ADOPTION OF TALENT MANAGEMENT FOR COMPETITIVENESS AMONG

FIVE – STAR HOTELS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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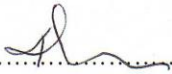
October 2020

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution, or university other than Kenyatta University for academic credit

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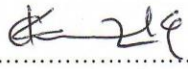
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DEDICATION

My sincere appreciation goes to my parents (Mr. Samuel Mirieri and Mrs. Grace Mokeira) and my siblings (Gilbert, Irene, Lillian, Damaris, and Dickson), partner (Christie), son (Darrell) and friends (Edmond and John) who have always supported and encouraged me with their best wishes.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBET	Competency-Based Education and Training Curriculum
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
EKN	Employee Knowledge Networks
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
EVP	Employee Value Proposition
FBP	Food and Beverage Production
FBPE2	Food and Beverage Production Executive 2
FBPE3	Food and Beverage Production Executive 3
FBPE4	Food and Beverage Production Executive 4
FBPE6	Food and Beverage Production Executive 6
FBPE7	Food and Beverage Production Executive 1
FBS	Food and Beverage Service
FBSE3	Food and Beverage Service Executive 3
FBSE4	Food and Beverage Service Executive 4
FE5	Finance Executive 5
FOE1	Finance Executive 1
FOE4	Finance Executive 4
FOE8	Finance Executive 8
GoK	Government of Kenya
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
HEE5	Housekeeping Executive 5
HEE6	Housekeeping Executive 6
HiPe	High Performers
HiPo	High Potentials
HRM	Human Resources Management
KAHC	Kenya Association of Hotelkeepers and Caterers
KICC	Kenyatta International Convention Centre
KSAs	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
PC	Psychological Contract
PERAK	Pubs, Entertainment and Restaurant Association of Kenya
RBV	Resource-Based View
TM	Talent Management
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WEF	World Economic Forum
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Adoption — It is the extent of use of a new concept in the long term when the firm is aware of its benefits

Competitive Advantage — It is the superiority gained by an organization over competitors by offering guests the great value of service.

County — A geographical unit envisioned by the 2010 Constitution of Kenya as the unit of a devolved government

Five-star hotel — A hotel which is considered the best rating making it the most expensive and elegant in terms of luxury and sophistication

Competitiveness — This is progress characterized by providing quality products/services and competitive advantage

Hospitality Industry — Institutionalized phenomena where the reception in terms of entertainment, food, drink, and accommodation are offered to guest or strangers away from their homes

Talent Management — The systematic attraction, selection, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those employees who are of particular value to an organization, either because of their 'high potential' for the future or because they are fulfilling the operation's critical roles

Talent Pool — Refers to the group of high potential and high performing incumbents that the organization can draw upon to fill pivotal talent positions

Talent — Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance using a skill that is difficult to imitate.

ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the adoption of talent management to competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. The concept of talent management comprises strategies for attraction, selection, development, engagement, and retention of knowledge and talented individuals. These individuals can create quality, diverse and exceptional products that form the competitiveness of the five-star hotels. The competitiveness of the hospitality industry in Kenya is held back due to a shortage of talent, loss of talent, and critical knowledge to other industries. The study investigated; conceptualization of talent management, hospitality core competencies required in talent, inherent approaches used in each talent management practices, the extent of talent management adoption, outcomes of talent management, and the relationship between talent management among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. The study adopted a mixed-method research design and specifically a QUAN + qual research approach. Purposive sampling was used to select five-star hotels in Nairobi City County and the hotel executives' respondents. A simple random sampling technique was used to select guest participants. Data were collected from 145 participants using a semi-structured questionnaire, Servqual structured questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The data analysis was done using; descriptive statistics, content analysis, thematic analysis, and inferential statistics. Linear regression results revealed that, among the significant predictors (talent selection, talent engagement, hospitality core competencies, talent and knowledge retention, and talent development), selection was the most significant. It meant that their competitiveness is hinged on the selection of talented individuals. Null hypotheses on the hospitality core competencies (β= -0.195, p =0.020), talent attraction approaches (β = -0.202, p= 0.009), talent engagement approaches (β = -0.224, p= 0.002), talent and knowledge retention approaches (β = -0.189, p= 0.024) were rejected and their impact was not enough to influence competitiveness positively. Null hypotheses on talent selection approaches (β = 0.512, p= 0.001), talent development approaches (β = 0.296, p= 0.002) and outcomes of talent management (β = 2.061, p= 0.018) were also rejected and they impacted competitiveness positively. The null hypothesis on the extent of talent management adoption (β = 4.414, p= 0.130) was maintained indicating that it did not influence competitiveness. Null hypothesis on the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels; an executives' perspective was rejected (β = 1.094, p= 0.001). A second null hypothesis on the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels; a guests' perspective was rejected (r = -0.277, p =0.009) but showed the need for improvement on talent management aspects to positively affect competitiveness. This thesis recommends that five-star hotels conceptualise talent management from the perspective of exclusive subject and positions. Hotels also need to enrich hospitality core competencies so that they create quality and diverse sustainable products and services to serve a wider clientele. Additionally, hotels need to enhance their employee brands to boost employee value proposition so that talent is attracted. Talent engagement levels also need to be improved to draw valuable knowledge and effort from talent. The retention of talent and protection of tacit knowledge ought to be improved for greater competitiveness. Talent policies and budgets are put in place. This study has been conducted among the management teams and guests in five-star hotels; it is recommended that a related study is conducted on individuals considered talent in the same hotels.

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the background of the statement, the problem of the statement, the purpose of the study, research objectives and research hypotheses, the significance of the study, scope, limitations, delimitations, the assumptions of the study, and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC] (2018), estimated that the Hospitality and Tourism industry generated jobs representing 9.9% of total employment globally in 2017 and this is expected to rise by 11.6% in 2028. The growth in employment figures in this industry means that there is also a continuous growth in demand for employees (Barron, 2008; Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). However, there are concerns regarding hospitality organizations' ability to attract, develop, and retain employees with key skills. Kichuk (2017); World Economic Forum (WEF) (2018) tout the adoption of talent management (TM) in the hospitality industry as a means of promoting their competitiveness. TM is the identification of key positions that have the potential to differentially impact the firm's competitive advantage and filling them with valuable individuals that have inimitable and rare knowledge to promote superior, diverse, and quality products/ services; and retaining them (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

From a global perspective, multinational corporations are facing shortages and difficulties in recruiting and retaining talent for their operations (Scullions, Collings, & Caligiuri, 2010; Pierré, 2017). Chan and Oi (2011) found that the hospitality industry in China cannot

adequately find suitably motivated, trained, qualified talent, and retain it. However, Turkish hospitality firms that have implemented TM programs have reported positive competitive outcomes (Vural, Vardarlier, & Aykir, 2012). These outcomes are directly related to recruitment, development, and retention of the best workers that are suitable for tasks in the hospitality industry. Vural *et al.* (2012) concluded that, when firms have the best sets of employees, it is easier to achieve success. However, one common criticism that TM faces is that it can result in an environment of inequality between the employees if it has been implemented without proper planning and thought (Mellahi & Collings, 2010). For example, nurturing the skills of only the best performers without giving much attention to other employees can lead to demotivation and employee dissatisfaction. Hence, the effect of those people who are not categorized as 'Talent' may lead to a high turnover rate (Cappelli, 2008).

TM strategies adopted in the United Kingdom (UK) are based on identifying key positions that have the potential to differentially impact the firm's competitive advantage and filling them with "A performers" (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). ''A performers'' contain core competencies which include; technical capabilities, foreign languages, business knowledge, marketing ability, communication skills, knowledge and trends, legal knowledge, and strategic planning. These competencies equip employees with the right knowledge on various issues relating to job performance leading to high–quality products and services Armstrong (2012); Kichuk (2017). Huda, Haque, and Khan (2014) noted that heads of departments, chefs, sales, and reservations staff are among the vital talent in the hospitality industry that are assigned key positions. ''A performers'' should be invested in

as they are needed by an organization to execute and deliver strategic objectives (Holland, 2017).

The state of adoption of TM in the United States of America (USA) is characterized by competitive organizations applying TM strategies that attract, recruit, develop, engage and retain talented individuals who hold or would potentially possess tacit knowledge (Berger & Berger, 2010). Tacit knowledge consists of a technical dimension often referred to as know-how and a cognitive dimension that includes schemes, mental models, and beliefs (Gascoigne & Thornton, 2013). This knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalize, making it difficult to communicate and share with others (Williams, 2006). This knowledge is safeguarded from loss either by lack of harnessing it; employee turnover or retirements, and talent management (TM) identifies and retains employees with it (Whelan & Carcary, 2011).

Hospitality expatriates in the USA emphasized that; the competitiveness of the hospitality industry broadly features; expansion in facilities and products/ services, increased guests, provision of high-quality service, and competitive advantage (Boella & Turner, 2013). However, it has been noted that the competitiveness of the industry is held back due to the unavailability of staff with the needed skills, loss of talented employees, and key knowledge to other industries, and lack of sound succession plans. It has been acknowledged that TM influences the provision of high-quality products/services, and enables organizations to be competitive. It is further viewed from the perspective of creating a large talent pool that has the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary for an organization (Berger & Berger, 2010).

Comprehensive competitiveness of the hospitality industry is measured by the greater extent of TM application as established in Europe and North America (Scullion & Collings, 2011). This extent can be demonstrated in a talent pool process. Talent pool refers to the group of high potential and high performing incumbents that an organization can draw upon to fill pivotal talent positions (Scullion & Collings, 2011). It involves the proactive identification of incumbents with the potential to fill key positions that may become available. As such, organizations need to systematically identify business needs in terms of knowledge, skills, and capabilities that will be required in the future, but are not currently available in-house and recruit on this basis. Indeed, Stahl and Björkman (2012) confirmed that the highest performing organizations they studied followed a talent pool strategy-recruiting the best people and then finding positions for them.

Deloitte (2014) and Lyria (2014) noted that the African continent has not been able to recruit and retain well-trained and skilled personnel. Also, many African countries have lost some of their highly skilled professionals to North America, Europe, Australia, and the Gulf States. Nonetheless, African countries are making strides towards making their organizations competitive. For instance; the Southern African Country of Botswana's hospitality industry has adopted skills development as a key driver of TM to create a competitive advantage (Nzonzo & Chipfuva, 2013). In South Africa, the Department of Tourism's National Tourism Sector Strategy has adopted strategies aimed at training and building capacity of critical and scarce skills in the hospitality and sector (Government of South Africa (GRSA), 2015). According to (Shabane, 2017), among the TM strategies adopted to drive the creation and sustenance of competitive advantage are the retention of knowledge and talent individuals.

North African countries are also experiencing TM challenges. This has been asserted by The African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) which found that countries such as Egypt have lost their talent of all types abroad leaving the local firms uncompetitive (AAPAM, 2008). Deloitte (2014) also noted that countries in this region do not sufficiently attract, recruit, and retain talent due to less satisfactory working environments and poor compensation exacerbating uncompetitive advantage. Likewise, West Africa countries such as Nigeria's hospitality sector have the majority of its hotels not able to compete favourably on a sustainable basis for the past 10 years (2007-2016) as no significant improvement in service delivery has been observed (Etuk & Igwe, 2016). In mitigating these challenges, Olaka, Okafor, and Ulo (2018) pointed out that the hospitality industry in Nigeria has newly adopted TM strategies such as identification, development, and retention of talented individuals aimed at enhancing the innovative capacity of its hotels.

The hospitality industry in Kenya is also facing TM challenges. This is according to the 2018 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report compiled by WEF in 2018, of the 140 countries participating in the project, Kenya was ranked 93rd. The country was evaluated on 12 different pillars. The area of Human Resources saw the country ranked 60th. Hiring and firing practices were ranked 31st with a rating of 4.4 out of 7; and Reliance on professional management was ranked 50th with a rating of 4.5 out of 7. The area of skills was ranked 95th. The extent of staff training was ranked 46th with a rating of 4.3 out of 7. The skills set of graduates was ranked 56th with a rating of 4.2 out of 7. Ease of finding skilled employees was ranked 21st with a rating of 4.9 out of 7. The area of Innovation capability was ranked 69th. Diversity of workforce was ranked 56th with a rating of 4.5 out

of 7; and Multi-stakeholder collaboration was ranked 33rd with a rating of 4.3 out of 7. The area of the product market was ranked 79th. Competition in services was ranked 48th with a rating of 5.2 out of 7 (WEF, 2018). According to this report, the people component is not well managed as an integrated whole to enable organizations to obtain and maintain their competitive advantage.

Firms in the city of Nairobi have adopted TM strategies which include; leadership, retention, engagement, reskilling, talent acquisition, workforce capability, learning and development, performance management, and diversity and inclusion (Deloitte, 2014). Leadership is reported as the largest gap (35%) with a low level of readiness at 43%, even though the importance index stood at (77%). The second most important trends are retention and engagement; whose importance is 72% but the capability gap is 27%. Workforce Capability was identified as the third most urgent and important challenge, with 91% of the respondents rating it as urgent and important while 21% indicating their lack of readiness. Reskilling the HR function was rated as the fourth most urgent and important challenge with 81% rating the trend as urgent and important while 37% were not ready for it (Deloitte, 2014). The capability gap is the difference between the urgency and readiness for the trend. The capability gap among the trends is relatively significant indicating that the extent of TM adoption is questionable. This study, therefore; sought to assess the adoption of talent management as a tool of competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County.

TM researchers including Collings and Mellahi (2009); Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013; Thunnissen (2015); Kaewsaeng-on (2017) observed that TM and

talent are conceptualised differently depending on the industry in question. The manner of conceptualising TM and talent determines the extent of competitiveness. In hotels in the Kenyan context, the researcher has not come across any study that has explored the concepts. This study; therefore, sought to establish how TM and talent are conceptualised in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. TM scholars in the hotel sector like Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Kichuk (2017); Pierré, (2017) have observed that; the sector is largely labour –intensive and relies a lot on the low skilled or unskilled workforce. Given these factors, it is not clear how the concept of TM applies to the sector. The current study; therefore, sought to find out whether there are positions/ jobs that are either labour intensive or not but require critical knowledge resources.

1.2 Problem of the Statement

Globalization has led to increased competition and pressure on organizations to use human capital as effectively and productively as possible (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). The hospitality industry competitiveness depends on the ability of firms to have the right talent, in the right position at the right time. Employers are forced to compete in attracting, developing, and retaining pools of talented individuals to provide high-quality products/services and competitive advantage (Mellahi & Collings, 2010). Firms with effective talent management practices deliver better results for shareholders (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Effective TM practices can create an enduring competitive advantage and enhance high-quality products/services.

TM process ought to attract, select, engage, develop, and retain individuals with unique KSAs. Kichuk (2017) pointed out that TM being a relatively new concept; there are challenges in implementing it for example misidentification and mismatch of talent,

inclusive treatment of talent, and positions as opposed to exclusive treatment. According to GoK (2010) report on *strategic planning and economic survey*, the hospitality sector was experiencing difficulties in recruitment and retaining employees particularly where they compete with other firms for talent. Thus, talent with critical tacit skills needed to spur the competitiveness of the five-star hotels is neither obtained nor retained after being acquired. Third; *Sessional Paper No.1 of 2010 on Enhancing Sustainable Tourism in Kenya* (GoK, 2011) and *The National Tourism Strategy 2013 – 2018* (GoK, 2013) noted that the industry is experiencing a shortage of KSAs, inadequate development, engagement, and retention of talent. These TM challenges appear to have been unresolved according to the World Bank (2018) report on *Kenya-Capturing Skills Requirements and Assessing Skills Gaps in the Modern Economy.* The report revealed that over 60% of organizations experience difficulties in finding required skills, 30% developing and retaining both talent and tacit knowledge. The report further contended there are weak product diversification and differentiation in the hospitality industry in Kenya. These challenges indicate that TM adoption is low in the hospitality industry.

Consequently, a study on the adoption of TM is likely to yield strategies that would minimise misidentification and mismatch of talent thus reduce their shortage, build talent with unique KSAs that create exceptional and diverse high-quality products/ services that can differentially impact the competitiveness of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The study is also of importance because most studies on the association between TM competitiveness have been conducted largely in the United States, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Thailand, China, and Nigeria. Therefore, this study sought to bridge the knowledge gap by assessing the adoption of talent management to competitiveness among

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five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. A review of the past studies conducted in Kenya on TM was focused on organizational performance and did not address competitiveness or were other contexts other than hospitality. Keoye (2014) examined the effect of TM on organizational performance at Comply limited. Kibui, Gachunga, and Namusonge (2014) investigated the role of TM on employee retention in state corporations in Kenya. Lyria (2014) investigated the effect of TM on organizational performance in companies listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange in Kenya. Mangusho, Murei, and Nelima (2015) investigated TM on employee's performance in the beverage industry at Delmonte Kenya Limited. Gitonga (2016) investigated TM strategies for generation Y and the competitive advantage of commercial banks in Kenya. Machuma, Wekullo, and Nafukho (2018) investigated talent development in emerging economies through learning and development capacity building. The current study; therefore, sought to fill the existing research gap in the hospitality sector among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To assess the adoption of talent management for competitiveness among five − star hotels in Nairobi City County

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives;

1.4.1. General Objective

To evaluate the adoption of talent management in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

i. To explore the conceptualization of talent management on the promotion of competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

ii. To assess hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

iii. To profile the approaches adopted for talent management practices in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

iv. To evaluate the association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

v. To establish the outcomes of talent management in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

vi. To determine the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

1.5 Research Questions and Hypotheses

1.5.1 Research Question

i. How is talent management conceptualised on promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya?

1.5.2 Research Hypotheses

$H_0 1$: There are no significant hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County

$H_0 2$: There are no significant approaches adopted in talent management practices that promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County

$H_0 3$: There is no significant association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County

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$H_0 4$: There is no significant association between the outcomes of talent management and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County

$H_0 5$: There is no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County

1.6 Significance of the Study

The public sector through the Government of Kenya would benefit from this study. Some of the GoK bodies include; Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Kenyatta International Convention Center (KICC), and hospitality training departments in public universities (Kariuki, 2010). The study provides them with knowledge for designing appropriate policy on talent management and its implementation. Furthermore, it may be useful to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (Department of Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET)) which is seeking TVET institutions to partner with the private sector to match the training with skills needed in the industry. As such, it may contribute to the much-desired competency-based education and training curriculum (CBET) in TVET institutions.

The private sector is an integral stakeholder in the hospitality industry. The private sector includes associations like the Kenya Association of Hotelkeepers and Caterers (KAHC), Pubs, Entertainment, and Restaurant Association of Kenya (PERAK) (Kariuki, 2010). Hotels and talent management consultancy firms like Deloitte are also part of the private sector. This study may help them formulate talent management-oriented programs that would acquire highly talented personnel.

Finally, it will be of great help to the consumers of hospitality services. It would benefit the scholars, researchers, and academicians since it will increase the body of knowledge thus, serving as reference material on TM. Additionally, the study will be of importance to customers of the five-star hotels as they will be able to receive prime services. Finally, it would help employees since TM practices aim at creating job competencies in them and retaining them.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study covered the adoption of talent management for competitiveness among five – star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Precisely, the study sought to address how TM is conceptualised, hospitality core competencies adopted, TM approaches, the extent of TM adoption, outcomes of TM, and the relationship between TM and competitiveness of the target hotels. The study was carried out in Nairobi City County because it is considered a host of most five star hotels with resources to implement talent management programmes (GoK, 2003; The Tourism Act, 2014; and Knight Frank Report, 2015).

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The respondents were reluctant to provide all the information sought claiming that their hotel policies did not allow them to disclose some data regarded as classified. Nonetheless, the researcher assured the respondents that the data they provided was purely for academic intentions. Equally, the researcher convinced the respondents that the study would benefit them if it becomes successful. Loss of most questionnaires was witnessed but they were replaced. Additionally, TM is a relatively new field and hospitality organizations in Kenya have not embraced it. Moreover, the study was constrained by the inadequacy of local literature on the concept of TM because few studies have been done. Nonetheless, the

researcher replicated literature prepared elsewhere abroad where comprehensive TM studies have been conducted. The cross-sectional nature of this study implies that it measured the perception of the respondents/ informants at a single point in time and the situation may change in the future. Future repetitions of this study by other scholars could serve to address changes over time. Finally, the researcher would not complete the study ahead of time, but he sought more time from graduate school and he appreciates it was allowed.

1.9. Assumptions of the Study

The study was carried out based on the following assumptions: The respondents of this study responded honestly and that the sample and the census of the population were the representatives of the whole population. It was also assumed that all the respondents in the census were accessible and accorded the researcher the desired cooperation. The researcher also assumed that the research instruments used were reliable in collecting the required data on the state of TM in the hospitality industry in Kenya.

1.10 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework

1.10.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study adopted the resource-based view theory (RBV), Workforce differentiation or segmentation theory, incentive theory of motivation, and motivation crowding theory. RBV was conceived by Barney in 1991, and it describes the way heterogeneity and immobility of a firm's resources can offer an organization a sustainable competitive advantage (Höglund, 2012). These resources must be able to respond to the needs of the market to add value to the organization. For the resources to be strategic, they must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non – substitutable (Pierré, 2017; D'Alessandro, 2018). Valuable resources are heterogeneous and imperfectly transferable. Rare resources are

those acquired by one or a few companies. A non-substitutability resource cannot be replicated with strategically equivalent resources by other firms. Thus talent with core competencies should be developed internally while others may be outsourced (Höglund, 2012). A criticism of RBV is that it is a perspective and untestable as a theory (D'Alessandro, 2018). The focus of the RBV to this study is on strategies to attract, select, engage, develop, and retain individuals who harbour valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable KSAs.

Workforce differentiation theory is based on the fact that not all employees contribute equally and some jobs are important than others (Syed & Kramar, 2017). Therefore employees should be segmented so as those with critical KSAs can be exploited for critical positions for competitive advantage. According to Tarique and Schuler (2012), Workforce differentiation categorizes employees into A, B, and C players. It assumes that employees that add more value to the organization should be treated differently. Furthermore, most talented employees should be placed in the most critical jobs or positions that have the most significant impact on the organization's business (Arif & Thakkar, 2015). Therefore, organizations should invest more of their resources to "A" players in "A" positions (Tarique & Schuler, 2012). TM requires that employees are classified according to their level of competency and technical ability. Those who exhibit these attributes on high levels are deployed to a vital position and the rest put in a talent pool for further development. Those who will be classified as poor or 'C' performers are dismissed (Cardy & Leonard, 2011). The theory has been criticised for being elitist for aligning itself to "A" players in "A" positions (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013). The current study adopted the concept of

differentiation in which the focus was on HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs for critical positions.

The incentive theory of motivation was developed in the 1940s and 1950s by scientists who tried to understand motivation from an economic point of view (Goodman, 2018). It suggests that behaviour is motivated by a desire for external reinforcements rather than internal reinforcements in achieving certain goals or tasks. The theory proposes that people are pulled toward behaviours that lead to rewards and pushed away from actions that might lead to negative consequences (Goodman, 2018). Incentives can be used to get people to engage in certain behaviours, but they can also be used to get people to stop performing certain actions. The theory appears to isolate intrinsic motivators nevertheless; this study adopted it to examine how extrinsic motivators contribute to engagement and retention levels of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs for critical positions at five-star hotels in Nairobi, Kenya.

Motivation crowding theory takes a psychological view which assumes that when financial rewards are introduced to already intrinsically motivated individuals, the rewards will diminish the individuals' motivation to fully engage in a particular activity (Frey & Jegen, 2001). Nonetheless; many economics scholars have argued that monetary incentives work well to change individuals' behaviour (Putra, Cho, & Liu, 2017). Given this indecisiveness of consensus on the outcomes of the theory, this study adopted a point of view that extrinsic and intrinsic motivators stimulate positive behaviours in the talent which inspires high engagement levels and ultimately retains it. Moreover, when the theory is critically examined, there is an oversimplification of concepts. For instance, the theory assumes that

the only motivation people have to work is financial and related incentives, yet there are other extrinsic motivators. Secondly, Putra *et al.* (2017) found a positive relationship between financial rewards and engagement, that is financial rewards do not diminish talent's intrinsic motivation.

1.10.2 Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by a conceptual framework derived from the specific objectives supported by Workforce differentiation or segmentation theory, RBV, incentive theory of motivation, and motivation crowding theory. The contributions of RBV to the study include; attraction, selection, engagement, development, and retention of talent. Its emphasis on knowledge resources, hospitality competencies, and competitive advantage were also adopted. The contributions of workforce differentiation theory to the study include; segmentation of employees into classes, competencies, talent paths, talent pools, strategic positions, knowledge resources, and competitive advantage. The contributions of incentive theory to the study include; pay as a motivator to talent with unique KSAs for critical positions, reduction of demoralization, and turnover rates. The contributions of motivation crowding theory to the study include; talent paths (buying, building, bounding, binding, and bouncing), teamwork, strategic positions, and knowledge resources through extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Figure 1.1 represents the conceptual framework.

Independent Variables		Dependent Variable
Conceptualisation of TM 1. Inclusive – subject 2. Inclusive – object 3. Exclusive– subject 4. Exclusive – obiect	**Hospitality competencies** 1. Cognitive 2. Meta 3. Functional 4. Social	**Competitiveness** 1. Quality products/ services 2. Tacit/ inimitable knowledge 3. Production of exceptional products/ services 4. Acquiring or/ developing of talent 5. Variety of quality products/ services
TM practices 1. Talent attraction 2. Talent selection 3. Talent engagement 4. Talent development 5. Talent retention	**Outcomes of TM** 1. Levels of KSAs 2. Talent as role models 3. Efficiency of TM 4. Teamwork 5. Turnover rates **6.** Workforce satisfaction	

Extent of TM adoption
1. TM policy
2. TM budget
3. Pay differentiation
4. Top leadership support
5. Talent paths
6. Talent pools
7. Strategic positions
8. Knowledge resources

Intervening Variables

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework for the study

1.10.2.1 Independent Variables

They include conceptualisation of TM through inclusive – subject, inclusive – object, exclusive– subject, and exclusive – object; hospitality competencies measured through cognitive, meta, functional, and social; TM practices that were measured through attraction, selection, engagement, development, and retention of talent; and outcomes of TM that were measured using levels of KSAs, talent as role models, the efficiency of TM, teamwork, turnover rates, and workforce satisfaction.

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1.10.2.2 Intervening Variables

The intervening variables consisted of the extent of TM adoption that was measured through the availability of TM policy, TM budget, pay differentiation, levels of top leadership support for TM, talent paths (buying, building, bounding, binding, and bouncing), talent pools, occupancy of strategic positions, and management of knowledge resources.

1.10.2.3 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the hotel competitiveness. The independent factors affected the hotels' competitiveness by influencing the quality of products/ services over competitors. Furthermore, TM influenced the production of exceptional products/ services that differentiate the holders from competitors. The competitive advantage is also earned by attracting, selecting, developing, engaging, and retaining talent most of whom form unique knowledge that is difficult to imitate by competitors. The competitive advantage was also measured through the production of a variety of services and products.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed scholarly articles on the implementation of Talent Management in the hospitality industry. It reviewed the conceptualization of TM, hospitality core competencies, approaches used in each TM practice; the extent of TM adoption, and outcomes TM. Finally, a summary of gaps from the reviewed articles was discussed.

2.2 Conceptualization of Talent Management

Talent management has been effective in industries like manufacturing, medicine, and engineering because it affects knowledge related positions. There are lingering questions about whether it is effective in the hospitality industry. This is due to the concerns that the hospitality industry is heavily labour intensive and reliant on low skilled or unskilled workers (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). Against this backdrop, this section is set to determine whether TM can be operationalized in the hospitality industry. According to Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013), there are different definitions of TM and they appear according to industries. The question that needs to be posed therefore is which of the different definitions of TM apply to the hospitality industry? The answers to this question helped unravel how TM is conceptualized in the industry. The definitions of 'talent' and 'talent management' formed the basis of demystifying the gap in question.

2.2.1 The Conceptualization of Talent

Despite submissions by Leng (2013); Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Putra et al., (2017) that the hospitality industry is highly labour intensive and heavily reliant on low skilled or unskilled workers; Mohannadi (2017) claims that the industry's competitiveness is now driven by

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knowledge and intellectual capabilities. This implies that there are jobs in the industry that require exceptional KSAs to an extent that they become competitive assets. These exceptional KSAs reside in people considered a talent. CIPD (2015); Kichuk (2017); Torres and Mejia (2017) observed that; globally, the industry is struggling to fill knowledge positions because talent is scarce. What is talent? Scholars have not come up with a unanimous definition of what talent is. For instance, Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) acknowledged that despite the widespread research on the concept of talent, there is a difficulty defining talent. Moreover, Holland (2017) claimed that relatively little is known about the characteristics of such individuals considered talent.

Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) wrote that talent can be conceptualized as object (talent as characteristics of people) and subject (talent as people). The object approach was conceptualized as; talent as exceptional characteristics demonstrated by individual employees. The object approach was further classified as; talent as natural ability, talent as mastery, talent as commitment, and talent as fit. Talent as natural ability is a belief that talent is innate, or a unique mix of innate intelligence or brainpower, with a degree of creativity or the capacity to go beyond established stereotypes and provide innovative solutions to problems in their everyday world. Proponents of this approach believe that talent pertains to characteristics that are much more enduring and unique.

Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) described, talent as mastery as a conceptualization of talent that focuses on deliberate practice and learning from experience which is measured by outcomes like superior performance. Talent as commitment refers to employees' willingness to invest discretionary energy into their organization's success—thus aligning

personal goals with organizational ones. Talent as fit refers to the fit between an individual's talent and the context within which he or she works – that is; the right place, the right position, and/or the right time.

The subject approach was conceptualized as; inclusive – talent as all people and exclusive – talent as some people (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013). The inclusive approach to talent-as-subject sees the term talent as including everyone in the organization. According to this approach, every employee has his or her strengths and thus, can potentially create added value to the organization. The main criticism of the inclusive subject approach to talent is that it makes the differentiation between talent management and human resources management (HRM) more difficult. If talent refers to the entire workforce, managing talent simply' implies proper workforce management and development of all the organization's people, which is not particularly helpful in specifying how TM is different from HRM.

The exclusive approach is based on the notion of segmentation of the workforce that can make a difference to organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013). The exclusive approach is further classified as; talent as high performers and talent as high potentials. High performers refer to a group of employees within an organization who are exceptional in terms of skills and abilities either in a specific technical area, a specific competency, or a more general area. High potentials refer to those employees believed to have the potential to advance at a faster pace than their peers, whilst demonstrating different needs, motivations, and behaviours than 'regular' employees.

The approaches; object and subject discussed by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) revealed a comprehensive outlook of talent. However, Thunnissen (2015) repackaged the approaches by combining their attributes to form four critical topologies. They included; inclusive approach to talent as a subject, an Inclusive approach to talent as an object, an exclusive approach to talent as a subject, and an exclusive approach to talent as an object. These are the approaches that were investigated by the current study.

2.2.1.1 The Inclusive Approach to Talent as a Subject

This topology is based on Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) that conceptualizes talent as "all people". In broad terms talent is described in Thunnissen (2015)'s work as the entire workforce attracted, selected, engaged, developed, and retained by organizations to meet their business goals. Likewise, Xue (2014) defined talent in the domain of "all people", that it is the entire workforce in organizations that are recruited, deployed, developed, and retained. In this approach, TM is equivalent to HRM. This typology has been criticized for being too broad and as completely meaningless (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013; Thunnissen, 2015).

2.2.1.2 The Inclusive approach to talent as an object

This topology is a hybrid of subject and object conceptualization by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) on "talent as all people" and "talent as characteristics of people". It was viewed in Thunnissen (2015)'s work as developing all people to attain potential outstanding KSAs. Kichuk (2017) was also of the opinion that the term talent refers to the entire workforce in the firm whose value is captured for its success. It can be characterized as a positive approach to HRM in which the development and training of the exceptional abilities (i.e. talents) of all employees are emphasized (Thunnissen, 2015). This approach shows a great

deal of resemblance to HRM. This approach has been criticized for being too broad (Lewis & Heckman 2006; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2012). Organizations that adopt this approach consider everyone a talent, and in this regard, there is no difference between TM and HRM.

2.2.1.3 The Exclusive Approach to Talent as a Subject

This topology is based on Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) which conceptualizes talent as, "some people". In broad terms, talent was described in Thunnissen (2015)'s work as those employees labelled as A-players/ high performers or high potentials and make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the organization. One can differentiate the workforce by excellent performing individuals, positions, or functions. Becker, Huselid, and Beatty (2009) remarked that talent are individuals deployed on key (or pivotal) positions, namely those positions that differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage. Collings and Mellahi (2009) apply the concepts of value, rareness, inimitability, and uniqueness centred on the resource-based view to determine which jobs are strategic and have above-average impacts.

The approach has faced some criticisms one of them being, workforce not labelled talent become less able because they are asked to do less and get fewer resources, for example, development (Thunnissen, 2015). It has also been criticized for an overemphasis on individual performance which diminishes teamwork and creates a destructive internal competition that hinders learning and the spread of best practices across the organization (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013; Thunnissen, 2015).

2.2.1.4 Exclusive Approach to Talent as an Object

This topology is a hybrid of subject and object conceptualizations by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) on "talent as some people" and "talent as characteristics of people". It refers to

those employees in the organization who have exceptional, above-average abilities, and who can apply those abilities to achieve excellent performance. To achieve exceptional results, employees must apply their above-average and differentiated competencies (Thunnissen, 2015). They also have to be willing to put their energy and effort into doing their jobs because talent ought to be a committed employee. Moreover, scholars like Collings and Mellahi (2009); Martin and Schmidt (2010); Tansley (2011); Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2012) stress the importance of elements such as commitment, engagement, and aspiration to put up an extraordinary performance now and in future positions. TM gives talent, with outstanding abilities, and who are highly motivated, the opportunity to develop themselves, and to achieve high performances.

Based on the arguments above especially those put forward by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Thunnissen (2015), this study adopted the "exclusive approach to talent as a subject" and "exclusive approach to talent as an object" as a measure of talent management in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. These approaches were also adopted by Scullion and Collings (2011); Feng (2016) as the individuals who can bring about a difference in the overall performance of the organization, through either immediate or long term contribution, all the time displaying their maximum potential or exceptional characteristics. According to Ingram (2013), talented individuals have the following characteristics; they influence organizational effectiveness, they are rare, incomparable, and unique. They are aware of their value, able to create competitive advantage, goal-oriented regarding organizational and individual goals. The inclusive approaches did not represent talent management because they ate too wide and can be taken care of by the HRM processes.

2.2.2 The Conceptualization of Talent Management

Talent management is critical to organizational success because it represents a potential driver to competitive advantage (Khoreva, Vaiman, & VanZalk, 2017). TM also remains vague as there has been no unanimous definition (Xue, 2014). This ambiguity is partly because of the general lack of empirical study and investigation into how the concept is applied in the hospitality industry and particularly within the hotel sector (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). Nevertheless, the review of literature on the conceptualization of talent management was discussed based on the conceptions by (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen 2015). This study modified Thunnissen (2015)'s earlier concepts to; inclusive approach to TM as a subject, inclusive approach to TM as an object, exclusive approach to TM as a subject, and exclusive approach to TM as an object.

2.2.2.1 Inclusive Approach to TM as a Subject

This topology is based on Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen, 2015 that conceptualizes talent as "all people". In broad terms talent is described in Thunnissen (2015)'s work as the entire workforce attracted, selected, engaged, developed, and retained by organizations to meet their business goals. Xue (2014) also described TM as a process of managing human resources that organizations want to acquire, retain, and develop to meet their business goals. This definition has been criticized for targeting all employees in the organization and it has been termed as another synonym for HRM (Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014).

2.2.2.2 Inclusive Approach to TM as an Object

This topology is a hybrid of subject and object conceptualizations by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) on "talent as all people" and "talent as characteristics of people". It was viewed in Thunnissen (2015)'s work as the process of developing all people to attain potential

outstanding KSAs to increase their performance levels. Kichuk (2017) was also of the opinion that TM is the process of drawing value from the entire workforce in the firm for its success. It can be characterized as a positive approach to HRM in which the development and training of the exceptional abilities (i.e. talents) of all employees are emphasized. Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Thunnissen (2015) labelled it as wide, and just another description of HRM.

2.2.2.3 Exclusive Approach to TM as a Subject

This topology is based on Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) which conceptualizes talent as, "some people". In broad terms, talent was described in Thunnissen (2015)'s work as the engagement of those employees labelled as A-players/ HiPe or HiPo to make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the organization. Davies and Davies (2010) described TM as, "the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/ retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organization". Likewise, Scullion and Collings (2011)'s definition was, "global talent management includes all organizational activities to attract, select, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles (those roles necessary to achieve organizational strategic priorities) on a global scale".

Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam (2013); Xue (2014); Ayed, Tamzini, Abdennadher, and Hamdeni (2017)'s TM conceptualization followed the same trend of TM as "some people". They defined it as a form of management of a selected group of workforce that brings about competitive advantage and retain value for organizations. Collings and Mellahi (2009) gave a comprehensive description of TM as, "activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the

organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization". This approach has been praised as conforming to TM architecture focussed on creating a competitive advantage for organizations (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013). It has also been criticised in equal measure as not enhancing teamwork (Thunnissen, 2015).

2.2.2.4 Exclusive Approach to TM as an Object

This topology is a hybrid of subject and object conceptualization by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013 on "talent as some people" and "talent as characteristics of people". It refers to the managing of those employees who have exceptional, above-average abilities, and who can apply those abilities to achieve excellent performance (Thunnissen, 2015). This definition has been praised for focusing on the management of only individuals with unique knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence that can make a difference to organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the long-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential (Ariss *et al.,* 2014; Feng, 2016).

2.2.3 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

The literature reviewed revealed some gaps. Literature did not take a stance as regards what paradigm of TM conceptualization adopted for the industries especially hospitality, because there was no consensus on what 'talent' and 'TM' were. The current study took a stance and adopted a hybrid approach involving an exclusive approach to TM as a subject and exclusive approach to TM as an object as a measure of adoption of talent management in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Hotels that were found to be using the inclusive approach to TM as a subject and inclusive approach and TM as an object are considered to

be on the domain of HRM and not TM. Thus the hybrid approach involving exclusive approach to TM as a subject and exclusive approach to TM as an object matches with Boella and Turner (2013)'s assertion that TM is the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage; and Collings and Mellahi (2009); Makarius and Srinivasan (2017), noted that filling of positions with a talent pool of high potentials and high performing incumbents creates competitive assets.

Another gap that was noted is that there was little empirical evidence that the functions of TM are practiced as conceived in the definitions. This is partly because most TM studies were conducted through qualitative research designs that did not reveal the deepness and breadth of TM. The current study filled this gap by investigating the conceptualization of TM through qualitative research design but incorporated aspects of quantitative research design to report on statistics related to each talent and TM topology. Additionally, there was no known study in Kenya, the hospitality industry that conceptualized TM. This study sought to fill this gap in the literature.

2.3 Hospitality Core Competencies Required in Talent

Competencies are individual characteristics, including knowledge, skills, abilities, self-image, traits, mindsets, feelings, and ways of thinking, which, when used with the appropriate roles, achieve desired results (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Rothwell, Stavros, & Sullivan, 2015). Competencies could, thus, include motives, traits, self-concepts, attitudes or values, knowledge of specific content areas as well as cognitive, behavioural, or physical skills (Bharwani & Talib, 2017). Collings and Mellahi (2009); Pylat (2017) assert that competencies contribute to greater organizational performance. In the context of TM,

competencies are initiated for certain pivotal job positions that are likely to create competitive advantages (Bharwani & Talib, 2017).

According to Bharwani and Talib (2017) competencies can be classified broadly into cognitive, functional, meta, and social. Cognitive competencies (knowledge) are related to the conceptual knowledge of an individual. Functional competencies (skills) are related to the job-specific technical skills of an individual. Social competencies (attitudes and behaviours) are related to the interpersonal attitudes and behaviours of an individual and their ability to effectively interact with others. Meta competencies (motives and traits) are higher-order personal competencies concerned with the ability to understand the situation at hand, adapt and apply existing competencies or acquire new competencies as and when required (Bharwani & Talib, 2017). The competencies core of this thesis were classified in Table 2.1. Business Savvy and competitor knowledge, communication, and strategic planning were informed by Armstrong (2012), technical and multilingualism, leadership, hospitality intelligence, and creativity and innovation by (Bharwani & Talib, 2017; Shum, Gatling, & Shoemaker, 2018; Tavitiyaman, Weerakit, & Ryan, 2014).

Table 2.1: Hospitality Core Competencies

		OCCUPATIONAL	PERSONAL
CONCEPTUAL		**Cognitive Competencies (Knowledge)**	**Meta Competencies (Motives and traits)**
		Strategic planning Creativity and innovation Business Savvy and competitor knowledge	Leadership
OPERATIONAL		**Functional Competencies (Skills)**	**Social Competencies (Attitudes and behaviours)**
		Sales and marketing Technical	communication Multilingualism Hospitality Intelligence

Modified from (Bharwani & Talib, 2017)

2.3.1 Business Savvy and competitor knowledge Competencies

Business savviness is characterized by competency areas such as planning, strategic decision-making, systems thinking that facilitate efficient operations and profitability (Suh, West, & Shin, 2012; Testa & Sipe, 2012). These competencies enable the workforce to proactively plan and structure work efficiently, identify critical tasks and activities, manage the resource, and ensure that key objectives are achieved on time and within budget (Shum *et al.,* 2018). Workforce with business savviness demonstrates the ability to think strategically; analyses business data to find patterns or themes related to success or performance problems; leverages business investments and keeps promises to consumers, and stays current on industry trends.

Pylat (2017)'s study insisted that; business and competitor knowledge permit talent to understand industry dynamics, competitive forces, finance, business processes, business conditions including; economic, political, technological, environmental, and demographic trends that affect their industry. Additionally, Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) noted that hotel

executives were aware of the strengths and weaknesses of competitors to recognize strategic opportunities in the environment, identify problems, and create the needed systems and procedures to support changes.

2.3.2 Creativity and Innovation Competencies

Creativity is an active process involved in innovation. It is a learning habit that requires skill as well as a specific understanding of the contexts in which originality is being applied (Yams, 2017). Innovation can be broadly thought of as the idea of output, of actually producing or doing something differently, making something happen, or implementing something new (Yams, 2017). Talent is expected to harbour knowledge that they can manipulate to invent or modify existing products (Shum *et al.,* 2018). Departmental executives ought to create an innovative environment for these competencies to be exploited. Furthermore, talent is encouraged to use and develop their creative and innovative abilities.

Yams (2017) noted that domain-relevant expertise, factual knowledge, and technical skills are prerequisites for innovation. The wider the experience and expertise are, the greater is the number of different possible alternatives to produce new combinations of how the work is done or problems solved. Yams (2017) further insisted that the entire workforce should participate in the innovation process. Sisson and Adams (2013) found out that competitive hospitality organizations looked for and developed innovative/ creative competencies. They added that these were important because; they enabled the workforce to comprehend important elements of the job and generating ideas for action.

2.3.3 Sales and Marketing Competencies

Hospitality employers seek for individuals possessing skills that increase their sales and clientele through friendly service and boost their productivity through problem solving and communication skills (Weber, Lee, & Crawford, 2019). A study conducted by Elbaz, Haddoud, and Shehawy (2018) noted that sales and marketing are important competencies that enhance and sustain the greater organizational performance of the hospitality and tourism industry. Bharwani and Talib (2017) noted that sales and marketing competencies were significantly related to the business side of the hotel. Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014)'s findings were also in agreement that sales and marketing competencies were influential in the continuous adding of high-value clientele. The critical basis of this competency is the understanding of industry dynamics, competitive forces, finance, business processes, business conditions including; economic, political, technological, environmental, and demographic trends that affect their industry (Pylat, 2017).

2.3.4 Communication Competencies

Potnuru and Sahoo (2016) described communication competence as the ability to choose among available communicative behaviours to accomplish one's own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of interactants within the constraints of the situation. Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014)'s study on leadership competencies necessary for general executives in Thailand hotels; communication competencies emerged as one of the most important factors for general executives. According to Elbaz *et al.* (2018), communication competencies facilitate the effective transfer of KSAs, information, ideas, and feelings from employee to employee. This aptitude is based on employees' abilities, skills, and behaviours to undertake such tasks. The efficient use of

communication competence leads to an increase in employees' performance, job satisfaction, productivity, and loyalty to the organization ultimately creating competitiveness (Elbaz *et al.*, 2018).

Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study of talent management in the Thai hospitality industry noted that most of the problems that arise within hotel settings are mostly immediate issues. Effective communication through tactfulness, negotiations, and concessions promptly address them. Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) added that; executives who demonstrate appropriate emotional intelligence through active listening and effective negotiation with employees or guests, adequately manage conflicts. Further, Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) noted that communicating persuasively helps employees or guests support policies, proposals, or solutions that have been suggested. Elbaz *et al.* (2018) noted that electronic media also enhance direct communication between organizations, employees, suppliers, information resources, and customers to create greater hospitality experiences. Effective communication competencies facilitate for high standard service and should receive extra recognition (Tavitiyaman *et al.,* 2014). Thus, organisations whose talent individuals are equipped with effective communication offer competitive products and services.

2.3.5 Multilingualism Competencies

The hospitality industry also attends diverse clientele, therefore; the ability of frontline workers in hotels communicating foreign languages is important. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study in Thai hotels demonstrated that they receive a significant segment of foreign customers predominantly English, Russian and Chinese speaking. It is necessary for talent in these hotels to speak these languages and possibly more others so that Thai hotels remain competitive. Another study by Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) in South East Asia found that

hotels adopted the English language which is foreign and that improved communication with diverse guests.

Multilingual competencies are not only important to guests but co-workers as well. This is confirmed by Kichuk (2017) who conducted a study on understanding talent management in the hotel sector: employees' narratives of personal career development in Bournemouth. The study found that the majority of the workforce in the surveyed hotels was of multinational and cross-cultural backgrounds. This necessitates for functional multilingualism in which a mix of gestures and mimes are used to communicate to improve understanding. A common language in this context, English was emphasized for use. The findings of Kichuk (2017)'s work show that functional multilingualism has a positive impact on the ability to increase employees' and guests' understanding. Thus, organisations whose talent is equipped with multilingual competencies offer competitive services.

2.3.6 Hospitality Intelligence Competencies

Hospitality competencies are a set of features that create memorable experiences for guests (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). They were identified as emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and experiential intelligence. Emotional intelligence encompassed interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills which are critical for self-management. Shum *et al.* (2018)'s study suggested that emotional intelligence is necessary for the hospitality context because of the high number of emotional exchanges that occur among executives, employees, and customers. Thus emotionally intelligent talent can control their negative reactions while simultaneously transmitting enthusiasm and positive energy when communicating with colleagues/ customers. Cultural intelligence enables hospitality talent to be sensitive and mindful of diverse cultures (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). This promotes

diversity which forms and sustains a large customer base. Experiential intelligence enables hospitality talent to understand the nuances of the host-guest relationship and innovatively interpret guests' needs to personalize guest experiences (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). These competencies have been touted to make a difference in the quality of services offered.

