

Investigating the Theory and Practice of Inclusive Talent Management

**Agnieszka Lenton
Kingston Business School
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Supervised by

Dr Rachel Lewis, Dr Lilith Whiley & Dr Joanna Yarker

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Overall Abstract

Inclusive Talent Management (TM) has been of interest to academics and practitioners in the last decade as an alternative to exclusive TM. Evidence-based approaches to managing talent in an inclusive, transparent, and ethical way are not widely known and require urgent attention to enable employers to create inclusive workplaces, which are demographically representative of the local communities. Ethics and fairness in TM, while overlooked in the early research on TM, have gained interest in recent years. A growing body of writing suggests that “responsible TM” interventions that effectively incorporate ethics, inclusion, and sustainability may positively impact individual and organisational well-being (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020).

This thesis presents two studies that together aim to contribute to our understanding of inclusive talent management approaches. The first study, a systematic literature review, seeks to consolidate empirical research on ITM to understand the business case, features, and outcomes of ITM interventions. This review was carried out using a systematic approach as outlined by Briner and Denyer (2012). The review identified seven studies that met the inclusion criteria that together demonstrated unclear evidence for ITM delivering improvements in the inclusion of women or other groups or other positive outcomes for individuals and organisations. While TM definitions and measures lacked rigour and consistency, two case study organisations met the fully inclusive TM definition (but did not report outcomes), and two met the partially inclusive TM definition (Swales et al., 2014). The majority of the empirical ITM studies explored partially exclusive TM programmes aimed to deliver inclusive outcomes for underrepresented groups (and which have been classified as inclusive TM by virtue of inclusive outcomes). Five of the seven studies were derived from the public sector (two in the UK). The methodological quality was generally low, with limited conclusions drawn on the outcomes of effective ITM interventions.

The second study in this thesis was focused on a partially exclusive TM programme with inclusive outcomes (increased representation of women in senior roles) in the UK public sector. The talent programme paired participants with senior sponsors, whose role was to help sponsees increase their visibility and make important connections and open doors to opportunities to move up the career ladder (e.g., Ehrich, 2008; Hewlett, 2013).

Responding to the research limitations identified in the ITM literature, this study employed semi-structured interviews carried out at three time points throughout the ITM intervention programme. The research participants (n=12) were drawn from TM programme participants (“sponsees”), senior “sponsors,” and members of the working group involved in programme implementation (“stakeholders”). The analysis identified a range of positive individual outcomes: promotions, opportunities to raise visibility, new skills and confidence (for sponsees) and increased commitment to diversity and inclusion, prompt for self-reflection, and own development (for sponsors). Both sponsees and sponsors reported a broadening of personal networks. The research participants also noted organisational outcomes such as new organisational processes, organisational conversations on talent and inclusion, more comprehensive universal development programme offer to all staff, inter-organisational collaborations, sharing learning from the programme within the organisations and wider industry, and negative responses from other staff groups excluded from the programme.

Insights were also gained into mechanisms involved in sponsorship relationships in the context of a formal sponsoring scheme in the UK public sector. These findings suggest that effective and ethical sponsorship is contingent on 1) the ability to tailor the intervention to the individual needs and readiness 2) the assessment of talent, which reassures the sponsor that the sponsee has been accepted into the TM scheme “on merit” and 3) the organisational context in which the intervention is deployed, including clear business case, stakeholder engagement at all levels and integration with other organisational strategies. The implications of the study findings, including risks and challenges involved in utilising an exclusive TM intervention to deliver inclusive outcomes, are also discussed.

The positive outcomes of the intervention in this study exceeded those reported in other ITM studies. This study offers promise for inclusive talent management. If delivered effectively and with ethical considerations given to different stages of the TM process, sponsorship can be a valuable tool within a wider talent strategy that has the potential to deliver improvements in the representation of women and other minority groups at the senior level. Further reflections and recommendations are shared in the final section.

Table of Contents

	Overall Abstract	2
	Table of Contents	4
Part 1	The Case and Evidence for Inclusive Talent Management: a Systematic Literature Review	7
	Abstract	7
	Introduction	9
	Talent Management – a Corporate Fad or the Key to Organisational Success?	9
	A Need for a More Ethical, Socially Responsible Approach to Talent Management	11
	Defining Inclusive Talent Management	14
	Research Aim and Questions	17
	Research Method and Analysis	19
	Search Strategy	19
	Review Strategy	20
	Selection Criteria	22
	Data Extraction	23
	Quality Assessment	23
	Results	24
	Research Question 1: Are There Examples of Inclusive Talent Management Interventions in the Empirical Literature?	24
	Overview	24
	Journals	24
	Authors and Citations	24
	Geographical Distribution of Publications	24
	Sector	26
	Nature of and Focus in Empirical Inclusive TM Research	26
	Research Design	26
	Participant Population Characteristics	26
	Population Overview	26
	Demographics	26
	Educational Attainment	27
	Occupational Setting	27
	Seniority and Role in Relation to the Talent Management Intervention	28
	Research Question 2: What are the Characteristics/Aspects of Inclusive Talent Management Interventions?	29
	Definition of Talent Management (TM) and the TM Intervention Target Group	29
	Selection Into Talent Management Programmes (Talent Identification)	31
	Intervention Length and Content	32

	Research Question 3: What are the Outcomes/Impact of Inclusive Talent Management Approaches?	40
	Organisation-level Outcomes	40
	Individual-level Outcomes	41
	Research Question 4: What are the Perceptions of ITM Interventions within the Organisations Implementing such Approaches?	42
	Reactions and Perceptions of TM Theme 1: Concepts and Measures of Talent Management	45
	Definition and Measures	45
	Value of Talent Management Activity	46
	Preference for Inclusive Talent Management (Over Exclusive TM)	46
	Reactions and Perceptions of TM Theme 2: Wider Context and Strategy Alignment	47
	Importance of Context for Talent Management	47
	Performance Management and Performance Targets	48
	Equality and Diversity Policies	49
	Internal Alignment (within TM Strategy or Policy)	51
	Reactions and Perceptions of TM Theme 3: Implementation of the Intervention	51
	Involving Relevant Stakeholders	52
	Managing Expectations of Selected staff	52
	Selection and De-selection (Into the TM Programme)	53
	Research Question 5: What Empirical Evidence is There to Support the Case for Inclusive Talent Management?	54
	Quality Review	54
	Evidence Statements	55
	Discussion	57
	Are There Examples of Inclusive TM Interventions in the Empirical Literature?	58
	What are the Characteristics/Aspects of ITM Interventions?	60
	What are the Outcomes/Impact of Inclusive TM Approaches, Including Greater Inclusion of Underrepresented Groups?	60
	What are the Reactions and Perceptions of ITM Interventions Within the Organisations Implementing Such Approaches?	61
	Recommendations for Practice	64
	Limitations of this Review	66
	Directions for Future Research	67
	Conclusions	70
	References	72
	List of Tables: Systematic Literature Review	
	Table 1: Database Search Terms	19
	Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	22
	Table 3: Overview of Reviewed Studies and Research Design	25

	Table 4: Inclusive Talent Management Interventions: Theoretical Underpinnings, Inclusion Considerations, and Characteristics (Research Q2)	36
	Table 5: Intended (I) and Measured (M) Outcomes of Talent Management Interventions (Research Question 3)	43
	Table 6: Reactions and Perceptions of Talent Management Interventions (Research Question 4) – Themes	44
	Table 7: Quality Assessment of Reviewed Studies	55
	Table 8: Evidence statements and Quality Ratings (GRADE/CerQual)	56
	Supplementary Table 1: Quality Assessment of All Studies	77
	List of Figures: Systematic Literature Review	
	Figure 1: Search Results Flow Diagram	21
Part 2	What Outcomes Do Gender-inclusive Talent Management Programmes Achieve and How? A Process Evaluation of a Sponsorship Programme for Women.	79
	Abstract	79

Part 1: The Case and Evidence for Inclusive Talent Management: a Systematic Literature Review

Abstract

Background – In the past two decades, talent management (TM) has attracted considerable attention from practitioners and scholars alike. TM interventions are an established part of organisational life and are most commonly implemented through exclusive TM practices, despite a number of criticisms levelled at them. Inclusive talent management (ITM) philosophy emerged as an alternative, particularly attractive to the public and voluntary sectors, based on a core assumption that all employees have talent and potential for high performance and that organisations should provide opportunities and roles that match individual strengths. Whilst there is substantial theoretical and growing empirical literature on TM in general, no systematic review of the ITM literature has been conducted to systematically examine the evidence from this growing field. More work is needed to clearly define ITM and better understand how organisations may deliver positive outcomes of ITM interventions.

Purpose – The purpose is to review the empirical literature on the impact of inclusive TM practices.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors adopted a systematic review that covers empirical research on inclusive TM, which has been published between 1996 and 2018 in academic peer-reviewed journals. A total of seven articles were included.

Findings – 443 unique titles were retrieved from five databases; 80 abstracts were reviewed, followed by a full review of 30 papers; this resulted in identifying seven papers for data extraction. Examples of partially exclusive talent programmes with inclusive outcomes (improved representation of women and ethnic minorities in the organisation or at its senior-level) were the most common, with two studies referencing fully inclusive TM. There was limited evidence of measurable outcomes, as the majority of studies provided qualitative insights into perceptions of TM interventions among a range of stakeholders.

Discussion - Despite a wide range of terms used, the searches resulted in only a small body of research from which to draw conclusions. The reviewed studies give some insights into

potential facilitators and barriers to effective inclusive TM interventions and how ethics and fairness principles can be considered when implementing exclusive TM interventions. There is, however, little evidence to inform our understanding of how fully and partially inclusive TM interventions deliver successful individual and organisational outcomes. Limitations of this review and recommendations for future research are presented.

Practical implications – Organisations concerned with inclusivity and corporate social responsibility are striving to achieve high performance and efficiency while maintaining the engagement and well-being of their wider diverse workforce. This review provides some insights into how partially exclusive TM interventions should incorporate ethics, transparency, and fairness into the talent selection and development process.

Originality/value – This study reviews the extent and nature of empirical research on links between talent management and inclusion. It is the first to specifically and objectively examine the advances made in the field and identify under-explored areas.

Keywords - Talent Management, Talent Development, Inclusive Talent Management, Ethics, Responsible Talent Management, Diversity, Inclusion, Empirical research, Literature review

Paper type - Systematic Literature review

Introduction

Talent Management – a Corporate Fad or the Key to Organisational Success?

Since McKinsey consultants announced the “War for Talent” (Chambers et al., 1998; Michaels et al., 2001), talent management (TM) has been discussed extensively by academics and widely adopted by professionals as a critical driver of corporate performance (Stahl et al., 2012; Martin, 2018). In a 2016 CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) survey of HR practitioners, 22% of respondents reported that their organisation had a formal definition of ‘talent’ and a further 42% suggested that there is at least an informal agreement of what is understood by the concept (Zheloukhova & Baczor, 2016). Questions remain over how “talent” and TM are defined (Collings & Melahi, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016), the measurable differences between employees branded as “talented” and “not talented” (De Boeck et al., 2018) or whether organisations are adopting certain types of TM practices indeed gain a competitive advantage over those that do not do so (McDonnell et al., 2017). There is also a growing recognition that there are other factors – which may be pulling organisations in a different direction than the adoption of TM practices – that are also seen as critical or at least contribute to high organisational performance. These factors include organisational citizenship behaviours, employee well-being, engagement, diverse workforces, and inclusive cultures (McDonnell et al., 2017; Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020).

As migration trends accelerate and the population age profile changes, societal expectations are raising about what organisations and their leaders are doing to further equality, provide employees with meaningful work, opportunities for growth, and work-life balance (Dillon & Bourke, 2016). As organisations examine their people practices in the wake of the “Black Lives Matter” and “Me Too” movements, there is an ever-greater spotlight on how marginalised demographic groups are represented at the senior level and how organisations may harness individual talents at all levels. A common realisation is that the HRM and TM practices currently in place have failed to meet the needs of the diverse workforces (and that organisations need to try new, more inclusive approaches to how talent is identified, developed, and rewarded (Roberts & Mayo, 2019).

Widespread adoption of TM suggests strong and unambiguous evidence for this set of organisational practices to positively contribute at the individual, group, and organisational levels. However, the field is dominated by practitioner reports and in need of more academically rigorous studies (McDonnell et al., 2017). The terms “talent” and “talent management” are often used without a clear definition provided – including half of the publications focusing on TM (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Different TM philosophies translate into different TM practices and activities that organisations implement and invest in, whether explicit or not. TM *practices* and *activities* are indeed the most common focus of publications on TM, featuring in nearly 70% of articles reviewed by Thunnissen et al. (2013).

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (Tansley & Sempik, 2008) described TM as: “the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment [of employees],” a definition that seems all-encompassing of most Human Resources Management (HRM) activities. Collings and Mellahi (2009) provided the most frequently quoted definition of strategic TM as “activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organisation’s sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation” (p.304). Collings and Mellahi argued that the focus of the investment (or a differentiated architecture) should be on those employees with the potential to fill the key positions – which could be at different levels of organisational strategy - rather than over-investing scarce resources in non-pivotal roles in the organisation (2009).

Most publications position TM as a normative and exclusive practice where an organisation focuses on a small proportion of high-performing and high potential individuals (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; McDonnell et al., 2017). Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016), in their systematic literature review, defined TM as “aimed at the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of high potential and high performing employees, to fill in key positions which have a significant influence on organisation’s sustainable competitive advantage” (p. 50). If these practices are to make a

positive contribution, they need to adhere to six principles: “alignment with strategy, internal consistency, cultural embeddedness, management involvement, the balance of global and local needs and employer branding through differentiation (Stahl et al., 2012, p. 25), based on a review of TM at 33 leading global corporations.

A systematic review of TM by McDonnell et al. (2017) examined 87 papers published on talent management between 1998-2013, 82 of which were published after 2008. Fifty studies were drawing on empirical data (majority quantitative) drawn from a managerial perspective (senior HR/talent specialists or top management team). The authors noted that the quality, depth, and breadth of methodologies in the field of TM still need improving, including drawing deeper insights from single case studies. Individual accounts (i.e., talents’ experiences) were found to be limited, and research findings on outcomes were contradictory in terms of positive-negative impacts. Conceptual and theoretical fragmentation remains, and more empirical and multidisciplinary research is needed.

