b>Generational differences</b>   | Generation Y and X have different needs have no loyalty.   | X  |          |
|   | Individuals need to take responsibility for their own careers.   | X  |          |

The table depicts that Talent Management has different challenges when compared to Strategic Human Resources Management. Similar challenges do include finding scarce skills, measuring return on investment and a requirement for more focused initiatives.

***Sub Question: What do you think the importance of TM or STM in the business/global context is?***

Globally and locally, organisations will cease to exist until they recognise that they need to identify top talented individuals and invest in that talent as well as shed those who do not contribute. [R1]

Globally companies are fighting for the same talent and this indicates that there is no longer global versus local. Depending on the frame of reference and where companies are based, countries are looking to attract and retain skills, but also experience losing these skills to other countries. It may also be challenging to find the relevant skills globally due to barriers of culture, language, etc. In SA, the challenge is with the education system which results in a smaller pool of educated people and not large enough to only look locally. The position will be exasperated in the future with the currently limited pipeline experienced. [R2]

Globalisation has made the workplace so small and looking for local skills is equivalent to looking for global skills. Literature provides best practise models, however in SA context, Talent Management is challenging and new in terms of the landscape and when comparing it from province to province. Attempting to retain key individuals with core skills whose requirements/needs are not met is a challenge when trying to implement best practise Talent Management, locally and globally. Organisations are not knowledgeable and are under resourced therefore practise does not match up to the literature simply because of lack of experience, exposure and capacity. [R3]

In the SA context within financial services talent is viewed differently and organisations have paid substantial amounts for core skills, retention initiatives and growing core skills in-house. In a global context, the threat of

losing skills is higher (particularly young talent) which creates a dependency on a skill. Companies do not understand that by buying the skill from the market they can get cross synergy or knowledge to grow the organisation's own skills/base, i.e. where SA companies lack the discipline of long term initiatives and continuously try to fill gaps by focusing on short term goals and therefore is in a constant demand/fight for talented individuals with competitors. Talented individuals can play competitors against each other for highest return. [R4]

SA is still in its infancy stage of developing competencies to manage talent whereas in EU and USA TM is more advanced. [R6]

## **Responses to Question 2**

***How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?***

### **➤ Attracting Talent**

Organisations need to go through a variety of processes in order to attract talented individuals. This is an attraction strategy which includes a strong brand sending the message about wanting the best of the best. Internally and externally employees identify with the organisation as a place that they want to work for. [R1]

Talent attraction also depends on branding of how organisation is represented in the market, i.e. people are excited about working for the organisation and companies can be selective in the approach. [R2]

EVP plays an important role and is the package that attracts talented individuals in to companies, i.e. employee wellness, culture of the organisation. [R3]

### **➤ Identifying Talent**

The organisation embarks on graduate recruitment programmes and targeted initiatives for professionals. [R1]

Focused recruitment includes targeting talented individuals at career fairs, but should start at grass roots and when children make choices. [R3]

Targeted recruitment at career fairs take place, but organisations should start at the secondary level and influence career choices because these are future leaders. Organisations should allow for creative thinking and attainment of futuristic goals. [R4]

Organisations need to establish what skills and competencies are required and implement recruitment campaigns. Scholars should be identified and the brand strategy and value proposition implemented accordingly. [R7]

Formal external structures of recruitment via graduates/knowledge and internal HR processes of identifying talented individuals via reporting and working with Line managers. [R6]

Internally and externally it applies to the rigor with which you apply your recruitment process. Therefore part of decision making would be psychometrics which confirms that the main abilities up front (given what the role requires) and that the individual can operate at the required level. Effective interviewing skills, i.e. competency based should be conducted to find the right people and track past records and references. [R2]

### ➤ **Categorising Talent**

Everyone is considered talented and at a minimum should be able to do their work that they are hired for. [R2]

Talented individuals have an idea of who they are and even when employees are not considered talented they should still have the opportunity to learn, develop skill sets and obtain training to be fit for roles. [R2]

The organisation categorises talented individuals (some know that have been identified whilst others do not know). It is standard to have talent mapping which forms part of the succession plan and part of talent pipeline. Any good HR will have that in place to ensure that talented individuals are being developed in conjunction to the business/plan overall strategy. [R1]

The organisation employs a segmented model according to performing and potential and categorises employees into smaller pools (leadership, critical skills and young Talent). [R2]

Further segmentation would identify employees who then receive more development offerings, empowerment and leadership programmes. Talent pools are deliberate and individualised offering based on a person's future. Currently the organisation does not practise a transparent model, however there is a subtle undercurrent and certain individuals will be given a higher bonus and will be given the opportunity to work on additional projects than peers. The organisation is considering a transparent model in the future. [R2]

➤ **Retaining Talent**

❖ **Engagement**

Further conversations around their careers, increases, promotions and milestone dates would not happen if someone is not considered as talented to the organisation. [R1]

Conversations with employees give an idea of where they fit. Through conversation and practise, actions and behaviour of the organisation, it is quite clear who talented individuals are, i.e. if you are investing in someone they must be talented. [R1]

Career and Talent discussions with all staff should take place. The organisation considers performance (and complexity), potential (leadership) and ambition and plot employees on a grid and place talented individuals in pools. [R5]

Organisations can identify talented individuals by proper conversations, observe staff and look at what they are currently doing around career prospects. [R5]

### ❖ **Remuneration and Rewards**

Factors taken into account are market benchmarking, experience to do the job, abilities and skills but the organisation pays for performance. [R1]

Remunerating employees is stratified across the company and top performers are paid more. [R1]

talented individuals are being paid equal to the market, however if talented individuals are kept stimulated and provided with meaningful work, all the other development needs are taken care, this can act as retention strategy and differentiates the organisation from competitors.[R2]

The organisation has a segmented approach of how talented individuals are identified and then treats them differently, i.e. specific/critical skills will be fast tracked on development programmes which include development, perks and benefits.

[R3]

In the Financial services, talented individuals are treated differently and given additional non- financial company perks, i.e. golf, canteen services, full medicals and it is the little added benefits that distinguish them from other organisations. Therefore if employees are doing something to benefit the company like a project, they would get a completion/once off bonus and organisations are seen as recognising the effort with tokens of appreciation. In certain organisations, it is not guaranteed that talented individuals will get more money, promotions or status/symbol. [R4]

### ❖ **Global opportunities**

Organisation offers a global mobility programme as part of the attraction and retention policy and employees can work in internationally based officers which are an amazing opportunity as SA tends to be country bound. [R1]

#### ❖ **Performance Management**

Retention of talented individuals includes performance and offerings, i.e. mentoring, coaching, international exposure/best practise, remuneration review and different pay and rewards from a market perspective. From a regulatory perspective in financial service industry, regulation governs remuneration. [R2]

Performance management identifies competencies, regular one on one mentoring, coaching and guidance for direct transfer of knowledge. The organisation offers internationally based formal courses and manages to keep the majority of graduates depending on growth of business and performance management ratings. A challenge is mobility and therefore organisations must ensure that employees enjoy work and the environment. [R6]

#### ❖ **Work life balance**

Organisations should offer work life balance, going to gym, eating well, stimulate the mind and support family structure, i.e. crèche, bursary schemes and attach to reward. [R4]

The organisation identifies the gaps, successes for critical roles and then identifies critical positions and key candidates with skills and knowledge that companies can use in these roles. [R5]

Formal talent interviews and conversations occur and talent is acknowledged and processes are transparent since this leads to better performance of others. [R5]

#### ❖ **Culture (combined with the sub question of whether the company institutional and/or culture influences lead to the adaptation of talent management practices)**

In banking industry Talent Management follows a transparent process and talented individuals know who they are as well other employees. talented individuals are even published with the intention of recognition and encourages mentorship for other employees who also want to be considered talented individuals, thus enhancing a performance based culture. [R4]

Some companies inform employees but it is not public knowledge since other individuals may feel unfairly treated. [R3]

Transparent processes depend on the company culture, maturity and how differently employees are treated. Companies are at various stages of Talent Management. Some companies are more progressive whilst other companies do not know what Talent Management is about. Once you have attracted employees organisations need to deliver on what was promised. Recruiting across the globe for critical skills and how organisations pay for the skills need to be in line with how to deliver on business imperatives. [R3]

Institutional culture and the buy in from leadership is vital as this filters down to employees who feel they are been taken care of. [R8]

Talent Management is not a transparent process although some employees are aware that they have been identified. However should the company objectives change, those identified as talented individuals may change depending on whether the skills are still relevant. This will be communicated since company objectives change. Organisations should focus on Talent Management of talented individuals instead of only focusing on individuals with development areas. [R8]

### ➤ **Monitoring Talent**

Technology can empower individuals and make work life easier and automation of process and technology makes monitoring Talent Management easier; however there is more value in engaging with people. Certain electronic PM systems are in place and managing competencies from a

governance perspective add value but does not replace the importance of a conversation. [R1]

### ➤ **Standardising Policies and Processes**

Attracting and recruitment depends on the number of vacancies. [R6]

Succession planning ensures that knowledge is transferred directly from line and talented individuals are rotated. [R6]