2.3.7 Strategic Planning Competencies

Strategic positioning relates to an awareness of customer needs, commitment to equality, managing stakeholders, and concern for the community (Tavitiyaman *et al.,* 2014). Strategic planning competencies were considered important qualities by those individuals in the key positions Kaewsaeng-on (2017). Specific practices include influencing owners' and stakeholders' decisions, promoting quality initiatives, and considering customer needs when making decisions. Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) argued that strategic planning is a part of the responsibilities of general executives of hotels in a bid to achieve objectives and goals. Pylat (2017) noted that; strategic planning competency enables talent to articulate strategic goals and priorities; analyse the past and predicts future events; think strategically, make strategic choices, have a strategic vision, understand general business conditions that affect their industry, predict customer expectations and create a strategic agenda. Hotel executives also were found to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of competitors to recognize strategic opportunities in the environment, identify problems, and create the needed systems and procedures to support changes (Tavitiyaman *et al.,* 2014). Strategic planning competencies can make a difference in the quality of products/ services offered.

2.3.8 Technical Competencies

Technical competencies also referred to as hard competencies involve aspects of performing a job, and require the acquisition of knowledge primarily cognitive in nature,

and influenced by an individual's intelligence (Weber *et al.,* 2019). For instance, wiring a car or producing a toast utilizes technical skills. Weinland, Gregory, and Petrick (2016) found that technical competency ranked first because it is used for the actual production to optimal levels. Rose (2016) indicated that technical competencies were mostly required in: hospitality property management, menu planning, and design, front office procedures, food production and service, food and beverage service, hotel housekeeping practices, lodging operations, and management, catering skills, Events planning/ management, and hospitality safety and security. The researcher found that they were related to the performance of the hotels. German Development Cooperation (2017); and World Bank (2018) highlighted those technical competencies are key in the development and sustainability of competitiveness.

2.3.9 Leadership Competencies

Leadership competencies can be described as a combination of observable and applied knowledge, skills, and behaviours used to influence subordinates to accomplish organizational goals (Tavitiyaman *et al.,* 2014). A study by Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) explored leadership competencies for executives and found team building and ethics, leadership, and communication skills as the most important. Suh *et al.* (2012) conducted a study on important competency requirements for executives in the hospitality industry in the USA. The findings suggested that leadership skills were identified as the top competencies for hospitality executives. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) insisted that good leadership creates a good workplace environment for employees to be embedded in their jobs. A study by Kichuk (2017) suggested that hospitality leaders also need entrepreneurial skills for business. Effective leaders were also found to motivate individual employees

towards high productivity. Lyria (2014) agreed with the statement and emphasized that effective leadership contributes positively to talent retention and organization performance. These competencies can potentially influence the quality of products/ services offered.

2.3.10 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

The hospitality studies reviewed were done in Europe, North America, and Asia. The context on the suitability of the identified competencies for TM in those countries may not be the same as that in Kenya. Therefore, the current study sought to find out what hospitality core competencies suitable in the hospitality industry in Kenya. Furthermore, the study sought to establish whether they influence the competitiveness of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The review of literature also revealed that the studies Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Kichuk (2017) conducted within the domain of hospitality used qualitative research design thus quantifiable data was not available. The current study sought to fill this gap by conducting a survey through a quantitative research design that obtained statistical data for quantifying the extent to which hospitality core competencies were enriched and applied amongst talent.

2.4 Approaches Used in each Talent Management Practices

Talent management practices involve the systematic attraction, selection, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those individuals with high potential to pivotal positions (CIPD, 2013).

2.4.1 Talent Attraction

The attraction of talent is critical to the success of the hospitality industry, but as Nzonzo and Chipfuva (2013); Nwoye (2017) noted, there is a shortage of these individuals which makes it more difficult to recruit. Nevertheless, Saad and Mayouf (2018) indicated that there are four sources upon which potential talent is attracted from; in-house, outside

environment, competitors, and academia through job fair and internships. The attraction of talent allows organizations to effectively select the best applicants who are likely to perceive higher levels of fit and, in turn, to be committed to their jobs (Fathy, 2018). Lyria (2014)'s results reveal that talent attraction is statistically significant in explaining the performance of organizations. TM literature reviewed has discussed antecedents of talent attraction but without common criteria. For instance, different researchers discussed a dissimilar or un-proportional number of antecedents. Unlike other studies, the current study adopted employer branding as a single predictor of efficient talent attraction as the basis of discussion.

Bhasin, Mushtaq, and Gupta (2019) defined employer branding as a scheme that offers employees economic benefits, development activities, and psychological benefits. Such benefits elicit a perception in prospective talent referred to as employee value proposition (EVP). Vatne and Torgersen (2014) defined EVP as, the holistic sum of everything that employees experience and receive both intrinsic and intrinsic motivation. A review of various literature indicated that attracting potential talent to the hospitality industry was an uphill task mainly because all or some antecedents of employer branding such as; talent development opportunities, competitive compensation and incentives for talent, job security for talent, interesting responsibilities for talent, growth/ promotion opportunities for talent, flexibility in roles for talent, work-life balance for talent, and good working conditions/ environment for talent are wanting (Leng, 2013; Kaewsaeng-on, 2017; Saad & Mayouf, 2018). These antecedents formed the basis of the literature review for this study.

2.4.1.1 Talent Development Opportunities

The presence of exciting talent development opportunities in hospitality organizations creates a reputable employer brand. The McKinsey consultancy emphasized that the war of talent which exacerbated shortage necessitates the attraction of the best talent in critical positions. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) found that hospitality firms that attracted prospective talent offered appropriate and adequate training to current talent. The training was aimed at building strong internal relationships/ supervisory relationships; putting the right people to take on the role of managing talent; and surrounding talent with good co-workers. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) further noted that relationships due to training were closely associated with attracting potential talent. It can be recognized that prospective talent who become aware of the exciting training that would meet them with good co-workers and form good relationships with supervisors creates a better employer brand which attracts top talent. This assertion is given more credence by Leng (2013)'s study which emphasised that people favoured employment in firms with adequate and advanced development programs. However, this assertion is inclusive of all employees. The current study adopted an exclusive approach that targeted only employees considered talent as also advocated by (Collings, McDonnell, & Scullion, 2009; Thunnissen, 2015).

Lyria (2014) conducted a study on firms listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange. Though not hospitality-related, the study affirmed that training and career progression influenced talent attraction. In the study, the majority of the respondents 80% agreed with the statement that their company supported employee training and career progression while 12.4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 7.4% were neutral of the statement. Lyria (2014) further reiterated that the study findings were an overwhelming

endorsement of a perceived employee value proposition. This is evidence that the resultant employee value proposition creates a favourable employer brand that attracts potential talent to organisations, and this is likely to form a competitive advantage. Weinland *et al.* (2016)'s study in vacation establishments insisted that training for specific competencies and corresponding certification strengthens EVP which reinforces employer brand.

Tanwar and Prasad (2016)'s study also noted that the employer brand was associated with good training opportunities and personal development. The study also emphasised that the organisation's contribution to career development was valued more by applicants with good work experience. The aspect of career development was also endorsed by Cui, Khan, and Tarba (2018) whose respondents revealed that they arrange suitable training courses for talented employees, and test the knowledge acquired during the training course. Saad and Mayouf (2018) also found out that career development opportunities in terms of apprentice and internship programs attract potential talent candidates. The adoption of career development strategies seemingly creates a perceived EVP which has a positive association with the employer brand.

2.4.1.2 Competitive Compensation and Incentives for Talent

Competitive compensation and incentives have received much attention in the context of employer branding. A study by (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017) in the Thai hospitality industry indicated basic pay is almost the same across the board and that may not necessarily attract potential talent. Nonetheless, hotels that have adopted a TM concept, guaranteed minimum service charges, and bonuses. The guarantee of service charges pay and other bonuses are attracting potential talent to want to be part of the hotels' workforce. The use of competitive

compensation and incentives is in line with findings by Lyria (2014); Cui *et al.,* 2018) whose studies found a positive correlation with the attraction of talent.

Participating hotels in Kaewsaeng-on (2017) further indicated that they attract talent through other compensation or incentives like free shuttle bus, clothing, accommodation, medical aid, a free meal, and/or insurance. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) further noted that most staff accommodation is shared and therefore not comfortable. The problem of shared accommodation does not arise for people in certain positions. However, Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study pointed out that monetary incentives were applied by wealth and rich international and chain hotels as tools for competing against rivals and consequently were more competitive than the Thai branded hotels.

(Leng, 2013)'s study findings noted that the hospitality industry has become less attractive because the benefits and salary levels are not as competitive as those of other industries. This strengthens the claim that the hotel industry is categorized as a low-wage labor industry (Leng, 2013; Putra *et al.,* 2017). This revelation aligns with that of Fathy (2018) and added that this has led the industry to be less attractive to candidates because the salary is not competitive compared to other industries. Thus, it has exacerbated a poor employer brand of the hotel sector making them lose their attraction among talent in the market. Tomany (2012) noted that since compensation and related incentives are limited but important, they cannot be relied on as a means of attracting potential talent. The best bet is to lean to employee value proposition which highlights unique selling points. A compelling EVP has been found to increase access to potential talent.

2.4.1.3 Job Security for Talent

Job security for talent has been touted as one of the important determinants of attracting potential talent to organizations. A study done by Lyria (2014) confirmed this claim, and findings revealed that the majority of the respondents 93% agreed with the statement that surveyed companies ensured employees good job security to attract the right talent while 7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Oppenheim (2018) also stressed that job security is a vital block in the architecture of EVP which makes the employer brand viewed positively. Ballou (2013); Soomro, Syed, and Memon (2016) are also of the same accord that job security influences talent in their choices of organizations to work for. Nwoye (2017) was also of the same opinion, and it is apparent that there is a unanimous acknowledgment that talent would be ready to join an establishment that would guarantee a long term work engagement. The attraction of talent allows organizations to select individuals with KSAs to boost their competitiveness.

2.4.1.4 Interesting Responsibilities for Talent

The concept of transforming jobs to have interesting responsibilities has received much attention among the scholars of TM. This ensued because hospitality work is considered labour intensive, with few jobs being knowledge-based Leng (2013); Putra *et al.* (2017), and this does not motivate talent into the industry. A compelling employee value proposition has to be created, and one of the elements is putting together interesting responsibilities into otherwise laborious and less exciting jobs. Tomany (2012)'s study concurs with this claim and further notes that an EVP that contains jobs with interesting responsibilities has the potential of attracting talent into less appealing tasks. The study reported that such EVP boosted employer brand that ultimately increased access to potential talent by 50%. Hana and Lucie (2015) also reported that 68% of surveyed

organizations attempted to make existing jobs more attractive to attract talent. Lyria (2014)'s study informants felt that transforming jobs to have interesting responsibilities is part of career development, and this lures talent which leads to competitiveness.

2.4.1.5 Growth/ Promotion Opportunities for Talent

Employer branding which is critical in the attraction of talent has been given impetus by TM scholars. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) argued that promoting talent within hospitality ranks helps in building a brand that attracts potential employees. Leng (2013) posited that talented people in the industry can move up much more quickly than in other industries. Furthermore, hotels could offer talented employees opportunities for further study in universities overseas. Leng (2013) insists that hotels should try their best to project this image of the hospitality industry to the public so that potential talent is aware of those benefits. Likewise, Fathy (2018)'s study noted that the majority of HR executives attract talented employees with quick promotions. Hana and Lucie (2015) also added that organizations that actively focus on development prospects on current jobs or offering opportunities to move up to another, higher, or specialized position contribute to an appealing brand image that attracts potential talent.

2.4.1.6 Flexibility in Roles for Talent

The concept behind flexibility in roles is to motivate talent, eliminate boredom, and increase competence levels of talent to respond better in their jobs. Idris (2014); Nwoye (2017)'s work endorsed flexibility in work as a key role in attracting talent. Putra *et al.* (2017)'s study stressed that instances where jobs were enriched enhanced commitment of talent. It appears that employees who are committed are also happy and in totality, it makes the organization to be perceived as a blissful place to work in. When this perception is

projected to the public, potential talent develops a desire to be associated with such brands. It; therefore, makes it easy for hospitality organizations to attract potential talent. This claim aligns with Lyria (2014)'s who observed that organisations that adopt flexible strategies within jobs make them more attractive to potential talent.

Job rotation has also been cited as a form of flexibility in establishments that prepare talent for diverse roles. Thunnissen (2015)'s study revealed that job rotation was a useful instrument in developing capabilities of talent in different job roles. This enables talent to multi-task in various roles and this has the potential of increasing job satisfaction. Soomro *et al.* (2016); Tanwar and Prasad (2016) concurred with this assertion and added that job satisfaction can be viewed as an important element of attracting potential talent. These studies suggest that job satisfaction has the potential of forming a positive EVP among prospective talent which contributes to a favourable brand that these individuals would wish to be associated with.

Challenging work and increased responsibilities are considered forms of flexibility accorded to talent to prepare for executive roles. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s work indicated that hotels adopted challenging work and increased responsibility as a basis for developing employees. Such kind of flexibility has been praised by Thunnissen (2015); Putra *et al.* (2017) as an enabler of increased performance among talent which potentially brings competitiveness to organizations. This is an indication of prevailing positive EVP which forms an employer brand that potential talent would want to be associated with. Lyria (2014)'s work was in agreement with this assertion and added that the target strategies

increase employees' value for themselves and for the firm to improve organization performance.

2.4.1.7 Work-Life Balance for Talent

Work-life balance (WLB) has received much attention over the recent years as an important talent management issue. Organizations these days have started incorporating WLB strategies in their employer brand (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). WLB is one of the important determinants apart from salary and prestige in impacting employer brand. Tanwar and Prasad (2016) underscored that organizations can enhance their employer brand image by introducing flexible working hours and the same can be communicated to the employees through their employer value proposition which forms employer brand that talent is attracted to.

Cui *et al.* (2018)'s work is in support of WLB as a strategy for attracting talent who have families. Family people will always experience external pressures which will necessitate the relevant intervention by their organizations. Organizations that show adequate support are likely to make potential talent to perceive that if they are engaged there, they would experience a positive EVP. Pierré (2017)'s study was aligned with this claim, and its participants revealed that they experienced varying levels of external pressures among them family – related. The study further noted that demonstrated it is possible to use external pressures as a positive tool for the benefit of the organization. Lyria (2014)'s study results revealed that the majority of the respondents 96% agreed with the statement that work-life balance, as well as social networking facilities in the company, was a motivating factor to their employees. The researcher concluded by imploring WLB for contributing positively to talent attraction.

2.4.1.8 Good Working Conditions/ Environment for Talent

The work environment is considered as an important dimension of employer branding by potential talent. The work environment has been found to influence the attitude of people including talent towards the organization (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). However, there are uncertainties of what good working environments are because they have diverse dimensions and each prospective talent has their perceptions. Therefore, the work environment may not be a strong pillar in the architecture of EVP thus would not have a robust influence on the employer brand responsible for attracting potential talent. As such scholars like Cui *et al.* (2018) have endorsed it as a strategy for attracting talent but when combined with other factors such as company background, company culture, job attractiveness, career development opportunities, good salaries, and benefits. Lyria (2014)'s results showed that 91% agreed that the company's good working conditions and fair wages had enabled it to attract the right talent. Results also reveal that 6.2% disagreed while 3.1% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The findings imply that participating firms in the study attract employees through good working conditions.

2.4.2.9 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

All the TM studies reviewed described a handful of talent attraction approaches. This study assembled some under EVP. The current study investigated them further in the five-star hotels in Nairobi to establish their impact on competitiveness. TM requires organizations to attract HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs for critical positions. This assertion was agreed upon by researchers in the hospitality industry which involved Leng (2013); Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Fathy (2018); Saad and Mayouf (2018) but did not link them to either to inclusive or exclusive TM to determine their stance. The current study sought to fill this gap by categorically basing the research of exclusive TM.

Studies reviewed in this section other than Tomany (2012); Lyria (2014) utilised qualitative research designs therefore, they did not inform on the quantity of the organizations that used talent attraction approaches to attract HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs for critical positions. However, Tomany (2012); Lyria (2014)'s studies were conducted in other fields other than hospitality. This study filled the gap in the literature by conducting a survey through a quantitative research design that revealed the statistics on talent attraction. Finally, studies of TM addressing talent attraction in Kenya's hospitality industry were not discovered; thus this study sought to fill the gap.

2.4.2 Talent Selection

Talent selection is a process of picking individuals with requisite competencies to fill jobs in the organization (Aswathappa, 2005). Tarique and Schuler (2012) argued that selecting the right talent for the right place, at the right time, for the right price is a challenge for organizations today. Therefore; Holland (2017) suggested that positions ought to be identified first, and as Collings (2014) stressed those positions should be "A" positions because they are the ones that fall in the domain of TM. This ensures that selected talent are not deployed to non – strategic roles where they will be underutilized. According to Holland (2017), strategic positions included key senior management, functional, technical, and commercial positions. These positions can either be filled from internal or external sources (Kichuk, 2017). The review of literature narrowed talent selection approaches to; selection from talent pools, selection based on performance appraisals results, poaching proven talent from other firms, interviewing, reference approach, and psychometrics.

2.4.2.1 Selection Based on Performance Appraisals Results

Talent who are in-house can be promoted into critical positions when they become vacant. However, they ought to be subjected to performance appraisal (Nwoye, 2017). A study by Boštjanci and Slana (2018) supported the use of performance appraisal by organizations as they can measure the effectiveness of high-potentials. Further, Holland (2017) stated that performance appraisal has a bearing on the selection of talent with a trifecta of competence, commitment, and contribution to the strategic objectives of the organization. Nwoye (2017) posited that performance appraisal identifies talent who have a strategic fit for positions that are consequential to the organization. Lyria (2014) also noted that performance appraisal is effective as it provides an objective assessment of current individuals. Therefore, those individuals will be fit to be selected for vacancies that may arise.

2.4.2.2 Hotels Poach Individuals with Rare and Unique Capabilities from Competitors

Hotels across the world are experiencing a shortage of talent. One of the techniques they adopted in shelving the challenge is poaching individuals with rare and unique capabilities from competitors. This has been corroborated by Mangusho *et al.* (2015) who noted that organizations around the world are competing for the same pool of talent. This has resulted in some unethical practices such as poaching of talent. Organizations have lost some of their best talent to their competitors and have been left to either train or attract others.

A further contribution to the poaching of talent was made by Peshave and Gujarathi (2015) who observed that there has been a remarkable growth in the hotel industry in India. This situation has led to fierce competition in attracting employees leading to poaching between hotels. This makes it relatively easier for employees to switch employers leading to

increased staff turnover. Msengeti and Obwogi (2015) also observed that the hotel industry in Kenya is expanding. Managements of most of these establishments are increasingly facing the challenge of staff turnover with new entrants in the industry constantly poaching employees from existing hotels.

2.4.2.3 Selection into Critical Positions is from an Established Internal Talent Pools

Talent pool refers to the group of high potential and high performing incumbents that an organization can draw upon to fill pivotal talent positions (Scullion & Collings, 2011). Feng (2016) wrote that talent pool ensures continuity of operations when a critical position is vacated by immediately supplying talent who fits with the demands of the job. It guarantees that the value of the position is not lost or deferred and this safeguards the competitive advantage of organizations. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s revealed that talent is selected out of an established talent pool, and the benefit is that they have a good background understanding of the organization's direction. This implies that there will be no gap in the organization culture, and that merits a competitive advantage. Additionally, Kichuk (2017)'s work revealed that talent pools harboured talent with leadership, unique skills, knowledge, experiences, and capabilities whose selections to pivotal roles brought immediate positive outcomes.

2.4.2.4 Interviewing

Interviewing is a process conducted to eliminate unqualified applicants, and reject misfits (Aswathappa, 2005). Structured, unstructured, mixed, and behavioural interview types are adopted in the selection of talent Aswathappa (2005); Pulakos (2005). Structured interviews consist of a specific set of questions that are designed to assess critical knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required to perform the job effectively (Pulakos, 2005). An important characteristic of an effective structured interview is that it provides

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standardized rating criteria to help interviewers judge the quality and effectiveness of the responses provided by the interviewees. Unstructured is one in which questions to be asked are left up to the interviewer to decide, and there are no agreed-upon standards for evaluating an applicant's performance during the interview (Pulakos, 2005). Research has shown that unstructured interviews are not particularly useful for predicting job performance. Secondly, they may overlook key areas of the applicant's skills or background (Aswathappa, 2005).

A mixed interview is a blend of structured and unstructured questions used by interviewers (Aswathappa, 2005). The structured questions provide a base of information that allows comparisons between candidates. But, the unstructured questions make the interview more conventional and permits greater insights into the unique differences between applicants. Behavioural interviewing focuses on a problem or hypothetical situation that the applicant is expected to solve. This interview technique has a limited scope in which the applicant's ability to solve the types of the problem presented is revealed. The validity is more likely if the hypothetical situations match those found in the jobs. When the job involves much stress, a stress interview attempts to learn how an applicant will respond to the pressure (Aswathappa, 2005). The current study adopted a mixed interview because it assesses a range of aspects of prospective talent.

2.4.2.5 Psychometrics

Psychometrics is a series of standardized tasks that enable recruiters to measure individuals' personalities or abilities (Roberts, 1997). Thus, they are classified as ability and personality tests. Ability tests are designed to stimulate work requirements so that a consistent sample of work required to be undertaken by a range of candidates and their

relative performance can be measured. Personality tests aim to gauge the innate traits and characteristics of people, codify them, and compare them with others (Roberts, 1997). Therefore, psychometric testing is a way to ensure that a candidate has the knowledge, skills, and aptitude for the job (Andrews, 2009).

There are various ways to test potential talent and include; technical skills tests/ work sample tests, job knowledge tests, cognitive tests, achievement tests, biographical information, situational judgment tests, integrity tests, group discussions, extempore speaking, aptitude tests, physical aptitude tests, case studies, psychological tests, assessment centres, and medical tests (Andrews, 2009). The current study adopted technical skills tests/ work sample tests, employment tests, and assessment centres because they are comprehensive in assessing talent who will be working in a technical and complex hospitality environment.

2.4.2.6 Technical Skills Tests/ Work Sample Tests

These evaluate skills; for example, a chef may be asked to prepare a four-course menu, a server to lay out a table cover, and a room service order taker to do a voice test (Andrews, 2009). Work sample tests consist of tasks or work activities that mirror the tasks that talent is required to perform on the job (Pulakos, 2005). They can be designed to measure almost any job task but are typically designed to measure technically-oriented tasks; such as operating equipment, repairing and troubleshooting equipment, organizing and planning work, and so forth. Work sample tests typically involve having job applicants perform the tasks of interest while their performance is observed and scored by trained evaluators. Similar to job knowledge tests, work sample tests should only be used in situations where candidates are expected to know how to perform the tested job tasks before job entry. If

training on how to perform the job will be provided after selection, work sample assessments would not be appropriate to use (Pulakos, 2005).

2.4.2.7 Employment Tests

Talent management requires employment tests to be conducted on the identified personnel. Employment tests are systematic procedures for examining candidates and drawing methodical inferences, based on objective criteria, about their suitability for employment (O'Meara, 2013). When used properly, tests are a reliable and valid method of the selection and hiring process compared to commonly used approaches such as interviews, biodata, or reference checks (Chon, 2013). Tests may be used to determine how well an individual can perform tasks related to the job (ability tests), predict how capable a candidate is in learning new skills (aptitude tests), and assess how motivated a candidate will be to get along with co-workers (personality tests) (Kwansa & Parsa, 2002). This would enable the organization to select potentials that can generate high-quality products/ services for competitive advantage (Aswathappa, 2005; Boella & Turner, 2013).

2.4.2.8 Assessment Centres

An assessment centre is a type of work sample test that is typically focused on assessing higher-level executive and supervisory competencies (Pulakos, 2005). They measure knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a series of exercises that reflect job content and types of problems faced on the job, cognitive ability tests, personality inventories, and/ or job knowledge tests (Andrews, 2009). Candidates are asked to complete a series of exercises that simulate actual situations, problems, and tasks that they would face on the job for which they are being considered, and they are asked to handle these as if they were

in the real situation. Assessment centres usually last at least a day and up to several days (Pulakos, 2005).

Assessment centres typically include role-play exercises, in-basket exercises, analytical exercises, and group discussion exercises (Pulakos, 2005). In-basket exercises are where a candidate responds to phone messages, e-mails, memoranda, reports, and other items that require action to be taken. Sometimes in-basket exercises also include an interview with trained assessors where the candidate explains the rationale for his or her actions. Trained assessors observe the performance of candidates during the assessment process and evaluate them on standardized rating. Some assessment centres also include other types of assessment methods, such as cognitive ability, job knowledge, and personality tests. It should be noted that assessment centres are not only used for selection purposes but can also be used to provide comprehensive development feedback to participants (Pulakos, 2005).

2.4.2.9 Reference Approach

A reference approach is facilitated by certain people who have experience in a specific field and when a vacancy arises they use their judgment to suggest replacements (Tzoumas, 2013). Kaewsaeng-on (2017) suggested that referrals by other employees or friends already working in the organization contribute to talent selection. Their uptake should be based on criteria such as person-job fit, person-organization fit, person–workgroup fit, and person-industry fit. Study findings by Mehta (2017) revealed that employees in the service sector at Punjab and Haryana India were encouraged to provide references of talented candidates. However, the reference approach fails to provide an impartial measure of evaluation and also is considered less trustworthy for companies to hire the right persons (Saad & Mayouf,

2018). Tzoumas (2013) also backed this observation by noting that referrals can; later on, prove to be ineffective.

2.4.2.10 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

All the TM studies reviewed described a handful of talent selection approaches. This study assembled some approaches from human resources textbooks and investigated them further in the five-star hotels in Nairobi to establish their impact on competitiveness. The studies conducted in hospitality included; Tzoumas (2013); Msengeti and Obwogi (2015); Peshave and Gujarathi (2015); Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Kichuk (2017) but they used qualitative research design which did not give a clear picture of talent selection in the industry. This study filled the gap in the literature by conducting a survey through a quantitative research design that revealed the statistics on talent selection. Finally, studies of TM addressing talent selection in Kenya's hospitality industry were not available; thus this study sought to fill the gap.

2.4.3 Talent Engagement

Talent engagement is a practice adopted from the concept of TM. According to CIPD (2013), TM practices involve a systematic attraction, selection, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those individuals with high potential to pivotal positions. Putra *et al.* (2017) noted that not all employees will be classified as talent because the nature of hospitality job is labour intensive, with few jobs being knowledge-based. The knowledge-based jobs are the ones that differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage (Collings & Mellahi 2009; Jafari & Xiao 2016). These are the jobs that would require talent, who will further need to be engaged so that they sustainably produce quality products and services.

Talent–powered firms have high levels of talent engagement which accelerate performances of their talent making them deliver beyond their equivalents in peer organizations (Martins & Martins, 2011). Holland (2017) defined talent engagement as the extent to which employees drive and invest themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally into their work. Cheese, Thomas, and Craig (2008) defined talent engagement as the degree to which talent is aligned, confident, and committed to achieving higher performance by being motivated to apply additional discretionary effort to their work. Tomany (2012) described employee engagement as heightened emotion and intellectual connection that talent has for their jobs, organizations, executives, or co-workers that in turn influence them to apply additional discretionary effort to their work. The latter definition is consistent with features of talent ready to invest their emotional, intellectual, and discretionary capacities to generate greater values for their organizations from the point of view of TM. Therefore; the current study selected this definition because of its consistency and clarity to TM.

Tomany (2012)'s research findings suggest that the number of employees giving full discretionary effort at work is falling. Moreover, Putra *et al. (*2017) cited reports which indicated that talent engagement is a challenge for many business organizations worldwide. For instance, 70% of the American workforce was not engaged, but rather emotionally disconnected from their workplaces. Reviews on hospitality and tourism studies in Kenya did not yield talent engagement literature. It has also been recognized that the hospitality industry is characterized by an unfavourable work environment, including low wages, long working hours, few career opportunities, and low work-life balance. The current study sought to establish whether competitive advantage by the five-star hotels is influenced

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through talent engagement. Secondly, the study sought to establish the extent of talent engagement in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County.

Talent management engages individuals of exceptional qualities because they are expected to produce or offer service that drives competitive edge for organizations (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Organizations use costly resources to engage these individuals, therefore; selected ones ought to satisfy the demands expected of talent so that desired results are obtained. This view is supported by the workforce differentiation theory. The theory categorizes employees into A, B, and C players (Tarique & Schuler, 2012). It assumes that employees that add more value to the organization should be treated differently. Furthermore, these individuals are placed in the most critical jobs or positions that have the most significant impact on the organization's business (Arif & Thakkar, 2015). Therefore, organizations should invest more of their resources in "A" players in "A" positions because they possess unique abilities (Tarique & Schuler, 2012). Those who fit this classification are deployed to critical positions and those considered above average are exposed to further development. Those who will be classified as poor or 'C' performers are dismissed (Cardy & Leonard, 2011). The benefit of engaging talent is to make them committed to the organization to apply their unique abilities in production and service (Tomany, 2012).

One of the selection criteria for "A" players for "A" positions emanating from talent management studies is the use of the Nine-Box Grid concept (Alziari, 2017). The grid comprises two axes of performance and potential, both of which have three levels: low, medium, and high (Jooss, 2018). Table 2.2 is a classic representation of the grid.

Table 2.2: Nine-Box Grid

	High potential	High potential	High potential
	Low performance	Medium performance	**High performance**
	Medium potential	Medium potential	Medium potential
	Low performance	Medium performance	**High performance**
	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
	Low performance	Medium performance	**High performance**

The vertical axis is labelled **Potential** and the horizontal axis is labelled **Performance**.

Adopted from (Lucy, 2016)

Talent reviews are conducted by the executives on variables of performance and potential of talent. A rating is determined and employees' performance is plotted against potential in the nine-box grid (Lucy, 2016). Those individuals that feature in the top right-hand corner of the grid are both high performers and high potential; and arguably the individuals upon whom the company should focus on, both in terms of reward and retention initiatives. Those employees that rest in the middle of the grid can be stretched and supported, to improve their performance through the talent pipeline. Finally, those employees in the bottom left-hand corner (considered low performers and low potential) can be 'acted on decisively' and, if necessary, managed out (Jooss, 2018).

This study adopted individuals falling on the high potential/high-performance grid as talent or 'A-performers' as the ones to be engaged. Tomany (2012) supports this view by noting that, those individuals that feature in the top right-hand corner of the grid are both high

performers and high potential; and arguably the individuals upon whom the company should focus engaging. Jooss (2018)'s study findings noted that some hotels' human resources questioned the reliability of a linear, two-dimensional nine-box grid but conceded that there is a lack of viable alternatives. In Tomany (2012)'s work, the model is criticized because it focuses solely on an individual's attributes and performance, although most organizations rely on collaborative working and interdependent action. The current study did not embrace this critique; instead, it was informed by the TM concept of exclusivity. When the concept of exclusivity is put into context, there is clarity on who to be engaged and in Table 2.2; it is those at the top right-hand corner, while the rest will be managed accordingly.

Truss, Alfes, Delbridge, Shantz, and Soane (2013) noted that engaged talent plays an important part in getting people into the broad frame of mind to accept the complex performance challenge. A survey done by Mansoori (2015) revealed that talent engagement is characterized by an atmosphere that increases commitment in applying discretionary effort to work in form of extra time, brainpower, and energy. It can be deduced that complex activities which by their nature require knowledge workers (talent) influence the competitiveness of organizations. For this talent to be committed to those complex activities, they must be sufficiently motivated to apply their discretionary effort. Thus hospitality organizations need to understand the nature and impacts of commitment on talent engagement.

Commitment is critical in talent engagement in producing greater results achieved by the perceived employee value proposition (EVP) (Hatum, 2010; Vatne & Torgersen, 2014).

Vatne and Torgersen (2014) defined EVP as, the holistic sum of everything that employees experience and receive both intrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Kichuk (2017) highlighted expectations of commitment from the perspective of talent. The first was a rational commitment, which assesses whether a job meets talented employees 'monetary and development interests and fits in a motivational organisational environment. Second is an emotional commitment, which reflects the values and beliefs of the talented staff and their roles in organisations. There was an agreement that high achievers with emotional commitment are considered to be more successful in their careers and bring greater value for business development (Kichuk, 2017). This discussion implies that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations among other factors are to be adopted by the hospitality industry to create and sustain acceptable levels of commitment hence consequential engagement.

Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s work discussed three types of commitment, - work, organisation, and industry. Commitment to work was described as difficult and stressful and individuals must be willing to like it for success. Commitment to the organisation was portrayed as trust and fully obliging to the cause of the organisation, and try to position their knowledge and experiences to fit and work well. Commitment to the industry was described as the ability to involve oneself in otherwise a less exciting hospitality job. It can be concluded that commitment in hospitality is untenable unless talent is orientated to like a difficult, stressful, less appealing work, and focus on the demands of the organization. Putra *et al.* (2017) also emphasised that employment within the hospitality is less appealing and consequently employees will have reduced commitment hence difficult to engage.

It is apparent that if extrinsic and intrinsic motivations are adopted by the hospitality industry that is considered to have less appealing employment characteristics, commitment is created to sustain acceptable levels of engagement. Researchers like Lyria (2014); Mansoori (2015); Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Kichuk (2017) found a trend in which talent engagement was linked to classic theories related to motivation narrowing to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation antecedents. This study adopted extrinsic and intrinsic motivations discussed in the incentive theory of motivation and motivation crowding theory.

Extrinsic motivation comprises tangible and visible rewards given to individuals that include financial rewards, work promotions, and working conditions (Kichuk, 2017). These motivations strengthen the relationship between talent and organizations. Talent promotions, range of financial rewards, performance appraisal were the basis of extrinsic motivation for the current study. They were arrived at because of their recurrence in hospitality's TM literature as reflected in Putra *et al.* (2017); Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Kichuk (2017); Nwoye (2017). On the other hand, intrinsic rewards are based on the value placed by the talent in their work. They are important for talent's sense of self-esteem and overall motivation. A talent that feels valued increases productivity and attains a competitive advantage faster than disengaged ones (Kichuk, 2017). Career development opportunities, best work environment, the psychological contract formed the basis of intrinsic motivation literature for the current study. They were also decided on because they were common in hospitality's TM literature as discussed in (Tomany, 2012; Kaewsaeng-on, 2017; Khoreva et al., 2017; Kichuk, 2017; Nwoye, 2017).

2.4.3.1 Talent Promotion

Talent promotion is used in recognition of outstanding performance and permits talent to feel valued thus leading to engagement. TM espouses a promotion system that enables organizations to seek the best and brightest talent to fill critical positions that either requires a knowledge worker or the most senior. Research results by Kichuk (2017) indicated that the most talented staff have risen to a higher ranking position, and are recognised amongst peers. Putra *et al.* (2017)'s findings indicated that the promotion of talent was found to positively influence commitment behaviour. Additionally, promotions come with rewards such as increased salaries and enriched jobs among others whose result is to enhance commitment in the assigned work. Kichuk (2017) also noted that sufficiently engaged talent achieve high levels of performance for the organization. Soomro *et al.* (2016) added that organizations that have structured promotional opportunities increased chances for their employees to be committed to the organization's objectives. Promoted talent in Kichuk (2017)'s study affirmed that their promotion increased their commitment and gained tangible benefits for themselves and their hotels.

The above studies suggest that talent promotion is critical in creating a commitment to work, organization, and industry which ultimately boosts engagement. It is therefore important for an organization to adopt promotional plans that target talent. This assertion is consistent with the concept of TM which adopts a narrow view of those engaged to be strictly talent or A-players. It appears that research by Soomro *et al.* (2016); Kichuk (2017); Putra *et al.* (2017) adopted talent engagement inclined to inclusive TM approach. It was also not clear which category of talent was promoted in these studies. However, Jooss (2018) study emphasized that promotions were based on experience and seniority. The

current study opted for the narrow view of TM representing individuals considered talent as the only to be promoted to draw maximum and unique performance from their engagement.

2.4.3.2 Range of Financial Rewards

The range of financial rewards is also a major form of extrinsic motivation. They are considered as one of the most important aspects of motivating talent (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). Kichuk (2017) concurred with this assertion and added that talent is sensitive to financial compensation and, in some situations, increased wages influenced job satisfaction. The current study hypothesizes that talent who are satisfied with their jobs due to monetary motivation will offer their discretionary effort to perform complex tasks whose success puts their organizations above those who do not have the advantage of this extrinsic motivator. Nwoye (2017) assessed the outcomes of pay equity among talent with the same level of experience and doing the same job whether it was a key factor in increasing engagement. Informants of the study positively confirmed the claim and explained that having a good bonus system broadened their engagement.

Kaewsaeng-on (2017) concurred with the positive income of financial rewards and revealed that hotels found it difficult to fully engage the talent between 20-35 years old. Coincidentally, this millennials generation is the main source of labour for hotels. The challenge arises because of their versatility. They are characterised as being less patient and are likely to keep trying for new opportunities that offer competitive compensation. Putra *et al.* (2017)'s emphasized some organizations that adopted an economic view of engagement argued that monetary incentives were effective in creating competitive levels, while those that adopted a psychological view of engagement dismissed monetary

incentives. These are conflicting views informed the current study to establish whether financial rewards-based engagement had a relationship with the competitiveness of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County.

2.4.3.3 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal informs recognition of talent's contribution is also a consequential form of extrinsic motivation. The feedback succeeding in the appraisal exercise apportions rewards to talent depending on the nature of performance (Kichuk, 2017). Jooss (2018) mentioned financial incentives and recognition of best efforts by talent as important benefits of the appraisal process. Kichuk (2017) added that the appraisal process creates an on-going relationship between line executives and talent creating a close social exchange. Kichuk (2017) further stressed that the appraisal process segments talent that displays outstanding performance to be placed in the talent pool or promoted. Fathy (2018) emphasised that appraisals become the basis for designing an employee training plan as well as identifying areas for further development and improvement. These benefits effectively induce commitment which ultimately generates an engaged talent. Kichuk (2017) supported the claim by noting that outcomes of the appraisal process prompts employees to feel valued and appreciated who ultimately align their behaviour with organisational expectations, thus contributing to the organisation's vision. Putra *et al.* (2017)'s work emphasized that employees engaged more in their work when specific job resources, such as performance feedback were provided.

Whereas TM concept takes a narrow view of the exclusive approach of engaging talent, Kichuk (2017)'s adopted a blended approach with attention paid to all employees (inclusive approach), but with special focus given to a particular core group or groups of

employees (exclusive approach). The other researchers Putra *et al.* (2017); Fathy (2018); Jooss (2018) adopted an inclusive approach in which all individuals were subjected to the appraisal process. The current study adopted an exclusive approach to limit engagement to talent only.

2.4.3.4 Talent Career Development Opportunities

Talent Career development activities form a major part of intrinsic motivation. Some TM studies on intrinsic motivation have been conducted to understand ways that have been adopted in engaging talent. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s work indicated that hotels adopted training, challenging work, job rotation, increased responsibility, and job enrichment in developing employees. Lyria (2014)'s work highlighted job rotations, informal career discussions with executives, challenging job assignments and mentorship relationships with senior colleagues, career centres, career counselling, career workshops, formal education as ways of developing talent. These strategies increase employees' value for themselves and for the firm to improve organization performance. Nwoye (2017)'s respondents noted that talent was developed through active challenging work. Some of Nwoye (2017)'s respondents insisted though that what matters in making talent engaged in the entire value proposition from the employer.

Thunnissen (2015) stresses job rotation and challenging assignments as useful instruments for developing talent. Putra *et al.* (2017) noted that employees are motivated when the work itself is challenging, interesting, and accorded career development opportunities. Kichuk (2017)'s work insisted that the development of talent enhances job involvement, which was described as active participation in one's job, or the degree to which employees are actively engaged in it, to fulfil their intrinsic needs. Respondents in Kichuk (2017)'s confirmed that

involvement in their jobs increased job satisfaction and were more committed to their organisations investing substantial effort to achieve organisational objectives. Tomany (2012)'s works noted that keeping talented employees engaged is so important that some organizations have adopted a policy of assigning a senior mentor to each high performing individual, not merely to assist with the development, but also to help address any difficulties.

Organizations that are keen on engaging their talent must adopt career development strategies. Such strategies equip talent with competencies that make them competent in their jobs. This ultimately builds commitment to the job, organization, and industry. This claim is consistent with Mansoori (2015); Kichuk (2017) points of view that talent who were technically endowed showed significant commitment to the establishment. Kichuk (2017)'s findings emphasised that individuals who were allowed to develop their careers felt valued and increased commitment. Their commitment mattered even more because they would create unique value based on their mastery of skills and in-depth practical industry-related knowledge. Anbumathi and Sivasubramanian (2016) posited that highly engaged people in the organization share their tacit knowledge with the organization members leading to engagement that benefits the organization with enhanced productivity and profitability.

There was no consensus in the studies reviewed on what activities constitute talent career development. Nevertheless; the current study adopted talent career development activities based on enriched jobs, increased responsibilities, and challenging jobs as a package for investigation. The reviewed literature on this section was also not forthright as to whether

all individuals were engaged through career development opportunities or not. The current research adopted exclusive engagement that aimed at talent only.

2.4.3.5 Best Work Environment

The best work environment that includes authority, autonomy to be innovative; and work and life balance is a key constituent of intrinsic motivation. Putra *et al.* (2017) emphasized that a good work environment is a key driver of commitment to hospitality talent. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) agreed and added that the hotels' environments mean more to talent especially millennials than extrinsic motivators like money. This suggests that matters that catered for their social wellbeing contributed to the desired work environment in organizations. This statement was supported by Leng (2013) who described the best work environment adopting strategies aimed at showing concern about talent's personal lives that create feelings of belonging. Nwoye (2017)'s study added that the best work environment encourages teamwork, supportive and trustworthy relationships among employees. In such environments, employees can be creative, exchange ideas, and take risks without fear for their careers. Therefore; adopting an environment that allows authority and autonomy enhance engagement.

Authority and autonomy form the perceived best work environment. These attributes allow talent to use their knowledge and skills more freely rather than following the basic working routine which leads to job satisfaction hence commitment (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). Linden and Teece (2014) agreed with this claim and added that; talent are experts who must be accorded guided professional autonomy while holding them accountable to the organization. Some of Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s respondents noted that when talent is given authority at work they will enjoy working for the organisation. However, the authority

should be limited to prevent abuse of authority and flexibility in decision making; and this arrangement might be virtually impossible to offer for some positions. In this case, authority and autonomy were exclusively given to talent (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). It is apparent from this literature that autonomy and authority make talent to feel in charge and as such, they are likely to apply their discretionary effort and expertise for the benefit of the organization. This is in congruence with Putra *et al.* (2017)'s work studies in hospitality settings found that autonomy can predict employee work engagement.

Work-life balance (WLB) also forms part of the work environment which strengthens organisational commitment. Kichuk (2017) noted that WLB includes flexible working hours and career advancement. Nwoye (2017) explained that organizations' support and affection is a key component of WLB. Research shows that the hospitality industry is faced with long and unsociable working hours, heavy workload, handling demanding and difficult customers leading to stress (Kichuk, 2017). Putra *et al.* (2017)'s work emphasized that employees engaged more in their work when specific job resources, such as social support were provided. A study by Kichuk (2017) found that talent reported positive outcomes of WLB despite long and unsociable hours, stress, and heavy workloads. On the other hand, some participants confessed that it was extremely difficult to achieve proper WLB in hotels due to stress, unsociable hours, and exhaustion. For instance, Kichuk (2017) discovered that WLB was hardest to achieve in certain departments like the restaurant, food and beverage production, and housekeeping staff.

2.4.3.6 Psychological Contract (PC)

PC is critical to an employee's intrinsic motivation aimed at achieving organizational commitment (Holland, 2017). It is a belief in a reciprocal obligation between the employee

and the organization through a mutual relationship and it is perceived by the employee rather than the organization (Ballou, 2013; Soomro *et al.*, 2016). If the employer upholds the PC in terms of pay and job security, the employee will provide hard work, loyalty, sacrifices, etc. in return (Oppenheim, 2018).

Psychological Contract can be portrayed in two different ways: transactional and relational. A transactional contract is based on economic or extrinsic factors, that enhance employees' commitment to performing well in a short period but generally does not result in high performance in the long term (Ballou, 2013; Soomro *et al.*, 2016). The short-term perspective is because employees with a transactional PC are not driven by factors that facilitate loyalty to the organization. A relational PC is developed through non-economic, socio-emotional, and intrinsic factors founded on trust and organizational commitment over an indefinite time. Employees whose PCs are portrayed as relational may base their contracts on status, recognition, the chance to be creative, job security, work/ lifestyle balance, training, career development, and promotions (Ballou, 2013; Soomro *et al.*, 2016).

When an employee perceives that his/her employer has violated one or more promised obligations termed as "PC breach", he/she is likely to reciprocate in some ways (Oppenheim, 2018). Perceived contract breach results in a sense of discrepancy between what is promised and fulfilled. This perceived discrepancy leads to unmet expectations, loss of trust, and commitment, which in turn negatively affects talent engagement (Soomro *et al.*, 2016). Oppenheim (2018) claims that a violation of PC breach can impact the employee's beliefs towards their duties in their work with the employer. Those employers,

who fulfil their promises to the employees, show that they are committed to them, value their contributions, and intend to continue with the relationship (Soomro *et al.*, 2016).

The fulfilment or breach of the PC can impact the amount of work the employee puts in the job, perceptions of fairness and trust, and employee turnover (Oppenheim, 2018). Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s respondents insisted that their hotels honour whatever they promise their employees and include compensation (base pay, overtime pay, bonuses, service charge, travel/ meal/ housing allowance, insurance, vocation, and leave), and promotion. Thus, pay should be complemented by recognition, coaching, job rotation, and development (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). If these are not fulfilled, talent is disillusioned and less committed to the work.

PC can be achieved by three phases (Soomro *et al.*, 2016). Firstly, positive PC facilitates employees to reach greater job satisfaction that spurs excessive emotions in their performance. Secondly, it can increase the enthusiasm of employees. When the employees have functioning enthusiasm, they ascribe additional meaning to the job and it will influence job performance positively. At work, enthusiasm brings extra care for the job and raises the potential capability of employees resulting in additional values to the organization. Thirdly, a well-adjusted psychological contract stimulates the development of employees. Such employees will always put extra effort into their jobs to deliver more effectively to their organizations. If an employee views their PC with an employer positively, they are more likely to become engaged in their work and more highly motivated to contribute to organizational effectiveness (Oppenheim, 2018). When the employer maintains its promises in the eyes of the employee, the PC is fulfilled.

