

**EMPLOYEE REACTIONS TO TALENT MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES**

The image shows a large, faint watermark of the Mahidol University logo in the background. The logo is circular with a blue center containing a golden emblem of a traditional Thai stupa. The outer ring of the logo contains Thai text. Overlaid on this watermark is the author's name.

BOONTIP BOONBUMROONGSUK

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Thank God for all things.

Boontip Boonbumroongsuk



EMPLOYEE REACTIONS TO TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

BOONTIP BOONBUMROONGSUK 5749606

Ph.D. (MANAGEMENT)

THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: PROF. ROY KOUWENBERG, Ph.D., CFA, ASSOC. PROF. PARISA RUNGRUANG, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. DECHA DECHAWATANAPAISAL, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. ASTRID KAINZBAUER, Ph.D., SUPARAK SURIYANKIETKAEW, Ph.Ds.

ABSTRACT

Despite the acclaimed advantages of talent management by both academics and practitioners, empirical research on its effectiveness remains lacking. Recent studies have even indicated that employee reactions to talent management might actually contradict this perceived optimism. The current study investigates the underlying mechanisms of justice perceptions and job stress in employee reactions (employee brand identification, turnover intentions, and satisfaction with work-life balance) to talent management practices, among both the *elite* employees who are considered as more talented and valuable (Group A) and the *non-elites* (Group B). Online surveys were distributed internally by five organizations from various industries in Thailand, and a total of 544 completed responses were collected. The data were analyzed using structural equations modeling (SEM). The results indicate that employees' perception of justice and job stress mediate the relationships between talent management perceptions and employee reactions in a positive way. This study provides empirical evidences to support the optimistic view of talent management and aid in defining better talent management strategies to deliver effective organizational investments in its people.

KEY WORDS: Talent Management/ Workforce Differentiation/ Employee Reactions/ Justice Perception/ Job Stress

168 pages

ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์ภาษาไทย ทักษะคติของพนักงานต่อแนวทางปฏิบัติด้านการบริหารจัดการคนเก่งในองค์กร

ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์ภาษาอังกฤษ EMPLOYEE REACTIONS TO TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

บุญทิพย์ บุญบำรุงสุข 5749606

ปรัชญาคุณวุฒิบัณฑิต (การจัดการ)

คณะกรรมการที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ : PROF. ROY KOUWENBERG, Ph.D., CFA., รศ.ดร. พลิศารุ่งเรือง, รศ.ดร. เดชา เศรษฐวัฒน์ไพศาล, ASSOC. PROF. ASTRID KAINZBAUER, Ph.D., สุภรักษ์ สุริยันเกียรติแก้ว, Ph.Ds.

บทคัดย่อ

ถึงแม้ว่าประโยชน์ของการบริหารจัดการคนเก่งในองค์กรจะเป็นที่ประจักษ์แก่นักวิชาการและนักธุรกิจ แต่ในการวิจัยเชิงประจักษ์ ผลงานวิจัยในเรื่องประสิทธิผลของการบริหารจัดการคนเก่งยังคงขาดแคลน ผลการศึกษาล่าสุดกระทั่งระบุว่าทัศนคติของพนักงานต่อการบริหารจัดการคนเก่งอาจขัดแย้งกับมุมมองของนักวิชาการและนักธุรกิจที่กล่าวข้างต้น คุณวุฒิพนธ์ฉบับนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษากลไกของการรับรู้ความยุติธรรมในองค์กรและความเครียดจากการทำงานของพนักงาน (ความเป็นหนึ่งเดียวกันกับเอกลักษณ์ขององค์กร ความตั้งใจในการลาออก และความพึงพอใจต่อความสมดุลในชีวิตการทำงาน) ต่อแนวทางปฏิบัติในการบริหารจัดการคนเก่ง ในกลุ่มพนักงานชั้นยอด (Elite employees) (กลุ่ม A) หรือพนักงานที่มีผลงานและความสามารถโดดเด่น และพนักงานชั้นรอง (Non-elites) (กลุ่ม B) ที่มีผลการดำเนินงานอยู่ในเกณฑ์ปกติ การศึกษาครั้งนี้ใช้วิธีการสำรวจออนไลน์ (Online survey) กับกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่เป็นพนักงานจำนวน 544 คนขององค์กร 5 แห่งจากหลากหลายอุตสาหกรรมในประเทศไทย จากนั้น นำข้อมูลทั้งหมดที่ได้มาวิเคราะห์โดยใช้โมเดลสมการโครงสร้าง (Structural Equation Modeling-SEM) โดยผลการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่าการรับรู้ความยุติธรรมในองค์กรและความเครียดจากการทำงานของพนักงานเป็นตัวแปรในการเชื่อมโยงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างทัศนคติต่อการบริหารจัดการคนเก่งและทัศนคติของพนักงานในเชิงบวก การศึกษานี้นำเสนอหลักฐานเชิงประจักษ์ เพื่อสนับสนุนทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการบริหารจัดการคนเก่งในองค์กร และยังช่วยกำหนดกลยุทธ์การบริหารจัดการคนเก่งให้ดียิ่งขึ้น ทั้งนี้ เพื่อเป็นการสนับสนุนการลงทุนด้านการบริหารจัดการบุคลากรที่มีประสิทธิภาพขององค์กร

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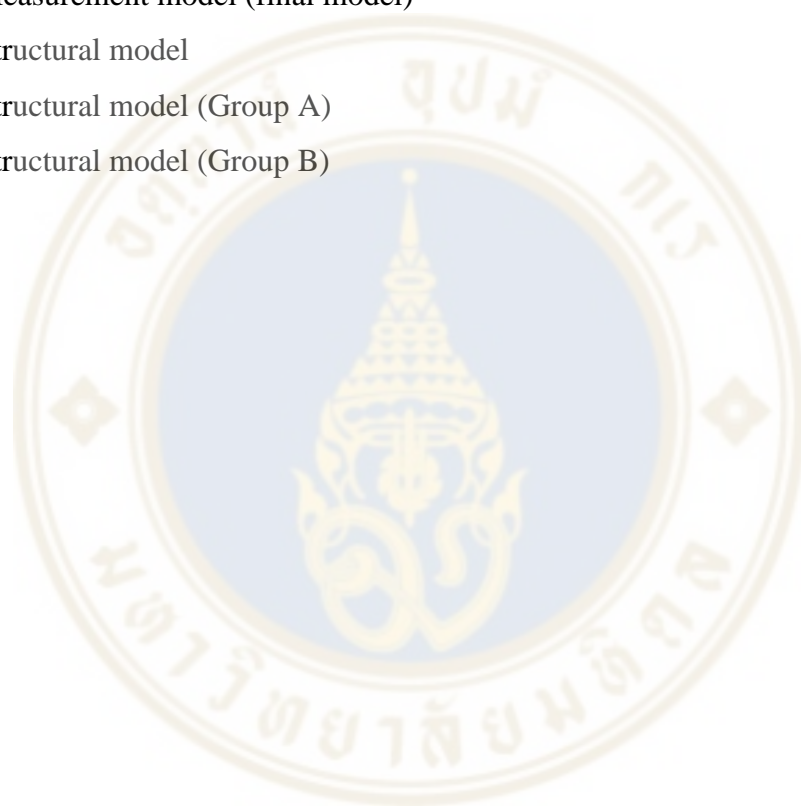
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Economies around the world have evolved from industrial to service and more recently to digital eras. Throughout these changes, however, one thing remains the same. Whatever type of businesses are driving those economies, they all include some degree of a human element. Be it production, services, or innovation, business involves people. It logically follows, therefore, that the businesses which have the best people remain the most competitive. In such a competitive environment, the effective management of talent is essential for organizational success. While talent management has become a buzzword that has recently received significant attention from practitioners and researchers alike, its concept extends as far back as the Bible where the term *talent* was used to represent something precious or rare, taken as a unit measurement of silver during that historical period of time (Painter-Morland, Tansley, Deslandes, & Susan Kirk, 2018; Tansley, 2011). In the workplace, the notion of talent generally endorses the idea that a selected group of *talented employees* (those who are or perceived to be able to demonstrate outstanding accomplishments) are considered to be more valuable when compared to another group of typical employees, thereby meriting more investments from the organization, such as development and career growth opportunities through various talent management programs.

Talented employees are in such an appallingly short supply that a *war for talent* has been declared, referring to the increasingly competitive landscape of recruiting and retaining talented employees (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). The declaration of this war has triggered many on-going discussions around talent management in an attempt to answer the lingering question of whether talent management is actually just another fad of human resource management (HRM). However, research has proven that talent management is not just a re-labeling of HRM, but a new and different approach to people management (Chuai, Preece, & Iles, 2008). Over the past decade, scholarly interest in talent management has increased and

continues to grow (Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013). Nevertheless, talent management is frequently associated with a lack of empirical research (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; De Vos & Dries, 2013; Skuza, Scullion, & McDonnell, 2013) due to it having been considered largely insignificant up until as recently as 2010 (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016).

With many important issues still remaining in talent management studies, Gallardo-Gallardo, Nijs, Dries, and Gallo (2015) compiled an influential review of the talent management literature, from which they discussed the definitions, theoretical frameworks, and themes in the field in order to help advance it quickly and to address the pressing interests of both scholars and practitioners. Reviews have revealed that the resource-based view is the most dominant framework in the extant literature, whereby the workforce differentiation of human capital is the key attribute in managing talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Consistent with the war for talent analogy, this view considers talented employees as being exclusive and in short supply. Special efforts have to be made through segmenting employees into a prioritized or elite group (the talent pool) typically comprising up to 10% of the employee population within an organization (Swales, Downs, & Orr, 2014). Employees who are selected for inclusion in the talent pool are competent incumbents in which organizations are willing to invest a significant portion of their resources for the purpose of meeting current and future demands and encouraging the long-term commitment of these talented employees to the organization (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

Pfeffer (2001) argued that talent management programs result in an underemphasis on the team as emphasis is placed on the stardom of the minority talented employees. While the majority of employees belong to the former group of people, who do not belong in the talent pool, there is a surprising lack of research investigating the effects of talent management on the *non-talent* group of employees' attitudes and behaviors (Swales & Blackburn, 2016). With these concerns in mind, there is a growing interest in investigating the effects and outcomes of this disproportional investment and favoritism. Empirical evidence in this area is limited, but one notable example is the research by Björkman, Ehrnrooth, Mäkelä, Smale and Sumelius (2013), which identified significant differences between employees who perceived that they were included in the talent pool and those who either perceived that they were not or did not

know their talent status. Within the limited evidence available, mixed results have been achieved. In some studies, no differences were found between both groups of employees contrary to theoretical assumptions (e.g., Bethke-Langenegger, 2012), whereas some studies achieved mixed results in identifying attitudinal differences between the two groups (e.g., Swailes & Blackburn, 2016).

Referring to “all (positive) attitudes and (effective) work behaviors exhibited by employees identified as talents in response to their organization's talent management” (De Boeck, Meyers, & Dries, 2018, p. 202), employee reactions to talent management programs are understudied, rare, and remarkably deficient (Becker, Huselid, & Beatty, 2009; Lacey & Groves, 2014). Additionally, the existing talent management literature is dominated by the organizational perspective with a unitarist managerial orientation (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; McDonnell, Collings, Mellahi, & Schuler, 2017). The majority of the respondents included in talent management studies are human resource managers, line managers, and top management. Instead, the effects of talent management should be investigated at the employee level to observe whether talent management programs are achieving their goals and objectives according to the talent strategies applied by the organization to compete in the war for talent. Data collected at the employee level are scarce and the few studies that discuss the impact of talent management usually explore outcomes at the macro level, such as strategy formation (i.e., Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler, & Staffebach, 2011). However, Gelens, Hofmans, Dries and Pepermans (2014) argued that talent management practices affect micro-outcomes as well (e.g., employee attitudes and behaviors). Although there may be some positive impacts among the selected group, the absence of positive effects and the potential for negative impacts among the excluded group can create an overall negative effect from talent management, whereby even the optimistic outcomes of talent management may, in reality, be a double-edged sword (Marescaux, De Winne, & Sels, 2013). Employee reactions to workforce differentiation remain ambiguous, and more investigation is required in this area to understand both the positive and negative employee reactions that can occur through the inclusion and exclusion of employees into talent pools.

The ethical dimension in talent management becomes an increasing area of concern as the spotlight of organizational resources falls upon the elite group. The

concept of differentiation is a strategic use of limited resources from an organizational perspective, but the way in which it promotes inequality among the workforce with its focus on organizational elites makes talent management a sensitive matter. This bias has been largely ignored in the extant literature (Swales, 2013). With the exception of the work of Gelens et al. (2014), the ethical dimension of the talent management discourse remains mainly unexplored (Painter-Morland et al., 2018). Swales and Blackburn (2016) encouraged researchers to investigate views of fairness between talent pool insiders and outsiders in order to shed more light on the *dark side* hypotheses of talent management.

Derived from the foundation of the signaling theory (Spence, 1973), when organizations send out *signals* that one is included in the talent pool (whether formally or informally), it is expected that there will be an increase in the understanding of the employment relationship and individuals will alter their behaviors based on their perception of received organization investments. According to the social exchange theory, the employees in which organizations have made higher investments are obligated to respond to the favor in the employee-employer exchange relationship (Blau, 1964). On the other hand, employees who are not included in the talent pool and receive significantly less investment from their organization due to a scarcity of resources are expected to be less obligated to the organization. Thus, a higher level of reciprocated effect is expected among employees who are included in the talent pool as compared to employees who are not included in the talent pool.

The spotlight of organizational resources might fall upon the elite group, but these rewards often come at a certain price (Meyers, De Boeck, & Dries, 2017). As elite employees enjoy the benefits bestowed upon them, the terms and conditions of the reciprocal exchange in the psychological contract between the employee and the employer change. Research by Sonnenberg, van Zijderveld, and Brinks (2014) indicated a signaling value of talent management practices in this exchange relationship. However, unlike formal legal contracts, psychological contracts are idiosyncratic, only existing in the minds of employees (Höglund, 2012), and hence there are possibilities for differences in the interpretations by the organization and the employees (Suazo, Martínez, & Sandoval, 2009).

When talented employees are given additional benefits, such as overseas assignments, the management of special projects, or training opportunities, they are expected to conform to organizational expectations and always display the appropriate identity worthy of their elite status. Numerous studies have proven that job-related stress is a major concern in both developing and industrialized countries (De Jonge & Dormann, 2017), yet within the talent management context, job stress has received little attention in the literature despite its psychological influence on the valued elites (Deery, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015).

Good talent management practices are of strategic importance to organizations, as they can improve strategy execution and operational excellence, thereby differentiating an organization and becoming a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Ashton & Morton, 2005; Huselid & Becker, 2011). Despite the many proposed advantages associated with talent management, there is little empirical support for such claims, and an on-going debate by both academics and practitioners exists on the desirability of talent management within organizations (De Boeck et al., 2018). With great worth attached to talent management, academics fear that there is still little known about “how and how well (and according to whom)” talent management applies in practice (Thunnissen, 2016, p. 58). While practitioners have generally embraced the concept and believe in the advantages that talent management brings, many are unsure of how, to what extent, and even if its implementation and integration are beneficial in achieving organizational goals.

One example is Adidas Global, where both the exclusive and inclusive approaches to talent management are utilized. The exclusive approach assumes that some people are more talented than others (being more valuable to the organization), whereas the inclusive approach assumes that all people are talented (Dries, 2013b). This combination of approaches is interesting as the exclusive and inclusive approaches are seen as opposites on the spectrum of a talent tension that is still under debate today. In the organization’s attempt to achieve integrated talent management at the international level, “talent management remains a journey,” according to Dr Dagmar Daubner-Siva, Director Talent Partnering (Global Operations, Adidas Headquarters), in her keynote presentation at the 6th Workshop on Talent Management in Barcelona, Spain. From the perspectives of both academics and practitioners, further empirical support for claims

on the worth of talent management is desired. In addressing these gaps in the literature, this research aims to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between talent management practices and three specific employee reactions (i.e., employee brand identification, turnover intention, and satisfaction with work-life balance)?

Research Question 2: Do justice perception and job stress play mediating roles in the relationship between employees' perceptions of talent management practices and these reactions?

Research Question 3: Is there a difference between the results from employees who are included in the talent pool and employees who are not included in the talent pool?

1.1 Purpose Statement

This research seeks to extend the understudied area of workforce differentiation in talent management. The purpose is to investigate the underlying mechanisms in employee reactions to talent management in both the elite and non-elite groups of employees. More specifically, this research examines the mediating roles of perceived justice and job stress on the relationship between perceived talent management practices on various employee reactions, and compares the results between two groups of employees (Group A – employees who are included in the talent pool and Group B – employees who are not included in the talent pool).

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

- To study employee reactions to talent management practices in terms of employee brand identification, turnover intention, and satisfaction with work-life balance
- To investigate the roles that overall justice perception and job stress play in the relationship between employees' perceptions of talent management practices and these reactions

- To compare the reactions between two groups of employees (Group A and Group B)

1.3 Research Methodology

A quantitative research approach was employed for this study. An online survey was distributed internally by five selected organizations in Thailand from various industries. The determination of whether an employee belongs in Group A or Group B was supervised by the organizations themselves and different links to the same survey provided by the researcher were distributed among these two groups. Eventually, a total of 544 completed responses (246 in Group A and 298 in Group B) were used after data cleaning, and the collected data were analyzed using structural equations modeling (SEM).

1.4 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is organized into five main chapters. Chapter 1 presents a general discussion of the topic of talent management, the current status of debates on this topic, and gaps in the literature. This is followed by an explanation of the purpose of this research, its objectives, methodology, and a brief outline of the thesis. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background for this research by reviewing the talent management literature, discussing the growth of talent management, the meaning of talent at work, definitions of talent management, and existing theoretical themes. A research stance on talent management is provided followed by a review of workforce differentiation in relation to talent management and criticisms of the literature. Based on the review of the literature, a conceptual framework is developed and the current study's hypotheses are proposed. Chapter 3 describes the methodology applied in conducting this research through a discussion on the research design, sampling and data collection, the variables and their measures, and the statistical methodology best fitting the analysis. Chapter 4 reports the steps taken after data collection, where preliminary analysis is conducted to check for missing data, outliers, data normality, and data multicollinearity. The demographic profiles of the participants of the research are

discussed, along with the default measurement model, final measurement model, model diagnostics, and model modifications. Subsequently, the structural model is analyzed according to the hypotheses, and the findings are shown through the use of IBM SPSS version 24 and Amos version 24. Chapter 5 discusses these findings in correspondence to the extant literature, presenting the implications and limitations of the research, and offering recommendations for future research. Finally, a conclusion of the thesis is provided.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide a theoretical background for this research, this chapter reviews the extant literature on the growth of talent management as a field, the meaning of talent at work, definitions of talent management, and the theoretical themes that exist in the talent management literature. A research stance on talent management is then provided followed by a review of workforce differentiation in relation to talent management. Subsequently, the hypotheses of this research are developed based on the reviewed literature.

Research has shown that talent management is not just an old wine in a new bottle, but is a new and different approach to people management (Chuai et al., 2008). Collings and Mellahi (2009), Lewis and Heckman (2006), Tansley (2011), and Thunnissen et al. (2013) all agree that with only a limited amount of empirical research, the talent management field is in its infancy-adolescence stage. On the other hand, Dries (2013) views talent management as being in transition from a growing stage to a maturity stage. Based on the three developmental stages of a phenomenon (von Krogh, Rossi-Lamastra, & Haefliger, 2012), Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) conclude that talent management was an embryonic field from 1998 until 2011 and has been a growing field from 2011 until today. Currently, the field faces the challenge of transitioning from the growth to the mature stage of study, and is expected to change drastically and quickly within the next few years.

2.1 The Growth of Talent Management as a Field

2.1.1 The Historical Context of Talent Management

Continually cited in the literary works on talent management, the publication of "*The War for Talent*" in the 1990s by McKinsey & Company reflects an

ongoing reality that the management of talented employees is of paramount concern in business practices (Michaels et al., 2001). The effect of this publication was to spur on leading global human resource consulting firms either to create new practices or to rebrand existing practices with the intention of providing talent management solutions over the past decades. While it seems that talent management emerged in the 1990s, Cappelli and Keller (2017) argue that the practices associated with talent management have much longer histories, dating back to the period prior to World War I, when organizations grew complicated enough to require strategic positions (e.g., executives and senior management), but had neither an internal talent pool available to them nor existing processes for developing employees to fill these strategic positions in the future. One of the solutions was to acquire small companies and recruit their founders to management positions in charge of their business units. Another solution was to acquire talented employees from competing businesses, called *poaching* or *head hunting*. Nevertheless, the gap between the excess demand for employees to fill executive and senior management roles surpassed the supply, resulting from a shortage of talented employees. Through World War II, this gap not only persisted but became even more severe, as a majority of the candidates who would otherwise have joined entry-level positions had to serve in the military, affecting all industries (Whitmore, 1952). Since then, following a series of global recessions, the business environment has become more uncertain, dynamic, and complexed, characterized by quick changes in customer needs, growing global competition, and digitization (Harsch & Festing, 2019). Rather than recovering over time, the talent shortage problem continues today, a century later.

2.1.2 Phenomenon-Driven Talent Management

Rather than being theory driven like most fields, research in talent management has emerged as a phenomenon that has attracted greater interest among practitioners than among academics (Cappelli, 2010; Dries, 2013b; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Thunnissen et al., 2013; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). The development of a phenomenon can be discussed in three stages: embryonic, growth, and mature (von Krogh et al., 2012). In the embryonic stage, the phenomenon is of interest to practitioners and a small group of scholars, who try to develop a common language and terminology for discussion. Following the embryonic

stage, the phenomenon becomes more visible to a larger academic community, and works on special issues are published to encourage further research in the growth stage. Moreover, the recurrent works of authors and editor teams across special issues (an establishment of a core scientific community) can be observed in the growth stage. The phenomenon then progresses into a well-recognized field of study in the mature stage, with researchers who study it acquiring tenured position in top-tier universities, and obtaining research grants. Along with that, its own associations, journals, and PhD programs are also developed. Based on the three stages of the development of phenomena, bibliometric and content analysis have concluded that talent management was an embryonic field from 1998 until 2011, and has been growing field from 2011 onwards (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Over the next decade, the field is expected to change drastically and quickly as it faces transition from the growth to the mature stage of study.

2.2 The Meaning of Talent in the World of Work

A serious lack of clarity in defining the term *talent* has always been associated with the talent management field (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Tansley, 2011). Literature on the topic has been criticized as being consultancy-based, focusing on the *how* of the definition rather than on the *who* is considered as talented and *why* (Chuai et al., 2008; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & González-Cruz, 2013). It seems that everyone and every organization has their own belief on what talent is or what talent should be to the extent that the talent concept has been taken for granted. As everyone has their own idea of what constitutes a talented employee or person, the term means what a business leader or a writer wants it to mean (Ulrich, 2011). This lack of a consensus can be further explained by different interpretations of the term in various business aspects, geographical locations, culture, or languages, as well as in the different characteristics of each organization, creating confusion regarding the definitions of terms used and differences in the assumptions made by the researchers who write about the issue (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Without proper evaluation of the meaning of talent, the process of talent management itself is in jeopardy. The different definitions of talent found in related literature are presented in Table 2.1. From these definitions, a number

of discussions have risen on how the term is elaborated according to talent perspectives, talent tensions, and talent philosophies.

Table 2.1 Definitions of Talent in the World of Work

Author(s)	Definition of Talent in the World of Work
Bethke-Langenegger (2012), p. 3	“We understand talent to be one of those workers who ensures the competitiveness and future of a company (as a specialist or leader) through his organizational/job specific qualification and knowledge, his social and methodical competencies, and his characteristic attributes such as eager to learn or achievement oriented”
Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001), p. 21	“Talent should refer to a person's recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied.”
Cheese, Thomas, and Craig (2008), p. 46	“Essentially, talent means the total of all the experience, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that a person has and brings to work.”
Gagné (2000), p. 67	“(…) superior mastery of systematically developed abilities or skills”
Lewis and Heckman (2006), p. 141	“(…) is essentially a euphemism for ‘people’”
Michaels et al. (2001), p. xii	“(…) the sum of a person's abilities—his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow.”

Note. Adopted from Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2013)

Table 2.1 Definitions of Talent in the World of Work (cont.)

Author(s)	Definition of Talent in the World of Work
Silzer and Dowell (2010), p. 13–14	“In groups, talent can refer to a pool of employees who are exceptional in their skills and abilities either in a specific technical area (such as software graphics skills) or a competency (such a consumer marketing talent), or a more general area (such as general managers or high-potential talent). And in some cases, ‘the talent’ might refer to the entire employee population.”
Silzer and Dowell (2010), p. 14	“(…) an individual's skills and abilities (talents) and what the person is capable of doing or contributing to the organization.”
Stahl et al. (2007), p.4	“(…) a select group of employees – those that rank at the top in terms of capability and performance – rather than the entire workforce”.
Tansley, Harris, Stewart, and Turner (2006), p. 2	“Talent can be considered as a complex amalgam of employees' skills, knowledge, cognitive ability and potential. Employees' values and work preferences are also of major importance.”
Tansley et al. (2007), p. 8	“Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential.”
Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), p. 60	“Talent = competence [knowledge, skills and values required for todays' and tomorrows' job; right skills, right place, right job, right time] × commitment [willing to do the job] × contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their job]”

Note. Adopted from Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2013)

Table 2.1 Definitions of Talent in the World of Work (cont.)

Author(s)	Definition of Talent in the World of Work
Williams (2000), p. 35	“...describes those people who do one or other of the following: regularly demonstrate exceptional ability – and achievement – either over a range of activities and situations, or within a specialized and narrow field of expertise; consistently indicate high competence in areas of activity that strongly suggest transferable, comparable ability in situations where they have yet to be tested and proved to be highly effective, i.e. potential.”

Note. Adopted from Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2013)

2.2.1 Talent Perspectives

In exploring the international philological perspective of talent, Tansley (2011) suggests that there is no universal definition of talent in any one language. For example, in some European languages (e.g., German, Russian, French, and Danish), there is an agreement that talent is an innate aspect, something that one is born with, not something one has learned. It is considered a *gift* that allows a person to achieve exceptional performance compared to others in a particular field. On the other hand, in some non-European cultures, such as Japanese, talent is seen as a product of accumulated accomplishments from efforts to attain perfection that often takes years. Within the business context, Tansley separates the view of talent into three different levels of perspectives: organizational, group, and individual.

At the organizational level, it is observed that each organization has a unique perspective and prefers to formulate its own meaning of talent. As such, the meaning of talent tends to be organization-specific and highly affected by the nature of the work undertaken. For instance, talent is seen as a creative intuition or the exceptional taste buds of chefs at Gordon Ramsay Holdings, while talent means the ability to apply intelligence, the willingness to accept challenges, and the demonstration of exceptional difference at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

At the group level, the meaning of talent is segmented into various talent pools. Employees are identified into the groups in which they belong according to the standards of the organization in which they are employed. Talent pools take up different forms, with both positive and negative connotations existing regarding talent recognition. Four forms of talent are proposed by Tansley (2011) in this area. First, leadership talent can be described as a group of individuals who are imperative to the organization, who display the potential for future leadership or have the skills that others do not, and who would be hired by the business's competitors at an instant. Second, key talent describes a group of employees who represent elite performers or employees who exhibit potential (approximately the top 5%) and who are often the target of headhunters. Third, the core talent group is formed of employees who perform the core business function and are mainly responsible for delivering the main products or services offered by the organization. Individuals in this group are not difficult to replace, but their replacement would mean a loss of productivity due to the loss of experience and accumulated expertise. Fourth, the peripheral talent group includes external contractors or providers who provide essential services to the organization. This group is also important in the business as the replacement of talent from this group would mean a loss of time on selecting and becoming acquainted with other new providers.

At the individual level, the meaning of talent is recognized as being individually specific; it is special or unique to each person. Talent is related to certain behaviors and personal standards of conduct. Individually, talented people can be seen as a combination of high performance and high potential, as just high potential, as a high performer (with expertise, leadership behaviors, creativity and the 'can-do attitude') or as having individual strengths. The meaning of talent at this level is more complicated as it is the basis of thought for all the levels discussed above. Despite the ongoing discussion on these three levels of talent perspectives, the meaning of talent is still unclear and further tensions have risen regarding the meaning of talent.

