

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**IMPACT OF TALENT MANAGEMENT ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AT
ESKOM**

**By
Zamantuli Mtshali
212561941**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters in Commerce: Leadership Studies**

**Graduate School of Business and Leadership
College of Law and Management Studies**

**Supervisor: Cecile Proches
2014**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following individuals, without whose assistance, this study would not have been possible:

- ☐ All glory and honour to the Lord and my Father, whose grace was sufficient at all times and guided me to the finish line. Worthy is your name.
- ☐ I owe my gratitude to my late father, Dr Joshua Ntuli, for standing by my side to the very last day of his life, and who inspired and gave me confidence to continuously challenge myself in all situations. My mother, Phumzile Ntuli, who in her time of mourning still took time to edit my work and continues to be my pillar of strength. I could not have done this without your prayers, encouragement, unwavering love and support.
- ☐ To my aunt, Khetha Conco, who has always given me support and guidance.
- ☐ To my children, Somandla and Amahle, thank you for your understanding and support during these past two years.
- ☐ To my brother and sister, Sibusiso and Tlalane Ntuli, thank you for your support and helping look after my children.
- ☐ To my domestic helper, Winnie Mntambo, your support and help have enabled me to complete this research whilst raising my two children.

- To my supervisor, Cecile Proches, for all the guidance and assistance throughout this research. Thank you for your constructive comments.

- To my friends and relatives, thank you for the support you have given me.

- Lastly, but not the last, I wish to express gratitude to my employer Eskom for funding part of my studies, and to colleagues, for taking time out of their busy schedule to participate in the research.

ABSTRACT

Eskom is a state-owned company that is run by an Executive which reports to a Board. As part of the existing Eskom structures, the Human Resources (HR) Department reports to the Chief Executive and the Board. It is accountable for a structure includes in its value chain, talent management. The purpose of the talent management system at Eskom is to provide, among other services, a defined talent management process to attract, grow and retain top talent in core, critical and scarce skills. Within Eskom's talent management system there are evident weaknesses that inhibit a successful implementation of the talent management process. This research was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the talent management system at Eskom and to ascertain the effect thereof on career development. The objectives of the study were to: identify the challenges that inhibit the implementation of the talent management process at Eskom; establish the effect of talent management on career development for employees in Eskom; establish the role of leadership in ensuring the successful implementation of talent management in Eskom; and identify interventions to improve the implementation of talent management in Eskom. Owing to the social and complex nature of the study, a qualitative research approach, was adopted because of its ability to capture perceptions, reality and feelings of participants at Eskom. Purposive sampling was used. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 respondents at Eskom Head Office comprised of: three senior managers accountable for talent management, two HR talent and skills practitioners and nine managerial staff. The data was collected and analysed in themes. The study also examined demographic data of participants and their roles in the organisation, years of service, age category and level of education to ensure that all views were consistently considered and represented. Through interviews with Eskom staff, this qualitative study has identified definite areas of improvement for Eskom's talent management programme. The identified need to enhance the talent management programme was greatly influenced by the findings which indicated poor implementation and leadership commitment to talent management. The findings further indicated that, in ensuring an invaluable impact of talent management to career and leadership development, it is recommended that Eskom leadership must play a critical role in aggressively and consistently driving talent management and

the alignment of policies relevant to talent management. This could be done through simplifying the talent management process and inculcating a culture of engagement.

GLOSSARY

The following terms apply in this dissertation:

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EE	Employment Equity
HR	Human Resources
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Description	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	iii
GLOSSARY	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
DECLARATION	xiii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	3
1.4 Research Questions	4
1.5 Relevance of the Topic and the Study to Eskom	4
1.6 Research scope	5
1.7 Theoretical underpinning.....	6
1.8 Preliminary literature review	6
1.8.1 Talent management	6
1.8.2 What Talent Management Is.....	7
1.8.3 Responsibility and accountability of talent management.....	7
1.8.4 Aim of talent management	8
1.8.5 Talent management and business performance	9

1.8.6 Talent management challenges	10
1.9 Research Methodology	11
1.10 Limitations	14
1.11 Structure of dissertation	14
1.12 Chapter Summary	15
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Introduction	16
2.2 Definition of talent	16
2.3 Talent management theoretical understanding	19
2.4 Talent management practical application.....	20
2.5 Accountability of talent management	22
2.6 Management's role in talent management.....	22
2.7 Recruitment and selection	23
2.8 Performance Management	24
2.9 The role of Human Resources in Talent Management.....	24
2.10 Talent management objectives	26
2.11 Talent Management Framework	28
2.12 Organisational strategy and talent management	31
2.13 Career Management.....	32
2.14 Career Development	34
2.15 Succession Planning.....	37
2.16 Impact of talent management in organisations	38
2.17 Chapter Summary	39

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	41
3.1 Introduction	41
3.2 Research philosophy and approach	41
3.3 Research methodology	42
3.3.1 Quantitative research	42
3.3.2 Qualitative research.....	43
3.4 Research design	46
3.5 Population and sampling	46
3.6 Data gathering process	48
3.7 Data analysis	51
3.8 Validity and reliability	52
3.8.1 Credibility	55
3.8.2 Transferability	55
3.8.3 Consistency	56
3.8.4 Neutrality	56
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	58
4.1 Introduction	58
4.2 Participants and demographic information to the research study	58
4.3 Talent management definition and understanding in Eskom	64
4.4 Responsibility to deliver a successful talent management programme	67
4.5 Performance as a critical feeder to talent management	69
4.6 Career and leadership development	73

4.7	Succession management.....	75
4.8	Eskom's Talent management objectives	77
4.9	Compliance with the talent management process	79
4.10	Personal career development.....	80
4.11	Control over successful implementation of the talent management process	82
4.12	Leadership level of accountability	83
4.13	Leadership role	86
4.14	Challenges inhibiting successful talent management implementation	88
4.15	Critical success factors required for Eskom to realise successful talent management and career development.....	89
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		92
5.1	Introduction	92
5.2	Key findings	93
5.3	Recommendations	98
5.3.1	Leadership commitment and consciously driven talent management process	99
5.3.2	Alignment of human resource related policies and processes	99
5.3.3	Simplify and follow the talent management process systematically	99
5.3.4	Talent management culture and engagement	100
5.4	Limitations of the study.....	100
5.5	Recommendations for future research	100
5.6	Conclusion	101

REFERENCES.....	102
APPENDIX 1 Informed Consent	113
This page is to be retained by the researcher	115
APPENDIX 2 Interview Questions	116
APPENDIX 3 Ethical Clearance	120

LIST OF FIGURES

Number	Description	page
Figure 1.1:	Eskom's legal structure	2
Figure 1.2:	Eskom's immediate priorities towards its vision	5
Figure 1.3:	Structure of the dissertation	14
Figure 2.1:	Conceptualisation of talent in the world of work	18
Figure 2.2:	Talent Management Framework	29
Figure 2.3:	The new organisational career	34
Figure 3.1:	Validity and Reliability of the Research study.....	55
Figure 4.1:	Number of respondents by race and gender	59
Figure 4.2:	Number and Roles of Respondents in Talent Management.....	60
Figure 4.3:	Number of Respondents and Years of Service	61
Figure 4.4:	Number of Respondents per Age Category	62
Figure 4.5:	Number of Respondents and Level of Education	63
Figure 4.6:	Stakeholders in the talent management process	68

LIST OF TABLES

Number	Description	page
Table 3.1:	Demographical data of respondents.....	48
Table 4.1:	Themes in the study	64

DECLARATION

I, Zamantuli Mtshali, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a) their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - b) where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- (v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am an author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.
- (vi) This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the References sections.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Eskom is a state-owned company that employs 43 000 permanent employees and is run by an Executive which reports to a Board. Within the existing Eskom structures there is a Human Resources (HR) Department which reports to the Chief Executive and the Board, and is accountable for a structure which includes a talent management function in its value chain. The purpose of the talent management system in Eskom is to provide, among other services, a defined talent management process which aims to attract, grow and retain top talent in core, critical and scarce skills, (Eskom Procedure for Deployment – Talent, Succession and Career Management, 2011). Within Eskom's talent management system there are evident weaknesses that inhibit a successful implementation of the talent management process. This research was conducted to investigate the complexities that inhibit the successful implementation of the talent management system at Eskom.

Eskom has, as one of its objectives, the goal to be ranked in the five top-performing utilities in the world (Eskom Business Plan, 2010). Included in the organisation's objectives is the requirement to fulfil a comprehensive talent management plan. Eskom has developed an Employment Equity (EE) plan which derives support from the outcomes of the talent management system. Talent Management is, therefore, one of the tools that have been identified as being critical for realising the above-mentioned objective. However, it appears that the hard work put into the process thus far has not yielded the desired outputs.

Some of the challenges to the process have manifested themselves through the inability to build skills in critical areas, for example technical skills, the lack of a solid pipeline, the lack of retention of talent among core, critical and scarce skills, and the inability to fulfil EE targets which are part of the talent management objectives in the organisation.

Eskom has been in existence in South Africa since 1923 and was formerly known as the Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM). In July 2002 it was converted into

a public, limited liability company, solely owned by the government. Eskom is one of the top 20 utilities in the world, rated by its capacity to generate electricity. Eskom generates about 95 % of the electricity used in South Africa and approximately 45 % of the electricity used in Africa (Eskom, 2014). It generates, transmits and distributes electricity to customers in the industrial, mining, commercial, agricultural and residential sectors, as well as to redistributors.

Eskom's structure (Figure 1.1 below) mainly consists of the line divisions which are principally concerned with generation, transmission, distribution, and customer services which interface with Eskom's customers. Service functions are part of the structure and are there to mainly support the line functions, as well as Eskom Enterprises, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Eskom Holdings. Eskom Enterprises provides lifecycle support and plant maintenance network protection, as well as the required support for the capacity expansion programme for all divisions of Eskom Holdings Limited. Eskom's Sustainability Division acts as the strategic and governance wing of Eskom and is mainly responsible for organisational strategy and policy development.

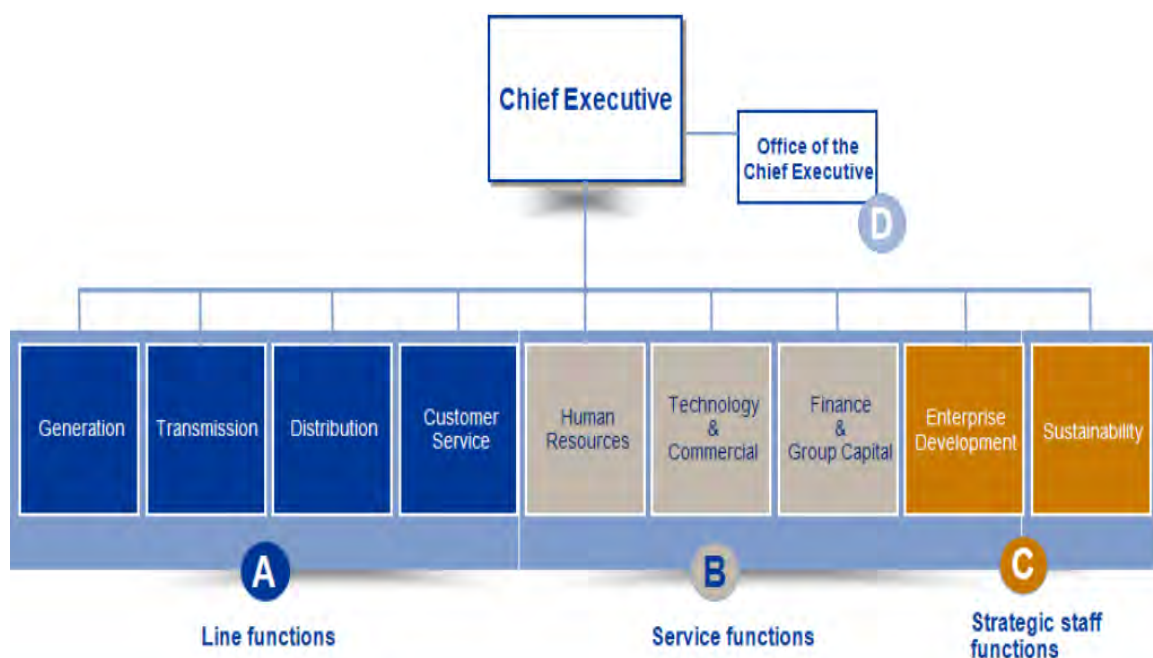


Figure 1.1: Eskom's legal structure

Source: Eskom Business Plan (2010)

Eskom's footprint is in all provinces in South Africa, with the Generation Division being mainly represented in the coal-rich Mpumalanga province by virtue of the power stations being fired by coal. Transmission, Distribution and Customer Services are represented regionally. Services functions and strategic functions are mainly found in the head office environment which is based in the Gauteng province, in Sunninghill where this study will be conducted.

1.2 Problem Statement

There is a noticeable challenge with realising a successful conversion of the input made to the talent management process, when compared with satisfactory and expected outputs as also observed by talent (Stahl, Björkman, Farndale, Morris, Paauwe, Stiles & Wright, 2012): Eskom has a talent management process which is followed rigorously and which should ensure the availability of a consistent talent pool or apply effective talent management to minimise gaps that mainly arise out of business demands and talent attrition. The current context is, however, not reflecting the efforts that are being put into the process; instead, the following challenges are evident in the organisation: a lack of a strong internal pipeline, the unavailability of succession plans to effectively deploy, grow, and retain core, critical and scarce skills, as well as enhance leadership capacity, and the absence of a leadership pipeline and development (Burkus. & Osula, 2011). A review must constantly be made of organisational strategy, the talent management process, other related processes and leadership culture that ensure the required and desirable talent management impacts on career and leadership development, in order for the business to remain relevant and competitive (Clarke, 2013). The problem that was researched was what hinders effectiveness of talent management in the organisation.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were: to determine how effective the talent management process at Eskom is; to establish the effect of talent management on career development for employees at Eskom; to investigate the role of leadership in ensuring the successful implementation of talent management at Eskom; and to

make recommendations for the effective implementation of talent management at Eskom.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions, based on the observation made in Eskom and continuous strategic focus on building of skills were aligned to the research objectives, namely:

- What is making the talent management system ineffective?
- What hinders the Eskom talent management system from delivering on expected outcomes?
- What can be done to enhance the implementation of the talent management system?

1.5 Relevance of the Topic and the Study to Eskom

Talent management has been identified as a strategic imperative in organisations and is considered an important tool in enhancing performance, attracting, growing and retaining top talent (Eskom Human Resources Strategy, 2010). Failure to implement an effective talent management process has a direct impact on organisational growth and performance (Eskom Human Resources Strategy, 2010). It is therefore critical for Eskom to master the art of talent management implementation in order to realise the many benefits attributed to successful talent management implementation. These benefits may include, among other things, a nurtured succession management pool, the achievement of transformation goals, improved business performance, and the retention of core of skills. The identification of barriers to successful implementation will present an important learning opportunity for the organisation.

Eskom has decided its imperatives for a vision to become one of the top-five performing utilities in the world, and one of the critical areas set as a focus area is the building of skills, as depicted in Figure 1.2.



Figure 1.2: Eskom's immediate priorities towards its vision

Source: Eskom Business Plan (2010)

1.6 Research scope

The scope of this research was limited to Eskom, specifically the managerial levels. The rationale behind this level-aligned scope is that the talent management process has only been rolled out to managerial levels which start from 'M14' (junior management) to 'E' Band (senior management) levels. The talent management process in Eskom has a specific focus on core, scarce and critical positions. The other categories outside core, scarce, critical, and non-managerial positions are sufficiently dealt with through the performance management process in terms of levels and areas of work.

1.7 Theoretical underpinning

The research study took into consideration the relevant theoretical bases underpinning Eskom's Talent Management approved process, EE policy and the recruitment policy.

1.8 Preliminary literature review

The main objective of the theory and literature review is to contextualise and enrich general understanding of talent management.

1.8.1 Talent management

Talent management has appeared in many organisations as a central, deliberate and strategic imperative for organisational development, growth and performance. The framework of talent management has been contextualised as a manner of dealing with talent shortages faced by the demand created by business, with the quality of available skills and knowledge of workers, with growing the skills and with how the critical skills can be retained in organisations (Mellahi & Collings, 2010). Furthermore, talent management has been cited as a critical value-adding dynamic in certifying organisational success through performance (McDonnell, 2011). This is supported by the research carried out by the Boston Consulting Group and the World Federation of People Management Associations (Boston Consulting Group, 2012) which found a fundamental correlation between excellence in talent management and excellence in organisational performance. The study showed that organisations that shine in key areas of the HR value chain, among which is talent management, have enjoyed 2.1 times and revenue growth of 3.5 more, than those organisations that do not pay attention to these areas. Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach (2011) corroborate the above finding and further state that organisations with sound talent management strategies project higher profit margins, realise organisational objectives, and generate general attractiveness for the organisation through customer satisfaction.

1.8.2 What Talent Management Is

It appears that there is not a consistent definition of what talent management is globally, and even in South Africa. Galagan (2008) gathered from the research carried out by the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) that more than 75 organisations define talent management differently. There is, however, consensus that a grounded talent management system can yield positive results on organisational performance and sustainability. Vaiman, Scullion and Collings (2012) also highlight multiple definitions of talent management. It appears that among scholars and talent management practitioners there is a common understanding that talent management is about organisational activities that are concerned with attracting, growing and retaining skills in alignment to organisational strategy and attainment of set objectives (Scullion & Collings, 2011).

For the purpose of this research, the researcher will settle on the Collings and Mellahi (2009) approach, which defines the talent management process as a deliberate, methodical approach of identifying critical positions and their impact in the organisation and creating a talent pool with the intention of developing and retaining the identified talent. It is also about the ability of the talent management system to redeploy talent and to create efficiencies with the available resources. This is all done to secure the achievement of the organisational objective and to secure sustainability of the organisation through the supply that meets the demand of needed skills in critical positions within the competitive labour market.

1.8.3 Responsibility and accountability of talent management

Where organisations maintain that people are their greatest assets, it suggests that the management of talent should be placed at the right level within organisations (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013). Sound talent management has been identified as one of the key processes that set organisations apart from others (Barnett & Davies, 2008).

Conaty and Charan (2011) assert that talent is a resource that must be strategically managed. The responsibility to attract, develop, retain and deploy talent has been placed as a managerial accountability, mainly because the results of these activities have a direct impact on organisational performance. Martin and Schmidt (2010) share the view of placing accountability for talent management at senior levels in an organisation. They deem Chief Executive Officers to be the custodians of talent management in organisations and thus are expected to spend substantial amounts of time in managing talent. They further advocate for inculcating a talent management culture where senior leadership is vigilant on managing talent. There seems to be a strong view that organisations that excel have talent management as a business imperative at the top of their agendas.

Responsibility is further cascaded down from Chief Executive Officers to senior leadership to drive talent management processes by providing suitable work exposure to top talent with potential to succeed in leadership and critical roles.

1.8.4 Aim of talent management

Talent management has surfaced as a strategic imperative in organisations and within the HR value chain. It has been identified as a process that can mitigate the unmet demand of skills and talents that are fuelled by the competitiveness of the market within which organisations operate.

There appears to be a strong correlation between talent management and organisational performance (Aguinis, Gottfredson & Joo, 2012). There is also a strong view that effective talent management yields a competitive advantage (Mellahi & Collings, 2010). Mellahi and Collings further argue that talent is a critical resource in any organisation and management of it is therefore critical. Top talent has a vast impact on business results and accordingly management thereof cannot be underplayed (Martin & Schmidt, 2010).

The ability to attract, develop and retain top talent at the right time and value is the main aim of talent management. Failure to do so in a competitive market may mean that the organisation concerned will fail to attract the right skills that are critical for the business survival of the business. On the other hand, for an organisation that is not developing the skills, that organisation may be sitting with

underdeveloped skills and at times the organisation may lose critical and core skills. Ultimately, the attrition of staff numbers and the replacement of such skills may have a direct negative impact on profitability and impede the competitiveness of the organisation (Doh, Smith, Stumpf & Tymon, 2011).

Leadership development can also be achieved through sound talent management processes in organisations. Doh *et al.*, (2011) identified the fact that moving professionals to supervisory, managerial and leadership roles can also intensify other challenges in the organisation. The need, therefore, to systematically develop and nurture leadership should be at the top of the agenda of any talent management programme for any organisation.

1.8.5 Talent management and business performance

There is a strong link between talent management and organisational performance. In the competitive environment that organisations find themselves in, employees' skills and capabilities set one organisation apart from others, which necessitates the proper investment in talent and management thereof. Williamson (2011) says that talent management is the critical differentiator between the success and failure of an organisation. Talent management continues to be acknowledged as a tool and vehicle for managerial development, which also cannot be separated from organisational performance, and has a major influence on the direction of the organisation (Sheehan, 2011). Talent management has also been identified as a cost-effective way of ensuring business performance and the necessary flexibility required by the business to create a competitive advantage (Coulson-Thomas, 2013). Sweitzer (2013) concurs that a talent management agenda that is integrated with other business imperatives has a major influence on business results, competitive advantage, effectiveness and efficiency. Williamson (2011) states that talent management is the critical differentiator between accomplishment and failure of an organisation. Chahari and Kumari (2013) also advocate for talent management as the system for securing competence of the organisational workforce and quality decision making which eventually leads to excellent and quantifiable business performance. This, therefore, suggests that organisations need to give talent management space to unfold to its full potential

and should be focused on embedding it as a critical business culture, driver and gate keeper.

