



**Investigating the Strategic Alignment of Talent Management and Organisation  
Sustainability in the Saudi Higher Education Sector**

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By

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## **Abstract**

This research investigates the process of talent management (TM) and determining its link to organisational sustainability in the Saudi Arabian higher education sector. Since the inception of Talent management as a field, it has been largely researched and implemented in the for-profit business organisation. Its benefits have helped organisation in retaining top talented professionals that are a source of competitive advantage. However, it has been rarely researched and implemented in the Higher education sector, especially in developing countries where the phenomenon of talent management is still finding its grips with the traditional human resource management (HRM).

The literature review identifies a literature gap in the TM literature, prompting the development of a talent management theoretical framework to investigate the process of talent management and the factors that are critical to the development of talent management process. Thus, a literature gap was identified in the area of talent management specifically in the context Saudi higher education. Based on the previous works of scholars and academics, the Researcher was able to develop a theoretical framework that aim to help higher educational organisations in achieving organisational sustainability with the help of talent management. The theoretical framework illustrated how alignment of talent management with existing strategies of HRM and Human capital management can help organisations in reaching organisational sustainability. The research was conducted as a two-stage empirical study in the Saudi higher education sector employing sequential mixed methods of data collection and analysis. A series of 21 semi-structured qualitative interviews with senior officials in Saudi higher education system were conducted followed by quantitative survey of 110 higher education professionals and students.

The research findings confirm that talent management is still limited in majority of Saudi higher educational organisations and its knowledge and training is very limited. The research findings also show various obstacles such as fear of change and lack of pre-defined guidelines as the reason behind not having such strategies in Saudi higher education sector. However, the primary findings also suggest that majority of Saudi higher education

professionals are open to such strategic implementation in their organisations. Moreover, the research also shows that aligning talent management with existing organisational strategies of HRM and human capital can lead to optimum organisational performance which will results in organisational sustainability.

The main contribution of this research is the development of talent management alignment framework that may help higher educational organisation in implementing talent management more effectively. Specifically, talent management guidance model identifies that five major factors of talent management which are identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development and attraction and retention of talent. These five factors can be further investigated individually and their impact on organisational performance can be further thoroughly investigated in future researches.

Key limitations to Saudi higher education sector. Since the talent management is a developing field that has helped organisations to prosper in for profit business sector. However, confinement of the research to Saudi higher education sector and limited sample size of semi structured interviews can be considered as the major limitations of this research. Future research recommendations that researches can be conducted on individual factors of talent management that have been identified that focus on the alignment of talent management with strategies other than HRM and Human capital strategies.

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# **1 Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction and Background**

Despite the abundant amount of research on the process of talent management, scholars haven't produced yet, a work with massive consensus (McDonnell *et al.*, 2010). Even though the field of talent management is moving gradually towards maturity, it still lacks a clear and concise definition, scope and conceptual framework (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Collings *et al.*, 2011; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013; Schiemann, 2014). A large number of scholarly articles have been published and written on talent management, its factors and framework. However, no concise and agreed definition and framework have been yet identified. Thus, the field clearly has a long way ahead. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that, the underdevelopment in the field of talent management is due to the lack of consistent and concise definition that ultimately leads to a conceptual framework. Collings and Mellahi (2009) argued that talent management consists of a systematic identification of pivotal positions, and a talent pool which then creates a differentiated human resource architecture. Despite the vague definitions and frameworks, the Researcher aims to identify a clear and concise definition of talent management and the factors forming up the strategies of TM. The Researcher aims also to analyse the academic and industry-based literature, and to draft out a definition of talent management that will be recognised in industry as well as in academia.

As the world moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, traveling distances were reduced, and the large advancements in IT and telecommunication even brought everything closer. The movement of personnel became easier, people started travelling more and moving in and out of a country for jobs, and business was not a problem anymore. Thus, a large number of people, especially the talented workforce, started moving globally for better opportunities. This created a talent shortage in various countries, especially in the developing and the Middle Eastern regions, as talented personnel started moving towards western industrial states (Cappelli, 2008). Thus, a major setback for organisations was created, especially those operating in the developing countries.

Many organisations and academics started taking the problem of talent shortages seriously. Strategies were being formed in organisations to tackle this emerging problem of losing talented personnel (Michaels, *et al.*, 2001). The academics started writing articles on talent management, after the famous research of Chambers *et al.* (1998) 'war for talent'. Thus, scholars and practitioners started collaborating to solve a major human resource management issue that even started spreading across academia and especially in Higher Education (Paiseya & Paisey, 2016). A ground-breaking research in this regard was conducted by (Collings & Mellahi, 2009), who analysed the existing theories regarding talent management, and devised a framework that can be implemented in an organisation so that the issue of talent shortages, and retention of talent can be addressed. The issue of organisational sustainability is a major concern for every profit or non-profit organisation, yet, it is very hard to identify why organisations who have prospered in one decade fail to even survive in the next (Young, 2010).

Education in Saudi Arabia is based on four basic characteristics: first, the focus on teaching should be based on the ideology of religion Islam; second, a centralised system of education is in place; third, the education system relies on state funding (free education), and last, the system adopts the general policy of gender segregation (Baki, 2004). The Higher Education in Saudi Arabia can be categorised in two categories: Government Higher education institutes and Private Higher education institutes. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is looking for innovative strategies that can help Saudi universities to expand, self-sustain and reduce the dependence on government funding. By introducing talent management strategies in Saudi Higher Educational institutes, organisational sustainability of these universities can be achieved. If the talent management strategies can be aligned with organisational existing HRM and human capital strategies, fruitful results can be achieved. Therefore, this research discusses an innovative and robust approach of aligning talent management strategies with organisational existing HRM and human capital strategies in Saudi Higher educational sector, so that organisational sustainability can be achieved.

## 1.2 Talent Management

Despite producing abundant amount of research based on talent management, scholars haven't produced a work with consensus (McDonnell *et al.*, 2010). Even though the field of talent management is moving gradually towards maturity, it still lacks a clear and concise definition, scope and conceptual framework (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Collings *et al.*, 2011; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013; Schiemann, 2014). A large number scholarly articles have been publishes and written on talent management, its factors and framework. However, no concise and agreed definition and framework has been identified yet. Thus, the field clearly has a long way ahead. The research of Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that the underdevelopment in the field of talent management is due to the lack of consistent and concise definition that ultimately leads to a conceptual framework. Collings and Mellahi (2009) argued that talent management consists of a systematic identification of pivotal positions, talent pool which then creates a differentiated human resource architecture. Despite the vague definitions and frameworks, the researcher aims to identify a clear and concise definition of talent management and the factor which makes up the strategies of talent management. The Researcher aims to analyse the academic and industry based literature and will try to draft out a definition of talent management that be recognised in industry as well as academia.

### **1.3 Saudi Arabia Higher Education system**

The Saudi Higher Education system has transformed over the years with the country's inception in 1932, where the system has been a major part of the country's development and progress. Education in Saudi Arabia is based on four basic characteristics: first, the focus on teaching should be based on the ideology of religion Islam; second, a centralised system of education is in place; third, the education system relies on state funding (free education); and last, the system adopts the general policy of gender segregation (Baki, 2004). As of 2017, a total of 141,394 people were associated with Saudi Higher Education system, among which 71,806 are associated with administration, while 69,588 are faculty members. Despite the fact that Saudi Higher Education system has come a long way since its inception, it has not been able yet to achieve its potential (Al-Eisa & Smith, 2013). Various challenges existed that the Higher Education has been facing, spending more than 160 billion US dollars to improve the system (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013), through many dedicated educational programs. For instance, King Abdullah scholarship program which funds the tuition fees, traveling expenditures, and the living and accommodation expenses for selected candidates to study abroad (Saha, 2015). Also, AAFAQ or Horizon, the kingdom's 25 year plan to promote a knowledge based economy, and move the country from oil based economy to a more technology oriented and scientific nation. And recently, Vision 2030, which is the country's greatest future plan, focuses on making Saudi Arabia a research and scientific based economy. However, the lack of formal planning, implementation and fear of change have hindered fruitful results in these projects (Albaqami, 2015). Talent management provides an opportunity for Saudi Arabia and its Higher Education system. With Saudi government looking for various ways to make Saudi Higher Educational organisations self-sustainable, and reduce the financial dependency on Government funding, talent management provides an opportunity for Saudi Higher Educational organisations, to achieve organisational sustainability by effectively managing and developing talent.

### **1.4 Research Rationale**

The subject of talent management is gaining more importance in the business environment. Both, profit as well as non-profit organisations, are adopting multiple talent management

strategies to attract and retain the best available talent (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). Thus, the field of talent management has evolved over the past decade, as more scholars and academics are investigating this phenomenon (Collings, 2014). Talent management is becoming critical in the field of Higher Education, as many universities have used talent management strategies to enhance the overall performance of their respective organisations (Paiseya and Paisey, 2016). Hence, talent management strategies, which have been successfully implemented in for profit business organisations (Young, 2010), can be introduced successfully in Higher Education system.

Saudi Arabia has taken reforms in the education sector, particularly by supporting universities to help them establish and sustain on their own (Alnassar and Dow, 2013). Although the Kingdom has been investing heavily in the Higher Education sector, the outcomes did not reach yet the expected results (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). The field of talent management is an opportunity for Saudi Higher Educational organisations. By adopting effective talent management strategies and aligning them with the overall strategy of the organisation, Saudi universities may develop effective strategies for sustainable future.

Taking a step ahead, this research primarily focuses on talent management in the context of Saudi Arabia Higher Education system. Moreover, the Researcher aims to develop an aligned framework based on effective talent management, in Saudi Higher Education organisations. These strategies aim to help the Saudi Higher Education system, and improve the overall structure of Higher Education organisations, through effective talent management strategies that are aligned with the overall strategy of the organisation.

## **1.5 Research Aims**

The main aims of this research are:

1. To investigate the impact of strategic alignment of talent management on organisational sustainability in the Higher Education sector;

2. To develop an effective strategic talent management framework, aligned with the overall strategy of the organisation, and supported by practical implementational guidance model that will enhance organisational sustainability.

## **1.6 Research Objectives**

To achieve these aims, the Researcher has identified the following objectives:

1. To critically analyse academic and industry-based literature on talent management and organisational sustainability;
2. To draft out a definition of talent management that will be recognised in the industry as well as in academia
3. To identify the literature gap in the field of talent management;
4. To investigate the role and importance of effective talent management strategies;
5. To analyse the link between effective talent management and organisational sustainability; and
6. To evaluate the effectiveness of current talent management frameworks, and their alignment with organisation sustainability.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

The Researcher will address the following questions, in order to achieve the objectives of the study:

1. How talent management is strategically aligned with organisational sustainability in the Higher Education organisations?
2. What are the major factors that talent management depends on?
3. How talent management can improve the performance of Saudi Higher Educational organisations?
4. What are the challenges faced by Saudi Higher Education organisations in developing effective talent management?

## **1.8 Research Contributions**

This research is the first of its kind, as no prior research has been conducted in the field of talent management in the context of Saudi Arabia Higher Education. Moreover, very limited research on talent management is particularly specific to Saudi Arabian Higher Education context, as most of the studies conducted in the Gulf region focused on sectors other than Higher Education. This research becomes even more important for the practical implementation it recommends, as there is an urgent need for a strategy, from which the Saudi Higher Education can self-sustain. The contributions from the research can be divided into two categories namely managerial contribution and academic contribution.

### **1.8.1 Academic contribution**

The research contributes academically in multiple ways. Firstly, the research presents a definition of talent management that can be useful for academic as well as managerial purposes. Secondly, the research is the first of its kind as no prior research has been conducted in the context of Saudi higher education in the field of talent management. The Researcher has looked into various sources of information such as EBSCO Host, Google Scholar, Brunel Library, Emerald Journals and various other sources to seek out a similar research in higher education of Saudia in the field of talent management. The most related research on talent management was conducted by Sidani and Ariss (2014) which focused on the Gulf Cooperation council (GCC). However, this research focusses on for profit business organisations that are operating in the GCC region. Thus, not a single research was found which is focussing on the field of talent management in the Sudi higher education. Hence, this research can be considered as a base for the future researches that be conducted in the field of talent management in the Saudi higher education and other fields. Another academic contribution is the development of strategic talent management framework and talent management guidance model. The factors on which talent management depends have been identified through rigorous literature review and have been tested in the Saudi higher educational context. These five factors can be further researched individually in order to understand a more in-depth analyses on the impact of these factors on organisations performance due to talent management strategies.

### **1.8.2 Managerial Contributions**

This research aimed to develop an effective strategic talent management framework, aligned with the overall strategy of the organisation. The research also presents a talent management guidance model that is based on the existing Literature. The guidance model consists of five stages that effectively contribute to the development of effective talent management. This guidance model can be used by organisations to improve the overall organisational performance and achieve sustainability. Managers of organisations can use this guidance model to implement talent management more effectively. Hence, in an environment like Saudi where talent management is still considered a new field and knowledge and training is limited, this research presents a guidance model for the implementation of talent management and also the literature which can educate and train managers in implementing talent management in organisations.

### **1.9 Thesis Methodology**

The growing complexity of the social sciences have forced researchers to analyse, validate and then, choose a methodology. It has become even more difficult to determine which research paradigm is more appropriate for a field of area (Baker, 2000). This section outlines the research methodology chosen in this research, which is further explained with justification in Chapter 4. The discussion in Chapter 4 explains how certain tools and analyses are necessary, to justify the chosen research paradigm, research philosophy and research methods.

Generally speaking, two mainstreams approaches in academic research exist for research methodology, namely, the inductive, and the deductive approach. These approaches are adopted by researchers to analyse, investigate, and identify patterns, formulate hypotheses and finally draw conclusions. The inductive approach is usually associated with the qualitative methodology, where the research does not conclude to a fixed hypothesis, but rather opens more avenues for future research. On the other hand, the deductive approach follows a top down approach, where the researcher starts with a theory, narrows it down to a specific hypothesis and then collects observations on the basis of which to accept or reject the hypothesis, and so to confirm or contest the original theory. Quantitative methodologies

are usually associated with the deductive reasoning, where the researcher relies on survey questionnaires. The inductive and deductive approaches are further discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.

However, since the modern research is concerned with human behaviours and its reaction on the implementations of certain strategies, it is not reasonable to apply only the deductive approach, which focuses on the objectivity of the phenomenon, and aims to formulate social phenomenon through numbers. Similarly, if the researcher only applies the subjective inductive approach, it would be challenging to reach valid conclusions, simply through reasoning and explanations. As the Researcher aims to address the issue of talent shortages and organisational sustainability in Saudi Higher Education system, the adopted approach should result in an applicable conclusion. Thus, the Researcher uses the mixed method research methodology, which falls under the abductive approach. The mixed methodology combines the qualitative and quantitative methodology, so that the disadvantages of both individual approaches can be overcome by the advantages of the other. More details are presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.

The research methodology adopted can be divided into desk research and field research. The desk research is associated with the critical analysis and evaluation of literature on talent management and its factors, as well as on organisational sustainability. It is also associated with defining talent management based on analysed literature. Finally, the desk research concludes by developing a strategic alignment framework and talent management implementation model.

In parallel, the second part of the research can be described as field research. In this part, the Researcher focused on conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews and analysed them, then, quantitative questionnaires and analysing them as well. It is also concerned with the alignment framework validation, and the guidance model adaptation in the alignment framework, its limitations and benefits. The main aim of the field research is to validate the theoretical framework and the guidance model, with the help of empirical data. Thus, by combining the findings with literature, the Researcher was able to present

practical guidelines, embracing the benefits and limitations of the talent management alignment framework, as presented in Chapter 7 of the research.

The findings of the methodology are presented in Chapters 5 and 6, where analysing the qualitative findings and the quantitative findings, respectively. Chapter 7 discusses the qualitative and quantitative findings, and combine the literature with empirical findings, to validate the theoretical framework . Thus, the Researcher has followed the abductive approach of combining inductive and deductive strategies, and has followed the mixed method research methodology, in conducting this research.

### **1.10 Thesis Outline**

This thesis is composed of a total of 8 Chapters, including the Introduction Chapter. The research itself is divided into two parts, theoretical (desk research) and practical (field research).

**Chapter 1** consists of the research background, and the research problem that the Researcher has identified and is trying to solve through the research. It also contains brief background of talent management and Saudi Higher Education system, which are the main field and sector targets of the research. The Chapter also presents the research aims, objectives and questions.

**Chapter 2** defines and explains the concept of talent management and organisational sustainability. Key academic and industrial based literature is identified and analysed in this Chapter. The Chapter also presents the challenges of Saudi Higher Education system, the advised talent management guidance model, and the literature gap that the research aims to address.

**Chapter 3** evaluates the literature and presents the derivation of the theoretical framework. The Researcher focuses on developing the theoretical framework through literature analysis and evaluation, as presented at the end of the Chapter.

**Chapter 4** details the research methodology, describing the research process, the problems that are associated with identifying the most appropriate research methods, the research design, data access ethical issues and the collection and analysis procedures.

**Chapter 5** focuses on presenting the qualitative research analysis, where the Researcher presents the qualitative data that were obtained through semi-structured interviews.

**Chapter 6** presents the quantitative findings obtained through survey questionnaires. The Researcher aimed at analysing and presenting the quantitative data in order to link it to the literature review, as shown in Chapter 7.

**Chapter 7** focuses on aligning the desk research with the field research. The Chapter aimed at validating the talent management framework, by combining the qualitative and quantitative findings with the literature analysis. The Chapter then discusses the benefits, practical implementation and limitations of the theoretical framework .

**Chapter 8**, at last, summarises the research, draws conclusions and gives direction for future research. The Chapter also points out to the contribution of the research in academic, as well as in the industry.

## **2 Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Talent management has become a key strategic issue for strategic management and HRM (Aguinis *et al.*, 2012). In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the articles published in the field of talent management. Talent management broadly refers to the development and management of high potential incumbents, in strategically important roles (Collings, 2014). Since talent management was presented as the expression ‘war for talent’ by Chambers *et al.* (1998), organisations in private, public and non-profit sector started giving more importance to talent management (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013). Effective talent management is considered as a critical factor of organisational performance (Beechler and Woodward, 2009), and sustainability (Lawler, 2008). In this Chapter, the Researcher will discuss the main concepts of effective talent management, its definition, frameworks and process, while also analysing the talent management literature based, in developing and developed economies. Also, this Chapter will present a definition of talent management in the context of Higher Education, then, will further identify five critical factors of effective talent management that ultimately leads to organisational performance. Thus, in this Chapter, the Researcher will try to determine the link between effective talent management and organisational sustainability, as well as identifying the Literature gap, using Althonayan’s (2003) four quadrant frameworks. The Literature review will not only focus on the academic literature, but will also examine the industry-based literature, related to the area of talent management and organisational sustainability. Thus, the literature gap will be identified and addressed in the corresponding Chapter 3.

The literature review starts by analysing the definition of talent management through rigorous investigation on existing literature on talent management in section 2.2. Based on the existing literature, the Researcher was able to draft a definition on talent management that may help academically as well in industrial context. Furthermore, the Researcher focussed on identifying researches on talent management that were conducted in a particular context as shown in section 2.3. Here the researcher divided the evaluation of the literature into two types talent management in developing and emerging economies and

talent management in developed economies. The purpose for this separation was to identify how different context adapted various talent management practices in the application of talent management strategies. Moreover, the researcher further narrowed down by identifying and evaluation researches that particularly focused on talent management in higher educational context as shown in section 2.4. The literature evaluation shows how various higher educational organisations adapted talent management strategies to attract and retain talented professionals. Section 2.4.1 focusses on a new managerialist strategy where higher educational organisations adapted for profit business organisations strategies such as creation of talent pool and attraction of talent in order stay competitive in global market. Section 2.4.1 analyses the various challenges that organisation face in Saudi higher educational system. The Researcher then identifies a talent management process and its main factors by analysing the literature as shown in section 2.5. Moreover, a literature gap using four quadrant technique has been developed as shown in section 2.6. Finally, the Researcher presents talent management guidance model in section 2.7. The research strategy used in identifying researches for analyses and evaluation was based on relevancy. Words such as talent management, higher education, strategy, organisations were commonly used in identifying literature that could be analysed and evaluated.

## **2.2 Definition of talent management**

Talent management (TM) has been one of the most debated topics in the past decade or so. Practitioners and scholars pay a great amount of effort and investment to win this war for talent (Iles *et al.*, 2010). Despite the publishing of abundant amount of research on talent management, scholars haven't produced yet a work with consensus (McDonnell *et al.*, 2010). Even though the field of talent management is moving gradually towards maturity, it still lacks a clear and concise definition, scope and conceptual framework (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Collings *et al.*, 2011; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013; Schiemann, 2014). Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that the underdevelopment in the field of talent management is due to the lack of consistent and concise definition that ultimately leads to a conceptual framework. The definition of Collings and Mellahi (2009) consisted of a systematic identification of pivotal positions, and a talent pool which then creates a differentiated human resource architecture. Furthermore, the definition suggests that before

looking for talented personnel, the organisations need to identify key positions in the organisation which are of strategic importance.

Tatli *et al.* (2013) defined talent management as a creative, and competitive method that can meet the Human Capital needs. This includes comprehensive use of internal talent to their full potential, while meeting the demand for external talent, by identifying talents, locally as well as globally. Ma'kela' *et al.* (2010) viewed talent management as a field that focuses on a specified pool of employees, who have the potential, capability and performance to be considered as future leaders of the organisation. Festing and Scha'fer (2014) broadly defined talent management, as the ability of an organisation to attract, select, develop and retain key personnel, who are of strategic importance. Ma'kela' *et al.* (2010) suggested TM as a field of broader Human Resource Management (HRM), however, Schiemann (2014) suggested that talent management is a function that integrates all activities and responsibilities associated with the management of talent lifecycle, as shown in Figure 2-1. As per Schiemann (2014), the talent management cycle has broad application regardless of any geography or context, as it deals with all the major issues of TM, from attraction to training and further retaining. The talent management cycle of Schiemann (2014) encompasses all stages of interaction between organisation and Human Capital. Thus, the analysed literature relating to the definition and conceptual boundaries shows some patterns regarding the activities in TM. Thus, it is quite obvious that factors, such as the identification of pivotal position (Collings and Mellahi 2009), talent pool, attracting talented personnel (Dries 2013; Collings 2014), training, and development and retention (Schiemann 2014) have all been common in many studies.

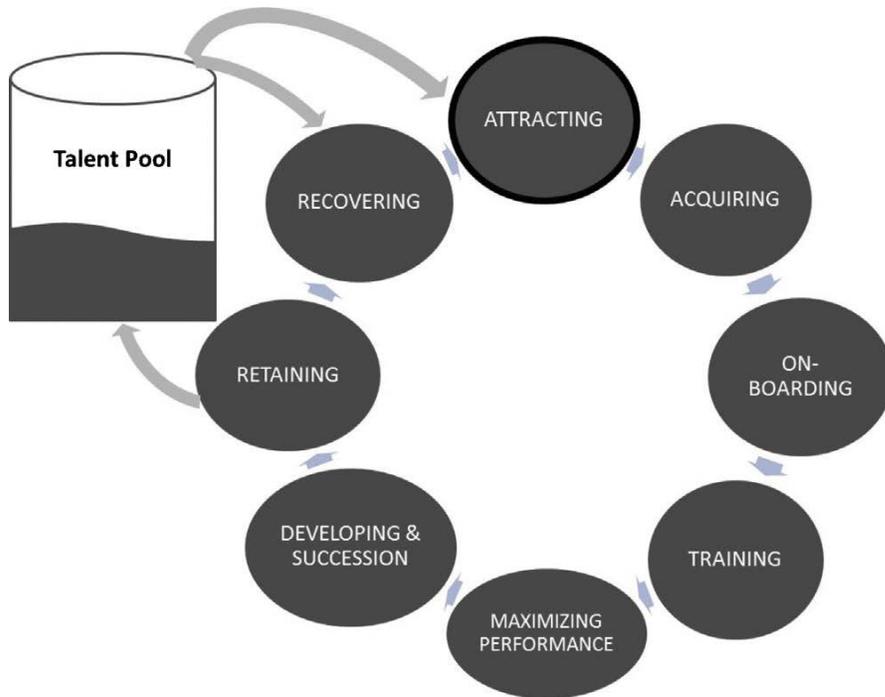


Figure 2-1: Talent life cycle

Source: Schiemann (2014)

Another perspective regarding the field is the individualistic and systematic approach, or the classification of A, B and C players. Lewis and Heckman (2006) reviewed the problems associated with the definition of talent management, in terms of clarity and conceptual boundaries. Lewis and Heckman (2006) suggested that a confusion exists regarding the term talent management among practitioners and scholars, yet, when talent management was keyed to a search engine, it yielded over 8 million hits. Thus, the problem reveals no shortage in the quantity of definitions of TM; however, it is the quality and consistency that are lacking. Lewis and Heckman (2006) further presented the three distinct areas usually associated with TM, namely, the basic HRM practice. First, it includes the recruitment, development and management of employees; second, it involves the management of talent pools; and third, it categorises the classification of employees (A, B, or C players).

Similarly, Sloan *et al.* (2015) suggested that two distinct views of talent management emerge, namely, the differentiated and the inclusive approach. The first approach suggests

the development of A players or the people who are strategically important to the organisation, whereas the latter approach suggests meeting the needs of all employees at all levels. The differentiated approach may hurt the morale of certain B or C players, which in return will affect the performance of the organisation. Michaels *et al.* (2001) suggested an even harder approach, with regards to the management of A, B, and C players. According to Michaels *et al.* (2001), organisations should fill all positions with A players, referred to as top grading, while emphasising the positioning of C players or poor performers out of the organisation. Jones *et al.* (2012) referred in their research to the classification of talent as individualistic, or system level approach, suggesting that the emphasis should be put on identifying key positions that are of strategic importance. Jones *et al.* (2012) suggested a framework, as presented in Figure 2-2, showing how some organisations focus on micro individualistic approach, while others are keen on developing vast talent pools, by following a system level strategic TM. However, Malik and Singh (2014) found that different programs are developed for the effective performance of A players, which impacts the morale and commitment of B players, ultimately affecting the commitment and motivation of these employees.

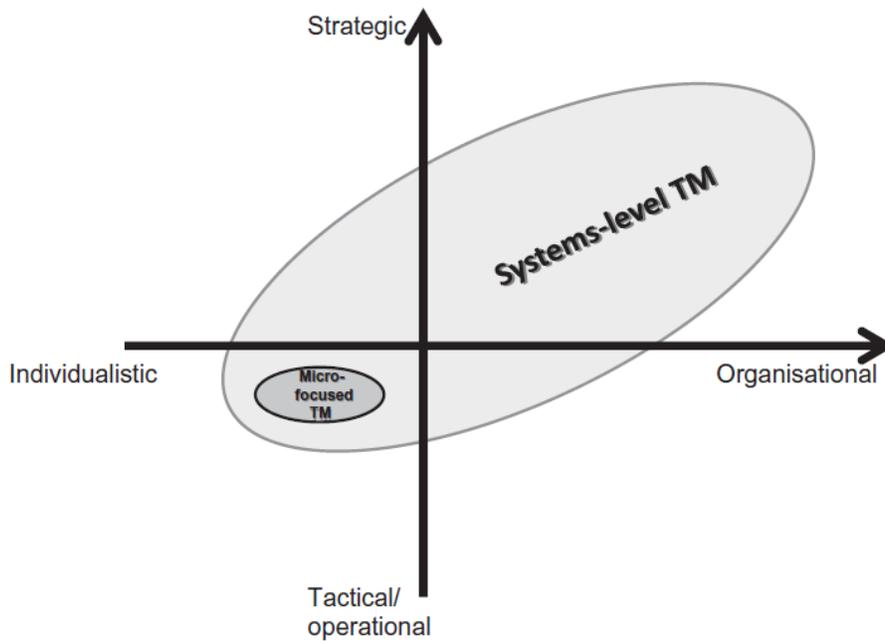


Figure 2-2: Individualistic versus system-level

Source: Jones *et al.* (2012)

Sloan *et al.* (2015) questioned the best practices of talent management, suggesting that these practices work best in the context from which they were obtained. Sloan *et al.*'s (2015) version of six principles of effective global talent management has broad applications, as presented in Figure 2-3. Collings (2014) also adopted the definition of Collings and Mellahi (2009) that suggests the systematic identification of key positions, and the development of high potential and high performing talent pools, to fill these strategically important roles. Thus, a development of differentiated human resource architecture will ultimately lead the organisation to the development and retention of these individuals. Furthermore, Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that, the reason behind ineffective talent management that is not linked with organisational performance is the fact that organisations often only consider shareholders' value as a measure of effective organisational performance, and neglect other stakeholders, such as employees. This further translates into the HRM, which ultimately fails to align individuals with organisational performance. Collings (2014), on the other hand, suggested a more pivotal role of employees, by considering them as a major stakeholder. This ultimately leads to higher level of alignment among employees' and organisation's goals, which in return, produces higher shareholders' value.



Figure 2-3: Talent management wheel

Source: Sloan *et al.* (2015)

On the other hand, critiques of the business field have suggested that talent management is a mere phenomenon that came into existence from the work of a consultation organisation (Dries, 2013). Lewis and Heckman (2006) argued that the lack of a universally acknowledged definition and framework are the main reasons behind these critiques. Thus, the field has not matured yet, even after more than 70,000 articles were written on talent management (Dries, 2013). Chuai *et al.* (2008) suggested that the field of talent management is not an old wine in new bottles, but a new field that is differentiated from the traditional HRM. However, the research of Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) showed that the construct of talent management suffers, because of the lack of clarity and conceptual boundaries. This is because most of the Literature is consultancy based, and the word talent in talent management is still debatable. The scholars of the field are not precise about defining talent. The Researcher suggests that talent should be context specific and industry specific. A generalised notion about who and what should be considered as talent, cannot be specified, as every context and field has its own needs and requirements.

Despite the difficulties in defining talent and its conceptual boundaries, the analysed literature suggests its link with Collings and Mellahi's (2009) identification of pivotal position being the start, followed by the development of a talent pool, then, the succession planning and management of star performers and evaluation (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; McCauley and Wakefield, 2006). The retention and development of employees (stakeholders) ultimately leads to effective organisational performance (Collings 2014). Furthermore, effective recruitment techniques followed by training and development of the talented employees ultimately promotes the retention of talents. This, in turn, results in effective organisational performance.

### **2.3 Talent management in a context**

Talent management is slowly, but gradually, moving towards maturity. Historically, it became a phenomenon, when Mckinsey consultants suggested the word 'war for talent' (Chambers *et al.*, 1998). However, the field is now moving from a simple phenomenon

towards a theory (Dries, 2013). TM is now widely regarded as one of the important factors of organisational performance and sustainability (Collings, 2014). The field of talent management is now emerging, not only in developed economies, but also in developing and emerging economies (Chuai *et al.*, 2008; McDonnell *et al.*, 2012). Thus, the field of talent management is continuously evolving and attracting more practitioners and scholars to research in this field.

### **2.3.1 Talent management in developing and emerging economies**

Talent management in developing and emerging economies is growing day by day. The economic developments, along with globalisation and mobility of people, forced some organisations to adopt talent management strategies, to attract and retain talented personnel. The work of McDonnell *et al.* (2012) focused on the challenges that are associated with talent management, in the region of Asia Pacific. McDonnell *et al.* (2012) suggested that one of the biggest concerns of developing and emerging economies is the mobility of talent. Due to globalisation and changing demographics, many qualified and talented home-grown personnel move to developed economies (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). One of the main reasons behind these immigrations is the lucrative and attractive packages in Europe and North America, with which a domestic organisation is unable to compete (Latukha, 2015). Froese *et al.* (2010) further emphasised in their research on the fact that, the image and size of an organisation from USA, UK or Japan is one of the key factors for talents to migrate from home countries. Froese *et al.*'s (2010) research, which was based in Vietnam, suggested that job characteristics, image of country and technological advancement were the main reasons behind choosing foreign Multi-National Corporations (MNC) over local organisations. The BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have witnessed major economic growth over the past two decades. Consequently, the demand for the talented personnel has exceeded the supply (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2012). The research of Latukha (2015) aimed into understanding the development of talent management in the Russian context. Latukha's (2015) research was designed to understand the difference in talent management practices, between foreign owned Multi-National Corporation (MNC) working in Russia and the local enterprises. The study showed that the concept of TM is still immature in the Russian context, and needs more

academics and practitioners to invest time in it. However, many cultural, bureaucratic, regulatory and organisational barriers hinder the progress of this field.

Since the social and economic reform in 1970, China has experienced profound marketisation, revolution and conjunction of its economy. China's economic value for the western MNC is greater than ever, as many organisations are moving businesses to China (Chuai *et al.*, 2008). Thus, it is important for western MNCs to understand the increasingly scarce managerial talent in China. Lynton and Beechler (2012) attempted to understand the Chinese managerial values, and how MNCs can design or adjust their HRM architecture to attract, develop, train and retain talent in China. Based on the empirical evidence, the authors proposed several ways to attract and retain talent, which were found effective in the Chinese context. The research of Chuai *et al.* (2008) was also context specific, conducted in the region of China. The main purpose of the research was to understand the development of TM in China, and to differentiate its approaches with traditional HRM. Another research aimed at understanding the talent management and managerial practices in China was conducted by Preece *et al.* (2011). The research of Preece *et al.* (2011) suggested that the majority of organisations embracing talent management believed it would address their problems in attracting and retaining of talent in the context of China.

Similarly, Tymon Jr *et al.* (2010) focused on talent management and organisational success in the context of India. The research of Tymon Jr *et al.* (2010) suggested that the biggest challenges that organisations faced, after the 2008 economic crisis, was attracting, managing and retaining talent, especially in the economies that are progressing rapidly. This research sampled 28 Indian organisations, and presented a talent management model based on intrinsic rewards, such as social responsibility of employee, pride in organisation, managerial support and performance management. However, Tymon Jr *et al.* (2010) suggested that money is not the only motivation for employees' retention; rather, it is the non-pecuniary rewards that were found to be critical in employees' retention and satisfaction, in a challenging global market. Thus, talent management cannot be universally implemented by one simple methodology, but, it is a context specific phenomenon that should be managed, while considering the local and regional factors (Sharma and

Bhatnagar, 2009). Furthermore, talent management is becoming an essential priority for organisations in developing countries, such as Iran (Beheshtifar *et al.*, 2012). It has been considered an important tool in retaining talented employees in Iranian educational organisations (Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani, 2014) and Private banking sector (Noori and Bezanaj, 2013). Therefore, the importance of talent management has grown in the developing economies.

Additionally, other regions, such as Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have started to gain pace in the economic development. Countries like the emerging market of Poland, is in period of transition to a market economy. The research of Skuza *et al.* (2013) focused on highlighting the talent management challenges, as faced by local and foreign organisations in Poland. Skuza *et al.* (2013) stated that talent management practices will challenge the old traditional managerial practices, already employed by Polish organisations. Due to the globalisation and increased number of MNCs working in the region, Poland is growing more towards a culture adopting the new talent management practices, in order to retain the talents migrating towards the western side of Europe. Another context specific research by Sidani and Ariss (2014), based in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), identified the challenges and problems that MNCs face when they try to implement European TM practices in the Middle Eastern region. The research suggested that the challenges for organisations in this part of the world are different from those of Europe and North America. Sidani and Ariss (2014) showed that laws and regulations regarding the talent management, particularly locals' employability, are different than those in Europe. In these countries, there is a coercive pressure on organisations to hire locals, due to nationalisation policies. Thus, organisations in this part of the world need to have a modified or adapted TM framework, as presented in Figure 2-4.

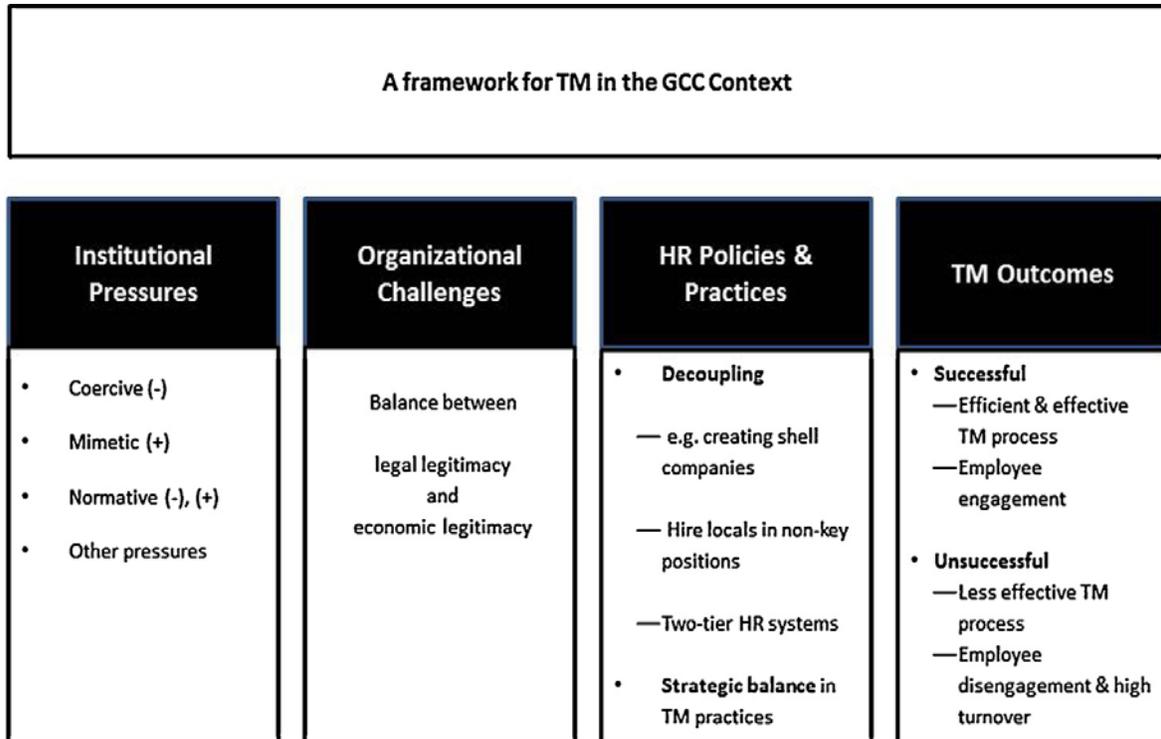


Figure 2-4: Talent management framework in GCC

Source: Sidani and Ariss (2014)

### 2.3.2 Talent management in developed economies

The research of Collings *et al.* (2011) was a major step in differentiating Europe and North America, in the field of talent management. The research observed progress in the development of a concise definition of talent management in the USA context, as well as the European context. Collings *et al.* (2011) agreed that most of the work in this regard was being conducted in North America. Since the 27-member trade and free movement bloc of European Union (EU) allows nationals from these countries to move freely without any immigration or working barriers (Collings *et al.* 2011), the talent management in this region is considerably different than that of the USA. The authors concluded that the field was moving from the infancy stage to the adolescence stage in Europe. Responding to the findings of Collings *et al.* (2011), Thunnissen *et al.* (2013) intended to produce a talent management framework that considers a broader approach to talent management, while studying the context specific factors.

The research of Chabault *et al.* (2012) focused on the French clusters, a policy introduced by the French Government as a top down approach. The aim of these clusters was to lay the foundation of a new strategy based on knowledge and talent. A competitive cluster, as defined by Porter (2000), represents “the geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are present in a nation or region. Clusters arise because they increase the productivity with which companies can compete” Porter (2000, p.15). Thus, Chabault *et al.* (2012) identified the talent management practices currently employed in the French clusters. As per the authors, the basic talent management practices lie in the ability of an organisation to attract, recruit, identify, develop and retain talented personnel. However, these stages of TM, when applied in a context such as the French clusters, need to adopt certain strategies to effectively attract, recruit, identify, develop and retain talented personnel. Similarly, Valverde *et al.* (2013) studied Spanish Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), suggesting that even though talent management practices are being applied by the local Spanish SMEs, little awareness of TM is exhibited among the practitioners and owners.

Another research aimed at contributing to the development of context specific talent management was conducted by Festing *et al.* (2015), who focused on the German media industry. The research of Festing *et al.* (2015) aimed at investigating gender peculiarities and inclusion in Talent Development (TD), suggesting talent management as an integral part of HRM that focuses on the smaller subset of employees, while HRM is designed to focus on all stakeholders, including customers, unions and investors.

By analysing the literature based in the developed, developing and emerging economies, it is quite evident that no framework or conceptual boundary exists that can be implemented for talent management unanimously. Thus, each context or region has its own challenges associated with talent management. By doing a thorough analysis of the literature, the Researcher revealed that no definition or conceptual boundary can be regarded as a universally acknowledged definition, however, Collings and Mellahi’s (2009) version of talent management was found to be the most famous among practitioners.

## 2.4 Talent management in Higher Education

Talent management is a critical success factor in the development and sustainability of an organisation (Conger, 2014). TM possesses the same critical impact for academic organisations that holds for profit and voluntary based organisations (Davies and Davies, 2010). On the other hand, scholars in developed economies have started to take notice of this dearth in the field, researching this key issue. The work of Paiseya and Paisey (2016) explored the aspect of talent management in the context of Ireland and Scotland. Paiseya and Paisey (2016) particularly focused on the recruitment phase of talent management, in the accounting department of respective universities. The authors presented a deep literature analysis of the academic talent, the impact of HRM in the academic talent recruitment and the alignment of talent with strategy. Paiseya and Paisey (2016) based the research on the work of Brink *et al.* (2013), which suggested that academics in their respective context had more authority than the HRM departments in the recruitment phase. Thus, the recruitment phase in academia differs from that of the corporate world.

The research of Brink *et al.* (2013) is considered as a major milestone in the development of talent management in academia. Brink *et al.*'s (2013) research focused on the academic recruitment and selection, challenging the view of an academic world, where the allocation of rewards and resources is governed by principles of transparency. The authors showed that academic recruitment differs than the usual organisational recruitment, and thus, identified three performance-based dilemmas in academic recruitment and selection, namely: transparency vs autonomy, power of HR vs academics, and equality vs homogeneity (Brink *et al.*, 2013).

In the first dilemma of transparency vs autonomy, Brink *et al.* (2013) found out that academics, who hold pivotal positions in the concerned department, had more influence and power in the recruitment phase. Despite having a policy and strategy for recruitment, HR managers seemed to be less powerful against academic professors, when it comes to selecting and recruiting academics. Thus, the recruitment in the academia was not based on equality, but rather on homogeneity. Recruiters often selected those who presented similarities, rather who were most suitable for the role. Hence, the recruitment and

selection of talent in academia is not as transparent as suggested by academics. Even in a developed economy like Netherland, selection is highly influenced with factors such as homogeneity and autonomy.

While facing the challenges in the recruitment and selection phases of academics, educational organisations face challenges to attract and retain scarce talent. Edwards and Smith's (2010) research, directed in the context of Australian Higher Educational organisations, studied the demographics change and other factors that have increased the desirability of an academic talent, especially in the field of science and mathematics. Edwards and Smith (2010) concluded that issues related to tenure and workload of science academics threaten long term sustainability of Australian Higher Educational organisations. A future policy for Higher Education was then suggested, accordingly requesting long-term planning related to future workforce, so that a clear long-term career goal is given early in an academic career. Second, Australian educational organisations need to collaborate with industry, and form clusters such as the French clusters (Chabault *et al.*, 2012). Finally, educational organisations need to appreciate female participation and monitor this progress, as a traditionally under-represented group contributes more to the development of sustainable Higher Educational organisations.

Similarly, Verhaegen (2005) analysed the recruitment and retention of academic talent, in the context of European business school. The purpose of Verhaegen's (2005) research was to identify the factors that influence the academic recruitment and retention, and can help the leadership of the business schools to design and implement policies, to better recruit and retain talent in a competitive environment. Verhaegen's (2005) research, based on empirical evidence, suggested gaps between the perceptions of deans and faculty, on the current policy of recruitment and retention. The factors deemed as important by deans were not so relevant in the eyes of the faculty. Interestingly, remuneration was considered less important in terms of recruitment and retention, and it was surpassed by factors such as research opportunities, academic freedom personal and professional development. Thus, the researchers tried to overcome such gap, by presenting a helpful framework for academic organisations, in terms of recruitment and retention.

Another policy based report that focused on developing strategy for academic recruitment and retention was presented by Metcalf *et al.* (2005). Metcalf *et al.* (2005) aimed at identifying the factors that lead individuals to join and leave the English Higher Education sector. Recruitment and retention were given focus in the study. Some of the major recruitment problems included vacancy being unfulfilled, due to the unavailability of the quality talented personnel, pay in the choice of career, academic pay compared with other sectors and countries, pattern of recruitment, and satisfaction of academic staff. Countries, such as Saudi Arabia, possessing great opportunity for academics, can adopt policies that can attract quality academics, to ultimately increase the prestige and value of national academic organisations.

Thus, the phenomenon of talent management in the Higher Education is gaining popularity and is becoming more and more strategically important for Higher Educational organisations to sustain (Metcalf *et al.*, 2005; Paiseya and Paisey, 2016). A Higher Education context specific talent management can be defined as the identification of pivotal positions, in the educational organisation, which are of strategic importance. Then, the organisation can create talent pool consisting of internal and external talent including past alumni (Verhaegen, 2005). Furthermore, the recruitment in the Higher Education is different than that of the corporate sector, as the influential prominent position professors and academics, will have more influence than HR managers and directors in decision making (Paiseya and Paisey, 2016). Moreover, the training and development of academic employees will include foreign scholarships and teaching training programs that can enhance the quality of the existing employees (Edwards and Smith, 2010). Finally, the retention and attraction of the talented academics is also different than that of the corporate sector. As the literature analysis shows, freedom of research, image of the organisation, participation in the decision making, innovativeness and progress of the organisation, and reputation of the organisation in business and academic community were found to be more important factors than high salary, for attracting and retaining talented academics (Verhaegen, 2005).

### **2.4.1 The New Managerialist approach**

Despite the advancements of talent management in the context of Higher Education, researchers call for the commercialisation of education, due to changing demographics. Deem and Brehony (2005) focused on new managerial practices implemented in the UK public sector Higher Educational organisations. These managerial practices are usually associated with for profit business organisations. In the past decade, Public sector universities have faced issues in getting the finances and funds required to smoothly operate and function as supposed. At the same time, universities were being exhorted to raise the quality of teaching, and the standard and research outcomes, while funding from the Government was being questioned. Moreover, the increase in the competition for academic talents and for students, and the rise in demand for research outcomes increased the problems for these organisations. Thus, Deem and Brehony (2005) examined the theoretical developments in the changes to public sector educational policies, particularly the New Managerialism. The New Managerialism can be regarded as the way to implement managerial techniques, usually associated with the management of medium and large for-profit organisations, onto a public and voluntary organisation (Grummell, 2009). These new managerial approaches include fostering competition among employees, usage of internal cost centres, intensive marketisation, and effective performance management, through individual and collective staff performance and effective talent management (Deem and Brehony, 2005).

### **2.4.2 Challenges in Saudi Arabia Higher Education**

Talent management has been largely discussed and researched in the context of for-profit organisations and non-profit sector, however, in terms of education, this area remains under researched. Especially in the context of Saudi Arabia, no single research has been conducted, in relation to talent management in the Higher Education sector. However, like any other Higher Education system in developing nations, the Higher Education system of Saudi Arabia has also transformed over the past few years, and has taken major steps to reform the quality of education provided. But before exploring the opportunities of the Higher Education system, an understanding of the political, ideology and the economic system of the country is necessary. The Higher Education system of Saudi Arabia was

founded in 1932; the government is a monarch system with its head of state and prime minister being the King. The Crown Prince is always appointed by the king himself, as well as the cabinet ministers and foreign representatives (Alamri, 2011).

Education in Saudi Arabia is based on four basic characteristics: first, the teaching basis on the ideology of the religion of Islam; second, the centralised system of education; third, the state funding (free education); and last, the general policy of gender segregation (Baki, 2004). Saudi Arabia has been trying to achieve the world class status for its education system, thus, the kingdom has invested more than 160 billion US dollars in this system (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). One of the major steps taken by the kingdom to achieve this world class status was king Abdullah scholarship program, which started in early 2007. The purpose of this program was to develop Saudi academics by training them, revamping the textbooks, and introducing technology in both, teaching and learning (Alamri, 2011). For this reason, thousands of Saudi students and scholars were sent abroad to UK, USA, Canada and other western countries, to pursue Higher Education (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). A vast majority of Saudi students were supported by King Abdullah scholarship program, which covers tuition fees, traveling expenditures, and living and accommodation fees (Saha, 2015). The main purpose of this major investment is to encourage scholars studying in high profile universities to come back home, and ultimately improve the quality of the education system, by introducing new policies and strategies (Krieger, 2007). This will not only improve the quality of the system, but will also help changing the mind-set regarding western countries and the policies.

However, despite these major steps and investment initiatives in the Higher Education, several flaws and problems are still faced by Saudi Arabia in developing an effective Higher Education system. Al-Eisa and Smith (2013) address the AAFAQ or Horizon project. In 2009, the Kingdom launched a 25 years plan, to promote a knowledge based economy, and move from oil based economy to a more technology oriented and scientific nation. The 25 years plan aims to promote education, specifically in the field of science and technology, in order to meet the growing demand for scientists in the country (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). However, the lack of commitment is one of the main obstacles for the

plan to not reach its highly-expected goals (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). Saudi Arabia is trying to improve the quality of the education, by investing money and energy, however, lacking the human resources, infrastructure, and technology can significantly affect the effective implementation of this plan. Another major hurdle in achieving world class status is the status of governance and leadership. Saudi educational organisations lack self-governance and autonomy (Mosa, 2015). Because of the centralised system, universities are unable to take bold decisions that can benefit the organisation. Traditional models of governance dominate the Saudi academic organisations (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013).

Another problem faced by the Saudi Higher Education institutions is the lack of formal training for academics (Alnassar and Dow, 2013). Teachers lack the professional training, which is necessary to establish a world class university. Most common training and learning problems faced by Higher Education institutions involve the lack of formal training for academic staff, lack of incentives, concentrated nature of old traditional curriculum that is not sufficient to promote critical thinking and knowledge, innovation based learning, self-learning, and traditional old assessment methods and problem solving (Alnassar and Dow, 2013). The Ministry of Education has already taken major steps to reduce these challenges, through the AAFAQ program, and sending academics through king Abdullah scholarship program. Even though the situation has got slightly better, the stakeholders haven't earned the expected Return on Investment (ROI) they were hoping for, after investing more than 3 billion dollars in such programs.

The use of information technology in education is another challenge faced by the Saudi Higher Education institutions. A survey conducted by Al-Ghreimil and Colbran (2013) showed that the Higher Education organisations of Saudi Arabia lack the infrastructure and efficient use of IT, blocked websites and social media forums, lack the proper training and proper usage of technology; all of which hinder developing an effective IT framework. Another challenge that the Higher Education system faces is related to staff selection and recruitment. Due to the cartelised government and education system, several appointments are done through contacts and nepotism (Al-Ghamdi and Tight, 2013). This results in a waste of talents, as important positions are occupied by people who are not talented, but

rather have influence and connection, while talented personnel cannot reach these positions. This trend is gradually changing, as the government is giving more autonomy to the organisations in selecting academics. However, more effort is needed, if the Saudi Higher Education system wants to attract and retain skilled academic professionals.

Similarly, the education system needs to improve the quality, as well as the quantity of research published by academics in Saudi Higher Educational organisations (Albaqami 2015). Enhancing the research publications is considered one of the pillars of Saudi national development plans (Al-Ohali and Shin, 2013). However, the efforts of Saudi universities are still insufficient with respect to international standards, because the majority of its organisations rely on foreigners to conduct quality research and publications. The Higher Education system is investing heavily to change this reality, by sponsoring thousands of scholars to western countries. However, there is no clear strategy of how Saudi academics will produce high quality research that can be acknowledged internationally (Al-Ohali and Shin, 2013).

Another major challenge, which the Saudi Higher Education system has faced in the past 30 years, is the education of women (Alkhazim, 2003; Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). Unfortunately, the Saudi society was a male dominated society before the 1960s, with the ratio of female students compared to male in Higher Education was negligible (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). However, since 1970s, the trend started to change, as Saudi Arabia started to put more emphasis on women's education and inclusion in the workforce. Since then, the number of women students and academics have increased exponentially (Profanter, 2014). As of 2009, more than 14 thousand female academics were teaching or researching in Higher Education institutions, and women represented 60 % of Saudi Higher Education academics (Alharbi, 2016). Although these figures show a great picture of improvement, many challenges are still faced by women in the Higher Education sector that need to be addressed. The unemployment rate of women in Saudi Arabia is 21 %, compared to 7 % of men (Profanter, 2014). Also, the gender segregation in the education system does not prepare women to work in an environment that includes male in a male dominated upper hierarchy. The requirement of a male mahram, which means having the consent of a

relative male for women to work and learn, hinders the scholarship programs for many female students and scholars. Furthermore, since the Saudi culture focused on central control, the Higher Education system is lagging self-autonomy and self-governance (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013; Albaqami, 2015). Saudi education system has taken much global criticism for its education quality and criteria, however, since 2005, the country had taken major steps in developing this sector. But the recent plunge in oil prices has caused economic instability in Saudi Arabia (Bowler, 2015; Clements, 2017). The Government has, thus, taken measures to cut down the costs of running several sectors in the country, and the education sector was affected by these drastic measures.

Therefore, this research will propose a talent management guidance framework for Saudi Higher Education, addressing the majority of challenges discussed above. The Researcher will focus on developing a TM framework that aims to help Higher Educational organisations have a sustainable future. The Researcher supports the arguments that effective talent management strategies can help Saudi Higher Education system, to develop such policies, which will help them attract, develop and retain the best talent. Hence, this research will provide a framework and policy for Saudi Higher Education sector, which desperately needs alternative measures for sustainability.

Through the analysis of academic, practitioners and consultancy based literature, no concise definition and framework that can be implemented universally in regard to talent management exists yet. However, it is important to stress that some dilemmas remain constant across different contexts and sectors.

## **2.5 Talent management process**

Since the millennium 2000, the world demographics and job market changed, as more jobs were being advertised on the internet, rather than local newspapers (Faulconbridge *et al.*, 2009). Opportunities for talented employees to find a better job are much easier than before (Cappelli, 2008). Thus, organisations from the developed and developing economies are struggling to attract and retain the best available talents (Chambers *et al.*, 1998). According to Schiemann (2014), the talent management process is a function that integrates all activities and responsibilities, associated with the management of talent lifecycle. As per

Schiemann (2014), the cycle consists of inter-connected stages, such as attracting, acquiring, on-boarding, training, maximizing performance, developing, retaining, recovering, and maintaining a talent pool. Tatli *et al.* (2013) defined the talent management process as the management of talents that allows the creative and competitive use of internal talents, in order to unleash full potential. At the same time, organisations should be looking out for external talents, by developing effective attraction and recruitment strategies. However, Sloan *et al.* (2015) suggested that talent management is based on a set of six core guiding principles. These six principles include the alignment with strategy, internal consistency, cultural embeddedness, management involvement, balance of global and local needs, and employer branding through differentiation. As per Sloan *et al.* (2015), the practices of talent management process, such as recruitment, attraction, selection, and development and retention, are only effective in the context in which they were designed. On the other hand, the six guiding principles have a broad implication, and can be implemented regardless of any context.

Even though talent management is a well-known field in the academia, debate over a concise and universally accepted definition still exists. Henceforth, the talent management process and the factors which make up the entire process have been explored (Lewis and Heckman, 2006). An important research in the area of talent management was conducted by Collings and Mellahi (2009), who looked at the cursory view of talent management and the process associated with it. Collings and Mellahi (2009) did not only present a concise definition of talent management, but also converted that definition into a talent management system, as shown in Figure 2-5. Thus, according to the authors, the talent management system consists of four basic elements, namely talent pool (internal and external), identification of pivotal positions, organisational commitment, and organisational performance. Moreover, Beechler and Woodward (2009), aiming at understanding the global war for talent, argued that organisations started developing talent management strategies and process during the past two decades, due to multiple reasons. Some of the major reasons include the change in global demographics and economic trends, increasing mobility, transformational changes to business environment, skills and cultures, and diversity. Beechler and Woodward (2009) argued that, due to the

technological advancements and ease in mobility, organisations had to develop a process to attract, develop and then, retain top talents in this global war for talent.

Talent management process or system is essential to implementing overall talent management strategy (Schiemann, 2014). Talent management is a function that integrates management, attraction, development and retention of talents into a single system. According to Cappelli (2008), the changing demographics and mobility of workforce forced organisations to adopt talent management and its practices. The importance of talent management process increased during the past two decades, as technology is spread across the world, making relocation much easier for personnel (Collings *et al.*, 2011). Thus, organisations, not only in developing and emerging economies, but also in developed economies, had to develop talent management process, in order to attract and retain the best available talents (Chuai *et al.*, 2008; Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Faulconbridge *et al.*, 2009; Festing *et al.*, 2015). It can be argued that the importance of a talent management process became evident, once organisations started taking the field of talent management independently. Multiple organisations developed TM process, in order to remain effective in managing and attracting talent.

Thus, the talent management process is a guidance model that helps an organisation to implement its talent management strategies. The talent management process can be context specific (Sloan *et al.*, 2015), and at every different context it might vary. However, some factors remain common, as previously discussed in Section 2.4. These factors involve the identification of pivotal positions (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Collings 2014), creation of talent pool (Chambers *et al.*, 1998; Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Collings and Mellahi, 2009), recruitment (Cappelli, 2008; Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Collings and Mellahi, 2009), training and development (Chambers *et al.*, 1998; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Joyce and Slocum, 2012), and attraction and retention (Chambers *et al.*, 1998; Cappelli, 2008; O'Boyle and Aguinis, 2012). Therefore, the Researcher has identified the following five stages of talent management process:

1. Identification of pivotal positions;
2. Creation of Talent pool;

3. Recruitment;
4. Training and development; and
5. Attraction and Retention.

### 2.5.1 STAGE 1– Identification of pivotal positions

The identification of pivotal positions, as defined by Collings and Mellahi (2009), is the identification of key positions in the organisation, which differentially contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage. These key positions should have a greater focus on strategic roles rather than non-strategic roles, or in other words, have massive impact rather than marginal. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that the starting point of any effective talent management process should be the identification of key pivotal positions. These strategically critical positions, when filled with equally competent talent, will contribute significantly to the organisational performance, and will provide a sustainable competitive edge over rivals. As shown in Figure 2-5, Collings and Mellahi (2009) considered the identification of the pivotal positions as a part of differentiated human resource architecture, which suggested that the focus of differentiation should be the job itself, rather than the individual.

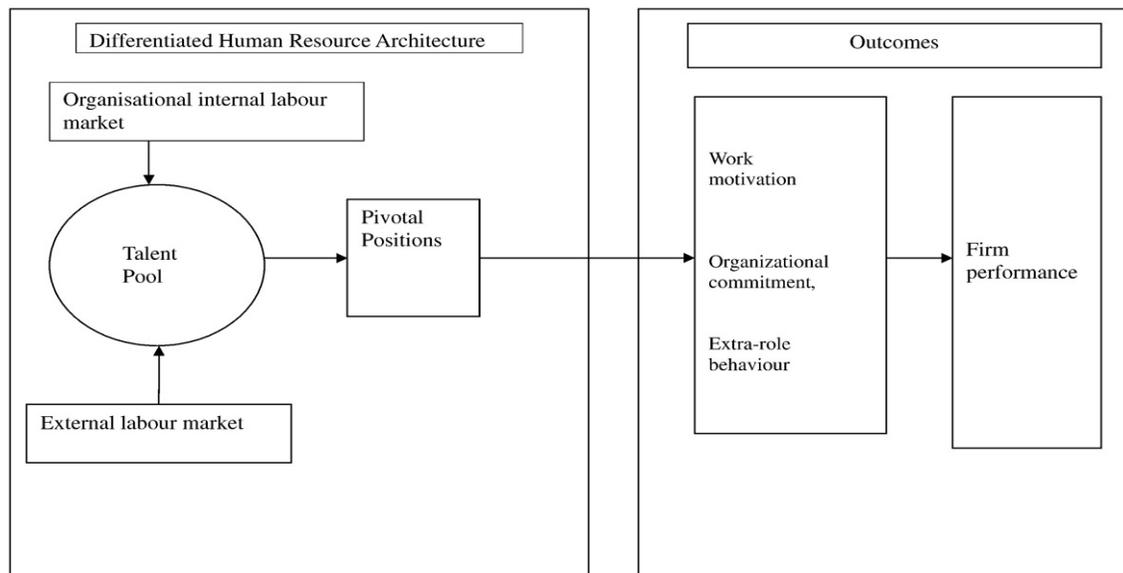


Figure 2-5: Strategic talent management

Source: Collings and Mellahi (2009)

Similarly, Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) also focused on the emergence of identifying pivotal positions, by discussing the importance of having a talent decision science, referred to as talentship. Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) suggested that talent positions occupied by talent pools can significantly impact the organisational performance, by bringing 20 % improvement in quality. Becker and Huselid (2006), on the other hand, advised a top down approach, by arguing that when an employee contributes to reaching the strategic goal of an organisation, then, this employee has a strategic importance to the organisation. However, Huselid *et al.* (2005) argued against the traditional view of filling each position with A players. Huselid *et al.* (2005) suggested that A player only becomes effective, when he or she is placed in an A position. Traditional academia and practice argued that organisations with most talent win, and thus, the ability of an organisation to attract, recruit, develop and retain high calibre talent will decide its fortunes. However, Huselid *et al.* (2005) claimed that it has become impossible for organisations to fill each position with A players. Thus, greater emphasis should be placed on recruiting the best talents in the strategically important positions, and good performers or B players in support positions, while eliminating the poor performers as well as the jobs that do not add any value.

Another argument raising concern is how an organisation can identify its key positions. A generalised approach of an HR manager would suggest that an A position should be held by those who are highly skilled, hardworking employees and are operating in the most challenging environments with commitment. In the eyes of an economist, the most important key position are held by most highly paid employees. For this dilemma, Huselid *et al.* (2005) suggested that, to identify the key positions, organisations must be clear about the strategy based on which they are competing on the ground. Some positions might be pivotal for one type of organisations, while being totally irrelevant for other ones. However, Huselid *et al.* (2005) further recommended that, to manage A positions effectively, organisations should also manage B and C positions and employees carefully. Organisations need to invest in the key positions, and thus, fill them with A players, while keeping the hold of B positions for B players. As for C positions and C players, the best policy is to weed out the C positions gradually, either by outsourcing or eliminating the work, and the outcome will be an automatic departure of C players.