2.2.2 Talent Tensions

The meaning of talent is rigorously examined by Dries (2013b) through five tensions; whether talent is subjective or objective, inclusive or exclusive, innate or acquired, input or output, and transferable or context-dependent. The first tension is

between the subjective and objective perspectives of talent. This examines the question of *who* or *what* constitutes to being a talent. The subjective perspective focuses on the identification and development of talented people (i.e., who), whereas the objective perspective focuses on the identification and development of the *characteristics* of talented people (i.e., what). Talent management policies and practices within the subjective approach focus on organizational career management and succession planning for those deemed talented individuals, while the objective approach focuses on competence and knowledge management in order to pass on or retain the talented qualities within the organization.

The second tension is between the inclusive and exclusive perspectives of talent. This focus examines the conditions of being considered a talent in working organizations. The inclusive perspective assume that all people are talented, and so organizations focus on a strength-based approach to allocating their resources. Based on positive psychology, the strength-based approach promotes the fulfillment of the natural potential of all employees, advocating the entitlement of all employees to use organizational resources to maximize their strengths. The exclusive perspective assumes that some people are more talented than others. Therefore, some people are considered to be more valuable to the organization, and more resources should be used to attract, develop, and retain these differentiated individuals, leading to disproportionate investments in human resources (i.e., workforce differentiation). Apart from a win-win positive association with the strength-based approach for both the employee and employer, workforce differentiation is the more cost-effective and efficient approach for organizations as well (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

The third tension is between the innate and acquired perspectives of talent. This questions the extent to which a person can be developed. The innate perspective regards talent as being a natural gift that one is born with and implicates a focus on selection, assessment, and the identification of existing talent in an individual. Conversely, the acquired perspective believes that talent is developed and can be gained through time and experiences, implicating a focus on education, training, experience, and learning tools in order to develop a person.

The fourth tension is between the input and output perspectives of talent, which focuses on debating whether talent is more dependent on ability or motivation.

The input perspective stresses a focus on effort, motivation, ambition, and career orientation; however, the output perspective places stress on performance, achievements, and results. One interesting study in this respect is the work of Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), which observes that talent should be multiplicative rather than additive, and proposes the talent formula as: “talent = competence x commitment x contribution” (p.60). Unfortunately, this talent formula is merely a proposition and no empirical evidence can be found to verify its usability or statistical contributions.

Finally, the fifth tension is between the transferable and context-dependent perspectives of talent. It examines the extent to which talent is conditional on the work environment in which the individual is situated. In the transferable perspective, it is believed that talent would be displayed regardless of the work environment. As for the context-dependent perspective, it asserts that the display of talent is dependent on interaction between the talented individual and their work environment. This implies that a talented employee in one work place or work function does not indicate that the same employee will thrive under a different work environment.

2.2.3 Talent Philosophies

From the tensions explored, Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) consider two tensions to be major controversies in discussing the meaning of talent. Talent philosophies are introduced based on the tensions between talent being either inclusive (all employees have specific talents that can be utilized) or exclusive (few employees are talented) and between talent being either stable (one’s talents are one’s permanent traits) or developable (one’s talents can be polished and grown). The four talent philosophies are (1) exclusive/stable, (2) exclusive/developable, (3) inclusive/stable and (4) inclusive/developable, each differing in its perception of talent.

The exclusive/stable talent philosophy assumes that talents are rare and innate characteristics with which a person is born. Organizations that believe in this philosophy practice workforce differentiation, indicating that there are preferential treatments toward employees who are considered talented. Both the attraction and retention of talented employees are emphasized in talent management and employee branding is very important in this philosophy. The opportunities for the exclusive/stable talent philosophy are that there is an optimal allocation of human resources within the

company and that those employees who are deemed talented will receive investments and opportunities as they are believed to yield disproportionate returns for the organization. Similarly, the second philosophy (exclusive/developable talent philosophy) assumes that talented employees are rare. Its distinctive difference from the first philosophy is that it considers talent to be something that is unrealized most of the time and needs to be revealed through training and development. Organizations that believe in this philosophy also believe in workforce differentiation and focus their investments in talent training and development tailored to the initial potential of the identified talented employees, who are expected to produce greater returns for the organization compared to their colleagues.

There are a few challenges related to the first two philosophies. Within the exclusive approach, talent identification is not a fundamentally simple task and the use of performance appraisals are not a measure for talent, often reflecting one's experience with the task at hand and not one's talent itself (Rob Silzer & Church, 2009; Yost & Chang, 2009). The differentiated, often positively special, treatment of employees who are considered to be talented can incur a negative effect on other employees, who are inevitably considered as neither talented nor valuable to the organization, impairing the latter's motivation. It is possible that the negative effects from the demotivation of employees who are outcasted from the exclusive talent classification will outweigh the positive effects of workforce differentiation itself (Becker et al., 2009; Marescaux et al., 2013), making it a risky strategy for organizations to adopt, especially when there is intense competition in the ongoing war for talent (Michaels et al., 2001).

The next two philosophies assume the inclusive approach to talent (i.e., talent is universal and among the stable characteristics or strengths of each person). In the inclusive/stable talent philosophy, these strengths are enduring and can only slightly be refined as they are considered natural strengths that are unique to an individual. Organizations that believe in this philosophy design their systems to acknowledge the unique qualities of all employees, which the organization will then capitalized upon and match with positions and tasks that are most suitable to the individual. The inclusive/developable talent philosophy, on the other hand, aims to develop the potential of every ordinary employee into becoming as exceptional as they can be. This philosophy believes that everyone has the ability to excel in specific areas according to

their strengths and that everyone can become excellent in almost any domain by nurturing their strengths through fostering. This philosophy is built on the notion that “experts are always made, not born” (Ericsson, Prietula, & Cokely, 2007, p. 2) and that the development of all employees can be achieved by managing their personal growth. The inclusive/developable talent philosophy facilitates a growth mindset in the workforce; increases intellectual achievement, willpower, and resilience; and promotes better conflict resolution (Dweck, 2012). With its decreased attention on stereotyping employees, it promotes a Pygmalion Effect, where the belief that every employee can become an excellent performer becomes a special form of self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1965). A broad variety of talent is developed, creating advantages for companies in dynamic markets or business environments (Yost & Chang, 2009), and it is believed that companies with the inclusive/developable talent philosophy might even overcome the global scarcity of talent by producing their own exact forms of talent required for the execution of their business processes (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014).

The challenge for the inclusive philosophies is failure, which is inevitable. These philosophies lead employees to thinking that they lack the innate benefits and they then become easily discouraged when facing challenges. Furthermore, the question of whether the *right* employees are attracted or retained is debatable, and while the inclusive/stable talent philosophy does not differentiate the more from the less valuable employees, there are always some who are indispensable to an organization. The inclusive/developable talent philosophy specifically requires a substantial investment in time and money. A diversified array of human resources to be developed to their fullest potential will divide up the company’s training budget, and may result in every employee receiving only a little allocation of the organization’s resources. Moreover, it can be difficult to motivate employees to engage in deliberate practice that may not be their area of interest or may even be their weakness, but is deemed important by the organization.

Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) argue that the exclusive talent management approach faces two major challenges: global talent scarcity and the difficulty of predicting the type of talent needed in the future in a fast-changing environment. A more inclusive talent management approach is reasoned to be able to

help overcome these challenges, and the authors predict that talent management will experience a shift towards more inclusive philosophies. Rather than focusing on exclusive or inclusive talent philosophies alone, the authors foresee a hybrid talent management system, whereby one talent management approach is used for one group of employees, and another talent management approach is used another group of employees. Support for this prediction is found in the recent research of Meyers, van Woerkom, Paauwe, and Dries (2019), who found that there are nearly an equal prevalence of the four talent philosophies in the views of human resource managers around the world, contradicting the findings by Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016), which showed that the exclusive view to talent management was found to be predominant in practice. According to von Krogh et al. (2012), a level of consistency is reached and regularities that were encountered earlier in the field become predictable in the mature phase of a phenomenon. The discrepancy in findings between Meyers et al. (2019) and Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) thus signifies that talent management is still a growing field and has not yet reached the maturity stage, in line with previous literature (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Dries, 2013a; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015).

2.3 Definitions of Talent Management

As with the term talent itself, Lewis and Heckman (2006) point out that it is very difficult to identify the meaning of *talent management*. Indeed, there is much ambiguity regarding the terms used in this field, and academics have different assumptions while writing about the issue. For example, it is noted that terms such as *talent strategy*, *succession management*, and *human resource planning* are used interchangeably in referring to talent management (p. 140). From their extensive review of literature on talent management, Lewis and Heckman proposed three distinct schools of thoughts that have emerged from the literature.

Talent management can firstly be seen as the daily activities of the human resource department (usual practices, functions, activities, or specialist areas). This includes recruiting, selection, development, career management, and succession management. Advocates of this school of thought focus on making established human

resource activities faster or more efficient by using technology or the internet. Many describe talent management as a broad area, being implemented across the organization (e.g., Byham, 2001; Chowanec & Newstrom, 1991; Heinen & O'Neill, 2004; Hilton, 2000; Varricchio, 2004), while others give talent management a narrower focus within each human resource function. For example, recruiters want to attract and retain as many talented employees as possible (Botha, Bussin, & De Swardt, 2011). To achieve this, training and development advocates emphasize growing talented employees through leadership development programs (Cohn, Khurana, & Reeves, 2005), whereas succession planning enthusiasts aim to manage a talented employee's career as the best way to fill future management positions (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2009). Whether these authors focus on the broad or narrow view of talent management, they are re-branding human resource practices, substituting the term *talent management* for *human resource management*.

The second school of thought focuses on the concept of talent pools, whereby talent management is a set of processes designed to make sure that there is an adequate flow of employees to fill job positions higher up in the organization (Kesler, 2002). Being quite close to succession planning, workforce planning, or human resource planning, this school of thought can be expanded to include other human resource functions, such as recruitment and selection. The primary concern here is manpower or skill forecasting and managing career progressions through positions, mainly focusing on the internal rather than external aspect of talent management. As Schweyer (2010) sums up, the first step of talent management is to obtain a clear understanding of the internal workforce. Advocates of this school of thought focus on developing organizational hierarchy; modeling career flows; setting the parameters for entering and exiting a job position; and determining the cost, tenure, supply, and demand for a position and/or business function. While this perspective accounts for more jobs within an organization being considered at the same time, talent management here performs a similar task and is a repetition of succession and workforce planning, failing to advance the field (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

The third school of thought focuses on the classification of talent. The classification is separated into two general views. In the first view, talented employees are high performing and high potential individuals who are to be attracted, recruited,

and rewarded differently regardless of their job positions or organizational specific requirements. This perspective is in line with the war for talent (Michaels et al., 2001), in which talented employees are considered to be exclusive and rare resources, thus requiring a differentiated approach to their management. The second view adopts the inclusive approach to talent management, in which all people are considered talented (Dries, 2013b). This view creates an appealing and aspirational message, but the intention to manage innate talent that exists in every employee is not strategic in economical terms; there is no determination of resource allocation per employee and all employees are deemed equally valuable to the organization (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

Overall, Lewis and Heckman (2006) conclude that talent management has no clear meaning and that it is used in too many ways. The problem with the first perspective is that talent management is used as a re-brand for existing HR practices, with no understanding of strategic and effective talent management. As for the second perspective, the authors believe that talent management is nothing more than a repetition of succession planning and workforce planning. However, the most problematic perspective of all is the third school of thought, whereby the idea of managing every employee's talent individually may be well-intentioned but it is not strategically possible. Before presenting a definition of talent management, Lewis and Heckman suggest that it is first important to understand the components of talent management by discussing the attributes that are commonly used to characterize it. There are many authors who have attempted to define talent management and some of their definitions are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Definitions of Talent Management in Empirical Research

Author(s)	Definition of Talent Management
Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011), p. 527	“...a distinctive process that focuses explicitly on those persons who have the potential to provide competitive advantage for a company by managing those people in an effective and efficient way and therefore ensuring the long-term competitiveness of a company.”
Chadee and Raman (2012), p. 463	“We refer to talent management as the deliberate and organized efforts by firms to optimally select, develop, deploy and retain competent and committed knowledge employees for key positions which bear significant influences on the overall performance of the organization.”
Chahal and Kumari (2013), p. 199	“Talent management is a process that ensures that an organization has the quality and quantity of people in place to meet current and future business priorities. The process covers all the aspects of an employer’s lifecycle, i.e. selection, succession, and performance management.”
Daubner-Siva, Ybema, Vinkenburg, and Beech (2018), p. 75	“Broadly defined, talent management is concerned with the development and implementation of an HR architecture to fill key positions with high potential and high performing (i.e. talented) employees in order to sustain the organization’s competitive advancement.”
Funk et al. (2013), p. 2521-2522	“Talent management concerns the way in which organizations recruit, promote, and terminate employees to streamline the workforce and maximize productivity.”

Table 2.2 Definitions of Talent Management in Empirical Research (cont.)

Author(s)	Definition of Talent Management
Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016), p. 50	“Talent management is aimed at the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of high potential and high performing employees, to fill in key positions which have significant influence on an organization’s sustainable competitive advantage”
Hajikaimisari et al. (2010), p. 68	“Talent management may be defined as a core sub-system of an organization’s strategic management system, to develop a human resource asset base that is capable to support current and future organizational growth directions and objectives.”
Horváthová and Davidová (2012), p. 761	“From the perspective of human resources management task as well as particular personnel activities, the concept of talent management does not place any special requirements on the organization. It only involves a careful application of the best principles and approaches that have been proven in practice especially in the field of acquisition and choice, education and development, remuneration, and socio-cultural and welfare activities for employees.”
King (2016), p. 94	“Talent management is an example of workforce differentiation used to create and leverage human capital.”
Lepak and Snell (1999), p. 271	“Talent management is the differential management of employees based on their relative potential to contribute to the competitive advantage of their organizations.”

Table 2.2 Definitions of Talent Management in Empirical Research (cont.)

Author(s)	Definition of Talent Management
Oladapo (2014), p. 31	“Broadly defined, talent management is the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs.”
Piansoongnern, Anurit, and Kuyawattananonta (2011), p. 1579	“Talent management is therefore, defined here as both a philosophy and a practice. It is both an espoused and enacted commitment – shared at the highest levels and throughout the organization by all those in managerial and supervisory positions – to implementing an integrated, strategic and technology enabled approach to human resources management, with a particular focus on human resource planning, including employee recruitment, retention, development and succession practices, ideally for all employees but especially for those identified as having high potential or in key positions.”
Raman, Chadee, Roxas, and Michailova (2013), p. 336	“For the purposes of this research, we refer to talent management as top management's deliberate and organized efforts to optimally select, develop, deploy and retain competent and committed employees who bear significant influence on the overall performance of the organization.”
Rothwell (2011), p. 12	“...the process that focuses on attracting, developing, and retaining the most talented technical and professional workers and transferring their specialized knowledge to less proficient or less experienced workers”

Table 2.2 Definitions of Talent Management in Empirical Research (cont.)

Author(s)	Definition of Talent Management
Scullion, Collings, and Caligiuri (2011), p. 106	<p>“Global talent management includes all organizational activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles (those roles necessary to achieve organizational strategic priorities) on a global scale. Global talent management takes into account the differences in both organizations' global strategic priorities as well as the differences across national contexts for how talent should be managed in the countries where they operate.”</p>
Tymon, Stumpf, and Doh (2010), p.109	<p>“...the best practices for the attraction, onboarding, development, appraisal, motivation, retention and/or redeployment of professional talent.”</p>

Undeniably, the scattered view of meanings applied to the talent management concept has been criticized (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). However, more recent literature suggests that a greater extent of consensus has been reached than assumed so far in the definition and framework of talent management (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Thunnissen et al., 2013). It is noticeable that there is a focus on pivotal positions, high potential and/or high performing employees, and workforce differentiation (Huselid & Becker, 2011) in the talent management literature (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). For example, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), a human resource consultancy firm in London that is a well-cited source in the literature in this field, defines talent management as “the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention and deployment of those individuals who are of particular value to an organization, either in view of their ‘high potential’ for the future or because they are fulfilling business/operation-critical roles” (CIPD, 2020). This corresponds to the definition that is by far the most influential in the talent management literature (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015) which refers to talent

management as:

Activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high-performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization (Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p. 304).

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks and Themes in Talent Management

The review by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) established four dominant frameworks and four alternative frameworks in talent management. In their research, the most dominant framework is the resource-based view (RBV) (30.2%), whereby talent is viewed as highly valuable and unique (Lepak & Snell, 1999). The core principles to this framework are its references to human capital, pivotal positions, and workforce differentiation. It is believed in this view that people can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage, aligning with the predominant definition of talent management by Collings and Mellahi (2009). The second most dominant framework within the literature is the international human resource management (IHRM) framework (18.7%), in which talent management usually refers to global talent management (GTM) and the management of high-potential expatriates. The third most dominant framework, employee assessment (11.5%), typically refers to talent identification and employee reactions to talent management; this approach is usually applied as a secondary theoretical framework to the RBV or the IHRM framework. The final dominant theoretical framework in talent management literature is institutionalism (10.1%), which is “the study of how cognitive and normative principles impact on institutions such as cultures and organizations, and how those institutions in turn shape the behaviors of actors at lower levels” (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015, p. 272).

Other than these dominant frameworks, four less prevalent frameworks have been identified in talent management. The knowledge management framework (7.2%) has been utilized with the main aim of applying talent management as a facilitator of a knowledge-intensive organization, maximizing the innovative

capabilities of the organization through the use of its human resources. Talent management is also connected to career management (5.8%), whereby the focus of talent management is on all interventions shaping the careers in an organization, uncovering the factors predicting how and when people are promoted. Some studies have linked talent management primarily to the social exchange framework (5.6%), in which the focus lies in the reciprocal relationships, interactions, and obligations between the employers and employees, mainly associating talent management to factors such as psychological contract breach and perceived organizational justice. The strength-based approach (3.5%) is the final but nonetheless an interesting alternative framework that is related to talent management as it redirects the focus of talent management toward positive psychology, encouraging the fulfillment of the natural potential of all employees (the inclusive talent approach), which is believed to result in increased employee productivity and organizational performance.

The field of talent management is expected to change rapidly within the coming years, and it is not unusual for researchers to employ a combination of frameworks to best suit their research context (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Talent management began as a phenomenon and the indication of these theoretical frameworks serves as a reference for researchers to allow for an unbiased understanding of what talent management means or should mean, or which frameworks or methods are more recognized than others. It provides the foundation for researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary talent management. By using these frameworks as a guide, researchers are thus able to state with clarity the meaning and concepts of talent management that are most suitable to their research aims, objectives, questions, and designs.

2.5 Research Stance and Justification

Although the terms *talent* and *talent management* were previously thought to be ambiguous (Lewis & Heckman, 2006), their meanings have now been discussed in relation to their usage in related literature (see Dries, 2013b; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, 2015; Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014). It is important to make an intentional choice of the theoretical frameworks to be used in talent management research in order

to ensure that there is consistency in the frameworks that are utilized throughout the research project (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Following this guidance, the term *talent* will refer to the objective perspective of the characteristics of *talented employees* (what constitutes being a talent) and the subjective perspective of who the *talented employees* are (those who constitute being talented) from this section onwards. The exclusive/developable talent philosophy and the definition of talent management by Collings and Mellahi (2009) is adopted, assuming that some people are more talented than others, and therefore more valuable to an organization, and that talented employees require that a differentiated training and development program be provided by their employers. In alignment with the exclusive/developable philosophy, the talent management definition, and the research objectives, this research adopts a combination of three frameworks: the RBV, employee assessment, and the social exchange framework.

First, this research adopts the RBV framework in which talented employees are believed to be precious and rare, with workforce differentiation assumed to be present. Workforce differentiation of human capital is the key attribute in the RBV (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015), and talent management is a form of workforce differentiation that is used to grow and maximize the use of human capital (Becker et al., 2009; Huselid & Becker, 2011; King, 2016). It refers to the disproportionate investment of resources into the selected group from which one expects disproportionate returns (Gelens et al., 2014). By separating employees into groups, it is argued that organizational efficiency will increase based on the two dimensions of human capital, value and uniqueness (Lepak & Snell, 1999); where value refers to the potential of talented individuals that supplement their organization's competitive advantage, and uniqueness refers to the difficulty of finding a substitute for the individual in relevance to the labor market (De Vos & Dries, 2013).

Second, the employee assessment framework is adopted as it is one of the research's objectives to study employees' reactions to the talent management practices implemented in their organizations. Employee assessment is typically applied as a secondary framework to the RBV and despite the developed association between talent management and workforce differentiation, empirical research on the effects of talent

management practices in workforce differentiation remains scarce (Sonnenberg et al., 2014).

Third, this study adopts the social exchange framework as it investigates the effects of the reciprocal relationships between the employers and employees. According to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), employees in which organizations have made higher investments are obligated to respond in favor, and thus, beneficial effects are expected from the group that benefits from workforce differentiation (i.e., employees who are included in their organization's talent pool). Mixed results have been observed in the literature on this field, and the ongoing debate on the desirability of talent management practices calls for further investigation of employee reactions to talent management practices (De Boeck et al., 2018).

2.6 Workforce Differentiation and Talent Management

Standardization has always been central to human resource policies, practices, and employee experience in organizations, based on the belief that standardization promotes trust and cooperation through the consistent treatment of employees (Lazear, 1981). It is an inclusive approach aiming to utilize the strength of all employees in unison under an organizational umbrella. The shift of focus from the inclusive to the exclusive approach to people management became noticeable in the 1990s along with the war for talent, as talent management grew to become a corporate buzzword (Michaels et al., 2001; Painter-Morland et al., 2018). At that point of time, everyone formed their own meaning of what talent or talent management referred to, giving rise to much confusion regarding the terms used (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Ulrich, 2011). Significant interest among both academics and practitioners has contributed positively to the growth of talent management as a field, leading to an evident relationship between talent management and workforce differentiation (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Huselid & Becker, 2011).

Workforce differentiation is based on the exclusive approach, considering some individuals as more valuable to an organization than another. It is defined as "formalized approaches to the segmentation of the workforce based on employees' competence or the nature of roles performed to reflect differential potential to create

value” (Collings, 2017, p. 300). The exclusive approach gained a greater degree of popularity after the economic stagnation in the 1970s, as the inclusive approach became more difficult to sustain due to the constricted amount of resources and a greater awareness that investing equally in all employees resulted in unnecessarily high costs for organizations (Becker et al., 2009; Cappelli & Keller, 2017).

Despite the developed relationship between talent management and workforce differentiation, empirical research in this area remains scarce (Sonnenberg et al., 2014). Empirical studies prevail even less so in talent management research that investigate two groups of employees (those who are included in and those who are excluded from the talent pool) simultaneously. It is important to study and compare the reactions of both groups in order to prevent and manage undesirable outcomes of workforce differentiation since one of the major assumptions in current talent management debates is that it leads to positive outcomes from talented employees, which might not in fact be true (De Boeck et al., 2018).

By differentiating the workforce, the employee experience becomes more diverse; for example, employees will receive different organizational investments in terms of development, rewards, and career progression opportunities (Collings, 2017). Marescaux et al. (2013) argue that rather than organizations benefiting from positive outcomes within the selected group of employees (positive attitudes, behaviors, and performance), the overall effect on the organization might actually be negative. The expected optimistic outcomes could be reduced, offset, or overturned by the reactions of the excluded group of employees, positioning workforce differentiation as a “double-edged sword” (p.330). Based on the equity theory (Adams, 1965), the authors believe that the differential treatment of employees would lead to a comparison between the employees and their colleague on the favorability of human resource practice outcomes. Their findings show that while the selected group that benefits from workforce differentiation perceived positive favorability, others (who are the majority) experience some degree of setbacks, validating their concern. Hence, with the increased relationship between workforce differentiation and talent management, talent management itself may not be beneficial to the organization as a whole. It is possible that there can be negative reactions to talent management not only from talented employees (e.g., job stress from fear of not meeting expectations), but also from

employees who are excluded from the talent pool (e.g., feelings of unfairness in organizational investments in employees). Thus, it is important for studies to investigate the reactions of both talented employees and employees who are excluded from their organizations' talent pool.

A limited number of empirical studies have investigated employee reactions to workforce differentiation according to the status of talent designation, which is the process whereby organizations identify which employees are included as members of the organization's talent program (which varies from organization to organization) and which employees are not (King, 2016). Presented in Table 2.3, these studies focus on comparing one or several groups of talented employees with a control group of average employees (those who are not included in the organization's talent pool). The classification can be made either through designated official talent status or employee perceived talent status.

Table 2.3 Empirical Studies Investigating Employee Reactions to Workforce Differentiation (Comparative Cases)

Author(s)	Research Context	Research Focus	Outcomes
Björkman et al. (2013)	Eleven Nordic MNEs (representing various industries)	Perceived talent status (talent/non-talent/do not know)	+ Acceptance of increasing performance demands + Commitment to building competencies + Support of strategic priorities + Identification with the unit ns Identification with the MNE (-) Turnover intentions (only when compared with non-talent)

Note. "+" = significant positive relationship; "-" = significant negative relationship; "ns" = not significant. Partially adopted from Meyers et al. (2017).

Table 2.3 Empirical Studies Investigating Employee Reactions to Workforce Differentiation (Comparative Cases) (cont.)

Author(s)	Research Context	Research Focus	Outcomes
Dries, Forrier, De Vos, and Pepermans (2014)	Five Belgian non-profit organizations (various industries)	Official talent status (talent/non-talent)	<p>ns Perceived employee psychological contract obligations (display high loyalty and performance)</p> <p>+ Perceived employer psychological contract obligations (offer long-term job security and opportunities for development)</p>
Dries and Pepermans (2007)	Three organizations (financial, insurance and telecom industry)	Official talent status (talent/non-talent)	ns Career commitment
Gelens et al. (2015)	Two Belgian organizations (finance sector)	Official talent status (talent/non-talent)	<p>+ Perceived organizational support</p> <p>(+) Affective organizational comment (only in Study 1, not in Study 2)</p>

Note. "+" = significant positive relationship; "-" = significant negative relationship; "ns" = not significant. Partially adopted from Meyers et al. (2017).

Table 2.3 Empirical Studies Investigating Employee Reactions to Workforce Differentiation (Comparative Cases) (cont.)

Author(s)	Research Context	Research Focus	Outcomes
Gelens et al. (2014)	Belgian organizations (finance sector)	Official talent status (junior high-potentials/senior high-potentials/non-talent)	+ Perceived distributive justice + Job satisfaction (+) Work effort (only for senior high potentials)
Sonnenberg et al. (2014)	21 European private- and public-sector organizations	Talent perception incongruence (talent/non-talent)	- Psychological contract fulfillment

Note. "+" = significant positive relationship; "-" = significant negative relationship; "ns" = not significant. Partially adopted from Meyers et al. (2017).

Table 2.3 Empirical Studies Investigating Employee Reactions to Workforce Differentiation (Comparative Cases) (cont.)

Author(s)	Research Context	Research Focus	Outcomes
Swales and Blackburn (2016)	A public European chemical organization	Official talent status (talent/non-talent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ns Support from the HR team ns Fair access to personal development support ns Ability to identify and pursue personal development needs ns Line manager's openness to their development + Quality of support from the line manager + Access to talent pools being well-balanced and free of bias + Happiness with overall access to development opportunities + Access to work-based opportunities to develop skills + Knowledge and skill development over the past year + Company's commitment to their future career progress + Motivated toward career development at the company

Note. "+" = significant positive relationship; "-" = significant negative relationship; "ns" = not significant. Partially adopted from Meyers et al. (2017).