2.4.3.7 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

Like talent attraction and selection, all the TM studies reviewed did not comprehensively review talent engagement. This study assembled some approaches from human resources textbooks and investigated them to establish their impact on competitiveness. Studies on engagement reviewed used qualitative research design thus quantifiable data was not available. This study filled the gap in the literature by conducting a survey through a quantitative research design that revealed the statistics on talent engagement. Finally, studies of TM addressing talent engagement in Kenya's hospitality industry were not available; thus this study sought to fill the gap.

2.4.4 Talent Development

In most large organisations, on average, 80% of talent is developed or grown; and 20% obtained externally (Tomany, 2012). It is economical and less risky for organisations to develop talent because it creates positive EVP, psychological contract, and organisational capability (Tomany, 2012; Putra *et al.*, 2017). Holland (2017) contends that if the talent is not challenged and developed its value will be lost. Development is vital in instilling the corporate culture and enabling talent to contribute to the performance of the organization (Sturman, Corgel, & Verma, 2011). Whelan and Carcary (2011) added that TM initiatives seek to develop the KSAs of only talented and knowledge workers in line with the firm's strategic needs. Critical skills gap analysis identifies skills to be trained (Charron, Harrington, & Wiggin, 2014), and individuals to be developed can be selected based on the nine-box grid in Table 2.2.

Talent oriented organizations use various development initiatives and some of them are as follows (Aswathappa, 2013; Mansoori, 2015): external career development courses, in-

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house development programmes, 360-feedback assessment technique, technology-based training, coaching systems, mentoring (buddying) systems, job rotation, action learning, special projects assignments, stretching assignments, and job shadowing.

2.4.4.1 External Career Development Courses

External career development courses like masters, management, doctorate, or any other have the potential of creating self-confidence among the workforce because of increased knowledge and better performance. Unless funded by the individuals themselves, hospitality organisations have little incentive in sponsoring them because of financial implications (Kichuk, 2017). CIPD (2015) confirmed this claim and added that hospitality organisations were likely to adopt in-house career development courses rather than external ones, presumably due to economies of scale. Mishra, Sharma, and Kumar (2019) also found that external career development courses have a significant relationship with organizational performance which is a source of competitive advantage.

2.4.4.2 In-House Development Programmes

Mansoori (2015) stated that the implementation of TM is an uphill task, and its actualization varies from organization to another. Its success depends on individuals who have special KSAs. One of the techniques of imparting or improving KSAs in individuals is the utilization of in-house development programmes. Kichuk (2017)'s study informants praised them for their capacity to increase knowledge and better performance. On this account talent gain self-efficacy that makes them approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. Lyria (2014)'s study revealed overwhelming support for in-house development programmes by company executives at 90%. As well, they improved the KSAs of talent who would then handle assignments they had less

incentive to take before. This assertion aligns with CIPD (2010) study on learning and talent development which indicated that in-house development programmes were rated at 56% and ranked as one of the most effective learning and development practices. This reveals that critical talent that would offer an organization a competitive edge is developed.

2.4.4.3 360-Feedback Assessment Technique

Bialek (2014) stated that the 360-feedback assessment technique is largely used for leadership development programmes. It allows a wide range of stakeholders to gain a broader perspective of how they are viewed within the organization in comparison to self-reported and self-perceptions. Assessment is through bosses, peers, direct reports, and clients or customers. Bialek (2014) noted that the administration of two feedback interventions can improve leader effectiveness more than a single administration; therefore, where possible, administer a follow-up 360-degree feedback process six months to one year after the end of the development program for further improvement and as a benchmarking tool (Bialek, 2014). A study by Dirani (2018)'s finding revealed that 360 feedback assessment is applied in business, academia, and government in the United Arab Emirates to create or improve KSAs among talent.

2.4.4.4 Technology-Based Training is used to Develop Talent

A study by Dirani (2018)'s revealed that business, academia, and government within the United Arab Emirates adopted online training platforms for functional and soft skill training, and employees taught the courses. Lyria (2014) assessed the adoption of technology-based training in companies listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange. It was established that E-learning was of great importance with 83% of executives embraced it, 12% did not while 5% were uncertain. The findings implied that the adoption of

technology-based learning was a factor in organizational performance. Keen selection and utilization of the technique would create benefits that are rare with competitors. Kichuk (2017) agreed with this assertion and added that exposing talent to technology-based training may present opportunities to study new material connected to their jobs via interactive computer learning packages.

2.4.4.5 Coaching Systems are used to Develop Talent

Coaching has been acclaimed as useful in developing effectiveness among individuals. It is critical after processes of appraisal in which coaches study the feedback and then guides the target individual accordingly (Mansoori, 2015). In the end, individuals improve the performance and business growth of organizations. Mensah and Bawole (2017) also revealed that coaching is an effective development process that helps employees to match their KSAs with job requirements. This statement is supported by CIPD (2010)'s study on learning and talent development in which coaching by line executives was ranked at 51% among the top effective learning and development practices.

Coaching can be conducted by coaches mostly line executives or participation in peer-group coaching. Bialek (2014) studied peer group coaching in the USA. The researcher stated that peer coaching supports collaborative learning which increases confidence and facilitates the application of skills, generation of ideas, and creation of accountability. On the other hand, Lyria (2014) studied coaching by the line executives, and 80% of the respondents confirmed to have adopted it, 16% did not while 4% were unsure about it. Lyria (2014) further added that coaching occurs between the employee and supervisors and focuses on examining employees' performances and taking actions to maintain effective performance.

2.4.4.6 Mentoring (Buddying) Systems are used to Develop Talent

According to the CIPD (2007), mentoring occurs when a senior experienced staff member takes responsibility for the development and career progression of individuals. Moreover, the mentee will observe the skills displayed by the mentor and learn them from the experience. Indeed, the dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation proposed by Nonaka (1994), embraces the mentoring/ buddying system as ideal for talent oriented organizations. The theory proposes that tacit knowledge in talent accumulated through experience need to be diffused, and passed on to potential talent (Dalkir, 2013). Therefore, it is apparent that mentoring is valuable for the development of talent. Various entities have become aware of these benefits. For instance, Mansoori (2015); Dirani (2018) reported that businesses, academia, and government in the United Arab Emirates have actively engaged the technique to support the transfer of expert knowledge from professionals to junior employees. Detuncq and Schmidt (2013); Tansley and Tietzeb (2013) also commended the technique as being effective in supporting the leadership development of individuals ready to take responsibilities.

Individuals identified as talent ought to be attached to a buddy who will mentor them over time to improve and apply KSAs. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study in Thai hotels identified the practice of buddying. It noted that when hotels recruited or promoted talent into position, they also assigned them, buddies, to help them develop to the highest performance. Lyria (2014)'s study also found that mentoring was adopted in the companies investigated but they were focused on the career management of employees. Results showed that 82% of companies had career mentors, 9% did not while 9% were uncertain.

The process aligned individuals with performance needs and their contribution have made organizations competitive.

2.4.4.7 Job Rotation is used to Develop Talent

Job rotation is a type of on the job training in which talent undergoing training are placed into a job without advance training; when the job is learnt they progress to another job and so on (CIPD, 2014). Glaister, Karacay, Demirbag, and Tatoglu (2017) posited that job rotations allow for collaboration and teamwork and create conditions for sharing knowledge. Saad and Mayouf (2018) stated that a well-executed job rotation can enable hotel employees to discover their abilities and skills; and further facilitate in matching them with job requirements (Mensah & Bawole, 2017). Lyria (2014) supported this statement and pointed out that job rotation helps move people into roles where their skills are most suited and their aspirations are best met. Job rotations are also beneficial in other ways like multiskilling and functional flexibility (Kichuk, 2017). When these benefits are achieved, organizations are in a position to become more competitive than competitors.

2.4.4.8 Action Learning

Action learning, in the form of cross-functional, enterprise-wide strategic projects, could complement the overall learning experience and benefit both participants and organizations alike (Bialek, 2014). Action learning is an approach for developing leaders, solving complex problems, and building teams. Therefore; action learning provides an environment for participants to learn and develop leadership skills while working on high-impact initiatives and solving problems important to the organization. Action learning projects utilizing sponsors and the opportunity to present project results and recommendations to senior leaders also provide high-potentials greater visibility and access to senior-level leaders. The organization can further benefit by utilizing the

intellectual horsepower and talent of high-potentials to complete initiatives related to organization strategy (Bialek, 2014). Mensah and Bawole (2017) found action learning helped match employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities with job requirements.

2.4.4.8 Special Project Assignments

Special project assignments are ideal for leadership development (Detuncq & Schmidt, 2013). Moreover, project assignments provide real opportunities to build and lead teams, facilitate strategic thinking, and help participants cultivate communication skills (Murugesan, 2011). Glaister *et al.* (2017) wrote that special project assignments foster collaboration and teamwork and provide a stimulating work environment that encourages knowledge sharing and enhances the intensity of social interaction. Glaister *et al.* (2017) also indicated that special project assignments focused on personal and team growth but are combined with an individual plan for the future, ensuring a sense of stability in the organisation. The assertion was confirmed by Mishra *et al.* (2019) who found that special

2.4.4.9 Stretching Assignments used to Develop Talent

Mansoori (2015) stated that talented people need creative development and growth opportunities, and these can be provided via assignments that create challenging roles to enable them to learn by working. These assignments further expose talented individuals to new areas of the organisation, thus allowing them to develop and demonstrate their KSAs (Tomany, 2012). Study findings by Cutajar (2012); Brunila (2013); Keoye (2014) noted that; organizations use stretching assignments to nurture creativity and share the knowledge among talent. Additionally, Glaister *et al.* (2017) noted that stretching assignments facilitate collaboration and teamwork and create an environment that encourages the sharing of knowledge. Besides, they facilitate personal and team growth to ensure a sense of stability in organisations.

From an organisational perspective, assignments provide prospects to grow KSAs, among talent for increasingly broad and complex appointments (Tomany, 2012). Ultimately, this is regarded as a developmental intervention for broadening talent in preparation for senior leadership team positions: demands and skill requirements for which are not known. This is particularly important given that, in many large organisations, there is a strong preference to promote internal candidates into future senior leadership team positions because their performance and potential are already established: thereby reducing any possible risks. Investment in talent development through stretch assignments can help to build organisational capability (Tomany, 2012). This statement has been complemented by Mishra *et al.* (2019) who noted that stretching assignments have a significant relationship with organizational performance. Performances that are greater than competitors form sustainable competitive resources.

2.4.4.10 Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is an activity where two employees who have similar performance levels pair up for a specific period to share common experiences, skills, and knowledge regarding specific competencies (Anaya, 2015). Normally, one employee will be designated as the knowledge provider and the other as the knowledge recipient. In a job shadowing activity, both employees are experienced, competent workers. This allows each employee to benefit from the unique KSAs and experience of the other employee(s). This is critical because it helps spread the special KSAs of the most competent workers to others which ensure sustainable competitive advantage.

However, the description of job shadowing by Fabricant, Miller, and Stark (2014) is different from that of Anaya (2015). They defined it as an activity that involves observing

and following a person in a work setting. The person following does not participate in work-related activities, other than learning and asking questions. The current study will adopt the former because the nature of hospitality work requires one to have a combination of KSAs and participating in the work guarantees these. A study by Mensah and Bawole (2017) on Person–job fit matters in parastatal institutions found job shadowing was used and it helped match employees' KSAs with job requirements.

2.4.4.10 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

Like other TM approaches, TM studies reviewed described a handful of talent development approaches. This study assembled some approaches from assorted resources and investigated them to establish their impact on the competitiveness of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Most studies reviewed on talent development could not be determined whether their intent of workforce development was based on inclusive or exclusive TM stances. This study filled the gap in the literature by basing the research on talent development on an exclusive TM stance. Finally, studies of TM addressing talent development in Kenya's hospitality industry were not available; thus this study sought to fill the gap.

2.4.5 Talent and Knowledge Retention

It is an organizational challenge if there is knowledge loss resulting from employee turnover – whether through competitor headhunting, redundancies, or retirements. Departing employees leave with often rare and difficult-to-imitate knowledge, but they also take with them critical knowledge about who they know (Kozic, 2012). This leads to loss of good customer relationships, customer satisfaction, and productivity (Nwoye, 2017). Strategies can be put in place but they will not prevent talent from leaving. Therefore; it is recommended that their tacit knowledge is transferred to other talent in the organization.

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Mansoori (2015) contends that talent departure is of equal importance as retention. This allows talent who turn to be misfits to let go. Reviewed literature revealed that knowledge transfer, long-term contracts, succession planning, and employer branding (talent development opportunities, compensation and incentives, growth/ promotion, psychological contracts, work-life balance, and good working environment) help to retain knowledge and for the sustainable competitiveness of the organizations.

2.4.5.1 Long-Term Contracts to Retain Talent Individuals

Helenius and Hedberg (2007) revealed that organizations targeted in the study offered their employees long term contracts so as they can over their value for an elongated period. Moreover, those employees have the option of extending their contracts. Helenius and Hedberg (2007) add that employees on long-term contracts are more likely to be motivated and remain loyal to the organizations which are incentives for not leaving. Thus, drawing value from talent for an elongated time helps organisations to continue producing quality products and services for a long time. It is even more important if the value they are providing is unique from competitors because it generates and sustains the competitiveness of the organizations. Dirani (2018) contended that contracts with short longevity make employees insecure and as such, they can depart any time before maturation if other opportunities arose elsewhere.

2.4.5.2 Tacit Knowledge Transfer

This is the critical type of knowledge that creates rare capabilities that drive the competitive edge of organizations. Unluckily, it is more personal and subjective, making it difficult to be formalized and communicated (Nonaka & Takeushi, 1995). The knowledge transfer mentoring initiative has been found vital in retaining knowledge in the event of talent

turnover. Mentoring promotes the direct transfer of critical tacit work-related knowledge from an experienced employee to a prote´ge´ and can increase an individual's social capital through exposing him/her to the mentor's social network (Whelan & Carcary, 2011; Martins & Martins, 2011).

The other techniques include; storytelling, coaching, after-action reviews, and communities of practice aid the transfer of tacit knowledge (Agarwal & Islam, 2015). Handover training (for outgoing employees) and induction program, orientation or training (for incoming employees), are both effective ways for the transfer of tacit knowledge. These mechanisms ensure that even if a key knowledge worker leaves the organization, his/her knowledge is retained through its transfer to other employees. A study conducted in hotels in the coastal region of Kenya by Gichuki (2014), noted that hotels transferred knowledge and experience to existing personnel. This is mainly done to enhance and sustain a competitive advantage.

2.4.5.3 Succession Planning

Succession planning refers to a process of anticipating and then planning for the replacement of important employees in an organization (Jooss, 2018). The description by Fitz-Lewis (2018) is more comprehensive; and it states that succession planning is the identification of the growth opportunities based on the talent within the organization strategically and competitively achieving success in the future. Succession planning can help with the retention of talent as they are made aware of the availability of internal opportunities to progress in their careers (Helenius & Hedberg, 2007; Kichuk, 2017). Fitz-Lewis (2018) revealed that one of the effective ways of creating and transferring KSAs is

through mentoring. Machuma *et al.* (2018) praised succession management as a process that creates transfers and retains knowledge associated with target jobs.

Employer Branding

Employer brand refers to an image of the organization, and its status affects the retention of talent. Leng (2013) noted that a good employer brand plays a critical role in retaining talented employees. A study conducted by Fathy (2018) states that the poor image of the hospitality industry negatively affects employee retention. Bhasin *et al.* (2019) are of the view that a successful employer brand reduces employee turnover. Thus talent executives in collaboration with the management team of organizations focus on creating a workplace that delivers exceptional work experience to its employees, thereby; influencing the perception of employees towards employer brand and hence, retention Bhasin *et al.* (2019).

The literature reviewed revealed antecedents of employee branding that were common to talent retention and they include; talent development opportunities, compensation and incentives, growth/ promotion, psychological contracts, work-life balance, and a good working environment. Tomany (2012) singled out intrinsic rewards related approaches to be the most effective in retaining talent. Talent development opportunities, growth/ promotion, psychological contracts, work-life balance, and a good working environment are all intrinsic rewards. Tomany (2012) also observed that individuals not considered talent prefer extrinsic rewards such as monetary benefits.

2.4.5.4 Talent Development Opportunities

Hausknecht, Rodda, and Howard (2009)'s study of the leisure and hospitality sector in the USA indicated that talent stayed because they are offered advancement opportunities and organizational prestige as compared to low performers who preferred extrinsic rewards.

Talent oriented hospitality organizations in Egypt provided opportunities for developing talent (Saad & Mayouf, 2018). A study conducted by Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Fathy (2018) also agreed that the development of talent is one of the effective retention programmes that increase productivity. Some of the development programmes include; different cross – exposure training programmes (internal, chain, and international cross-exposure training), among others. (Leng, 2013), also identified cross-training in other properties or studying in universities overseas, formal leadership programs, and on-the-job learning opportunities are critical in retaining talent in China (Leng, 2013).

Becker *et al.* (2009); Tomany (2012) added that line executives foster organizational development of talent using stretching and challenging assignments. Talent development build relationship with talent aimed at promoting loyalty to achieve retention. This claim is supported by Holland (2017), who revealed that talented workers stay if development opportunities and challenging work to strengthen their careers are provided. The CIPD (2015) as well recommended increased development opportunities and the creation of clear career paths to retain talent. It further revealed that organizations that invest in the development of talent have the highest retention rates. Kichuk (2017)'s study results were also aligned with development through career development courses to increase retention.

2.4.5.5 Compensation and Incentives

A competitive compensation scheme has been touted by Becker *et al.* (2009) as critical to talent retention, but this should be reserved for critical positions. However, other studies have downplayed upward compensation packages as not significant because competitors can match them (Holland, 2017). Other research findings noted that compensation influenced retention depending on its nature and cohort (Deloitte, 2010). Compensation

can be either financial or non-financial Deloitte (2014) and a recent report highlighted that financial incentives are seen to appeal more to generation X, whereas non-financial incentives such as company culture and flexible working arrangements were the preference of generation Y (Deloitte, 2010).

Talent oriented hospitality organizations in Egypt provided a financial reward system for talent (Saad & Mayouf, 2018). A study was done by Fathy (2018) also noted that compensation and rewards alleviate employee turnover rate. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s work noted that compensation is the single most important determinant for talented workers to leave or remain in the hotels. Relatively low wages in the hospitality sector were cited as the major reason talent would weigh staying or leaving based on the monetary rewards available (Leng, 2013; Putra *et al.,* 2017). In light of this, Kaewsaeng-on (2017) concluded that the technique is the most effective tool for retaining valuable employees.

Tomany (2012) stated that compensation or pay is complex from the point of view of individuals. Individuals may be paid to satisfactory levels but quit because of the equity of pay issues. Respondents in Tomany (2012)'s study noted that having pay equity among the same employees with the same level of experience and doing the same job was a key factor in ensuring that the talent remained. In relation to this, Lyria (2014) explained two types of equity; internal and external equity. Internal equity is how individuals perceive their pay to be fair in comparison to others in similar positions within the same establishment. External equity is the perceived fairness of the remuneration in comparison to how much other individuals in the same kind of work are receiving in the same industry (Lyria, 2014). Anyhow, the study found a positive relationship between compensation and retention. As

far as TM is concerned, treatment of individuals is differentiated in that talent is paid high amounts while those not considered as talent are paid less. This study adopted the approach of differentiation so that the study remains consistent with the TM concept in which talent is paid more because they differentially influence positive competitive advantage.

2.4.5.6 Growth/ Promotion of Talent

Promotion is an important driver of retention; however, Fathy (2018)'s study in Egypt posited that employees spend several years before getting promoted in the hospitality industry. Fathy (2018); however, indicated that hotels should adopt promotions as they are one of the effective retention programmes that increase productivity. A study by Kichuk (2017) confirmed that organizations investigated recognized and promoted their employees giving them a sense of job satisfaction and career satisfaction. This implied that employees got increased responsibility, pay or perks, prestige, and also became more valuable to the organization. Lyria (2014) found that growth/ promotion opportunities may have contributed positively to talent retention. The findings also imply that employee satisfaction and motivation may have contributed positively to the competitiveness of the organizations.

2.4.5.7 Psychological Contracts

A psychological contract is an employee's belief in a reciprocal obligation between the employee and the organization through a mutual relationship and it is perceived by the employee rather than the organization (Ballou, 2013; Soomro *et al.*, 2016). When an employee believes that the organization has failed to discharge its obligations the psychological contract is said to have been damaged (Holland, 2017). Promises are not necessarily oral; rather, they can be demonstrated through management action and be

spoken, written, or implied. Context, words, and actions can signal promises, which create meaning for individuals (Holland, 2017). Talent who perceive the existence of a positive psychological contract become embedded in the organization.

Embeddedness occurs when people become attached to their environments, finding it difficult to leave (Mitchel & Lee, 2001). It is characterized by a combination of psychological, social, and financial elements that drive retention. Employees with high organizational embeddedness are mostly involved in and tied to projects or jobs they fit well in and apply their skills, and sacrifice valued things if they quit (Mitchel & Lee, 2001). Thus, hospitality organizations that keep their promises and offer greater rewards make employees to be embedded in the organizations' job and compete at par or better than competitors (Kichuk, 2017).

2.4.5.8 Work-Life Balance

Leng (2013); Kichuk (2017); Kaewsaeng-on (2017) described work-life balance as a work environment that creates feelings of family and belonging within the establishment. Fathy (2018) argued that one of the negative aspects of the hospitality industry is the sacrifice of private life, invasive, and long working hours. These aspects have been found to cause a turnover. In the same context, Kichuk (2017)'s work noted that it was a challenge to achieve WLB because of the nature of the industry that has unsociable working hours, but noted that those who enjoy a WLB are better able to manage work and family, and are more satisfied and therefore; more inclined to stay. Holston-Okae (2018) affirmed that work-life balance was one of the most effective methods of reducing talent turnover, whereby; retention strategies consider both work and life components (Fathy, 2018). The retention strategies need to address the negative impact created by pressure and unsociable

hours to retain talent (Kichuk, 2017). Thus effective WLB practices become part of an appealing employer brand that creates feelings of being valued which increases retention of staff.

2.4.5.9 Good Work Environment

The work environment is considered as an important dimension of employer brand by employees regarding their choice of an employer (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). They further indicated that the work environment is an important component that contributes to the strength of an employer brand. This is important because a good employer brand plays a critical role in retaining talented employees (Leng, 2013). Kaewsaeng-on (2017) added that positive work environments combined with other aspects become attractions for talent to be retained. Nwoye (2017)'s study added that a good work environment encourages teamwork, supportive and trustworthy relationships among employees. In such environments, employees can be creative, exchange ideas, and take risks without fear for their careers. Therefore; such work environments foster employee retention who continue to be sources of competitive advantage.

2.4.5.10 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

Like other TM approaches, TM studies reviewed described a handful of talent and knowledge retention approaches. This study assembled some approaches from assorted resources and investigated them to establish their impact on the competitiveness of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Most studies reviewed on talent retention could not be determined whether their intent of retention was based on inclusive or exclusive TM stances. This study filled the gap in the literature by basing the research on talent and knowledge retention on an exclusive TM stance. Finally, studies of TM addressing talent

development in Kenya's hospitality industry were not available; thus this study sought to fill the gap.

2.5 Extent of Talent Management Adoption

Talent management being a new concept, it is important to establish the depth and breadth it has been adopted across organisations more so hotels. The indicators that were discussed and eventually formed the basis of the study involved: TM policy, TM budget, top leadership support for TM, talent paths, talent pools, filling of all strategic positions with talent only, pay differentiation, and identification and transfer of tacit knowledge.

2.5.1 Hotels have Talent Management Policies

The adoption of policy supports the implementation and evaluation of TM. The literature reviewed revealed that not all organizations have TM policies. Among those that were considered not to have a TM policy adopted inclusive approaches to talent management which are perceived to be human resources management (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen, 2015). In other words, the policies they have are HRM centric. Most organizations do not have TM policies. For instance, Holland (2017)'s study in pull-to-stay post-acquisitions found characteristics of exclusive TM, but respondents indicated that there was no formal TM policy.

On the other hand, other organizations were found to have a formal TM policy. For instance, Cappelli and Keller (2014) advocated for a TM policy whereby firms ought to devote more resources to jobs in which individual performance has the greatest potential to impact a firm's competitiveness. Cappelli and Keller (2014) further argued that HiPo programmes are designed to identify HiPo individuals for the positions while leveraging limited developmental budgets to them. This assertion has been lent credence by Feng

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(2016) who found that formal TM policies targeted critical roles with more resources and attention. Koranteng (2014)'s study in Ghana though in Banking was informed that organizations adopted TM policies which facilitated the achievement of goals and objectives.

2.5.2 There is a Budget Set Aside for Talent Management

Dries (2013) argues that TM is successful when there are budgets allocated to its activities under the exclusive approach. This argument is supported by Collings (2014) who posited that that TM requires a budget for managing its activities like training, career development, creation of benefits to keep employees satisfied which are incentives for retention. Jooss (2018)'s study on, "global talent management: the identification process of pivotal talent in multinational hotel corporations in Dublin," lends support to budgets for TM. The study found that hotels had budgets for identifying and developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs for critical positions to gain a competitive advantage.

2.5.3 There is Top Leadership Support for Talent Management

Stahl and Björkman (2012) stressed the importance of top leadership support in organizations on the successful implementation of TM. In support of TM as well are the line executives and their immediate supervisors whose main role is implementation. Cappelli and Keller (2014) noted that TM practices are implemented by line executives and supervisors. Their specific roles would include, identifying, training, coaching, and mentoring HiPo and HiPe, and reporting to the top leadership about outcomes and needs of TM (Bialek, 2014; Mensah & Bawole, 2017). A study conducted by Jooss (2018) on "global talent management: the identification process of pivotal talent in multinational hotel corporations," found that TM needs a higher management 'sponsorship', that is,

strong support from superiors in the organisation. Tarique and Schuler (2012) confirmed that a lack of senior management support is one of the main barriers to successful TM. The assertions expressed indicate that the extent of TM can be measured by the depth of top leadership support because they would play an important role in preparing necessary resources, policies, strategic planning, monitoring, and correcting where need be.

2.5.4 Talent Paths

Talent paths involve buying, building, bounding, and binding limited to talent only, and bouncing applies to the entire workforce. Buying talent is one of the indicators of the extent of talent management adoption. It is achieved by recruiting, sourcing, and securing new talent into the organisation (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). The attraction of talent allows organizations to effectively select the best applicants who are likely to perceive higher levels of fit and, in turn, to be committed to their jobs (Fathy, 2018). TM scholars such as Bhasin *et al.* (2019) have touted an employer brand as a strategy that eases talent attraction problems. The selection of talent is based on HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs for critical positions (Tarique & Schuler, 2012; Holland, 2017).

Building talent is another indicator of the extent to which TM adoption is achieved by helping people grow through training, job assignments, or life experiences (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). This shapes talent into fitting in the organizations' corporate culture that enhances their competitive advantage (Sturman *et al.,* 2011; Stahl and Björkman, 2012). Additionally Holland (2017) contends that if the talent is not challenged and developed its value will be lost. Talent oriented organizations predominantly used: external career development courses, in-house development programmes, 360-feedback assessment technique, technology-based training, coaching systems, mentoring (buddying) systems,

job rotation, action learning, special projects assignments, stretching assignments, and job shadowing (Aswathappa, 2013; Mansoori, 2015). Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) insisted that development opportunities ought to be prioritised for talent only.

Borrowing talent is also an indicator of the extent to which TM is adopted by bringing knowledge into the organization through advisors or partners while bounding talent is achieved through promoting the right people into key jobs (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). A study by Fathy (2018) on "issues faced by hotel human resource executives in Alexandria, Egypt," confirmed the assertion. The findings showed that hotels adopted promotions as retention strategies to increase productivity. The extent of TM was also found to involve 'bouncing talent' strategy which entails removing poor performers from their jobs and/or the organisation. This is related to Jack Welsh's concept of 20/70/10 differentiation rule whereby; 20% of employees are superstars that should be promoted and retained at all costs. 70% of employees are average but should be kept and developed. However, 10% of employees are underachievers who should be bounced (Cardy & Leonard, 2011).

Binding talent which is another indicator of the extent to which TM adoption is measured by the nature of retention (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). Extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are important incentives in retaining talent (Kichuk, 2017; Putra *et al.,* 2017). Alternatively, tacit knowledge within talent can be retained in the organization through transfer to HiPo and HiPe as suggested by Nonaka and Takeushi (1995); Agarwal and Islam (2015). Machuma *et al.* (2018) also indicated that succession management supports the creation, transfer, and retention of knowledge associated jobs in critical positions. The retention of both talent and critical knowledge form competitive resources that would not be copied or

imitated easily by competitors. The overall outcome is that competitive advantage is obtained and sustained.

2.5.5 Only Individuals Considered Talent are Drafted into Talent Pools

The extent of TM can also be demonstrated in talent pool processes. The phrase talent pool refers to the pool of high potential and high performing incumbents that the organization can draw upon to fill pivotal talent positions (Autti, 2011). Having identified the positions, the development of a talent pool to fill them is done. A study by Jooss (2018) was also in agreement with these assertions noting that employees that are selected into the talent pool were HiPo and HiPe and are expected to occupy strategic roles within the establishment. Whelan and Carcary (2011) argue that firms systematically identify future business needs in terms of knowledge, skills, and capabilities that will be required in the future but are not currently available in-house and recruit on this basis.

Indeed, Schuler and Tarique (2012) confirmed that high performing organizations followed a talent pool strategy in recruiting the best people and then finding positions for them. Kichuk (2017)'s study noted that individuals in talent pools are more likely to accept increasing performance demands. The study further suggested that succession planning should be considered as a subset of talent pools. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s findings also indicated that it is the best employees that are chosen into talent pools through proven performance. This also means that they have a 'ready pool of talent ready to us' which can contribute the best performance to the organization (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). Beheshtifar and Moghadam (2011)'s work found that objective assessment methods such as multilateral evaluation to identify individuals for talent pools.

Boudreau (2013); however, suggested a hybrid approach in which all employees are put into talent pools, with some pools being identified as more critical or specialized but with a general ethos of good human resource management. This assertion is different from the intentions of TM in that it combines both inclusive and exclusive approaches to TM. The criticism towards the concept of talent pools is that HiPe may easily become disillusioned if they are appointed to roles with limited scope for the application of their skills or development of their talent Collings and Mellahi (2009); (Swailes & Blackburn, 2016). Bialek (2014) emphasized that talent pools are important to an extent that lack of their existences would make it difficult for organizations to fill critical positions or responsibilities.

2.5.6 All Strategic Positions within Hotels are Filled with Talent Only

This proposition is based on the description of TM described by Collings and Mellahi (2009) as, "activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization". Bialek (2014) also indicated that strategic positions should be occupied with HiPo, HiPe, or individuals with unique KSAs. The utilization of HiPo and HiPe is to draw their value for competitive advantage.

Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study on, "talent management: a critical investigation in the Thai hospitality industry," found results that were in agreement with "all strategic positions are filled with talent." The findings indicated that strategic positions were filled with talent and

motivated other employees to achieve better performances. Mansoori (2015) also shared a similar view that individuals with KSAs should be available in strategic positions to accomplish strategic business requirements. Collings and Mellahi (2009) lend support to the assertions by noting that strategic positions ought to be filled with talent – people who are HiPo or and HiPe so as their value is maximized, and a sustainable competitive advantage is achieved.

Jooss (2018) perceived the aspect of all strategic positions in organizations is filled with talent only formed two perspectives. The first one is for the firms that followed the elite exclusive perspective, all key strategic roles are filled with top talent and further differentiation of top talent takes place to identify a super-elite. On the other hand, when implementing a hybrid TM perspective, only small proportions of employees, aspiring executives, for example, are included. Anyhow, TM researchers like Cappelli and Keller (2014) supported the exclusive view in which organizations identify individuals who are best bets for success in strategically important roles, leveraging limited developmental budgets by focusing them on HiPo and HiPe candidates. The use of HiPo and HiPe is to draw their value for competitive advantage.

2.5.7 Pay Differentiation whereby Talent is Compensated Better than Employees Doing the Same Job

The proposition of pay differentiation stems from the exclusive approach of TM discussed by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* (2013) in which some positions differentially influence competitiveness. These positions ought to be filled by HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Secondly, the classification of employees into classes A, B, and C players by workforce differentiation theory Tarique and Schuler (2012) portrays "A players" as HiPo,

HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. These two propositions refer to elite workers whose pay should commensurate with their value.

Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study on, "talent management: a critical investigation in the Thai hospitality industry," uncovered that there was a budget set aside to reward high potentials and high performers. Kichuk (2017)'s study on, "understanding talent management in the hotel sector: employees' narratives of personal career development," also found that there were rewards exclusively for HiPo, HiPe, and talent with unique KSAs. Jooss (2018)'s study also noted that financial resources are limited in most organizations and it is more cost-effective to focus all attention on a select few. This implies that talent in critical positions in which most resources are allocated to benefit more than other employees not considered talent or not occupying these positions. (Nwoye, 2017)'s study findings seemed to suggest that there was pay equity for all employees doing the same job in the organizations that were targeted.

2.5.8 Tacit Knowledge Management

Hotels find tacit knowledge internally or externally, obtain it, transfer it from holders to potential talent, and prevent competitors from accessing it. Putra *et al.* (2017) noted that the nature of hospitality jobs is labour intensive, with few jobs being knowledge-based. The knowledge-based jobs differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Jafari & Xiao, 2016). Further, tacit knowledge has been considered to be critical in creating competitive resources that competitors do not have. Tacit knowledge consists of a technical dimension often referred to as know-how and a cognitive dimension that includes schemes, mental models, and beliefs (Gascoigne & Thornton, 2013). External processes identify and recruit talent with

sought tacit knowledge. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) suggested that critical knowledge is achieved by recruiting, sourcing, and securing new talent into the organization. This was true to Jooss (2018)'s work which indicated that external staffing provides organizations with a greater variety of employees who may have unique know-how whose utilization makes them competitive.

Internal processes have also been found to support the development, transfer, and retention of tacit knowledge. Glaister *et al.* (2017) wrote that special project assignments and job rotations allow for collaboration, teamwork, and the creation of conditions for sharing knowledge. Agarwal and Islam (2015) claimed that organizations used storytelling, coaching, after-action reviews, and communities of practice to transfer tacit knowledge. Additionally, talent with tacit knowledge transferred it through mentoring processes (Whelan & Carcary, 2011). Reviewed literature revealed that knowledge transfer, long-term contracts, succession planning, and employer branding (Whelan & Carcary, 2011; Dirani, 2018; Jooss, 2018).

2.5.9 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

The extent of TM can best be measured through statistical data. The literature reviewed whether in hospitality or other industries, used qualitative research design which generated descriptive data. The current study conducted a survey through a quantitative research design that generated statistical data for rating the extent of TM in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Finally, studies of TM addressing the extent of TM in Kenya's hospitality industry were not available; thus this study sought to fill the gap.

2.6 Outcomes of Talent Management

Scholars of TM have highlighted both positive and negative repercussions of adopting the concept. Those came up in the review of literature include knowledge resources difficult to imitate, individuals, with valuable KSAs, non-talent into talent, efficiency in production, teamwork and cohesion, turnover rates, and demoralization and resentment.

2.6.1 Talent Management Creates Knowledge Resources Difficult to Imitate

According to Sparrow and Makram (2015), TM is a strategy that can provide a competitive advantage to any organization. McCartney and Worman (2010) add that if an organization is focused on TM, it would be successful in creating some valuable assets that are rare and difficult to imitate in the form of tacit knowledge (Whelan & Carcary, 2011). Tomany (2012) concurs with this assertion, by insisting that the use of talent management may enable organizations to sustain competitive advantage. This is because competitors will find it harder to replicate the KSAs of talent. According to some scholars such as Mellahi and Collings (2010) employees are the most important assets of any organization and hence, managing them effectively can be an influential factor that determines the success or failure of the organization.

2.6.2 Talent management assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs

One school of thought regards talent as 'natural ability', and they propose its acquisition for competitive advantage. Regarding this context, Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) observed that talent is regarded as a natural ability that cannot be learnt. This suggests that organizations that can identify and recruit individuals with the natural ability will be in a position to create unique products and services competitors cannot. Thunnissen (2015) seemed to be in support of this statement noting that, talent considered to harbour natural

ability is likely to create superior performances for the organizations worthy to build competitive advantage.

There is also a second school of thought that portrays 'talent as mastery' and as such target individuals ought to be exposed to suitable training and learning environments. This is a deliberate effort for organizations to build talent but target individuals that are HiPo and HiPe. Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013)'s study noted that talent is not born, but made through deliberate practice and learning from experience. The study; however, contended that not all individuals exposed to practice and learning experiences end up creating competitive resources. Therefore, this calls for a focus on HiPo and HiPe to be developed through talent pools (Jooss, 2018).

The other school of thought promotes the recruitment and development of individuals considered to contain 'natural ability and mastery.' Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) conceptualized these individuals as containing inborn, unique abilities and that can be further systematically imparted with KSAs that lead to superior performance. Similarly, Kichuk (2017)'s respondents highlighted the significance of hotels recruiting the best possible talent and in providing the right environment for growth and success of both the individual and the firm. The concept gained support from Thunnissen (2015) who noted that such individuals have the aptitude to master KSAs and ultimately achieve exceptional results. Whichever school of thought adopted; whether 'natural ability', talent as mastery', or 'natural ability and mastery,' individuals in any of the domains should be retained. This is to ensure that their special KSAs do not leave the organization. Indeed, Kaewsaeng-on

(2017) contended that the turnover of key worker hinders the organization from fully utilizing this source of competitive advantage.

2.6.3 Talent Help Hotels to Build Individuals not Considered Talent into Talent

Talent management can build suitable environments in which talent improves the KSAs of co-workers particularly HiPo to become talent whose contribution creates a competitive advantage. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study on, 'talent management: a critical investigation in the Thai hospitality industry' investigated the importance of talent in improving the KSAs of co-workers. General executives noted that if talented workers' performance is high then this can influence other workers as well, or become role-models for other co-workers. They further insisted that it is important to have talented workers in strategic positions because what they do can be the main motivation for other workers to follow; and thus, this can be our standard of working or the model of best practice (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). A study by Thunnissen (2015) noted that TM processes are likely to encourage talent to do more than their assigned tasks and show extra-role behaviour, such as helping co-workers become polished in their work.

2.6.4 Talent Management Increases Efficiency in Production

This study adopted an exclusive approach of TM that was cited to be efficient through the utilization of the workforce with unique KSAs. This workforce creates a difference in organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013). A study by Kaewsaeng-on (2017) found that individuals under TM are endowed with KSAs to contribute effectively in their roles. Their performance goes a long way in satisfying customers by displaying high-quality service to hotel guests. Boella and Turner (2013)'s

asserction that TM is the systematic identification of key positions that differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage; suggests that the process increases efficiency and productivity. Wood, Dibben, and Meira (2016) emphasised that a lack of supply chain talent negatively affects businesses because inefficiencies cause increased costs and decreased quality.

2.6.5 Talent Management Undermines Teamwork and Cohesion

Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) write that TM undermines teamwork because it involves some team members considered talent. It is only these individuals that are rewarded, causing an overall negative or neutral effect whereby the positive effects of some receiving a reward do not outweigh the negative effects of most not receiving a reward), and runs the risk of creating an atmosphere of destructive internal competition that impedes learning and the spread of best practices across the organization. Thunnissen (2015)'s work noted criticisms of the exclusive TM approach because of its overemphasis on individual performance, which potentially diminishes teamwork and creates a destructive internal competition that hinders learning and the spread of best practice across the organization. These assertions are in accordance with the finding by Bialek (2014); Xue (2014) whose informants noted that, employees not considered talent feel discriminated against and get disengaged.

2.6.6 High Turnover Rates of Non – Talent Individuals

Individuals in organizations not categorized as 'talent' can lead to a high turnover rate (Cappelli, 2008). The researcher further argues that organizations need people with various skillsets at different levels. Thus the inclination of TM to certain groups of employees especially HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs manifests weaknesses. Mohannadi

(2017)'s work also observed that TM creates elitist approaches that cause discontent among the workforce. Findings by Kichuk (2017) revealed that employees who were excluded from the TM related processes felt frustrated and had intentions of leaving their current hotels.

Holland (2017)'s work views turnover from an interesting perspective. The researcher's work suggests that turnover is good for the organization because it can help weed out unproductive or poor performing employees, and there is evidence that the practice influences organizational effectiveness. However, departures are appropriate if only they do not involve HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs (Holland, 2017). The practice of weeding out poor performers is supported by workforce differentiation theory which considers them as 'C performers', and should be let go (Cardy & Leonard, 2011). Swailes and Blackburn (2016); however, argue that those employees who were not considered talent were more likely to accept increasing performance demands, be more committed to skill development, and more likely to support the organization's strategic priorities.

2.6.7 Demoralization and Resentment from Individuals not Considered Talent

A common criticism of TM is that it can result in an environment of inequality among employees if implemented without proper planning and thought (Collings & Mellahi, 2010). For example, nurturing the skills of the best performers only without giving much attention to other employees can lead to demotivation and dissatisfaction. Employees excluded from the TM process get demotivated and underperform in their roles. This statement was confirmed by Kichuk (2017)'s findings whose respondents referred to the act of exclusion from the TM process as unethical and unfair which does little to inspire

high performances for competitiveness is hindered. Furthermore, if the process of identifying talent is unstandardized, employees will feel that the process is insincere.

A study conducted by Kichuk (2017) revealed that TM produces resources that create a competitive performance. The resources formed by TM create better levels of productivity than rival firms which put them in the domain of competitiveness (Mansoori, 2015). These statements emphasize the importance of TM in achieving greater organization performance for promoting competitive advantage. Tomany (2012)'s study adds weight to the statement by noting that TM can be used as a potential lever for enhancing organizational performance by creating talent with unique KSAs and deploying them to critical positions within establishments.

2.6.8 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

The outcomes of TM can best be measured through statistical data. The literature reviewed whether in hospitality or other industries, used qualitative research design which generated descriptive data. The current study conducted a survey through a quantitative research design that generated statistical data for quantifying the outcomes of TM in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Finally, studies of TM addressing the extent of TM in Kenya's hospitality industry were not available; thus this study sought to fill the gap.

2.7 Hospitality Industry Competitiveness

The competitiveness of the hospitality industry broadly features; expansion in facilities, products/ services, increased guests, provision of high-quality service, and competitive advantage (Boella & Turner, 2013). Critical jobs within the industry have been touted as drivers of competitiveness. There are a significant number of jobs in the Kenyan economy that are in the Hospitality and Tourism sector. In 2017, the industry directly supported

429,500 jobs in Kenya (3.4% of total employment) (WTTC, 2018). This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines, and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). It also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists. This is expected to rise by 2.7% per annum to 574,000 jobs by 2028 (WTTC, 2018).

The statistics indicate a noteworthy development of the hospitality industry in relation to other industries. However, the industry is faced with the challenge of high labour turnover, and among the group are talented individuals. Kuria, Wanderi, and Ondigi (2011) indicated that labor turnover was higher by 68% in 3-star rated hotels and 13% in 5-star hotels. The implication is that customers would not receive a high-quality service, and the overall result is dissatisfaction. Eventually, the competitiveness of the industry is hurt.

2.7.1 Quality Products/ Services

Talent Management is designed to increase workplace productivity that drives organizational success (Mansoori, 2015). Kichuk (2017) adds that TM brings about competitive advantage in hotels by producing high levels of service quality, customer satisfaction, innovation, and retention of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs who in turn sustain productivity. Additionally, Mansoori (2015) notes that TM drives organizations' performance, sustainable competitive advantage, and revenues. This claim is supported by Kaewsaeng-On (2017) who stated that; TM-powered hotels meet customers' demands for quality products and services, and this requires an equivalent level of KSAs. Mmutle and Last (2017)'s study noted that hotels have to deliver superior service quality to differentiate themselves from their competitors and; furthermore, enhance their

reputation. Mohannadi (2017) cautioned that, though the TM concept brings and sustains competitive advantage; it is complex.

TM positively influences the quality of products and services provided in hotels (Jafari & Xiao, 2016). Guests are end-users of these products and services, and their level of expectations and perceptions will reflect the competitiveness of hotels (Aliyu, 2017). Indeed, service quality results from customers' comparisons of their expectations about a service encounter with their perceptions of the service encounter (Mmutle & Last, 2017). According to Parasuraman (1985), service quality can be measured by subtracting customer perception scores from customer expectation scores on responsiveness, assurance, empathy, reliability, and tangibility dimensions shown in Table 2.3. TM has been touted as an approach that can enable organizations to acquire, develop, engage, and retain individuals with KSAs pertinent to dimensions of responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and reliability.

Table 2.3: SERVQUAL Dimensions

Dimension	Description
Responsiveness	Readiness in assisting customers and offer a swift service
Assurance	Workers' knowledge, courteousness, ability to motivate trust and confidence
Tangibility	The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and written materials
Empathy	Compassionate, effective communication, understanding of customers, and providing them with individual attention
Reliability	Ability to execute the service promised in a manner that is dependable and accurate

Source: Adopted from Parasuraman (1985)

2.7.2 Tacit/ Inimitable Knowledge

Lyria (2014) observed that TM processes nurture talent who ultimately inject capabilities that are very difficult for competitors to benchmark and replicate. TM obtains or develops

technical talent that is responsible for creating tacit knowledge considered critical in the establishment of intellectual property (Holland, 2017). Intellectual properties create unique products and services that offer hotels a competitive advantage (Kaewsaeng-on, 2017). The talent responsible for intellectual property needs to be safeguarded from competitors by building loyalty. The intellectual property must be protected as well. Thus tacit knowledge and resulting intellectual properties create a competitive advantage. This is in accordance with RBV theory which emphasis the acquisition and development of inimitable resources. These resources affect how knowledge is applied to work, resulting in a superior competitive advantage over rivals (Lyria, 2014).

2.7.3 Production of Exceptional Products/ Services

Globally, the hospitality industry is witnessing increasingly sophisticated guests with heightened expectations, the constant emergence of new technologies, and unyielding cost pressures in the wake of intense competition. Hospitality organisations, therefore, must develop talent with competencies that correspond to exceptional products/ services (Bharwani & Talib, 2017). Creating exceptional products/ services requires critical KSAs which can be available or developed in HiPo and HiPe individuals (Tarique & Schuler, 2012; Holland, 2017). Mmutle and Last (2017)'s study found that guests perceived target hotels to be of high quality if they had good recreational facilities, exceptional service, and a good variety of entertainment. Rose (2016) confirmed this assertion in which study findings noted that the delivery of exceptional products/ services is supported by individuals with KSAs. Lyria (2014)'s studies also indicated that exceptional service is achieved by providing an exciting customer experience. This experience is complex to create and requires individuals with proven knowledge, skills, and abilities.