A subsequent review by De Boeck et al. (2018), focusing on individual reactions to talent management, confirmed that TM practices are generally associated with positive reactions exhibited by individuals labelled as “talents”, including higher job satisfaction, organisational commitment, performance, and lower turnover intentions. The review - which included 21 empirical studies - highlighted difficulties in establishing causality (for example, only two studies followed talents over time), clarity of operationalisations and measures, and lack of multi-level studies which would test the alignment of different elements of TM systems.

A Need for a More Ethical, Socially Responsible Approach to Talent Management

In 2008, the McKinsey Consulting Group published an updated report which turned attention to the contribution of ‘B players’ because ‘top talent is more effective when it operates within vibrant internal networks with a range of employees’ (Guthridge et al., 2008, p. 55). After 2010, more critical voices emerged questioning TM focusing on a select group of “corporate stars” and investing a disproportionate share of corporate resources and attention into their progression (Swales, 2013). Thunnissen et al. (2013) called for the TM conversation to become more balanced, broader and to encompass employee engagement and well-being, organisational culture, gender, and racial equity in the workplace. McDonnell

et al. (2017) cautioned against focusing TM efforts on the financial performance of a company as high stock-market performance may mask underlying issues with the talent and performance systems (e.g., Enron in the McKinsey report on TM, Michaels, et al., 2001).

The criticisms against talent management relate to individual negative reactions to TM, flawed assumptions and methodological concerns, ethical considerations, and their applicability across different contexts. Each of these issues is referenced below.

Critics of TM share an assumption that excluding a wider employee population in the search for talent is likely to evoke negative reactions from those labelled as “non-talents” (Gelens et al., 2013; Swailes, 2013). De Boeck et al. (2018) noted, however, that this assumption remains untested due to a lack of studies on non-talent employee reactions. The same review reported nonetheless negative reactions of those labelled as “talents”: stress, risk of psychological contract breach, insecurity, and issues with work identity.

Other critiques of TM include flaws in key assumptions (and mixed evidence) behind workforce segmentation practices (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). These assumptions include: 1) managers can objectively and in an unbiased way assess someone’s potential/performance, 2) there are inherent, significant, and stable differences between “A” and “B” players across different contexts, 3) past performance accurately predicts potential and/or future performance, 4) there is value in labelling only a small subset of employees as talented (which is known to lead to self-fulfilling prophecies around higher motivation and self-esteem), 5) labelling a small group only as “talented” leads only to positive outcomes (negative effects have been found on that group such as fear of failure), 6) allocating disproportionate resources to a small group of employees creates enough added value to risk potential damage to organisational morale and resentment among other employees. As a result, only 13% of managers in organisations adopting an exclusive approach to TM can accurately identify talented employees (Karakovsky & Kotlyar, 2012).

McDonnell et al. (2017) observed that organisations were being pulled in opposite directions by, on the one hand, promoting teamwork, wider staff engagement, organisational citizenship, and on the other – retaining and rewarding a small subsection of star performers

and called for more research exploring ethics of different aspects of TM across a variety of contexts. In recent years, TM publications have indeed been paying more attention to concepts of justice, ethics, and sustainability (Meyers et al., 2013; De Boeck et al., 2018), rather than focusing purely on the financial returns of TM practices. The exclusive TM practices (focusing on a select few) were contrasted with sharing development opportunities equally, a practice associated with a more open, trusting, collegial work environment, and one which promotes employee well-being and creates a more pleasant, motivating work climate (Warren, 2006; Bothner et al., 2001).

The TM literature has long been dominated by studies in the US (and the private sector (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; McDonnell et al., 2017), with an increasing number of studies emerging in Europe more recently (McDonnell et al., 2017). Practitioners and scholars alike have therefore been questioning the transferability of findings to other contexts such as not-for-profit or public sector elsewhere in the world (Powell et al., 2013). Empirical research suggests that talent management needs to be organisation and culture-specific to deliver the outcomes it aims for (e.g., Ford et al. 2010; McDonnell et al., 2017), that it is unlikely that a single agreed definition will ever be presented, and there is no single 'blueprint' for effective TM that can be applied to all organisational contexts (Tansley et al., 2006; Thunnissen et al., 2013; Downs & Swailes, 2013; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017).

According to Thunnissen and Buttiens (2017), a shortage of research on TM issues in public sector organisations remains. Conceptually, a more inclusive approach to TM is, according to the editors of a special edition of *Public Personnel Management* (Garrow & Hirsch, 2008), particularly well-suited to public sector organisations or government agencies which value equality, diversity, and inclusivity (Harris & Foster, 2010; Powell et al., 2013; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). Such organisations are under legal and public scrutiny pressure to perform but also to deliver for the community they serve. They wish to follow best practices – and public sector organisations have been shown to implement both inclusive and exclusive TM interventions (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017) - but also must demonstrate socially responsible practices and outcomes of their human resource development efforts.

Defining Inclusive Talent Management

Stahl et al. (2012) found that among the international companies they studied, there were two distinct approaches on how to evaluate and manage talent, based on key assumptions around what proportion of employees hold more “value” or “potential”. The “differentiated” approach assumes that only a small proportion of employees are talented and that companies should focus the majority of resources on that group. The authors contrast it with an “inclusive” approach, where organisations believe that many individuals at any level have the potential to be considered talent and that too much emphasis on top players is damaging to the wider morale and can be detrimental to the company’s success.

Similar to the wider debate around the definition of “talent management”, there are many definitions of what constitutes *inclusive* TM or *inclusion* in the context of TM. Roberson (2006) states that *inclusion* is concerned particularly with the extent to which all employees are integrated, empowered and able to contribute fully and effectively to an organisation. Inclusion management interventions focus on identifying and removing possible obstacles to full participation and utilisation of full range of skills and competencies in organizations (Roberson, 2006). *Inclusion* is a concept related to, but distinct from *diversity*, which focused on heterogeneity and the demographic make-up of organisations. Inclusion goes one step further and focuses on “employee involvement and the integration of diversity into organizational systems and processes” (p.23). Building on Roberson’s conceptualisation and applying it to TM. Festing et al. (2015) propose that TM can be considered inclusive when it supports *all talented employees equally to contribute fully and effectively to the organisation*, independent of their gender, ethnicity, social status, disability, etc. Therefore inclusive TM is seen as an approach that not only taps into a full range of skills, competencies and talents in an organisation but also *results in greater inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups*. In pursuit of a more diverse leadership make-up of an organisation, full range of organisational talents are included in the organisational search for talent and wider range of skills and competencies are utilised.

Dries (2013) calls out the tension between inclusive and exclusive perspectives on talent as one of the dilemmas present within the field of TM, which are at the source of definition and operationalisation issues, and hinder TM from maturing as a field of study. Dries sees

inclusion-exclusion as a continuum with two extremes, concerned with how the organisation's resources are distributed among employees to realise their potential. At one end, there is an assumption that all people are talented (but potentially in a different way), and resources are allocated equally and/or focus resources on low performers to bring everybody to "good" levels of performance. At the exclusive end, a small proportion of employees (in literature, this ranges between 0.001% - 10% of the workforce) are identified as talented and become a focus of differentiated talent architecture. In effect, 90% of resources are channelled at 5% of "talented" employees in the jobs identified as strategic.

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) propose to systematise the TM definitions by dividing those focusing on "talent as object", where "talent" refers to *exceptional characteristics* of people (usually a set of capabilities combined with organisational commitment and contextual fit), and those focusing on "talent as subject" where "talent" refers to *people*, understood as a subset or entirety of the employee population. Within the subject approach, exclusive TM is based around the concept of workforce segmentation, and "talent" refers to the high performers and/or high potentials. This is the most prevalent approach in both theoretical and empirical literature (Gallardo and Gallardo et al., 2013). The alternative to exclusive TM, but also within the "talent as subject" approach, is the inclusive TM, which considers everyone as talented and including everyone in the organisation in talent development efforts. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) note that this inclusive definition of TM is typically associated with strength-based approaches, where TM is "the art of recognising where each employee's areas of natural talents lie and figuring out how to help each employee develop job-specific skills and knowledge to turn these talents into real performance" (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001, p. 22). Downs and Swailes (2013) propose that inclusive TM is an approach that enhances each employee's capabilities (not performance), expands individual freedoms (to realise what the person values), *and* meets organisational needs.

Andrews and Ashforth's study (2014) examined the links between inclusion and representation to test an assumption that those public sector organisations, which are representative of the population they serve, are more likely to foster organisational inclusion. They examined the People Survey data from 97 UK civil service organisations (across 20 government departments), namely survey questions related to perceptions of

inclusion and experiences of discrimination and bullying in the workplace, against publicly available workforce representation data. Their findings confirmed a connection between inclusion (and fewer incidents of harassment and discrimination) and a workforce representative of the population it serves. If inclusion and representation are interrelated concepts, is TM strategy concerned with the delivery of equal senior-level representation (of traditionally underrepresented groups) an inclusive TM strategy?

In this systematic review, we draw from the Swailes et al. (2014) typology of TM approaches who define inclusive TM as putting “systems in place to recognise the full range of talent in the organisation and to deploy talent according to job fit, which may mean assisting some people to benefit from alternative vocations.”. A *fully inclusive* TM approach focuses on the entire workforce or totality of talent in the organisation. The differentiating factor between well designed HRM practices (concerned with all employees all the time) would be that inclusive TM would seek to *actively sort* employees into best fit positions according to individual strengths and aspirations.

Pragmatically, Swailes et al. (2014) recognise there the scope of employee inclusion is likely to vary, even for organisations concerned with openness and fairness, seemingly in agreement with Stahl et al. (2012) notion that in practice, most organisations implement a version of a “hybrid” approach” rather than solely exclusive TM practices. A *partially inclusive* TM involves talent scanning across a wider range of employees to identify people who match the organisation’s models and descriptions of talent. Within the authors’ typology, there is also a distinction between partially exclusive TM, where a small proportion of employees are included in the scope of talent search and development opportunities granted (for example, aspiring managers), and *elite* TM, where an organisation only selects, employs and retains the highest performers.

Research Aim and Questions

Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) indicate in their literature review of 96 empirical talent management studies published between 2006-2014 that the majority of organisations continue to adopt an exclusive conceptualisation of talent (where the focus is on a select few high performing/high potential individuals). An alternative approach - Inclusive Talent Management - has been referred to as a “chimera”, a mythical entity too implausible to exist (Swales et al., 2014). At the same time, wider industry, and particularly public sector organisations, are interested in finding alternatives to the traditional, exclusive approach to TM (Harris & Foster, 2010; Powell et al., 2013), or at least learning how to implement exclusive TM in a transparent, fair and ethical way.

In recent years, the trend towards advocating more inclusive approaches has been led by the non-empirical literature (De Boeck et al., 2018). This systematic literature review aims to examine the empirical evidence on the nature and outcomes of inclusive TM approaches. Due to a range of definitions present in the literature and a limited number of peer-reviewed studies in the preliminary search, we built on the Swales et al. (2014) typology of TM and considered the three types of TM interventions to be reviewed as part of this study:

- 1) *Fully inclusive TM* where an organisation recognises the full range of talent in the workforce and aims to deploy talent according to job fit.
- 2) *Partially inclusive TM* approaches where a wide range (or all) employees can apply to be part of a talent development programme, however eventually, a smaller proportion of employees is included (inclusive at the point of entry).
- 3) *Partially exclusive TM*, where a small proportion of employees are identified as “talent” (as defined by Swales et al., 2014), for the purposes of *achieving inclusive outcomes* (as an addition for the purposes of this study), i.e. bringing in traditionally underrepresented groups into an organisation, or through its ranks. By tackling long-standing exclusion of these individuals and their skills, the talent programmes (although not always open to all), support a wider diversity and inclusion agenda. These programmes may be focused on a specific group (e.g. ethnic minorities) or a wider group of staff, with an intention to increase the representation of traditionally underrepresented groups at a senior level of an organisation.

This literature review aims to explore the range of inclusive TM interventions, as defined above, including the characteristics of such programmes and their outcomes. To reflect the nature of inclusive TM research (qualitative studies), the authors set out to explore both the measurable impact of the TM programmes, as well as subjective perceptions of the research participants based on their experience of the programme. The following research questions are therefore addressed:

- 1) Are there examples of inclusive TM interventions in the empirical literature?
- 2) What are the characteristics/aspects of inclusive TM interventions?
- 3) What are the outcomes/impact of inclusive TM approaches, including greater inclusion (e.g. career progression, representation at senior level) of underrepresented groups?
- 4) What are the reactions and perceptions of inclusive TM interventions within the organisations implementing such approaches?
- 5) What empirical evidence is there to support the case for “inclusive” TM?

Research method and analysis

Search Strategy

A systematic literature review (SLR) protocol was produced based on Briner and Denyer (2012), adapted from Higgins and Green (2008).

Preliminary searches were carried out to investigate the body of literature available on “inclusive talent management”. Due to a limited number of search results, the search terms were subsequently expanded, to include a range of terms associated with diversity and inclusion, sustainability and ethics, alongside terms associated with talent management and talent development. To arrive at these terms (see final list in column 2 of Table 1.), the research team of three consulted 15 subject matter experts including talent management, human resources and organisational development specialists, occupational psychologists and diversity and inclusion policy advisors.

The subject matter experts and researchers were also consulted around the relevant databases in which to conduct the search. Previous literature reviews on talent management were also reviewed to ascertain which databases were used in the searches.

Final search terms and choice of databases were agreed through discussion, and on 28 March 2018, a literature search was conducted in the following databases: PsychINFO, Business Source Premier (EBSCO), Scopus, Web of Science and ABI/ Inform Global using the search terms shown in *Table 1* below.