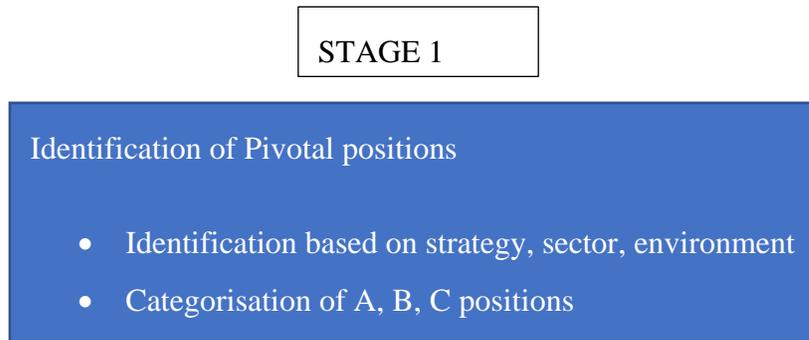
However, some roles are pivotal for the organisations, yet, the potential for differentiation in these key positions is limited. Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) further differentiated the positions that have marginal or pivotal impact on the organisational performance. Furthermore, the authors suggested that, in order to identify such positions, organisations need to segment their positions. This comes in accordance with the work of Huselid *et al.* (2005), who also recommends the segmentation policy in developing the key A positions. However, Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) argued that the lack of decision science to perform talent segmentation in many organisations, ends up in investing too much in those pivotal talent pools, which make only marginal impact on the overall performance.

Similarly, Huselid and Becker (2011) argued that some roles have more importance and a bigger impact on the overall strategy than others. Organisations need to invest more in those roles by, first identifying and then, filling these roles with competent talented people. Huselid and Becker (2011) further suggested that the differentiation in this regard is important, as organisation needs be clear about the strategically important roles being filled by A players, and the supporting roles to these pivotal positions filled by good performers or B players. Huselid and Becker (2011) suggested that one role in an organisation can act as a pivotal strategic position, depending on its alignment with the overall strategy of the organisation, while the same role can be regarded as a supporting, or even an unnecessary role in another organisation, with different strategic objectives. Thus, this view coincides with Huselid *et al.* (2005), who also suggested the workforce differentiation, based on the strategic objectives of the organisation.

Therefore, the analysed literature in this Section suggests that the identification of a pivotal position is a crucial factor in the overall process of talent management, however, this process should be done effectively. Pivotal roles should be identified based on the organisation overall strategy, sector and external environment. The industry in which the organisation is working plays a huge role in this aspect. On the other hand, identifying key pivotal positions in an educational organisation and in a centrally controlled region, like Saudi Arabia, will be a hard task. However, by giving autonomy to the educational organisations, making the hiring process more transparent and by following the New

Managerialist approach of Deem and Brehony (2005), these effective changes can occur in that environment.

Table 2-1 Identification of pivotal positions



Source: The Researcher

### 2.5.2 STAGE 2 – Creation of talent pool

Creation of talent pools, as defined by Collings and Mellahi (2009), is the development of a talent pool of individuals with highly skills, incumbent to fill the roles that differentially contribute to organisational sustainable competitive advantage. The definition supports the work of Collings and Mellahi (2009), who considered the creation of talent pool as an important factor in the creation of differentiated human resource architecture. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that it is a waste of resource and finance to fill each position with A players, rather than a determined approach, in which key positions are filled with talented employees. Collings and Mellahi (2009) further recommended the development of talent pool from internal, as well as external labour market. This is perhaps due to the changing demographics and mobility, as it is easier to find competent talent from outside the environment in which the organisation is operating. However, the phenomenon of being categorised as talent or A players who will form a talent pool, is still debatable.

The ground-breaking research of Chambers *et al.* (1998) exposed the war for talent, as a strategic challenge and a driver to organisational performance and sustainability. Chambers *et al.* (1998) reported that, since the dot.com bubble had burst, US enterprises were having difficulties in attracting and retaining talented personnel. Based on the empirical research which was conducted in 77 large US corporations with more than 400 surveys, the work

of McKinsey consultant by Chambers *et al.* (1998) is still regarded as the most revolutionary in the field of talent management (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Collings, 2014). Chambers *et al.* (1998) insisted on rating talent management as a top corporate priority, if an organisation wants to win the war for talent. This reflected the importance of attracting talented personnel and building pools of talent, for current and future needs of the organisation. The research suggested building a winning employee value proposition, which tailors the organisation image, products, brand and jobs offered, to appeal to the talent needed to hire and retain.

Bjorkman *et al.* (2013) examined the effect of talent identification on employees' attitude. The research aimed to understand employees' perceptions of being regarded as talent, based on the social exchange theory. The theory suggests that, when organisations invest in their employees, they are likely to reciprocate these finances in a positive way. Thus, Bjorkman *et al.* (2013) tried to understand the effect of being regarded as talent, by analysing the factors, such as the acceptance of increasing performance demands, commitment to building competencies, support of strategic priorities, and organisational identification with the unit and turnover intentions. Bjorkman *et al.* (2013) found out that, those employees who were considered as talent, were more likely to accept the increasing demands, and strategic alignment, and were less likely to leave than those who were not regarded as talents. Another important aspect of the research was that those employees who knew they were identified as talent, actually performed better than those who were not aware of it. Thus, the identification of talent within the organisation is a major concern.

Another study addressing the talent shortages was conducted by Holland *et al.* (2007), in the context of Australia. The research of Holland *et al.* (2007), based on the resource based value, focused on how organisations can create a talent pool, as a major source for organisational performance and competitive advantage. The Resource Base Value (RBV) focuses on how organisations build bundles of resources that generate competitive advantage (Holland *et al.*, 2007). In the case of human resource, the RBV would assist in the development of a human resource framework that helps organisations attract and retain talented employees, who will give strategic edge over its rivals (Holland *et al.*, 2007).

Hence, the attraction of talents is an important factor in the overall process of talent management. The new Managerialist approach in the Higher Education sector implements policies and strategies of the for-profit organisations, in the public non-profit sector (Deem and Brehony, 2005). Henceforth, the identification of academic talent is an important issue that requires effective strategies and framework. However, the identification of an academic talent and development of an academic talent pool is entirely different from the profit business environment. Brink *et al.*'s (2013) research focusing on talent management in academia, suggested that different fields of academia consider variable factors when an academic is being identified as talent. For example, in the field of humanities, the academic education, teaching experience, high teaching load and pedagogic skills are considered. These fields were identified as seller market, as academics in this field are not scarce. However, in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Medical (STEM), the talented academics are scarce (Brink *et al.*, 2013). Candidates in this field are usually identified and recruited, through informal networks of scouts, being considered a buyer market.

Therefore, based on the literature analysed, the development of an academic talent pool is an important stage in the overall process of talent management. Higher Education sector has adopted the new Managerialist approach, in order to achieve effective talent management, however, in educational sector, these strategies and policies have to be adjusted and modified, in order to attract and identify talented personnel.

Table 2-2 Identification of talent pool



Source: The Researcher

### 2.5.3 STAGE 3 – Recruitment

Recruitment can be defined as the process of hiring personnel for a particular job, either on a temporary or a permanent basis (Hughes and Rog, 2008). Once the talented personnel are identified, it is important that the organisation recruits him or her in an effective manner (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Recruiting talented personnel can be accomplished in many ways. An organisation can market the role through advertisement to attract talented personnel, or can refer to the help of executive search organisations and head-hunters, who are labour market intermediaries (Dries, 2013). The research of Faulconbridge *et al.* (2009) showed that, since the business environment has become a global economic hub in which labour can travel to another part of the world and work easily, the executive search organisations or head-hunters influence has increased overall. Faulconbridge *et al.* (2009) suggested that these organisations control the labour recruitment process, through two forms of power relation: one by constructing a long-term relation between the executive firm and the organisation, and the other in the labour market itself, by promoting the definition of talent, based on their own resources. Thus, these search organisations have transformed the recruitment practices and placed themselves in a position of power, controlling the elite labour market. The authors described these executive organisations and head-hunters as the new boys' network of executive search organisations that have increased enormously in the past decade. This has resulted in a geographically inscribed hierarchy and exclusiveness in elite labour market.

Although recruitment through head-hunters, advertisement and network connections is the most common recruitment practice found in the business environment, the word-of-mouth is also an effective strategy that is being employed by some organisations in recruitment. The research of Uen *et al.* (2015) focused on understanding the factors that the word-of-mouth referrals are based on. Uen *et al.* (2015) addressed the cross-level influence of employees' brand management and prestige on employees' referrals. Word-of-mouth recruitment is an effective strategy to recruit talented personnel, however, it is not under the control of the organisation. Based on the empirical evidence, Uen *et al.* (2015) suggested that the word-of-mouth recruitment strategy can be effectively controlled, through Employee Brand Management (EBM) framework. Furthermore, the authors

argued that organisational EBM positively affects the word-of-mouth recruitment. Uen *et al.* (2015) found a positive relation between organisational prestige and EBM. Hence, the word-of-mouth is different from the traditional recruitment strategies, yet, extremely effective, if organisational prestige is maintained and the organisational brand is managed and marketed effectively.

On the other hand, recruitment in the academic industry is different from the recruitment in the for-profit organisations. Verhaegen (2005) examined the factors that can help European business schools in recruiting academic talent in a competitive market place. Verhaegen (2005) investigated the perceptions of deans (recruiters) and faculty (talent), and identified 42 factors of recruitment and retention, analysing their importance in the eyes of both set of groups. The most important factors for deans, in terms of recruiting faculty, were innovativeness, reputation of school, and progress of the business school. However, in the eyes of faculty, the most important recruitment factors were freedom of research, geographic location of the organisation, research time and opportunities for future development. Another research related to talent management recruitment phase was conducted by Paiseya and Paisey (2016). The study examined recruitment strategies found in the accounting schools of Universities in Scotland and Ireland. The study was based on the contributions of Metcalf *et al.* (2005), which presented three dilemmas: transparency vs autonomy, power of HR versus power of academics, and equality versus homogeneity. Paiseya and Paisey (2016) considered the recruitment drivers as for how the talent is defined and then recruited, by comparing recruitment strategies among different contexts and geographical locations. The context of Paiseya and Paisey (2016) research involved old and new Scottish and Irish organisations, where the authors analysed the recruiting phases in the accounting department of the respective universities. Paiseya and Paisey (2016) found that academics had more power than human resource professionals when it comes to recruitment, however, these academics were higher up in the hierarchy, and the power did not vest at the departmental level.

Transparency in academic recruitment is a major concern which has been identified by many scholars (Metcalf *et al.*, 2005; Brink *et al.*, 2013; Paiseya and Paisey, 2016).

However, another major issue involves the inequalities in the hiring process, and the under-representation of women in the Higher Education system. Brink *et al.* (2010) shed the light on the academic practices and gender discrimination that led to the under-representation of women in the education sector. The academic appointment is a process in which, an elite group of high rank professors and academics select new professors and lectures, in an informal close decision-making process (Metcalf *et al.*, 2005). Hence, these processes need to be much more transparent, to limit any form of corruption and inequalities. Brink *et al.* (2010) stressed the importance of making academic recruitment more transparent, providing equal opportunities for both genders. Also, Brink *et al.* (2010) considered that transparency and accountability in the academic recruitment improved gender equality. Although policies regarding gender equality in academic appointment have not been implemented, Brink *et al.* (2010) agreed that some process in the academic selection cannot be formalised, as elite upper hierarchy individuals have extreme powers in the recruitment and selection stages, even in a developed economy like Netherlands. Therefore, for a country like Saudi Arabia, where women's representation in the Higher Education is very low, this research will present a framework and strategies that can be used effectively, in order to increase the representation of women. According to Al-Ohali and Shin (2013), the underrepresentation of women in different sectors has badly affected the Saudi economy, however, the Government is now taking measures to improve the situation (Alamri, 2011). Hence, for the sake of the economic progress and the development of the education sector, the recruitment and selection process should be made more transparent and accountable. Equal opportunities for both genders will create competition, thus, more competent and professionals will apply, due to a more transparent competition.

Metcalf *et al.*'s (2005) research on the recruitment and retention of academic staff in Higher Education, suggested a recruitment process that can be useful for the Higher Education sector. Metcalf *et al.* (2005) conducted surveys in both, old and new universities, of UK existing recruitment strategies in the Higher Education. The recruitment strategy of old and new universities differed in some ways. The new university emphasised on recruiting individuals that can deliver undergraduate courses effectively, while old universities recruited individuals that were more research-oriented, to increase the university research

ranking, as well as keeping the research curriculum up to date. The recruitment strategy was also affected by the turnover, as most employees moved to a more senior post or to another highly-ranked university. However, in most cases, the departing staff is not replaced by another personnel at the same level, but rather, it is common to hire a more junior personnel, due to cost and availability. Talented academics, which can attract funding through research and achieve higher ranking in the research assessment exercise (RAE), are poached. In some cases, Universities offered recruitment incentives for students to study PhD at their campuses. Hence, with these effective recruitment strategies, UK universities have been able to attract and recruit talented academics that have further developed the reputation of the organisations (Metcalf *et al.*, 2005). Saudi Higher Education sector, which is evolving, can adopt similar strategies to recruit talented personnel. These effective recruitment strategies will ultimately lead to an effective talent management.

Table 2-3 Recruitment

STAGE 3
<p>Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment through Head-hunters, Search firms.</li> <li>• Factors of academic recruitment</li> <li>• Transparency and accountability</li> </ul>

Source: The Researcher

#### **2.5.4 STAGE 4 – Training and development**

Training and development is an important aspect of managing talents effectively. Training and development do not only lead to effective organisation performance, but also motivates employees, towards achieving collective organisational goals. Joyce and Slocum (2012) focused on understanding the effect of talent management on organisation performance. Joyce and Slocum (2012) suggested that organisations nowadays need to develop their capabilities consistently. The capabilities ultimately enhance the financial performance of

the organisation. The most important capability, according to authors, is the training and development of existing staff. Furthermore, Joyce and Slocum (2012) considered that the strategic capabilities of an organisation align with the capabilities of senior managers; hence, in order to achieve the strategic goals, organisations need to train and develop senior managers effectively. Conger (2014) also suggested the importance of developing global leadership talent pool, by developing and training talented employees. Thus, the training and development of employees does not only lead to effective organisation performance, but also creates a competitive edge over rivals.

In parallel, organisations need to develop training and development programs as per context, industry and geographic location (Sloan *et al.*, 2015). A good training program in one context might be useless in another, hence, organisations need to understand which training and developments programs should be developed, and which talented personnel should be targeted. Hiltrop (1999) suggested that organisations with effective human resource architecture are consistently out-performing their rivals. One important factor in the overall structure is the effective training and development of employees. Hiltrop (1999) explored the issue of talent attraction and retention in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. When organisations need to adapt effective strategies to attract talent, they also need to develop strategies to develop and train their existing talent. Some of these strategies involve providing opportunities for self-learning and development, career planning and mentoring, information and support for individual's personal development, creating challenging and career enhancing work experiences. Similarly, Aguinis *et al.* (2012) insisted on developing performance management, recognising the importance of winning the war for talent in a competitive environment, in order to sustain in the future. Aguinis *et al.* (2012) suggested that organisations need to train and develop their talented employees, to motivate and retain them from competitors. Performance management is a process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals, aligning it with the overall strategy of the organisation. Hence, based on this theory, Aguinis *et al.* (2012) advised training and development recommendations, such as individualised development plans, challenging and meaningful work and advancement opportunities.

The work of McCrackena *et al.* (2016) segmented university graduates as a key source of talents for organisations, which suggested that recruiting, training, developing and then, retaining talented graduates ultimately leads to effective organisational performance. McCrackena *et al.* (2016) suggested that it is important to distinguish between graduate talents and non-talents. After this segmentation, the organisation can target individuals, through effective training and development procedures to retain the talented graduates. Another important contribution has been made by Cappelli (2008), who argued against the old traditional strategies of talent management. The research suggested that the two old talent management practices, the Reactive approach, and the Bureaucratic model of 1950, have been unable to predict and address the changing demands of talent management.

Henceforth, Cappelli (2008) argued that pivotal positions and talent identification and recruitment are equally important as the succession planning, development of talents and reducing the turnover rates. Thus, Cappelli (2008) presented a framework based on the supply chain that addresses both, the supply and demand of talents in an uncertain environment. By applying the operational principle of supply chain to talent management, the author presented 4 principles of talent management. The first principle of make and buy helps organisations to manage between buying and developing talents. The second principle advises organisations to develop their employees' generic skills, by analysing the unpredictability of the market place. The third principle focuses on the return on investment (ROI) in developing employees; and finally, the fourth principle insists on preserving the interest of both employers and employees through development. Another important research to understand the impact of training and development on employees was conducted by Khan *et al.* (2016), who aimed at understanding the impact of training and development on employees' satisfaction and performance. Khan *et al.* (2016) showed that effective training and development practices lead to job satisfaction, which ultimately leads to higher performance of employees.

However, each sector will have a different impact of training and development practices (Schiemann, 2014). Higher Education sector contains different mould of talent than the business sector (Holland *et al.*, 2007), hence, the training and development practices in this

sector are entirely different than that of for-profit business environment. The New Managerialism suggests the development of academic talent with a more aggressive approach, by adopting, in education, the HRM practices of for-profit organisations (Deem and Brehony, 2005). However, a balanced or hybrid approach is needed to develop the education sector, and maintain the real purpose of education, which is to provide quality education and research. An important research in the field of Higher Education supply issues in Australia was conducted by Edwards and Smith (2010), who recognised talent shortages in the academia. These shortages were more consistent in the field of science and mathematics. Edwards and Smith (2010) suggested that there is growth in the amount of younger academics choosing the field of science academics, however, retaining these individuals through training and development is a key issue that Australian Higher Education is facing. One of the major problems identified by the authors is that fewer PhDs are being offered academic positions, due to which, interest in academics is decreasing. Another major issue is the lure of overseas opportunities; science and mathematics staff are continuously getting opportunities from abroad, due to globalised changing demographics. Similarly, Brink *et al.* (2013) identified the importance of recruiting, developing and retaining the academics from Science, Technology, Engineering and medical (STEM).

Another example of academic training and development can be analysed from the research of Metcalf *et al.* (2005). Based on the UK Higher Education system, Metcalf *et al.* (2005) identified the factors that help in developing and retaining talented personnel. The study also insisted on the importance of developing PhD students, who can become a source of academic talent. Hence, these training and development strategies can be used by Saudi education sector to develop their academic talent. A PhD leading into academic recruitment can be offered to students. Bonds and agreements can be signed between the two parties to protect the interest of both (Cappelli, 2008). Saudi Higher Education have already taken major steps to support and improve the education sector. King Abdullah scholarship program introduced in 2007 covers the travel, tuition, and expense fees of candidates, as well as for their children (Alamri, 2011). Many of these scholars are sent from public and private universities to develop skills, by being exposed to the education system of

developed economies. The majority of scholars from Saudi Arabia through the scholarship program are studying in the USA and the UK (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). Hence, training and development programs already exist in the Saudi Higher Education, however, these programs need to target talented individuals, which are good enough to go abroad and come back to serve the country.

Table 2-4 Training and development

STAGE 4

Training and Development

- Internal talent development
- Development programs, self-learning, career planning, mentoring
- Supply chain of talent via development
- Development of PhD students

Source: The Researcher

### 2.5.5 STAGE 5 – Attraction and retention

The ability to attract and retain talents is becoming one of the key factors in organisational performance (Hiltrop, 1999). Retaining top talents will provide benefits to the organisation, as top talents produce disproportionately large amounts of output than normal employees (O’Boyle and Aguinis, 2012). Most performance outcomes are attributed to a small group of employees, who are the A players of the organisation. Furthermore, the cost of losing a talented employee is not just financial occurring in the form of recruiting, interviewing, and training new employees; but also, social, as the current employees will have more workload (Hillmer *et al.*, 2004). Managers are putting more and more emphasis on developing strategies and programs, to attract and retain their talented employees. Also, recognising the importance of attraction and retention of talents, big organisations are

losing talents to small and medium sized organisations, hence, large organisations should not remain complacent about their talents, as they are also vulnerable due to the changing demographics. Another important research in talent retention was conducted by Duxbury and Halinski (2014), who suggested that aging at work in Canada can cause a labour shortage in organisations. These organisations need to find ways in order to re-engage older workers with less commitment, and reduce turnover intentions. Conceptually, Duxbury and Halinski (2014) segmented these aging workers into four categories, as shown in Table 2-5. These categories are: disengaged exiters, engaged high performers, retired on the job, and existing performers. For the two categories of workers, engaged high performers and disengaged exiters, the turnover intentions are beneficial for the organisation. However, it is the other two categories that can be problematic. The research of Duxbury and Halinski (2014) suggested that these employees need to be well managed and retained, through effective retention strategies. Supportive managers, work load balance, supportive culture, job satisfaction and challenging work are some means through which, an organisation can retain talented employees.

Table 2-5 Organisational commitment

		Organizational Commitment	
		Low	High
Intent to Turnover	High	<p><i>Disengaged "Exiters"</i> 15.5% of sample <i>n</i> = 867</p> <p>Commitment: 2.6 (0.63)** Intent to Turnover: 3.9 (0.84)**</p>	<p>Exiting Performers 9.6% of sample <i>n</i> = 537</p> <p>Commitment: 4.0 (0.41)** Intent to Turnover: 3.6 (0.75)**</p>
	Low	<p><i>Retired on the Job</i> 16.3% of sample <i>n</i> = 909</p> <p>Commitment: 2.9 (0.47)** Intent to Turnover: 1.5 (0.51)**</p>	<p><i>Engaged High Performers</i> 58.6% of sample <i>n</i> = 3,275</p> <p>Commitment: 4.3 (0.46)** Intent to Turnover: 1.3 (0.46)**</p>

Note: \*\* $p > 0.01$

Source: Duxbury and Halinski (2014)

Similarly, Holland *et al.* (2007) focused on understanding the problems associated with talent attraction and retention, in the context of Australia. Based on the Resource Based Value view (RBV), Holland *et al.* (2007) suggested that organisations need to develop effective ways to retain talents, because increased competition and changing global demographics have increased the mobility of people. Thus, Human Capital, which is one of the sources of advantage as per the RBV view, can be lost if effective retention strategies are not implemented. The attraction and retention of talented employees has become a significant factor in the sustainable competitive advantage for organisations. Thus, organisations that adopt a proactive strategy instead of a reactive strategy, can tackle more effectively the problem of talent shortages, and turn it into a competitive advantage.

Although it is important to develop and retain talents within the organisation, it is also important that an organisation can attract talent from external sources. The research of Hiltrop (1999) emphasised the importance of attracting key talent in the organisation, as those organisations with effective talent attractions strategies are outperforming their competitors. Superior talents are considered a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Thus, Hiltrop (1999) addresses one of the most important issue of talent management, which is how to attract competent talents to the organisation. The author provided eleven guidelines which can be used for employees' attractiveness and retention, including organisation's attractiveness, employees' development programs, opportunities for learning and self-development, realistic job reviews and creating own talent pool. Another research associated with employers' attractiveness was conducted by Newburry *et al.* (2014), in the context of Latin America. The study suggested that, due to economic changes and mobility, personnel from different parts of the world, especially from Latin America, can easily move around. Thus, there is a scarcity of talented personnel in Latin America, as more people are moving to developed economies. However, the internationalisation and foreignness of an organisation help in attracting competent talent. Thus, global MNCs' reputation plays a huge role in attracting and developing talent pools. This, ultimately, affects the domestic organisations who are losing competent talents at the hands of foreign organisations.

Aguinis *et al.* (2012) recognised talent management as a 21<sup>st</sup> century reality, and the war for talent is still ongoing. The authors argued that the war for talent is fierce, because each industry has certain A players, who are well known and provide competitive advantage to whichever organisation they join. Hence, for an organisation to retain these A players, different retention strategies must be implemented. Organisations should place emphasis on retaining all employees, due to the cost associated with recruiting and training new ones. However, the best practice is to retain the top talents in the organisation, as they are the real source of competitive advantage. For this reason, Aguinis *et al.* (2012) presented four recommendations that can be useful in attracting and retaining top talents. These include individualised development plans, challenging interesting meaningful work, advancement opportunities and contingent rewards. Thus, based on the performance system, if these recommendations are implemented effectively, organisations can retain top talents, and avoid losing them for the favour of competitors.

An important research in explaining the strategies that can be useful in attracting and retaining top talent was conducted by Brannick (2001), who recognised the importance of retention in the changing mobile industry, where high potential talent is scarce. Brannick (2001) argued that money and bonuses cannot attract and retain a talented personnel, as monetary strategies are easy to replicate, and rival organisations can offer better salaries and incentives to attract top talents. Hence, seven strategies were suggested that can help organisations retain top talents. First, organisations need to hire top talents to keep the talent; second, organisations need to align employees' expectation with job demands. Many talented employees leave when the job role is not clearly defined before hiring, which affects their expectations, and pushes them to leave. Third, an important retention strategy for organisations is to create great employee profile (GEP), by holding face to face discussions with existing top talents in the organisation. These interviews might reveal any information regarding the motivation, and reason behind joining the organisation. Hence, organisations can promote such strategies to hire more talented personnel of the same kind. Therefore, some approaches should be followed, such as creating value proposition, distinguishing between good turnover (bad performers leaving) and bad turnover (talented employees leaving), concentrating on employees' ownership of the organisation and

avoiding the 'one size fits all' approach, i.e. considering talented employees individually, rather than collectively. These approaches can be used by organisations to keep talented personnel.

However, the attraction and retention strategies in the academic sector differ from the ones used in the normal business environment (Metcalf *et al.*, 2005). Like any other area, the academic sector is also suffering from talent shortages all over the world. Talented academics are hard to retain, and in some cases, they leave the sector, due to limited opportunities for development. An important research in academic talent attraction and retention was conducted by Verhaegen (2005), focusing on European business schools. Verhaegen (2005) acknowledged that the recruitment and retention of an academic talent is the key to educational organisational success, reputation and sustainability. Verhaegen (2005) suggested that the market for top academic talents has become international, and while academics have become more mobile, the talent hunt for academics has also become global. This leads to academics shortage and retention problems for Higher Education organisations, who are finding it hard to retain their top talents. Another research that addresses the issue regarding the attraction and retention of academics was conducted by Hugo (2005), who analysed the academic workforce demographics, in the context of Australia. Due to migration and the aging workforce, there is a dearth of talented academics. Moreover, the increased mobility of academics from Australian universities has made the problem more severe. Since the number of universities in Australia is on the rise, the demand for academics, and especially Science and mathematical specialised academics, (Edwards and Smith 2010) has increased rapidly. Hugo (2005) suggested that, if Australian universities want to maintain their current level of excellence, certain measures to attract and retain top talented researchers and academics should be taken. This might include innovative human resource strategies, such as new blood programs, early identification of talent, family friendly programs for women, bringing former staff and student back, and developing international exchanges in teaching, research and incentives, to keep A players.

Just like developed economies, Saudi Arabia's Higher Education sector is also affected with talents shortages (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). However, the biggest problem for the sector now is attracting and retaining talented academics, which can contribute to research and teaching (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). Although universities in Saudi Arabia can provide good packages to academics, yet, these universities have failed to retain top talented academics. Thus, universities in Saudi Arabia need to attract and retain top talented academics, not just by using monetary strategies, but through effective attraction and retention strategies that will encourage academics to stay in the Saudi Higher Education institutions. Focus should be placed on retaining those academics that are research oriented, as research publications increases the reputation and ranking of the university.

Table 2-6 Attraction and retention

STAGE 5

Attraction and Retention

- Image of organisation to attract
- individualised development plans, challenging interesting meaningful work,
- advancement opportunities and contingent rewards
- Distinction b/w good and bad turnover
- Research freedom, international exchanges in teaching and research

Source: The Researcher

Based on the analysed literature, the effective talent management process consists of five stages, namely, identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention of talent. Each of these stages has a significant value and importance to the overall process of talent management. Different

strategies, as discussed in the analysed literature, show how organisations can make use of these processes, to attract, develop and retain top talents. The overall talent management process will ultimately improve the organisational performance, and the chances of remaining successful and sustainable are more likely. This will be discussed in more details in the next Sub-Section.

### **2.5.6 Outcomes / Organisational performance and sustainability**

The goal of any business organisation is the optimum performance and sustainability. Whether a profit, non-profit or voluntary organisation, each one aims to perform effectively, and survive in a competitive global market. One way to achieve this goal is to strategically align organisational sustainability to the adopted strategies. Positive impact on organisational performance is associated with effective HRM strategies, like training, development and talent identification (Delaney and Huselid, 1996). Decisions regarding HRM have a significant impact on the organisational performance, the progress and development of an organisation is directly linked with how it manages and employs personnel (Becker and Gerhart, 1996). Hailey *et al.* (2005) focused in their study on understanding the effect of HRM strategies on organisational performance, and suggested that the lack of focus on human capital means that the outstanding financial performance of the organisation is not sustainable. Thus, it is important for an organisation to have an effective HRM system that manages people effectively. The business environment has become more unstable and unpredictable, and the talented personnel have become the source of competitive advantage and differentiations. Multiple organisations have developed and adopted strategies to attract, develop and retain talented personnel, with the aim of improving the overall performance of the organisation. The research of Bethke-Langenegger *et al.* (2011) investigated the effect of different types of talent management strategies. Their empirical findings, based on 138 surveyed Swiss organisations, concluded that organisations that focus on retaining and developing talented personnel had statistically positive impact on human resource outcomes, such as job satisfaction, commitment, motivation and trust in leadership. On the other side, organisations which focused more on talent management strategies with a strong focus on corporate business, strategically had significant impact on organisational outcomes, such as achievement of

business goals, customer satisfaction, organisational attractiveness and, most importantly, corporate profit. Therefore, a positive link is associating effective talent management strategies with organisational performance.

An important research in understanding the positive impact of effective talent management strategies on organisational performance was conducted by Collings and Mellahi (2009). This research insisted on developing a differentiated HR architecture that emphasises on the identification of pivotal positions, and then filling these positions with talented personnel. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that the outcome of these effective talent management strategies is the positive organisational performance, which ultimately leads to organisational sustainability. It presents an input-output framework, which shows how, through effective measures, organisations can improve overall performance. Another research that aimed at understanding the practical value of talent management and its optimisation on the business outcomes was conducted by Schiemann (2014). The author suggested that investment in talent management is a major factor in attaining successful return on investment (ROI). The return on talent management investment is not quantifiable, but it is a source of competitive advantage that competitors cannot replicate. An important factor mentioned by Schiemann (2014) is the talent optimisation, defined as, the means by which organisations balance talent acquisition, development, performance and retention strategies, with process and policies, in order to maximise the outcomes of those talents' investments. Based on this concept, Schiemann (2014) suggested that a higher retention of talented employees will lead to higher performance of organisation. Thus, effective talent management strategies will lead to sustainable future of the organisation. Furthermore, Schiemann (2006) recommended the people-equity framework, as a source of understanding talent management and its outcome on organisational performance. People-equity framework is defined as the collective state of alignment, capabilities and engagement (ACE). In this definition, alignment refers to the degree to which, everyone in the organisation synchronises in the same direction; *capabilities* relate to developing competencies in the organisation, while keeping customers in mind. Finally, the *engagement* comprises of three factors: satisfaction of employees, commitment and advocacy. Henceforth, the authors recognised the fact that talented human capital is an

expensive source for the majority of organisations, across the globe. However, it is one of the important sources of competitive advantage that helps organisation perform effectively and sustain, in the long run.

Similarly, Aguinis *et al.* (2012) acknowledged the severity of this war for talent, as these talented individuals are a source of competitive advantage. The authors suggested that, attracting and retaining top talents generate great deal of revenues and profits, and improve the overall performance of the organisation. Thus, retaining top talented employees has become a matter of survival for organisations, as losing them to rivals means the loss of business. Thus, the human capital has become more important than the financial and technological capital, as these capitals are more easily obtainable. However, there is a shortage of top performers across industries.

Organisational performance is generally associated with shareholders' return. Collings (2014) argued against the generalised performance measures, involving the maximum shareholders' return. This measure translates into HRM of the organisation, which is then unable to align the individual and collective goals of the organisations. This creates conflict of interest, which results in unmotivated employees and high turnover rates. In contrast, organisations that consider employees as major stakeholders, generally have higher alignment of employees' and organisational goals. This results in highly motivated employees, which then, pursue higher organisational performance that ultimately leads to higher shareholders' return. This was also reflected in Young's (2010) research, who conducted an online survey on human resource, risk management and management professionals from global Fortune 1000 organisations, to understand how talent management affects the organisational performance. The research of Young (2010), based on empirical evidence, suggested that in today's global market, the alignment of organisational vision and strategy with the management of people is the key to effective talent management. As shown in Figure 2-6, the alignment of strategies and values of organisations with the way talents are managed, reflects how talent management programs in the organisation are aligned with the business strategy. The integration process defines how talent management programs are tied together across the organisation, where each

process output becomes an input for the other. Young’s (2010) findings showed that 63% of respondents suggested that the talent management programs in their organisations were aligned to support future growth, 32% recognised this alignment globally, 20% regionally, and 15% in business units. Furthermore, these findings also showed that those organisations that aligned and integrated talent management programs achieved 20% higher return on equity (ROE) than competitors, whose talent management programs were not aligned with organisational strategy (Young, 2010). Hence, effective talent management is a key to organisational performance and sustainability. However, these talent management programs and policies need to be aligned and integrated, with the overall strategy of the organisation to make it more effective.

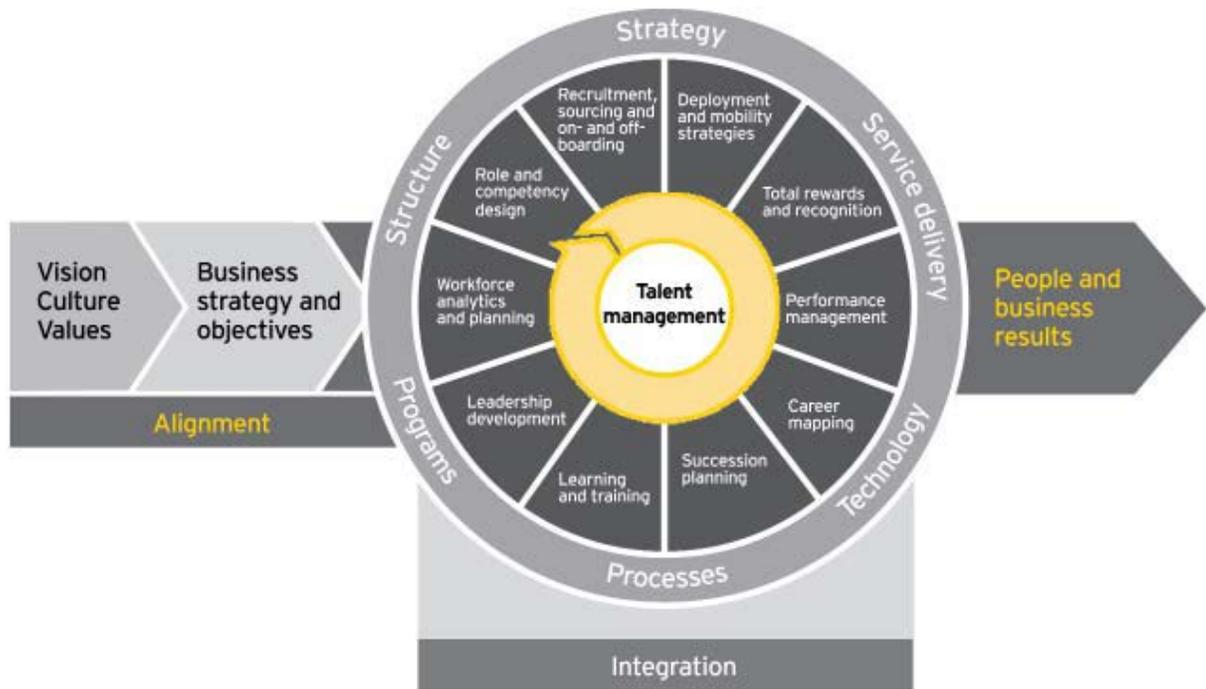


Figure 2-6: Talent management and alignment framework

Source: Young (2010)

Another important research which explained the effectiveness of talent management in gaining competitive advantage was conducted by Ashton and Morton (2005). The authors suggested that an integrated talent management is of strategic importance, and can become

an important competence. It can significantly improve strategy execution, and help organisations achieve performance goals. Ashton and Morton (2005) also insisted on the relevance of implementing an integrated talent management process that is developed, according to the context and industry. A generalised TM system is presented in Figure 2-7. The first process of talent management system is the need arising from competitive issues. Second, the data collection is very important for making right talent management decisions. Based on the data collection, planning for talents should occur, after which, activities like recruitment, development, and retention should follow. Finally, the last process is the cost of implementing the TM system; this includes the effectiveness of criteria cost and measures. The authors suggested that by using this system, an organisation can become a strategic differentiation, which will impact its performance in a positive manner, leading to sustained future growth.

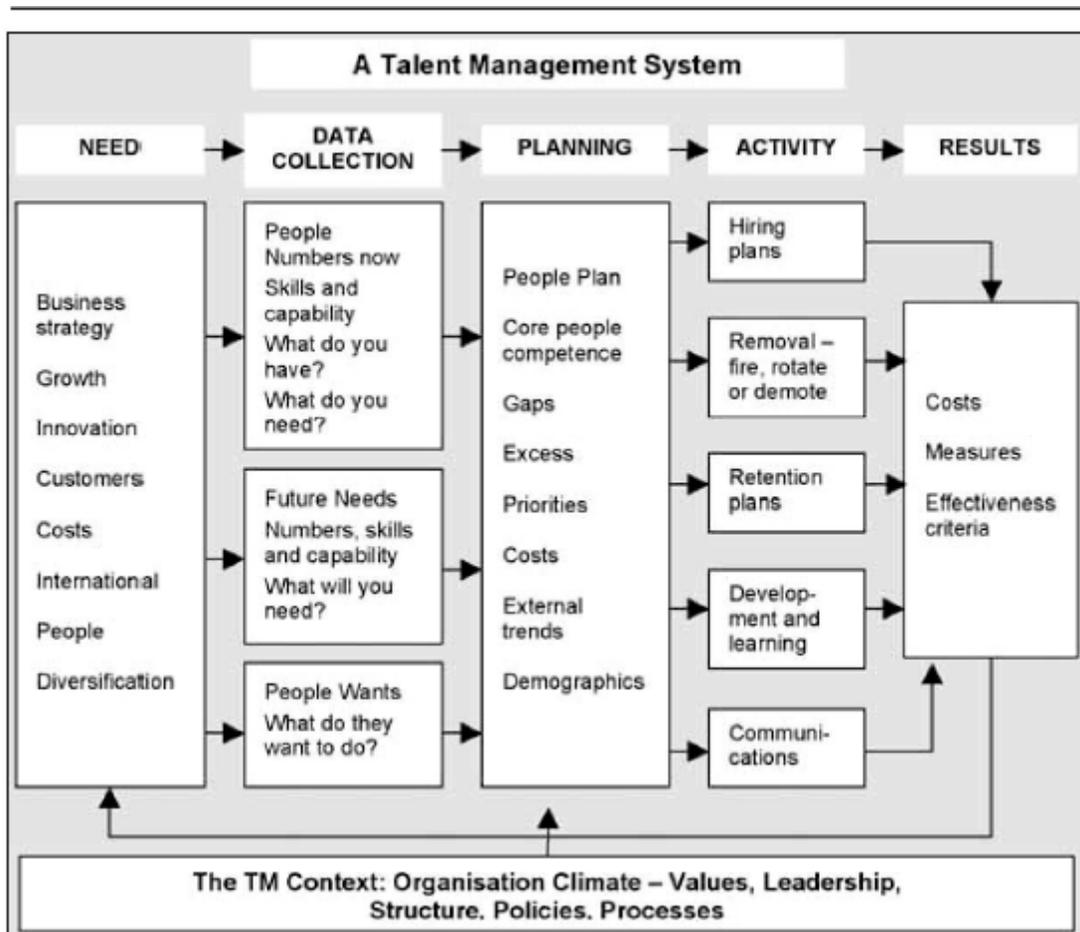


Figure 2-7 : Talent management system

Source: Ashton and Morton (2005)

Much like for-profit organisations, the Higher Education organisations also develop strategies to grow and sustain in the long run (Metcalf *et al.*, 2005). Due to the changing demographics and globalisation, educational organisations in developed and emerging economies need to adopt strategies, to compete with growing commercialisation of Higher Education. The goal of each educational organisation is to provide quality education research that contributes to the society, and develops the future generations (Brink *et al.*, 2013; Paiseya and Paisey, 2016). Higher Educational organisations can adopt the strategies already employed in the corporate sector, supported with proper adjustments. As shown through the new Managerialist approach (Deem and Brehony, 2005), for-profit business talent management strategies can be implemented in the educational organisations, provided that the quality of the education is not compromised. Furthermore, effective talent management will ultimately have the biggest impact on the long term sustainable future of Higher Educational organisations. However, these goals can only be achieved, if the organisation has abundant resources and funds, to operate and develop talented scholar that can further educate and develop future generations. The recent drop in oil prices has badly impacted the Saudi economy (Staff, 2016). The impact of dropping oil prices also affected the Saudi education system, which is funded by the Saudi Government. However, for these Saudi Higher Education institutions to self-sustain, and attract funding and international students based on higher ranking and criteria, effective measures need to be taken. One major step towards achieving this sustainability is building an effective talent management system that helps these organisations to attract, develop and retain top talented academics. Thus, this research also contributes practically to developing a framework that will help these educational organisations to reach organisational sustainability.

## **2.6 Literature Gap**

The area of talent management started coming out as an independent field since the Mckinsey consultants coined the word 'war for talent' (Chambers *et al.*, 1998). Its strategic importance for business development and performance was recognised, and multiple

authors started conducting studies, relying on empirical as well theoretical evidences. This Section identifies the gap from the literature that has been analysed throughout Chapter 2, and also identifies the literature gap by using the four quadrant framework. As discussed in Section 2.1, the biggest challenge that academics have faced is to draft a concise, collective definition of talent management (McDonnell *et al.*, 2010). Schiemann (2014) examined the multiple studies and definitions on talent developed so far by academics. Schiemann (2014) defined talent management as a unique function that integrates all the responsibilities and activities that are associated with the talent management cycle. Talent management cycle consists of all basic factors of talent management, such as attracting, acquiring, training and retaining. However, Schiemann (2014) measured the success of talent management on the basis of return on investment (ROI), as a good measure for the performance of TM. However, the definition did not include context specific factors, such as demographics, political system, and economic system, and does not define any specific boundaries for any specific sector. Most importantly, the definition is much generalised, and cannot be implemented in the Higher Education context.

Collings and Mellahi (2009) provided another version of talent management definition, based on the research of previous scholars. According to Collings and Mellahi (2009), talent management is the systematic identification of pivotal positions in the organisation, which contributes differentially towards a sustainable competitive advantage. This is followed by the creation of talent pool, through external and internal resources, by finding individuals who fill out these pivotal positions. And then, organisations develop a human resource architecture to facilitate filling those positions, ensuring the commitment of highly talented individuals. The definition also suggested that these strategically pivotal positions are not restricted to top team management, but can be also related to lower level teams. Although the definition presented by Collings and Mellahi (2009) is widely regarded as the most concise and consistent definition by many scholars (Chabault *et al.*, 2012; Brink *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013; Festing and Schafer, 2014), the definition has its shortcomings. The definition depicts a generalised strategic view of talent management, and cannot be considered for a context specific sector, such as the Higher Education in

Saudi Arabia. Collings and Mellahi (2009) also did not define a performance measurement metric, which can be used to analyse the performance of the organisation.

Tatli *et al.* (2013) defined talent management as a creative and competitive method that can meet human capital needs. This includes the comprehensive use of internal talent to their full potential, while meeting the demand for external talents, by identifying talents locally, as well as globally. Tatli *et al.* (2013) suggested that, due to changing demographics, aging population, decreased birth rates, increased mobility and talent shortages, organisations have to develop talents internally, while at the same time have to look out for talented individuals in the external markets. Festing and Schäfer (2014) broadly defined talent management as the ability of an organisation to attract, select, develop and retain key personnel, who are of strategic importance. Festing and Schäfer (2014) viewed talent management as a field of broader HRM, and defined it as all the policies and systems that influence the attitude and performance of the employees. Lewis and Heckman (2006) suggested that there is a confusion regarding the conceptual boundaries of talent management, due to which, there hasn't been a concise consensual definition. Thus, the definition of talent management is still an aspect of the field that scholars have yet to reach consensus. Moreover, the studies by Lewis and Heckman (2006), Tatli *et al.* (2013), and Festing and Schäfer (2014) tried to draft out a definition for talent management. However, these definitions were either too broad or too limited to the particular context from which they were generated. The context of Higher Education is different than the for-profit business context (Deem and Brehony, 2005; Paiseya and Paisey, 2016); thus, the conceptual boundaries and strategies used for such for-profit organisations cannot be applied in the Higher Education context. Therefore, the definition of talent management in the context of Higher Education is one of the literature gaps that the Researcher has identified.

The area of talent management has evolved from infancy to maturity, in the past two decades (Collings, 2014). Despite the fact that talent management is regarded as a sub-field of HRM by multiple authors (Festing and Schäfer, 2014), and an old wine in a new bottle (Chuai *et al.*, 2008), the field has grown in many aspects. Talent management has been

researched by academics in developed and developing economies, and the field is ever-growing (Cappelli, 2008). The research conducted by Lewis and Heckman (2006); Collings and Mellahi (2009); Beechler and Woodward (2009); and Aguinis *et al.* (2012) have all been based on theoretical aspects, as well as on the works of previous scholars. On the other side, the research of Ashton and Morton (2005); Chuai *et al.* (2008); Brink *et al.* (2013); and Festing and Schafer (2014) have all been based on empirical evidences. Thus, all the academic studies, primarily analysed in Sections 2.1 to 2.5, will be separately evaluated, using Althonayan's (2003) four quadrant frameworks. The Researcher will differentiate the literature in four categories, namely, descriptive theoretical-based research, descriptive empirical-based research, prescriptive research on talent management (TM) in education sector, and focused research on TM in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in four separate quadrants, as shown in Table 2-7. The first quadrant evaluates the literature that broadly discusses the concept and process of talent management, based on the previous work of scholars and the established theoretical frameworks or theories. The second quadrant focuses on the empirical-evidence based studies, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research. The third quadrant evaluates and differentiates the literature that particularly focused on talent management in the education sector. Finally, the fourth quadrant only focuses on the literature associated with talent management in the Saudi Higher Education context. The Researcher then evaluates the each quadrant separately, by critically analysing the literature in each.

Table 2-7 Literature evaluation framework

Research Philosophy			
Research Outcomes	Descriptive	Visionary	Implementational
		Quadrant I	Quadrant III

	<p>Describes talent management definitions, and discusses the literature based on theoretical models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Research based on theoretical models, theories and conceptual work</li> <li>■ Some form of conceptual (theoretical) framework or model may be introduced</li> <li>■ Research based on existing literature, unlikely to provide an implementational model</li> <li>■ Research based on theoretical assumptions, supported by the Literature discussion</li> </ul>	<p>Describes the process of TM implementation based on empirical evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ TM Process and its factors are described and supported by the literature</li> <li>■ Theoretical TM framework may be defined and discussed</li> <li>■ Context specific talent management based on empirical evidences is analysed and discussed</li> <li>■ Research describes empirical examples of TM implementation</li> </ul>
	Quadrant II	Quadrant IV
Prescriptive	<p>Provides prescriptive TM Process and discusses the links of TM, in the Higher Education sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ TM integration in the Higher Education field</li> <li>■ TM framework integrated in Higher Education and its impact on the field</li> </ul>	<p>Provides prescriptive TM process and discusses the implementation, in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ TM process and integration in Saudi organisations</li> <li>■ TM implementation steps, challenges and practical recommendations may be discussed</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Research may provide a basic guideline for future implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ TM management in Saudi Higher Education maybe discussed</li> <li>■ The benefits of TM implementation based on empirical data may be examined</li> </ul>
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Source: Adopted from Althonayan (2003)

Each quadrant, as shown in Table 2-7, helps the Researcher to formalise and differentiate the literature discussed in previous Sections. It also helps in differentiating the shortcomings of each type of literature, as being evaluated and discussed. Each academic, consultancy based, and industry reports literature is assigned to the respective quadrant, as this categorisation of research helps formulating the research gap. At the end, emphasis will be given to the quadrant that is least researched. In the following Section, the literature already discussed in previous Sections and throughout the Chapter, will be evaluated and categorised in the respective quadrant.

### 2.6.1 Quadrant 1

In this quadrant, literature that focused on developing definition and conceptual frameworks of talent management will be evaluated. Furthermore, the research that focused on existing literature and theories by developing theoretical based framework and talent management process, will be also analysed.

The research of Mckinsey consultants (Chambers *et al.*, 1998), ‘war for talent’, opened the gates for talent management as a field. Since then, multiple scholars presented their version of definition for talent management, however, the consistency and conceptual framework of the definition has been lacking. Since 1988, the early when literature surfaced, researchers tried to develop the conceptual boundaries and definition of talent management. The research of Lewis and Heckman (2006) presented a critical review, regarding the problems associated with the existing definitions of talent management, by critically examining the literature that already existed. The researchers tried to highlight

the lack of clarity that existed among practitioners and scholars, in the field of talent management. Tatli *et al.* (2013) defined talent management as a creative and competitive method that can meet the human capital needs. Another theoretical research, regarding the process and definition of talent management, was conducted by Collings and Mellahi (2009). The research also aimed at developing consensus among practitioners and scholars, regarding TM in terms of definition and framework. The study was based on the existing literature; thus, the whole research was theoretical. Beechler and Woodward (2009) also emphasised on developing the conceptual boundaries of talent management, by analysing 400 contemporary academic and business press articles. Dries (2013) also investigated how the field of talent management is maturing. Dries (2013) suggested that talent management, which was considered as a phenomenon, is now slowly transforming into a theory. The research was a literature review that thoroughly analysed five papers.

Another theoretical based research was conducted by Thunnissen *et al.* (2013), whose aim was to understand the broader aspect of talent management field, and develop a framework that can be implemented on a broad scope. The study also contributed to the development of the definition of the field, outcomes of implementation and the talent management practices. Another considerable research that has been analysed in Chapter 2 was conducted by Schiemann (2006). The study also suggested a definition of talent management, and a talent management cycle that can help organisations in implementing business strategies more effectively. The author argued in the support of people-equity framework, as it can help organisations to bridge the gap between employees and organisations, and can bring the best out of talent management investments. Scholars used previous studies and theories to understand and predict the coming implementation and practices, which can be helpful for academic, as well as for industry purposes.

However, as all this analysed data is still theoretical, and has a broad application, it lacks the reliability as each region, country and industry has own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Thus, a broad definition and framework for implementation does not present itself as a good idea. The research of Sloan *et al.* (2015) acknowledged this problem, regarding the theoretical based best practices for implementation. Sloan, *et al.*'s

(2015) research suggested that these practices are best, in the context in which they were developed. On the other hand, the Researcher intends to contribute to the development of talent management definition. Based on the evaluated literature, the Researcher analysed the common themes and practices, and noticed that the definition of Collings and Mellahi (2009), which suggested the development of human architecture by identifying pivotal positions and recruiting talents, was the most cited definition among scholars and practitioners. However, this version of talent management definition addresses only the first two important stages, and fails to address the other aspects, such as training, development and retention. Henceforth, a lack of context specific definition exists, and the Researcher attempted to address this gap, by giving a customised version of context specific definition at the end of Chapter 2, Section 2.2. This definition can be used by researchers, who wish to conduct research in the Saudi Higher Education context region.

### **2.6.2 Quadrant 2**

Articles analysed in this quadrant are based on empirical evidences. Most of the articles evaluated in this quadrant have been analysed in Section 2.3. This includes the TM in developed economies, and in developing economies, as an effective way to differentiate and understand the challenges and problems associated in these two contexts. An important empirical based research was conducted by Froese *et al.* (2010) in the context of Vietnam. The authors conducted a survey, to investigate the effect of foreign MNCs' image on the local talents. Froese *et al.* (2010) presented a good understanding of challenges that organisations face in implementing talent management strategies, in the context of Vietnam. Another important publication based on empirical findings that explored the challenges associated with implementing the talent management practices in Russia was conducted by Latukha (2015). The author conducted a comparative study, to understand the talent management practices of foreign owned and local organisations. Analysis of such studies presents multiple context specific talent management frameworks. Thus, Froese *et al.* (2010) and Latukha (2015) contributed into understanding the regional and context specific challenges, associated with talent management. However, both studies were conducted on a broad scale, without being directed at a specific industry or sector.

China, since the social and economic reform in 1970, has experienced profound marketisation, revolution and conjunction of its economy. Thus, multiple scholars and academics have started to pay attention to the talent management practices and challenges, associated with the Chinese context. The study of Lynton and Beechler (2012) aimed at understanding the managerial values of Chinese professionals, associated with talent management. Lynton and Beechler (2012) based their findings on empirical data, which presented a deep understanding of the Chinese talent management culture and policies. Another empirical research specific to the Chinese context was conducted by Preece *et al.* (2011), who suggested that the phenomenon of talent management is gaining pace, as multiple organisations are embracing it. Similarly, Chuai *et al.* (2008) also aimed at understanding the development of talent management in the Chinese context. Henceforth, these empirical studies conducted in the context of China, help academics to understand and develop policies, as per region. The development of a context specific talent management is an important step in the overall field of talent management, as it has broadened up the scope and understanding of it.

The articles listed in this quadrant are not only specific to Far East and China, but also evaluates the studies conducted in other regions. For example, Tymon Jr *et al.* (2010) aimed at understanding the talent management and its outcome on organisational success, in the context of India. Similarly, Beheshtifar *et al.* (2012), Noori and Bezanaj (2013), and Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani (2014) examined the phenomenon of talent management in the context of Iran. These studies provided an understanding of the context specific talent management practices, revealing various differences from traditional talent management aspects. Additionally, Skuza *et al.* (2013) conducted a survey to analyse the challenges associated with talent management, in the context of Polish business environment. This research provided an insight into the challenges faced by the local Polish organisations, due to changing demographics.

The literature analysis in Chapter Two highlighted the various differences that multiple scholars spotted with regard to TM, between developing and developed economies. However, the field of talent management was first introduced in the USA after an empirical

research was conducted by Mckinsey consultants. Since then, the field has been moving towards maturity. Multiple organisations in the USA now have direct policies and programs that are associated with talent management. However, even in these developed economies, differences in culture exist, resulting in different talent management practices (Collings *et al.*, 2011). For example, Chabault *et al.* (2012) focused on understanding talent management practices in French clusters. The empirical findings suggested that these clusters adopted different talent management strategies, to make these clusters successful. Another empirical based research aimed at understanding the talent management practices in Spanish Medium and Small Enterprises was conducted by Valverde *et al.* (2013). The study concluded that Spanish context specific practices and challenges are linked with effective talent management strategies. Similarly, Festing *et al.* (2015) examined the development of talent management in the German media industry.

Thus, all publications evaluated in the second quadrant show that multiple scholars have started to focus on talent management all over the world. Different academics and practitioners have shown keen interest in talent management, as many studies have examined this process and its practices. This research will further contribute to this context specific literature on talent management, by focusing on the Higher Education system of Saudi Arabia. Hence, as analysed earlier and shown by Sloan *et al.* (2015), talent management practices developed in a context are best for that specific context. All the empirical studies that have been conducted on talent management have revealed various aspects of the field, and have contributed towards its maturity. However, it is important to understand the culture and context of Saudi Arabia, before applying any talent management implications. Thus, this research will provide those implications and practices that can be used, for an effective talent management in the region.

### **2.6.3 Quadrant 3**

The studies evaluated in this quadrant focused on talent management in the Higher Education sector. Although these studies are not context specific or region specific, the main focus entirely targeted developing effective talent management practices in the Higher Education sector. These articles were analysed, because this research focuses on

Higher Education sector and the talent management practices associated in it. Thus, it is important to evaluate the existing literature in this particular sector. Despite the lack of research in the field of talent management in this sector, multiple scholars, in recent times, especially in the developed economies, have started to pay attention to it. The research of Paiseya and Paisey (2016) was an important step in the development of talent management practices in Higher Education. The resulting empirical based findings, aimed at understanding the recruitment practices in the universities of Scotland and Ireland, showed the difference between academic and for-profit business recruitment processes. Another important research in talent management in Higher Education was done by Brink *et al.* (2013), which was considered as an important milestone of talent management in academia. Brink *et al.* (2013) focused on the academic recruitment and selection, and presented the challenges associated with academic talent management. An important finding of this research was the autonomy and power of senior academics over HR professionals, in the process of academic recruitment. Hence, the literature analysis of academic based talent management in Section 2.4 shows how the recruitment and selection of academics differ from the usual process at profitable businesses.

The literature analysis of studies in Section 2.4 also showed that there is a shortage in academic talents. Several universities are losing talented academics, due to increasing mobility and globalisation. The research of Edwards and Smith (2010) focused on the problems faced by Australian organisations, in attracting and retaining top academic talent. The research insisted on developing implications and policies, to retain top academic talents and sustain in the long run. Female participation in the sector was mentioned as an important implication. Another research aiming at understanding the recruitment and retention of top academics in European business schools was conducted by Verhaegen (2005). The purpose of this research was to identify the factors that the recruitment and retention of academics depended on. Another policy-based research concentrating on developing effective recruitment and retention techniques was conducted by Metcalf *et al.* (2005), basing the research in the UK Higher Education system. The authors aimed to understand the talent management practices of the sector, with a particular emphasis on recruitment and retention techniques. All the analysed studies (Metcalf, et al., 2005;

Verhaegen, 2005; Edwards & Smith, 2010) were based on empirical findings, which significantly contributed to the development of talent management practice in the Higher Education sector.

However, the focus of this research is to develop effective talent management framework that aligns with the human capital and HRM strategies, impacting positively the educational organisational performance. Therefore, it is important to analyse such literature, as it focuses on developing strategies that help Higher Educational organisations to self-sustain. The new Managerialist approach of Deem and Brehony (2005), in Sub-Section 2.4.1, shows how Higher Educational organisations can adopt for-profit business policies, to become self-sustainable. In the past decade, Saudi public sector universities have faced issues in getting the finances and funds required to smoothly operate and function. At the same time, universities were being exhorted to raise the quality of teaching and the standard and research outcomes, while their funding from the Government was being questioned. Thus, the New Managerialist approach, as discussed by Reed and Anthony (1993) and Clarke and Newman (1997), is an approach to implement practices associated with for-profit organisations, to non-profit or voluntary organisations. Thus, Deem and Brehony (2005) based their research on a case study, showing how Higher Education organisations can continue to grow by adopting such policies.

Analysis of the literature based on the practices of talent management in the education sector reveals room for improvement. The evaluation of the literature clearly shows the differences in recruitment, selection, training, development and retention strategies in Higher Education institutions. However, this research will address this gap, as it will focus on the Saudi Higher Education system.

#### **2.6.4 Quadrant 4**

The last quadrant in Table 2-7 focuses on evaluating the literature on talent management, in the context of Saudi Higher Education sector. The Saudi Higher Education system has taken a long journey, since its inception in 1967 (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). The country has seen a transition in Higher Education, from few locally rated universities to many world class universities (Alamri, 2011). However, the Saudi Higher Educational organisations

lack the manpower and strategic direction that can enhance institutional image, as the top educational organisations of the region. Thus, one area which can be helpful in achieving the world class status is talent management. So far, no research has been conducted to link talent management with the Higher Education system, in the Saudi Arabia context. Thus, the previously evaluated studies show that talent management plays a vital role in the development of an effective Higher Educational system. The Saudi Higher Education system is in great need of such strategically important process that can be aligned with the overall strategy. The kingdom has spent billions of dollars on the development of the Higher Education system, however, the results have not been so fruitful.

Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on four basic characteristics. First, the focus on teaching should be based on the ideology of the religion of Islam; second, the educational system is a centralised system of education; third, the education system relies on state funding (free education); and last, the system applies the general policy of gender segregation (Profanter, 2014). The first ever university in the kingdom was established in 1967. Since then, multiple universities have been established and reforms have been taken. The research of Sidani and Ariss (2014) focused on the Gulf Cooperation council (GCC) area, and identified the challenges and problems that MNCs face, when trying to implement western TM practices in the Arab region. Profanter (2014) suggested that the employability laws regarding local nationals, differ from that for foreigners. Hence, there is a pressure on organisations in these regions to employ local nationals, even though it is more feasible to hire more talented foreigners for less costs. In parallel, countries, like Saudi Arabia, whose major contributor in the economy is oil, are now facing economic crisis. The impact of this oil crisis has impacted the whole country. Government expenditures, including the funding for Higher Education have been reduced. Saudi Arabia, which was known for sending thousands of scholars to the USA and the UK for post-graduate studies, is facing crisis in the education sector. Hence, the country is now moving its focus to developing talented personnel in the country, rather than importing from abroad.

Several studies concerning the Saudi Higher Education system have been conducted. The research of Al-Ghamdi and Tight (2013) focused on selecting high quality academics in

Higher Educational organisations. This included fusing foreign academics with local academics, to enhance the skills and capabilities of locals, while increasing the quality of the education system. Another research on Saudi Higher Education was conducted by Alkhazim (2003), who investigated the challenges faced by the Saudi Higher Education system. According to the author, the lack of structure, mismanagement of finance and nepotism are among the major reasons why Saudi Higher Education organisations lack quality.

Ultimately, there is a lack of research in the talent management in the Saudi region. More so, in the education sector, no single research was found to focus on talent management as the area of interest. Hence, this quadrant was identified as the mostly less researched area. Therefore, this presents an opportunity for the Researcher to contribute in two ways. First, the research in the field of talent management in the education sector will contribute theoretically to the literature. The field of talent management is gaining pace in Higher Education, however, there is still room for improvement, especially in the developing economies, where no research in talent management in education was found. And second, the research will practically contribute to the development of strategies that can help Saudi Higher Education institutions to self-sustain. As discussed earlier, the Higher Education system is funded by the government, which is currently facing a fall in oil prices. Therefore, the impact of this crisis has severely impacted the education sector. This research presents as an opportunity for the Saudi Higher Education system, as it will help the sector to identify, recruit, develop and retain talented personnel that will contribute to the welfare of society, as well as the education system. This will ultimately lead to autonomous self-funded educational organisations that will start attracting research funding, as well as international students. Thus, the Researcher's focus throughout this research is to address the literature gap, and develop strategies that can help Saudi Higher Education institutions to self-sustain. Table 2-8 highlights the evaluated researchers in the respective quadrants.