Based on employees' perspectives of whether they perceive themselves as chosen or not, Björkman et al. (2013) separate employees into three main groups: (1) those who perceive that they have been identified as talent, (2) those who perceive that they were not included in the talent pool, and (3) those who do not know. Their study investigates the perception of employees' formal inclusion in their organization's talent pool in association with a number of attitudinal outcomes (i.e., acceptance of increasing performance demands, commitment to building competencies, support of strategic priorities, identification with the unit, identification with the enterprise, and turnover intentions). Based on theoretical assumptions, their study expected that employees in group 1 would be more committed on issues that are important for their organization than employees in groups 2 and 3. It also expected that the attitudes of the employees in group 2 would be different from those of the employees in group 3 due to psychological contract breach (expecting employees in group 3 to have a more positive attitude toward the organization than employees in group 2, because they do not know). The results support their first expectation, with significant differences observed between the employees in group 1 and those in groups 2 and 3. This suggests that informing talented employees of their *talent status* has a motivational effect in line with the predictions of the social exchange theory. Unexpectedly, however, there are no significant differences between the employees in groups 2 and 3, indicating that informing employees that they are not considered as talented employees has little or no negative effects. This unforeseen result is interesting because it controverts the social exchange theory and the general logic of talent management. Speculation can only be made as to why these results have been achieved and more research is encouraged.

Unlike Björkman et al. (2013), Gelens et al. (2014) separated employees who were identified as high potential and non-high potential by giving participants in separate groups different links to the study's questionnaire, even though the questionnaire was the same for all participants. The separate groups were identified by the organization using archival data. By doing so, the researchers were able to lower the risks of common method bias, as compared to the study conducted by Björkman et al. (2013), where employees self-reported the perception of their status (i.e., those who perceived that they had been identified as talent, those who perceived that they had not been identified as talent, and those who did not know).

Gelens et al. (2014) investigated the effects of perceived distributive and procedural justice on the relationship between an employee's identification as a high potential and job satisfaction and work effort at a large financial organization in Brussels, Belgium. Based on the social exchange theory, the authors expected that high potentials would report higher job satisfaction and work effort compared to the non-high potentials. In line with their expectations, it was found that high potentials and non-high potentials reacted differently to workforce differentiation. The perception of distributive justice was significantly higher for those who were identified as high potentials, while the perceptions of procedural justice moderated the relationship between perceived distributive justice and work effort. Therefore, the outcomes of workforce differentiation are favorable toward the organization's interests.

In a similar method, Gelens et al. (2015) compared high potentials and management trainees against control groups of employees (those who were not included in the organization's talent pool), exploring the psychological mechanisms behind the differences in affective commitment based on talent designation. In support of the signaling theory (Spence, 1973), their study found that being designated as a talented employee was perceived as a signal of organizational support leading to a higher level of affective commitment, showing that perceived organizational support was a key mediator in this relationship. When employees are differentiated they are more likely to identify with the organization, be more emotionally attached, and be involved in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

According to the employees' own beliefs, Sonnenberg et al. (2014) investigated the incongruence in the talent perception of two groups of employees: those who were officially designated as talented employees and those who were not designated. The study found that most employees considered themselves as talented employees within their organization (94% of the designated talented group and 84% of the non-designated group). For the latter group, incongruence exists (the situation where the organization does not consider an individual as talented while the individual believes that he/she is) because the perceptions of the employees do not match those of their organization regarding their talent status. These results show a clear effect that the greater use of talent management practices generates a more positive psychological-contract fulfillment, indicating a signaling value in talent management practices.

However, this relationship is negatively affected by incongruent talent perceptions. Therefore, this study emphasizes caution due to the potential for misinterpretation as many organizations tend to communicate an inclusive talent strategy, conveying that some form of talent exists in everyone in the organizational view. The issue of misunderstanding one's talent status is especially delicate when the organization, in truth, views its talent strategy as being exclusive.

While some research has found that talented employees score more highly on desirable outcomes in line with the social exchange theory, such as commitment to building competencies, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and psychological-contract fulfillment (Björkman et al., 2013; Gelens et al., 2015, 2014; Sonnenberg et al., 2014), these positive reactions are not always assured. Dries and Pepermans (2007) compared a group of employees who were identified as high potentials by their organizations with a group of regular managers. The study found that the employees who had been identified as high potentials in their organization scored more highly in the subscales of the Emotional Quotient Inventory (i.e., assertiveness, independence, optimism, flexibility and social responsibility) and displayed higher levels of self-reported job performance, although not career commitment, as compared to the control group of regular managers. In contributing to the literature, these results identify the subsets of emotional intelligence that are related to talent identification and, more importantly, indicate that there is no guarantee of the expected positive reactions to talent management programs.

Dries et al. (2014) followed the case-control design, comparing a group of respondents that had been identified as high potential employees against another matched sample group of employees who had not been included in the talent pool. The signaling impact of the organizational ratings of potential (talent designation) was examined as a buffer between self-perceived employability resources and perceived psychological contract obligations. Employees who perceive higher levels of self-employability resources – the skills, abilities, attitudes, and behaviors that may help them find new employment or remain in their current employment – are less inclined to be loyal towards a single employer. This is because they are likely to see themselves as the main actor in exploring their career opportunities rather than leaving the management responsibility of their career to the organization, while also believing that

employees become less marketable in the job market if they remain with the same employer for a long period of time (Baruch, 2001; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Rousseau, 2011). Therefore, they become less loyal and less obliged to stay with their current employer. This is an undesirable outcome from an employer's point of view, especially regarding the high potentials in which organizations have made (or will make) higher levels of investment compared to the employees in the control group. Instead of becoming more loyal to the organization in the long-term, it is feared that talented employees (those receiving the majority of the organization's investment of resources) would not be psychologically obliged to remain with the organization, but would only have the physiological obligations toward better performance.

However, results indicate otherwise and being identified as a high potential is neither related to a person's obligation to remain with the company nor is related to their obligation to perform. As no significant relationship has been found, the fear is not warranted by the results of this study. The results, nevertheless, remain interesting because the main purpose of most high potential (or talent) programs is often aimed at talent retention (Dries & Pepermans, 2008), but the relationship between talent identification and talent retention and higher performance is shown to be insignificant here. On the one hand, it is a relief that no significant relationships have been found in support of the fearful assumptions made by organizations, yet on the other hand, no relationship has been found for the expected purpose of talent programs either. More studies are needed to make stronger claims about the causality of the research model.

A similar degree of caution is raised by Swailes and Blackburn (2016), whose study compared a list of talented employees provided by an organization against a matched sample of a control group in terms of their reactions to talent programs. Along with the equity and social exchange theories, their research argued with two other theoretical perspectives. The Pygmalion effect, which reflects a person acting on the expectations of another (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1965), suggests that higher expectations in a leader-follower relationship would bring about more effective performance, and similarly, lower expectations would bring about less effective performance (Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009). Thus, when employees are identified as talents, it can be predicted that they would feel better and perform better. However, the Golem effect (the opposite of the Pygmalion effect) may occur where employees perceive low

expectations from their leaders, resulting in their feelings and performance deteriorating. Therefore, it is believed that employees who are excluded from the talent programs are inequitable, and are expected to react unfavorably towards the organization.

Some differences in attitudinal effects have been found between the two groups. Employees in the talent pool recognize that they are in a better position than others in the organization and are optimistic about the support that they have received from the organization, while those who are not in the talent pool (control group) doubt their ability to influence their future, have stronger feelings of unfairness, believe that they have less access to development opportunities, and expect that their organizations are less committed to their future. The outcome poses a pressing danger to talent management programs as it risks upsetting those who makes up the majority of employees in the organization. If general job attitudes are positively stimulated through talent management programs in the group of talented employees, and less so in the matched sample of employees, an additional issue in the desirability of talent management programs is presented. Where Dries et al. (2014) feared that talented employees would not be obliged to remain with the organization (undesirable in an organization's talent program investment point of view), the findings by Swailes and Blackburn (2016) raised concerns that the talent programs may be unsettling for the majority of employees who are excluded from the talent programs.

2.7 Critiques of the Literature

The review of relevant literature revealed that a lack of empirical research has always been associated with talent management (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; De Vos & Dries, 2013; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Observing that it is a growing field, Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2015) argue otherwise and note that much of the research on talent management occurs after 2008, which is consistent with the increase in the special issues on talent management (two special issues in 2008, one in 2010, three in 2013, and one in 2014). Contradicting the views of many scholars who believe that talent management lacks empirical research, while theoretical studies accounted for 38.8% of the talent management literature

analyzed between 2006 and 2014, empirical studies contributed 61.2%, with the qualitative method being most popularly used (33.1%). Aside from the lack or otherwise of empirical research, the talent management literature still contains some significant gaps. This section discusses the current study's criticism of the literature and is divided into substantive criticisms and methodological criticisms.

2.7.1 Substantive Criticisms

Through the expansion of academic interest since 2008, Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2015) have demonstrated that more and more empirical, rather than conceptual articles, are being published yearly. Nevertheless, it is argued that the increase in quantity is not an indication of higher quality, and many empirical papers face the issue of rigor and relevance (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Rigor refers to the validity, trustworthiness, and soundness of theoretical and conceptual development; the design and execution of research methods; the interpretation of findings; and the use of these findings to extend existing or develop new theories (Zmud, 1996). Relevance refers to the use of knowledge obtained through the research for use in practice (Boxall, Purcell, & Wright, 2007). As the topic of talent management has emerged as a hot topic and there is an increase in the number of empirical articles, the number of new authors who attempt to benefit from the academic and practitioner interests also increases. There are various instances whereby the terminology of talent and/or talent management is used to catch readers' attention in key sections (such as the title, abstract, or key words), but there is no focus on or any relation to talent management in the article. According to research by Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo (2019), half of the empirical articles (49.4%) mention no theoretical framework; do not use, adapt, modify, or develop any existing theory to justify their study; and only present a vague description of the core concepts of talent and talent management (e.g., referring to talented employees as the brightest, best, or most fitting).

Geographically, the national representation of articles in the talent management field has been criticized as being US-centric (Collings, Scullion, & Vaiman, 2011). However, this is no longer true. Following the bibliometric and content analysis by Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2015) research in talent management has been conducted in more than 35 countries. While there is also an increasing research interest

in Asian regions such as India, China, and Malaysia, each country appears to have different research needs or problems to solve, implying a context-dependability nature of talent management (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Thailand is one of the countries that have adopted talent management as a new challenge among its Human Resources (HR) practitioners with talent management being closely related to succession planning in both the private and public sector (Piansoongnern & Anurit, 2010; Poocharoen & Lee, 2013). The focal point of talent management in Thailand has been regarding the link between HR practices, organizational performance, and the factors that affect talent management, while conversely, issues such as the meaning of talent and talent management and what practices are used in managing talent are left without much consideration (Piansoongnern, 2014). As such, a decade later, leading organizations in Thailand are still wondering about what talent truly means (e.g., Boonbumroongsuk & Panvisavas, 2019), instead of measuring its implications and advancing the field. Perhaps, talent management adoption in the country might be the result of talent management as a HRM fashion (Iles, Preece, & Chuai, 2010). Nonetheless, talent management is still a growing field worldwide and increasing prospects for quality empirical evidence are expected (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Thunnissen, 2016).

Along with the broad scope of research areas and geographical representation in talent management, the issues that are addressed are particularly relevant for large or global organizations, whereas small/medium organizations and single country organizations receive less academic attention. The literature is dominated by an organizational perspective that follows a unitarist managerial orientation, with most of the respondents being human resource managers, line managers, and top management (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; McDonnell et al., 2017). Employee level data collection is scarce and the limited number of studies that have discussed the impact of talent management usually explore the macro-level outcome, such as strategy formation (i.e., Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011), and place more focus upon the conceptualization of best practices in the talent management literature (e.g., Groves, 2011). Instead, the effects of talent management should be investigated at the employee level to observe whether talent management programs are achieving their goals and objectives. The latest trend observes that academic research interests have

shifted from the identification and attraction to the development and retention of talented employees, with the outcomes or effects of talent management becoming a dominant research topic (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). In other words, while individual-level research is becoming increasingly critical in the field of talent management, it is hardly found in the literature on this topic.

Talent management practices are viewed as the communication mechanisms that signal the expected behaviors of employees by the organization, as well as the organization's corresponding promises to their employees (Sonnenberg, 2006). However, the communication mechanisms are not as simple as they may seem, and often, not all intents are conveyed across. Thus, it is the individual's perception of talent management practices that is argued as being the basis of the reactions to talent management implementation. Thunnissen (2016) draws upon the HRM-process models of Paauwe (2004) and Wright and Nishii (2013) in elaborating talent management practices into three phases: intended, actual, and perceived. Determined by the overall organization strategy, intended practices are often made by dominant decision makers in the organizations, for example, top management, supervisory board, and HR management (Paauwe, 2004). This then initiates the actual implemented practices, which are the correspondence between thinking and doing, whereby opinions are put into action (Van Dijk, 2014). Due to the fact that actual implemented practices are often executed by actors other than the decision makers, Wright and Nishii (2013) argue that actual implemented practices consequently differ in their representation of their initial intentions. Since the implementation process is faced with intervening obstacles at both the organizational (e.g., lack of internal consistency) and individual levels (e.g., line managers' poor implementation), the impact of actual practices does not exist in the practices themselves, but rather in the perceived talent management practices of individual employees, which then form the basis of each individual's subsequent reactions (Wright & Nishii, 2013).

The scarceness of empirical studies that has always been leveled against talent management research (Lewis & Heckman, 2006) is still a valid limitation today, especially in studies investigating talent management practices and employee reactions to workforce differentiation. Within the handful of studies available, there is a scattered

list of employee reactions without any meaningful categorization or direction toward a unified orientation. In addition, recent studies are increasingly posing critical and challenging arguments against the assumption that talent management leads to positive outcomes from talented employees, with concerns having been raised over the question of whether talent management is in fact, a double-edged sword (Dries et al., 2014; Marescaux et al., 2013; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016).

The restrictions in both quantity and quality in this regard make the current study's research objectives even more crucial. More empirical studies are required in the area in tandem with better research quality in order to clarify and enhance understanding of the relationship between workforce differentiation and talent management. With the literature remaining unfocused on the issue of employee reactions to talent management, this study thus selectively focuses on the relationship between five constructs of perceived talent management practices (i.e., employee brand identification, turnover intention, satisfaction with work-life balance, overall justice perception, and job stress).

2.7.2 Methodological Criticisms

Apart from the aforementioned substantive criticisms, the talent management literature is subject to two major methodological criticisms. First, contrary to the growing interest in labeling respondents as *talent* or *non-talent* in order to measure their perceptions of and reactions to talent management, more than half of the articles in the talent management field do not provide any information about the type of respondents (59.2%) in their research papers (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Moreover, the minority of articles that do provide details about the respondents often include senior and/or middle managers and human resource representatives as respondents in the studies, thereby conflicting the objectives of extending the knowledge of employees' perceptions and reactions to talent management initiatives. There is a lack of transparency in the research methodology and confusing research designs, with relatively small data sets of less than 50 respondents (37.4%) or between 50 to 150 respondents (14.9%) in the increasing body of research (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). In academia, small data sets such as these are usually frowned

upon and questions are raised as to whether these inadequate sample sizes are “big enough” to be statistically significant (Lenth, 2001).

Secondly, SEM has been argued to be more effective than multiple regression as it takes into account the interaction effect among both the dependent and the independent variables, thereby enabling the examination of a series of dependent relationships simultaneously (Cheng, 2001). SEM is a single comprehensive method that has the explanatory ability and statistical efficiency needed in multilevel research (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). Multilevel research is usually employed in social and organizational research as these studies generally investigate the interaction, influence, and/or relationship between individuals and the group and/or the organization to which they belong (Maas & Hox, 2005). Although the adoption of SEM has been increasing in recent talent management studies (e.g., Glaister, Karacay, Demirbag, & Tatoglu, 2018; Mensah & Bawole, 2017), among the dearth of literature that focuses on comparative cases for investigating employee reaction to workforce differentiation, regression is a common method that is used (e.g., Dries et al., 2014; Gelens et al., 2015, 2014) with exceptions to MANCOVA (i.e., Björkman et al., 2013), while none of these studies have employed the use of SEM. Therefore, it is imperative that a study employing the use of SEM, such as the current study, be conducted to fill this methodological gap in the literature.

In light of all the criticisms, talent management continues to be a growing field that is transitioning into a mature field (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Dries, 2013a; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015), while becoming one of the fastest growing areas in management studies (Collings, Scullion, & Vaiman, 2015). The aim of raising the criticisms that have been discussed here is to encourage academics who are interested in the area of talent management to follow a more focused and consistent line of research agenda in response to contemporary business concerns and debates with rigor in substance and methodology.

2.8 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Currently, research does not allow for a definite conclusion to be drawn about employee reactions to either inclusive or exclusive forms of talent management

(De Boeck et al., 2018). However, this research aims to contribute by extending the knowledge in the exclusive perspective with a selective focus on the relation between perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification, turnover intention, and satisfaction with work-life balance through two mediators (i.e., perceived overall justice and job stress). Based on the foundations of past literature and the call for research in this area, a conceptual framework has been developed as shown in Figure 2.1.

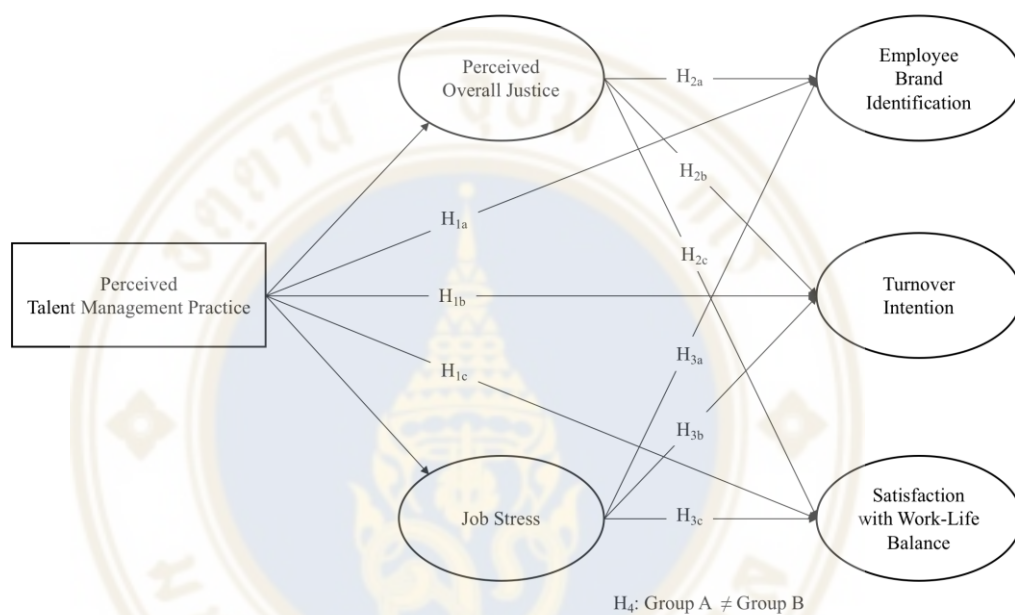


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework

2.8.1 Perceived Talent Management Practices

A handful of empirical studies have been conducted on the perception of talent management practices, but within the few studies, perceived talent management practices have been viewed only at two levels. At the organizational level, Chadee and Raman (2012) explored perceived talent management practices by asking senior executives of offshore IT service providers (OSPs) to rate a set of talent management practices relative to the industry standards. The results suggest that the perception of talent management practices of OSPs mediates the relationship between external knowledge and firm performance; therefore, talent management should be used as a means of using knowledge to enhance organizational performance.

At the individual level, Sonnenberg et al. (2014) examined the incongruence between the perceptions of employees and those of their employer regarding the talent status of the employees. Results show that incongruence in talent perceptions negatively mediates the relationship between perceived talent management practices and psychological contract fulfillment. Sonnenberg et al.'s study emphasizes the delicacy of individual perception of talent management practices as the talent strategies of organizations can be easily misinterpreted by employees, eventually bringing about the failure of talent management programs in achieving their initial objectives. Following the individual level of employee perception, Mensah and Bawole (2017) suggest that perceived talent management practices have both direct and indirect effects on outcomes (affective commitment and quit intention) within the talented group of employees.

As the literature suggests, the individual perception of talent management practices should be the basis of reactions to talent management implementation (Thunnissen, 2016). The individual level of perception is, therefore, used as the input variable in the current study in order to investigate employee reactions to talent management practices. The following subsection continues the discussion of the selected variables for the current study and their relationships with individuals' perceptions of talent management practices.

Employer Branding

Since the earliest works in this area, employer branding's key aim has been to help attract and employ the best people (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). From the talent management perspective, an organization must have a strong and positive employer brand in order to attract and retain talented employees anywhere in the world (Brewster, Sparrow, & Harris, 2005) and an effective employer brand will be advantageous for organizations in the war for talent (Edwards, 2017). While early branding concepts were related only to products and services, interdisciplinary studies in marketing and human resource management during the 1990s resulted in the emerging application of branding principles to human resource management. The term *employer branding* refers to "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p. 187). Employer branding has been undeniably related to internal marketing, where the workforce is considered the first market of an organization (Caruana & Calleya, 1998).

Internal marketing is defined as “viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products, and then endeavoring to offer internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization” (Berry, 1981, p. 34). Through the practice of internal marketing, the internal brand is created, enabling the organization to be successful in delivering its brand promises to meet its customers’ brand expectations through its employees (Drake, Gulman, & Roberts, 2005). Internal branding is about delivering the brand promise, promoting the brand inside the organization, mainly focusing on its employees, with the aim of ensuring the congruence between internal and external brand messages and that brand messages are conveyed by employees into a reality that reflects the brand experiences that are expected by customers (Ahmed, Rafiq, & Saad, 2003; Boone, 2000; Mitchell, 2002).

From investigating the influence of internal branding on employee brand attitudes (i.e., brand identification, brand commitment, and brand loyalty), Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009) found that internal branding affects employee brand identification the most, while employee brand identification positively influences employee brand commitment, which is a precursor of employee brand loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Reichers, 1985). Due to the fact that identification reflects the individual’s perception of belonging to an organization which is influenced by organization-given signals (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), this study have chosen employee brand identification as the first important employee reaction to talent management practices.

In terms of the signaling theory (Spence, 1973), talent management practices are signals that represent the choices made by the organization which clarify what the organization believes to be important, what it expects from its employees, and what the employees can expect in return (Sonnenberg, 2006; Sonnenberg et al., 2014). According to these signals, employees make sense of their employment relationship and are expected to alter their behavior based on their perception of the organizational investments they have received in line with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). No organization has one experience that is shared by all in reality (Edwards, 2017), and those who perceive higher levels of talent management practices are expected to demonstrate higher levels of favorable outcomes to the employee-employer relationship

in the form of higher employee brand identification. Therefore, the first hypothesis in relation to employees' perceptions of talent management practice is:

H1a: The more talent management practices perceived by the employee, the higher the level of employee brand identification

Turnover Intentions

Retaining employees who are valued by the organization has always been a crucial component in talent management ever since the term came into existence (Björkman et al., 2013). Managing employee turnover is also the most crucial managerial challenge today (Reina, Rogers, Peterson, Byron, & Hom, 2018). Within the exclusive perspective, the study of turnover intent is particularly important in relation to talented individuals because these people are rare and hard to replace. Turnover intention is the "conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization" (Tett & Meyer, 1993, p. 262). The construct is considered a useful variable in anticipating and preventing actual employee turnover as it is often reported as the final step in the sequence of withdrawal (Tutuncu & Kozak, 2007).

Posing a constant challenge to human resource management, turnover problems are costly. Apart from the costs that arise from hiring new employees to fill the vacated positions, additional costs are incurred from training, the loss of knowledge, disrupted workflows, and the possibility of harm to existing client-organization relationships. Quickly adding up to unexpected amounts, it is estimated that these economic and psychological costs can range from 90% to 200% of an employee's annual salary (Boroş & Curşeu, 2013; Cascio, 2016). Search and recruitment is challenging in the war for talent, especially in the digital environment, where abundant and almost immediate access to candidate information is readily available online with the development of HR technologies and the aid of artificial intelligence for instant job matching and head hunting. Interviews and the selection process require a lengthy amount of time with an increasing number of jobs demanding multiple rounds of panel interviews in an attempt to determine the best person-job fit, particularly for key positions. Development and growth opportunities have to be continually present in order to keep talented individuals interested in developing their career within the organization, while the appropriate mixture of benefits and rewards that attracted talented candidates

in the first place must remain sufficient or be updated to retain talented employees over time.

Within the limited number of studies on employee reactions to talent management practices, researchers have drawn attention to the importance of turnover intention (e.g., Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Deery, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015). However, in terms of comparing employee reactions to talent management practice between groups, only one study has been empirically conducted. With limited research available, this present study argues for further empirical investigation with the aim of extending the empirical evidence on turnover intentions as an employee reaction to talent management initiatives. The findings of Björkman et al. (2013) suggest that employees who perceive that they are identified as talent are less likely to have turnover intentions when compared to those who perceive that they are not identified as talent, in line with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Along the same line of reasoning, the second hypothesis in relation to employees' perceptions of talent management practice is:

H1b: The more talent management practices perceived by the employee, the lower their turnover intention

Work-life Balance

Following the association between talent management and retention, work-life balance has also been highlighted as an important component of talent management studies within the literature in this field (Deery, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015). The concept of the work-life balance stems from the work-life or work-family literature, wherein work-family conflict has been defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77), reflecting the spillover from work-to-family and from family-to-work (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). Generally, work-life balance is “an overall appraisal of the extent to which an individual’s effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles is consistent with their life values at a given point in time” (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011, p. 174). Not only has work-life balance been linked to employee retention (Shockley, Smith, & Knudsen, 2017) and employee development (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016), but recent literature also suggests that the concept of work-life balance also appeals to the younger work generation as well (Carless & Wintle,

2007; Ehrhart, Mayer, & Ziegert, 2012). To date, no empirical research has been conducted on the construct of work-life balance as an employee reaction to talent management practices. This study responds to the call for investigation of work-life balance and intends to broaden the scope of reactions to talent management practices that have been empirically studied.

There are many proposed positive advantages associated with talent management (De Boeck et al., 2018). However, from the little empirical evidence that exists, it seems the optimistic outcomes of talent management may actually be a double-edged sword (Marescaux et al., 2013). Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) suggest that individuals manage the boundaries of work and private life on a continuum of integration versus segmentation, whereby integration promotes work and private life interaction and segmentation separates the domains; as employees are exposed to higher levels of talent management practices, more time and energy is expected to be involved at work, intruding across the boundary between work and private life. Drawing upon the boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), Deery and Jago (2015) suggest that additional role overload leads to emotional drains and the lack of work-life balance. In line with this viewpoint, the third hypothesis in relation to employees' perceptions of talent management practice is:

H1c: The more talent management practices perceived by the employee, the lower the satisfaction with work-life balance

2.8.2 Mediating Effects

The mechanism of the relationship between perceived talent management practices and employee reactions is deemed to be complex, and this research is developed on the belief that there are underlying mediators between the constructs. Through the fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001) and role theory (Bolino & Turnley, 2005), this research argues that justice perceptions and job stress mediate the relationship between perceived talent management practices and employee reactions.

Justice Perceptions

Workforce differentiation results in a diverse employment experience (e.g., different levels of investment in career development opportunities and performance-related compensation) creating significant potential for motivation, but also increasing

the risk of perceptions of inequality or injustice (Collings, 2017). One construct that is of high significance but also highly understudied in the area of employee reactions to talent management is justice perceptions. In contrast to the views of philosophers and attorneys, for whom justice is deemed as what truly is just, managerial scientists are more interested in what people believe to be just by studying organizational justice (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). Perceived organizational justice refers to one's subjective perception of the fairness of allocations (Gelens, Dries, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2013). There are three sub-dimensions of justice that most justice researchers accept, but more recent research proposes that there may be four distinct types of justice: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001).

The first type of justice is distributive, which concerns the fairness of decision outcomes (Cropanzano et al., 2007). It is about how individuals react to the allocation of outcomes by comparing their portion of outcome to input with that of an appropriate colleague (Colquitt, 2012). Next, procedural justice concerns the fairness of the decision-making process and not particularly with the outcomes themselves (Adams, 1965). When the process is perceived as just, employees would show more promising levels of loyalty, higher willingness towards organizational interests, and less likelihood to betray the organization (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Colquitt (2012) argues that there are three dimensions to the decision-making process – a decision, a procedure, and an interpersonal reaction – in the course of which the procedure is carried out. This leads to the third type of justice, interactional justice, which represents the importance of the quality of the interpersonal treatment people receive when procedures are implemented, or how one treats another (Bies & Moag, 1986). According to Cropanzano et al. (2007), two aspects exist within the concept of interactional justice: informational justice (being truthful and providing acceptable justifications in unfavorable conditions) and interpersonal justice (treating one another with respect and integrity). Introduced at a later stage in the justice literature, informational justice concerns the explanations provided as to why certain procedures are used and why outcomes are distributed in a certain fashion (Colquitt et al., 2001).