2.7.4 Acquiring and Developing of Talent

There is a consensus that facilities and amenities are duplicated from hotel to hotel suggesting that other resources need to be introduced to achieve competitive advantage. Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) suggest that talent is the one resource that can create a superior performance that differentiates an organization from another. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study was informed that "there is a lot of competitiveness and external constraints in hotel business therefore hotels ought to find or develop adequate talent in key positions to create and remain competitive. Kichuk (2017) stressed that talent needs to be acquired and developed for all levels and noted that 'A-players' improve productivity and raise profits of hotels. Lyria (2014)'s study is also in support of acquiring or/ developing talent. The research insisted that firms that want to be competitive, must invest in talent management for their workers

2.7.5 Variety of quality products/ services

Talent management nurtures individuals with exceptional qualities because they are expected to a variety of quality products/services to create competitive resources for organizations (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Mmutle and Last (2017)'s study found that guests perceived target hotels to be of high quality if they had good recreational facilities, exceptional service, and a good variety of entertainment. GoK (2007) in its vision 2030 suggests that the tourism industry in Kenya should endeavour to offer new products. GoK (2013)'s strategy on '*The National Tourism Strategy 2013 – 2018'* contended that lack and weak product diversification and differentiation is a drawback for the tourism industry in Kenya.

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

This section addressed; key knowledge issues, controversies in literature, main research gaps, and the actual gaps that the study addressed.

2.8.1 Key Knowledge Issues

The literature reviewed indicated that the conceptualization of TM was linked to the manner in which TM was implemented. Hospitality competencies critical in TM were cognitive, functional, meta, and social. TM practices; attraction, selection, engagement, development, and retention emerged as the medium through which TM is conducted. The extent to which TM is adopted involved the availability of policies, budgets, exclusivity, or inclusivity of the concept, compensation differentiation among others. The outcomes of TM revealed both positive and negative impacts on organizations. Finally, the literature reviewed indicated that TM influences the competitiveness of organizations through acquisition/ development of tacit knowledge; acquisition/ development and retention of talent; and production of quality, diverse and exceptional products/ services.

2.8.2 Controversies in Literature

The review of the literature revealed some controversies. It is only HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs who were attracted, selected, engaged, developed, and retained. There is compensation differentiation for the workforce in the same positions because one is considered talent and the other not; retention of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs only.

2.8.3 Main Research Gaps

The literature reviewed revealed that there are diverse conceptualizations of talent management which make it difficult for its implementation. It was also revealed that some

organizations did not differentiate between TM and HRM. TM practices such as attraction, selection, engagement, development, and retention have not been adequately addressed. Key or critical positions were referred to often but there was insufficient evidence on what those positions were. Most of the studies were conducted through qualitative research designs upon which descriptive data was obtained which could not adequately measure the adoption of talent management. Most studies on talent management were conducted in other disciplines like management and finance. The majority of those conducted in hospitality were done in Europe, North America, and Asia which may not be replicated in Kenya due to contextual aspects. There were no known studies on TM conducted in Kenya's hospitality industry except one that did not address issues surveyed by the current study.

2.8.4 The Actual Gaps that the Research Addressed

The study addressed all the gaps that were identified in the review of the literature. The study established the manner in which TM was conceptualized in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The study adequately addressed the TM practices of attraction, selection, engagement, development, and retention. The current study used a mixed-method research design to address both quantitative and qualitative data needs. The study was conducted in the hospitality industry in Kenya to fill gaps existing in terms of lack of sufficient TM knowledge in the industry worldwide and lack of TM studies in Kenya's hospitality industry.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the research design, the study area, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, the research instruments, pre-testing, validity and reliability, data techniques, data analysis, logistical and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a structure of research (Kombo & Tromp, 2013). This study used a mixed-method research design. Crotty (1998) emphasised that researchers ought to systematically justify their choices of research design to command respect in research. This helps to ensure the soundness of research, make outcomes convincing, and justify the choice of methodology and methods. Thus the process is conceived through methodical, methodological, theoretical, and epistemological stances (Crotty, 1998). Methods are procedures used to gather and analyze data related to some research questions or hypotheses. The methodological stance is a plan of action, process, or design that leads to the choice and use of methods for desired outcomes. The theoretical stance is a philosophical perspective informing the methodology thus creating a context for the process and grounding their logic and criteria. The epistemological stance is the theory of knowledge rooted in the theoretical stance leading to the methodology (Crotty, 1998).

3.2.1 Research Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge namely: authoritative, logical, intuitive, and empirical Crotty (1998); Mansoori (2015), which is the basis of the theoretical approach selected. The epistemological stance of a study provides a context for the research process, it offers the philosophical grounding necessary to make decisions on the kind of

knowledge that is possible and how these can be ensured to be both legitimate and adequate

(Crotty, 1998). Three epistemological constructs; objectivism, subjectivism, and

constructionism are expressed in Table 3.1. Each one of the epistemological stances is

accompanied by respective theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and methods to be

adopted in studies.

Table 3.1: Research Framework Based on Epistemology

EPISTEMOLOGY	THEORETICAL	METHODOLOGY	METHODS
Objectivism	Positivism Post-Positivism	Experimental research Survey research	Sampling Measurement and scaling Statistical analysis Survey Questionnaire Focus group Interview
Constructionism	Interpretivism ✓ Symbolic interaction ✓ Phenomenology ✓ Hermeneutics Pragmatism Critical inquiry Feminism	Ethnography Grounded theory Phenomenological research Heuristic inquiry Action research Discourse analysis Feminist standpoint Case Study	Qualitative interview Observation Life history Narrative Theme identification Focus group Document analysis
Subjectivism	Postmodernism Structuralism Postcolonialism	Discourse theory Archaeology Genealogy Deconstruction	Auto-ethnography Semiotics Literary analysis Pastiche Intertextuality

Source: Adapted from Crotty, 1998

Objectivists adopt an ontological assumption, and therefore meaningful reality exists as

such apart from the operation of any consciousness Crotty (1998); Kaewsaeng-on (2017).

This implies that meaning is already inherent within the object being examined and the

properties of that object can be measured and quantified (Munyiri, 2015). Therefore, it is

up to the researcher to discover the reality inherent in the target objects. The downside is

that humans are limited by underlying values and biases, cultural influences, and the provisional nature of knowledge and understanding (Crotty, 1998).

Constructionists hold that 'truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of [one's] engagement with the realities in [one's] world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge; it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even with the same phenomenon' (Crotty, 1998). The perspective further implies that meaning can only be constructed by humans by interacting with the objects around them (Crotty, 1998). The implication in research is that scholars are active, resourceful, and reflective rather than passive recipients of a predetermined meaning.

Regarding subjectivism, Crotty (1998) contends that meaning does not come out of the interplay between subject and object, but is imposed on the object by the subject. This implies that the object does not contribute to the generation of meaning. It; therefore, appears that the researcher's values and lived experience cannot be removed from the research process and the researcher's axiology should be acknowledged (Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007). Axiological assumptions refer to the values of the researcher. The overall epistemology allowed the researcher to apply triangulation to overcome the weaknesses of a single monolithic method. Precisely constructionism and objectivism were adopted for the study.

3.2.1.1: Theoretical Stance

Crotty (1998) describes a theoretical stance as a research design framework informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria. Positivism aims to collect data by observation and interpret it through an objective

approach to yield observable and quantifiable findings (Mansoori, 2015). It enabled the researcher to obtain numerical answers, actual data and figures, minimize bias, and generalise findings to the broader hospitality industry in Kenya. Pragmatism allows the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed methods research design) (Mansoori, 2015). Furthermore, it rejects the scientific notion that social science inquiry can access the ontological data about the real world solely by virtue of a single scientific method (Munyiri, 2015). The current study adopted it to use a mixed-method research design and also to independently construct meaning on the adoption of TM in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County.

3.2.1.2: Methodology

Methodology refers to the overall strategy or plan of action for conducting research (Kothari, 2004). A research strategy is a general plan of action that will give direction to the research, enabling one to conduct it systematically. The research strategies applied in this study were survey research and case study. The survey strategy is closely associated with the deductive approach. In this strategy, a sample of respondents is selected from a population and administered with questionnaires. This was conducted to capture attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions of the adoption of TM in Nairobi City County.

3.2.1.3: Methods

Mixed methods design comprises explanatory sequential design denoted as QUAN+qual and exploratory sequential design denoted as QUAL+quan among others (Kariuki, 2010; Creswell, 2015). This study utilized explanatory sequential design which is a type of mixed methods design in which the dominant method was quantitative which sought data from talent and training executives and guests. The qualitative method complemented the quantitative data by seeking data from the front office, housekeeping, food and beverage production (FBP), food and beverage service (FBS), and finance executives. The

qualitative descriptive design described the state of affairs as they existed (Kombo & Tromp, 2013). It captured attitudes, patterns, and opinions of the departmental executives towards the concept of talent management.

Mixed methods design involved collecting data through interviews, questionnaires, and statistical analysis. The explanatory sequential design is a two-phased process. It involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data, which has the priority of addressing the study's (Creswell, 2015). Finally, qualitative data is collected and analysed to build on quantitative data. Kariuki (2010) observed that mixed-method has emerged, and has become known as the third methodological movement, alongside quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The quantitative approach was used to obtain talent management related statistics from talent and training executives and guests. The qualitative approach captured attitudes, patterns, and opinions of the line executives on the state of affairs of TM competencies and approaches as they existed.

3.2.1.4: The Overall Mixed Method Design of the Current Study

The mixed-method design as applied in the current study was the QUAN+qual research approach. This is because the researcher believes that it is important to include qualitative data and approaches into an otherwise quantitative research approach. The overall design can be referred to as a combination of the quantitative-objectivism-positivism approach, and the qualitative-constructivism-pragmatism approach. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The two sets of data were separately analyzed after and then blended during interpretation. The overall mixed-method design of the current study is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

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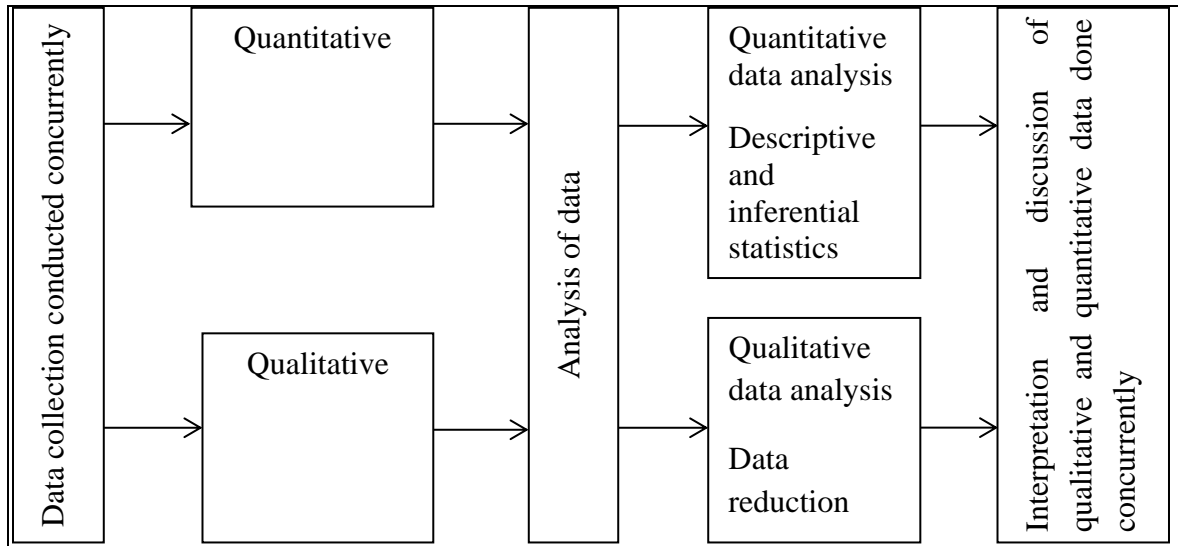
Figure 3.2: Design of the research study

3.3 Research Study Area

The study was conducted in the County of Nairobi because over 70% of the hotels classified in the *Tourism Regulatory Authority Regulations: L.N.128 of 2014 Publication of Classified Tourism Enterprises* are located in Nairobi City County (The Tourism Act, 2014). Secondly, most of the five–star hotels in Kenya have their headquarters in Nairobi. Third, the County of Nairobi is the political and administrative centre of Kenya and the business capital of East and Central Africa. Thus, resulting findings from the study have been considered significantly representative.

3.4 Target Population

A population was defined as an entire group of individuals, cases, or objects with some common observable characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). All five-star hotels in Nairobi were targeted and this was according to (GoK, 2003; The Tourism Act, 2014). Talent, training, front office, housekeeping, food and beverage production, food and beverage service, and finance executives were targeted. The participation by this cadre of personnel ensured that the data collected and in extension findings were solidly grounded

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in experience and practice. Furthermore, their selection was based on the assumption that their positions are critical and they are talent Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Kichuk (2017). Guests from 5-star hotels were also targeted because they are the end-users of products/services due to TM. According to the Knight Frank Report (2015) bed night occupancy in Nairobi high-class hotels is 2500 guests, and this figure was used as the target population. The respondents were drawn from all the 11 five star hotels available in Nairobi City County as shown in Appendix v. Table 3.2 shows the target population.

Table 3.2: Target Population

Type of Respondents	Respondents Targeted		
	Total	**Total**	**Aggregate**
Talent executives	11		
Training executives	11		
Housekeeping executives	11		
Food and beverage production executives	11		
Food and beverage service executives	11		
Front office executives	11		
Finance executives	11		
Guests		2500	
Total	**77**	**2500**	**2577**

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is a process of selecting some individuals, cases, or objects from a target population so that the group chosen contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The study utilized stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques. The stratified sampling technique divides the target population into strata to complete the process of sampling (Kombo & Tromp, 2013). A stratified sampling technique was used to divide the target population into executives and guests. This because there was a different set of questions for each stratum.

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The technique was further used to divide executives into two strata. One stratus was for talent and training executives upon whom quantitative data was sought. The second stratus contained front office, housekeeping, food and beverage production, food and beverage service, and finance executives upon whom qualitative data was obtained.

According to Kombo and Tromp (2013), the purposive sampling technique deliberately targets a group of individuals, cases, or objects believed to be harbouring specific characteristics sought. Five-star hotels were selected because they are the ones with resources to implement TM which is a costly process. The technique was also used to select hotel executives because they are the ones who implement talent management in their critical positions. Two sets of data; quantitative and qualitative were obtained from the executives. Lastly, simple random sampling was used to obtain guest informants for the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) wrote that a simple random sampling technique allows each participant an equal chance of inclusion into the sample. Guests were chosen because they are the end-users of service output which would be influenced largely by effective talent management.

3.5.2 Sample Size

The first level of respondents comprised of 77 executives from all the eleven hotels (Appendix V). Each hotel provided 7 executives. The executives were selected based on exclusive– subject and exclusive – object approaches. The exclusive– subject approach refers to KSAs in HiPe, or unique workforce and the study assumed that executives fit the criterion. Exclusive – object approach refers to critical/ strategic positions that must be filled with HiPe, or a unique workforce, and it was assumed that the executives for the study occupy such positions. Twenty-two (22) executives, that is 'talent' and 'training'

executives are responsible for TM in the overall hotel. These executives responded to questionnaires. Fifty-five (55) executives are line executives and are responsible for implementing TM in their departments. These executives were informants of interviews. The second level of respondents was guests, who were calculated according to Fisher's formula in Mugenda and Mugenda (2003);

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the optimum sample size, N the number of the target population, e the probability of error (i.e., the desired precision, e.g., 0.05 for 95% confidence level). Thus n was *345* as derived from the equation below:

$$n = \frac{2500}{1+2500(0.05)^2} = 345$$

Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) noted a threshold of 30% of the calculated sample is sufficient. Thus only 30% of the 345 guests were participants, resulting in 104 guests. The total sample size was 181 (77 hotel executives + 104 guests). Table 3.3 shows the distribution of respondents.

Table 3.3: Sample Size

NO	STUDY HOTELS	RESPONDENTS							
		Talent Executives	Training Executives	FBP Executives	FBS Executives	Finance Executives	Front Office Executives	Housekeeping executives	Guests
	Hotels for the Study								
1.	Hemingway's Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
2.	Villa Rosa Kempinski Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
3.	The Sarova Stanley Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
4.	Dusitd2 Hotel Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
5.	Fairmont The Norfolk Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
6.	Tribe Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
7.	Hilton Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
8.	Safari Park Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
9.	InterContinental Hotel Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
10.	Nairobi Serena Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
11.	Laico Regency Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
	Total	**11**	**11**	**11**	**11**	**11**	**11**	**11**	**104**
	Grand Total	**181**							

3.6 Research Instruments

Concurrent triangulation of various quantitative and qualitative techniques was used to collect data. The study used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data from talent and training executives. The semi-structured questionnaires allow respondents to state their answers in the way they see as appropriate, in their ways, and their own words (Veal, 2006). These enabled the executives to provide holistic views of the adoption of TM in their establishment. Servqual structured questionnaires were used to obtain data from the guests. Questions were restrained to expectations and perceptions of the final products and services. These perspectives revealed the relationship between the adoption of TM and

the competitiveness of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Generally, questionnaires allow respondents adequate time to think about their responses (Kombo & Tromp, 2013).

Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain qualitative data from line/ departmental executives. Questions on hospitality core competencies and talent management practices were posed and probing was done where necessary to get deep and rich data. Kariuki (2010) emphasised semi-structured interviews tend to probe more deeply and allow for explanations from respondents without necessarily jeopardizing the goal of the research. A major shortcoming though is that they are time-consuming to undertake, hinder reliability, and in that results cannot be easily replicated in other situations (Veal, 2006). The three sets of instruments enhanced triangulation which involves comparing data from multiple sources of evidence to enhance the completeness of data, to increase confidence in the findings, and enhance the understanding of the study (Yin, 2014).

3.7 Pre-Testing

A pre-test was done in two five star hotels comprising of four talent and training executives, ten line executives, and 10 guests. Table 3.4 shows the distribution of respondents that participated in the pre-test. The pre-test allows for any modification in the tool before it is distributed to the respondents (Kombo & Tromp, 2013). The results of the pre-test were used to make appropriate adjustments in the research instruments to improve their effectiveness in data collections. Some questions/ statements in the various tools were either eliminated or revised. There was also an edition of statements and questions to fill the gap that was evident in the findings of the pre-test.

Table 3.4: Pre-Test Data

NO	STUDY HOTELS	RESPONDENTS							
		Talent Executives	Training Executives	FBP Executives	FBS Executives	Finance Executives	Front Office Executives	Housekeeping executives	Guests
	HOTELS FOR PRETEST								
1.	Sankara Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
2.	Radisson Blu Hotel Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
	Total	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**10**
	Grand Total								**34**

3.7.1 Validity of the Research Instruments

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data represent a phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Content validity was used to assess the internal validity of the research instruments which was ascertained through the help of supervisors to ensure that set of questions and interviews gathered the intended responses. Moreover, some interviews were recorded, and that not, careful note-taking was done to minimise the risk of wrongly interpreting answers during transcription. Additionally, probing was to ensure that the informants comprehended the questions and to allow the collection of richer data.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability measures the degree to which the research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Two sets of data from the same respondents were obtained in a difference of one week during the pre-test. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the scales used in the questionnaire and Alpha's less than 0.6 for some items in constructs were dropped as suggested by Du Plessis (2010). The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the constructs improved to above 0.6 as shown in Table

3.5. Additionally, research assistants were trained and facilitated to ensure the equivalence of results.

Table 3.5: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for Internal Reliability

Constructs	Number of Items Measured	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
Competencies that require TM	10	0.744
Approaches applied in each TM practice		
Attraction	9	0.670
Selection	9	0.673
Engagement	7	0.702
Development	12	0.741
Talent and knowledge retention	10	0.685
The extent of talent management	11	0.661
Outcomes of talent management	7	0.867

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher sought appointments from the respondents through personal visits, email, and telephone calls. The researcher made personal visits to administer the questionnaires and conduct interviews with the respondents selected for instrument testing with the help of three (3) research assistants during the pre-test phase. In the data collection phase for the thesis, the researcher made personal visits together with the three (3) research assistants to administer the questionnaires and conduct the interviews. All the interviews were conducted by the researcher. Two respondents answered the questions and emailed later. Most interviewees declined to be recorded on voice records, so their answers were put in written form. The researcher and research assistants visited the selected hotels on several occasions for follow-ups and collection of questionnaires. Some respondents requested to have research tools emailed to them, and they returned answers through the same media. The study was conducted between the start of December 2017 and mid-April 2018.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved quantitative and qualitative data analyses. The analysis was conducted based on each objective. The data analysis matrix in Table 3.6 forms the foundation of involved quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

Table 3.6: Data Analysis Matrix

Research Objectives	Sources of Data	Data Analysis
To explore the conceptualization of talent management on the promotion of competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya	Questionnaire	1.Descriptive statistics: percentages, mean, standard deviation 2. Thematic analysis
To assess hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels	Questionnaire, Interview schedule	1.Descriptive statistics: percentages, mean, standard deviation 2.Inferential statistics: two-sample proportion test, one-sample t-test, and Linear regression analysis 3. Content analysis 4. Thematic analysis
To profile the approaches adopted for talent management practices in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya	Questionnaire, Interview schedule	1. Descriptive statistics: percentages, mean, standard deviation 2. Inferential statistics: Linear regression analysis 3. Thematic analysis
To evaluate the association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya	Questionnaire	1. Descriptive statistics: percentages, mean, standard deviation 2.Inferential statistics: linear regression analysis
To establish the outcomes of talent management in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya	Questionnaires	1. Descriptive statistics: Percentages frequencies, means, standard deviation 2. Inferential statistics: linear regression
To determine the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels	Questionnaires	1. Descriptive statistics: Percentages frequencies and means 2. Inferential statistics: linear regression and Pearson correlation

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Filled questionnaires were coded and edited after which the data therein was entered into the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and imported to statistical packages (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 20 version and STATA 14). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were derived from the softwares. Descriptive statistics involved frequencies, percentages, means, mean rankings, and standard deviations; and they were presented via graphs and tables. Inferential statistics involved correlation of relationships amongst variables; and they involved bivariate and multivariate analyses which were done through Pearson correlation tests and linear regressions respectively. All inferences and conclusions were made at 95% confidence level. Therefore, rejection criteria involved rejecting the null hypothesis whenever the p-value was less than the significance level of the test (p-value < 0.05).

Bivariate analysis was used for guests' respondents. Thus competitiveness through product and service quality was measured by subtracting average customer perception scores from average customer expectation scores (Q=P-E) finding a Gap score of -0.827 indicating an unsatisfactory quality. Pearson correlation was used to determine the significance between the expectation of the guests on products and services as a result of talent management and the perceptions of products and services of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County (r = -0.277, p =0.009). The corresponding H_05 is indicated in Table 3.7. Multivariate analyses were used for talent and training executives and the hypothesis tested are indicated in Table 3.7.

The overall hypothesized linear regressions model equation was reconstructed to:

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots + \beta_n x_n$$

Where; y = dependent variable, competitiveness of five star hotels, α = intercept term and β = regression coefficients based on the significant predictor variables, x = talent management independent variables

Table 3.7: Summary of the Proposed Study Hypotheses

$H_0 1$:	There are no significant hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County
$H_0 2$:	There are no significant approaches adopted in talent management practices that promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County
$H_0 3$:	There is no significant association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County
$H_0 4$:	There is no significant association between the outcomes of talent management and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County
$H_0 5$:	There is no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County

Note: Results significant at p<.05 for all null hypotheses

3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was done in a three-phase process which included: reduction, discussion, and conclusions from the data. In reduction, the recorded interviews were transcribed into Microsoft word as well as transferring those interviews that were answered in writing by the informants. They were then imported to QSR NVivo 10 analysis package. Key terms and statements were extracted and presented on tables which then formed themes for discussion. Data discussion ensued with compiling the reduced data into an organized and compressed into a logical framework. Content analysis was used to discuss how hotels conceptualised TM. Both content and thematic analyses were used to discuss the views of line executives on hospitality core competencies and approaches used in each TM practice. Conclusions were drawn from the themes to reveal topologies of TM conceptualization in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

3.10.1 Logistical Considerations

Before visiting the hotels under investigation, the researcher sought consent from the school of postgraduate and also from the Commission for National Science and Technology Innovation (NACOSTI). Appointments were secured through personal visits, telephone calls, and online applications where advice was made to obtain formal consent from respective study hotels. This was followed by personal visits by the researcher and research assistants to administer questionnaires to the talent and training executives and guests and interview line executives.

3.10.1 Ethical Considerations

The collected data was handled with the utmost confidentiality. The respondents were assured that the findings of the study would be used for academic purposes only. Participation in the study by the research respondent was voluntary, without physical or psychological coercion or promises of benefits.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess the adoption of talent management for competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. This chapter focused on the findings and discussions of the study and highlighted key areas such as response rates, study participants' demographic variables, followed by discussions based on the study objectives and test of hypotheses.

4.1 Response Rate

One hundred and eighty-one (181) respondents involving hotel management staff and guests were targeted. Responses were received from 145 respondents. Twenty (20) line executives were not available for interviews. The overall response rate was 80.11%, and it was deemed adequate for analysis and interpretation. This was in accordance with Johnson and Wislar (2012) who asserted that a response of above 60% is generally accepted as a threshold for survey quality in social sciences. Table 4.1 shows the categories of survey respondents and their response rates.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Type of Respondents	Respondents Targeted	Participants that Responded	Percentage Response
Talent and executives	11	11	100.00
Training executives	11	11	100.00
Housekeeping executives	11	7	63.64
Food & beverage production executives	11	7	63.64
Food & beverage service executives	11	7	63.64
Front office executives	11	8	72.73
Finance executives	11	6	54.55
Guests	104	88	84.62
TOTAL	**181**	**145**	**80.11**

4.2 Section A: Demographic Profile of the Participants

The demographic profile of participants comprised of gender, age, period respondents has held their positions and their academic qualifications.

4.2.1 Gender

Results revealed that the overall male participants were 55.86% (n=81), while the female was 44.14% (n=64). Male respondents dominated in all other categories except Housekeeping executives. Table 4.2 exhibits the results of the participants' gender profile.

Table 4.2 Participants' Gender Profile

Level of Respondents	Female		Male	
	n	%	n	%
Talent and Training Executives	08	36.40	14	63.60
Food and beverage production executives	02	28.57	05	71.43
Food and beverage service executives	03	42.86	04	57.14
Front office executives	02	25.00	06	75.00
Finance executives	02	33.33	04	66.67
Housekeeping executive executives	06	85.71	01	14.26
Guests	41	46.60	47	53.40
Total	**64**	**44.14**	**81**	**55.86**

These findings conform to those of Knott (2016) whose results indicated that 55% of the respondents were male and 45% of the respondents were female (Knott, 2016). Dumse (2011)'s findings were consistent with the gender split that is a reflection of male dominance in organizations surveyed. A two-sample proportion test (at 95% confidence level) was done to test if the proportion of male to female respondents were significantly different, yielding a resulting Z-value of 1.96 and a p-value of <0.001. Thus male respondents in this study were significantly higher than the female respondents (p<0.001). This finding would imply that any talent programme that is implemented would have to recognize this aspect of the gender profile. Moreover, one of the key characteristics of TM is tacit knowledge and male respondents will be largely depended on for training,

development, and revealing it. According to Dumse (2011), critical in going forward is a deliberate effort to increase the number of female employees especially in the core and critical positions.

4.2.2 Age

Generally, the age of the majority of respondents was between 46-50 years (n=42, 47.73%), followed by $\geq$ 51 years (n=38, 43.18%) and the least was between31-35 years (n=17, 19.32%). Table 4.2 illustrates the results of the participants' age.

Table 4.2 Distribution of the Participants' Age

Respondents	≤30	31-35	36-40	40-45	46-50	≥ 51
Talent & Training executives	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)	7 (31.8%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)
Food & beverage production executives	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (14.29)	2 (9.1%)	1 (14.29%)	3 (42.86%)
Food & beverage service executives	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (14.29)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)
Front office executives	0 (0%)	1 (14.29)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (14.29%)	2 (9.1%)
Finance executives	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (42.86%)	1 (14.29%)
Housekeeping executives	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (14.29%)	3 (42.86%)	1 (14.29%)	0 (0%)
Total 1	**0 (0%)**	**5 (8.77%)**	**11 (19.30%)**	**17 (29.82%)**	**14 (24.56%)**	**10 (17.54%)**
Guests	0 (0%)	12 (13.64%)	14 (15.91%)	6 (27.3%)	28 (31.82%)	28 (31.82%)
Total 2	**0 (0%)**	**17 (19.32%)**	**25 (28.41%)**	**23 (26.14%)**	**42 (47.73)**	**38 (43.18%)**

The analysis of the age of the management staff without guests revealed that the majority age of the executives was between 40-45 years old, (n=17, 29.82%) followed by 46-50 years old (n=14, 24.56%). These findings hold resonance with a study conducted in five-star hotels in Nairobi by Mbugi (2015) which suggested that; the higher the age of executives, the better their performance in management. The findings of this study imply that management staffers relatively had a sufficient period of work experience. Such

experience deepens their knowledge, intellectual capital, technical knowledge, and skills in their respective responsibilities of work. Therefore, they are in a position to identify, select, deploy, engage, develop, and retain talented individuals who bring about competitive advantage for their hotels.

4.2.3 The Period Respondents have Held their Positions

First, the period respondents have held their positions was determined in each hotel department. Secondly, the total percentage of respondents per cluster was calculated as shown in Figure 4.1.
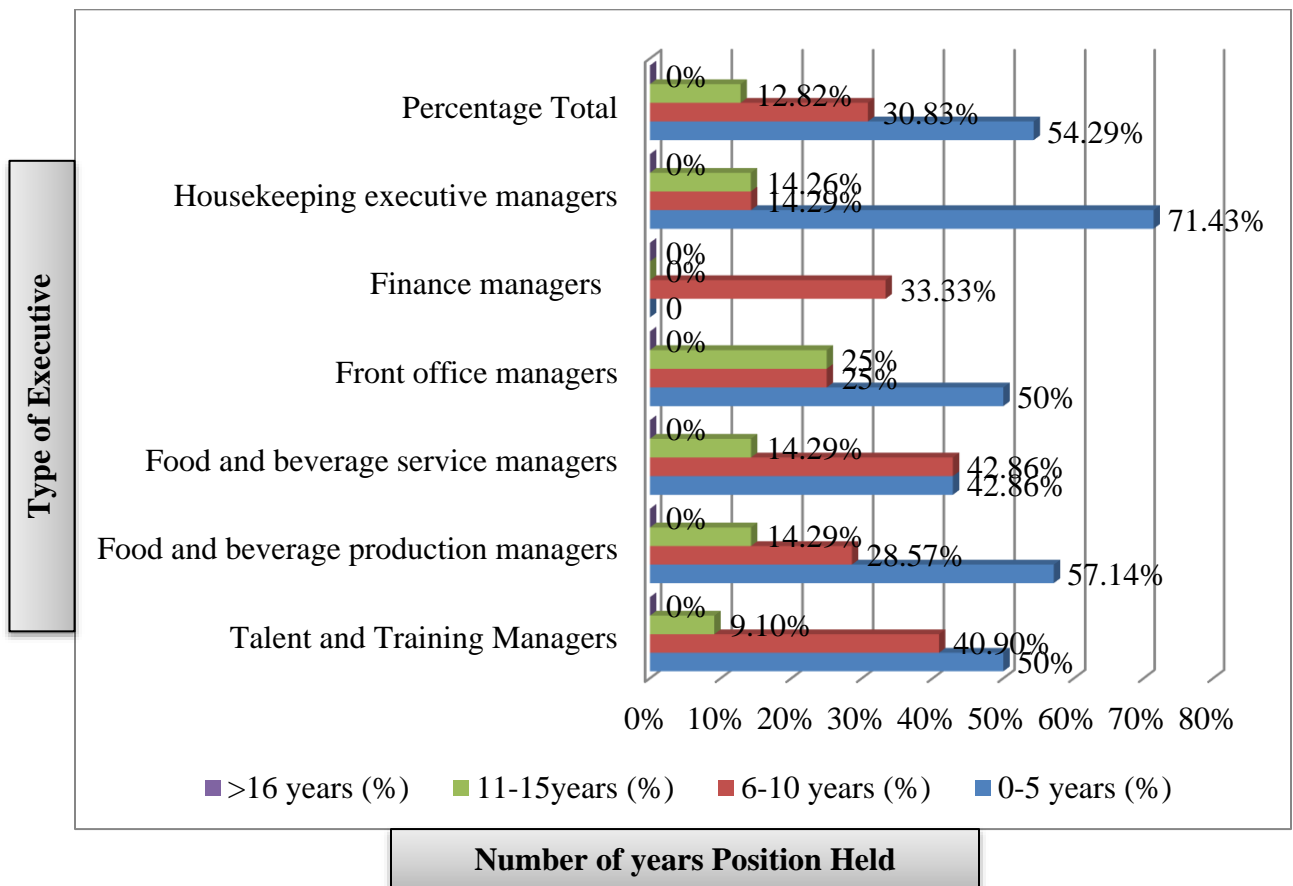
Figure 4.1: Respondents have Held their Positions

The results showed that 54.29% of the respondents had worked in their respective hotels for less than 5 years, between 6-10 years were 30.83%, 11-15 years were 12.82% and above 16 years there was none. It can therefore be established that the majority of the respondents

(54.29%) had held their current positions in five-star hotels in Nairobi for less than 5 years. Comprehensive distributions of the period respondents have held their present positions in their particular departments per cluster are expressed in Figure 4.1. These findings are consistent with those of Knott (2016) whose results showed that the majority (71%) of the executives of the organizations surveyed had held their current positions for less than 5 years. 20% of the respondents had worked for 6 to 8 years, while those who had worked for more than 9 years were 9%.

There are two views as regards the majority of executives holding their positions for a less significant period. The first view is that this is caused by high turnover levels in hotels (Kuria *et al.,* 2011). The studies by Rahman (2011); GoK (2010)'s *strategic planning and economic survey* supported the perspective that the hospitality industry has always had challenges of losing highly skilled personnel to other industries and competitors. The implication is that the loss of these talented individuals has a domino effect on the loss of tacit knowledge which influences competitive advantage. Knowledge workers are developed over a long time in specific contexts of customized tacit knowledge of a particular organization which gives organizations a competitive edge. A structured plan of transferring skills to other talented employees must be put in place to retain tacit knowledge within the hotels. Additionally, there has to be an effort to retain executives over a long time so that hotels continue to utilize vast insights into the business and hotels due to their long experiences. These assertions are in line with Gichuhi (2014) which noted that experienced knowledge workers are sources of immense experiences, insights, understanding, and capabilities to give organizations a competitive edge.

The second view is that fewer years held in a position are due to high turnover which does not necessarily impact competitive advantage negatively. This is because it is a way of equipping pivotal positions with talent that becomes available in the labor market. The implication is that hotels should continually assess the capability of their executives through a performance management system based on tacit knowledge faculties. They should also be keen on the talent that may become available in the labor market to fill pivotal knowledge positions. This will enable hotels to continually operate at high levels of competitiveness. This concept has been supported by Cardy and Leonard (2011) who noted that contributors of Talent Management such as Jack Welsh have indicated in his management concept 20/70/10 differentiation rule that; 20% of employees in companies are superstars that should be promoted and retained at all costs. 70% of employees are average and just perform to expectations and should be kept and trained. However, 10% of employees are underachievers who should be moved out.

4.2.4 The respondents' Professional Qualifications

Professional qualifications of the respondents were sought and the majority of the respondents had a Bachelor's Degree (n=87, 60%). It was followed by respondents with a Master's Degree (n=34, 23.49%), then Diploma at (n=21, 14.48%). It is only 2.07% (n=3) who had doctorate qualifications. Table 4.3 shows the distribution of the respondents' professional qualifications.

Table 4.3 Respondents' Academic Qualifications

Respondents	Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	PhD
Talent & training executives	0 (0%)	13 (59.1%)	9 (40.9%)	0 (0%)
Food & beverage production executives	2 (28.57%)	3 (42.86%)	2 (28.57%)	0 (0%)
Food & beverage service executives	3 (42.86%)	4 (57.14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Front office executives	3 (37.5%)	4 (50%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
Finance executives	0 (0%)	6(100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Housekeeping executives	4 (57.14%)	3 (42.86%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total 1	**12 (21.05%)**	**33 (57.89%)**	**12 (21.05%)**	**0(0%)**
Guests	9 (10.2%)	54 (61.4%)	22 (25%)	3 (3.4%)
Total 2	**21 (14.48%)**	**87 (60%)**	**34 (23.49%)**	**3 (2.07%)**

When guests are excluded, still the majority of the respondents had a Bachelor's Degree (n=33, 57.89%), followed by respondents with a Master's Degree (n=12, 21.05%), then Diploma at (n=12, 21.05%). This implies that the majority of the management staff possesses higher academic qualifications. These qualifications can be sources of intellectual capital, technical knowledge, skills, and values. Therefore, they are in a position to identify, select, deploy, engage, develop, and retain talented individuals who bring about competitive advantage in hotels. The results are related to those in a study by Mbugi (2015) which found that higher professional qualifications of the executives directly influenced the performance of hotels which brings about competitive advantage.

4.3: Section B: Objective One: Conceptualization of Talent Management

This section was hinged on the research question, 'how is talent management conceptualised on promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya?' The intent is to set a scene for establishing the understanding of the concept of TM among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. This section discusses responses for objective one and answers its corresponding question.

4.3.1 Conceptualization of Talent

Talent and training executives were asked to indicate how their hotels define talent. The specific question was, "how does the management of your hotel define talent? Definitions from the 22 informants were captured. Based on the definitions, frequently appearing characteristics were organized into four themes. The themes that were coined out of the definitions in Table 4.4 by the informants are unique abilities; delivering value to the hotel; not specific – everyone/ synonym for the workforce; and leadership.

Table 4.4: Conceptualization of Talent

Infor.	Definition	Topology
1	"Talent refers to our employees and what makes them special is that they have unique knowledge, skills, and abilities not readily available out there."	Inclusive approach to talent as an object
2	"Unique and high-quality abilities and capabilities within our staff and they are identified and developed for better performance."	Inclusive approach to talent as an object
3	"Talent can be defined as the entire workforce in our hotel."	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
4	"Talent refers to all the employees who work in our hotel."	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
5	"Talent is the mobility of an employee to move to the next position and is also willing to relocate to other places to offer their expertise.''	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
6	"Talent in this context means the specific human and intellectual capital, including the knowledge, skills, and values required to effectively execute the business strategy."	Exclusive approach to talent as an object
7	"Talent means a capacity of achievement and ability to action any task with the facility. I define it as having the ability of innovation besides good training, wide knowledge, and solid background."	Exclusive approach to talent as an object
8	"Talent is an individual, whose potential, skills, and dedication makes a great difference in achieving the company's objectives and growth to success which leads the company to be recognized as the leading in the World."	Exclusive approach to talent as a subject
9	"Talent as far as we are concerned is a term that refers to anyone who is part of our workforce."	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
10	"We define talent as any employee worth working for our hotel."	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
11	"Talent comprises individuals who can make a difference in the performance by demonstrating the high level of skills and potential."	Exclusive approach to talent as a subject

Table 4.4: Conceptualization of Talent Continued

Infor.	Definition	Topology
12	"Talent to me means the staff working for our hotels to meet its objectives and goals"	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
13	"We define talent as, our employees considered potential and high performers in their roles. To be an employee in this hotel, you must be a talent"	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
14	"I would define talent as a person's capacity to perform a task correctly with great passion and this is aimed to be cultivated in all our staff."	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
15	"Having the relevant skills, potential, competencies, experience, job knowledge, and capabilities to enable the hotel to achieve its objective of superior service and products and expected revenues."	Exclusive approach to talent as an object
16	"Talent includes people who have the potential to occupy pivotal positions after they have been developed and mentored."	Exclusive approach to talent as a subject
17	"Talent means an employee with a technique or skill that is difficult to copy."	Exclusive approach to talent as an object
18	"There is no formal definition of talent in our hotel"	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
19	"We don't define talent as we assume it to be a substitute for an employee"	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
20	"Talent is a person with a special ability of quality work and can be looked upon as a role model."	Exclusive approach to talent as an object
21	"Talent can be defined as "the best most highly skilled employees" who form part of an organizational pool of employees who will ensure future business leadership and continuity."	Exclusive approach to talent as an object
22	"According to me, talent is an individual's personal qualities and traits (additional attributes apart from experience, skills, and knowledge) which an employee uses to make a difference to the hotel's performance."	Exclusive approach to talent as an object

No	Topology	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject	10	45.46
2	Inclusive approach to talent as an object	02	09.09
3	Exclusive approach to talent as a subject	03	13.67
4	Exclusive approach to talent as an object	07	31.82

The themes that were coined out of the definitions in Table 4.4 by the informants were: an inclusive approach to talent as a subject, an inclusive approach to talent as an object, an exclusive approach to talent as a subject, and an exclusive approach to talent as an object.

4.3.1.1 Inclusive Approach to Talent as a Subject

The results in Table 4.4 revealed that 45.46% of the respondents conceptualised talent from the point of view of an "inclusive approach to talent as a subject". This would imply that 45.46% of training and talent executives in those five-star hotels in Nairobi City County view talent to be every employee. Respondent TT9 revealed talent as;

"Talent as far as we are concerned is a term that refers to anyone who is part of our workforce."

The definition of talent in the domain of "inclusive approach to talent as a subject" reveals that those hotels have not adopted the concept of talent management. It further shows that they are using human resources concepts to manage their talent.

The findings conform with Thunnissen (2015)'s work which views talent as the entire workforce attracted, selected, engaged, developed, and retained by organizations to meet their business goals. Xue (2014) also defined talent in the domain of "all people". The researcher defined it as, the entire workforce in organizations that are recruited, deployed, developed, and retained. Furthermore, some respondents did not have a definition of talent because they assumed that "employees" were ideal for identifying all their workers. For instance, TT19 responded that;

"We don't define talent as we assume it to be a substitute for an employee"

These results align with Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Xue (2014) who found out that some of the organizations studied did not have an official definition for talent as the entire workforce was considered talent. (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen, 2015) also observed that perceiving talent from the point of view of "entire workforce" is just HRM as opposed to TM. They substantiated their claim by labelling it as being too broad and

completely meaningless. This implies that hotels that define talent in an inclusive approach will lose focus as they will have a wide range of skills set, and this would be virtually impossible to achieve.

4.3.1.2 Inclusive Approach to Talent as an Object

The findings in Table 4.4 show that 09.09% of the respondents conceptualised talent from the point of view of an "inclusive approach to talent as an object". This would imply that 09.09% of training and talent executives of those five-star hotels in Nairobi City County view talent to be every employee who is also expected to have some unique characteristics. Respondent TT1 defined talent as;

"Talent refers to our employees and what makes them special is that they have unique knowledge, skills, and abilities not readily available out there."

Definitions under "inclusive approach to talent as an object" are too broad as opposed to talent management which is narrow, hence considered as being in the domain of human resources management. It implies that around about 09.09% percent of the hotels did not adopt talent management.

The findings agree with the work by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) who wrote that some organizations defined talent in the domain of, "talent as all people" and "talent as characteristics of people". The results also agreed with Kichuk (2017) who suggested that those firms that used this domain to define talent viewed it as; getting unique value out of the entire workforce. This claim was also consistent with Thunnissen (2015)'s work which indicated that firms described talent as the entire workforce whose outstanding KSAs drive them to competitive levels. Lewis and Heckman (2006); Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) also noted that organizations that adopt this approach consider everyone talent, and in this

regard, there is no difference between talent management and human resources management. This implies that hotels that define talent in the domain of inclusive approach risk losing focus as they will have a wide range of skills set to manage and this would be virtually impossible to achieve.

4.3.1.3 Exclusive Approach to Talent as a Subject

Table 4.4 reveals that 13.67% of the respondents conceptualized talent from the point of view of an "exclusive approach to talent as a subject." This approach emphasizes on few employees who are HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. The implication is that about 13.67% of training and talent executives of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County view talent as a narrow group of individuals who perform at high levels or have the potential to perform at high levels to differentially influence the competitive advantage of hotels. Respondent TT11 defined talent as;

"Talent comprises individuals who can make a difference in the performance by demonstrating the high level of skills and potential."

Definitions classified under the topology of "exclusive approach to talent as a subject," signifies that hotels have adopted talent management in which few individuals with great potential and high performers are immensely contributing to the competitive advantage. The narrowness of this concept allows hotels to invest sufficient resources on the few individuals considered HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to heighten their performance.

The findings are consistent with Thunnissen (2015)'s work that described talent as employees labelled as A-players/ high performers or high potentials that make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the organization. The findings also

agree with those of Becker *et al.* (2009) who described talent as individuals deployed on pivotal positions that differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage. (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Thunnissen (2015) outlined the outcome of TM under this topology to a greater and sustainable performance from a few high performing or potential individuals. The current findings were also supported by Collings and Mellahi (2009) who argued that A-players, high performers, or high potentials have exceptional KSAs and should concentrate on pivotal positions, namely those positions that differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage.

4.3.1.4 Exclusive Approach to Talent as an Object

Table 4.4 shows that 31.82% of the respondents conceptualised talent from the perspective of an "exclusive approach to talent as an object." The definitions contained "talent as some people" and "talent as characteristics of people" and "excellent performance" perspectives. The implication is that about 31.82% of training and talent executives of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County view talent as few individuals with unique KSAs in pivotal positions that produce exceptional performance. For instance, respondent TT20 defined talent as;

"According to me, talent is an individual's personal qualities and traits (additional attributes apart from experience, skills, and knowledge) which an employee uses to make a difference to the hotel's performance."

Definitions classified under the topology of "exclusive approach to talent as an object," denote that hotels have adopted talent management in which few individuals with exceptional traits in pivotal positions create resources competitors cannot. The narrowness of this concept allows hotels to invest sufficient resources on the few individuals considered HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to heighten their performance. The

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implication is that a five-star hotel in Nairobi City County ought to continually identify pivotal positions and fill them with talent who have rare, inimitable, and unique abilities. It further implies that five-star hotels should give talented employees with outstanding abilities and who are highly motivated, opportunities to develop themselves, and to attain high performances that would lead to competitiveness.

The findings are consistent with Thunnissen (2015)'s work which referred to talent as those employees in the organization who have exceptional, above-average abilities, and who can apply those abilities to achieve excellent performance. To achieve exceptional results, employees must apply their above-average, differentiated competencies. The finding also mirrored Holland (2017)'s work that described talent as individuals who have exceptional, above-average abilities deployed in critical positions to achieve excellent performance. Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Thunnissen (2015); Kaewsaeng-on (2017) also posited that this view is narrow and allows hotels to direct resources to the few talented individuals and pivotal positions to enhance greater and sustainable performance.

In summary, there was no unanimous definition of the term talent within the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. It suggested that expert characteristics required of talent are missed. This is likely to hold back the proper implementation of talent management. This assertion is supported by Hana and Lucie (2015)'s study which concluded that organizations that had a vague definition of talent struggled to take advantage of the concept of talent management to create competitive resources. Secondly, hotels that conceptualised talent based on exclusive approaches were approximately 45%, meaning

that about 55% of the hotels viewed talent from an HRM perspective. Therefore; they are likely not to gain a competitive advantage as TM scholars suggest.