Table 2-8 Research Literature evaluation

		Research Philosophy	
		Visionary	Implementational
		Quadrant I	Quadrant III
Research Outcomes	Descriptive	(Chambers, et al., 1998), (Michaels, et al., 2001), (Brannick, 2001), (Lewis & Heckman, 2006), (Ashton & Morton, 2005), (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005), (Schiemann, 2006)	(Huselid, et al., 2005), (Holland, et al., 2007), (Chuai, et al., 2008), (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2009), (Faulconbridge, et al., 2009), (Froese, et al., 2010)
		(McCauley & Wakefield, 2006), (Cappelli, 2008), (Lawler, 2008),	(Iles, et al., 2010), (Maˆkelaˆ, et al., 2010), (McDonnell, et al., 2010), (Preece, et al., 2011)
		(Collings & Mellahi, 2009), (Beechler & Woodward, 2009), (Young, 2010)	(Bethke-Langenegger, et al., 2011), (Beheshtifar, et al., 2012), (McDonnell, et al., 2012)
		(Chabault, et al., 2012), (Collings, et al., 2011), (Huselid & Becker, 2011)	(Lynton & Beechler, 2012), (Skuzˆa, et al., 2013), (Tatli, et al., 2013), (Valverde, et al., 2013)
		, (Jones, et al., 2012), (Joyce & Slocum, 2012), (Gallardo-Gallardo, et al., 2013)	(Malik & Singh, 2014), (Bjorkman, et al., 2013), (Thunnissen, et al., 2013)
		(O’Boyle & Aguinis, 2012), (Dries, 2013)	(Duxbury & Halinski, 2014), (Newburry, et al., 2014),

	(Sloan, et al., 2015).	(Uen, et al., 2015), (Latukha, 2015), (Khan, et al., 2016)
<b>Prescriptive</b>	<b>Quadrant II</b>	<b>Quadrant IV</b>
	(Deem, 1998) , (Hugo, 2005),	(Alkhazim, 2003)
	(Metcalf, et al., 2005) (Verhaegen, 2005)	(Smith & Abouammoh, 2013), (Alnassar & Dow, 2013)
	(Davies & Davies, 2010), (Edwards & Smith, 2010),	(Al-Ghamdi & Tight, 2013), (Al-Ghreimil & Colbran, 2013)
	, (Brink, et al., 2010), (Brink, et al., 2013)	(Al-Ohali & Shin, 2013), (Alkhazim, 2003)
	(Paiseya & Paisey, 2016),	(Profanter, 2014), (Sidani & Ariss, 2014)

Source: Adopted from Althonayan (2003)

As discussed above, the Researcher identified the literature gap, by segregating the Literature using Althonayan’s (2003) four quadrant framework. Table 2-9 summarises the Literature gap specific to each Section discussed in Chapter 2, and evaluated in Section 2.6. The Researcher aims to point out to the under-researched areas of talent management, particularly in the field of Higher Education.

Table 2-9 Research gap

No	TM Area	TM Gap	Authors
1	Definition of talent management	<p>Lack of single consistent concise definition</p> <p>Lack of theoretical foundation</p> <p>Lack of conceptual boundaries</p> <p>Labelling TM as a Sub-Field of HRM</p> <p>Considered as strategic and international HRM terminology</p>	<p>(Collings &amp; Mellahi, 2009), (Collings, 2014),</p> <p>(Tatli, et al., 2013)</p> <p>(Lewis &amp; Heckman, 2006),</p> <p>(Festing &amp; Schaffer, 2014)</p> <p>(Schiemann, 2014).</p>
2	Talent management based on theoretical perspective	<p>Difficulty in defining what talent management is and how it should be measured</p> <p>Lack of clear structure and framework</p> <p>Broad non-consistent definitions</p> <p>Best practices of TM only applicable in the respective context</p> <p>Overlooking internal and external environment</p> <p>Lack of empirical evidence to support the theories</p> <p>Unable to distinguish between HRM and TM</p>	<p>(Beechler &amp; Woodward, 2009),</p> <p>(Chambers, et al., 1998),</p> <p>(Cappelli, 2008),</p> <p>(Collings &amp; Mellahi, 2009),</p> <p>(Conger, 2014),</p> <p>(Dries, 2013),</p> <p>(Gallardo-Gallardo, et al., 2013),</p> <p>(Huselid, et al., 2005),</p> <p>(Hiltrop, 1999),</p> <p>(Jones, et al., 2012), (Lawler, 2008), (Michaels, et al., 2001)</p>
3	Talent management in a context (empirical research based)	<p>Lack of talent management frameworks</p> <p>Lack of TM strategies in developing economies</p> <p>Fear of adopting TM and evolving traditional management practices</p>	<p>(Ardichvili, et al., 2012),</p> <p>(Bethke-Langenegger, et al., 2011),</p>

		Lack of knowledge and understanding of talent management	(Chuai, et al., 2008), (Chabault, et al., 2012),
		Difficulties in determining the suitable strategy in various forms of government	(Faulconbridge, et al., 2009),
		Difficulty in understanding the long-term benefits of effective talent management	(Festing & Schafer, 2014), (Huselid, et al., 2005),
		Adopting talent management to solve a problem	(Iles, et al., 2010),
		Lack of research in South Asian and middle eastern context	(Holland, et al., 2007), (Thunnissen, et al., 2013), (Tatli, et al., 2013).
4	Talent management in Higher Education	Lack of research in the Higher Education sector	(Paiseya & Paisey, 2016),
		Difficulty in implementing for profit organisation strategies in Higher Education	(Davies & Davies, 2010), (Brink, et al., 2010),
		Lack of definition and conceptual boundaries specific to Higher Education and TM	(Deem & Brehony, 2005),
		Lack of understanding of TM by practitioners	(Hugo, 2005),
		Lack of consistent framework specific to Higher Education sector	(Metcalf, et al., 2005),
		Lack of clear TM guidance on implementation of strategies	(Verhaegen, 2005).
		Lack of collaboration between organisations and practitioners	
5	talent management in Saudi	Lack of research in talent management	(Al-Eisa & Smith, 2013),
		No research found in Higher Education that focuses on talent management	(Al-Ohali & Shin, 2013),

Arabian Context	Lack of understanding among scholars and practitioners	(Alamri, 2011),
	Lack of framework specific to talent management	(Albaqami, 2015),
	Lack of implementation model specific TM	(Alharbi, 2016).
	Opportunity in evolving Higher Education system	(Alkhazim, 2003),
	Lack of effective measurement of TM benefits	(Education, 2017), (Krieger, 2007).
6 Talent management and organisational sustainability	Lack of research that connects organisational sustainability with TM	(Collings, 2014), (Young, 2010),
	Lack of clear TM implementation guidance, and expertise on how to resolve potential Sustainability issues effectively	(Hailey, et al., 2005), (Bethke-Langenegger, et al., 2011),
	Lack of framework or model that focuses on organisational sustainability	(Schiemann, 2014),
	Failure to understand the relation between TM implementation and long-term sustainable competitive advantage	(Schiemann, 2006), (Aguinis, et al., 2012), (Ashton & Morton, 2005).

Source: The Researcher

## 2.7 Talent management implementation guidance model/ TM process

As discussed previously in Sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5, the Researcher has drafted a talent management guidance model. As shown in Figure 2-7, the guidance model has five main stages, which have been discussed in Section 2.5. These five stages involve the identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention. The proposed five stages, when effectively aligned together, may contribute to achieving effective organisational performance and

sustainable competitive advantage. As presented in Figure 2-8, the first stage of TM process/ guidance model is the identification of pivotal positions in the organisation. As discussed in Sub-Section 2.5.1, stage one of the guidance model is an important phase in the overall process of talent management. It leads to the second stage of the TM guidance model, which is the creation of talent pools, internally and externally. This is also an important stage of effective talent management process, as shown in Sub-Section 2.5.2. The third stage of recruitment comes afterwards and leads to the fourth stage of training and development, as discussed briefly in Sub-Sections 2.5.3 and 2.5.4, respectively. The final stage of the guidance model is the attraction and retention of talent, as discussed in Sub-Section 2.5.5, which is an important phase of the guidance model. The outcomes of this aligned talent management process/guidance model is the effective organisational performance and sustainability, as discussed in Sub-Section 2.5.6. Thus, if the talent management guidance model is implemented effectively, and aligned with the overall strategy of the organisation, it can achieve the high value outcomes mentioned in Figure 2-8. All five stages have been identified through extensive critical literature analysis. The guidance model may contribute into reaching the aim of organisational sustainability, through effective talent management alignment with organisational strategy. This model covers all the basic principles of talent management, as shown in Section 2.5.

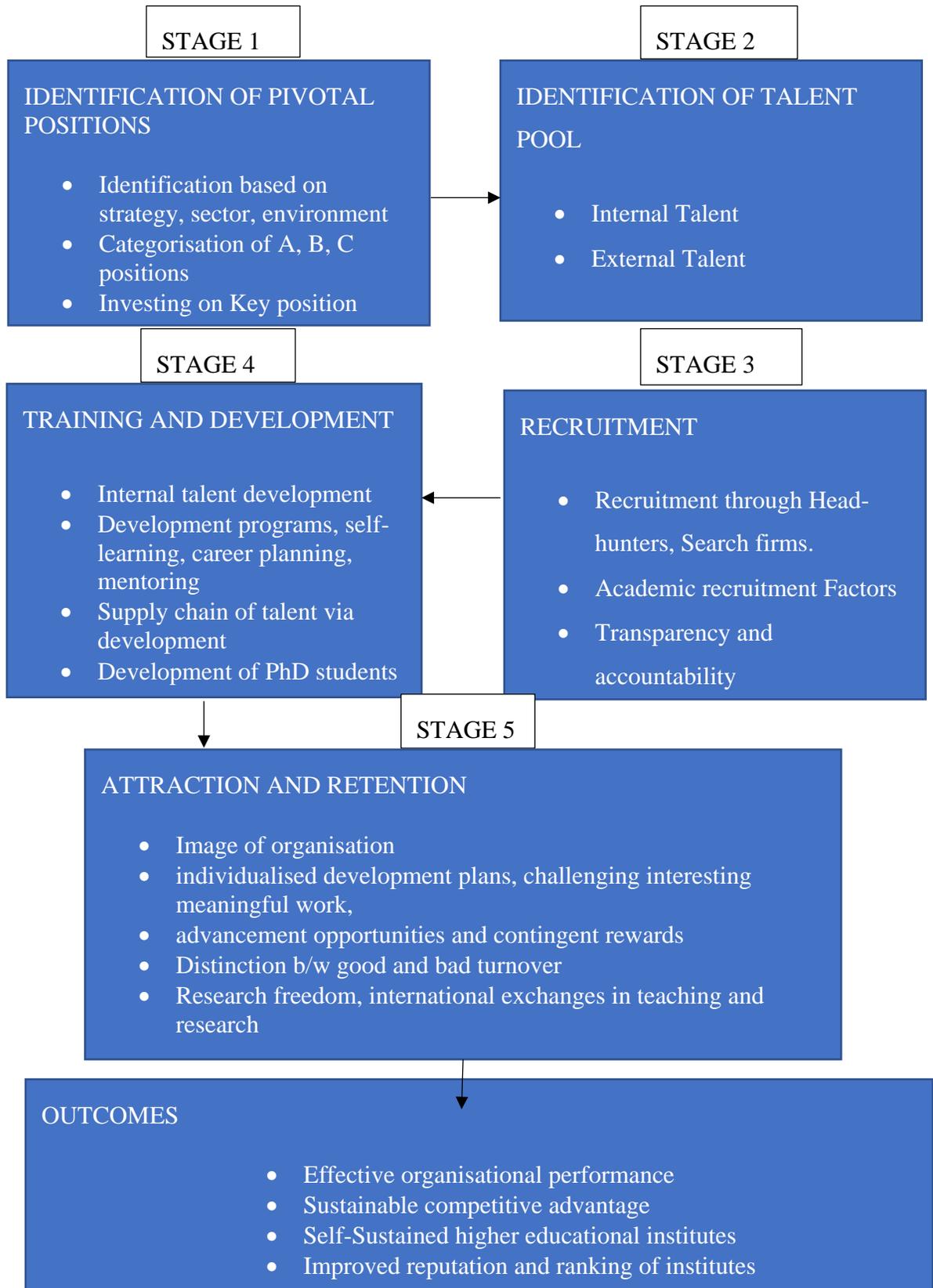


Figure 2-8: Talent management guidance model

Source: The Researcher

This Chapter discussed the literature on talent management and its processes. The Chapter started with discussing the problems associated with the definition and framework of talent management, as there is a lack of universally acknowledged definitions. Furthermore, the Researcher defined talent management as a stream of linked stages, starting with the identification of pivotal positions, followed by the development of a talent pool. Then, comes the succession planning and management of star performers and evaluation. The retention and development of employees (stakeholders) ultimately leads to effective organisational performance. Moreover, The Chapter discussed the impact of talent management in developing and developed economies, which shows that there is lack of research in developing economies, whereas in the developed economies, the field of talent management lacks a universally acknowledged framework and definition. It gave a brief overview of how the talent management process has impacted organisations in various contexts. Moreover, the Chapter narrowed down the impact of talent management to the Higher Education sector, and shows how organisations, specifically in the developed economies, have adopted talent management strategies to improve the Higher Education system. Hence, the Researcher discussed the impact of talent management in Higher Education sector and how various strategies of talent management have been implemented successfully.

Furthermore, it discussed the talent management cycle and the stages which form an effective talent management strategy. These stages of talent management process have been identified, after a vigorous critical analysis of the literature. These five critical stages of talent management include: identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development and attraction and retention. Thereafter, the Chapter identified the literature gap, by using the four-quadrant framework, to categorise the literature systematically. The four-quadrant framework helped the Researcher to classify the literature in four categories, namely, descriptive theoretical-based research, descriptive empirical-based research, prescriptive research on talent management (TM) in education sector, and focused research on TM in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The four-quadrant framework revealed the literature gap in the area of talent management, especially in the third and fourth quadrants, which are the prescriptive research on talent management (TM)

in education sector and focused research on TM in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Finally, the Chapter concluded by discussing the effect of talent management strategy on organisational performance. Based on this analysis, the Researcher presented a talent management guidance model, which may help organisations to implement talent management effectively. This guidance model, which consists of five stages as mentioned earlier, when aligned with the overall human capital and HRM strategies can help the organisations in achieving optimum performance, and reaching organisational sustainability. The guidance model includes the critical factors that are directly linked with the talent management process.

In the next Chapter, the Researcher will evaluate the analysed literature on talent management and its process, and consequently, will develop the research theoretical framework.

### **3 Chapter Three: Formulation of Theoretical Framework**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This Chapter will evaluate the existing literature on talent management that has been analysed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, the Researcher will analyse the different talent management frameworks that have been proposed by various scholars. Moreover, based on the literature analysis and evaluation, the Researcher will present a theoretical framework for effective talent management for the education sector. This framework will be derived from existing theories and studies by scholars, who have already contributed to the field of talent management.

#### **3.2 Stages of effective talent management**

The literature analysis in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, identified five stages of effective talent management, namely, identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention. These five stages, when performed in accordance with an organisation's overall strategy, can effectively contribute to the overall performance of the organisation. The New Managerialist approach, discussed in Section 2.4.1, showed how for-profit business strategies can be effectively implemented in the education sector, to produce more fruitful results. Thus, these stages analysed in Section 2.5 shows how for-profit business talent management strategies can be successfully applied in the Higher Education sector.

The first critical stage, as analysed in the literature, is the identification of pivotal positions. Adopted from the work of Collings and Mellahi (2009), this stage recognises the importance of identifying first the key positions, which are of strategic importance to the organisation. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that these strategically important positions will give strategic edge over rivals, when filled with competent talent. Another research of Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) that emphasised on the importance of identification of pivotal positions was also analysed in Sub-Section 2.5.1. The study suggested that the strategic important positions, if occupied by talented personnel, can enhance the organisational performance by 20% ROE. Similarly, Huselid *et al.* (2005) also

focused on the identification of pivotal positions, by differentiating them as A, B, and C positions. The authors suggested that, to perform effectively, organisations need to identify and fill A positions with A players. Huselid and Becker (2011) also emphasised on the importance of investing in strategically important positions. The findings also supported the idea of Huselid *et al.* (2005), which is to identify the key positions and normal positions as A, B, and C, and then fill the positions with A and B players. Therefore, the identification of pivotal positions is the first critical stage for effective talent management. The framework for effective talent management included this stage as the starting point of the process. However, to make it effective, organisations or Higher Education organisations need to make sure that the overall strategy is integrated with the talent management strategies.

The second important stage identified and included in the effective talent management framework is the creation of talent pool. Again, adopted from the work of Collings and Mellahi (2009), the creation of talent pool is an important part of strategic talent management. The authors suggested that talent pool can be created not only by focusing on internal talent, but also by identifying talents from external sources. The groundbreaking research of McKinsey consultants by Chambers *et al.* (1998), promoted talent management as a field on the world stage, emphasising the importance of creating talent pools for future, as well as for present needs. The research of (Hiltrop, 1999) also emphasised developing strategies to attract high calibre talents to create talent pools. As per the authors, talented personnel constitute a source of competitive advantage and sustainability for the organisation. Another research analysed in Sub-Section 2.5.2 was conducted by Newburry *et al.* (2014), who examined the talent identification strategies applied by organisations in Latin America. The study provided a framework for attracting talents, in the specific context of Latin America. Another context specific research targeting talent attraction and shortages in Australia was conducted by (Holland *et al.*, 2007). The study was based on the RBV view, and stressed how organisations can create a talent pool, creating a major source in organisational performance and giving competitive edge over rivals. Similarly, talent identification in academics is also an important factor for Higher Education organisations, due to globalisation. The research of Brink *et al.* (2013)

focused on talent management in academia, and suggested that different fields of academia consider variable factors, when an academic is being identified as a talent. Hence, the identification and attraction of talents lead to the creation of talent pool, an important stage in the overall process of talent management. This stage is recognised as the second stage in the effective talent management framework.

The third important stage in the effective talent management framework is recruitment. Although this stage is usually associated with the usual identification and hiring processes in the traditional HR, this phase of TM is further differentiated, impacting the overall process of talent management. The research of Faulconbridge *et al.* (2009) showed that, due to the globalisation of business environment, executive organisations' or head-hunters' influence has increased dramatically. These search organisations or head-hunters have developed long-term relationships with organisations, promoting those personnel in their resources. Sub-Section 2.5.3 also analysed the effective recruitment strategies that organisations apply. Uen *et al.* (2015) attempted to understand the impact of word-of-mouth referrals, through employee brand management. However, recruitment is identified as a separate stage, rather than being considered a segment of the identification stage, because of the differentiating factors of academic recruitment. The research of (Brink, et al., 2013) showed that academic talents in science, technology, engineering and medical fields are scarce. Hence, normal advertisement or word of mouth recruitment strategies were found ineffective. Instead of academic referrals, networks and contacts of existing professors are used as an effective recruitment strategy in these fields. Another research regarding academic recruitment was conducted by Verhaegen (2005), which examined the factors that can help European business schools, in recruiting academic talent in a competitive market place. The results outlined 42 factors that can be useful in academic recruitment. Paiseya and Paisey (2016) also examined the academic recruitment strategies employed in the universities of Scotland and Ireland. Paiseya and Paisey (2016) found in their study that senior academics had more influence than HR professionals, in hiring in the Higher Educational organisations. Therefore, the academic recruitment is different than that of normal for-profit business organisations. Due to this importance, recruitment is

identified as the third important stage of effective talent management; different recruiting strategies that differ from usual strategies are being employed in the academic recruitment.

The fourth important stage in the effective talent management framework is training and development. Training and development is considered as an important aspect of talent management. The famous research of McKinsey consultant by Chambers *et al.* (1998) prompted the need for talent management, and insisted on developing talents aggressively (Chambers *et al.*, 1998). Training and development do not only lead to effective organisational performance, but also motivates employees towards achieving collective organisational goals. The research of Joyce and Slocum (2012) analysed the importance of training and development of staff. The authors suggested that one of the important capabilities of an organisation is to train and develop talents, which ultimately leads to effective organisational performance. The research of Conger (2014) also outlined the importance of developing global leadership talent pools, by developing and training talented employees. Furthermore, Hiltrop (1999), who focused on the relevance of attracting and retaining talented individuals, suggested that the training and development of talented professionals lead to non-imitable competitive advantage. Cappelli (2008) explained the phenomenon of talent management with respect to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and argued against the old practices of HRM. Cappelli (2008) found that organisations need to develop effective strategies, such as succession planning, development of talents and reducing the turnover rates. To achieve this, Cappelli (2008) presented a framework that applies the operational principles of supply chain to talent management. However, training and development in Higher Education is different from the business sector. Edwards and Smith (2010) investigated the talent shortages, and supply issues in Australian Higher Education. The authors suggested the need to train and develop existing PhDs in organisations, who in return, can serve the organisation in the future. Focus should be placed on identifying such talented students early in their career, so that they can be developed and trained. Another important research which focused on the UK Higher Education was conducted by Metcalf *et al.* (2005). The study also insisted on the importance of developing PhD students, who can become a source of academic talent. Thus, training and development is an important part of an effective talent management

process. This is considered as the fourth stage of the effective talent management framework.

The final stage of any talent management framework was found to be the attraction and retention of talent. Several scholars insisted on the importance of developing strategies that can help organisations to attract and retain talent. Since most performance outcomes are attributed to a small group of employees, known as A players, it is important for organisations to look after these A players, and develop effective strategies to retain them. An important research in developing these attraction and retention strategies was conducted by Chambers *et al.* (1998), in their famous work the 'war for talent'. The authors showed that big organisations were losing talent to small SMEs, hence, large organisations should also protect these talented sources. Another important research by Holland *et al.* (2007) focused on the attraction and retention problems associated with Australian based organisations. The study suggested that the attraction and retention of talented employees has become a significant factor, to maintain the sustainable competitive advantage of organisations. Aguinis *et al.* (2012) suggested that organisations should only put emphasis on retaining their top talents or A players. The authors recommended some effective attraction and retention strategies, such as individualised development plans, challenging, interesting and meaningful work, advancement opportunities and contingent rewards. On the other hand, Brannick (2001) insisted on developing non-monetary retention strategies; as per the author, monetary strategies are the easiest to replicate, thus, organisations need to develop strategies that will motivate employees to remain in the organisation. Another important research that focused on retention issues associated with Australian academics, was conducted by Hugo (2005). Hugo (2005) argued that the aging workforce, changing demographics and increased mobility led to severe academic shortages in Australian academic organisations. Due to the increase in demand for academics in Australia, the demand for academics especially in science, engineering and medical field has increased rapidly. Thus, it is becoming harder for Australian organisations to retain top academics in such fields. Thus, the retention of talented personnel is the final important stage of effective talent management framework.

### 3.3 Evaluation of existing talent management frameworks

Throughout the analysis in Chapter 2, focus was placed on analysing the literature that discussed the effective talent management strategies and frameworks. Various studies, in the developed and developing economies, showed various strategic frameworks, resulting from empirical and theoretical based research. Similarly, the researchers who focused on talent management in the education sector, also presented their form of alignment frameworks. However, the majority of these studies occurred in developed western economies. As discussed earlier, every talent management practice was found to apply best in the context in which it was developed. Collings and Mellahi (2009) presented a talent management framework, which included the identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool and creation of human resource architecture that help organisations to retain talented employees. As shown earlier in Figure 2-6, the four factors are interconnected, which ultimately leads to effective organisational performance and long-term sustainability. Collings and Mellahi (2009) drafted a definition based on this model, and has been cited and referred to by various scholars (Brink *et al.*, 2010; Bethke-Langenegger *et al.*, 2011; Aguinis *et al.*, 2012; Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani, 2014). Although the framework presented by Collings and Mellahi (2009) covered the basic factors of talent management, the framework was still very vague and generalised. Moreover, the framework has been developed on the basis of past theories, and is not based on a specific context or empirical evidence. Similarly, Schiemann (2014) presented another framework on talent management, which he referred to as talent lifecycle, as shown in Figure 2-1. According to Schiemann's (2014) framework, talent lifecycle is a function which integrates all activities and responsibilities, associated with the management of talent lifecycle. As per Schiemann (2014), this cycle consists of attracting, acquiring, on-boarding, training, maximizing performance, developing, retaining, recovering, and creating talent pool, given that all of those factors are inter-connected with each other. According to Schiemann's (2014) framework, talent lifecycle is the way through which, people interact with the organisation, and talent management is the way in which talent cycle is managed. Even though Schiemann's (2014) framework covers all aspects of talent management, from talent optimisation, acquisitions, training, to development and retention, it still has broad implications. The framework is based on theoretical works, and is not specific to any sector

or context. The framework is more focused on developing a cycle, where one process follows another, and thus, does not include any factors related to sustainability.

The research of Sloan *et al.* (2015) also presented a talent management framework, based on empirical evidence. The framework of Sloan *et al.* (2015), as shown in Figure 2-3, presented a talent management wheel, as a framework for effective talent management. The framework contains six guiding principles, which remain consistent regardless of the context or sector. These guiding principles include management involvement, employer's branding through differentiation, balancing global and local needs, cultural embeddedness, alignment with strategy and internal consistency. However, Sloan *et al.*'s (2015) framework suggested that talent management practices, such as talent review, recruitment and selection, development and selection, performance management and retention, are only beneficial for the context in which these were designed. Thus, the framework presented by Sloan *et al.* (2015) acknowledges the fact that talent management practices are limited to particular context and sector. The talent management practices, being applied in Higher Education, are different than that of for-profit business organisations (Paiseya and Paisey, 2016). Hence, a framework developed in a for-profit organisation context is not completely applicable to a Higher Education context.

Sidani and Ariss (2014) showed how talent management is moulded by institutional and corporate drivers. Sidani and Ariss (2014) conducted the study in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), in which the authors presented a talent management framework. The formulated framework showed how organisations had to adapt and change, due to different external factors, such as recruitment of locals in key positions, two tier HR systems, strategic balance in TM practices, etc. The study revealed that organisations operating in the GCC context had to adapt various strategies in terms of recruitment, attraction and retention. The framework of Sidani and Ariss (2014) consisted of four major factors, as presented in Chapter 2, Figure 2-4. These four factors are institutional pressures, organisational challenges, HR policies and practices and TM outcomes. Although the framework is specific to GCC context, there are major differences among countries falling under the GCC collaboration. Furthermore, the Higher Education systems, policies and

strategies are different than that of for-profit organisations. Hence, nepotism and dual standards in hiring should not be acceptable at Higher Education level, as scholars will be training the future generations of the country.

Young (2010) presented another framework on talent management that was more focused on the outcomes of talent management. Young's (2010) study was conducted in Fortune 1000 global organisations, and presented a framework based on the empirical evidence. As per Young (2010), talent management should be integrated with the overall strategy of the organisation, as presented in Figure 2-6. Talent management factors, such as recruitment and sourcing, deployment, rewards, development and training, succession planning, leadership development and workforce analytics, must be integrated with the overall strategy of the organisation. This includes the programs, structure, technology used, and services delivered by the organisation. By integrating these two factors and aligning them with the organisations business objectives, mission and vision statement, the outcome will be an enhanced performance of the organisation. Although Young (2010) presented a detailed framework of talent management backed by empirical evidence, the outcomes are measured by the financial performance and growth of the organisation. In the context of Higher Education, the performance of the organisation is based on its research publications, number of PhDs, and role of its alumni to the society (Paiseya and Paisey, 2016). Thus, similar outcomes measurements cannot be implemented in a talent management process, based on the Higher Education context.

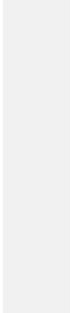
The analysis of existing talent management frameworks show that talent management has become a major part in organisational structure. The number of generalised and context specific frameworks show that talent management is now a field, which has progressed from infancy and is now moving towards maturity (Festing and Schafer, 2014). However, as suggested by Sloan *et al.* (2015), talent management practices and frameworks are best for the context in which they are derived from. The Higher Education system is one field in which talent management is still considered a new phenomenon. Several studies were conducted by Verhaegen (2005), Holland *et al.* (2007), Brink *et al.* (2010), and Paiseya and Paisey (2016), and focused on talent management in the Higher Education sector.

However, these researchers didn't derive a particular framework that may help an organisation to implement talent management successfully. Furthermore, there is no single research that has been conducted on Saudi Arabia's Higher Education system. Hence, this presents an opportunity for the Researcher to address this research gap, and develop a research framework that points out the outcomes of TM, and also directs organisations in implementing it by providing a guidance model. Table 3-1 shows the TM frameworks analysed earlier, along with the area of research and framework description.

Table 3-1 Evaluation of existing frameworks

No	Author	TM Framework	TM Area
1	Collings and Mellahi (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consists of two elements, differentiated HR architecture and outcomes</li> <li>➤ First element focuses on development of talent pool from internal organisational and external labour market</li> <li>➤ Identification of pivotal positions and filling these positions with identified talent</li> <li>➤ Second element is associated with outcomes, such as work motivation, organisational commitment and extra role behaviour that leads to effective firm performance.</li> </ul>	Existing Literature based review to identify key limitations, such as clear consistent definition and conceptual boundaries
2	Schiemann (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A talent management cycle consisting of 8 stages</li> <li>➤ Stages include talent attraction, acquiring, on-boarding, training, maximizing performance, developing &amp; succession, retaining, and recovering from talent pool</li> <li>➤ All 8 Stages are connected in a cycle which starts from attraction and ends at recovering from talent pool</li> <li>➤ As per research, talent management is the way in which talent cycle is managed</li> <li>➤ How well the talent cycle is managed will determine the effectiveness of talent management investment.</li> </ul>	Literature based research that addresses the concept of talent management. It shows that TM is of both practical and theoretical value in any industry and geography.

3	Sloan <i>et al.</i> (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Talent management wheel which is divided into two elements, talent management practices and guiding principle</li> <li>➤ The six talent management practices consist of talent review, recruitment &amp; selection, development &amp; training, performance management, retention, compensation &amp; rewards</li> <li>➤ The six guiding principles are management involvement, employer branding through differentiation, balancing global and local needs, cultural embeddedness, alignment with strategy, and Internal consistency</li> <li>➤ The talent management practices are best for the context in which they were developed</li> <li>➤ The guiding principles are consistent and have broad applications.</li> </ul>	An empirical research that aimed at identifying steps that global organisations take to ensure they recruit, train and retain best available talent from the global market.
4	Sidani and Ariss (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A framework of talent management specific to GCC is divided into four factors namely institutional pressure, organisational challenges, HR Policies &amp; Practices and TM Outcomes</li> <li>➤ The institutional pressures include coercive pressures, mimetic pressures and normative pressures. All these pressures can influence basic HRM and TM practices in an organisation</li> <li>➤ These institutional pressures can either balance or unbalance between legal legitimacy and economic legitimacy</li> <li>➤ This may result in TM being successful or unsuccessful depending on how organisations balance the three institutional pressures.</li> </ul>	An empirical research based on TM practices in GCC context. The research shows how organisations abide by localisation rules to sustain their legal legitimacy, while trying to improve and enhance economic sustainability.
5	Young (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A TM holistic approach which is divided into two elements namely, alignment &amp; integration</li> <li>➤ The alignment consists of organisations vision, culture values, business strategy and objectives</li> <li>➤ The integration part is the one where talent management plays a key role in integrating</li> </ul>	An empirical research that is aimed at understanding how talent management programs and mobility assignments are



recruitment, rewards & recognitions, performance management, succession planning, training and development and leadership development

aligned and integrated across organisation.

- This alignment and integration lead to positive firm performance, higher rate of returns, shareholder value.

Source: Researcher

### 3.4 Derivation of theoretical framework

According to the studies of Beechler and Woodward (2009), Collings *et al.* (2011), Thunnissen *et al.* (2013), and Schiemann (2014), talent management can play a vital role in organisational performance; however, a certain framework or guidance model is needed to direct these changes. Adopted from the research of Collings and Mellahi (2009), and as presented in Figure 2-5, the systematic identification of pivotal positions and their alignment with talent pools, from internal and external labour markets, can result in positive organisational performance and sustainability. As shown in Figure 3-1, the theoretical research framework consists of two parts: alignment strategy and sustainability strategy. The alignment strategy focuses on developing talent management strategies that can be aligned with the human capital and HRM strategies of the organisation. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the talent management process consists of five stages. These five stages, when effectively aligned with the overall HRM and human capital strategy of the organisation, can improve the overall performance. The outcome of aligning talent management strategies with HRM and human capital strategies within the organisation is improved overall performance, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Sub-Sections 2.5.6 and 3.5, respectively. This input of aligned talent management and human capital strategies is adopted from the work of Collings and Mellahi (2009) and Young (2010), whose research show, how effective talent management can enhance the organisational performance. The following Subsections will discuss the two basic parts of the theoretical framework s, as shown in Figure 3-1.

### 3.4.1 Alignment strategy

The literature analysis in Chapter 2 shows that talent management strategies contribute, positively, towards the overall performance of the organisation. However, the focus of these talent management practices should be placed on HRM and human capital strategies (Aguinis *et al.* 2012). Aligning HRM and Human Capital strategies with talent management strategies is critical, as shown in the research of Young (2010). Young's (2010) research on the fortune 1000 organisations showed that organisations who had aligned talent management strategies with the internal human capital strategies witnessed more return on equity (ROE), than those that did not. Similarly, the work of Ashton and Morton (2005) suggested that an integrated talent management is of strategic importance and can develop into an important competence. Ashton and Morton (2005) believed that talent management is a holistic and strategic approach to business planning and HR. Thus, the alignment of TM with HRM and human capital strategies is an important aspect for organisational sustainability. The authors further emphasised on implementing an aligned talent management framework that is developed in a particular context.

Furthermore, Hailey *et al.* (2005) focused in their research, on understanding the effect of HRM strategies on organisational performance, and argued that the lack of focus on human capital means the outstanding financial performance of the organisation is not sustainable. Thus, it is important for an organisation to have an effective HRM system that manages people effectively. Since the business environment has become more unstable and unpredictable, and the talented personnel have become the source of competitive advantage and differentiations, multiple organisations have developed and adopted strategies to attract, develop and retain talented personnel, with the aim of improving the overall performance of the organisation. Schiemann (2014) defined talent management with the help of talent lifecycle, and suggested that people-equity framework of Schiemann (2006) provides a good base to understand and manage talents. People-equity framework is the collective state of alignment, capabilities and engagement. Hence, the alignment factor is a major factor of this framework. As per Schiemann (2006), the alignment represents the degree to which, everyone in the organisation is synchronised in the same direction. Thus, the alignment of talent management with the organisational HRM and human capital goals

will have to be clearly defined to all employees. Thus, the alignment of talent management with the organisational HRM and human capital strategies is an important aspect of TM success. If an organisation aims to benefit of talent management by improving the overall performance of the organisation, it must make sure that TM strategies are completely aligned with the overall human capital & HRM strategies.

From the evaluated literature in Chapters 2 and 3 on talent management stages and its outcomes, it can be argued that effective talent management is a combination of five stages, namely, identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention. These stages effectively contribute to the success of the organisation, when aligned together with the overall HRM and human capital strategies. The outcomes of this aligned talent management will lead to optimum performance, which will ultimately result in long run sustainability. The talent management guidance model, presented in Figure 2-8, can be used as a guidance framework, in aligning talent management with HRM and human capital. Starting with stage one of Figure 2-8, the identification of strategic pivotal positions will help the organisation to identify the positions of strategic importance. Then, the organisation can create a talent pool, by using existing as well as external labour markets, to identify talented personnel who can fill those strategically important positions. The third stage of recruitment is usually associated with the HRM department of the organisation, and should use effective the recruitment strategies discussed in Chapter 2, Sub-section 2.5.3. The fourth stage of training and development is an important aspect of talent management, as well as of HRM. Finally, the fifth stage of guidance model is the attraction and retention of talented personnel, which is a significant aspect of the human capital strategy. Thus, aligning HRM and human capital strategies with the systematic talent management guidance model can lead an organisation to profitable outcomes.

### **3.4.2 External and internal organisational environments**

An important aspect of the talent management framework is the effect of internal and external environment on the sustainability and talent management strategy. The external environment of an organisation can be regarded as the effect of factors that the organisation

either, doesn't have any control, or has minimum control over. This includes political situation, economic situation of the society in which the organisation operates, technological advancements, law and legislation, environmental conditions and social norms (Yüksel, 2012). (Anchor & Aldehayyat, 2016) observed the external factors in their study of the Jordanian context. The authors found out that certain factors, such as lack of resources, volatile political situation of the Middle Eastern region, high collectivist and high-power culture had a major impact during the implementation of TM. Similarly, (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016) revealed in their study based in the UAE context that uncontrollable external factors were among the major obstacles during strategic decisions implementation. It is important to determine the external environment of the organisation, by analysing the factors affecting the overall strategy and performance of the organisation (Srdjevic, et al., 2012). These external factors can impact the talent management and sustainability strategy of the organisation, as these factors are uncontrollable (Cappelli, 2008). The economic condition of the society plays a huge role to the overall performance of the organisation. If the economy is on the rise, the organisation is expected to perform in a positive manner, thus, hiring more talented individuals and providing more opportunities. On the other hand, an organisation, in stagnant or declining economy, will be considering financial cuts and layoff of unwanted staff, even the talented ones. This may result in losing talented personnel and creating disgruntled workforce, resulting in a bad turnover (Malik & Singh, 2014). Similarly, technological advancements in the society can also impact the overall performance and strategy implementation in the organisation. High tech equipment and multi-purpose software can help organisations in improving basic organisational process, such as HRM and talent identification (Young, 2010). Furthermore, law and legislation of the external society in which the organisation operates have a significant impact on the organisation future and sustainability. The laws regarding education, Higher Education policies and human development, can severely impact talent management strategies in Higher Educational organisations (Albaqami, 2015). Finally, the environmental factors and social norms of the society are also important external environment factors that impact the overall process of talent management.

The internal organisational environment is another major factor that impacts the overall performance of the organisation, as well as future sustainability (Conger, 2014). Organisational culture plays an important role in any strategic decision implementation. The success or failure of any strategy hugely depends on how effectively the involved members communicate, within a good communicative culture or not. (Hrebiniak, 2006) showed that ineffective information sharing, and unclear responsibilities are among the major obstacles in effective strategic implementation. These two obstacles highlight the negativity of the poor co-ordination among employees, which results in the failure of a strategic decision. (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000) also recognised this problem and considered it as one of the silent killers of strategy implementation. However, the authors indicated that employees may recognise the problem, but are unable to share this with managers, due to lapses in communication. Hence, one of the important factors of internal organisational environment is the internal communication among employees, as well as with managers.

Similarly, leadership of higher level or C-suite managers, and team management can adversely impact the overall performance of the organisation. Effective leadership and team management play an important role in the successful implementation of any decision; however, the lack of these qualities may end up turning a well formulated strategy into a disaster. (Hrebiniak, 2006) showed the importance of effective team management, as the study considered this barrier as the topmost obstacle, among internal organisational hurdles. Also, the pace at which the decision is implemented plays a huge role in the outcome of the strategy. (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000) also considered this obstacle as one of the silent killers of strategies, and suggested that top management members who usually prefer their own circle, fear any strategic change that might result in the reduction of their power. Such top executives may try to jeopardise strategy by not managing changes effectively. Thus, it is important to make sure that top level leadership involvement is taken into consideration, before implementing any strategy. In the case of talent management and sustainability strategy, the majority of personnel in the Saudi Higher Education institutions needs to be debriefed and trained about TM and alignment, before any such strategy should be implemented.

Another important internal organisational factor is the formal structure of the organisation. The lack of a formal organisational structure and unclear vague strategy can adversely impact the overall implementation of a strategic decision in an organisation. The research of (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000) identified the six silent killers of strategic implementation, by examining the barriers that hinder the implementation of a strategic decision. (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000) identified that the lack of a formal structure and unclear strategies to be among the major reasons behind the failure of strategic decisions, as clear compelling direction is not provided by management. The research by (Hrebiniak, 2006) also emphasised the effect of informal structure and vague strategy during implementation. A poorly formulated strategy will result in a poor execution; thus, vague strategy will limit the implementation efforts. (Hrebiniak, 2006) also revealed that even the good execution will not provide promising results, if the strategy is poorly defined. Another research by (Elbanna, 2012) showed how slack behaviour and poorly planned strategies fail mostly, in a study conducted in the UAE context. Henceforth, a formal structure in the organisation, with a clearly defined strategy, is an important internal organisational factor that can impact the performance of the organisation.

The existing HR function of an organisation is another major factor of internal organisational environment. Hailey *et al.* (2005) focused on understanding the effect of HRM strategies on organisational performance. The authors suggested that the lack of focus on human capital threatens the sustainability of the outstanding financial performance. Thus, it is important for an organisation to have an effective HRM system that manages people effectively. Similarly, a stable financial situation of the organisation is important, to make sure the organisation performs effectively in the respective market. (Young, 2010) argued that the financial stability of an organisation is one of the important factors behind long term sustainability. Thus, both, financial sustainability and existing HRM functions, constitute important internal organisational environment factors, which can impact the performance of the organisation.

It can be argued that both, the external and the internal environments of the organisation, can significantly impact the overall performance of the organisation. External

uncontrollable factors, such as the political situation of the society, economic conditions, technological advancements, law and legislation, environmental issues, and social norms can play a huge role in how organisations perform in the external environment. These factors can also impact the organisational connection, with the public sector and governmental organisations. On the other hand, the internal environmental factors, which are under the control of the organisation, can impact the long term sustainability and strategic success. These factors include the internal communication, leadership and team management, formal structure, HRM function and financial stability. These factors can have a significant impact on the organisational performance and the long term success. Thus, both sets of factors exhibit major importance that should be recognised, being an important aspect of talent management alignment framework. Also, these factors can impact the alignment strategy, as well as the sustainability strategy of an organisation.

### **3.4.3 Sustainability strategy**

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, Sub-Section 2.5.6, the goal of any business organisation is the optimum performance and sustainability. Whether a profit, non-profit or voluntary organisation, each organisation aims to perform effectively to survive in a competitive global market (Cappelli, 2008). One way of achieving long term sustainability is the optimum performance in the context in which an organisation is operating. The contribution of HRM is vital to the overall performance of the organisation (Delaney and Huselid, 1996). Bethke-Langenegger *et al.* (2011) investigated the effect of adopting different types of talent management strategies. Bethke-Langenegger *et al.* (2011), concluded, based on the empirical findings, that organisations who focus on retaining and developing talented personnel had statistically positive impact on human resource outcomes, such as job satisfaction, commitment, motivation and trust in leadership. Nevertheless, organisations which focused more on talent management strategies with a strong direction on corporate business, had strategically significant impact on organisational outcomes, such as achievement of business goals, customer satisfaction, organisational attractiveness and most importantly, corporate profit (Bethke-Langenegger *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, a positive link is associating effective talent management strategies with organisational performance.

Similarly, Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that the outcome of these effective talent management strategies, such identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool and differentiated HRM structure includes positive organisational performance, which ultimately leads to organisational sustainability. According to Collings and Mellahi (2009), effective talent management strategies lead to motivated workforce, organisational commitment and greater job roles. This will directly impact the overall performance of the organisation, in a positive manner. Moreover, Aguinis *et al.* (2012) considered talented individuals as a source of competitive advantage that is not imitable. The importance of human capital has become greater than the financial capital. The authors suggested that, attracting and retaining top talents generate great deal of revenues and profits, and improves the overall performance of the organisation. Thus, retaining top talented employees has become a matter of survival for organisations, as losing them to rivals means the loss of business.

Organisational performance, in a for profit business context, is usually associated with shareholders' value (Cappelli, 2008). However, Collings (2014) argued against the generalised performance measures, such as the maximum shareholders' return. This policy translates into HRM of the organisation, which is then unable to align the individual employees' with the collective goals of the organisation. This leads to a conflict of interest, which results in demotivated employees and higher turnover rates. In contrast, those organisations, which consider employees as major stakeholders, generally have higher alignment of employees' and organisational goals. This results in highly motivated employees, who then pursue higher organisational performance that ultimately leads to higher shareholders' return. On the other hand, organisational performance in a Higher Educational organisation is measured in terms of its performance in research publications, university ranking, number of PhDs and number of research publications that are being produced by scholars (Verhaegen, 2005). Due to the changing demographics and globalisation, educational organisations in developed and emerging economies need to adapt their strategies, in order to compete with the growing commercialisation of the Higher Education. The goal of each educational organisation is to provide quality education and research that contribute to the society, and develop future generations (Brink *et al.*,

2013; Paiseya and Paisey, 2016). Thus, in order to remain sustainable and contribute effectively to the society, Higher Educational institutions need to develop talent pools that can promote further the overall performance of the organisation. Therefore, it can be argued that, effective and aligned talent management will directly contribute to the positive performance of the organisation, which will lead to organisational sustainability.

Apart from the alignment strategy and the sustainability strategy, internal and external environments can also affect the overall framework. The alignment strategy has external and internal environments, where the external environment involves government policies, strategies and other non-controllable aspects. The internal environment is the organisational internal HRM and human capital strategies and policies that are partially or fully controlled by the organisation. Any positive or negative feedback from the outcomes can be fed back into the alignment strategy, for any context specific changes.

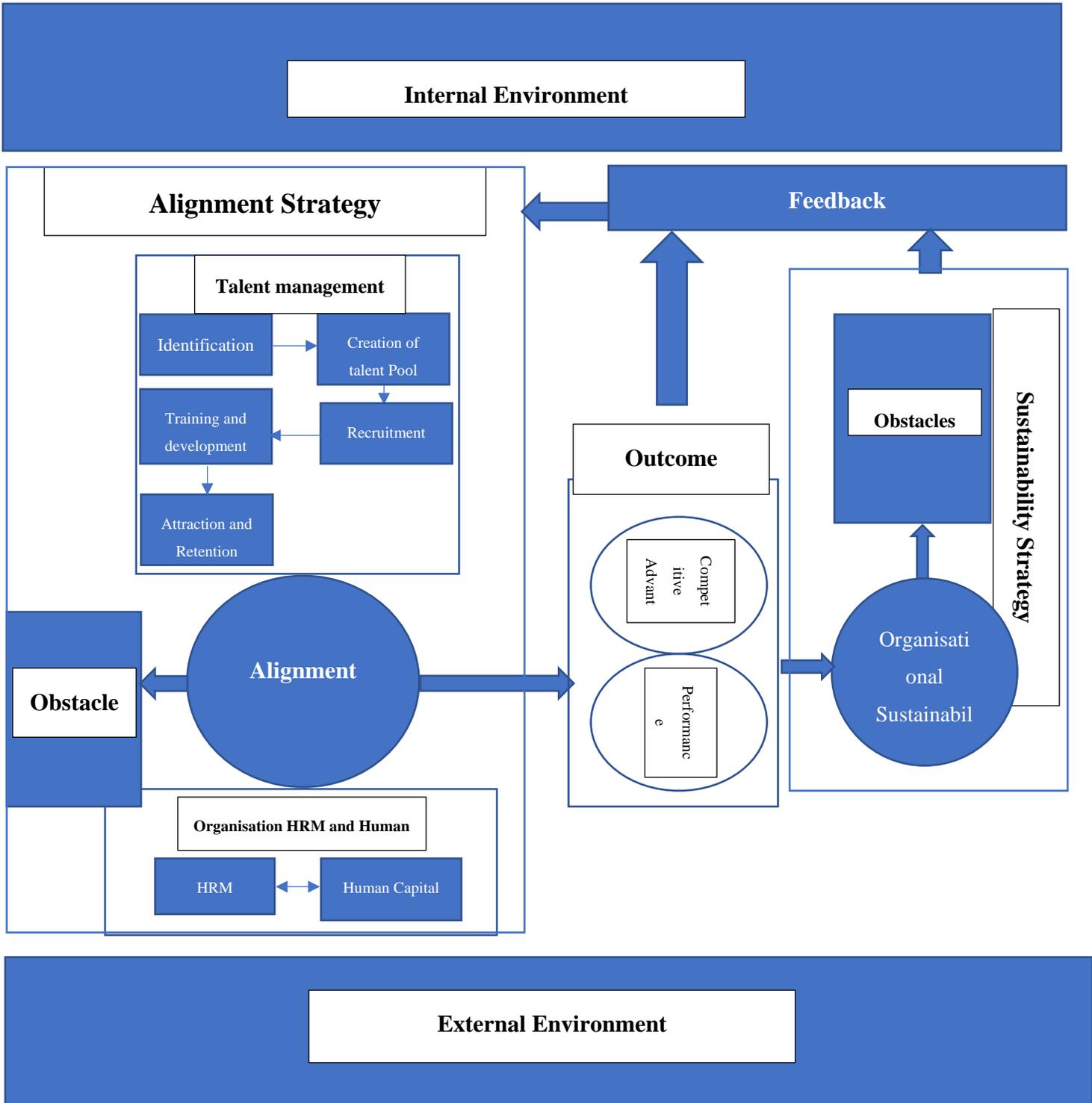


Figure 3-1: Theoretical Framework

Source: The Researcher

### **3.5 Uses and Benefits of Alignment Framework**

The talent management alignment framework is designed to help the talent management alignment with HRM and human capital strategies. Then, this alignment can help organisations achieve organisational sustainability. The basic benefit of this framework, in terms of academics, is the research on talent management in the Higher Education sector, as there is a lack of research on talent management in this sector (Paiseya & Paisey, 2016). More specifically, no single research has been conducted yet on talent management in the Saudi Higher Education system. Therefore, this research is contributing to academia, as it is focusing on an under-researched field. Moreover, this research embraced the Saudi Higher Educational field, which is lacking empirical research. Furthermore, this research can be considered as a platform for other researchers to pursue further studies and investigations in the TM field, and the Saudi Higher Education context.

The alignment framework can be used by Saudi Higher Educational organisations, as well as other regional Higher Educational institutions, to implement talent management strategies effectively. This framework is useful for such environments, where there is a lack or no knowledge at all of talent management. The talent management guidance model (see Figure 2-8) can help organisations to implement talent management strategies more effectively, as the model focuses on the main factors of talent management and its implications. Thus, the alignment framework is not only useful for Higher Educational organisations, but can be also implemented in other sectors, with minor changes related to the needs and requirements of that specific organisation.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This Chapter evaluated the literature that has been discussed in Chapter 2, as well as the basic process of talent management. The evaluation of the literature reflected that talent management is a systematic integration of five stages that effectively contribute to the organisational performance and sustainability. Furthermore, the evaluation of the literature showed that, if these stages are implemented effectively and aligned with the human capital

and HRM strategies of the organisation, can improve the overall performance of the organisation. A theoretical framework has been developed, and presented in Chapter 3, Figure 3-1. The evaluation of the talent management framework revealed two parts, the alignment strategy and the sustainability strategy. The alignment strategy represents the part of the framework, where talent management strategies are aligned with HRM and human capital strategies. For this reason, a talent management guidance model, as presented in Chapter 2, Figure 2-8, can be used. This framework may assist organisations to align the talent management process with HRM and human capital strategies. The outcome of the alignment part will directly impact the results of the sustainability part; as shown through the literature analysis and the developed framework, an effectively aligned talent management contributes positively to the overall performance of the organisation. Any positive or negative feedback will be then fed back to the initial stage of the framework.

The next Chapter will analyse the methodology used in the data collection, and will discuss the reasons behind adopting the respective research method.

## **4 Chapter Four: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

For research studies, methodology sets into place a framework, a strategy for how the researcher will take what is known about the subject and apply this knowledge to further answering the research questions. The importance of choosing carefully the correct methodology and its design represent the specific skills and tools at the researcher's disposal. The design of the research methodology remains a challenge, because the researcher must determine the appropriate research philosophy based on the professional experience and understanding. Part of the issue explored in this Chapter is how design is determined out of research philosophy, as these philosophical views will focus the tools upon individual research observations, while always in relationship to the research objectives. Therefore, it is important to examine the various research philosophies and forms of research methodology like quantitative and qualitative, in order to determine the most appropriate tools that will assist in answering and supporting the research questions. Ultimately, the research design will be determined by how well the researcher defines these forms of methodology in relationship to their unique philosophy, but also how the research skills for data may intersect with this philosophy. The research philosophy must be grounded on how the researcher views the value of data collection upon specific parameters, as this directly affects the reliability and validity of data. This Chapter discusses the methodology in relation to the research questions and objectives, as outlined in Chapter 1, and adopts the terminology of the research process onion (Saunders *et al.*, 2009), as presented in Figure 4-1.

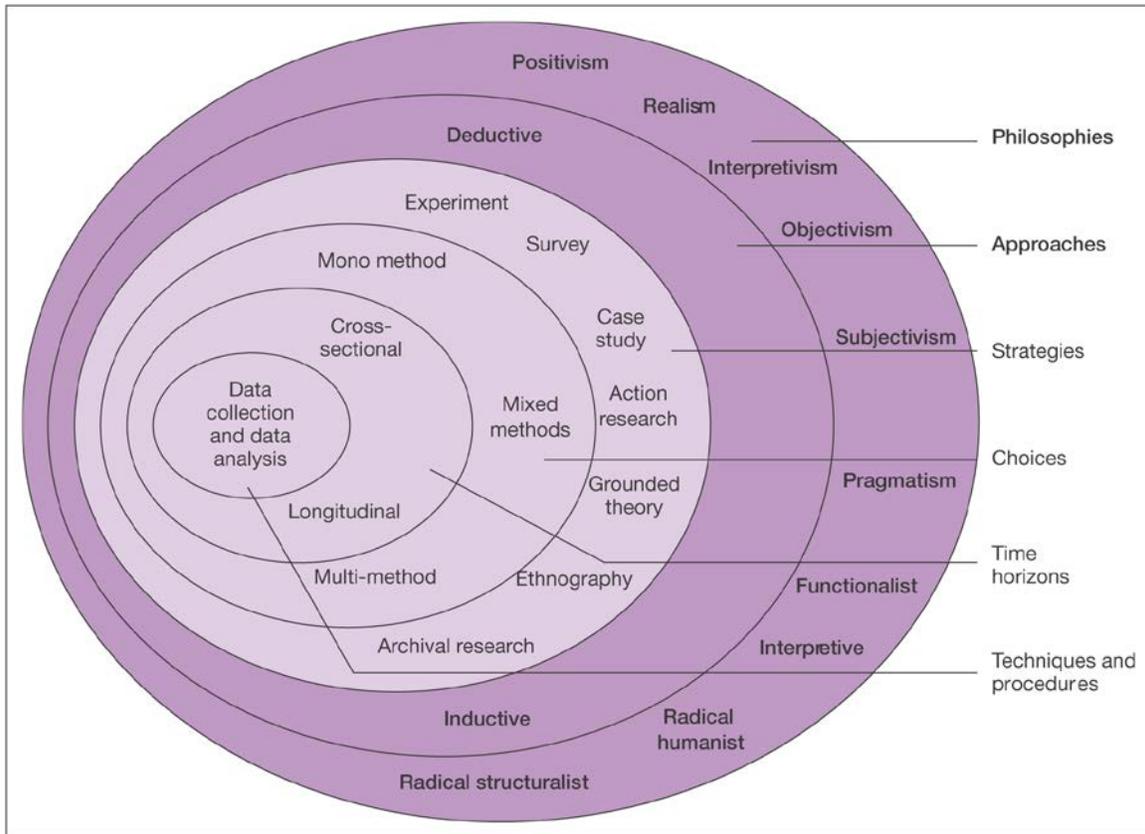


Figure 4-1: The research process “onion”

Source: Saunders et al. (2009)

## 4.2 Research philosophy

Research philosophy can be formed by the personal knowledge and experiences within the academic frameworks for forming methodologies. While much reading about research philosophy suggests a mix of personal observation and experience inspiring the need for research, there are also classical and modern interpretations of the research philosophy that remain important to this research. Making choices toward effective research design may be directly related to the researcher’s relationship with the environment, but also with the professional understanding of how academic research works. There are frameworks, protocols and rules that must be followed to achieve reliable results and answers. The researcher must adapt to a defined approach for maintaining these frameworks while also working towards achieving the research goals.

This research adopts the interpretivism approach, which provides further insight into how research coincides with the real-world experience of those who live within the world being observed. Part of what is interesting remains in the scope and specific tools used for observation and compiling data in a way that remains true to that experience (Maxwell, 2005). Interpretivist research assumes that reality is socially constructed, and that the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed. As a social scientist, the investigator interprets this empirical reality in terms of what it means to the observed people. At this point, this research adopted the interpretivism approach, to collect the essential data that would answer the research questions and prove the proposition underscored in this investigation.

Researchers have argued that the data gathered within the interpretivist research paradigm is primarily descriptive, although it may be quantitative (Creswell, 2005). The 'interpretivism' research paradigm is essentially qualitative. The emphasis is on the exploration and insight, rather than experiment and the mathematical treatment of data. In this type of research, the interpretivism research paradigm could address questions about how and why something is happening. It can also address questions about what is happening in a wider context, and what is likely to happen in the future. This method can seldom do so with statistical confidence, because the 'truth' is not grounded in mathematical logic. The 'truth' has to be a conclusion in the mind of a reader (or listener), based on the researcher's power of argument.

In the research design, the researcher needs to decide on how the research will be conducted, and what steps will take place to maintain research ethics and frameworks toward reliable outcomes. This means that the researcher must make decisions upon the philosophy, based on the internal strengths and weaknesses of the research skills. The researcher then follows the interpretivism paradigm, as a core skill and way of viewing the research. Adopting the interpretivism lens will allow the research to build upon observations and literatures reviewed, but also to seek answers from individuals who are experiencing organisational talent management problems. If these individuals are difficult

to access, then, a case study fulfils the need to examine these scenarios for talent management strategies.

The interpretivist research focuses on the full complexity of human logic, as the situation emerges (Jakowicz, 2005). The execution of this research project can be divided into four sections of focus. First, the Researcher assesses the current conditions of the situation. For this research, this can be done via interviews with the candidates. Also by analysing the literature, the Researcher seeks a background theory, as a foundation for further understanding. Also, these processes can be achieved through interviews and observations of the participants, but these insights can return to the theoretical basis for questioning, as a mean of organizing the research. The collection of the data works to examine the effect of talent management on the overall performance of the organisation, and its alignment with HRM and human capital strategies (Luthans *et al.*, 2015). Finally, a presentation of the findings serves to promote insights into providing specific recommendations for the organisations, as the data collected provides real world feedback that can be further validated.

### **4.3 Research approach**

In general, the research approach seeks to provide ample foundations for the steps needed to achieve the research process. The research approach looks to defining these steps, in a way that addresses the gap between research questions, the literature reviewed and the Researcher's lens, from which the research strategy is set into place. This research requires a specialised approach to promote the new conceptual model needed for talent management practices. The special approach of this research offers a new conceptual model, in response to the need for fresh insights in the field of talent management in the Higher Educational sector. The two research approaches which the Researcher can refer to are inductive and deductive. In this research, the Researcher has adopted the inductive approach.

#### **4.3.1 Inductive approach**

Similarly to the styles of leaders and traits within teams, research takes upon different qualities. The inductive and deductive research forms are two striking, polar opposites

within the research process, but that also have profound valuable use for the research strategy and design of data collection for analysis.

The inductive reasoning is quite the opposite of the deductive reasoning because such an enquiry begins with a larger, broader picture on the subject for research (Boyce, 2006). The Researcher, in this particular study, has evaluated many different frameworks of talent management that already exist in the literature, as well as the effect of talent management on the overall performance of the organisation. There is a broader scope or a complete picture view within this context that seeks to explore the realm of possibility, but also to allow the inductive reasoning to support the need to explore every angle, in order to provide a more complete view and reasoning for the observations (Maxwell, 2005). In other words, such reasoning can explain and justify the overall logic for what happens or takes place within the context of the observation. Therefore, it is really quite the opposite of deduction, because the Researcher is starting at a specific insight, and then, using a broader view to collect information.

However, despite the advantage of this inductive process for a more complete investigation of the issue, it can grow quite complex, if not designed with specific parameters or controls in place (Creswell, 2013). Another issue with the inductive reasoning is that it remains closely tied to the concept of quantitative and qualitative forms of data. The inductive view of reasoning allows for a much more qualitative view of research than the deductive reasoning, which, depending upon the topic under investigation, may not adequately support the research needs. Qualitative data will allow for the opinions of many different types of perspectives, which can be powerful in terms of validation with variation (Maxwell, 2005).

For this research, and given the context of the Saudi environment where no prior research based on talent management in Saudi education system was already conducted, as shown in Subsection 2.4.2, justifies the rationale of using interpretivism as the main lens for the Researcher. A research approach must reflect the needs of the research questions, and the environment in which this research is conducted. The qualitative research is descriptive in

nature, sometimes perceived as emotional or opinionated, but when executed properly, it provides a rich contextual basis for understanding the issues at hand.

#### **4.4 Research strategy**

This research sets into place a wide range of needs, in terms of how to address the research question and objectives. Due to the nature of talent management and Human Resources, and its impact on the overall performance of the organisation and sustainability, setting into place a solid research strategy that meets academic standards, ethics and parameters remains important. The research strategy should encompass the steps needed to fitting research methods to meet these needs. The research strategy will promote the idea of steps and processes to engage the best possible quality of data.

#### **4.5 Research choice**

Researchers usually face a number of challenges, when designing the methodological approaches. Sometimes too many choices can create some weakness in the instrument (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). This research specifically focuses upon the use of the semi-structured interviews, to gather the data needed to answer the research questions (Boyce, 2006). The research aims to focus on the effect of talent management on the overall performance of the organisation. Furthermore, the Researcher aims to develop a framework that focuses on aligning talent management with HRM and human capital strategies. Interviews can be used as a means of creating an intimate connection between the Researcher and the participants. What makes the participant 'tick' or what compels them to behave in a certain manner with respect to their close relationship with one's own identity and then of course, one's relationship with the team, the leader and the organisation. Various data collection methods are available under the exploratory study approach (Yin, 2009). The bulk of interview questions seek to elicit information about attitudes and opinions, perspectives and insights of team leaders and employees in selected multinational organisations within the Saudi context (Alserhan, 2009).

The Researcher also considered how the selected methods for data collection revolved around the questionnaires, interviews and observations, as they all compose archival

directory for the exploratory study as valuable data. Such techniques extend the tool for deploying the methods and seeking to apply semi-structured interviews for the sake of this research (Stentz, 2012).

This research uses semi-structured interviews and documents, to gather the data needed to answer the research questions. The bulk of the interview questions seek to elicit information about talent management, stages of talent management, its impact on overall performance, alignment with HRM and human capital strategies, effect of internal and external environment on the organisation, and organisational sustainability. The research looks for how the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies affect the overall performance of the organisation that leads to sustainability. Moreover, this research seeks to understand the challenges that occur, or may occur in implementing talent management strategies, in alignment with HRM and human capital strategies. With this respect, such methods are defined by both, the qualitative and quantitative traits of the methodology as a valuable mix, instead of relying totally on one method.

#### **4.5.1 Mixed methods**

Part of the issue with creating a methodological framework for the mixed method approach is to understand how forms of data collection do not promote the mixed method. From above, for instance, there is the use of experimentation that works in a linear process that remains mono in process and procedures because it focuses upon only the experiment (Shuttleworth, 2008). This research aims to deploy the multi-method research strategy to create a multi-dimensional line of enquiry. Using a multi-method approach allows for further enquiry; furthermore, the use of different data collection tools allows a cross-sectional review that considers, not only primary and secondary forms of data, but also quantitative and qualitative forms of methods. Therefore, the research uses first, the semi-structured interviews, then, the surveyed questionnaires, and finally, the archival sources, so the research does not lack any processes (Stentz, 2012).

The research primarily uses qualitative method to achieve the overall purpose, which is to develop an effective strategic talent management Framework aligned with human capital and HRM strategies of the organisation, supported by practical implementational guidance

that will enhance the organisational sustainability. This method helped the researcher to understand participants, as well as their social and cultural contexts (Ajzen, 2005). Moreover, this method was deemed the most appropriate for this research, since it provides information to understand the processes behind observed results, and to assess the understanding of talent management in Saudi Higher Education system. In this case, the research explored the link between the strategic alignment of talent management with organisation sustainability in the Higher Education sector, and presented a framework which may help organisations to implement talent management more effectively.