1.8.6 Talent management challenges

Organisations seem to be succeeding with putting together talent management programmes, although there is still a gap between the existing programmes and expected outcomes of those programmes. Skuza, Scullion and McDonnell (2012) concur and in their study prove that there is a gap between theory and practical application and the operationalisation of talent management in organisations. They further state that although there is consensus that talent management is critical for the competitiveness and survival of organisations, talent management remains unmanaged and therefore its implementation remains a challenge in some organisations.

Organisations continue with traditional practices which do not take into consideration the dynamics of the competitive environment and which are defined by vagueness concerning talent demand, the evolution of the workforce and varying generational interests (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). An example of varying generational interests is a generation that prefers job security versus a generation that enjoys flexibility.

The uncertainty placed by changing consumer demands can also lead to organisations not knowing how to plan and therefore having to rely on other talent acquisition mixes, for an example employing services of third party contractors, freelancers or casual workers. The unpredictable demand from consumers necessitates a different strategy from the traditional approach of creating succession pools where this may not be necessary. Cappelli and Keller (2014) state that the employer preferences which are moving towards using service providers other than permanent employees indicate the employers' inability to provide the job security of permanent employment. The adverse result of the threat to job security is attrition, especially of core, critical and scarce skills, as it can be easy for those exiting to secure other employment from competitors or other industries, and at times, self-employment.

Talent management implies at times a process of differentiation of employees according to their levels of performance and the investment in those employees identified as having potential and those that are high performers. This, therefore, means that performance management is a critical feeder to the talent management process. Cappelli and Keller (2014) identify the subjectivity of the performance management system as a challenge, in that the differentiation of talent according to lenient or critical appraisers, and the subjectivity of that process, compromise consistency in identifying top performers, thus rendering the identification of high potential employees ineffective at times.

There are numerous other factors that may act as barriers to the successful implementation of talent management. Top talent identification, as discussed above, has great impact on the realisation of the talent management objectives. The utilisation of a performance management system as a tool may also have a shortcoming in that it may have bias towards technical competence and ignore leadership competencies.

Hierarchical organisational structures may also relegate the accountability of senior management and commitment to the process and as a result downplay the criticality of the process. The influence of personal relationships can also dampen the objectivity of the process, leading to further challenges developing within the organisation (Skuzza, Scullion & McDonnell, 2012).

The above challenges compel the researcher to further investigate other barriers and impediments facing the organisation.

1.9 Research Methodology

The objective of this section is to discuss the research methodology proposed for this study. The section includes particulars of the population, the sampling methods and size and data gathering process, as well as the analysis thereof.

Research philosophy according to Saunders and Lewis (2012) is a critical aspect of study to understand, as it shapes the approach and the data gathering method that the researcher will use.

It is essential that researchers approach their own study with an understanding of their worldview (Creswell, 2014). Research philosophy is further defined by Saunders and Lewis (2012) as an aspect that determines the researcher's approach, influenced by his or her central assumptions and values.

Constructivism is defined by Creswell (2014) as the worldview that takes into consideration individual context, as seen subjectively by individuals while experiencing the context of that which is being studied. This approach is combined with interpretivism.

Saunders and Lewis (2012) define interpretivism as a philosophical approach that considers social context with its complexities. The approach allows individuals in a broad context to interpret the environment as they experience it (Creswell, 2014). The researcher proposes this approach, mainly because of the social nature of the problem and inherent complexities.

Taking into account the nature of the research problem, the social context and the complexity of the problem, the research process will employed this method and utilised open-ended broad questions to gather information. This approach allowed the participants to authentically share their worldview and context as they experience it.

The research design took an inductive approach, considering that the research process needed to allow engagement and derive meaning from the context as presented by participants. Eskom's talent management implementation was studied in the context of the participants who are exposed to the system. A qualitative method is proposed for this study because of its ability and flexibility to take into account participants' subjective views on the research topic.

The qualitative approach allowed for better comprehension of the fundamental challenges that hinder the organisation in successfully implementing talent management. This was because the qualitative approach captures the genuine experience of respondents within the research context.

Open-ended interviews were used as a method of data collection. Although qualitative research does not come without the criticism that it is subjective,

interviews presented the respondents and the research team the opportunity to engage and establish the respondents' worldviews on the identified organisational challenge being researched. The other advantage of face to face interviews being that the reasons and rationale for the responses received from the participants could be probed whereas a questionnaire does not provide one the opportunity to further engage where necessary.

Population is defined by Saunders and Lewis (2012) as the whole set of a group in the same defined context. The population of the study will comprise Eskom employees. It will be a combination of the policy makers or decision makers and the employees who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the talent management system. The decision makers have the power to change the policy and the practice, and the employees in their capacity will understand the effects of the system. The population is based in the head office environment at Eskom's Megawatt and Sunninghill offices.

Sampling of the population is done because of practical reasons, mainly because it might not possible to reach the entire population for a research problem (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Considering the size of Eskom, it was imperative that a sample be drawn.

Purposive sampling was employed for this study. Purposive sampling takes into account the researcher's judgement on the basis on who is the most suitable respondent to answer the research question (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The selection of the respondents is based on the exposure to the talent management system in the organisation. The sample included two talent management advisors, two senior members in leadership in the organisation, eight employees within the targeted segment of talent management, i.e. managerial employees and two human resource business partners. In total, 14 people formed the sample

Data was analysed using thematic analysis. An inductive approach was utilised in data analysis to gain understanding and insight to the research questions.

1.10 Limitations

The study has produced an insight into the challenges which the organisation is facing and may contribute to the improvement of the current state of talent management.

A notable research limitation of the study is the fact that the study was done only at the head office environment and therefore limits the study to the environment. This excluded many other employees who had experienced the organisation's talent management system and who may be posted in smaller regions where there are pockets of excellence due to size.

Taking into consideration the sensitivity of the subject and the business volatility, a few of the targeted respondents chose not to respond to the invitation to participate in the study. Time constraints and business demands on the respondents may have compromised the priority given to the study.

1.11 Structure of dissertation

The layout and structure of this dissertation is depicted in Figure 1.3 below.

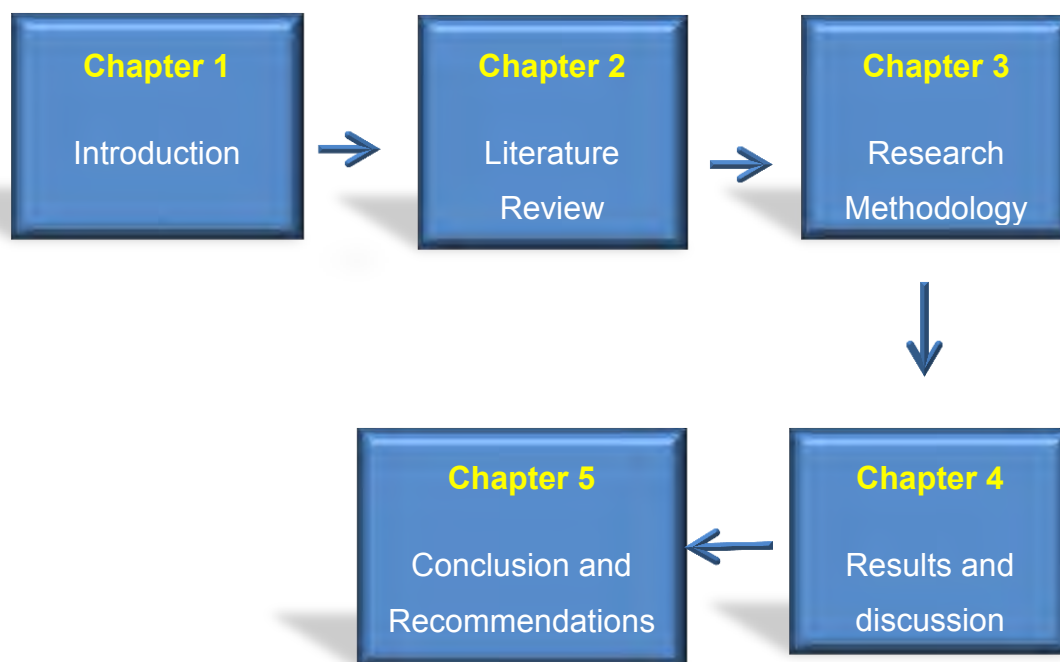


Figure 1.3: Structure of the dissertation

1.12 Chapter Summary

The first chapter has given an introduction to the research by outlining the background to the study, stating the problem and key questions, giving a high level view of the literature reviewed, as well as the research methodology adopted. Chapter 2 presents a detailed literature review and Chapter 3 contains the detailed research methodology. Research findings are presented and discussed in Chapter 4 and the major conclusions and recommendations are discussed in Chapter 5, the final chapter.

The next chapter will focus on the literature review wherein academic literature on talent management in general, as well as specific topics related to the problem statement will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The objective of the literature review as contained in this section was firstly to provide an overview and enhance general understanding of talent management. Talent management is considered to be an imperative in the quest for meeting organisational goals through the acquisition, development and retention of talent necessary for economic growth and competitiveness, specifically in the current environment characterised by a skills shortage as a major challenge. Secondly, the theory and literature on talent management adds insight and provides guidance on how organisations view and approach talent management. It is through understanding the determinants of talent management objectives and, importantly, the associated behaviours and the required effort, application and learning, that Eskom will be able to enhance and attempt to close gaps to fulfil the desired outcomes in the talent management discipline.

2.2 Definition of talent

The word 'talent' can be traced back thousands of years to Syria, Babylon, Greece and Rome, where 'talent' was defined as a denomination of weight, and to the Bible where 'talent' was a monetary unit. The later development of the word in the Greek version of the Bible has led to a meaning of talent as 'capital' (Tansley, 2011). The definition of talent evolved from one century to another, and is today understood by some as indicating a superior ability or aptitude (Tansley, 2011).

Tansley (2011) distinguishes numerous angles that talent can be viewed from, in the following manner:

- **Talent as high potential:** which involves looking at the potential of the individual to advance to senior roles in the organisation, for example to leadership and managerial roles.
- **Talent as high performance:** which involves considering individuals who consistently display high performance.

- Talent as the combination of both high potential and high performance.

The other two perspectives underpinning the above view are behaviour and strengths observed in individuals.

Collings and Mellahi (2009) argue that there are restrictions to the approach of focusing on high potential and high performance employees, in that it is not possible to fill all positions in the organisation with top performers only. They advocate that organisations should alternatively identify the critical positions that have high impact on their competitiveness and sustainability.

Lacey and Groves (2014) believe that nurturing talent is a corporate social responsibility and therefore employers should view all employees as talent, instead of selecting a only few employees to enjoy the privileges of being developed and rewarded above others, simply by virtue of being regarded as top talent.

Zhang and Bright (2012) state a need to understand the meaning of talent before employing talent management practices; however, there is no consistent and universal understanding of the definition of talent. Organisations have in their own contexts defined and articulated what talent means. Yarnell (2011) presents a different perspective of talent in opposition to that of high potential and high performance individual characteristics. She presents an understanding of talent as a “statement of needs”.

Burkus and Osula (2011) highlight different views and a misunderstanding that talent is innate and static. There is also another assertion that talent can be developed for a specific industry and organisation (Garavan, Carbery & Rock, 2012). Tansley (2011) supports the view and describes talent as systematically developed abilities.

There is also no consensus on the approaches that organisations should take to identify and segment talent.

Figure 2.1 below depicts two approaches on how talent can be viewed or defined:

- **Talent as an object:** where talent is regarded as extraordinary abilities manifested by an individual.
- **Talent as a subject:** where talent is viewed as people who display high performance and potential.

The main difference between the two approaches is that the *Object* approach views talent as natural abilities, commitment and fitness for the organisation as main characteristics. The *Subject* approach considers talent to be people with ability to perform at the individual level and this ability is further considered as being possessed by the elite few (and by implication exclusive in the organisation). This approach, however, does not neglect the inclusive approach of talent where everyone is considered as talent with different capabilities (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries & González-Cruz, 2013).

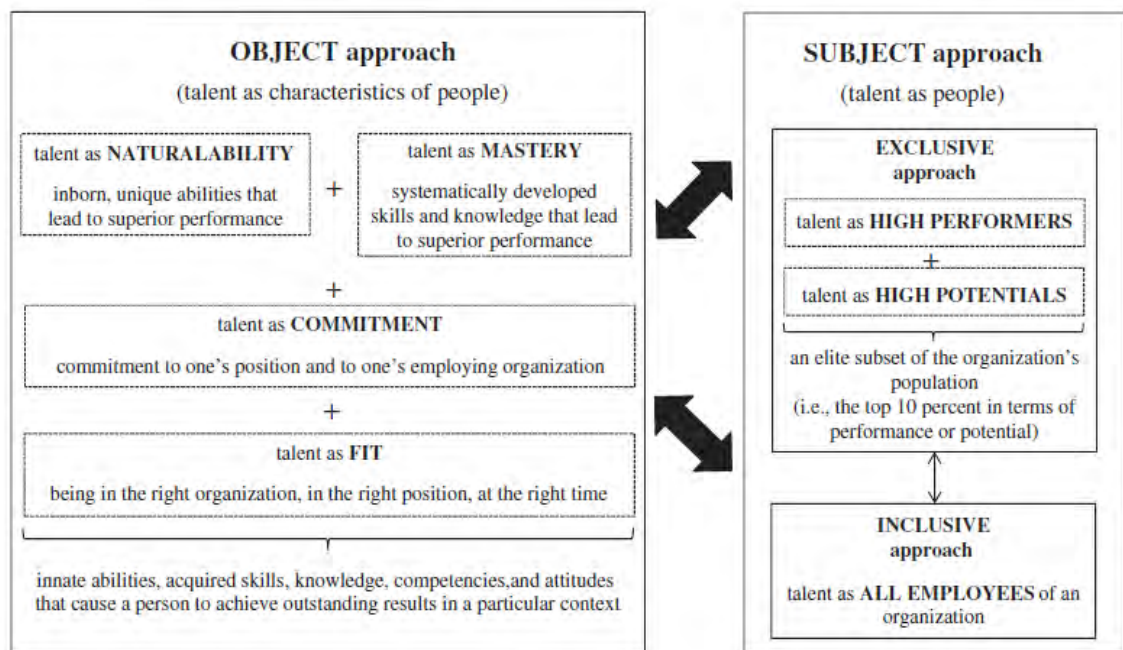


Figure 2.1: Conceptualisation of talent in the world of work

Source: (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013: 297)

2.3 Talent management theoretical understanding

Talent management does not seem to have a clear-cut definition or defined parameters (Zhang & Bright, 2012). Talent management is seen by others as the evolution of collective human resource management practices for the management of talent with an objective of meeting the competitive business environment (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) state that talent management can mean anything that any business leader or author wants it to mean, based on the context.

Organisations elect to take a narrow view, while others take a broad approach of defining talent management (Beardwell & Claydon, 2010).

Lewis and Heckman (2006) look at three angles and attempt to define talent management from these angles:

- Talent management as a cluster of human resource activities, which entail human capital acquisition, and career development in the form of training and succession planning
- Talent management as workforce planning with the internal focus on “home grown skills” – where demand and supply of skills are evaluated with the intention of closing the skills gap and ensuring continuous skills supply and sustained through talent pools.
- Talent management managed by performance levels, when employees with high performance and displaying high potential are identified for specific roles and are treated differently in terms of benefits. Employees are segmented in line with their performance.

Beardwell and Claydon (2010) attest to the fact that there are different perspectives to talent management and further state that, regardless of the perspective, the common features of talent management seem to encapsulate talent acquisition, development and retention. Mäkelä, Björkman and Ehrnrooth (2010) concur that talent management is mainly concerned with attraction, development and retention of key skills in organisations. Chambers, Foulon,

Handfield-Jones, Hankin and Michaels (1998) view talent management as an organisation's ability to retain top talent and to let go of the bottom performers.

Whelan, Collings and Donnellan (2009) introduce the "talentship" dimension which shifts the focus from people to positions that are critical and key to the organisation's competitiveness, strategic imperatives and those that have high impact. Talent pools are built on jobs and competencies.

Cappelli and Keller (2014) cite an inclusive approach that can also influence and broaden the definition of talent management from just focusing on high-performing employees and employees displaying high potential, to where all employees are taken as talent with strengths and worthy of an organisation's investment.

Huselid and Becker (2010) look at the exclusive differentiation of talent that segments and invests in talent, exclusively on the basis of scarcity and an organisation's prioritisation.

2.4 Talent management practical application

Talent management applications and approaches vary from one organisation to another, depending on the need for talent which an organisation is attempting to fulfil. The success or failure of talent management application is also dependent on numerous variables, for example the stakeholders' participation, top leadership sponsorship and the prevailing political environment (Burbach & Royle, 2010).

Blass (2009) identifies six perspectives that organisations hold of the practical application of talent management in various organisations. The perspectives are as follows:

Process perspective: focuses on organisational processes designed and geared towards development of talent in a given organisation.

Cultural perspective: leans more towards viewing talent as a mindset and ethic. Organisations which take this view believe that individuals have control of their talent and can also use it to grow. They further give autonomy to individual career development.

Competitive perspective: is concerned more about talent competition against the external environment. Initiatives in such organisations are designed mainly to minimise talent attrition.

HR planning perspective: organisations with this inclination pay attention to development of talent pools to ensure the consistent supply of skills to match the skill demand at the right time and place. Succession planning is also critical to this approach.

Development perspective: the focus of this approach is on identification of top talent in the organisation. This approach is exclusive in nature and investment by an organisation targets top talent

Change management perspective: uses talent management as a case for change in the organisation.

Nilsson and Ellstrom (2012) outline three perspectives aligned to some of the perspectives mentioned above:

- An assortment of HR practices perspective – which is a grouping of various processes that are related to talent management
- Talent pools perspective – known as views held by different people and organisations about talent
- High performance and high potential perspective – which relates to the ability of an organisation to compete external to one's environment by using talent advantage.

Cho and Ryu (2009) take a positive perspective and focus on how organisations can retain talent, rather than on why employees exit organisations. The authors deem the following dimensions critical for talent retention:

Organisational citizenship: where employees are encouraged to go beyond the call of duty, exercising their own discretion without expecting the reward.

Job embeddedness: this dimension recognises the employee as a total being and acknowledges links between job and family commitments.

Voluntary Turnover identification: employees' attitude and willingness to remain with the organisation is seen as critical in talent retention.

Organisational identification: is critical for an individual to remain as part of the team and acknowledges the significant contribution that the employee makes, e.g. a sense of pride on an employee's side is critical.

Pa'wan, Nurita, Rammiklah, Kaur and Norizan (2012) cite employee rewards, development, and open climate and communication as dimensions for talent management. Communication was mentioned as a significant component. They further state that agility, performance and growth are critical in evaluating employee potential, with agility having a significant impact on employee retention, although agility is cited as being the significant component that has a direct impact on retention.

2.5 Accountability of talent management

Talent management is seen as a strategic imperative and therefore the responsibility, accountability and decision making regarding talent management should be positioned at right place and level (Vaiman, Scullion & Collings, 2012). They further state that leadership and HR have a critical role to play in the talent management process:

2.6 Management's role in talent management

It is becoming evident that organisations' operating environments are far different from what they were, say, two centuries ago. This, therefore, calls for an alignment of business processes, and talent management is one of them. Numerous organisations acknowledge that employees are the most precious resource any organisation needs and that development of the resources is critical for competitive advantage (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013). These authors further advocate that accountability for talent management should be placed at the executive level

of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and cascaded to middle management, to meet the organisational goals through developed and empowered employees.

Hughes and Rog (2008) state that it is management's responsibility to inculcate organisational culture and to engage employees in the talent management process, including career development, growth opportunities and organisational performance.

Timmerman (2010) concurs that management should take an active role in selecting employees for the organisation. An organisation's performance may be impeded by lack of participation from management in employee-related issues. It is not sufficient for leaders to deal only with strategy and implementation. It is critical that the human side of the business be afforded equitable attention for business sustainability. Managers need to take the lead in broadening employee understanding of the value they need to add to the organisation, which can be achieved through engaging employees in initiatives on organisational goals, career paths and prospects available to employees, and the like. Delegating the responsibility to engage employees will rob the business of the opportunity of strengthening organisational objectives and the understanding thereof (Timmerman, 2010).

2.7 Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection of employees is one of the critical processes within a business. Identifying talent and the selection methods should not be left to HR, but rather line management should leverage their understanding of the input required and the expertise that is required and which needs to be matched to the talent that is brought in the organisation. Innovation has been seen to set organisations apart from others. This suggests that investments in sourcing the talent that can make valuable input into the organisation have long-term benefits and will likely yield returns on investment (Timmerman, 2010). It has, however, been observed that line managers who tend to detach themselves from the process of managing human resources tend to miss out on the benefits organisations which can derive from nurtured talent (Timmerman, 2010).

2.8 Performance Management

Performance management is the main input in talent management, especially when it comes to talent segmentation. Management should play a significant role in the performance management function because it is when performance is properly managed that the organisation will understand its talent capability against the business imperatives set by the business (Timmerman, 2010).

Aguinis, Gottfredson and Joo (2012) identify the prerequisites of performance management as including performance planning, performance execution, performance assessment, performance review, performance renewal and re-contracting. They assert that in performance management it is essential that line management drives this process to derive an understanding of the organisational talent and how it can deliver against set business objectives. Line management should manage the execution to realise the business objects and identify strengths and gaps in the talent and then execute the development of talent where there are gaps needing continuous improvement and reinforcement of talent. Aguinis *et al.* (2012) further state that employee development is the ammunition used in the war for talent, aiming at the retention of top talent.