4.3.2 Conceptualization of Talent Management

Talent and training executives were asked to indicate how their hotels define talent management. The specific question was, "how does the management of your hotel define the concept of talent management?" Definitions from the 22 informants were captured. Based on the definitions, frequently appearing characteristics were organized into four themes. The definitions and themes are expressed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Conceptualization of Talent Management

Infor.	Definition	Theme
1	"Talent management is primarily focused on managing unique knowledge, skills, and abilities of our employees".	Inclusive approach to TM as an object
2	"Talent Management is recruiting and managing exceptional knowledge, skills, and abilities of staff to sustain performance"	Inclusive approach to TM as an object
3	"Talent management is a developing employee and managing a proper succession plan"	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject
4	"Talent management is recruiting, retaining and developing employees to conform to the organizational culture"	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject
5	"Talent management is a process of managing all employees to sharpen their competencies to meet the demands of the industry."	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject
6	"Talent management is defined as recruiting people with exceptional abilities, develop, retain them, and put them in a talent pipeline."	Exclusive approach to TM as an object
7	"Talent Management is identifying people with suitable skills, capabilities, and offering them a chance and rewards to be more productive to the hotel and grow their experience."	Exclusive approach to TM as an object
8	"Talent Management is making sure that we have the right people at the right spot at the right time, for all those functions that are critical for the company's development and success."	Exclusive approach to TM as a subject
9	"Talent Management is recruiting qualified employees, training of soft skills and basic competencies, performance management and compensates them accordingly."	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject
10	"Talent Management is the managing of employees' skills, experience, and strengths for business growth."	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject

Table 4.5: Conceptualization of Talent Management Continued

Infor.	Definition	Theme
11	"Talent Management is a process of identifying, selecting, developing, and deploying superior performers in pivotal positions for greater performance."	Exclusive approach to TM as a subject
12	"Talent management is selecting appropriate candidates, effective orientation, training and feedback, competitive compensation, rewards for their contributions, promotional opportunities, and retaining them."	Inclusive approach to talent as a subject
13	"Talent management is a process that ensures a hotel attracts, recruits, develops, motivates, retains, and promotes its employees to positions."	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject
14	"Talent management is about allowing permanent staff and high potential recruits to apply for the internal vacancies, utilizing exams and followed by executives' recommendations after-which further training is done to enable them to develop unique capabilities."	Exclusive approach to TM as a subject
15	"Talent management is the development of selected competencies in selected sections from external experts."	Exclusive approach to TM as an object
16	"Talent management is the removal of low-performing employees, retaining high performers and potential staff to enable the hotel to be competitive."	Exclusive approach to TM as a subject
17	"Talent Management is on attracting and finding new talent for critical positions rather than on utilizing existing employees."	Exclusive approach to TM as an object
18	"Talent Management is the process of guiding all our employees to become proficient to boost the objectives and goals of the hotel."	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject
19	"Talent Management is the general term for human resources that develop talent and potential."	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject
20	"Talent Management is the acquisition, engagement, and integration into the organization of people with exceptional abilities. It involves performance management and development."	Exclusive approach to TM as an object
21	"It is a process of creating chances to most eligible candidates by selecting them according to capability, knowledge, capacity, and experience."	Exclusive approach to TM as an object
22	"Talent Management is managing of employees with exceptional skills and developing them further for an excellent performance."	Exclusive approach to TM as an object

No	Topology	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inclusive approach to TM as a subject	07	31.82
2	Inclusive approach to TM as an object	02	09.09
3	Exclusive approach to TM as a subject	06	27.27
4	Exclusive approach to TM as an object	07	31.82

The themes that were coined out of the definitions in Table 4.5 by the informants were: an inclusive approach to TM as a subject, inclusive approach to TM as an object, exclusive approach to TM as a subject, and exclusive approach to TM as an object.

4.3.2.1 Inclusive Approach to TM as a Subject

The results in Table 4.5 revealed that 31.82% of the respondents conceptualised TM from the point of view of an "inclusive approach to TM as a subject." This implied that 31.82% of the training and talent executives considered TM to encompass all employees working in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. In this context, employees will be managed through the human resources management processes. Their definitions of TM confirmed this claim, for instance, TMT13 described TM as;

"Talent management is a process that ensures a hotel attracts, recruits, develops, motivates, retains, and promotes its employees to positions."

It can be deduced that hotels that adopted this approach could not achieve talent management outcomes that include competitive advantage. This is because they would not have enough resources to put all the employees under TM processes. Moreover, pivotal positions that differentially impact the performance may not be identified and filled with individuals who have exceptional KSAs; these individuals may not be identified to have their KSAs nurtured. This is likely to underutilize the full value of employees which will have a ripple effect on the performance of the hotel leading to inferior competitiveness.

The current findings were consistent with Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam (2013); Thunnissen (2015)'s works which revealed that some of the organization that adopted the "inclusive approach to TM as a subject", defined talent as, the entire workforce attracted,

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selected, engaged, developed and retained by organizations to meet their business goals. Xue (2014) also conformed to the current study regarding this topology and described TM as, a process of managing human resources that organizations want to acquire, retain, and develop to meet their business goals. This topology has received criticism from some researchers. For instance, Ariss *et al.* (2014) criticised it, for targeting all employees in the organization and termed it as another name for human resources management. Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Thunnissen (2015) labelled it as wide and meaningless.

4.3.2.2 Inclusive Approach to TM as an Object

The results in Table 4.5 revealed that 09.09% of the respondents conceptualised TM from the point of view of an "inclusive approach to TM as an object." This suggested that a minority of 09.09% of the training and talent executives considered TM to incorporate all employees working in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. In this perspective, employees are managed through the human resources management processes as well. These processes; however, address employees' value by trying to nurture their KSAs. Their definitions conformed to the indicators of "inclusive approach to TM as an object" which were suggested in the literature as talent as all people" and "talent as characteristics of people". For example, TMT1 defined TM as;

"Talent Management is recruiting and managing exceptional knowledge, skills, and abilities of staff to sustain performance"

It can be deduced that the fewer hotels that adopted this approach may not be in positions to form competitive assets. This is because there may not be available sufficient resources to cultivate all the employees' KSAs. Additionally, pivotal positions that differentially impact the performance may not be determined and equipped with employees who may

have unique KSAs. Like, "inclusive approach to TM as a subject", this topology may lead to insufficient utilization of the full value of talent which would negatively affect the competitiveness of the hotels. Nonetheless, about 09.09% of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County adopting this topology would not be a concern.

The findings were consistent with Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013)'s work which revealed that talent as all people" and "talent as characteristics of people". Thunnissen (2015)'s work also indicated that firms that adopted this topology defined TM as the process of developing all people to attain potential outstanding KSAs to increase their performance levels for competitiveness. Kichuk (2017)'s research also conformed to the indicators; - "talent as all people" and "talent as characteristics of people". The researcher defined TM as the process of drawing value from the entire workforce in the firm for its success. Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013); Thunnissen (2015) labelled the topology as wide, and just another description of HRM.

4.3.2.3 Exclusive Approach to TM as a Subject

The results in Table 4.5 revealed that 27.27% of the respondents conceptualised TM from the point of view of an "exclusive approach to TM as a subject." This suggested that 27.27% of the training and talent executives considered TM to include some employees working in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. These are the people considered to have potential or high performers whose input differentially affects the competitiveness of the targeted hotels. The definitions demonstrated that talent is only a section of employees who are the talent, and their work is critical in the competitiveness of the hotels; for instance, TMT11 defined TM as;

"Talent Management is a process of identifying, selecting, developing, and deploying superior performers in pivotal positions for greater performance."

The implication is that the hotels that adopted this topology may be in positions to form KSAs assets in their pivotal positions. These guarantees hotels reasonable resources to develop, engage, and retain high potentials and performers. Given that they are deployed in strategic/ pivotal positions, their KSAs are fully utilized. On the downside, the engagement of a portion of employees may create disunity and discord which may negatively affect their performance. The ensuing consequence would negatively impact the competitive advantage.

These findings are consistent with Thunnissen (2015)'s work viewed TM as the engagement of those employees labelled as A-players/ high performers or high potentials to make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the organization. The findings were also supported by Scullion and Collings (2011) who conceptualised TM as, "all organizational activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles (roles necessary to achieve organizational strategic priorities) on a global scale." The study results also agreed with the works of Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam (2013); Xue (2014); Ayed *et al.* (2017) which followed the same trend of TM as "some people". They defined it as a form of management of a selected group of workforce that brings about competitive advantage and retain value for organizations.

4.3.2.4 Exclusive Approach to TM as an Object

The results in Table 4.5 revealed that 31.82% of the respondents conceptualised TM from the point of view of "exclusive approach to TM as a subject". These findings suggest that

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the description of TM was based on "talent as some people" and "talent as characteristics of people". For instance, TMT20 defined TM as;

"Talent Management is the acquisition, engagement, and integration into the organization of people with exceptional abilities. It involves performance management and development."

The implication is that the hotels that adopted this topology are likely to be in positions to recruit HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs and deploy them to pivotal positions. This ensures that there are sufficient resources to be invested in the portion of employees with exceptional KSAs to cultivate them further for critical assignments that would earn the hotels a competitive edge. It also ensures that pivotal positions are identified and equipped with sufficient resources including talent. The implication is that specific technical positions, sales, communication, and leadership positions among others in five-star hotels adopting this topology are identified and occupied by talent with HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Like, "exclusive approach to TM as a subject," this topology risk dividing employees into talent and non-talent which would likely affect the hinder teamwork and cause resentment.

The findings of the study were consistent with works by (Ariss *et al.,* 2014; Feng, 2016) which viewed TM as the management of only individuals with unique knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence that can make a difference to organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the long-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential. The findings were also consistent with Thunnissen (2015) who noted that organizations that adopted this apology described TM as, the management of those

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employees who have exceptional, above-average abilities, and who can apply those abilities to achieve excellent performance. The finding also echoes the assertions by Mellahi and Colling (2010) who noted that organizations that adopted this topology; engaged workforce with unique and rare knowledge in pivotal positions that differentially affect competitive advantage.

4.3.3 Competitiveness of the Hospitality Industry

Study informants whose conceptualisation of talent management leaned towards exclusive topology were asked whether TM has made their hotels competitive. The majority of informants revealed that talent management has created competitive resources for their hotels. For instance, talent executive 4 noted that;

"The talent management approaches that we have implemented have helped to create food and beverage products that international guests are familiar with in top hotels in the western frontiers".

Talent executive 4 was further probed on what those products were, and the resulting response pointed to Chinese cuisine products.

"I wouldn't get into the specific products but all I can say is that we can prepare and present Chinese cuisine like it is prepared and presented in any top hotel in China".

A study by Kichuk (2017)'s survey on, "understanding talent management in the hotel sector: employees' narratives of personal career development in Bournemouth", found a similar result. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study on, "talent management: a critical investigation in the Thai hospitality industry" reported similar results. Other informants revealed that talent management has rewarded their hotels through acquiring or developing talent capable of producing diverse products that potentially attract diverse guests. Talent executive 17 also remarked that;

"Talent management has enabled us to manage our key workforce into to produce a variety of products that have attracted more guests, and by the way, we can price them competitively".

This finding matches an appeal by GoK (2013)'s strategy on '*The National Tourism Strategy 2013 – 2018'* contended that lack and weak product diversification and differentiation is a drawback for the tourism industry in Kenya and this ought to be overturned. Mmutle and Last (2017)'s study found that guests perceived hotels to be of high quality if they had exceptional and diverse products/ services. Equally, study informants whose conceptualisation of talent management leaned towards inclusive topology or human resources management approach were asked whether TM has made their hotels competitive. Just below 50% of informants that lied in this path thought that talent management did not give them competitive advantages. Training executive 9 represented this assertion, and contended that;

"We have not shifted to talent management because our human resources management processes are effective. So my take is, we have not benefitted from talent management but we have not suffered because we have not adopted its practices".

In summary, the findings indicated that the hotels did not have a unanimous definition of talent management. This signalled that the manner of adopting talent management is also different from one another. Findings also revealed that approximately 58% of the hotels conceptualised TM based on the exclusive perspectives which TM researchers found to create a competitive advantage for organizations. However, approximately 42% of the hotels that leaned towards an inclusive perspective were less likely to draw competitive

benefits created by TM. The majority of the informants who adopted the exclusive perspective approach of TM indicated that they created competitive resources.

4.4 Section C: Hospitality Core Competencies Required in Talent

This section discusses responses for objective two and test for its corresponding hypothesis one.

4.4.1 Objective Two: Hospitality Core Competencies Required in Talent

The first objective was to assess hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels. Talent and training executives ranked their opinions on hospitality core competencies that require talent management. Finally, line executives responded to the interview. Table 4.6 shows a summary of the results by talent and training executives, and all of them were significant (scored a p-value of <0.05) thus were discussed).

Table 4.6 Hospitality Core Competencies Expected in Talented Individuals

Attributes	Mean Rank	Std. Error Mean	P-value: Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Business Savvy and competitor knowledge	1.50	0.158	<0.001	1.17	1.83
Creativity and innovation	1.64	0.155	<0.001	1.31	1.96
Sales and marketing	1.45	0.143	<0.001	1.16	1.75
Communication	1.68	0.166	<0.001	1.34	2.03
Multilingualism	1.59	0.170	<0.001	1.24	1.94
Hospitality Intelligence	1.50	0.143	<0.001	1.20	1.80
Strategic planning	1.73	0.176	<0.001	1.36	2.09
Technical	1.32	0.102	<0.001	1.11	1.53
Leadership	1.32	0.138	<0.001	1.03	1.60
Competiveness (the above competencies makes a difference in the quality of products/ services)	1.68	0.166	<0.001	1.34	2.03

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Very Important" and 5 "Not at all Important"

Majority of the talent and training executives (mean 1.50; p-value <0.001) leaned to somewhat important that business Savvy and competitor knowledge are very important competencies that should be inherent in talent. These findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's talent are conscious of business and competitor knowledge to spot new products, services, technological applications, trends, and competitive opportunities. Findings in this study concurred with previous research by Pylat (2017) who noted that; business and competitor knowledge permit talent to understand industry dynamics, competitive forces, finance, business processes, business conditions including; economic, political, technological, environmental, and demographic trends that affect their industry.

The study findings are also in agreement with Shum *et al.* (2018)'s work which insisted that competencies enable employees to proactively plan and structure work efficiently, identify critical tasks and activities, manage resources, including people, and ensure that key objectives are achieved on time and within budget. The study was also consistent with Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014)'s work which noted that hotel executives were aware of the strengths and weaknesses of competitors to recognize strategic opportunities in the environment, identify problems, and create the needed systems and procedures to support changes. Business Savvy and competitor knowledge competencies are constituents of tacit knowledge that contribute to the competitive advantage of hotels (Agarwal & Islam, 2015). Hotels should continue building them in talent over a long time to sustain their competitive edge.

Majority of the talent and training executives (mean 1.59; p-value <0.001) indicated that creativity and innovation leaned to somewhat important core competencies that talent should have. This finding implies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County sought talent with abilities to develop new insights, manipulate their technical competencies in production processes, and innovatively interpret guests' needs to personalise guest experiences. This finding agrees with research findings by Sisson and Adams (2013) who found that competitive hospitality organizations looked for and developed innovative and creative competencies. They added that these were important because; they enabled talent to comprehend important elements of the job and generating ideas for action. Shum *et al.* (2018) supported the current findings by insisting that talent is expected to harbour knowledge that is manipulated to create or modify existing products. The findings were further supported by Yams (2017) who noted that firms made and sustained competitive edge when innovative environments were created.

Interviews with front office and food and beverage production executives also revealed that innovation and creativity abilities were critical in driving the competitiveness of their departments. Front office executives noted that talent needs to possess innovative and problem-solving skills. Food and beverage production executives indicated that talent ought to be innately creative in exploring new food production avenues. This finding is also in accordance with research findings by Sisson and Adams (2013) who revealed that hospitality organizations looked for and developed innovative and creative competencies to spur competitive advantage.

Majority of the talent and training executives (1.45; p-value <0.001) also felt that sales and marketing are very important competencies that should be inherent in talent. This implies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are obtaining, developing, and retaining talent with sales and marketing competencies. Findings in this study concurred with previous research by Elbaz *et al.* (2018); who noted that sales and marketing competencies enhance and sustain the greater organizational performance of hospitality organizations. The findings are consistent with Weber *et al.* (2019)'s study which found that hospitality employers sought for and retained individuals possessing skills that increase their sales and clientele through friendly service to boost their productivity Weber *et al.,* (2019). Studies conducted by Bharwani and Talib (2017); Elbaz *et al.* (2018) were also consistent with the results of the current study in which sales and marketing competencies were positively related to a competitive advantage.

Majority of talent and training executives (mean 1.68; p-value<0.001) also indicated that communication leaned to somewhat important competency for talent. The findings imply that effective communication is valued in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. This means that complex and valuable knowledge inherent in talent is passed to other employees who use it to produce unique products and services for hotels. Furthermore, complex processes and needs that are fundamental to superior performance are effectively articulated in hotel management.

These findings concur with those by Kichuk (2017) that; communication competencies improve relationships with various stakeholders to pass routine decisions, instructions, and training among others. The findings were also consistent with those of Pylat (2017) who

revealed that effective communication boosts the dissemination of critical knowledge to substantial others for the benefit of the organization. There was also consensus on the statement from Dumulescu, Balazsi, and Opre (2015) who observed that communication facilitates the formation of networks upon which transfer of critical knowledge is transferred to potential talent through socialization (Agarwal & Islam, 2015). The results also concurred with Elbaz *et al.* (2018) who observed that communication competencies facilitate the effective transfer of KSAs, information, ideas, and feelings from employee to employee. Study findings also agreed with Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) who noted that efficient use of communication competence leads to an increase in employees' performance, productivity, and loyalty to the organization.

Interviews with the front office, housekeeping, food and beverage production, food and beverage service, and finance executives revealed that multilingual skills were vital in driving the competitiveness of their departments. Front office executives indicated that talent needs to possess superior written and verbal communication. For instance, interviewee FOE4 said that, *"We check for ability to communicate a clear and consistent message in English,''* and interview FOE7 said that," *we focus on proficiency in spoken and written English."* The executive added that *'we ensure that our workforce is critical positions has excellent interpersonal skills and abilities.* Food and beverage production executives noted that talent requires the command of both written and verbal English language and excellent interpersonal skills. Finance executives noted that talent requires solid written and verbal communication, comprehension conceptual, analytical and documentation, and presentation skills. Kichuk (2017) and Pylat (2017) studies noted that

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hospitality organisations gain a competitive advantage by developing and enriching effective communication skills and imparting them in their talent.

Majority of the talent and training executives (1.59; p-value <0.001) felt that multilingualism is important that talent should have. This shows that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's talent have multilingualism competencies. It means that hotels are aware and acquire, engage, and retain talent that is multilingual in selected languages to enhance broader communication to extensive groups of guests. Findings in this study concurred with previous research by Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) who noted that it is important for hotels to have talent proficient in selected foreign languages to communicate with customers from different cultures.

Interviews with the front office, housekeeping, FBP, FBS, and finance executives revealed that multilingual skills were vital in driving the competitiveness of their departments. Front office executives indicated that talent needs to possess superior written and verbal communication skills in English and similar qualities in a foreign language from any major source market would be critical. For instance, interviewee FOE4 said that, *"like communication skills, it is same for multilingual competence; we check for ability to communicate a clear and consistent message in English,''* and interview FOE7 said that,*'' we focus on proficiency in spoken and written English and sometimes French language."* Housekeeping executives said that talent needs proficiency in oral written English language, with some saying that Kiswahili language is necessary. For example; interviewee HEE6 said that, *"our talent individuals must have excellent communication skills both verbal and written in English and Swahili; and good communication in French".* Food and

beverage service executives noted that talent requires excellent communication in English and Swahili both in written and spoken; and strong interpersonal and problem-solving abilities. Kichuk (2017) studies noted that hospitality organisations gain a competitive advantage by possessing multilingual abilities.

Besides, these findings were also consistent with Kaewsaeng-on (2017) who demonstrated that Thai hotels receive a significant segment of foreign customers predominantly English, Russian and Chinese speaking. As such, strategies are in place to develop and sustain employees in those hotels that are multilingual. Another study by Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) in South East Asia found that hotels adopted the English language which is foreign and that improved communication with diverse guests. The study conducted at Bournemouth in hotels by Kichuk (2017) revealed that functional multilingual competencies comprising gestures, mimes, and English language were adopted to support communication with both guests and co-workers.

Most of the talent and training executives (mean 1.50; p-value <0.001), were also of the opinion that hospitality intelligence is leaning to somewhat important competency in talent. The finding implied that hospitality intelligence competencies in the hospitality industry are sources of competitive edge among five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. It; therefore, means that talent with hospitality intelligence (emotional, cultural, and experiential) are either sourced for externally or developed internally to understand and empathize with guests, sensitive to cultural diversity and nuances, and offer memorable experiences. These aspects are likely to drive the competitive advantage of the hotels.

These findings are closely related to those of Bharwani and Talib (2013) whose study revealed that emotional, cultural, and experiential competencies co-create memorable customer experiences in the hospitality industry. The study results also agreed with Shum *et al.* (2018) who noted that emotional intelligence enables talent to control their negative reactions while simultaneously transmitting enthusiasm and positive energy when communicating with colleagues/ customers. Bharwani and Talib (2013) also supported the current study's findings by indicating that cultural intelligence-enabled the talent to be sensitive and mindful of diverse cultures. Additionally, Bharwani and Talib (2013)'s study backed the findings of the current study by indicating that experiential intelligence-enabled hospitality talent to understand nuances of host-guest relationships and innovatively interpret guests needs to personalize guests experiences.

Most of the talent and training executives, (mean 1.73; p-value <0.001) were also of the opinion that strategic planning leaned to somewhat important competency among talent. This finding implied that talent in five-star hotels must be empowered to competently create a competitive actionable strategic agenda in accordance with the strategic vision and goals to sustain and further the competitive edge of hotels.

Talent and training executives agreed with findings by Kaewsaeng-on (2017) who revealed that strategic planning competencies were considered important qualities by those individuals in key positions. The findings also concurred with those of Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) who argued that strategic planning was vested on hotel executives so that they can analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their hotels/ competitors to take advantage of strategic opportunities in the environment. The study by Pylat (2017) concurred with the

current results and added that; strategic planning competency enables talent to articulate strategic goals and priorities; analyse the past and predict future events; think strategically, make strategic choices, create a strategic vision, understand general business conditions that affect their industry; predict customer expectations and create a strategic agenda.

Majority of talent and training executives (mean 1.32; p-value <0.001) indicated that technical competencies are very important for talent. This finding implies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County consider technical capabilities critical in their talent management programs. This means that they sought to acquire and develop sufficient technical capabilities that drive the competitiveness of these hotels.

This finding concurs with Weinland *et al.* (2016) who found out that technical competency ranked first because it is used for the actual production to optimal levels in vacation establishments. Agreeing with the current results was Rose (2016), whose study noted that technical competencies were mostly required in: hospitality property management, menu planning, and design, front office procedures, food production and service, food and beverage service, housekeeping practices, lodging operations, and management, catering skills, events planning, hospitality safety and security, and events management. The researcher found that they were related to the performance of the hotels. The findings were further supported by work by German Development Cooperation (2017); and World Bank (2018) highlighted that technical competencies are key in the development and sustainability of competitiveness.

Interviews with the front office, housekeeping, finance, food, and beverage production, and food and beverage service executives also revealed that technical capabilities were critical

in driving the competitiveness of their departments. The front office and housekeeping executives singled out: advanced knowledge in Microsoft Office, Fidelio/Opera, point of sale systems, and credit monitoring. Finance executives noted that talent needs familiarity with finance regulations, adept data entry skills; proficiency in hotel operating systems and software, including, Hyperion, Microsoft Office, Micros, Novacom hotel systems, opera property management system, aptitude for figures; and knowledge of finance modules of an ERP system such as SAP, Oracle, and PeopleSoft.

Food and beverage production executives noted that talent requires knowledge of unique menu items; competent in all aspects of baking and pastry; advanced knowledge of preparing a variety of cuisines; adept at using kitchen equipment and knowledge of a wide range of ingredients; and a sound understanding of HACCP. FBPE2 responded that *"we look for individuals with advanced culinary techniques such as sautéing, baking, grilling, frying and barbecuing among others".* Food and beverage service executives noted that talent must have knowledge of service of all food and drinks; and knowledge of beverage lists and promotions. Weinland *et al.* (2016); German Development Cooperation (2017); World Bank (2018) highlighted that technical competencies are key in the development and sustainability of competitiveness.

Majority of the talent and training executives (mean 1.32; p-value <0.001) indicated that leadership is an important core competency that talented individuals should have. This finding implies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County highly consider leadership competency as an important attribute in talent. It means that hotels have talent who leads

and develops subordinates, communicates effectively, manages conflicts, and displays emotional intelligence.

Study findings were consistent with research by Sisson and Adams (2013); Shum *et al.* (2018) who noted that leadership competencies were informed on critical positions. This finding implies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County highly consider leadership competency as an important attribute in talent. It means that hotels have talent who leads and develop subordinates, communicates effectively, manages conflicts, and displays emotional intelligence. A study by Tavitiyaman *et al.* (2014) was consistent with the findings of the current study. They explored leadership competencies for executives and found team building, ethics, and communication skills as the most important. Suh *et al.* (2012)'s study on important competency requirements for executives in the hospitality industry in the USA supported the findings of the current study. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study findings mirrored the current findings and further observed that leadership was the top competency for hospitality executives.

Interviews with the front office, food and beverage production, food and beverage service, and housekeeping executives also revealed that leadership abilities were critical in driving the competitiveness of their departments. Front office executives noted that talent needs to possess skills of leading teams, training, and demonstration of emotional intelligence all the time. Food and beverage production executives emphasised on mentoring and developing staff, leading teams, quality control analysis of resources, services, labour, and processes. Food and beverage service executives indicated that talent should be able to perform coaching, teaching, developing, mentoring food and beverage teams, and leading

service teams. Housekeeping executives noted that talent needs to possess budgeting and cost control knowledge, operational knowledge of housekeeping equipment and machines, knowledge of chemicals, cleaning techniques, and knowledge on housekeeping procedures and standards and demonstrate them. These findings are in accordance with Sisson and Adams (2013); Shum *et al.,* (2018) who indicated that talent must be equipped with leadership skills so that they lead teams effectively and transfer their expert skills to potential talent.

Most of the talent and training executives (mean 1.68; p-value <0.001), thought that the core competencies were investigated to make a difference in the production and provision of quality products/ services. This finding implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County find and develop core competencies within talent. The application of these competencies has led to the production of superior products and the provision of excellent service. This finding in this study concurred with previous research by Elbaz *et al.* (2018) who noted that; talent's competencies can be inimitable and this presents opportunities to exclusively continue producing quality products and services.

Line executives interviewed noted that hospitality core competencies inherent in their talent help deliver exceptional products, guest service, and maximization of sales and revenue. For instance; interviewee FOE1 noted that "they lead to an all-rounded talent that makes critical decisions and effective handling of guests' requests." FOE8 also indicated that *"they create a professional image of our hotel because they dictate the first and last impression guest makes of the hotel"*. HEE5 noted that *"the competencies that our department looks for are those that allow our hotel to maintain a high level of customer*

service by providing professional cleanliness while exercising cost control". FBPE3 noted that *"they enable us to produce quality products and try to add more varieties".* FBSE4 responded that; "t*hey ensure the hotel's service and food standards are met every day resulting in exceptional guest satisfaction."* This demonstrates that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County look for talent with the right skills that inspire and sustain competitiveness (Elbaz *et al.,*2018).

4.4.2 Testing of Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one posited that 'there are no significant hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County'. Linear regression was conducted, and the regression model summary is presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
0.999a	0.999	0.998	0.036	0.999	1121.774	9	12	0

a Predictors: (Constant), Business Savvy and competitor knowledge, Creativity and innovation, Sales and marketing, Communication, Multilingualism, Hospitality Intelligence, Strategic planning, Technical, and Leadership

Results in Table 4.7 revealed that the regression model correlation coefficient R was (0.999) indicating that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. Moreover, results showed a significant overall regression model coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.999$, indicating that approximately 99.9% of the variance in competitiveness (quality of products/ services) of five-star hotels could be explained by the model significant predictor variables. Moreover, this finding is emphasised by ANOVA[a] in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 ANOVA[a] Model

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12.758	9	1.418	1121.774	0.001b
Residual	0.015	12	0.001		
Total	12.773	21			

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness (Difference in the quality of products/ services)
b Predictors: (Constant), Business Savvy and competitor knowledge, Creativity and innovation, Sales and marketing, Communication, Multilingualism, Hospitality Intelligence, Strategic planning, Technical, and Leadership

The ANOVA[a] establishes whether the regression model explains a statistically significant part of the variance. It utilizes a ratio to compare the extent to which the linear regression model predicts the outcome. It predicts that the association between the means of the dependent variable and the predictors (independent variables) is statistically significant ($p=0.001<0.050$). The overall regression model was significant ($p<0.05$) as demonstrated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Regression Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		-0.249	0.033		-7.502	**0.001***
Business Savvy and competitor knowledge	(X_1)	0.066	0.016	0.062	4.142	**0.001***
Creativity and innovation	(X_2)	0.166	0.042	0.154	3.906	**0.002***
Sales and marketing	(X_3)	0.068	0.021	0.059	3.262	**0.007***
Communication	(X_4)	0.013	0.028	0.013	0.447	0.663
Hospitality Intelligence	(X_5)	0.284	0.025	0.245	11.178	**0.001***
Strategic planning	(X_6)	0.408	0.031	0.432	13.200	**0.001***
Technical	(X_7)	0.039	0.024	0.024	1.625	0.130
Multilingualism	(X_8)	0.036	0.014	0.036	2.509	**0.027***
Leadership	(X_9)	0.153	0.022	0.127	6.941	**0.001***

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness (Difference in the quality of products/ services)
*P<0.05

Table 4.9 yielded the values of the coefficients to be estimated and their corresponding significant values (p-values). The p-values were used to test the hypothesis about β, the

coefficients. In this test, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis whenever the p - values were less than 0.05. Table 4.9 shows that, business savvy and competitor knowledge ($\beta = 0.066$, p= 0.001), creativity and innovation ($\beta = 0.166$, p= 0.002), sales and marketing ($\beta = 0.068$, p= 0.007), hospitality Intelligence ($\beta = 0.284$, p= 0.001), strategic planning ($\beta = 0.408$, p= 0.001), multilingualism ($\beta = 0.036$, p= 0.027) and leadership ($\beta = 0.153$, p= 0.001) were significant thus; rejected. Since all coefficients were positive, it implied that they were positively related with competiveness.

Technical competencies ($\beta = 0.039$, p= 0.130) and communication competencies ($\beta = 0.013$, p= 0.663), were not significant therefore were accepted. Thus, if hotels make these competencies significant levels of quality products and services are likely to increase and spur their competitiveness even further. This assertion concurs with Elbaz *et al.* (2018) who observed that communication competencies facilitate the effective transfer of KSAs, information whose value creates a competitive advantage. German Development Cooperation (2017) and World Bank (2018) insisted that technical competencies are key in the development and sustainability of competitiveness.

From the values of the coefficients, the corresponding linear regression equation on how hospitality core competencies influenced competitiveness (increased quality of products/ services) was thus expressed as;

$$y= -0.249 + 0.066x_1 + 0.16x_2 + 0.068x_3 + 0.013x_4 + 0.284x_5 + 0.408x_6 + 0.039x_7 + 0.036x_8 + 0.153x_9 \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots (1)$$

H_01 posited that; there are no significant hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. Linear

regression results revealed negative and significant results (β = -0.249, t = -7.502, p =0.001), thus the hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that hospitality core competencies decreased competitiveness in the hotels. It suggests that there was an insufficient application of hospitality core competencies which drove down the competitiveness (increased quality of products/ services) of the hotels.

Several research studies concurred with these findings. For instance, Agarwal and Islam (2015), noted that organizations which had a sense of business and competitor knowledge always brought in innovative ways of operations. Weinland *et al.* (2016) posited that technical competencies would have either a negative or positive influence on the hospitality sector depending on the level of application of those competencies. Given that these competencies are used for the actual production, their quality matters. Pylat (2017) found that competencies such as communication would present and transfer personal valuable knowledge, abilities, and skills to the internal workforce for production which drives up competitiveness (increased quality of products/ services).

In summary, the results revealed that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County focused on some hospitality core competencies that should be inherent in their talent to enhance and sustain their competitiveness. The mean rank indicated that; technical and leadership, sales and marketing, hospitality intelligence and business savvy and competitor knowledge, multilingualism, creativity and innovation, communication, and strategic planning were most important in that order. Competency like technical comprises of difficult to transfer knowledge which allowed the hotels possessing them to continue edging their competitors in the sphere of production and services. Further probing revealed that hotels mostly

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sought, developed, and retained talent that was proficient in oral and written English to enable them to provide excellent service. However, the statistical test found technical and communication competencies not significant against competitiveness. This implied that if boosted, growth and sustainable quality products and services are likely to occur. Further the hypothesis was rejected (β = -0.249, t = -7.502, p =0.001).

4.5 Section D: Approaches Used in each Talent Management Practices

This section discusses responses for objective two and tests for hypotheses H$_0$2.

4.5.1 Objective Three: Approaches Used in each Talent Management Practices

The second objective was to profile the approaches used in each TM practices among five–star hotels. The TM practices investigated were; attraction, selection, engagement, development, and talent, and knowledge retention.

4.5.1.1 Talent Attraction Approaches

Talent and training executives were asked to indicate talent attraction approaches which they considered applicable in their respective hotels. Findings are revealed in Table 4.10. Interviews were answered by line managers.

Table 4.10 Approaches of Talent Attraction

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
Hotels provide development opportunities for talent to attract potential talent	10 (45.5%)	7 (31.8%)	5 (22.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.77	0.813
Competitive compensation and incentives for talent to attract potential talent	9 (40.9%)	5 (22.7%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	2.05	1.046
Hotels offer job security for talent to attract potential talent	8 (36.4%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	2.00	0.976
Hotels match talent's roles with interesting responsibilities to attract potential talent	10 (45.5%)	6 (27.3%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	2.00	1.234
Growth/ promotion opportunities for talent to attract potential talent	7 (31.8%)	6 (27.3%)	7 (31.8%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	2.23	1.110
Talent are allowed flexibility in their roles and this attracts potential talent	3 (13.6%)	6 (27.3%)	9 (40.9%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	2.64	0.953
Hotels provide work life balance for talent to attract potential talent	22 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.00	0.000
Good working conditions/ environment for talent to attract potential talent	12 (54.5%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (13.6%)	1 (4.5%)	2 (9.1%)	1.95	1.327
Competiveness (talent attracted produce varieties of quality products/ services)	19 (86.4%)	3 (13.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.14	0.351

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Strongly agree" and 5 "Strongly Disagree"

Talent and training executives leaned towards agreement on whether "Hotels provide development opportunities for talent to attract potential talent ($\bar{x}$ = 1.77; SD = 0.813)". Among these respondents, 45.50% strongly agreed and 31.80% agreed. This was an endorsement of the accord that the adoption of development opportunities for talent creates an affinity for potential talent. The standard deviation was 0.813, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are actively involved in providing development opportunities in form of targeted training/ certification programs which may have contributed positively to the attraction of potential talent. The findings also imply that when vacancies arose appropriate

talent was easily picked and their subsequent performance contributed positively to competitiveness (varieties of quality products/ services) among target hotels.

These findings were consistent with those of Lyria (2014) in which 46.30% agree and 34.00% strongly agree that development opportunities especially training programs were critical in creating a compelling employee value proposition that attracted potential talent. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study informants also agreed with the finding that hospitality firms that attracted prospective talent offered appropriate and adequate training to current talent. Weinland *et al.* (2016) revealed similar views in vacation establishments and insisted that corresponding certification to training strengthens EVP which reinforces employer brand. The findings were further credited by Leng (2013) whose study conducted on multinational hotels in China reported that individuals favoured employment in firms with adequate and advanced development programs. Cui *et al.* (2018) revealed that training was accompanied by testing which ensured talent acquired the desired competency, and this is a desire for potential talent to improve their competency levels. Researches by Brunila (2013); Tanwar and Prasad (2016) indicated that talent is attracted to organizations where their KSAs are appreciated and developed and their recruitment and engagement create competitiveness.

Talent and training executives agreed on whether "competitive compensation and incentives for talent to attract potential talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.05; SD = 1.046)". Among the study informants, 40.9% strongly agreed while 22.7% agreed with the statement. It is an indication that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County built their brand partly through competitive compensation and incentives. The mean (2.05) implies that respondents leaned towards an agreement with the statement. The aggregate standard deviation, a measure of

the dispersion of a set of data from its mean, was 1.046, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. This implies that other significant views did not implore the use of compensation and incentives in attracting potential talent. But overall, the results imply that compensation and incentives were critical in attracting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs whose recruitment may have made the hotels competitive (varieties of quality products/ services).

The findings are aligned with those by Lyria (2014); Cui *et al.* (2018) whose studies found a positive correlation between compensation and incentives, and attraction of potential talent. However, Kaewsaeng-on (2017) had two views that are consistent with the results of the standard deviation of the current study showing two potential significant sides for and against compensation/ incentives. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study revealed that monetary incentives were applied by wealth and rich international and chain hotels as tools for competing against rivals and consequently; were more competitive than the local branded hotels that did not rely on compensation/ incentives. More on the critical side, Tomany (2012); Leng (2013); Fathy (2018) did not agree with the current study findings. Their findings portrayed an image of a hospitality industry that cannot match other industries because its compensation and incentive packages are not significant to attract potential talent.

Talent and training executives agreed on whether "hotels offer job security for talent to attract potential talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.00; SD = 0.976)". The respondents who strongly agreed and agreed with the statement were 36.4% each. This signifies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County built their brand partly through job security. The mean (2.00) implies that

respondents leaned towards an agreement with the statement. The standard deviation was 0.976, indicating a normal variation in the responses. These results indicate that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are offering their talent decent contracts or securing their jobs over a long time; and this may have contributed positively to talent attraction of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs whose possible engagement created competitiveness (varieties of quality products/ services).

These findings showed a similar trend as those of Lyria (2014) in which 19.80% strongly agreed, 72.80% agreed, while 7% of the disagreed that talent is attracted to organizations that are known to offer job security to its employees. Consequently, future engagement of this talent ensured that organizations continued to produce consistent results. Ballou (2013); Soomro *et al.*, (2016) are also of the same accord that Job security influences talent in their choices of organizations to work for. Oppenheim (2018)' s study results were also consistent with the current ones by revealing that job security is a vital block in the architecture of EVP which makes employer brand viewed positively. Nwoye (2017) was also of the same opinion and revealed that organizations that attracted talent were in a position to become more competitive in their operations.

Talent and training executives agreed on whether "Hotels match talent's roles with interesting responsibilities to attract potential talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.00; SD = 1.234)". Among these respondents, 45.5% strongly agreed and 27.3% agreed. This suggests that the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County built their brand partly through transforming jobs to have interesting responsibilities. The mean (2.00) implies that research informants leaned towards an agreement with the statement. The standard deviation was 1.234, indicating a

substantial divergence of participants' responses. The implication is that five-star hotels are transforming jobs to have interesting responsibilities to attract HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs who would drive performance to high levels through creating or providing varieties of quality products/ services.

These findings agree with those of Hana and Lucie (2015) in which 68% of the respondents were in agreement that organizations focus on making existing jobs more attractive to talent who are ready to migrate to occupy them. Lyria (2014)'s study respondents also agreed that organizations that transformed their jobs to have interesting responsibilities were viewed to be part of career development, and this lures talent. Tomany (2012)'s study findings also concurred with current findings and further noted that an EVP that contains jobs with interesting responsibilities has the potential of attracting talent into less appealing tasks.

Talent and training executives agreed on whether "growth/ promotion opportunities for talent to attract potential talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.23; SD = 1.110)". Among the them; 31.8% strongly agreed, 27.3% agreed, while 31.8% were uncertain whether potential talent viewed promotion opportunities as a factor to join an organization. This implies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County project uneven views explaining whether growth/ promotion opportunities contributed to the overall employer brand responsible for attracting potential talent. The standard deviation (1.110) which showed a substantial divergence of participants' responses, confirms the unevenness. However, the mean (2.23) established that research informants leaned towards agreement on whether growth/ promotion opportunities contributed to the attraction of potential talent. The implication is that five-

star hotels have adopted promotion opportunities in their ranks. Consequently, this gesture attracts HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs who become part of the team that spurs competitiveness (varieties of quality products/ services) for the hotels.

The study results were in accordance with those of a survey by Hana and Lucie (2015) who revealed that 96% of the informants agreed that potential talent would be attracted to organizations offering growth/ promotion opportunities. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s results also revealed that promoting talent within hospitality ranks helped Thai hotels to build a brand that attracts prospective talent. Leng (2013)'s survey of multinational hotels yielded similar results that growth opportunities were accorded to talent. This created an attractive employer brand image that attracted potential talent. Likewise, Fathy (2018)'s study revealed that most HR executives attract talent with quick promotions.

Talent and training executives agreed on whether "talent are allowed flexibility in their roles to attract potential talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.64; SD = 0.953)". Among the them; 27.3% agreed, 40.9% uncertain, and 18.2% disagreed with the statement. This signifies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have yet to widely adopt TM strategies to make their jobs flexible to attract potential talent. This is confirmed by the mean (2.64) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. The SD was 0.953, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings suggest that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County somewhat allow their talent flexibility in work to attract HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to their ranks. It further implies that flexibility in roles was important but not widely depended on by the hotels in their pursuance of competitive advantage

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On the contrary, Idris (2014); Nwoye (2017) agreed that flexibility in work played a role in attracting talent. Putra *et al.* (2017)'s study results also differed from the current ones by revealing a strong endorsement of flexibility in roles to attract HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. The results further noted that flexibility in work was achieved through enriching jobs. Study findings by Thunnissen (2015) were also inconsistent with those of the current study which revealed that flexibility in work played a key role in attracting talent but through job rotation. Additionally, studies by Thunnissen (2015); Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Putra *et al.* (2017) also differed from the current one in which flexibility in jobs was adopted for most establishments surveyed and formed an EVP through challenging work and increased responsibilities. This is an indication that prevailing positive EVP forms an employer brand that potential talent was associated with. Lyria (2014)'s work revealed that flexibility in work attracted potential talent whose actual engagement made organizations competitive (varieties of quality products/ services).

It is apparent from Table 4.10 that talent and training executives agreed that, "hotels provide work-life balance for talent to attract potential talent ($\overline{x}$ = 1.00; SD = 0.00, 100.00%)". The findings imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are actively involved in branding themselves as employers of choices which may have contributed to the attraction of potential talent. Lyria (2014)'s study results were consistent with current ones and revealed that the majority of the respondents 96% agreed with the statement that work-life balance for talent attracted HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Studies conducted by Tanwar and Prasad (2016); Pierré (2017); Cui *et al.* (2018) also vindicated the current study findings which revealed that flexible working hours for talent that had family was adopted which appealed HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

Talent and training executives leaned towards agreement on whether "good working conditions/ environments for talent attracted potential talent ($\bar{x}$ = 1.95; SD = 1.327)." Among these respondents, 54.5% strongly agreed and 18.2% agreed. This suggests that the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County built their brand partly through good working conditions/ environment for talent. The mean (1.95) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 1.327, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The findings imply that five-star hotels have adopted good working conditions/ environment for talent to attract HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs whose possible engagement enables them to gain competitive advantage (varieties of quality products/ services).

These findings were aligned with those of Lyria (2014)'s study which showed that 91% agreed that the company's good working conditions and fair wages had enabled it to attract the right talent. Results also reveal that 6.2% disagreed while 3.1% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The findings imply that participating firms in the study attract talent partly because of good working conditions. On the other hand, current study findings were inconsistent with those of Tanwar and Prasad (2016) who did not find a significant relationship between good working conditions/ environment and attraction of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. They justified their finding by noting that work environments are complex because their perceptions differ from HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to another. Therefore work environment may not be a strong pillar in the architecture of EVP thus would not have a robust influence on the employer brand responsible for attracting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

Opinions of the talent and training executives were sought on whether talent attraction approaches have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of quality products / and services. Survey respondents strongly agreed that, "talent attracted create varieties of quality products/ services ($\overline{x}$ = 1.14; SD = 0.351)". Among these respondents, 86.40% strongly agreed and 13.60% agreed. This was an overwhelming endorsement that talent attraction approaches adopted by five-star hotels in Nairobi City County influenced competitiveness. The mean (1.14) implies that respondents leaned towards a strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.813, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings suggested that approaches used to attract talent into five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have enabled them to have a pool of potential talent ready for selection. Further, that allows hotels to easily add this talent to their workforce. Eventually, they enhance and sustain the production and provision of diverse products and services.

These findings are in accordance with those of Thunnissen (2015) who found out that organizations need to make themselves employers of choice to attract talent. The findings of this study were also consistent with those of Fathy (2018) which found an association between talent attraction approaches and competitiveness of organizations surveyed. The study further indicated that attraction of talent allows organizations to effectively select the best applicants who are likely to perceive higher levels of fit and, in turn, to be committed to their jobs (Fathy, 2018). Study results by Lyria (2014) revealed that talent attraction was statistically significant in explaining the performance of organizations. This was in congruence with the current study results which noted that talent attracted produce varieties of quality products/ services enhancing competitive advantage.

Interview with the front office, housekeeping, FBP, FBS, and finance executives also revealed ways of attracting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Results indicated that: competitive pay packages, incentives, holiday entitlements, branding the department as the best place to work in, job security, promotion of talent to critical positions, development programs, enriched jobs with exciting roles, flexible working shifts, recognition of excellent performance, and safe working conditions were identified. For instance, interviewee FOE4 indicated that *"we can attract talented individuals because we are being best at what we do and they want to be the best with us.* "Interviewee FBPE2 responded that, *"we offer our talent individuals jobs with passion-able activities."* Interviewee FBPE6 answered that *"our hotel is considered one of the great brands, and as such talented chefs are attracted to our department."* Interviewee FBSE3 responded that" *the hotel is a renowned brand, makes it easier to attract talented individuals to the FBS department.*" This implies that departments also had some attraction approaches that drew HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to their ranks. The findings were consistent with studies on TM by Xue (2014); Thunnissen (2015) who noted that talent differentially influences the competitiveness of organisations.

4.5.1.2 Approaches of Talent Selection

Talent and training executives were asked to indicate talent selection approaches which they considered applicable in their respective hotels. The findings are revealed in Table 4.11. Interviews were answered by line managers.