Table 1: Database Search Terms

	AND	AND
talent management	includi* (inclusion, inclusive, inclusivity)	work* (work, workplace, worker, work environment)
talent identification	divers* (diversity, diverse)	employe* (employee, employer, employment)
talent development	fair* (fairness, fair)	organi* (organisation, organisations, and organisational)
talent pool	transparen* (transparent, transparency)	
	ethic* (ethics, ethical)	
	bias	
	positive psychology	
	strengths	

affirmative action
equality
justice
discriminat* (discrimination, discriminate, discriminatory)
capability approach
sustainability

Therefore, the search line used to investigate the databases was as follows:

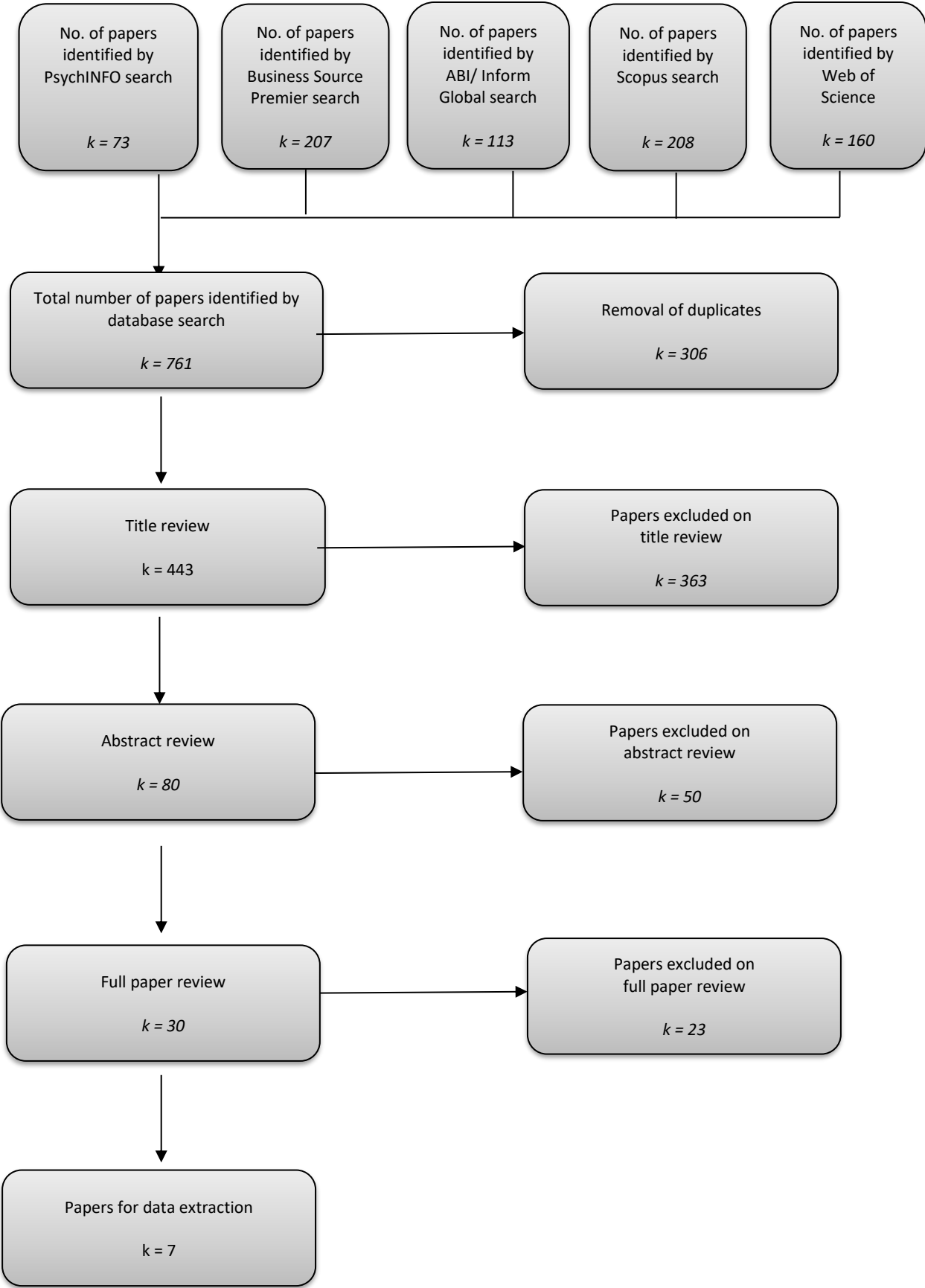
("talent management" OR "talent identification" OR "talent development" OR "talent pool")
AND (Inclusi* OR equality OR Divers* OR Fair* OR Transparen* OR "affirmative action" OR
bias OR "positive psychology" OR strengths OR discriminat* OR justice OR ethic* OR
"capability approach" OR sustainability) AND (Work* OR Employe* OR Organi*)

Review Strategy

The searches returned 761 papers across five databases (see *Figure 1.*). The number of returns from each of the databases and details of the searches was recorded, and results exported into a reference management system. The duplicates were removed, resulting in 443 unique articles. The list of references was exported for the purposes of the initial title review. Following the title review, an abstract review was conducted and then a full article review. The resulting full papers were reviewed against the criteria to identify the final selection of papers from which the data were extracted.

At each review stage, two researchers conducted the review independently against inclusion and exclusion criteria. Any discrepancies were moderated by a third researcher; disagreements were resolved by discussion. *Figure 1.* shows the searches and review numbers at each stage, following a protocol according to PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2009).

Figure 1: Search Results Flow Diagram



Selection Criteria

Studies were included or excluded based on criteria (see *Table 2*) agreed through the review protocol. Search results must have been published in the English language, in a peer-reviewed journal, and published between 1.1.1996 (to include two years leading up to McKinsey coining the term “War for Talent”; Chambers et al., 1998) and 28.3.2018 when the searches took place. The limiters for English language and peer-reviewed journals were also set within the databases to constrain the searches from the outset.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Adult population (18+)	1. Thought pieces which are purely theoretical or descriptive (e.g. focusing solely on definitions of inclusive talent management)
2. Workplace/employment related (any workplace setting or sector)	2. Not work-based
3. Focus on employees at any level of the organisation (for example apprenticeships are also included)	3. Outside date range
4. Time period: since 1.1.1996	4. Does not include reference talent management programme/ intervention / strategy (e.g. describes a general approach to workforce development or strategic HR management)
5. Published in English language	5. Does not cover inclusion considerations either within the core approach to talent management or as its outcomes
6. Peer reviewed empirical studies (qualitative and quantitative)	6. Does not include expected outcomes (outcome measures or target variables in which the intervention aims to achieve change).
7. Exploration of a specific talent management programme or initiative (an intervention or interventions)	
8. Includes outcomes (measures/target variables) in which the intervention aims to achieve change	
9. The talent management intervention is a programme or activity which can be defined as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fully inclusive talent management OR 2) Partially inclusive talent management OR 3) Partially exclusive talent management which aims to deliver inclusive outcomes (e.g. a programme which explicitly mentions improvements in organisational female representation or representation at senior level). 	

Data Extraction

Final full article review narrowed the articles on inclusive talent management (meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria) to seven. All seven studies followed qualitative research methodologies. On that basis, narrative data was extracted from the final set of full papers and recorded for further analysis.

Quality Assessment

Following the systematic literature review recommendations proposed by Briner and Denyer (2012), a quality assessment process took place on the seven included papers. This process was based on Snape et al. (2017) process for qualitative research and applied the use of checklist by which each of the papers was independently assessed by the lead author and another researcher. The two researchers discussed their findings to reach consensus for each of the included studies.

Results

Research Question 1: Are There Examples of Inclusive Talent Management Interventions in the Empirical Literature?

Overview

Seven studies met the inclusion criteria: Harris and Foster (2010), Glastra and Meerman (2012), Powell et al. (2013), Festing et al. (2015), Kulkarni and Scullion (2015), Hirt et al. (2017) and Erasmus et al. (2017).

Journals

Empirical research on inclusive TM is published in a variety of journals (HR/business management, policy, training and equality and diversity focused). Two journals published two articles each: International Journal of Human Resource Management and European Journal of Training and Development. No papers were published in journals within the domain of psychology.

Authors and Citations

All the reviewed articles were co-authored by at least two authors (three articles) up to five authors (two articles). A total of 22 authors from 14 institutions worldwide contributed to the seven articles in this review. Each reviewed article was published by different authors.

Geographical Distribution of Publications

Inclusive TM empirical research originating from six different countries has been published. Looking at country representation, there are two articles from the UK, three from other European countries (one each from Germany, Austria and the Netherlands), one from South Africa and one from India (which is co-authored by an author affiliated with an academic institution in Ireland). Notably, there are no articles originating from the Americas, despite the dominance of US-affiliated scholarship published on talent management more generally (McDonnell et al., 2017).

Table 3: Overview of Reviewed Studies and Research Design

Reference	Country	Sector / Organisation	Type of talent management intervention	Data source (n)			Data collection (n)			Overall sample (N) size
				Employee and/or the target of the TM	Employer (senior managers, HR/talent specialists)	External stakeholder	Survey	Interviews	Focus groups	
Harris and Foster (2010)	UK	Public sector Legal Services Commission and a City Council	Talent management policy; Talent development programmes	✓	✓	✓		20	30-60	50-80
Glastra and Meerman (2012)	Netherlands	Public sector Dutch National Tax Administration	Positive action talent development programme for talented ethnic minority staff	12	22			34		34
Powell et al. (2013)	UK	Public sector The National Health Service	Talent management strategy; Range of Talent development programmes, including for ethnic minorities	✓	✓		556	77	24	657
Festing et al. (2015)	Germany	Private sector Media sector (two large unnamed organisations)	Talent development programmes, including positive action programmes for women	37	6			43		43
Kulkarni and Scullion (2015)	India	Public sector Five National agencies supporting those with disability	Talent management activities targeted at disabled job candidates (pre-/post-employment)			12		12		12
Hirt et al. (2017)	Austria	Private sector An unnamed bank in cooperation with a university	Internship/Traineeship programme for students from South Eastern Europe backgrounds	25	4	2		31		31
Erasmus et al. (2017)	South Africa	Public Sector University of South Africa	Talent management policy; Range of talent development programmes		11			11		11

Sector

Inclusive Talent Management studies originate primarily from the public sector case studies (five articles). A range of public sector organisations are featured, including the University of South Africa, National Health Service (UK), central and local government (Netherlands, UK), and national agencies in India. Two private sector case studies originate from the financial services (Austria) and media sectors (Germany).

Nature of and Focus in Empirical Inclusive TM research

Research Design

Our study shows that the majority of empirical research in the area of inclusive TM is qualitative. Only one study (Powell et al., 2013) use a mixed method approach, where qualitative interviews are used alongside survey data (only responses to open ended questions are included in the publication) and focus groups. All seven studies used semi-structured interviews, with focus groups used in three studies. Six out of seven studies adopt the case study approach, including three using single case study. Two organisations rely on two organisation case studies (Harris & Foster, 2010; Festing, et al., 2015). There was also one interview study, with interviewees from a number of different organisations.

Participant Population Characteristics

Population Overview

In total, the combined sample size was between 806-836 (as Harris & Foster, 2010, study only provided an approximate number for their focus group participants).

Out of those, 228 participated in semi structured interviews.

Demographics

Only three studies (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Festing et al., 2015; Hirt et al., 2017) provided an age profile and gender breakdown of the study participants. Two of these studies only provided the demographic breakdown of the TM programme participants, which was a

subset of all study participants. Gender split in those was relatively balanced. Out of those reported on, 45 were female and 35 were male.

Glastra and Meerman (2012) study participants average age was 42.1 years (where ethnic minority participants were younger at 38.5 years on average and their majority colleagues were 45.7 years). Festing et al. (2015) provided an age range only for their for talent programme study participants (27-38 years for Company A and 30-53 years for Company B). Hirt et al. (2017) study participants (former talent programme participants) were 25 years old on average (age range 22-30 years).

Powell et al. (2013) indicate that their focus group and interview participants' sample was heterogenous in terms of age and gender.

One study (Glastra & Meerman, 2012) provides a breakdown of ethnicity characteristics for a subset of its study participants: out of 12 TM programme participants, six are from a minority ethnic background, and six are from the majority ethnic background. Whilst Hirt et al. (2017) did not specify the actual ethnicity of their sample, country of origin was reported for each of its 25 former talent programme participants: Bosnia (11), Macedonia (6), Croatia (4), Slovenia (2) and Serbia (2).

Educational Attainment

Only two studies provided partial detail of the educational attainment of their study participants. In Hirt et al. (2017), the 14 former participants of the TM programme were Master's level students and 11 were Bachelor's level students. In Festing et al. (2015) study, all but one TM programme participants held a postgraduate degree. In both studies, the educational attainment of other study participants was not provided.

Occupational Setting

The occupational setting was specified for all studies. The case study organisations (which accounted for six studies in total) were: the Legal Services Commission and a large City

Council in the UK (Harris & Foster, 2010), a large public sector organisation in The Netherlands (Glastra & Meerman, 2012), the National Health Service in the UK (Powell et al., 2013), two media sector organisations in Germany (Festing et al., 2015), the headquarters and a subsidiary of an Austrian bank (Hirt et al., 2017) and an open and distance learning university in South Africa (Erasmus et al., 2017).

Three studies incorporated the views of stakeholders external to organisations implementing TM initiatives. Harris and Foster (2010) conducted interviews with trade union representatives as part of the sample (numbers not provided). Hirt et al. (2017) interviewed two representatives of an Austrian University collaborating with the case study organisation (an Austrian bank). Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) focused entirely on a perspective external to organisations looking to deploy inclusive TM interventions, by interviewing representatives of five national agencies in India focusing on the employment of those with disability.

Seniority and Role in Relation to the Talent Management Intervention

All studies indicated the level of leadership, managerial responsibilities and/or the relationship to the TM interventions. Senior managers and talent/HR specialists were the most targeted research group. The perspective of individuals targeted by the TM interventions was also incorporated in the majority of the studies.

Senior executives' views were represented in five out of seven studies: Harris and Foster (2010), Hirt et al. (2017), Glastra and Meerman (2012), Erasmus et al. (2017) and Kulkarni and Scullion (2015). Line Managers were interviewed in the Harris and Foster (2010) and Powell et al. (2013) studies. Authors did not specify how many line managers participating in these studies had been part of the specific structured talent management programmes. However, as both studies focused on the wider TM strategy, the study participants would have been within the scope of the strategy as the talent intervention.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs; namely Human Resources, TM or training) were targeted in most studies due to their involvement in the setting of the TM strategy, their insight into TM

activities or the delivery of the TM programmes. HR/talent/training SMEs were represented in all but one study: Harris and Foster (2010), Hirt et al. (2017), Festing et al. (2015), Glastra and Meerman (2012), Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) and Powell et al. (2013).

Employees participating in the structured talent development programmes (some of whom with managerial experience) were interviewed in the following studies: Harris and Foster (2010), Festing et al. (2015) and Glastra and Meerman (2012). It was unclear how many of the survey participants and interviewees in the Powell et al. study (2013) participated in the formal NHS talent development programmes described by the authors.