Pathak and Intratat (2012) faced interesting challenges, while interpreting the qualitative data as stated. Boyce (2006) also cited that the semi-structured interviews guide provides a clear set of instructions for interviewers and could provide reliable and comparable qualitative data. Boyce (2006) further explained that semi-structured interviews are often preceded by observation, informal and unstructured interviewing, in order to allow the researchers to develop a keen understanding of the topic. This remains necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions.

The second stage of the research uses quantitative research questionnaires, in which a quantitative survey will be conducted to gather data. The Researcher used this method as a way to triangulate, since the qualitative opinion can form biasness. The quantitative part of the research is considered as a secondary research, and thus will be conducted once the qualitative data is collected and analysed. The quantitative methodology is a research methodology that comes under the umbrella of the positivism philosophy (Eldabi *et al.*, 2002). Under this methodology, the focus is on testing theories in which the researcher uses a deductive strategy that follows a linear structure, and then, causal links between concepts are formed and tested via hypothesis. Hence, the determination of causal links that are specified by hypothesis will determine the acceptance or rejection of a theory. Thus, the quantitative research methodology emphasizes on the numerical data, and measures the internal/external reliability and validity of causal links between concepts, by producing quantifiable conclusions. Therefore, the objectivity is an important aspect of the quantitative methodology that allows the researcher to make a generalised prediction (Guba

and Lincoln, 1994). The primary research method used in the second primary data collection and analysis is the quantitative survey design. The data is collected via a self-completion questionnaire. The intent is to generalise through the sample, by either doing a cross-sectional or longitudinal analysis (Creswell, 2013).

This research mainly adopts the inductive approach, through establishing a conceptual model and a theme, to develop interview questions for the fieldwork. However, the second phase of the research uses more of the deductive approach, by conducting a quantitative survey, and using conceptual and theoretical structures tested by empirical observations.

#### **4.6 Research time horizon**

One commonality between research projects is the issue of time and resources. An accurate timeline is needed to manage the study and keep it tight to deadlines and time horizons. What remains clear to the Researcher is the vast difference between longitudinal studies and cross-sectional studies. Longitudinal studies face a research timeframe of many years, and the expectation remains defined by the horizon extending beyond the present conditions (Creswell, 2013).

A longitudinal research could take a decade to complete and promotes many revisions and aspects that could change over time. A cross-sectional research is mostly appropriate with this particular research, because it will focus upon observational techniques that seek data collection on a specific population, over a specific duration of time. This research focuses upon the talent management process, and its alignment with HRM and human capital strategies. Also, for the impact that this alignment will have on the organisational performance, a cross-sectional study seems more appropriate (Paul and Robinson, 2007). This type of timing also fits with the mixed method approach that creates the research design.

#### **4.7 Research technique and procedures**

The classification of the sample remains important, focusing on the non-probability sampling, including accidental, quota, purposive, and self-selected samples, with a chance of incomplete sampling as well. Non-probability sampling and the use of other techniques

to pick the samples were entirely left to the Researcher's discretion. Self-selection allowed for further convenience for the immediate access to the samples, but only with general or inductive purposes were not warranted. It is with this mind that the sample was selected from Saudi Universities.

Securing informed consent is not only expected to uphold ethical research practices, but also it also aids in organising the sampling process for the research. This research adopted the non-probability sampling technique, and more specifically, the purposive sampling. Under this sampling method, respondents were chosen for their professional experience, deemed relevant to the purpose of the research (Maxwell, 2005). As with other non-probability sampling methods, the purposive sampling does not produce a sample that is representative of a larger population. Yet, it can fit the needs of some studies, such as, a research of an organisation, community, or some other clearly defined and relatively limited group. For this research, the sample included high-level and mid-level employees within the Saudi Higher Education context that applies to these specific demographic groups (Alserhan *et al*, 2009).

The sampling technique adopted is purposive, as the groups participating were selected according to their position and experience in the Higher Education system. Therefore, 20-30 high-level and mid-level management employees should participate in the semi-structured interviews data collection, with another 100 plus executive level employees and students in Saudi Higher Education system for the survey questionnaires.

#### **4.7.1 Research design**

Much of the research design is closely related to how researchers form critical links between the philosophy, environmental observation and resources. The research design will include a set of processes that deploy these skills, in a way to achieve answering the research questions. However, the research design also seeks to deploy methods that fit the needs of the environment under study, in a way that also promotes the quality of data to be collected. For this research, the best possible method is the mixed design, combining the quantitative and qualitative forms.

The purpose of the research design is to help the researcher answer the research questions, and fulfil the research objectives (Bryman and Bell, 2011). It could be noted that the design type used by the Researcher is the exploratory study research design. However, the data collection method works to determine the impact of talent management on human resource performance, by the use of semi-structured interviews, observation, triangulation approach, and cross-case analysis of data (Yin, 2009).

The research design often equates with the qualitative research methods; the exploratory studies are prime examples of qualitative research, which also adopts the interpretivist approach to data, and studies subjects within their context. The exploratory study research design is also useful for testing whether scientific theories and models actually work in the real world (Shuttleworth, 2008). Hence, this research followed three stages of research design with this main objective. The three stage methodological designs are explained as in Figure 4-1 below.

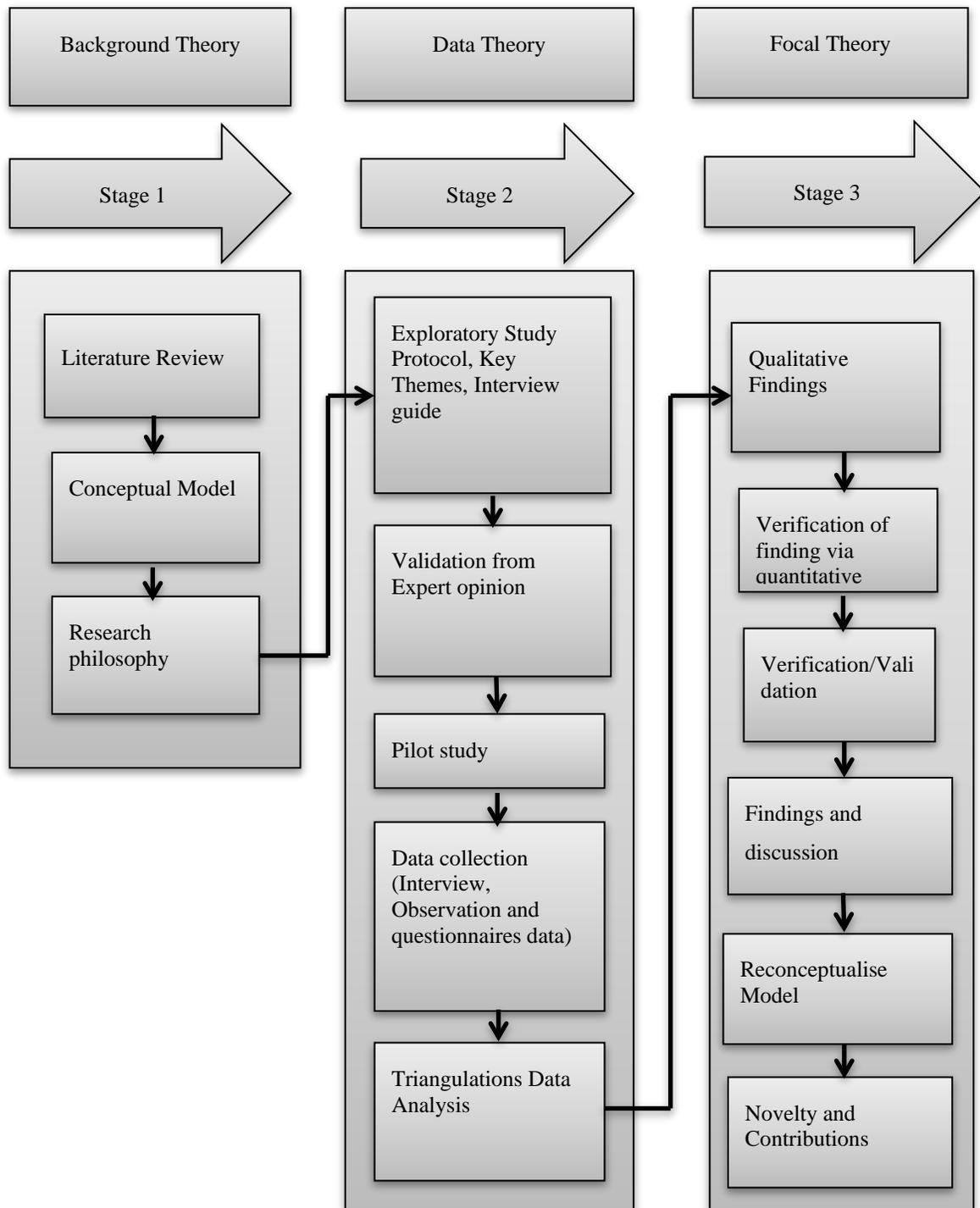


Figure 4-2: The Research Design of the Research

Source: Phillips and Pugh (2010)

#### 4.7.2 Data Collection

For this research, the research process takes upon four specific steps for the collection of data. First, the Researcher will deploy semi-structured interviews for data collection by the targeted groups of participants. Interviews data collection will take place over a certain period of time that allows the participants to adequately reply. From this semi-structured interviews' data collection, further data can be composed to develop questionnaires for the second step of the research. The questionnaires will be sent to participants, who occupy executive level, and students studying or connected with Saudi Higher Education system. The third stage refers to the analyses of the findings from both qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires. The final stage involves the observation of both qualitative and quantitative findings.

So far, the purpose of the interviews was explained, the selection of participants was justified, as well as the expected duration of the interview. The informed consent of the interviewees is requested (either written, or documented oral).

The selected sample size will directly relate to data saturation and how successful the Researcher strives in promoting the collaboration level of participants. The sample size that will be used in this research is directly impacted by the amount of access that the Researcher has, to such specific groups of targeted populations of employees at Saudi Higher educational organisation (Alserhan *et al.*, 2009). Taking into consideration the time and resources of the Researcher, the data collection method and the professional analysis skills, rather than simply the size of the sample also allow for further composition and saturation of data, within the mixed method applied (Stentz, 2012). The sample size and its proposed saturation of data will be appropriate, considering the dynamics and access to such populations, at the disposal of the Researcher. Part of the issue includes attitude and how some organisations are just not open to allowing for the research process (Ajzen, 2005).

For the purpose of this research, a maximum of thirty (30) semi-structured interviews will be performed within Saudi Higher Educational organisations (Stentz, 2012). The Researcher intends to have the interviews equally distributed between organisations, at the

rate of 10 interviews in each location and organisation. The length of each interview is approximately 60 minutes. There will be a research meeting between the Researcher and the participants to discuss this interview process, the interview guide and legalities entailed, as well as the ethical frameworks set into place, to create protective measures for the research (Boyce, 2006). An interview guide is prepared as an essential component for conducting the interviews. This guide includes a list of questions, topics, and issues with regard to talent management, human capital strategies, HRM and alignment of these strategies, and how the model applies or works in the context of the participants' role. The interview guide should be clear enough, and must avoid uncertainty, so as not to confuse the participants.

Data saturation refers to the situation when interviews do not provide any new or additional insights of the topic under study, because the information gathered is repetitive (Yin, 2009). For the sake of this research, the interviews will be halted, once data saturation is recognised, leading back to the estimation raised by the Researcher of having 10 to 30 interviews, as it would be impossible to predict the point of saturation. However, the risk of saturation can be lessened with the adoption of a variation of research methods. Therefore, the mixed method for data collection might be more appropriate than a solo method.

Many research studies deploy various research methods at the same time, in order to gather the research data needed to answer the research questions. Methodologies seek the formulation of specific data sampling, when probability sampling is set into place. Probability can also involve simple random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling, when compared to non-probability sampling. Given the nature of the research problem outlined in Chapter 1, it became clear that non-probability data sampling methods would be more appropriate for this research (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, the qualitative approach adopted by this research almost takes probability out of the equation and therefore, it should not be pursued here.

### **4.7.3 Pilot study**

A pilot study would serve as an exploratory case, to obtain an informative prior theory that shapes the interview protocol. This research will rely on this pilot study, to have access to the necessary organisations in the Saudi Higher Education context, through the Researcher's personal relationships and networks. This is based on the exploratory study protocol, to collect the data from the pilot study. Finally, the report of the pilot study must reflect with a clear understanding from the Researcher side, and should be explicit about the different approaches used for both, the design strategy and the data collection procedures (Yin, 2009). Consequently, the pilot study allows the Researcher, to practice the skills needed to move towards data analysis and the findings. In this research, the pilot study was conducted, before the final interviews and surveys were taken place. A Saudi Higher Educational professional working in a Saudi university was selected for the pilot study of semi-structured interviews, whereas five respondents linked with Saudi Higher Education system were elected randomly, for the pilot study of the survey design. Figure 4-3 below illustrates how data collection takes place.

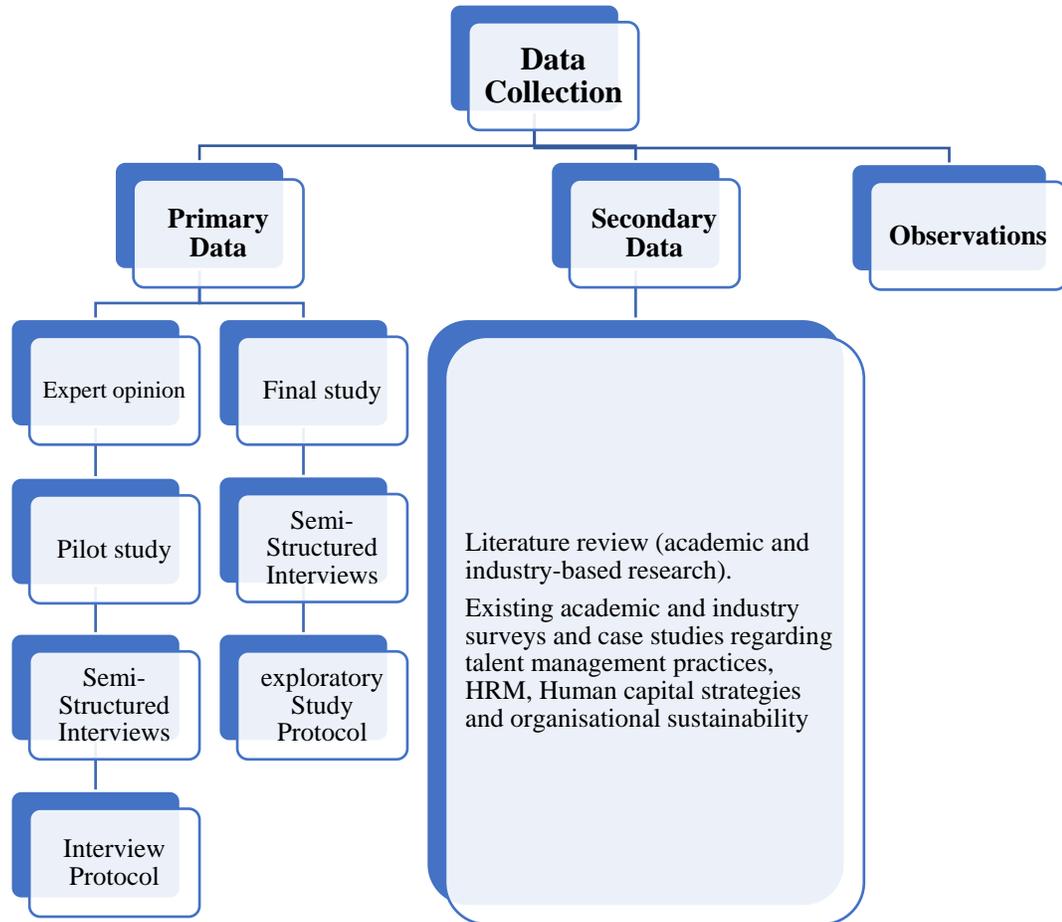


Figure 4-2: Data collection procedure

Source: Researcher

#### 4.7.4 Semi-structured interviews

Data analysis seeks to offer results to the data collection process, and for this research, analysing the interview data is significantly important. So, to accomplish the participation and trust at this stage of the semi-structured interviews, a sample is used with a set of key questions to be raised, before the actual interviews took place. This method of data collection is conducted with a fairly open framework, focused, conversational, and two-way communication (Boyce, 2006). This technique is used to obtain feedback, and provides the opportunity to explore an issue or service. It allowed the interviewees to express personal opinion, concerns and feelings. Relevant topics are initially identified, the

possible relationships between these topics become the basis for more specific questions (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). For these purposes, the interview guide was devised and subjected to testing via a pilot study for interviews, to see if these questions stood up to the process. Normally, the information obtained from semi-structured interviews will provide not just answers, but also the reasons for these answers. This is the driving force of the research to achieve answers. Analysis of data remains an important step because it will reveal the degree of validity later, but also, the true application of recommendations for organisations who mostly need those answers.

#### **4.7.5 Questionnaires**

In a dual approach to methodology, or specifically the use of both questionnaires and interviews for data collection, the qualitative nature of the subject matter suggests that the mixed methods approach benefits the data collection, but it may lend it a lack of balance between tools (Maxwell, 2005). More valid information comes to light during the one on one, intimate setting of the interviews. However, it is important for the Researcher to code the participants, regardless of the type of participation or the type of data collection (questionnaires and/or interviews). Keeping track of the numbers and the category of participants reveals which pools of data are more important. To succeed at a dual or mixed approach, the research should first design an interview script, for use during the interview stage (Stentz, 2012). After which, the Researcher may design the questionnaires to be used in the survey. Such surveying acts a primary form of data collection, which remains important to the research process.

For the purpose of this research, a semi-structured data collection is designed to meet the needs of primary data, or new and unique growth in the field. After which, a secondary questionnaire was designed to meet the requirement of triangulation, and to overcome the problem of biasness that might arise, due to the qualitative nature of research. The questions in the survey design were adopted from the research of Verhaegen (2005), Collings and Mellahi, (2009), Beheshtifar *et al.* (2012), (Collings, 2014) and Paiseya and Paisey, (2016). These questions were designed in a way so that all major factors of talent management and their importance could be determined, through the lens of quantitative

survey. The Researcher objective was to link the qualitative findings with the quantitative survey, so that the same factors and causal links can be tested and verified, through qualitative and quantitative methodology.

#### **4.7.6 Design of Research interviews and questionnaires**

This Section explains the process of developing interview questions and survey questionnaires, around the research areas that were established through the literature review. Table 4-1 illustrates the structure of the research interview, whereas Table 4-2 presents the structure of survey questionnaire.

Table 4-1: The structure of research interview

Description of Section	Topics
<p><b>SECTION I:</b></p> <p>Demographic Profile</p>	<p>This part concerns of the background position/ function of the interviewees.</p>
<p><b>SECTION II:</b></p> <p>Investigating the Effect of internal and external organization environment</p>	<p>This part is investigating the existing effect of internal and external organizational environment on talent management, HRM and Human Capital Strategies, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Organization Performance.</p>
<p><b>SECTION III:</b></p> <p>Investigating the Effect of talent management with HRM and Human capital strategies</p>	<p>This part is investigating the existing organization strategic alignment between TM, and HRM and human capital strategies.</p>
<p><b>SECTION IV:</b></p> <p>Investigation of organizational sustainability strategy</p>	<p>This part is investigating the existing organization sustainability strategy, its advantages/disadvantages and level of implementation</p>

<p><b>SECTION V:</b></p> <p>Investigation of proposed framework practical implementation</p>	<p>This part is investigating the proposed framework organizational sustainability practical implementation.</p>
<p><b>SECTION VI:</b></p> <p>Additional comments or suggestion</p>	<p>This part gives the interviewee the opportunity to give their comments and suggestions.</p>

Source: Researcher

Table 4-2: The structure of survey questionnaire

Description of Section	Topics
<p><b>SECTION I:</b></p> <p>Demographic Profile</p>	<p>This part is concerned of the background position/ function of the interviewees.</p>
<p><b>SECTION II:</b></p> <p>Gathering data on participant knowledge and experience of talent management</p>	<p>This part is investigating whether participants have any experience or academic/industrial knowledge regarding talent management.</p>
<p><b>SECTION III:</b></p> <p>Investigating the participant knowledge about talent</p>	

management process, factors on which it depends on.	This section intended to understand the respondents knowledge about the talent management process and the factors that are associated with it
<p><b>SECTION IV:</b></p> <p>Investigating the implications of talent management alignment with existing strategies</p>	This section is intended to understand the implications of implementing an alignment strategy of talent management with organisations existing HRM and human capital strategies.

Source: Researcher

#### 4.7.7 Observation

Observation covers events in real time, and takes place in a natural environment where most of the time the respondents do not know that they are being observed. The research adopts data collection techniques, such as, interviews and observations, as outlined above. The research also looks to the experts' opinions and interview process, as steps that need to be taken to capture valid data within the specific environment for Human Resources and talent management. In this research methodology, the Researcher used coding techniques, charts and statistical graphs, in observing patterns and results from the data collection process. The qualitative findings were analysed used NVIVO to identify patterns that occurred in the semi-structured interviews, while the quantitative findings were observed through basic graphical charts and graphs.

Yin (2009) considers that pattern matching and explanation building the most two dominating analytical techniques used in data analysis. In order to analyse the findings, at the process should go through three activities: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. For example, data reduction (data coding) reflects new ideas about many issues that should go into a data display (data matrix), then, the Researcher can draw the

conclusion (matrix filling up). From this point, a theme about the results can be proposed, as the Researcher can start to see a pattern of trends within the data, which suggests a strong pathway toward validating some answers to the research questions (Creswell, 2013). In this research, coding was used to determine patterns that were reoccurring, then, the data was categorised and synthesised, to be finally presented through graphical charts and graphs, as shown later in Chapters 5 and 6.

The qualitative method offers richness in perspective that is warranted for the research of talent management strategies. Without the input of experts and performing the step of the interview process, the reliability of qualitative data falters. According to Saunders *et al.* (2011), “Experts’ opinion is a principal way of conducting exploratory research to clarify our understanding of topics and problems” (Saunders *et al.*, 2011, p. 53). After conducting a thorough literature review based on the objectives of the research, the first draft of the interview guide is produced. For the sake of testing the interview questions, and as a part of building trust between the Researcher and the high-level and mid-level managerial participants, the guide was used. Thus, the Researcher can be positively positioned for the mid-range team employees, and gain even further insight into the talent management impact and perceptions taking place at this level. The aim here is to understand the perspective from both points of view, the high-level and the mid-range employees. This will require the Researcher to create dialogue with the participants, way before the data collection process starts. Creating dialogue is important to the process so that the Researcher can capture the most accurate sets of data. This may start the process of designing a pilot study to test the interview process and the interview guide (Boyce, 2006). Therefore, it is critical to ask a specific group of experts to participate in a pilot study, taking into consideration that this group of experts will not be able to participate in the interview process.

The interview guide can be revised as recommended by the experts. Comments and suggestions given by these experts are therefore included in the revised interview guide, should revision be needed. This interview guide is used for the main empirical data collection, in alignment with what has been suggested by Yin (2009). Experts’ opinion is

used to further improve the interview questions, in order to make sure the participant understands what the question is. Also, the interview guide helps to find out if the research instrument was valid or invalid. Hence, the interview guide should be developed through the use of experts' opinion (Boyce, 2006). Also, the recommendations given by the experts can be included in the sub-questions from the main questions. Then, the questions are tested and piloted to ensure the suitability for the context of this research.

#### **4.7.8 Research quality**

A partial justification of conducting the research is, besides the Researcher's aim to answer the research questions, to establish values for quality research, which upholds academic standards in social sciences. For the area of Human Resources, talent management and organisational sustainability quality will arise from the interaction with participants, and supporting case studies as well as the literature. In this way, actions define the accountability and the compatibility with standards that have been previously set by other experts, in the field of organisational behaviour. This means that the research quality for this research must be met with the same standards for research, and devising methods for reliability of methods, so that the data can stand up to the quality controls of previous work. This calls to validity and seeking frameworks that established these standards early on.

#### **4.7.9 Research reliability**

The methods and tools for collecting data should be reliable, because this, in turn, creates reliable data, from which the results can be synthesised. This, in a way, determines the quality of research, and puts at the core of the activity the value for constructing tools that will find the answers for the research questions. Reliability and validity speak directly to the quality of research performed. If the data comes back as false or unreliable, there would be a lack of validity, and much of the process would be in vain. Putting the correct tools in place as a part of the research design will reflect the amount of time, talent and resources that the Researcher has dedicated, but also relate to the Researcher's definition of quality.

The challenge in the research process and framework is to reach a point, where the patterns in the noticeable trends start to define a certain level of reliability. In other words, the data

has been found to support repeatedly certain goals of the research. Reliability in terms of data for quantitative work will promote measurable numbers to a point of accuracy, and define the pattern as a means of understanding possible solutions. Yin (2009) raised the concern that much of reliability for the research will remain fully defined by the Researcher's access to organisations, with participants who are eager to share experience with incentives and rewards, while considering the cultural impact at their organisations. The issue here is how to gain access, but also, to make sure that the feedback will be authentic and coerced. The concern remains that the Researcher may have limited access to organisations that work to meet the level of validation needed, to support research goals.

#### **4.7.10 Research validity**

For the research quality to be attainable, the relationship between reliability and validity will be close, in terms of data and handling of data processes. While there must be measurable accuracy, there also must be a way to apply such data, so that it remains valuable to the research. This is how validity is born out of reliability. Reliable data promotes valid data, and outcomes toward solutions for the research questions. With respect to the research questions, aims and objectives, there is also a strong need for designing a methodology for the research that will seek specific elements of validation. While the Researcher remains concerned about access to the organisation, applying the organisation at the unit of measure also seeks to allow for further validation of the information, already supplied by the participants from the organisations (Yin, 2009). It may be that areas of validation take place within certain organisations. Certain lines of data happen within certain organisational cultures, due to certain factors found within those organisations (Alserhan *et al.*, 2009). How the culture of the individual organisation impacts the strategy for retention may directly relate to the organisation's management and leadership, but also this may not be seen at all organisations that the participants come from (Harackiewicz *et al.*, 2009). A point of validation will be deciding how the rate of validity will be measured within reason, for the value of the research. To what degree each organisation serves the purpose of the research and answers the research question remains a concern of interest. Validity remains an important quality factor to the research, as this will promote the significance of the findings, in terms of setting parameters for reliability,

but also to seek justification for the types of data collection procedures selected for this research. The relationship between reliability and validity directly relates to data results and discussions, achieving unique outcomes for the research.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

To conclude, this Chapter serves as a foundation for the methodology and the research design elements, to support further examination and deployment of research tools (survey and interview) to available organisations, as a means of reaching participants for the research. This means taking existing gaps in literature, and promoting the creation of a new framework, to handle the new reality of talent management and organisational sustainability for the organisation, to the degree that it recognises a need for further talent management strategies. This means that an appropriate methodology is a means for supporting research steps, arising from the combination of gaps in the literature with gaps found in the existing frameworks, to achieve the correct tool for research instrumentation. Every research project has different needs, according to the gaps identified, but also, every researcher has differing view, strengths and weaknesses related to their research experiences.

This Chapter has examined specific research philosophies, techniques and tools to guide the process of research design, and to seek the best possible structure in which to deploy the full-scale mixed method of data collection, questionnaires and interviews. The purpose behind this selection for this type of research that seeks both quantitative and qualitative outcomes is to seek tools that can achieve both types of data collection. This mixed method of data collection (questionnaires and interviews) allows the results to be measurable and purposeful, toward proving the research aim that Higher Education organisations may improve the overall performance, by aligning talent management with HRM and human capital strategies. Furthermore, in this Chapter, the research methodology is explained by describing an overall picture of the qualitative research. The research philosophy and approach are also discussed, followed by a justification for using the qualitative method and the exploratory study strategy. Moreover, it offers an analysis of the empirical methodology, in terms of research design, data collection and data analysis.

This Chapter has sought to define how these steps will be determined and defined, in a way to use the Researcher's best skills, and experiences, as well as strengths and weaknesses. Having the tools in place allows the Researcher to carry forward, and to explore how the gaps in literature and frameworks will create a new stage in this research, to elaborate sustainable strategies that leaders can use to identify opportunities for better talent management strategies.

In the next Chapter, the Researcher will analyse the findings of data collection from semi-structured interviews.

## **5 Chapter Five: Qualitative Data- Collection and Findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This Chapter analyses the qualitative data that had been collected, through semi-structured interviews. The aim of conducting the semi-structured interviews was to identify the level of understanding for the concept of talent management, in the Saudi Higher Education organisations, and to analyse the impact of implementing strategies associated with talent management in the future. The reason for conducting semi-structured interviews in the first phase of data collection was the lack or minimum knowledge of talent management in the Saudi context. By conducting one to one or video link interviews, the Researcher was able to clear any sort of confusion regarding the topic. Therefore, the aim of qualitative interviews was to identify certain patterns, themes relationships, and new concepts that may arise throughout the research, thus, improving the overall understanding of the phenomenon (Cassell, et al., 2006).

Furthermore, this Chapter discusses the theoretical aspects of talent management and organisational sustainability, as discussed in Chapter 2, and analysed in Chapter 3. This discussion is, therefore, aligned with the findings of the qualitative data in this Chapter, and later on with the empirical data in Chapter 6. Consequently, the aim of this Chapter is to analyse the qualitative part of the research that was conducted through semi-structured interviews, then, applying the empirical evidence to validate the theoretical talent management framework (see Figure 3-1), as presented in Chapter 3.

### **5.2 Interview data analysis**

This Section discusses the interview questions in detail, and presents its outcomes as well as its findings. It contains six Sections, each Sub-section represents the interview protocol dedicated to the different aspects of TM and organisational sustainability.

Table A.1 in Appendix A summarises the questions that were asked to each of the 21 participants. It also determines, in each part, the questions and the variables identified from the data collection.

### 5.3 Section 1- Background position

This Section analyses the managerial position of the 21 interviewees, and the respective departments the interviewees were associated with. Figure 5-1 shows that the majority of the participants occupy high level management positions. This was an important aspect in selecting the interviewees, as the Researcher intended to collect the point of views of higher level managers, who are involved in making and implementing such strategies.

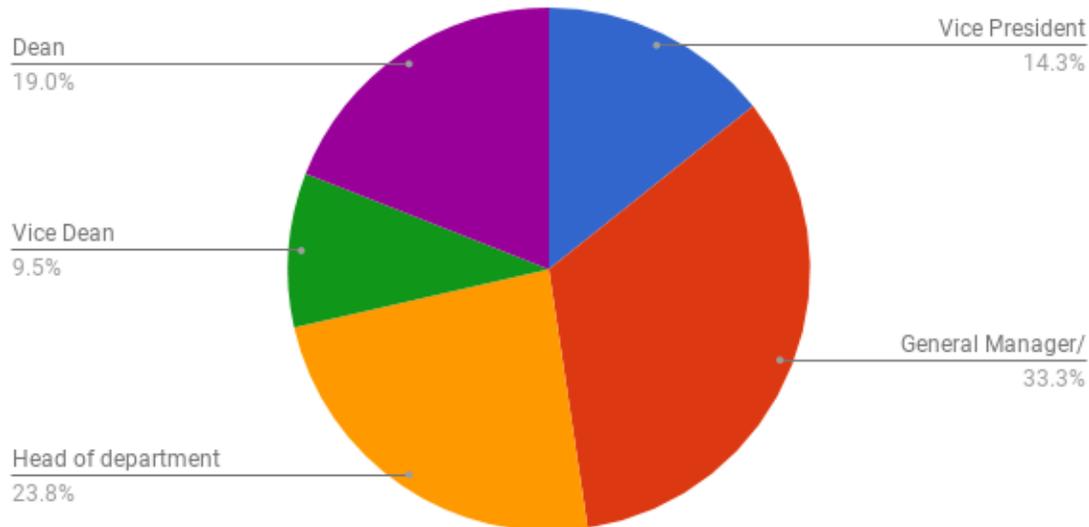


Figure 5-1: Managerial level of interviewees Figure

Figure 5-2 shows the respective departments in which the interviewees were working or associated with. As it can be seen in Figure 5-2, the majority of the interviewees were associated with the academic departments and academic affairs. The reason behind choosing this sample for the interviews was intentional, as the Researcher aimed to align the talent management strategies with organisational human capital and HRM strategies. In this way, the Researcher was able to extract the in-depth knowledge, problems and hurdles, usually associated with implementing such strategies in the academic departments. In parallel, some interviewees were also associated with the HRM, strategy and planning departments, as the research also intended to focus on developing future strategies of HRM that can be integrated with talent management.

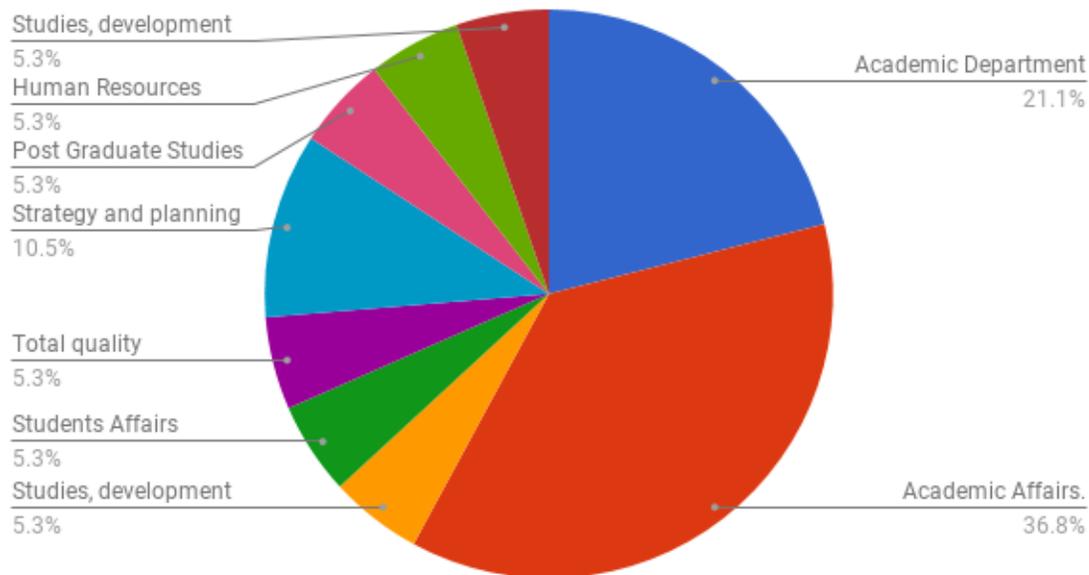


Figure 5-2: Department of interviewees

#### 5.4 Section 2- Internal and external organisational environment

This Section focuses on analysing the effects of internal and external organisational environments on talent management, human capital and HRM strategies, sustainable competitive advantage and organisational sustainability. The Section is divided too three Subsections, in each, ten questions were asked to interviewees regarding the internal and external organisational environments and their impact on talent management and organisational sustainability. The ten questions in each Sub-section are organised, where five question focus on internal organisational factors, such as leadership, communication, financial stability, HRM structure and formal structure of the organisation. The remaining five question focus on the external factors, such as economic conditions, technological advancements, law and legislation, environmental conditions and social norms. The Researcher aimed to understand the impact of these factors on talent management, HRM and human capital strategies and long term competitive advantage, respectively.

### 5.4.1 Effect of internal and external environments on talent management

In this Sub-section, the Researcher used ten questions to analyse and understand the effects of internal and external organisational environments on talent management. The internal organisational environment refers to controllable factors that impact the performance of the organisation, such as the leadership style, level and means of communication, formal structure, employee morale and financial issues. It includes both, the organisation's strengths and weaknesses, as these factors directly impact the overall performance of the organisation. On the other hand, the external organisational environment refers to the uncontrollable factors outside the organisation that may impact directly or indirectly the organisation. These factors include the political situation of the country in which the organisation is operating, such as the economic conditions, social situation, technological advancements, legislative changes and environmental issues.

A total of ten questions were used to identify the key factors that impact talent management strategies in the internal and external organisational environments.

#### 5.4.1.1 Internal Leadership-Question 1

The first question focuses on the leadership style of upper/higher managerial hierarchy. It aimed at understanding the effects of good/bad leadership styles on talent management implementation in the organisation. As shown in Figure 5-3, 61.9 % of the interviewees

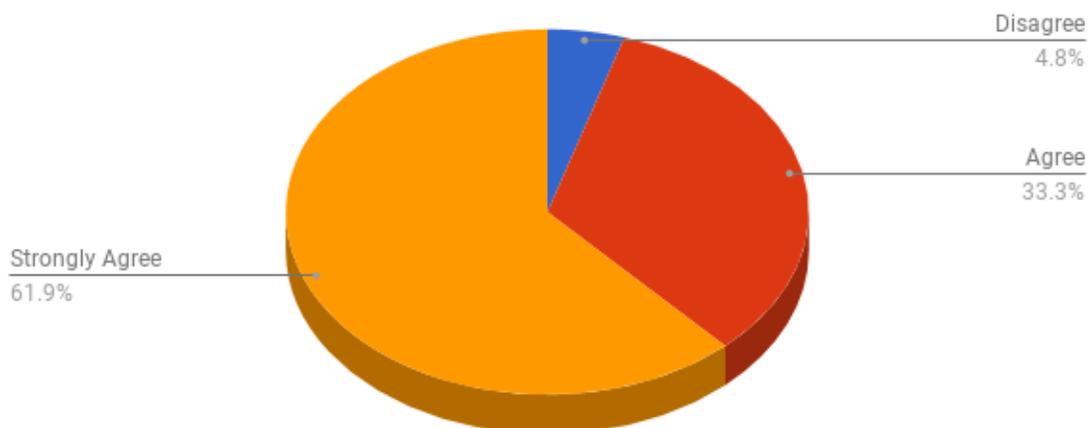


Figure 5-3: Internal leadership

strongly agreed with the notion that leadership style can greatly impact the talent management implementation within the organisation.

#### 5.4.1.2 Internal communication-Question 2

This question was asked to analyse the effect of effective horizontal communication among employees at the same level, as well as between managers and lower level employees. Effective communication among employees at different levels is an important aspect of the internal organisational environment. The interviewees were asked whether effective communication among different level of employees will positively impact the talent management implementation in the organisation. As shown in Figure 5-4, 76.2 % of the interviewees strongly agreed, while none of the interviewees disagreed with this notion.

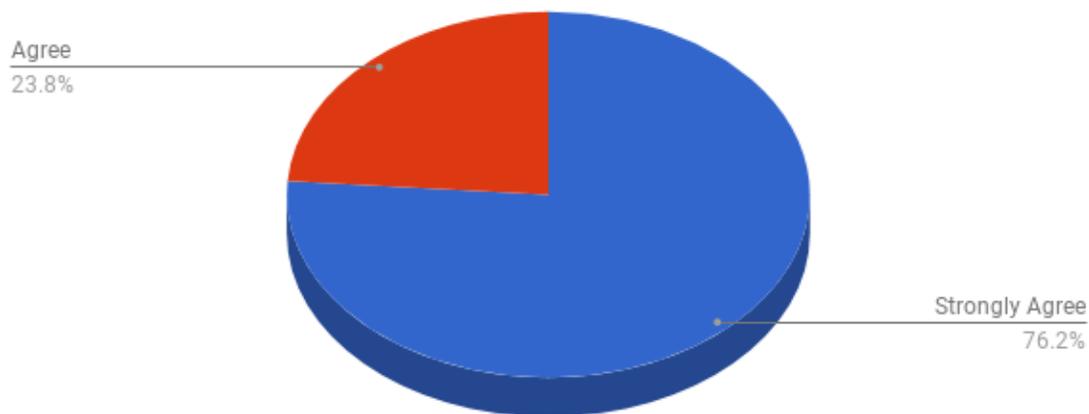


Figure 5-4: Internal communication

#### 5.4.1.3 Internal HR function-Question 3

This question aimed at understanding whether interviewees agree to the fact that the existing HR structure can help in implementing talent management strategies in an organisation. Despite being one of the most important aspects of internal organisational environment, the response was not as clear as the previous two questions. As shown in Figure 5-5, the majority of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that existing HR structure can help in implementing TM in the organisation. However, only

a small percentage of the interviewees were either not sure, or disagreed with this claim. This shows that the lack of knowledge regarding talent management is one reason, why some interviewees were unsure about its implementation through the existing HR structure.

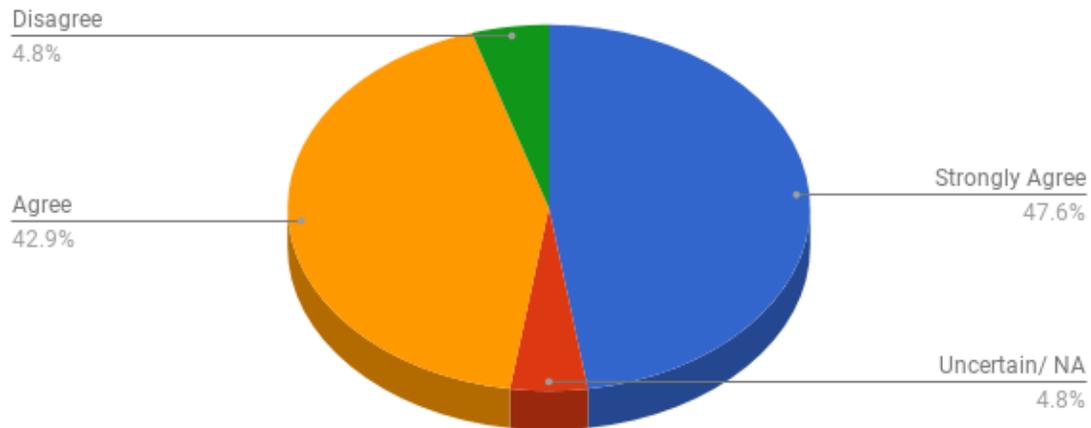


Figure 5-5: Internal HR Function

#### 5.4.1.4 Internal formal structure-Question 4

This question was presented to the interviewees to understand their perspectives, regarding the formal structure of the organisation. Having a formal structure in an organisation can have a positive effect on the overall performance of the organisation. The interviewees were asked whether having a formal structure will help in implementing talent management strategies. Figure 5-6 shows that 85.8 % of the interviewees agreed with the Researcher's point of view. However, 14.3% were unsure or uncertain regarding this claim. This is mainly due to the lack of formal structures in some Saudi Higher Educational institutions.

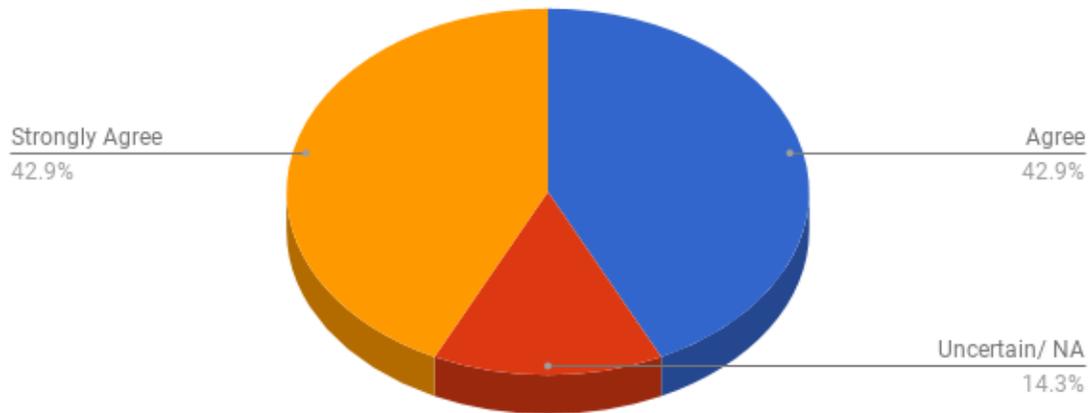


Figure 5-6: Internal formal structure

#### 5.4.1.5 Internal financial stability-Question 5

This question refers to the financial situation of the organisation. A stable financial forecast can help in implementing talent management strategy. The interviewees were asked whether they believe that a stable financial position and performance of the organisation can ease out the implementation of talent management strategies. Figure 5-7 shows that more than 80% of the interviewees agreed (42.9%) or strongly agreed (42.9%) with this view, however, a small proportion was either unsure (4.8%) or disagreed (4.8%) with this view. Given the fact that Saudi Higher Educational institutions are funded by the Government, the Researcher aims to recommend such strategies to the Saudi Higher Educational organisations, which can help them sustain and manage their finances independently.

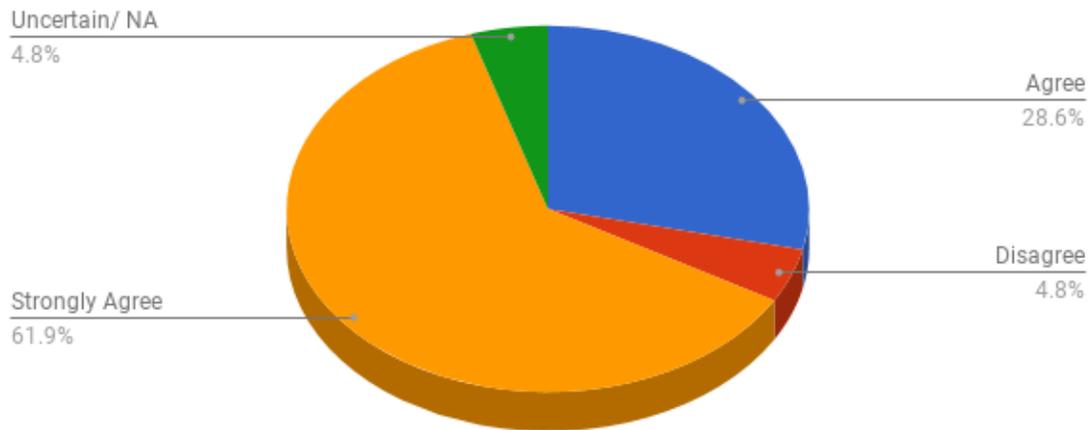


Figure 5-7: Internal financial stability

#### 5.4.1.6 External economic conditions-Question 6

This question focused on understanding one of the external organisational environment factors. External economic conditions of the society, where the organisation operates, can impact the performance of the organisation. The interviewees were asked whether economic conditions of the society can have a significant impact on talent management implementation in the organisation. Figure 5-8 shows that all interviewees agreed to the Researcher's point of view that, external economic conditions significantly impact the implementation of TM strategies in the organisation.

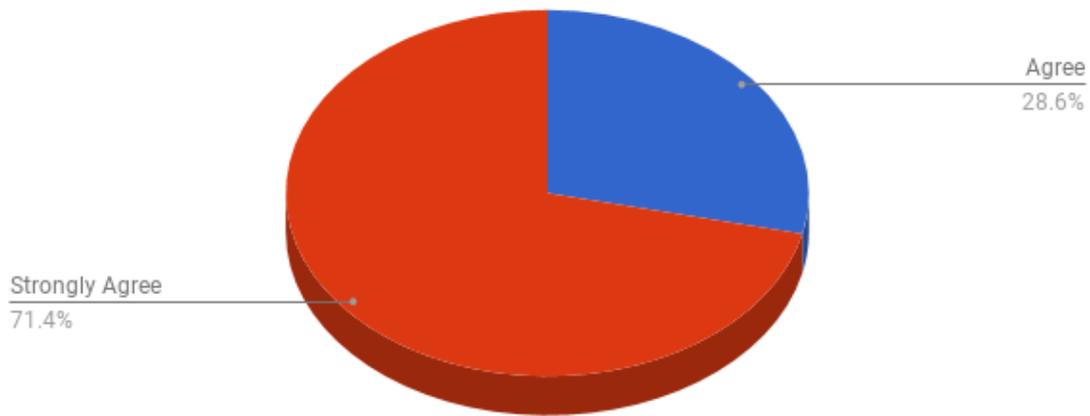


Figure 5-8: External Economic conditions

#### 5.4.1.7 External technological advancements-Question 7

This question intended to understand the impact of technological advancements in the external environment of the organisation on TM implementation. The interviewees were asked whether technological advancements can help the organisation in implementing effectively talent management strategy. As shown in Figure 5-9, every interviewee strongly agreed that by adopting new technological advancements, Saudi Higher Educational institutions can implement talent management strategies more effectively.

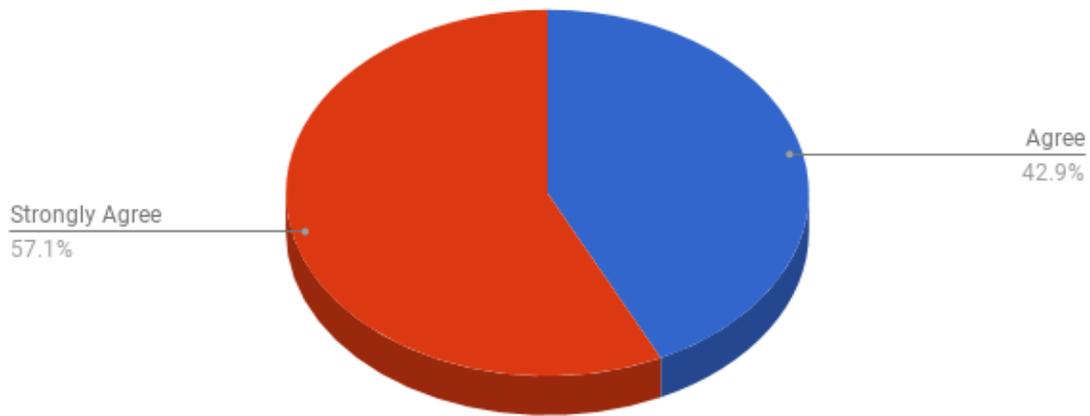


Figure 5-9: External technological advancements

#### 5.4.1.8 External law and legislation-Question 8

This question was designed to determine the impact of law and legislative changes on the implementation of talent management strategies within an organisation. Saudi Arabia has a centralised governmental system; thus, the Higher Education system is also a centralised system. The interviewees were asked whether law and legislative changes in the society can positively/negatively impact the overall process of talent management strategies. Figure 5-10 shows that all interviewees agreed that legal amendments can impact the process of talent management in the organisation.

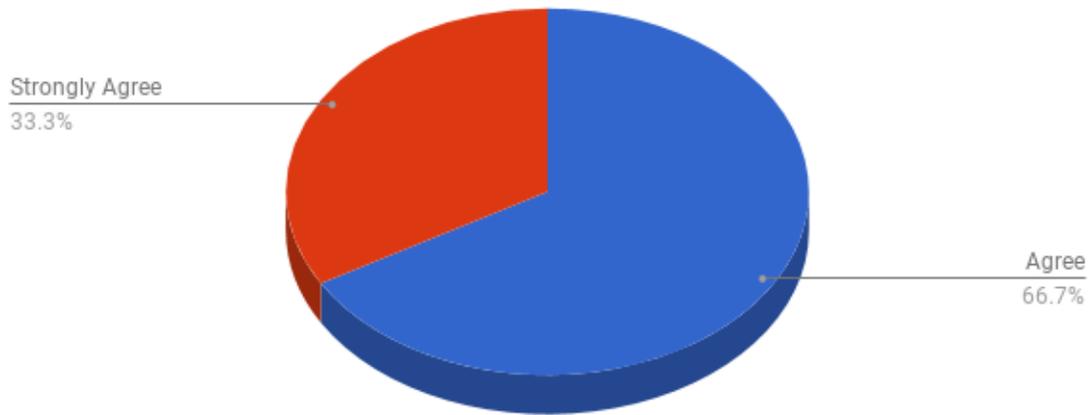


Figure 5-10: External law and legislation

#### 5.4.1.9 External Environment-Question 9

This question aimed to get interviewees' views on external environmental issues. The interviewees were asked whether external environmental issues can have a major impact on talent management strategy implementation. Figure 5-11 shows that all interviewees either agreed or strongly agreed that external environmental issues will impact the talent management in an organisation.

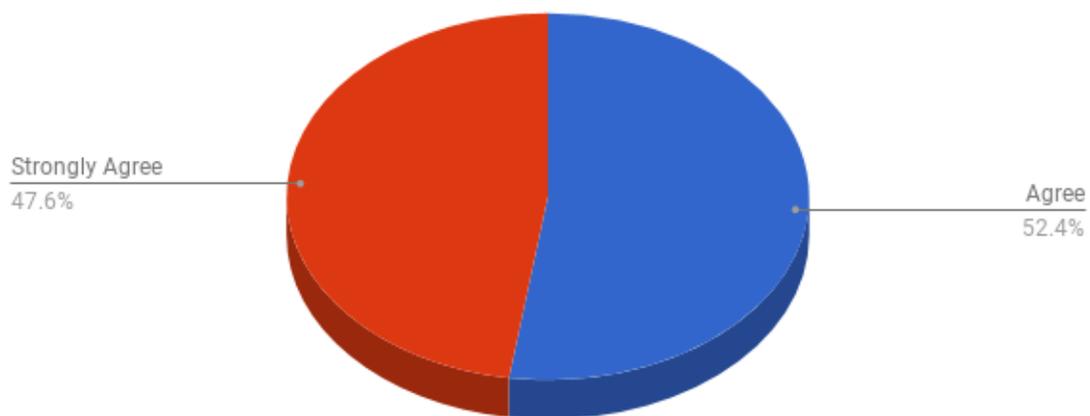


Figure 5-11: External environment conditions

#### 5.4.1.10 External social norms-Question 10

This question aimed to understand the impact of social norms, moral values, and ethics of the society on talent management process in an organisation. The interviewees were asked, whether social norms and moral values can also affect the overall talent management process. Figure 5-12 shows that the majority (95.3%) of the interviewees were in agreement that these factors will impact the overall process of talent management. However, only 4.8% of the interviewees were uncertain about it.

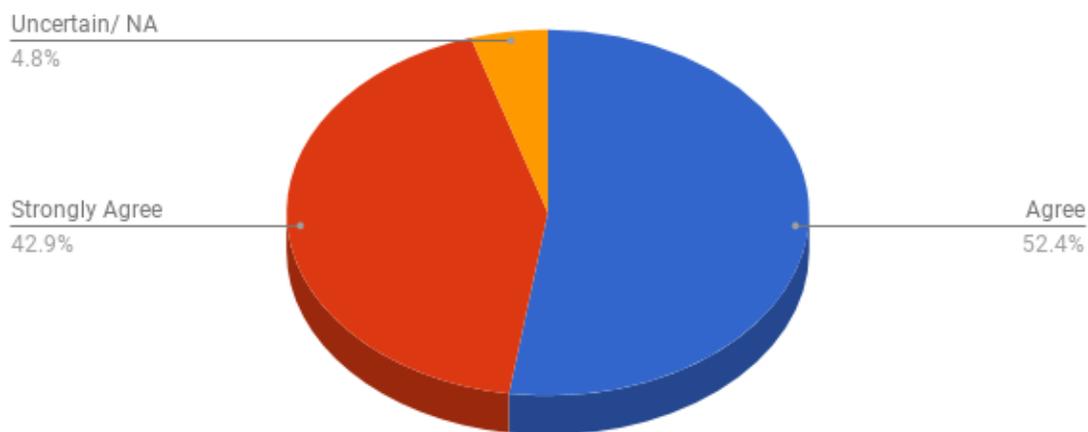


Figure 5-12: External social norms

#### 5.4.2 Effect of internal and external environments on HRM and human capital strategies

Under this Subsection, the Researcher used ten questions to analyse the impact of internal and external environments on HRM and human capital strategies. Human capital strategies refer to a comprehensive business management strategy that is integrated with every aspect of the organisation, and adopts a more people-centred and strategic approach to business; on the other hand, HRM strategies refer to factors that are associated with running the HR department of the organisation. This includes recruitment, training, performance analysis, orientation, employment and payroll. It is the solitary body responsible for carrying the organisational process in a business environment.

Thus, the Researcher used ten questions to determine the effect of external and internal environments on the existing human capital and HRM strategies in the organisation. An important aspect of the Researcher's theoretical framework is how existing HRM and human capital strategies can be aligned with talent management strategies.

#### 5.4.2.1 Internal leadership-Question 1

This question aimed to analyse interviewees' views regarding the leadership and management styles. The employees were asked whether leadership style has a significant impact on how personnel are being employed and managed, in an organisation. Employee management is one of the basic, yet, most important aspects of HRM. Figure 5-13 shows that all interviewees agreed that leadership plays a significant role in how personnel are employed and managed in an organisation.

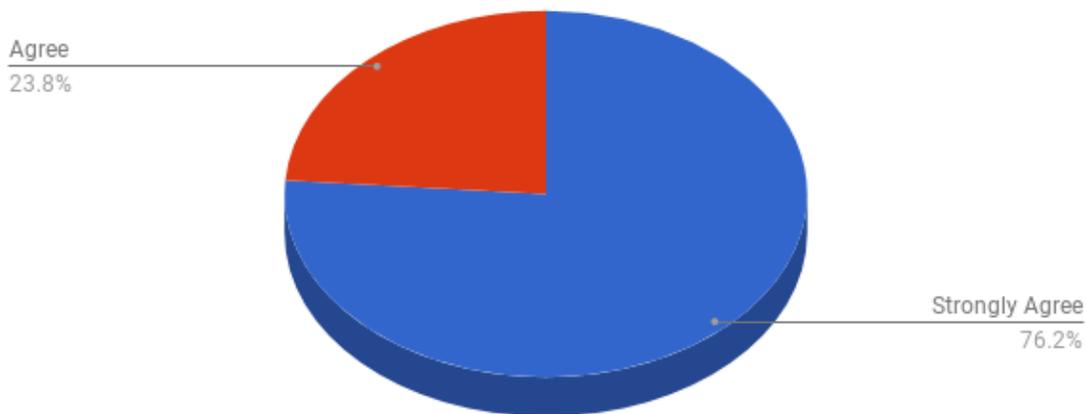


Figure 5-13: Internal leadership

#### 5.4.2.2 Internal recruitment-Question 2

This question aimed to collect interviewees' opinions regarding recruitment strategies. Recruitment of employees is an important aspect of HRM, and recruiting talented employees has been one of the major problems for Saudi Higher Educational institutions. The interviewees were asked whether more people centred recruiting strategies can affect the organisational performance in a positive manner. Figure 5-14 shows that 42.9 % of the

interviewees strongly agreed with this claim, similarly with 42.9 % who also agreed with this notion. However, a small portion of interviewees (14.3%) were uncertain about it, due to the centralisation educational system in Saudi Higher Educational system.

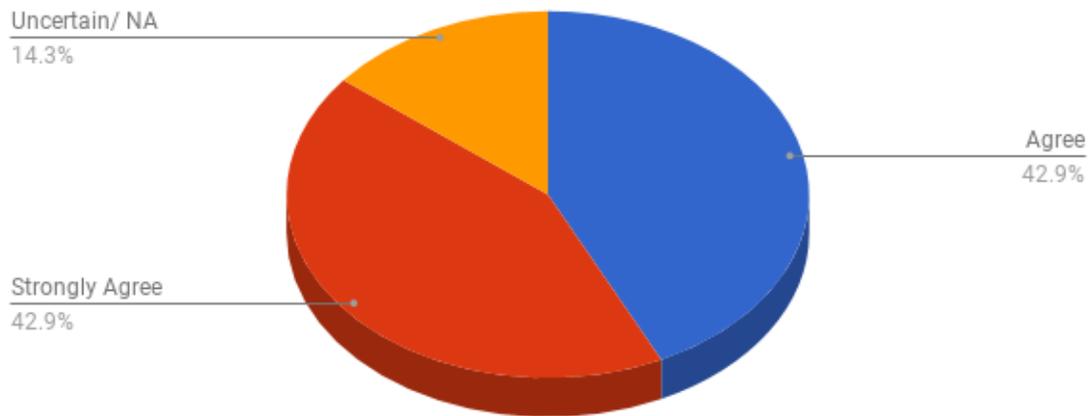


Figure 5-14: Internal Recruiting

### 5.4.2.3 Internal communication-Question 3

This question aimed at understanding the effect of internal horizontal communication among employees in an organisation. The Researcher's aim was to analyse the impact of effective communication on basic HRM functions, such as performance analysis, payroll and promotion. The interviewees were asked whether effective horizontal communication in the organisation can impact the basic functions of HRM, such as payroll, performance analysis and promotion in a positive manner. Figure 5-15 shows that a total of 80.9 % of interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However, 19 % either were uncertain or disagreed with this.

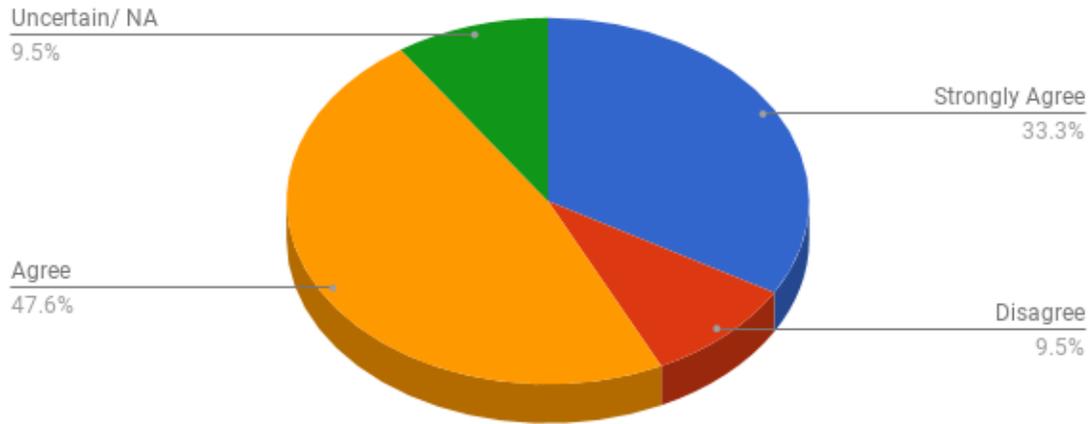


Figure 5-15: Internal communication

#### 5.4.2.4 Internal formal structure-Question 4

This question aimed to get interviewees' views about the formal structure, mission and vision of the organisation. The interviewees were asked whether an informal structure, and lack of clear vision, objectives and aims can negatively impact the HR functions of the organisation. Figure 5-16 shows that 90.5 % of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this notion. Only 9.5% were uncertain about it.