Table 4.11 Approaches of Talent Selection

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
Selection of talent to critical positions is based on performance appraisals results	18 (81.8%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.18	0.395
Hotels poach individuals with rare and unique capabilities from competitors	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.36	0.492
Selection into critical positions is from an established internal talent pools	4 (18.2%)	5 (22.7%)	9 (40.9%)	3 (13.6%)	1 (4.5%)	2.64	1.093
Mixed interviews (structured and unstructured) lead to the selection of talent	6 (27.3%)	8 (36.4%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	2.18	0.958
Technical skills tests/ work sample tests allow for the selection of talent	4 (18.2%)	7 (31.8%)	7 (31.8%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	2.50	1.012
Employment tests allow for the selection of talent	9 (40.9%)	4 (18.2%)	5 (22.7%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	2.18	1.181
Assessment centres to allow for the selection of talent	7 (31.8%)	2 (9.1%)	6 (27.3%)	6 (27.3%)	1 (4.5%)	2.64	1.329
Reference approach is used because it yields talent	14 (63.6%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	1.91	1.269
Competiveness (the selection process succeeds in choosing talent individuals)	5 (22.7%)	10 (45.5%)	7 (31.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.32	0.750

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Strongly agree" and 5 "Strongly Disagree"

Results in Table 4.11 revealed that the selection of talent to critical positions is based on performance appraisals results ($\bar{x}$ = 1.180; SD = 0.395). The majority (81.8%) of talent and training executives strongly agreed and 18.2% agreed with the statement. This showed that performance appraisals results were overwhelmingly relied on for selecting talent in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The mean (1.180) implies that research informants leaned towards a strong agreement. The SD was 0.395, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The results imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County can fill critical positions that differentially influence their competitive advantage.

The findings concurred with suggestions by Nwoye (2017); Boštjanci and Slana (2018) who supported the use of performance appraisal by organizations as they can measure the effectiveness of high-potentials thus their selection differentially impact organizations. The results also reflected the accord by Holland (2017) who stated that performance appraisal has a bearing on the selection of talent with a trifecta of competence, commitment, and contribution to strategic objectives of the organization. Lyria (2014) also noted that performance appraisal was effective as it provides an objective assessment of current individuals whose engagement influences firms' competitiveness.

Talent and training executives also strongly agreed that hotels poach individuals with rare and unique capabilities from competitors ($\overline{x}$ = 1.36; SD = 0.492). The majority (63.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed with the statement. This suggested that poaching of talent by the five star hotels in Nairobi City County is a common practice. The mean (1.36) implies that research informants leaned towards a strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.492, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings infer that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County poach individuals with rare and unique capabilities from competitors to enhance their competitive edge.

The results agreed with the portrayal by Mangusho *et al.* (2015) who noted that organizations around the world are poaching talent. They; however, labelled this practice unethical. The results also align with Peshave and Gujarathi (2015) who observed that there has been a remarkable growth of the hotel industry in India necessitating a range of means to acquire talent including poaching of talent between hotels. The findings matched those

of Msengeti and Obwogi (2015) as who wrote that the hotel industry in Kenya is expanding with new entrants constantly poaching talent from existing hotels.

Talent and training executives inclined towards uncertainty on whether "selection into critical positions is from established internal talent pools ($\bar{x}$ = 2.64; SD = 1.093)". Among the respondents; 18.2% strongly agreed, 22.7% agreed, and 40.9% uncertain with the statement. This signifies that the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have yet to establish sufficient talent pools for developing talent for critical positions. This is confirmed by the mean (2.64) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. The standard deviation was 1.093, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The results imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are not keen on inducting talent into talent pools. This means that these hotels are missing the benefits of talent who have been developed further to fill critical positions.

The current study finding somewhat differed with the assertion by Feng (2016) who wrote that talent pools ensure continuity of operations when a critical position is vacated by immediately supplying talent who fits with the demands of the job. The findings again somewhat differed with Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s revelation that talent in hotels selected from established talent pools has a good background understanding of the organization's direction. This implies that there will be no gap in the organization culture, and that merits a competitive advantage. It also appeared that five-star hotels in Nairobi Country did not match with organizations depicted in Kichuk (2017)'s work whose talent pools represented talent with leadership, unique skills, knowledge, experiences, and capabilities that brought immediate positive outcomes.

Talent and training executives agreed that "mixed interviews (structured and unstructured) lead to the selection of talent ($\overline{x} = 2.18$; SD = 0.958)". Among the study respondents, 27.3% strongly agreed, 36.4% agreed, and 27.3% uncertain with the statement. It is an indication that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County had a good measure of reliance on mixed interviews in selecting talent. The mean (2.18) implies that research informants leaned towards an agreement. The standard deviation was 0.958, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The results imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County use mixed interviews as one way of selecting talent. As a result, they can select high-potential individuals with sought competencies, personality, and fit for the hotel.

The results of Gitonga (2016) were in agreement ($\overline{x} = 4.0000$; SD = 0.91735) that; organizations select talent through interviews. The researcher used a Likert scale in which; 5=very high extent 4 = good extent 3 = fair extent 2 = slight extent and 1 = none at all. Pulakos (2005) noted that these interviews consisted of carefully planned, job-related questions that are systematically scored to reliably identify talent. The results also echo Aswathappa (2005)'s work that advocates for use of different interview approach including mixed ones.

Talent and training executives leaned to a neutral stance that, "technical skills/ work sample tests allow for the selection of talent ($\overline{x} = 2.50$; SD = 1.012)". Among the respondents; 18.2% strongly agreed, 31.8% agreed, and 31.8% uncertain with the statement. This denotes that the star hotel in Nairobi City County's utilization of technical skills/ work sample tests to select talent is just a little above average. This is confirmed by the mean (2.50) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. The standard deviation

was 1.012, indicating a substantial divergence of responses. The findings suggested that, the extent to which five-star hotels in Nairobi City County utilize technical skills/ work sample tests need to be embraced more in selecting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to power them to greater levels of competitiveness.

These findings slightly differed with the portrayal by Pulakos (2005); Andrews (2009) who rooted for technical / work sample tests for selecting talent that bring competitive advantage for organizations. They posited that technical/ work sample tests subject prospective talent to perform the tasks while their performance is observed and scored by trained evaluators, which eventually guide them in choosing the right candidates.

Talent and training executives agreed that "employment tests allow for the selection of talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.18; SD = 1.181)". Most respondents; 40.9% strongly agreed, and 22.7% uncertain with the statement. It is an indication that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County embraced employment tests to select talent for critical positions. The mean (2.18) suggests that research informants agreed with the statement. The aggregate standard deviation, a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean, was 1.181, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. This implies that other significant views utilized other forms of interviews to obtain talent for critical positions. But overall, the results imply that employment tests were critical in selecting talent whose engagement may have made the hotels competitive. It means that talent executives can predict the ability of the candidate, measure job knowledge, and determine their intellectual abilities and organizational fit.

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The findings agreed with those by Chon (2013) which showed that various employment tests led to the selection of talent with skills, intelligence, and technical knowledge to do the job. This would enable the organization to select potentials that can generate high-quality products/ services for competitive advantage. The results also mirrored ideas by Aswathappa (2005); Boella and Turner (2013); O'Meara (2013) which insisted that employment tests conducted on the identified personnel results on qualified talent for the vacated critical positions.

Talent and training executives inclined towards uncertainty on whether "assessment centres allow for the selection of talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.64; SD = 1.329)". Among the respondents; 31.8% strongly agreed, 27.3% uncertain, and 27.3% disagreed with the statement. This indicated that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's utilization of assessment centres to select talent are just a little above average. This is confirmed by the mean (2.64) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. The standard deviation was 1.329, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The results suggest that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have fairly embraced assessment centres. This means that they do not fully determine the holistic competencies of their prospective talent. Additionally, rigorous talent assessment centre processes such as experiential exercises, group decision-making tasks, case study analysis, and employment tests role-playing exercises among others are moderately used.

These findings slightly differed with the portrayal by Pulakos (2005); Andrews (2009) who rooted for assessment centres for selecting talent that bring competitive advantage for organizations. They suggested that assessment centres use rigorous activities that expose

maximum capacities including cognitive ability, job knowledge, and personal characteristics of talent. Thus candidates selected to target critical positions have what it takes to differentially impact the competitive advantage of their organizations.

Talent and training executives leaned to agreeing that, reference approach is used because it yields talent ($\overline{x}$ = 1.91; SD = 1.269). Among these respondents, 63.6% strongly agreed and 18.2% agreed. This suggests that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County utilized the reference approach to select talent to a large extent. The mean (1.91) implies that research informants leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The SD was 1.269, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The findings imply that five-star hotels have embraced the reference approach to obtain talent for critical positions. The results suggest that these hotels utilize reference approaches to select talent that fits well with hotels' organizational culture hence sustaining their competitiveness.

These findings were conformed to those of research by D'Alessandro (2018) whose participants mentioned referrals as an occasional but important selection strategy. They further noted that some of their best talent has come from referrals. Study findings by Mehta (2017) also agreed with the current study and observed that staff in the service sector at Punjab and Haryana India were encouraged to provide references for talent. Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study suggested that referrals by other employees or friends already working in target organizations contribute to talent selection agreed with the current study. However, Tzoumas (2013); Saad and Mayouf (2018) did not support these findings because they were sceptical about whether the reference approach is effective.

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Opinions of the talent and training executives were sought on whether talent selection approaches have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of choosing talent. Survey respondents strongly agreed that "the selection process succeeds in choosing talent ($\bar{x}$ = 1.32; SD = 0.750)". This finding implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have taken advantage of a range of talent selection approaches to select talent.

Interview with the front office, housekeeping, food and beverage production, food and beverage service, and finance executives also revealed ways of identifying individuals with unique abilities for difficult jobs or positions in their department. Results indicated that: referrals, job auditions, interviews, employment tests, role plays, situational exercises, assessment centres, demonstration of tasks, description of task-procedures, and physical tests stood out as most important ways. Interviewee FOE1 offered a different point of view by stating that, *"by getting members of staff from the other departments whose work has been exceptional."*

The implication is that hotels' departments investigated have some kind of selection approaches that identified individuals with unique abilities for difficult jobs or positions in their departments. Consequently, these individuals positively impact a competitive advantage. The findings were in congruence with those of other researchers who found out that; right talent selection approaches allow organizations to recruit talent who differentially created competitive advantage (Kichuk, 2017; D'Alessandro, 2018).

4.5.1.3 Approaches of Talent Engagement

Talent and training executives were asked to indicate talent engagement approaches which they considered applicable in their respective hotels. The findings are revealed in Table 4.12. Interviews were answered by line managers.

Table 4.12 Approaches of Talent Engagement

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean $\bar{x}$	SD
Talent is provided with career development opportunities (enriched jobs, increased responsibilities, and challenging jobs)	3 (13.6%)	8 (36.4%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	2.73	1.241
Talent are allowed best work environment that includes authority, autonomy to be innovative, and work and life balance	10 (45.5%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.73	0.767
Performance appraisal inform recognition of talent's contribution	18 (81.8%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.18	0.395
Talent are provided with a range of financial rewards	8 (36.4%)	5 (22.7%)	9 (40.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2.00	0.926
When promotion opportunities become available, talent are considered first	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.36	0.492
Hotel has developed a relationship with talent in which there are reciprocal obligations or promises (PC)	3 (13.6%)	5 (22.7%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (13.6%)	7 (31.8%)	3.27	1.486
Competiveness (talent engagement activities have led to individuals producing exceptional products/ services)	21 (95.5%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.05	0.213

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Strongly agree" and 5 "Strongly Disagree"

Talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty on whether "hotels provide talent with career development opportunities (enriched jobs, increased responsibilities, and challenging jobs) ($\bar{x}$ = 2.73; SD =1.241)". The mean (2.73) indicates that development opportunities were moderately adopted and there was a wider gap between those for and against as demonstrated by the standard deviation. The aggregate standard deviation, a

measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean, was 1.241, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. This implies that most talent was engaged through career development opportunities; however, there was a minority but substantial group that was not. This is likely to have an average impact on inspiring competitiveness among five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Furthermore, a talent who wishes to advance their careers but are not allowed opportunities to do so may be disengaged from their work and hotels, hurting competitive levels of hotels. The findings suggest that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County somewhat allow their talent flexible time to further their careers. These findings were inconsistent with Idris (2014) who found that flexible plans that allowed talent to further their career increased their engagement levels to their work and company.

The finding also implied that a considerable number of jobs that ought to have been enriched so as talent draw some helpful experience and knowledge were not fully exploited. Therefore, a unique product or service creation or innovation that would have increased competitive levels of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County was not utilized to the maximum. This was contrary to Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s findings which stressed that talent who were deployed to enriched jobs got better acquainted with unique abilities that made their production efforts much easier thus attaining desirable engagement levels. The findings also suggested that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County engaged their talent but not to the desired levels because they did not fully make their jobs challenging enough, training, and job rotations upon which creativity and innovation are learnt and applied for unique assignments to differentiate them from competitors.

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The findings were not consistent with Lyria (2014)'s survey whose respondents strongly agreed 26.50%, agreed 61.70%, neutral 4.30%, disagreed 4.30%, and strongly disagreed 3.10% that interesting and challenging job increased engagement of employees. The results were also inconsistent with those of Thunnissen (2015) who revealed that job rotation and challenging assignments were useful instruments for developing talent for superior performances which would be the motivators for commitment to the work and the organization. Mansoori (2015)'s respondents indicated that organizations sought the right training courses that would practically enhance talent's knowledge and skills. It; however, appears that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County somewhat adopted career development opportunities but more is needed to create critical knowledge that would inspire the engagement that benefits the organization with enhanced productivity and profitability.

Talent and training executives inclined to the agreement whether "talent are allowed best work environment that includes authority, autonomy to be innovative, and work and life balance ($\bar{x}$ = 1.73; SD = 0.767)". The mean (1.73) shows that talent was accorded the best work environment which influenced engagement among talent in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The standard deviation was 0.767, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County permitted talent to take risks to innovate and improve their products and services. These improved or innovative products and services may have contributed to the competitiveness of these hotels. These findings are consistent with Linden and Teece (2014); Kaewsaeng-on (2017) who also stressed that authority and autonomy should be accorded to talent only. Thus, these make talent to feel in charge and as such likely to apply their discretionary effort and expertise for the benefit of the organization.

However, a section of findings in Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study noted that it was impossible to accord authority and autonomy to all positions in hotels. This study also has a similar perspective because it was based on exclusive talent management. The study concludes that authority and autonomy influenced engagement which furthered the competitiveness of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Putra *et al.* (2017)'s research work in hospitality settings also found that authority and autonomy positively predicted engagement of talent which were stimuli of competitiveness for organizations adopting the strategies. These findings concurred with the results of the study by Kibui *et al.* (2014) who found that; talent is allowed to exhibit a significant amount of discretionary effort to their jobs. According to the survey by Gitonga (2016), the talent who were allowed to be innovative and creative led to a high level of engagement ($\overline{x}$ = 3.8967; SD =1.10893) to a good extent. The researcher used a Likert scale in which; 5=very high extent 4 = good extent 3 = fair extent 2 = slight extent and 1 = none at all.

The findings further suggest that hotels' environments mean more to talent by being favourable to their personal lives which create feelings of family and belonging. Leng (2013); Kichuk (2017); Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s studies branded this relationship as work-life balance, and added that it encourages commitment among talent; which is a key component of engagement that is the basis for competitiveness of the hotels. It also appears that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have adopted work-life balance programmes that accorded talent social support and flexible working hours. Such kind of programmes is likely to have increased engagement levels that positively impacted talent to invest their unique abilities to the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The finding is closely in agreement with Nwoye (2017) who explained that organizations' support and affection is

a key component of WLB and Putra *et al.* (2017)'s work which emphasized that employees engaged more in their work when specific job resources, such as social support were provided. A section of Kichuk (2017)'s respondents confessed that it was extremely difficult to achieve a proper WLB in hotels due to stress, unsociable hours, and exhaustion.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that "performance appraisal inform recognition of talent's contribution ($\overline{x} = 1.18$; SD = 0.395)". The mean (1.18) indicates that there was a strong agreement that the performance appraisal system has been adopted in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. It further shows that the results of appraisal informed on the recognition of talent for various rewards. The aggregate standard deviation, a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean, was 0.395, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings imply that talent is proactively committed to their job, loyal, faith, and pride in an organization. This led to the engagement of talent which may have contributed to the competitiveness of these hotels. The finding concurs with Kichuk (2017) who noted that recognising talent for rewards develops rational commitment, which reflects whether a job meets talented employees 'monetary and development interests and fits in a motivational organisational environment. Soomro *et al.* (2016); Putra *et al.* (2017); Fathy (2018); Jooss (2018)'s findings were consisted with the current study by citing increased commitment due to performance results that led to promotion, extra salary, and simple appreciation.

Talent and training executives agreed that "talent is provided with a range of financial rewards ($\overline{x} = 2.000$; SD = 0.926)". The mean (2.000) indicates that there was an agreement that a policy of providing talent with financial rewards when opportunities arose was

adopted in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The aggregate standard deviation, a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean, was 0.926, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The implication is that one of the reasons why five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are competitive is because talent has been more engaged through financial rewards. These findings were consistent with those of Kichuk (2017) whose study noted that engaged talent applies their discretionary effort to perform complex tasks whose success put their organizations above those who do not have the advantage of this extrinsic motivator. It was apparent that only individuals considered talent needed to be engaged through financial rewards, and this confirmed earlier findings by Nwoye (2017); Kichuk (2017) whose informants noted that engagement of talent in critical positions through monetary rewards influenced positive results in their organizations.

Conversely, findings by Kaewsaeng-on (2017) were sceptical whether monetary incentives were effective in engaging talent. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) particularly pointed out that millennials' motivation is better compensation and they will shift to where available making it difficult to engage them. This assertion echoes 40.9% of the respondents in this study who were uncertain whether it is the only talent that needed to be engaged through monetary rewards. Nevertheless; Putra *et al.* (2017) emphasized that the hospitality industry is known for its low wages and long working hours, which resulted in employees preferring monetary rewards as a source of engagement.

Talent and training executives also strongly agreed that "when promotion opportunities become available, talent is considered first ($\bar{x}$ = 1.36; SD = 0.492)". The mean (1.36) shows that there was a strong agreement that talent is given priority when opportunities for

promotion arise. The aggregate standard deviation, a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean, was 0.492, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are filling promotion opportunities that become available with talent considered first. Furthermore, the occupation of leadership positions or working in pivotal positions by talent increases the quality of products and service in these hotels. This is because these individuals develop a significant emotional attachment with their jobs which goes beyond the call of duty, to further the interest of the organization.

The findings are similar to the results of the study by Kibui *et al.* (2014) who found that; when promotion opportunities become available, talent is considered first. Besides promotion is accompanied by rewards which include enriched jobs, incentives, bonuses, allowances, and increased salaries. Putra *et al.* (2017) concurred with this proposition and added that such rewards positively influence commitment behaviour. This is the behaviour that forms engagement in which talent apply extra effort and use their unique characteristics to produce inimitable products and services. Soomro *et al.* (2016); Kichuk (2017) also noted that sufficiently engaged talent achieve high levels of performance enough to cause competitive advantage.

Talent and training executives remained undecided whether hotels have developed a relationship with talent in which there are reciprocal obligations or promises ($\bar{x}$ = 3.27; SD = 1.486)". The mean (3.27) indicates that there was uncertainty about whether five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have adopted relationships with talent in which there are reciprocal obligations or promises (psychological contract). The aggregate standard

deviation, a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean, was 1.486, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. This implies that the extent of psychological contract prevailing in these hotels is not deep enough suggesting that benefits that would have been amassed from the practice are lost. This is likely not to impact the competitiveness of hotels to the levels of psychological contract is adopted.

This study predicts that the uncertainty could be attributed to two aspects. The first aspect is that these hotels have adopted an inclusive talent engagement strategy. This strategy denotes that all employees are considered talent indicating that engagement practices adopted a focus on all. The question posed by the researcher was based on exclusive talent engagement and as such there might have been a discrepancy between the researchers' expectations and the reality on the actual adoption of engagement. The second aspect would be that talent is engaged based on the exclusive perspective of engagement but the levels and quality of engagement are not deep enough. Findings by Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam (2013); Xue (2014) agreed with this proposition that engagement practices ought to be dedicated to a selected group of talent who perform critical jobs that differentially affect performance and retain value for organizations. Thus these aspects explain why respondents remained uncertain whether five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have adopted psychological contracts that could propel them to greater competitiveness.

The findings for this study were slightly different from those of Oppenheim (2018) whose results reflected the availability of most conditions that significantly predicted psychological contract, and it ultimately influenced greater levels of production. Results

obtained by Ballou (2013) were also slightly different from the current ones whose psychological contract's components of job satisfaction and perceived organizational support were rated as strongly agree to and leaned to agree to respectively. The researcher based psychological contract questions on an aggregate of extrinsic and intrinsic tenets. The responses suggested that it is difficult for the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County to satisfy the combination and that explains why participants' remained uncertain. Ballou (2013); Soomro *et al.* (2016)'s findings showed that positive relational and transactional psychological contracts had been created between talent and the organizations whose results increased engagement. Another explanation as to why most respondents remained uncertain as to whether hotels developed relationships with talent in which there are reciprocal obligations could be due to a breach of the psychological contract. Oppenheim (2018) emphasized that the fulfilment or breach of the psychological contract can impact the amount of work talent put in the job, which in turn impacts talent engagement.

Opinions of the talent and training executives were sought on whether TM approaches have positive contributions towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of choosing, and producing exceptional products and / services. Survey respondents strongly agreed that "talent engagement activities have led to producing exceptional products/ services ($\overline{x}$ = 1.05; SD = 0.213)". The mean (1.05) indicates that talent engagement activities adopted by five-star hotels in Nairobi City County led to talent producing exceptional products/ services. The standard deviation was 0.213, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's engagement strategies deliver high-quality products and services contributing to

competitive advantage. The findings are similar to the results of the study by Kibui *et al.* (2014); Moayedi and Vaseghi (2016) found that; engaged employees are strong organizational assets for sustained competitive advantage. These engaged employees are difficult to imitate and are unique to an organization thus lending credence to the resource-based perspective of the firm.

Interview with line executives also revealed ways on how to motivate their talent to maintain the highest performance levels. Results indicated that: performance incentives, training technical skills, recognition of excellent performance, responsibilities that advance career growth, job security, competitive pay, adopting best practices from competitors, promoting talent to leadership positions, benchmarking with competitors, consistent on-the-job training, refresher programs, new processes and procedures of completing tasks, conducive working environment, health care services, sufficient holidays, equal treatment and respect, international career opportunities in hotel functions and specialist functions, refresher programs and rewards were to motivate talent to maintain highest performance levels. Interviewee FE5 responded that "we offer e*nhanced holiday allowance and holiday purchase scheme to our talent to reward great performance so that it can be sustained."* Interviewee FBPE7 also replied that *"our department has family-friendly policies to promote a work-life balance so that talent gives more to us in return."*

The implication is that the hotels' departments investigated have some kind of engagement approaches that motivated talent to maintain the highest performance levels. Accordingly, these individuals influenced a competitive advantage. These findings are similar to the

findings of the study by Kibui *et al.* (2014) who found that; engaged employees are strong organizational assets for sustained competitive advantage.

4.5.1.4 Approaches of Talent Development

Talent and training executives were asked to note talent development approaches which they considered applicable in their respective hotels. Findings are revealed in Table 4.13. Interviews were answered by line managers.

Table 4.13 Approaches of Talent Development

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
External career development courses are used to develop talent	10 (45.5%)	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.64	0.658
In-house development programmes are used to develop talent	8 (36.4%)	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	1.95	1.046
360-feedback assessment technique is used to develop talent	7 (31.8%)	14 (63.6%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.73	0.550
Technology based training is used to develop talent	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.1%)	8 (36.4%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	2.09	1.109
Coaching systems are used to develop talent	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.36	0.492
Mentoring (buddying) systems are used to develop talent	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.36	0.492
Job rotation is used to develop talent individuals	7 (31.8%)	7 (31.8%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	2.41	1.368
Action learning is used to develop talent individuals	7 (31.8%)	7 (31.8%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	1 (4.5%)	2.32	1.249
Special projects assignments re used to develop talent	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (31.8%)	4 (18.2%)	7 (31.8%)	3.55	1.299
Stretching assignments are used to develop talent	5 (22.7%)	3 (13.6%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	2.77	1.270
Job shadowing is used to develop talent individuals	7 (31.8%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	4 (18.2%)	2.73	1.549
Competiveness (talent development allow talent to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors)	16 (72.7%)	6 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.27	0.456

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Strongly agree" and 5 "Strongly Disagree"

Table 4.13 shows that talent and training executives leaned towards agreement on whether "external career development courses are used to develop talent ($\bar{x}$ =1.64; SD = 0.658; strongly agree (45.5%), agree (45.5%), uncertain (9.1%), disagree (0%) and strongly disagree (0%))". This suggests that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County largely, depended on external career development courses to develop talent. The mean (1.64) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.658, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County depended on external career development courses in universities or colleges to pass critical KSAs to talent. This allowed the hotels to equip their talent with competencies aimed at contributing positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

The findings were supported by Mishra *et al.* (2019) who found that external career development courses adopted in the hospitality industry have a significant relationship with organizational performance. However, these results were inconsistent with the observation by CIPD (2015) which noted that hospitality organisations are likely to use in-house career development courses rather than external ones. Kichuk (2017) also did not back this finding and concluded that unless external career courses are funded by the individuals themselves, hospitality organisations have little incentive in sponsoring them because of financial implications.

Majority of the talent and training executives inclined towards disagreeing that, "in-house development programmes are used to develop talent ($\bar{x}$ = 1.95; SD = 1.046)". This finding was not consistent with the findings of other researchers. Most of the respondents; 36.4%

strongly agreed while 45.5% agreed with the statement. This is an indication that in-house development had been largely adopted for developing talent. The mean (1.95) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 1.046, indicating a substantial divergence of the participants' responses. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's in-house development programmes are widely used to develop talent, and they may be gaining a competitive advantage out of this.

The findings were supported by CIPD (2015) which noted that hospitality organisations prefer to use in-house career development courses for developing their talent. Mansoori (2015) agreed with the findings as well and further noted that in-house career development courses develop KSAs in talent that is critical in the competitive organizational performance. Kichuk (2017)'s study results also agreed with the current study and praised them for their capacity to increase knowledge and better performance. A study by Lyria (2014) revealed overwhelming support for in-house development programmes by company executives at 90% and noted that they improved the KSAs of talent.

Most of the talent and training executives inclined towards agreement whether "360-feedback assessment technique is used to develop talent ($\bar{x}$ =1.73; SD = 0.550)". The majority of the respondents, 31.8% strongly agreed while 63.6% agreed with the statement. The implication is that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County largely, utilized 360-feedback technique assessment for developing talent. The mean (1.73) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.550, indicating a normal variation in the informants' responses. The

findings disclose that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have found the 360-feedback assessment technique to be successful in developing talent. This has allowed the hotels to innovate or and create new or improve KSAs which may have contributed positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

The study results were consistent with those of Dirani (2018) who revealed that 360 feedback assessment techniques were applied in business, academia, and government in the United Arab Emirates to create or improve KSAs among talent. Bialek (2014) was also in agreement and further revealed that it improves the effectiveness of talent especially the leaders because they are the ones targeted by the tool. Thus the technique creates valuable KSAs in talent whose application in the workplace offers organizations valuable benefits in the form of quality products and services.

Majority of the talent and training executives agreed that, "technology-based training is used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.09; SD = 1.109; strongly agree (45.5%), agree (9.1%), uncertain (36.4%), disagree (9.1%) and strongly disagree (0%))". The standard deviation was 1.109, indicating a substantial divergence of responses in which more were strongly agreeing and more others uncertain. The mean (2.09); however, revealed that respondents agreed hotels use technology-based development approaches to equip talent with KSAs. These findings were suggestive of the fact that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County recognize that explicit knowledge is vital to the further development of their talent. As a result, TBT is being applied for learning and codifying the explicit knowledge. This has allowed for the transfer of critical knowledge to talent and this may have contributed positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

These findings were slightly different from the study conducted in Qatar by Mohannadi (2017) who found that talent who relied on technology-based training as the essential factor in supporting knowledge dependency was 48.78%. According to Nonaka and Takeushi (1995), there are two types of knowledge; tacit and explicit. Explicit knowledge is collected, stored, distributed, and shared primarily as electronic or paper documents (Kunwar, 2018). Moreover, Lyria (2014) assessed the adoption of technology-based training in companies listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange also agreed with the current results. The researcher found out that E-learning was of great importance with 83% of executives embraced it, 12% did not while 5% were uncertain. The findings implied that the adoption of technology-based learning was a factor in organizational performance. Kichuk (2017) agreed with this assertion and added that exposing talent to technology-based raining may present opportunities to study new material connected to their jobs via interactive computer learning packages.

The majority of the talent and training executives strongly accepted that they use "coaching systems are used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ =1.36; SD = 0.492)". The majority (63.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed with the statement. This showed that coaching systems to a large extent backed five-star hotels in Nairobi City County developing critical talent. The mean (1.36) implies that research informants leaned towards a strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.492, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County overwhelmingly use coaching systems to develop talent. This may have created knowledge resources that have been used to enhance and sustain a competitive advantage.

CIPD (2010)'s study supported the findings of this study by noting that coaching especially by line executives was ranked at 51% among the top effective learning and development practices. Besides, the findings of the study match those by Mansoori (2015) who revealed that coaching was widespread in Dubai's organizations in developing talent based on the appraisal outcomes. The findings were also consistent with Mensah and Bawole (2017)'s work which noted that coaching is an effective development process that helps employees to match their KSAs with job requirements. Bialek (2014)'s study on peer-group coaching in the USA, was also in the same accord with the current study. The researcher noted that coaching supports collaborative learning which increases confidence and facilitates the application of KSAs.

Majority of the talent and training executives also strongly agreed that "mentoring systems are used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ =1.36; SD = 0.492; strongly agree (63.6%), agree (36.4%), uncertain (0%), disagree (0%) and strongly disagree (0%))". The majority (63.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed with the statement. This showed that mentoring systems to a large extent backed five-star hotels in Nairobi City County developing critical talent. The mean (1.36) implies that research informants leaned towards a strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.492, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's experienced talent can pass their valuable knowledge to potential talent. This knowledge is vital and it is being prevented from loss if experienced talent retires or leaves. This may have contributed positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

These findings for the most part resembled a trend found by Lyria (2014)'s survey whose respondents strongly agreed that coaching and mentoring systems were used to develop talent were 28.40%, agree 51.2%, neutral 0%, disagree 9.90%, and strongly disagree 20%. Findings by Lyria (2014) emphasised that mentoring occurs between the talent and superiors by focusing on performance levels and taking actions to maintain effective performance. The findings of this study also correspond with surveys by Cutajar (2012); Keoye (2014) that, the mentoring system enabled the development of talent by transferring to them knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The study results also agreed with those of Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study in Thai hotels which identified the adoption of mentoring/ buddying. It noted that when hotels recruited or promoted talent into position, they also assigned them, buddies, to help them develop to the highest performance. Mansoori (2015); Dirani (2018)'s studies were consistent with the current study, and their reports showed that businesses, academia, and government in the United Arab Emirates have actively engaged the technique to support the transfer of expert knowledge from professionals to junior employees.

The majority of the talent and training executives agreed that "job rotation is used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.41; SD = 1.368)". Among the respondents; 31.8% strongly agreed while 31.8% agreed whether job rotation is used to develop talent. This implies that over 60% of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County had a good measure of job rotation practices. The mean (2.41) established that research respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation (1.368) showed a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The results of this study suggest that job rotation is practiced in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County but not to a significant extent. Talent ought to be

technically sufficient all round to be more useful to hotels. To obtain this benefit, perhaps these hotels would add more job rotation programmes to further their competitiveness.

The findings complement the results of the study by Brunila (2013) who found out that talent is permitted to perform various jobs at different times. Talent typically has to stay for a while at the same job so that this individual has a deeper understanding of the role. Glaister *et al.* (2017) also agreed with the finding and added that job rotations allow for collaboration and teamwork and create conditions for sharing knowledge. Lyria (2014) was supported this finding and pointed out that job rotation helps move people into roles where their skills are most suited and their aspirations are best met. Mensah and Bawole (2017); Saad and Mayouf (2018) agreed with the findings as well and added that that job rotation allows hotel staff to discover their abilities and skills whose application drives up the competitiveness of the target organizations.

The majority of the talent and training executives agreed that "action learning is used to develop talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.32; SD = 1.249)". Among the respondents; 31.8% strongly agreed while 31.8% agreed whether action learning is used to develop talent. This implies that over 60% of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County had a good measure of action learning practices. The mean (2.32) established that research respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation (1.249) showed a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The results of this study suggest that action learning is provided for five-star hotels in Nairobi City County to a good measure. Talent requires practical engagements aimed at developing KSAs that would make a difference in the competitiveness of hotels.

The findings agree with the study by Bialek (2014) on an examination of how participation in a cohort-based leadership development program for high-potential employees contributes to the development of leaders at major professional services firms in the United States. The study revealed that action centres were actively used to develop talent especially leaders through solving problems. The researcher further noted that the organization can benefit by utilizing the intellectual power gained and talent of high-potentials to complete initiatives related to organizational strategy. The findings also align with those of Mensah and Bawole (2017) who observed that action learning supported organizations to match talent's KSAs with job requirements.

Majority of the talent and training executives inclined towards disagreeing that, "special projects assignments are used to develop talent ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55; SD = 1.299)". This finding was not consistent with the findings of other researchers. Most of the respondents; 31.8% were uncertain, 18.2%, disagreed, and 31.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. It appears that special project assignments are not common in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The standard deviation was 1.299, which showed a substantial divergence of responses in which more strongly disagreed and more others uncertain. The mean (3.55) established that research respondents leaned towards a strong agreement. The findings suggest that most five-star hotels in Nairobi City County do not fully benefit from special projects assignment which ought to develop critical KSAs among talent.

These findings differed with those of Detuncq and Schmidt (2013) which revealed that special projects assignments were utilised but more on talent targeted for leadership. Murugesan (2011)'s book did not support the finding as the book endorsed project

assignments for providing real opportunities to build and lead teams, facilitate strategic thinking, and help participants cultivate communication skills. Additionally, Glaister *et al.* (2017)'s work did not agree with the findings. They wrote that special project assignments were critical in creating collaboration, teamwork, and an environment that encourages knowledge sharing. The findings again were not supported by Mishra *et al.* (2019)'s work which revealed that special project assignments were used in the hospitality sector in India to grow personal and team competencies to contribute to organizational stability and compete better in the market.

Most talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty on whether "stretching assignments are used to develop talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.77; SD = 1.27)". The majority of the respondents, 22.7% strongly agreed and 36.4% remained undecided whether stretching assignments are used to develop talent. These imply that assignments have been adopted in less than half of the five-star hotels surveyed. The standard deviation (1.27) suggests that the results were unevenly distributed but skewed towards uncertainty according to the mean (2.77). The findings disclose that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County; allow their talent to participate in stretching assignments that allow critical learning to develop specialist talent in pivotal positions. However, the assignments are moderately used because the informants leaned towards uncertainty when asked whether they are used to develop talent. Nonetheless, the number of stretching assignments used may have contributed to the competitiveness of hotels.

The findings slightly differed with studies by Cutajar (2012); Brunila (2013); Keoye (2014) who found that; organizations use stretching assignments to nurture talent's creativity and

share knowledge. The findings were also slightly inconsistent with the work of Glaister *et al.* (2017) who noted that stretching assignments facilitated collaboration, teamwork, and an environment that encourages the sharing of knowledge. The findings again slightly differed with those of Mishra *et al.* (2019) who noted that stretching assignments have a significant relationship with organizational performance in the hospitality sector in India. This statement was affirmed by Tomany (2012) who noted that stretching assignments were preferred to provide prospects to grow KSAs, among talent for increasingly broad and complex appointments.

Most talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty on whether "job shadowing is used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.73; SD = 1.549)". The findings show that 31.8% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed, 13.6%, uncertain 18.2% disagreed, while 18.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. The results show that while there were a significant number of five-star hotels that used the job shadowing technique, there was also another significant number that did not. The standard deviation (1.549) confirms the unevenness but leaning towards uncertainty according to the mean (2.77). The findings disclose that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County; use job shadowing to transfer knowledge and skills from talent to potential talent, or from one talent to another. However, the technique is moderately applied, and some do not use it at all. This implies that some hotels missed the benefits of transferring tacit knowledge which is best passed on in this manner. That missed opportunity may be a reason why hotels may not reach their potential for competitive advantage.

The study findings slightly agreed with Anaya (2015)'s book which holds that job shadowing is adopted by talent management-oriented companies so that talent can share common experiences, skills, and knowledge regarding specific competencies. The book further insisted that job shadowing is critical because it helps spread the special abilities of the most competent workers to others in the discipline. The findings also differed slightly with a study by Mensah and Bawole (2017) on person-job fit matters in parastatal institutions which revealed that job shadowing was used and it helped match employees' KSAs with job requirements.

Finally, the opinions of the talent and training executives were sought on whether talent development approaches have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in developing individuals to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors. Survey respondents strongly agreed that, "talent development allow individuals to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors ($\bar{x}$ = 1.27; SD = 0.456; strongly agree (68.2%), agree (22.7%), uncertain (9.1%), disagree (0%) and strongly disagree (0%))". It appears that over 90% of the respondents thought that development approaches adopted by the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County created knowledge assets that are difficult to imitate by competitors, which made them competitive. The standard deviation (0.456) showed a normal variation of responses, and the mean (1.27) confirmed that respondents strongly agreed that the development of talent enabled talent with inimitable competencies. The findings also imply that; five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's talent development approaches have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in developing talent to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors.

These findings are consistent with Mohannadi (2017)'s survey whose respondents strongly agreed that talent development approaches have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of choosing individuals to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors were 50%, agreed 42%, neither agreed nor disagreed 7%, disagreed 1% and strongly disagreed 0%. These findings also resembled a trend found by Lyria (2014)'s survey whose respondents strongly agreed that employees are continuously acquiring new knowledge and skills, and mastering new ways was 26.50%, agree 66.0%, neutral 1.20%, disagree 5.60% and strongly disagree 0.60%.

Line managers were interviewed and identified external career development courses, in-house development programmes, technology-based training, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, action learning, special projects assignments, stretching assignments, job shadowing, and 360-feedback assessments as approaches for developing talent. When probed further as to which approaches were commonly used, they picked; career development courses, in-house development programmes, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment. For instance, FBD12 said that *"we use external courses in colleges, job rotation, in-house programmes, coaching, mentoring, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment"*. FOE08 noted that *"sure we commonly use job rotations, 360-feedback assessment external courses, custom design programmes within our department, coaching, mentoring, and action learning"*.

4.5.1.5 Approaches of Talent and Knowledge Retention

Talent and training executives were asked to indicate talent and knowledge retention approaches which they considered applicable in their respective hotels using. Findings are revealed in Table 4.14. Interviews were answered by line managers.

Table 4.14 Approaches of Talent and Knowledge Retention

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
Hotels use long-term contracts to retain knowledge and talent	6 (27.3%)	8 (36.4%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	2.18	0.958
Hotels diffuse difficult-to-imitate knowledge to potential talent to retain it	12 (54.5%)	10 (45.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.45	0.510
The use of succession plan ensure that talent is retained	8 (36.4%)	8 (36.4%)	1 (4.5%)	3 (13.6%)	2 (9.1%)	2.23	1.343
Hotels use development opportunities to inspire talent retention	13 (59.1%)	8 (36.4%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.45	0.596
Hotels use compensation and incentives to inspire talent retention	3 (13.6%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	6 (27.3%)	3.41	1.403
Hotels use growth/ promotion opportunities to inspire talent retention	4 (18.2%)	7 (31.8%)	2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)	4 (18.2%)	2.91	1.444
Hotels develop relationships with talent in which there are reciprocal retain them	15 (68.2%)	7 (31.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.32	0.477
Hotels balance between work and life to ease pressure on talent to retain them	9 (40.9%)	7 (31.8%)	5 (22.7%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	1.91	0.921
Hotels adopted appealing work environments to encourage retention	7 (31.8%)	9 (40.9%)	6 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.95	0.785
Competiveness-retention of talent & unique knowledge sustained production of exceptional products/ services	16 (72.7%)	6 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.27	0.456

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Strongly agree" and 5 "Strongly Disagree"

Talent and training executives agreed that "hotels use long-term contracts to retain knowledge and talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.18; SD = 0.958)". Most of the respondents, 27.3% strongly agreed, 36.4% agreed, while 27.3% remained uncertain with the statement. It appears that they leaned towards the agreement that long-term contracts used to retain talent. The mean (2.18) confirmed that research respondents leaned towards an agreement. The standard

deviation was 0.958, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings suggest that these hotels are securing their talent for long times to benefit from their high-level performances. Talent has valuable knowledge that is difficult to imitate and it is used to further and sustain the competitiveness of hotels. If these individuals are allowed to move, the valuable knowledge will be an asset to competitors.

The findings are on the same trend as the revelations by Helenius and Hedberg (2007)'s work which revealed that organizations targeted in their study offered their employees long-term contracts so as they can offer their value for an elongated period. Dirani (2018)'s results also supported the current findings that employees who were considered talent were tied in their organizations with long term contracts. However, Dirani (2018) contended that contracts with short longevity make employees insecure and as such, they can depart any time before maturation if other opportunities arose elsewhere.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that "hotels diffuse difficult-to-imitate knowledge to potential talent to retain it ($\bar{x}$ = 1.45; SD = 0.510)". The majority of the respondents, 54.5% strongly agreed and 45.5% agreed with the statement. It is apparent that 100% of the respondents indicated that they transfer difficult-to-imitate knowledge from talent to potential talent. The findings imply that; five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have means in place for transferring valuable knowledge from talent to high potential individuals and repositories. This ensures that hotels conserve valuable organizational knowledge which continues to sustain their competitiveness.

These findings were in accordance with a study conducted in hotels in the coastal region of Kenya by Gichuki (2014); who found out that to a great extent, hotels transferred

knowledge and experience to existing personnel. The results were also consistent with

Nonaka and Takeushi (1995) who insisted that critical knowledge (tacit) resides in talent

and it is transferred to potential talent so that it does not get lost if talent leave, or retire.

Whelan and Carcary (2011); Martins and Martins (2011)'s work was also of the same

opinion with the findings. They noted that knowledge transfer efforts were made through

mentoring. The findings were also consistent with Agarwal and Islam (2015 who identified

storytelling, coaching, after-action reviews, and communities of practice, handover

training, induction program, orientation, or training as means of transfer.

Talent and training executives agreed that "the use of succession plan ensures that talent is

retained ($\overline{x}$ = 2.23; SD = 1.343)". Among the respondents; 36.4%% strongly agreed while

36.4% agreed whether using succession planning ensured that talent is retained. This

implies that over 70% of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County use succession planning

to retain talent. The mean (2.23) established that research respondents leaned towards an

agreement. The standard deviation (1.343) showed a substantial divergence of participants'

responses. Based on the findings of this study, most five star hotels in Nairobi City County;

used succession plans to retain their talent. This retention means that critical KSAs are

retained which enhances and sustains competitive advantage in the surveyed hotels.

These findings are consistent with Kichuk (2017) study which investigated the

understanding of talent management in the hotel sector found that succession planning led

to the retention of talent. Succession planning helps with the retention of talent because

they are made aware of the availability of internal opportunities to further their careers.

These findings also agreed with Helenius and Hedberg (2007)'s work which noted that

organizations that adopted succession planning encouraged talent to remain because they become aware of possible reserved opportunities for them. The findings are also in agreement with those by Fitz-Lewis (2018) who revealed that succession planning is effective in creating and transferring KSAs through mentoring to take on critical roles and this encourages talent to remain. The findings also agreed with those of Machuma *et al.* (2018)'s work which revealed that succession planning is effective in transferring critical knowledge to talent and most importantly retaining them.

Talent and training executives also strongly agreed that, "hotels use development opportunities to inspire talent retention ($\bar{x}$ = 1.45; SD = 0.596; strongly agree 59.1% agree 36.4%), uncertain 4.5%, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree)". These results reveal that 90% of the respondents agreed that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have adopted development opportunities for their talent which is an incentive for them to stay. The mean (1.45) indicated that respondents strongly agreed and that the standard deviation (0.596) shows that the variance of the results from the mean was normal. These results suggest that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County use development opportunities to inspire key talent retention. It is an indication that talent is ambitious in becoming more competent and demand to be developed by their hotels which persuade them to stay. This may have contributed positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

These results were slightly different from those by Knott (2016)'s study, but they suggested the same trend. The study revealed that; 34% of the informants strongly agreed that development opportunities are important in retaining talent, 21% agreed, 22% were neutral, 17% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed. A survey by Leng (2013); Kibui *et al.* (2014);

Saad and Mayouf (2018) found out that providing development opportunities restrict employees from leaving the organization. Consequently, their organization usually gains in form of increased commitment and employee satisfaction. A study by Hausknecht *et al.* (2009); Kichuk (2017); Fathy (2018) complement the findings of this study that development courses are among the effective strategies of preventing loss of organizational knowledge due to turnover.

Talent and training executives remained certain whether "hotels use compensation and incentives to inspire talent retention ($\bar{x}$ = 3.41; SD = 1.403)". Most of the respondents; 18.2% were uncertain, 27.3% disagreed, and 27.3% strongly disagreed. This implies that compensation and incentives were sparingly used. This can be confirmed by the standard deviation (1.403) which indicated a substantial divergence of participants' responses from the mean. The mean confirms (3.41) that most responses were uncertain whether compensation and incentives are used to inspire retention of talent. These results imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are at risk of losing critical talent if better paying opportunities become available elsewhere.

These results are slightly different from Fathy (2018); Saad and Mayouf (2018)'s studies in North Africa and the Middle East whose findings gave an emphatic approval of financial incentives as a means of retaining talent in hospitality oriented organizations. The findings are also slightly different from those of Leng (2013); Putra *et al.* (2017) whose findings revealed that monetary incentives were important in the retention of talent because wages in the hospitality industry are low and any salary increases or perks will be effective. The findings by Kaewsaeng-on (2017) also slightly differed with those of the current study,

whereby respondents in Thai hotels indicated that competitive compensation and incentives formed the most effective tool for retaining valuable employees (talent). Likewise, Tomany (2012); Lyria (2014) slightly differed with the findings for finding a positive relationship between compensation and retention.

Talent and training executives inclined to uncertainty whether "hotels use growth/ promotion opportunities to inspire talent retention ($\bar{x}$ = 2.91; SD = 1.444)". The results were distributed in significant proportions among those who strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree on whether hotels use growth/ promotion opportunities to inspire talent retention. The standard deviation (1.444) confirmed this trend because there was a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The mean suggests that more respondents agreed with the statement but the agreement was weak so it leaned to uncertainty. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are promoting talent to positions to retain them but those positions may not be sufficient for all talent.