The ethical implications around talent management are very much needed (Painter-Morland et al., 2018), but there is a surprising lack of empirical research on

justice perceptions of talent management practices. As a single exception, Gelens et al. (2014) investigated the effects of perceived distributive and procedural justice on the relationship between an employee's identification as a high potential, job satisfaction, and work effort. There should perhaps have been more empirical studies in this area but the attempt to signal the importance of ethical behaviors and equity in talent management mechanisms has been a recent development (Swales, 2013). Differentiating the justice perception into its sub-dimensions has its benefits. Not only has it brought about a more detailed analysis for the examination of justice effects, but it has also allowed scholars to analyze the separate effects of the decision-making process and the outcomes, exploring the interaction between the constructs at the same time (Greenberg, 1993). However, recent researchers believe that there are weaknesses in the specific focus on sub-dimensions of justice and suggest a shift towards examining overall justice judgments (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Lind, 2001), whereby individuals make a holistic judgment when they form their impression of justice (Greenberg, 2001). In a similar manner, Hauenstein, McGonigle and Flinder (2001) suggest that greater consideration should be given to a general fairness perception as a central causal mechanism, instead on focusing on the sub-dimensions of justice. In the statistical sense, distinguishing the constructs also brings about issues such as multicollinearity (as strong relations are expected among the types of justice) and decreased parsimony (Colquitt & Rodell, 2015).

It is possible to consider justice as an individual construct to provide a more complete understanding of justice in organizational settings (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt, 2012). One approach to this is to include an actual scale that is committed to measuring the overall sense of fairness, where distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice are considered to be the antecedents of the overall fairness that leads to behavioral and attitudinal outcomes (Lind, 2001). From a construct that receives nothing more than a passing mention in commentaries regarding organizational fairness, overall justice has become fully embedded in the justice field over recent years (Ambrose, Wo, & Griffith, 2015). Overall justice is “a global perception of the fairness of an entity stemming from one’s experiences as well as those of others” (Aryee, Walumbwa, Mondejar, & Chu, 2015, p. 232). Ambrose and Schminke (2009) advise that researchers use overall justice instead of the sub-

dimensions of justice, as it is a better indicator and a more parsimonious approach, unless a clear theoretical basis for making a distinction across the sub-dimensions exists. Similarly, Barclay and Kiefer (2014) agree that researchers have recommended the use of overall justice for three reasons: overall justice is a “more parsimonious, robust and phenomenologically accurate depiction of people’s justice” (p. 1860); variance may be unaccounted for when individual dimensions are used; and overall justice drives the reactions to other outcomes such as attitudes and behaviors (Greenberg, 2001; Kim & Leung, 2007; Lind, 2001).

This research seeks to investigate the relationship between talent management practices and employee reactions through the lens of overall justice and the fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001). The fairness heuristic theory suggests that overall justice is a global assessment of a social entity (e.g., an organization) and that it “plays an important role in how individuals judge and react to events pertaining to organizational justice” (Jones & Martens, 2009, p. 1025). It is a fact that people use fairness to guide their behavior in that “just as people who are treated fairly tend without much calculation to comply with requests from fair authorities, so too can authorities, without a great deal of calculation, count on fair treatment to produce favorable organizationally oriented response” (Lind, 2001, p. 83). The fairness heuristic theory differs from the equity theory (Adams, 1965) in that the scope of the fairness heuristic theory expands to include more than two sub-dimensions of justice. The equity theory is usually referred to when distributive and procedural justice are discussed as the theory argues that people compare their input/output ratio with the ratios of referent others (e.g., colleagues) to assess fairness. Therefore, in this research, the equity theory cannot be applied when a holistic view of justice is considered as it disregards other dimensions of the justice perception.

With only one empirical research available, Gelens et al. (2014) employed the equity theory and investigated the effects of perceived distributive and procedural justice on the relationship between an employee’s identification as a high potential and job satisfaction and work effort in the talent management context. The results show that distributive justice mediated the relationship between talent status and work effort and that procedural justice moderated the relationship between perceived distributive justice and work effort. On a comparative note, the results also indicate that the perception of

distributive justice was significantly higher for those who were identified as high potentials. The relationship between talent management practices and justice perceptions is an underexplored area given its importance and the calls for further research (De Boeck et al., 2018; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Painter-Morland et al., 2018; Swailes, 2013). Within the talent management literature, no research has been conducted that employs the fairness heuristic theory and thus this present research is a critical attempt to gain an understanding of employees' perceptions of overall justice.

The relationships between perceived talent management practices and employee reactions are seemingly not so simple. First, it is argued that an overall perception of justice mediates this relationships through the fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001). With the importance of the ethical implications around talent management warranted (Painter-Morland et al., 2018), but the evidence limited to the study conducted by Gelens et al. (2014), this research proposes that the perception of justice play an important role between the relationships of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification, turnover intentions, and work-life balance.

The members of an elite group of people who are considered more talented are treated with a different (more favorable) set of terms and conditions based on the exclusive view of talent management. This leads to a larger wage disparity in favor of talented employees (Collings, 2014), a negative perception of favorability among the non-talented employees (Marescaux et al., 2013), a comparative atmosphere, and possible damage to employee relations (Meyers et al., 2017). It is presumed that employees are conscious of these differences in employee experiences and question their fairness (Edwards, 2017). To the employees who enjoy more favorable terms and conditions (employees who are in the talent pool), it is likely that they perceive these experiences as being fair according to their contributions at work. However, to the employees who are in receipt of less favorable signals (the majority of employees who are in the talent pool), the question of justice can become an aggravated issue.

The reflection of how these organization-given signals affect the perception of belonging that an individual has to an organization is observed through an employee's brand identification (Punjaisri et al., 2009). The effects of these signals can also be observed in an individual's turnover intention as numerous studies have shown that justice perception is an antecedent of turnover intention (e.g., Chin et al., 2019; Kim,

Tam, Kim, & Rhee, 2017), and that it acts as a mediator for employee turnover intention (e.g., Lee, Murrmann, Murrmann, & Kim, 2010; Suurd Ralph & Holmvall, 2016). This research also suggests that the unequal access to benefits within the organization (monetary or non-monetary) that occurs through workforce differentiation, is reflected as perceived overall justice, which interrupts one's satisfaction with the work-life balance, as the benefits of the work-life balance can only be realized if employees are aware of these initiatives and feel that they are able to use them (Beauregard, 2014; Eaton, 2003; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Employees' overall justice perceptions are therefore hypothesized to mediate the relationships between selected employee reactions to the individual perception of talent management practices as follows:

H2a: The relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification are mediated by an individual's overall justice perception

H2b: The relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intention are mediated by an individual's overall justice perception

H2c: The relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance are mediated by an individual's overall justice perception

Job Stress

One of the contributions of this research is to include new, understudied but important concepts based on the empirical evidence of past talent management literature. In contemporary organizations, stress plays a crucial role (Grawitch, Barber, & Justice, 2010). Despite its influence in the workplace, however, it has received little attention in the talent management literature (Deery, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015). There are numerous studies that prove job stress is a major concern in both developing and industrialized countries and for employees and organizations alike (De Jonge & Dormann, 2017). For example, hundreds of billions of dollar are spent in the United States every year addressing issues of burnout, turnover, higher absenteeism, and lower productivity, all caused by job-related stress (Hassard et al., 2014). At the individual level, job stress can be a threat to both one's psychological (e.g., Melchior et al., 2007)

and physical health (e.g., Kivimäki & Kawachi, 2015). Still, the investigation of the effects of job stress in the talent management context has fallen short.

Receiving additional benefits or investments from the organization in the form of talent management practices, such as overseas assignments or special training and development opportunities, may appear as rewards that should stimulate positivity. However, these rewards often come at a certain price (Meyers et al., 2017). The fear of failing to meet the expectations of the organization has been reported as a major source of stress for talented employees (Dries & Pepermans, 2008). Apart from the stress of meeting the organization's expectations, employees are expected to have the *right* personality. Conforming to this expected norm can cause an individual to lose sight of their own values and uniqueness through the desire to please others, resulting in the development of a *false* self (Dubouloy, 2004). This alteration of behavior is in line with role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964), which suggests that people typically behave according to how their roles are defined and that tensions in inter-role conflict often arise as individuals try to carry out their role successfully with constrained resources, such as time and energy, or when there is incompatibility among the roles that individuals play. In short, the problem with this situation is "the idea that fulfilling multiple roles is likely to be associated with higher levels of stress and strain" (Bolino & Turnley, 2005, p. 741). The need to display the *appropriate identity* to grow and advance in one's career often exposes the tension between the work role of embracing the organization's culture and the life role of standing out as a unique individual, with this issue especially affecting the talented employees and further raising their stress levels (Tansley & Tietze, 2013).

With empirical evidence lacking and stress having a more crucial role in contemporary organizations, there is clearly a need to investigate job stress in the talent management context (Deery, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015). On the basis of role theory (Kahn et al., 1964), this study proposes an investigation into the function of job stress as a mediator between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee reactions. The reasoning behind this proposal is a belief that there is a price to be paid for the additional benefits, investments, or rewards given by the organization with reference to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) through workforce differentiation. Of the limited studies available in this area, Mak, Sockel, Bucholz, and

Webb (2010) found that job stress indirectly lowered employee brand loyalty. As a precursor to employee brand loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Reichers, 1985), it is believed that employee brand identification will be affected by the stress associated with the price of the rewards of talent management practices and the fear of failing to meet expectations. Studies have shown that employees with higher levels of job stress are more likely to have turnover intentions (Chen & Lien, 2008) and that job stress as a key mediator in predicting turnover intention (Chen, Lin, & Lien, 2011). There is also evidence that implies a correlation between work stress and work-life balance (Aziz & Cunningham, 2008) and a causal relationship between job stress and poorer work-life balance (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012). This places job stress in the position of being an important intermediary in the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification, turnover intentions, and work-life balance. For these reasons, job stress is therefore hypothesized to mediate the relationships between employee reactions to employees' perceptions of talent management practices as follows:

H3a: The relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification are mediated by an individual's level of job stress

H3b: The relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intention are mediated by an individual's level of job stress

H3c: The relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance are mediated by an individual's level of job stress

2.8.3 Comparing Two Groups of Employees

Apart from investigating the relationships between employee reactions (i.e., employee brand identification, turnover intention, and satisfaction with work-life balance) to their perceptions of talent management practices and the roles that two mediators (i.e., perceived overall justice and job stress) play in these relationships, this research examines the differences between two groups of employees based on the assumption of the RBV framework that the workforce is segmented. It is evident that

through the talent management process, employees are segmented into two groups, one of which belongs in the organization's talent pool (Group A) and one that does not (Group B). A distinguished group emerges, consisting of the minority that are deemed to be the talented employees in which the organization will earnestly invest its resources in the expectation of receiving disproportionate returns. One of the major assumptions in current talent management debates is that talent management leads to positive outcomes from employees; however, this might not be true (De Boeck et al., 2018). If it is utilized correctly, talent management can be of great value, but on the other hand, it can also backfire and be perceived as an organization's practice of favoritism toward the elite group of employees as the majority do not enjoy access to these benefits. Comparative studies are therefore needed to measure the desirability of talent management, which has become increasingly described as a double-edged sword (Dries et al., 2014; Marescaux et al., 2013; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016).

The scarceness of empirical research on the effects of talent management practices has already been discussed as a substantive criticism of the literature in earlier sections of this study. This is especially true in comparative cases of the attitudes of employees, which is highly in need of investigation (Swailes & Blackburn, 2016). As research on the relationship between talent management practices and employee attitudes is still at an early stage, there are still instances where no significant differences in predicted outcomes have been found (Bethke-Langenegger, 2012; Khoreva & Vaiman, 2015; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016). Overall, within the limited amount of research that has been conducted in this area, a mixture of findings has been achieved with no valid conclusion drawn for comparative cases. Additional research is, therefore, required to further our understanding of employee reactions to workforce differentiation. In developing the hypothesis on comparative cases, this research follows the theoretical perspectives adopted by Swailes and Blackburn (2016). In line with these theories, differences between Group A and Group B are expected to exist in the structural equations model, hypothesized as follows:

H4: Observable differences in the structural model are expected between Group A and Group B

2.9 Summary

This chapter has provided a theoretical background for the current study by reviewing the talent management literature. The growth of talent management as a field has been discussed through the examination of historical contexts and the talent management phenomenon, along with the meaning of talent in the world of work, and a comprehensive discussion of the meaning of talent management. Dominant theoretical frameworks and alternative frameworks in talent management research have been presented, and the research stance for the current study has been determined to be a combination of three frameworks (i.e., the RBV, employee assessment, and the social exchange framework) in alignment with the exclusive/developable philosophy. Workforce differentiation and its imperative association to talent management have been justified and a conceptual framework has been developed to investigate the relationship between a selected number of constructs representing employee reactions to talent management practices. Justifications have been provided for each of these constructs and the hypotheses for each relationship have been developed according to the reviewed literature. The following chapter discusses the methods of research applied in order to test the proposed hypotheses.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate the direct and indirect effects of employee perceptions of talent management practices on employee reactions and compare these effect between the two groups of employees (Group A – employees who are included in the organization’s talent pool and Group B – employees who are not included in the organization’s talent pool), this research has employed the use of a quantitative cross-sectional design and an online survey is conducted. This chapter describes the design of the research, the sampling and data collection, the measures, and the method used for analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The cross-sectional design is regarded as the most appropriate type of research design for this investigation. According to De Vaus (2001), there are a few distinctive characteristics of cross-sectional designs, firstly being the time dimension. Data are collected at one point of time as compared to other designs, such as panel designs and experimental designs, in which data are collected at a number of different points of time. In the cross-sectional design, there is a reliance on existing differences in the sample at that particular point in time. It does not allow for differences to emerge over time (like panel designs) or changes to occur after an intervention (like experimental designs). Also, the groups in cross-sectional designs are constructed on the basis of existing differences in the sample, according to the category of the independent variable to which they happen to belong, and not based on random allocations.

More specifically, the cross-sectional design is suitable for this research as the participants are recruited based on the exclusion or inclusion criteria (i.e., whether they belong in Group A or Group B according to their organization) allowing the

researcher to observe existing differences between the groups. As cross-sectional studies are relatively faster and are less expensive than other designs, the researcher is also able to investigate the relationships between a number of variables within the time constraints and resources available for optimal sample reach.

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

3.2.1 Target Population

This research targets both employees who are included in the talent pool and employees who are not included in the talent pool in organizations in Thailand, without limiting the research to any specific industry. Thus, the determination of the size of the population is difficult; the probability of selection for each member of the population of interest is unknown; and a non-probability sampling method has to be employed.

3.2.2 Sampling

To secure a representative sample, the selection of respondents for each group is determined by the organizations that participate in the research. To participate in this research, each organization has to agree that it has an exclusive view to talent management. In implementing talent management programs, the first year is assumed to be an initial phase of trial and error. Adjustments should have been made to improve the program by the second year, and a more stable talent management program is expected organization-wide by the third year, when employees have become well-exposed and familiar with the talent management program. Therefore, apart from agreeing to have an exclusive view to talent management, participating organizations also have to meet the criterion of having implemented their talent management program for at least three years.

Organizations that meet these two criteria are instructed to implement judgmental sampling (also known as purposive sampling), involving the deliberate choice of sample members. As this study focuses on the selection of respondents who belong to Group A, the participating organizations first identify a group of employees who are included in the organizations' talent pool. This is because there is a relatively

small ratio of employees in this group within an organization, only accounting for 1% to 10% of employees in a given organization in the exclusive view (Swales et al., 2014). Then, the members of Group B (employees who are not included in the organizations' talent pool) would be determined to best match the profile of Group A in an attempt to keep the demographics of the groups as similar as possible for the research.

Once these criteria and steps were determined, the human resource departments of 40 organizations in Thailand were contacted, and meetings were set up to inform the organizations of the details of the research, including the research's aim and objectives, the commitment that the research requires from the organization, the research time frame, the sampling selection, the contributions to literature, and the contributions to the participating organizations. This is a very important step because the organizations' human resource departments were responsible for the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Only 10 organizations met the criteria for participation, of which, seven agreed to participate in the research after confidentiality agreements were signed at the request of these organizations. Subsequently, two organizations withdrew their participation and a total of five organizations from a mix of industries participated. Information on these organizations can be seen in Appendix A.

Recommendations for sample sizes range from minimum samples of five observations per item (Gorsuch, 1983) to 10 observations per item (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). Respectively, there should be between 220 (44 x 5) to 440 (44 x 10) samples for this study. For SEM, 200 is deemed as a critical sample size that provides sufficient statistical power for data analysis (Garver & Mentzer, 1999; Hoe, 2008; Hoelter, 1983; Weston & Gore, 2006). For this research, a total of 552 fully completed responses were received (with 250 respondents belonging in Group A and 302 respondents belonging to Group B), and this sample size is considered acceptable.

3.2.3 Data Collection

Online questionnaires were distributed through the use of a professional website, SurveyMonkey, on which a paid plan was selected to include unlimited questions and responses per survey. This plan enables the inclusion of a customized logo and professional design to encourage responses through the use of a visually pleasant experience upon completing the survey. The two target groups were sent the

same questionnaire internally by the human resource department of their organizations, but with different links to differentiate the respondents in each group through customized survey uniform resource locators (URLs) with an expiration time frame. To stimulate the survey response rate, an incentive was provided in the form of a lucky draw. Also called a *low-cost cash prize lottery* when used in academic research, lucky draws have been found to increase survey response rates (Pedersen & Nielsen, 2016). For the respondents who were willing to participate in the lucky draw, they were required to complete the questionnaire in its entirety within the timeframe provided. The inclusion of the incentives was also discussed with the participating organizations to make sure that it was not against their company's policy to do so.

The online questionnaire begins by introducing the research, including the researcher's name, institution, and the research aims and objectives. This information was provided in the participant information sheet and the consent form required by the university for ethical approval of participant-based research. Instructions and the estimated total time needed to complete the questionnaire were also provided along with the contact details of the researcher so that the respondents could contact the researcher at their convenience if they did not understand a question or had any technical difficulties in completing the survey. The inclusion of the participants' personal contact details was optional and data confidentiality (both for personal contact information and responses) was highly emphasized to assure the privacy of each individual. Following the introduction and instructions, the questionnaire proceeded to the demographics section in which respondents were asked for their age, gender, tenure in their current organization, and their highest attained educational level. Respondents were asked about the opportunities they had received from their organization (number of perceived talent management practices) followed by questions regarding employee brand identification, turnover intention, job stress, perceived overall justice, and their level of satisfaction with their work-life balance.

The questionnaire was translated from English to Thai, using the back-translation method (Brislin, 1980), where the questionnaire is first translated by one translator from English to Thai, and then it is sent to another translator (blind to the original questionnaire) to be translated back into English. Back-translation is commonly used in verifying the translation of an instrument for bilingual procedures to ensure that

the meaning is identical in both languages (Varricchio, 2004). For this research, the back-translation was done three times (involving six independent translators) to ensure that the translation was most meaningful and closest to the original questionnaire.

Pre-tests are needed when new scales are developed or when scales from various studies are mixed or when scales are applied out of context. As this research combines scales used by various studies, a pre-test is required. A pre-test is a “key phase of the development, adaptation, or translation of any questionnaire or psychometric instrument... to verify that the target audience understands the questions and proposed response options as intended by the researcher, and is indeed able to answer meaningfully” (Perneger, Courvoisier, Hudelson, & Gayet-Ageron, 2015, p. 147). Perneger et al. (2015) recommend a default sample size of 30 participants when pre-testing a self-report instrument, with the participants first filling in the questionnaire and then providing feedback about each item in sequence.

The pre-test for this research included 36 respondents comprised of professors, PhD candidates, and working professionals (employees who are included and excluded from their organization’s talent pool alike). Professors and PhD candidates have been included in the sample for the pre-test as they are considered to be experts in the field, and working professionals are representatives of the actual respondents for this research (i.e., either belonging or not belonging in the talent pool of their respective organizations). The pre-test respondents completed the online questionnaire and expressed their opinions with the aim of assisting in making the questionnaire as understandable as possible to the target audience and ensuring that the objectives of the intended questions were most appropriately conveyed. From the pre-test suggestions, instead of having the questionnaire distributed in one language (either English or Thai), both English and Thai versions were included in the questionnaire to preserve the intended meaning of the questions for respondents who preferred the simplicity and accuracy of the English language. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

The ethics of conducting any research is an important area of concern, especially in research that involves human beings. Although the participants are in no danger of physical harm through answering the questionnaire for this research, the research has to be socially responsible with concern for the human rights and the psychological health and safety of its participants. After implementing the changes from

the pre-test, the questionnaire and the research were ethically approved by the Institute for Population and Social Research - Institutional Review Board (IPSR-IRB) of Mahidol University, which issued the certificate of ethical approval number 2017/03-078, thereby assuring the participants that their response data and personal information were treated with the highest confidentiality (the ethical approval certificate is attached in Appendix C).

3.3 Measures

The formation of the questionnaire was guided by an extensive review of previous talent management literature which resulted in the selection of a total of six constructs for the current study. These constructs are perceived talent management practices, employee brand identification, turnover intentions, satisfaction with work-life balance, perceived overall justice, and job stress. The scales for each construct were adopted from established sources in the literature and each construct is discussed in the following subsections.

3.3.1 Talent Management Practices

As talent management is still a relatively young field, only two empirical studies have been conducted to examine the role of talent management practices to date. Chadee and Raman (2012) introduced an instrument for measuring talent management practices, applying six talent management items to capture assess talent management practices within the organization. With this instrument, respondents are to rate the talent management practices concerning the identification of talent gaps, selection, recruitment, retention, training and rewarding of talented employees, in comparison to the industry standards. Sonnenberg, van Zijderveld, and Brinks (2014) made use of eighteen talent management practices. Their measurement is based on CIPD (2006) and the items are shown in Table 3.1.

According to these items, respondents are asked whether or not they perceive their employer to be offering them an opportunity to make use of these talent management practices. Then, the number of talent management practices is summed up per employee to reflect their perceived level of talent management practices. This

research follows the measurement for perceived talent management practices used by Sonnenberg et al. (2014). It is deemed more appropriate to use this measure for this research because it is more tangible at the level of individual employees compared to the measurement of Chadee and Raman (2012), which targets respondents at the organizational level.

Table 3.1 Items for Talent Management Practices

Author(s)	Items
Sonnenberg et al. (2014)	Internal coaching
	External coaching
	Mentoring/Buddy
	In-house development programs
	High-potential development schemes
	Graduate-level development programs
	Cross-functional job assignments
	Internal secondments - i.e. a temporary transfer to another job or post within the same organization
	External secondments - i.e. a temporary transfer or a temporary assignment outside the organization)
	Job rotation
	Job shadowing
	MBAs
	Development centers
	Succession planning
	Assessment centers
	360-degree feedback
Action-learning sets	

3.3.2 Employee Brand Identification

The eight-item scale for measuring employee brand identification constructed by Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, and Wilson (2009) in their investigation of the influences of internal branding on employee brand attitudes is used for this study (items are shown in Table 3.2). The respondents are to rate how much they agree with the eight statements on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The items have been adapted from several studies (i.e., Herrbach, Mignonac, & Gatignon, 2004; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 1998) to capture the employee's sense of brand belonging, pride and ownership.

Within the “dearth of research in the internal branding concept” (Punjaisri et al., 2009, p. 212), the employee brand identification scale has been used by Sharma and Kamalanabhan (2014) to examine the process and outcome of internal corporate communication and employee brand attitudes by Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, and Rudd (2013) in examining the relationships between brand-specific transformational and transactional leadership, trust in the leader and in the corporate brand, brand identification, and service recovery performance from the employees' perspectives. From these studies, the Cronbach's alpha for this scale ranges from 0.77 to 0.95.

Table 3.2 Scale for Employee Brand Identification

Author(s)	Items
Punjaisri et al. (2009)	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
	I feel a sense of ownership for this organization.
	My sense of pride toward the organization's brand is reinforced by the brand-related messages.
	I view the success of the organization as my own success.
	My organization is like a family to me.
	I feel a sense of belonging to this organization.
	When I talk about this organization, I usually say “we” rather than “they”.
	When someone praises this organization, it feels like a personal compliment.

3.3.3 Turnover Intentions

This study follows Björkman et al. (2013) in using three items from Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991) to measure turnover intentions (Table 3.3). The respondents are also asked to rate how much they agree with the statements on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Widely used in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior studies, the internal consistency for this scale ranges from 0.80 to 0.91 in past research (e.g., Deconinck, Johnson, & Busbin, 2012; Lee, Cho, Seo, Lee, & Choi, 2014; Mehmood, Ahmad, Irum, & Muhammad, 2016; Mishra & Bhatnaga, 2010).

Table 3.3 Scale for Turnover Intentions

Author(s)	Items
Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991)	I intend to look for a job outside of the organization within the next year.
	I often think about quitting my job at the organization.
	I intend to remain with the organization for the near future. [R]

Note. [R] = reverse scaled items

3.3.4 Work-Life Balance

Satisfaction with work-life balance “results from individual’s assessment that they have adequate resources to effectively respond to the demands of their work and family roles” (Valcour, 2007, p. 1513). Focusing on the interpretation of the level of balance rather than the balance itself (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003), this definition poses satisfaction with work-life balance “as a unitary, holistic construct that includes a cognitive and affective component” (Beham & Drobnič, 2010, p. 671). While this construct is assessed with a single item measure (Clarke, Koch, & Hill, 2004; Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001), a multi-item scale has been developed by Valcour (2007) with α ranging from 0.87 to 0.93 (Aleksić, Mihelič, Černe, & Škerlavaj, 2017; Annink, Den Dulk, & Amorós, 2016; Beham & Drobnič, 2010). The multi-item scale (see Table 3.4) is used in this research and the respondents are asked to rate their levels of satisfaction with five items on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly dissatisfied* to *strongly satisfied*.

Table 3.4 Scale for Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

Author(s)	Items
Valcour (2007)	The way I divide my time between work and personal or family life.
	My ability to balance the needs of my job with those of my personal or family life.
	The way I divide my attention between work and home.
	The opportunity I have to perform my job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties adequately.
	My work life and my personal or family life fit well together.

3.3.5 Perceived Overall Justice

Two approaches have been suggested in the literature to measure overall justice. According to Lind (2001), overall justice is the global judgement that an individual has regarding his or her experiences of fairness, and its assessment should be through items that focus on an individual's personal experiences. On the other hand, Colquitt and Shaw (2005) drew upon the notion that entity judgments are reflections of a general assessment of the fairness of the entity (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001), suggesting that the scale for overall justice should be a collection of statements about the organization in general, as previous studies have indicated that the fairness experiences of others are also used by individuals to form their own fairness perception (Kray & Lind, 2002; Lind, Kray, & Thompson, 1998).