2.9 The role of Human Resources in Talent Management

Vaiman and Vance (2008) argue for the joint accountability of talent management, this being shared between line management, human resources and the employees themselves. Huselid, Beatty and Becker (2009) agree that human resource practitioners have important roles to play, but add that line management, and even employees, also have a significant role in talent management. They further assert that management, together with HR, are jointly accountable for workforce planning, recruitment and selection, job description, performance management, employee rewards and retention.

The changing business environment that thrives on attracting, growing and retaining skills has a great impact on an organisation's HR. HR is seen as an important business partner in ensuring successful talent management (Bartlett &

Ghoshal, 2013). This will also be driven by the vigorous evolution of HR's role away from focusing on providing organisations with talent data. They further state that paying specific attention to the synthesis of data to give meaningful input on talent management process will enable an organisation to show commitment to its employees, which may have strong mitigating influence on the organisation's attrition (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013).

HR plays a pivotal role in guiding the business on relevant strategies of managing by guiding an organisation as to whether it needs to grow or acquire talent. HR expertise is also needed in driving talent management initiatives, for example facilitating talent board and talent development (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries & González-Cruz, 2013).

Vaiman *et al.* (2012) argue that Human Resources should play a role in critically analysing information to capacitate management to take talent quality decisions. They further state that the lack of proper synthesis from Human Resources practitioners may result in poor decision making and compromised professionalism in selecting candidates, for example managers may be biased in selecting employees on the basis of their familiarity with them.

Wikström and Henrik (2012) contend that Human Resources professionals in organisations should be afforded the same opportunity as business managers to make input on talent management; organisations will thus derive value on the management of talent.

Vaiman and Vance (2008) extend the responsibility for career development beyond management and HR to employees themselves. The responsibility to engage with employees is entrusted to a manager, as the manager should have a grounded understanding of the employees' performance and potentials. Vaiman and Vance (2008) further argue that although talent management may easily be seen as an HR function and HR professionals have a valuable and important role to play, managers need to play a pivotal role in the implementation of talent management. Vural and Vardarlier (2012) uphold a view that individuals in the organisation have to understand their career status and plan where they want to be in the future.

2.10 Talent management objectives

In the introduction of this work it was established that there is no universal definition of talent management. Organisations, however, in their own contexts realise that gaps may exist in not properly managing talent and they further agree that deliberate efforts are required in talent acquisition, deployment and retention. Organisations appear to recognise a need to meet the demand and supply of talent (Stahl, Björkman, Farndale, Morris, Paauwe, Stiles & Wright, 2012).

Global competitiveness has also compelled organisations to manage emerging market trends which have a great influence in altering talent behaviour and to maintain alignment to best practices on recruitment, training and development and retention (Stahl *et al.*, 2012).

Hughes and Rog (2008) state that if organisations share the sentiment that employees are the most value resource for competitive advantage, the management of talent should be reflective of that view. They also argue that the recruitment, retention, development and engagement of employees should be prioritised and efficiently managed as part of talent management.

Gümüş, Sudi, Gümüş and Kurban (2013) concur with the objectives stated above. They state that gone are the days when organisations saw talent as a cost; nowadays, talent is rather seen as one of the most important resources in meeting strategic objectives of the organisation and in enabling competitive advantage. They further embrace the main objectives of talent management as talent acquisition at the right time and place, talent flow through employee career development, and the correct balance of supply and demand of talent and skills.

Vural and Vardarlier (2012) assert that the main aim of talent management is to maximise organisational performance. They further state that the retention of talent and commitment is critical for business sustainability. The authors argue that failure to manage talent may lead to unstable employee commitment and loss of critical talent and skills through attrition. Vural and Vardarlier (2012) also state and support the view that sound talent management principles enhance an

organisation's ability to maintain profitability, innovation and capacity to differentiate itself through its talent.

Aguinis *et al.*, (2012) define talent management objectives as deliberate efforts to attract, develop and retain top talent for an organisation in order to maintain its competitiveness through a changing and growing operating environment. Meyers, Van Woerkom and Dries (2013) observed that the definition of talent management has an influence to a large degree on the objectives and outcomes of talent management. Organisations position talent management objectives based on definitions of talent. Two perspectives of talent management can be explored and deliberated. Talent management objectives can be premised on a nature–nurture perspective on talent. An organisation's objectives will become aligned according to the perspective which the organisation aligns itself with. Organisations that choose to view talent as nature are likely to focus on talent acquisition and focus its efforts on the identification and attraction of best talent. Organisations that take a nurture approach, believing that talent is about acquisition of skills, will focus their efforts towards talent development to enhance performance and competitiveness of the organisation (Meyers *et al.*, 2013).

Dries, Van Acker and Verbruggen (2012) highlight organisational competitive advantage as the main objective for talent management. It is through a process of talent management that employees are differentiated on the basis of their performance and potential in order to align their contribution towards organisational performance and competitiveness. Dries *et al.* further argue that the objectives of talent management should move beyond focusing on the traditional approach that assumes stability of the market and job security, and rather aim towards managing talent in the turbulent organisational operating environment.

The increase in market competitiveness in the global arena has to be met with high performance standards. Technological advancement and innovation plays a pivotal role in organisational performance which therefore makes the talent management agenda critical (Chabault, Hulin & Sopornot, 2012).

2.11 Talent Management Framework

Talent management research needs to be supported by a framework that will assist an organisation to ensure proper implementation.

Janice Caplan, cited in Human Resource Management International Digest (HRMID 2014), presents a four-point framework which covers the following:

- Business strategy
- Self-managed succession
- Engagement
- Shared management.

HRMID (2014) contends that business strategy triggers organisational conversations on future planning and expected challenges, which include employees' capabilities. Self-managed succession forms a critical part of the above-mentioned framework. It advocates that employees be given all the tools to develop themselves, based on the opportunities they see in the organisation. Caplan in her framework (cited in HRMID, 2014) further highlights the importance of engaging employees. This enables future planning on enhanced performance that takes into account the potential of employees. The framework embraces shared management principles which enable management to share the responsibility of closely monitoring employee performance and giving feedback to employees.

Siikaniemi (2012) shares a sentiment with Caplan (HRMID, 2014) that the talent management framework must take into cognisance business strategy, and that building employees' capabilities is a pertinent issue. There is also a strong alignment with the view that the competencies needed by the organisation must be well understood by both employees and the organisation. Caplan further asserts that talent management in organisations often does not succeed, mainly because it is not focused on the future. This hinders organisations from realising talent management benefits.

Siikaniemi (2012) divides a talent management framework into three main approaches, as shown in Figure 2.2 below:



Figure 2.2: Talent Management Framework

Source: (Siikaniemi, 2012: 51)

Figure 2.2 above illustrates a talent management framework with the following approaches:

- Talent planning – which is driven by the organisational strategy and focuses on the future organisational talent needs that encapsulate the demands of the changing environment.
- Foresight – this concept is premised on understanding the future and on the engagement of employees by management who take a degree of responsibility for acquiring necessary competencies for the future needs which will take the organisation forward. The result of this future concept is a shared roadmap to the future, with all relevant stakeholders jointly, intentionally and purposefully gravitating towards a clearly-mapped future.

- Competence – this concept focuses on competencies illustrated as follows:
 - o Core competences: which are directly linked to the mandate of the organisation and constitute the reason for the existence and survival of the organisation.
 - o Dynamic competencies: these comprise the ability of the organisation to adapt to environmental changes and a flexibility to be tactful through innovation.
 - o Loss competencies: which is about understanding organisation attrition and employing effective retention strategies.

Phillips and Roper (2009) present a five-key-element framework, with the following elements:

- The attraction of talent must be managed with intelligence. Phillips and Roper (2009) recognise that while the attraction of talent is essential, and that it needs to be more than merely carefully executed, they also encourage that traditional methods be challenged to attract cream of the crop talent.
- Selection of talent for the organisation needs to be done more objectively to yield the desired results, which are mostly to meet business objectives and competitive advantage.
- Phillips and Roper (2009) further support the view that engaging with employees often yields mutual benefits to both the organisation and the employees and that it greatly contributes to enhanced organisational branding.
- The development of employees forms a critical part of the framework and has direct influence on business sustainability and growth.
- Organisations are further challenged to find innovative ways to retain employees, mostly to receive enhanced returns on investment in the development which the organisation thereby invests in. Phillips and Roper

(2009) also argue that retention anchors performance and employee relations.

Business strategy: the author maintains that the business strategy adopted triggers organisational conversations on future planning, based on the anticipated challenges which need to be met according to the people's capabilities.

Self-managed succession: is founded on a view that the employer must provide tools to enable employees to develop themselves, based on the opportunities they see in the organisation.

This framework also sees employee engagement as being critical to the development of a data bank. This is an endeavour to gain an understanding of employees' views on their capabilities, career aspirations and contributions they can make towards achievement of organisational objectives.

Shared management is an element of Caplan's four-point framework (cited HRMID, 2014) and aims at sharing responsibility in managing talent with management, instead of talent management being the responsibility and within the decision of one line manager. Joint decision making on talent is considered to be a business imperative and therefore joint effort is required.

2.12 Organisational strategy and talent management

It is vital that organisations reposition their thinking and view on the role that talent management plays towards fulfilling organisational objectives. The shift from talent management being treated as a human resource target, to an organisational imperative aimed at achieving business objectives, is critical. The shift needs to take into consideration the complexities that are presented by the turbulent nature of the businesses operating environment. This will be made possible by organisations which recognise that talent is crucial and further develop talent pools with various competencies across all levels, which have significant impact on the organisational performance. An integrated approach between organisational goals and organisational competencies should not be fragmented, but rather viewed holistically (Cooke, Saini & Wang, 2014).

Talent management has been seen as a critical contributor to organisational success. It is, however, essential that talent management intervention be purpose-driven towards achieving business objectives. Top executive commitment and involvement in creating a conduit between organisational strategy and talent management should not be understated. Talent management should not only be talked about in the business, but should also be evident and highlighted in the business strategy itself. Wavering commitment from management may easily mean a lost battle in the war for talent (Ready, Hill & Conger, 2008).

Hartmann, Edda and Holger (2010) maintain that talent management has moved beyond being a human resource agenda to being an important agenda for strategic consideration in organisations, mainly because of the influence talent has on the competitiveness of organisations.

Huselid *et al.*, (2009) support the notion that organisational strategy is central to talent management and that the end in mind should be to enhance organisational competitiveness. Talent should be regarded as an enabling tool for carrying out the strategic imperative.

2.13 Career Management

Clarke (2013) states that the traditional organisational career path was characterised by upward mobility in the form of promotions and is today referred to as Weber's bureaucratic approach. Clarke further confirms that in contemporary organisations there is still a great need for career management. She acknowledges, however, that organisations may find themselves in a position where they are unable to offer job security and where other generations of employees prefer flexibility in career development. She argues that organisations need to evolve in line with the modern-day approach to accommodate the flexibility that both employees and organisations need, without undermining the role of career management.

The employment relationship of today between employees and employers is presented with different talent management challenges. The employer in the past

carried a responsibility of providing job security and career development, whereas today employees are taking more responsibility for their development in order to remain employable and competitive in the market (Hirschi, 2012). He further states that a shift has been observed for over three decades where employee development has been uneven. Clarke's study (2013) established that although there has been a major shift in how organisations approach career development, employees still yearn for an organisational environment where their careers are managed and nurtured by the business.

Clarke (2013) suggests that for career management to be kept alive, organisations should:

- Be flexible and adaptable to their operating environment
- Avail opportunities to employees to develop
- Jointly with employees, take responsibility for employee development
- Take into cognisance both organisational interests and employee career aspirations
- Acknowledge organisational-specific careers that can impact on career mobility.

Clarke (2013) further advances a view that organisations should take into account and bridge the bureaucratic and boundaryless approach on career development in order to balance both organisational needs and employee aspirations, and endeavour to remain competitive to increase their employees' chances of employability (depicted in Figure 2.3 overleaf).

<i>Bureaucratic organizational career</i>	<i>New organizational career</i>	<i>Boundaryless career</i>
Employment security	Employment continuity	Employability
Stability	Flexibility and adaptability	Mobility
Long-term tenure in same role	Medium-term tenure across different roles	Flexible tenure across different organizations
Loyalty to organization	Loyalty to organization and outside groups	Loyalty to own career
Organizationally managed career	Jointly managed career	Self-managed career
Development to meet organization needs	Development to meet organization and individual needs	Development to meet primarily individual needs
Career focus is internal to organization	Career focus is internal and external to organization	Career focus is internal to the individual
Linear progression	Spiral progression	Transitory progression
Relational employment contract	Relational employment contract	Transactional employment contract
Objective measures of success	Objective and subjective measures of success	Subjective measures of success

Figure 2.3: The new organisational career

Source: (Clarke, 2013: 697).

2.14 Career Development

Garavan *et al.*, (2012) define career development as the identification of a business need aligned with the available skills and planning, and effecting talent development strategies to close skills gaps within an organisation. A question may arise as to in whose interest the career should be developed. Garavan *et al.* (2012) state that although employees within the organisation will have their own career aspirations and concerns about employability, organisational objectives and interest to meet them through people capability will always take precedence in organisations. Prais (2011) concurs that investments by an organisation on employee career development in alignment to the business need not be done pro bono.

Career development appears to be an under-researched and under-developed subject, and yet it is a critical component of talent management (Garavan *et al.*, 2012). There is, however, a sentiment that “home grown” talent should not be compromised through the status which might be afforded to external talent (Burkus & Osula, 2011). These authors further argue that internal talent plays a significant

role and has great influence on the performance of the talent that is acquired externally. Resources should be balanced between the external sourcing of talent and the development of talent within the organisation. Groysberg, Lee and Abrahams (2010) support the view that a balance between new hires and talent in the organisation should be achieved. They maintain that newly-acquired talent needs the support of colleagues to succeed and shine in their new roles. The implication is, therefore, that talent development should be acknowledged as the critical part of talent management and for the organisation itself.

The changing organisational environment dictates a need for organisations, on a continual basis, to enhance business effectiveness, to develop and enrich skills to remain competitive, and to make up for workforce attrition and an aging workforce (Golden, 2010).

Noe, Wilk, Mullen and Wanek (2014) look at a multiple-dimension aspect of career development and approaches which organisations may take to develop an employee:

- Voluntary versus involuntary – this involves an approach where an employee may be placed on a compulsory initiative, for example job rotation or employee mentorship programme, or a voluntary approach where an employee can on own-initiative request to be moved from one department to the other with a development purpose.
- Informal versus formal – an initiative of a formal nature may involve formal agreements between the employee and an employer funded development initiative, for example where an employee is enrolled in a leadership programme. On an informal basis, an employee may through self-initiative decide to participate in knowledge-sharing sessions that are not mandated and funded by the organisation.
- Current versus future orientation – the current approach takes into consideration the current competency levels of the employee and the interventions that may be related to the enhancement of that current status, whereas a future approach may consider the future opportunities that might arise and prepare the employee for that future.

- Incremental versus frame breaking – under the incremental approach, employee development is paced on an incremental basis, as opposed to ‘frame braking’, which means accelerated development where there is high risk of failure, but more benefits to be achieved if it is successful.
- Introspective versus Interactive – this approach considers development that might happen within the employee and without much assistance from other people, particularly on their values, attitudes and interests. The interactive approach allows the development to happen with the involvement of others, e.g. through mentoring and coaching.

Garavan *et al.* (2012) confirm the four categories of development that organisations can engage in to facilitate the development of employees:

- formal programmes
- relationship-based developmental experiences;
- job-based developmental experiences; and
- informal/non-formal developmental activities.

Garavan *et al.*, (2012) further advocate for a balanced split of development interventions, with 70 % being allocated to on-job experience, 20 % to relationships that employees are exposed to in the organisation, for example customers, peers, senior employees and leadership and 10 % being the portion that most organisations default to, especially at managerial levels.

There seem to be strong sentiments regarding different categories of development, especially on job-based development. It has been reported as being an extremely efficient method of developing employees in an organisation, especially where employees and the organisations have little appetite for downtime in their operations (Teixeira & Pinto, 2012). Some concur with Wilson and Hoole (2011) that, for key leadership to be developed in the organisation, a swing from classroom-focused development to the on-job development is needed.

Wilson and Hoole (2011) state that on-job training presents opportunities for employee development in several traits, for instance “bosses and superiors, turnaround situations, increases in the job scope, horizontal job moves and new initiatives”. Garavan, Hogan and Cahir-O'Donnell (2009) highlight the risk in on-job development that the culture of the organisation may not support on-job training, although the risk can be mitigated by the assertiveness of the employee being developed.

2.15 Succession Planning

Succession planning is defined as a process that an organisation engages to ensure a continuous supply or pool of skills to succeed to the next senior level, so as to mitigate the skills vacuum that can occur owing to unforeseen circumstances, by either acquiring skills from external sources, or growing skills within the organisation (Hills, 2009). Succession management is also viewed as a critical part of talent management (McDonnell, Lamare, Gunnigle & Lavelle, 2010). Stadler (2011) defines succession management as a process where an organisation identifies core and critical roles and potential successors, with the intention of up-skilling and capacitating them with necessary skills and experience for future organisational needs. She further defines various approaches to succession management that organisations may follow:

- Short-term approach – which focuses on meeting the immediate need of the organisation when an unforeseen circumstance arises, for example the unexpected exit of an employee with critical skills.
- Long-term approach – which is planned in line with the workforce planning over a period of time. This approach has its disadvantages, e.g. it may require intensive investment and take time to develop the levels of skills and experience that may be available in the organisation to the desirable levels.
- Combination approach – which is a hybrid of the two approaches mentioned above. The advantage of this approach is the balance it brings between the approaches.

Titzer and Shirley (2013) state that the following organisational attributes are necessary to realise successful succession planning:

- Organisational commitment
- Resource allocation
- Proactive and visionary leadership
- Mentoring and coaching environment.

2.16 Impact of talent management in organisations

Schuler, Jackson and Tarique (2011) state that the business environment demands high standards from organisations, and therefore organisations need to respond by having employees that can produce the required quality, standard and innovation rapidly. They further state that HR policies used to deliver required skills need to be measured against business strategies and performance in delivering the required skills at the right time and place. Becker, Huselid and Beatty (2009) support the view that if talent management is deemed critical in an organisation, it must be supported by strategy and procedures or policies, the impact of which can be measured.

Becker *et al.*, (2009) argue that because of the unique nature of one organisation compared with another, talent strategy should be distinctive to each organisation and not simply be based on benchmarks which do not take into account the qualities unique to the organisation, for example the strategic objectives of one organisation would differ from another organisation.

Management behaviour in an organisation may also have great influence in hindering the organisation from realising positive effects of talent management, for example senior management's commitment to the talent management process has a significant on its effects and therefore there is a need to determine management's commitment (Schuler *et al.*, 2011).

Becker *et al.* (2009) state that a talent management strategy should translate to the contribution towards the organisation's strategic accomplishment. Schiemann (2014) has confirmed that the downfall of many organisations in talent effectiveness is that they do not measure talent management initiatives and the fact that the utilisation of the initiatives is grossly fragmented. He also argues that talent indicators should be aligned with the business indicators and that the organisations should measure indicators, such as:

- Loss of key performers
- Customer defections
- Labour organising
- Effective knowledge transfer
- Ethical blow ups.

Sonneberg, van Zijderveld and Brinks (2014) concur that talent differentiation strategies are critical for the survival and the competitiveness of an organisation. They also advance a view that evaluating the value of the psychological contract is essential in the organisation, mainly because it keeps the organisation and the employee connected and committed to each other, depending on the perception an individual holds about the organisation. Neglecting the psychological contract aspect of talent management will compromise the employer–employee relationship which is critical in the employment relationship.

2.17 Chapter Summary

In the literature, it is debated whether talent is an exclusive ability that individuals possess, or whether it can be nurtured. It was established that talent needs to be developed in an organisation to enhance organisational capabilities for survival and competitiveness of the organisation.

Although there is no universal definition of what talent is, it appears that there is convergence of understanding in that the management of talent is concerned with having an agreed strategy to attract, develop and retain core skills in the organisation. Views on whether to take an inclusive or exclusive approach in managing talent, and on investment in talent, were also looked at, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of any of the approaches.

Accountability and responsibility for talent management is not only in the hands of management. Senior leadership and HR are seen as critical drivers of the talent management process in an organisation, while employees remain responsible for their development in the organisation.

While organisational strategy and objectives remain at the centre of talent management, processes, such as talent development and succession management, are identified as pertinent to talent management.

Constant evaluation of the effectiveness of talent management initiatives continues to be critical for the purpose of enhancing the talent management impact in organisations.

The next chapter will cover the research methodology that will be employed in the research study. Research philosophy, methodology, designed population, sampling, data gathering process data analysis, validity and reliability of the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to define the research methodology which was proposed for the study. The chapter includes particulars of the population, the sampling method, size, data gathering process and the data analysis method.

3.2 Research philosophy and approach

The research philosophy that was used is the constructive worldview, which included interpretivism. The study took into account the social environment, where individuals participated in their roles according to how they perceived their roles to be in a given community, e.g. organisational setting. Interpretivism takes into consideration the fact that the researcher has personal views that are influenced by values and circumstances. One of the positive points about this specific philosophy is the fact that it recognises the uniqueness of different organisational settings and the complexities that are presented by the human element in the environment (Lewis & Saunders, 2012). The method also allows the individuals to bring in their subjective views, which will vary from one individual to another, according to the environments they find themselves in. Talent management in an organisation is a process that is experienced differently by individual employees, even though they are in the same organisation, taking into account their level of responsibilities and other circumstances, such as performance, expectations and their outlook on the organisation. The study that the researcher embarked on is of a social nature in an organisational setting. The study was performed with the intention of interpreting the talent management problem that has been identified.