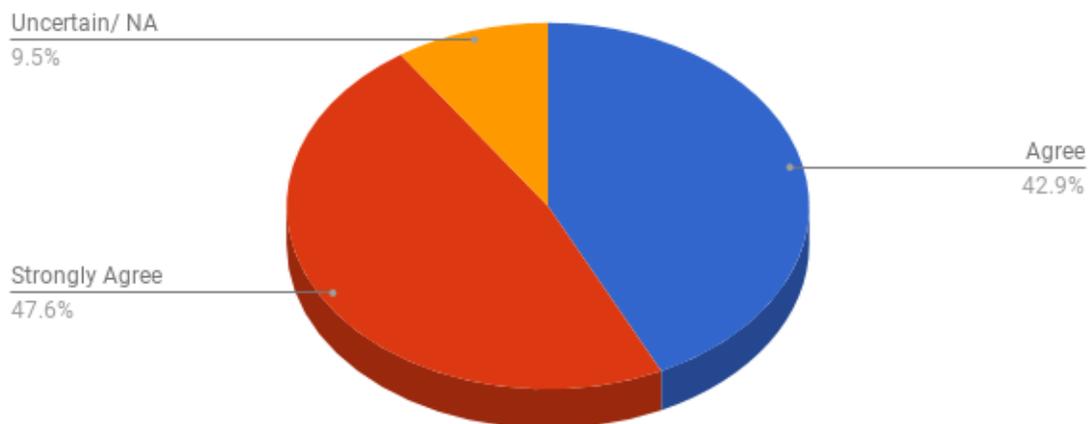


Figure 5-16: Internal formal structure

#### 5.4.2.5 Internal financial stability-Question 5

This question's purpose was to analyse participants' views about bad turnover. Bad turnover occurs when talented employees leave frequently. It is one of the major HRM problems that organisations face. The interviewees were asked whether unstable financial situation in the organisation may lead to bad turnover. Figure 5-17 shows that 47.6 % of participants strongly agreed, and 33.3 % agreed with this notion. However, 19 % were uncertain about this relationship between financial performance and bad turnover.

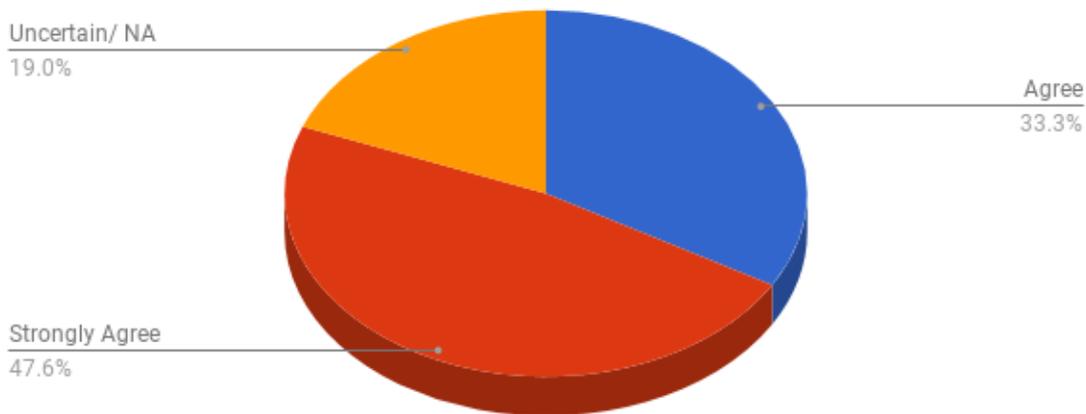


Figure 5-17: Internal financial stability

#### 5.4.2.6 External economic conditions-Question 6

This question analysed the interviewees' views regarding the impact of external economic conditions of the society, on organisational HRM policies and strategies. Economic conditions of the society in which an organisation is situated plays a huge role. The interviewees were asked whether the external economic conditions of the society can impact the organisation's HRM policies and strategies. Figure 5-18 shows that all interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

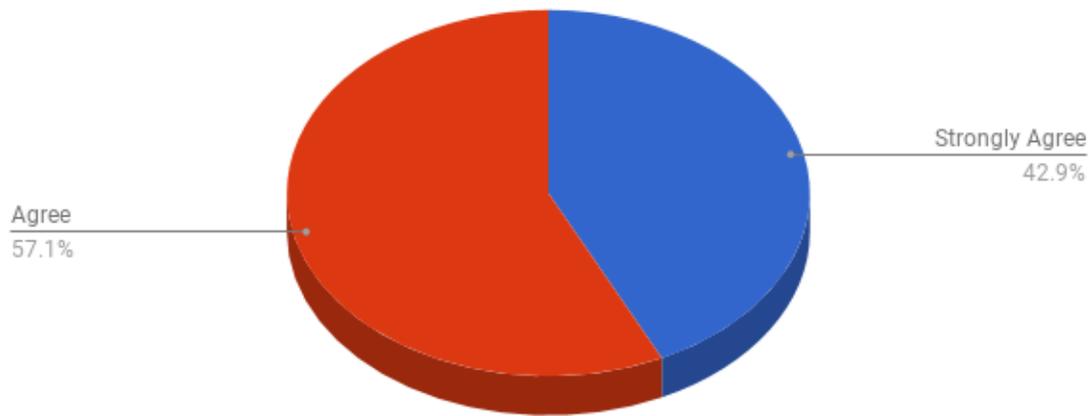


Figure 5-18: External economic conditions

#### 5.4.2.7 External technological advancements-Question 7

This question collected the interviewees' views, regarding the impact of advanced technology on HRM and recruitment. Technology now plays a vital role in HRM and human capital development. The interviewees were asked whether technological advancements improved the way organisations hire and manage the human capital. Figure 5-19 shows that 71.4 % of the interviewees agreed with this notion, while the remaining strongly agreed.

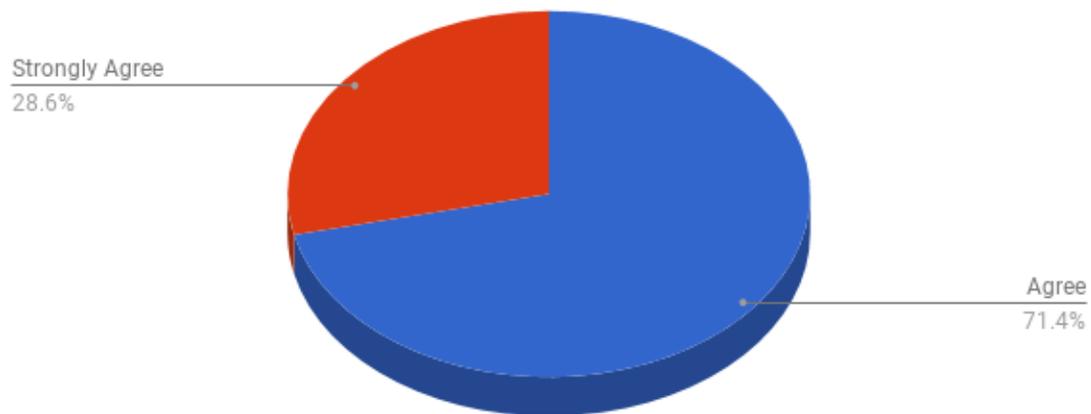


Figure 5-19: External technological advancements

#### 5.4.2.8 External law and legislation-Question 8

This question aimed at analysing the impact of law and legislative changes on HRM and human capital strategies. The interviewees were asked whether laws and legislative changes can positively/negatively impact the HRM policies and strategies of an organisation. Figure 5-20 shows that 95.3 % of the interviewees agreed and strongly agreed with this statement.

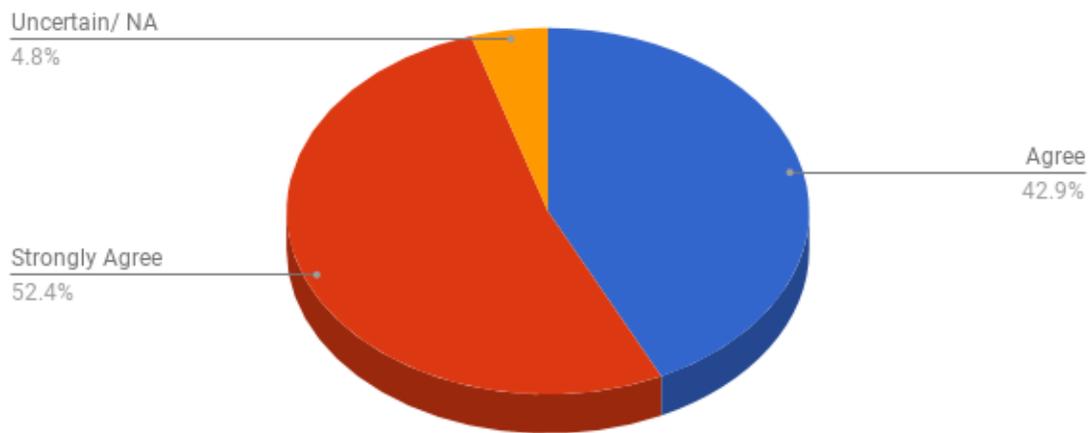


Figure 5-20: External law and legislation

#### 5.4.2.9 External environment conditions-Question 9

This question aimed at analysing the effects of environmental and ecological issues of the society on organisational HRM and human capital strategies. The interviewees were asked whether environmental and ecological issues can also affect the HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation. Figure 5-21 shows that, in total 90.5 % of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The remaining 9.5 % were uncertain about it.

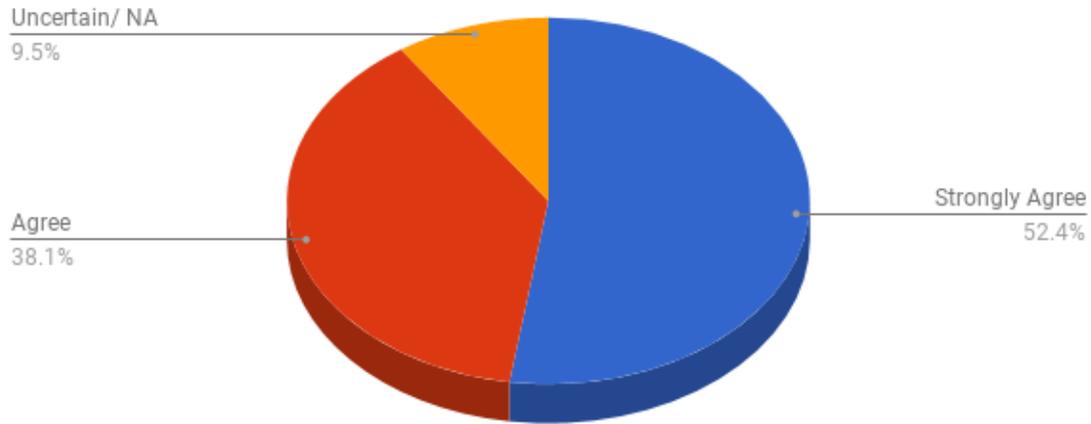


Figure 5-21: External environmental conditions

#### 5.4.2.10 External social norms-Question 10

This question was presented to the interviewees to understand their perceptions, towards the social norms and values, and their impact on HRM and human capital strategies in the organisation. The interviewees were asked whether social and moral norms of a society affect the overall HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation. Figure 5-22 shows that the vast majority of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (52.4% and 38.1% respectively). Thus, only 9.6 % disagreed or were uncertain about it.

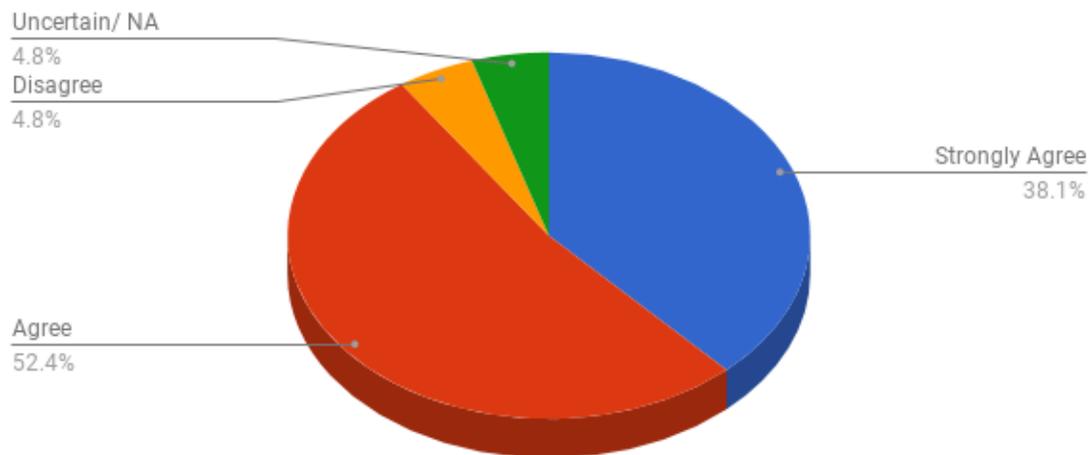


Figure 5-22: External social norms

### **5.4.3 Effect of internal and external environments on sustainable competitive advantage**

In this Sub-section, the Researcher used also ten questions to analyse the impact of internal and external environments on sustainable competitive advantage. Sustainable competitive advantage refers to the organisation's assets, attributes, or abilities that are difficult for competitors to duplicate or exceed; and thus, it provides a superior or favourable long-term position over competitors. One of the important factors which impact the long term sustainable advantage is the organisational performance. Organisational performance refers to how, successfully, an organised group of people with a purpose performs a function. In a business environment, the organisational performance depends on how an organisation is achieving its goals, objectives and reaching its aims. Metrics, such as the financial performance, shareholders' value, market performance and market shares, are used to measure and assess the organisational performance.

Thus, the Researcher used ten questions to analyse the impact of external and internal environments of the organisation on sustainable long term competitive advantage. An important factor in the Researcher's theoretical framework is sustainable competitive advantage and organisational performance, as this leads to organisational sustainability.

#### **5.4.3.1 Internal formal structure-Question 1**

This question collected the interviewees' perspectives on the formal structure, mission and objectives of the organisation. An organisation with a clear set of objectives is more focused on reaching its milestone and remaining competitive in the long run. Thus, the interviewees were asked whether a formal structure and mission, and pre-defined objectives in the organisation can have a positive impact on sustainable competitive advantage. Figure 5-23 shows that, in total, 95.2 % of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However, a small minority of the interviewees (4.8%) were uncertain about it.

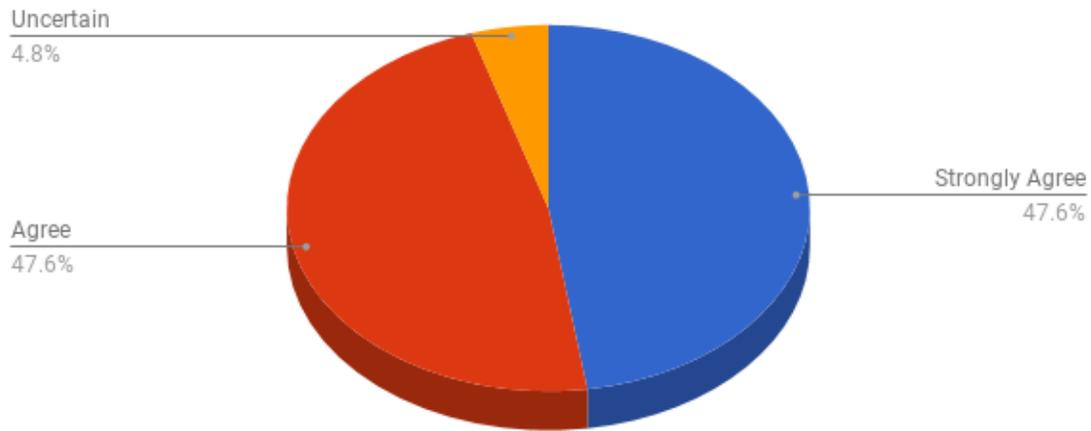


Figure 5-23: Internal formal structure

#### 5.4.3.2 Internal communication-Question 2

This question aimed at understanding the impact of effective communication among employees on sustaining competitive advantage. The interviewees were asked whether effective vertical communication and harmony among employees can positively impact sustainable competitive advantage of the organisation. Figure 5-24 shows that all interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

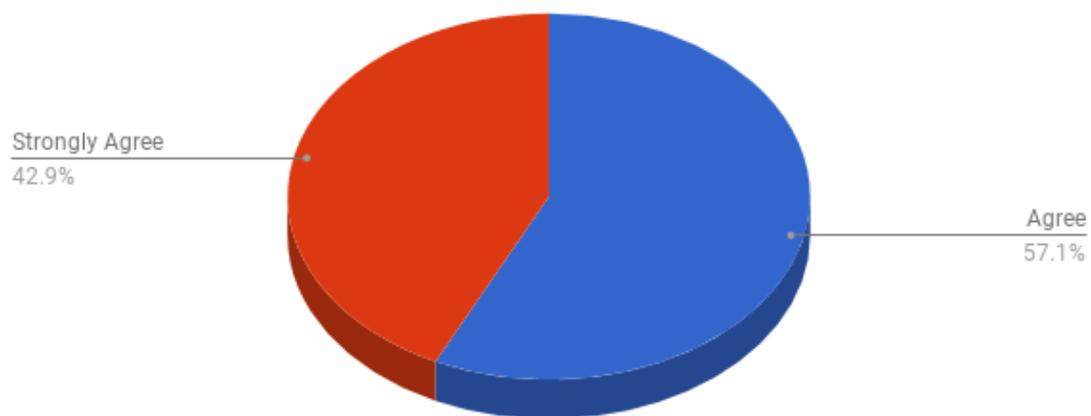


Figure 5-24: Internal communication

### 5.4.3.3 Financial stability-Question 3

This question aimed at understanding the impact of financial stability on the organisation's long-term sustainability. The interviewees were asked whether the financial stability helps an organisation to remain competitive in the long run. Figure 5-25 shows that more than 90 % of the interviewees agreed (28.6%) or strongly agreed (66.7%) with this statement, whereas a small minority of 4.8% were uncertain about it.

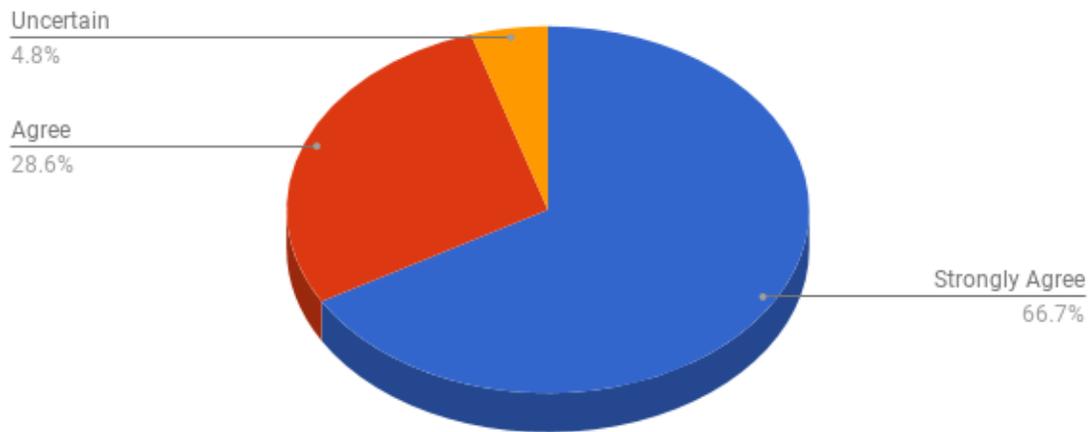


Figure 5-25: Internal financial stability

### 5.4.3.4 Internal Leadership-Question 4

This question aimed at understanding the effects of having great leadership and succession planning strategies, on long term sustainable competitive advantage. The interviewees were asked whether the leadership style and long-term succession planning can have a major impact on the organisation's competitive advantage. Figure 5-26 shows that 33.4 % of the interviewees strongly agreed with this notion, and 47.6 % agreed as well. However, 19% of the interviewees were uncertain about this claim.

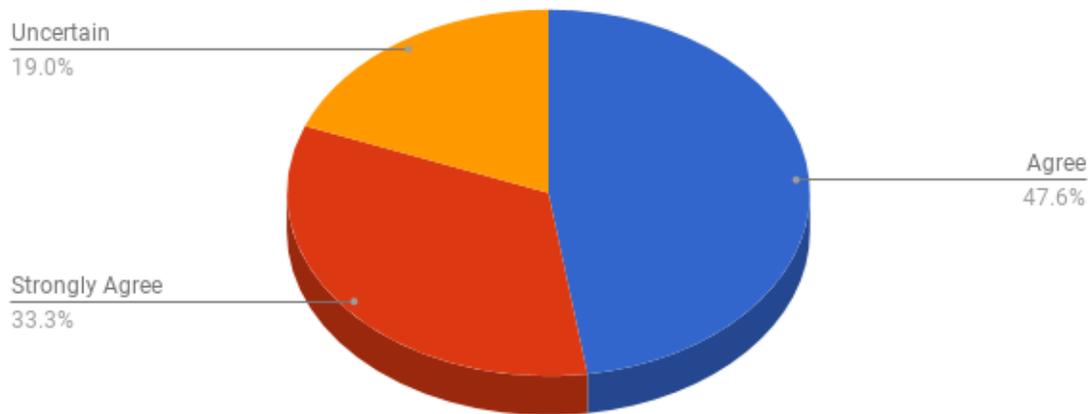


Figure 5-26: Internal leadership

#### 5.4.3.5 Organisational strengths and weaknesses-Question 5

This question aimed to determine the interviewees' perceptions on how organisational strengths and weaknesses can affect the long-term sustainable advantage. The interviewees were asked, whether organisational strengths and weaknesses in a market can affect the long-term competitive advantage. Figure 5-27 shows that, in total, 85.7 % of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However, 14.3% were uncertain about it.

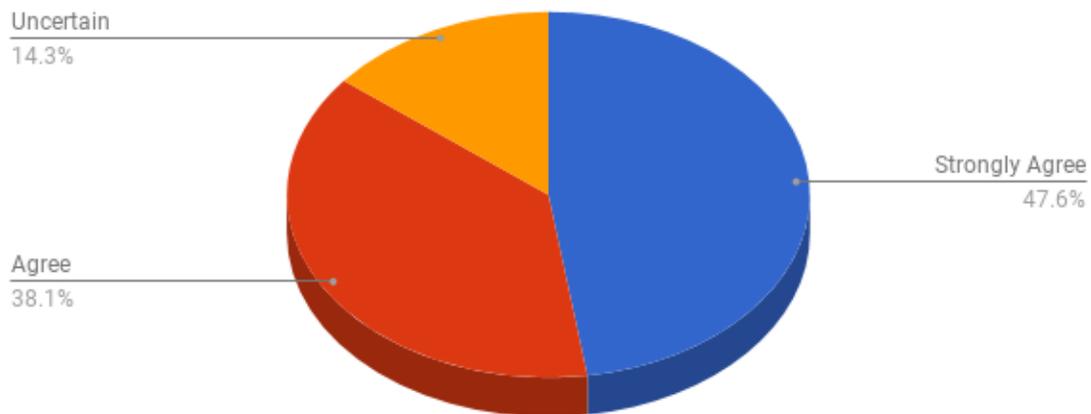


Figure 5-27: Internal strengths and weaknesses

#### 5.4.3.6 External economic conditions-Question 6

This question focused on understanding the impact of external economic conditions on the long-term competitive advantage of the organisation. The external economic conditions of the society can play a huge role on the organisational long-term sustainability. The interviewees were asked whether the economic conditions of a society can have a major impact on an organisation's sustainable future. Figure 5-28 shows that 95.2% of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this notion. However, a small minority of 4.8% were uncertain about it.

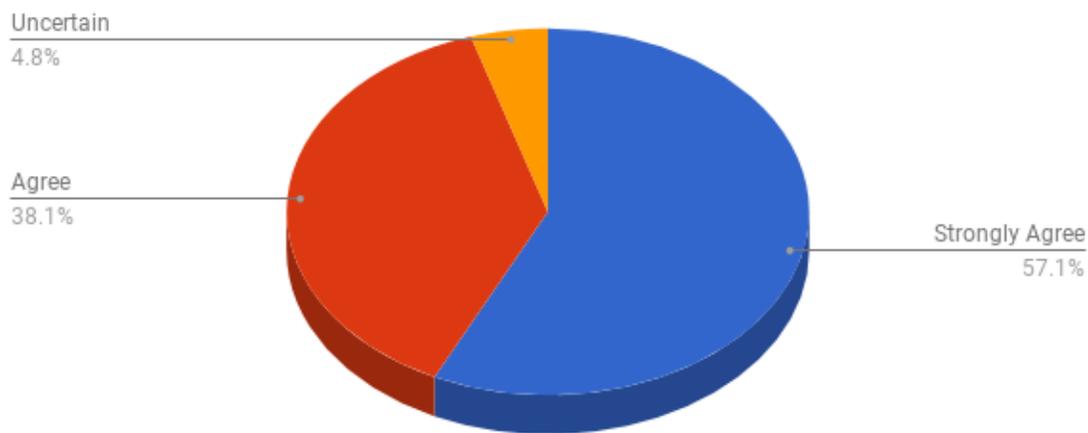


Figure 5-28: External economic conditions

#### 5.4.3.7 External technological advancements-Question 7

This question aimed at understanding the impact of technological advancements in the society, on organisational competitive advantage. The technological advancements' integration in the organisational system can play a vital role in the organisational sustainability. The interviewees were asked whether technological advancements and integration in the organisation can positively impact the sustainable growth and future. Figure 5-29 shows that 95.3 % of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with the Researcher's point of view. Yet, 4.8% were uncertain about it.

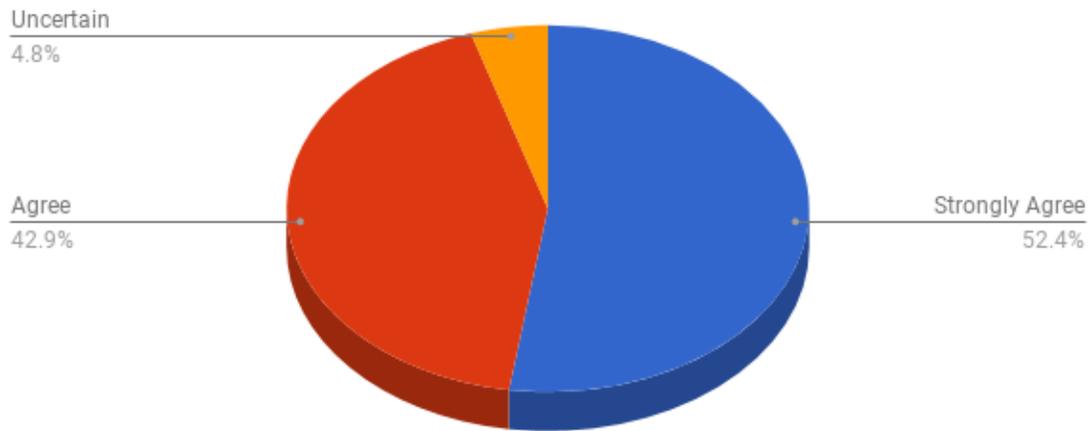


Figure 5-29: External technological advancements

#### 5.4.3.8 External law and legislation-Question 8

This question aimed at understanding the impact of laws and legislative changes, on the organisation's long-term performance and sustainability. The interviewees were asked whether laws and legislative changes in a society might have a major impact on the sustainability of an organisation. Figure 5-30 shows that 95.2% of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that, laws and legislative changes affect the long-term performance and sustainability of an organisation.

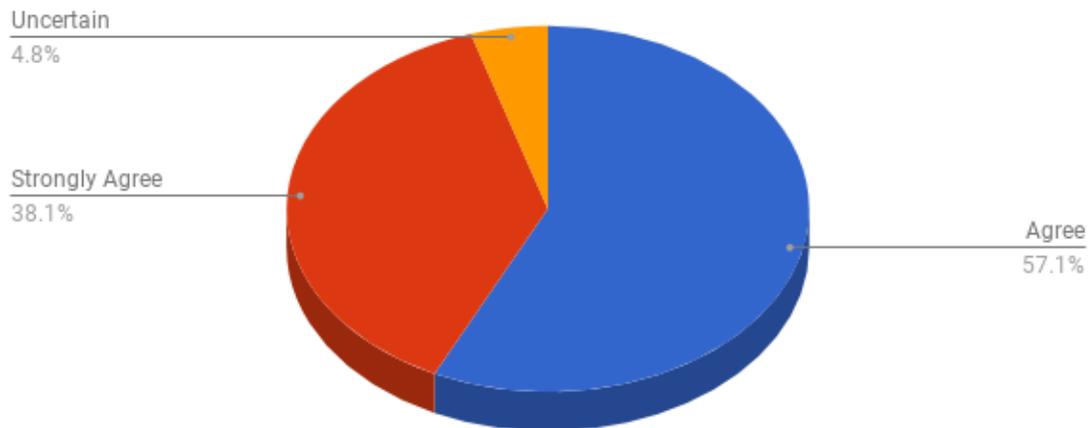


Figure 5-30: External laws and legislation

#### 5.4.3.9 External environment-Question 9

This question focused on understanding the impact of environmental and ecological changes on organisational sustainability and long-term competitive advantage. The interviewees were asked whether environmental and ecological changes can impact the overall sustainable future of an organisation. Figure 5-31 shows that 95.2 % of the interviewees in total agreed or strongly agreed with this view.

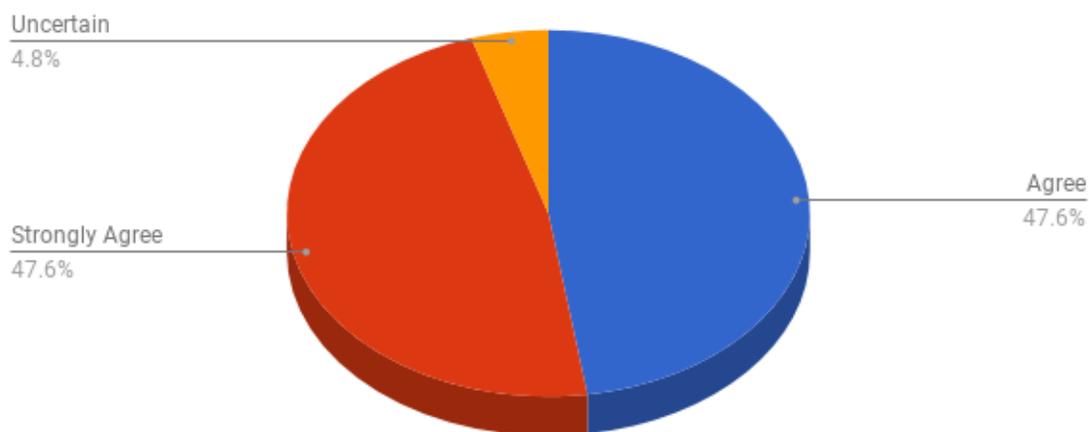


Figure 5-31: External environment conditions

#### 5.4.3.10 External social norms-Question 10

This question focuses on analysing the impact of social and moral values of external societies on the long-term competitive advantage of an organisation. The interviewees were asked whether social and moral values can impact the sustainability of an organisation. Figure 5-32 shows that 90.5 % of the interviewees either agreed or strongly agreed with this view.

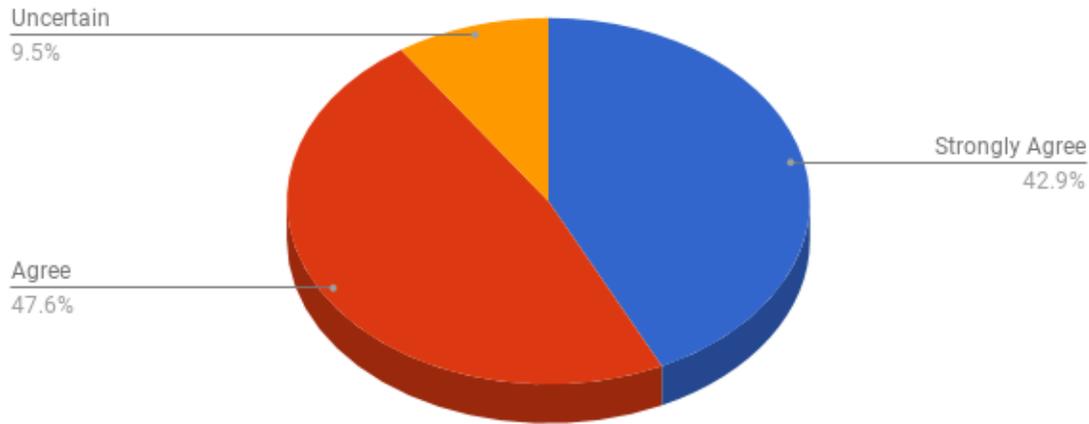


Figure 5-32: External social norms

#### 5.4.4 Summary

From the analysis of Section 2 of the interviewing questions, it can be argued that most of the interviewees agreed with the Researcher's claim. The interviewees were asked ten questions in each Sub-section, where five questions focused on the internal organisational environment factors, such as communication, leadership, financial stability, formal structure and recruitment. The remaining five questions focused on the external environmental factors, such as economic conditions, technological advancements, law and legislation, environmental conditions and social norms. The Researcher's aim was to analyse the impact of these internal and external factors on talent management, HRM and human capital strategies, as well as the long term competitive advantage of the organisation. The results from the findings from each question showed that most of the interviewees either agreed, or strongly agreed with the Researcher's claims.

#### 5.5 Section 3- Alignment of HRM with talent management

This Section focuses on the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies. Alignment strategy refers to the systematic alignment of existing talent management, HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation. This includes basic

functions of HRM, such as payroll, orientation, promotion, performance analysis, as well as long term strategic human capital strategies, such as individual succession plans, targeted training, development, people centric attraction and retention strategies. This Section consists of three Subsections, in which interviewees were asked whether their organisations have any alignment strategy. Based on their answers, follow up questions were asked. The main aim of this Section was to identify whether Saudi Higher Educational institutions have such alignment strategies. If not, what are the obstacles and challenges that prevent the organisation from having such strategies. On the other, if any of the organisation already has such strategy in place, what are the advantages and disadvantages of having such a strategy. The Section also identified at what level such strategy is implemented.

### **5.5.1 Question 1**

This question was presented to the interviewees as a sampling question. The interviewees were asked whether their organisations apply any alignment strategy of talent management strategy, and any of the organisation HRM and human capital strategies. The interviewees were given four options. If the answer was YES, they had to select whether that strategy was formal or informal. However, if the organisation doesn't have any such strategy in place, then, the interviewees would select NO, and move into highlighting the obstacles and challenges, preventing organisations from implementing such strategy. As shown in Figure 5-33, out of 21 interviewees, 9 interviewees answered YES, 4 of them outlining that their organisations have an informal strategy, whereas, 5 stated that a formal strategy was in place. However, the majority of the interviewees answered NO, showing that most of the Higher Educational organisations don't have any alignment strategy in place.

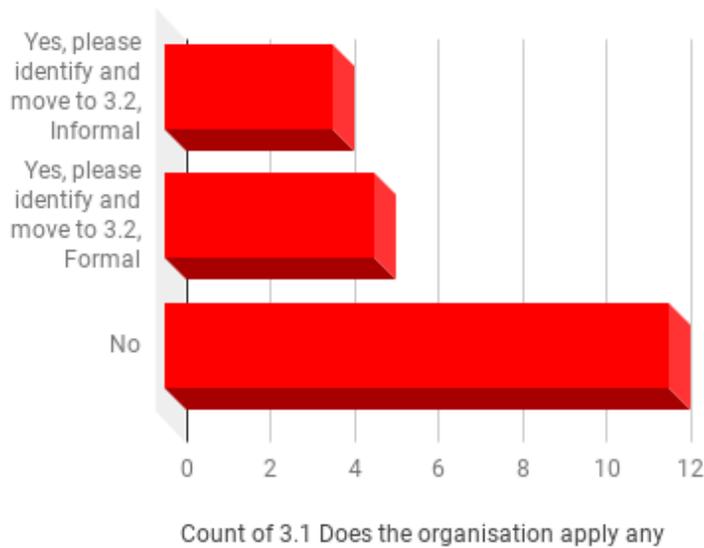


Figure 5-33: Alignment of TM with HRM

### 5.5.2 Obstacles and challenges

This question was presented to interviewees, to either choose from the obstacles mentioned in the table, or to list ones other than the mentioned. There are multiple obstacles and challenges that have been identified in Saudi Higher Educational institutions, through the literature analysis and evaluation, in Chapters 2 and 3. The Researcher identified five major obstacles that were presented to the interviewees. Each interviewee agreed or disagreed with the Researcher’s point of view.

#### 5.5.2.1 Obstacle 1 – Leadership

For this obstacle, the interviewees were asked whether they think that the upper hierarchy or leadership rigidity is one of the major obstacles, preventing Saudi Educational organisations from having an alignment strategy. The interviewees were also asked whether upper hierarchy or leadership is hesitant in implementing such strategies. Figure 5-34 shows that most of the interviewees were uncertain about it, and 50 % of the interviewees who selected NO in Question 1 of Section 3 agreed or strongly agreed. However, 41.7% were uncertain about it, while 8.3 % disagreed.

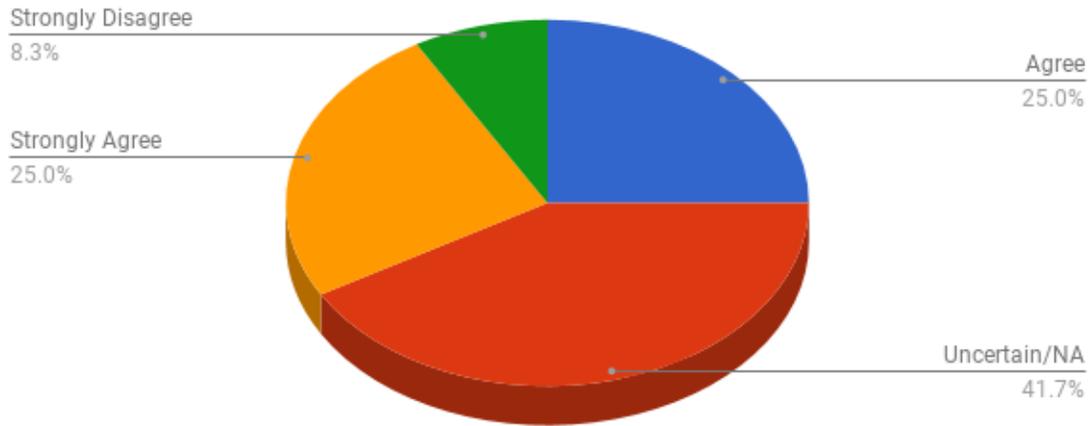


Figure 5-34: Leadership style

### 5.5.2.2 Obstacle 2 – Pre-defined guidelines

The second obstacle whose impact was to be determined from the interviewees was organisations having lack of guidelines for implementing such strategy. The interviewees were asked whether the lack of Pre-defined guidelines or framework is a major obstacle. Figure 5-35 shows that 50 % agreed and 25 % strongly agreed with this obstacle being a major one. However, 25 % were uncertain about it.

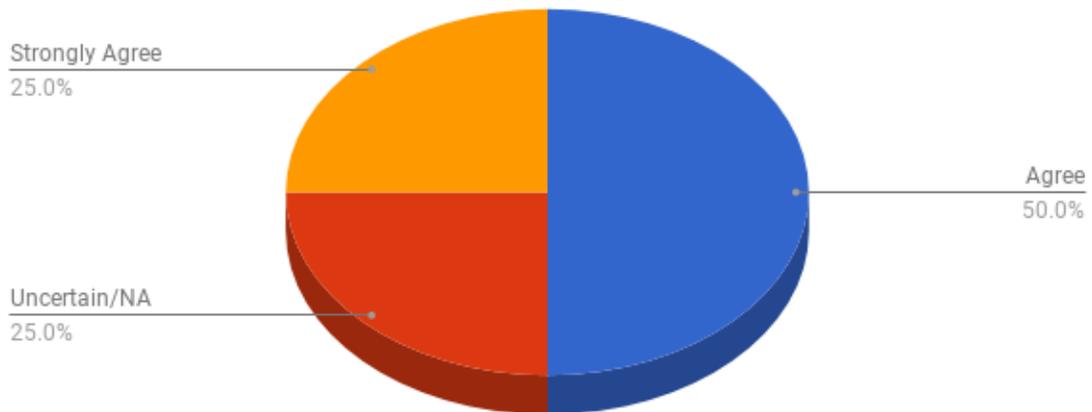


Figure 5-35: Pre-defined guidelines

### 5.5.2.3 Obstacle 3 – Centralised education system

The interviewees were asked about their views regarding the centralised education system of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has a centralised education system that is operated and controlled by the Ministry of Education. The interviewees were asked whether the centralised education system doesn't grant the freedom for individual educational organisations, to implement such strategies at their own will. Figure 5-36 shows that 50% of the interviewees strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. However, the remaining 50% either disagreed (16.7%), strongly disagreed (8.3%), or were uncertain about it (25%).

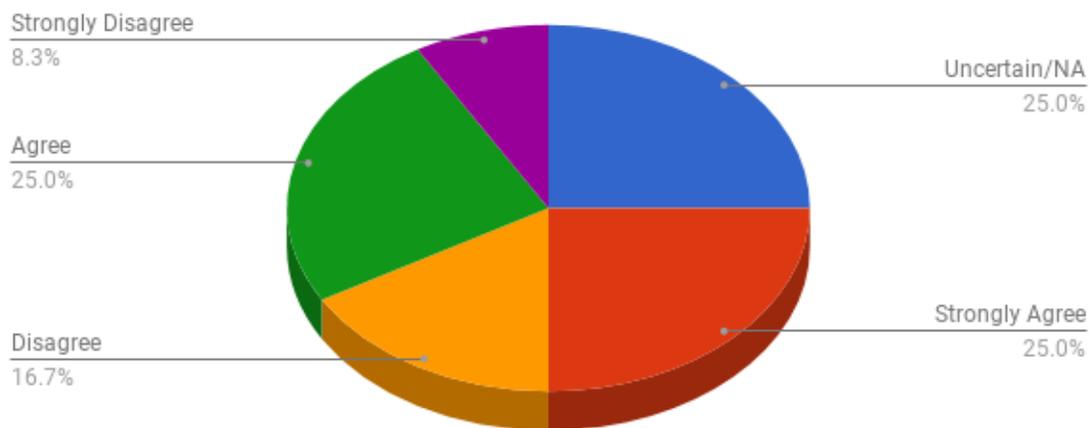


Figure 5-36: Centralised education system

### 5.5.2.4 Obstacle 4 – Lack of talent management knowledge

The interviewees were asked whether the lack of knowledge regarding talent management is a major obstacle in implementing such strategies. Figure 5-37 shows that 66.7% agreed or strongly agreed with this view. However, 25 % disagreed, and 8 % were uncertain about it.

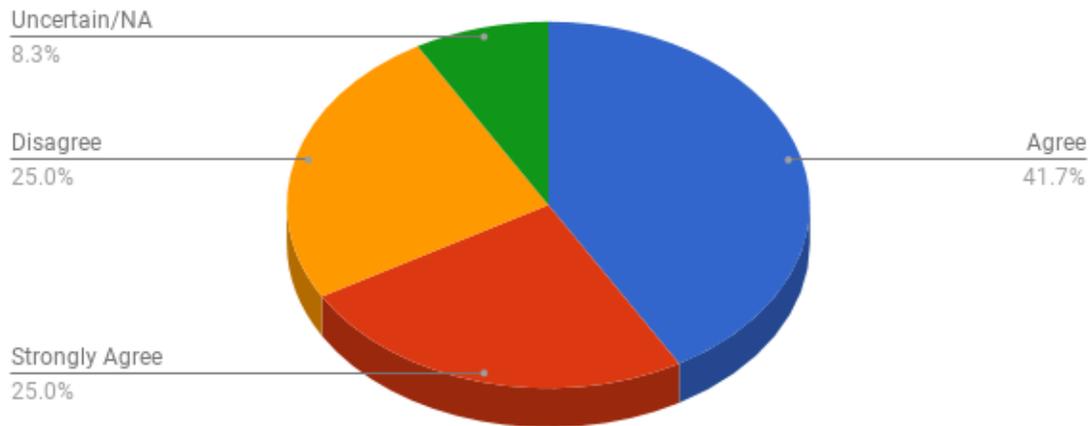


Figure 5-37: Lack of TM knowledge

#### 5.5.2.5 Obstacle 5 – Fear of change

The interviewees were asked whether fear from change and job security constitute a major obstacle in not having TM aligning strategies. They were asked whether the fear of change, job security, and lack of communication among middle level employees are major obstacles. Figure 5-38 shows that 33.3% strongly agreed with this statement, and 25% simply agreed. However, 25% disagreed, and the remaining were either unsure (8.3%) or strongly disagreed (8.3%) over it.

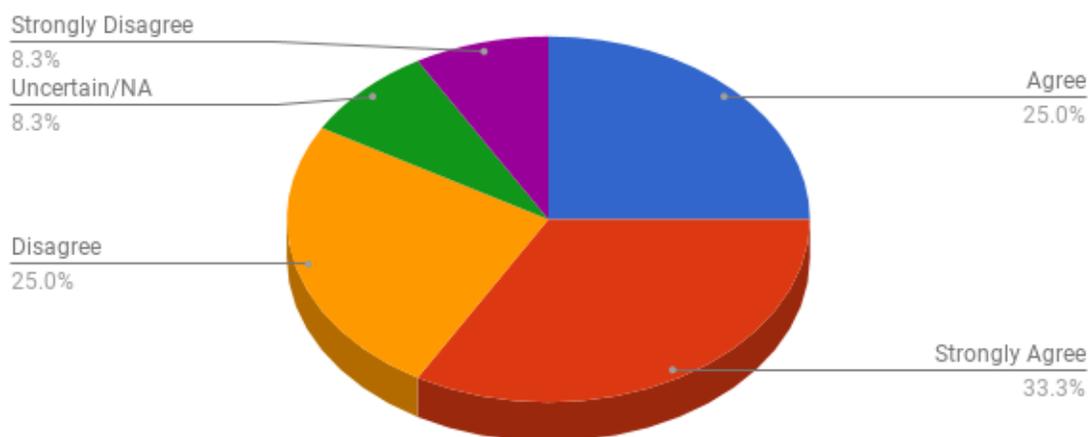


Figure 5-38: Fear of change

### **5.5.3 Advantages and disadvantages of alignment strategy**

In this Subsection of the interviews, the interviewees were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of having this alignment strategy. The interviewees who answered YES in question 1 of Section 3, moved to this question, skipping question 2. In this question, the interviewees were given several advantages and disadvantages, being extracted from literature analysis and evaluation, in Chapters 2 and 3. For the advantages, the interviewees were allowed to choose more than one option. As a result, the most common advantage that the interviewees chose were the sustainable competitive advantage, and the attraction and retention of talented personnel. Thus, the organisations, who had a talent management alignment strategy, were already enjoying the advantages of this alignment.

On the other hand, the interviewees were also asked to single out the disadvantages of having such a strategy. The most common disadvantage mentioned by the interviewees was the increased financial cost and manpower, and disjointed and disgruntled employees who may resist the change in the strategies. However, interviewees chose more advantages than disadvantages, which clearly shows that those organisations in Saudi Higher Education system, who have a formal or even informal talent management alignment system, are enjoying the benefits of this strategy.

### **5.5.4 Level of organisation involved in alignment**

This question was asked to interviewees, to understand at what organisational level this alignment strategy is being implemented. All interviewees answered that this strategy was implemented at the highest-level executives (C-level) or managing directors (MDs), supported by certain departments. Furthermore, the interviewees were asked to specify the departments, which were responsible for implementing this strategy. The most common choice was the HR department, followed by the strategy and planning department.

## **5.6 Section 4– Organisational sustainability**

This Section focuses on analysing the existing organisational sustainability strategies in the Saudi Higher Educational institutions. Organisational sustainability refers to the organisation's ability to achieve its goals, and ensure long-term stakeholders' value. It is

not only based on the financial performance of the organisation, but also other factors, such as employee management human capital development, succession planning, long term strategies and innovations are also important to consider. This Section is divided into three Subsections. The main aim of this Section was to determine whether Saudi Higher Educational institutions have any organisational sustainability strategy in place. Moreover, if such strategy doesn't exist, the Researcher tried to identify the obstacles and challenges, preventing Saudi Higher Educational organisations from investing in sustainability strategies. The Section also tried to identify at what organisational level such strategy is implemented.

### **5.6.1 Question 1**

This question was presented to the interviewees as a sampling question. The interviewees were asked whether their organisations have any organisational sustainability strategy in place. The interviewees were given four options. If they answered YES, they had to determine whether that strategy was formal or informal. However, if the organisation doesn't have any strategy in place, then, the interviewees would select NO, and will identify the obstacles and challenges preventing their organisations, from implementing such a strategy in the corresponding Section. This helped the Researcher to identify both sets of data to work with, and also the challenges and obstacles behind the lack of such strategy. Out of 21 interviewees, 14 answered NO in this question. This shows that some of Saudi Higher Educational institutions clearly lack organisational sustainability strategies. However, 7 interviewees answered YES, with their organisations having formal strategies.

### **5.6.2 Obstacles and challenges**

A list of five obstacles was presented to the interviewees, to either select from, or mention others. Multiple obstacles and challenges have been identified in Saudi Higher Educational institutions, through literature analysis and evaluation, in Chapters 2 and 3. The Researcher identified five major obstacles that were presented to the interviewees. Each interviewee agreed or disagreed with the Researcher's point of view.

### 5.6.2.1 Obstacle 1 – Lack of formal structure

The first obstacle given to the interviewees was related to the lack of formal structure, aims, and objectives. The interviewees were asked whether the lack of formal planning, structure, objectives and aims to achieve long-term sustainability is a major obstacle for Saudi Higher Educational organisations, in having any organisation sustainability strategy. Figure 5-39 shows that 35.7 % agreed, and 28.6 % strongly agreed with this notion. However, the remaining 34% either disagreed, strongly disagreed or were uncertain about it.

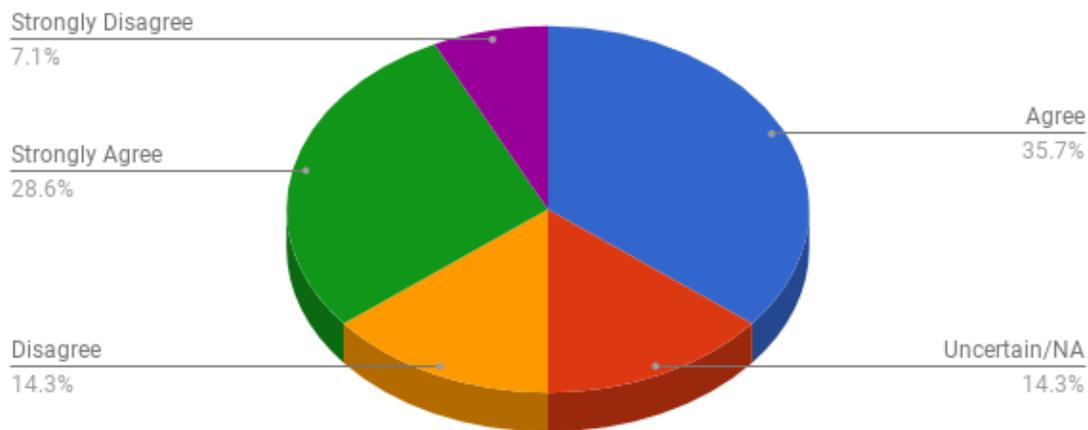


Figure 5-39: Lack of Formal Planning

### 5.6.2.2 Obstacle 2 – Focus on short term success

The second obstacle was related to whether organisations are focusing on short term success, and implement strategies for instant success that cannot promote long term competitive advantage. The interviewees were asked whether the focus on short term success rather than long term competitive advantage is a major obstacle for organisations. Figure 5-40 shows that 35.7% agreed, and 28.6% strongly agreed with this view. However, 28.6% disagreed with this view, and 7.1 % were uncertain about it.

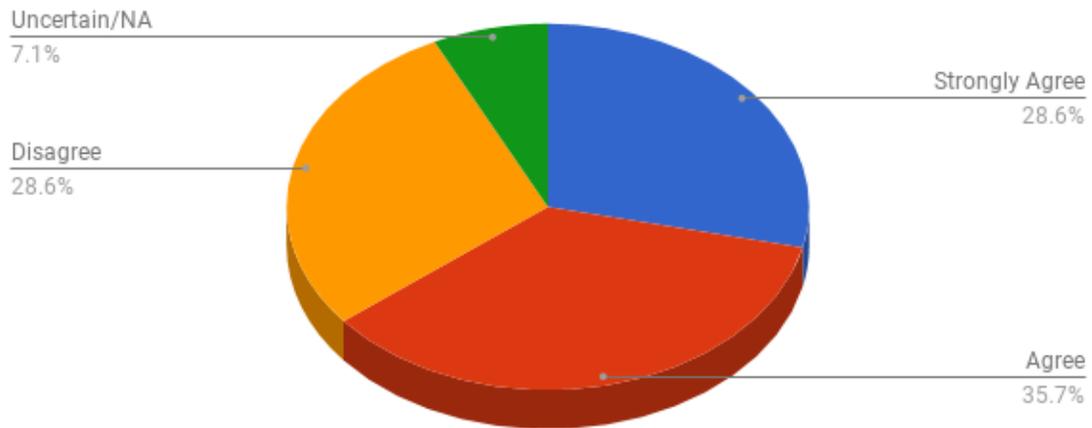


Figure 5-40: Focus on short term success

### 5.6.2.3 Obstacle 3 – Losing talented professionals

The third major obstacle given to the interviewees was Saudi Higher Educational organisations losing talented professional regularly. The interviewees were asked, whether losing talented professionals at regular intervals was a major obstacle. Figure 5-41 shows that 35.7% of the interviewees agreed with this claim, however, 35% were also uncertain about it. Thus, interviewees were not sure, if this obstacle constitutes a major challenge for Saudi organisations.

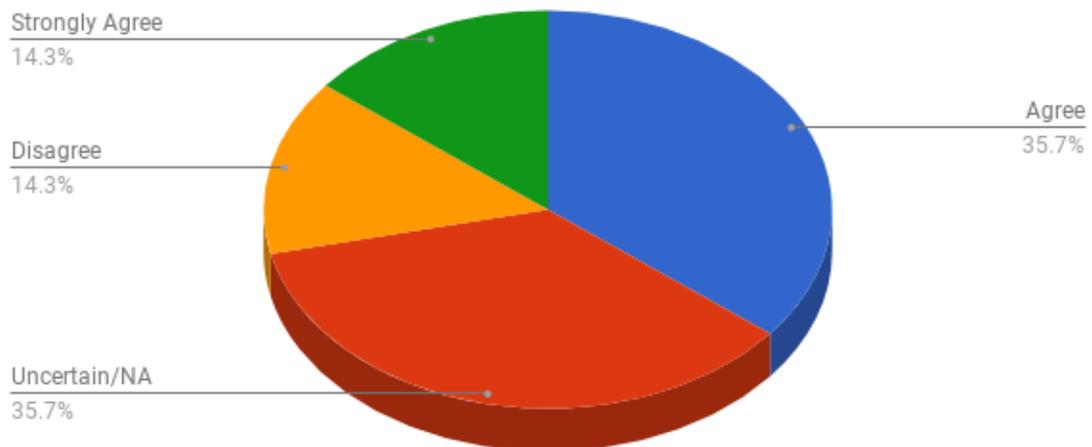


Figure 5-41: Bad turnover

#### 5.6.2.4 Obstacle 4 – Negative reaction over change

This obstacle was related to employees' reaction over any change in strategy or policies. The interviewees were asked whether negative reaction of existing employees over the change is a major obstacle for Saudi organisations for not having sustainability strategies in place. Figure 5-42 show that that 35.7% of the interviewees agreed with this claim, however, 35.7% were also uncertain about it. Thus, interviewees were not sure whether this obstacle is a major challenge for Saudi organisations for not having sustainability strategy.

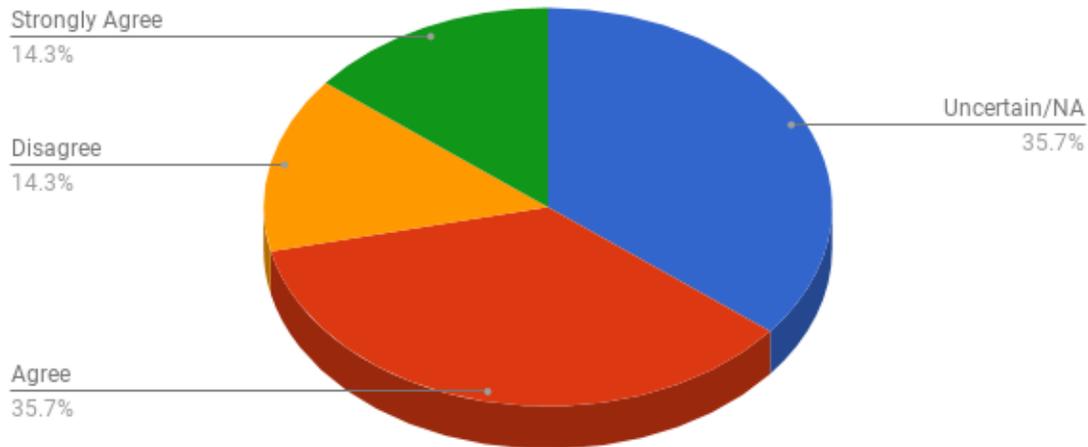


Figure 5-42: Negative reaction over change

#### 5.6.2.5 Obstacle 5 – Governmental financial dependency

This obstacle was presented to the interviewees, regarding governmental financial dependency, if perceived as a major obstacle for Saudi organisations against not having sustainability strategy. The interviewees were asked whether governmental financial dependency is a major obstacle. Figure 5-43 shows that 42.9 % of the interviewees strongly agreed, and, 28.6 % agreed with this statement. Thus, financial dependency on Government was identified as a major obstacle.

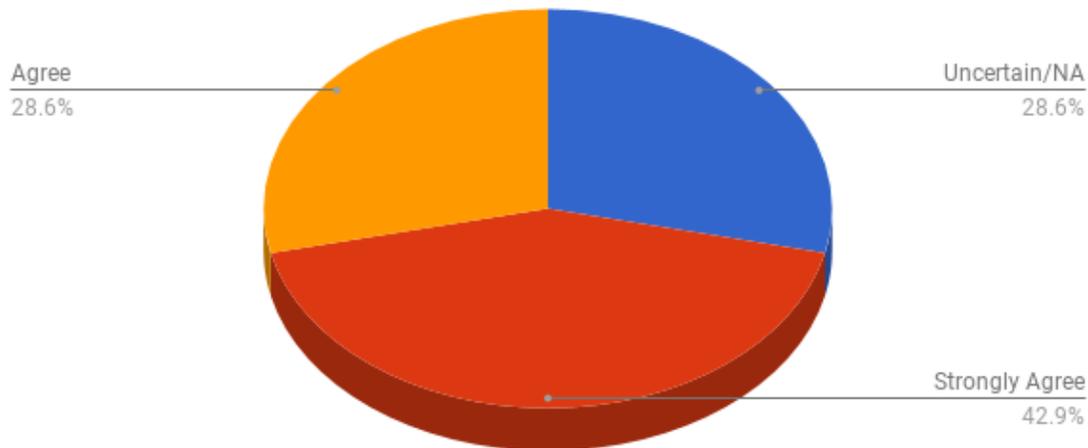


Figure 5-43: Financial dependency

### 5.6.3 Advantages and disadvantages

In this Subsection, the interviewees were asked to identify the advantages and disadvantages, of having an organisational sustainability strategy. A small number of interviewees had an organisational sustainability strategy in their organisations. The most common advantages that were mentioned by the interviewees were long term sustainable competitive advantage, self-sustainability, self-finance and attraction of foreign funding and students, who will be willing to invest their time and money in Saudi Educational institutions. Similarly, the most common disadvantages as selected by the interviewees included the increased cost and funding, more training programs to educate employees about this strategy and the alignment strategies in general, and employees' resistance over the change, job security and financial issues.

### 5.6.4 Organisational level involved in sustainability strategy

In this Subsection, the interviewees were asked about the level of organisation that is involved in implementing this strategy. Furthermore, the interviewees were also asked to mention the concerned departments responsible for implementing this strategy. 2 interviewees' organisations had only the highest level or MD involved in this strategy implementation. On the other hand, 4 interviewees had the Highest level or MD involved, but supported by the concerned departments. Furthermore, the interviewees who chose the second option (Highest level MD with concerned departments) also suggested that the most

common departments being involved in this implementation were the academic and HR departments.

## 5.7 Section 5- Proposed alignment implications

This Section was intended to analyse the views of the interviewees on the proposed alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies. The aim of this Section was to identify whether interviewees agree with the Researcher's proposed alignment framework or not. The Section is composed of five questions, for which interviewees were given the option to agree or disagree with the Researcher's point of view.

### 5.7.1 Question 1 – Positive impact on overall performance

This question was presented to the interviewees to get their views on the relevance of the proposed alignment framework. The interviewees were asked whether the proposed alignment strategy can positively impact the overall performance of the organisation. Figure 5-44 shows that 52.4% of the interviewees strongly agreed that the Researcher's proposed alignment has a positive impact on the overall performance, and the remaining 47.6 % also agreed with this proposal. Thus, the interviewees agreed that the proposed alignment of TM with HRM and human capital strategies will have a positive impact on the overall performance.

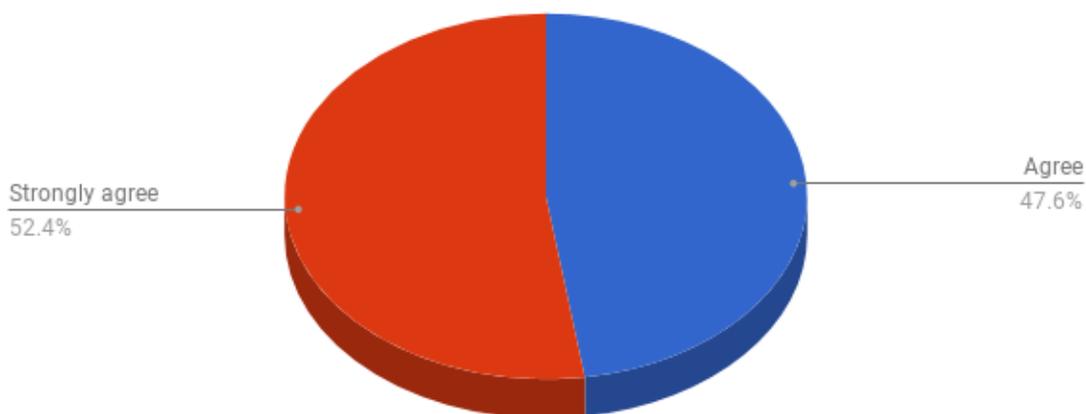


Figure 5-44: Positive impact of the alignment strategy

### 5.7.2 Question 2 – Improvement in HRM

In this question the interviewees were asked about their views, whether the proposed alignment strategy has a positive impact on the HRM structure in Saudi Higher Educational institutions. The interviewees were asked whether the alignment strategy can improve the overall HRM structure in the Saudi Higher Educational organisations. Figure 5-45 shows that 90.5 % of the interviewees, in total, agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whereas a small minority of 9.5 % were uncertain about it.