In congruence with the approaches of both Lind (2001) and Colquitt and Shaw (2005), Ambrose and Schminke (2009) developed the six-item perceived overall justice (POJ) scale, including three items that focus on the individual's personal experiences and three items that focus on the fairness of the organization in general (shown in Table 3.5). With α ranging from 0.84 to 0.95 (Mohammad et al., 2018; Paolillo, Platania, Magnano, & Ramaci, 2015; Verdorfer, Steinheider, & Burkus, 2015), the POJ scale is used in this research with the respondents asked to rate how much they agree with the six statements on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

Table 3.5 Scale for Perceived Overall Justice

Author(s)	Items
Ambrose and Schminke (2009)	Overall, I'm treated fairly by my organization.
	In general, I can count on this organization to be fair.
	In general, the treatment I receive around here is fair.
	Usually, the way things work in this organization are not fair. [R]
	For the most part, this organization treats its employees fairly.
	Most of the people who work here would say they are often treated unfairly. [R]

Note. [R] = reverse scaled items

3.3.6 Job Stress

Following the approach of Bolino and Turnley (2005), this research uses four items introduced by Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning (1986) to measure subjective stress (see Table 3.5) with $\alpha = 0.76-0.93$ (Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Guchait, Paşamehmetoğlu, & Madera, 2016; Lee & Madera, 2019; Mostafa, 2017). According to Rabenu, Tziner, and Sharoni (2017), “stress is in the eye of the beholder” (p.1146) and subjective stress is the consideration of an individual's subjective rating of how much stress they feel regardless of the actual event (Zawadzki et al., 2019). Similar to the way in which perceived overall justice is measured, the respondents are asked to rate how much they agree with the four statements on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

Table 3.6 Scale for Job Stress

Author(s)	Items
Motowidlo et al. (1986)	My job is extremely stressful.
	Very few stressful things happen to me at work. [R]
	I feel a great deal of stress because of my job.
	I almost never feel stressed because of my work. [R]

Note. [R] = reverse scaled items

3.4 Method of Analysis

SEM is the main method used to meet the objectives of this research because of its flexibility in dealing with a system of regression equations and considering several relationships simultaneously, as opposed to the normal regression analysis. It also provides estimates of error variance parameters that traditional multivariate procedures ignore (possibly leading to serious inaccuracies). SEM is a “statistical methodology that takes a confirmatory approach to the analysis of a structural theory bearing on some phenomenon” (Byrne, 2016, p. 3) and is gaining popularity as a research methodology in the talent management field (e.g., Höglund, 2012; Marescaux et al., 2013; Mensah & Bawole, 2017). Prior to conducting SEM, it is necessary to provide descriptive statistics of the dataset showing the number of observations per variable, minimum values, maximum values, mean, and standard deviation. Preliminary analysis has to be conducted in order to check for missing data, an appropriate value range, outliers, normality, and multicollinearity.

SEM is made up of two sub-models: a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model defines the relationships between the observed and unobserved variable, usually through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), specifying the pattern by which each measure loads on a particular factor. Standardized path estimates or factor loadings provide the evidence of possible indicators for elimination in confirmatory factor analysis, and there are many suggestions for the cut-off values. However, there is agreement that the cut-off value of 0.40 reflects a reasonably strong association and is widely accepted for interpretations (Pituch & Stevens, 2016; Sidique, Lupi, & Joshi, 2010). Loadings equal to or lower than 0.40 should always be eliminated as they are not reflective of the scales, while values below 0.60 indicate a lack of reliability. Therefore, the cut-off criterion of 0.70 is recommended as values from 0.70 to 0.90 are regarded as satisfactory in more advanced stages of research (Hair et al., 2011).

As this research pursues advanced statistic in SEM, the criterion-in-use for this research will be 0.70 and above. Other than analyzing the standardized estimates, the statistical significance of each estimate coefficient should also be assessed, and estimates that are not significant should be eliminated (Hair et al., 2009). Additionally,

squared multiple correlations that represent how well an item measures a construct is usually reported in SEM (Schreiber et al., 2006).

A structural model defines the relationships among the variables, in particular, determining whether they directly or indirectly influence each other (multiple regression). There are six stages in the SEM process (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). Stages 1 to 4 involve the measurement theory and Stages 5 to 6 involve the structural theory. All constructs that are of concern are defined in Stage 1. Such constructs are those which display adequate construct validity and content validity from the literature and are established scales through both expert opinion and empirical evidence. A pre-test should be employed prior to the actual testing when scales are combined from different studies. In Stage 2, the measurement model is developed by carefully considering how these constructs collaborate into an overall measurement model. Here, the unidimensionality, items per construct, and whether the model is congeneric and reflective or formative to the measurement theory are considered.

Then, the study is designed to produce empirical results in Stage 3 by determining the scales and sample sizes, and specifying ways of dealing with missing data and dealing with model identification. Identification focuses on “the extent to which a unique set of values can be inferred for the unknown parameters from a given covariance matrix of analyzed variables that is reproduced by the model” (Byrne, 2016, p. 41). Models can be just-identified, over-identified or under-identified, but SEM aims to have an over-identified model, where there is a positive degree of freedom enabling scientific use.

In Stage 4, the measurement model is assessed by analyzing the model fit, and Table 3.7 presents a summary of the criteria for the model fit indices. In assessing the measurement model validity, the first issue is whether the hypothesized model fits or adequately describes the sample data. Model fit is the issue of how the model best represents the data reflecting the underlying theory and basically includes three types of indices: absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimony fit indices.

The absolute fit indices provide the most fundamental indication of how well the proposed theory fits the data (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). It does not use an alternative model as a base for comparison unlike incremental fit indices, but rather is a measure of how well the model fits compared to having no model at all

(Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Included in this category are the chi-square (χ^2) and relative/normed χ^2 statistic, root mean square residual (RMR), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

The χ^2 is the original fit index for structural models. It is the only inferential statistic allowing researchers to make interpretations regarding the significance or hypothesis testing, while all other SEM fit indices are descriptive with rules-of-thumbs used to assess the goodness-of-fit (Lacobucci, 2010). A good fitting model would have an insignificant result at the 0.05 threshold (Barrett, 2007). Judging from the previous statements, it appears that the χ^2 should be the only statistic that should be of concern to researchers; however, there are two major limitations to the χ^2 statistics.

The first limitation is that the χ^2 statistic assumes multivariate normality. Thus, even when the model is correctly specified, model rejections can occur when there are deviations from normality (McIntosh, 2007). Another limitation is that the χ^2 statistic is sensitive to sample size. It is important to have a large sample size to enhance the accuracy of parameter estimation, but as the sample size increases, the χ^2 statistic is nearly always significant, rejecting the model (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Gerbing & Anderson, 1985; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Lacobucci, 2010). In the cases where small sample sizes are used, the χ^2 statistic lacks power, consequently lacking the ability to distinguish a model with a good fit from one with a bad fit (Kenny & McCoach, 2003). Due to these limitations, research suggests that a model will demonstrate a reasonable fit if the statistic adjusted by its degree of freedom, referred to as the relative/normed χ^2 , CMIN/DF, or χ^2/df (Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin, & Summers, 1977), does not exceed 3.0 (Kline, 2005). Nevertheless, there is no consensus regarding an acceptable statistic and recommendations range from as low as 2.0 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) to 5.0 (Wheaton et al., 1977).

The RMR is the square root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesized covariance model (Hooper et al., 2008). It is difficult to interpret the RMR because these residuals are relative to the sizes of the observed variances and covariances (Byrne, 2016), especially when a questionnaire consists of items with various levels (i.e., some questions based upon a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 and others from 1 to 7) (Kline, 2005). The SRMR represents the

average value across all standardized residuals and is more meaningful to interpret than the RMR. SRMR ranges from 0.0 to 1.0, with a well-fitting model obtaining a value of less than 0.05 (Byrne, 2016; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000) with an acceptable value being as high as 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Another statistic created as an alternative to the χ^2 test is the GFI (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). It calculates the proportion of variance that is accounted for by the estimated population covariance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), showing how closely the model comes to replicating the observed covariance matrix (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). With values ranging from 0.00 to 1.00, the range of $0.80 < \text{GFI} < 0.90$ indicates an acceptable fit (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 1998). A cut-off point of 0.90 has been recommended but when factor loadings and sample sizes are low, a higher cut-off of 0.95 is considered more appropriate (Shevlin & Miles, 1998). The GFI, however, has been associated with an upward bias toward large samples (Bollen, 1990; Shevlin & Miles, 1998) and a downward bias against small sample sizes (Sharma, Mukherjee, Kumar, & Dillon, 2005). Over the years, GFI has become less popular as it can be overly sensitive to sample sizes and it has been recommended that this index not be used (S. Sharma et al., 2005).

The AGFI differs from the GFI as it adjusts for the number of degrees of freedom in the specified model, addressing the issue of parsimony by incorporating a penalty for the inclusion of additional parameters (Byrne, 2016). The AGFI generally accepts that values of 0.85 or greater indicate a well-fitting model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). However, the AGFI has also been criticized for its detrimental bias in relation to sample size, and therefore neither of these two fit indices are relied upon as a standalone index but are often reported given their historical importance (Hooper et al., 2008).

The RMSEA proposed by Steiger and Lind (1980) has only been recently recognized as one of the most informative criteria in covariance structure modeling (Byrne, 2016; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). It takes into account the error of approximation in the population and asks the question: "How well would the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter values, fit the population covariance matrix if it were available?" (Browne & Cudeck, 1993, pp. 137–138). A few recommendations have been provided in the literature for the values of RMSEA. These values ranges from less than 0.05 indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2016) to as high as 0.08

being considered as reasonable (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). According to MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara (1996), a value of 0.08 to 0.10 indicates a mediocre fit, while a value of greater than 0.10 indicates a poor fit. As usually referred to in the SEM literature, Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest that 0.06 is a good fit. The RMSEA's greatest advantage is its ability to calculate a 90% confidence interval. A narrow confidence interval is evidence for the good precision of the RMSEA value in reflecting the model fit in the population (MacCallum et al., 1996). In a well-fitting model, the lower limit is closer to 0 and the upper limit should be less than 0.08 (Hooper et al., 2008).

Incremental fit indices are also known as comparative fit indices (Miles & Shevlin, 2007), whereby the χ^2 is not used in its raw form but compared to a baseline model (Hooper et al., 2008). Included in this category are the normed-fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and the non-normed fit index (NNFI), more commonly known as the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). NFI (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) assesses the model by comparing the χ^2 value of the model to the χ^2 of the null model; the worst case scenario specifying that all measured variables are uncorrelated. A cut-off criteria of greater than 0.90 has been recommended to indicate a good fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). More recently, this recommended value has been adjusted to ≥ 0.95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). However, the NFI has been criticized for its sensitivity to sample size and it is not recommended to be relied upon as the sole measure used (Kline, 2005). To address the problem of sensitivity to the sample size of the NFI, Bentler (1990) introduced the CFI as a revised NFI that takes the sensitivity issue into account. A cut-off value of > 0.90 was considered a well-fitting model (Bentler, 1992) but a revised cut-off value close to 0.95 has more recently been advised (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Established also to address the problem of NFI, the NNFI or the TLI (Tucker & Lewis, 1973) has value recommendations as low as 0.80 (Hooper et al., 2008) and as high as ≥ 0.95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Models that are parsimonious are simple models with great explanatory power. Parsimony fit indices take into account the complexity (i.e., number of estimated parameters) of the hypothesized model in the assessment of the overall model fit (Byrne, 2016). To address the issue of parsimony in SEM, several parsimony fit indices have been developed. The parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI), parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI), and the parsimonious comparative fit index (PCFI) have been developed

based on the GFI, NFI and CFI respectively. These indices have lower acceptable values than the threshold level generally perceived for other normed indices of fit, being acceptable above the 0.50 level while other goodness-of-fit indices should achieve values over 0.90 (Mulaik et al., 1989). Parsimony fit indices are normally used in comparing models, with higher values suggesting better fitting models. As these statistics are more difficult to interpret because there are no threshold levels, the analysis of parsimony fit indices used in tandem with other measures of goodness-of-fit is strongly recommended (Mulaik et al., 1989).

The assessment of model fit in Stage 4 suggests ways for researchers to improve the model for further assessments before moving on to the next stage through model diagnostics. With a modified model based on reasonable theoretical arguments, the researcher moves on to specify the structural model using a path diagram (Stage 5), and then ultimately in Stage 6, the hypothesized relationships are examined in the structural model.

Table 3.7 Criteria for Model Fit Indices

Model Fit Indices	Fit Criteria
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.0 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), ≤ 3.00 (Kline, 2005), ≤ 5.0 (Wheaton et al., 1977)
RMR	Good models have smaller RMR (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2007)
SRMR	≤ 0.05 (Byrne, 2016; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000), ≤ 0.08 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
GFI	$0.8 < \text{GFI} < 0.9$ (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 1998), good fit ≥ 0.90 to great fit ≥ 0.95 (Shevlin & Miles, 1998)
AGFI	≥ 0.85 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
RMSEA	reasonable fit ≤ 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), good fit ≤ 0.06 (Hu and Bentler, 1999), good fit < 0.05 (Byrne, 2016)

Table 3.7 Criteria for Model Fit Indices (cont.)

Model Fit Indices	Fit Criteria
RMSEA (LO90) and (HI90)	Lower limit is closer to 0 and the upper limit should be less than 0.08
NFI and CFI	≥ 0.90 (Bentler, 1992), ≥ 0.95 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
TLI	≥ 0.80 (Hooper et al., 2008), ≥ 0.95 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
PGFI, PCFI, and PNFI	Higher is better, preferably > 0.5 (Mulaik et al., 1989)

3.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the reasoning for the methodological approach taken by the current study in order to meet the research objectives. The research design has been discussed along with the methods for sampling and data collection from the research respondents. Details of the measurement of each construct in the research have been provided and the method for analysis (i.e., SEM) has been discussed. Following the six stages in the SEM process, Stage 1 through to a part of Stage 3 have been discussed in this chapter as part of the research methodology. This includes methods for displaying adequate construct validity and content validity, methods on developing the measurement model, and determining the scales and samples size. The next chapter continues with Stage 3 (specifying ways of dealing with missing data and dealing with model identification) to Stage 6 (examining the hypothesized relationships).

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter describes the steps taken after the data had been collected and presents the findings of the analysis conducted in this study through the use of IBM SPSS version 24 and Amos version 24. First, preliminary analysis is conducted to check for missing data, outliers, data normality, and data multicollinearity. The demographic profiles of the respondents who participated in this research are then discussed, along with the default measurement model, final measurement model, model diagnostics, and model modifications. Subsequently, the structural model is analyzed according to the hypotheses and the findings are shown.

4.1 Preliminary Analysis

Prior to analyzing any data, a preliminary analysis should always be conducted to make sure that the data have been cleaned and the assumptions for the statistical method are met. In this section, the data are cleaned by searching for any values that are missing, outside the appropriate range, or potential outliers. Also, the normality assumption and test for multicollinearity problems are conducted for SEM.

4.1.1 Checking for Missing Data and Appropriate Value Range

Once the research data had been collected, the data were screened by searching for any missing data. There are several ways that missing data can be dealt with. When there is a large sample size, the listwise deletion method can be applied by deleting all data from a respondent with any missing value (Field, 2013). Another common method where the loss of response is minimized is the pairwise deletion method, where responses with missing data are still used, and a statistical procedure is applied to exclude only cases with incomplete data when the missing data have to be used in a particular statistical analysis, for example, correlation calculation (Dong &

Peng, 2013; Pigott, 2001). Apart from using the listwise and pairwise deletion method, missing values can also be replaced with the mean of the variable or another estimate from the data set (Raymond, 1986; Roth & Switzer, 1995). This research only includes fully completed responses, which can be credited to the use of a professional website as the online survey distribution tool. The use of this tool ensured that all responses were fully complete and no selection of deletion method is necessary.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Items

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard Error
EBI1	552	2	7	6.20	0.894
EBI2	552	1	7	5.42	1.226
EBI3	552	2	7	5.83	1.071
EBI4	552	1	7	5.88	0.998
EBI5	552	2	7	5.72	1.064
EBI6	552	2	7	5.86	0.995
EBI7	552	2	7	5.82	1.002
EBI8	552	1	7	5.6	1.153
JSS1	552	1	7	5.25	1.196
JSS2r	552	1	7	5.15	1.306
JSS3	552	1	7	4.64	1.270
JSS4r	552	1	7	5.22	1.323
POJ1	552	1	7	5.47	1.186
POJ2	552	1	7	5.55	1.175
POJ3	552	1	7	5.51	1.148
POJ4r	552	1	7	5.49	1.279
POJ5	552	1	7	5.42	1.234
POJ6r	552	1	7	5.02	1.469
TI1	552	1	7	1.99	1.317
TI2	552	1	7	2.29	1.328
TI3r	552	1	7	2.25	1.258

Note. POJ = perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI = employee brand identification, TI = turnover intentions, WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance, and r = reverse-scored items

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Items (cont.)

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard Error
WLB1	552	1	7	4.73	1.305
WLB2	552	1	7	4.75	1.275
WLB3	552	1	7	4.84	1.244
WLB4	552	1	7	4.95	1.216
WLB5	552	1	7	4.79	1.321
Valid N (listwise)	552				

Note. POJ = perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI = employee brand identification, TI = turnover intentions, WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance, and r = reverse-scored items

In preliminary data screening, another important inspection is checking for the appropriate value range. For this research, all items should be within the range of 1 to 7. The descriptive statistics in Table 4.1 show the number of observations, minimum value, maximum value, mean, and standard errors of each item. An inspection confirmed that there were no missing values and that all responses in this dataset were within the appropriate value range.

4.1.2 Assessment of Univariate and Multivariate Outliers

Outliers are cases where scores deviate from others in the data set. A case can have a univariate outlier, if there is an extreme score on a single variable, or a multivariate outlier, if there are extreme scores on two or more variables or an unusual configuration of scores. Univariate outliers can be detected by observing the boxplots and z-scores (see Table 4.2) for each item. By analyzing both the boxplots and z-scores, some univariate outliers exist in the dataset with observations falling outside the data range in the boxplots and having absolute values greater than 3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In dealing with univariate outliers, the practice of simply removing any outlying data point can be harmful (Hawawini, Subramanian, & Verdin, 2003) and can result in an artificial restricted range (McNamara, Aime, & Vaaler, 2005). More emphasis is placed on multivariate outlier detection for this research as SEM is a multivariate method, involving the analysis of more than one outcome variable at a time.

To detect multivariate outliers, a common approach in SEM is observing the squared Mahalanobis distance (d^2) for each case. Byrne (2016) considers observing d^2 as most practical in this respect, and an outlying case will have a d^2 value that is distinctive from other d^2 values. Table 4.3 shows the top 20 d^2 values for this data set in descending order together with their observation number and d^2 values. The last column shows the differences between the d^2 values of that observation and its subsequently ranked observation. For example, there is a difference of 13.09 in the d^2 value between observations 490 and 97 (Rank 1st and 2nd) and a difference of 0.22 in the d^2 value between observations 97 and 104 (Rank 2nd and 3rd). As there is no comparison of values beyond the top 20 values in the table, “N/A” is displayed in the last column for observation 197 (Rank 20th). In searching for multivariate outliers using d^2 values, the differences between two d^2 values are observed. Compared to their subsequent observations, all observations have differences between 0.00 to 5.00 (from Rank 9th), but a difference of a leaping 7.46 is observed from observation number 503 (Rank 8th) upwards. This is an indication that observations above Rank 8th are outliers. There is a two-step process in defining and identifying outliers in SEM, first involving the identification of the model fit outlier candidates, and second involving the investigation of which candidates have influence over the model fit (Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2013). Based on this two-step process, a total of 8 multivariate outliers identified as influential observations are removed (i.e., observation numbers 490, 97, 104, 435, 543, 1, 211 and 503).

Table 4.2 Variable z-scores

Variable	N	Min.	Max.
Zscore(EBI1)	552	-4.69	0.90
Zscore(EBI2)	552	-3.61	1.29
Zscore(EBI3)	552	-3.58	1.09
Zscore(EBI4)	552	-4.89	1.12
Zscore(EBI5)	552	-3.49	1.21
Zscore(EBI6)	552	-3.88	1.15

Note. POJ = perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI = employee brand identification, TI = turnover intentions, WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance, and r = reverse-scored items

Table 4.2 Variable z-scores (cont.)

Variable	N	Min.	Max.
Zscore(EBI7)	552	-3.81	1.18
Zscore(EBI8)	552	-3.99	1.22
Zscore(JSS1)	552	-3.56	1.46
Zscore(JSS2r)	552	-3.18	1.42
Zscore(JSS3)	552	-2.87	1.86
Zscore(JSS4r)	552	-3.19	1.35
Zscore(POJ1)	552	-3.77	1.29
Zscore(POJ2)	552	-3.88	1.23
Zscore(POJ3)	552	-3.93	1.29
Zscore(POJ4r)	552	-3.51	1.18
Zscore(POJ5)	552	-3.58	1.28
Zscore(POJ6r)	552	-2.74	1.35
Zscore(TI1)	552	-0.75	3.80
Zscore(TI2)	552	-0.97	3.55
Zscore(TI3r)	552	-1.00	3.77
Zscore(WLB1)	552	-2.86	1.74
Zscore(WLB2)	552	-2.94	1.77
Zscore(WLB3)	552	-3.09	1.73
Zscore(WLB4)	552	-3.25	1.69
Zscore(WLB5)	552	-2.87	1.67

Note. POJ = perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI = employee brand identification, TI = turnover intentions, WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance, and r = reverse-scored items

Table 4.3 Squared Mahalanobis Distance (d^2)

Top 20 d^2 values (highest to lowest)	Observation number	d^2 values	Differences between two d^2 values
Rank 1 st	490	226.85	13.02
Rank 2 nd	97	213.83	0.22
Rank 3 rd	104	213.61	20.03
Rank 4 th	435	193.58	4.83
Rank 5 th	543	188.75	2.74
Rank 6 th	1	186.01	0.82
Rank 7 th	211	185.19	5.32
Rank 8 th	503	179.87	7.46
Rank 9 th	92	172.41	1.79
Rank 10 th	247	170.62	1.72
Rank 11 th	423	168.90	0.86
Rank 12 th	546	168.04	4.27
Rank 13 th	93	163.77	1.19
Rank 14 th	429	162.58	3.07
Rank 15 th	287	159.51	2.51
Rank 16 th	42	157.00	0.52
Rank 17 th	232	156.48	2.76
Rank 18 th	59	153.72	0.69
Rank 19 th	414	153.03	1.44
Rank 20 th	197	151.59	N/A

4.1.3 Assessment of Normality

The assessment of non-normality is a critical evaluation as the use of SEM assumes normality in the data. In this assessment, skewness and kurtosis are observed. A more conservative value for skewness ranging between -1 and +1 has been used in the past (Muthén & Kaplan, 1985), but in more recent research, skewness with absolute values of >3.0 is described as extremely skewed and kurtosis of >10.0 is an indication

of a problem (Kline, 2011). It is agreed that when the data are normally distributed, both the skewness and excess kurtosis values are zero; however there appears to be no clear agreement on how large the nonzero values should be before conclusions of extremes can be drawn (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2011). Using the suggestion by George and Mallery (2003) as a guide for both skewness and kurtosis, this research considers values outside the range of -2 to +2 as demonstrating considerable degrees of non-normality. The review of the skewness and kurtosis values reported in Table 4.4 reveals that no item is substantially skewed or kurtotic in this research's dataset.

Table 4.4 Assessment of Skewness and Excess Kurtosis

Variable	Skewness		Excess Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
EBI1	-1.05	.105	0.86	.209
EBI2	-0.47	.105	-0.24	.209
EBI3	-0.79	.105	0.24	.209
EBI4	-0.87	.105	0.99	.209
EBI5	-0.67	.105	-0.02	.209
EBI6	-0.83	.105	0.56	.209
EBI7	-0.82	.105	0.63	.209
EBI8	-0.84	.105	0.75	.209
JSS1	-0.77	.105	0.91	.209
JSS2r	-0.73	.105	0.38	.209
JSS3	-0.35	.105	0.24	.209
JSS4r	-0.69	.105	0.27	.209
POJ1	-0.88	.105	0.61	.209
POJ2	-0.82	.105	0.51	.209
POJ3	-0.75	.105	0.20	.209
POJ4r	-0.86	.105	0.40	.209
POJ5	-0.84	.105	0.65	.209
POJ6r	-0.61	.105	-0.20	.209

Note. POJ = perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI = employee brand identification, TI = turnover intentions, WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance, and r = reverse-scored items

Table 4.4 Assessment of Skewness and Excess Kurtosis (cont.)

Variable	Skewness		Excess Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
TI1	1.43	.105	1.65	.209
TI2	0.98	.105	0.41	.209
TI3r	1.10	.105	1.26	.209
WLB1	-0.37	.105	-0.21	.209
WLB2	-0.38	.105	-0.27	.209
WLB3	-0.46	.105	-0.19	.209
WLB4	-0.34	.105	-0.39	.209
WLB5	-0.41	.105	-0.24	.209

Note. POJ = perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI = employee brand identification, TI = turnover intentions, WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance, and r = reverse-scored items

4.1.4 Testing for Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity can be problematic as SEM deals with a number of constructs simultaneously. The term multicollinearity refers to situations where constructs are too highly correlated to the extent that they become redundant (Weston & Gore, 2006). The problem of multicollinearity then exists in a situation where two or more constructs essentially represent the same underlying concept, where they will be highly correlated, and thus correlation estimates should be observed to detect multicollinearity problems in SEM (Byrne, 2016). A correlation between any pair of variables that is higher than 0.85 signifies potential problems (Kline, 2005). Upon observation, the correlation estimates in Table 4.5 indicate no multicollinearity problems in the dataset.

Table 4.5 Correlation Estimates

Correlation			Estimates
Justice	<-->	Stress	-0.21
Justice	<-->	Turnover	-0.54
Justice	<-->	WorkLife	0.34
Justice	<-->	Brand	0.66
Stress	<-->	Turnover	0.28
Stress	<-->	WorkLife	-0.45
Stress	<-->	Brand	-0.12
Turnover	<-->	WorkLife	-0.38
Turnover	<-->	Brand	-0.54
WorkLife	<-->	Brand	0.34

Note. POJ = perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI = employee brand identification, TI = turnover intentions, and WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance

4.2 Respondent Demographic Profile

The demographic profiles of the respondents can be found in Table 4.6, covering a total of 544 fully completed responses remaining after the deletion of eight outliers. From the five organizations that participated in this research, there were 246 respondents in Group A (45.2%) and 298 respondents in Group B (54.8%). Overall, there were 266 female respondents (48.9%) and 278 male respondents (51.1%) with the majority being in the age range of 30 to 39 years old (50.9%), holding a Bachelor's degree (73.2%), and having worked with their current organization for more than 6 years (69.1%).

Table 4.6 also shows the demographic profile of the respondents in each group. In Group A, there were 124 female and 122 male respondents (50.4% and 49.6% respectively) mostly between the ages of 30 and 39 years old (65.9%), holding a Bachelor's degree (74.0%) and having more than 6 years of tenure in their current organization (61.0%). A similar profile is observed in Group B, where there were 142 female and 156 male respondents (47.7% and 52.3% respectively). The main age group

for Group B was between 40 and 49 years old, with 39.9% in this age range, followed closely by 38.6% aged between 30 and 39 years old. The level of education was also similar with most of the respondents holding a Bachelor's degree (72.5%). As with the respondents in Group A, the majority of the respondents in Group B (75.8%) had been with their current organization for more than 6 years.

Table 4.6 Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Characteristics	Categories	Group A (n=246)		Group B (n=298)		Total (n=544)	
		Number of response	Percent (%)	Number of response	Percent (%)	Number of response	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	124	50.4%	142	47.7%	266	48.9%
	Male	122	49.6%	156	52.3%	278	51.1%
Age	Under 20	1	0.4%	2	0.7%	3	0.6%
	20 - 29	49	19.9%	21	7.0%	70	12.9%
	30 - 39	162	65.9%	115	38.6%	277	50.9%
	40 - 49	33	13.4%	119	39.9%	152	27.9%
	50 and above	1	0.4%	41	13.8%	42	7.7%
Education Level	Below Bachelor's Degree	3	1.2%	6	2.0%	9	1.7%
	Bachelor's Degree	182	74.0%	216	72.5%	398	73.2%
	Master's Degree	59	24.0%	75	25.2%	134	24.6%
	Doctorate Degree	2	0.8%	1	0.3%	3	0.6%

Table 4.6 Respondents' Demographic Profiles (cont.)