Constructivism permits individual views to be ascertained through open and broad questioning and interaction with individuals in their setting (Creswell, 2014). The researcher utilised open-ended questions during the interview sessions to engage on the research problem and to solicit required information. Limiting individual views through using other methods would have deprived the researcher of the opportunity to engage effectively and to understand the problem.

The rationale behind selecting the above-mentioned research philosophy was its suitability for the study that was to be done in the talent management discipline. The other element taken into consideration was the fact that talent management impacts could be better tested through people's experiences and perceptions (worldviews).

An exploratory method was proposed for this study. An exploratory study enables the researcher to seek deeper understanding on what the researcher has observed through individual perceptions (Lewis & Saunders, 2012). Participants were interviewed with the purpose of gaining an understanding of their perceptions on the impact of talent management on career development in Eskom. This was done through interviews that were conducted by the researcher.

3.3 Research methodology

The nature of the study was of a social complex situation that relied on the views and perceptions of the participants and therefore qualitative research was more suitable for the study. Prior to settling on a qualitative methodology, the researcher weighed options and evaluated the suitability of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.3.1 Quantitative research

Xu and Storr (2012) caution the researcher that careful consideration should be given to choosing an appropriate research method for the study. They further state that a researcher should not avoid using a quantitative method purely because they are deterred by statistics and numbers, but the choice should be based on the methodology relevant to the study.

Westerman and Yanchar (2011) argue that quantitative data can be utilised for interpretive understanding in social science and that quantitative methods should not be excluded unnecessarily in understanding social problems. DeLyser and Sui (2014) contend that the choice on methodology, qualitative or quantitative, should take into account context and relevance. While the qualitative method has

potential to reveal far more than the quantitative method, it can be daunting, elaborative and time consuming.

Matveev (2002) states that the quantitative method has an advantage of offering a great level of measurement accuracy and influence, and he also highlights the point that a qualitative method has the capacity to provide significant depth to the research problem.

The research topic required in-depth understanding of a complex social problem, and the researcher was aware of the need to carefully differentiate between the quality and quantity of data.

Employing quantitative methods would have deprived the researcher of a grounded understanding of the context, and instead the researcher would have run the risk of achieving superficial findings because of the quantitative method's dependency on scientific measurements and assumption of the existence of objectivity and truth.

A quantitative method would have also deprived the researcher of an opportunity to experience the environment and the chance to probe for further clarity (Matveev, 2002). It was decided to use interviews to experience the environment of the respondents and the questions were open ended to enable interaction and to seek understanding, which would not have been permitted in a quantitative study which supports a closed-type of inquiry and discourages continuous investigation and probing of responses. The risk highlighted by Matveev (2002) is that open-ended questions and probing may introduce inconsistencies and compromise the reliability of findings, as the researcher is at liberty to include or exclude certain information.

3.3.2 Qualitative research

Kahlke (2014) defines qualitative research as an attempt to understand the research problem through individuals' interpretations of their experiences. This definition supports the fact that statistical interpretation in this study was not going to be sufficient in understanding the social and complex problems that the researcher wanted to explore. Matveev (2002) concedes that it is subjective

involvement that brings about complexity in social environments and therefore it is through sufficient and proper engagement that a researcher will decode and attach meaning to the observed phenomena. This is the reason why the researcher proposed qualitative study to appreciate the complexity, validity and accurate contextualisation of the phenomenon. Kahlke (2014), however, states that the researcher's worldview has the potential to influence the analysis, although other methods can be built in to mitigate this influence to ensure validity. Ells (2011) states that the researchers opting for qualitative methods are susceptible to being challenged on the quality and the validity of the study. Ells argues that the required quality of a qualitative study can be attained through a proper design and the observation of ethical considerations. The research abided by research ethics. An ethical clearance had to be obtained prior to commencing with the study, which was granted and is included at the beginning of this dissertation. The participating organisation was also properly engaged and permission to conduct the study was sought from the participating organisation and the respondents prior to commencing with the study (Appendix 1, Interview Questions; Appendix 2, Informed Consent; and Appendix 3, Ethical Clearance).

Xu and Storr (2012) state that the advantage of qualitative research is that the researcher becomes a critical instrument which enables the researcher to understand the research problem better, as well as the complexities thereof which may be lost in quantitative statistical approach. Matveev (2002), however, has cautioned that the researcher's personal characteristics may greatly influence the interpretation. Xu and Storr (2012) argue that although this may be seen as compromising the quality of a study, it can be effectively mitigated by the researcher's understanding of his or her epistemological and ontological position. The researcher employed theoretical understanding which was obtained through academic studies and the literature review that was described in the previous chapter (literature review). The researcher was, therefore, confident of her epistemological position. Interviews conducted with the different participants also enhanced the researcher's understanding and perspective of the reality at Eskom pertaining to talent management and its influence on career development.

Creswell (2014) has mentioned the following critical elements that qualitative research should reflect:

Natural setting: he states that participants should be engaged through the research, preferably in their natural environment. The study was conducted within the organisation that was selected for the study, which was Eskom. Participants were interviewed in their work environment. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis to allow open discussion between the participant and the researcher.

Researcher as key instrument: The participants were personally interviewed to obtain an understanding of the problem by using semi-structured questions with open-ended questions to enable the free flow of information. This process helped to analyse the research topic from different angles.

Multiple sources of data: Various sources of data were used by the researcher and the theoretical underpinning was Eskom's approved Talent Management process, Eskom's EE policy, and Eskom's recruitment policy, while the interviews ensured that a holistic approach was taken to the chosen research topic.

Inductive and deductive data analysis: Data was built, from bottom-up, into themes so as to gather a necessary understanding of the problem. The themes were built through gathering received data to enable synthesis of the research problem.

Participants meaning: Although the research team is employed in the organisation where the study was done, it was critical for the research to stay clear of bias and allow the views of the participants to dominate in order to understand and objectively acquire the essence of the problem within the organisation.

Emergent design: The research plan allowed for flexibility and built on the basis of the information that emerged from the research progress. This is the reason why the questions were kept open to allow for proper engagement, probing and follow-up to ensure that there was proper understanding of the research problem.

Reflexivity: The researcher had to reflect on how her experience, background and culture might have influenced her behaviour towards modelling the direction of the research study and so ensure that reliability on the study could be obtained.

Holistic account: The study was concluded with a comprehensive and holistic understanding so that the objectives of the study could be pursued. This was done by interviewing participants who held different responsibilities and experiences towards talent management system and its impact on career development.

3.4 Research design

The planned research design followed the exploratory approach. Lewis and Saunders (2012) define an exploratory study as research that allows the researcher to gain understanding towards the research design.

The objective of the study was to seek understanding on the impact of talent management on career development. This was done by interviewing subject matter experts and managerial employees in Eskom. The advantage of this design is that it allows the researcher the flexibility in the social environment for obtaining a better appreciation of the problem, after which the insight is modified based on the sought after broader perspective, and the narrowing down to critical issues which is essential for the synthesis (Lewis & Saunders, 2012).

3.5 Population and sampling

Jepsen and Rodwell (2008) argue that when selecting participants in the workplace, it is essential that their characteristics in relation to the subject are considered and also that subject matter experts are included. During the identification of the participants, the researcher took into account the characteristics that aroused the interest of the participant to the phenomenon.

The population of this study comprised Eskom managerial employees between TASK grade 14 to e-bands (Eskom managerial level, grade 14 being the entry level, and e-bands being at an executive level). The rationale was that talent management in Eskom only covers those levels (TASK 14 – M18 employees) senior managers, HR professionals and Talent and Skills Advisors). The sample of

the population of the Eskom community which is exposed to the talent management system was selected from among the relevant Eskom head office functions to explore the identified research problem. Lewis and Saunders (2012) define a sample as a sub-group of the population. They also state that the sample must be appropriately selected and that careful consideration must be given to the rationale for selecting a specific sample in order to facilitate the researcher's conclusion and decision making about the research problem.

The reason for selecting the sample from the population was that it was not going to be possible to interview each and every managerial employee participating in the talent management programme because of the size and large geographical location spread of the population. The following sample from head office functions was selected:

- Talent Management Advisors (two)
- Senior leadership in the organisation (two)
- Employees within the targeted segment of talent management, i.e. managerial employees (eight)
- Human Resource Business Partners (two).

Demographical details of the respondents are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Demographical data of respondents

Respondent Code	Gender	Race	Role in Talent Management
R 1	Female	African	Senior Manager
R 2	Female	Indian	Manager
R 3	Female	African	Middle Manager
R 4	Female	African	Talent and Skills Advisor
R 5	Male	African	Manager
R 6	Male	African	Middle Manager
R 7	Male	African	Middle Manager
R 8	Male	White	Middle Manager
R 9	Female	White	Middle Manager
R 10	Female	White	Middle Manager
R 11	Male	African	Manager
R 12	Male	White	Manager
R 13	Female	African	Talent and Skills Advisor
R 14	Male	African	Senior Manager

Purposive sampling was proposed for this study. Lewis and Saunders (2012) explain purposive sampling as being a method where the researcher purposefully selects a specific sample based on the researcher's logic and judgement.

Creswell (2014) concurs that the purposeful selection of participants enables researchers to enhance their insight on the research problem at hand.

3.6 Data gathering process

The proposed data gathering method was implemented through interviews using open-ended questions (Appendix 1). Rowley (2012) defines interviewing as one of the methods that is used mostly by qualitative researchers to collect data on a

specific subject concerning people's opinions, experiences or observations. Rowley (2012) states that, other than interviews, there are various ways that researchers may collect data, for example a new researcher may be easily be attracted to questionnaires. Questionnaires are recognised as one of the data gathering processes where participants are asked similar questions in a specific order (Lewis & Saunders, 2012). Even though questionnaires may be deemed easy to implement, the advantage of utilising interviews as a data collection method, even though it may be time consuming, resides in the comprehension and interesting perspectives that can be found. Rowley (2012) cautions that great insight from interviews can be achieved through well prepared questions and interviews. Careful selection of participants, based on the basis of their proper understanding the phenomenon, may add an advantage in that the researcher is likely to get useful information required to understand the problem (Rowley, 2012).

There are also different types of interviews that the researcher may opt to use, for an example using structured interviews, which is very similar to the questionnaire approach, conducting unstructured interviews where the researcher engages on various subjects, but with the intention of guiding the participant to talk about a specific topic that is being researched, and using semi-structured interviews, which is unlike the structured interviews where the researcher only focuses on the prepared questions. In the semi-structured approach, the researcher enjoys a degree of flexibility to ask probing questions. In the unstructured approach, the researcher will formulate well-structured questions to ensure that required information is solicited in a set order (Rowley, 2012).

The researcher prepared fifteen questions and used a semi-structured approach, which is viewed by Lewis and Saunders (2012) as a method that allows the researcher to organise preconceived questions into themes that will assist the researcher to understand the research problem. Depending on the relevance of the question to the participant, the researcher may not ask some of the prepared questions and may instead ask further questions to follow up on the participant's response and to seek further clarity.

Prior to conducting the interviews with the participants, the researcher was given ethical clearance by the University (Appendix 3). The sixty-minute interviews were

conducted by the researcher in offices at Eskom's head office complex at Megawatt Park, Sunninghill, during the month of August 2014. The researcher asked all the set questions to maintain consistency and to mitigate the risk of inconsistency that was highlighted as a point of caution by Matveev (2002) for researchers who use the qualitative method. This was also done in order to manage quality and validity, especially at the point of data analysis. In other instances, clarity had to be sought from the researcher's side and accordingly follow-up, probing questions were asked. Some of the questions had to be rephrased to enhance communication between the respondents and the researcher, especially at junior management level (M14) which is the management entry level the organisation. The researcher recorded on paper the responses given by the participants during the interviews. A decision to purposefully select the participants turned out to be advantageous in that most of the participants were conversant with talent management. Although some of the junior management employees took time to seek clarity, they gave invaluable information for the purpose of this research study.

There were three notable limitations that the researcher identified in this study.

Time: talent management and career development are deemed to constitute one of the critical processes for Eskom as part of its mandate to contribute to skills development in the country and to build internal capability to deliver on the business's requirements. The time allocated for the study did not allow the researcher to explore the study widely and in depth to the point where the study recommendations could be implemented and be seen through by the researcher.

Timing: Eskom was going through a difficult time at the time the study was conducted. The volatile environment that the business found itself in demanded that all available resources focused their efforts on business continuity. Although the study had potential to contribute positively towards improving the talent management system, it was not a priority for some of the professionals that the researcher wished to engage and therefore participants did not perceive the study to be a priority for the business, and as a result did not commit to scheduled interviews.

Location: the interviews were conducted at Megawatt Park which is a head office environment. Professionals in the regions outside Gauteng may have other experiences about the research topic but their experiences were not tapped into. This deprived the researcher of knowing and understanding the research problem from their perspective.

3.7 Data analysis

Jepsen and Rodwell (2008) state that in qualitative research the researcher aims to understand the depth of the phenomenon and other critical issues that might be prevalent in the research problem. They further state that the qualitative method offers more flexibility, being unstructured in its approach, as compared with quantitative research, and that more observations can thus be made. Jepsen and Rodwell (2008) recognise interviews as being a method that researchers can opt for to collect data and to investigate the problem. Interviews can also complement quantitative studies, especially in the workplace context.

Analysis of the data in the study was carried out by the researcher as the data collection process happened. Lewis and Saunders (2012) and Creswell (2014) acknowledge that it is normal for a researcher to analyse the data as the data is collected, unlike in quantitative studies where data collection has to be finalised prior to data analysis.

Owing to the fact that data was in large forms and came from various sources, for example interviews and observations, not everything was utilised but it was represented in themes representing the views given by the participants on the research topic to ensure validity and that no views were left out, which may undermine authenticity of the research.

The researcher employed some of Tesch's Eight Steps data analysis process, supported by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) to process data where they recommend the following steps:

- Data preparation - where data should be transcribed into text and be studied holistically to get full context

- Define the unit of analysis – where the researcher will define individual themes representing large amounts of text
- Develop categories and a coding scheme – where individual topics and themes will be clustered
- Test your coding scheme on a sample of text – by coding the themes and where a need to revise arises, the recoding must be done
- Code all the text – where coding of data is done consistently into relevant themes
- Assess re-coding – where all coding is double checked for consistency
- Draw conclusions from the coded data – where the research needs to get to a full understanding of the themes represented by the comprehension of the research problem
- Report your methods and findings – by accurately and openly reporting on the methods used and the truthful findings of the study.

The researcher mainly wrote notes during the interviews and captured all the points raised by the participants. Data was coded into themes to enable a structured analysis to be carried out and a synthesis made of data during analysis. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2008) describe theme analysis as a method of identifying common themes that emerge from the data gathered through a quantitative research study. This process also enabled the researcher to study the data holistically. Data was analysed against the phenomenon broken down into themes, after which conclusions were drawn, followed by the formulation of the researcher's recommendations.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2011) define validity of a research study as being a true reflection or accurate presentation of the situation or findings of the researcher. The quality of the research study is also largely informed by the trustworthiness (validity, reliability, and the objectivity) of the study (Zhang &

Wildemuth, 2009). Creswell (2014) concurs that validity is the anchor of the research study.

Denzin and Lincoln (2009) state that trust in the research work is the accountability of the researcher. They further argue that lack of trust in this regard weakens the study itself. Chenail (2011) concurs that the researchers in qualitative research studies need to continuously check themselves and maintain their rigor in the quality of their studies.

The researcher strived towards maintaining objectivity and consistency and did not undermine the ethics which would have compromised the validity and reliability of the study. Neglecting ethical guidelines in research, especially where human beings are participating, as in this study which solicited personal experiences and perceptions from individual employees, would undermine fundamental ethical research principles and quality (Ells, 2011).

In the process of attaining validity in qualitative research, Guion *et al.* (2011) recognise triangulation as a method to validate the authenticity of a research study. Guion *et al.* (2011) highlight five types of triangulation that can be used in a research study to maintain validity:

- Data triangulation: where different stakeholders are utilised to enhance the validity of the research study.
- Investigator triangulation: where different investigators are employed during the analysis state to improve legitimacy of the findings.
- Theory triangulation: where the researcher engages different professionals in other fields to solicit their interpretation of data.
- Methodical triangulation: in this method, the researcher uses different methods to gather information on a common phenomenon, for example focus groups, interviews and questionnaires, with the intention of strengthening validity of the research study.
- Environmental triangulation: this type of triangulation takes into account different environments, for example the researcher might have considered

also using participants in the regions outside the head office environment who perhaps might have joined the organisation at different locations, with varying service records.

The researcher in this instance opted to use data triangulation. The researcher looked at employees at junior, middle and senior managerial levels who, by virtue of their different roles, accountabilities and capabilities, are experiencing talent management and career development differently in Eskom. Talent management practitioners and HR managers, who are responsible for the facilitation of talent management, also held different perceptions and shared different sentiments from senior management, who have the accountability to implement talent management.

The pronounced advantage of triangulation is that it enriches reliability and trust in the research study (Guion *et al.*, 2011). Triangulation also has a benefit of exposing different dimensions of the phenomenon. During interviews the above argument became evident when the researcher engaged different categories of stakeholders, for example when managers were asked who is accountable for the development of their leadership capacity, they responded differently from those who were responding as employees. Guion *et al.* (2011) also caution that triangulation can be onerous.

Thomas and Magilvy (2011) state that validity and reliability have a significant influence on the trust afforded to the study where the researcher's findings are evaluated as to whether they represent the population represented by the sample in the research study. They also state that qualitative studies are based on individual views of researchers and participants, and therefore at times this may compromise validity and trustworthiness of the study. They recommend that researchers should use methods that can strengthen the rigour of the validity of the study, such as the Lincoln and Guba method which enhances trustworthiness by looking at the components shown in Figure 3.1 below.

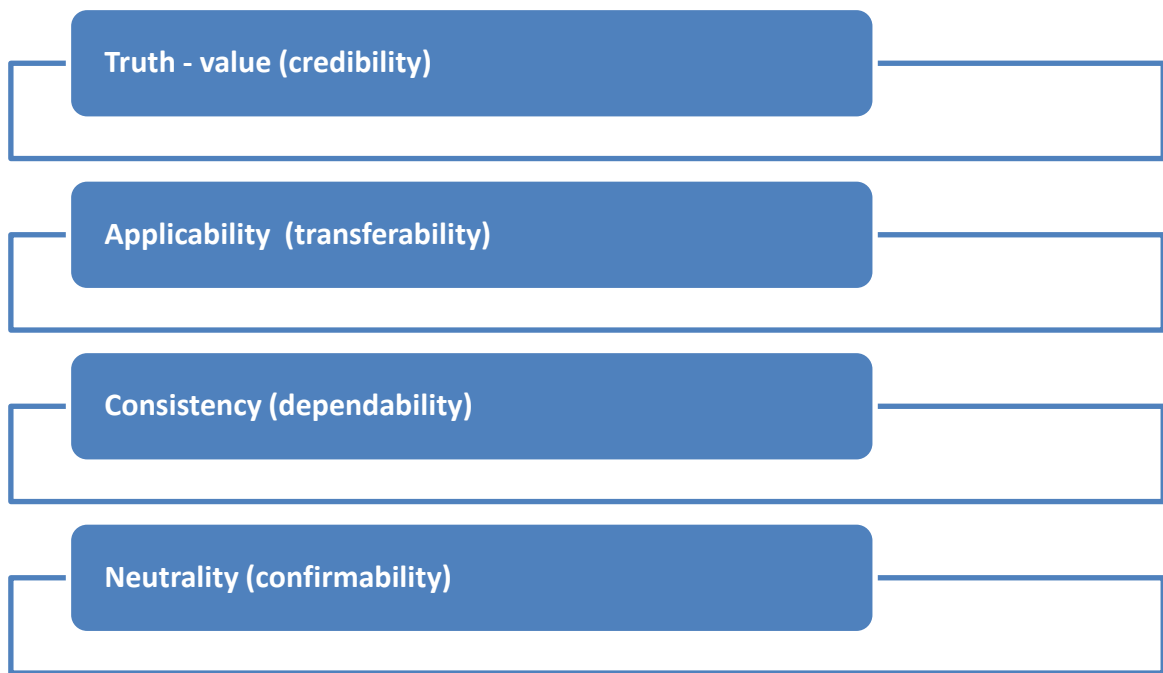


Figure 3.1: Validity and reliability of the research study

(Adapted from Thomas & Magilvy, 2011: 151)

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is defined by Thomas and Magilvy (2011) as the validity that allows others to distinguish others' experiences through the findings and conclusions reached by the researcher using data truthfully captured through a valid interpretation of experiences of a represented population in the research study.

The researcher ensured that all the views and perceptions of participants were captured truthfully to reflect the reality. All data that was received by the researcher was recorded in themes to support the findings and conclusions made by the researcher.

3.8.2 Transferability

Thomas and Magilvy (2011) present the feasibility of transferring research findings and methods from one population to another. The higher the transferability of the study is, the higher the validity the research study is. Finfgeld-Connett (2010) states that transferability is informed by the similarities prevalent and experienced by the populations that are participating in the study. This therefore means that the

researcher needs to validate the data received and use a representative sample prior to reaching a conclusion and drawing findings.

The researcher, having sought understanding, is confident that the findings can be transferred to other similar environments, for example to other divisions within the greater Eskom group and from one site to the other.