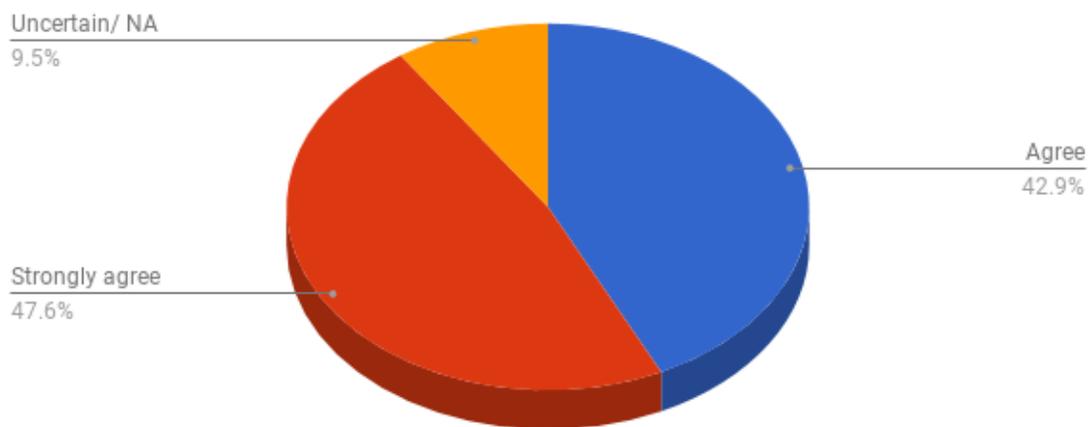


Figure 5-45: Improvement in HRM

### 5.7.3 Question 3 – Attraction and retention

This question was presented to the interviewees to get their opinions whether the alignment strategy has a positive impact in attracting and retaining talented professionals in Saudi Higher Educational institutions. The interviewees were asked, whether the alignment strategy can help Saudi Higher Education institute to attract and retain talented professionals, through effective recruiting and retention strategies. Figure 5-46 shows that 95.2 % of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with the Researcher's point of view.

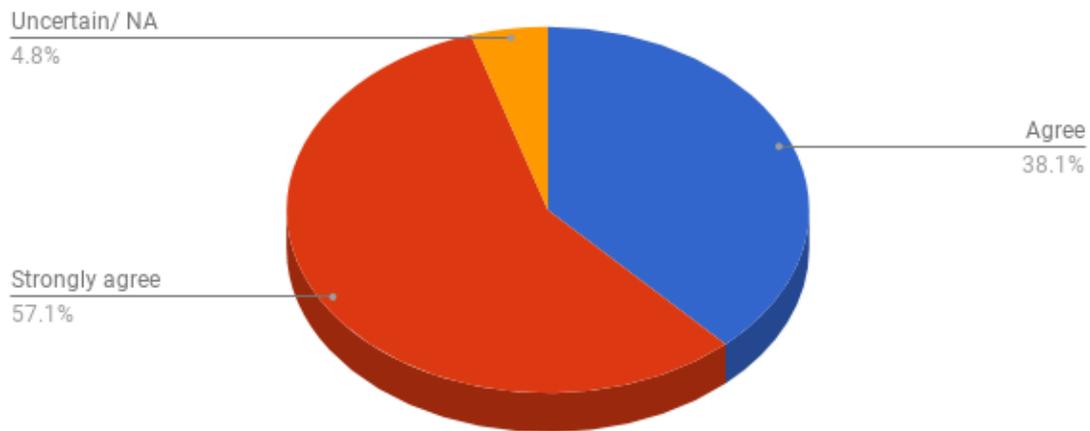


Figure 5-46: Attraction and retention

#### 5.7.4 Question 4 – World class status & funding

In this question, the interviewees were asked about whether the proposed alignment strategy can help Saudi Higher Educational organisations to achieve world class status, and attract foreign funding and students. Figure 5-47 shows that 76.2 % of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this claim, however, 23.8% were uncertain about it.

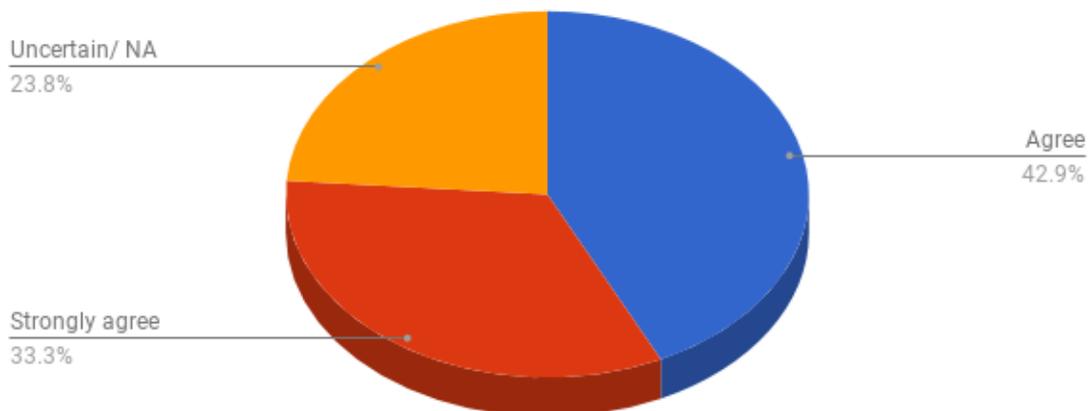


Figure 5-47: World class status

### 5.7.5 Question 5 – Promoting science students

This question focused on getting interviewees views about the proposed alignment’s positive impact on Saudi Higher Educational institutions, by encouraging more science enrolments. The interviewees were asked, whether the proposed framework can help Saudi Higher Educational system produce science engineering students and professionals, which are vastly needed in the country. Figure 5-48 shows that 33.3 % strongly agreed, and 38.1 % agreed with this claim, whereas, 28.6 % were unsure about it.

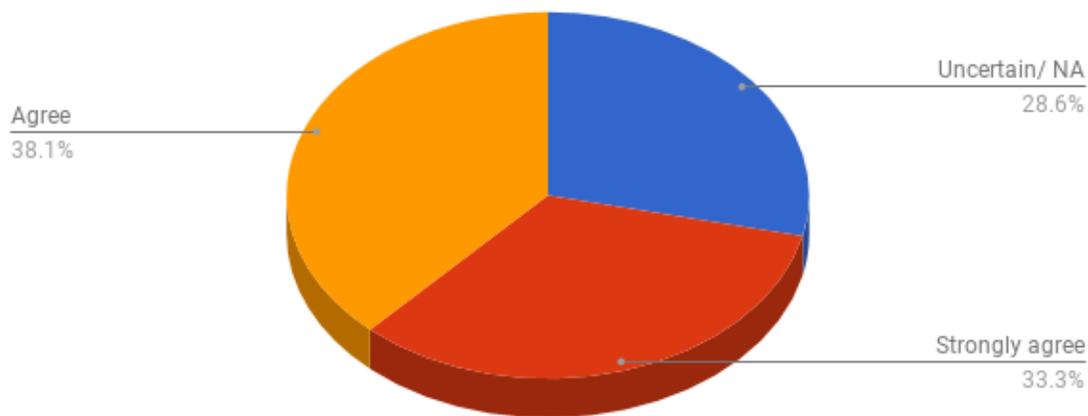


Figure 5-48: Promoting science students

The findings from this Section clearly show that the proposed alignment framework of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can impact the Saudi Higher Education institutions in a positive manner.

## 5.8 Section 6- Proposed sustainability implications

In this Section, the interviewees were asked about the proposed organisational sustainability implications. The interviewees were asked five questions, regarding the proposed sustainability strategy, which is an important aspect of the Researcher’s theoretical framework. The aim of this Section is to analyse whether interviewees agreed with the Researcher’s point of view, regarding organisational sustainability strategy.

### 5.8.1 Question 1 – Effective organisational performance

This question was presented to the interviewees to collect their opinions about the alignment between talent management, HRM and human capital strategies, which can lead to effective organisational performance. The interviewees were asked, whether effective alignment of talent management strategy with the overall HRM and human capital strategies can lead to an effective organisational performance, which in turn can lead to organisational sustainability. Figure 5-49 shows that 61.9 % of the interviewees strongly agreed, and the remaining 38.1 % also agreed with this notion. This shows that the interviewees agreed with the Researcher’s point of view.

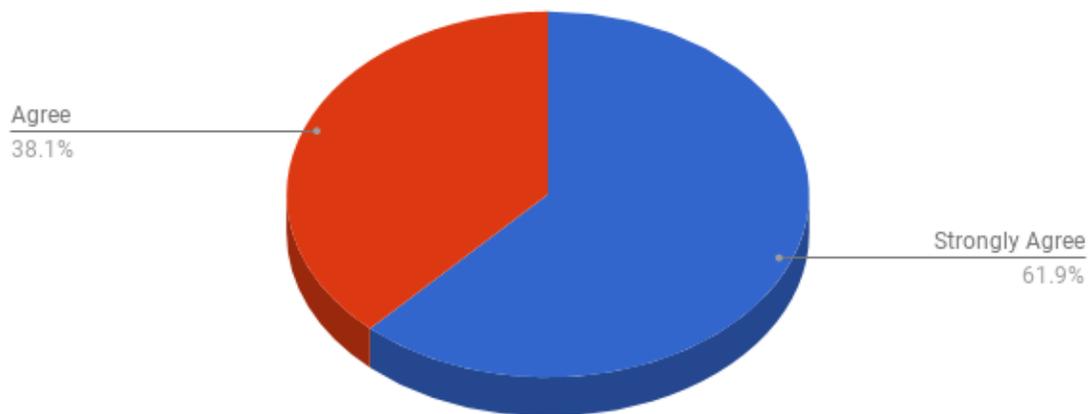


Figure 5-49: Effective organisational performance

### 5.8.2 Question 2 – Long term competitive advantage

This question was presented to the interviewees to get their views, whether talent management helps organisations achieve long term competitive advantage. The interviewees were asked whether talent management-based strategies help organisations focus on long-term competitive advantage, by investing in talented professionals. Figure 5-50 shows that 52.4 % of the interviewees strongly agreed, and 33.3 % agreed as well. However, 14.3 % were uncertain about it. Hence, most of the interviewees agreed with the Researcher’s statement.

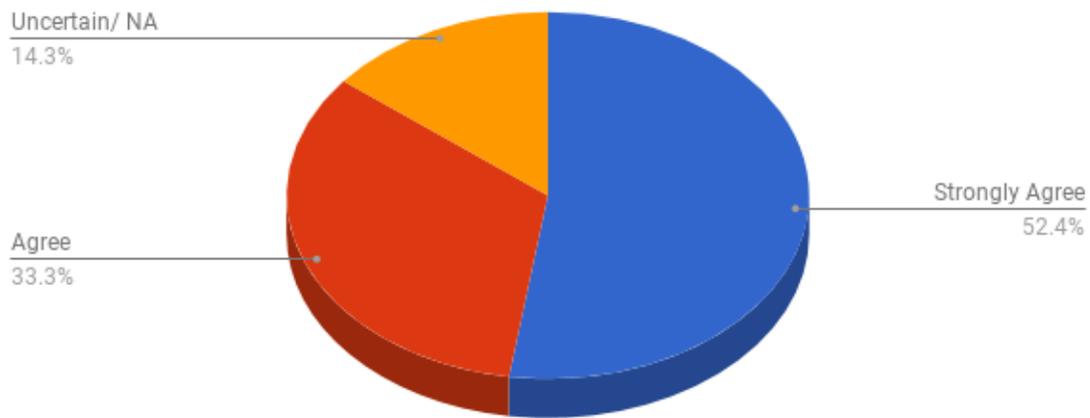


Figure 5-50: Long term competitive advantage

5-51: Financial sustainability

### 5.8.3 Question 3 – Improvement of ranking

This question was proposed to the interviewees to get their opinions whether Saudi Higher Educational institutions can improve their overall rankings, and reach world class status with the help of talent management alignment with HRM and human capital strategies. Figure 5-52 shows that 47.6 % of the interviewees agreed, and 38.1 % strongly agreed with this claim. Thus, the interviewees were in agreement with the Researcher’s claim, about improving the educational ranking, through talent management aligned strategies.

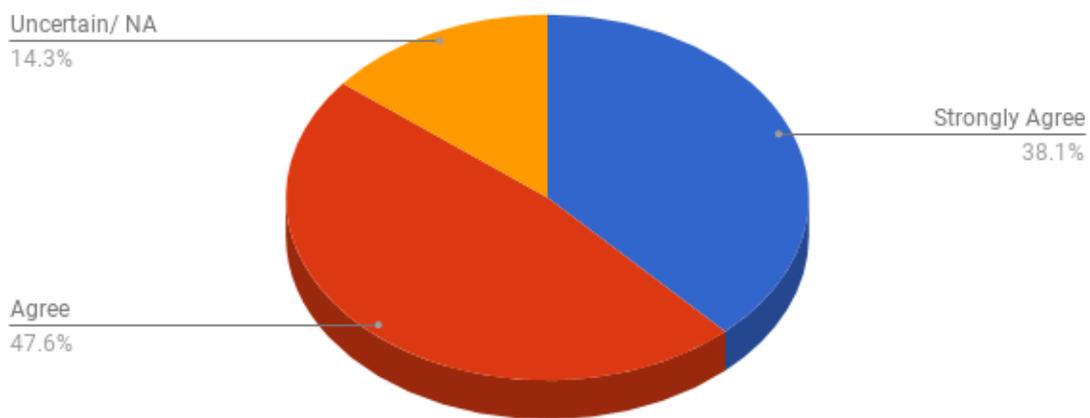


Figure 5-52: Improvement of HRM and Human Capital

#### 5.8.4 Question 4 – Reputation enhancement

This final proposal by the Researcher was presented to the interviewees, inquiring whether talent management can help Saudi Higher Educational institutions, recruit and retain talented professionals, who will produce and publish quality academic research-based articles. Thus, enhancing the reputation of the institution will improve the overall reputation of the Higher Education system. The interviewees were asked whether the alignment of talent management, with the overall of HRM and Human Capital strategies may help Saudi Higher Education system reach world class status, and improve the ranking of the institutions in the world. Figure 5-53 shows that 47.6 % of the interviewees strongly agreed, while, 42.9 % simply agreed with this notion. Hence, the majority of the interviewees agreed with the fact that talent management can enhance the overall reputation of the Higher Educational organisations.

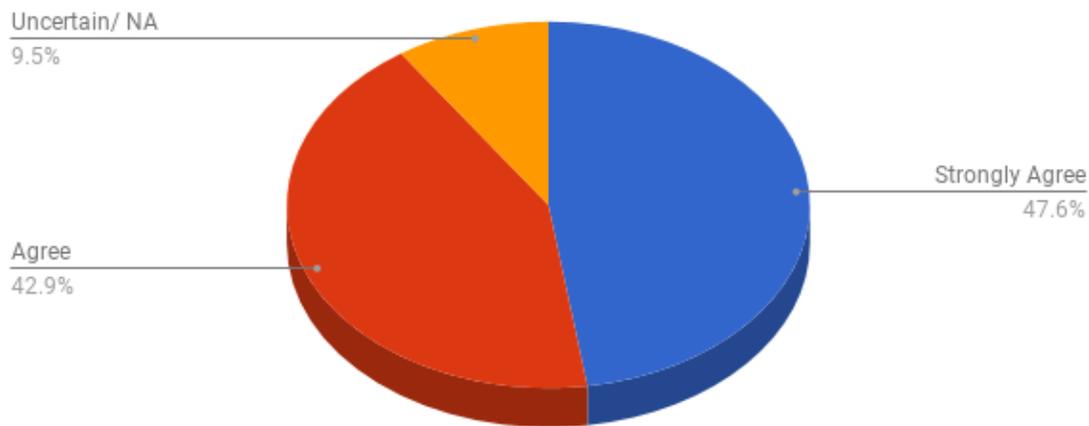


Figure 5-53: Reputation enhancement

The findings from this Section shows that interviewees agreed with the majority of the Researcher's claims. The findings also reflect that the interviewees also agreed with the fact that the alignment of talent management with HRM and Human Capital strategies can play a vital role in improving organisational performance. This can further lead to financial and long-term sustainability of Saudi Higher Educational institutions.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

To conclude, this Chapter has analysed the qualitative data collected from interviews, in the first phase of the data collection, which is also the primary source of data. The Chapter used qualitative analysis techniques, to identify patterns and links among factors, as presented in Figures and tables.

Most of the findings from the qualitative analysis shows that talent management can positively impact the overall performance of the organisation. The findings also revealed that, by implementing talent management strategies that are aligned with HRM and human capital strategies, the organisations can reach long term competitive advantage, which will result in organisational sustainability. The first Section of the findings showed that most of the interviewees occupied high positions in Saudi Higher Education system. This was an important aspect of the research, as it was necessary for the Researcher to get first-hand knowledge from the decision makers.

Furthermore, the second Section of the interview findings, which focused on the internal and external organisational environments, reflected that factors, such as leadership, communication, formal structure, financial stability, economic conditions, technological advancements and law and legislation, play a vital role in implementing talent management strategies. The findings showed that, all the internal and external factors are expected to have a major impact on talent management, HRM, human capital strategies, and long-term sustainability. Thus, any organisation willing to implement such a strategy will have to take these factors into consideration.

The next Section of the interviews focusing on the alignment of HRM and human capital strategies with talent management and organisational sustainability strategies, also showed that the majority of Saudi Higher Educational institutions do not have such strategies in place. Also, the obstacles and challenges, as mentioned previously, are affecting the implementation of such an aligning strategy. Most of the findings from these obstacles revealed that the lack of pre-defined guidelines, lack of talent management knowledge, and fear of change were among the biggest obstacles identified. The findings also revealed that,

in the organisation where the alignment strategy is already being implemented, C-level MD with concerned departments are involved.

Moreover, the last two Sections on the findings focused on analysing the implications of implementing talent management alignment with HRM, human capital and organisational sustainability. The findings showed that these strategies can be easily implemented in the Saudi Higher Educational institutions, as the majority of the interviewees were open to it and showed positive responses towards it. The findings also suggested that talent management alignment with HRM and human capital strategies can help Saudi Higher Educational organisations self-sustain financially. It can also help them achieve the world class status, and improve the overall ranking of Saudi Higher Educational organisations.

## **6 Chapter Six: Quantitative Data Collection and Findings**

### **6.1 Introduction**

A major part of the research methodology involves the quantitative analysis that was conducted after the qualitative data collection and analysis, in order to validate the research. The quantitative data collection was conducted through a questionnaire survey design, in which hundred and nine responses were collected. The aim of this survey was to identify and analyse the perception and knowledge of talent management in the Saudi Higher Education sector. The quantitative part of the research is considered as the secondary research and was conducted in the second phase; the reason for conducting this research was to further validate the findings of qualitative analysis, which is the primary research method of this research.

Moreover, the findings in this Chapter also showed the acceptance of a talent management process model that has been presented in Chapter 3. The findings from the quantitative analysis show correlation between the qualitative and quantitative findings. Thus, this Chapter aims to achieve one of the primary methodology objectives of this research, which is to identify a phenomenon through the mixed method research.

### **6.2 Survey data analysis**

This Section presents the survey findings in detail. The survey was divided into four Sections, each Section intended to target various components of talent management that the Researcher aims to identify. The first Section focused on the basic demographics, such as age, gender, working experience, experience in the education sector, etc. The second Section focused on talent management knowledge and understanding, in Saudi Higher Education sector. It aimed to identify whether Saudi professionals, working or studying in Higher Education sector, have the basic and necessary knowledge of TM. The third Section aimed to analyse the impact and understanding of talent management guidance model, as developed in Chapter 4. The Researcher asked questions regarding the basic framework of guidance model, such as the identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development and attraction and retention. Finally, the last Section

of the survey design focused on the implication of implementing such a strategy, in which talent management is aligned with existing HRM and human capital strategies. The respondents were asked about their perceptions regarding such strategy, and whether they consider such a venture to be successful or not.

### 6.3 Section 1-Basic demographics

In this Section, the Researcher identified the basic demographics of the respondents, such as age, gender, education and working experience.

#### 6.3.1 Gender Proportions

A total of 109 respondents completed the questionnaire; out of which, 30.6 % were female while the remaining 69.4 % were male, as shown in Figure 6-1. This is a reasonably accurate representation of the Saudi Higher Education sector, as the majority of the high level positions are occupied by males. However, the female professionals in Saudi Higher Education institutions are earning more positions, which is why a big portion of the respondents are females.

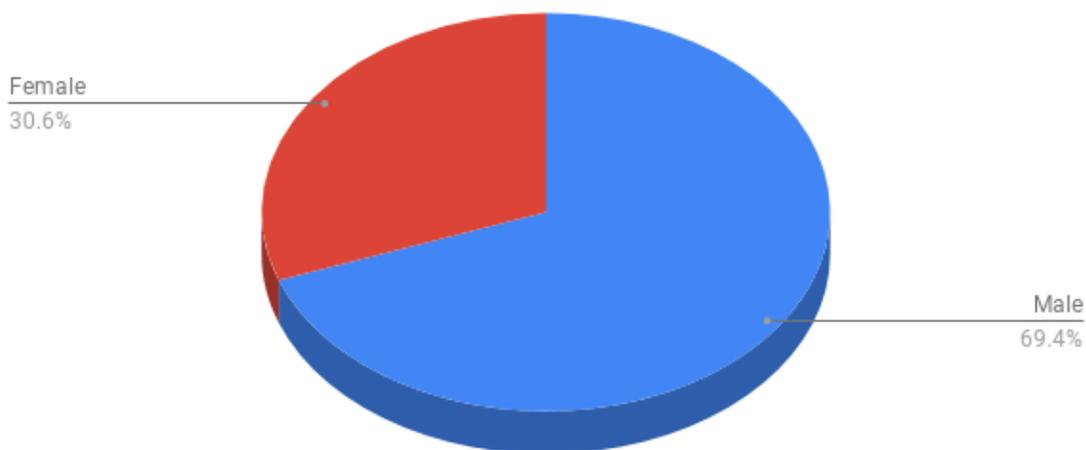


Figure 6-1: Gender proportions

### 6.3.2 Age

In this Sub-section, the respondents were asked to select their age group. The age of the respondents is an important demographic factor, showing the diversity among respondents. In this survey, the majority of the respondents were in the age group of 31-40 (45.4%), while a big portion of respondents were between the age group of 41-50 (25%), as shown in Figure 6-2. Thus, the majority of the respondents who participated in the survey were experienced mature professionals.

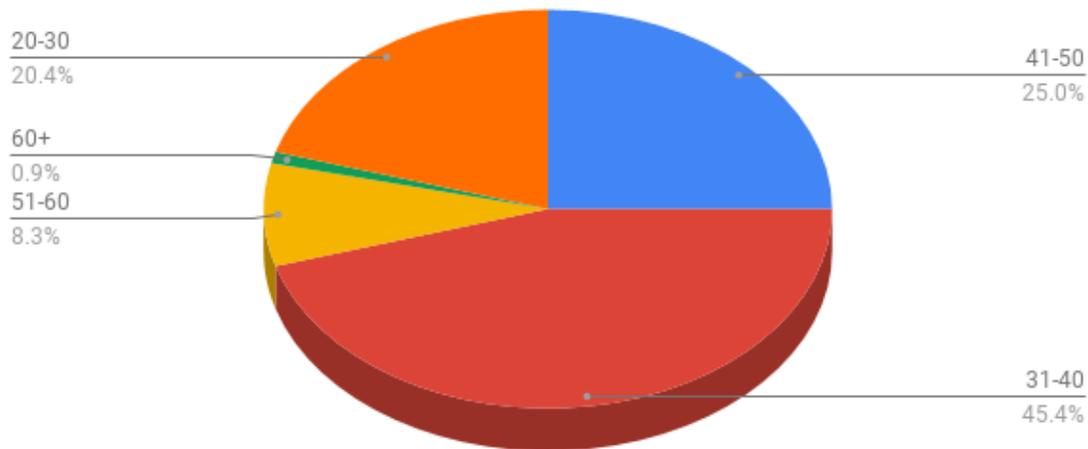


Figure 6-2: Age

### 6.3.3 Level of education

Another important factor in determining the demographics of the respondents is the level of education. It is important for the quantitative questionnaire design, to have a population of the highest level of education. The reason behind this selection is related to the area of interest, which is talent management. As this research is targeting Saudi Higher Education system, the majority of the respondents were holders of either Masters or Doctorate degree, as shown in Figure 6-3.

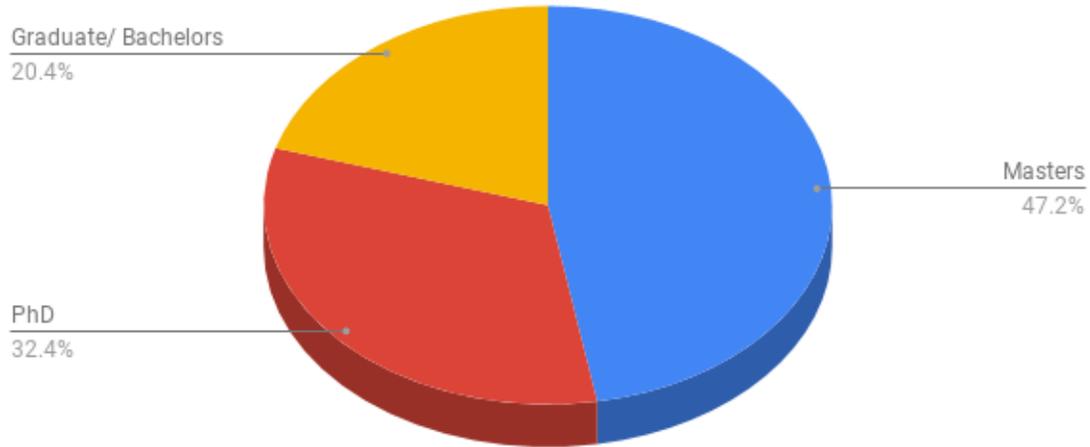


Figure 6-3: Level of education

### 6.3.4 Level of experience

Another major factor in basic demographics is the level of experience of the respondents. It is important for the quantitative research to have a population that has enough working experience, in order to understand the basic questions regarding HRM, sustainability and organisational performance. As shown in Figure 6-4, the majority of the respondents have working experience in the region of 5-10 (26.9%) and 15-20 (16.7%) years.

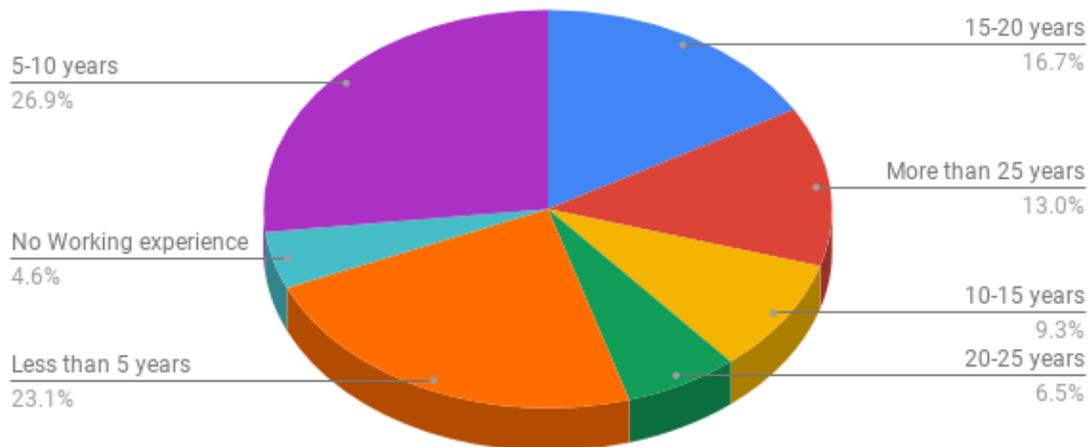


Figure 6-4: Working experience

### 6.3.5 Level of experience in education sector

The last factor in this Section was the level of experience of the participants in the education sector. As the research focuses on identifying a talent management strategy that can be aligned with the HRM and human capital strategies of Higher Educational institutions, it was important for the quantitative data collection to include a sample with experience in the education sector. As shown in Figure 6-5, a diverse sample with various levels of experience in education participated in the survey. However, the majority of the respondents had less than five or 5-10 years of experience.

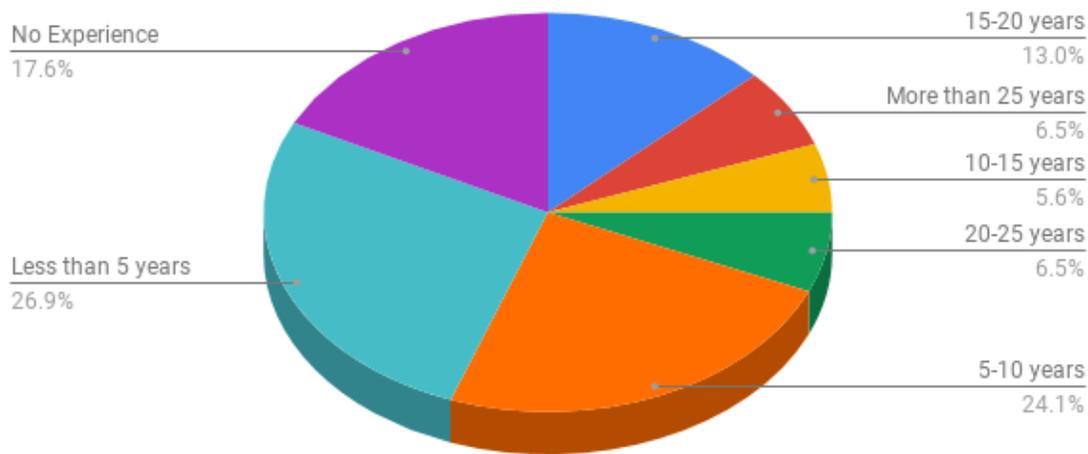


Figure 6-5: Working experience in education sector

## 6.4 Section 2- Talent management knowledge and experience

In this Section, the Researcher used quantitative data collection tools, to identify whether participants have any knowledge or experience in the field of talent management. This Section has been used as a screening Section, to give a general idea about talent management knowledge in the education sector. The Section also aimed at identifying, whether the participants have any working experience in the education sector.

### 6.4.1 Talent management experience

In this question, the respondents were asked whether they have any experience in the field of talent management. This is a screening question, which provides a generalised idea about

the population, through the surveyed sample. As expected, the majority of the respondents didn't have any experience in talent management, neither at the academic, nor at the industrial level. As shown in Figure 6-6, 57 % of the respondents answered NO, while only 24.3 % answered YES. The rest of the respondents were unsure about their personal experience.

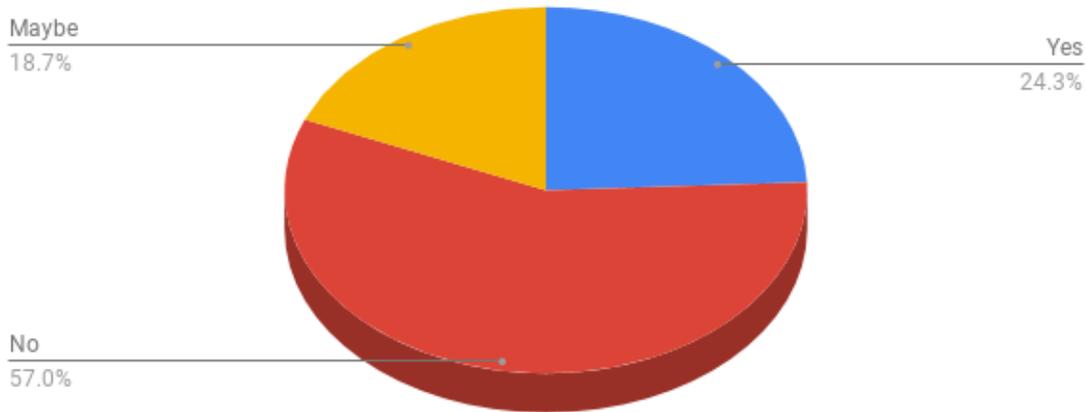


Figure 6-6: Working experience in talent management

#### 6.4.2 Talent management knowledge/information

In this question, the respondents were asked, whether they have any knowledge or information regarding talent management. This is another good screening question, as it gives the Researcher a generalised perception about talent management in the education sector. As expected, the majority of the respondents answered NO (50%), as shown in Figure 6-7. However, 35.2 % of the respondents answered YES, which shows that some professionals already have knowledge regarding this field. The remaining 14.8 % were uncertain.

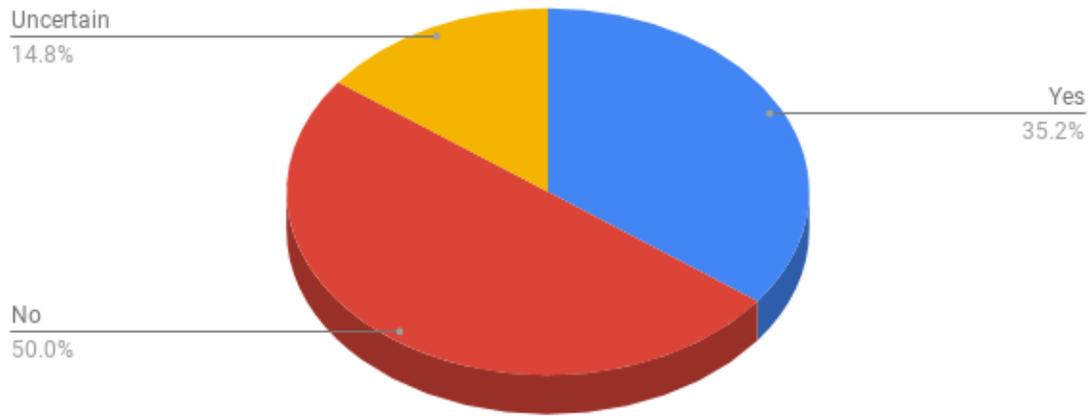


Figure 6-7: Level of experience in the field of talent management

### 6.4.3 Experience in organisational sustainability

A major part of this research focuses on how organisations can achieve organisational sustainability, via successfully aligning talent management with HRM and human capital strategies. In this question, respondents were asked whether they have any working/learning experience, in implementing or drafting organisational sustainability strategies. The results showed that the majority of the respondents don't have any such experience, as shown in Figure 6-8. This is expected, as there is a lack of organisational sustainability strategies in the Saudi Higher Education system.

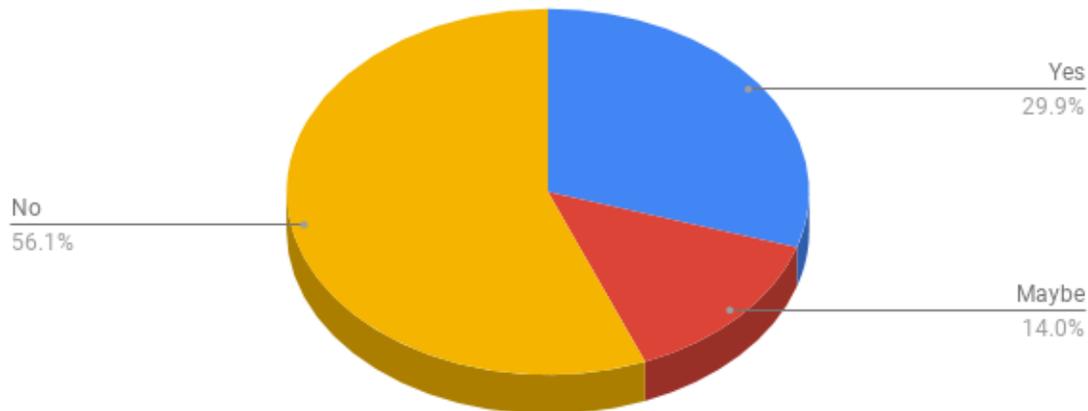


Figure 6-8: Working experience in organisational sustainability

#### 6.4.4 Experience in Higher Education

In this question, respondents were asked whether they have any working experience in the education sector, or specifically, in the Higher Education sector. As expected, the majority of the respondents answered YES (68%), as shown in Figure 6-9. However, 25% of the respondents answered NO, as some students studying in the Saudi Higher Education system were also targeted in this survey.

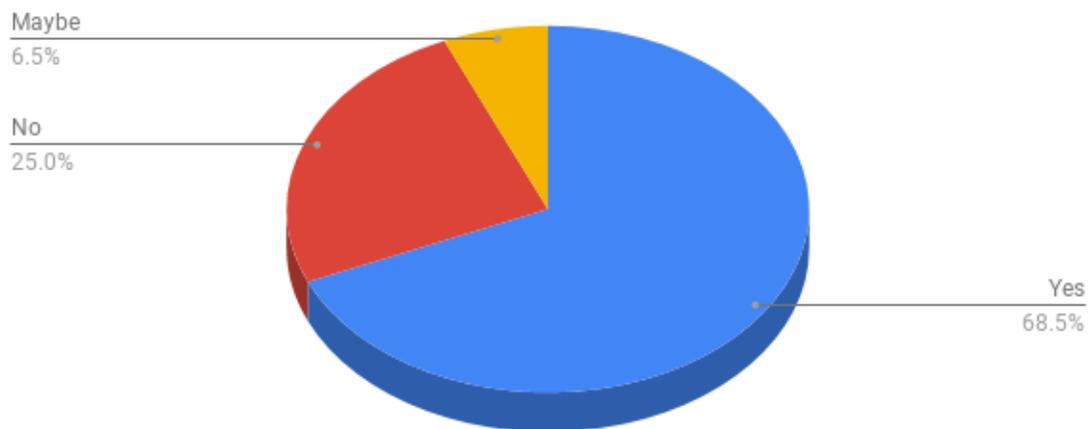


Figure 6-9: Working experience in Higher Education sector

#### 6.4.5 Talent management learning

In this question, the respondents were asked whether they have been taught academically the subject of talent management. The majority of the respondents (63.6%) answered NO. This result goes in accordance with the research rationale, as there is a lack of research and knowledge in the Saudi Higher Education system. A small portion of the respondents answered YES (22.4%), as shown in Figure 6-10, which could be possible, as the majority of Saudi students attend western (UK,USA) universities for Doctorate degrees. However, the overall picture, as shown through research and quantitative analysis, looks grim.

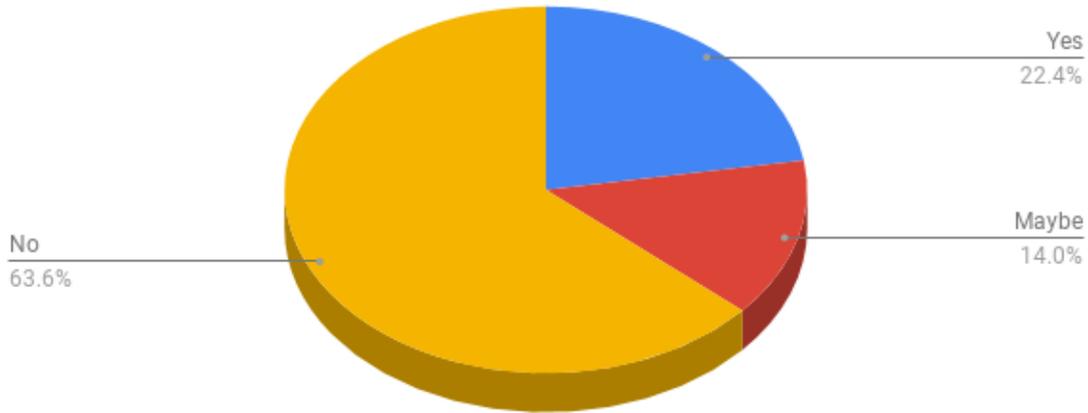


Figure 6-10: Taught talent management

### 6.5 Section 3-Talent management Guidance Model

In this Section, the Researcher aimed to analyse the talent management guidance model, previously developed through the literature analysis, as shown in Figure 2-8, in Chapter 2. The Researcher developed questions that targeted the basic factors of talent management guidance model, such as identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention of talents. The respondents were asked whether they considered these factors to have a major or minor impact in the overall process of talent management. The Researcher is aware of the fact that talent management is an area that is not widely known in the Saudi context, and the majority of the personnel working in the Higher Education sector are not aware of it. However, the basic definition and explanation of talent management was provided prior to filling this form.

#### 6.5.1 Identification of pivotal positions

To identify the importance of this factor in Saudi Higher Education, and the overall process of talent management, two questions were asked to the respondents. First, the respondents were asked whether they think that the identification of strategically important positions, and filling them with highly competent talented personnel is important. As a result, 69.5 % of the respondents answered YES, as shown in Figure 6-11. A small percentage of the

respondents (7.6%) answered NO, while the rest were uncertain. This shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that the identification of pivotal positions, and filling these positions with talented personnel is strategically important.

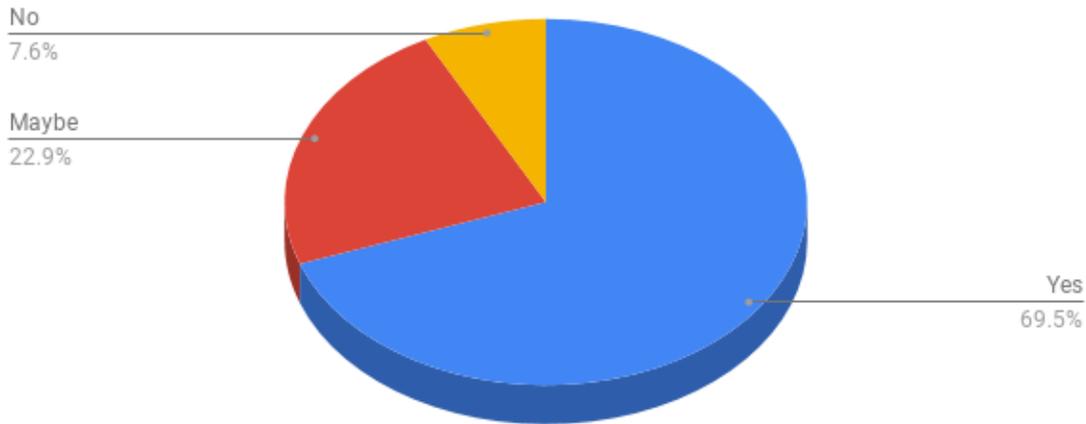


Figure 6-11: Identification of pivotal positions

Furthermore, the respondents were asked more specific questions in terms of talent management and Higher Education. The respondents were asked whether they think strategically important positions can contribute to the overall process of talent management. As shown in Figure 6-12, the majority of the respondents answered YES (60%), whereas around 14% answered NO, and the rest were uncertain. These numbers reflect the endorsement that the Saudi Higher Education professionals have shown towards talent management.

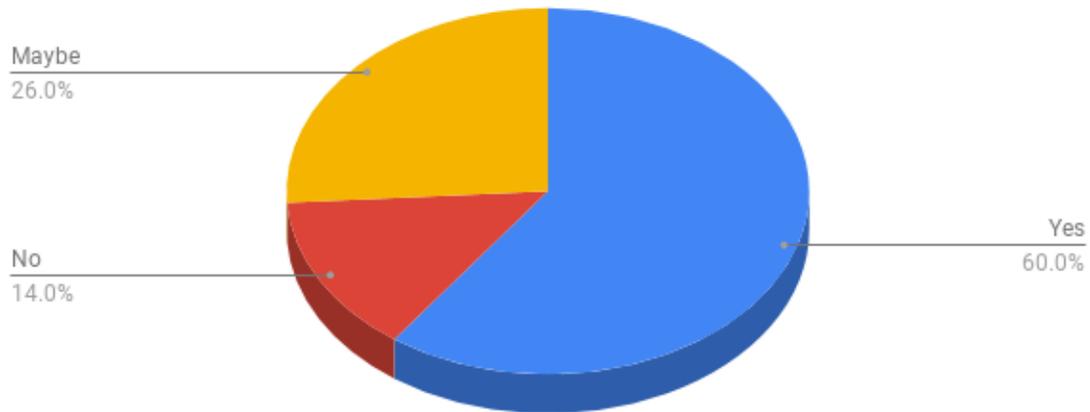


Figure 6-12: Importance of pivotal positions

### 6.5.2 Creation of talent pool

To determine the importance of creating a talent pool (a database of talented personnel), the Researcher asked two questions. In the first question, the respondents were asked, whether they think that creating a data base of talented individuals, from inside and outside the organisation, for future and existing recruitment can improve the performance of the organisation. As shown in Figure 6-13, 66.7% of the respondents answered YES, while merely 8.6% answered NO. Thus, the majority of the respondents agreed with the importance of creating a talent pool.

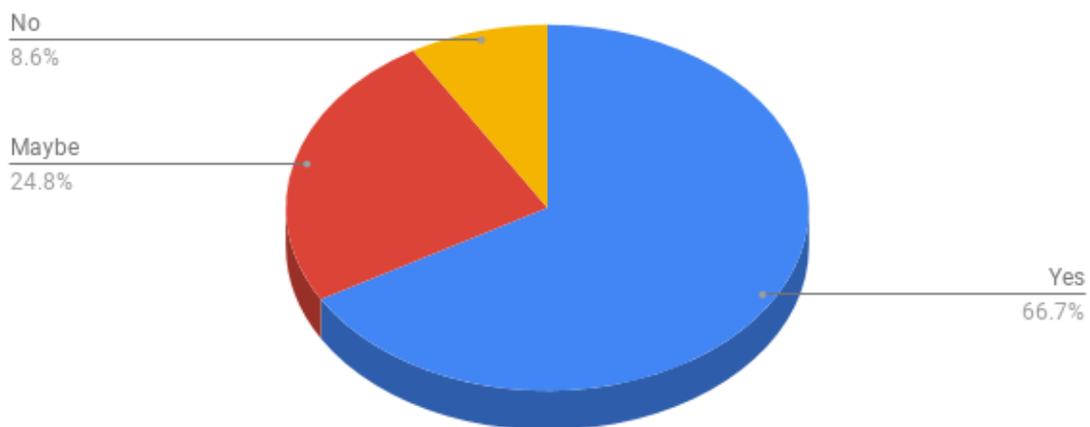


Figure 6-13: Creation of talent pool

In the second question, the respondents were asked whether a database of talented personnel can help Higher Education organisations to implement talent management strategies more effectively. As a result, 66.7% of the respondents answered YES, while only 7.6% answered NO, as shown in Figure 6-14. These findings show that Saudi Higher Education professionals considered the creation of talent pool an important factor of talent management.

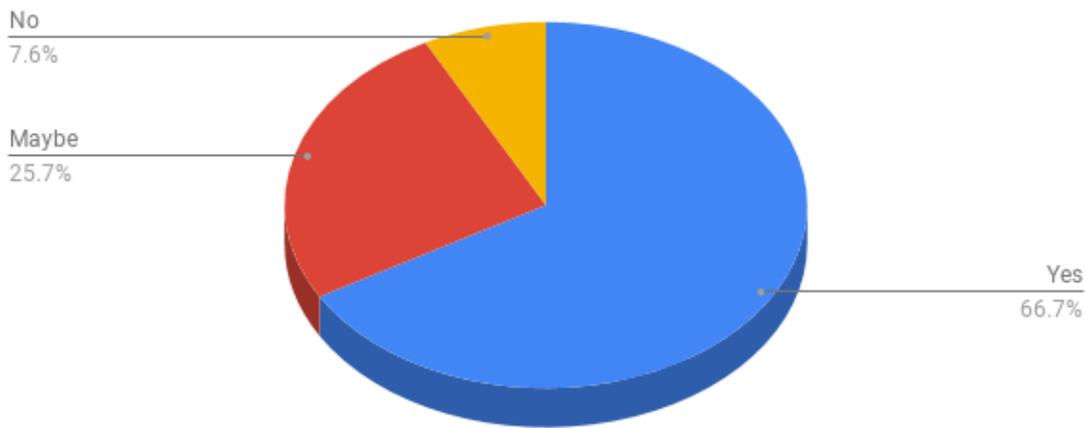


Figure 6-14: Importance of talent pool

### 6.5.3 Recruitment

In this Subsection, the respondents were asked about the importance of recruitment, for the overall HRM and talent management. The respondents were asked two questions, each question trying to identify a different phenomenon. In the first question, the respondents were asked whether they considered the recruitment an important part of Higher Educational organisations' HRM. As shown in Figure 6-15, 70.9% of the respondents agreed that recruitment is an important of Higher Education's HRM. Only 2.9 % did not consider it as important, while the rest were uncertain.

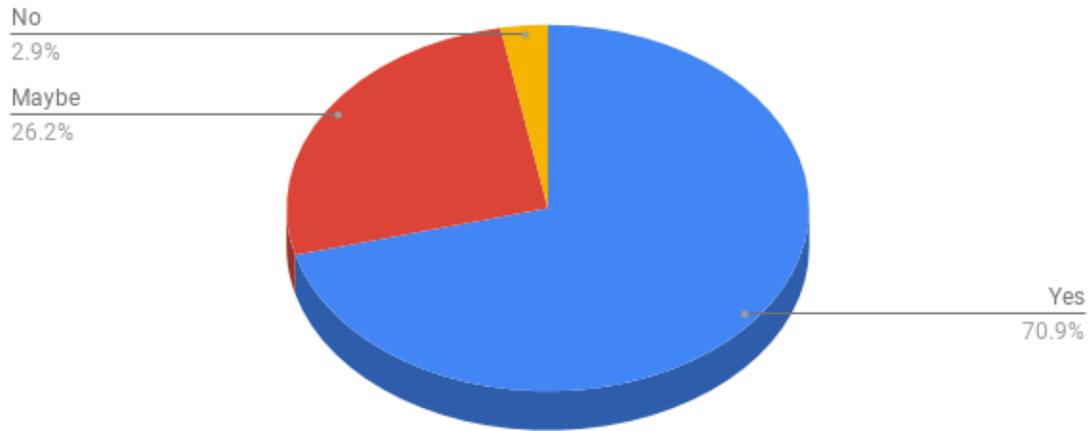


Figure 6-15: Recruitment

In the second question, the respondents were asked, whether they think that Saudi Higher Educational institutions need to introduce new and dynamic strategies of recruitment. As a result, 84 % answered YES, as shown in Figure 6-16, while only 3 % answered NO. Thus, a strong feeling of change emerges in the Higher Education system, as previous methods of hiring through nepotism are getting obsolete. The respondents were also asked whether they think the recruitment stage can play an important role in the overall process of talent management. As shown in Figure 6-17, 71.2% answered YES, while only 6.7% answered NO.

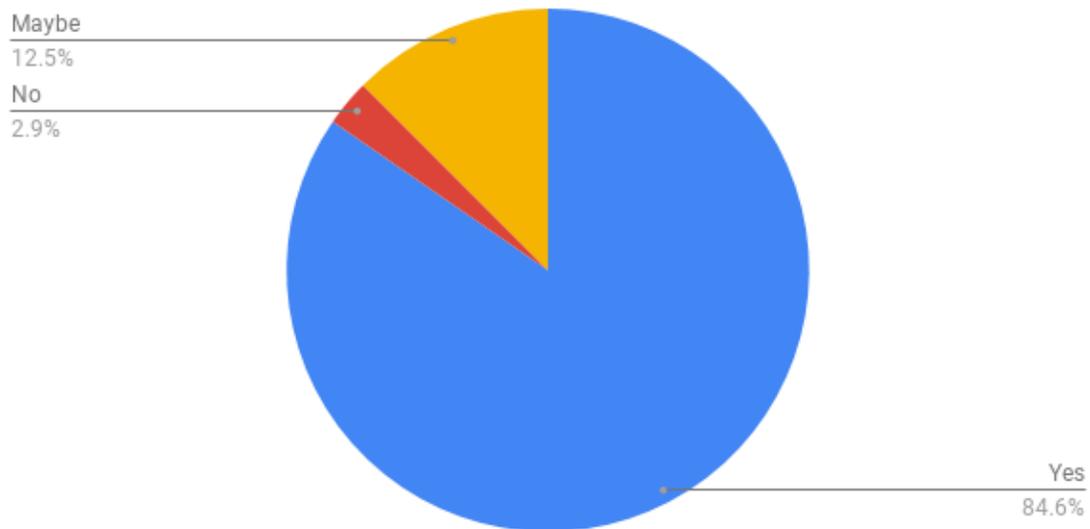


Figure 6-16: Dynamic strategies of recruitment

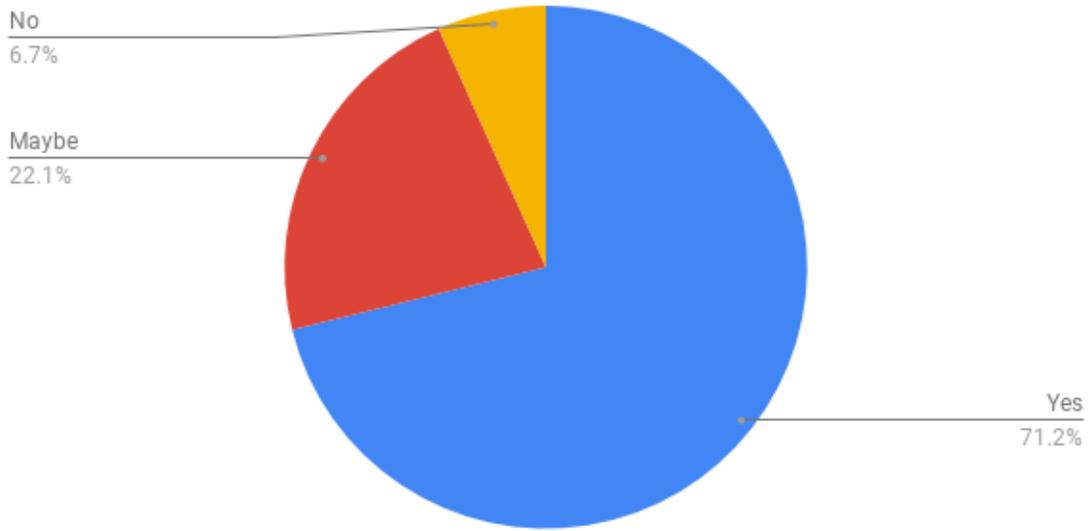


Figure 6-17 : Importance of Recruitment

#### 6.5.4 Training and development

In this Subsection, the respondents were asked about the importance of training and development for talent management, and the overall Higher Education sector. This factor's importance was identified using three questions. The respondents were first asked whether they consider the training and development of existing and newly recruited employees necessary or not. As shown in Figure 6-18, 84.5 % of the respondents answered YES, while only 3.9 % answered NO.

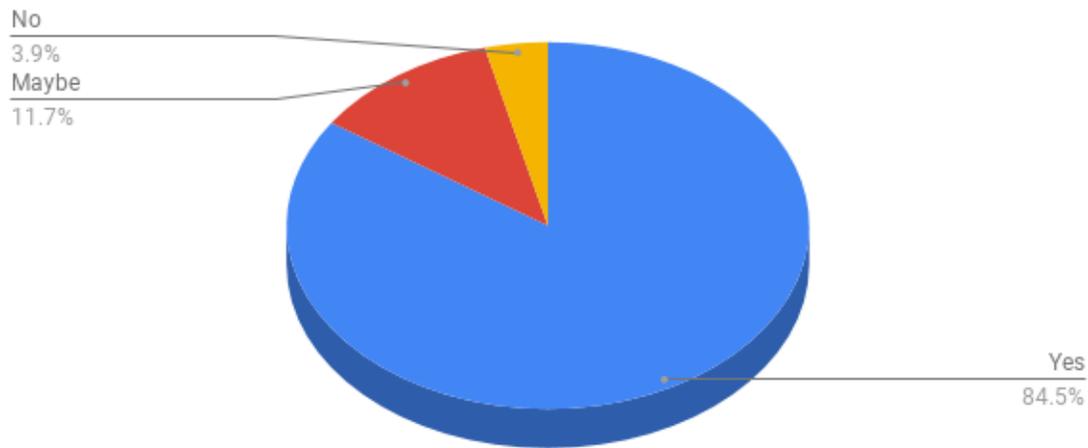


Figure 6-18: Training and development

In the second question, the respondents were asked whether Higher Educational organisations should have a department specific, or function specific training and development programs. As shown in Figure 6-19, 82.7% of the respondents answered YES, while only 5.8 % answered NO. Finally, the respondents were also asked whether they think that training and development can play an important role in the overall process of talent management. As shown in Figure 6-20, 79.8% agreed that training and development can play an important role in the talent management process, while 7.7% disagreed.

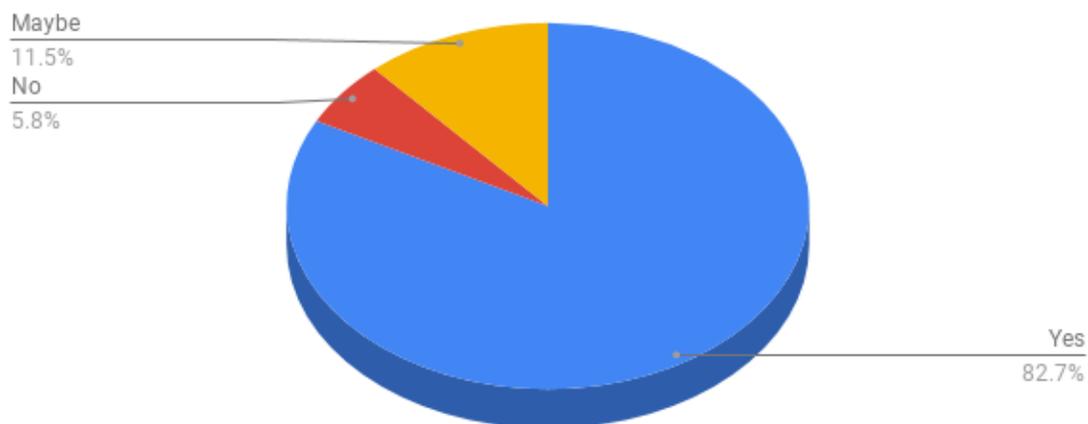


Figure 6-19: Function specific department

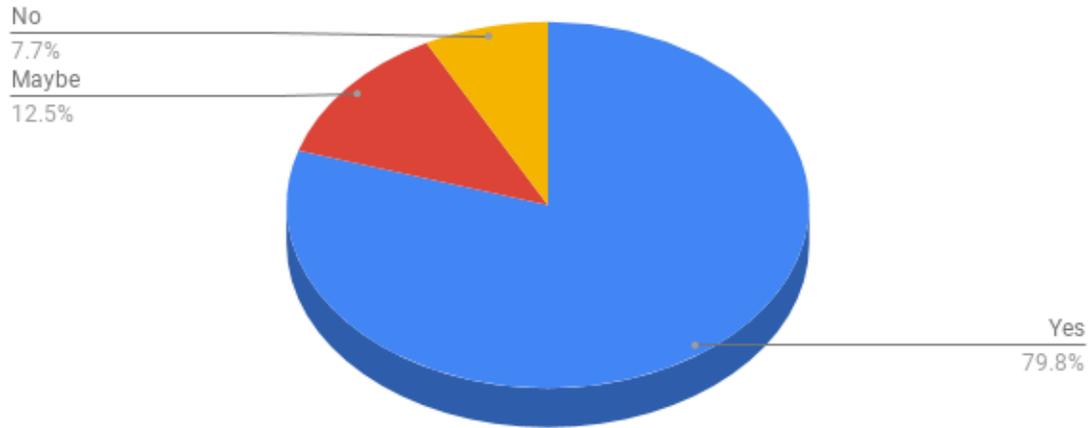


Figure 6-20: Importance of training and development

### 6.5.5 Attraction and retention

In this Subsection, the respondents were asked about the last factor of talent management guidance model: the attraction and retention of talented employees. Three questions were used to identify this phenomenon. The respondents were first asked whether they think that the attraction and retention of talented employees is an important aspect for organisational success. As shown in Figure 6-21, 72.8% of the respondents answered YES, while only 5.8 % answered NO.

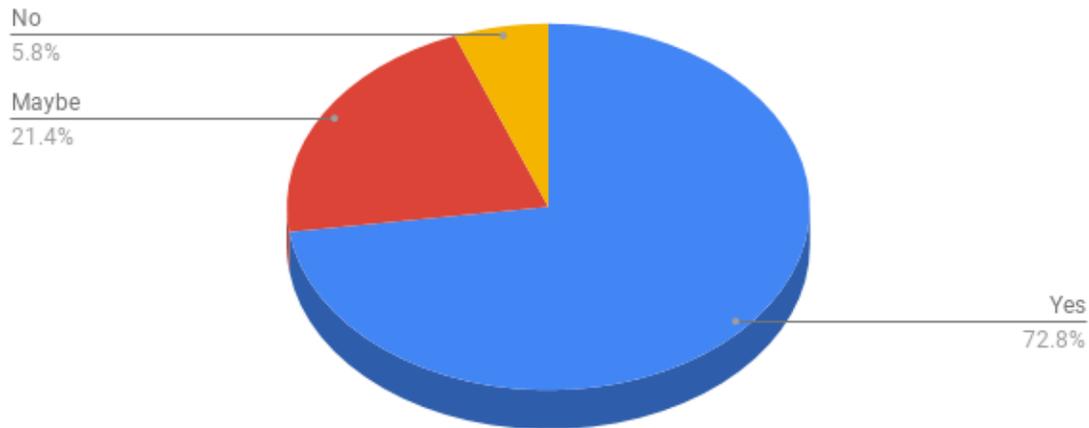


Figure 6-21: Attraction and retention

In the second question, the respondents were asked whether Saudi Higher Educational organisations should introduce attractive retention strategies (other than monetary strategies) to retain talents. As shown in Figure 6-22, 72.8% of the respondents answered YES, while only 6.8% answered NO. Thus, this clearly indicates that Saudi Higher Education needs to introduce better and innovative retention strategies. Finally, the respondents were asked whether they think that attraction and retention of talented employees can play a significant role in the overall process of talent management. As shown in Figure 6-23, 75 % of the respondents answered YES, which is a clear indication of how important this factor is for the overall process of talent management.