Targeted and focused external recruitment for key roles take place via Agencies, HR policy for internal promotions, Line input for interviews or head hunting from particular companies. [R5]

Policies and procedures from a centralised depository are important and organisations appreciate risk, governance and compliance with Labour practises. Central resources means consistency of policies and part of managing HR e.g. treat people the same and not differently. [R1]

Recruitment processes also assist to identify talent who can contribute to the organisations success. [R8]

Organisations must enhance transformation (more than legal compliance, diverse and harmonious), performance management (cascading of objectives with business strategy), learning and development strategy, remuneration strategy (market-attract and retain) and HR Strategy aligned to attract and retain Talent. [R7]

### ➤ **Generations**

Work life balance is linked to different generations, previous generation saw parents working long hours, dedication, no proper retirement benefits, retiring and dying. Newer generations work hard but are demanding in expectations, they want exposure, experience and challenging assignments and in a shorter period of time. There is also a contradiction because employees want work life balance, challenging assignment and are still prepared to work long hours. It

is important to identify talented individuals, structure careers and have conversations with them in order to give them the exposure, develop and grow them. [R1]

➤ **Investing in Talent**

Different sectors apply Talent Management differently based on their strategic needs. Using EVP and understanding what your employee needs are is important. TM is still developing and evolving and not all organisations can implement work life balance for high potential employees. [R4]

The current economic situation does not allow people to exit as easily as before. Trainees come in for a limited period and the organisation will retain top talented individuals for manager roles. It is a business model used by competitors as well. Currently within the organisation, the length of service serves as indicator for retention of individuals and turnover is generally low. [R1]

New roles allow for flexibility of experience and competencies and not necessarily what the company requires at that point. The view is to create a role or create portfolios around talent and not talent around roles. [R5]

Identified talented individuals are sent on executive management programmes which is customised to future needs of the organisation coupled with generic training modules. Performance bonuses, remuneration, recognition, training and development, global exposure and managing projects overseas, secondment to senior positions are among other initiatives. The organisation has high potential programmes to feed the talent pipeline. [R8]

➤ **Leadership**

Leadership need to acknowledge true talent and have a mind-set of growing talent in order to embrace and maintain what talented individuals they have. Organisations should create roles around skills and competencies of talented individuals. Line requires experience to deal with talented individuals and high

flyers have quicker progression but do not necessarily receive a higher compensation (owners and employees are treated the same via performance management process). [R6]

In order to retain talented individuals, benefits, standardised process and policies (to avoid silos), career advancement in other units/provinces, transparency and communication and leadership style is an integrated Talent Management system that an employee receives when they join the company and can differentiate them from other employers. [R7]

Talent Board is responsible to identify Talent with specific criteria for retention. There is a clear difference between employees that are performing satisfactorily and talented individuals are identified by the Talent Board. The focus of Talent Management is formalised at high levels (management and executives) and not so much at the lower levels. [R8]

Table 5 compares the responses of how organisations identify, develop and retain talented employees in Talent Management practices versus Strategic Human Resources Management as described in the literature review with supporting evidence from the responses.

Table 5

*How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?*

| <i>How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?</i> |   |           |                 |
|---|---|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Categories/Themes</b>  | <b>Evidence from Responses</b>  | <b>TM</b> | <b>HRM/SHRM</b> |
| <b>Attracting and Identifying Talent</b>                                      | Attraction strategy - strong brand internally and externally.         | X         | X               |
|   | EVP - the package that attracts talented individuals in to companies. | X         | X               |

Table 5 (continued)

*How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?*

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|   | Recruitment via graduates/ knowledge and internal HR processes of identifying talented individuals via reporting and working with Line managers. | X | X |
| <b>Developing Talent</b>                                | Talent mapping, succession plan and part of talent pipeline.   | X | X |
|   | Segmented model according to performing/potential and categorises into smaller pools.  | X | X |
|   | Identified employees - receive more development offerings, empowerment/leadership  | X | X |
|   | Transparent TM models  | X |   |
| <b>Retaining Talent</b>                                 | <b>Engagement</b>  |   |   |
|   | Conversations around their careers, increases, promotions.   | X | X |
|   | Provides an idea of where employees fit.   | X | X |
|   | <b>Remuneration and Rewards</b>  |   |   |
|   | Benchmarking - experience, abilities and skills.   | X |   |
|   | Stratified remuneration across the company and top performers.   | X |   |
|   | Meaningful work and development - differentiates the organisation from competitors.  | X | X |
| Various sectors can afford to treat Talent differently. | X  |   |   |

Table 5 (continued)

*How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?*

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | Retention of Talent includes mentoring and coaching.  | X | X |
|  | <b>Performance Management</b><br>Identifies competencies, mentoring, coaching and direct transfer of knowledge. | X | X |
|  | <b>Global opportunities</b><br>Organisation offers a global mobility programmes as part of the attraction.      | X |   |
|  | <b>Culture</b><br>Transparent / Non transparent Talent process – treat employees fairly.                        | X |   |
|  | Transparent processes depend on the company culture and maturity.   | X | X |
|  | Institutional culture and the buy in from leadership are vital.   | X | X |
|  | <b>Work life balance</b><br>Organisations should offer work life balance and support family structure.          | X |   |
|  | <b>Standardised Policies and Procedures</b>   |   |   |
|  | Depends on the number of vacancies.   | X |   |
|  | Succession planning ensures that knowledge is transferred and rotated.  | X | X |
|  | Targeted and focused external recruitment for key roles.  | X | X |

Table 5 (continued)

*How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?*

| <b>How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?</b> |   |           |                      |
|---|---|-----------|----------------------|
| <b>Categories/Themes</b>  | <b>Evidence from Responses</b>  | <b>TM</b> | <b>HRM/<br/>SHRM</b> |
|   | Policies and procedures from a centralised depository-governance, consistency and compliance with Labour practises.       | X         | X                    |
|   | Organisations must enhance transformation, learning and development and HR Strategy aligned to attract and retain Talent. | X         | X                    |
| <b>Generations</b>  | Change in expectations of newer generations.  | X         |                      |
| <b>Monitoring Talent</b>  | The organisation identifies the gaps, successes for critical roles and critical positions and key candidates.             | X         | X                    |
| <b>Investing in Talent</b>  | Create roles/ portfolios around talented individuals who receive more opportunities.                                      | X         |                      |
| <b>Leadership</b>   | Line requires experience to deal with Talent.   | X         | X                    |
|   | Leaders can result in being differentiated from other employers.  | X         | X                    |
|   | TM is formalised by Talent Boards.  | X         | X                    |
| <b>Technology</b>   | Technology can empower and make monitoring TM easier.   | X         |                      |

The table identifies various areas of attracting talented individuals which is similar to Strategic Human Resources Management practices. Retaining talented individuals differ from Strategic Human Resources Management in that it is focused on talented individuals only. Standardised policies, monitoring talented individuals and leadership are equally important to retain talented individuals. Monitoring talented individuals and leadership are also mentioned as challenges for implementation.

### **Responses to Question 3**

***Does TM possess some features which are distinct from Human Resources Management (HRM)/Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)?***

Talent Management can be a science on its own however it has to have a degree of overlap to support the organisational roles. [R1]

Talent Management is an integration role and needs to start at the full life cycle of the employee rather than as a stand-alone and separate function. It is linked to HR and then rest of business strategy. [R2]

Talent Management falls within the HR function that is viewed as the strategic partner. Talent Management is seen as value-add services that an HR fraternity can offer. HR offers both transactional support services and centres of expertise, i.e. Organisational Development, Learning and Development, Talent Management, Graduate programmes, etc. [R2]

Talent Management forms part of HRM e.g. remuneration, training however with specific objectives. HR is the owner of and implementer of policies, procedures including Talent Management. [R6]

Talent Management is interconnected with the HR strategy. [R7]

Talent Management and HR are aligned and Talent Management links with development and PM, training and development with the aim change the way

leaders interact with Talent. [R8]

HR is viewed as a strategic partner (no longer administrative) and more of a focus on people. [R8]

Talent Management is an integral part of HRM and should partner with and form part of the company strategy. Organisations focus on operational matters and ignore people issues. TM and HR are at an equal level with the same objectives. [R8]

***Sub question: In what ways do the TM process “fit” with the other things that HR is trying to achieve in the company;***

Talent Management has a more strategic view of how HR functions, e.g. strategic sourcing which is about how you go about attracting Talent whereas HR will have recruitment and the day to day practises and on-boarding. TM is more strategic and does not always work with HR. Talent Management should however be a subset and not a stand-alone practise, integrated and should fall with HR strategy. SHRM and Talent Management inform each other. [R3]

Talent Management is one strategic lever and not always seen holistically with the other levers to drive the organisation through the various cycles of change. An integrated model of TM/people strategy aligns business strategy complimented by governance, remuneration, change management and practises and systems that run across these functions. [R4]

Talent and Talent Management is part of HR. Reward (performance bonus), Employment Equity, Talent pool and recruitment does not have a formalised Talent strategy. HR is a strategic support function and impacts on all aspects of the business. [R5]

Table 6 compares Talent Management with Strategic Human Resources Management and explores whether Talent management has features that are in fact different from Strategic Human Resources Management as described in the literature review with supporting evidence from the responses.