Characteristics	Categories	Group A (n=246)		Group B (n=298)		Total (n=544)	
		Number of response	Percent (%)	Number of response	Percent (%)	Number of response	Percent (%)
Tenure	Less than 1 year	0	0.0%	5	1.7%	5	0.9%
	1 - 2 years	5	2.0%	41	13.8%	46	8.5%
	3 - 4 years	45	18.3%	0	0.0%	45	8.3%
	5 - 6 years	46	18.7%	26	8.7%	72	13.2%
	More than 6 years	150	61.0%	226	75.8%	376	69.1%

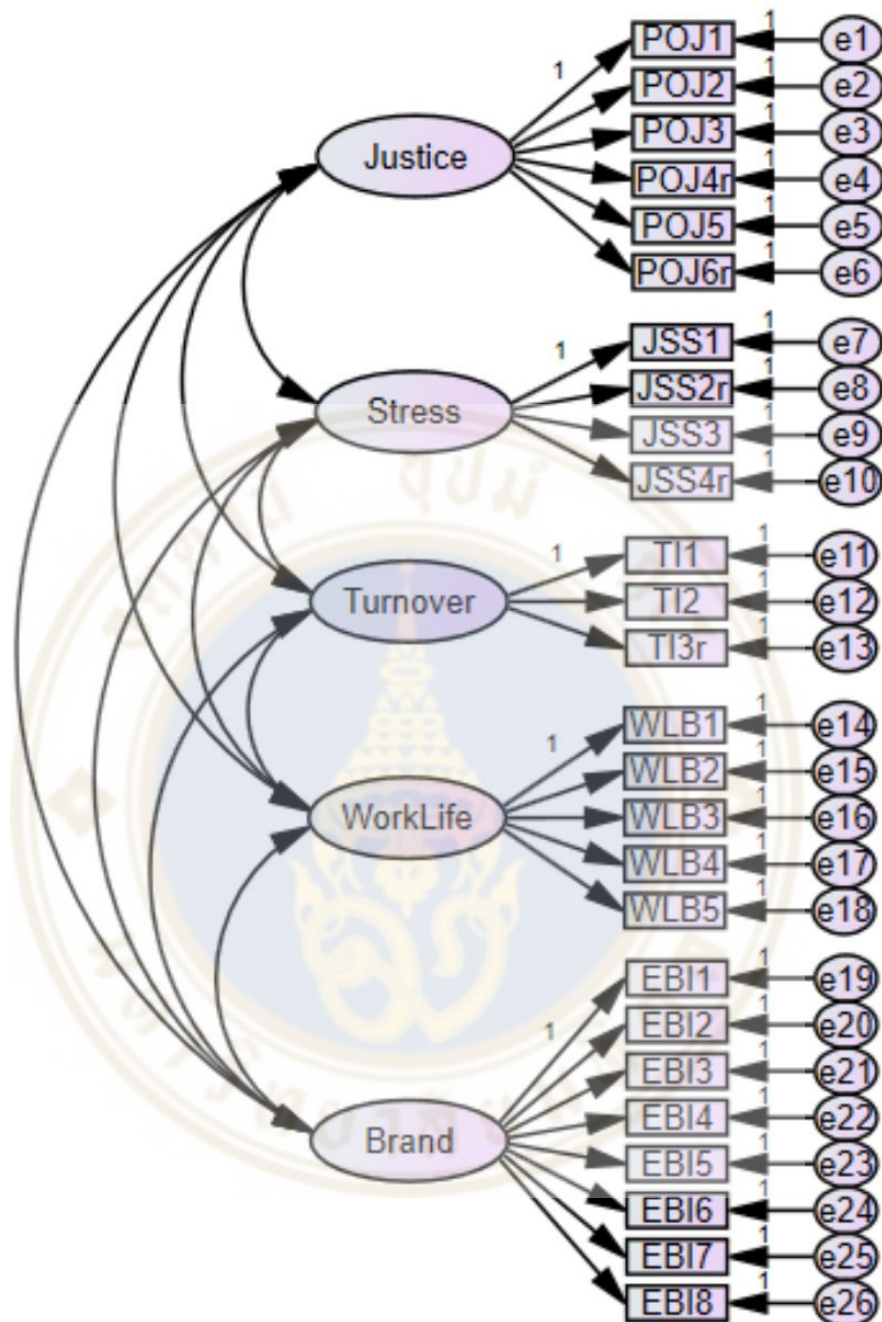
4.3 Measurement Model

The measurement model forms the first of the two sub-models of SEM in order to define the relationships between the observed and unobserved variables through CFA. This section discusses the initial measurement model, hereby called the default model, preceding any model modifications. Figure 4.1 shows the default model for this research and its model fit indices. There are 351 distinct sample moments (elements in the sample covariance matrix), 62 parameters to be estimated, 289 degrees of freedom, and a χ^2 of 832.73 with $p < .001$, making it an over-identified model enabling further analysis. CMIN/DF is less than 3.00 with a significant χ^2 ($p < .05$). For the absolute fit indices, the GFI value of 0.89 is just a little below the good fit criteria, but is considered acceptable. The AGFI (0.87), SRMR (0.05), and RMSEA (0.06) all indicate a good fitting model. Among the incremental fit indices, the CFI and TLI values are acceptable at 0.96 and 0.95. The value for NFI (0.93) is slightly below the level of acceptable fit at 0.95, but is above the 0.90 threshold. The model fit indices imply that the model diagnostics must be checked to suggest ways of further improving the model and identifying problem areas.

4.4 Model Diagnostics

It is normal for SEM researchers to find that the measurement model does not fit adequately well as items from different scales are being combined and used in different contexts (Byrne, 2016). AMOS provides users with model diagnostics to suggest ways of improving the model, including the path estimates, standardized residuals, and modifications indices.

Table 4.7 shows the standardized path estimates, its significance level, and squared multiple correlations for the items in this research. The standardized path estimates range from 0.47 (POJ6r) to 0.94 (POJ3), and all are significant. The squared multiple correlations range from 0.22 (POJ6r) to 0.89 (POJ3). From Table 4.7, it can be seen that there are indications that some items should be eliminated as they do not represent their respective constructs sufficiently well (path estimates less than 0.70). The elimination of these items will be discussed in the model modifications section in this chapter.



Degrees of Freedom = 289, $\chi^2 = 832.73$, $p < .001$, CMIN/DF = 2.88, RMR = 0.07, SRMR = 0.05, GFI = 0.89, AGFI = 0.87, RMSEA = 0.06, RMSEA (LO90) = 0.05, RMSEA (HI90) = 0.06, NFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, PGFI = 0.73, PCFI = 0.85, PNFI = 0.83

Figure 4.1 Measurement model (default model)

Table 4.7 Path Estimates, Significance Level, and Squared Multiple Correlations

Paths			Standardized Path Estimates	Squared Multiple Correlations
POJ1	<---	Justice	0.93***	0.86
POJ2	<---	Justice	0.94***	0.88
POJ3	<---	Justice	0.94***	0.89
POJ4r	<---	Justice	0.67***	0.45
POJ5	<---	Justice	0.73***	0.54
POJ6r	<---	Justice	0.47***	0.22
JSS1	<---	Stress	0.78***	0.61
JSS2r	<---	Stress	0.76***	0.57
JSS3	<---	Stress	0.79***	0.62
JSS4r	<---	Stress	0.82***	0.67
TI1	<---	Turnover	0.82***	0.67
TI2	<---	Turnover	0.90***	0.80
TI3r	<---	Turnover	0.74***	0.55
WLB1	<---	WorkLife	0.89***	0.79
WLB2	<---	WorkLife	0.92***	0.85
WLB3	<---	WorkLife	0.94***	0.88
WLB4	<---	WorkLife	0.89***	0.78
WLB5	<---	WorkLife	0.93***	0.86
EBI1	<---	Brand	0.77***	0.60
EBI2	<---	Brand	0.80***	0.64
EBI3	<---	Brand	0.77***	0.59
EBI4	<---	Brand	0.89***	0.79
EBI5	<---	Brand	0.91***	0.84
EBI6	<---	Brand	0.93***	0.87
EBI7	<---	Brand	0.85***	0.72
EBI8	<---	Brand	0.70***	0.49

Note. Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, r = reverse-scored items, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

Another diagnostic cue that is provided in standard SEM outputs is the standardized residuals (shown in Table 4.8), where values that are $\leq |2.5|$ represent no problem, standardized residuals $> |2.5|$ indicate potential problems, and standardized residuals $> |4.0|$ may imply serious problems. In assessing the standard residuals for the model, there are five values that suggests potential problem areas. They are the values between EBI4 and TI3r (-2.61), EBI6 and TI3r (-2.89), EBI7 and TI3r (-2.80), EBI6 and JSS1 (2.79), and between EBI4 and JSS1 (3.03). With only five values suggesting potential problems, few residual problems exist and further analysis can be conducted for this research.

Table 4.8 Standardized Residuals

	EBI7	EBI6	EBI5	EBI4	EBI3	EBI2	EBI1	WLB5	WLB4	WLB3	WLB2	WLB1	TI3r	TI2	TI1	JSS4r	JSS3	JSS2r	JSS1	POJ5	POJ3	POJ2	POJ1	
EBI7	0																							
EBI6	0.215	0																						
EBI5	-0.014	0.105	0																					
EBI4	-0.433	-0.046	0.23	0																				
EBI3	-0.403	-0.423	-0.349	0.725	0																			
EBI2	0.047	-0.2	0.137	-0.063	0.626	0																		
EBI1	0.144	0.012	-0.567	-0.247	1.347	-0.264	0																	
WLB5	0.658	-0.058	0.892	0.922	1.025	0.765	0.518	0																
WLB4	1.904	1.132	1.71	1.796	1.789	1.783	1.675	0.847	0															
WLB3	0.103	-0.889	-0.232	-0.185	0.03	-0.292	0.074	-0.066	0.117	0														
WLB2	-0.48	-1.454	-0.493	-0.69	-0.549	-0.405	-0.815	-0.347	-0.765	0.229	0													
WLB1	-0.07	-1.232	-0.465	-0.343	-0.028	-0.608	-0.602	-0.249	-0.557	-0.24	0.912	0												
TI3r	-2.797	-2.891	-2.464	-2.608	-2.291	-2.412	-2.365	-1.917	-1.83	-0.645	-1.547	-1.403	0											
TI2	0.54	0.495	0.842	1.114	1.434	0.592	0.246	-0.06	-0.091	0.752	0.458	0.009	-0.142	0										
TI1	0.046	0.002	0.566	1.084	0.911	0.721	0.007	0.841	-0.145	0.787	0.249	0.166	-0.698	0.339	0									
JSS4r	-0.687	-0.755	-1.417	-0.452	-0.707	-2.131	0.57	-0.47	0.072	0.64	-0.174	-0.838	0.267	-0.332	-0.608	0								
JSS3	-1.552	-0.918	-1.14	-0.393	-0.128	-1.648	-0.517	-1.074	-0.832	-0.921	-1.296	-1.765	1.997	2.081	0.746	-0.212	0							
JSS2r	-0.571	-0.206	-0.018	-0.108	-0.62	-1.499	-0.318	0.151	0.561	1.079	0.593	-0.061	-0.562	-1.101	-0.529	1.462	-1.573	0						
JSS1	2.15	2.794	2.39	3.03	2.308	1.774	2.277	0.681	1.306	1.353	0.701	0.026	-0.806	-0.544	-0.72	-0.999	1.245	0.07	0					
POJ5	1.529	1.457	1.209	-1.106	1.068	1.653	2.189	0.146	1.147	0.628	-0.295	0.052	-2.137	0.375	0.022	-1.127	-0.835	-0.091	0.936	0				
POJ3	0.579	0.144	-0.288	-0.637	-0.067	0.032	2.088	0.199	0.762	-0.549	-0.836	-0.574	-1.646	0.292	0.402	-0.123	-0.589	0.297	0.961	-0.124	0			
POJ2	0.405	0.269	-0.035	-0.316	0.303	-0.037	2.094	0.159	1.005	-0.268	-0.567	-0.053	-1.714	0.77	0.397	-0.077	-0.759	0.191	0.892	0.206	-0.07	0		
POJ1	-0.026	-0.472	-1.07	-1.412	-1.1	-0.674	0.845	0.077	1.196	0.379	-0.269	0.152	-1.468	0.459	-0.262	-0.545	-0.823	0.254	0.871	-0.291	0.092	0.022	0	

Notes. POJ= perceived overall justice, JSS = job stress, EBI= employee brand identification, WLB = satisfaction with work-life balance, TI = turnover intentions, and r = reverse-scored items

Modification indices (MI) are diagnostic cues that capture the indications of model misspecifications, conceptualized as a χ^2 statistic with one degree of freedom (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Values less than 10.00 are considered of little value and would not result in any significant changes in the overall model fit. In reviewing most models, MI values above 10.00 are usually present. Using MI to diagnose a model can improve results, but it is generally frowned upon as it is not theory driven and defeats the confirmatory nature of SEM. Here, the top 20 MI values for the default model can be observed in Table 4.9 and they are reported for referential purposes only.

Table 4.9 Modification Indices (MI) – Default Model

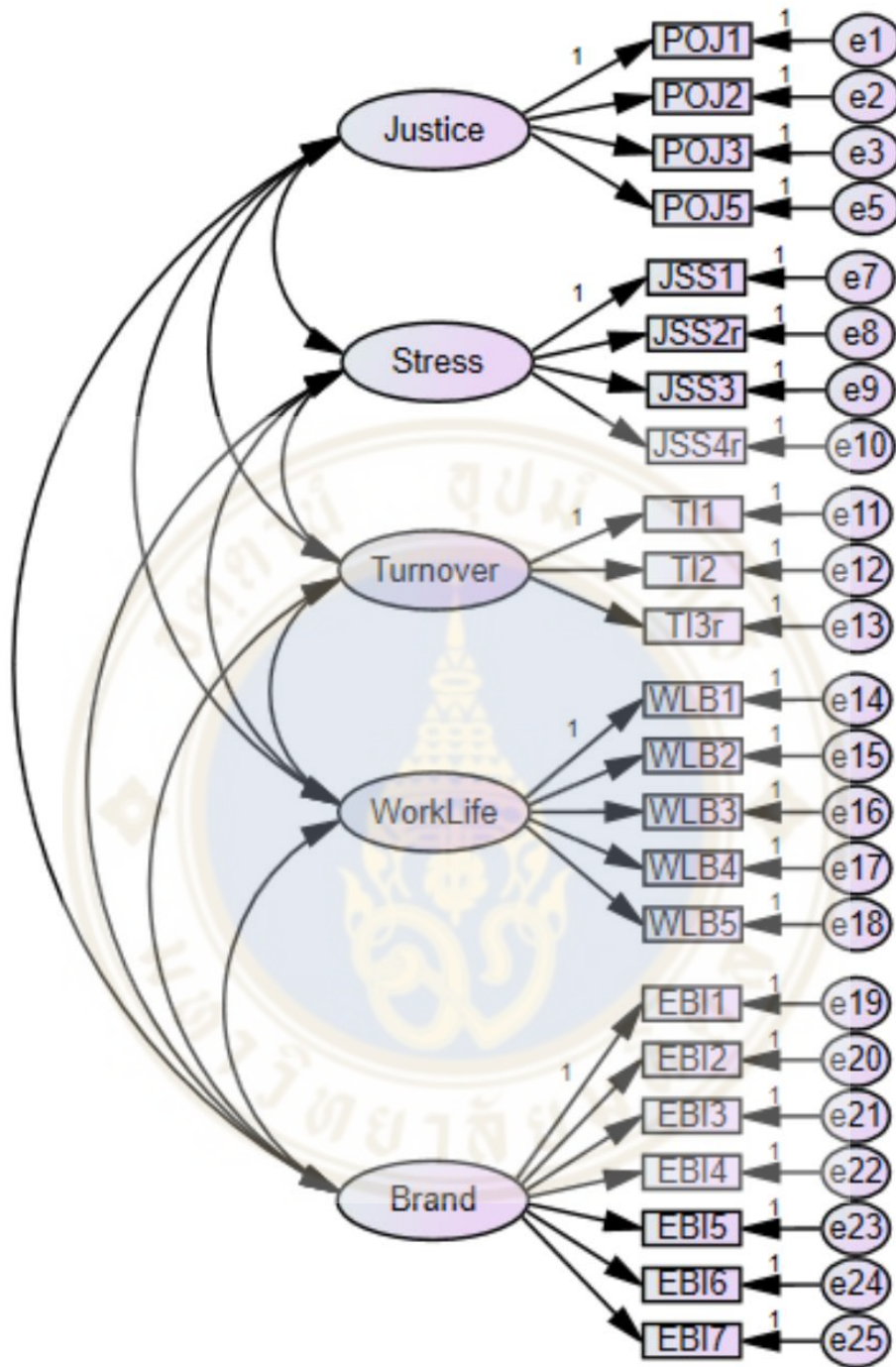
Covariances		M.I.	Par Change	
e14	<-->	e15	62.35	0.12
e17	<-->	e18	57.62	0.11
e4	<-->	e6	57.23	0.40
e15	<-->	e17	41.41	-0.09
e8	<-->	e10	31.78	0.19
e8	<-->	e9	29.33	-0.19
e7	<-->	Brand	25.92	0.09
e13	<-->	Brand	21.64	-0.09
e7	<-->	e9	20.64	0.14
e19	<-->	Justice	19.79	0.09
e7	<-->	e10	16.72	-0.12
e19	<-->	e21	16.17	0.07
e1	<-->	Brand	15.64	-0.04
e15	<-->	e18	15.11	-0.05
e14	<-->	e17	14.72	-0.06
e13	<-->	Turnover	14.48	-0.13
e17	<-->	Brand	13.95	0.05
e1	<-->	e4	13.63	-0.08
e11	<-->	e18	12.14	0.07
e5	<-->	e6	12.05	0.16

Note. Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, and Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance

4.5 Model Modifications

It is not unusual to find that the fit of the proposed default model is not the best-fitting model (Hooper et al., 2008). As a result, modifications may be needed (Weston & Gore, 2006). Based on the model diagnostics, items are removed one at a time, starting with the item that has the lowest path estimate. In total, three items were removed from the default measurement model (POJ6r, POJ4r and EBI8), after which, all the factor loadings were accepted within the criterion-in-use for the final measurement model (path estimate > 0.70).

In the final measurement model (Figure 4.7), there were 276 distinct sample moments and 56 parameters to be estimated leaving 220 degrees of freedom and making it an over-identified model. The model fit indices for the final measurement model can be observed from the figure, where the χ^2 of 616.93 is significant with a CMIN/DF of 2.80. The goodness-of-fit statistics of the final measurement model show a good fit for all absolute fit indices (SRMR = 0.04, GFI = 0.91, AGFI = 0.88 and RMSEA = 0.06) and incremental fit indices (NFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.97 and TLI = 0.96). The slight decrease in all three values of the parsimony fit indices (PGFI, PCFI, and PNFI) suggests that the final measurement model is less parsimonious compared to the default measurement model, but only marginally so. The goodness-of-fit indices indicate that the analysis is able to proceed to the structural stage of SEM. Before proceeding further, however, the construct validity and reliability of the model must be analyzed.



Degrees of Freedom = 220, $\chi^2 = 616.93$, $p < .001$, CMIN/DF = 2.80, RMR = 0.06, SRMR = 0.04, GFI = 0.91, AGFI = 0.88, RMSEA = 0.06, RMSEA (LO90) = 0.05, RMSEA (HI90) = 0.06, NFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96, PGFI = 0.72, PCFI = 0.84, PNFI = 0.82

Figure 4.2 Measurement model (final model)

4.6 Construct Validity and Reliability

Construct validity is “the extent to which a set of measured items actually reflects the theoretical latent construct those items are designed to measure” (Hair et al., 2009, p. 686), and it is an important analysis in conducting SEM. Dealing with the accuracy of measurement, it consists of four major components: convergent validity, discriminant validity, nomological validity, and face validity. Convergent validity exists when a set of variables of a specific construct share a high proportion of variance in common. Generally, it measures whether each of the constructs within the model is reflected by its own indicators. One of the most common ways to assess convergent validity is by evaluating the factor loadings or path estimates. High factor loadings on a factor indicate high convergent validity, as items converge on a common point. All factor loadings are significant and pass the criterion-in-use for this research, which is a minimum of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011).

Another indicator of convergent validity is the average variance extracted (AVE), which is “calculated as the mean variance extracted for the items loading on a construct and is a summary indicator of convergence” (Hair et al., 2009, p. 687). A good rule of thumb that suggests adequate convergence is an AVE of 0.5 or higher. Reliability estimates are also usually shown in the assessment of convergent validity. Construct reliability (CR) values are often used in conjunction with SEM models, in which the values between 0.6 and 0.7 are acceptable and 0.7 or higher suggests good reliability. Discriminant validity is “the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs... representing only one latent construct” (Hair et al., 2009, p. 687), and it can be tested by observing the AVE and maximum shared variance (MSV). The AVE should be greater than the MSV for there to be discriminant validity (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014, p. 605). Nomological validity is a type of validity in which a measure correlates positively in the theoretically predicted way with measures of different but related constructs. It is tested by examining whether the correlations among the constructs make sense. In this research, all correlations among the constructs are in line with the theory. Face validity concerns the appearance of the content as a predictor of a good measure. It is judgmental and does not provide a quantitative measure. It mainly deals with the question of whether the test “looks like” it is measuring the construct of

interest. The face validity was established prior to the theoretical testing of the measurement model through the pre-test of this research.

Where validity is concerned with the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, reliability is concerned with the ability of an instrument to measure consistently or whether a similar result will be achieved if something is measured twice with the same measurement instrument (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The reliability of the constructs was analyzed using two measures: the maximal reliability, or MaxR(H), and Cronbach's alpha (α). The cutoff for MaxR(H) is reached if it is higher than 0.80 (Hancock & Mueller, 2001), and generally an α of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable with a 0.60 acceptance point for new scales (Nunnally, 1978). Table 4.10 shows the CR, AVE, MSV, square root of AVE (bolded on the diagonal), and correlations between constructs (off diagonal), while Table 4.11 shows the MaxR(H) and the α for each construct. The figures in both tables indicate that the constructs are valid and reliable for further analysis.

Table 4.10 Model Validity Measures

Construct	CR	AVE	MSV	Justice	Stress	Turnover	WorkLife	Brand
Justice	0.94	0.79	0.43	0.89				
Stress	0.87	0.62	0.20	- 0.207***	0.79			
Turnover	0.86	0.67	0.30	- 0.528***	0.28***	0.82		
WorkLife	0.96	0.83	0.20	0.331***	- 0.45***	-0.38***	0.91	
Brand	0.95	0.72	0.43	0.654***	-0.12*	-0.55***	0.34***	0.85

Note. Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

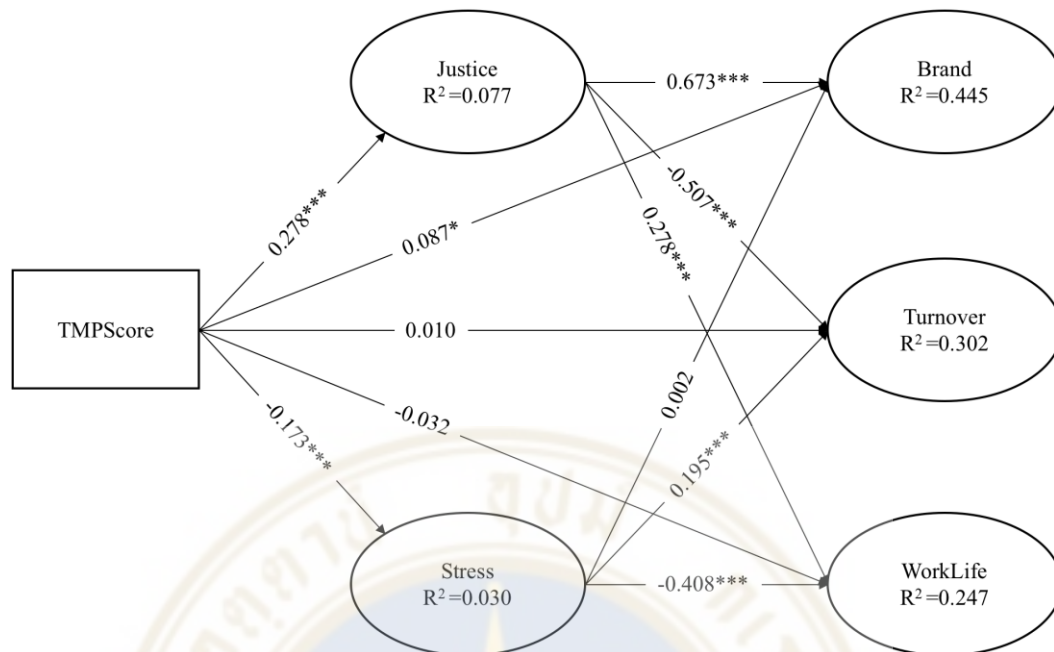
Table 4.11 Model Reliability Measures

Construct	MaxR(H)	Cronbach's Alpha
Justice	0.96	0.93
Stress	0.87	0.86
Turnover	0.88	0.85
WorkLife	0.96	0.96
Brand	0.96	0.95

Note. Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, and WorkLife = satisfaction with work-life balance

4.7 Structural Model

A structural model defines the direct or indirect relationships among variables (multiple regression) in SEM. After examining the model validity and reliability of the final measurement model, the structural model (Figure 4.3) can be analyzed. Here, the perceived talent management practices construct has been included as an observed exogenous variable in the model represented by a rectangle as TMPScore. The structural model is an over-identified model, with 900 distinct sample moments, 174 parameters to be estimated, and 726 degrees of freedom. The χ^2 (1783.83) is significant and CMIN/DF is acceptable at 2.46. The goodness-of-fit statistics of the structural model shows an acceptable fit for absolute fit indices with AGFI = 0.85 and RMSEA = 0.04. The GFI is slightly below the cut-off point at 0.88 and the SRMR is slightly above the cut-off point of 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The incremental fit indices show acceptable fit with the NFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.95, and TLI = 0.95. The small decrease in the parsimony fit indices suggest that this is a slightly worse fitting model compared to the measurement model. Nonetheless, the parsimony fit indices range between 0.70 to 0.85 and are substantially above the accepted level of 0.50 (Mulaik et al., 1989). Overall, the goodness-of-fit statistics validate the fit of the structural model.



Degrees of Freedom = 726, $\chi^2 = 1783.827$, $p < .001$, CMIN/DF = 2.46, RMR = 0.13, SRMR = 0.09, GFI = 0.88, AGFI = 0.85, RMSEA = 0.04, RMSEA (LO90) = 0.04, RMSEA (HI90) = 0.04, NFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.95, PGFI = 0.71, PCFI = 0.84, PNFI = 0.81

Figure 4.3 Structural model

The squared multiple correlations (SMCs), or the coefficient of determination (R^2), of the structural model can also be observed in Figure 4.3. AMOS provides an SMC value for each endogenous variable in the model and this is a useful statistic that is independent of all units of measurement, representing “the proportion of variance that is explained by the predictors of the variable in question” (Byrne, 2016, p. 212). From Figure 4.3, it can be interpreted that 44.5% of the variance associated with employee brand identification is accounted for by three predictors: perceived talent management practices, overall justice perception, and job stress. Likewise, 30.2% of the variance associated with turnover intentions and 24.7% of the variance associated with satisfaction with work-life balance are accounted for by these three predictors, while perceived talent management practices accounts for the variance associated with overall justice perception (7.7%) and job stress (3.0%).

4.8 Findings

This section provides the findings according to the hypotheses by presenting the results for total effects, multiple mediation model, and group comparison. A graphical summary of the hypotheses can be referred to in Figure 2.1 (Chapter 2).

4.8.1 Hypothesis 1: Employee responses to perceptions of talent management practices

The first set of hypotheses centers around the total effects of talent management practices on the three selected employee reactions and perceptions. The total effects of these relationship are shown in Table 4.12. In Hypothesis 1_a, it is expected that there will be stronger employee brand identification as employees perceive higher numbers of talent management practices. This hypothesis is accepted ($\beta = .26, p < .05$). Hypothesis 1_b expects the relationship between the perception of talent management practices and turnover intentions to be negative. Likewise, this Hypothesis 1_b is accepted ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$). In Hypothesis 1_c, the relationship between the perception of talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance is expected to be negative, however, this hypothesis, even though significant, is not accepted as there is a positive relationship observed ($\beta = .12, p < .01$).