25 former trainees and interns (participants in a targeted talent development programme) were interviewed in the Hirt et al. (2017) study. These individuals have since returned to university and were not employees at the time of the study.

Research Question 2: What are the Characteristics/Aspects of Inclusive Talent Management Interventions?

Definition of Talent Management (TM) and the TM Intervention Target Group

Table 4 provides details of the theoretical underpinnings for the talent approaches used in the included studies, alongside the inclusion considerations which indicate the described approaches as examples of “inclusive talent management”. The studies were reviewed through the lens of Swailes et al. (2014) typology of inclusive talent management: from fully inclusive TM, through partially inclusive, to partially exclusive TM targeting particular groups for the purposes of their greater inclusion. It is notable that the approach to TM spans two different definitions of inclusive TM for two studies (Powell et al., 2013; Erasmus et al., 2017).

“Fully inclusive talent management” is defined by Swailes et al. (2014) as efforts to identify individual talents within the entirety of the workforce (or job market) and to match those individual talents to different jobs and responsibilities. Erasmus et al. (2017) noted the

explicit intention to “ensure employee talents are optimised for the benefit of the individual as well as an organisation” within their TM study. Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) argued that everyone should be able to participate in the labour market by utilising their individual strengths and skills, and focus research efforts on capturing strategies how to remove barriers faced by disabled people when trying to gain access to employment. The described activities could be effectively deployed by employers who want to be more inclusive of disabled talent in their talent management practices. While noting benefits of this fully inclusive approach, none of the reviewed studies have adopted the fully inclusive TM approach or reported on outcomes of such approaches.

Swales et al. (2014) define “partially inclusive talent management” as programmes open to a wider group of staff at the point of entry. Three papers met this definition by describing overarching TM strategies or policies which typically boost their “inclusive” credentials by listing improved representation as a target outcome (even if it is unclear how those outcomes are measured and/or met). Powell et al. (2013) reported success measures including ambitions for the leaders to reflect the workforce and the communities they serve (particularly BME, women and disabled people) in the NHS talent management strategy reviewed. Harris and Foster (2010) described a TM strategy which applies to all staff, and a specific talent programme (which offers additional support to participants’ development) being planned as open to all staff at the point of entry. The authors also referenced an organisational commitment to address representation issues as part of the TM strategy and to increase the number of women in senior management and ethnic minorities in managerial roles. Similarly, Erasmus et al. (2017) focused on a TM strategy and policy, which applied to all employees, while aiming to ultimately create talent pools for accelerated development. A differentiated investment approach, where talent pipelines and talent pools are created, offers different opportunities to those seen as future leaders or particularly valuable to the organisation.

Four studies focused on what can be described as positive action programmes or diversity initiatives, with explicit links to an organisation’s TM strategy. These programmes are

partially exclusive in nature – only a subset of employees can take part (Swailles et al., 2014) – but they were aimed at achieving inclusive outcomes, typically increased representation of underrepresented minority at senior leadership level. Under the umbrella of the NHS TM strategy, Powell et al. (2013) listed a positive action programme specifically targeting BAME employees. Glastra and Meerman (2012) described a programme targeted (partly) at ethnic minority employees. Festing et al. (2015) analysed a range of TM programmes deployed by two companies in Germany, the majority of which are targeting young or junior employees. Some of those programmes were targeted at young female employees (e.g. 50% female quota networking programme or female only mentoring programme). Hirt et al. (2017) reported on a programme, while not designed to directly increase the numbers of ethnic minority employees at the senior level, pursued a strategy of adding value through ethnic background and a learning strategy as an approach to managing critical resources that skilled migrants can provide to organisations (Ortlieb & Sieben 2013, in Hirt et al. 2017). Such strategies might be achieved through organisations finding ways to achieve greater inclusion of such target group in their operations.

Notably, the focus of one of the studies (Festing et al., 2015) was to conceptually, as well as empirically, investigate TM in the case study organisations, and to arrive at a authors' own conceptualisation of what “gender inclusive” TM is.

Selection into Talent Management Programmes (Talent Identification)

Placing limits on access “inclusive” TM programmes seems at odds with the inclusive TM definition, however most of the reviewed programmes indeed are either targeted partially inclusive TM approaches or “partially exclusive” focused on “high potential” employees, albeit with quotas or ambitions of inclusive outcomes.

The level of detail provided on the talent identification process varied. Two studies provided comprehensive information about the talent selection process (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Festing et al., 2015). Three studies commented on the impact of the selection process on the

resulting demographic make up for the programmes (Harris & Foster, 2010; Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Festing et al., 2015).

In three studies, a selection process was applied but no details on the process were provided. Powell et al. (2013) mentioned but did not explore a selection process into one of the NHS talent programmes (“Top Leaders”). Erasmus et al. (2017) described talent identification processes (selection into leadership and specialist development pools) carried out by TM committees consisting of senior managers. Harris and Foster (2010) briefly mentioned the programme at the Legal Services Commission (one of the case study organisations) as open to certain salary bands but with plans to make it inclusive to all at the point of application, after which point a “rigorous approach” to selection was to be applied (no details provided). In the same study, the “Future Leaders” talent programme at a large Council (second case study organisation) was open to all staff in managerial roles, subject to line management release. No selection criteria were applied, however female representation remained lower than desired.

Glastra and Meerman (2012) described a programme targeting “employees with ethnic backgrounds and the potential to grow towards senior management levels”. To the organisers’ surprise (as minority ethnic staff tended to be underrepresented in previous iterations of the same TM programme), the take up exceeded the number of spaces available. A maximum of one candidate per region was put forward, selected by management (no details provided as to that process). Despite this level of interest, programme organisers decided to offer the places on 50% ethnic minority and 50% majority basis, as “less controversial”. Upon applying for a place, ethnic minority programme candidates (including those with academic degrees) had to pass an assessment, typically applied to candidates without an academic degree or those whose competencies were doubted. In contrast, the talent status of ethnic majority candidates joining the same programme, was seen as “more established among relevant parties” and those candidates did not have to undergo the same assessment.

Festing et al. (2015) noted that the Company B's selection process into the International Networking programme, Young/Senior Executive and Non-executive development programmes consisted of nomination by supervisor and a board decision (100% male). No feedback was provided on unsuccessful nominations and information on the purpose of TM was unclear. Self-nomination process was only available for networking opportunities (targeted at female employees). To moderate a potential male and/or management bias, Company B introduced a 50% gender quota for all its talent programmes as part of its gender equality efforts. The talent pool list was kept deliberately confidential. In the same study, Company A, also applied a nomination and selection process. The Networking Programme and Mentoring opportunities were accessible for most if not all who applied to take part (self-nomination). The Young Executive Programme required a nomination by supervisor and participation in a highly competitive assessment centre process. Despite no gender quota applied to the process, female participation was approximately 60% for the Networking opportunities and Mentoring, and 30% for the Young Executive Programme.

Intervention Length and Content

There was varying level of detail provided by authors on the TM interventions, which comprised of all-encompassing strategies and policies (three studies), through structured time-bound and targeted programmes for internal employee cohorts (five studies), to stand-alone TM activities or techniques which seek out to incorporate typically overlooked external talent pools (two studies).

All the studies which focus on a *wider TM strategy* (Harris & Foster, 2010; Powell et al., 2013; Erasmus et al., 2017) also listed examples of *structured talent interventions for internal employee groups* with very limited information on their length or content.

Harris and Foster (2010) focused on programmes developing an internal leadership pipeline. The only mention of programme content relates to the "Future Leaders" programme which featured training and special projects. Powell et al. (2013) provided a brief overview of the overall NHS TM strategy where examples of programmes are mentioned: "Breaking

Through” programme for BAME staff, “Gateway” programme to identify external talent and a “Management Training Scheme”. Similarly, Erasmus et al. (2017) present a TM strategy and policy which set out the philosophy, purpose and strategic alignment of TM with the University’s strategic goals. Specific talent interventions were listed as: job shadowing, mentorship, accelerated development for young professionals and academics, stretch assignments, communities of practice, leadership development and in-house skill development programmes.

More detail in terms of development methods and intervention length was provided as part of the two studies which focus specifically on targeted programmes focusing on *specific cohorts of employees* (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Festing et al., 2015).

The Glastra and Meerman (2012) programme consisted of a curriculum delivered over 16 days spanning nine months, covering thematic units such as self-awareness, personal efficacy, personal development, action learning and diversity. The formal training was delivered in combination with workplace learning (work experience postings) and mentoring. Initially focused on the “career advancement” of its participants, the authority’s Education and Training Centre changed the emphasis to “personal development”.

Similarly, a multitude of individual programmes are listed by Festing et al. (2015) for both case study organisations: networking events, mentoring, and a Young Executive Programme, Senior Executive Programme and non-executive programme). The duration of these programmes was provided for networking and mentoring as approximately 12 months and 18 months for the young executive programme at Company A. The focus of talent development programmes at Company A is on further education and topic such as general management, strategy, law and work-related networking. In contrast, Company B focused almost exclusively on personal development aspects, such as soft skills, team management and leadership skills, without any technical qualifications attached.

Two studies focused on activities aimed at greater inclusion of typically overlooked *external* talent pools and provided some insights into the detail of the intervention such as length and content (Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015; Hirt et al., 2017).

Hirt et al. (2017) showcased a one-year traineeship or three-month internship where university students received on the job development (and get to know the tasks and departments) and attend social events with management. Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) proposed individual TM activities which could be incorporated into wider organisational programmes or strategies: involving multiple stakeholders when understanding skills, needs and choices of disabled candidates, extended socialisation of new talent and their peers and affording employers a preview of talent in a workplace environment.

Table 4: Inclusive Talent Management Interventions: Theoretical Framing, Inclusion Considerations and Characteristics (Research Q2)

	Theoretical framing	Inclusion considerations and intervention target group	Characteristics of the inclusive talent development intervention
Harris, L. and Foster, C. (2010)	<p>TM seen as a comprehensive and integrated set of activities to ensure that the organisation attracts, retains, motivates and develops the talented people it needs now and, in the future, (Armstrong and Baron, 2007). “Talent” means “individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential” (Tansley et al., 2007, p. 8). TM considered in the context of the "sameness-different debate" (Harris and Foster, 2005). Contrasting greater equality by making employment opportunities available to the widest range of applicants versus focus on identifying individuals who have the potential to provide future leadership.</p>	<p>Exclusive TM with Inclusive Outcomes Partially Inclusive TM (future plans)</p> <p>Plans to open the talent programme to all at the point of entry (partially inclusive TM). A stated commitment to address areas of under representation of certain groups in the workforce, for example women in senior management and ethnic minorities in managerial roles at the Council (inclusive outcome). Demographics are not used for selection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A talent development programme, “Future Leaders”, aiming to create a pool of c100 individuals retained and developed to take on senior leadership roles in the future. • Training plus special projects (no detail available). • Selection process to get on the programme but open to all to apply. • For the purposes of succession planning and to develop internal capacity to progress into senior roles. • The programme is considered within the context of a wider talent management policy.
Powell, M., et al. (2013)	<p>A working definition of TM as given by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) (2008) involves: ‘. . . the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/ retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation’. Similarly, according to NHS Employers (2009), TM is essentially making sure you have the right person in the right place at the right time. It can be defined as attracting and integrating highly skilled workers and developing and retaining existing workers.</p> <p>The authors also emphasise the historical lack of clarity of TM definition.</p>	<p>Exclusive TM with Inclusive Outcomes</p> <p>The NHS follows predominantly exclusive TM approach with elements of partly exclusive/inclusive TM due to the diversity outcomes and targeting some of the initiatives at the underrepresented staff.</p> <p>Positive action programmes form part of the talent strategy (e.g. BME programme). Improved representation (inclusive outcome) is one of the strategic objectives (leadership reflective of community). Valuing diversity, fairness and transparency are embedded in the approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to increase a leadership supply internally (the “spoilt for choice” principle) • Prime focus on Aspiring Chief Executives (ACE) and Aspiring Directors (AD) programme • A range of programmes form part of the overall NHS TM strategy (incl. “Gateway” to identify external talent, “Management Training Scheme” and “Breaking Through” for BAME staff).

Kulkarni, M. and Scullion, H. (2015)	<p>TM understood as activities aimed at identifying, selecting, developing and retaining productive employees (Stahl et al. 2007; Scullion and Collings 2011; Valverde, Scullion and Ryan 2013).</p>	<p>Fully Inclusive TM</p>	<p>Three unique TM activities are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involving multiple stakeholders when understanding skills, needs and choices of disabled candidates; • extended socialisation of new talent and their peers; • affording employers a preview of talent in a workplace environment.
	<p>TM is seen as a set of processes designed to ensure an adequate flow of employees into jobs, focused on different talent pools (Lewis and Heckman 2006).</p>	<p>Inclusive approach (tapping into underutilised talent pools) - assumes everyone has "talent" which can be utilised according to individual skills (fully inclusive talent management).</p>	
Glastra, F. J. and Meerman, M. (2012)	<p>Talent is an outcome of a specific system and history of interactions between employees and selective agents within the work organisation (Barab and Plucker, 2002). According to the strategic and socio-cultural characteristics of work organisations some practices (knowledge, competence, behaviours) become visible and are noted as manifestations of talent, while others remain unnoticed.</p>	<p>Exclusive TM with Inclusive Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Talent on the Move" programme for higher professional and lower management employees with academic qualifications and the ambition to grow to higher managerial positions. It offers the opportunity to explore personal ambitions and aptitudes with regard to careers in higher management. • Involves formal training, action learning in combination with workplace learning (work experience postings) and mentoring.
	<p>The authors also refer to theories of effective diversity management and career advancement of minority employees. Relevant success factors for DM on Fischer (2007), Wentling (2004), and Seymen (2008): strategic integration, top management commitment, establishing organisational culture open to new developments.</p>	<p>Talent development programme targeting ethnic minority staff (a positive action programme, partially exclusive TM). Designed originally as a solely minority intake, was then implemented with 50% ethnic minority participants.</p>	
		<p>"A personal development program for ethnic minority employees with a view to advancement to higher function levels (especially management functions) in the organisation."</p>	

; Hirt, C., Ortlieb, R., Winterheller, J., Bešić,	<p>The paper focuses on both organisational and individual perspectives in TM. The authors draw on the typology of diversity strategies by Ortlieb and Sieben (2013) and the categorisation of individual career competencies by DeFillippi and Arthur (1994).</p> <p>Although the programme participants are referred to as “international talents”, no definition of “talent” or “talent management” is referenced.</p>	<p>Exclusive TM with Inclusive Outcomes</p> <p>Specific organisational strategy aimed at bringing in ethnically diverse talent (highly talented graduates and students from South Eastern Europe) through a targeted traineeship programme (early talent). Partially exclusive TM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-year traineeship or three-month internship for Bachelor’s and Masters’ students. • On the job development - get to know the tasks and departments • Attending social events with management.
Festing, M., Kornau, A. and Schaefer, L. (2015)	<p>Stahl et al. (2007): TM as an organisation’s ability to attract, select, develop and retain key employees (in a global context). TM can be considered inclusive when it supports all talented employees equally to contribute fully and effectively to the organisation, independent of their sex and/or gender-stereotypical orientation.</p> <p>The authors rely on both understandings of gender, in order to allow for a more differentiated analysis of the inclusiveness of women and/or people with a stereotypical feminine value orientation, thus going beyond the glass ceiling discussion which is mostly sex-related. This conceptualization of an inclusive TM system regarding gender includes potential (i) gender bias in TM practices and (ii) sex discrimination of TM practices based on differences in perceptions or treatment and related merely to biological sex.</p>	<p>Exclusive TM with Inclusive Outcomes</p> <p>Inclusive TM programmes are conceptualised by five distinct propositions. The article analyses aspects of the TM programmes and approaches which are gender inclusive/non-inclusive. Some programmes are specifically aimed at women or require a 50% representation.</p> <p>None of the described programmes are open to all staff at point of entry; partially exclusive TM approach is used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company A offers: Networking events (national), Mentoring and a Young Exec Programme. • Company B offers: International Networking events, female mentoring; Young Executive Programme, Senior executive programme and non-executive programme. • Both companies use a mixed TM approach (exclusive as well as universal features)

The inclusive TM approach (Meyers and Van Woerkom, 2014 and Mishra 2008), promotes the perspective that all employees in the organisation's workforce are considered talent.