3.8.3 Consistency

Thomas and Magilvy (2011) cite the need for consistency when conducting research. They argue that there must be consistency, starting with the objective of the research study, in the rationale of how the sample was put together from the larger population, and in understanding the data collection method and data analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (2009) highlight and support the need for transparency in data collection and in the interpretation thereof to increase consistency and trust in the research process. The researcher took into account and maintained consistency to enhance the validity of the study by gathering data from participants at different managerial levels, and with different functional areas and different responsibilities on talent management. Consistency was also observed in the questions that were asked and then taken further to the analysis stage by ensuring that all the views expressed were afforded equal attention and were reflected on in the conclusion.

3.8.4 Neutrality

Neutrality in a research study is essential to the validity and reliability of the research study. The researcher has to allow the participants' views to come up (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Kahlke (2014) concurs that neutralism is critical for enhancing the rigour required for a valid research study. Diebel (2008) refutes the fact that neutrality is critical in qualitative research. Diebel states that the neutrality of the researcher has potential to lessen the value of the researcher's interest in the phenomenon. The impetus of the researcher's interest in the subject may be experiences and background that are impossible to ignore. Instead of struggling for neutrality, the researcher can assume that the transparency of the researcher

observed during data collection, analysis and findings can fortify the credibility and validity of the research study.

There was transparency concerning the fact that the author is in the HR discipline and is also a managerial employee participating in talent management, and is responsible for the delivery of talent management in the organisation. The researcher allowed the understanding and the experiences of the participants to influence and dominate the study, and not her own worldview. Diebel (2008) has argued for the importance of upholding fairness and maintaining balance during the research study. The researcher undertook to treat the information fairly and to be balanced in her findings, not only as a researcher but also because this is required by the researcher's ethics and conduct as an HR manager in the organisation. Distorting the information and findings would not have done justice to the organisation which gave the researcher the privilege of conducting the study nor to participants who took time and availed themselves, trusting that an ethical framework would be observed.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter was dedicated to the research philosophy and methodology. The different data gathering and analysis approaches were explored in this chapter. The research design was also discussed. The sampling method and analysis were also highlighted. It was considered essential to undertake interviews, as opposed to using questionnaires, for this study in order to gain participants' insights about the research topic.

The following chapter (chapter four) will present the results and deliberate on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present the results and to discuss the findings of the interpretive study that the researcher embarked on to understand the perceptions that Eskom employees hold about the impact of talent management on career development in Eskom. This chapter was preceded by three chapters where the problem was defined. A literature review was conducted to gain insight into the subject. The research project also evaluated research methods available and opted for a qualitative approach to accommodate the complexity and the social context presented by the environment that needed to be studied. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data gathering tool.

The research findings will be presented, together with a consideration of the research objectives the study intended to address and of the questions asked during the interviews that were held with the respondents. These findings will then be connected to the literature to show correlations and consistencies where it is suitable.

4.2 Participants and demographic information to the research study

In order to get a better perspective of the phenomenon that was studied, participants were purposefully chosen, mainly on the basis of their understanding and involvement with Eskom's talent management system, as participants or recipients (employees at managerial level), subject matter experts (Talent Management Advisors) and implementers (senior managers). Another point to mention is that all participants are employees by their own right, whose talent should be managed using the current talent management system. A total of fourteen participants were interviewed using a semi-structured approach, and the race and gender categories are illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

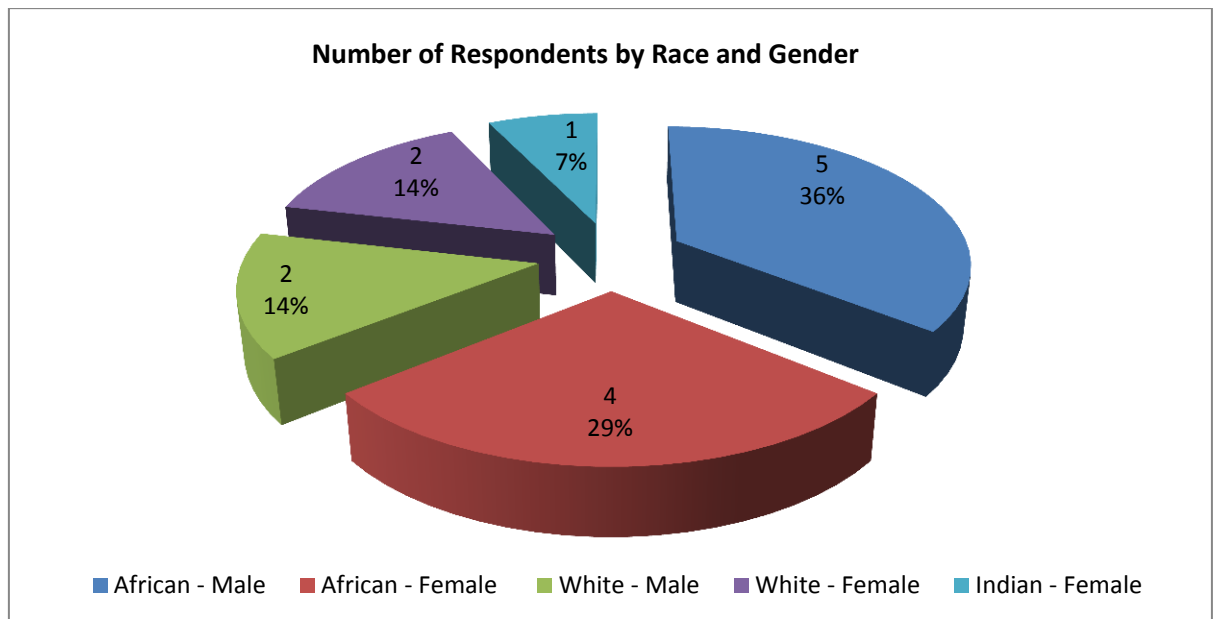


Figure 4.1: Number of respondents by race and gender

All participants were based in the head office environment. The interviews took an average of fifty minutes per participant to complete. All the participants were in managerial level positions. Some interviewees participated in the study, voluntarily, by virtue of their experience as managerial employees participating in the talent management system. Others participated because of their role in HR, being Human Resource Business Partner or Talent Skills practitioners, and some participated because of their accountability to deliver and to implement talent management and career development.

Figure 4.1 above depicts the race of the participants. It will be noted that there were no coloured managerial employees who were interviewed and the main reason was that the organisation has very few coloured employees in the managerial level categories and in the HR fraternity.

Non-managerial employees did not participate in the study because they do not participate in the talent management process, although they are still managed through the performance management system which is a feeder to talent management system.

Responses that were captured during the interviews were summarised into various themes and at times direct quotes were used by the researcher to supply context. Participants also shared examples during the interviews to support their

perceptions and some of the sentiments they have about talent management and its impact on career development in Eskom.

The levels of participation and purposive selection are indicated in Figure 4.2 below. This was done deliberately mainly to verify the information, not only from implementers' views but also from the views of beneficiaries and those who are deemed to be accountable to deliver a successful talent management process in the organisation.

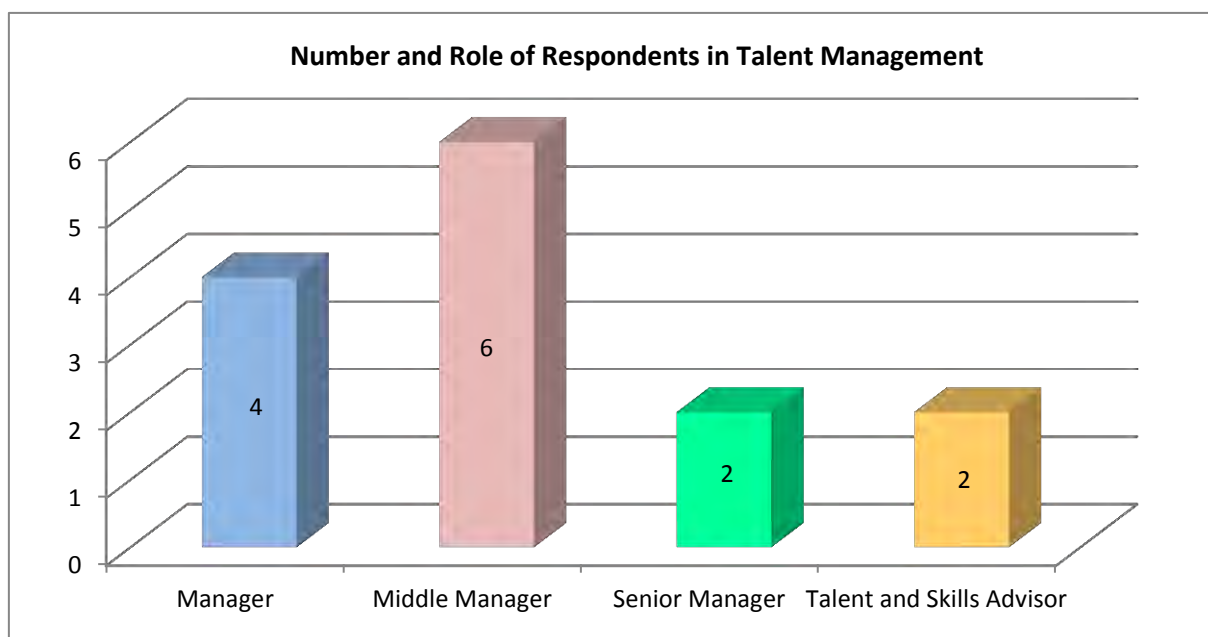


Figure 4.2: Number and Roles of Respondents in Talent Management

The four respondents in Figure 4.2 above were managers who do not have the responsibility of managing others, but who are intended to be the beneficiaries of the talent management process. The rest of the respondents have multiple roles in that although they are managers, they are also intended to be part of talent pools at different levels and in different business units. The six respondents have employees reporting to them; two were senior managers and the remainder were two Talent and Skills Advisors.

The split was motivated by the purpose of the research as the researcher wished to establish the impact of talent management on career development. It therefore made sense for the researcher to have beneficiaries as the larger number of the

participants, and have an equal split between implementers and those accountable.

The tenure of the participants was established by requesting details of their years of service in Eskom and the results are shown in Figure 4.3 below. The rationale behind establishing their years of service was to determine how long the participants would have been exposed to the organisation's talent management system and to come to a conclusion or hold the perception they have about Eskom's talent management system. The participants that would have been in the system for a longer time would have a better understanding and experience of the system.

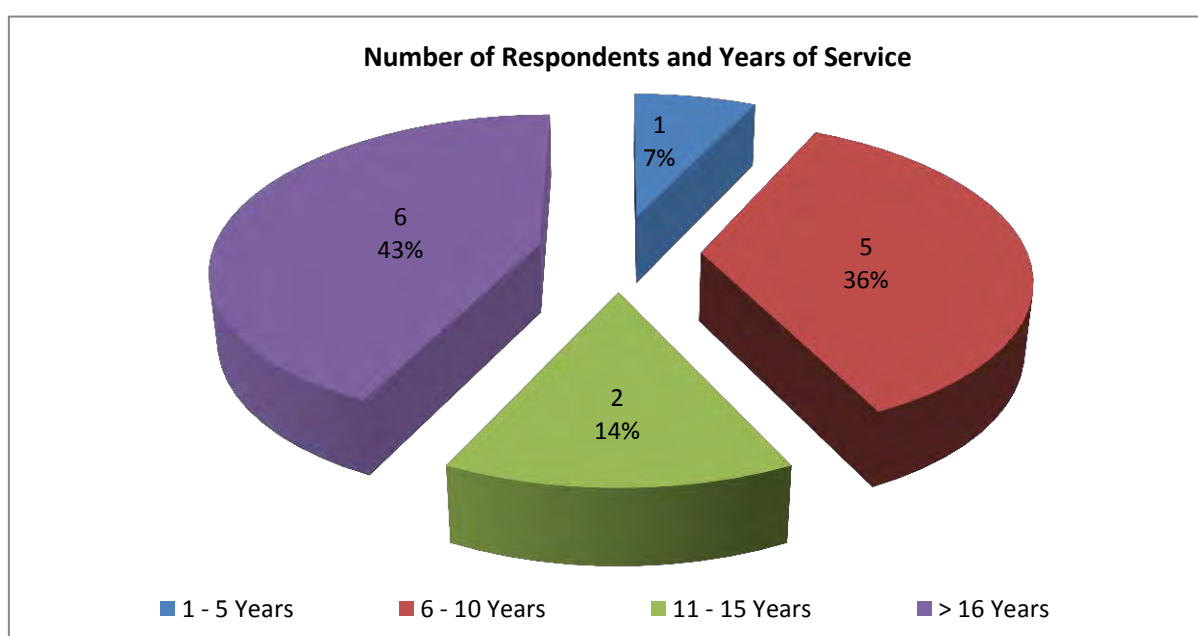


Figure 4.3: Number of Respondents and Years of Service

It was established that 43 % of respondents had been in the organisation for more than 16 years, 14 % between six and ten years, 36 % between 11 and 15 years, and only 7 % had been in Eskom for less than five years.

Figure 4.4 below illustrates the age categories of the participants. There were no participants between ages 20–24, and this is because the organisation has only a minority of employees at managerial levels between these ages. Moreover, employees in this age category would not have participated in the talent

management programme for any reasonable amount of time so as to hold a firm view about the programme.

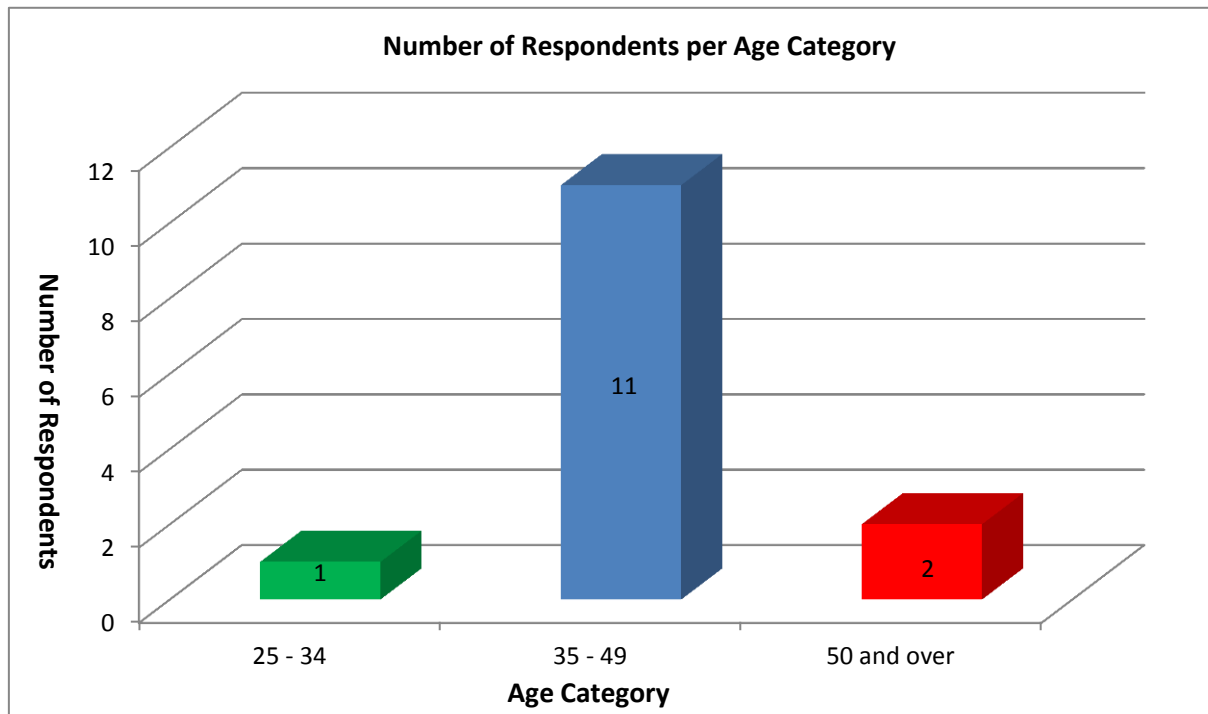


Figure 4.4: Number of Respondents per Age Category

Figure 4.5 below shows that 78 % of participants in the study held university degrees. These academic qualifications also depict the levels of understanding of issues, especially around people development. Out of the 14 participants, 21 % did not have university degrees, but did have other qualifications, and these respondents also gave invaluable information during the interview.

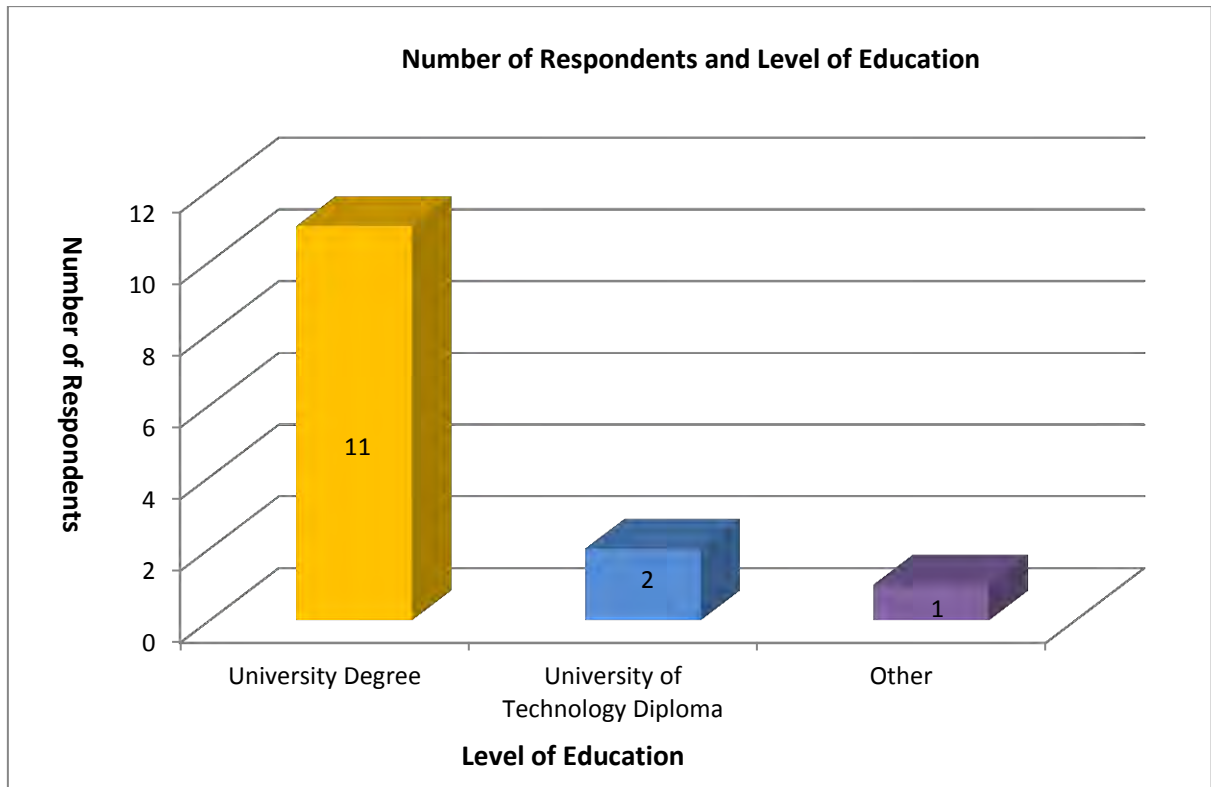


Figure 4.5: Number of Respondents and Level of Education

All participants in this study held managerial positions and therefore have a fair understanding of the talent management programme. They also participate in the performance management process, which is the main feeder to the talent management programme. All participants would have been exposed to a career development programme of their own, or of their subordinates, by at least populating an Individual Development Plan which consists of a summary of individual developmental areas and the recommended initiatives to address any gaps, whether it gets implemented or not.

At the analysis stage, the following themes indicated in Table 4.1, below unfolded:

Table 4.1: Themes in the study

Theme 1	Talent management definition and understanding in Eskom
Theme 2	Responsibility to deliver a successful talent management programme
Theme 3	Performance as a critical feeder to talent management
Theme 4	Career and leadership development
Theme 5	Succession management
Theme 6	Eskom's talent management objectives
Theme 7	Compliance with talent management
Theme 8	Personal career development
Theme 9	Control over successful implementation of the talent management process
Theme 10	Leadership level of accountability
Theme 11	Leadership role
Theme 12	Challenges inhibiting successful talent management implementation
Theme 13	Critical success factors required for Eskom to realise successful talent management and career development

4.3 Talent management definition and understanding in Eskom

The respondents had diverse views of what talent management is. Their views, however, converged towards the purpose and they all shared a sentiment that talent management is a critical process for the organisation to achieve its objectives, through the skills it has at the right time and at the right place. One of

the common themes that came forth from the responses was talent management's purpose of delivering on imperative objectives of the organisation, which was explored during the interviews. Retention of core, critical and scarce skills as one of the key objectives of talent management also came up. Employee skills development was deemed to be critical for enhancing the capability of the organisation to deliver against its business imperatives. The availability of a pipeline and skills at the opportune time for Eskom to meet its business objectives and the methodology thereof to enable effective talent management in the organisation was also raised.

One respondent stated that talent management is about identifying talent that will align with the business in meeting the strategic objectives of the organisation. The respondent also gave an example that Eskom's focus currently is to deliver on the new built programme, which is basically to complete building a new power station that will contribute to the extension of the organisation's ability to supply reliable electricity. The respondent further contended that talent management should be utilised to retain the identified talent, at least until the project is seen to completion, not only by financial rewards but also by affording employees opportunities to do meaningful work.

It is a well-structured methodology of measuring your own employees' development. (R9)

Another respondent understood that employees could be retained by improving their working conditions and opportunities to grow within a defined space that is determined by business needs and career paths facilitated by mentorship and coaching programmes.