Table 4.12 Total Effects

Total Effects	Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	Standardized Estimate
TMPscore → Brand	0.07	0.04	0.09	0.26*
TMPscore → Turnover	-0.06	-0.10	-0.04	-0.17**
TMPscore → WorkLife	0.05	0.02	0.08	0.12**

Note. TMPscore = perceived talent management practices, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

4.8.2 Hypotheses 2 and 3: Mediation effects of justice perception and job stress

Hypotheses 2 and 3 focus on the multiple mediation effects affecting the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and these employee reactions. When mediation is mentioned, there is no doubt that Baron and Kenny's method (1986) will come to mind. Based on the causal steps approach by Baron and Kenny (1986):

A variable functions as a mediator when it meets the following conditions: (a) variations in levels of the independent variable significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator (i.e., Path *a*), (b) variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (i.e., Path *b*), and (c) when Paths *a* and *b* are controlled, a previously significant relation between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant, with the strongest demonstration of mediation occurring when Path *c* is zero (p.1176).

For full mediation to exist, the significant relationship between the independent and the dependent variable has to no longer be significant when controlling for the mediator. If the mediator does not entirely account for the relation between the two variables, it partially mediates that effect (where the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable remains significant but the parameter estimate reduces materially after including a mediator). No mediation occurs if there is no change in the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable when a mediator variable is introduced.

Recent literature, however, widely accepts that testing mediation by using the method of Baron and Kenny (1986) is now obsolete and that simply, if a significant indirect effect exists, then mediation is present. For the debate on contemporary mediation, see Hayes (2017) and Meule (2019). According to Meule (2019), many researchers use software based on contemporary mediation incorrectly with a prevalent mindset in the outdated concepts of mediation testing due to its popularity. Observing the direct, indirect, and total effects based on Baron and Kenny's method of mediation should not be adopted in analyzing multiple mediation models in AMOS, because the effects that AMOS report are the total mediated effects from multiple mediators between one construct and another (Gaskin, 2016c). That is, the results do not distinguish

between the indirect effect of one mediator versus that of another mediator. In this research, for example, the indirect effects reported by AMOS are the total mediation effects from both overall justice perception and job stress on the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practice and employee brand identification. Therefore, to investigate the mediation effect of a mediator on an endogenous variable, a plugin by Gaskin (2016a) has to be used to report the specific indirect effects in order to address Hypotheses 2 and 3.

Table 4.13 shows the results of the mediating effects for each endogenous variable. The first mediator in this research is an individual's overall justice perception, which is expected to mediate the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification (Hypothesis 2_a: $\beta = .15, p < .001$), turnover intention (Hypothesis 2_b: $\beta = -.12, p < .001$), and satisfaction with work-life balance (Hypothesis 2_c: $\beta = .06, p < .001$). All three hypotheses are accepted.

The third set of hypotheses focuses on job stress as a mediator between the relationship of the number of perceived talent management practices and employee reactions. The results reject Hypothesis 3_a, where job stress is expected to mediate the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification ($\beta = -.00, p > .05$). However, Hypothesis 3_b, in which job stress is expected to mediate the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intentions ($\beta = -.02, p < .001$), and Hypothesis 3_c, where job stress is expected to mediate the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance ($\beta = .05, p < .001$), are both accepted.

Table 4.13 Specific Indirect Effects

Indirect Path	Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	Standardized Estimate
TMPscore → Justice → Brand	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.15****
TMPscore → Justice → Turnover	-0.05	-0.06	-0.04	-0.12****
TMPscore → Justice → WorkLife	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.06****
TMPscore → Stress → Brand	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00
TMPscore → Stress → Turnover	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02****
TMPscore → Stress → WorkLife	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.05****

Note. TMPscore = perceived talent management practices, Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and **** $p < .001$

4.8.3 Hypothesis 4: Structural differences between Group A and Group

B

Hypothesis 4 predicts a difference in the structural model between Group A and Group B. This hypothesis is accepted ($p < .01$) based on the results from the global test produced by the invariance plugin (Gaskin, 2016b) shown in Table 4.14. The invariance test result confirms that differences do exist in the reactions of Group A and Group B in the SEM model ($p < .01$). Tables 4.15 and 4.16 show the total effect of the relationships in Group A and Group B respectively. In Group A, only the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification is significant ($\beta = .18, p < .05$), whereas, the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intentions ($\beta = -.09, p > .05$) and the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance ($\beta = .09, p > .05$) are not significant. In Group B, all the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee reactions, that is, employee brand identification ($\beta = .32, p < .05$), turnover intentions ($\beta = -.23, p < .05$), and satisfaction with work-life balance ($\beta = .13, p < .05$) are significant.

Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5 show the structural models of Group A and Group B, and it can be observed that the relationship between the number of perceived talent

management practices and overall justice perception is significant for both Group A ($\beta = .26, p < .001$) and Group B ($\beta = .30, p < .001$). Similarly, the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and job stress is significant for both Group A ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$) and Group B ($\beta = -.18, p < .01$). All relationships between the perception of overall justice and employee reactions (i.e., employee brand identification, turnover intentions, and satisfaction with work-life balance) are significant in both Groups (Group A: employee brand identification $\beta = .60, p < .001$, turnover intentions $\beta = -.60, p < .001$, and satisfaction with work-life balance $\beta = .27, p < .001$; Group B: employee brand identification $\beta = .67, p < .001$, turnover intentions $\beta = -.42, p < .001$, and satisfaction with work-life balance $\beta = .29, p < .001$). No significant difference was observed in the relationships between job stress and employee brand identification for both Group A and Group B ($p > .05$), but significant differences were observed in the relationships between job stress and turnover intentions (Group A: $\beta = .16, p < .05$; Group B: $\beta = .22, p < .001$), and job stress and satisfaction with work-life balance (Group A: $\beta = -.43, p < .001$; Group B: $\beta = -.38, p < .001$). The presence of a significant direct effect between the number of perceived talent management practice and employee brand identification in Group B is the only difference that can be observed between the two models.

Table 4.17 shows a summary of the differences in the betas and the significance level of the differences from comparing Group A and Group B. There are two effects that are significantly different: the relationship between overall justice perception and employee brand identification (β difference = $.07, p < .05$) and the relationship between overall justice perception and turnover intentions (β difference = $.18, p < .05$). This indicates that the positive relationship between overall justice perception and employee brand identification is stronger for Group B. Also, the negative relationship between overall justice perception and turnover intentions is stronger for Group A. There is a stronger negative effect on justice perceptions on turnover intentions for Group A than Group B. In other words, if there ambiguity is present in the fairness of the organization's talent management programs, Group A are most likely more sensitive issues regarding justice and are more prone to leave the organization as compared to Group B.

Table 4.18 and Table 4.19 provide the standardized estimates and the significance levels of the specific indirect effects for Group A and Group B respectively. From the results, it is observed that overall justice perception significantly mediates the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and all three employee reactions (i.e., employee brand identification, turnover intentions, and satisfaction with work-life balance) for both groups. On the other hand, the mediation effects of job stress can be significantly observed in only Group B, where job stress mediates the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intentions and satisfaction with work-life balance, but not employee brand identification.

Table 4.14 Invariance Test for Multigroup Analysis

Global Test	χ^2	<i>df</i>
Unconstrained	1067.39	484
Constrained	1085.29	490
<i>p</i> -value	0.006	

Table 4.15 Total Effects – Group A

Total Effects	Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	Standardized Estimate
TMPscore → Brand	0.05	0.05	0.28	0.18*
TMPscore → Turnover	-0.04	-0.20	0.03	-0.09
TMPscore → WorkLife	0.04	-0.01	0.18	0.09

Note. TMPscore = perceived talent management practices, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, and ****p* < .001

Table 4.16 Total Effects – Group B

Total Effects	Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	Standardized Estimate
TMPscore → Brand	0.08	0.24	0.38	0.32*
TMPscore → Turnover	-0.08	-0.30	-0.13	-0.23*
TMPscore → WorkLife	0.05	0.04	0.24	0.13*

Note. TMPscore = perceived talent management practices, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

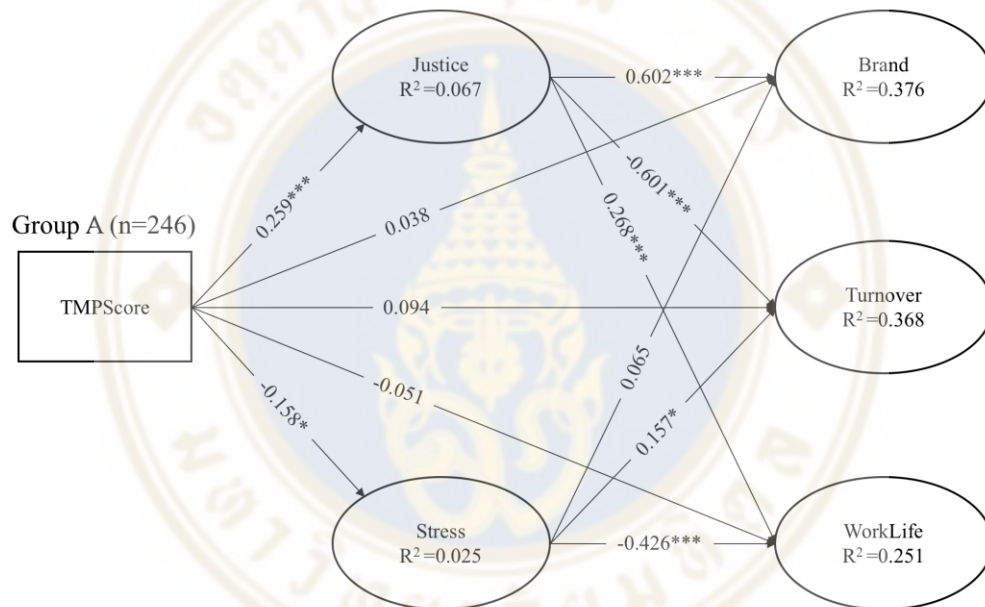


Figure 4.4 Structural model (Group A)

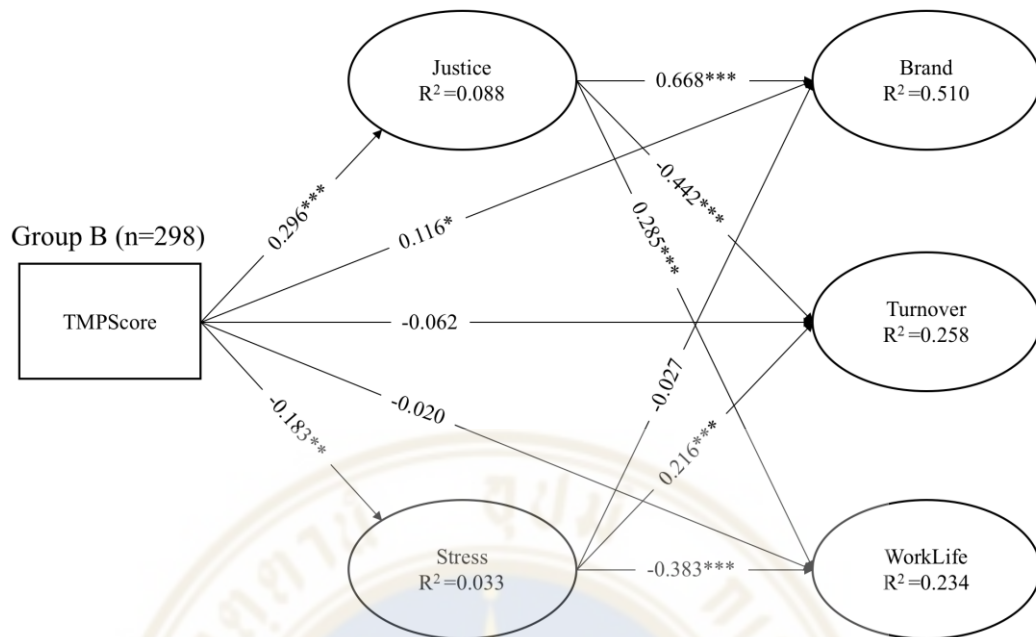


Figure 4.5 Structural model (Group B)

Table 4.17 Multigroup Analysis

Path Name	Group A Beta	Group B Beta	Difference in Betas
TMPScore → Brand	0.04	0.12*	0.08
TMPScore → Turnover	0.09	-0.06	0.16
TMPScore → WorkLife	-0.05	-0.02	0.03
TMPScore → Justice	0.26***	0.30***	0.04
TMPScore → Stress	-0.16*	-0.18**	0.03
Justice → Brand	0.60***	0.67***	0.07*
Justice → Turnover	-0.60***	-0.42***	0.18*
Justice → WorkLife	0.27***	0.29***	0.02
Stress → Brand	0.07	-0.03	0.09
Stress → Turnover	0.16*	0.22***	0.06
Stress → WorkLife	-0.43***	-0.38***	0.04

Note. TMPScore = perceived talent management practices, Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

Table 4.18 Specific Indirect Effects (Group A)

Indirect Path	Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	Standardized Estimate
TMPscore → Justice → Brand	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.15***
TMPscore → Justice → Turnover	-0.06	-0.09	-0.04	-0.14***
TMPscore → Justice → WorkLife	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.06***
TMPscore → Stress → Brand	0.00	-0.01	0.00	-0.01
TMPscore → Stress → Turnover	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	-0.02
TMPscore → Stress → WorkLife	0.02	0.00	0.05	0.05

Note. TMPscore = perceived talent management practices, Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

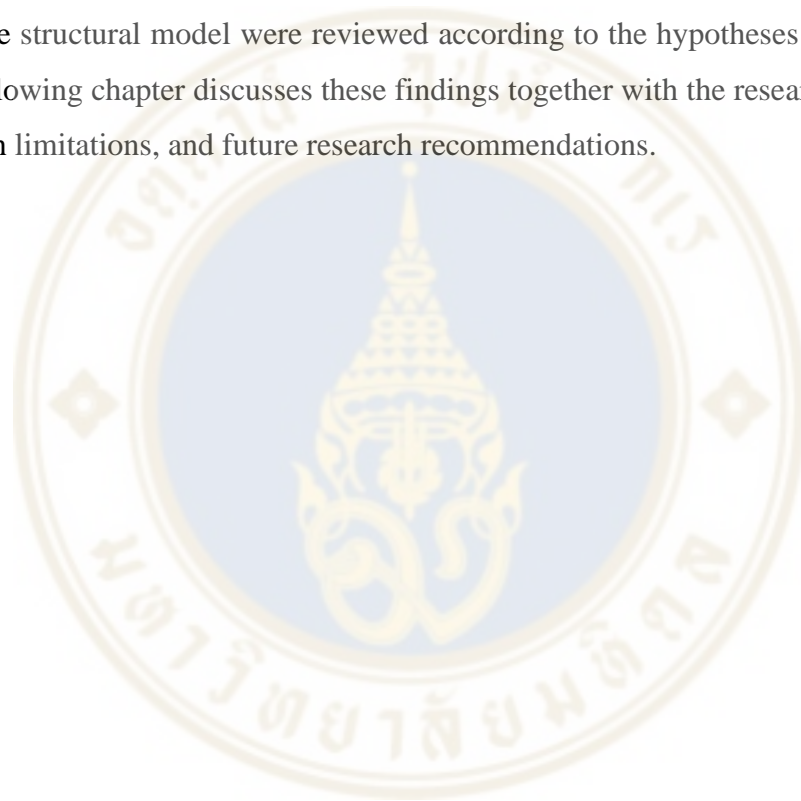
Table 4.19 Specific Indirect Effects (Group B)

Indirect Path	Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	Standardized Estimate
TMPscore → Justice → Brand	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.18***
TMPscore → Justice → Turnover	-0.04	-0.06	-0.03	-0.11***
TMPscore → Justice → WorkLife	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.08***
TMPscore → Stress → Brand	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00
TMPscore → Stress → Turnover	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	-0.03*
TMPscore → Stress → WorkLife	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.06*

Note. TMPscore = perceived talent management practices, Justice = perceived overall justice, Stress = job stress, Brand = employee brand identification, Turnover = turnover intentions, Worklife = satisfaction with work-life balance, and significance level: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

4.9 Summary

This chapter described the steps that were taken after the data had been collected for this research and presents the findings of the analysis conducted in this study. Preliminary analysis has been conducted to check for missing data, outliers, data normality, and data multicollinearity. The demographic profiles of the respondents has been discussed, along with the default measurement model, final measurement model, model diagnostics, and modifications, before finally presenting the structural model according to the steps in conducting SEM by Hair et al., (2009). The findings derived from the structural model were reviewed according to the hypotheses of this research. The following chapter discusses these findings together with the research implications, research limitations, and future research recommendations.



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to fill a research gap in the area of workforce differentiation in talent management by investigating the underlying mechanisms in employee reactions to talent management in both the elite (Group A) and non-elite (Group B) groups of employees. This chapter presents a discussion of the data gathered according to the research questions and objectives. Then, the research implications and limitations are presented along with areas for future research and the conclusion of this study.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

In Chapter 4, the findings of this research were presented. However, these findings are incomplete without an analysis of their contribution to the literature. Here, the hypothesis outcomes are discussed in the context of the academic literature review which was presented in Chapter 2 in order to understand how the findings fit within existing literature. The discussion focuses on consistencies and inconsistencies with prior findings, new contributions to knowledge, and how these findings can be interpreted, proceeding in the same order as the hypotheses were first presented and grouped by the main themes of the hypothesis statements.

5.1.1 Hypothesis 1: Employee responses to perceptions of talent management practices

Hypothesis 1 tested the responses of employees to their perceptions of their employers' talent management practices, including employee brand identification (H1_a), turnover intentions (H1_b), and satisfaction with work-life balance (H1_c). The test of these hypotheses did show that employees who perceive more talent management practices had higher levels of brand identification and lower levels of turnover

intentions. The results did not support the expected negative relationship between the perceptions of talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance. Instead, the relationship between the perceptions of talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance is a significantly positive one. Overall, while H1_a and H1_b were accepted, H1_c was rejected.

The relationship between employee perceptions of talent management practices and brand identification is somewhat unique, as no prior empirical studies have been conducted to investigate this relationship in the academic literature. As anticipated from the theoretical evidence discussed in Chapter 2, the results of this study have confirmed that a positive relationship exists between employee perceptions of talent management practices and brand identification, justifying the signaling theory (Spence, 1973). The findings of the current study support the idea that talent management practices are indeed signals representing the choices made by the organizations. From these signals, employees make sense of their employment relationship and alter their behavior based on their perceptions of the organizational investments they have received in line with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Sonnenberg, 2006; Sonnenberg et al., 2014). Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009) investigated the influence of internal branding on employee brand attitudes (i.e., brand identification, brand commitment, and brand loyalty) and found that internal branding has the most significant effect on employee brand identification. Also, employee brand identification has been found to have a positive influence on employee brand commitment, which is an antecedent of employee brand loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Reichers, 1985). In other words, talent management practices can be considered a component of the internal branding efforts of organizations that support the development of employee brand identification leading to brand loyalty.

It was not surprising that the negative effect was found to be significant in the relationship between employee perceptions of talent management practices and turnover intentions as it has been argued that this relationship is a notable factor in talent management (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Deery, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015). The retention of employees, especially those who are considered as talented, has always been a crucial element in talent management, and research has found that employees who perceive that they have been identified as talented (through increased exposure to talent

management practices) are less likely to have turnover intentions compared to those who perceive that they have not been identified as talented employees (Björkman et al., 2013).

Contradictory to the review in Chapter 2, the findings indicate that the relationship between employee perceptions of talent management practices and employees' satisfaction with work-life balance is positive rather than negative. Previous studies have argued that work-life balance may suffer as a result of talent management practices which encourage greater integration and identification with the employer at the expense of the self (Ashforth et al., 2000; Marescaux et al., 2013). Deery and Jago (2015) also argued that the higher levels of role overload associated with talent management could lead to an emotional drain and have a negative influence on work-life balance.

The positive relation might be due to the Pygmalion effect, which reflects a person acting on the expectations of another (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1965). The perceived exposure to more numbers of talent management practices might lead employees to think that their organizations have a high expectation of them, making employees feel better as they are more likely to be included in the company's talent pool. The Pygmalion effect might offset, or even replace, the emotional drains due to additional role overload, thereby making the relationship between employee perceptions of talent management practices and employees' satisfaction with work-life balance a positive rather than negative one. Similar to the relationship between employee perceptions of talent management practices and brand identification, no prior empirical studies have been conducted to investigate this relationship in the academic literature. Given that these relationships are rarely tested empirically, they should not be taken as comprehensive relationships. It is possible that there are mediating factors present in the relationship, and this possibility is investigated more in Hypotheses 2 and 3, which are discussed below.

5.1.2 Hypothesis 2: Mediation effects of justice perception

Hypothesis 2 investigated the potential mediation effects of the employees' overall perceptions of justice in the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee outcomes, including employee brand

identification (H2_a), turnover intentions (H2_b) and satisfaction with work-life balance (H2_c). There was evidence for partial mediation of all three of these relationships by overall justice perception, resulting in each of the sub-hypotheses of H2 to be accepted.

It should be noted that there has been very little empirical evidence from investigations into any of these relationships. The only empirical study that could be found during the course of this research was that of Gelens et al. (2014), who used the equity theory to investigate the effect of perceived distributed and procedural justice in relationship to talent management. The researchers of that study did find that distributed justice mediated the talent status-work effort relationship. However, they did not investigate the potential further effects of overall justice, unlike the present study. This has led to several researchers calling for more studies into the role of justice perceptions in the talent management context (De Boeck et al., 2018; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Painter-Morland et al., 2018; Swailes, 2013). This is one of the gaps that the current research has intended to fill.

This positive finding raises a deeper question about the role of organizational justice perceptions in talent management and how employers need to consider their talent management practices in light of their organizational justice obligations. The literature shows conclusively that talent management practices can easily lead to an inequitable working environment. For example, talent management creates an elite class of employees who have access to relatively higher wages compared to those not included in the talent group (Collings, 2014), as well as more favorable working conditions compared to those in the non-talent group (Marescaux et al., 2013). These inequities in the workplace can lead to considerable damage to the workplace environment (Meyers et al., 2017) and strong perceptions of unfairness and injustice in the workplace (Edwards, 2017). Ultimately, this can lead to a split between the included group and the excluded group in terms of overall justice perceptions – members of the included group may feel they are being treated fairly, while those in the excluded group may feel differently about the fairness of their treatment (Edwards, 2017). The potential of these differences is investigated in Hypothesis 4, which is discussed in the final section.

Under signaling theory, this imbalance in organizational justice perceptions signals that employees who are considered as talented are more highly valued than

employees who are not (Lepak & Snell, 1999). Previous studies have shown that these poor justice perceptions can have effects on employee outcomes like turnover intentions (Chin et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2010; Suurd Ralph & Holmvall, 2016) and employee satisfaction with work-life balance (Beauregard, 2014; Eaton, 2003; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). This study has confirmed that within the talent management environment, overall justice perceptions do influence these outcomes.

5.1.3 Hypothesis 3: Mediation effects of job stress

In Hypothesis 3, the effects of job stress on the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee outcomes was tested. This hypothesis was once again sub-divided to include the effects on employee brand identification (H3_a), turnover intention (H3_b) and satisfaction with work-life balance (H3_c). Job stress was not found to mediate the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification relationship, resulting in the rejection of H3_a. However, there was evidence to support a partial mediation effect of job stress on the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intentions and on the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance, allowing both H3_b and H3_c to be accepted.

The principles of role theory (Kahn et al., 1964) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggested that job stress would have a significant mediating effect between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification. Simply, it was expected that talent management would create an expectation for higher performance among those receiving rewards, such as special training or key assignments (Meyers et al., 2017), and that these employees would have a higher level of fear of failure within their role (Dries & Pepermans, 2008). Additional to the stress from conforming to the organization's expectations, it was anticipated that this group of talented employees could feel stress from trying to conform to the expected self-implications within their role, such as fabricating a persona to appear to have the right personality fit for the prestigious role they occupied (Dubouloy, 2004). This induction of a higher level of job stress could have a negative effect on employee brand identification, a precursor of employee brand loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Brown &

Peterson, 1993; Mak et al., 2010; Reichers, 1985). However, this turned out not to be the case, as there was no evidence that job stress had a significant mediating effect, and this raises the question of why this did not occur. One possible reason is the inclusion of both Group A and Group B employees in the testing of this hypothesis. Since Group B employees do not have access to the benefits of the talent management program, they also would not have the increased stress levels, causing the insignificance of these findings overall. This possibility is investigated through Hypothesis 4, which is discussed below.

On the other hand, job stress did partially mediate the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intention relationship. As with the other areas in this study, this relationship is one that has been under-investigated in the literature (Deery, 2009; Deery & Jago, 2015). When this relationship has been studied, it has been shown that job stress has both direct effects (Chen & Lien, 2008) and indirect effects (Chen et al., 2011) on turnover intention on its own. Therefore, the mere effect of job stress on turnover intentions was not a surprise. The value that this study adds to the literature is the demonstration that job stress does indeed mediate the effect of the number of perceived talent management practices on turnover intention. As discussed earlier under Hypothesis 1, this effect was expected to be significant, but was not. The mediating role of job stress, which as discussed in the previous paragraph could be higher in talent management environments, is one possible mechanism for why this mediating effect may not have been significant.

Job stress also partially mediated the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance. There was even less evidence for this relationship in the literature than for other relationships, with no studies found during the literature review that directly evaluated this relationship. However, there is prior evidence that job stress has a negative direct effect on work-life balance perceptions (Aziz & Cunningham, 2008; Bell et al., 2012). Therefore, the unexpected positive finding on the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and employees' satisfaction with work-life balance might be due to the mediation of both employee overall justice perception and job stress.

5.1.4 Hypothesis 4: Structural differences between Group A and Group B

Finally, Hypothesis 4 argued that there would be structural differences in the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee reactions when comparing Group A (employees who are included in the talent pool) with Group B (employees who are not included in the talent pool). The global invariance test confirmed that differences do exist in the reactions between the two groups and the examination of total effects supports the argument, hence H4 is accepted.

In analyzing each relationship in the structural model, however, the relationships in both models are observed to be rather similar, with the only exception being the direct effect between the number of perceived talent management practice and employee brand identification in Group B. Only 2 out of 11 path differences in betas were observed in the multigroup analysis (i.e., the relationship between overall justice perceptions and employee brand identification and the relationship between overall justice perceptions and turnover intentions).

Further examination into the specific indirect effects of each relationship revealed that both groups displayed a significant mediation effect of justice perception in the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and all employee reactions. This finding confirms that the mediating effect of justice perceptions in the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee reactions, that have been examined in Hypothesis 2, is prevalent in all employees. When the effect of justice perception is taken into consideration, the relationship between talent management practices and all employee reactions can be examined more clearly. More likely for all employees, it is through an individual's overall justice perception that the effect of the number of perceived talent management practices on employee reactions are determined.

An interesting observation in the differences between the two groups is that the mediating effects of justice perception on turnover intention is stronger for Group A than for Group B in the current study. One reason for this is that Group A may have higher overall turnover perceptions; after all, if an employee perceives himself or herself as being worth more, he or she will feel less obliged to remain with a certain employer as there is a higher possibility of making a beneficial move to a new employer (De Vos

& Soens, 2008; Rousseau, 2011). However, it is also highly likely that this is an effect of the differences in organizational justice perceptions between the two groups. The effects of talent management on establishing an elite group with access to more organizational resources and prospects can create conditions whereby the included group of resource-rich elites may have higher organizational justice perceptions than the excluded group (Collings, 2014; Edwards, 2017; Marescaux et al., 2013).

Next, the mediating effects of job stress in the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee reactions have been examined in Hypothesis 3. From the three sub-hypotheses, job stress was not found to mediate the number of perceived talent management practices and employee brand identification relationship (H3_a), but was found to mediate the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intention and the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance (H3_b and H3_c). Further exploring the relationships between the two groups, it has been discovered that the relationship is significant in Group B only while no mediation effects are present in Group A.

This could be a consequence of the Golem Effect, in which an individual's performance deteriorates if that employee perceives that his or her managers (or others) expect less of him or her than of others (Collins et al., 2009). However, it may also be due to increased job stress and the interaction effect of organizational justice perceptions (which were not tested directly). Furthermore, employees in the excluded group may perceive themselves as having fewer opportunities and less organizational support than those in the talent group (Dries et al., 2014), which could increase their overall job stress and, as a consequence, lead to higher turnover rates and other negative outcomes. This is entirely consistent with the principles of talent management, which do in fact grant fewer development opportunities and organizational resources and less overall support to those in the excluded group (non-elites) compared to those in the elite group. It is possible that companies are even offering job stress reduction resources, like stress management workshops, to the elites and not to the non-elites, which could not only fail to address but actually exacerbate the effects of job stress for employees in Group B.