Inclusive/developable talent philosophy has been adopted because of the view that every employee has the potential to contribute towards the organisation's objectives and this capability may be developed (Meyers, Woerkom and Dries, 2013).

Fully Inclusive TM
Partially Inclusive TM

TM focuses on **all employees**. Assumes that every member of the organisation is a potential high performer and a valuable employee given the right experience and learning opportunities.

Intention to ensure individual employee talents (strengths) are optimised for the benefit of the individual and organisation (fully inclusive TM).

A differentiated investment is applied (not equal for all in terms of time/effort/money) as individual needs are unique. Talent pools for accelerated development of selected individuals (partially inclusive TM).

- The Strategy and Policy set out the philosophy, purpose and strategic alignment of TM with the Uni's strategic goals. TM policy: a specific process that compares current talent in a dept to the strategic needs of the institution. TM committees identify the leadership and specialist development pools using identified criteria. Talent interventions: job shadowing, mentorship, accelerated development for young professionals and academics, stretch assignments, communities of practice, leadership development and skill development programmes.
- The TM architecture is to build a talent mind-set with line managers for them to provide the required talent leadership.

Research Question 3: What are the Outcomes/Impact of Inclusive Talent Management Approaches?

Only two studies reported results on *measured* outcomes, including differences to career progression outcomes between majority and minority participants of the TM programme (Glastra & Meerman, 2012) and tangible changes to organisational practices (Hirt et al., 2017). The remaining studies described the *intentions* of measuring impact of TM interventions. All studies explored the reactions and perceptions of the key stakeholders involved in the TM strategies and programmes. The studies examined organisational and individual-level outcomes.

Organisation-level Outcomes

Diversity and inclusion were reported as a specific objective in five studies: improved representation at senior level for women (Harris & Foster, 2010; Powell et al. 2013; Festing et al. 2015), ethnic minorities (Harris & Foster, 2010; Powell et al., 2013, Glastra & Meerman, 2012) and disabled people (Powell et al., 2013). In one study, an Austrian bank sought to incorporate skilled migrants' skills and perspective into organisational strategy through a targeted traineeship and internship programme (Hirt et al., 2017).

Meeting a specific aspect of organisational strategy was noted in four studies: increased leadership supply (increase in numbers of appointable internal candidates for senior management vacancies) and increased numbers of clinicians appointed to senior roles (Powell et al., 2012), developing a "talent management mindset" among line managers, for them to provide effective talent leadership, and, ultimately, attract develop and retain talent to meet current and future human resources needs of the organisation (Erasmus et al., 2017), adding value through ethnic background (Hirt et al., 2017) or retaining high potential individuals during times of sectoral changes (Harris & Foster, 2010).

The improvement of the organisational brand, both to avoid discrimination litigation (Festing et al., 2015) and to present the organisation as an "exemplar employer" (Hirt et al.,

2017; Glastra & Meerman, 2012) was also reported. A comparison of two companies in the Festing et al. study (2015) indeed reveals a difference between the perceived risk of sex discrimination between Company A adopting less gender inclusive TM practices than company B. 83% of female and 86% of male respondents in Company A perceived negative impact of TM practices on women, compared to 36% of female and 30% of male respondents from Company B.. Gender bias was reported in how talent is defined, the prevalence of a male dominated work context and organisational values, talent selection decision making process and even content of talent development intervention.

The Hirt et al. (2017) was the sole study which reported actual positive organisational outcomes for the researched intervention. The authors reported that, despite its talent development programme being limited to migrant trainees and interns only temporarily joining its workforce, the programme impacted the hosting organisation in the long term. Through insights gained from the programme, the bank's HR department realised it has "learned how to recruit personnel without discrimination against people of foreign backgrounds, which in turn supported the bank's antidiscrimination strategy" (p. 622). The study also mentioned some unplanned positive outcomes including improvements in "awareness of diversity issues within the bank, intercultural understanding, knowledge of South Eastern European markets, reputation of foreign subsidiaries and transfer of values form headquarters to foreign subsidiaries" (p. 617).

Glastra and Meerman (2012) also reported on actual outcomes of talent interventions however the intended inclusion outcomes have not been achieved. Despite some evidence of individual career progression outcomes for both majority and minority participants, majority members reached higher positions and salaries than their minority peers. In addition, the programme ceased to attract minority participants in subsequent years.

Individual-level Outcomes

All seven studies listed outcomes at the individual level. Specific examples included: developing management capabilities (Harris & Foster, 2010), developing awareness of one's

own ambitions and competencies and a tightly knit support network of fellow participants (Glastra & Meerman, 2012), development of career competencies: “know-why” (rich opportunities to find out about own career motivation and goals and career oriented strengths and weaknesses), “know-how” (professional, social and personal skills) and “know-whom” (development of personal relations and networks that may influence their careers) (Hirt et al., 2017), personality development, technical skills and knowledge such as media law (Festing et al., 2015) and enhanced performance in a role (Erasmus et al. 2017).

Career progression to a higher role (typically a leadership position) was listed as an intended outcome in five studies: Harris and Foster, 2010; Glastra and Meerman, 2012; Powell et al., 2013; Festing et al., 2015; and Erasmus et al. 2017. Increasing employability, gaining a work placement or employment was an intended outcome for initiatives described by Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) and Hirt et al. (2017).

Table 5 presents the inclusive TM intervention outcomes at organisational and individual level across all reviewed studies (Research question 3).

Research Question 4: What are the Perceptions of ITM interventions Within the Organisations Implementing Such Approaches?

The perceptions of TM interventions are presented below in three themes (each with individual subthemes). *Table 6* provides an at a glance overview of the frequency of each of the themes and subthemes.

Table 5: Intended (I) and Measured (M) Outcomes of Talent Management Interventions (Research Question 3)

	Organisational level outcomes			Individual level outcomes		
	Diversity and inclusion outcomes*	Meeting organisational strategy objectives**	Enhanced corporate brand***	Career progression (to a higher-level role)	Wider network, new skills or performance development (within current role)	Increased employability (if target group external to organisation)
Harris & Foster (2010)	I	I	I	I	I	
Glastra & Meerman (2012)	M		I	M	M	
Powell et al. (2013)	I	I	I	I		
Festing et al. (2015)	I		I	I	I	
Kulkarni & Scullion (2015)						I
Hirt et al. (2017)	I	M	M		M	I
Erasmus et al. (2017)		I		I	I	

Note.

* Diversity and Inclusion outcomes* (access to opportunities for underrepresented groups, bringing in diverse talent and improved representation to reflect the community)

**Developing an internal pipeline of potential future leaders (for purposes of succession planning and to develop internal capacity to progress into senior roles) or bringing in organisational learning from members of ethnic minority

***Enhanced organisational brand (positioning the organisation as an exemplar employer and/or avoiding discrimination litigation)

Table 6: Reactions and Perceptions of Talent Management Interventions (Research Question 4) – Themes

	Concepts and measures of talent management			Wider context and strategy alignment				Implementation of the Intervention		
	Definition and measures	Value of TM activity	Preference for Inclusive TM	Importance of context for TM	Performance Management and Performance targets	Equality and Diversity Policies	Internal alignment (within TM strategy or programme)	Involving relevant stakeholders	Managing expectations of selected staff	Selection (and de-selection) into the TM programme
Harris & Foster (2010)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Glastra & Meerman (2012)				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Powell et al. (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Festing et al. (2015)	✓		✓			✓				✓
Kulkarni & Scullion (2015)		✓		✓			✓	✓		
Hirt et al. (2017)				✓	✓	✓			✓	
Erasmus et al. (2017)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Reactions and Perceptions of TM Theme 1: Concepts and Measures of Talent Management

The first thematic cluster identified in the perceptions of research participants was focused on concepts, definitions and measures associated with TM more broadly and/or inclusive TM more specifically. Research participants in three studies commented on how (inclusive) TM is conceptualised while interviewees in four studies emphasised the value of TM activities. An additional theme in this cluster is centred around explicit statements of preference or direct comparisons between inclusive and exclusive TM approaches (four studies).

Definition and Measures

The challenges of how to define “talent management” or “inclusive talent management” and how to measure impact of TM interventions are echoed by the interviewees in some of the reviewed studies. What was viewed as “talent” varied between, and within, the participating NHS organisational units (Powell et al., 2012), and among the line managers at the University of South Africa (Erasmus et al., 2017). In the latter study, despite defining the approach to TM as fully inclusive (including intention to match individual strengths and aspirations with the organisational needs), that ambition is not reflected in the perceptions of research participants, as practice is limited to secondment and acting up opportunities rather than active measures to promote internal staff movement according to their individual strengths and aspirations. In Festing et al. (2015), the two media sector case study organisations did not have a company-shared talent definition, and the respondents were only able to comment on the perceived underlying criteria to be judged by as “talent” or “not talent” in their companies.

Powell et al. (2013) provided a comprehensive analysis of TM measures within the NHS (including talent dashboards and specific inclusion targets) and indicated that there are issues with clarity, consistency and ease of application. No data was provided at this point about how far these measures are met currently and what (if any) positive outcomes have been achieved without further summative evaluation efforts. There was an early indication that some of the process measures were not being met through senior leaders at the NHS

not being able to allocate 20% of their time to developing their leadership capacity in their area.

Value of Talent Management Activity

There was an agreement that TM is a worthwhile activity and the respondents seemed to agree that a systematic and more proactive TM strategy was an important organisational priority (Powell et al., 2012; Harris & Foster, 2010; Erasmus et al. 2017). This view was strongly endorsed by interviewees from high performing NHS trusts (Powell et al., 2013).

Preference for Inclusive Talent Management (Over Exclusive TM)

More inclusive approach to TM was preferred by the interviewees in most of the public sector case studies (Powell et al., 2013; Harris & Foster; 2010 and Erasmus, 2017) to counter balance what is seen as a culture of 'patronage' or 'old boys' network' and to address representation issues (Powell, et al., 2013) while they acknowledged that was hard to reconcile the valuing of inclusivity with the partially exclusive approach to TM (Harris & Foster, 2010).

The selection of certain employees into talent pools was of concern in the Erasmus et al. study (2017) as the respondents saw this approach at odds with the ambition of the University's TM strategy to be "all-inclusive", and potentially leading to conflicts between staff and managers. In the same study, respondents emphasised the need for the organisation to optimise employees' talents (strengths and aspirations) for the benefit of the individual as well as the organisation.

The preference for universal, or more inclusive approach to TM was, however, not limited to the public sector: female respondents in the Festing et al. (2015) study also expressed a preference to focus on individual strengths of each employee and promoting those, as opposed to pursuing more "elite" TM (partially exclusive TM). Male respondents in contrast were in favour of the exclusive ("elite") approach and in general more complimentary about the TM approach deployed at their organisations than female interviewees.

As an indication of a clear preference for seeing “talent” in everyone as opposed to a selected few, respondents in the Kulkarni and Scullion study (2015) saw themselves as active advocates of issues related to inclusive TM understood as an approach leading to the greater inclusion of disadvantaged groups. They engaged in the influencing of national policy making in India, as well as individual employers to further the cause of inclusion on disabled talent.

Reactions and Perceptions of TM Theme 2: Wider Context and Strategy Alignment

The second cluster of the individual perceptions’ themes was focused on the importance of a wider context (organisational, sectoral or country context) for talent management (six studies), strategic links with other organisational policies such as performance management (three studies) and diversity and inclusion (six studies) and intra-strategy cohesion (three studies).

Importance of Context for Talent Management

The importance of context and how it shapes an approach to talent management has been emphasised in six studies. The *national* context was important to three studies’ respondents. For Hirt et al. (2017), the approach was largely driven by migration trends (movement from South Eastern European countries to Austria) and, at the same time, the Austrian bank aiming to expand their market reach internationally. In the Kulkarni and Scullion study (2015) the respondents emphasised the moral obligation (and a business case), for Indian employers to increase their intake of disabled employees considering large numbers, stigmatisation and high levels poverty among the country’s population of 21 million disabled people. Erasmus et al. (2017) note uncertainties around how to apply the national Employment Equity imperative, intended to address imbalances resulting from South Africa’s past discriminatory practices, to the practice of talent selection.

Public sector context and ethos were linked to perceptions of TM in the two UK case studies. Powell et al. (2013) quoted perceptions of the NHS as a fairer, more friendly and welcoming backdrop to TM than the talent practices they experienced in the private sector. These views were echoed by Harris and Foster (2010) who saw the public sector as an important context

in terms of its diminishing financial resources (and thus limited investment in development of staff), well-embedded commitment to diversity and inclusion and the need to integrate any new talent initiatives with the public sector organisations' culture and processes.