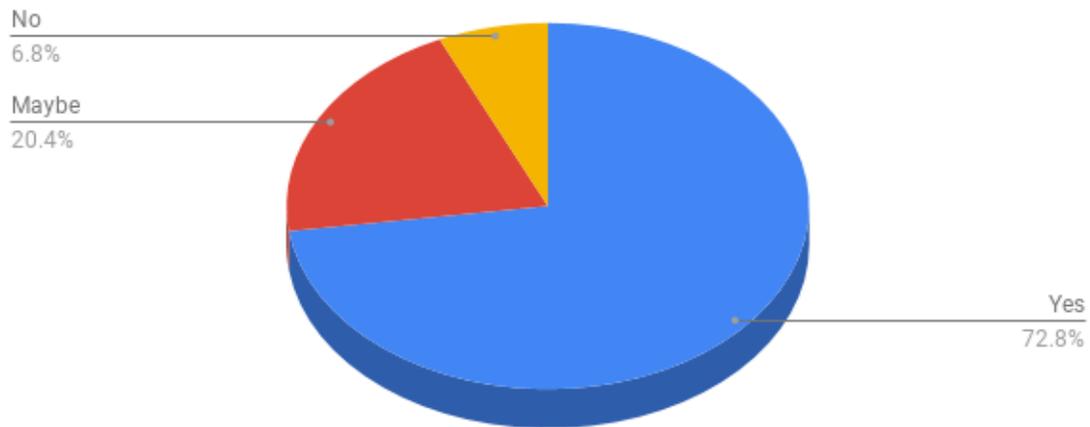


Figure 6-22: Importance of attraction and retention

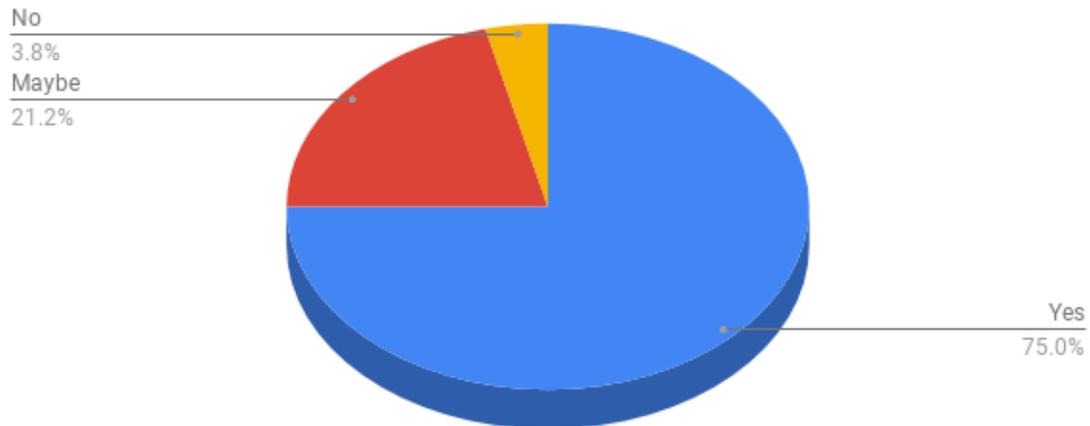


Figure 6-23: Importance of attraction and retention strategies

## 6.6 Section 4- Implications

In this Section, the Researcher aimed to understand the implications of implementing a talent management alignment strategy. The Researcher tried to analyse the point of view and acceptance of talent management and organisational sustainability, of Saudi Higher

Education professionals. In this Section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about their perceptions, regarding internal and external organisational factors that may impact the organisational performance. The Section contained a total of 9 questions, and the respondents were asked about their perspective regarding talent management, and its alignment with HRM and human capital strategies. The respondents were also asked about their organisations' flexibility, in terms of adopting such a strategy. Overall, this Section provides a good perspective about the Saudi Higher Education context adoption and acceptance for talent management strategies.

### 6.6.1 Internal organisational factors

In this question, the Researcher attempted to identify the impact of internal organisational factors, such as communication, financial stability, leadership, and HRM, can impact the overall performance of the organisation. As shown in Figure 6-24, 82.4 % agreed that these internal organisational factors impact the overall performance of the organisation. Only a small minority of 5.9 % believed that these factors do not impact the overall performance. As a result, it can be argued that Saudi Higher Education professionals consider these internal organisational factors important, in terms of effective organisational performance.

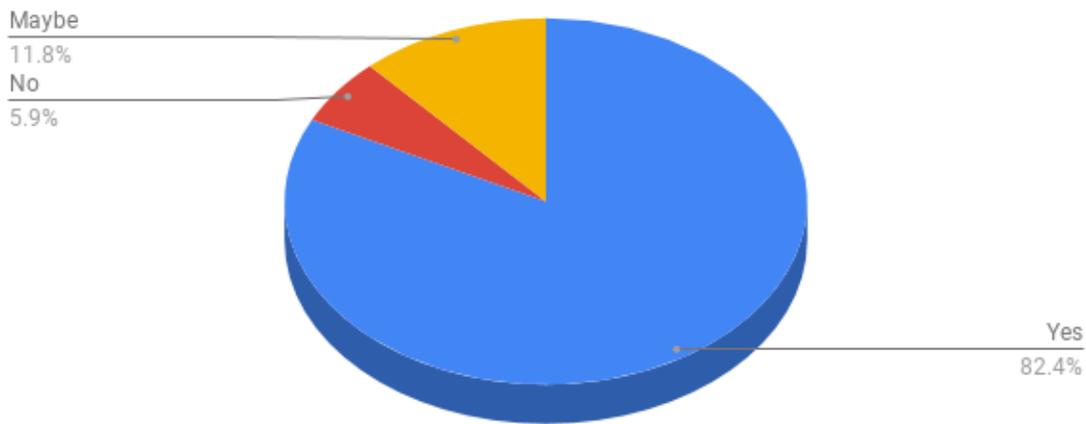


Figure 6-24: Internal organisational factors

### 6.6.2 External environmental factors

In this question, the Researcher asked the respondents whether they think that external uncontrollable environmental factors, such as political situation of the society, law and order, technological advancements, legislation, economic conditions etc. can impact the overall performance of the organisation. As shown in Figure 6-25, 75.5 % of the respondents answered YES, thus, agreed that these factors are significant, and can impact the overall performance of the organisation. However, 17.6 % of the respondents were uncertain about it.

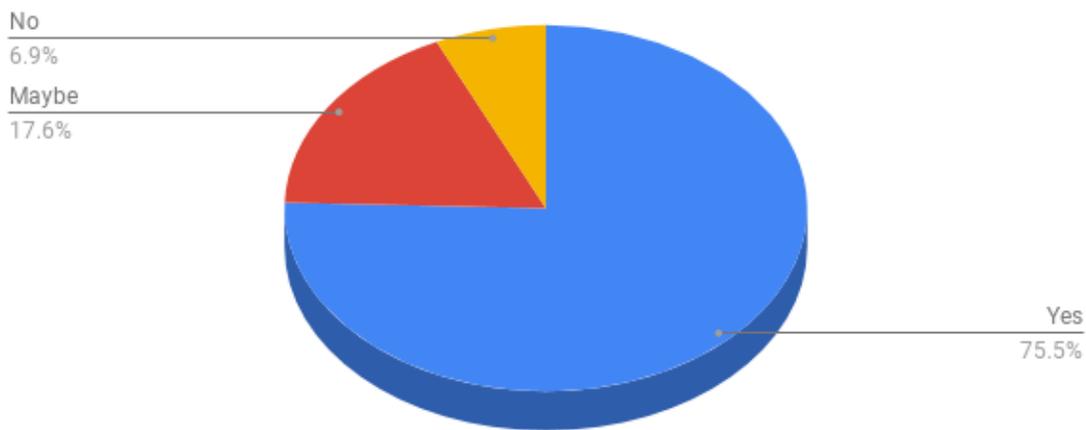


Figure 6-25: External factors

### 6.6.3 Existing HRM and human capital strategies

In this question, the respondents were asked whether the existing HRM and human capital strategies can be aligned with talent management strategies. As shown in Figure 6-26, 58.3 % of the respondents answered YES, showing that most of the respondents agreed that, the existing HRM and human capital strategies in their organisations can be aligned with talent management strategies. However, 36.9 % of the respondents were unsure about this.

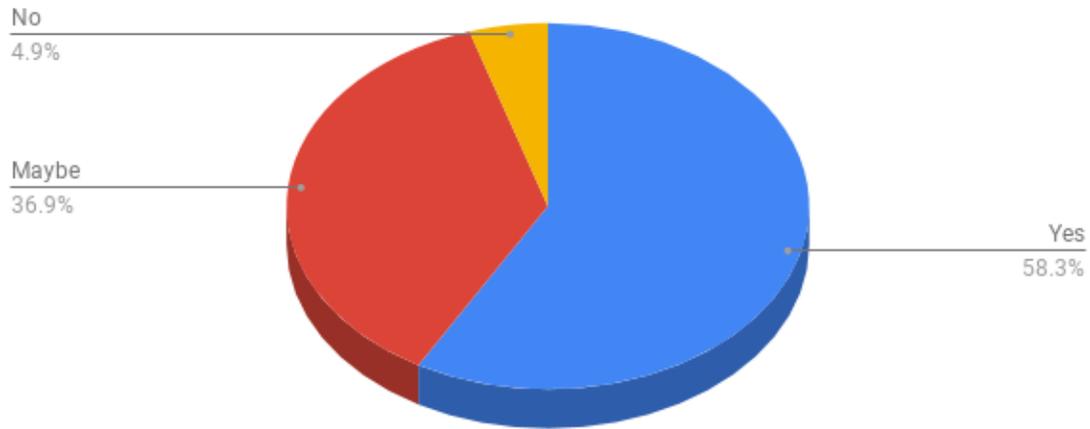


Figure 6-26: Alignment of HRM and human capital

#### 6.6.4 Organisational performance

In this question, the respondents were asked whether they think that the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can improve the overall performance of the organisation. As shown in Figure 6-27, 64.7 % of the respondents agree that the alignment of talent management with HRM strategies can improve the overall performance of the organisation.

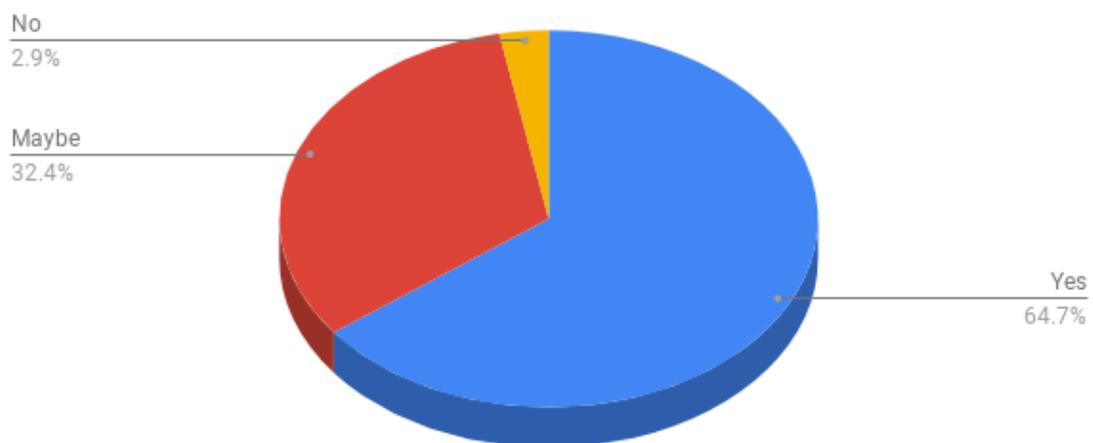


Figure 6-27: Alignment implications

### 6.6.5 Organisational sustainability

A major part of this research was to draft out a strategy that can help Saudi Higher Educational organisations to achieve organisational sustainability. In this question, the respondents were asked whether they think that aligning talent management with existing HRM and human capital strategies leads to organisational sustainability. As shown in Figure 6-28, 61.8 % of the respondents answered YES, showing that the majority of the respondents believe that organisational sustainability in Saudi Higher Education is achievable through talent management. However, 34.3 % of the respondents were uncertain about it, which reflects why talent management as a field needs to be more researched and introduced, in the Saudi Higher Educational context.

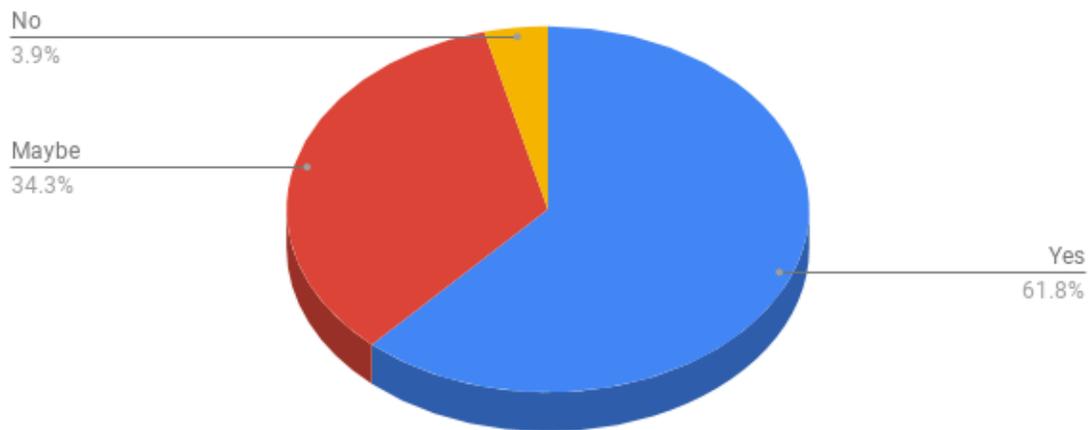


Figure 6-28: Organisational sustainability

### 6.6.6 Necessity for talent management strategies

In this question, the respondents were asked whether they think that it is necessary to introduce talent management in the Saudi Higher Education system. The reason for asking such question is to get the perception of the population, about accepting talent management as a field and strategy in the sector. As shown in Figure 6-29, 65.7% of the respondents answered YES, showing that the majority is willing to have such a strategy introduced, in

the Higher Education sector. However, 30.4 % were uncertain and only 3.9 % answered NO.

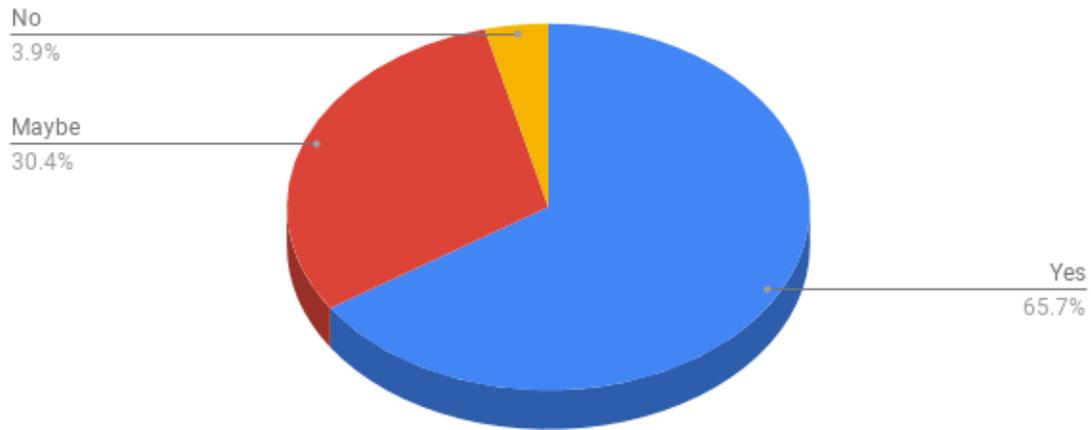


Figure 6-29: Implementation of alignment strategy

### 6.6.7 Talent management Adaptation

In this question, the respondents were asked whether they think that existing Saudi Higher Educational system can easily adapt to talent management alignment strategy. As shown in Figure 6-30, the respondents were quite evenly divided. 41.7% of the respondents answered YES, while 39.8 % were uncertain, and 18.4% answered NO. This shows that Saudi Higher Education professionals are unsure about the adoption of talent management strategy in the Higher Education system. This may be due to the lack of knowledge, working experience and exposure to talent management research and projects.

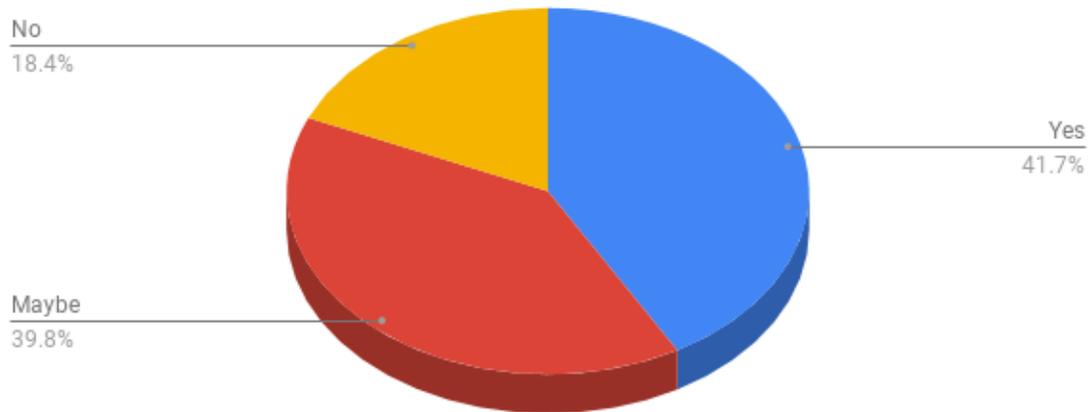


Figure 6-30: Adaptation of TM strategy

### 6.6.8 Personal opinion

In these two questions, the respondents were asked about their personal views, regarding talent management strategies. In the first question, the respondents were asked whether they think that it is easier to implement such an alignment strategy in their existing organisation. As shown in Figure 6-31, the responses were divided between 36.7% who answered YES, and 41.8 % who were uncertain about it. 21.4 % answered NO. This shows that, due to the lack of knowledge and fear of change, the majority of the respondents were uncertain about it.

In the second question, the respondents were asked whether they will accept such a change of strategy, in case their organisation implemented the alignment of talent management with HRM strategies. As shown in Figure 6-32, 76.5% of the respondents answered YES, which shows that most of the Saudi professionals who participated in this survey are willing for this change. Even though the respondents were uncertain about their organisation and the overall Saudi Higher Education system, the personal choice of the respondents is welcoming such change, and the introduction of such strategy.

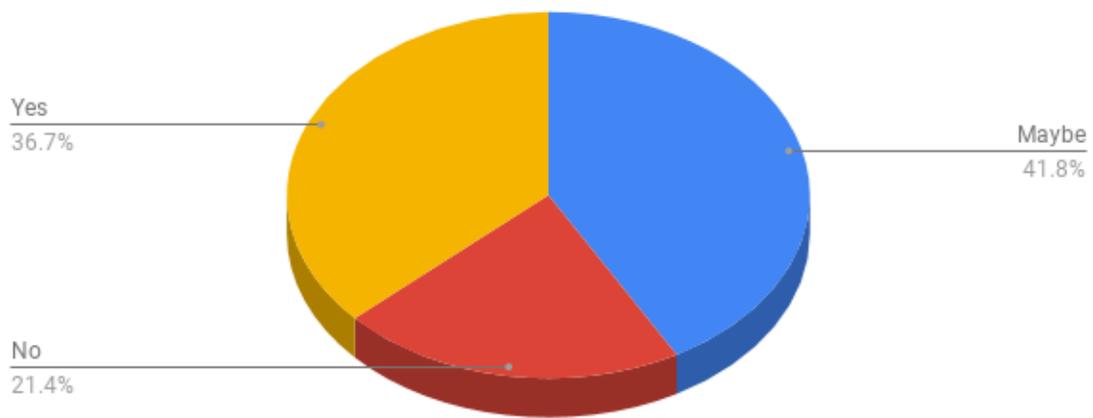


Figure 6-31: Adaptation acceptance

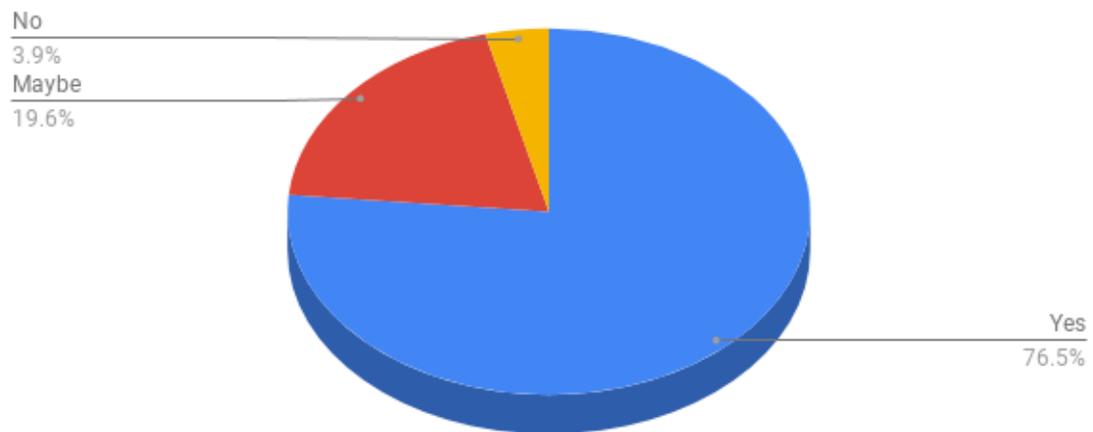


Figure 6-32: Personal Acceptance

## **6.7 Key Findings from interviews and questionnaire**

This Section summarises the qualitative and quantitative findings from both Chapters, 5 and 6. Table 6-1 shows the key findings of interviews and survey data.

Table 6-1 Key Research Findings

<b>Research findings: Interview and Survey data</b>
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<p><b>Internal and External Environments</b></p>	<p>82.4% of the survey participants considered internal environmental factors important in terms of talent management implementation, while 75.5 % also believed that external environmental factors are also vital.</p>	<p>The qualitative analysis show that 61.9 % of the interviewees strongly agreed that good/bad leadership can impact the talent management strategies in the organisation in positive/negative manner.</p> <p>The semi-structured interviews also shows that 76.2 % of the interviewees also believe that effective horizontal communication in the organisation impact talent management strategic implementation positively.</p> <p>Qualitative findings also reveal that 85.8 % of the interviewees agree that formal structured HR department can help organisations to implement talent management strategies more effectively.</p> <p>42.9 % of the interviewees strongly agreed that stable internal financial situation of the organisation helps implementation of talent management strategies effectively.</p> <p>The qualitative findings also show that 71.4 % of the interview participants strongly believe that external economic conditions can have a significant impact on the talent management strategies implementation.</p> <p>All participants either agree or strongly agree that external environment technological advancements can impact the talent management strategies in the organisation. Also, all participants believe that external legal legislation and law can significantly impact the talent management strategies.</p> <p>Majority of the participants believe that internal factors such as leadership, communication, HR structure, Financial stability and formal structure can have a significant impact on sustainability and competitive advantage of an organisation. Also, external factors such as economic conditions of the society, technological advancements, law and legislation, social norms and environmental situation can</p>
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		severely impact the competitive advantage and organisational sustainability.
<b>Talent management Guidance Model</b>	<p>Only 35.2 % of the respondents had any knowledge about TM and its factors, and 24.3 % working experience in TM</p> <p>63.6 % of the Respondents stated they have never been taught a subject or course regarding talent management in their academic years in Saudi Higher Education system.</p> <p>66.7 % of the interview respondents agree that the lack of knowledge and training about talent management is one of the main obstacles on why Saudi Higher Education does not have talent management strategies in place</p>	<p>69.5 % of the respondents consider the identification of pivotal positions important, while 60 % think it can contribute to the process of talent management.</p> <p>66.7 % of the respondents think that the creation of data base of talented personnel can improve the overall performance of the organisation, while 66.7 % also think that it can help Higher Educational organisation in building effective talent management strategies.</p> <p>70.9 % of the respondents think that recruitment is an important aspect of Higher Educational organisation HRM, while 71.2 % believe that it can contribute in the overall process of talent management.</p> <p>82.7 % of the respondents agree that employees should get function specific training and development, 84.5% also believe that training and development can contribute effectively in the overall process of talent management.</p> <p>72.8 % of the respondents think that attraction and retention of talented employees is an important aspect of organisational success, while 75 % believe that it can play a significant role in the overall process of talent management</p>

<p><b>talent management and Alignment strategy</b></p>	<p>The qualitative interviews revealed that two third of the interviewed organisation did not have a strategy that aligned talent management with HRM and human capital strategy.</p> <p>50 % of the respondents agreed that leadership hesitation in implementing such a strategy is a major obstacle</p> <p>Lack of pre-defined guidelines in a strategic decision implementation was identified as a major obstacle by 75 % of the respondents</p> <p>41.7 % of the interviewees agree and 25 % strongly agree that lack of talent management knowledge and training is major hurdle in the implementation of such strategies</p> <p>Fear of change and centralised education system were considered each as a major obstacle by almost half of the interviewees, however, the other half was either uncertain or didn't agree with this notion</p>	<p>One third of the respondents whose organisations had talent management alignment strategy suggested the mentioned the biggest advantage of having such a strategy is competitive advantage, attraction and retention of talented personnel.</p> <p>When asked about the implications of having talent management alignment strategy, all interviewees agreed or strongly agreed that such a strategy can improve the overall performance of the organisation.</p> <p>85.7 % of the interviewees agreed that talent management alignment with HRM and Human Capital strategies can help building long term competitive advantage</p> <p>57.1 % of the interviewees agree that Financial stability of the organisation was another positive factor that can be achieved with talent management alignment strategy</p> <p>Saudi Higher Educational organisations need to improve their overall ranking and 85.7 % of the interviewees agree that such a strategy can help Saudi Higher Educational institutions by attracting and retaining top professionals.</p> <p>Also, 90.5 % of the interviewees agree that such a strategy can enhance the reputation of the Saudi Higher Education organisation and the overall system.</p> <p>The quantitative survey findings show that 58.3 % of the respondents believe that existing HRM and Human Capital strategies of their organisation can be aligned with talent management strategies. 64.7 % believe that this alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital can improve the overall performance of the organisation.</p>
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<p><b>Sustainability strategy</b></p>	<p>The semi-structured interviews show that two third of the respondents did not have an organisational sustainability strategy.</p> <p>Lack of formal structure, planning and unclear vague aims and objectives were considered as a major obstacle for not having sustainability by more than half of the respondents.</p> <p>64.3 % of the respondents agree that the focus on short term success and planning is one the major reasons why Saudi Higher Education colleges do not have long term sustainability strategy</p> <p>70.5 % of the interviewees believe that losing talented professionals on regular basis is also one of the major obstacles for not having sustainability strategy</p> <p>71.4% of the interviewees believe that the negative reaction of existing employees over change is another major hurdle, while 71.5 % agree that financial dependency of Saudi Higher Educational organisations on the government is a major obstacle for not having sustainability strategy.</p>	<p>All respondents in qualitative findings believe that alignment of talent management with HRM and Human Capital strategy can improve the overall performance of the organisation</p> <p>85.7 % of the interviewees agree that the talent management alignment strategies can help organisations to focus on long term competitive advantage by investing in talented professionals</p> <p>More than half of the respondents agree that talent management alignment with HRM and human capital strategies can help organisations to achieve long term financial sustainability, however 38.1 % were uncertain about this notion</p> <p>More than 85 % of the interviewees believe that talent management alignment strategies can improve the ranking of the organisation as well as its reputation in the world.</p> <p>Quantitative findings also reveal that 64.7 % of the survey participants believe that alignment of talent management with HRM and Human Capital strategies can improve the overall performance of the organisation.</p> <p>Survey findings also reveal that 61.8 % of the respondents believe that alignment strategies of talent management can help Saudi Higher Educational organisations to achieve organisational sustainability</p>
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<b>Challenges of talent management alignment strategies</b>	64.7 % of the respondents believe that it is necessary to introduce talent management alignment strategies, in order to improve the overall performance of the Saudi Higher Education system	41.7 % of the respondents believe that Saudi Higher Educational organisation can adapt talent management strategies, while 39.8 % were uncertain about it.  76.5 % of the respondents agree that they will welcome such a strategy if any such alignment strategy is implemented in their respective organisation.  However, 21.4 % of the respondents believe their organisations cannot adapt such a strategy and 41.8 % are uncertain about it.
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The qualitative and quantitative findings, presented in Chapters 5 and 6, show that talent management strategies, when aligned with HRM and human capital strategies, can improve the overall performance of the organisation. Key conclusions and findings give strong support to theoretical assumptions and gives valid support to the research aim. Thus, based on the findings from both qualitative and quantitative analyses, and supported by the literature evaluation, it is quite evident that a theoretical framework that aligns talent management with HRM and human capital of the organisation should be developed, which will ultimately improve the overall performance of the organisation. This will help in achieving organisational sustainability.

## 6.8 Conclusion

To conclude, this Chapter discussed the quantitative data collection and analysis of the research. The quantitative research survey and analyses composed the secondary part of the research methodology. In this Chapter, the Researcher identified and analysed each factor, through quantitative questionnaires. The Chapter used quantitative analysis techniques, to identify patterns and links between factors, as presented through figures and tables.

The first Section of the questionnaire aimed at understanding the basic demographics of the sample population. A total of 109 respondents completely filled the survey. The

demographics, such as age, gender, working experience and level of education, were presented, using pie charts. The Section gave a brief information about the level of education and experience of the participants, as it was important for the research to have a sample population that is educated, with the desired experience in the education sector. The results showed that most of the participants had masters or above degree qualifications, with males being the dominant gender in the sector. Also, the average working experience of participants was 5-10 years.

Moreover, the second Section of the questionnaire was used, to further narrow down and determine whether the participants particularly have any experience in the field of talent management. The respondents were asked whether they have any learning or working experience in any talent management related topic. The Section also aimed at analysing whether the participants had any experience in organisational sustainability, or have been taught any subject related to talent management in their respective universities. The Section provided a generalised view about talent management in the Saudi Higher Educational sector. The results showed that the majority of the participants does not have any talent management experience. Most of the participants have not been taught any subject related to talent management, in their academic studies. This shows the lack of experience and knowledge regarding talent management, in the Saudi Higher Education sector.

Furthermore, the third Section aimed at testing the talent management guidance model, which was presented by the Researcher in Chapter 2. The respondents were asked about the basic talent management factors, such as identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention of talents. The results showed that the majority of the respondents agreed that all these factors are important for the success of the organisation HRM and human capital strategies. Also, these factors, when aligned effectively, can improve the performance of the organisation.

Finally, the last Section aimed to get a perspective about talent management framework, which was presented by the Researcher in Chapter 3, along with its implications. The respondents were asked about their views, regarding the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies. Also, the respondents were asked about their

perception regarding organisational sustainability, effects of internal and external factors on organisation performance, and their own views about talent management strategies, in their respective organisations. The results showed that the majority of the respondents agreed that external and internal factors, as mentioned in the research, can have a significant impact on the overall performance of the organisation. Also, the majority of the respondents agreed that the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can improve the overall performance, and image of Saudi Higher Education system. However, most of the respondents were unsure whether such an open and new change can occur in the Saudi Higher Education sector, and were unsure whether their respective organisations will be willing to implement such changes. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents themselves were open to such change in strategy.

## **7 Chapter Seven: Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This Chapter strengthens the link between this research, academic research and practical implementation of talent management in the Saudi Higher Education context. The aim of the research is to develop a strategic framework that can align talent management with existing HRM and Human Capital strategies of the organisation. Furthermore, the research also aimed at developing a talent management framework that can help Higher Educational organisations implement talent management strategies more effectively. This research draws together the threads of the academic and industry literature, already presented in Chapter 2, through the research and its findings. The Researcher discusses the key findings, themes and links that have been identified through qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

### **7.2 Key TM factors and TM alignment framework**

The Researcher has identified five main factors of TM that can help organisations implement talent management more effectively. These five factors have been identified through academic research, and have been supported by empirical findings. These five factors are considered significant for the overall implementation of talent management, as it covers the basic functions of TM, and provides a set of guidelines to the organisation, as shown in the talent management guidance framework.

Moreover, this Section also discusses the talent management alignment framework, which is the core of this research. The TM alignment framework is a combination of TM alignment strategy and sustainability strategy that has been identified through literature analysis. It is also supported by empirical research. The alignment framework, also influenced from the internal and external environments, focuses on how alignment of talent management strategies with existing HRM and human capital strategies can improve the overall performance of the organisation, which can lead eventually to organisational sustainability. This Section discusses, in detail, how the talent management alignment

framework's main factors interact with each other, and assesses its acceptance and impact on the Saudi Higher Educational sector.

### **7.3 Talent management factors**

Talent management has been one of the widely debated topics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in academics, as well as HRM practice (Iles, et al., 2010). However, and despite the abundance of literature on the field and areas of talent management, scholars have not been able to find a conclusive framework or definition (McDonnell, et al., 2010). Specifically, in the developing economies, the topic of talent management is still considered as a fashionable term, used by HRM practitioners to sell old wine in new bottles (Chuai, et al., 2008). Also, most of the research work conducted so far is based on theoretical knowledge and previous literature (Schiemann, 2014). Thus, a consistent definition and a framework of TM are needed.

Despite the various academic and industrial attempts to define and elaborate talent management and the factors that explain it, this field still lacked a clear concise definition, as well as a framework. Tatli *et al.* (2013) defined talent management, as a creative and competitive method that can meet the human capital needs. This includes the comprehensive use of internal talents to their full potential, while meeting the demand for external talents, by identifying talents locally as well as globally. Ma'kela' *et al.* (2010) focused on having a pool of employees that should be targeted and trained, as this small pool of employees represented the talents of the organisation, and can serve as future leaders. Festing and Scha'fer (2014) considered the attraction and retention capabilities of the organisation as its competitive advantage in the market. Schiemann (2014) created a talent management cycle, based on the existing theoretical work. Talent management cycle encompasses all stages of interaction between organisation and human capital. Thus, the analysed literature relating to the definition and conceptual boundaries shows some patterns, regarding the activities in TM management. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested the importance of identifying pivotal positions, creating talent pools, and then filling these strategically important positions with talented personnel, from the talent pools. Lewis and Heckman (2006) reviewed the problems associated with the definition of talent

management, and suggested that there was a confusion among practitioners and academics. Lewis and Heckman (2006) suggested the categorisation of employees into A, B, and C. Sloan *et al.* (2015) suggested two distinct views of talent management, namely the differentiated and the inclusive approach. The first approach suggests the development of A players, or the people who are strategically important to the organisation, whereas the latter approach suggests meeting the needs of employees at all levels, as the differentiated approach may hurt the morale of certain B or C players, which in return, affects the performance of the organisation. Michaels *et al.* (2001) further backs the idea of filling strategically important positions with A players, and cutting out the C players or poor performers from the organisation.

Despite the vaguely defined talent management in the academia, the Researcher was able to define talent management and its conceptual boundaries. From the analysed literature, talent management can be defined as the stream of links between five major factors, starting with the identification of pivotal positions in the organisation (Collings and Mellahi, 2009), followed by the creation of talent pool (Ma"kela" *et al.*, 2010). This is followed up with effective recruitment (Dries, 2013), and then, training and development of the recruited employees. The final stage of this stream of links will be the attraction and retention of talented employees (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; McCauley and Wakefield, 2006), which will contribute to the overall performance of the organisation (Collings, 2014).

The first of the five main factors identified in talent management is the identification of pivotal positions in an organisation. Collings and Mellahi (2009) defined the identification of pivotal positions as strategically important roles, which have a massive impact on the overall performance of the organisation. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that, the starting point of any talent management in an organisation should be the identification of key positions. These strategically critical positions, when filled with equally competent talents, will contribute significantly to the organisational performance, and will provide sustainable competitive edge over rivals. Huselid *et al.* (2005) suggested that talented personnel can only perform effectively, if placed in strategically important positions. Huselid and Becker (2011) argued that organisations need to invest more in those positions

that give them competitive edge over rivals. These positions need to be filled with highly competent people, and only then, an organisation can benefit from such an investment. Aligning with the views of participants in the empirical study, the quantitative study shows that 69.5 % of the participants considered the identification of strategically important positions, and filling those important positions with talented personnel to be necessary for organisations. Also, 60 % of the respondents believed that the identification of pivotal positions in Higher Education, and filling them with competent personnel can contribute positively to the overall performance of the organisation. The quantitative analysis examined the individual factors of talent management, by focusing on its importance and integration with existing HRM, and human capital strategies of the organisation.

The second main factor identified in talent management was the creation of talent pool. Collings and Mellahi (2009) defined the creation of talent pool, as a database of highly skilled and incumbent professionals. This talent pool can be created internally (within the organisation), or externally (from outside, the market). The research of Holland *et al.* (2007) focused on how organisations can create a talent pool, so that it becomes a major source in organisational performance and gives it competitive edge over rivals. Brink *et al.* (2013) focused in their study on talent management in academia, which suggested that different fields of academia consider various factors, when an academic is being identified as talent. The research suggested that, while recruiting talented personnel is important, the academic organisation also needs to develop talent pool of talented academics, especially in the areas of science, medicine and engineering. The alignment of literature with quantitative research analysis also showed that, 66.7 % of the participants considered that creating a database of talented personnel (within and outside the organisation) is necessary in the Higher Education sector. Moreover, 66.7 % of the participants also believe that creation of such talent pools of talented personnel can help Saudi Higher Educational organisations, in implementing effective talent management strategies. Thus, based on the literature analysis, and with the support of quantitative research methodology, it can be argued that the creation of talent pool of dynamic competent personnel is an important factor of talent management. Furthermore, this factor can help organisations implement talent management process more effectively.

Once talented personnel are identified from the talent pool, the next important stage in talent management is the recruitment. Faulconbridge *et al.* (2009) research highlighted the importance of effective recruitment strategies; as the world is becoming a global village, organisations need to integrate more effective recruitment strategies, in order to hire the best available talents. Dries (2013) suggested that, an organisation can market the role through advertisement to attract talented personnel or refer to the help of executive search organisations and head-hunters, who are labour market intermediaries. Uen *et al.* (2015) suggested a different mode of recruitment strategy, the word of mouth referrals. Uen *et al.* (2015) suggested that word-of-mouth recruitments is an effective strategy to recruit talented personnel, however, it is not under the control of the organisation. The research of Verhaegen (2005) focused on examining the factors that can help European business schools in recruiting academic talents, in a competitive marketplace. Verhaegen (2005) found out that, for deans (recruiters), the factors which helped the most recruiting talented personnel were innovativeness, reputation of school, and progress of the business school. The research of Paiseya and Paisey (2016) was another milestone in developing a framework for recruitment in academia. Paiseya and Paisey (2016) found that academics had more power than human resource professionals, when it comes to recruitment. However, these academics were higher up in the hierarchy, and the power did not vest at the departmental level. Aligning the literature with the quantitative research findings, 70.9 % of the participants in the quantitative survey considered recruitment as an important part of Higher Educational HRM structure. Moreover, 84 % of the participants believed that Saudi Higher Education system needs to introduce new, and dynamic recruitment strategies, in order to improve the overall Higher Education system. Finally, a big majority of 71.2 % believed that, effective recruitment strategies can help Higher Education organisations improve the overall process of talent management. Henceforth, from the analysed literature and the research findings from the quantitative analysis, it can be argued that recruitment is an important factor for TM, and can improve the overall process of talent management, in Saudi Higher Education system.

The fourth important factor of talent management, which comes after the recruitment, is the training and development of employees. The research of Joyce and Slocum (2012)

suggested that, organisations nowadays need to develop and enhance the capabilities of their existing employees, in order to remain competitive in the market. Joyce and Slocum (2012) argued that strategic capabilities of an organisation should align with the capabilities of organisations' senior managers. Hence, to achieve strategic goals, organisations need to train and develop their senior managers effectively. The research of Hiltrop (1999) suggested that organisations with effective human resource architecture are consistently outperforming their rivals. One of the most important factors in the overall structure is the effective training and development of employees. Aguinis *et al.* (2012) insisted on developing performance management to develop and attract talented personnel, recognising the importance of winning 'the war for talent' in a competitive environment. Aguinis *et al.* (2012) argued that individual performance management process, such as individualised development plans, challenging and meaningful work and advancement opportunities are important for talent development. McCrackena *et al.* (2016) suggested the segmentation of talent into graduates and non-graduates, after which, the organisation can develop and train talented graduates. Cappelli (2008) argued that talent management does not stop after the identification and recruitment of talented personnel, but an effective training and development program can only lead to fruitful outcomes. Succession planning, development of talents and reducing the turnover rates are important tools for achieving this goal. Holland *et al.* (2007) argued that training and development varies per each sector and region. Hence, the training and development of personnel working in the Higher Education sector will be different. Edwards and Smith (2010) suggested that retaining talented personnel in the science, technology, engineering and medical (STEM) fields is becoming a big hurdle for educational institutions, and only through proper training and development, this hurdle can be overcome. By aligning the literature with the quantitative data analysis, the findings showed that 84.5 % of the respondents agreed that training and development of a newly recruited employee is necessary. Moreover, 82.7 % of the respondents agreed that each Higher Education organisation should have department specific and function specific training programs for its employees. Finally, 79.8 % of the respondents agreed that training and development can play an important role in the overall process of talent management, in the Saudi Higher Education sector. Thus, based on the literature analysis and the quantitative findings, it can be argued that training and

development is an important factor of talent management, and can improve the overall process of TM in the Higher Education sector.

The final and last important factor of talent management is the attraction and retention of talents. O'Boyle and Aguinis (2012) suggested that retaining top talents will provide benefits to the organisation, as top talents produce disproportionately large amounts of output than normal employees. The research of Hillmer *et al.* (2004) suggested that the cost of losing talented personnel is not only related to finance, as the search of new employee will need identification, recruitment, training and development. But there might be social costs occurring as well, due to the extra workload on the existing employees. The research of Chambers *et al.* (1998) showed that big organisations are losing talented employees to small organisations, hence, large organisations should not remain complacent about their talents, as they are also vulnerable due to the changing demographics. Holland *et al.* (2007) suggested that organisations need to develop effective ways to retain talents, because increased competition and changing global demographics have increased the mobility of people. Hence, the problem of talent shortage has become a global problem, as more organisation are now starting to address it, through effective attraction and retention strategies. Organisations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to adopt a proactive strategy, rather than a reactive strategy. Newburry *et al.* (2014) suggested that the mobility and globalisation have helped the workforce in developing economies, to move easily to organisations located in the developed economies. Aguinis *et al.* (2012) suggested that the war for talented personnel has become fierce, with fewer A players or talented personnel in the market that every big organisation wants to attract and retain. These employees are considered a source of competitive advantage, and organisations introduced various strategies, such as individualised development plans, challenging interesting meaningful work, advancement opportunities and contingent rewards. Brannick's (2001) research emphasised on the importance of retaining talented employees, as the talent has become scarce, due to changing mobile market. Verhaegen (2005) recognised the importance of attracting and retaining talented academics in Higher Educational organisations, as these talented individuals are a source of competitive edge over other institutions. Verhaegen (2005) suggested that the market for top academic talents has become international, and

while academics have become more mobile, the talent hunt for academics has also become global. This has led to academic's shortage and retention problems for Higher Education organisations, who are finding it hard to retain their top talents. Hugo's (2005) research emphasised on the importance of the attraction and retention of academic workforce demographics, in the context of Australia. Due to migration, the academics, especially in STEM fields, have become scarce, and organisations need to introduce attractive retention strategies, if they are likely to replace the aging workforce by young talented academics. Key findings of the quantitative data show that 72.8 % of the participants agreed that, the attraction and retention of employees is an important aspect for organisational success. Moreover, 72.8 % of the participants also agreed that Saudi Higher Educational organisations should have 21<sup>st</sup> century attraction and retention strategies (other than monetary strategies), to retain talented academics in this sector. Lastly, 75 % of the participants believed that innovated attraction and retention strategies can play a significant role in the overall process of talent management. Based on the analysed literature and the quantitative research findings, it can be argued that the attraction and retention of talented employees is an important factor for talent management. Also, the alignment of literature and quantitative findings suggests that the attraction and retention stage play a significant role in the overall talent management process.

Key findings of the quantitative empirical evidence also show that 50 % of the respondents had no prior knowledge about talent management, while 14.8 % were uncertain. 63.6 % of the respondents did not attend any related subject during their education, informative about talent management. Moreover, 57 % did not have any experience in the field of talent management, and the rest were either uncertain or had minimum experience. Thus, it is clear from the analysed quantitative data that the Saudi Higher Education sector lacks clear understanding of talent management, due to which, few academics research in this field exist. Moreover, the lack of talent management knowledge and practice is holding back Saudi Higher Education professionals from conducting research, in the field of talent management.

## **7.4 Talent Management Alignment Framework**

The support and need for a talent management framework has been constant, as shown throughout the literature (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). However, critiques of the field have always requested a consistent, academically as well industrially acknowledged framework (Chambers, *et al.*, 1998; Cappelli, 2008). The Researcher has tried to answer the call for a dependable talent management framework, by aligning talent management with organisational sustainability. The key components of this framework include the alignment strategy, sustainability strategy and internal/external environments. The Researcher derived this framework based on the previous studies, particularly adopting the strategic talent management framework of Collings and Mellahi (2009). As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, talent management alignment with organisational strategies, in particular HRM and human capital strategies, can impact the overall performance of the organisation. Based on the literature analysis and evaluation, the Researcher drafted the talent management alignment framework and tested its validity, primarily through qualitative semi-structured interviews and then, validating it with the quantitative survey questionnaires.

### **7.4.1 Internal and external environments**

One of the important factors of talent management framework is the internal and external environments of the organisation. The external environment represents the factors on which the organisation doesn't have any control or has minimum control. This includes political situation, economic situation of the society in which the organisation operates, technological advancements, law and legislation, environmental conditions and social norms (Yüksel, 2012). The internal factors are organisational factors that impact the performance of the organisation, but that the organisation has control over. The research of (Anchor & Aldehayyat, 2016) suggested that external factors, such as the lack of resources, volatile political situation of the Middle Eastern region, high collectivist and high-power culture, had a major impact during the implementation. Also, Elbanna and Fadol (2016) suggested that uncontrollable external environmental factors are among the biggest hurdles for a successful strategic implementation. (Cappelli, 2008) also reported that external environmental factors can impact the talent management and sustainability of the organisation, as these factors are uncontrollable. The most influential factors are the

economic and political situation of the country. A peaceful and economic society is a great environment for organisation to prosper, while unstable society can even disturb the foundation of large enterprises. The Researcher used qualitative methodology as a primary source of data collection. Thus, by aligning the literature analysis with the qualitative data, the findings revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that external factors, such as economic conditions of the society, external technological advancements, law and legislation of the society, environmental and social values, affect the talent management, HRM and human capital, organisational sustainability and competitive advantage of an organisation. In terms of talent management, 71.4 % strongly agreed that economic conditions of the society can have a significant impact on talent management strategies. Similarly, 57.1 % strongly agreed that external technological advancements in the society can impact the talent management strategies of the organisation. Moreover, 66.7 % of the interviewees agreed that external law and legislation can impact the talent management strategies of the organisation. Also, 52.4 % agreed and 47.6 % strongly agreed that environmental issues can impact the talent management strategies of the organisation. Lastly, 52.4 % agreed and 42.9 % of the interviewees strongly agreed that social values and norms have a significant impact on the talent management strategies of the organisation. Similarly, the findings also showed that these external factors can have a significant impact on HRM, human capital, organisational sustainability and competitive advantage, as shown in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.

Similarly, the quantitative research methodology revealed similar patterns, as shown in Chapter 6. The quantitative findings showed that 75.5 % of the respondents considered that external economic conditions, political factors, law and legislation, environmental issues and social norms are important factors, and can impact the overall performance of the organisation. Thus, the qualitative and quantitative findings are aligned with the literature analysis in Chapter 2, which suggests that external factors impose a significant impact on the talent management strategies, HRM, human capital strategies and organisational sustainability.

The internal organisational environment is another major factor that impacts the overall performance of the organisation and future sustainability (Conger, 2014). A successful strategy can be only considered a success, after its successful implementation. Hence, organisational structure plays a big role, in determining whether a strategy will result in a success or a failure. The research of (Hrebiniak, 2006) shows that poor internal communication in an organisation is one of the major obstacles of the successful implementation of strategies. Ineffective information sharing and unclear responsibilities can severely impact a well drafted strategy in its implementation. (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000) recognised poor vertical communication in an organisation as one of the strategy killers, and the problem becomes more severe, when lower level employees are unable to communicate with higher level managers. Thus, communication among employees is one of the major internal environmental factors in an organisation. Another major factor that may affect the internal organisational environment is the leadership style. Leadership and team management play an important role in the successful implementation of a successful strategy; however, the lack of these qualities may end up a well formulated strategy into a disaster. The research of (Hrebiniak, 2006) shows that the lack of an effective team management is a major obstacle in the successful implementation of a strategy. (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000) suggested that some C-suite executives and leaders work within their circle, as they consider distributing power among the lower level employees a threat to their command. Such top executives may try to jeopardise strategy by not managing changes effectively.

Another important internal organisational factor is the formal structure of the organisation. (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000) identified that the lack of formal structure and unclear strategies are among the biggest reasons why strategic decisions fail, as clear compelling direction is not given by the management. The research by (Hrebiniak, 2006) suggested that unclear and vague strategy, and the lack of formal structure will affect the implementation of a strategy in a negative manner. The research of (Elbanna, 2012) suggested that a slack behaviour of top management, and unclear poorly defined strategies end up as a failure. Thus, formal structure and clearly defined strategies are an important component of the internal organisational environment. Another important internal organisational factor is the

existing HRM and human capital structure. The research of Hailey *et al.* (2005) suggests that HRM and human capital are a source for competitive advantage and sustainability over its rival organisations. Similarly, a stable financial situation of the organisation is important to make sure the organisation performs effectively in the respective market. (Young, 2010) suggested that the financial stability of an organisation is one of the important factors behind its long-term sustainability.

The qualitative findings in Chapter 5, Section 5.4, showed that the majority of the respondents agreed that internal organisational factors, such as leadership, management, communication, HRM, human capital strategies, financial stability and formal structure play a significant role in the overall performance of the organisation. These factors also have a major impact on talent management, organisational sustainability and competitive advantage of an organisation. In terms of internal organisational factors, data findings revealed that 61.9 % of the respondents strongly agreed that good/bad leadership style can have a significant impact on talent management strategies. Similarly, 76.2 % of the respondents strongly agreed that effective, strong horizontal communication among employees and managers can positively impact the implementation of talent management strategies. Moreover, 42.9 % strongly agreed, and 42.9 % agreed that a formal structure and a clearly defined strategy can help in the effective strategic implementation of talent management. Finally, 61.9 % strongly agreed that a stable financial situation of the organisation can help in the smooth implementation of the talent management strategies. Similarly, qualitative findings in Chapter Five, Section 5.4, showed that, other two major components, the organisational sustainability and HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation, are positively/negatively impacted by these internal factors. Thus, all these internal organisational factors can severely impact the overall performance of the organisation. Hence, before implementing any new strategy, such as talent management, an organisation needs to consider all these important internal environmental factors.

It can be argued that the external factors, such as economic conditions, technological advancements, law and legislation, environmental and social norms, have a significant impact on strategies associated with talent management, organisational sustainability and

HRM and human capital strategies. Also, internal organisational factors, such as leadership, communication, HR function, formal structure and financial stability, also have a major impact on any strategy successful implementation. It is reflected through the literature analysis, and the qualitative and quantitative findings that internal and external factors have a major impact on talent management strategies and organisational sustainability. Hence, the inclusions of these factors in talent management framework were validated through the literature analysis and the qualitative/quantitative findings.

#### **7.4.2 Alignment strategy**

The alignment strategy in the talent management framework is the first main part of the overall framework. It is the alignment of talent management with existing HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation that lead to competitive advantage, and results in organisational sustainability. The research of Young (2010) shows that organisations that aligned talent management with human capital strategies showed more return on equity (20%), than those who had non-aligned TM strategies. The research of Ashton and Morton (2005) suggested that talent management provides a holistic approach for business planning and HR. Thus, those organisations, which include talent management as a major part of business planning, show optimum performance results, in terms of HR and human capital strategies. The research of Hailey *et al.* (2005) suggested that, organisations which didn't focus on developing Human Capital strategies and HRM strategies faced a non-sustainable financial performance. The cost of losing a talented employee is far more than the actual financial cost. Thus, in order to remain sustainable, organisations may develop human capital strategies that are aligned with talent management. The research of Schiemann (2014) defined people equity framework as the collective state of alignment, capabilities and engagement. As per Schiemann (2006), the alignment is the degree to which everyone in the organisation is synchronised in the same direction. Thus, the alignment of talent management with the organisational HRM and human capital goals will have to be clearly defined to all employees. Based on the literature analysis in Chapter 2, it can be argued that talent management alignment with HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation is an important aspect. This alignment is defined by the Researcher as the alignment strategy in the talent management framework model. This alignment may

help organisations to achieve competitive advantage over rivals, which will result in organisational sustainability.

The qualitative findings revealed that the majority of Saudi Higher Educational institutions does not have an alignment strategy. However, the majority of the interview participants do believe that, an alignment strategy of talent management with human capital and HRM strategies, can have a positive impact on the overall performance of the organisation. Out of 21 interviewees, 12 said that their organisation does not have any alignment strategy. The remaining 9 agreed that their organisations have alignment strategies, and 4 of them revealed that it exists informally, and does not follow any structure or guidelines.

The interviewees were asked about 5 major obstacles that were previously identified through the literature analysis. These obstacles were: leadership style, poorly pre-defined guidelines, centralised education system, lack of knowledge on talent management and its strategies, and the fear of change. In terms of the leadership style as an obstacle, the majority of the respondents were uncertain (41.7 %). However, a big majority of the interviewees agreed (25%) and strongly agreed (25 %) that leadership was one of the major obstacles. The next obstacle presented to the interviewees was the lack of clearly defined guidelines, for the strategic implementation. In this case, 50 % agreed, and 25 % strongly agreed that the lack of pre-defined guidelines is one of the major obstacles. Both of these obstacles showed that, the leadership style in the Saudi Higher Education system plays a vital role in the strategic decision implementation. Qualitative findings, supported with the literature analysis, showed that the leadership style should clearly define the guidelines, and then, support the new strategic implementation. The third major obstacle, identified through the literature, was the centralised education system in Saudi Arabia. In this case, 25 % of the interviewees strongly agreed, while 25 % agreed that the centralised education system is one of the major hurdles, in implementing new alignment strategies, as a strategy has to pass through multiple bureaucratic layers and departments, before being implemented in a Higher Educational organisation. The fourth major obstacle identified through the literature was the lack of talent management strategies, in Saudi Higher Education system. For this question, 41.7 % of the interviewees agreed, and 25 % strongly

agreed that the lack of talent management knowledge is a major obstacle in the alignment strategy implementation. Finally, the fifth major obstacle identified was the fear of change, in which 33.3 % strongly agreed and 25 % agreed that fear of change is a major obstacle. Based on the qualitative findings and the literature analysis, it can be argued that the lack of talent management knowledge and fear of change exhibited by employees, are holding back Saudi Higher Education system from developing and adopting TM alignment strategies. It can be suggested that, before applying such strategy, Saudi Higher Education system has to train and inform Higher Education workforce, specially the higher-level leadership, about the field of talent management and its alignment with HRM and human capital strategies. The benefits of having such a strategy should be clearly explained, and a special training program about talent management can be arranged, to make Saudi Higher Education personnel aware of the field. Only in this way, any new strategy can be successfully implemented, without facing any hostility from the existing workforce.

On the other hand, the qualitative findings also revealed that the Saudi Higher Education professionals are more open to such change, if provided with proper guidelines and training. As shown in Chapter 5, Section 5.5, the majority of the interviewees agreed that the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can impact the overall performance of the organisation, in a positive manner. 52.4 % of the interviewees strongly agreed that the proposed alignment strategy can impact the overall performance of the organisation in a positive manner. 90.5 % of the interviewees agreed that such an alignment strategy will improve the existing HRM structure of the Higher Educational organisations. Moreover, 57.1% strongly agreed that such strategies will help Saudi Higher Educational system, in attracting and retaining top talented academics and professionals. Furthermore, 76.2 % agreed that such strategies can help Saudi Higher Educational organisations achieve world class status and rankings. Finally, 71.4 % of the interviewees believed that the proposed alignment strategy can help Saudi Higher Education system produce more science, and engineering students. Hence, the positive response towards the alignment strategy shows that Saudi Higher Education professionals are more open towards such changes. Any strategy, which is clearly defined in terms of

roles, guidelines and time frame can be successfully implemented, provided that the people implementing it are fully trained and educated about it.

### **7.4.3 Sustainability strategy**

The aim of any profit or non-profit organisation is to achieve organisational sustainability. One way of achieving long term sustainability is the optimum performance and achieving competitive advantage, in the context in which an organisation is operating. The alignment strategy is the second part of the talent management framework, which is the result of a competitive advantage over competitors, due to its optimum performance. As discussed in Chapter 2, Subsection 2.5.6 and Chapter 3, Subsection 3.4.3, the sustainability strategy of the talent management framework shows how effective the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can impact the overall performance of the organisation, positively. The research of Bethke-Langenegger *et al.* (2011) suggested a positive link between talent management and organisational performance. The work of Collings and Mellahi (2009) insisted on developing a differentiated HR architecture that emphasises on the identification of pivotal positions, and then filling these positions with talented personnel. The outcome of this differentiated HR structure resulted in organisational performance, which ultimately leads to organisational sustainability. The research of Collings and Mellahi (2009) provided the base for the talent management framework, as the Researcher adopted the input-output framework to show how the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can result in an output of optimum performance. The research of Aguinis *et al.* (2012) suggested that talented personnel are a source of competitive advantage for an organisation. As per Aguinis *et al.* (2012), the importance of human capital has overpassed that of the financial capital, as it is the only source of competitive advantage that is not imitable. Collings (2014) suggested that, organisations which consider employees as major stakeholders, generally have higher alignment of employees' and organisational goals. This results in highly motivated employees, which then pursue higher organisational performance that ultimately leads to higher returns. However, the goals and targets of a Higher Educational institutions are somehow different than the ones for the for-profit organisations. The performance of a Higher Educational organisation is measured by its ranking, publications,

number of PhDs, laboratories and the fact that how many top talented personnel, in terms of academics, it is able to retain (Verhaegen, 2005). Thus, for a Higher Education organisation to be sustainable, and contribute effectively in the society, it needs to develop strategies that help attract and retain top talented academics, while focusing on new strategies, such as the creation of talent pool, effective recruitment strategies and focused training and development. Hence, the sustainability strategy of the talent management framework is an important aspect of the theoretical framework.

The qualitative findings in Chapter 5, Section 5.6 revealed that the majority of the Saudi Higher Educational institutions does not have sustainability strategy. However, most of the interviewees agreed that an effective sustainability strategy can have a positive impact on the overall performance of the organisation. Out of 21 interviewees, 14 stated that their organisation does not have any sustainability strategy in place, while the remaining 7 had formal sustainability strategy. Upon further investigation, the interviewees were asked about the obstacles that occur in implementing such a strategy. The Researcher identified 5 obstacles from the literature analysis that have prohibited organisations from developing a sustainability strategy.

The first obstacle identified by the Researcher is the lack of formal structure in an organisation. The interviewees were asked whether they think it is a major obstacle, preventing organisations from developing a sustainability strategy. Qualitative findings, in Chapter 5, Subsection 5.6.2, revealed that 28.6 % strongly agreed and 35.7 % agreed that the lack of a formal structure is a major obstacle for a sustainability strategy implementation. Another obstacle, identified through the literature, is the focus on short term success. Qualitative findings revealed that 28.6 % of the interviewees strongly agreed and 35.7 % agreed that organisations' focus on short term success is one of the obstacles, for not having sustainability strategy. Since the organisation invest and focus on short term immediate success, it does not pay attention to strategies that can bring long-term competitive advantage and sustainability. Another obstacle, identified through the literature analysis in Chapter 2, is the loss of talented professionals. Organisations, due to not having effective retaining strategies, lose talented employees. This bad turnover, in

return, affects the competitive advantage of the organisation. Findings showed that the majority of the interviewees were uncertain about this obstacle, as 35 % were uncertain while 15 % disagreed. The remaining 50 % agreed that losing talented professionals was a major hurdle in achieving organisational sustainability. Another major obstacle identified through the literature analysis, Chapter 2, Section 2.4, is the resistance or negative reaction over change. Saudi Higher Education system and society is known to be centralised. Thus, any changes in strategy can be faced with resistance or negative reaction from the workforce. Findings revealed that 35.7 % strongly agreed and 14.3 % agreed that the negative reaction of employees over any change in strategy, or introduction of strategy, is a major hurdle in sustainability strategy. Finally, the last major obstacle, identified through the literature, was the financial dependency on Government. The Saudi Higher Education system is solely dependent on government funding. The lack of private educational institutions means that Higher Education system expansion is limited to government policies. Hence, any policy that a Saudi Higher Educational institution wishes to process, has to go through the concerned governmental departments and ministries. The interviewees were also in accordance with this view, as 42.9 % strongly agreed and 28.6 % agreed that governmental financial dependency is one of the major hurdles, why Saudi Higher Educational organisations do not have any sustainability strategy.

Thus, it can be argued that Saudi Higher Education system lacks sustainability strategy, due to major obstacles, such as lack of formal structure, focus on short term success, losing talented professionals at regular intervals, resistance over change and financial dependency on the Government. The literature analysis and qualitative findings suggested that these obstacles are a major hurdle why Saudi Higher Education organisations do not have any sustainability strategy.

However, the qualitative findings in Chapter 5, Section 5.6, revealed that Saudi professionals are more open to sustainability strategies, provided that they are guided and trained accordingly. The interviewees were asked about the implications of implementing sustainability strategies that are aligned with the talent management, HRM, and human capital strategies. The majority of interviewees were positive about these changes in

strategy. The interviewees were first asked whether, according to them, the alignment between talent management, HRM and human capital strategies can lead to effective organisational performance. The qualitative findings revealed that 61.9 % of the interviewees strongly agreed that the effective alignment of HRM, human capital and talent management can lead to effective organisational performance. Similarly, the interviewees were also asked whether the talent management-based strategies help organisation focus on long-term competitive advantages, by investing in talented professionals. 52.4 % of the interviewees strongly agreed with this notion.

A major obstacle which was identified through the literature, and then, validated via the qualitative findings was the financial dependency on Government by the Higher Educational institutions. The respondents were asked whether they believe that the alignment strategy of talent management, with the overall HRM and human capital strategies may help Saudi Higher Educational institutions self-sustain financially, by attracting foreign funding and students. A large majority of 38.1 % were uncertain, however, 33.3 % agreed and 23.8 % strongly agreed with this claim. Moreover, the implementation of such strategies can also improve the overall ranking of the Higher Educational organisation. Qualitative findings revealed that 47.6 % agreed that the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can improve the overall performance of the organisation, which will gradually improve its ranking. Finally, the reputation of Saudi Higher Educational system can be improved, through such effective strategies. 90.5 % of the interviewees agreed and strongly agreed that the alignment of talent management strategy, with the overall HRM and human capital strategies may help Saudi Higher Education to reach world class status, and improve the ranking of the local institutions in the world.

Although the primary research methodology was qualitative (Chapter 5), it was supported by the quantitative data, as shown in Chapter 6. The quantitative findings revealed similar patterns of information obtained. The quantitative findings showed that 64.7 % of the respondents think that the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can improve the overall performance of the organisation. Furthermore, 61.8 %

of the respondents also believe that this alignment of talent management with HRM, and human capital strategies can help Saudi Higher Educational institutions to achieve organisational sustainability. Also, 65.7 % of the respondents believed that is necessary to introduce an alignment strategy of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies, in Saudi Higher Education system. However, the majority of the respondents were uncertain, whether Saudi Higher Education system will adopt such alignment strategies in the system. 41.7 % believed that the Higher Education system can easily adopt alignment strategies, while 39.8 % were uncertain over it.

Based on the qualitative, quantitative and the literature analysis, it can be argued that Saudi Higher Education system needs a talent management strategy that can be aligned with existing HRM and human capital strategies. The literature analysis in Chapter 2 showed that, such an alignment can produce fruitful results, in terms of performance and sustainability. Moreover, the Saudi higher professionals have shown acceptability and positive response, towards the introduction of such strategies. However, in a Saudi Higher Education system which is centralised and dependent on Government financial support, it is bound to face some serious challenges and obstacles, as discussed in the previous Sections.