5.2 Research Implications

The current study seeks to fill the gap in the understudied area of workforce differentiation in talent management by investigating the underlying mechanisms in employee reactions to talent management practices, the elite and non-elite groups of employees. The results from the analyses of the model have yielded insightful information with several implications. These implications are divided into theoretical implications and managerial implications, and will be discussed in the following subsections.

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

A unitarist managerial orientation dominates the existing talent management literature (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; McDonnell et al., 2017) but it is impractical to infer bottom-line employees' reactions to talent management through the investigation of human resource managers, line managers, and top management. Only a handful of studies investigate the perceptions of employees at the individual level and, additionally, compare the two groups of employees segmented by organizations such as the current study. This makes the results of the current study relevant to the questions raised as to "how and how well (and according to whom) TM really works in practice" (Thunnissen, 2016, p. 58).

A distinct lack of empirical evidence for the effects of talent management in the workplace has been observed as a major observation from the literature review (Chapter 2). This absence of empirical evidence includes the three employee reactions investigated here (employee brand identification, turnover intentions, and satisfaction with work-life balance). The novelty of this study's findings is that the relationships between talent management practices and these three employee reactions was empirically tested, offering value to the academic literature by demonstrating that the mechanism explained by the signaling theory and social exchange theory does exist. The signaling theory (Spence, 1973) and the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) predict that employees would respond positively when they perceive that their organizations have made a higher investment in them in the form of talent management programs and initiatives. This suggests that employees who have a positive perception of talent management practices would respond to these investments with higher employee brand

identification and lower turnover intentions. Indeed, the results show that employees with more positive perceptions of talent management practices had higher levels of brand identification and lower levels of turnover intentions. However, the results did not support the expected negative relationship between the perceptions of talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance. Instead, the results have indicated that this relation is a significantly positive one, posing a challenge to the boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) and questioning whether the Pygmalion effect might offset the emotional drains due to additional role overload according in cases of talent management.

This research has also investigated the effects of organizational justice perceptions and job stress within the talent management environment. There has been surprisingly little research into these two factors, despite the clear implications of talent management practices and their potential effects on both of these factors. This research showed that both organizational justice perceptions and job stress did play a mediating role in the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and employee reactions. Organizational justice had a partial mediating effect on all three relationships tested, while job stress had a partial mediating effect on both the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and turnover intention and the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and satisfaction with work-life balance. Although they have been only rarely tested previously in the academic literature (if at all), these relationships are important because, as shown from the results of this study, these are the intervening variables in the relationships between talent management practices and their outcomes. Moreover, differences have been identified between the employees who are included in their organization's talent pool and those who are excluded. The results from this study strongly support the idea that there is a need for academics to include both justice perceptions and job stress in studying the effects of talent management practices on all employees.

Apart from contributing empirically, the theoretical implications of this study extend much further into the current debate on whether talent management is a double-edged sword, as recent studies are increasingly posing critical and challenging arguments to the assumption that talent management leads to positive outcomes from

talented employees (Dries et al., 2014; Marescaux et al., 2013; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016). Supporters of talent management have argued anecdotally that it produces positive effects in the workplace, however, evidence to support these effects are lacking. This study contributes to the academic literature by empirically testing the effects of talent management practices. Overall results have shown a positive impact of talent management practices, supporting the optimistic view of talent management supporters. On the contrary to challenging arguments, the results of this study found that talent management has a *positive* relation on justice perceptions (higher fairness) and *negative* impact on stress (lower stress), in both Group A and Group B.

5.2.2 Managerial Implications

The research is also useful to practitioners seeking to understand the underlying mechanisms in employee reactions to talent management initiatives. As such, the results from this study can assist practitioners already using talent management, in planning improvements to their organizations' talent management programs, and also for those who are considering its introduction. The findings of this study raise genuine concerns for organizations that are hoping to use talent management as a way of positively influencing employee reactions. More specifically, this research identifies some serious implications for firms that are implementing talent management practices in the hope of achieving specific outcomes like higher employee brand identification, reduced turnover among their high-valued human capital, and employees' satisfaction with work-life balance.

From the results of this study, talent management practices are related to higher levels of employee justice perception. Even with workforce differentiation and the segmentation of employee into elite or non-elite groups, talent management still has positive effects on justice. This implies that employees in general, understand the exclusive perspective to talent management and deem the disproportionate distribution of organizational resources to be just. With the implementation of talent management programs, positive employee reactions are expected from this justice perception mechanism. It is also important to take note that fairness and transparency must be achieved in talent management programs in order for them to have the desired outcomes for employers. The organization as well as both employee groups need to have a

mutually aligned interpretation of what a fair and just talent management program is. Thus, internal communication and transparency is key in organizations, especially in the process of selecting those who will be included in the talent pool and receiving higher levels of organizational investments.

Stress is another important factor in explaining employee reactions to talent management practices. The results from this study have shown that talent management practices are related to lower levels of job stress. In other words, talent management programs reduce employee stress levels and in turn, reduces their intention to leave the organization and increases their satisfaction with work-life balance. This is observable in both employee groups. With job stress playing such a crucial role in talent management, managers should keep in mind that their expectations for employees should be suitable to their elite status; not too overwhelming for employees belonging in the elite group and not neglecting employees who are non-elites.

From the knowledge gained through this research, organizational investments in human capital can be sustained and the development of talented employees can be better managed, but it is essential that clear and regular emphasis be placed on ensuring the employees who are excluded from the organization's talent pool understand that they are also of significant value to the organization. Simply, talent management programs can have the desired effects on both groups of employees through effective management of fairness within the implemented programs and a policy of involvement, where the effects on both groups are considered.

5.3 Limitations of Research

To ensure that the results of the current study are fully utilized, one must first be aware of both the methodological and the substantive limitations of the research. Firstly, to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables of interest, the data for this cross-sectional research were collected at a single point in time, thereby providing a snapshot of the specific situation at that time only (Wall & Wood, 2005). Therefore, it is uncertain whether a similar study conducted in a different timeframe would yield similar results. There is also no denying that the research faced the issue of causality, and establishing correlation between two variables does not prove

that there are causal explanations. Additionally, reverse causality can be an issue if the researcher attempts to determine causal relations by implementing cross-sectional design.

Secondly, the data collected for this research are prone to the possibility of being exposed to common method variance (CMV), a common problem for behavioral research. CMV refers to the variance that is associated with the measurement procedure rather than the substantive factor of concern (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). It has the potential to influence the significance, magnitude, and direction of coefficients, inflating or deflating the estimated relationship and threatening both the reliability of the estimates and the validity of the conclusions made about the relationships between the variables under investigation (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

The third limitation is related to the measurement of perceived talent management practices. The scale by Sonnenberg et al. (2014) is deemed appropriate for use in this research as it is tangible at the level of individual employees. However, the items in the scale (e.g., coaching, development programs, cross-functional job assignments, job rotations, job shadowing, 360 degree feedback, and succession planning) are human resource practices that are associated with positive outcomes. It has no comparative or negative aspect to the measurement, for example, whether an employee is upset about not being exposed to certain practices or are envious about their colleagues receiving more opportunities to practices related to talent management. The *all positive view* of the measurement itself could have influenced the attitude of respondents in this study, resulting in an overall positive outcome of talent management. As the measurement of perceived talent management practices is the accumulation or sum of these positive outcomes, it is thus also debatable as to whether the measurement corresponds to the quality aspect of principled talent management practices.

Additionally, there are the substantive limitations of the results. Talent management is highly context dependent (Sparrow & Makram, 2015), but this research is limited to the exclusive perspective of talent management, in which it is assumed that some people are more talented than others and therefore more valuable to their organizations, leading to disproportionate investments or workforce differentiation. Therefore, the findings could be irrelevant to the inclusive perspective, wherein all

people are assumed to be talented or all employees are assumed to have specific talents that can be utilized by the organization. Regarding context dependability, there are also concerns about the generalizability of the results, as the current study investigates employee reactions and group differences of employees in only five organizations that are based in Bangkok, Thailand. The positive outcomes of this study can be limited to organizations in Thailand only or in countries with similar employee demographics and working culture. Moreover, all measurements used in this research has been greatly impacted by the Anglo-Saxon context, and therefore overall, prudence is advised when applying the results of employee reactions to talent management from this study to the whole of country or to the rest of the world.

Lastly, this research is limited to the focus on three employee reactions to talent management practices and two mediators, in which the R^2 are 0.08 for perceived overall justice and 0.03 for job stress. Even though the R^2 of the outputs of the model are 0.45, 0.30, and 0.25, which means that the model accounts for 44.5% of employee brand identification, 30.2% of turnover intentions, and 24.7% of satisfaction with work-life balance, perceived talent management practices account for 7.7% of perceived overall justice and 3.0% of job stress. This means that there are other antecedents for both overall justice and job stress that have not been included in the model. There is also a likelihood that the relationships between talent management and employee reactions are more complicated and that there are more variables of concern.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Compared to a cross-sectional research which examines data from a single point in time, longitudinal research measures data repeatedly across different periods of time (Menard, 2002) and can provide more insights into the detection of outcomes of talent management practices with higher levels of accuracy. Nonetheless, correlation is a pre-requisite for establishing a causal relationship and methodologically the results of this research could guide future studies of the causality of talent management practices that adopt longitudinal research.

Future studies may improve on the data collection procedures by collecting data from different sources to minimize the common method variance (Podsakoff et al.,

2003). Instead of relying on self-reported data only, the participants in this study were first identified by their respective organizations in order to determine the talent group to which the participant belonged. Following the observations of Gelens et al. (2014), this likely provides a reasonable degree of psychological separation as a means to minimize common method variance. Even so, future studies can find ways to include more sources of data or collect data at different periods of time in order to rule out this variance. For example, longitudinal research can be conducted to observe employees in both groups during the pre-implementation, during-implementation, and post-implementation phases of talent management programs.

Future studies may also focus on improving the measurement scale for perceived talent management practices and include both positive and negative elements in the measurement to ensure that both views are incorporated and presented to respondents. Additionally, a new scale can be developed with the knowledge gained from this study, in order to achieve a more holistic approach in measuring employee perception of talent management.

By comparing the results from organizations that adopt an exclusive perspective to talent management with those from organizations that apply an inclusive perspective, future research can also contribute to solving the dilemma faced by both academics and practitioners of which of the two opposite perspectives would have the biggest benefit on both the organizations and the employees. Future research can seek to identify and explore other employee reactions to talent management, such as psychological contract breach (Sonnenberg et al., 2014; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016) or employee engagement (Ashton & Morton, 2005; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Kim & Leung, 2007), in order to provide a more comprehensive list of reactions to talent management and extend empirical knowledge of this field.

In conjunction with this research, it would be interesting for the model to be investigated in a different setting (national level or regional level research) to enable an academic discussion on the similarities and differences in employee reactions from both employee groups in order to assist practitioners in developing sustainable talent programs that are beneficial to all employees and the organization itself.

5.5 Conclusions of the Study

Talent management is a phenomenon-driven field that has recently experienced significant growth through the attention received from both practitioners and academics. The volume of works in the talent management literature has expanded significantly over the years since the term first appeared in the spotlight. The current study has extended the knowledge of the understudied area of workforce differentiation in talent management by investigating the underlying mechanisms in employee reactions (i.e., employee brand identification, turnover intention, and satisfaction with work-life balance) to talent management practices among both the elite and the non-elite groups of employees. The mediating roles of the number of perceived overall justice and job stress on the relationship have also been examined and a comparison has been made between the results of the two groups of employees (Group A – employees who are included in the talent pool and Group B – employees who are not included in the talent pool).

An online survey was distributed internally by five organizations from various industries in Thailand, and a total of 544 completed responses (246 from Group A and 298 from Group B) were received. The data were analyzed through the use of SEM, in which a good model fit was achieved for both the measurement model and the structural model.

The findings show that all the relationships between employees' perception of talent management practices and employee reactions are significant. However, for satisfaction with work-life balance, there is a positive relation instead of an expected negative relation. The current study has suggested that there can be mediating interventions in the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and these reactions. Indeed, further investigations revealed that overall justice perception mediated all three employee reactions in this study, and job stress mediated the relationship between the number of perceived talent management practices and both turnover intentions and satisfaction with work life balance.

Under the assumptions of the RBV framework, the workforce is deemed to be segmented through the talent management process. Thus, employee reactions to talent management practices were further examined to compare the elite and the non-elite groups of employees (Group A and Group B). The findings indicate that there is a

difference between the structural model among the two groups. Although the mediation effect of overall justice perception on all three employee reactions was present in both groups, an interesting difference was in the mediating effect of job stress on the relationships between the number of perceived talent management practices and both turnover intentions and satisfaction with work life balance, was found to be significant in Group B only.

With the existing lack of empirical evidence on the effects of talent management in the workplace, the results of the current study have yielded insightful information with several theoretical and managerial implications. As a contribution to theory, the current study has extended the individual level empirical research in a field that is dominated by a unitarist managerial orientation (of human resource managers, line managers, and top management) in order to investigate bottom-line employees' reactions to talent management. The results have demonstrated that talent management practices are indeed signals representing the choices made by organizations, as expected from the signaling theory (Spence, 1973). The results of this study also support the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) in that positive employee reactions have been observed as responses to talent management initiatives. Nonetheless, the relationships are not simple and intervening mechanisms exist, raising the need for academics to include both justice perceptions and job stress in studying the effects of talent management practices on all employees.

Apart from being of interest to academics, the results of this study can also be of use to managers and organizations that are hoping to use talent management as a way of positively influencing employee reactions. In designing and implementing talent management programs, employers need to be aware that talent management initiatives alone might not lead to the favorable outcomes anticipated by the organization, and it is through the effect of increased justice perception and lowered job stress that positive employee outcomes can be achieved.

In appallingly short supply, talented employees have to be managed carefully. At the same time, it cannot be forgotten that all employees are affected by talent management programs. Attaching great worth and high potential to talent management, academics and practitioners alike yearn for programs that are beneficial to both employees and organizations. It is hoped that this research may provide a

stepping stone for future empirical studies of employee reactions to talent management to explore this field further, and that it may serve as a foundation for the development of a systematic, sustainable, and fair talent management program that benefits all employees and the organization as a whole under the exclusive talent management perspective.



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APPENDIX A
INFORMATION ON PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Company	Industry	Group A			Group B			Total Participants	Response Rate
		Link Sent	Response	Response Rate	Link Sent	Response	Response Rate		
A	Tele communications	120	66	55.00%	120	84	70.00%	150	62.50%
B	Food and Agriculture	100	78	78.00%	100	87	87.00%	165	82.50%
C	Personal care	80	58	72.50%	80	72	90.00%	130	81.25%
D	Hospitality	30	25	83.33%	30	30	100.00%	55	91.67%
E	Hospitality	30	23	76.67%	30	29	96.67%	52	86.67%
		360	250	73.10%	360	302	88.73%	552	76.67%



แบบสอบถามนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของ โครงการวิจัยนักศึกษาปริญญาเอก

วิทยาลัยการจัดการมหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล

ท่านสามารถติดต่อนักวิจัยหลัก นางสาวบุญทิพย์ บุญบำรุงสุข

ได้ที่หมายเลข โทรศัพท์ 08-607-34567 หรืออีเมล boontip.bon@student.mahidol.ac.th



This questionnaire is part of a doctoral research project conducted by a Ph.D. Candidate from the College of Management, Mahidol University. You are able to contact the researcher, Ms Boontip Boonbumroongsuk, at 086-073-4567 or email: boontip.bon@student.mahidol.ac.th

ข้อมูลส่วนตัวของผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยจะถูกเก็บรักษาไว้ ผู้วิจัยจะใช้ข้อมูลที่ได้จากแบบสอบถาม โดยจะนำเสนอเป็นข้อมูลโดยรวมจากการวิจัยเท่านั้นและจะไม่เปิดเผยต่อสาธารณะเป็นรายบุคคล แต่จะรายงานผลการวิจัยเป็นข้อมูลส่วนรวม แบบสอบถามนี้แบ่งออกเป็น 3 ส่วนและท่านจะใช้เวลาในการทำแบบสอบถามประมาณ 30 - 40 นาที

ขอเรียนว่าคอมพิวเตอร์ของท่านอาจไม่บันทึกคำตอบของแบบสอบถามนี้หากท่านยุติการทำแบบสอบถามกลางคัน

Personal information of all participants in this research will be kept confidential. All information obtained from this research will be used as a whole and individual responses will not be made available in any public way. This questionnaire contains 3 sections which will require approximately 30 - 40 minutes to complete. Please note that it is not advisable to stop/pause the survey half way through as your answers might not be saved on your computer.

ส่วนที่ 1: ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคล

Section 1: Personal Information

ท่านสามารถเลือกว่าท่านต้องการกรอกข้อมูลส่วนบุคคลในส่วนนี้หรือไม่

This section is optional.

ชื่อ Name: _____

อีเมล Email Address: _____

หมายเลขโทรศัพท์ Contact Number: _____

กรุณาตอบทุกคำถามตั้งแต่ข้อนี้เป็นต้นไป

From this section onwards, please answer **all** questions.

ส่วนที่ 2: ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

Section 2: Demographics

1. กรุณาระบุอายุของท่าน

Please select the category that includes your age.

- ต่ำกว่า 20 ปี / Under 20 years old
- 20 - 29 ปี / 20 - 29 years old
- 30 - 39 ปี / 30 - 39 years old
- 40 - 49 ปี / 40 - 49 years old
- มากกว่า 50 ปี / 50 years old and above

2. กรุณาระบุเพศของท่าน

Please indicate your gender.

- ชาย / Male
- หญิง / Female

3. ระยะเวลาที่ท่านทำงานในองค์กรนี้

How long have you been working for this organization?

- น้อยกว่า 1 ปี / Less than 1 year
- 1 - 2 ปี / 1 - 2 years
- 3 - 4 ปี / 3 - 4 years
- 5 - 6 ปี / 5 - 6 years
- มากกว่า 6 ปี / More than 6 years

4. กรุณาระบุระดับการศึกษาขั้นสูงสุดของท่าน

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- น้อยกว่าปริญญาตรี / Less than Bachelor's Degree
- ปริญญาตรี / Bachelor's Degree
- ปริญญาโท / Master's Degree
- ปริญญาเอก / Doctorate Degree

ส่วนที่ 3: แบบสอบถาม

Section 3: Questionnaire

1. ท่านได้รับโอกาสในการพัฒนาศักยภาพด้วยวิธีการใดดังต่อไปนี้จากองค์กรของท่าน กรุณาเลือกโอกาสทุกข้อที่ท่านได้รับ

(ท่านสามารถเลือกได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

Does your organization offer you the opportunity to make use of these practices?

(You can select more than one)

- ได้รับการสอนงานภายในองค์กร (Internal coaching)
- ได้รับการสอนงานจากภายนอกองค์กร (External coaching)
- ได้รับคำแนะนำจากผู้มีประสบการณ์ในการทำงานในฐานะพี่เลี้ยง (Mentoring/Buddy)
- โครงการพัฒนาต่างๆ ในองค์กร (In-house development programs)
- แผนการพัฒนาบุคลากรที่มีศักยภาพสูง (High-potential development schemes)
- หลักสูตรการพัฒนาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา (Graduate-level development programs)
- ได้รับการมอบหมายงานข้ามสายงาน (Cross-functional job assignments)
- การมอบหมายงานชั่วคราวในหน่วยงานอื่นหรือตำแหน่งอื่นภายในองค์กร
(Internal secondments - i.e. a temporary transfer to another job or post within the same organization)
- การมอบหมายงานชั่วคราวในหน่วยงานอื่นหรือตำแหน่งอื่นนอกองค์กร
(External secondments - i.e. a temporary transfer for a temporary assignment outside the organization)
- การโอนย้ายและหมุนเวียนงานไปหน่วยงานอื่นในองค์กร (Job rotation)
- การเรียนรู้วิธีการทำงานของพนักงานอื่น โดยการทำตามแม่แบบทั้งงานในหน่วยงานเดียวกันหรือต่าง
หน่วยงาน (Job shadowing)
- ปริญญาโทบริหาร (MBA)
- โอกาสในการไปศูนย์พัฒนาต่างๆ (Development centers)
- การวางแผนผู้สืบทอดตำแหน่ง (Succession planning)
- ศูนย์การประเมินผล (Assessment centers)
- การประเมินผลแบบ 360 องศา (360 degrees feedback)
- การเรียนรู้จากการปฏิบัติจริง (Action-learning sets)

กรุณาเลือกช่องที่ตรงกับระดับความคิดเห็นของท่านในแต่ละข้อ

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

2. ความเป็นหนึ่งเดียวกันกับ เอกลักษณ์ขององค์กร Employee Brand Identification	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Disagree	ไม่เห็นด้วย Disagree	ค่อนข้าง ไม่เห็นด้วย Somewhat Disagree	ปานกลาง Neutral	ค่อนข้าง เห็นด้วย Somewhat Agree	เห็นด้วย Agree	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Agree
ฉันภูมิใจที่จะบอกกับคนอื่นว่าฉันเป็น ส่วนหนึ่งขององค์กรนี้ I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ฉันรู้สึกถึงการเป็นเจ้าขององค์กรนี้ I feel a sense of ownership for this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ความรู้สึกภาคภูมิใจของฉันต่อแบรนด์ ขององค์กร ได้รับการเสริมสร้างด้วย ข้อความที่เกี่ยวกับแบรนด์ My sense of pride towards the organization's brand is reinforced by the brand-related messages.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ฉันมองความสำเร็จขององค์กรเหมือนเป็น ความสำเร็จของฉันเอง I view the success of the organization as my own success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
องค์กรของฉันเหมือนครอบครัวสำหรับ ฉัน My organization is like a family to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ฉันรู้สึกเป็นส่วนหนึ่งขององค์กรนี้ I feel belonging to this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
เวลาฉันพูดถึงองค์กรของฉัน ฉันมักจะใช้ คำว่า "เรา" มากกว่าคำว่า "เขา" When I talk about this organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
เมื่อมีคนให้คำชมเชยขององค์กรนี้ ฉันรู้สึก เหมือนเป็นคำชมเชยฉันเป็นการส่วนตัว When someone praises this organization, it feels like a personal compliment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. ความตั้งใจในการลาออก Turnover Intentions	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Disagree	ไม่เห็นด้วย Disagree	ค่อนข้าง ไม่เห็นด้วย Somewhat Disagree	ปานกลาง Neutral	ค่อนข้าง เห็นด้วย Somewhat Agree	เห็นด้วย Agree	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Agree
ฉันตั้งใจจะสมัครงานบริษัทอื่นใน ระยะเวลา 1 ปีนี้ I intend to look for a job outside of the organization within the next year.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ฉันมักจะคิดเกี่ยวกับการลาออกจาก งานในบริษัทที่ฉันกำลังทำงานอยู่ I often think about quitting my job at the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ฉันตั้งใจจะทำงานในบริษัทนี้ต่อไป ในอนาคต I intend to remain with the organization for the near future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. ความเครียดในการทำงาน Job Stress	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Disagree	ไม่เห็นด้วย Disagree	ค่อนข้าง ไม่เห็นด้วย Somewhat Disagree	ปาน กลาง Neutral	ค่อนข้าง เห็นด้วย Somewhat Agree	เห็นด้วย Agree	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Agree
งานของฉันมีความเครียดสูง My job is extremely stressful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ที่ทำงานของฉันไม่ค่อยมีอะไรให้ เครียดมากนัก Very few stressful things happen to me at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ฉันรู้สึกเครียดมากจากงานของฉัน I feel a great deal of stress because of my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ฉันแทบไม่เคยรู้สึกเครียดจากการ ทำงานของฉัน I almost never feel stressed because of my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. ความยุติธรรมโดยรวม Perceived Overall Justice	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Disagree	ไม่เห็นด้วย Disagree	ค่อนข้าง ไม่เห็นด้วย Somewhat Disagree	ปานกลาง Neutral	ค่อนข้าง เห็นด้วย Somewhat Agree	เห็นด้วย Agree	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Agree
โดยรวมแล้วฉันถือว่าฉันได้รับการปฏิบัติ อย่างเป็นธรรมจากองค์กร Overall, I'm treated fairly by my organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
โดยทั่วไปฉันสามารถวางใจได้ว่าองค์กรนี้ เป็นธรรม In general, I can count on this organization to be fair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
โดยทั่วไปฉันได้รับการปฏิบัติอย่างเป็น ธรรมในองค์กรนี้ In general, the treatment I receive around here is fair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
โดยปกติ วิธีการทำงานในองค์กรนี้ไม่ ยุติธรรม Usually, the way things work in this organization are not fair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ส่วนใหญ่แล้ว องค์กรนี้ปฏิบัติต่อพนักงาน อย่างเป็นธรรม For the most part, this organization treats its employees fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
คนส่วนใหญ่ในองค์กรนี้มักพูดว่าพวกเขา ได้รับการปฏิบัติอย่างไม่เป็นธรรม Most of the people who work here would say they are often treated unfairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

กรุณาให้คะแนนความพึงพอใจของท่านสำหรับข้อต่อไปนี้

Rate your level of satisfaction with these items.

6. ความพึงพอใจต่อความสมดุลในชีวิตการทำงาน Satisfaction with work-life balance	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Disagree	ไม่เห็น ด้วย Disagree	ค่อนข้าง ไม่เห็น ด้วย Somewhat Disagree	ปาน กลาง Neutral	ค่อนข้าง เห็นด้วย Somewhat Agree	เห็นด้วย Agree	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง Strongly Agree
วิธีการแบ่งเวลาระหว่างการทำงานและชีวิตส่วนตัว/ชีวิตครอบครัว The way I divide my time between work and personal or family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ความสามารถของฉันในการสร้างสมดุลระหว่างการทำงานและชีวิตส่วนตัว/ชีวิตครอบครัว My ability to balance the needs of my job with those of my personal or family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
วิธีการแบ่งความใส่ใจระหว่างที่ทำงานและที่บ้าน The way I divide my attention between work and home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
โอกาสที่ฉันต้องทำงานให้ดี และยังคงต้องรับภาระหน้าที่ในบ้านได้อย่างดีด้วย The opportunity I have to perform my job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties adequately.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ชีวิตการทำงานและชีวิตส่วนตัว/ชีวิตครอบครัวของฉัน เหมาะสมกันดี My work life and my personal or family life fit well together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

--- สิ้นสุดแบบสอบถาม ---

ขอขอบพระคุณท่านเป็นอย่างสูงสำหรับการมีส่วนร่วมในงานวิจัยนี้

--- You have come to the end of the survey ---

Thank you very much for your time and effort participating in this research





IPSR-Institutional Review Board (IPSR-IRB)

Established 1985

COA. No. 2017/03-078

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Title of Project: *Talent Management: The Outcomes of Differentiating the Workforce*

Duration of Project: *1 Year 1 Month (April 2017 - April 2018)*

Principal Investigator (PI): *Miss Boontip Boonbumroongsuk*

PI's Institutional Affiliation: *College of Management, Mahidol University*

Approval includes:

- 1) Submission form*
- 2) Research proposal*
- 3) Questionnaire*
- 4) Participant information sheet*
- 5) Informed consent document*

IPSR-Institutional Review Board (IPSR-IRB) met on 30th March 2017 and decided to issue the COA to the above project.

Signature

(Professor Emeritus Pramote Prasartkul)
Chairman, IPSR-IRB

Date:April 17, 2017

Valid from April 17, 2017 to April 16, 2018

Remarks

- 1) Upon the completion of this project, the PI should inform the IPSR-IRB of such progress.
- 2) The PI is obliged to notify any modification of the research project to the IPSR-IRB.

IORG Number: IORG0002101; FWA Number: FWA00002882; IRB Number: IRB0001007

Office of the IPSR- IRB, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University,
Phuttamonthon 4 Rd., Salaya, Phuttamonthon district, Nakhon Pathom 73170. Tel (662) 441-
0201-4 ext. 228