Organisational context and culture were mentioned by Glastra and Meerman (2012) who suggested that the TM initiative was “a bad choice for realising diversity goals” because the organisation was not prepared to challenge its wider practices around enabling minority talents to “gain competencies in playing or changing the organisational game” (p. 118). Specifically, the career progression at the authority was typically slow and based on social capital and informal interactions, which was in itself biased against minorities as they were less represented in senior level and had a shorter organisational tenure. In addition, part of the internal application process for senior positions was a personnel committee, which would judge whether the leadership candidates would fit the social make-up of the team; those decisions could not be challenged despite frequently excluding ethnic minority candidates. The respondents attributed the failure of the talent development initiative achieving its inclusion outcomes, at least partly, to the fact that the programme was seen as implemented in isolation and not taking organisational culture and practices described above into account.

Performance Management and Performance Targets

While effective and equitable performance management was perceived as an essential building block to enable TM outcomes, respondents in the UK studies (Powell et al., 2013; Harris & Foster, 2010) reported that the quality of actual performance management practice was inconsistent.

The UK public sector case studies which explored partially exclusive TM showed an organisational dilemma around a divide between whether identified “talent” is the “property” of the wider entity – such as the NHS sector more broadly, or a wider organisation elsewhere – or a single Trust in the case of the NHS or local department elsewhere (Powell et al., 2013). The issue was compounded through the tension between

collaboration/ unification and subsidiarity/competition between the sub units, which were striving to meet their individual performance measures (Harris & Foster, 2010) and may have been reluctant to see their high performing (or “talented”) staff be moved to a different part of the organisation.

The ownership of “talent” and its contribution to a local department’s delivery and performance was also highlighted by Hirt et al. (2017) as some of the talent development participants were “held on to” by their hosting departments rather than allowed to rotate their placements for the purposes of developing a wide range of organisational experiences. In that case, priority was given to the specific department’s needs – to utilise the trainee’s competencies – rather than wider objectives of the scheme or indeed an opportunity for the individual to discover her strengths and weaknesses while working in another area.

Equality and Diversity Policies

Unsurprisingly for organisations interested in implementing inclusive TM initiatives, the respondents in all the articles based on organisational case studies made references to internal equality and diversity policies or strategies. The study respondents saw TM interventions as either a separate strategy to diversity and inclusion policy (possibly at odds with one another), an enabler of inclusive outcomes or in a dynamic, two-way relationship with organisational strategies regarding diversity.

Both Erasmus et al. (2017) and Harris and Foster (2010) highlighted concerns related to integrate exclusive aspects of TM policies with the well embedded equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and strategies. Harris and Foster (2010) study respondents expressed unease about establishing exclusive talent pools of people to receive special treatment and how this approach could be reconciled with principles of equal treatment, stipulated by the long-established equality and diversity policies. In addition, some interviewees stated the possibility that the TM interventions could have a little or adverse impact on representation of disadvantaged groups at senior level, despite a desire to affect senior representation in a positive way. Erasmus et al. (2017) described a similar uncertainty of how to apply the

internal policy related to Employment Equity when carrying out talent selection process and how the policy would affect the acquisition of the required competencies. There was also another challenge expressed in that study, that the University policies and strategies in general were not supportive of TM implementation.

For Powell et al. (2013), the links to the equality and diversity strategy manifested themselves *implicitly* through the expected inclusive outcomes of the TM strategy, namely the levels of senior representation corresponding to the number of women, BAME, disabled employees or within the wider community which the NHS serves.

Glastra and Meerman (2012) and Festing et al. (2015) focused on talent development programmes (or aspects of those programmes) designed *explicitly* as diversity management initiatives to enable inclusive outcomes. Their purpose was to deliver greater female inclusion in the talent programme and emphasise the value the organisation places on diversity (through 50% female quotas as Company B, Festing et al., 2015) or to “strengthen diversity in the organisation by means of the programme” (p. 113) and increase the number of ethnic minorities at senior levels in the longer term (in Glastra & Meerman, 2012). In the latter, even though the TM and the related diversity initiative (targeting one particular cohort of the programme at ethnic minorities), were integrated with well-developed diversity policies within TaxAd, that integration was seen as “superficial and inconsequential” (p. 117), through the lack of organisational coherence and appropriate engagement of the key stakeholders.

Hirt et al. (2017) explore *two-way* links between individual TM outcomes reported by the respondents and strategies regarding ethnic diversity adopted by the organisation (Austrian bank) drawing on the typology by Ortlieb and Sieben (2013, after Hirt et al., 2017). “Know-how” competency had the biggest impact on the organisation’s ability to realise its diversity strategy, as the highly qualified migrants completing the programme can positively portray the bank as a fair employer (linked to the bank’s “antidiscrimination” strategy). The “adding value through ethnic background for competitive advantage” strategy is also realised,

through drawing on unique competencies of the programme participants over the duration of traineeship and creating further opportunities for the bank to find qualified employees and enhancing the ethnic diversity of the workforce in the long term.

Internal Alignment (within TM Strategy or Policy)

Strategic alignment was essential not only in terms of other, related organisational strategies, but also within TM efforts as well – a view which was shared by respondents in four studies. Where several different programmes coexisted, the links between them need to be clearly articulated (Powell et al., 2013). The various stages of the TM lifecycle - talent attraction, development, deployment and retention strategies – needed to be well integrated (Erasmus et al., 2017) as otherwise the TM strategy lacked clarity. Similarly, Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) spoke of the importance of integrating TM efforts from the pre-employment stage (seeking talent in traditional and non-traditional locations, involving relevant stakeholders to understand talent needs, matching individuals with vocations as well as the provision of training) to post employment (on the job training, ad hoc support and training for fellow team members) and ongoing activities (advocacy on behalf of disabled talent and engagement with employers).

Even within a single talent development programme, the different elements of the programme design must be cohesive – as evident from the Glastra and Meerman study (2012) where the work placement and mentorship element of the programme were seen by the respondents poorly implemented in the context of ethnic minority participants. Having joined the programme with a limited range of personal networks, those participants struggled to utilise potentially the most career beneficial element of the programme: gaining visibility through hands on experience and accessing suitable mentors.

Reactions and Perceptions of TM Theme 3: Implementation of the Intervention

The final cluster of the individual perceptions' themes was focused specifically on different aspects of the implementation of the TM intervention: how different organisational stakeholders were involved or aligned (five studies), what process was followed to select

participants of the described programmes (three studies), how expectations were managed (four studies).

Involving Relevant Stakeholders

Five out of seven studies see engaging all relevant stakeholders within the organisation (and sometimes beyond) as critical to effective implementation of talent management initiatives. One of the TM strategies recommended by Kulkarni and Scullion (2015), was to involve the “non-traditional” stakeholders – the family -to understand the needs of the “talent” more holistically (and allow better adjustment into the workplace as a result) and, post-employment, invest efforts to raise the awareness among the peers through disability sensitisation training.

Harris and Foster (2010), Powell et al. (2013) and Erasmus et al. (2017) portrayed TM efforts as worthwhile in principle but saw insufficient shifts in line managers’ mind sets or inconsistencies of the application of TM processes as barriers. Festing et al. (2015) saw a stated commitment to gender equality as insufficient: Company B respondents complained this ambition is “not lived” by senior management and therefore unlikely to impact gender composition at senior levels.

Glastra and Meerman (2012) went further to attribute the lack of expected TM programme outcomes to poor stakeholder alignment as the decisive contribution of senior management and the Education and Training Centre was not secured.

Managing Expectations of Selected Staff

The Erasmus et al. study (2017) interviewees expressed fears that TM strategy would be creating unrealistic expectations of upward mobility while career progression opportunities remain limited and stressed the importance of managing expectations. Low turnover and high numbers of aspiring individuals in some areas of the NHS create a challenge of how to manage expectations of those in the “stagnant” talent pools (Powell et al., 2013).

Those fears were not unfounded – in Glastra and Meerman (2012) the ethnic minority TM programme participants spoke of their disappointment related to limited career progression, despite the efforts by programme organisers shifting the advertised focus of the TM programme from “career advancement” (of ethnic minorities) to “personal development” opportunity.

In the Powell et al. study (2013), the credibility of talent development programmes was undermined if managers shy away from honest feedback and allow poor performing staff to self-nominate to take part. Without “honest conversations”, an individual may be labelled as “talent” through their participation in a structured talent development programme and expect an imminent promotion, leading to subsequent disappointment when career progression does not happen.

Selection and De-selection (into the TM Programme)

Even in the case of targeted positive action programmes, aiming for inclusive outcomes was not enough – it was important for the selection and subsequent support to be applied in an inclusive and transparent way (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Festing et al., 2015; Powell et al. 2013; Harris & Foster, 2010). Interestingly, in four studies which cover the selection process to any extent, it was seen by at least some of the research participants as inconsistent and prone to bias (Harris & Foster, 2010; Powell et al., 2013; Glastra & Meerman, 2015; Festing et al., 2015).

The selection process into the NHS “Top Leaders” talent programme (Powell et al., 2013, p. 300) was reported as lacking transparency, creating resentment, mistrust and a suspicion of patronage. Raising similar concerns around transparency, Festing et al. (2015) reported on a selection process: company B talent participants were selected only via supervisor nomination, no feedback was provided to those not selected and the talent pool itself was kept confidential. The company attempted to remove the discriminatory risk by introducing 50% female participation quotas, although this came with its own practical challenges if an insufficient number of women are nominated by their managers in the first place.

Not all respondents were equally negative about the selection process. In the same study (Festing et al., 2015), Company A, which overall was perceived as more gender inclusive in their talent management practices, applied a nomination and selection process seen as fair and objective. The criticisms were raised however with relation to low awareness of the existence of a TM programme, similar to Company B. Harris and Foster (2010) mentioned a view by one of the respondents (from Legal Services Commission) who was pleased to be allocated a place on a talent programme, despite her working part time. This outcome was seen as consistent with the organisation's commitment to equality and diversity for those working flexible hours and with a young family.

Even if talent selection was perceived as fair and transparent, these practices also needed to be balanced with the need to continue developing staff from majority groups (Powell et al., 2013) vital to continued and improving service delivery (Harris & Foster, 2010). Initiatives aimed at a select group of individuals were seen at a risk de-motivating or de-engaging of those who were not included (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Erasmus et al., 2017; Festing et al., 2015) or even a legal discrimination challenge (Harris & Foster, 2010).

Research Question 5: What Empirical Evidence is There to Support the Case for Inclusive Talent Management?

Quality Review

Based on the guidelines developed by Snape et al. (2017), each paper was quality assessed against the proposed qualitative methods frameworks. Methodological rigour was assessed in nine areas, namely: (1) appropriateness of qualitative methodology (2) design (3) clear statement of findings (4) data collection (5) recruitment strategy (6) data analysis (7) consideration of relationship between researcher and participants (8) ethics (9) research contribution. *Supplementary Table 1* outlines the detailed results of the quality assessment.

Through discussion, the research team agreed that an overall quality rating of: <10 represented a Very Low Quality; between 11 and 14 represented Lower Low Quality;

between 15 and 19 was equivalent to Low Quality; between 20-24 represented Upper Low and 25 or above represented a paper of Moderate Quality. The research team awarded a quality rating to each of the seven papers as summarised in *Table 1*. Only one paper (Festing et al., 2015) achieved a Moderate quality rating, with the remaining studies were awarded a Low rating (Harris and Foster, 2010; Powell, et al., 2013; Erasmus, 2017) or Upper Low rating (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015; Hirt, et al., 2017)

The researchers noted limitations in the following aspects of methodological rigour: data collection process (making the process of data collection explicit and explaining any study modifications), participants selection and data analysis (sufficient depth of description, how categories were derived from data, how data was selected to be presented and taking contradictory data into account). There were also substantial gaps in how the relationship between the researcher and study participants was explained and how ethical issues were taken into account.

Table 7: Quality Assessment of Reviewed Studies

Study	"Yes" frequency	Quality assessment	
Harris, L. & Foster, C. (2010)	17	Low	<10 = very low
Glastra, F. J. & Meerman, M. (2012)	22	Upper low	10-14 = lower low 15-19 = low
Powell, M., et al. (2013)	18	Low	20-24 = upper low
Festing, M., et al. (2015)	26	Moderate	>25 = moderate
Kulkarni, M. & Scullion, H. (2015)	20	Upper low	
Hirt, C., et al. (2017)	22	Upper low	
Erasmus, B., et al. (2017)	18	Low	

Evidence statements

According to the four evidence categories presented by Snape et al. (2017) the research team used the following statements: Unclear Evidence (studies with significant quality issues and/or studies show effects in different directions or studies which may not be relevant); Initial Evidence (single study with some limitations, insufficient evidence to make conclusions); Promising Evidence (single high quality study with some limitations or multiple studies with some limitations); Strong Evidence (more than one high quality study with

similar results, or one high quality ‘upgraded study’), to award an overall evidence assessment for each of the statements corresponding to research questions.

Due to methodological limitations and lack of, or limited reporting on, actual intervention outcomes, majority of evidence statements achieved a quality rating of Unclear Evidence (see *Table 8*). There is Promising Evidence for organisations implementing interventions which meet partially exclusive TM with inclusive outcomes and partially inclusive TM from studies with some limitations.

Table 8: Evidence Statements and Quality Ratings (GRADE/CerQual)

Evidence statement	Quality rating	Reasoning
Inclusive Talent Management Interventions delivered to a working population ...		
... meet the definition of fully inclusive talent management	Unclear evidence	Two studies met the definition of fully inclusive talent management; however the implementation or outcomes of these interventions was not explored in those studies.*
... meet the definition of partially inclusive talent management or exclusive talent management aimed at inclusion outcomes	Promising Evidence	Two studies met the definition of partially inclusive TM; five studies met the definition of partially exclusive TM with inclusive outcomes.*
... lead to greater inclusion (in terms of employability, career progression, representation at leadership level) of women, ethnic minorities and/or disabled employees	Unclear evidence	Of the seven studies that met the inclusion criteria, one was of moderate quality, three of low quality and three of upper low quality in terms of their design and execution. Inclusion outcomes are either not reported on as part of the study or mixed results are reported.
... lead to other positive outcomes for individuals and organisations	Unclear evidence	One study was of moderate quality, three of upper low and three low quality in terms of their design and execution. Outcomes, beyond individual perceptions, are not measured or not measured consistently. Mixed results in terms of positive effect (where reported).