The organisation should not take it for granted that professionals always know what to do, especially young ones; talent management should be a guide for employee development and meaning contribution to the organisation. (R6)

It was indicated that one other way of retaining employees is to provide opportunities for development and career growth within the confines of the organisation's defined talent management policy. One other respondent argued

that talent management is mainly about identifying the qualities employees have, exposing them and nurturing them.

One viewed talent management as a process for effecting career guidance, career mobility and planning to ensure required skills development in critical positions.

Talent management is about finding the right people for the right jobs at the right time to deliver on the business objectives. (R4)

The above view was also shared by another respondent who interpreted talent management as being a process to identify skills and competencies required by the organisation and the suitability of the employees to deliver on the job.

The talent management process allows the organisation to understand its SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). (R5)

The talent management process was also described as a process that has various aspects, such as succession planning and performance management, and is mainly about development of skills, knowledge transfer and on-job training.

The multiplicity of definitions and themes that emerged from the respondents concerning talent management within Eskom was found to be consistent with other industries in the talent management discipline. It is not unique to the organisation that a standard definition could not be established. McDonnell *et al.* (2010) also recognised the absence of a standard definition of talent management. McDonnell *et al.* (2010), however, acknowledged the consistency in identifying the topics that must be covered in talent management, for instance workforce planning, talent gap analysis, talent acquisition, staffing, training and development, retention, and succession planning.

A similar observation was made by Zhang and Bright (2012) who stated that, on the basis of practices in different industries and organisations, various definitions have been conferred. It was witnessed from the respondents that their descriptions of talent management were based on their understanding of the practices in their local environments.

The definitions given by respondents to talent management were also indicative of the inclusive philosophy and the approach the organisation has to talent management, which recognises everyone as talent. The findings were found to be aligned to the work of Collings and Mellahi (2009) who argue that organisations should not rely only on high-performing individuals, as it is impossible for an organisation to only have high flyers, and they advocate that all employees in the organisation should be developed for the success of the organisation.

There was no emphasis on talent management as being exclusive to only those with unique capabilities. The organisational approach is perceived as inclusive, where all employees are viewed as talent. However, such an approach is criticised by Ross (2013) as being limiting for the organisation on the basis that it neutralises the emphasis of development initiatives reserved for the few identified as having above-average capabilities, to the benefit of many. Ross further labels such an approach as that which is preferred by HR, as it is seen as unbiased.

These findings correspond with the work of Lacey and Groves (2014) which embraced all employees as talent that should be developed and nurtured, as opposed to a specific focus on a select few.

4.4 Responsibility to deliver a successful talent management programme

Respondents' views varied when they were asked where the responsibility to deliver a successful talent management was currently placed in the organisation:

Figure 4.6 below depicts the various stakeholders that were mentioned by the respondents as having responsibility to deliver a successful talent management programme in the organisation.



Figure 4.6: Stakeholders in the talent management process

One line manager stated that line managers have taken accountability to deliver talent management successfully in the business. On the other hand, a Talent Management Advisor confirmed that talent management is currently left to Human Resources and Talent and Skills Advisors to deliver, mainly because delivery of this key performance area is contracted to them. She argued that senior management should be contracted to do so, as well. She also stated that there are many stakeholders who have talent management accountability, for example human resources, leadership and employees themselves.

Although there were a few respondents who observed that line managers were taking on talent management accountability, many other respondents also perceived HR as the main driver of talent management in the organisation. This view was also shared by some of the leaders and line managers themselves.

Other respondents felt that no one had taken accountability to deliver talent management. However, they recognised that talent management advisors have attempted to take accountability, but this has not yielded any results.

While various other stakeholders, i.e. management, finance department and leadership, were mentioned by some of the respondents as role players in talent management, it was established through the interviews that HR / Talent and Skills Advisors / Training Department comprise a common thread that is still upholding the survival of the talent management in the organisation by virtue of being process owners.

The study findings were remarkably similar to the findings made by Ellehuus (2012) in a Corporate Executive Board study that found that less than a fifth of senior executives had the required levels of commitment to talent management alongside the effectiveness in delivering the talent management practices required to drive these outcomes. Ellehuus (2012) further identified the point that leadership does need HR assistance to make a shift from being business leaders to talent leaders, where they are capacitated to take accountability of their talent to enhance their capability to deliver on business imperatives. The study by Ellehuus (2012), conducted in 2009 on leaders and direct reports based in North America, Europe, Asia and South Africa, aligns acutely with the findings of this study in that 42 % of the managers in the above-mentioned countries did believe that talent management is essential for the business, although the very same leaders lacked effectiveness in managing talent.

The dominance of Human Resource facilitation in Eskom appears to have kept the organisation to an approach that embraces all employees as talent, as opposed to a view that talent is found from a few. It was consequently not surprising that the philosophy of talent remains inclusive in the organisation. This is consistent with the observation made by Ross (2013) that the majority in the HR community tends to select an approach that is seen to be clear from controversy and bias, and prefers to view the talent management process as inclusive.

4.5 Performance as a critical feeder to talent management

The view was expressed that performance management has a significant role to play in any organisation to deliver the required output from the talent which the organisation has, although in Eskom it has not realised its full potential. It was also acknowledged that, to a limited extent, the organisation has seen some results,

but the talent management process and performance management are not integrated and performance is not managed satisfactorily.

Aguinis *et al.* (2012) highlight the significance of performance management as one of the critical success factors in managing talent and ensuring an organisation's ability to meet its objectives and to maintain its competitiveness in the marketplace.

A respondent acknowledged that there are talent management and performance management processes in the organisation, but also stated that the value of the systems will only be known if the systems are used properly. The respondent further commented that the input has not been that good and therefore the results are yet to be achieved.

A Talent Management Advisor agreed that performance management is a pertinent component of talent management. The respondent further elaborated that it is through performance management that you are able to distinguish and identify your top performers and differentiate decisions on succession planning, and even on retention strategies. In Eskom, leadership is not bold enough to properly manage performance, for example by giving developmental feedback. As a result, the use of individual performance ratings has proven not to be a reliable feeder. This in turn undermines many other benefits which might be derived from a proper talent management, for example the filling of vacancies by using succession pools instead of full recruitment.

Aguinis *et al.* (2012) also acknowledge that it is through properly managed performance interventions that organisations will be in a better position to develop internal skills that facilitate talent which can deliver in alignment with the strategic organisational goals. Aguinis *et al.* (2012) further note that properly managed talent interventions have a major influence on a successful talent management programme.

One senior manager argued that performance management is properly managed in the organisation and that employees are also held accountable for their deliverables, however acknowledging that there are pockets of excellence in this regard.

It was acknowledged that although there is a performance management process in place in Eskom, it is mainly done for compliance purposes and hence no meaningful outputs have been realised.

You can take the horse to the river but you cannot force it to drink. (R3)

Another Talent Management Advisor firmly stated that performance management is not a reliable feeder in Eskom, mainly because it is not properly managed and it is not well integrated. She argued that there is no focus on performance management, except at performance appraisal time as it is attached to monetary rewards, and there is still a high degree of bias in the process which impedes a prudent way of identifying gaps.

One of the managerial employees felt that performance management is still used to get back at people and does not allow innovation where employees' capabilities can be differentiated and that its results cannot be a reliable feeder to the talent management process.

It is only done for compliance. (R5)

It is taken for granted that things are happening whilst there is nothing happening. There is no proper alignment of processes. (R6)

The respondent agreed that while there is a base, performance management itself still has huge gaps which need to be filled before it can be used to influence other processes like talent management.

Another manager felt that his department had done very well in managing performance and that deliverables were well understood by all employees in the department and further stated that there is still a gigantic gap between the expected deliverables and employees' capabilities and there is still a room for improvement.

A respondent felt that performance is not managed in the organisation and that there is not even a concerted effort to make an impact in the organisation.

How can the current performance management process be used as a feeder to talent management? Managers are not comfortable in giving feedback, everyone gets rated high to avoid conflict. Those who manage performance properly are seen to be depriving their employee of good bonuses. (R8)

Models are in place it is left up to individual managers to execute. Managers are complacent. It is a culture and poor performance is not managed. (R9)

The above-mentioned observation made by one of the respondents is identical to the Impoverished Management Style identified by Morton (2003) where some organisations are seen to have an under-emphasis on both performance and satisfaction and there is also insufficient focus on both of these. Morton mentioned that when managers pay insufficient attention to the performance of team members and ignore the importance of job satisfaction, they undermine their most fundamental managerial responsibilities and organisational talent management objectives.

There was strong consensus among respondents that although performance management is ideally an important contributor to talent management, considering the current practice in the organisation, it cannot be relied upon and cannot influence talent management.

The revelation that performance is not properly managed goes against the view expressed by Aguinis *et al.*, (2012) which highlights the vital role which performance management plays in ascertaining the value that the organisation may derive from its employees. This is reinforced by Timmerman (2010) who maintained that the strength of the organisation's talent can only be seen through performance. It can, therefore, be concluded that an organisation that does not manage its performance can only weaken its own capability and competitiveness in the operating environment.

4.6 Career and leadership development

Respondents were asked about the contribution that talent management has made to career and leadership development.

One respondent stated that Eskom has excellent policies and processes in place, although they need to be used properly. Performance is supposed to be reviewed twice a year with an option to use a performance enhancement process together with the Individual Development Plan to develop individuals. She further said that it depends where the employees are located, for example in the project environment, where there is alignment and defined career paths. Financial challenges have also slowed career and leadership development initiatives.

Another respondent argued that if the talent management process was implemented, it would work. She further said commitment should be everyone's responsibility and confirmed that talent management has not been working and therefore there has not been any contribution towards career and leadership development.

The current behaviour defined by the respondents gravitates towards the opposite direction to that described by Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008), who have stressed the importance of the ability of leadership to transform the organisation in career and leadership development at different levels. Liden *et al.* (2008) further noted that leadership is about making a significant contribution towards the development of others. Such practice in leadership does not seem to be prevalent in Eskom.

A senior manager responded by saying that outcomes, such as career and leadership development, are dependent on the manager.

Currently no one is policing and therefore positive impact has been very minimal.
(R1)

One other respondent confirmed that there had been initiatives which the organisation has embarked on to develop leaders, for example the Senior Leadership Programme and Supervisory Development Programme, although no

positive effects of the programmes have been evident because of the misalignment of the processes. This respondent further said it appeared that the initiatives are not thought through and aligned.

Another respondent stated that there had not been any feedback on talent management and he was not even aware that the process was still in place. He further stated that the organisation still lacks skills in critical areas. He also confirmed that there are numerous leadership development programmes that Eskom has offered, but the results have not been realised.

Even when people get trained, there are not offered opportunities to apply what they have learnt and there not been follow through. (R5)

One manager stated that Eskom is heading in the right direction. He said that the organisation needs to accelerate the existing programmes to ensure that the talent management processes are aligned and should facilitate meeting business objectives. He also said initiatives, like on-job training, that were used to effectively facilitate career development are now undermined and the current processes are effected haphazardly.

It was cited by another respondent that where the process had been thoroughly followed, career development has been the outcome. He further stated that because his environment is highly regulated, the talent management has assisted in ensuring that there is compliance with the regulations and legislation, for example concerning the competence to operate.

Most respondents acknowledged the existence of the procedure and the fact that the organisation still has a long way to go to reap rewards and derive value. The majority of the respondents realise that there is a need for a change towards behaviours and actions that will capacitate and support the organisation in reaching its full potential through its human capital. It appears that Eskom makes substantial investments in the development skills, although the effort is short of purposeful, central co-ordination and hence the return on investment is not apparent and leadership commitment

A proper alignment between the need of the organisation to fulfil its objectives and the investment on augmentation of skills was identified by the respondents. The observation of the respondents is similar to that of Garavan *et al.* (2012) who recognise the prevailing importance of individual aspirations but contend that the organisation's objectives often take precedence over career ambitions of individuals. This is echoed by Pruis (2011).

4.7 Succession management

A senior manager shared a view that succession management arises as a result of much deliberate effort that is made through talent management and dedication. He said that succession pools have, to a certain extent, been put together but highlighted the point that the organisation is not yet there, for an example in technical environments there are very few women, which is an indicator that transformational goals have not been met.

It was categorically stated by a human resource business partner that the organisation has not done well at all when it comes to succession planning. He further expressed a view that there is lack of integrity in other processes that are crucial for succession planning, such as performance management (that is used to differentiate employees in the organisation). Eskom had to put in place other restrictive processes to mitigate other risks that may arise, for instance, succession pools should not be used for promotion purposes and instead a full recruitment process needs to be followed, rather than relying on the succession pool.

If there was integrity in the system we would have been able to use the existing succession if we need to replace attrition in critical areas and for promotional prospects. (R12)

Another respondent agreed that if Eskom had a succession plan that was working, there would not be a need to go through a full recruitment process each time a vacancy arose.

One other manager admitted that the organisation has not gone far with succession planning and the management thereof. She said that Eskom has ideas and plans, but there has not been an application of those ideas.

The statement made by the respondent above was supported by another respondent, but she also acknowledged that in other business areas individual managers have developed the pipeline, even though the initiatives have not been enabled by the existing talent management process.

One manager felt that the organisation is on a par with other utilities. He further reported that Eskom knows its core skills, for example the organisation has engineers in training programmes that it funds as a pipeline.

Although the majority of respondents indicated a lack of achievement in succession planning objectives, it appears that there is general understanding of a need to have succession plans, especially for the core, critical and scarce roles. The organisation seems to lack vision and commitment to prudently execute talent management initiatives that will propel the organisation towards achievement of effective and active talent pools.

The research findings are congruent with the finding of Erickson (2008) who ascertained that organisations lacked aggressive succession management initiatives for various reasons, among which is the lack of commitment from the senior leadership in organisations and a culture that is dependent on buying the skills, as opposed to nurturing the available resources. Erickson (2008) argues that leadership needs to enlist a culture that embraces growing skills.

The perceived practice in Eskom also goes against the grain of the importance of succession management. Titzer and Shirley (2013) contend that succession plans can be attained through visionary leadership and organisational commitment, among other things. Ellehuus (2012) also argues that it is critical that leadership should focus at least on the strategic talent management activities, such as succession management.

4.8 Eskom's Talent management objectives

A senior manager cited the main objectives of talent management in Eskom as being talent retention and employee development. The achievement of these objectives has not been evident in the organisation.

A respondent advised that she understands career progression, employee development and retention to be the talent management objectives. She further confirmed that some objectives, like employee development, have been achieved to a degree, for instance the organisation is giving additional study funding to employees. However, she stated that the awarding of further assistance appears to be driven more by employees' aspirations because applications are initiated by the employees. There is not a clear indication that the study aid is awarded according to the organisational needs.

The development of an internal pipeline, the retention of skills, and skills development were identified as the main objectives for talent management. A respondent noted that the organisation was still lagging behind and further acknowledged the lack of a bigger picture as a hindrance. He said that the bigger picture can be achieved if there is proper, central co-ordination of all these various initiatives.

One manager stated that the process is not yet known and further said that the implementation has been haphazard in achieving any positive results or its objectives.

Internal pipeline development was again identified by one other respondent as Eskom's talent management objective, and the respondent felt that the talent management objectives have been marginally achieved, more evidently on transformational goals where the organisation now has women and Africans in senior roles in the organisation.

It was cited that the optimisation of HR, productivity, efficiency, upliftment of individuals, retention of skills and social investment were the main objectives of talent management. She further said there was a time when Eskom met these

objectives, but has since regressed owing to loss of skilled individuals who were able to successfully mentor and coach others for development.

The strengthening of an internal pipeline skills base, mainly in the core, critical and scarce skills, was also mentioned by a middle manager as Eskom's talent management objectives, although it was expressed unhappily that the talent management tools are not being efficiently utilised in the organisation.

One respondent noted that Eskom offers much internal training through its college, as well as opportunities to get external training, although not much has been achieved as the initiatives lack alignment.

Another manager defined talent management objectives as promoting flexibility and mobility of skills for the areas where the organisation needs the skills. He cited the example of the current needs of the organisation in the construction environment. His view is that if Eskom had the ability to mobilise skills in required areas, the organisation would not be relying on external consultants and contractors to build new power stations, and instead Eskom could have groomed the skills internally, seeing they will always be required to build other power stations in the future.

The findings in Eskom were consistent with Erickson (2008) who found that talent management objectives, such as attraction and retention of critical skills, employment value proposition, leadership pipeline, and knowledge and skills transfer, are similar to those of other industries, and the challenge of meeting those objectives were found not to be different from other organisations who are in different geographical places and in various industries.

It was found that respondents had a clear understanding of what talent management seeks to achieve. It also became obvious that the organisation does not have talent management monuments. Stahl *et al.* (2012) highlight the point that even if talent management lacks a standard definition, it is apparent that, for any organisation to perform according to the set expectations and to remain competitive, talent must be managed and the organisation needs to execute its objectives in a disciplined fashion.

4.9 Compliance with the talent management process

A senior manager confirmed that Eskom does comply with talent management process in place, adding, however, that she is not confident that the process adds any value, considering how it is done.

Another respondent cited the financial challenges and the many other operational critical expected deliverables that the organisation is faced with as being a reason for not complying with the talent management process.

One other respondent said that although there are pockets of excellence, there is limited evidence that compliance by the few business units has made the required impact in Eskom.

The talent advisor explained that there has been somewhat of a level of compliance *where it suits managers; if it was working, we would not be having such a high number of vacancies.* (R4)

It was highlighted that the level of compliance has not been beneficial to the organisation.

The talent advisor's statement was also illustrated by one other respondent's comment that recruitment process which is adopted does not follow the recommendations of the talent board, which is evidence that the current level of compliance is not advantageous.

There is one respondent who shared a different view. He said that the business has complied with its talent management processes. He further said that HR drives committees and pays specific attention to development of people.

On the other hand, one manager emphatically stated that none of the talent management process can be utilised to take the business forward at this stage.

Everyone is aware that these processes are not working. (R9)

Another respondent remarked that there is a degree of compliance in the organisation, although the process has not been enabled.

A human resource business partner cited the view that the shortcoming of the current talent management process is that it is complicated and cumbersome in achieving the desired objectives.

One senior manager described the current compliance as a 'tick box' exercise. He further explained that the organisation has not yet reached the maturity levels required to make the talent management process work.

There is no follow through and more often the interventions are vague. (R7)

It was found that in the organisation there are set deliverables that must be met, for example each business unit needs to conduct two talents boards a year and a signed succession plan needs to be in place. The reason that these deliverables are being met arises from the fact that HR are contracted to meet these outcomes, and as a result HR drives the process. The process, however, is seen not to be adding any value to both the employees and the business.

The outcomes of the research are consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Uren (2007) which ascertained that although organisations realise the importance of talent management and the importance thereof, practice has not been consistent with the need. Uren (2007) accordingly advocates a case for change to progress the organisations beyond a compliance stage to talent commitment. Uren (2007) argues that compliance alone does not take an organisation to a level where the value of talent management can be realised, rather it is when a talent management programme is aligned to other relevant processes, for example performance management and an enhanced commitment level, that it will yield desired results.

4.10 Personal career development

One respondent at senior management level confirmed that at a personal level, he has been afforded many opportunities to attend training, such as a senior development programme. He said that he had to make effort on his own to get to the next level. It was not as a result of the current talent management process that he was promoted.

One respondent confirmed that her career progression was made possible by both the exposure the organisation gave her and mainly her own initiative. She said she had to apply for a promotion.

A human resource business partner firmly noted that HR drives the talent management for line businesses, although nothing is done to manage the talents of human resource professionals.

A respondent shared the point that although he was not promoted through a talent management programme, he admitted that the exposure and feedback he received from his manager prepared him to compete for a senior position.

A middle manager interviewed stated that she has at a personal level partially experienced the effects of talent management in that her manager prompted her to think about her career development.

A respondent emphatically stated that she has not benefited from Eskom's talent management process. She stated that as a self-starter she initiated her own mobility. This sentiment was shared by many other respondents.

Another respondent, similarly to the above-mentioned respondents, indicated that he has enjoyed career growth, although it was not through the talent management system in the organisation, but through the efforts of a manager who gave him exposure, coaching and support which allowed him to apply for better opportunities.

Respondents' personal experiences were symptomatic of a lack of execution of talent management processes in the organisation. It also unfolded in numerous themes that the processes fall short of deliberate effort on the side of the organisation, which undermines the results of the great investment that the organisation has made. However, career aspirations do seem to have been supported by the organisation through investment made by the organisation, for example in providing further study aid.

The sentiments shared by the respondents are similar to the characteristics that were identified by in a study by Noe *et al.* (2014) where some of the constraints to

career development were identified. Noe *et. al* (2014) argue that the lack of funding and time may hinder employee development, which has been evident in the above-mentioned findings. Noe *et al.* (2014) also highlighted the point that leadership support contributes significantly to the development climate and therefore the absence of support and commitment does negatively influence the development of employees, their interest in the organisations and their perceptions of the developmental opportunities offered by the organisation.

4.11 Control over successful implementation of the talent management process

A respondent mentioned that leadership does, to a limited extent, have control over the successful implementation of talent management in their respective areas.

It was established that employees have not been receptive to development intervention, for example they have found it difficult to learn new skills, mainly because they are in a comfort zone

One respondent expressed a view that although leadership has the control required to deliver a successful talent management programme in Eskom, they need to move beyond a compliance stage to a proper implementation level.

Leadership does not seem to have control and talent management is seen as a waste of time. (R12)

The above-mentioned view was supported by that of another respondent who felt that management does not have any control, mainly because this process cannot be used to influence anything.