#### **7.4.4 Challenges of TM Alignment Framework**

Even though Saudi environment and, in particular, Higher Education system is changing and becoming more advanced and prone to change, it is still a centralised system, where every policy has to go through multiple layers of department and ministries (Alamri, 2011). The benefits of the talent management alignment framework are clearly visible, as shown through the literature analysis, yet, it is supposed to be tested practically. The framework is bound to face challenges during its implementation and adaptation. The Saudi Higher Education has tried to implement various strategies in the past, to improve the overall structure of the system, however, due to various reasons, such as slack behaviour, resistance to change, negative reaction and communication, even the well-crafted strategies have failed (Albaqami, 2015). The talent management alignment framework is bound to face such challenges, justifying the direction of research to identify obstacles or hurdles

that the alignment strategy or sustainability strategy might have faced in the past. The literature analysis was validated, through qualitative findings, as shown in Chapter 5, Sections 5.5 and 5.6. However, the research also tried to understand the personal point of view of Saudi professionals for the implementation of such strategies.

Quantitative findings, in Chapter 6, revealed that the majority of the respondents were positive and showed acceptable attitudes towards a talent management alignment strategy. However, most of the respondents were unsure whether their organisation could adapt such a strategy, due to past history and external pressure. The respondents were asked whether they think that their respective organisation will adapt easier such a strategy, in which talent management is aligned with HRM and human capital strategies. 41.7 % of the respondents were uncertain, while 36.7 % were positive and 21.4 % were negative about this prospect. This clearly suggests that Saudi professionals working in Saudi Higher Education have a lack of confidence in their respective organisations, in terms of introducing and implementing such strategies. However, when the respondents were asked whether they are personally willing to accept such a strategy if introduced, 76.5% of them were positive about this prospect, while 19.6 % were unsure. Thus, it shows that Saudi professionals are more open towards talent management strategy, however, it is now up to the upper hierarchy and management to train the employees about talent management and then, implement it effectively.

## **7.6 Validation of the TM Alignment Framework**

The main aim of this Section is to analyse how the theoretical framework of talent management, already developed and presented in Chapter 3, is changed based on the empirical qualitative and quantitative findings. The Researcher identifies and validates each factor already determined through the literature analysis, with the support of qualitative and quantitative findings.

The framework developed in Chapter 3 aimed to address the research gap that was identified in Chapter 2, Section 2.6. The research gap showed the need for a framework that could address the organisational performance, and long-term sustainability goal, by aligning talent management strategies with existing HRM and human capital strategies of

the organisation. Therefore, the Researcher identified and defined key factors of the framework model in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, where the derivation of the theoretical framework was presented, and each factor of the model was identified. Later, the three key elements of the framework, which are the alignment strategy, sustainability strategy and internal and external environments, were validated, through the empirical findings in Chapters 5 and 6.

The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 was formulated around 5 pillars: talent management, HRM and Human Capital strategies, organisational performance and competitive advantage, organisational sustainability, and external and internal environments. Since the talent management itself lacks a consensual framework and definition, also the lack of knowledge in Saudi Higher Education system regarding talent management led the Researcher to develop the talent management guidance model in Chapter 2, Section 2.7. This guidance model suggests how an organisation can implement talent management strategies, and also shows the main factors of talent management that should be addressed, while implementing any TM strategy. These factors were identified through the literature analysis in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, and were shown in the form of a guidance model, containing five stages of an effective talent management process. The five stages involved the identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention of competent personnel.

Having outlined the key factors of talent management, the Researcher sought to validate the key talent management factors and the talent management guidance model, using empirical data. Figure 7-1 shows the essential findings of qualitative and quantitative analyses, and the impact those findings had on the main theoretical framework. The five main factors of talent management were validated through the qualitative and quantitative findings, as shown in Chapters 5 and 6, thus, these factors were added to the alignment strategy, talent management pillar.

The next factor in the alignment strategy of the theoretical framework is the HRM and Human Capital strategies of the organisation. The qualitative findings determined the obstacles that may occur in implementing such a strategy, as shown in Chapter 5, Section

5.5.2. Thus, the comparison of Figures 3-1 and 7-1 revealed that, following the empirical findings, most of the amendments are occurring in the alignment strategy of the theoretical framework. Another factor that witnessed a major amendment in Figure 7-1 involve the internal and external environments, as the empirical findings validated all the factors of those environments.

Another change in the theoretical framework of Figure 3-1 occurred in the sustainability strategy, in which the qualitative findings revealed the obstacles of implementing such a strategy. These difficulties were identified through the literature analysis, and then, validated via empirical findings. Based on these empirical findings from qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative survey methodology, the Researcher updated the theoretical framework, to incorporate the findings. As shown in Figure 7-1, the talent management framework contained the previous pillars of the model, as well as the new factors that were identified and validated, through qualitative and quantitative research methodology.

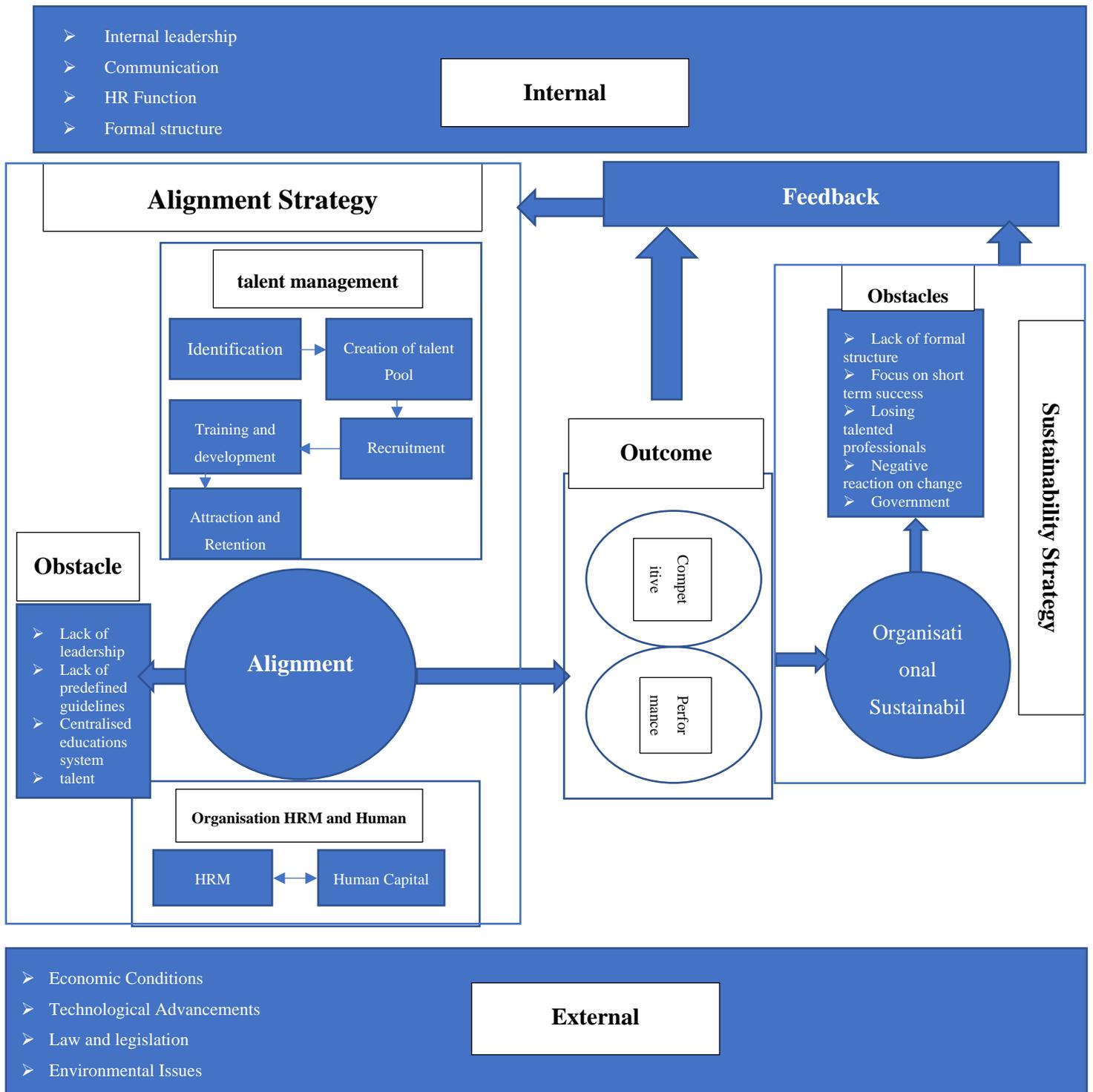


Figure 7-1: Talent management alignment framework

## **7.7 Strengths of TM Alignment Framework**

The Literature analysis in Chapter 2, Section 2.4 shows the challenges that organisations face in retaining top talent. This led the Researcher to develop the aligned framework of talent management, as shown in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, which was then adjusted, according to the empirical findings of Chapters 5 and 6. The resulting framework is a practical guidance model for Higher Education industry, as well as for academic research purposes. The framework, which has three main parts of alignment strategy, outcomes and sustainability strategy, gives clear view on how organisations can implement talent management strategies that can be aligned with existing HRM and human capital strategies. Thus, this alignment helps organisations to achieve organisational sustainability. The following Section discusses the strengths of talent management alignment framework.

### **7.7.1 Combination of academic, theoretical, empirical and industry-based literature**

The literature, discussed in Chapter 2, shows the variety of subjects that are involved with talent management. The literature analysis discussed the academic as well as the industry-based studies, in which theoretical as well as empirical based findings were also analysed. Thus, the talent management alignment framework has solid foundation of academic and industry-based literature, and is supported by proven practical and academic models of talent management.

### **7.7.2 Construction of various TM factors interactions**

The talent management framework includes talent management guidance model in the sustainability strategy part of the framework, which can help organisations to implement talent management strategies more effectively. It aimed to develop basic understanding of talent management, which is especially beneficial for those environments, which have less or no knowledge in talent management, such as the Saudi Higher Education system.

### **7.7.3 Effect of internal and external environment of the organisation on talent management strategies**

The framework also includes the internal and external environments' pillars that evolve with the dynamic changes of the external and internal environments of the society. The internal and external environmental factors, identified in the framework, are supported with the academic and industry-based literature, and were also validated through empirical findings.

### **7.7.4 Development of alignment framework that aligns with existing strategies**

Another benefit of the alignment framework is the incorporation of existing strategies and structures of the organisation. The talent management is aligned with the existing HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation. Hence, a new strategy can be incorporated with the existing structure of the organisation.

### **7.7.5 Development of TM framework that focuses on organisational sustainability as the final outcome**

The final outcome of the talent management framework is the achievement of organisational sustainability. Since the aim of this research was to develop a framework, through an alignment of talent management with existing organisational strategies to achieve organisational sustainability, this framework satisfies this aim. Also, as every Higher Educational organisation aims to achieve organisational sustainability, this framework can be adopted in the Higher Education industry.

### **7.7.6 Development of TM alignment framework that recognises its limitations and provides feedback option**

Another strength of this talent management framework is the recognition of limitations, due to the various internal and external factors. Since the external environment is dynamic and, in some scenarios, extremely volatile, the framework provides an option of feedback in two stages. In this way, strategists can send feedback in the alignment strategy part, to do any necessary changes that can be incorporated, according to the changes in the internal and external environments.

The research recognises the challenges that any such strategy might face in the implementation and creation stages, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. However, based on the empirical findings, the research identified obstacles that may affect the implementation of such strategies, in Saudi Higher Educational environment. These obstacles are also mentioned in the theoretical framework, in Figure 7-1.

The Researcher believes that the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies can improve the performance of the organisation, and gives it competitive advantage over rivals. This will ultimately lead to the sustainability of the organisation. The Researcher claims that the developed framework of talent management can help Saudi Higher Educational organisations, to attract and retain talented professional in the sector. This will improve the quality and performance of the education system, as highly competent personnel will occupy the strategically significant positions, and will take decisions that are for the best of the whole Higher Education institution. This framework will also act as a guidance framework for the majority of the Saudi Higher Educational institutions, as the empirical findings revealed that the majority of the Saudi professionals do not have any knowledge or training in talent management and organisational sustainability.

## **7.8 Limitations of the Talent Management Alignment Framework**

In this research, the Researcher identified various talent management frameworks, definitions, methodologies and data analysis tools. After going through this procedure, the Researcher was able to draft the theoretical framework of the talent management alignment model. Following are the three most significant limitations of the talent management alignment framework.

### **7.8.1 Emphasis on a Higher Education sector**

Although the talent management framework presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3-1) is a generalised framework that can be applied in any sector, the detailed talent management alignment in Chapter 7, Figure 7-1, addresses the concerns and characteristics of an organisation operating in the Higher Education industry, as the amendments in the

framework were achieved through the empirical findings that were attained from the Higher Education sector.

### **7.8.2 TM alignment framework is limited to Higher Education industry**

The Researcher presented the talent management alignment framework mainly for the Higher Education sector, and in particular, the Saudi Higher Education system. However, further research opportunities are open in other sectors, and in different contexts.

### **7.8.3 Talent management alignment specific to HRM and human capital strategies**

The talent management alignment framework focuses on the alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation. However, there could be more opportunities, where talent management can be aligned with other aspects such as financial strategies. Therefore, the limitations recognised by the Researcher in this Section represent future opportunities in the next Chapter.

## **7.9 Addition to Talent management literature**

This research findings provide a valuable addition to the talent management literature. Since there was a limited research on talent management in the context of Higher education (Paiseya & Paisey, 2016). This research can be considered as a benchmark for future research in the field of talent management and in the context of Saudi Arabian higher education. The research findings provide a valuable knowledge to the field of talent management academically as well as industrially. Moreover, since this is the first ever research that has been conducted in Saudi higher education in the field of talent management, it provides an opening for the future researches in the field of talent management in Saudi higher education sector.

The key findings of the research in terms of internal and external environment of the Saudi higher education organisations, obstacles that arise in implementing new strategies, alignment of talent management with existing organisational strategies provide abundant resource that can be used in future researches and provide great value in the literature. The research has identified how external factors such as political situation, economic situation

of the society in which the organisation operates, technological advancements, law and legislation, environmental conditions and social norms (Yüksel, 2012) affect the overall strategies of organisations operating in Saudi higher educational context. These findings are useful for researchers who wish to conduct researches in Saudi context. The research findings show that majority of the interview participants and survey participants believe that volatile political situation, economic situation of the country, technological advancements and law and legislation of the country critically affect the implementation of strategies in a higher educational organisation. Similarly, the research findings shows that the internal environment of the organisation such as internal communication among employees (Hrebiniak, 2006), leadership, formal structure (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000), Unclear vague strategy (Hrebiniak, 2006), HRM and human capital structure and financial situation of the organisation can have a significant impact on the overall performance and strategy implementation in an organisation. The qualitative and quantitative research findings in chapter 5 and 6 suggest that majority of the participants agreed that financial situation of the organisation, HRM and human capital structure, vague strategies and lack of leadership and formal structure can have a significant impact on implementing talent management strategies. Thus, both internal and external environment factors play a significant role in the implementation of strategic decision implementations as shown through literature analyses and supported with qualitative and quantitative findings. These findings regarding internal and external environment can help future researchers who wish to conduct researches in the context of context of Saudi.

Furthermore, the research findings show that alignment of talent management with existing human capital and HRM strategies of the organisation can lead to optimum results. The research through literature analyses shows that talent management is a systematic process of identification of pivotal positions (Collings, et al., 2011), creation of talent, recruitment (Beechler & Woodward, 2009), training and development and attraction and retention of talent (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Moreover, when talent management is aligned with existing HRM and human capital strategies of the organisation, it may lead to optimum performance and sustainability (Young, 2010). The researcher tested this theory in Saudi Arabian higher education context through mixed method research methodology. Findings

from the qualitative and quantitative results suggested that majority of the Saudi higher education stakeholders who participated in the research agreed that talent management is an important factor in the organisational strategy. Majority of the participants agreed that if such a talent management process is aligned with existing HRM and Human capital strategies of the organisation, it can lead to fruitful results. These findings provide a base for future researches in the field of talent management as well as valuable data for Saudi organisations that can adopt such a model of talent management such as talent management guidance model in chapter 2 figure 2.8 and talent management framework as shown in chapter 3 figure 3.1 and adapt as per their needs and demands.

## **7.10 Conclusion**

This Chapter has aligned the findings of the theoretical research (Chapters 2 and 3) with those of the empirical research (Chapters 5 and 6). A number of key themes from the research and existing information were discussed, along with the variety of research paradigms of talent management. This discussion indicates that, with leadership support and effective formal structure, an organisation can successfully implement talent management strategies that can be aligned with existing organisational strategies.

The data analyses in Chapters 5 and 6 support the literature analysis that recognised talent management as a combination of five stages, namely, identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction/retention of talented personnel. The results also indicated that talent management has evolved over the years, and is not just a small part of HRM. The analysis of the empirical findings, together with the literature analysis, revealed that the five talent management factors identified constitute an important aspect of the successful implementation of talent management strategies.

Moreover, the Chapter also analysed the talent management alignment framework, in accordance with the empirical findings. The data analyses of Chapters 5 and 6 support the literature's claim that the alignment of talent management with existing HRM and Human Capital strategies can lead to optimum organisational performance, and long-term competitive advantage. This can further lead to organisational sustainability, which is the

main objective of every profit or non-profit organisation. The findings also emphasised the importance of taking internal and external environments into consideration. The volatility of the external environment, and the dynamic changes in the internal environment of the organisation can impact any strategic implementation. Thus, the literature analysis, supported by empirical findings, recognised the importance of external and internal environments, and incorporated them in the talent management alignment framework. .

The Chapter also recognised the challenges that an organisation may face in implementing such a strategy. These obstacles are also identified and presented as a pre guidelines for the strategist. The Chapter also presented the key findings from the qualitative semi-structured interviews, as well as from the quantitative survey questionnaires. Lastly, the Chapter acknowledged the strengths of talent management alignment framework, while also recognising the limitations of the theoretical framework.

## **8 Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this Chapter, the Researcher aims to provide conclusions drawn out from the research, and the recommendations for future research, in the field of talent management and organisational sustainability. The Chapter also aims to show that the objective of this research has been achieved, and that the research questions have been answered. Then it draws conclusions and recommendations from findings, which demonstrates how future studies in the area of talent management in Higher Education sector can take place. The literature evaluation in Chapter 3 shows that, there is a literature gap in the field of talent management, in both academia and industry. This Chapter also reveals how the research has tried to address this gap, providing a direction for future researches.

The Chapter starts with review of the aims, objectives and research questions. Furthermore, it discusses the limitations of the research, and then identifies the important contributions of this research, in academia as well as in industry. Finally, the Chapter provides future direction and recommendations for the talent management alignment framework.

### **8.2 Aims, objectives and research questions**

This Section reviews the aims, objectives and research questions, already presented in Chapter 1 (Sections 1.5, 1.6, 1.7), to demonstrate that they have been achieved. The overall research aims were:

- To investigate the impact of strategic alignment of talent management on organisational sustainability in the Higher Education sector;
- To develop an effective strategic talent management framework, aligned with the overall strategy of the organisation, and supported by practical implementational guidance model that will enhance organisational sustainability.

Both aims have been achieved. The literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 focused on the massive literature on talent management and organisational sustainability. This helped the Researcher to identify the literature gap in the field of talent management, in the Higher

Education sector. The further investigation in Chapters 2 and 3 showed that, talent management when aligned with the existing strategies of the organisation contributes effectively towards the organisational sustainability. The qualitative and quantitative findings, when collaborated with the literature review, helped the Researcher in achieving the second aim, which is to develop an effective strategic alignment framework, supported by practical guidance model. The talent management guidance model when integrated within the strategic talent management alignment framework helped the Researcher in achieving this aim.

Besides the research aims, the Researcher had set five objectives, as follows:

- To critically analyse academic and industry-based literature on talent management and organisational sustainability;
- To identify the literature gap in the field of talent management;
- To investigate the role and importance of effective talent management strategies;
- To analyse the link between effective talent management and organisational sustainability; and
- To evaluate the effectiveness of current talent management frameworks, and their alignment with organisation sustainability.

The literature review and evaluation, in Chapters 2 and 3, critically analysed the industrial and academic based literature on talent management and organisational sustainability. Thus, the first objective was achieved, through in-depth research analysis and evaluation, specifically in Chapter 2, Sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 and in Chapter 3, Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.

The second objective was to identify the literature gap, and then to address it through the development of a theoretical and practically viable framework. The literature gap was identified in Chapter 2, Section 2.6, where the Researcher shows how the Higher Education sector, specifically in Saudi Arabia, did not have any talent management research or policy implementation that can guide Higher Education institutions, into developing sustainable strategies using talent management. The Researcher identified that there was no prior

research in the field of talent management in Saudi Higher Education system, as shown in Chapter 2, Subsection 2.6.4 (Quadrant 4). Moreover, the Higher Education industry itself lagged behind other industries, in terms of talent management policies and frameworks.

The third objective of the research was to identify a link between talent management and organisational sustainability. The Researcher achieved this objective, not only through theoretical literature analysis, but also through qualitative and quantitative empirical evidences, as shown in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6. The literature analysis in Chapter 2, Subsection 2.5.6 shows that, talent management when applied in alignment with the organisational existing strategies can improve the overall performance of the organisation (Young, 2010). This claim was further validated through qualitative and quantitative data findings, as shown in Chapters 5 and 6.

The last main objective was the evaluation of the existing talent management frameworks. This objective was achieved in Chapter 3, Section 3.3. The evaluation of the existing frameworks shows that there is no consensus on a particular framework or definition for talent management. Also, the majority of the existing frameworks are only viable and applicable, in the sector or region from where they were generated (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). Henceforth, all of the objectives that were identified at an early stage of this research were achieved eventually.

Apart from the objectives and the aims, the Researcher set out four research questions that were answered through theoretical literature evaluation and analysis, as well as through the empirical findings.

The first question was:

How talent management is strategically aligned with organisational sustainability in the Higher Education organisations?

In order to answer this question, the Researcher conducted a vigorous literature analysis and evaluation, in Chapters 2 and 3. It was identified that, until the research of Chambers *et al.* (1998), the talent management was considered as sub-field of the HRM. There was

no single research that focused on talent management, as a field of reference (Brannick, 2001), but instead, scholars considered talent management as a supporting factor of HRM that helps HR personnel in carrying their day to day duties. It was the research of (Chambers, et al., 1998), which paved the way for researchers to identify this new field of strategic importance, giving the organisations the competitive edge over its rivals (Cappelli, 2008). The strategic alignment of talent management with HRM and human capital strategies of the Higher Education organisations was first answered through theoretical literature analysis in Chapter 2, Section 2.4. In this section, the Researcher showed through theoretical and empirical evidences (Verhaegen, 2005;Brink, *et al.*, 2013; Uen, *et al.*, 2015; Paiseya and Paisey, 2016), how organisations in Higher Educational organisations adopted talent management strategies, by aligning it with existing strategies, to improve the overall performance of the organisation. The research of Metcalf *et al.* (2005) showed how talent management alignment with existing strategies, can help organisations in achieving organisational sustainability.

Moreover, the Researcher used qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in finding out the relation between talent management and organisational sustainability. Thus, Chapters 5 and 6 revealed through empirical evidences that, talent management can play a significant role in the organisational sustainability of the Higher Education system. Figure 7-1 shows how the alignment of talent management with organisational HRM and human capital strategies can lead to organisational sustainability in the Higher Education sector.

The second question that the Researcher aimed at answering was:

What are the major factors that talent management depends on?

The research analysis and evaluation in Chapters 2 and 3 helped the Researcher in identifying the major factors that the talent management process depends upon. The research of Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggested that talent management consisted of a systematic identification of pivotal positions, then a talent pool that creates a differentiated human resource architecture. The talent pool is created by combining external and internal talents in the organisation; those talented personnel who are able to fill the pivotal critical

positions (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; McCauley and Wakefield, 2006). The recruitment of talented personnel is also an important factor that the organisation needs to manage more effectively. Another important factor that the Researcher has identified was the training and development of the talented personnel (Conger, 2014). Finally, the retention and attraction of talented individuals by the organisation is the most important factor of talent management that each progressive 21<sup>st</sup> century organisation aims to achieve (Young, 2010). However, the Researcher answered this question in a much-organised manner, by developing a talent management guidance model, as shown in Chapter 2, Figure 2-8. The research analysis in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, identified five main factors of talent management, namely identification of pivotal positions in the organisation, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, and attraction and retention of talent. These five factors, when aligned with existing organisational HRM strategies, can contribute effectively to the overall performance of the organisation.

The third and fourth questions that the Researcher tried to address are related to the Saudi Higher Education system. One of the main objectives was to identify the problems and challenges that the Saudi Higher Education system faces, and address them through talent management.

How talent management can improve the performance of Saudi Higher Educational organisations?

What are the challenges faced by Saudi Higher Education organisations in developing effective talent management?

One of the research questions aimed at addressing the Saudi Higher Education problems through talent management. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has taken multiple steps in addressing the problems in Higher Education, with project like AAFAQ (the horizon), and King Abdullah Scholarship program (Saha, 2015). The Researcher conducted an in-depth analysis of Saudi Higher Education system, structure, scope and challenges, in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2. The research analysis shows that although Saudi government is taking massive steps in improving the overall structure of the Higher Education system, lots of

their efforts go in vain, as there is no proper framework or policy that can manage the talented personnel of the education system (Al-Eisa and Smith, 2013). The Researcher identified that no formal strategy is being implemented in the Saudi Higher Education system. This was further backed with the findings of the qualitative interviews, where most of the interviewees being employed in Saudi Higher Education system revealed that, their organisations did not have any policy or framework for managing talented personnel. However, the research of Verhaegen (2005), Metcalf *et al.* (2005), Holland *et al.* (2007), Brink *et al.* (2010), Edwards and Smith (2010), Brink *et al.* (2013), and Paiseya and Paisey (2016), have shown that talent management can be successfully implemented in Higher educational organisations, provided that it will be integrated with other organisational existing strategies. Such a strategy was further supported by the findings of the interview and survey data collection and analyses, as shown in Chapters 5 and 6. The majority of the interviewees and the survey participants believed that talent management can positively impact the Saudi Higher Education system, and can set a benchmark for future direction, towards world class status. Thus, by developing a talent management alignment framework, as shown in Chapter 7, Figure 7-1, the Researcher was able to present a practically viable framework that can be implemented in Saudi Higher Education system, as it has been drafted out of it.

### **8.3 Limitations of the research**

In this research, the Researcher analysed various academic and industry-based literature, examined multiple theoretical frameworks, followed a particular research paradigm and research methodologies, and collected qualitative and quantitative data. However, even after such rigorous and in-depth analyses, some limitations that the researcher has identified, still exist binding this Research. Following are the three major limitations of this research:

#### **8.3.1 Confining the field work to Saudi Higher educational Institutions**

The empirical data collection was limited to participants who were working or associated with Saudi Higher Education system. However, in order to reduce the effect of the limitation, the Researcher selected senior managers and directors for semi-structured

interviews, while lecturers, scholars and mid and low-level managers were selected to fill the quantitative survey. Yet, this field limitation can be considered as one of the major limitations of this research.

### **8.3.2 Limited sample size**

The empirical data of this research contained interviews of 21 participants and 109 survey questionnaire respondents. However, the size of the Saudi Higher Education system cannot be justified with this sample size. This can be considered another limitation of the research.

### **8.3.3 Qualitative methodology as a primary research strategy**

Qualitative study is associated with interviewer's biasness, also known for mending the results in the direction that best suits the interviewer (Silverman, 2001). This research adopted the qualitative semi-structured interviews for data collection, however, in order to overcome this limitation, the Researcher adopted the mixed methodology approach, where quantitative survey was conducted to remove any biasness that may occur in the qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Despite the limitation of the research, the whole research was conducted in a very professional and unbiased manner. As shown in Chapter 4, Section 4.7, the reliability and validity of the research were maintained. For the research quality to remain preserved, the relationship between reliability and validity was carefully and closely monitored, in terms of data handling and data processing. Notwithstanding the limitations of this research, it has contributed towards the development of talent management as a field, and especially in the Higher Education sector, where there is a lack of research and frameworks. Apart from that, the research has contributed to the development of a talent management definition and framework.

## **8.4 Contributions of the research**

This Section discusses the contributions this research has made to the academia literature as well as the industry literature. The first major contribution is the in-depth analysis and evaluation of the talent management literature. Since Chambers *et al.* (1998) wrote the

famous article ‘war for talent’ on the field of talent management, scholars and academics started noticing the importance and need for this area of management. Since then, hundreds of articles have been written on talent management and its factors. The contributions of this research can be categorised in 4 major parts.

### **Development of talent management definition and framework**

Even though many articles have been written on talent management in the past, yet, there is no consensus on its definition and framework. The research of Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Cappelli (2008) also emphasised on the fact that talent management lacked a structured definition and framework that can be acknowledged by the majority of the practitioners. The Researcher in this research has tried to address this issue, by developing a definition that has combined all the major factors identified by previous scholars, into one concise definition. The Researcher adopted the work of Collings and Mellahi (2009), for initiating the process of talent management, by identifying the pivotal positions in the organisation, and then, creating talent pool from the external and the internal workforce. Then, the Researcher adopted the evaluation of Lewis and Heckman (2006) and McCauley and Wakefield (2006), by focusing on the recruitment of talented professionals, and the training and development of these talents, using succession planning, evaluation and unique programs. Finally, the Researcher adopted the work of Lewis and Heckman (2006), Collings (2014), and Conger (2014), by combining the attraction and retention of talented individuals with the five previously mentioned factors. In this way, the Researcher was able to develop simple and easy to adapt framework of talent management guidance model, as shown in Chapter 2, Figure 2-7.

### **In-depth literature analysis on talent management and organisational sustainability**

The second major contribution of the study is the in-depth literature analysis on talent management and organisational sustainability. As shown in Chapters 2 and 3, the Researcher analysed multiple articles that focused on definition and frameworks of talent management. Moreover, the Researcher then categorised the literature in a more systematic manner. In Chapter 2, Section 2.3, the Researcher analysed the empirical based literature over two stages, the literature that covered the developing and emerging economies like

Saudi Arabia, Russia, Pakistan in Subsection 2.3.1, and the literature that covered the developed economies, like USA, UK, and Germany in Subsection 2.3.2. In this way, the Researcher was able to analyse how different contexts, regions, and countries have different social and moral values, and how talent management can be adapted according to the local needs and requirements. Moreover, the Researcher further categorised the research by segregating the literature focusing on talent management, in the Higher Education sector. As shown in Chapter 2, Section 2.4, the Researcher was able to identify and analyse various articles on talent management that were based on the empirical findings in Higher Educational organisations.

### **Talent management in Higher education**

Another major contribution of the study is towards the sector of Higher Education, as the Researcher highlighted how talent management can help Higher Educational organisations achieve organisational sustainability. The research on talent management in the field of Higher Education is very limited, thus, a research gap exists that the Researcher identified, and tried to address through literature analysis and empirical evidences. The Researcher analysed the various articles written on talent management in the Higher Education sector, as shown in Chapter 2, Section 2.4. The analysis shows that talent management can contribute effectively to the overall performance of the Higher Educational organisations (Paiseya and Paisey, 2016), provided that it is aligned and adapted as per the local needs and requirements (Brink *et al.*, 2013).

### **Talent management in Saudi Higher Education system**

Perhaps one of this research biggest contributions falls to in the literature and practice of talent management in Saudi Higher Education system. As of December 2018, no prior research has been found which focuses on talent management in the Saudi Higher Education system. The Researcher used various search engines, such as Google Scholar, EBSCO host, JSTOR, Emerald and Brunel Library, however, no research was found that focused on talent management in the area of Saudi Higher Education system. The research of Sidani and Ariss (2014) focused on talent management in the whole gulf region, however, their research only focused on the corporate drivers that are effected by talent

management in the for-profit business organisations. Thus, this research can be considered as a benchmark for future researches in the field of talent management, in Saudi Higher Education system. Same research can be applied in other sectors of the Saudi market, which is expanding and looking for innovative ways to attract and retain talented professionals.

### **Mixed method research in talent management**

Another major contribution of the research is the abductive research approach, in which the researcher used the mixed method methodology to collect the required data. The majority of the studies based on talent management have been conducted, through either qualitative or quantitative methodology. In this research, the study explores the phenomenon of talent management by collecting data, through both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted as the primary source of data. In order to overcome the problem of biasness of qualitative study, and improve the reliability of the research, the Researcher conducted a quantitative survey, to further enhance the acceptability and validity of the study. Thus, another major contribution of the research was the use of the mixed method research methodology.

### **Recommendations for future research**

The research literature review has identified a further research opportunity, in the field of talent management. As shown in Chapter 2, Section 2.6, the Researcher indented the field of talent management has been lacking empirical based studies, especially in the field of Higher Education. Moreover, the Researcher identified that no single research was found in the context of Saudi Higher Education system that focused on talent management as a field. This provides an opportunity for future researchers and scholars, to conduct more in-depth analyses on talent management in this sector.

The Researcher, through the literature review, also identified the disagreement and the lack of consensus over the definition and framework of talent management. By combining the major factors based on which the process of talent management depends, the Researcher has drafted out a definition and a framework that can be further enhanced in the future.

Finally, the talent management alignment framework can be used as a model for future studies, in the context of Saudi Arabia. As the model was enhanced after the data collection and analyses, it presents a great opportunity for scholars, who wish to explore the Saudi market. The same framework with minor adjustments can be applied in another sector, or can be aligned with any other strategy of the organisation.

The Researcher recommends that future studies on individual factors of talent management can be conducted. As the field is evolving with every research and publication, future studies can be based on the five major factors of talent management that have been identified in this research, through analysing the various academic and industry-based literature.

Furthermore, a number of conclusions can be drawn from this research and are presented in this Section. The Researcher has identified that the field of talent management has been under-researched, especially in the context of Higher Education, where the field needs more research and framework. The first ever research on talent management was conducted by Chambers *et al.* in 1998. Since then, various articles have been published on the field, with the majority of them focusing on defining and explaining talent management. However, as the field is now aiming towards maturity, it is a sensible time for researchers and scholars to start focusing on the factors that the talent management depends upon.

The Researcher identified that even though a lot has been written on talent management, there is still a lack of agreement on its definition and framework. The Researcher concludes that, in order for the field to develop into a major phenomenon rather than being considered as a sub branch of HRM, scholars of the field have to reach a consensus, regarding the definition and framework of talent management. The Researcher through the literature analysis presents its own version of the definition and framework of talent management, based on the work of previous researches. The Researcher aimed at combining the major factors that the talent management process depends on, and tried to merge them into a single convenient definition and framework.

Moreover, the Researcher has identified a major literature gap in talent management, especially in the Higher Education sector, and more specifically, in the Saudi system. The Researcher concludes that talent management is now being developed in the context of Higher education with the studies of Verhaegen (2005), Brink *et al.* (2010), Metcalf *et al.* (2005), Edwards and Smith (2010) and Paiseya and Paisey (2016), being the most prominent ones. However, the Researcher concludes that no research on talent management in Saudi Higher Education has been conducted, prior to this research. This opens a vast opportunity for future researchers to build on the existing research, and improve the performance of Saudi Higher Educational organisations.

Furthermore, the Researcher concludes that most of the literature that has been written on talent management is theoretically based. Very few empirical evidence-based researches have been conducted. Also, most of the empirical based studies have been conducted in the developed economies. Thus, the Researcher suggests that more empirical based studies are needed, in the developing and emerging economies. This research is a milestone in that perspective, regarded as the first empirical based research on talent management in Saudi Higher Education context.

Also, the Researcher concludes that the abductive approach, in which the mixed method research methodology was used for gathering and analysing the data, is the recommended approach for future studies. The Researcher, through the literature analysis in Chapters 2 and 3, identified that the majority of the studies that have been conducted on talent management are either qualitative or quantitative. Thus, a question of validity and biasness may occur, when a researcher tries to present a social phenomenon through a single research method. Therefore, in this research, the Researcher has adapted the mixed method research methodology, where qualitative semi-structured interviews were followed by quantitative questionnaires.

Finally, the Researcher discussed the data findings, in light of the literature findings. The Researcher tried to link the literature analysis with the qualitative and the quantitative findings. Based on these findings, the Researcher adapted the talent management alignment theoretical framework, so that it can be aligned with Saudi Higher Education system

demands, requirements and obstacles. The Researcher has also provided the limitations and the major contributions of the study. This Chapter also shows how the Researcher was able to achieve the research aims and objectives, and to answer the research questions. To conclude, talent management is a major aspect of strategic management that can help an organisation in enhancing its performance, and reaching organisational sustainability. The Researcher has tried to achieve organisational sustainability for Higher Educational organisations, through the effective use of talent management. Thus, if talent management can be successfully aligned with an organisational existing strategy, it can improve the overall performance of the organisation, and can assist it to reach organisational sustainability.

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## Appendix A

No.	Interview Question	Factor
Section 1,1	Position and function in the organisation	
1.1	What is your position/ function in the organisation?	Position in Organisation
1.2	What is your specific department	Speciality of department
Section 2	<b>Effect of Internal and External Environmental Organisation Factors on talent management strategy</b>	
Section 2 -1	<b>Effect of Internal and External Environmental Organisation Factors on talent management strategy</b>	
2.1.1	Good/Bad Leadership style of upper managerial hierarchy can positively/negatively impact the talent management strategy implementation	Internal Leadership
2.1.2	Effective open horizontal communication among employees and managers can positively impact the talent management strategy implementation in the organisation	Internal Communication
2.1.3	Existing formal structured HR department can help in talent management strategy implementation	Internal HR function
2.1.4	Having a Formal structure in the organisation can help in talent management strategy implementation	Internal Formal Structure
2.1.5	Having a stable financial situation can help in talent management strategy implementation	Internal Financial stability
2.1.6	The external economic conditions of the society have a significant impact on talent management strategy implementation	External Economic Conditions

2.1.7	The technological advancement in the external environment can help organisations in implementing talent management strategy effectively	External	Technological Advancements
2.1.8	Law and legislative changes in the society can positively/ Negatively impact the overall process of talent management strategy	External	Law and legislation
2.1.9	External environmental issue can have a major impact on talent management strategy implementation	External	Environment Issues
2.1.10	Social norms, moral values can also affect the overall talent management process	External	Social Norms
Section 2-2	<b>Effect of Internal and External Organizational Environmental Factors on HRM and Human Capital Strategies</b>		
2.2.1	Leadership has a significant impact on how personnel are employed and managed in an organisation	Internal	Leadership
2.2.2	A more people centred recruiting and developing strategy can affect the organisation in positive manner	Internal	Recruitment
2.2.3	Effective horizontal communication in the organisation can impact basic functions of HRM such as payroll, performance analyses and promotion in a positive manner	Internal	communication
2.2.4	Informal structure, lack of vision, objectives and aims can negatively impact the HR functions of the organisation	Internal	Formal Structure
2.2.5	Unstable financial situation in the organisation may lead to bad turnover	Internal	financial stability
2.2.6	The external economic conditions of the society can impact the organisations HRM policies and strategies	External	Economic conditions

2.2.7	The technological advancement has improved the way organisations hire and manage the Human Capital.	External	Technological advancements
2.2.8	Laws and legislative changes can positively/negatively impact the HRM policies and strategies of an organisation	External	Law and legislation
2.2.9	Environmental and ecological issues can also affect the HRM and Human Capital strategies of the organisation	External	environmental issues
2.2.10	Social and moral norms of a society affect the overall HRM and Human Capital strategies of the organisation	External	Social norms
Section 2-3	<b>Effect of Internal and External Environmental Factors on Sustainable Competitive Advantage</b>		
2.3.1	Formal structure, mission and having pre-defined objectives in the organisation can have a positive impact on sustainable competitive advantage	Internal	Formal Structure
2.2.2	Effective vertical communication and harmony among employees can positively impact sustainable competitive advantage of the organisation	Internal	Communication
2.2.3	Financial stability in the organisation helps organisation to remain competitive in the long run	Internal	financial stability
2.2.4	Leadership style and long-term succession planning can have a major impact on the organisation competitive advantage	Internal	leadership
2.2.5	The organisation strength and weaknesses in a market can affect the long term competitive advantage	Internal	strengths and weaknesses
2.2.6	The economic conditions of a society can a have major impact on an organisations sustainable future	External	economic conditions

2.2.7	The technological advancement, its acceptance and integration in the organisation can positively impact the sustainable growth and future	External technological advancements
2.2.8	Laws and legislative changes in a society have a major impact on the sustainability of an organisation	External law and legislation
2.2.9	Environmental and ecological changes can impact the overall sustainable future of an organisation	External environment conditions
2.2.10	Social and Moral Values can impact the sustainability of an organisation.	External social norms
Section 3	<b>Alignment of talent management with existing HRM and Human Capital strategy</b>	
Section 3-1	Does the organisation apply any alignment strategy between talent management strategy and any of the organisation strategies	Alignment
Section 3-2	<b>Obstacles or challenges that prevent alignment strategy</b>	
3.2.1	Upper hierarchy or leadership is hesitant in implementing any such strategies	Leadership
3.2.2	Lack of Pre-defined guidelines or framework is a major obstacle	Pre-defined guidelines
3.2.3	Centralised education system doesn't allow the freedom to individual educational organisation to implement such strategies at their own will	Centralised education system
3.2.4	Lack of knowledge and understanding of talent management and its strategies.	Lack of talent management knowledge

3.2.5	Fear of change, job security, lack of communication among middle level employees is a major obstacle	Fear of change
Section 3-3	What are the advantages and disadvantages of this alignment strategy?	Advantages/Disadvantages
Section 3-4	At what level (s) of the organisation is (are) involved in developing alignment strategy?	Level of organisation involved in alignment
Section 4	<b>Organisation sustainability strategy</b>	
Section 4-1	Does the organisation have organisation sustainability strategy?	Sustainability
Section 4-2	<b>Obstacles and challenges preventing sustainability strategy</b>	
4.2.1	Lack of formal planning, structure, objectives and aims to achieve long-term sustainability	Formal structure
4.2.2	Focus on short term success rather than long term competitive advantage	Short term success
4.2.3	Losing talented professionals at regular intervals	Losing talented employees
4.2.4	Negative reaction of existing employees over the change	Negative reaction
4.2.5	Governmental financial dependency	Financial dependency
Section 4-3	Advantages and disadvantages of organisational sustainability strategy	

Section 4-4	At what level (s) of organisational are involved in developing organisation sustainability strategy	Level of organisation involved
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Section 5	<b>Alignment strategy implications</b>	
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5.1.1	The proposed alignment strategy can positively impact the overall performance of the organisation	Positive impact on performance
5.1.2	The alignment strategy can improve the overall of the HRM structure in the Saudi Higher Educational organisation	Improvement in HRM
5.1.3	The alignment strategy can help Saudi Higher Education institute to attract and retain talented professional through effective recruiting and retention strategies	Attraction an retention
5.1.4	The proposed alignment strategy can help Saudi Higher Educational organisation to achieve world class status and attract foreign funding's and students	World class status
5.1.5	The proposed framework can help Saudi Higher Educational system to produce science engineering students and professional which are vastly needed in the country	Science and engineering professionals

Section 6	<b>Organisational sustainability strategy implications</b>	
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6.1.1	Effective alignment strategy between talent management strategy with the overall of HRM and Human Capital strategies can lead to an effective organisational performance which in turn can lead to organisational sustainability	Effective organisational performance
6.1.2	The talent management-based strategies help organisation to focus on long-term competitive advantages by investing in talented professionals	Long term competitive advantage
6.1.3	The alignment strategy of talent management strategy, with the overall of HRM and Human Capital strategies may help Saudi Higher Educational institutions to self-sustain financially by attracting foreign funding's and students	Financial sustainability

- |       |  |                        |
|-------|--|------------------------|
| 6.1.4 | The alignment strategy of talent management strategy, with the overall of HRM and Human Capital strategies may help Saudi Higher Education to reach world class status and improve the ranking of the institutions in the world      | Improvement of ranking |
| 6.1.5 | The alignment strategy may help Saudi Higher Educational institutions to produce more research-oriented quality publication which will enhance the reputation of the organisation as well as the whole Saudi Higher Education system | Reputation enhancement |

Source: The Researcher

## **Appendix B**

### **Qualitative Interview Transcript**

Dear Sir/ Madam

Thank you for participating in these interview questionnaires. This interview is a part of the requirements for obtaining a PhD degree in Strategic Management, it is intended to get a better understanding of the opportunities and difficulties faced by the organisations (Saudi Higher Education Institutions as case study) in aligning talent management strategy with both of human resource and human capital strategies during the development of the organisational sustainability strategy. The responses on these interview questions will only be used for research purposes and in combination with other responses, Responses will be collected and used while maintaining the privacy of participants and considering that their identities are not indicated.

**All the best,**  
**The researcher**

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### The structure of the research questions:

For the research data collection, the data design consists of semi-structured interviews with the highest-level *and middle* levels of management. The information that will gather from these questions addresses the knowledge from the organisation's experiences and will contribute to the literature through filling the research gap.

The interview questions consist of seven parts as following:

Part	Topics
<b>I</b>	This part concerns of the background position/ function of the interviewees.
<b>II</b>	This part is investigating the existing effect of internal and external organizational environment on talent management, HRM and Human Capital Strategies, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, and Organisation Performance.
<b>III</b>	This part is investigating the existing organisation strategic alignment between talent management strategy with the overall of HRM and Human capital strategies of the organisation.

<b>IV</b>	This part is investigating the existing organisation sustainability strategy.
<b>V</b>	This part is investigating the proposed alignment strategy implications.
<b>VI</b>	This part concerns of investigating organisational sustainability opportunities during the alignment strategy development.
<b>VII</b>	This part concerns of the interviewees additional comments or suggestions.

**Part I: Background of position/ function about the interviewees.**

**1.1 What is your position/ function in the organisation?**

Position	Specialty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>President</i></li><li>○ <i>Vice President</i></li><li>○ <i>Dean</i></li><li>○ <i>Vice Dean</i></li><li>○ General Manager/ General Supervisor</li><li>○ Head Department</li><li>○ Other, please specify:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● -</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Academic Affairs.</li><li>○ Students Affairs.</li><li>○ Girls Affairs.</li><li>○ Post Graduate Studies and Scientific Research.</li><li>○ Studies, development and community service.</li><li>○ Deanship.</li><li>○ Academic Department</li><li>○ Departments, please specify:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Finance Department</li><li>- Legal Department</li><li>- Human Resources Department</li><li>- Strategy and planning Department</li><li>- Marketing Department</li><li>- Program and Project manager</li><li>- Information Technology Department</li><li>- Research and development Department</li><li>- Other, please specify</li></ul></li></ul>

Part II: This part is investigating the existing effect of internal and external organizational environment on talent management, HRM and Human Capital Strategies, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, and Organization Performance at the organisation (The Case Study).

**Internal Organizational environment** refers to controllable factors that impact the performance of the organisation such as the leadership style, level and means of communication, formal structure, employee morale and financial issues. It includes company's strength and weaknesses as these things may directly impact the overall performance of the organisation

**External organizational environment** refers to the uncontrollable factors outside the organisation that may impact directly or indirectly to the organisation. These factors include political situation of the country where organisation is operating, economic conditions, social situation, technological advancements, Legislative changes and environmental issues.

**Talent management strategy** refers to systematic identification of strategically pivotal position in the organisation which then can be filled with talented personnel by creating a talent pool of talented workforce from within and outside the organisation. These talented personnel can be trained and developed based on the job description and later on can be retained by effective retention strategies.

**HRM, Human Capital Strategies** refer to comprehensive business management strategy that is integrated with every aspect of the organization and takes a more people-centred and strategic approach to business where as HRM strategies refer to factors that are associated with running the HR department of the organisation. This includes Recruitment, training, performance analyses, orientation, employment and payroll. It is the solitary body responsible for carrying the organisational process in business environment.

**Sustainable Competitive Advantage** refers to **Sustainable competitive advantages are company assets, attributes, or abilities that are difficult to duplicate or exceed; and provide a superior or favourable long-term position over competitors.**

**Organization Performance** refers to how successfully an organised group of people with a purpose perform a function. In a business environment, the organisational performance depends on how an organisation is achieving its goals, objectives and reaching towards its aim. Metrics such as financial performance, shareholder value, market performance and market shares are used to measure and assess the organisational performance.

**2.1 The existing effect of Internal Organizational and External Environmental Factors on talent management strategy?**

Factor Effect	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain N/A	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Good/Bad Leadership style of upper managerial hierarchy can positively/negatively impact the talent management strategy implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Effective open horizontal communication among employees and managers can positively impact the talent management strategy implementation in the organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Existing formal structured HR department can help in talent management strategy implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

4. Having a Formal structure in the organisation can help in talent management strategy implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. Having a stable financial situation can help in talent management strategy implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. The external economic conditions of the society have a significant impact on talent management strategy implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. The technological advancement in the external environment can help organisations in implementing talent management strategy effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

8. Law and legislative changes in the society can positively/negatively impact the overall process of talent management strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. External environmental issue can have a major impact on talent management strategy implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. Social norms, moral values can also affect the overall talent management process.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

○ **Other, please specify:**

- -
- -

**2.2 The existing effect of Internal Organizational and External Environmental Factors on HRM and Human Capital Strategies?**

Factor Effect	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain N/A	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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<p>1. Leadership has a significant impact on how personnel are employed and managed in an organisation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>2. A more people centred recruiting and developing strategy can affect the organisation in positive manner.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>3. Effective horizontal communication in the organisation can impact basic functions of HRM such as payroll, performance analyses and promotion in a positive manner.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>4. Informal structure, lack of vision, objectives and aims can negatively impact the HR functions of the organisation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

<p>5. Unstable financial situation in the organisation may lead to bad turnover.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>6. The external economic conditions of the society can impact the organisations HRM policies and strategies.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>7. The technological advancement has improved the way organisations hire and manage the Human capital.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>8. Laws and legislative changes can positively/negatively impact the HRM policies and strategies of an organisation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>9. Environmental and ecological issues can also affect the HRM and Human capital strategies of the organisation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

10. Social and moral norms of a society affect the overall HRM and Human capital strategies of the organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

○ **Other, please specify:**

- -
- -

**2.3 The existing effect of Internal Organizational and External Environmental Factors on Sustainable Competitive Advantage?**

<b>Factor Effect</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain N/A</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Formal structure, mission and having pre-defined objectives in the organisation can have a positive impact on sustainable competitive advantage.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Effective vertical communication and harmony among employees can positively impact sustainable competitive advantage of the organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Financial stability in the organisation helps organisation to remain competitive in the long run.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

<p>4. Leadership style and long-term succession planning can have a major impact on the organisation competitive advantage.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>5. The organisation strength and weaknesses in a market can affect the long term competitive advantage.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>6. The economic conditions of a society can a have major impact on an organisations sustainable future</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>7. The technological advancement, its acceptance and integration in the organisation can positively impact the sustainable growth and future.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

<p>8. Laws and legislative changes in a society have a major impact on the sustainability of an organisation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>9. Environmental and ecological changes can impact the overall sustainable future of an organisation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>10. Social and Moral Values can impact the sustainability of an organisation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

○ **Other, please specify:**

- -
- -

**Part III: This part is investigating the existing alignment strategy of the organisation (The Case Study) between talent management, HRM and Human capital strategies.**

**Alignment strategy** refers to systematic alignment of existing talent management, HRM and Human capital strategies of the organisation. This includes basic functions of HRM such as payroll, orientation, promotion, performance analyses as well as long term strategic Human capital strategies such as individual succession plans, targeted training and development and people centric attraction and retention strategies.

**3.1 Does the organisation apply any alignment strategy between talent management strategy and any of the organisation strategies?**

- **Yes, Please identify**
  - Formal
  - Informal

**Then go to question No 3.2**

- **No**

**Please identify obstacles or challenges that prevent applying of the alignment strategy from the following list, then go to question Part IV:**

<b>Obstacles or Challenges</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain N/A</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Upper hierarchy or leadership is hesitant in implementing any such strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

<p>2. Lack of Pre-defined guidelines or framework is a major obstacle.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>3. Centralised education system doesn't allow the freedom to individual educational organisation to implement such strategies at their own will.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>4. Lack of knowledge and understanding of talent management and its strategies.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>5. Fear of change, job security, lack of communication among middle level employees is a major obstacle.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

○ **Other , please specify :**

- -
- -

### 3.2 What are the advantages and disadvantages of this alignment strategy?

Please identify of the list (Multiple answers are possible)

#### ADVANTAGES

- Sustainable competitive advantage in the Saudi Higher education market.
- Attraction and retention of talented personnel.
- Non-imitable strategic asset.
- Avoiding bad turnover/ losing out talented employees.
- Adaptation of 21<sup>st</sup> century talent management strategies.
- A new benchmark to increase talented professionals in the higher education system which can be adopted by other organisations in the sector.
- Other, please specify:
  - -
  - -
  - -

#### DISADVANTAGES

- Increased financial cost and manpower needed.
- A complicated strategy which is mostly unknown in the Saudi Higher education environment.
- Disjointed and disgruntled employees who may resist the change in the strategies.
- HRM department increased load which may affect the harmony and motivation of employees in that department.
- Other, please specify:
  - -
  - -
  - -

**3.3 At what level (s) of the organisation is (are) involved in developing alignment strategy?**

- Only the highest-level executives (*C-level*) or managing directors (MDs).
- The highest-level executives (*C-level*) or *managing* directors (MDs) supported by department(s) of: **(Multiple answers are possible)**

- Academic Departments
- Deanships
- Departments, please specify:
  - Finance Department
  - Legal Department
  - Human Resources Department
  - Strategy and planning Department
  - Marketing Department
  - Program and Project manager
  - Information Technology Department
  - Research and development Department
  - Other, please specify
  -

**Part IV: This part is investigating the existing organisation sustainability strategy.**

**Organisation sustainability** refers organisations ability to achieve its goals and ensure long-term stakeholder value. It is not only based on the financial performance of the organisation but instead other factors such as employee management human capital development, succession planning, long term strategies and innovations are also important to consider.

**4.1 Does the organisation have organisation sustainability strategy?**

- **Yes, please identify:**
- - Formal
  - Informal

**Then go to question No 4.2**

○ **No, please identify obstacles or challenges that prevent applying of the strategy of the following list, then go to question Part V:**

<b>Obstacles or Challenges</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain N/A</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Lack of formal planning, structure, objectives and aims to achieve long-term sustainability.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

2. Focus on short term success rather than long term competitive advantage.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Losing talented professionals at regular intervals.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Negative reaction of existing employees over the change.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. Governmental financial dependency.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

○ **Other , please specify :**

- -
- -

#### 4.2 What are the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy?

Please identify of the list (**Multiple answers are possible**)

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Long term sustainable competitive advantage.</li><li>○ Attraction of foreign funding and students who will be willing to invest their time and money Saudi Educational institutes.</li><li>○ Attracting and retaining talented professionals.</li><li>○ Enhancing the reputation of the educational organisation.</li><li>○ Self-sustainability, self-dependency on finances.</li><li>○ Other, please specify:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● -</li><li>● -</li><li>● -</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Increased cost and funding,</li><li>○ Resistance from existing employees over the change, job security and financial issues.</li><li>○ More training programs needed to educate employees about this strategy and the alignment strategies in general.</li><li>○ Complexity of the strategy, understanding and presenting the benefits sustainability strategy to the higher hierarchy.</li><li>○ Other, please specify:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● -</li><li>● -</li><li>● -</li></ul></li></ul>

**4.3 At what level (s) of organisational are involved in developing organisation sustainability strategy?**

- Only the highest-level executives (*C-level*) or managing directors (MDs)
- The highest-level executives (*C-level*) or managing directors (MDs) supported by department(s) of: **(Multiple answers are possible)**

- Academic Departments
- Deanships
- Departments, please specify:
  - Finance Department
  - Legal Department
  - Human Resources Department
  - Strategy and planning Department
  - Marketing Department
  - Program and Project manager
  - Information Technology Department
  - Research and development Department
  - Other, please specify
  -

**Part V: This part is investigating the proposed alignment strategy implications.**

The proposed alignment strategy implications refer to the expected outcomes of implementing such strategy in which talent management strategy is aligned with the overall of HRM and Human capital strategy.

**5.1 The proposed alignment strategy opportunities:**

<b>Implication Indicator</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain N/A</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. The proposed alignment strategy can positively impact the overall performance of the organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. The alignment strategy can improve the overall of the HRM structure in the Saudi higher educational organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. The alignment strategy can help Saudi Higher education institute to attract and retain talented professional through effective recruiting and retention strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

<p>4. The proposed alignment strategy can help Saudi Higher educational organisation to achieve world class status and attract foreign funding's and students.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>5. The proposed framework can help Saudi Higher educational system to produce science engineering students and professional which are vastly needed in the country.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

○ **Other , please specify :**

- -
- -

**Part VI: This part concerns of investigating organisational sustainability implications during the alignment strategy development.**

Organisational sustainability implications refer to the expected outcomes of effective organisational performance that lead to organisational sustainability. Sustainability is the ultimate goal of every organisation, by the alignment between talent management strategy with the overall of HRM and Human capital strategies the organisation can perform effectively in the long run and can achieve long term sustainability.

**6.1 Organisational sustainability strategy implications:**

<b>Implication Indicator</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain N/A</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<p>1. Effective alignment strategy between talent management strategy with the overall of HRM and Human capital strategies can lead to an effective organisational performance which in turn can lead to organisational sustainability.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>2. The talent management-based strategies help organisation to focus on long-term competitive</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

advantages by investing in talented professionals.					
3. The alignment strategy of talent management strategy, with the overall of HRM and Human capital strategies may help Saudi Higher educational institutes to self-sustain financially by attracting foreign funding's and students	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. The alignment strategy of talent management strategy, with the overall of HRM and Human capital strategies may help Saudi Higher education to reach world class status and improve the ranking of the institutes in the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. The alignment strategy may help Saudi Higher educational institutes to produce more research-oriented quality publication which will enhance the reputation of the organisation as well as the whole Saudi higher education system.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

○ **Other , please specify :**

- -
- -

**Part VII: Additional comments or suggestions:**

If you have any additional comments or suggestions you would like to share, please write them in the provided field below.

- -
- -
- -
- -
- -
- -
- -

## **Appendix C: Quantitative Survey**

## Investigating the strategic alignment of talent management and organisation sustainability in the Higher Education sector(Saudi Higher Education Institutions as case study)

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This survey is intended to understand the impact of talent management on Saudi organisations sustainability strategies

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What is your gender

- Male
- Female
- Other...

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What is your age group

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 60+
- Other...



What is the level of your education

- Graduate/ Bachelors
- Masters
- PhD
- Secondary education
-

---

What is your working experience ?

- No Working experience
- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- 20-25 years
- More than 25 years

...

What is your working experience in Education sector ?

- No Experience
- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years

- 15-20 years
- 20-25 years
- More than 25 years

⋮

What is your working experience in Education sector ?

- No Experience
- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- 20-25 years
- More than 25 years

Talent Management refers to systematic identification of strategically pivotal position in the organisation which then can be filled with talented personnel by creating a talent pool of talented workforce from within and outside the organisation. These talented personnel can be trained and developed based on the job description and later on can be retained by effective retention strategies

This section is intended to understand whether the participants have any Knowledge, academic or working experience in the field of talent management

---

Do you have any knowledge or experience in the field of talent management

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

⋮

Do you have working experience in Academic or higher education sector

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Have you ever been taught a subject that contains information about talent management

- Yes
- No

Do you have any experience in the field of talent management (Academic/Industrial) ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

...

Do you have any learning/working experience in implementing/drafting organisational sustainability strategies ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

After section 2 [Continue to next section](#)



Talent Management Process is a guidance model that help an organisation to implement its talent management strategies. It consists of five factors namely identification of pivotal positions, creation of talent pool, recruitment, training and development, attraction and retention of employees.

This section is intended to understand the respondents knowledge talent management process and the factors that are associated with it

Do you think identification of strategically important position and then filling those positions with talented personnel is necessary ?

○ ...

Do you think identification of strategically important position and then filling those positions with talented personnel is necessary ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

...

Do you think strategically important positions in higher educational organisations can contribute in the overall performance of talent management process ?

- No
- Yes
- Maybe

Do you think creating a database of talented personnel from within and outside the Higher education organisation necessary for effective performance?

- Yes

Do you think creating a database of talented personnel from within and outside the Higher education organisation necessary for effective performance?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

...

Do you think this talent pool can help Higher educational organisations in building effective talent management process ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you consider recruitment as an important part of Higher educational organisations HRM?

- Yes

Do you consider recruitment as an important part of Higher educational organisations HRM?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

...

Do you think Saudi Higher educational organisations need to introduce new and dynamic recruitment strategies in Higher educational sector?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think recruitment can play an important role in the overall process of talent management ?

- Yes

Do you think recruitment can play an important role in the overall process of talent management ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

⋮

Do you think training and development of existing and newly recruitment employees is necessary ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think Higher educational organisations should have function and department specific training and development programs for its employees ?

Do you think Higher educational organisations should have function and department specific training and development programs for its employees ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

...

Do you think training and development can play an important role in the overall process of talent management ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think attraction and retention of talented employees is an important aspect for organisation success ?

---

Do you think attraction and retention of talented employees is an important aspect for organisation success ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

...

Do you believe Saudi higher educational organisations should have new and innovative attraction and retention strategies (other than monetary strategies) to retain its talented personnel in the Higher education sector?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think innovative attraction and retention strategies can play a significant role in the overall process of talent management ?

---

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Do you think innovative attraction and retention strategies can play a significant role in the overall process of talent management ?

Multiple choice

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Add option or [ADD "OTHER"](#)



Required

After section 3 [Continue to next section](#)

## Organisational sustainability and performance

This section is intended to understand the implications of implementing alignment strategy of talent management with organisations existing HRM and Human capital strategies

Do you think internal organisational factors such as communication, financial stability, leadership, HRM etc can impact the overall performance of the organisation ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think external environment factors such as law and order situation, economical condition, political and legal situation and technological advancements can impact the overall performance of the organisation ?

Do you think external environment factors such as law and order situation, economical condition, political and legal situation and technological advancements can impact the overall performance of the organisation ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

∴

Do you think organisations existing HRM and Human capital strategies can be aligned with Talent management process ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think this alignment of HRM with Talent management can improve the overall performance of the organisation ?

Do you think this alignment of HRM with Talent management can improve the overall performance of the organisation ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

⋮

Do you think alignment of HRM with talent management will help Saudi Higher educational organisations reach organisational sustainability ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think it is necessary to implement HRM and talent management alignment strategy in the overall Saudi higher education system ?

- Yes

Do you think it is necessary to implement HRM and talent management alignment strategy in the overall Saudi higher education system ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

⋮

Do you think existing of Saudi Higher education can easily adapt to this alignment strategy ?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you think it is easier to implement this alignment of HRM and talent management strategy in your organisation

- Yes

Maybe

Do you think it is easier to implement this alignment of HRM and talent management strategy in your organisation

Yes

No

Maybe

...

Will you accept such a strategy if it is implemented in your organisation/institute ?

Yes

No

Maybe