* Two of the study organisations met more than one definition of TM approach (Harris & Foster, 2010 and Erasmus et al., 2017)

Discussion

This systematic literature review examined the evidence for inclusive talent management (ITM) against five research questions.

Firstly, we searched for examples of ITM interventions in the empirical literature. Despite a number of different terms used, the searches yielded only a small body of research from which to draw conclusions. Of the 443 unique peer-reviewed titles retrieved from the database search across five different online databases, only seven empirical studies met the inclusion criteria for this systematic review. The reviewed studies respond to the calls raised within wider TM scholarship to bring out more diverse industry sector or national contexts (e.g., Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017) and extending the study populations to individual employees (e.g. Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Powell et al., 2012),

Secondly, we enquired about the characteristics/aspects of ITM interventions. We found only two papers which meet the Swailes et al. (2014) fully inclusive TM definition (only by aspiration), while the majority of studies reported on partially exclusive TM (with inclusion as intended outcome) or a hybrid approach.

Thirdly, we sought evidence of outcomes or impacts of ITM approaches including greater inclusion (e.g. career progression, representation at senior level) of under-represented groups. We found limited evidence of measurable outcomes noted in the reviewed studies, while the majority reported on reactions and perceptions of described TM interventions among a wide set of stakeholders.

Fourthly, we themed the qualitative data describing the reactions and perceptions of ITM interventions within the organisations implementing such approaches. Many themes were consistent with the research and practice in the wider TM field, which may be to an extent explained by the use of “hybrid” approaches to TM in most reviewed case studies. In particular, those themes confirmed the importance of organisational strategy and culture,

integration of TM policies internally and with other key people policies and practices as well as the engagement of all relevant stakeholders (as also outlined by Stahl et al., 2012). In addition, the individual perceptions indicated more importance attached to issues of ethics, fairness and inclusion (e.g. Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015; Festing et al., 2015) and how these practices link to the values espoused by the organisations (e.g. Harris & Foster, 2010; Hirt et al., 2017).

Finally, we wanted to establish what empirical evidence there is to support the case for “inclusive” TM. As identified in the wider TM field (e.g. Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; McDonnell et al., 2017), we found similar challenges around the consistent use of definitions and the quality of research methodology, and thus evidence for such case is limited for the time being. The studies did further the understanding of exclusive TM practices reviewed through the lens of inclusion or ethics, as advocated by Downs and Swailes (2013) and Swailes (2013). However, significant gaps remain in our understanding of fully inclusive and partially talent management practices.

Each of the five research questions is discussed below, in the context of ITM theoretical publications and the wider TM empirical scholarship. This is followed by the limitations of this study, recommendations for practice and further research.

RQ 1: Are There Examples of Inclusive TM Interventions in the Empirical Literature?

Despite broad inclusion criteria, the database search identified only seven examples of inclusive TM empirical studies in peer-reviewed literature. In contrast to the general TM literature focusing on the managerial perspective (McDonnell et al., 2017), the inclusive TM studies have allowed for more insight into the views of talent programme participants or individual employees (five studies: Harris & Foster, 2010; Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Powell et al., 2013; Festing et al., 2015; Hirt et al., 2017) as well as external stakeholders (three studies: Harris & Foster, 2010; Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015; Hirt et al., 2017). None of the studies explicitly included the views of “non-talents”, a gap in research noted by de Boeck et al. (2018).

Powell, et al. (2013) argued that TM research being carried out on for-profit, multinational businesses in the USA made transferring research findings to other contexts problematic. This review indicates that, despite the low number of studies, since 2012 there has nonetheless been a growing body of TM studies set in other research contexts. The reviewed ITM studies have been derived predominantly from a diverse range of public sector organisations (national health service, local and national government agencies and higher education) across Europe, Africa and Asia. In addition, there are private sector studies from Germany and Austria but no multinational organisations and no studies at all from the US.

Two studies, which incidentally also account for the majority of research participants (even if survey respondents in Powell et al., 2012, are discounted) are derived from the public sector in Britain. Equality, diversity legislation and practice have long been embedded in the culture and internal processes of the public sector in the UK (Harris & Foster, 2010) and therefore it is not surprising that those organisations are at the forefront of trying to integrate (or at least reconcile) inclusion and TM practices.

Nearly all the European studies incorporate positive action programmes targeting a specific demographic group: aspiring leaders from ethnic minority in the Netherlands and the UK (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Powell et al., 2013), students from South Eastern European backgrounds (Hirt et al., 2017) and female employees seeking to develop their careers in Germany (Festing et al., 2015).

In the two non-European studies the wider societal issues are of relevance to the researched TM approaches. In the case of South Africa (Erasmus et al., 2017) historical racial tensions are still a live backdrop against the implementation of the TM strategy, although any related challenges are only vaguely mentioned. Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) study was carried out in India, where a large part of the population has a disability, the key driver behind TM efforts is to increase inclusion of this underutilised group, although not at a cost of other employees. Incidentally, the Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) paper, the sole non-case study in this review, gives attention to the subject of “talent” and the value which TM can create in

context of the wider societal well-being and issues, rather than focus on TM contribution to organisational systems and effectiveness, long seen as a feature of TM literature (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

RQ2: What Are the Characteristics/Aspects of the ITM interventions?

Stahl et al. (2012) note that the mixed (“hybrid”) approach – a combination of exclusive/elite and inclusive/universal features - is commonly used by global organisations. By offering both, those organisations apply differentiation practices for certain roles or people (branded as “talent”), but also have a wider talent offer which helps to soften the corporate message that that some employees are intrinsically perceived as more valuable. Six out of seven reviewed studies indicate that organisations do offer opportunities available to all alongside exclusive TM practices (some targeted at underrepresented groups, and others aimed at inclusive outcomes). Two studies reference the ITM philosophy in striving to identify individual strengths (talents) in the entirety of the workforce (Erasmus et al., 2017) or the wider job market (Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015) and match those talents to job roles needed by the organisation (e.g. Dries, 2013; Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001).

Conclusive classification of the TM interventions is difficult due to differing definitions used by the reviewed studies (see limitations of this review).

RQ3: What are the Outcomes/Impact of Inclusive TM Approaches, Including Greater Inclusion of Underrepresented Groups?

Based on the reviewed studies, there is still limited understanding of outcomes beyond individual reactions to TM. Only one study offered evidence of positive measurable outcomes of their talent programme (Hirt et al., 2017) such as changes to organisational policies. Another study showed negative measurable outcomes: slower progression of ethnic minority TM participants compared to their majority counterparts (Glastra & Meerman, 2015).

The reviewed ITM interventions seem to answer the call for by Thunnissen et al. (2013) to adopt a pluralist, system-structural view of TM – where the system affects the actors and vice versa - and recommend considering the needs, preferences and beliefs of stakeholders beyond management. Through those personal perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders, we have furthered our understanding of what may be some of the facilitating or limiting factors within the process of implementing ITM interventions.

RQ4: What Are the Reactions and Perceptions of Inclusive TM Interventions Within the Organisations Implementing Such Approaches?

The issues reported in exclusive TM literature are echoed in the perceptions of the research participants in the reviewed studies. The perceptions of key stakeholders in inclusive TM programmes reported in this review broadly reflect the six principles of effective global TM practices by Stahl et al. (2012). The principles of “Alignment with Strategy”, “Internal Consistency” and “Cultural Embeddedness” correspond to themes in this review in the cluster of “Wider Context and Strategy Alignment”, specifically the importance of context, internal alignment within TM strategy and with other organisational policies. Offering a range of programmes under an umbrella of a comprehensive talent policy is not in itself a guarantee of success. A challenge remains how integrate these individual programmes within a talent strategy, how to set meaningful outcome measures and how to enable line managers to effectively reconcile any potential contradictions between TM and equality, diversity and inclusion strategies.

Arguably, the reviewed studies show that despite organisational attempts at integration, inclusion and TM remain as separate concepts and practices. By the same token, the “hybrid” approach to TM, without internal and external coherence, does not in itself resolve the challenge around transparency, fairness and organisation’s ability to tap into the full range of talent that is available.

None of the reviewed studies are conducted in the context of global corporations, however the Stahl et al.’s (2012) principle of “Balancing Global and Local Needs” nonetheless appears

reflected in the theme “Organisational versus Local Performance Targets”. “Employer Branding through Differentiation” is the organisation’s drive to present itself as an exemplar employer, which in this review has manifested itself as an expected organisational outcome of the inclusive TM interventions (Harris & Foster, 2010; Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Powell et al., 2013; Festing et al., 2015; Hirt et al. (2017).

Stahl et al.’s “Management Involvement” is also seen as crucial in this study, where a “Involving Relevant Stakeholders” theme is identified. Not only a wider range of stakeholders are involved in the research itself, but the individual reactions of research participants continue to emphasise the role that different stakeholders play in implementing TM practices, including individual employees as the target of the TM interventions. The reviewed studies show that an alignment, close collaboration and shared responsibility between different stakeholders involved in the interventions – line managers, senior managers, top leaders, wider employee population and talent SMEs - are key to the delivery of positive outcomes of TM interventions.

Unique to the studies included in this review as compared to the broader TM literature, is the greater attention given to issues of fairness, ethics and equitable access as demonstrated through the design of interventions and their expected outcomes. It is noteworthy that the issues of inclusivity, transparency and ethics are of importance to research participants in the studies, regardless of whether the organisational approach is partially exclusive (Powell et al., 2013; Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Hirt et al., 2017; Festing et al., 2015), partially inclusive (Harris and Foster, 2020) or presented as fully inclusive (Erasmus et al., 2017). This confirms the view of Thunnissen et al. (2013) that “just and fair treatment is an important non-economic outcome of talent management at the individual level” (p. 332) and the recommendations of Gelens et al. (2013) for organisations to be consciously aware of the processes involved in producing TM outcomes, and in particular for the fair treatment and perceptions of organisational justice. Gelens et al. (2013) advise to pay attention to procedural rules, provide transparency and clarifications for TM practices, treating employees with respect and avoid personal self-interest (and bias) by sharing talent-

related decisions. These principles clearly are relevant to the partially exclusive and partially inclusive TM interventions in the reviewed studies.

Contextual factors (organisational culture and/or national context) are noted to be of key importance in six of the seven reviewed studies (Harris & Foster 2010; Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Powell et al., 2013; Festing et al., 2015; Hirt et al. 2017 and Erasmus et al. 2017), confirming the view that there is no single 'blueprint' for effective TM (Tansley et al., 2006) that can be applied to all organisational contexts and that equity, fairness and justice will unfold differently across different organisational cultures (McDonnell, et al., 2017). Ethical considerations, such as equality, transparency, social responsibility, can be seen as 1) the strategic drivers for wanting to try and implement inclusion within talent management (Harris & Foster, 2010; Powell et al., 2013; Erasmus et al., 2017) and also 2) potentially deciding factors whether the intervention will actually work (Glastra & Meerman, 2012; Powell et al., 2013; Festing et al., 2015; Hirt et al., 2017; Erasmus et al., 2017). The first consideration is the organisation's emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion as organisational values which would indicate the primary importance given to inclusive approaches or expected outcomes. Secondly, it is the leaders' and managers' ability to live up to those values in how they implement TM, that seems critical for turning intentions into positive outcomes. "Best fit" inclusive TM in this sense is an approach sensitive to the organisational culture, which espouses the same values of diversity and inclusion, and integrates ethical considerations into implementation of the talent strategy.

As reflected by the dominance of the public sector studies in this review, managers employed in the public institutions appear more concerned about TM interventions in terms of the culturally embedded equality and diversity agenda and their personal perceptions of fair and just treatment. These concerns were previously encountered less frequently in the private sector (Harris & Foster, 2010), however a more recent CIPD survey (Zheltoukhova & Baczor, 2016) indicates that most line managers prefer to use their discretion and apply inclusive TM practices when managing their teams (and ensure that all employees are given

opportunities to develop). This view was independent of the organisation's approach to TM in terms of the inclusion-exclusion and shared regardless of employment sector.

Recommendations for Practice

Organisations face an increasing need to remain competitive or deliver services in an efficient way, as well as cater for the needs of their increasingly diverse workforce. Those employers that express inclusion and diversity as their core values are seeking to implement talent management initiatives but not at the cost of the engagement and well-being of the wider workforce. Despite many conflicting definitions of TM, there is an agreement that TM is context driven, and "best fit" is better than "best practice". Therefore, organisations across all sectors that are focusing on corporate social responsibility, wider staff engagement and harnessing the value of diversity should be asking a question how to make their talent practices more inclusive.

As shown by this review, it is not enough to list inclusive outcomes as intended measures for exclusive TM approaches or to deliver positive action programmes in isolation from the rest of the talent strategy or indeed other organisational policies. Some of the practices branded as "inclusive TM" in this review have been shown to perpetuate exclusion, disengagement and undermine organisational efforts to create "exemplar employer" brand. There are opportunities and lessons here for organisations, leaders, managers and talent experts.

So, does "inclusive talent management" offer an attractive alternative practitioner proposition to exclusive talent management practices? Perhaps the answer lies in the Swailes's (2013) recommendation to look at any TM practices with an element of exclusivity – no matter whether exclusive, partially exclusive or partially inclusive – through the lens of ethics, with a view of furthering inclusion and removing bias. How is the TM approach and the reasons for it communicated? If there is an element of selection, to what extent is it free of bias – does it effectively identify "potential" as opposed to popularity (how connected the person is internally, do they adhere to what "talent looks like" in the company). Do all staff receive an opportunity to be considered talented? What support is given to those ultimately

not selected, the “non talents” versus the resources allocated to the “talents” – how do they remain engaged and motivated? How is the programme’s impact evaluated – on those selected into the programme or the wider organisation (including those who are excluded from the talent development efforts).

These questions align with the conceptualisation of inclusive TM emerging from one of the reviewed studies (Festing et al., 2015), who identify five TM elements which have an impact on the degree of bias and discriminatory risk of TM practices. These are talent definition, underlying career orientation, content of TM programmes, the TM approach (elite versus universal) and the talent selection process. As shown in this review, the “dark side” of TM (Downs & Swailes, 2013) which perpetuates exclusion and bias, can undermine the organisational investment and efforts in talent management practices across the exclusion-inclusion definition spectrum (Swailes et al., 2014).