Table 6

*Features of TM which is distinct from Human Resources Management (HRM)/Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)?*

| <b>Features which is distinct from Human Resources Management (HRM)/Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)?</b> |   |           |                 |
|--|---|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Categories/Themes</b>   | <b>Evidence from Responses</b>  | <b>TM</b> | <b>HRM/SHRM</b> |
| <b>Support Function</b>  | TM has a degree of overlap with HR to support the organisational roles.   | X         | X               |
| <b>Integrated Role</b>   | TM has an intergrated role and should form part of the HR strategy. SHRM and TM inform each other.                                | X         | X               |
|  | TM is an integration role, start at the full life cycle of employment.  | X         | X               |
| <b>TM is SHRM</b>  | TM is a subset and not a stand-alone practise.  | X         | X               |
|  | TM is part of the HR strategy.  | X         | X               |
|  | TM and HR are aligned and links with development, PM, training and development - aim change the way leaders interact with Talent. | X         | X               |
|  | TM and HR are at an equal level with the same objectives.   | X         | X               |
|  | A model of TM/HR strategy complimented by governance, remuneration, change management and practises and systems.                  | X         | X               |
|  | Talent and TM is part of HR. Reward, Employment Equity, Talent pool and recruitment.  | X         | X               |

Table 6 (continued)

*Features of TM which is distinct from Human Resources Management (HRM)/Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)?*

| <i>Features which is distinct from Human Resources Management (HRM)/Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)?</i> |  |    |          |
|--|--|----|----------|
| Categories/Themes  | Evidence from Responses  | TM | HRM/SHRM |
|  | TM falls within the HR function that is viewed as the strategic partner. | X  | X        |
| <b>TM is seen as strategic</b>   | TM has a more strategic view e.g. strategic sourcing.                    | X  | X        |
|  | TM is more strategic and does not always work with HR.                   | X  |          |
|  | TM is one strategic lever to drive the organisation.                     | X  | X        |
| <b>TM has specific Objectives</b>  | TM has specific objectives.  | X  |          |

The table depicts that, based on the responses of the respondents', Talent Management share similar features to Strategic Human Resources Management whether supportive, strategic or an integrative role.

***Sub Question: With regard to TM/STM, what do you see the role of the HR function and the line/senior leaders are in the TM/STM process?***

HR partners with Line to see the issues that impact on business. HR can assist Line to understand talented individuals. HR can identify necessary skills for delivery and inform/advise Line by interviewing and identifying gaps for proper delivery and succession plans. [R8]

HR has background, experience, theoretical and technical knowledge around putting processes in place to manage talented individuals and it is part of what they do. Therefore they need to work with the business and engage with the leadership to identify talented individuals, review the individuals, their performance and potential, future prospects and then operationalise Talent

Management. Talent mapping, succession planning and discussions around the individuals with Line to highlight who is imperative to the business and what can be done to promote them and fill the resultant vacancy, therefore strategising while identifying talented individuals. HR should be driving the process and asking the relevant questions. [R1]

HR needs to know the business in order to deliver on Talent, bring in Talent, best practise, ensure governance is in place and provide guidelines, populate templates and drive processes. [R3]

Line's role is significant for Talent Management, firstly their buy-in, next to be good manager to retain the talent, develop and engage with employees. Line managers require active listening skills, engagement with the individual and asking appropriate questions. It is a combined approach therefore a team effort. Talent Management cannot be in isolation from HRM. [R1]

Line needs to have conversation with staff including difficult conversations and provide good feedback and robust conversations around future aspirations and processes. [R3]

Line's role is to understand each individual, what their capabilities are and what their potential is together with aspirations, then look at how the company in conjunction with the individual manages that gap. It becomes a mutual agreement and not one sided and Line and talented individuals work together to build on careers and become a sustainable business. Line has business experience and should be open to young talented individuals with more qualifications and not see it as a threat. Line should see this as a sustainable pipeline and opportunity. The process can also encourage Line managers to develop further. [R4]

Line's responsibility is to own talent, ensure talented individuals is managed and to understand the business strategy/future and how to use Talent to get there rather than for own empire. [R3]

Line focuses on bottom line but also has HR functions. [R5]

Talent Management should be the responsibility of Line themselves. Line should be Talent Managers and a part of Line's and HR's role is to ensure that Talent Management it is happening consistently, best practise models are incorporated and the organisation is moving with the times and remaining competitive. [R2]

Table 7 records the roles of Line Managers and Human Resource Managers as identified for successful implementation of Talent Management and/or Strategic Human Resources Management.

Table 7

*The role of the HR function and Line/senior leaders*

*With regard to TM/STM, what do you see the role of the HR function and line/senior leaders are in the TM/STM process?*

| Categories/Themes          | Evidence from Responses   | TM | SHRM |
|----------------------------|---|----|------|
| <b>Line Manager's Role</b> | Have a vision for own and manage Talent.  | X  | X    |
|                            | Utilise talented individuals in line with business objectives.  | X  | X    |
|                            | Utilise talented individuals to transform and reach targets.  | X  | X    |
|                            | Be a good Talent/ Manager.  | X  | X    |
|                            | Incorporate best practise models and remain competitive.  | X  | X    |
|                            | Talent must not only be plotted on paper and as part of a checklist or a once off management process. | X  | X    |
|                            | Understand each individual's capabilities, potential and aspirations.                                 | X  | X    |

Table 7

*The role of the HR function and Line/senior leaders*

*With regard to TM/STM, what do you see the role of the HR function and line/senior leaders are in the TM/STM process?*

| Categories/Themes | Evidence from Responses  | TM | SHRM |
|-------------------|--|----|------|
|                   | Forge a mutual agreement to build careers and become a sustainable business.                             | X  | X    |
|                   |  |    |      |
|                   | Line should equally focus on HR functions and the bottom line.   | X  | X    |
|                   | TM should form part of Line's performance measurement.   | X  | X    |
|                   | Line should see Talent as a sustainable pipeline and opportunity.  | X  | X    |
|                   | HR should support business through people and their policies.  | X  | X    |
| <b>HR's Role</b>  | HR can identify the necessary skills and gaps for delivery, interview and put in place succession plans. | X  | X    |
|                   | HR should work with the business to identify and engage Talents and then operationalise TM.              | X  | X    |
|                   | HR's role is to assist with talent mapping and have discussions with Line.                               | X  | X    |
|                   | HR should be driving the process and actual driver to implement TM correctly.                            | X  | X    |

The table highlights that the roles of Line Managers and Human Resources Managers are the same and equally vital for the implementation of Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management.

***Sub question: What do you think the skills/attributes are that would be required by the HR function and line/senior leaders in the TM/STM process?***

HR skills is equally important to core positions for various reasons since it is a learned career which requires a broad knowledge across strategy, Talent Managers (TM), psychology, legislation, etc. HR needs however to a high level of numeracy and understand the financial aspects (because it is all about the bottom line at the end of the day). HR needs to understand the strategic initiatives and direction of the organisation. HR should be recognised in and by business towards making a positive contribution. Intervention skills and abilities and passion are important. [R1]

HR partner skills are required is to know when to bring in the people strategy, i.e. TM versus PM, how and when to influence and have relationships with Line, when objectives they require can be implemented by TM. HR is actual driver to implement Talent Management correctly. [R2]

TM and HR have no skill difference only function focus changes. HR generalist should be in line with Talent Management objectives even if driven by TM. [R6]

HR skills and HR policies are vital and HR needs to see the bigger picture of where they fit in but also see the bottom line/operations and be able to contribute to the operations. HR should support business through people. [R8]

TM require the same HR based skills but the focus is to identify talented individuals and develop people. TM report into HR and independently report to the Talent Board separately. [R8]

There is no difference as the HR roles as a necessity overlap with Talent Management. The role of HR extensively supports the role of TM. [R1]

HR must understand the business and the requirements of business. HR aligns what they think talent is required in line with business wants/needs. HR does however need to be assertive and objective and challenge Line who may be subjective. [R5]

Line managers who are not talent themselves and having to deal with talented individuals can be detrimental. The organisation has interventions for Line (irrespective of whether they are good or not) and apply emphasises where there are problems. Internally developed courses, performance processes (Informal- identifying areas, working on them and counselling; and formal processes have development facilitators to identify Line's areas of development and come up with an action plan). [R1]

Line requires effective conversation and engagement skills i.e. listening to what employees are really saying and translating that into activities. Line needs to be trained in order to have conversations and coach talented individuals accordingly. [R2]

Line needs to have wisdom, empathy, read and understand employee's fears and should be able to manage talented individuals. [R6]

TM should be trained and developed to ensure that proper career frameworks are in place, rewards and remuneration is linked to the business strategy and knowing who talented individuals are, what talented individuals need and then assist the business in sustainability, i.e. internally knowing who potential candidates are to fill vacancies or externally knowing potential candidates. [R2]

TM are required to articulate in business jargon the value add that TM can provide. They should be able to measure the value add of talented individuals or activities to better motivate and define investing money to show return on investment. They will then earn the right to sit at the business table. [R2]

Line must buy-in but also know that they need to treat and develop people in the right way in line with business objectives. Talent must not only be plotted on paper and as part of a checklist. Line should not view as a once management process with the ability to work on a high level of complexity, ability to grow and transform the organisation and reach targets but must also have a vision for Talent. [R5]

Line is responsible/owner of Talent Management and this should form part of Line's performance measurement and reviewed/scored accordingly. [R6]

Talent Management needs to be defined and become an integral part of Line's key performance areas. Line needs to engage with Talent. [R7]

Currently Talent Management is separate and Line does not take ownership and refers to HR. Line requires day to day PM skills (not systematic appraisal skills) but be able to coach talented individuals, listen to employees and continually show interest. Line is focused on bottom line but people are equally important. Line should be trained to identify potential. [R8]

Table 8 highlights the skills/attributes identified by the respondents that are required by Line Managers and Human Resource Managers for Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management.