These findings agreed with those of Fathy (2018)'s study in Egypt which revealed promotion to positions may not retain employees as they would spend several years before getting promoted in the hospitality industry. However, a study by Kichuk (2017) slightly disagreed with the current study by reporting that organizations investigated recognized and promoted their employees giving them a sense of job and career satisfaction leading to their retention. Lyria (2014)'s study slightly differed from the findings of the current study which reported that growth/ promotion opportunities were accorded to talent and may have contributed positively to their retention.

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Talent and training executives indicated a strong agreement that, "hotels develop relationships with talent in which there are reciprocal obligations/ promises (PC) retain talent ($\bar{x}$ =1.32; SD = 0.477; strongly agree (68.2%), agree (31.8%), uncertain (0%), disagree (0%) and strongly disagree (0%))". This implies that there was a strong agreement that obligation whether formal or informal was performed. This is confirmed by the mean (1.32) indicating a strong relationship and the standard deviation (0.492) that showed a normal variation on the responses. The findings implied that there exists a strong psychological contract between talent and five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. This must-have contributed to their retention of talent and consequently creating competitive edges for them as their critical knowledge remains as well. This further suggests that talent are embedded in their assigned roles because they have a positive view of existing psychological contract which is a component of superior performance hence competitiveness.

These findings were in accordance with those of Kichuk (2017) whose results suggested that promises between employees and hospitality organizations are kept and greater rewards are offered to make employees to be embedded in the organizations' job and compete at par or better than competitors. The findings also matched those of Mitchel and Lee (2001) who found that psychological contracts were positively perceived. They noted that the positive PC influenced greater job embeddedness in which talent applied their KSAs fully to an extent of the feeling of sacrificing valued things if they quit.

Talent and training executives leaned to agreeing that, "hotels balance between work and life to ease pressure on talent to retain them ($\bar{x}$ = 1.91; SD = 0.921)". Most of the

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respondents, 40.9% strongly agreed while 31.8% agreed with the statement. It implies that over 70% of the respondents felt that there exists a positive WLB. The mean (1.91) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.921, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings disclosed that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have created good WLB which eases social-related pressures. This makes talent feel a sense of belonging, and then be motivated to stay, offer, and embed themselves in their assigned roles hence becomes competitive assets.

The findings are consistent with Holston-Okae (2018)'s work which affirmed that WLB is one of the most effective methods of reducing talent turnover; whereby, retention strategies consider both work and life components. The findings were also consistent with those of Leng (2013); Kichuk (2017); Kaewsaeng-on (2017) who noted that hotels tried to create work environments that enhanced feelings of family and belonging within firms which encouraged talent to stay. However, Fathy (2018)'s work did not commit fully to the importance of WLB. The researcher argued that it is not easy to overcome some of the negative aspects of the hospitality industry such as the sacrifice of private life, invasive and long working hours for WLB to become a source of talent retention.

Table 4.14 shows that Talent and training executives are inclined to an agreement on whether "hotels have adopted appealing work environments to encourage talent retention ($\bar{x}$ = 1.95; SD = 0.785)". Most of the respondents, 31.8% strongly agreed while 40.9% agreed with the statement. It implies that over 70% of the respondents felt that there exist good work environments to encourage retention. The mean (1.95) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.785,

indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have adopted appealing work environments that make talent want to be associated with them for long times. This means that hotels will continue benefitting from their critical KSAs which are sources of competitive advantage.

The findings were consistent with Tanwar and Prasad (2016) which revealed that the work environment contributes to the strength of employer brands which are stimulants for talent retention. The findings were also supported by those of Kaewsaeng-on (2017) who revealed that positive environments in most Thai hotels combined with other aspects led to the retention of talent. Nwoye (2017)'s study also affirmed the results of the current study by noting that good work environments in target organisations encouraged teamwork, supportive and trustworthy relationships which fostered retention of the workforce that continued to be sources of competitive advantage.

Opinions of talent and training executives were sought on whether talent and knowledge retention approaches have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of maintaining the production of exceptional products and/ services. Survey respondents strongly agreed that "the retention of key talent employees and protection of unique knowledge has maintained production of exceptional products and / services ($\overline{x}$ = 1.27; SD = 0.456)". These findings suggest that talent and knowledge retention approaches applied in these hotels have enabled them to keep their talent. In turn, this talent has applied their valuable knowledge and ability to produce and offer exceptional products and / services.

Interviews with the front office, housekeeping, food and beverage production, food and beverage service, and finance executives also revealed ways of preventing difficult-to-imitate knowledge from being accessed by competitors. Twenty-eight (n=28; 80%) departmental said that there is no way competitors can be prevented from obtaining their unique knowledge. It is only seven (n=7; 20%) departmental executives who thought that their unique knowledge can be secured within the hotel.

The 20% who thought that their unique knowledge can be secured from being accessed by rivals gave the strategies they use. They comprised of; committing talent with long-term contracts, competitive pay packages, promoting them to leadership positions, employing talent for long periods or permanent basis, signing of non-disclosure contracts by talent. Interviewee FBPE4 responded that *"we have some pockets of rare knowledge that is in our hotel and we have managed to keep it to ourselves for a long time and I will not reveal how we do it because we are led by an international policy of the chain hotel that requires us to keep almost everything within confidential."* Interviewee FE1 stated that *"Once we identify an individual with unique technical capabilities, we recommend to the human resources to tie them down with long contracts."*

The implication is that most departmental heads are not keen on strategies that could prevent the loss of superior knowledge to rivals. Accordingly, this impacts the competitive advantage of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. These findings are inconsistent with those of surveys by Brunila (2013); Gichuki, (2014) who noted that organizations achieved competitiveness by retaining people considered talent and safeguard their tacit knowledge from being accessed by competitors.

4.5.2 Testing of Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis one posited that 'there are no significant approaches adopted in talent management practices that promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County'. Linear regression was conducted, and the regression model summary is presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
0.958a	0.918	0.892	0.09719	0.918	35.604	5	16	0.000

a Predictors: (Constant), Talent Attraction, Talent Selection, Talent Engagement, Talent Development, Talent and Knowledge Retention

Results in Table 4.15 revealed that the regression model correlation coefficient R was (0.918) which indicated that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. Moreover, results showed a significant overall regression model coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.892$, indicating that approximately 89.2% of the variance in the competitiveness of five-star hotels could be explained by the model significant predictor variables. Moreover, this finding is emphasised by ANOVA[a] in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 ANOVA[a] Model

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.682	5	0.336	35.604	0.001b
Residual	0.151	16	0.009		
Total	1.833	21			

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness
b Predictors: (Constant), Talent Attraction, Talent Selection, Talent Engagement, Talent Development, Talent and Knowledge Retention

The ANOVA[a] establishes whether the regression model explains a statistically significant part of the variance. It utilizes a ratio to compare the extent to which the linear regression

model predicts the outcome. It predicts that the association between the means of the dependent variable and the predictors (independent variables) is statistically significant ($p=0.001<0.050$). The overall regression model was significant ($p<0.05$) as demonstrated in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Regression Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		0.963	0.123		7.830	**0.001***
Talent Attraction	(X_1)	-0.202	0.068	-0.261	-2.988	**0.009***
Talent Selection	(X_2)	0.512	0.066	0.911	7.802	**0.001***
Talent Engagement	(X_3)	-0.224	0.061	-0.372	-3.638	**0.002***
Talent Development	(X_4)	0.296	0.078	0.546	3.777	**0.002***
Talent and Knowledge Retention (X_5)		-0.189	0.076	-0.363	-2.500	**0.024***

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness (exceptional variety of quality products/ services, choosing talent, develop competencies that are difficult to imitate, and protection of unique knowledge)
*P<0.05

Table 4.17 yielded the values of the coefficients to be estimated and their corresponding significance values (p-values). The p-values were used to test the hypothesis about *β*, the coefficients. In this test, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis whenever the p-values were less than 0.05.

4.5.2.1 Talent Attraction Coefficient

Talent attraction coefficient was negative but significant (β = -0.202, t = -0.068, p= 0.009). Therefore, it was rejected and this implied that talent attraction approaches differentially contributed to the competitiveness of five-star hotels. However, it was a negative difference indicating that talent attraction approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County are not attracting sufficient critical talent that would spur greater competitiveness. The results also suggest that the talent attraction package in the form of an employer brand was not attractive enough. Thus every unit increase in the hotels' employer brands potentially

decreased their competitiveness. This implies that the hotels' employer brands need to be improved to influence a positive employee value proposition so that HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs offer themselves for selection. The findings were inconsistent with studies on talent management by Mellahi and Colling (2010); Xue (2014); Thunnissen (2015) who noted that organizations with suitable talent attraction approaches modelled in employer brands attracted a critical workforce which differentially affected their competitiveness.

4.5.2.2 Talent Selection Coefficient

Talent selection coefficient was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.512$, $t = 7.802$, $p = 0.001$). Therefore, it was rejected and it suggested that talent selection approaches differentially contributed to the competitiveness of the five-star hotels. The positivity of the coefficient suggests that talent attraction approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County are selecting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs that drive them into greater levels of competitiveness. Thus, every unit increase of talent selection package applied by the hotels increased competitiveness by one unit. This implies that hotels used suitable talent selection approaches that enhanced their competitiveness. These findings corroborated those of other researchers who found out that, right talent selection approaches allow organizations to recruit talent who differentially drove up to their competitive advantage (Kichuk, 2017; D'Alessandro, 2018).

4.5.2.3 Talent Engagement Coefficient

Talent engagement coefficient were negative but significant ($\beta = -0.224$, $t = -3.638$, $p = 0.002$). Therefore, it was rejected and this implied that talent engagement approaches differentially contributed to the competitiveness of five-star hotels. However, it was a negative difference indicating that talent engagement approaches used by five–star hotels

in Nairobi City County were not exploited enough to affect their greater competitiveness. The findings also suggest that the talent engagement package in the form of employee value proposition was not appealing enough to HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Thus, every unit increase in the hotels' employee value proposition potentially decreased their competitiveness. This implies that the hotels' employee value proposition needs to be boosted so that talent gain organizational commitment, and apply additional discretionary effort to their work for greater levels of competitiveness. The findings are indifferent from the results of the study by Kibui *et al.* (2014); Kichuk (2017) who found that; engaged employees are strong organizational assets for sustained competitive advantage.

4.5.2.4 Talent Development Coefficient

Talent development coefficient was positive and significant (β = 0.296, t = 3.777, p = 0.002). Therefore, it was rejected and this implied that talent development approaches differentially contributed to the competitiveness of the five-star hotels. The positivity of the coefficient suggests that talent development approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County are developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs that power them into greater levels of competitiveness. Thus, every unit increase of talent development package applied by the hotels increased competitiveness by one unit. This implies that hotels exploited the talent development approaches which created competitive resources for them. These findings were consistent with findings by both Lyria (2014); Mohannadi (2017) whose surveys found out that talent development approaches positively influenced the competitive advantage of organizations.

4.5.2.5 Talent and Knowledge Retention Coefficient

Talent and knowledge retention coefficient were negative but significant (β = -0.189, t = -2.500, p = 0.024). Therefore, it was rejected and this implied that talent and knowledge

retention approaches differentially contributed to the competitiveness of five-star hotels. However, it was a negative difference indicating that talent and knowledge retention approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County were not exploited enough to create greater competitiveness. The findings also suggest that the talent and knowledge retention package was not appealing enough to talent. Therefore, every unit increase in the hotels' talent and knowledge retention package potentially decreased their competitiveness. This implies that the hotels' talent and knowledge retention package ought to be improved so that HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs are retained for greater levels of competitiveness. These findings differ with surveys by Brunila (2013); Gichuki, (2014) who demonstrated that organizations achieve competitiveness by retaining talent and safeguard their tacit knowledge from being accessed by competitors.

From the values of the coefficients, the corresponding linear regression equation on how approaches used in each TM practices influenced competiveness is expressed below;

$$y = 0.963 - 0.202x_1 + 0.512x_2 - 0.224x_3 + 0.296x_4 - 0.189x_5 \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$H_0 2$ posited that; 'there are no significant approaches adopted in talent management practices that promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County'. Linear regression results revealed positive and significant results ($\beta = 0.963$, t = 7.830, p =0.001), thus the hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that approaches adopted for talent management practices increased competitiveness among five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Equation two can further be improved to further competitiveness by reviewing and enriching approaches of talent attraction, talent engagement, and talent and knowledge retention practices.

The findings concur with the assertions by Davies and Davies (2010) who described TM practices (attraction, selection, engagement, development, retention) as creating value for TM – focused organizations. The findings also reflected the statement by Collings and Mellahi (2011)'s description of the value of TM as the management that embodies organizational activities of attracting, selecting, engaging, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles. This is mainly aimed at creating competitive resources.

The summary talent and training executives' responses on attraction rated development opportunities, competitive compensation and incentives, job security, interesting responsibilities, growth/ promotion opportunities, the flexibility of roles work-life balance, and good working conditions/ environment as important. This created an attractive EVP that formed an appealing employer brand. It is apparent that the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County' employer brand that attracted HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Line executives also added; holiday entitlements, enriched jobs with exciting roles, recognition of excellent performance as strategies of attracting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to their departments. It was noted when talent is acquired and deployed it creates quality and diverse products/ services. Its subjection to regression analysis yielded a negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.202, t = -0.068, p= 0.009). This indicated that the talent attraction package in the form of an employer brand was not attractive enough. This implies that the hotels' employer brands need to be improved to influence a positive employee value proposition so that HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs offer themselves for selection.

Talent and training executives noted that talent selection approaches had a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of choosing talent ($\bar{x}$ = 1.32; SD = 0.750). The most popular selection approaches for entrants or to critical positions were; performance appraisals, poaching, mixed interviews, and reference techniques. Line executives also identified referrals, job auditions, interviews, employment tests, role plays, situational exercises, assessment centres, demonstration of tasks, description of task-procedures, and physical tests as ways of selecting talent. It appears that the selection techniques were geared into finding evidence that candidates are HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. When talent selection was regressed with competitiveness, its coefficient was positive and significant (β = 0.512, t = 7.802, p = 0.001). Therefore, it was rejected and this implied that talent selection approaches differentially contributed to the competitiveness of the five-star hotels. The positivity of the coefficient suggests that talent attraction approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County are selecting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs that drive them into greater levels of competitiveness.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that the talent engagement approaches adopted by their hotels created competitive resources. Among the approaches used; performance appraisal, promotion opportunities, and the best work environment were the most popular. Line executives indicated that incentives, training, recognition of excellent performance, career growth, job security, competitive pay among others as ways of enhancing engagement. However, the regressing of talent engagement approaches with competitiveness resulted into negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.224, t = -3.638, p = 0.002). This showed that approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County were not exploited enough to affect greater competitiveness. The findings also suggest that

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the talent engagement package in the form of employee value proposition was not appealing enough to HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Thus, every unit increase in the hotels' employee value proposition potentially decreased their competitiveness. This implies that the hotels' employee value proposition needs to be boosted so that talent gain organizational commitment, and apply additional discretionary effort to their work for greater levels of competitiveness.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that the talent development approaches adopted by their hotels created competitive resources. Among the approaches used; external career development courses, in-house development programmes, 360-feedback assessment techniques, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, and action learning were the most preferred. Line executives indicated that in-house development programmes, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, technology-based training, action learning, special projects assignments, stretching assignments, job shadowing, and 360-feedback assessments as approaches for developing talent. When probed further as to which approaches were commonly used, they picked; career development courses, in-house development programmes, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment. When talent development was regressed with competitiveness, its coefficient was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.296$, t = 3.777, p = 0.002). The positivity of the coefficient suggests that talent development approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County are developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs that power them into greater levels of competitiveness.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that the talent and knowledge retention approaches adopted by their hotels created competitive resources. Among the common

approaches used were; performance appraisal, promotion opportunities, crystallising tacit knowledge, succession plans, development opportunities, psychological contracts, work-life balance, and appealing work environments were the most used techniques according to talent and training executives. However, line executives (n=28; 80%) contended that there is no way competitors can be prevented from obtaining their unique knowledge. Regressing of talent and knowledge retention approaches with competitiveness resulted into negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.189, t = -2.500, p = 0.024). This also suggested that talent and knowledge retention approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County were not exploited enough to create greater competitiveness. This implies that the hotels' talent and knowledge retention package ought to be improved so that talent and knowledge are retained for greater levels of competitiveness.

The $H_0$2; 'there are no significant approaches adopted in talent management practices that promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County', was tested through linear regression. The results revealed positive and significant results ($\beta = 0.963$, t = 7.830, p =0.001) thus, the hypothesis was rejected meaning that approaches adopted for TM practices created competitiveness for the hotel.

4.6 Section E: The Association between the Extent of Talent Management Adoption and Competitiveness

This study focused on talent management whose main characteristics were exclusive subject and exclusive object; and this was the basis of upon which the extent of TM was grounded. This section discusses responses for objective three and test for its corresponding hypothesis three.

4.6.1 Objective Four: The Association between the Extent of Talent Management Adoption and Competitiveness

The third objective was, 'to evaluate the association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya'. It sought to establish the depth and breadth of the adoption of TM in the target hotels. Talent and training executives were asked to indicate the extent of talent management adoption which they considered applicable in their respective hotels. Findings are revealed in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18 Extent of Talent Management Adoption

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (x̄)	SD
Hotels have developed a talent management policy	14 (63.6%)	4 (18.2%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.55	0.800
There is a budget set aside for talent management	16 (72.7%)	6 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.27	0.456
There is top leadership support for talent management	13 (59.1%)	4 (18.2%)	5 (22.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.64	0.848
Buying, building, bounding & binding are limited to talent only, bouncing for all	5 (22.7%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (13.6%)	8 (36.4%)	2 (9.1%)	2.91	1.377
Only individuals considered talent are drafted into talent pools	8 (36.4%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	2.09	1.192
All strategic positions within hotels are filled with talent only	7 (31.8%)	3 (13.6%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	2.95	1.676
There is pay differentiation in which talent are paid more than others in same jobs	6 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	8 (36.4%)	6 (27.3%)	3.36	1.590
Tacit knowledge is identified & transferred from holders to potential talent	10 (45.5%)	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.64	0.658
Competiveness (implementation of talent management has differentiated hotel from competitors)	9 (40.9%)	11 (50.0%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.68	0.646

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Strongly agree" and 5 "Strongly Disagree"

Talent and training executives were inclined towards an agreement that, "hotels have developed a talent management policy ($\bar{x}$ = 1.55; SD = 0.800)". The majority of the respondents; 63.6% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed while 18.2% were undecided on the statement. The implication is that the attribute of TM policy adopted to an extent of over 80% among the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The mean (1.55) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.800, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings disclose that most hotels run TM activities using formal policies. TM has been cited as the new form of managing HiPo, HiPe, or unique employees for competitiveness. It shows that TM has been accepted by most five star hotels in Nairobi City County.

These findings have been lent credence by Feng (2016) who found that formal talent management policies targeted critical roles with more resources and attention were available in organizations targeted. Further, the findings were consistent with those of Koranteng (2014)'s study in Ghana's banking industry which informed that organizations adopted TM policies which facilitated the achievement of goals and objectives. However, a study by Holland (2017) on pull-to-stay post-acquisition, found that there was no formal policy on TM but the researcher observed some characteristics of exclusive talent management.

The majority of talent and training executives strongly agreed that "there is a budget set aside for talent management ($\bar{x}$ = 1.27; SD = 0.456)". Most of the respondents, (72.7%) strongly agreed and 27.3% agreed with the statement. 100% of the respondents have budgets for TM processes. The mean (1.27) implies that respondents leaned towards a

strong agreement with the statement. The standard deviation was 0.456, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings suggest that all five-star hotels surveyed in Nairobi City County had set aside budgets for implementing talent management processes. Moreover, it means that these hotels have created competitive resources because that is the aim of funding talent management processes.

The findings have been lent support by Dries (2013)'s work which argued that TM is successful when there are budgets allocated to its activities under the exclusive approach. The findings of the current study were consistent with those of Jooss (2018)'s study on, "global talent management: the identification process of pivotal talent in multinational hotel corporations in Dublin." The study found that hotels had budgets for identifying and developing HiPo and HiPe in the most consequential positions to their competitiveness. The findings were further supported by the argument by Collings (2014) who wrote that a budget is critical for implementing TM activities like development, engagement, and retention.

The majority of talent and training executives were inclined to an agreement that: "there is top leadership support for talent management ($\bar{x}$ = 1.64; SD = 0.848)". The majority of the respondents, 59.1% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed while 22.7% were undecided on the statement. The implication is that top leadership support for TM is adopted to an extent of over 78% among the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The mean (1.64) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.848, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings suggest that most top leadership in the hotels are supporting TM with intent and resources. Such

kind of support is an incentive for creating unique resources whose deployment, utilization, and retention creates competitiveness.

The findings are related to Stahl and Björkman (2012)'s work which stressed the importance of top leadership support for TM with the help of line executives and their immediate supervisors whose main role is implementation. Jooss (2018)'s study on "global talent management: the identification process of pivotal talent in multinational hotel corporations," supported the findings of the current study. The study found that TM needs a higher management 'sponsorship,' from superiors in the organisation. The finding differs from that of Cappelli and Keller (2014)'s work which emphasized that TM practices are implemented by the line executives and supervisors.

The majority of talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty whether, "buying, building, bounding, and binding are limited to talent only, and bouncing for all – talent paths ($\overline{x}$ = 2.91; SD = 1.377)". Among the respondents; 22.7% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed, 13.6% uncertain, and 36.4% disagreed with the statement. This signifies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have yet to widely adopt strategies for specifically managing talent only. This is confirmed by the mean (2.91) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. Further, the standard deviation, 1.377 suggests a substantial divergence of participants' responses from the mean. It reveals that there were hotels that implement TM processes for talent only while there was substantial other that applied the processes for everyone. This implies that the extent of TM adoption is yet to apply across the board and it can be estimated to be less than 50%. Thus, about 50 percent of the hotels are likely to be using what has been referred to as inclusive TM which is human resources management.

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The findings differ with works of Tarique and Schuler (2012); Holland (2017) whose emphasis laid on attraction and selection of talent is based on HiPo and HiPe, or talent with unique work qualities in "A positions". Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s findings seemed to support the current study results by leaning towards "building" the entire workforce. Additionally, the current findings slightly differed with Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s work that strongly advocated for borrowing talent if it is available out there and bounding (promoting) talent into "A positions". The current findings did not uncover substantial affirmation on "bouncing" of talent. The study also differed slightly from Cardy and Leonard (2011)'s work which promoted bouncing of employees through the 20/70/10 whereby 10% of employees are underachievers who are edged out. The current findings are also slightly different from Cappelli and Keller (2014); Thunnissen (2015)'s works which emphatically rooted for retention of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

The majority of talent and training executives agreed that "only individuals considered talent is drafted into talent pools ($\bar{x}$ = 2.09; SD = 1.192)". Among the respondents; 36.4% strongly agreed while 36.4% agreed with the statement. This implies that over 70% of five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have talent pools and they are occupied by individuals considered a talent. The mean (2.09) established that research respondents agreed with the statement. The standard deviation (1.192) showed a substantial divergence of participants' responses from the mean. The findings suggest that most five star hotels recognise the importance of talent pools in supplying HiPo, HiPe, or individuals with unique KSAs to strategic positions. Thus the extent to which talent management strategy of using talent pools can be described as over 70% in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County.

The findings are consistent with those of the study by Jooss (2018), who found that employees selected into talent pools were HiPo, HiPe, and individuals with unique KSAs. Likewise, findings of the current study were also consistent with Schuler and Tarique (2012) who wrote that high-performing organizations followed a talent pool strategy in recruiting the best people and then finding positions for them. Bialek (2014) also agreed with the current study and emphasized that talent pools are important that lack of their existences would make it difficult for organizations to fill critical positions or responsibilities. These findings' views are in line with the exclusive perspective of TM. However, some organizations have adopted a hybrid approach of filling talent pools with HiPo, HiPe, and individuals with unique KSAs. For instance, Boudreau (2013) noted that some organizations use a hybrid approach in which all employees are put into talent pools, with some pools being identified as more critical or specialized but with a general ethos of good human resource management.

Talent and training executives were strongly inclined to uncertainty on whether "all strategic positions within hotels are filled with talent only ($\bar{x}$ = 2.95; SD = 1.676)". The majority of the respondents; 31.8% strongly agreed, 18.2% disagreed while 27.3% strongly disagreed about the statement. This denotes that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have yet to widely embrace the aspect of filling all strategic positions with talent only. This is confirmed by the mean (2.95) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. Further, the standard deviation, 1.676 suggests a significant divergence of responses from the mean. It reveals that there were hotels that implement TM processes of filling all strategic positions with talent only while some applied the processes for everyone. This implies that the extent of TM adoption is yet to apply across the board and

it can be estimated to be less than 50%. Thus, about 50 percent of the hotels are likely to be using what has been referred to as inclusive TM which is not different from human resources management.

Findings of the current study slightly differed from Bialek (2014)'s work which revealed that strategic positions should be occupied with HiPo, HiPe, or individuals with unique KSAs so that their value for competitive advantage is drawn. The results of the current study also slightly differed with those of Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study on, "talent management: a critical investigation in the Thai hospitality industry," whether "all strategic positions are filled with talent." The findings indicated that strategic positions were filled with talent. Further, the findings were slightly different from Collings, McDonnell, and Scullion (2009)'s work which stated that strategic positions ought to be filled with talent who are HiPo, HiPe, or individuals so that their value is maximized, and sustainable competitive advantage for organizations can be achieved. The findings differed with those of previous studies based on the exclusive perspective of TM which respondents of the current survey were not keen on.

The study results also revealed a second angle which seems to be exclusive and hybrid centred approaches. Regarding this perspective, current results were aligned with those of Jooss (2018)'s study on "global talent management: the identification process of pivotal talent in multinational hotel corporations." The study found that the aspect of "all strategic positions in organizations are filled with talent only," formed two perspectives. The first one is for the firms that followed the elite exclusive perspective, all key strategic roles are filled with top talent and further differentiation of top talent takes place to identify a super-

elite. On the other hand, when implementing a hybrid TM perspective, only small proportions of employees, aspiring executives; for example, are included.

The majority of talent and training executives remained undecided, whether "there is pay differentiation in which talent are paid more than others in the same jobs ($\bar{x}$ = 3.36; SD = 1.590)". Most of the respondents; 27.3% strongly agreed, 36.4% disagreed, and 27.3% strongly disagreed. This implies that compensation and incentives were sparingly used. This can be confirmed by the standard deviation (1.590) which indicated a substantial divergence of responses from the mean. The mean confirms (3.36) that most respondents were uncertain whether there is pay differentiation in which talent is paid more than others in the same jobs. The findings suggest that the extent of TM from the perspective of pay differentiation was fewer than 40%. This is nearly not enough because TM focuses on HiPo, HiPe, or individuals with unique KSAs in strategic positions and this ought to attract competitive pay to the rest of the employees.

The findings differ with those of Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study on, "talent management: a critical investigation in the Thai hospitality industry," which revealed that there was a budget set aside to reward HiPo and HiPe. The findings of the current study were also different from those of Kichuk (2017)'s study on, "understanding talent management in the hotel sector: employees' narratives of personal career development," which also found that there were rewards exclusively for HiPo, HiPe, and talent with unique KSAs. The findings also differed with Jooss (2018)'s study who noted that more financial resources were allocated to talent in critical positions compared to other employees not considered talent or not occupying these positions. The results of the current study are aligned with (Nwoye,

2017)'s findings which seemed to suggest that there was pay equity for all employees doing the same job in the organizations that were targeted.

Talent and training executives of respective five – star hotels inclined to an agreement that, "tacit knowledge is identified and transferred from holders to potential talent ($\bar{x}$ = 1.64; SD = 0.658)." Most of the respondents, 45.5% strongly agreed while 45.5% agreed with the statement. The results suggest that over 90% of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County identify and transfer tacit knowledge from holders to HiPo. The mean (1.64) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.658, indicating a normal variation in responses. Tacit knowledge is rare and any organization that has it and safeguards it from competitors sustains its competitiveness. The implication is that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are aware of the importance of the knowledge and which has created competitive resources for them.

The findings of the study were consistent with Kaewsaeng-on (2017) who noted that critical knowledge was achieved by recruiting, sourcing, and securing new talent into the organization. The findings align with Jooss (2018)'s study on, "global talent management: the identification process of pivotal talent in multinational hotel corporations." The study indicated that external staffing provided organizations with a greater variety of employees who have unique know-how whose utilization advance them. Glaister *et al.* (2017)'s study lent the current study support and noted that; special project assignments and social interactions are used to transfer tacit knowledge from HiPe or individuals with unique KSAs to HiPo.

Finally, the opinions of the talent and training executives were sought on whether the extent of TM adoption has had a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of the hotel differentiating itself from competitors. Survey respondents leaned to an agreement that, "the implementation of talent management has differentiated hotels from competitors ($\bar{x} = 1.68$; SD = 0.646)". These findings were consistent with the studies by Dumse (2011); Kibui *et al.* (2014) who found that; TM has developed a unique value that is rare and difficult to imitate by competitors thus creating and sustaining competitive advantage. These findings suggest that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's TM processed enabled them to develop talent that has created unique value different from competitors. This implies that TM has enhanced the differentiation of their products, services, processes, and marketing strategies that have contributed positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

4.6.2 Testing of Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three posited that 'there is no significant association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County'. TM policies (X_1); budget for TM (X_2); top leadership support for TM (X_3); talent paths (X_4); only talent occupy talent pools (X_5); all strategic positions filled with only talent (X_6); pay differentiation (X_7); transfer of tacit knowledge (X_8) were regressed with competitiveness (talent management differentiates hotels from competitors). The regression model summary is presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19 Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
0.756a	0.571	0.308	0.679	0.571	2.167	8	13	0.104

a Predictors: (Constant), (X_8), (X_2), (X_1), (X_6), (X_5), (X_7), (X_3), (X_4)

Results in Table 4.19 revealed that the regression model correlation coefficient R was (0.756) which indicated that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. Moreover, results showed a significant overall regression model coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.571$, indicating that approximately 57.1% of the variance in the competitiveness of five-star hotels could be explained by the model's significant predictor variables. Moreover, this finding is emphasised by ANOVA[a] in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20 ANOVA[a] Model

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8	8	1	2.167	0.104b
Residual	6	13	0.462		
Total	14	21			

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness (The implementation of talent management has differentiated hotel from competitors)
b Predictors: (Constant), (X_8), (X_2), (X_1), (X_6), (X_5), (X_7), (X_3), (X_4)

The ANOVA[a] establishes whether the regression model explains a statistically significant part of the variance. It utilizes a ratio to compare the extent to which the linear regression model predicts the outcome. It predicts that the association between the means of the dependent variable and the predictors (independent variables) is not statistically significant (p=0.104>0.050). The overall regression model was not significant (p<0.05) as demonstrated in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Regression Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		4.414	2.729		1.618	0.130
Hotels have developed a talent management policy	(X_1)	-0.586	0.951	-0.575	-0.616	0.548
There is a budget set aside for talent management	(X_2)	-2.345	1.638	-1.309	-1.431	0.176
Top leadership support for TM	(X_3)	-0.845	1.409	-0.694	-0.600	0.559
Talent paths	$(X4)$	1.034	0.896	2.076	1.154	0.269
Only talent are drafted into talent pools	(X_5)	0.241	0.282	0.365	0.857	0.407
Strategic positions filled with talent only	(X_6)	-0.172	0.366	-0.362	-0.471	0.645
Pay differentiation favouring talent	(X_7)	0.172	0.284	0.336	0.607	0.554
Transfer of tacit knowledge	(X_8)	-0.414	1.162	-0.333	-0.356	0.727

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness (implementation of TM differentiated hotels from competitors)

*P<0.05

Table 4.21 yielded the values of the coefficients to be estimated and their corresponding significance values (p-values). The p-values were used to test the hypothesis about β, the coefficients. In this test, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis whenever the p-values were less than 0.05. In this regard, all the coefficients were not significant at 5% significance level.

Proper implementation of TM as it is supposed to require policies. The study findings suggest that either the policies in place have not captured the intent of TM or they have not been fully implemented (β = -0.586, t = -0.616, p= 0.548). It has also been established that TM is an expensive process, and it requires a budget to facilitate as much TM practices as possible to realise competitive advantage. The results shows that, the budgets most likely are inadequate for funding the TM processes adopted (β = -2.345, t = -1.431, p= 0.176).

Leadership involvement and support was also not significant in relation to competitiveness of hotels (β = -0.845, t = -0.600, p= 0.559).

The level of involvement and support by the top executives would determine the extent to which TM processes are adopted. For instance, they play a role in determining the development approaches to be adopted. Talent paths that were characterised by buying, building, bounding, and binding are limited to talent only, bouncing for all did not in influence the competitiveness of hotels (β = 1.034, t = 1.154, p= 0.269). This suggests that hotels have not fully embraced TM whose characteristics are exclusive subject and talent. Talent pools did not influence competitiveness (β = 0.241, t = 0.857, p= 0.407) and yet the intent of TM is to have it manage HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to achieve differentiated performances.

Filling of strategic positions with talent only did not influence the competitiveness of the hotels (β = -0.172, t = -0.471, p= 0.645); and, likely, talent pools do not exist in some hotels or if they do, they not purely comprise of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Pay differentiation favouring talent only did not influence competitiveness of hotels (β = 0.172, t = 0.607, p= 0.554). This shows that hotels have not captured the intent of talent management that hinge on HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Transfer of tacit knowledge were not significant against competitiveness (β = -0.414, t = -0.356, p= 0.727). This indicates that the extent to which talent management is adopted is not significant.

From the values of the coefficients, the corresponding linear regression equation on how the extent of talent management adoption influenced competitiveness was thus expressed as;

$y= 4.414-0.586x_1-2.345x_2-0.414x_3+1.034x_4+0.241x_5-0.845x_6-0.172x_7+0.172x_8$………. (3)

Therefore, $H0_3$; there is no significant association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County ($\beta = 4.414$, t = 1.618, p = 0.130), was accepted. This implies that levels at which talent management was implemented did not significantly influence the competitiveness of hotels.

Holland (2017)'s study is in support of the current study because it noted that there was no formal policy on TM. On TM budgets, Collings (2014) disagreed with the finding and noted that budgets are critical for implementing TM activities. Cappelli and Keller (2014)'s work suggested different findings that were in support of top leadership support for TM. Talent paths are critical for the passage of HiPo, HiPe, and individuals with unique KSAs. Schuler and Tarique (2012); Bialek (2014); Jooss (2018) differed with current findings and emphasised that employees selected into talent pools were HiPo, HiPe, and individuals with unique KSAs to create competitive resources. On the influence of all strategic positions filled with talent only so as their value in those positions create competitive resources, Bialek (2014); Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s work supported the idea unlike the findings of the regression analysis of the current study. Kaewsaeng-on (2017); Kichuk (2017); Nwoye (2017) were in support of pay differentiation favouring talent unlike the findings of the study. $H0_3$ was partly accepted because the transfer of tacit knowledge had no relationship with competitiveness. As such the finding did not align with those of Glaister *et al.* (2017); Jooss (2018).

In summary, descriptive studies revealed that the adoption of talent management was mostly average going by the yardsticks employed (talent policies, TM budget, top

leadership support for TM, talent paths, talent pools, all strategic positions filled with talent only, pay differentiation favouring talent, and transfer of tacit knowledge). Linear regression between the predictors of the extent to which TM was adopted and the competitiveness of the five-star hotels found no association. The extent of TM adoption is likely to be low because TM is a new concept that embodies the management of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. This requires comprehensive policies, budgets, dedicated leadership among others which the study has found to be limited. Therefore $H0_3$; there is no significant association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County ($\beta = 4.414$, $t = 1.618$, $p = 0.130$), was accepted. This implies that levels at which talent management was implemented did not significantly influence the competitiveness of hotels.

4.7 Section F: Outcomes of Talent Management

This section discusses responses for objective four and test for its correspondent hypothesis four.

4.7.1 Objective Five: Outcomes of Talent Management

The fourth objective was 'to establish the outcomes of talent management in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels'. Talent and training executives were asked to indicate the outcomes of talent management which they considered applicable in their respective hotels. Findings are revealed in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22 Outcomes of Talent Management

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
TM creates valuable knowledge resources difficult to imitate	14 (63.6%)	0 (0%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1)	0 (0%)	1.82	1.140
TM assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs	16 (72.7%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	1.55	1.011
Talent help hotels to build individuals not considered talent into talent	4 (18.2%)	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	2.91	1.269
Talent management increases efficiency and productivity	2 (9.1%)	8 (36.4%)	6 (27.3%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	2.82	1.140
Talent management undermines teamwork and cohesion	20 (90.9%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.09	0.294
Individuals not categorized as 'talent' lead to high turnover rates	8 (36.4%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	12 (54.5%)	0 (0%)	2.73	1.453
TM causes demoralization & resentment from those not considered talent	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	12 (54.5%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	2.82	1.140
Competitiveness (holistic outcomes of talent management have made the hotel a producer and provider of unique products and services)	3 (13.6%)	10 (45.5%)	9 (40.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2.27	0.703

Notes: n=22. A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating "Strongly agree" and 5 "Strongly Disagree

Talent and training executives leaned towards agreeing that: "talent management creates valuable knowledge resources difficult to imitate ($\bar{x}$ = 1.82; SD = 1.140)". Among these respondents, 63.6% strongly agreed while 27.3% remained undecided. This suggests that approximately over 60% of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have built valuable knowledge resources difficult for competitors to reproduce. The mean (1.82) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 1.140, indicating a substantial divergence of participants' responses. The findings imply that most five star hotels have built valuable knowledge resources difficult for competitors to imitate. This further suggests that most of these hotels have diverse and

unique products/ services because of the inimitable knowledge in their possession. Thus, this is a resource that creates a competitive advantage for them.

The findings of the current study are closely related to the works of McCartney and Worman (2010); Whelan and Carcary (2011) which posited that organizations focused on TM are likely to be successful in creating some valuable assets that are rare and difficult to imitate in the form of tacit knowledge. The results also concurred with Tomany (2012)'s work which highlighted that the application of TM may enable organizations to sustain competitive advantage as competitors find it harder to replicate the KSAs of talent. The findings are also supported by Mellahi and Collings (2010) who noted that effective TM can nurture the value of employees to create organizational success as ahead of competitors.

Talent and training executives leaned towards agreeing that: "talent management assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs ($\bar{x}$ = 1.55; SD = 1.011)." The majority of the respondents, 72.7% strongly agreed and 9.1% agreed with the statement. It is apparent that approximately over 80% of the respondents indicated that, 'talent management assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs.' This is confirmed by the mean (1.55) indicating a strong relationship but the standard deviation (1.011) showed a variation on the responses suggesting that there was a small significant group that was not confident whether 'talent management assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs' in their hotels. The findings imply that; most five star hotels in Nairobi City County have adopted TM which has helped them find or create and retain HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

The findings of the current study concur with the work by Thunnissen (2015) which noted that talent considered to harbor natural ability is likely to create superior performances for the organizations. This was based on the school of thought that regards talent as 'natural ability.' The findings further aligned with Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) who observed that talent is not born but created thus HiPo and HiPe to be identified and developed. This observation is within the school of thought which portrays 'talent as mastery.' Similarly, the findings were in congruence with Kichuk (2017)'s study in which the significance of hotels recruiting the best possible talent and providing the right environment for growth and success of both the individual and the firm was highlighted. This assertion is related to the school of thought that promotes talent as 'natural ability and mastery'. Kaewsaeng-on (2017) contended that this talent should not be lost if hotels have to sustain their competitive advantage.

Talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty that: "talent help hotels to build individuals not considered talent into talent ($\bar{x}$ = 2.91; SD = 1.269)". Among the respondents; 18.2% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed, 27.3% uncertain, and 27.3% disagreed with the statement. This signifies that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have yet to widely adopt environments to encourage talent to help hotels build individuals not considered talent into talent. This was confirmed by the mean (2.91) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. Further, the standard deviation, 1.269 suggests a substantial divergence of participants' responses from the mean. It reveals that there were hotels that created environments for talent to help them build individuals not considered talent into talent, while there was a substantial other that did not. This implies that the

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utilization of talent to develop individuals not considered talent into talent is yet to apply across the board and it can be estimated to be less than 40%.

The findings of the current study are slightly different from those of Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study on, 'talent management: a critical investigation in the Thai hospitality industry' investigated the importance of talent in improving the KSAs of co-workers. Hotels' general executives in the study noted that if talented workers' performance is high then this can influence other workers as well, or become role-models for them. Likewise, the findings of the study slightly differed with Thunnissen (2015)'s work which observed that TM processes are likely to encourage talent to do more than the prescribed tasks and show extra-role behavior, such as helping co-workers become polished in their work.

Talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty that: "talent management increases efficiency and productivity ($\overline{x}$ = 2.82; SD = 1.140)". Among the respondents; 36.4% agreed, 27.3% uncertain, and 18.2% disagreed with the statement. This shows that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have yet to widely elevate TM to levels in which it can be a source of increased efficiency and productivity in their critical operations. This is confirmed by the mean (2.82) which implied that respondents leaned towards uncertainty. Further, the standard deviation, 1.140 indicates a substantial divergence of participants' responses from the mean. It reveals that there were hotels whose TM increased their efficiency and productivity, while there was a substantial other that did not. This implies that TM practices are yet to increase efficiency and productivity across the board. The results further suggest that efficiency and productivity due to TM in these hotels is approximately 45%.

The findings of the current study are slightly different from Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013)'s work which observes that workforce managed through TM creates a difference in organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential. The findings of the current study are also slightly different from those of Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study which found that individuals under TM are endowed with KSAs to enable them to display the highest quality services to guests. Findings of the study are also slightly different from Boella and Turner (2013)'s assertion that TM is the systematic identification of key positions that differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, suggests that the process increases efficiency and productivity.

Talent and training executives revealed that talent management undermines teamwork and cohesion ($\bar{x}$ = 1.09; SD = 0.294). The majority (90.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 9.1% agreed with the statement. This showed that talent management overwhelmingly undermined teamwork and cohesion in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The mean (1.09) implies that respondents leaned towards a strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.294, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The results imply that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are facing adverse effects of TM practices. However, this is not likely to be a serious threat because, TM focuses on HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs, and it is the ones that are not part of these categories feel left out.

The findings are in accordance with those by Bialek (2014); Xue (2014) whose informants noted that employees not considered talent feel discriminated against and they get disengaged. The findings also agree with an argument by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013)

that TM undermines teamwork because it involves some team members considered talent who are rewarded, causing an overall negative or neutral effect whereby the positive effects of some receiving a reward do not outweigh the negative effects of most not receiving a reward. The findings are also related to the argument by Thunnissen (2015)'s work which noted that TM particularly exclusive approach because of its overemphasis on individual performance, which potentially diminishes teamwork and creates a destructive internal competition that hinders learning and the spread of best practice across the organization.

Talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty that, "individuals not categorized as 'talent' lead to high turnover rates ($\overline{x}$ = 2.73; SD = 1.453)". Most respondents; 36.4% strongly agreed, 9.1% agreed, and 54.5% disagreed with the statement. This shows that 45.5% of individuals not categorized as 'talent' in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County are likely to leave while 54.5% are likely to remain. The mean (2.73) confirmed that respondents leaned towards uncertainty whether individuals not categorized as 'talent' lead to high turnover rates. Moreover, the standard deviation, 1.453 indicates a substantial divergence of participants' responses from the mean. It further reveals that there are hotels whose significant but minority individuals that are not categorized as 'talent' left; while a significant majority did not leave. The significant but minority individuals not categorized as 'talent' who leaves can create a positive effect in that poor workforce is weeded out.

The results were slightly different from Kichuk (2017)'s, who found that employees who were not considered as part of a talent pool showed an intention to leave their organizations. The findings were also slightly different from (Cappelli, 2008)'s observations which noted

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that individuals in organizations not categorized as 'talent' can lead to a high turnover rate because they were locked out of benefits. The findings also agreed with Kichuk (2017); Mohannadi (2017)'s works which noted that TM creates elitist approaches that cause discontent, frustration, and intentions to leave their current hotels. The findings also agreed with Holland (2017)'s work which views turnover as a means of weeding out unproductive or poor performing employees, and there is evidence that the practice influences organisational effectiveness. However, the departures are appropriate if only they do not involve key talent and top performers (Holland, 2017).

Talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty that: "talent management causes demoralization and resentment from individuals not considered talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.82; SD = 1.140)". Most respondents, 18.2% strongly agreed while 54.5% uncertain with the statement. This shows that roughly below 30% of respondents thought that, 'TM causes demoralization and resentment from individuals not considered talent,' while most (approximately 70%) thought otherwise in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The mean (2.82) confirmed that respondents leaned towards uncertainty whether TM causes demoralization and resentment from individuals not considered talent', Moreover, the standard deviation, 1.140 indicates a substantial divergence of participants' responses from the mean. It further reveals that there are hotels whose minority of individuals not categorized as 'talent' get demoralized and resent; while a significant majority did not. This implies that there are somewhat good environments in those hotels for TM to flourish to create a competitive advantage.

The findings were slightly different from Mellahi and Collings (2010)'s work which noted that Employees excluded from talent management processes get demotivated and underperform in their roles. The study findings were also slightly different from those of Kichuk (2017) on, 'understanding talent management in the hotel sector: employees' narratives of personal career development.' The study's respondents noted that the act of exclusion from the TM process as unethical and unfair which does little to inspire high performances. Furthermore, if the process of identifying talent is unstandardized, employees will feel that the process is insincere.

Finally, the opinions of the talent and training executives were sought on whether the outcomes of talent management have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of production and provision of unique products and services respectively. Talent and training executives strongly leaned to an agreement that, "the holistic outcomes of talent management have made the hotel a producer and provider of unique products and services ($\bar{x}$ = 2.27; SD =0.703); strongly agree (13.6%), agree (45.5%), uncertain (40.9%), disagree (0%) and strongly disagree (0%))". These findings resembled a trend found by Lyria (2014)'s survey whose respondents strongly agreed that organizations' TM increases competitiveness due to the creation of unique value was 37.00%, agree 45.10%, neutral 6.20%, disagree 4.90%, and strongly disagree 6.80%. Research on understanding talent management in the hotel sector in Bournemouth, England by Kichuk (2017) found out that TM processes developed talent who displayed high-quality service to hotel guests. These findings imply that most five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's holistic outcomes of TM have made them offer unique products and services. This conclusion is supported by Gitonga (2016) whose findings emphasized that;

outcomes of TM have witnessed increased value to firms, resources that are unique, perfectly inimitable, and cannot be substituted by competing firms.