One respondent contended that line managers have control over the implementation of a successful talent management process, and they only need to commit to the process to make it work.

A respondent felt that there are various factors that prevent management from applying the talent management principles, such as the inflexibility of policies and rules against moving employees vertically using talent management processes.

One middle manager confirmed that management can do a lot with the current talent management process, but they do not execute.

The organisation seems to have lost control over the current talent management system. This suggests that the availability of the talent management process in the organisation does not guarantee successful implementation and rather that commitment to the process and meticulous execution is required.

The experiences and perceptions shared by respondents are very much in line with the findings of Jackson (2011) where it was ascertained that big organisations are often found not to have control over the management of talent. Organisations such as Yahoo, GE and Home Depot were cited as large organisations which had also experienced attrition of top talent owing to the lack of control on talent management. Some of the reasons why large organisations have experienced these challenge are the bureaucratic processes, lack of career development opportunities, lack of accountability, and poor performance reviews. These challenges cited by Jackson (2011) were also alluded to by some of the respondents in this study.

4.12 Leadership level of accountability

When respondents were asked as to who is currently taking the accountability to deliver talent management system in the organisation and who they believe it should be, they expressed the following views.

One respondent at senior managerial level believed that employees have a bigger role to play, especially when it comes to identifying individual gaps. Leadership's accountability is that of ensuring that there is alignment between employees' aspirations, and the business needs assistance from HR as an enabler of the talent management process.

A respondent highlighted a point that it is incumbent upon the leadership to secure succession plans in the business so as to ensure a continuous supply of skills, and to identify training intervention, although some level of responsibility should also be apportioned to the employees themselves when it comes to commitment to the development programme.

A few respondents held a view that talent management is a joint responsibility of leadership, HR and employees.

One of the Talent Management Advisors expressed a strong sentiment that accountability to deliver a successful talent management programme in the organisation should reside at the highest office of the chief executive, with the support of line managers and with HR taking ownership of the process and guiding the business.

Two managers proposed a different angle in seeing the finance department as having a critical role in making the budget available for employee development:

Training is often seen as a cost by the finance colleagues, it is critical that they understand employee development as an investment not as a cost. (R6)

One of the line managers remarked that HR should also play a meaningful role in driving, monitoring and assuring the process if it is to be successful, because line managers have numerous day to day operational responsibilities they have to fulfil, which undermines other human resource processes.

One other respondent felt that subject matter experts, who are the Talent Management Advisors, should take a lead in the process to realise success.

Among other views, the training department was mentioned as a critical stakeholder in administering, facilitating and implementing the interventions identified by managers and employees themselves.

A senior manager argued that line management has taken accountability to deliver, but believed that accountability should be placed at individual level and that senior management should be an enabler.

It was highlighted by another respondent that the accountability to drive the talent management system is seen by many as a human resource function and there is no consequence for not delivering on this aspect.

The talent management advisor emphasised that the talent management procedure places accountability at the right levels, although implementation is

something else, and senior managers often leave delivery of talent management in the hands of middle managers.

It was observed that, thus far, HR have taken accountability to drive and to deliver talent management successfully.

One middle manager suggested that accountability should be retained at an executive level so that talent management can be kept as a priority in the midst of all the challenges which the organisation is facing, considering that Eskom is in survival mode.

Different levels of leadership were seen to be critical for the execution of talent management, as opposed to placing accountability at senior executive level only. It was further noted that collaboration between leadership, HR and talent and skills functions is more acutely necessary.

A similar sentiment as the above was also shared by a many other respondents, to the effect that responsibility needs to be shared by all relevant stakeholders, including the employees themselves, with senior executive leadership taking accountability.

Another respondent advocated for a more decisive approach, saying that managers should not be given an option to deliver on talent management, but should rather be contracted to deliver on it. He further said that it has been easy to overlook this responsibility as there are currently no consequences for individual managers.

It was cited by one other respondent that the matter of succession management is an extremely critical function and that such accountability should be placed at an executive level.

The findings of the study in respect of the placement of accountability for succession management correspond with previous research. In the last decade it was established that it is critical to place accountability at the highest level in an organisation. A study carried out by Handfield-Jones, Michaels and Axelrod (2001) reported on The Limited, a large and a well-established organisation in America,

which had experienced a down-turn in its business results in the early 1990s. The CEO at the time, Les Wexner, following input which he had received from various leaders of top organisations, such as General Electric's CEO Jack Welch, advised that it is through people that excellent business results can be achieved and that spending substantial amount of time in managing talent is a must for business leaders.

It was established that there are various stakeholders in talent management and that the participants should understand their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities in the system. A trend of line manager to detach from the talent management processes is not unique to Eskom. Timmerman (2010) made an observation that organisations whose leaderships disengage on such processes miss out by far on the opportunity to reap the benefits associated with sensible execution.

Although HR have been seen to be driving the process, it cannot be disputed that the responsibility and accountability should be placed at the right level. Vaiman *et al.*, (2008) have stated that a decision on how far down this accountability should be delegated from the Chief Executive should be determined by the premium which the organisation places on talent management. Vaiman *et al.*, (2012) also noted that although an HR department's role is invaluable to the talent management process, it can be argued that talent is a strategic imperative of the organisation and therefore the talent agenda should be placed at a strategic level as well.

4.13 Leadership role

Different views were expressed about the role of leadership in the talent management discipline.

The talent management advisor mentioned the deployment of business strategy in alignment with some of the talent management activities, such as employee development, career discussions, igniting passion and ethical conduct, as being a critical role which leadership should play in talent management.

A senior manager stated that leaders in Eskom should champion the talent management process, prioritise employee development, and be prepared financially to invest in skills development that will contribute to meeting organisational objectives.

It was argued that leadership needs to put structure, communicate about talent management to employees, and create awareness about the talent management process.

One respondent viewed the leadership role to include identifying skill gaps, supporting employees to bridge the identified gaps, and leading the talent management.

Bartlett and Ghoshal (2013) argue that managers have realised that there is a great need for the organisation to progress from a marginal management style and revolutionise towards adopting a leadership style that recognises its role as going beyond operational technical roles and moving toward empowering employees. Bartlett and Ghoshal (2013) further recognised that the shift from the traditional approach to a transformational mindset does not come without its challenges.

An emphasis was made that executives must champion and drive talent management through the leadership team.

As managers we need put the best interest of the organisation before ours and support talent management initiatives so that the organisation will derive more value out of the process. (R6)

Respondents reflected on the numerous accountabilities and roles that leaders should play in talent management. It is evident that it is expected that leaders have a significant place in talent management. Hughes and Rog (2008) concur that the momentous role that leaders have cannot be overlooked. Timmerman (2010) concurs that leadership has a vital role in the selection, growing and retaining of organisational talent and further contends that disregarding talent management can undermine the attainment of organisational objectives.

4.14 Challenges inhibiting successful talent management implementation

When asked about challenges that might be inhibiting success, the following reasons were advanced.

Recruitment procedure was identified by one respondent. She identified the lack of accountability and policies that are not aligned as being obstacles that hamper the achievement of successful talent management in Eskom.

It was found that the misalignment of the processes that contribute to talent management, such as EE policy, recruitment policy and non-existence of processes that enable use of succession pools, avoidance of critical conversations, lack of willingness to commit to individual development plans, funding and budgetary constraints, is a major contributor to the lack of an effective talent management process in Eskom.

*Why should line managers spend time on something that cannot be implemented?
The benefit of talent management should be seen when a vacancy arises. (R8)*

It was emphatically stated that if the process was used efficiently, its value would not be questioned.

One respondent identified management and leadership's lack of buy-in as the main challenge that hinders Eskom from achieving the desired talent management outcome and added that talent management is seen as a human resource function in the organisation.

A few respondents also mentioned that buy-in is by far critical for talent management to work.

There is currently no awareness of talent management in the organisation. (R11)

A Middle Manager mentioned, among other challenges, the absence of ownership of the talent management process and a main focus which is placed on technical deliverables. She further highlighted the fact that the organisation has lost core and critical skills, which has resulted in the loss of a mentoring and coaching focus.

One of the managers interviewed felt that the failure of the talent management process in the organisation could be attributed to the many changes and the turbulent times that the organisation has gone through, and as a result not much attention has been given to talent management.

Another respondent identified the lack of skills and a lack of interest from management as contributing to a non-effective talent management system.

The research of Schuler *et al.*, (2011) aligns with some of the challenges that were identified by the respondents. Schuler *et al.* identified a great need to align those HR policies and procedures which are relevant to talent for effective management of talent in an organisation. Failure to align was cited by respondents as being a major hindrance to a successful implementation of talent management. Mellahi and Collings (2010) note that fragmented and large volumes of information can contribute to complexity, which may pose a challenge to managers when they have to synthesise information, hence there is a need to align policies and process and to simplify the talent management system.

McDonnell *et al.*, (2010) also acknowledge the challenge to talent management which is brought about by turbulent times which the organisation may experience, such as the major financial crisis which Eskom is facing. McDonnell *et al.*, (2010) further claim that such business challenges may emerge as a diverting focus and so neutralise the need for sound practices in talent management.

4.15 Critical success factors required for Eskom to realise successful talent management and career development

One of the senior managers felt that there should be a review of current policies which should then be aligned so as to support one another in achieving the main business objectives. He further said that leadership should put time aside to attend to the talent management agenda. He said that HR can play a critical role in employee engagement, employee training on the talent management process, and in creating more awareness within the organisation.

A talent management advisor strongly suggested that line management should be performance contracted to deliver successful talent management in the

organisation. She, like many other respondents, identified a need to revisit processes to make sure all relevant processes talk to each other. She also identified a need to create more awareness in the business, especially about stakeholders' roles.

Talent management must be linked to performance management. (R11)

Managers must be contracted to deliver talent management outcome successfully. (R9)

One Middle Manager responded by saying that Eskom already has good policies and procedures in place. She further said that what is left is for leadership to progress to the execution level, which should be measured.

One of the respondents suggested that the implementation of talent management and other related processes, such as performance management processes, must be audited so that their credibility to influence a recruitment and promotion process can be restored and defended.

Another respondent suggested that the talent management system should be simplified so that it would be user friendly and further recommended that managers should be trained to use the process thoroughly.

A Project Manager's input was that the organisation needs to create awareness about talent management by training and engaging all stakeholders.

When respondents were asked as to what could be done to enhance talent management and career development in the organisation, various responses were given by the participants. The majority of the respondents identified a need to align the HR process, to simplify the process, and to secure leadership commitment to deliver on talent management in order for success to be realised in the organisation. This view can be aligned to the need for leadership commitment to talent management.

The finding that talent management and the impact thereof could be deepened in Eskom by a process of aligning the talent management related processes was found to be similar to that in the study of Bywater, Guest and Guarini (2008).

These authors maintained that there is largely a need for organisations to align all processes that are related to talent management in order to create efficiency and to neutralise the complexity that may prevail as a result of fragmented system. Bywater *et al.*, (2008) further supported flexibility and simplicity in a system. Farndale *et al.*, (2010) also concurred that the alignment of systems related to talent management is a critical success factor. Farndale *et al.*, (2010) further stated that leadership commitment to managing talent is equally essential for taking the organisation to a point where talent is efficiently managed to fulfil organisational objectives.

4.16 Chapter Summary

This chapter gave a comprehensive report and discussion on the findings of the research, based on the key research questions that sought to be answered by the research. Most findings of this research are consistent and congruent with prior research in the talent management field. In the following chapter, the conclusions of the research are presented, in chapter five together with recommendations and opportunities for future research.

The next chapter will present the key findings and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions on the impact of talent management in Eskom. The study investigated the understanding of the concept of talent management within the Eskom context. The study further attempted to comprehend the effectiveness of other processes that are deemed to be vital for a successful talent management, such as performance management and succession management. The impact and effectiveness of career development, compliance, leadership and accountability were investigated to establish an appreciation of the perceptions held about talent management in Eskom.

The study was inspired by an aspiration to establish the perceptions that Eskom employees hold about the talent management process, and whether or not it has been adequately delivered according to its objectives as stated in the Eskom talent management policy, and about the lack of its effectiveness.

The intent of the study was to:

- Determine how effective the talent management process is in Eskom.
- Establish the effect of talent management on career development for employees in Eskom.
- Establish the role of leadership in ensuring successful implementation of talent management in Eskom.
- Contribute to the improvement of the implementation of talent management in Eskom.

Although the study was conducted in the head office environment, its relevance may be extended to other environments, such as power stations, grids, regions and construction management sites that are geographically remote from head office.

The literature review formed a foundation for the theoretical basis of the study. Some of the topics that were explored when reviewing literature emerged as themes in the interviews and were at times found to be consistent with the literature.

The qualitative research approach was utilised for the purpose of the study. Semi-structured interviews were employed. A decision to use a qualitative and semi-structured approach was motivated by the nature of the problem, which was complex and social in nature. The questions were open-ended and allowed the respondents the flexibility to respond and to engage on the perceptions that they held on Eskom's talent management. This was also done to allow for openness in the engagements and discussions so as to solicit the essence of the challenges in talent management in the organisation.

The data was organised into themes, based on the responses that emerged during the interview from the fourteen respondents who were interviewed.

5.2 Key findings

The research findings will be presented in alignment to the research objectives that were stated in the first chapter.

Objective 1: Determine how effective the talent management process is in Eskom.

The first objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the talent management process in Eskom. This was done by establishing whether there was understanding of the concept of talent management and what it seeks to achieve in the form of objectives outlined in the talent management policy and whether the levels of compliance are meaningfully contributing towards the effectiveness of the talent management system.

The findings of the study established that although employees lacked a consistent definition, that there was, however, an understanding that the process is necessary and critical for the organisation to enhance its capacity to deliver on its

mandate and objectives. The definitions converged towards acknowledging talent management as being a process that ensures that the right skills are acquired, nurtured and retained by the organisation.

The respondents were also able to identify organisational talent management objectives, with individuals placing emphasis on different objectives, for example some focused on development and others looked at skills retention.

The findings of the research revealed there is some level of compliance with the talent management process. It emerged from the study that although there are areas that have excelled in the organisation while the organisation has been financially turbulent, the focus has shifted away from talent management being viewed as a priority.

Even though many organisations have a talent management strategy in place, more than half of them implement the strategy haphazardly, and more often shift focus away from talent management to other business operations (McDonnell *et al.*, 2010).

Although Eskom has a good and sufficiently understood talent management policy and a degree of compliance with talent management, it was established through the study that the desirable effectiveness of the talent management system has not been realised. The dissatisfaction expressed by the respondents about the system not yielding the results that it is designed to do could not be ignored.

The findings are similar to the findings in the Corporate Executive Board (CEB) study. Ellehuus (2012), in the CEB study conducted in 8 000 companies, revealed that although 42 % of managers understood the great value of talent management, they lacked effectiveness in implementing the talent management processes, whereas a small percentage executed the processes meticulously, with the remainder rejecting the process.

Objective 2: Establish the effect of talent management on career development for employees in Eskom.

The findings of the study revealed that Eskom is not yet at the stage where it is supposed to be in terms of career and leadership development. Talent management has not made significant progress to a point where it can influence career development. The findings also exposed shortcomings in the implementation, such as leadership commitment which was found to be lacking and so hindering delivery.

The findings of the study are consistent with those of Jones (2007) who established that the size of the organisation has an influence on the operationalisation of talent management. The bigger the size of the organisation, the more complex it was to implement a successful talent management programme. Among the 33 countries and a 1 000 executives who participated in Jones's study, only 29 % of their employees were reported to be happy with the manner in which the employers handled their talent, and the majority perceived their organisations to be not committed to their career development and that they had not benefited from any career development initiatives from the organisations. This was found to be similar to Eskom's case, it being a large organisation that employs a total of thirty-three thousand employees.

There was a perception that there are business units that have done well and that where the system had been followed, positive results were realised. The findings of the study showed that the organisation has significantly invested in training, although it has not reached a point where the training received has converted into development in employees' career and leadership development.

Eskom's position regarding the insignificant impact that talent management has made to career and leadership development was found to be similar to the study conducted by McDonnell *et al.*, (2010) which concluded that the majority of multinational organisations have not moved beyond merely focusing on traditional training and formal qualifications for everyone in the organisation, instead of

focusing on those employees who are high performers and with high potentials. An inference could be drawn that such practice denies organisations the opportunity to invest where returns on investment can be realised through organisational performance.

Poor career development implementation in Eskom was also attributed to a lack of leadership commitment to deliver on talent management, while others attributed the shortfall to the financial challenges that the organisation finds itself in. Furthermore, the findings indicated that career and leadership development of employees has not been achieved through a well-co-ordinated and a traceable process, but has rather been predominantly driven by employees' aspirations.

Objective 3: Establish the role of leadership in ensuring successful implementation of the talent management in Eskom.

Among the various stakeholders in the talent management process, respondents viewed leadership as being the key authority in driving talent management in the organisation, mainly because talent management is seen as a critical success factor for the organisation to deliver on its objectives.

Performance management was identified as an essential contributor to talent management, and the existence of areas that have excelled were acknowledged by some respondents. However, the majority of respondents identified a lack of leadership commitment and conscientious execution of performance management, even though it is clearly incumbent upon leadership to deliver business results through talent that has been carefully selected, developed and retained in suitable positions. Leadership's involvement in performance management was mainly seen as compliance rather than commitment.

This finding is congruent with that of Glenn (2012). Glenn agrees with the view that it is through performance that an organisation can understand its capability to deliver against the organisation's objectives, and that where there is a gap between skills and deliverables, talent management initiatives, such as mentoring, coaching and training, can be used to bridge the gap. Glenn further cites a pivotal

need to integrate the talent management system with the performance management system.

The strong need identified in the study for better talent management is reflected by Ellehuus (2012) who found that leaders who managed talent yielded better results (by 25 %) and that those who managed performance attained far better results in their organisations. Ellehuus (2012) furthermore argues that it is essential to co-ordinate business strategic objectives and talent plans in order for the organisation to attain better business results. Ellehuus (2012) also found it critical to establish a culture of accountability, especially by leaders, for talent management activities such as career and leadership development.

Perceptions of leadership's role in career development were seen to be tarnished by the non-commitment of leadership. The absence of execution of talent management processes was also perceived to be negatively impacting on the delivery of succession management in the organisation. Failure of leadership to implement succession management in the organisation was also attributed to a lack of co-ordination of other related processes, such as the recruitment policy which dictates that all selection should be done through a recruitment process that does not recognise succession pools. The fragmentation and misalignment of processes that are supposed to support talent management were seen to be the main factor contributing to management's loss of interest in focussing on talent management.

The impact of leadership was also explored against the main talent management objectives, which were mentioned during the interviews and summarised as talent acquisition, talent development and talent retention. Efficiencies, productivity and flexibility in deployment of human capital were also mentioned as other objectives.

Leadership was perceived as not having taken up the responsibility and accountability to deliver successful talent management in the organisation. The majority of organisations acknowledge the critical leadership responsibility to drive succession management and how vital it is for an organisation to place focus on it, although some may have dysfunctional and poor succession management

programmes, and by leadership admission, there is lack of confidence to restore the situation (Barnett & Davies, 2008).

Objective 4: Contribute to the improvement of the implementation of talent management in Eskom.

While the respondents felt that Eskom had not done well in managing talent management in the organisation, some felt that the organisation has a good policy, and if implemented properly, it can yield desirable outcomes. A few were still positive that the organisation has started and is recognising the significance of properly managing talent, and this was considered to be a positive step. Among the many views expressed on how the organisation can deepen its talent management success, the following views were offered by the respondents as representing desirable changes:

- Review and alignment of the current policies that are relevant to talent management.
- Talent management agenda to be placed at the fore.
- Leadership to be formally contracted to successfully deliver talent management to enforce leadership commitment.
- Organisation to simplify the talent management process.
- Awareness creation.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to Eskom, based on the findings of this research study:

5.3.1 Leadership commitment and consciously driven talent management process

It is recommended that senior executive leadership be committed to the talent management process and actively sponsor its operationalisation at all management levels by aligning talent management and business imperatives, one of which is to be in the top-five utility companies in the world.

5.3.2 Alignment of human resource related policies and processes

Eskom has adopted a talent management system. The value of the system is not being fully realised and there is no resolute effort being made to guarantee the successful implementation this much-needed talent management process in the organisation. Challenges arising the lack of alignment of succession management with recruitment were cited by respondents as constituting one of the issues that need to be rectified in the organisation. It makes sense that the organisation should realise the potential return on investment available from the succession pools, rather than relying on external recruitment to bring in resources to core, critical and scarce positions, more so now that the organisation is dealing with financial challenges, taking into account recruitment costs.

5.3.3 Simplify and follow the talent management process systematically

Simplification of the talent management process to eliminate cumbersome and bureaucratic elements embedded in the talent management system may encourage the use and implementation of the talent management system in the organisation. A consistent and periodically monitored process is recommended to allow for planning and implementation, so that other processes dependent on these processes can be meaningfully influenced, for instance succession management and career and leadership development.

5.3.4 Talent management culture and engagement

The study established that there was poor awareness about the talent management process and the talent management initiatives. It is therefore recommended that a culture of management of talent be cultivated in the organisation by thorough engagement, for example by soliciting buy-in and giving individual feedback. It is also recommended that leadership should be obliged to successfully implement the talent management. The implementation of talent management can be enhanced by adding talent management as one of the key performance outputs to the performance contracts of leadership personnel and by introducing the measurement of the deliverables against the business units.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The researcher identified three major challenges of this study.

The study was only conducted in the head office environment and therefore excluded many other employees who have experienced the organisation's talent management system and who are located in smaller regions where there may be pockets of excellence, owing to size, mainly because of the manageable numbers and the fact that regions are technical- and process-driven environments.