Table 8

***What do you think the skills/attributes are that would be required by the HR function and line/senior leaders in the TM/STM process?***

*With regard to TM/STM, what do you think the skills/attributes are that would be required by the HR function and Line/senior leader in the TM/STM process?*

| Categories/Themes | Evidence from Responses  | TM | SHRM |
|-------------------|--|----|------|
| HR's Skill        | HR partner skills = people strategy.   | X  | X    |
|                   | HR needs strategic initiatives of the organisation and contribute to operations. | X  | X    |

Table 8 (continued)

**What do you think the skills/attributes are that would be required by the HR function and line/senior leaders in the TM/STM process?**

*With regard to TM/STM, what do you think the skills/attributes are that would be required by the HR function and Line/senior leader in the TM/STM process?*

|                              |   |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                              | HR needs a high level of numeracy and understand the financial aspects. | X | X |
|                              | Assertive, intervention skills, abilities and passion are important.    | X | X |
| <b>Line Manager's Skills</b> | Day to day performance management skills                                | X | X |
|                              | Coaching and listening  | X | X |
|                              | Engage with Talent  | X |   |
|                              | Have difficult and robust conversations around future aspirations       | X |   |
|                              | Line needs to have wisdom, empathy and understand Talent                | X |   |
|                              | Line needs to develop themselves further                                | X | X |
|                              | Translating Talent into activities                                      | X |   |

The table illustrates that Human Resource Managers should be equipped with skills for implementing both Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources. Line managers need to be equipped with skills that will encourage more engagement with talented individuals around careers and future development.

**Responses to Question 4**

***How effective do you think the overall Human Resources (HR) function is in implementing Talent Management?***

HR cannot drive Talent Management if Leadership does not believe in it. Future of Talent Management depends on HR to play a significant role in managing the assets. Some organisations still view HR as personnel department whilst in other organisations they are contributing to the strategy of the organisation. In SA, HR is only just starting to develop and there is a strong emerging culture of HR strategy. [R1]

HR needs to insist on practices that are non-negotiable but be flexible when necessary. Past successes show that HR has evolved from the focus of compliance to focus on the bigger picture. HR should empower Line and give them the options to consider how Talent Management serves their business needs and can meet future objectives. Talent Management is included as standing agenda item on senior management meetings. [R2]

Traditionally HR and Talent Management is seen to be transactional but is evolving from a reactive to proactive workforce forecast in terms of future needs, enabling a Talent pipeline for organisations and since some careers don't even exist, HR is influencing career choices. [R3]

Individuals need to own their own future and also drive processes. It is the individual's decision to move forward or not to move forward and face the consequences. [R4]

Automation of Talent Management can lead to becoming impersonal. The immediate manager is the key to Talent Management with personal engagement and can create a new dynamic of people wanting to be part of the talent pool with clear career paths. [R5]

Generally HR is effective in implementing Talent Management and has been around longer. HR is transforming and becoming more professional and efficient with transactional processes. However due to the global economic slowdown, can organisations afford time and money to invest in Talent Management. [R6]

HR Strategy must be aligned to attract and retain talented individuals. HR must enhance transformation, performance management, learning and development, and remuneration. [R7]

HR has policies and awareness, but the implementation of Talent Management requires attention. HR needs to proactively implement Talent Management which should accordingly be rewarded, particularly in the SA context. Remuneration is a retention strategy and HR can avoid importing talented individuals from overseas. Development is also a government initiative; however skills are limited. [R8]

Table 9 depicts the responses of the respondents of how effective they view the overall Human Resources function is in implementing Talent Management.

Table 9

*How effective do you think the overall Human Resources (HR) function is in implementing Talent Management?*

| How effective do you think the overall Human Resources (HR) function is in implementing Talent Management? |  |    |      |
|--|--|----|------|
| Categories/Themes  | Evidence from Responses  | TM | SHRM |
| <b>HR partner with line</b>  | HR cannot drive TM without Leadership.   | X  | X    |
|  | HR should empower Line to serve their business needs and can meet future objectives. | X  | X    |
| <b>HR viewed as Personnel Management</b>   | HR as personnel department and transactional.  | X  | X    |
| <b>HR viewed as Evolving</b>   | HR is only just starting to develop and there is a strong emerging culture.          |    | X    |
| <b>HR is viewed as Strategic</b>   | HR contributes to strategy.  |    | X    |

Table 9 (continued)

*How effective do think the overall Human Resources (HR) function is in implementing Talent Management?*

| How effective do you think the overall Human Resources (HR) function is in implementing Talent Management? |   |    |      |
|--|---|----|------|
| Categories/Themes  | Evidence from Responses   | TM | SHRM |
|  | HR has evolved from compliance to the bigger picture.                                   |    | X    |
|  | Proactive in terms of future needs, enabling a Talent pipeline.                         | X  | X    |
|  | HR is more efficient with transactional processes.                                      |    | X    |
|  | HR must enhance transformation.   |    | X    |
| <b>Implementer and Governance</b>  | TM depends on HR to play a significant role in managing the assets.                     | X  | X    |
|  | HR needs to insist on practices that are non-negotiable but be flexible when necessary. | X  | X    |
|  | HR is effective in implementing TM and has been around longer.                          | X  | X    |
|  | Remuneration and Development are retention strategies.                                  | X  | X    |
| <b>Engagement</b>  | Avoid over automation of TM - become impersonal.  | X  | X    |

The table depicts that whilst Human Resources may still be viewed as Personnel Management, it is and continues to evolve to a Strategic function and is considered an implementing agent for Talent Management.

Engagement and partnering with Line is important to implement Talent Management.

## **4.2 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

### **Summary of Responses to Question 1**

*Question 1: What is your definition of Talent, Talent Management (TM) and/or Strategic Talent Management (STM)?*

The respondents defined Talent and Talent Management into four categories. There was an overlap of their understanding of the definition of Talent and Talent Management with processes, business and strategic objectives. Some respondents commented on traditional definitions, others defined Talent and Talent management overlapping and linking it to categories and finally some respondent's responses overlapped with all categories.

#### **➤ Definition of Talent and Talent Management**

Four of the eight (50%) respondents defined Talent differently and a summarised version is that Talent is a gift, the ability, potential, ambition, competency and intellectual capital of the organisation. Talent stands out, and think differently.

#### **➤ Talent management involves Processes**

From the various definitions provided by the respondents, it is clear that Talent Management is all encompassing and needs to be viewed in a holistic manner which involves managing the employment life cycle of individuals in an organisation.

The various definitions refer to structured processes that manage talented employees and four out of eight (50%) respondents highlighted workforce planning, recruitment (assessment centres and competency based assessments), on-boarding, development, career pathing, performance management (PM), mentorship, coaching and retention management.

➤ **Talent involves achieving business objectives**

Four out of eight (50%) respondents indicate that Talent contributes to the bottom line of the organisation. They indicate that organisations firstly need to understand the organisations objectives and secondly optimally utilise what talented individuals offer in line with current and future objectives.

Business units should also be empowered to implement Talent Management in order to operationalise Talent and Talent Management and according to their business needs.

➤ **Talent is about achieving strategic objectives**

Five out of eight (63%) respondents indicate that Talent contributes to the strategic objectives of the organisation. They describe that Talent Management is no more than Human Resources strategy with a focus on the open market to attract scarce skill via EVP and Brand strategy.

Talent is about placing the right people in the right roles at the right time and cost to enable the business to deliver on its current strategy and beyond. Talent Management is the end to process of managing individual's and their development compatible with culture of the organisation.



**Figure 2:** Definition of Talent and Talent Management

The sub questions further explored what factors influence the manner in which TM/STM is introduced, how TM/STM is conceptualised in academic literature

and by practitioners in the global context. The categories highlighted by the respondents included:

➤ **Management and Leadership**

Five out of eight (63%) respondents highlighted that buy-in from top and line managers are essential and that there needs to be a concerted effort to invest in, value and drive Talent Management. They argue that Top management provides the opportunity for implementation and the culture to nurture Talent Management. Without buy-in Talent Management is unlikely to be implemented or operationalised. The respondents view Talent Management as Human Resources initiative/practises that should be owned by Line managers. Three respondents did not comment on top management or leadership.