4.7.2 Testing of Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four posited that 'there is no significant association between the outcomes of talent management and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County'. TM creates valuable knowledge resources difficult to imitate (X_1), TM assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs (X_2), Talent help hotels to build individuals not considered talent into talent (X_3), TM increases efficiency and productivity (X_4), TM undermines teamwork and cohesion (X_5), Individuals not categorized as 'talent' lead to high turnover rate (X_6), and TM causes demoralization and resentment from individuals not considered talent (X_7) were regressed with Competitiveness (producer and provider of unique products and services). The regression model summary is presented in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23 Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
0.820a	0.673	0.509	0.492	0.673	4.11	7	14	0.012
a Predictors: (Constant), X_7, X_3, X_2, X_4, X_5, X_1, X_6								

Results in Table 4.23 revealed that the regression model correlation coefficient R was (0.820) which indicated that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. Moreover, results showed a significant overall regression model coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.673$, indicating that approximately 67.3% of the variance in the competitiveness of five-star hotels could be explained by the model significant predictor variables. Moreover, this finding is emphasised by ANOVA[a] in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24 ANOVA[a] Model

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.971	7	0.996	4.11	0.012b
Residual	3.392	14	0.242		
Total	10.364	21			

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness (holistic outcomes of talent management have made the hotel a producer and provider of unique products and services)

b Predictors: (Constant), X_7, X_3, X_2, X_4, X_5, X_1, X_6

The ANOVA[a] establishes whether the regression model explains a statistically significant part of the variance. It utilizes a ratio to compare the extent to which the linear regression model predicts the outcome. It predicts that the association between the means of the dependent variable and the predictors (independent variables) is statistically significant ($p=0.012<0.050$). The overall regression model was significant ($p<0.05$) as demonstrated in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25: Regression Coefficients[a]

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.061	0.768	0.000	2.684	**0.018***
TM creates valuable knowledge resources difficult to imitate (X_1)	1.581	0.499	2.564	3.164	**0.007***
TM assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs (X_2)	-1.212	0.483	-1.744	-2.508	**0.025***
Talent help hotels to build individuals not considered talent into talent (X_3)	0.844	0.373	1.524	2.264	**0.040***
TM increases efficiency and productivity (X_4)	0.501	0.166	0.813	3.026	**0.009***
TM undermines teamwork and cohesion (X_5)	-1.649	0.652	-0.691	-2.529	**0.024***
Individuals not categorized as 'talent' lead to high turnover rates (X_6)	0.389	0.148	0.804	2.626	**0.020***
TM causes demoralization and resentment from individuals not considered talent (X_7)	-1.389	0.625	-2.254	-2.224	**0.043***

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness (the holistic outcomes of talent management have made the hotel a producer and provider of unique products and services)

*$P<0.05$

Table 4.25 yielded the values of the coefficients to be estimated and their corresponding significance values (p-values). The p-values were used to test the hypothesis about β, the coefficients. In this test, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis whenever the p-values were less than 0.05. Since X_1, X_3, X_4, and X_6 coefficients were positive; it implied that they were positively related to competitiveness (producer and provider of unique products and services). This indicated that an increase in each of these coefficients increased that of competitiveness. The results indicate that hotels own knowledge resources that competitors have not been able to copy (X_1) and consequently, it has created competitiveness for them. Worman (2010): Whelan and Carcary (2011)'s studies were in support of the current results.

Findings of H_04: also indicate that hotels' talent has helped to transform fellow workforce not considered talent into HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. (X_3). In return, this has helped to create competitiveness for the hotels. These findings were consistent with those of Thunnissen (2015); Kaewsaeng-on (2017). The findings also imply that an increase in efficiency and productivity as a result of TM (X_4) positively affected competitiveness. These findings are supported by (Boella & Turner, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013). Individuals not categorized as 'talent' lead to high turnover rates (X_6) yielded a positive relationship with competitiveness. It is likely that the workforce that leaves do not necessarily make a critical contribution that can influence competitiveness but instead frees up resources to be invested in talent. Moreover, their departure eliminates possible prevailing inefficiency. This assertion was supported by (Holland, 2017).

Coefficients X_2, X_5, and X_7 negatively impacted competitiveness (producer and provider of unique products and services). This showed that a decrease in each of these coefficients decreased that of competitiveness. The results show that hotels are yet to gain competitiveness from TM's assembly/ creation/ retention of individuals with valuable KSAs (X_2). Thus every of its unit decrease, competitiveness is decreased by the same amount. Thunnissen (2015); Kichuk (2017) emphasised that these activities should result in individuals with valuable KSAs whose contribution creates a competitive advantage. It was also revealed that TM undermines teamwork and cohesion (X_5), and it posited a negative relationship with competitiveness. These findings were consistent with those of Bialek (2014); Xue (2014). Additionally, demoralization and resentment from individuals not considered talent negatively impacted the competitiveness of the hotels (X_7). Mellahi and Collings (2010); Kichuk (2017)'s observation are in accordance with the findings of the current study.

From the values of the coefficients, the corresponding linear regression equation on how the outcomes of talent management adoption influenced competitiveness was thus expressed as;

$$y=2.061+1.581x_1-1.212x_2+0.844x_3+0.501x_4-1.649x_5+0.389x_6-1.389x_7 \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (4)$$

H_04 posited that 'there is no significant association between the outcomes of talent management and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County'. Linear regression results revealed positive and significant results ($\beta = 2.061$, t= 2.684, p= 0.018), thus the hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that the outcomes of talent management increased competitiveness in the hotels. These findings are supported by those of Gitonga (2016); Kichuk (2017) whose surveys posited that outcomes of talent Management

implementation influenced competitive advantage because they create resources that produce and provide unique products and services.

4.8 Section G: Relationship between TM and Competitiveness of Five–Star Hotels

This section discusses responses for objective five and tests for hypotheses related with objective five.

4.8.1 Objective Six: Relationship between TM and Competitiveness, Perspectives of Hotels' Executives

The sixth objective was to determine the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels. The sixth objective was to determine the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels. Two sets of data were used; the first was that of talent and training executives, while the second was from guests. As far as talent and training executives' data was concerned, independent variables from attraction, selection, deployment, engagement, development, retention extent of TM adoption, and outcomes of TM adoption were related to the dependent variable.

4.8.2 Testing of Hypothesis H05; Perspectives of Hotels' Executives

Hypothesis H_05 posited that there is no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels. Hospitality core competencies, talent attraction, talent engagement, talent selection, talent and knowledge retention, talent development, the extent of TM, and outcomes of TM were regressed with the competitiveness of the five-star hotels in Nairobi. The regression model summary is presented in Table 4.26.

Table 4.26 Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
0.943a	0.889	0.821	0.1249	0.889	13.019	8	13	0.001

a Predictors: (Constant), Hospitality Core Competencies, Talent Attraction, Talent Engagement, Talent Selection, Talent and Knowledge Retention, Talent Development, Extent of TM, Outcomes of TM

Results in Table 4.26 revealed that the regression model correlation coefficient R was (0.943) which indicated that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. Moreover, results showed a significant overall regression model coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.889$, indicating that approximately 88.9% of the variance in the competitiveness of five-star hotels could be explained by the model significant predictor variables. Moreover, this finding is emphasised by ANOVA[a] in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27 ANOVA[a] Model

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.625	8	0.203	13.019	0.001b
Residual	0.203	13	0.016		
Total	1.827	21			

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness
b Predictors: (Constant), Hospitality Core Competencies, Talent Attraction, Talent Engagement, Talent Selection, Talent and Knowledge Retention, Talent Development, Extent of TM, Outcomes of TM

The ANOVA[a] establishes if the regression model explains a statistically significant part of the variance. It utilizes a ratio to compare the extent to which the linear regression model predicts the outcome. It predicts that the association between the means of the dependent variable and the predictors (independent variables) is statistically significant

(p=0.001<0.050). The overall regression model was significant (p<0.05) as demonstrated
in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28: Regression Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		1.094	0.227		4.825	**0.001***
Hospitality Core Competencies	(X_1)	0.181	0.062	0.346	2.934	**0.012***
Talent Attraction	(X_{2a})	-0.226	0.094	-0.292	-2.399	**0.032***
Talent Selection	(X_{2b})	0.309	0.088	0.550	3.520	**0.004***
Talent Engagement	(X_{2c})	-0.285	0.081	-0.475	-3.522	**0.004***
Talent Development	(X_{2d})	0.240	0.134	0.443	1.792	0.096
Talent and Knowledge Retention	(X_{2e})	-0.034	0.101	-0.065	-0.333	0.745
Extent of TM	(X_3)	0.120	0.093	0.345	1.295	0.218
Outcomes of TM	(X_4)	-0.026	0.092	-0.043	-0.280	0.784

a Dependent Variable: Competitiveness
*P<0.05

Table 4.28 yielded the values of the coefficients to be estimated and their corresponding
significant values (p-values). The p-values were used to test the hypothesis about β, the
coefficients. In this test, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis whenever the p values
were less than 0.05. Hospitality core competencies coefficients were positive, it implied
that they were positively related to competitiveness ($\beta = 0.181$, p = 0.012). This indicated
that with an increase in each unit of the coefficient, there was an equivalent increase in
competitiveness. Elbaz *et al.* (2018)'s research was in agreement with these findings.
Talent selection coefficients were also positively with competitiveness ($\beta = 0.309$, p =
0.004). This suggested that with an increase in each unit of the coefficient, there was an
equivalent increase in competitiveness. These findings were consistent with Kichuk
(2017); D'Alessandro (2018).

Talent attraction coefficients were negative implying that, they decreased the competitiveness of the hotels (β = -0.226, p = 0.032). This suggested that a unit decrease in talent attraction caused an equivalent decrease in competitiveness. The findings of the current study were inconsistent with those of Fathy (2018) which found a positive relationship between talent attraction and competitiveness of hotels. Talent engagement coefficients were negative implying that, they negatively affected competitiveness. This suggested that a unit decrease of talent engagement caused an equivalent decrease in competitiveness. The findings were different from the results of the study by Kibui *et al.* (2014); Kichuk (2017)

Talent development ought to create HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Thus in the overall competitiveness of the hotels, talent development was not sufficient to significantly impact it (β = 0.240, p = 0.096). The findings also noted that talent and knowledge were not successfully retained to create a competitive advantage (β = -0.034, p = 0.745). Furthermore, it seemed that talent management is not adopted to significant levels capable of influencing the competitiveness of the hotels (β = 0.120, p = 0.218). Finally, the outcomes of talent management were both positive and negative, and they did not influence the overall competitiveness of the hotels.

From the values of the coefficients, the corresponding linear regression equation on the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels was thus expressed as;

$$y = 1.094 + 0.181x_1 - 0.226x_{2a} + 0.309x_{2b} - 0.285x_{2c} + 0.240x_{2d} - 0.034x_{2e} + 0.120x_3 - 0.026x_4 \ldots \ldots (5)$$

H$_0$5: posited that there is no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels. Linear regression results revealed positive and significant results (β = 1.094, t= 4.825, p= 0.001), thus the hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that talent management increased competitiveness in hotels.

4.8.3 Objective Six: Relationship between TM and Competitiveness, Perspectives of Hotels' Guests

The relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels was measured by the expectations and perceptions of the guests. According to Parasuraman (1985), service quality can be measured by subtracting customer perception scores from customer expectation scores (Q=P-E). The difference between perception and expectation experiences is referred to as Gap analysis. The greater the positive score, the greater the positive amount of service quality, and the reverse is true (Mutisya, 2011). The result of the customers' perceptions, expectations, and gaps are shown in Table 4.29.

Table 4.29 Relationship between TM and Competitiveness Using Service Quality Gap Score Analysis

Dimensions and Corresponding Attributes	Perception	Expectation	Gaps
Responsiveness			
Give prompt service to guests	6.19	7.00	-0.81
Employees show sincere interest in solving guests' problems	6.60	7.00	-1.04
Average Gap score for Responsiveness	**6.395**	**7.00**	**-0.602**
Assurance			
The behaviour of employees instil confidence in guests	6.77	7.00	-0.23
Employees have the knowledge to answer guests' questions	6.20	7.00	-0.80
Average Gap score for Assurance	**6.485**	**7.00**	**-0.511**
Tangibility			
Availability of enough variety of products	5.50	7.00	-1.50
Provision of high-quality products	5.64	7.00	-1.36
Average Gap score for Tangibility	**5.57**	**7.00**	**-1.432**
Empathy			
Caring and individualized attention to the guests	6.19	7.00	-0.81
Employees understand the specific needs of their guests	5.86	7.00	-1.14
Average Gap score for Empathy	**6.025**	**7.00**	**-0.972**
Reliability			
Provision of exact products and services promised	6.17	6.95	-0.78
Perform the service right from the first time	6.55	7.00	-0.45
Average Gap score for Reliability	**6.358**	**6.978**	**-0.619**
Total	**30.841**	**34.977**	**-4.136**
Average	**6.168**	**12.591**	**-0.827**

Table 4.29 indicated that the average gap score was -0.827 implying that; guests did not rate the quality of service competitive in their respective hotels. "Availability of enough variety of products" had the widest gap score of -1.50, followed by "provision of high-quality products -1.36, "employees' understanding of specific needs of their guests -1.14 and "employees showing sincere interest in solving guests' problems" -1.04. "The

behaviour of employees instil confidence in guests" had the narrowest gap -0.23 followed by the "performance of the service right from the first time"-0.45.

Responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and reliability dimensions confirmed gaps between guest expectations and perceptions about the quality of service experienced. Responsiveness, the willingness to give prompt service to guests and show sincere interest in solving their problems fell short of the expected by -0.602; assurance, the knowledge to answer guests' questions and inspire confidence, fell short of expectations by -0.511; tangibility which is perceived as the availability of enough variety and quality products fell short by -1.432; empathy, provision of caring, individual attention to the guests and understand their specific needs fell short by -0.972; reliability which refers to the performance of the service right from first time and provision of exact products and services promised fell short of expectations by -0.619.

Perceptions failed to meet expectations in all the five dimensions, by the least threshold of zero. Tangibility and empathy had the widest gaps between expectations, perceptions, responsiveness, and reliability followed respectively. Assurance had the lowest gap. The findings on guest expectations and perceptions are in accordance with those of a study by (Aliyu, 2017) whereby all the five dimensions in perceptions failed to meet expectations. The findings suggest that the dimensions of tangibility, empathy, perceptions, responsiveness, and reliability's deficits adversely affected the competitiveness of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County.

4.8.4 Testing of Hypothesis H05; Perspectives of Hotels' Guests

Hypothesis H_05 posited, 'there is no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County'. In this regard, talent management was grounded on expectations and perceptions of products and services by the guests. Competitiveness was based on the quality of products and services computed by the difference between guests' expectations and perceptions. Pearson Correlation test was done as shown in Table 4.30.

Table 4.30: Correlations between Mean Expectation and Mean Perception

		Mean expectation of the guests on products and services	Mean perception of the guests on products and services
Mean expectation of the guests on products and services	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.277**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.009
Mean perception of the guests on products and services	Pearson Correlation	-0.277**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	
	N	88	88

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It was determined that expectations of the guests on products and services and perceptions of the guests on products and services were significantly related but had a weak negative correlation (r = 0.277, p =0.009). This means that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's products and services are slightly below the expectations of the guests. It thus suggests that the levels of the current products and services are slightly denying the hotels competitive edge. These results were inconsistent with assertions by Jafari and Xiao (2016) who suggested otherwise.

In summary, all the independent variables applying to talent and training executives were transformed and then regressed against transformed values of competitiveness. Hospitality core competencies ($\beta = 0.181$, $p = 0.012$), talent attraction ($\beta = -0.226$, $p = 0.032$), talent selection ($\beta = 0.309$, $p = 0.004$) and talent engagement ($\beta = -0.285$, $p = 0.004$) were significant thus rejected. This suggests that there was a significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels. Talent development ($\beta = 0.240$, $p = 0.096$), talent and knowledge retention ($\beta = -0.034$, $p = 0.745$), extent of TM ($\beta = 0.120$, $p = 0.218$) and outcomes of TM ($\beta = -0.026$, $p = 0.784$) were not significant therefore, were accepted. This implies that there was no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels. The results of the hypothesis were showed a positive significant relationship. The relationship between TM and competitiveness were was also tested using guests' expectations and perceptions. The results of the hypothesis revealed a negative relationship. It can be noted, that hotel managements had a different perspective on the success of the adoption of talent management and competitiveness of the hotels.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary, conclusions, recommendations of the study, and the implications for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the adoption of talent management for competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County.

5.1.1 Objective One: To explore the conceptualization of talent management on the promotion of competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The conceptualisation of talent management featured how the hotels targeted defined talent and TM. In both cases, four topologies emerged; inclusive approach to talent as a subject, inclusive approach to talent as an object, exclusive approach to talent as a subject, and exclusive approach to talent as an object. This suggested that there was no unanimous definition of the concepts among the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. However, how hotels defined talent leaned towards inclusive topologies at about 55% which was an HRM perspective. This implied that most hotels did not fully nurture and exploit the advantages of HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

Like talent, there was no unanimous definition for TM as they appeared under; inclusive approach to TM as a subject, inclusive approach to TM as an object, exclusive approach to TM as a subject, or exclusive approach to TM as an object. The implication is that the manner in which TM is adopted is different from hotel to hotel. Some of the strategies adopted maybe just HRM which may not adequately nurture or exploit HiPo, HiPe, or

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talent with unique KSAs. However, a slight majority of hotels at approximately 58% adopted exclusive approaches to talent that creates competitive resources.

5.1.2 Objective Two: To assess hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Results revealed that; technical and leadership, sales and marketing, hospitality intelligence and business savvy and competitor knowledge, multilingualism, creativity and innovation, communication, and strategic planning were most important in that order. However, the statistical test found technical competency (β = 0.039, p= 0.130) and communication competency (β = 0.013, p= 0.663), were not significant against competitiveness (quality of products/ services). Further the null hypothesis was rejected (β = -0.249, t = -7.502, p =0.001), thus significant but negative. This implied that the predicators have not been enriched enough to generate positive significance against the quality of products and services in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County.

5.1.3 Objective Three: To profile the approaches adopted for talent management practices in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

It was established that approaches for talent attraction practices have led to talent to the competitiveness of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County ($\overline{x}$ = 1.14; SD = 0.351). Talent and training executives noted that development opportunities, competitive compensation and incentives, job security, interesting responsibilities, growth/ promotion opportunities, the flexibility of roles work-life balance, and good working conditions/ environment created an EVP that formed an appealing employer brand. The employer brands attracted HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Line executives also added; holiday entitlements, enriched jobs with exciting roles, recognition of excellent performance as strategies of attracting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to their

departments. However, its subjection to regression analysis yielded a negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.202, t = -0.068, p= 0.009). This indicated employer brands were not appealing enough to attract HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

Talent and training executives noted that talent selection approaches had a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of choosing talent ($\bar{x}$ = 1.32; SD = 0.750). Performance appraisals, poaching, mixed interviews, and reference techniques were widely used to fill both entry and non-entry positions. Line executives also identified referrals, job auditions, interviews, employment tests, role plays, situational exercises, assessment centres, demonstration of tasks, description of task-procedures, and physical tests as ways of selecting talent. Regressing of talent selection with competitiveness, generated positive and significant results (β = 0.512, t = 7.802, p = 0.001). This suggested that talent attraction approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County succeed in selecting HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs that drive them into greater levels of competitiveness.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that the talent engagement approaches adopted by their hotels created competitive resources ($\bar{x}$ = 1.05; SD = 0.213). Performance appraisal, promotion opportunities, and the best work environment were the most popular. Line executives indicated that incentives, training, recognition of excellent performance, career growth, job security, competitive pay among others as ways of enhancing engagement. However, the regressing of talent engagement approaches with competitiveness resulted into negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.224, t = -3.638, p = 0.002). This suggested two things; approaches applied in talent engagement have not

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been fully exploited, and employee value proposition is not appealing enough to HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that the talent development approaches adopted by their hotels created competitive resources ($\bar{x}$ = 1.27; SD = 0.456). External career development courses, in-house development programmes, 360-feedback assessment techniques, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, and action learning were the most preferred approaches. Line executives were probed on commonly used talent development approaches used, and they picked; career development courses, in-house development programmes, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment. When talent development was regressed with competitiveness, its coefficient was positive and significant (β = 0.296, t = 3.777, p = 0.002). The positivity of the coefficient suggests that talent development approaches used by five–star hotels in Nairobi City County are developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs that power them into greater levels of competitiveness.

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that the talent and knowledge retention approaches adopted by their hotels created competitive resources ($\bar{x}$ = 1.27; SD = 0.456). Performance appraisals, promotion opportunities, crystallising tacit knowledge, succession plans, development opportunities, psychological contracts, work-life balance, and appealing work environments were the most used techniques according to talent and training executives. Contrary to this, line executives (n=28; 80%) contended that competitors would still obtain their unique knowledge. Regressing of talent and knowledge retention approaches with competitiveness resulted into negative but significant

coefficients (β = -0.189, t = -2.500, p = 0.024). This revealed that approaches adopted for talent and knowledge retention have not been fully exploited, and the employee value proposition is not appealing enough to HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs.

The $H_0 2$; 'there are no significant approaches adopted in talent management practices that promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County', was tested through linear regression. The results revealed positive and significant results (β = 0.963, t = 7.830, p =0.001) thus, the hypothesis was rejected meaning that approaches adopted for TM practices created competitiveness for the hotel.

5.1.4 Objective Four: To evaluate the association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was established. Descriptive studies revealed that the adoption of talent management was mostly average from the point of view of; talent policies, talent budget, top leadership involvement and support of TM, talent paths, talent pools, all strategic positions filled with talent only, pay differentiation favouring talent, and transfer of tacit knowledge. H03; there is no significant association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County (β = 4.414, t = 1.618, p = 0.130), was accepted implying that there was no association. The overall overview suggests that the extent TM adoption is average; and it goes beyond average, greater competitive levels are likely to be achieved.

5.1.5 Objective Five: To establish the outcomes of talent management in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The outcomes of talent management influenced a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in terms of production and provision of unique products and services. It was revealed that hotels' talent Management systems created some valuable assets that are rare and difficult to imitate. These enable them to achieve their goals more comprehensively. They are also able to retain talented individuals. On the other hand, TM systems in hotels resulted in environments of inequality among employees, and those not categorized as 'Talent' at some point, they depart. Some employees feel that the process of Talent Management is insincere because it is not only talented individuals that contribute to the success of hotels. H_04: there are no significant outcomes of talent management that influence the competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was rejected ($\beta =$ 2.061, p= 0.018).

5.1.6 Objective Six: To determine the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Respondents indicated that the adoption of talent management has helped the five-star hotels in Nairobi to become competitive. H_05, there is no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels was rejected ($\beta = 1.094$, p= 0.001). However, the measure of service quality through a SERVQUAL suggested that guests did not rate the quality of products and services to be competitive enough. Perceptions failed to meet expectations in all the five dimensions (tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and assurance) by the least threshold of zero, giving an average gap score of -0.827. This adverse deficit affected the competitiveness of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Hypothesis H_05 was posited a negative significant relationship, and it was rejected (r = -0.277, p =0.009).

5.2 Conclusion of the Study

Conclusions were drawn based on the study findings and are expressed in the subtitles below.

5.2.1 Objective One: To explore the conceptualization of talent management on the promotion of competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The lack of unanimity on the conceptualizations of talent and TM are likely to hinder the competitiveness of the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. Therefore; as regards the conceptualisation of talent, they ought to adopt either an exclusive approach to talent as a subject or an exclusive approach to talent as an object. As concerns to TM, they ought to adopt either an exclusive approach to TM as a subject or an exclusive approach to TM as an object. The exclusive approaches would bring them close to unanimous conceptualizations of talent and TM. Moreover, the approaches would enable them to attract, select, engage, develop, and retain HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs who will ultimately create products or perform services competitors cannot match.

5.2.2 Objective Two: To assess hospitality core competencies required in talent to promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Hotels appreciated the significance of hospitality core competencies in driving up their competitiveness. The mean rank showed that; technical and leadership, sales and marketing, hospitality intelligence and business savvy and competitor knowledge, multilingualism, creativity and innovation, communication, and strategic planning were most important in that order. However, the statistical test found technical and communication competencies not significant ($\beta = 0.039$, p= 0.130) and ($\beta = 0.013$, p= 0.663) respectively against competitiveness (quality of products/ services). The target hotels should endeavour to enrich them so that their impact creates quality and sustainable

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products and services. Furthermore, the hypothesis tested revealed that a decrease in hospitality core competencies decreased competitiveness in the hotels (β= -0.195, t = -2.655, p =0.020). This informs the hotels that they ought to improve the predictors (target competencies) so that they create quality, and diverse sustainable products and services.

5.2.3 Objective Three: To profile the approaches adopted for talent management practices in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Talent attraction is pivotal in making HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to be available for selection. However, its subjection to regression analysis yielded a negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.202, t = -0.068, p= 0.009). This indicated that the talent attraction package in the form of an employer brand was not attractive enough in the five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. This suggests that the hotels' total employer brands need to be improved to influence a positive employee value proposition so that HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs are attracted to offer themselves for selection. Their contribution would differentially impact competitiveness by producing varieties of quality products/ services.

Talent selection utilizes some approaches to find HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. There was a unanimous endorsement of the approaches used for selecting talent by talent and training executives, line executives, and regression tests. Regression analysis between talent selection predicators and competitiveness revealed a positive relationship. Thus, hotels should continue with what they are doing because the approaches used, successfully select HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs whose deployment to critical positions drive up and sustain hotels' competitiveness.

Talent engagement has been touted as a TM practice that creates competitiveness by motivating HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to produce exceptional products/ services (competitiveness). The regressing of talent engagement approaches with competitiveness resulted into negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.224, t = -3.638, p = 0.002). This implies that the talent engagement package in the form of employee value proposition was not appealing enough to HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Thus hotels ought to create an exciting employee value proposition talent gain organizational commitment, and apply additional discretionary effort to their work for greater levels of competitiveness.

Talent development was praised for developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs so that they gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors. The regressing of approaches of talent development with competitiveness revealed a positive and significant relationship (β = 0.296, t = 3.777, p = 0.002). This relationship suggests that the approaches adopted for talent development are effective and they ought to be sustained and improved where necessary. This will ensure that critical competencies difficult to be imitated by the competitors are developed continually for the novel or innovative products/ service.

The study results showed that the retention of talent and knowledge ensure that hotels continued to produce exceptional products/ services. Although talent and training executives strongly agreed with this assertion, an overwhelming 80% (n=28) of the line executives contended that there is no way competitors can be prevented from obtaining their unique knowledge. Regressing of talent and knowledge retention approaches with

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competitiveness supported this claim because negative but significant coefficients (β = -0.189, t = -2.500, p = 0.024) were obtained. This implies that the hotels' talent and knowledge retention package ought to be improved so that HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs are retained for greater levels of competitiveness.

The H_02; 'there are no significant approaches adopted in talent management practices that promote competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County', was tested through linear regression. The results revealed positive and significant results ($\beta = 0.963$, t = 7.830, p =0.001) thus, the hypothesis was rejected meaning that approaches adopted for TM practices created competitiveness for the hotel. Therefore, hotels can maintain the status quo or strive to improve predictors of competitiveness especially; talent attraction, talent engagement, and talent, and knowledge retention since they were negatively related with competitiveness.

5.2.4 Objective Four: To evaluate the association between the extent of talent management adoption and competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Descriptive studies revealed that the adoption of talent management was mostly average. Linear regression between the predictors of the extent to which TM was adopted and the competitiveness of the five-star hotels found no association. Hotels ought to review their talent management to ensure that it has exclusive subject and object characteristics. This will inform them of what strategies to adopt and how deep. For instance, they should consider optimum adoption of the following strategies; TM policies, TM budgets, top leadership involvement and support of TM, efficient talent paths (buying, building, bounding and binding, and bouncing), talent pools, all strategic positions filled with talent

only, pay differentiation favouring talent, and transfer of tacit knowledge from HiPe and talent with unique KSAs to HiPo.

5.2.5 Objective Five: To establish the outcomes of talent management in promoting competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Most of the outcomes of TM investigated were broad enough to overcome deficits of other outcomes to significantly impact the competitiveness of hotels (β = 2.061, t = 2.684, p =0.018). Hotels ought to adopt exclusive subject and object approaches of TM so that they can draw optimum benefits from HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. TM undermined teamwork and cohesion which drew back the competitiveness of hotels. Therefore, as hotels adopt TM practices, they should motivate the group feeling demoralised and resentful or manage them accordingly.

5.2.6 Objective Six: To determine the relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Talent and training managers strongly agreed that talent management has made five-star hotels in Nairobi competitive. A corresponding null hypothesis H_05, there is no significant relationship between talent management and the competitiveness of five–star hotels that were rejected (β = 1.094, t= 4.825, p= 0.001). This indicated that talent management increased competitiveness in hotels. A further test through Service Quality Gap Score Analysis revealed that guests gave a negative score indicating that hotels were not competitive enough (r = -0.277, p =0.009). Therefore; hotels will need to explore ways of further developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to have a chance of expanding a range of quality and diverse products and services.

5.3 Recommendations of the Study

This section highlights the recommendations for policy, practice, and future research regarding talent management in the hospitality industry.

5.3.1 Recommendations for Policy

1. The Ministry of tourism to incentivise five-star hotels with unique products and services that other markets do not have.

2. Selected critical knowledge that needs not to be retained that creates exceptional products can be shared with TVET and universities especially hospitality schools. This can be incorporated in the competency-based education and training curriculums to cover the needs of the industry.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Practice

1. Five-star hotels to conceptualise 'talent' and 'talent management' from the point of view of exclusive subject and object, so that they can focus on HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs for critical knowledge positions.

2. Five-star hotels to enrich their cognitive, functional, meta, and social competencies and instil them in HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs so that they are empowered to create quality, diverse and diverse products, and services.

3. Five-star hotels to prioritise in attracting, selecting, engaging, developing, and retaining HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSA; and tacit knowledge as well as de-crystallizing to their knowledge HiPos.

4. Five-star hotels to create or enrich talent management policies based on the exclusive approach, and put in place significant budgets for TM processes

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5. Task HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs to create and innovate hospitality products that would differentiate them from other markets.

5.3.3 Recommendations for Future Research

1. This research has been conducted among the management teams and guests in five-star hotels; it is recommended that related research is conducted on individuals considered talent in the same hotels.

2. This research has been conducted from the point of view of exclusive talent management five-star hotels in Nairobi City County; it is recommended that a related study be carried out in the same hotels on individuals excluded from talent management practices to understand how they perceive their career opportunities in the industry.

3. Due to limited studies of talent management in Kenya, it is recommended that similar studies are conducted in other sectors such as; healthcare, transport, mining, horticulture manufacturing among others.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Consent

Kenyatta University

Japheth Omae

P.O Box 20621- 00100

Nairobi, Kenya

08th/12/2017

Dear Madam/ Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH INFORMATION

The researcher (Japheth Omae) is a Master's student at Kenyatta University. I am undertaking a study entitled, "Adoption of talent management to competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County." The purpose of the study is to assess talent management and its implications for the performance of the hospitality industry in Kenya. The study will provide vital information that would add knowledge to the implementation of talent management for greater hotel competitiveness. I wish to involve talent executive/ human resources executive, Food and beverage production executive, Food and beverage service executive, Front office executive, Housekeeping executive, and guests. This study has been funded by the Kenya National Research Fund under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology.

The information collected will be highly confidential as no customer will be defined by name in the report. I am requesting to use your hotel to collect data from your Talent Executives and your guests to enable me to analyse my research findings. Any questions with reference to the study, please contact me on 0727138588 or at jojaphethi@gmail.com. Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Japheth Omae

Department of Hospitality Management (Kenyatta University)

Appendix II: Questionnaire for the Hotel Talent Executives and Training

Executives

SECTION A: Demographic Data

1. Name of the Hotel (optional) …………………………………………….................

2. Gender

   [ ] Male   [ ] Female

3. Please tick your age bracket

   [ ] 20-25   [ ] 26-30   [ ] 31-35   [ ] 36-40

   [ ] 40-45   [ ] 46-50   [ ] 51 and above

4. How long have you held your current position?

   [ ] 0-5 years   [ ] 6-10 years   [ ] 11-15years   [ ] More than 16 years

5. What is your academic qualification?

  [ ] Diploma   [ ] Bachelor's Degree   [ ] Master's Degree   [ ] PHD

 Other (Specify)...

SECTION B: Overview of Talent Management

6. How does the management of your hotel define talent?

....
....
....

7. How does the management of your hotel define the concept of talent management?

....
....
....

8. Comment on the impact of talent management on the competitive advantage of your hotel

....
....
....

SECTION C: Hospitality Competencies

9. Please indicate by circling the appropriate box key competencies that you expect from your talented individuals

NO	Key Competencies	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not at all Important
1	Business Savvy and competitor knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
2	Creativity and innovation	1	2	3	4	5
3	Sales and marketing	1	2	3	4	5
4	Communication	1	2	3	4	5
5	Multilingualism	1	2	3	4	5
6	Hospitality Intelligence	1	2	3	4	5
7	Strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5
8	Technical	1	2	3	4	5
9	Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
	Competencies above make a difference in the quality of products/ services	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)					
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: Approaches used in each Talent Management Practices

10. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your knowledge on attracting talented individuals to your hotel.

NO	Talent Attraction	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The hotel provides development opportunities for talent to attract potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
2	The hotel provides competitive compensation and incentives for talent to attract potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
3	The hotel offers job security for talent to attract potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
4	The hotel matches talent's roles with interesting responsibilities to attract potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
5	The hotel provides growth/ promotion opportunities for talent to attract potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
6	Talent are allowed flexibility in their roles and this attracts potential talent	1	2	3	4	5

7	The hotel provides work-life balance for talent to attract potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
8	The hotel provides good working conditions/ environment for talent to attract potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
9	Talent attracted when recruited and engaged produce a variety of quality products/ services	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)					
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

11. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your knowledge on selecting talented individuals for your hotel.

NO	Talent Selection	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Selection of talent to critical positions is based on performance appraisals results	1	2	3	4	5
2	Hotel poaches individuals with rare and unique capabilities from competitors	1	2	3	4	5
3	Selection into critical positions is from an established internal talent pools	1	2	3	4	5
4	Mixed interviews (structured and unstructured) lead to the selection of talent	1	2	3	4	5
5	Technical skills tests/ work sample tests allow for the selection of talent	1	2	3	4	5
6	Employment tests allow for the selection of talent	1	2	3	4	5
7	Assessment centres to allow for the selection of talent	1	2	3	4	5
8	Selection of talent to critical positions is based on performance appraisals results	1	2	3	4	5
9	The selection process succeeds in choosing talented individuals with skills sort	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)					
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

12. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your knowledge on the engagement of talented individuals in your hotel.

NO	Engagement of Talent Individuals	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Talent is provided with career development opportunities (enriched jobs, increased responsibilities, and challenging jobs)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Talent is allowed the best work environment that includes authority, autonomy to be innovative, and work and life balance	1	2	3	4	5
3	Performance appraisal inform recognition of talent's contribution	1	2	3	4	5
4	Talent are provided with a range of financial rewards	1	2	3	4	5
5	When promotion opportunities become available, talent are considered first	1	2	3	4	5
6	The hotel has developed a relationship with talent in which there are reciprocal obligations or promises (PC)	1	2	3	4	5
7	Talent engagement activities have led to individuals producing exceptional products/ services	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)					
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

13. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your knowledge on talent development in your hotel.

NO	Talent Development	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	External career development courses are used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5
2	In-house development programmes are used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5
3	The 360-feedback technique assessment tool is used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5
4	Technology-based training is used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5
5	Coaching systems are used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5

6	Mentoring (buddying) systems are used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5
7	Job rotation is used to develop talent individuals	1	2	3	4	5
8	Action learning is used to develop talent individuals	1	2	3	4	5
9	Special projects assignments are used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5
10	Stretching assignments are used to develop talent	1	2	3	4	5
11	Job shadowing is used to develop talent individuals	1	2	3	4	5
12	Talent development allows individuals to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)					
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

14. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your knowledge on talent and knowledge retention in your hotel.

NO	Talent and Knowledge Retention	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The hotel uses long-term contracts to retain knowledge and talent	1	2	3	4	5
2	The hotel diffuses difficult-to-imitate knowledge to potential talent to retain it	1	2	3	4	5
3	The use of a succession plan ensures that talent is retained	1	2	3	4	5
4	The hotel uses development opportunities to inspire talent retention	1	2	3	4	5
5	The hotel uses compensation and incentives to inspire talent retention	1	2	3	4	5
6	The hotel uses growth/ promotion opportunities to inspire talent retention	1	2	3	4	5
7	The hotel develops relationships with talent in which there are reciprocal obligations/ promises (PC) retain talent	1	2	3	4	5
8	The hotel balances between work and life to ease pressure on talent to retain them	1	2	3	4	5
9	The hotel has adopted an appealing work environments to encourage talent retention	1	2	3	4	5

10	The retention of key talent employees and protection of unique knowledge has maintained the production of exceptional products/ services	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)					
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E: The Extent of Talent Management Adoption

15. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your knowledge on the extent of talent management adoption in your hotel.

NO	Extent of Talent Management Adoption	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The hotel has developed a talent management policy	1	2	3	4	5
2	There is a budget set aside for talent management	1	2	3	4	5
3	There is top leadership support for talent management	1	2	3	4	5
4	Buying, building, bounding, and binding are limited to talent only, bouncing for all	1	2	3	4	5
5	Only individuals considered talent are drafted into talent pools	1	2	3	4	5
6	All strategic positions within hotels are filled with talent only	1	2	3	4	5
7	There is pay differentiation in which talent are paid more than others in the same jobs	1	2	3	4	5
8	Tacit knowledge is identified and transferred from holders to potential talent	1	2	3	4	5
	The implementation of talent management has differentiated hotel from competitors	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

SECTION F: The Outcomes of Talent Management

17. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your knowledge on outcomes of talent management in your hotel.

NO	Outcomes of Talent Management	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Talent management creates valuable knowledge resources difficult to imitate	1	2	3	4	5
2	Talent management assembles/ creates/ retains individuals with valuable KSAs	1	2	3	4	5
3	Talent help hotels to build individuals not considered talent into talent	1	2	3	4	5
4	Talent management increases efficiency and productivity	1	2	3	4	5
5	Talent management undermines teamwork and cohesion	1	2	3	4	5
6	Individuals not categorized as 'talent' lead to high turnover rates	1	2	3	4	5
7	The holistic outcomes of talent management have made the hotel a producer and provider of unique products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
	Others (please specify)					
1		1	2	3	4	5
2		1	2	3	4	5
3		1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your participation

Appendix III: Interview Guide for the Line Executives

SECTION A: Demographic Data

1. Name of the Hotel (optional) …………………………………………………….

2. Gender

[   ] Male   [   ] Female

3. Please tick your age bracket

[   ] 20 – 25   [   ] 26 – 30   [   ] 31 – 35   [   ] 36 – 40   [   ] 41-45   [   ] 46-50

[   ] 51 and above

4. How long have you held your current position?

[   ] 0-5 years [   ] 6-10 year [   ] 11-20years [   ] More than 20 years

5. What is your qualification?

[   ] Diploma [   ] Bachelor's Degree [   ] Master's Degree [   ] PHD

Other (Specify) …………………………………………………………………………

SECTION C: Hospitality Competencies

6. What skills do you look for in individuals required in difficult jobs or positions in your department?

7. Comment on the importance of the skills you mentioned above to your department

SECTION D: Approaches used in Talent Management Practices

8. How do you make your department attractive to individuals with unique abilities wanting to join you?

9. What ways do you use to identify individuals with unique abilities for difficult jobs or positions in your department? Which ones were the most effective?

10. State how you motivate your highly skilled employees to maintain performance at high levels?

11. Your difficult-to-imitate knowledge is vital to your competitive advantage in relation to departments of your competing hotels, is there a way you can prevent rivals from obtaining them?   [   ] Yes   [   ] No

12. If your answer is yes in question 11 above, Kindly mention ways you preserve your difficult-to-imitate knowledge within the hotel

Thank you for your participation

Appendix IV: Questionnaire for the Hotel Guests

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

School of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Faculty of Hospitality Management

My name is **Japheth Omae**, **an MSc student at Kenyatta University** undertaking a study, "Adoption of talent management among five–star hotels to competitiveness in Nairobi City County". Part of the study requires the ascertainment of the quality of service both expected and perceived. As such, the questionnaire is in two parts, expectations and experience. Please give your views openly and sincerely, the study is purely for academic pursuit and the views expressed are treated with confidentiality. For any query, please contact me on 0727138588.

Section A: Background Data

1. Name of the Hotel (optional)

……………………………………………………...

2. Gender

   [   ] Male   [   ] Female

3. Please tick your age bracket

   [   ] 20 – 25   [   ] 26 – 30   [   ] 31 – 35   [   ] 36 – 40

   [   ] 41-45   [   ] 46-50   [   ] 51 and above

Section B: Service Quality

4**.** This section deals with your **Expectations** on the quality of service in hotels. Kindly rank each statement based on its importance to you. Number 1 is less important and number 7 is very important.

NO	Expectations of Service Quality	Rank						
1	A hotel should provide exact products and services it promises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	A hotel should perform the service right from the first time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	A hotel cares and gives individualized attention to the guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Employees should give prompt service to guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5	The behaviour of employees in a hotel should instil confidence in guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Employees should show sincere interest in solving guest problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Employees of the hotel should have the knowledge to answer guests' questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Employees should understand the specific needs of their guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	A hotel should have enough variety of products	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Products a hotel provides should be of high quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. This section deals with **Perceptions** of service as experienced in the hotel. Kindly rank each statement based on your perception of service as observed in the hotel. Number 1 is less important and number 7 is very important.

NO	Perceptions of Service Quality	Rank						
1	The hotel provided the exact products and services it promises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The hotel performed the service right from the first time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	The hotel cares and gives individualized attention to the guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Employees gave prompt service to guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	The behaviour of employees in a hotel instil confidence in guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Employees showed a sincere interest in solving guest problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Employees of the hotel have the knowledge to answer guests' questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Employees understand the specific needs of their guests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	The hotel has enough variety of products	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	The products a hotel provides are of high quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation

Appendix V: Respondents per Hotel Nairobi City County

NO	STUDY HOTELS	TALENT EXECUTIVES (HUMAN RESOURCE EXECUTIVES)	TRAINING EXECUTIVES	FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTION EXECUTIVES	FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE EXECUTIVES	FINANCE EXECUTIVES	FRONT OFFICE EXECUTIVES	ACCOMMODATION EXECUTIVE EXECUTIVES	GUESTS
		RESPONDENTS							
1.	Hemingway's Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
2.	Villa Rosa Kempinski Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
3.	The Sarova Stanley Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
4.	Dusitd2 Hotel Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
5.	Fairmont The Norfolk Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
6.	Tribe Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
7.	Hilton Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
8.	Safari Park Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
9.	InterContinental Hotel Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
10.	Nairobi Serena Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
11.	Laico Regency Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
12.	Sankara Nairobi	Not used in the study; used for pretesting							
13.	Radisson Blu Hotel Nairobi								
	Total	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	**104**

Appendix VI: Work Plan/ Time Schedule

ACTIVITY	PERIOD
Writing and defense of concept paper	January 2013- April 2013
Writing a research proposal	May 2014 – December 2014
Defense and Proposal correction	October 2015 – November 2015
Data collection	December 2017 – April 2018
Data Analysis	May 2018 – May 2018
Research report writing	June 2016– August 2018
Submission of 1st draft to Supervisors	September 2018
Submission of 2nd draft to Supervisors	October 2018
Submission of 3rd draft to Supervisors	October 2018
Defense at the school level	January 2019
Submission of thesis for Examination	January 2019
Defense at graduate school	February 2019
Corrections and submission	March 2019

Appendix VII: NRF Award Recognition

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR RESEARCH,
INNOVATION AND OUTREACH

Ref: DVCR/NRF/VOL.1/64

Mr.Japheth Omoke
Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management
School of Applied Human Sciences
Kenyatta University

P.O. Box 43844 - 00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 020 – 8710901/19 Ext. 3026
Email: dvc-rio@ku.ac.ke

16th March, 2016

Dear Mr. Omoke,

RE: 2016 NRF AWARD

Following the National Research Fund 2016 Call and your submission of a proposal, I wish to congratulate you on being selected for an award. The University applauds your effort and commitment, together with your supervisors and collaborators, in developing a winning proposal. We are certain that the award will not only facilitate the completion of your program on time but also confident your research will increase KU's reputation and improve our capacity to contribute to achieving Kenya's Vision 2030 and resolving other globally important development challenges.

The Division of Research, Innovation & Outreach is looking forward to working closely with you to ensure successful implementation of the funded activities. Kindly note that the formal letter of offer and grant contract will be sent directly to you by NRF.

Congratulations!

Yours sincerely,

Prof. F. Q. Gravenir
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Research, Innovation and Outreach

Cc: Vice-Chancellor

Appendix VIII: Research Authorization by Graduate School, Kenyatta University

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean~graduate@ku.ac.ke   P.O. Box 43844, 00100
                                                    NAIROBI, KENYA
Website: www.ku.ac.ke   Tel. 020-8704150
                        Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School   DATE: 7th November, 2016

TO: Japheth Omoke   REF: T129/20271/2012
        C/o Hospitality Management Department.

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL
==

We acknowledge receipt of your revised Research Proposal as per our recommendations raised by the Graduate School Board of 21st September, 2016 entitled **"Adoption of Talent Management on Competitiveness among Five-Star Hotels in Nairobi, County"**.

You may now proceed with your Data collection, subject to clearance with the Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking Forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the Progress Report Forms. The Supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Thank you.

GIDEON KAIMENYI
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

CC.   Chairman, Hospitality Management Department

        Supervisors:

        1. Dr. Albert Kariuki
            C/o Hospitality Management Department
            Kenyatta University

        2. Mrs. Rahab Mugambi
            C/o Hospitality Management Department
            Kenyatta University

GK/rwm

Appendix IX: Research Authorization by National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone:+254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax:+254-20-318245,318249
Email:dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
when replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No. **NACOSTI/P/16/74674/14848**

Date:
23rd November, 2016

Japheth Omae Omoke
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Adoption of talent management on competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi County,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **21st November, 2017.**

You are advised to report to **the Managers of the selected Hotels, the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.
DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The Managers
Selected Hotels.

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAIROBI COUNTY
P. O. Box 30124-00100, NBI
TEL: 341666

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001:2008 Certified

Appendix X: Research Permit

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NACOSTI

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

RESEACH CLEARANCE PERMIT

Serial No.A 17013

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. JAPHETH OMAE OMOKE
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 20621-100
Nairobi,has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County

on the topic: ADOPTION OF TALENT
MANAGEMENT ON COMPETITIVENESS
AMONG FIVE-STAR HOTELS IN NAIROBI
COUNTY

for the period ending:
21st November,2017

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/16/74674/14848
Date Of Issue : 23rd November,2016
Fee Recieved :Ksh 1000

Applicant's
Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

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