The recommendations for organisations intending to implement ITM practices are not dissimilar in many respects from previous publications on TM in general (Stahl et al., 2012; Gelens et al., 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013). TM is unlikely to succeed in isolation - it needs to be an integrated the approach with other organisational processes and policies, involving all key stakeholders including line managers. The additional recommendations are linked with the ambition to make talent management “inclusive”. Having clarity what “inclusion” means in the context of talent management is crucial – whether it is about the core approach and talent management model (fully inclusive or partially inclusive TM), inclusive outcomes (including specific rather than vague measures of success) or inclusion-proofing aspects of the partially exclusive talent management approaches.

Finally, there is still an opportunity to further elevate the individual level approach to talent management (Thunnissen et al., 2013) and not only consult employees, but allow them to become active architects of their own TM, and working in partnership with their managers, identify individual strengths (talents) and craft meaningful work according to those strengths (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001; Downs & Swailes, 2013).

Limitations of This Review

This review adopted a rigorous systematic approach. However, it is limited by the small number of studies, poor methodological quality and lack of theoretical and conceptual clarity present in reviewed studies. This leads to caution in drawing conclusions about the nature and outcomes of ITM interventions.

The reviewed studies are predominantly qualitative, descriptive and exploratory, in contrast to most TM literature, which is largely quantitative, albeit with more qualitative studies emerging in recent years (McDonnell et al., 2017). As ITM clearly remains at the sense-making stage, the use of qualitative research design is justified, as long as sufficient academic rigour is applied. However, the major limitation of the reviewed studies is low methodological quality and limited evidence of outcomes, both at individual and organisational levels.

Each of the reviewed studies make a reference to a different definition of TM and/or ITM. Erasmus et al. (2017) briefly reference an approach, derived from positive psychology (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001; Wood et al., 2011; Dries, 2013), where talent is operationalised as strengths, and TM is about recognising each employee's natural talents, helping them to develop job-specific skills and turn the talents into work performance. Erasmus et al. (2017) report on a TM strategy which includes an ambition to utilise every employee's strengths and match them to roles at the University of South Africa, although this is not reflected in practice by the study respondents. Despite positive psychology's interest in 'talent' understood as 'strengths', no journals in the psychology domain have published any empirical studies meeting search criteria, and none of the other studies make a reference to that approach. We have not found peer-reviewed empirical studies which made reference to the capability approach to TM (Downs & Swailes, 2013), which is another conceptualisation of ITM focusing on expanding individual freedoms of each employee.

Two of the reviewed studies reference TM approaches that broadly meet (but do not refer to) the Swailes et al. (2014) definition of fully inclusive TM, which assumes everyone has

"talent". Kulkarni and Scullion (2015) focus on the greater inclusion of underutilised talent pools of the disabled population in India, who could be deployed in the workforce according to individual skills.

The approach described by Erasmus et al. (2017) is not completely clear and some of the descriptions and perceptions position it closer to partially inclusive TM – inclusive at the point of entry (Swailes et al., 2014) – where based on the assessment of individual skills, talent pools are created for accelerated development of selected individuals. Harris and Foster (2010) describe talent programmes, while available to some, are at least at the point of entry designed as open to self-nomination by any employee.

Many of the programmes covered by this systematic review are positive action programmes targeting a specific group (women or ethnic minority) under an umbrella or “badge” of talent management (which was a database search inclusion criterion). Arguably, there may be other studies focusing on positive action programmes striving for more diversity at senior levels, perhaps not too dissimilar to those described here, which are not branded as “talent management”. Therefore, future reviews may consider widening the search criteria further to encompass affirmative action without the “TM” link.

Directions for Future Research

A limited number of papers, varying definitions of inclusive TM and unclear evidence of effective outcomes underlines a need for more empirical, well-designed research into successful examples of organisations building inclusion into TM in an integrated way.

Future studies on inclusive TM should consider a range of research strategies beyond qualitative, interview-only designs (e.g. surveys, focus groups, mixed methods) to further the understanding of the key features of the inclusive TM interventions and their impact. Multilevel, sustainable outcomes need to be clearly defined and measured, including employee and organisational well-being (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020).

Larger samples and clear demographic information provided for studies will increase the ability to generalise findings. For partially inclusive and partially exclusive TM interventions with inclusive outcomes, future research should incorporate the views of the “non-talents” alongside the participants in TM programmes and other stakeholders, which has been identified as a gap in TM research by De Boeck et al. (2018). This would allow evaluation of how effectively the ethical, transparency and fairness considerations have been taken into account when implementing partially inclusive or partially exclusive TM interventions.

We noted a similarity of the challenges reported for TM interventions in the literature and those in the reviewed studies. This can to an extent be explained by the fact that researched organisations have implemented a “hybrid” (Stahl et al., 2012) approach to TM (including partially inclusive and partially exclusive programmes as part of their strategy). More research is required into TM practices which are fully inclusive or partially inclusive (with no exclusive elements) to establish whether the same principles apply in terms of effective implementation of TM interventions. Referencing clear, agreed definitions of inclusive TM and/or the typology provided by Swales et al. (2014), Dries (2013) or Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) will also aid comparisons between different practices and studies in the future.

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) question whether inclusive TM makes etymological sense as the term “talent” tends to imply exceptional, above-average ability or performance. Without empirical evidence for successful outcomes or clear, consistently used inclusive TM definitions, it seems tempting to subsume inclusive TM practices under Human Resources Management (or re-label it as the “Strength-Based Approach”) to distinguish it from exclusive, differentiated investment TM models focusing on the high potential and high performing subset of employees (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016). Arguably, while clear definitions are essential, this would be a loss to those organisations which operate in a different context than the profit-driven businesses in the US – and this review has confirmed that there is interest in inclusive TM certainly in Europe, but also in other parts of the globe (Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017). In the absence of published research on “Strengths-based Approach”, stripping the inclusive TM practices of the “talent

management” label and incorporating the “inclusive TM” efforts into a more established “HRM” brand, could be detrimental. Organisations reluctant to adopt exclusive approaches may fear being portrayed as somehow “behind” in their HR practices compared to organisations adopting what is seen as more “mature” exclusive TM. This is clearly not the case for organisations with ethics, inclusivity and corporate social responsibility as core values, which are keen to maximise the talents of their diverse workforce. Therefore, a need remains to further our ability to design and implement talent interventions in an inclusive, transparent and ethical way.

Reflecting the inclusive TM practices through this systematic review, we propose to retain the “*fully* inclusive talent management” definition proposed by Swailes et al., 2014. While there is currently a scarcity of studies investigating “fully inclusive TM”, more studies are needed.

In contrast, we define the term “talent management” after Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunissen (2016) as exclusive, differentiated organisational investment practice focusing on identifying and developing a subset of employees. Within that definition, the term “inclusive talent management” would refer to:

- a) Targeted talent management programmes aimed at women, people of colour and other underrepresented groups to harness their talents and fast track their careers to improve representation at senior level (positive action talent programmes)
- b) The evaluation of talent management practices through a lens of ethics, inclusion and fairness (as proposed by Swailes, 2013).

Conclusions

In 2010 Ford et al. optimistically hailed inclusive talent management (TM) as a “more evolved” version than the exclusive TM, citing an updated report by the McKinsey Consulting Group (Guthridge et al., 2008, p. 55). The report highlighted the importance of ‘B players’ contribution at all levels throughout the organisation because ‘top talent is more effective when it operates within vibrant internal networks with a range of employees. Ford et al. (2010) state that “inclusive approaches may therefore dominate in the second decade of the 21st century, much as exclusive approaches did in the first decade”. Inclusive TM philosophy emphasises the non-economic value of TM in the context of a fairer, more just society (Thunnissen et al., 2013), which offers a potential closer alignment with the public and voluntary sectors or those for-profit organisations which strive to harness the diversity of all talents within their workforce.

The findings of this systematic literature review suggest that the era of inclusive TM is yet to come. First, we found a low number of robust empirical studies in the area of inclusive TM, albeit in new and non-typical (compared to wider TM scholarship) research contexts and populations. Second, the studies which met our inclusion criteria use varying definitions of inclusive TM and are predominantly examples of partially exclusive TM (with inclusive outcomes), where talent development opportunities are available to a subset of a workforce. Two studies reported on fully inclusive TM; however, one of them (Erasmus et al., 2017) adopted a hybrid approach with exclusive and inclusive TM elements. Third, we found limited evidence for effective outcomes of inclusive TM practices in peer-reviewed literature, with one study reporting measurable positive organisational outcomes of the inclusive TM interventions (Hirt et al., 2015). Fourth, the perceptions of stakeholders involved in the reviewed studies and TM interventions offer helpful insights into understanding potential facilitators and barriers to successfully implementing TM interventions. Some of those insights are aligned with the generally accepted principles of effective TM (Stahl et al., 2012), including integration with the wider organisational strategy and other policies, internal consistency (of individual talent initiatives), the importance of

organisational context and culture, importance of involving a wide range of internal stakeholders (including crucially front line managers) and balancing the needs of departments and those of the wider organisation. Additional insights into how successful (or not successful) the research organisations were in implementing TM in an ethical way, focusing particularly on challenges associated with the fairness and transparency of the selection (or de-selection) process into TM programmes and managing the expectations of selected staff were also identified. These insights warrant further exploration.

We conclude that there is currently insufficient evidence to support the case for fully inclusive TM. Due to the low number of studies, inconsistent use of definitions and low methodological quality, our understanding of the phenomenon remains limited. Together, these findings highlight a pressing need to evaluate current practices and bring new insights. A future focus on targeted talent management programmes (defined as inclusive by virtue of expected positive action outcomes), and evaluating TM programmes through a lens of ethics, inclusion and fairness will provide further insights into *what works* and *how* with regards to inclusive talent management.

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Supplementary Table 1: Quality Assessment of Studies

Paper*	Research seeks to interpret or illuminate actions and/or subjective experiences	Qualitative methodology addresses research goal	Researcher justified research design	Findings made explicit	Discussion of evidence for and against researcher's arguments	Discussion of credibility of findings	Discussion of findings in relation to research question	Justified setting for data collection	Clear methods for data collection	Justification of methods chosen	Explicit process of data collection	Explanation of any modifications during study	Form of data clear	Explanation of how participants were selected	Explanation of why participants selected were the most appropriate	Discussion around recruitment and potential bias	Selection theoretically justified	In-depth description of analysis process	For thematic analysis, clear how categories/themes were derived from the data	Explanation of how data presented were selected to demonstrate analysis process	Sufficient data presented to support findings	Findings grounded in/supported by data	Good breadth and/or depth in findings	Contradictory data taken into account	Data appropriately referenced	Researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence	Researcher responded to events during the study and implications	Sufficient details of how research explained to participants	Researcher discussed issues raised by study	Adequate discussion of issues such as informed consent and anonymity	Consequences of research considered	Approval from an ethics committee	Contribution to existing knowledge or understanding	Total score	
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	17	
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	22
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	18
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	26
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	20
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	22
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	18

1. Harris, L. and Foster, C. (2010)
2. Glastra, F. J., Meerman, M. (2012)
3. Powell, M., et al. (2013)
4. Festig, M., et al. (2015)
5. Kulkarni, M. and Scullion, H. (2015)
6. Hirt, C., et al. (2017)
7. Erasmus, B., et al. (2017)

Key to Sections

1. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?
2. Is the research design appropriate for addressing the aims of the research?
3. Is there a clear statement of findings?
4. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
6. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?
7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?
8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
9. Contribution of the research

Part 2. What Outcomes Do Gender-inclusive Talent Management Programmes Achieve and How. A Process Evaluation of a Sponsorship Programme for Women. (Abstract)

Background – Despite the rapid emergence of Inclusive Talent Management (ITM) as an alternative to traditional, exclusive, and ‘elite’ talent management, there is a paucity of high-quality empirical research. Given the (possible) opportunities afforded by ITM to improve the representation of minority groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities, disabled employees, etc.), studies are urgently needed to better understand the mechanisms through which organisations may deliver positive outcomes.

Purpose – This empirical study aims to examine psychological mechanisms involved in sponsorship as an ITM intervention and provide a process evaluation of the ITM programme in the wider organisational and sectoral context.

Methodology – The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach, with in-depth semi-structured interviews at three time points. The research sample involved TM programme participants (sponsees) and their senior sponsors and organisational stakeholders involved in a programme delivered within public sector organisations in the UK. The data was subsequently analysed using thematic analysis. The coding framework was developed in an inductive way for the T1 interviews and applied to T2 and T3, with new themes identified and reflected in the coding frameworks for T2 and T3.

Findings - Research participants shared rich accounts of their mental models and experiences. Four high-level themes, each with three lower-level themes, were identified: “Mental constructs”, “Experiencing the sponsorship programme”, “The talent programme in context,” and “Outcomes”. Insights were gained into the sense-making of sponsorship in the context of talent, ITM, and inclusion and barriers and facilitators of sponsorship implemented in the context of inclusive TM. There was evidence of positive intervention outcomes at the individual and organisational level based on perceptions and reports of the study participants.

Discussion – Sponsorship as a development method offers a potential and increasingly popular extension for mentoring relationships; however, it needs careful implementation by

organisations and tailoring to individual needs, goals, and personal circumstances. The study found that the sponsorship programme deployed as a positive action talent scheme delivered positive career outcomes for participating women. A central thread of a conceptual and ethical dilemma will be particularly relevant to these organisations, which espouse a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. As with other exclusive TM (even if targeted at underrepresentation), there are risks involved in other employees feeling excluded, especially if the selection process is not transparent/rigorous and the choice of target group is not sufficiently supported by a clear business case. Formal sponsorship programmes (i.e., engineered, not organic pairings) create a programmatic structure that gives legitimacy to sponsoring. Nonetheless, sponsors must feel confident that their sponsees are granted their special access on merit and are worth risking their own reputation. Sponsorship schemes on their own are unlikely to break systemic barriers to the progression of women (and for other minorities) into senior roles. A wider range of well-evidenced interventions is needed, including non-sponsoring mentoring. Limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are presented.

Practical implications – Organisations striving to build inclusion, transparency, and fairness into their talent management approach will find practical recommendations for incorporating these considerations into the intervention design. The opportunities and pitfalls associated with using sponsorship specifically as a talent development strategy are discussed.

Originality/value – This study offers the first methodologically robust and in-depth insight into formal sponsorship programme used in a context of inclusive talent management.

Keywords - Talent Management, Talent Development, Inclusive Talent Management, Ethics, Responsible Talent Management, Diversity, Inclusion, Sponsorship, Sponsoring, Mentoring, Positive Action, Women Development Programmes, Women in Leadership

Paper type – Empirical study