➤ **Organisational Talent Maturity**

Two out of eight (25%) respondents conveyed that Talent Management is specific to the organisation at a given point in time since organisational strategies change.

Within the discussion regarding global context earlier in the chapter, four out of eight (50%) respondents highlight that time can influence the implementation of Talent Management and as whether organisations are Talent Management ready. The respondents believe that whilst literature provides best practise models, Talent Management is still a new and challenging concept in the SA context.

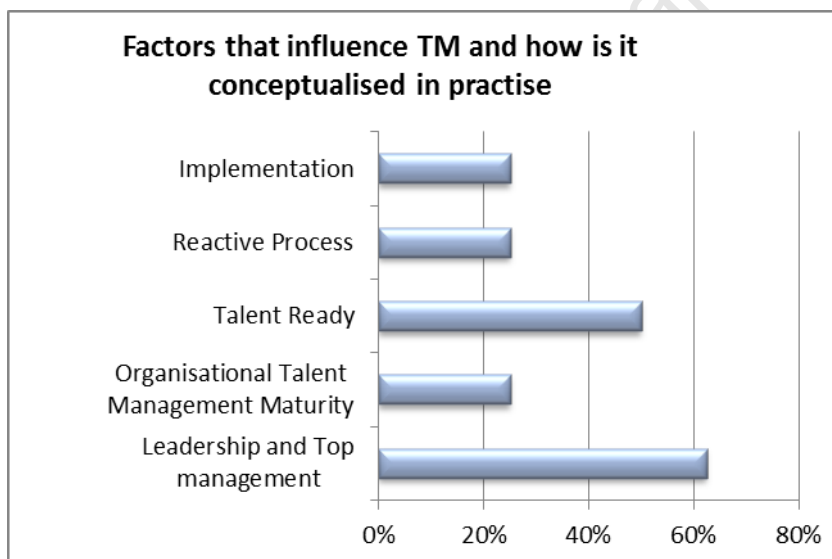
Organisations are under resourced or do not have the necessary skills in practise to retain talented individuals. One respondent did not comment on whether organisations are ready for Talent management.

➤ **Reactive process**

In practise, even with literature, policies and research, the implementation of Talent Management tends to be reactive with retention at the point of exit. Two of eight (25%) respondents indicate that organisations do not identify critical and future skills in advance. Six of the respondents did not comment on whether Talent management is reactive in practise.

➤ **Implementation of Talent management**

Two out of the eight (25%) respondents highlights that Human Resources tends to over operationalise with templates and checklists ensuring that candidates fall into categories. In this instance in practise, talent models, definitions and criteria of Talent will end up with same names. The respondents indicate that literature and best practise do not provide new information, only new ways for implementation. Six of the respondents did not comment on the application of Talent management processes in practise.



**Figure 3:** Factors that influence TM and how it is conceptualised in practise

The last sub question explored the challenges that are faced by practitioners to ensure that TM/STM is successfully implemented?

Certain sectors, invest more in retention initiatives and in-house development of skills. SA companies however lack long term initiatives and do not always

track return on investment of talented individuals apart from bringing individuals on board, putting them through a development cycle and then being unable to measure the holistic effort/investment of an individual's career. Two out of eight (25%) respondents discussed the measurement and tracking/progress of Talent Management processes and reference is made to a full dash board and matrix concept. However, two of the eight (25%) respondents earlier in the chapter also cautioned against over operationalising the process. Half of the other respondents did not comment on measuring Talent Management or how the process is monitored or measured in practise.

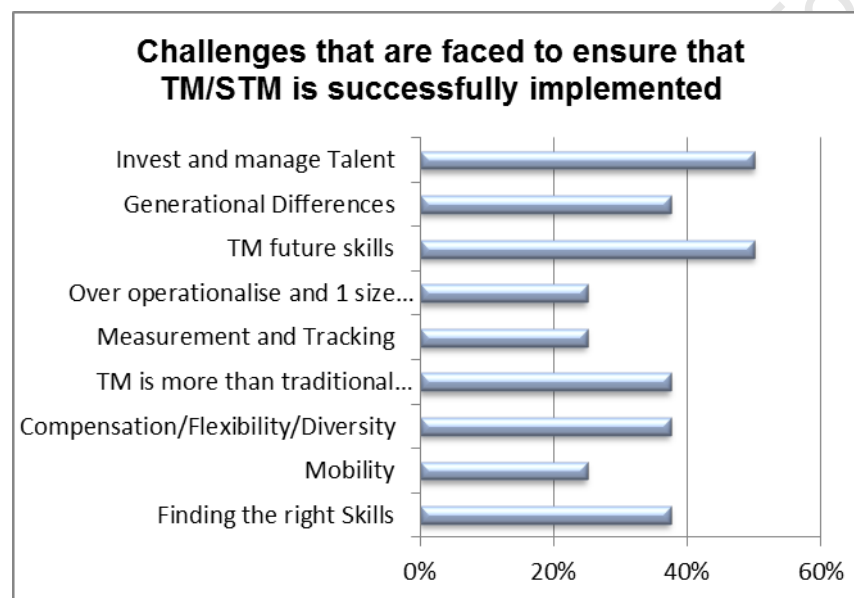
Three of the eight (37%) respondents indicated that talented individuals are mobile, diverse and want exciting projects and experiences across different fields. They comment that organisations are searching for the same talented individuals and hence it is has become easy for talented individuals to move between organisations. They question whether companies are able to accommodate this mobility, when in practise, the value of money overestimate the retention of talented individuals who are not all looking for the same things. In addition organisational structures can inhibit mobility within organisations. Five respondents did not comment on the agility of talented individuals.

Compensation, flexibility and the opportunity to do things differently support the above processes to retain talented individuals. Three out of eight (37%) respondents emphasise that Talent Management is more than the conventional training and development or succession planning and is rather about attracting talented individuals with the right skills, developing these skills and effective performance management and redeployment of skills. Five of the other respondents did not provide input to support structures for processes.

Three out of eight (37%) respondents highlighted managing talented individuals against the backdrop of the different generations. Five of the respondents did not provide input to the generational differences.

It is also more challenging to find people with qualifications, experience and profiles for the future. Four out of eight (50%) respondents highlight that organisations need to identify, manage and invest in top talented individuals. The other four respondents did not comment on this challenge.

Globalisation has shrunk the labour market and searching for talented individuals locally is equivalent to searching for skills globally. The challenge to retain young and upcoming talented individuals is equal across the globe. Three of the eight (37%) indicate that finding the right combination of skills may be challenging. The other five respondents did not comment on finding scarce skills.



**Figure 4:** Challenges for successful implementation of TM

One view indicated that some organisations however disregard Talent Management and believe that employees are employed to do their jobs. Organisations focus on operational matters and ignore people issues.

## **2. How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?**

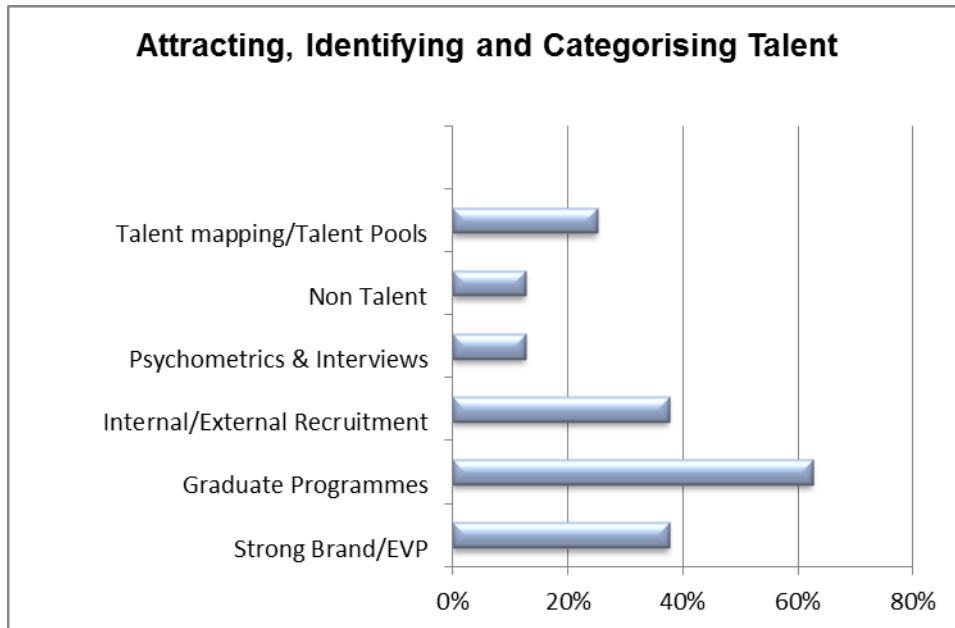
### **➤ Identify, Attract and Categorise Talent**

Three out of eight (37%) respondents commented on attraction strategies and highlighted that EVP and a strong brand is important for attracting talented individuals. Five of the respondents did not discuss this as an attraction strategy.

Three out of the eight (37%) respondents utilise internal and external recruitment. One out of these three respondents highlighted selection tools such as psychometrics and interviews. Five of the eight (63%) respondents participate in graduate programmes and career fairs in order to attract talented individuals.