Because of the sensitivity of the subject and the current business volatility, some of the employees chose not to participate and rather prioritised attending to other activities. Time constraints and business demands compromised the priority given to the study.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

This research took place at the time when Eskom took a decision to formalise Strategic Workforce Planning and the procurement of the tool to be used for implementation. The organisation had just introduced a team-based performance management system and a calibrated performance rating in the system in an attempt to enhance objectivity and joint accountability. It must be taken into account that Strategic Workforce Planning is the process for ascertaining the future resource needs of the organisation and that team-based performance will

hold both employees and managers accountable. The two initiatives are likely to yield positive spinoffs, specifically on talent management. It is on these grounds that future research is recommended so that the effect and impact of these new initiatives on talent management can be explored.

There is also an opportunity to widen the scope of a study to the entire breadth of the organisation, as this research was only conducted in the head office environment.

5.6 Conclusion

This study sought to establish the effectiveness of the talent management process in Eskom and its effect on career and leadership development for Eskom's talent. It also aimed to establish the role which leadership plays in ensuring the successful implementation of talent management in Eskom. The intention was to contribute to the improvement of the implementation of talent management in Eskom.

The study identified shortcomings of the talent management system for remedy and areas for development, as would enable Eskom to be counted in the top-five utility companies in the world. The main areas of development arise from a lack of focus on talent management, lack of leadership commitment, and misalignment of talent management processes with other relevant policies. These areas requiring improvement have made it difficult for the organisation to achieve a desired effective talent management programme as would contribute towards career and leadership development and the attainment of business results.

The findings revealed that, to efficiently operationalise talent management successfully, Eskom leadership should pledge commitment to implementing talent management. Alignment of processes, simplification of the talent system, and diligently embarking on talent management processes that will contribute meaningfully to career and leadership development, will be critical for the effective talent management process in Eskom.

REFERENCES

- Abhayawansa, S. & Abeysekera, I. (2007). Coping with the talent shortage: How GE, Rochester and other US firms have approached the recruitment conundrum. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 15(3): 6-8.
- Aguinis, H., Gottfredson, R.K. & Joo, H. (2012). Using performance management to win the talent war. *Business Horizons*, 55(6): 609-616.
- Barnett, R. & Davies, S. (2008). Creating greater success in succession planning. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 10(5): 721-739.
- Bartlett, C. & Ghoshal, S. (2013). Building competitive advantage through people. *Sloan Management Review*, 43(2). Available at: <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/building-competitive-advantage-through-people>.
- Beardwell, J. & Claydon, T., eds. (2010). *Human Resource Management: a contemporary approach*. London: Pearson.
- Becker, B.E., Huselid, M.A. & Beatty, R.W. (2009). *The differentiated workforce: Transforming talent into strategic impact*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Bethke-Langenegger, P., Mahler, P. & Staffebach, B. (2011). Effectiveness of talent management strategies. *European Journal of International Management*, 5(5): 524-539.
- Blass, E. (2009). *Talent Management: cases and commentary*. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Boston Consulting Group (2012). *Creating People Advantage*. The Boston Consulting Group & World Federation of People Management Associations.
- Bucur, I. (2012). The role of managerial motivation in predicting management performance. *Contemporary Reading in Law and Social Justice*, 1: 156 - 161.

- Burbach, R. & Royle, T. (2010). Talent on demand? Talent management in the German and Irish subsidiaries of a US multinational corporation. *Personnel Review*, 39(4): 414 - 431.
- Burkus, D. & Osula, B. (2011). Faulty intel in the war for talent: Replacing the assumptions of talent management with evidence-based strategies. *Journal of Business Studies*, 2(3): 1-9.
- Bywater, J., Guest, F. & Guarini, M. (2008). *Guidelines for Best Practice in integrated talent management*. [Online]. Available at: <http://ceb.shl.com/assets/resources/Best-Practice-Integrated-Talent-Management.pdf>.
- Cappelli, P. & Keller, J.R. (2014). Talent Management: Conceptual approaches and practical challenges. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1(1): 305-331.
- Chabault, D., Hulin, A. & Sopornot, R. (2012). Talent management in clusters. *Organizational Dynamics*, 41(4): 327-335.
- Chambers, E.G., Foulon, M., Handfield-Jones, H., Hankin, S.M. & Michaels, E.G. (1998). The war for talent. *The McKinsey Quarterly*, 3: 44-57.
- Chenail, R. (2011). Ten Steps for conceptualizing and conducting Qualitative Research Studies in a pragmatically curious manner. *Qualitative Report*, 16(6): 1713-1730.
- Cho, Y.B. & Ryu, J. (2009). Organizational citizenship behaviours in relation to job embeddedness, organizational identification, job performance, voluntary turnover intention in Korea. *International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 8(7): 51-68.
- Clarke, M. (2013). The organizational career: not dead but in need of redefinition. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(4): 684-703.

- Collings, D.G. & Mellahi, K. (2009). Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management Review*, 19(4): 304-313.
- Conaty, B. & Charan, R. (2011). *The Talent Masters*. London: Random House Business Books.
- Cooke, F.L., Saini, D.S. & Wang, J. (2014). Talent management in China and India: A comparison of management perceptions and human resource practices. *Journal of World Business*, 49(2): 225 - 235.
- Coulson-Thomas, C. (2013). Aiming for the stars can bring an organization down to earth. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 21: 128-130.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- DeLyser, D. & Sui, D. (2014). Crossing the qualitative-quantitative chasm III: Enduring methods, open geography, participatory research, and the fourth paradigm. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(2): 294-307.
- Denzin, K.N. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2009). *Qualitative Research*. Yogyakarta: PustakaPelajar.
- Diebel, A. (2008). Neutrality in qualitative research. In: *The SAGE Encyclopedia*. pp. 556-557.
- Doh, J.P., Smith, R.R., Stumpf, S.A. & Tymon, W.G. (2011). Pride and professionals: retaining talent in emerging economies. *Journal of Business*, 32(5): 35-42.
- Dries, N., Van Acker, F. & Verbruggen, M. (2012). How bounderyless are the careers of high potentials, key experts and average performers? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 81(2): 271-279.
- Ellehuus, C. (2012). Transforming business leaders into talent. *Strategic HR Review*, 11(2): 84-89.

- Ells, C. (2011). Communicating Qualitative Research Study Designs to Research Ethics Review Boards. *Qualitative Report*, 16(3): 881-891.
- Examining Integrated Talent Management (2013). *Examining Integrated Talent Management*. [Online] Available at: http://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/landing/talent_management [Accessed 28 February 2013].
- Fereday, J. & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2008). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1): 80-92.
- Finfeld-Connett, D. (2010). Generalizability and transferability of meta-synthesis research findings. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 66(2): 246-254.
- Galagan, P. (2008). Talent management: what is it, who owns it, and why should you care? *T&D*, 62(5): 40-44.
- Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Dries, N. & González-Cruz, T.F. (2013). What is the meaning of "talent" in the world of work? *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4): 290-300.
- Garavan, T.N., Carbery, R. & Rock, A. (2012). Mapping talent development: definition, scope and architecture. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 36(1): 5-24.
- Garavan, T.N., Hogan, C. & Cahir-O'Donnell, A. (2009). *Developing managers and leaders: Perspective, debates and practices in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Given, L.M., ed. (2008). In: *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. pp. 697-698.
- Glenn, T. (2012). The state of talent management in Canada's public sector. *Canadian Public Administration*, 51(1): 25-51.
- Groysberg, B., Lee, L.-E. & Abrahams, R. (2010). What it takes to make 'star' hires pay off. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 51(2): 57-61.

- Guion, L., Diehl, D.C. & McDonald, D. (2011). *Triangulation: Establishing the validity of qualitative studies*. Report FCS6014, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida.
- Gümüş, S., Sudi, A., Gümüş, H.G. & Kurban, Z. (2013). An application in Human Resources Management for meeting differentiation and innovativeness requirements of business: Talent management. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 99: 794-808.
- Handfield-Jones, H., Michaels, E. & Axelrod, B. (2001). Talent management: A critical part of every leader's job. *Ivey Business Journal*, 66(2): 53.
- Hartmann, E., Edda, F. & Holger, S. (2010). Talent management of western MNCs in China: Balancing global integration and local responsiveness. *Journal of World Business*, 45(2): 169-178.
- Herman, A., Gottfredson, R.K. & Joo, H. (2012). Using performance to win the talent war. *Business Horizon*, 55(6): 609-616.
- Hills, A. (2009). Succession planning - or smart talent management. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 41(1): 3-8.
- Hirschi, A. (2012). The career resources model: an integrative framework for career counsellors. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 40(4): 369-383.
- Hughes, J.C. & Rog, E. (2008). Talent management: A strategy for improving employee recruitment, retention and engagement within hospitality organizations. *international Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20(7): 743-757.
- Human Resource Management International Digest (2014). Thinking differently about talent development: An interview with Janice Caplan, author of Strategic Talent Development. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 22(2): 42-45.

- Huselid, M.A., Beatty, R.W. & Becker, B. (2009). *The differentiated workforce*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Huselid, M.A. & Becker, B.E. (2010). Bridging Micro and Macro domains: Workforce differentiation and Strategic Human Resource Management. *Journal of Management*, 37(2): 421-428.
- Jackson, E. (2011). *Top ten reasons why large companies fail to keep their best talent*. [Online] Available at: [http://www.forbes.com/sites/ericjackson/\(2011\)/12/14/top-ten-reasons-why-large-companies-fail-to-keep-their-best-talent/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/ericjackson/(2011)/12/14/top-ten-reasons-why-large-companies-fail-to-keep-their-best-talent/) [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Jepsen, D. & Rodwell, J. (2008). Convergent interviewing: a qualitative diagnostic technique for researchers. *Management Research News*, 31(9): 650-658.
- Jones, C. (2007). *Most Career Development Programs Fail to Meet Employee Needs*. [Online] Available at: <http://blessingwhite.com/enews/navigating-ambiguity-2014-career-research/> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Kahlke, R. (2014). Generic qualitative approaches: Pitfalls and benefits of methodological mixology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 13: 37-52.
- Lacey, M.Y. & Groves, K. (2014). Talent management collides with corporate social responsibility: creation of inadvertent hypocrisy. *Journal of Management Development*, 33(4): 399-409.
- Lewis, R.E. & Heckman, R.J. (2006). Talent management: A critical review. *Human Resource Management Review*, 16(2): 139-154.
- Lewis, P. & Saunders, M. (2012). *Doing Research in business & management: An essential guide to planning your project*. Financial Times/Prentice Hall.
- Liden, R., Wayne, S.J., Zhao, H. & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(2): 161-177.

- Mäkelä, K., Björkman, I. & Ehrnrooth, M. (2010). How do MNCs establish their talent pools? Influences on individuals' likelihood of being labeled as talent. *Journal of World Business*, 45(2): 134-142.
- Martin, J. & Schmidt, C. (2010). Spotlight on Leadership: The next generation. How to keep your top talent. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(5): 54-61.
- Matveev, A.V. (2002). The advantages of employing quantitative and qualitative methods in intercultural research: Practical implications from the study of the perceptions of intercultural communication competence by American and Russian managers. *Theory of Communication and Applied Communication*, 1: 59-67.
- McDonnell, A., Lamare, R., Gunnigle, P. & Lavelle, J. (2010). Developing tomorrow's leaders - Evidence of global talent management in multinational enterprises. *Journal of World Business*, 45(2): 150-160.
- McDonnell, A. (2011). Still Fighting the "War for Talent"? Bridging the science versus practice gap. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 26: 169-173.
- Mellahi, K. & Collings, D.G. (2010). The barriers to effective global talent management: The example of corporate elites in MNEs. *Journal of World Business*, 45(2): 143-149.
- Meyers, M.C., Van Woerkom, M. & Dries, N. (2013). Talent-Innate or acquired? Theoretical considerations and their implications for talent management. *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4): 305 - 321.
- Morton, M. (2003). Performance measurement and management control: superior organizational performance. *Studies in managerial and financial accounting*, 12: 78-90.
- Nilsson, S. & Ellstrom, P.-E. (2012). Employability and talent management: challenges for HRD practices. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 36(1): 26-45.

- Noe, R.A., Wilk, S.L., Mullen, E.J. & Wanek, J.E. (2014). Employee development: Issues in construct definition and investigation of antecedents. In: J.K. Ford, S.W. Kozlowski & K. Kraiger, eds. *Improving Training Effectiveness in Work Organizations*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. pp. 153-189.
- Pa'wan, F., Nurita, J., Rammiklah, H., Kaur, S. & Norizan, K. (2012). Effectiveness of talent management strategies in developing employee potential and reducing turnover intention. *The 13th Malaysia-Indonesia International Conference on Economics, Management and Accounting 2012, 18 -20 Oct 2012, Palembang, Indonesia*. pp. 1-20.
- Phillips, D.R. & Roper, K.O. (2009). A framework for talent management in real estate. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, 11(1): 7-16.
- Pruis, E. (2011). The five key principles for talent development. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 43(4): 206-216.
- Ready, D.A., Hill, L.A. & Conger, J.A. (2008). Winning the race for talent in emerging markets. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(11): 62-70.
- Ready, D.A., Hill, L.A. & Thomas, R.J. (2014). Building a game-changing talent strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 92: 1-2.
- Ross, S. (2013). How definitions of talent suppress talent Management. *Industrial Commercial Training*, 45(3): 166-170.
- Rowley, J. (2012). Conducting research interviews. *Management Research Review*, 35(3/4): 260-271.
- Saunders, M. & Lewis, P. (2012). *Doing research in business management*. England: Financial Times & Prentice Hall.
- Schiemann, W.A. (2014). From talent management to talent optimization. *Journal of World Business*, 49: 281-288.
- Schuler, R.S., Jackson, S.E. & Tarique, I. (2011). Global talent management and global talent challenges: Strategic opportunities for IHRM. *Journal of World Business*, 46(4): 506-516.

- Scullion, H. & Collings, D. (2011). *Global talent management*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Shai Zhang & David, B. (2012). Talent definition and talent management recognition in Chinese private owned enterprises. *Journal of Chinese Entrepreneurship*, 4(2): 143-163.
- Sheehan, M. (2011). Developing managerial talent: Exploring the link between management talent and perceived performance in multinational corporations. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 36(1): 66-85.
- Siikaniemi, L. (2012). Information pathways for the competence foresight mechanism in talent management framework. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 36(1): 46-65.
- Skuz, A., Scullion, H. & McDonnell, A. (2012). An analysis of talent management challenges in a post-communist country: the case of Poland. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(3): 453-470.
- Sonneberg, M., van Zijderveld, V. & Brinks, M. (2014). The role of talent - perception incongruence in effective talent management. *Journal of World Business*, 49: 272-280.
- Stadler, K. (2011). Talent reviews: The key to effective succession management. *Business Strategy Series*, 12(5): 264-271.
- Tansley, C. (2011). What do we mean by the term "talent" in talent management? *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 43(5): 266 - 274.
- Teixeira, C. & Pinto, J.S. (2012). *Assisted On-Job Training*. Rijeka, Croatia: INTECH Open Access Publisher.
- Thomas, E. & Magilvy, J. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 16(2): 151-155.
- Timmerman, J. (2010). Dispelling the myths of organizational leadership. *Journal for Quality & Participation*, 32(4): 39 - 40.

- Titze, J.L. & Shirley, M.R. (2013). Nurse Manager Succession Planning: A Concept Analysis. *Wiley Periodical*, 48(3): 155-164.
- Vaiman, V., Scullion, H. & Collings, D. (2012). Talent Management Decision Making. *Management Decision*, 50(5): 925-941.
- Vaiman, V. & Vance, C. (2008). *Smart talent management: Building Knowledge Assets for Competitive Advantage*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Vural, Y. & Vardarlier, P. (2012). The effects of using talent management with performance evaluation system over employee commitment. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 58: 340-349.
- Westerman, M. & Yanchar, S. (2011). Changing the terms of the debate: Quantitative methods in the explicitly interpretive research. *Theory & Psychology*, 21(2): 139-154.
- Whelan, E., Collings, D. & Donnellan, B. (2009). An examination of talent management concepts in knowledge intensive settings. Springer: Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.
- Wikström, C. & Henrik, M. (2012). *Talent management i praktiken*. Stockholm: Ekerlids Forlag.
- Williamson, D. (2011). Talent management in the new business world. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 19(6): 33-36.
- Wilson, M.S., Van Velsor, E., Chandra, A. & Criswell, C. (2011). *Grooming top leaders: Cultural perspectives from China, India, Singapore and the United States*. Greensboro, NC: Centre for Creative Leadership. [Online].
- Wilson, M.S. & Hoole, E. (2011). Developing Leadership: India at the Crossroads. *Vikalpa*, 36(3): 1.
- Xu, M. & Storr, G.B. (2012). Learning the concept of Researcher as Instrument in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17: 1-18.

- Yarnall, C. (2011). Maximizing the effectiveness of talent pools: a review of case study literature. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 5: 510-526.
- Zhang, S. & Bright, D. (2012). Talent definition and talent management recognition in Chinese private-owned enterprises. *Chinese Entrepreneurship*, 4(2): 143-163.
- Zhang, Y. & Wildemuth, B. (2009). Qualitative analysis of content. In: B.M. Wildemuth, ed. *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. pp. 308-319

APPENDIX 1

Informed Consent

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MCLS Research Project

Researcher: Zamantuli Mtshali (011 260 5101 / 083 276 3290)

Supervisor: Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

Dear Respondent,

I, Zamantuli Mtshali am a Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: *Impact of Talent Management on career development at Eskom*. Through your participation I hope to understand the effectiveness of the talent management process in Eskom and how it affects the career development of employees. The study can hopefully contribute towards the improvement of the implementation of talent management process in Eskom.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this interview. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the interview or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The interview should take about 45 minutes to an hour. I hope you will take the time to participate in the interview

Sincerely

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

This page is to be retained by the participant

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MCLS Research Project

Researcher: Zamantuli Mtshali (011 260 5101 / 083 276 3290)

Supervisor: Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

CONSENT

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent/do not consent to record the interview.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

This page is to be retained by the researcher

APPENDIX 2

Interview Questions

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MCLS Research Project

Researcher: Zamantuli Mtshali (011 260 5101 / 083 276 3290)

Supervisor: Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

Impact of Talent Management on career development at Eskom

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION 1: CHARACTERISTICS

1. The following questions are asked in order to understand more about the level of exposure to the talent management system. Which of the following is applicable to you? Please indicate by ticking a yes or no below.

	Yes	No
Manager in Eskom Holding Limited SOC		
Middle Manager in Eskom Holding Limited SOC		
Senior Manager in Eskom Holding Limited SOC		
Responsibility to implement talent management		
Participant in the organisations talent management process		
Beneficiary / employee affected by talent management system		
Office location Head Office (Sunninghill)		

2. RECORD GENDER OF PARTICIPANT

Female		Male	
--------	--	------	--

African	Coloured	Indian	White	Other
---------	----------	--------	-------	-------

3. What is your age group? READ OUT THE AGE BANDS

20 - 24 years	
25 - 34 years	
35 – 49 years	
50 years and over	

4. Years of experience in Eskom Holdings Limited SOC

01 - 05 years	
06 - 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
16 years and over	

5. What is the highest level of education that you have achieved? READ OUT THE LEVELS

The following questions are asked to understand if there a difference on understanding by participants who have similar academic background.

Some High School	
Matric (Grade 12)	
Artisans Certificate Obtained / Post Matric certificate	

Technikon Diploma / Degree Completed	
University Degree Completed	
Other (Specify)	

Full Name(s): _____

Official Designation: _____

SECTION 2: EXPERIENCE OF THE TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1. What is your understanding of talent management within Eskom?
2. Do you feel Talent Management plays a meaningful role in general? Please elaborate.
3. What are your thoughts about talent management in Eskom?
4. How does the current Talent Management process contribute to the realisation of career and leadership development in the organisation?
5. To what extent do you think Eskom has achieved its succession management, how can this be improved?
6. Does leadership within Eskom follow and comply with the existing Talent Management process? Please elaborate.
7. What do you understand the talent management objectives to be in Eskom?
8. Do you think Eskom has achieved its Talent Management objectives? Please state why and share some examples in this regard.
9. Have you personally experienced the effects of Talent Management as part your career development, in what way?

10. What role should leadership play in career development of Eskom employees?
11. Do you feel leadership has control over the successful implementation of the Talent Management process? How?
12. Who is currently accountable to deliver the talent management system in the organisation?
13. Do you think the accountability to deliver a successful talent management process is placed at the right level? Why? Where should the accountability be placed?
14. Please identify some of the underlying factors that inhibit the successful implementation of the Talent Management process?
15. How can Eskom improve the Talent Management practices and success thereof?

APPENDIX 3

Ethical Clearance



18 April 2014

Ms Zamsauli Babangila Ntsholi 202561941
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
Westville Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0279/2014M
Project title: Impact of talent management on career development at Eskom

Dear Ms Ntsholi

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 10 April 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter, Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shereka Singh (Chair)

/ps

cc Supervisor: Ms Cécile Genest-Hochet
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr E Munapo
cc School Administrator: Eileen Mahomed and Nonkuliso Shabane

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

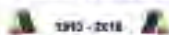
Dr Shereka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Gordon House Building

Postal Address: Private Bag 54001, 4013 Westville

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 261 3827/3320/4027 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 261 4806 Email: ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



1910 - 2018
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

■ Durban ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Port Elizabeth ■ Richards Bay ■ Stanger ■ Umhlanga ■ Westville