Two of the eight (25%) respondents discussed that once employees are recruited organisation's employ a segmented model according to criteria of performance, potential, leadership, critical skills and young talented individuals into smaller pools/categories. They discussed talent mapping, succession planning and a talent pipeline. Six respondents did not provide insight as to how their organisations categorise talented individuals.

In addition, one out of eight (13%) respondents above also shared the view that everyone is employed to do a job and even if employees are considered non- talented individuals they should still have the opportunity to learn, develop skill sets and obtain training to be fit for roles.



**Figure 5:** Attract, Identify and Categorise Talent

### ➤ **Retaining Talent**

Retention of Talent includes various offerings which according to the respondents' differentiate organisations from each other. In this section additional information from other categories discussed earlier in the chapter were taken into account, e.g. respondents discussing definitions and challenges which overlap with retention and is included in the categories below:

#### ❖ **Engagement**

Two of the eight (25%) respondents indicate that conversations, talent discussions and engagement around careers, increases, promotions and milestones give an idea of where employees fit. Through conversations, practise, actions and behaviour of the organisation, it is quite clear who is identified as talented individuals. Six respondents did not comment on engagement specifically, however it is important to note the roles and skills of Line Managers identified by the respondents later in the chapter.

#### ❖ **Rewards, Recognition and added benefits**

Six of the eight (75%) respondents discussed that market benchmarking, experience to do the job, abilities and skills are important and that remuneration is stratified across the company or regulated by industry. The other two respondents indicated that in certain organisations, it is not guaranteed that talented individuals will get more money, promotions or status/symbol.

Five of the eight (67%) respondents state that development needs act as retention strategy and differentiates organisations from competitors. Talented individuals are treated differently, would have more development offerings accessible to them and will be fast tracked with perks and added benefits. Talent pools are deliberate and individualised offerings are based on a person's future, organisational objectives and future leadership requirements. Three respondents did not comment on development needs.

#### ❖ ***Global opportunities***

Organisations offer global mobility programmes as part of the attraction and retention policy and four of the eight (50%) respondents offer this as a retention strategy. The other four respondents did not indicate whether their organisations offer global opportunities to talented individuals.

#### ❖ ***Performance Management***

Five out of eight (63%) respondents agree that talented individuals are identified via Performance management which can lead to mentoring, coaching and remuneration reviews. Performance management has been mentioned in earlier categories by respondents but three of the respondents do not mention it at all.

#### ❖ ***Culture***

Four of the eight (50%) respondents state that institutional culture and the buy in from leadership is vital for Talent Management. Some organisations practise a transparent process and talented individuals know who they are as while non-talented employees. The aim is to enhance a performance based

culture. Transparent processes depend on the company maturity and how differently employees are treated. Some organisations choose not to inform employees. Four respondents did not discuss transparent models related to the culture of the organisation.

#### ❖ **Work life balance**

Organisations should offer work life balance, e.g. going to gym, family support attached to reward and this is recommended by three out of eight (37%) respondents, whilst five respondents did not provide input in this category.

#### **Monitoring Talent**

One out of eight (13%) respondents discuss that technology which can empower individuals, create governance for monitoring purposes and make work life easier however there is more value in engaging with people. Earlier in the chapter two respondents highlighted as a challenge, the implementation of Talent Management and over operationalizing of practices. Six of the respondents did not comment on how their organisations monitor talent.

#### **Standardising Policies and Processes**

Five out of eight (67%) respondents stated the importance of standardised policies and procedures. They discuss recruitment processes and succession planning. Policies and procedures from a centralised depository are important to mitigate risk, governance and compliance and promote consistent policy practices. Organisations must enhance transformation and Human Resource strategy aligned to attract and retain talented individuals. Three of the respondents did not provide input of policies and procedures that support Talent Management processes.

### Summary of various retention strategies

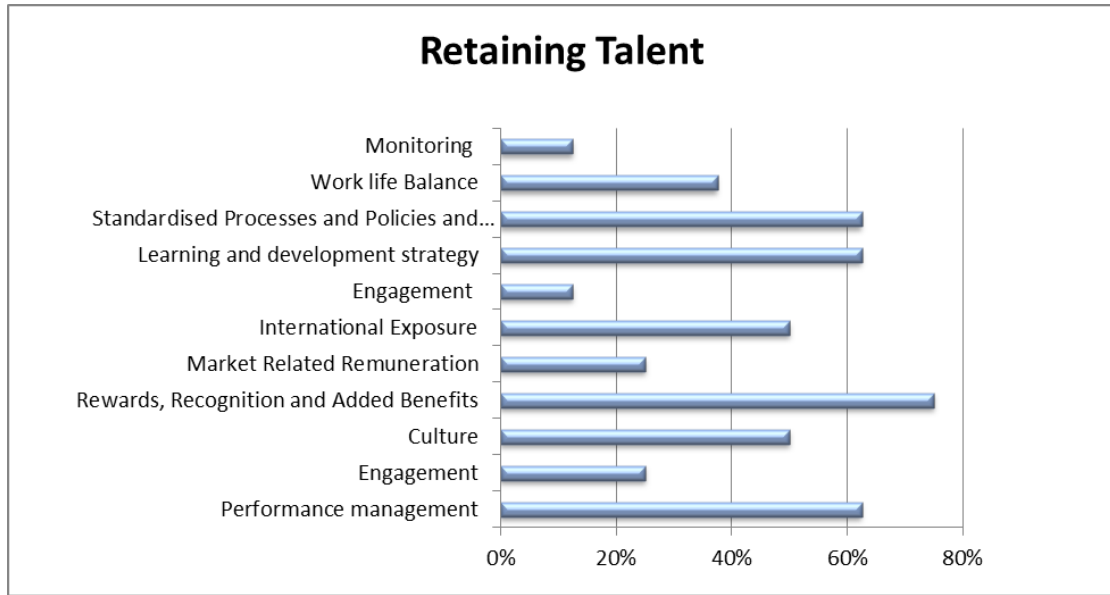


Figure 6: Retaining Talent

### 3. Does TM possess some features which are distinct from Human Resources Management (HRM)/Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)?

In this section additional information from other categories discussed earlier in the chapter were taken into account, e.g. respondents discussing definitions and challenges whereby there is an overlap and is included in the categories below. In addition some respondents discussed Talent Management with differing and contradicting features.

Only one out of eight (13%) respondents indicates that Talent Management is a strategic support function and impacts on all aspects of the organisation. The respondent indicated that Talent Management's objectives are specific and be a science on its own. In addition the respondent added that Talent Management and Human Resources Management inform each other and there is an overlap to support the organisation.

Two out of eight (25%) respondents views Talent Management as having a more strategic view than Human Resources i.e. strategic sourcing whereas Human Resources will have recruitment, day to day practises, transactional

functions and centres of expertise, i.e. Organisational Development, Learning and Development and Graduate programmes.

The remaining five out of eight (63%) respondents agree that Talent Management falls within Human Resources strategy which in turn is linked to the rest of business strategy, rather than as a stand-alone and separate function. Talent Management is part of Human Resources Management since it does not have formalised and stand-alone strategy regarding reward, training, employment equity, talent pool and recruitment.

Of these five respondents, two viewed Talent Management as a strategic lever complimented by governance, remuneration, change management, practises and systems that run across the functions. Talent Management is seen as the value-add services that a Human Resources fraternity can offer. More specifically, four out of these five respondents also view Talent Management as having an integrated role with Human Resources.

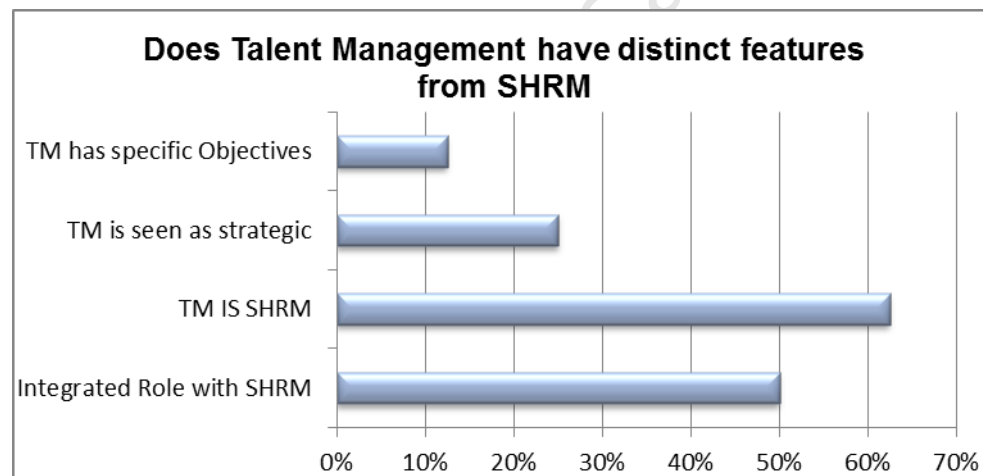


Figure 7: Talent Management have distinct features from SHRM

**Sub question: With regard to TM/STM, what do you see the role of the HR function and line/senior leaders are in the TM/STM process?**

Five out of the eight (63%) of the respondents agree that Line manager's role and buy-in is significant already highlighted earlier in the chapter. Line managers, who are not talented individuals themselves may have challenges in dealing with talented individuals, however organisations have interventions

for Line manager's to develop their own skills e.g. internally developed courses, performance processes and development facilitators. Three respondents did not provide input on Line managers' role.

Three out of the eight (37%) respondents agree that Human Resources practitioners have the experience, theoretical, technical knowledge and Talent Management background. Human Resources in any event need to know the business and it is seen as part of what they do in order to deliver on Talent Management. Human Resources practitioner's role is core since it has a broad knowledge across strategy, Talent Management, psychology and legislation and should be recognised in and by business towards making a positive contribution. Five respondents did not provide input on HR's role in the TM/STM process.

Six out of eight (75%) respondents indicated that Line managers need to have effective conversation and engagement skills i.e. listening to employees and translating talent into activities. Line manager's needs to have wisdom, empathy, understand employee's and be able to manage Talent. Line should have the ability to utilise talented individuals to transform the organisation and reach organisational goals. Line manager's requires day to day PM skills and be able to coach talented individuals. Line managers are responsible for talented individuals and this should form part of their key performance areas. Two respondents did not provide input on Line manager's skills.

Four out of eight (50%) respondents agree that Human Resources practitioners' skills should include an understanding of strategic initiatives and direction of the organisation. Human Resources skills are vital to the bottom line/operations and they should be able to contribute to operations. Human Resources practitioners must understand the business and align what talent is required in line with business requirements and support business through people. They should have intervention skills, be assertive, be objective and be able to influence, challenge and change Line managers perceptions. They

also need to partner with and have relationships with Line managers. Four respondents did not provide input on HR's skills.

Four out of eight (50%) respondents further agree that there is no difference in Talent Management and Human Resources skills since as a necessity the functions overlaps. The only difference is the focus on functions. Human Resources are the owner and implementer of policies, procedures including Talent Management. Human Resources practitioners should be in line with Talent Management objectives. Talent Management cannot be in isolation from Human Resources.

One respondent out of eight (13%) added that Talent Managers should be able to articulate in business jargon the value add and return on investment of Talent Management. Talent Managers should be trained and developed to ensure that proper career frameworks are in place, rewards and remuneration is linked to the business strategy and identify talented individuals in order to assist the business in sustainability.

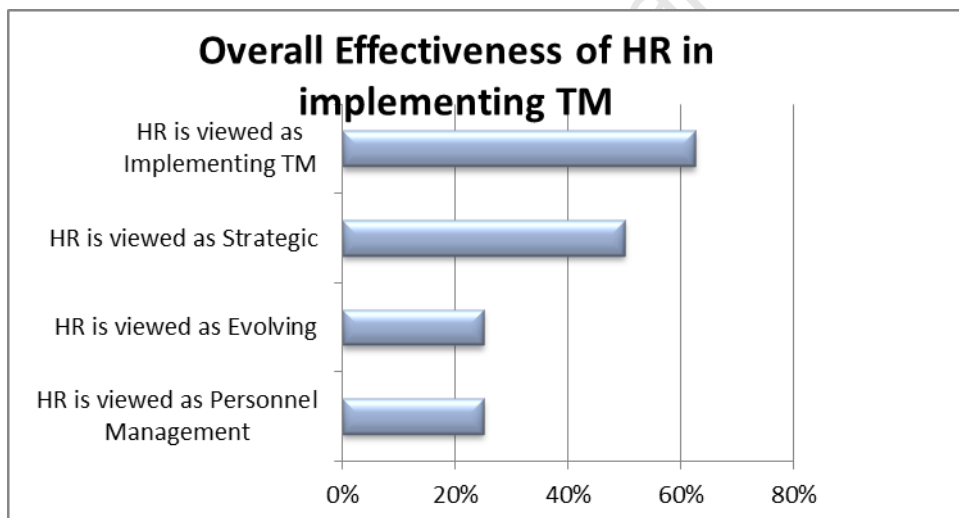
**4. *How effective do you think the overall Human Resources (HR) function is in implementing Talent Management?***

Five out of the eight (50%) respondents share a common view that Human Resources play an important role in implementing Talent Management. They highlight that the future of Talent Management depends on Human Resources to ensure that Talent Management is appropriately managed. Human Resources have been around longer and have the necessary policies and technical skills for implementing Talent Management. The remaining four respondents did not comment on the Human Resources function in this question.

There seems to be varied opinions on how Strategic Human Resources Management is viewed. Four of the eight (50%) respondents view Human Resources as having transformed and becoming more professional and efficient with transactional processes contributing to the strategy of the

organisation. They share insight that Human Resources are evolving to a proactive workforce forecasting future needs instead of being compliant. Two of the eight (25%) share that in SA, Human Resources is only just starting to develop and evolve to a Strategic Human Resources Management culture whilst the other two (25%) state that organisations may still view Human Resources as Personnel Management.

Included in the responses, one respondent believes that individuals play a role with regard to implementing Talent Management and share in owning their own future. Another respondent added that Human Resources should empower Line managers to consider how Talent Manager serves their individual business needs. Finally one respondent highlighted that development is also a government initiative however skills are limited and due to the global economic slowdown, organisations alone may not be in a position to afford time and money to invest in Talent Management.



**Figure 8:** Overall Effectiveness of HR in implementing TM

### 4.3 DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to investigate whether there is any difference in the theory and application of Talent Management and Strategic Human Resources Management.

Kehinde (2012) explained that although organisations do not define talent in the same manner, there is an assurance in talent and its impact on the bottom line. Aston and Morton (2005, p.30) notes that there "...isn't a single consistent or concise definition of talent management". The view is also supported that the concept of Talent Management has different meanings to different people (Uren, 2007).

Based on the responses, it is clear that practitioners define talent differently, however support that it is innate, a combination of a person's abilities and impacts the bottom line and organisational performance. There appears to be a common understanding, verbiage and objective of what talent and Talent Management is in practise.

When discussing Talent Management, the respondents all indicated various Human Resources processes that support and are needed to ensure the successful implementation of Talent Management. Akmal, Hamid, Hashim and Omar (2011) agree that the applications needed to support Talent Management processes are defined differently by industry analysts and consultants, but the majority includes: recruitment, performance management, competency and succession management, career development, and compensation. These are in fact all or segmented typical Human Resources activities, practices and functions and share underlying principles with Human Resources Management (Elegbe, 2010; Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

In addition, Talent Management shares similar Human Resources, business and strategic objectives as described by the respondents. Since there are interchangeable uses and similar underlying principles that Talent Management share with Strategic Human Resources Management this may

still causes confusion and can be deemed to be supportive that Talent Management is old ideas of Human Resources Management relabelled (Elegbe, 2010).

In order for Talent Management to be operationalised, it must be aligned directly or via Human Resources to the objectives and strategy of the organisation. Corporate Executive Board (2006) state that when creating an integrated Talent Management strategy, companies evaluate their human capital and determine which aspects of Human Resources will have the greatest impact on achieving talent and business goals. Aswathappa (2004) argue that Strategic Human Resources Management is responsible for aligning organisational capabilities to the wider organisational strategies and corporate objectives.

Highlighted by majority of respondents for the effective and successful implementation of Talent Management are the buy-in, commitment and drive by Top management. Stahl, et al. (2007) indicates that in leading organisations, Talent Management has multiple owners that include the CEO, all Line managers and Human Resources Managers. Based on the response the roles and skills of Line managers and Human Resources professionals are equally important for the implementation of Talent Management, but may be lacking. Colling, et al. (2010) state that there are underlying reasons manager's behaviours towards talent has not received great attention. Strategic Human Resources also requires Top management buy-in and Aswathappa (2004) argue that Strategic Human Resources Management breaches the issues of employer-employee relationships.

Human Resources is viewed to have the experience and technical knowledge to create an infrastructure of processes, policies, best practise and seems the most suited to drive, support and implement Talent Management. Human Resources are seen to work with business at varying levels as a strategic partner and in some instances still at a transactional level. The study reveals that at which ever level Human Resources, plays a role in the implementation

of Talent Management. The views expressed in the study indicate that the role of Human Resources in Talent Management include partnering with Line to understand the issues that impact business. Human Resources should assist Line managers to manage talented individuals around business needs, identify necessary skills for delivery and advise during recruitment, succession planning and effective performance. Ulrich, Younger, Brockbank and Ulrich (2012) share the view that Human Resources professionals should become insightful advisers and architects on matters that business leaders increasingly recognise as important for their success, i.e. individual abilities (talent), organisation capabilities (culture) and leadership.

One factor that influence the operationalisation and implementation of Talent Management include whether organisations are Talent Management -ready and if they have the infrastructure and flexibility to accommodate and offer talented individuals what they need. This also points to the view that Talent Management ensures that the right employees are in the right roles at the right time to achieve current and future organisation objectives. Collings and Mellahi (2010) argue that Strategic Human Resources Management is the systematic identification of key positions, development of high performers with potential and offers differentiated Human Resources architecture to facilitate filling these key positions.

A view among respondents indicates that there is no difference in Human Resources Management and Talent Management skills only that there is a difference in function. Talent Managers should similarly to Human Resources, articulate, measure and show return on investment or impact of Talent either at a strategic level and more importantly on the bottom line. In addition Talent Managers should be trained, effectively implement career frameworks, rewards and remuneration, proactively targeted individuals. Organisations are also under resourced and lack skills to focus efforts to retain scarce skills.

Talent Management needs to be viewed in a holistic and structured manner, managing the employment life cycle i.e. attraction and retention through to the

deployment or exit of talented individuals. Prior to attraction, organisations rely on their employer brand and EVP and strategic sourcing. Martin, Gollan and Grigg (2009) discuss that Strategic Human Resources Management have implications of this drive towards corporateness seeking to become employers of choice with a global employer brand and best practice.

The attraction phase of Talent Management also includes Human Resources selection techniques of assessment, recruitment and most widely utilised by respondents is graduate programmes. Corporate Executive Board (2006) indicates that selection and recruitment is individual elements of Talent Management but in fact Human Resources processes.

Varying retention processes include career development, performance management, engagement, flexible roles, remuneration and rewards, work life balance, and opportunities of global exposure. Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Hirsh (2009) identify that Talent Management underpins all Human Resources practices and represents a rebranding of Human Resources Management rather than something fundamentally different.

These structured processes also need to be measured and besides effective performance management which informs career development, growth in competencies and talent mapping highlighted in the study, there appears to be limited tracking mechanisms. This appears to be the case for monitoring talented individuals, the overall investment as well as the return on investment. The study indicates that Talent Management has administrative foundations in place whether automated with matrix, templates or a checklist/categorical system for segmentation into talent pools. The concern is that Talent Management may lose the engagement focus and becomes administrative laden. Corporate Executive Board (2006) indicates that succession planning and performance management is individual elements of Talent Management but in fact Human Resources processes.

Four views emanate from the study, one being that Talent Management and Human Resources strategy are interrelated. Secondly that Talent

Management is Strategic Human Resources, a view shared by most respondents. Thirdly, that Talent Management is a separate strategic discipline since Human Resources has its own functions. Finally that Talent Management is a strategic lever (value added service) of Human Resources strategy. Lewis and Heckman (2006) reports that Talent Management is often utilised as a means to highlight the strategic importance of Human Resources specialties without adding to the theory or practice of that speciality.

It is noted that Talent Management implementation in comparison to literature and best practise tends to be reactive and is triggered at the point of exit with no future planning of critical future skills. Mackinsey (2008) argues that Strategic Human Resources Management requires additional capabilities to develop effective solutions.

In the study it was found that practitioners are cognisant of the literature, research, policies and best practise models of Talent Management, however believe that in the South African context, Talent Management is a new concept. The respondents indicate that Strategic Human Resources Management may still be trying to find its place as a strategic partner. Other respondents highlight Human Resources is only just starting to develop a Strategic Human Resources culture whilst some organisations may still view Human Resources as personnel department. According to Sparrow, Hesketh, Hird, Marsh and Balain (2008) Strategic Human Resources Management's contribution is of concern due to notions of transferable best practice into unreceptive organisations.

Deloitte Consulting (2011) states that only 6% of employees surveyed rate their organisations overall Human Resources and talent efforts as world-class, while more than four in ten (43%) called them fair or poor. Not unexpectedly, employees who describe their companies' talent programs as world-class or very good are nearly twice (42% to 23%) as committed to remaining at their jobs than employees who work at companies with fair or poor talent efforts.

Certain sectors invest in talented individuals, retention initiatives and keep Talent Management on the agenda. Talented individuals are however not looking for the same things, whilst organisations are searching for the same Talent and this can make it easy for talented individuals to be mobile. The generational differences compound to the challenge of Talent Management and the study reveals that organisations are very much aware that this impacts on the attraction and retention strategies whilst attempting to balance the varying needs and different expectations of generational differences. Workforce demographics in the labour market are changing and surveys conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Deloitte and Harvard Business School reveal that employees are attracted and retained based on what they value most.

The other extreme is simply that some organisations disregard employees and believe that employees are employed to do their jobs.

The final chapter discusses the limitations, future recommendations and contributions of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

While the literature assists to align the development of theory with practise, in industry, the results can only be generalised to this grouping of executive Talent Managers in well-established companies and their personal perceptions of the reality of Strategic Human Resources Management and Talent Management strategies. In addition, in an attempt to provide insight to attraction and retention strategies, the unique needs of individuals and organisations ensure that it should not be interpreted without qualitative input.

The study includes a comparison of literature to practise and best practise, however may be limited to private sector companies and do not include the public sector that also benchmark themselves against international and private sector surveys.

Finally, the study did not explore or elicit input regarding the impact of talent and Talent Management on teams. Reference is only made to the organisation and organisational strategy.

#### **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study provides insight that South African organisations may not be ready for global and best practise Talent Management practises. Strategic Human Resources Management firstly needs to be optimally explored as a competitive advantage. Talent Management has managed to find a place in industry and is here to stay, however it cannot be sustained without Strategic Human Resources Management practices and expertise.

Benest (2008) state that top managers must engage in initiatives to enhance organisational culture and specifically market positive culture as a benefit. The role of engagement should further be explored in order for Talent Management to be aligned to the business and strategy.

Organisations should be cognisant that Talent Management practices not become administrative or over operationalised by checklists, categories or segmentation. In addition, implementing best practise Talent Management models must have proper Line manager and Human Resources skills and infrastructure.

Future research can also explore whether there is a new management style required to manage generational differences and diverse groups or whether it is simply an up-skilling of existing skills or perhaps a lack of basic management skills.

Future research can explore what truly differentiates organisations from each other since there appears to be similar Employee Value Propositions (EVP), attraction and retention strategies.

The respondents indicated that the literature and best practise models no longer provide new information regarding Talent Management, only new ways for implementation. The study does not seem to highlight new challenges experienced in practise versus what is in literature. In fact the challenges seem to be the same with different labels. Future research should focus on enhancing Talent Management and challenges of implementation.

There are mixed views of transparent and closed Talent Management models. Future research can explore what the impact is, if any, of organisations that choose to practise open or closed Talent Management models.

### **5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study does not highlight anything new around Talent and Talent Management or any extra value that it is adding to the theory, literature and industry.

It is however observed that Strategic Human Resources Management through careful planning to the organisation,,s strategy can play a crucial role for Talent Management to become ingrained in an organisation,,s culture and practices.

This would improve the credibility of Strategic Human Resources Management as well. Unlike some topics that have obtained faddish status over the years, Strategic Human Resources Management has achieved empirical and industry staying power and few would argue that it is an important and established field of study.

Organisations that view Talent Management as Strategic Human Resources Management will find higher levels of success. People are a costly, a critical resource in any organisation and can be a powerful source of sustained advantage. Talent Management is the instrument or strategy of having such valuable people. Strategic Human Resources Management needs to make Talent Management their business.

Going forward as a Strategic Human Resources Management professional, it will be important to be assertive, influential, mobile and organised with flexibility and the ability to adapt to strategic and global requirements. These areas would better position and enhance current Strategic Human Resources Management competencies to be future active and make a strategic contribution to world of work.

This study shows that Strategic Human Resources Management provides the fundamental platform for sustaining and retaining talented individuals and can provide the impetus to differentiate between best organisations to work for as well as an increase competitive advantage for these organisations.

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## APPENDIX 1

Semi-structured interview questionnaire:

1. What is your definition of Talent, Talent Management (TM) and/or Strategic Talent Management (STM)?

Follow up questions:

- What do you think is the importance of TM or STM in the business/global context?
  - Based on your knowledge, what do you think is the difference on how TM/STM is conceptualised in academic literature and by practitioners (i.e. operationalised in organizational practice)?
  - What factors do you think influence the manner in which TM/STM is introduced?
  - How would you implement TM/STM and operationalise it with the objectives of the company?
  - What do you think the challenges are/would be to ensure that it is successfully implemented?
  - To what extent did/can the TM/STM process link with other strategic business priorities at the company? (Identify areas of good and more difficult areas of linkage?)
2. How does your company identify, develop and retain talented employees?

Follow up questions:

- Specifically how does your company identify internal/external talented employees and how does the company codify talent within organizations;
- i.e. Categorization of talent;
- Talent management as internal talent pools and succession planning;
  - Talent management as the identification of talent positions;
  - Talent and the difficulty involved in replacing talent.
- Do the company institutional and/or culture influences lead to the adaptation of talent management practices?
3. Features of TM which is distinct from Human Resources Management (HRM)/Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)?

Follow up questions:

- In what ways do the TM process “fit” with the other things that HR is trying to achieve in the company;
  - With regard to TM/STM, what do you see the role of :
    - a) The HR function,
    - b) The line/senior leaders are in the TM/STM process?
  - What do you think the skills/attributes are that would be required by the
    - a) The HR function,
    - b) The line/senior leaders are in the TM/STM process?
4. How effective do think the overall Human Resources (HR) function is in implementing Talent Management?

Have you any other thoughts and comments about the talent definition and process, both generally, and in the company?

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