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Strategies and Challenges in Global Talent Management: Developing an Integrated Approach for Multinational Corporations

Master's thesis in
International Business

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Global Talent Management (GTM) is an emerging and highly regarded field, which focuses on the efficient management of the human capital of the organization to promote competitive advantage. This thesis offers a comprehensive examination of global talent management, aiming to bridge the conceptual gaps within the field and propose an integrated GTM framework approach suitable for multinational corporations (MNCs) in GTM implementation. The thesis highlights the strategic importance and nature of GTM. Through a systematic literature review the thesis collects some of the various challenges MNCs face with GTM and elements and processes the comprise GTM systems. As a result of the extensive discussion of the GTM system and factors of human resource management the thesis presents an integrated framework approach to GTM. The thesis presents theoretical contributions by bridging gaps in literature of offering comprehensive discussions from definitions to the GTM system and providing an integrated approach to promote future research avenues. This work contributes to the theoretical and practical discourse on GTM, proposing a multifaceted perspective that considers organizational, cultural, and ethical dimensions for advancing talent management globally. Practical relevance is drawn from the use and benefits of clarifying GTM definition and boundaries in addition to the integrated framework approach that involves various stakeholders in multiple ways. Ultimately the thesis provides discourse in GTM concepts without neglecting its limitations to offer excitement and opportunities for further research.

Keywords: Global Talent Management, International Human Resource Management, Talent Management, Multinational Corporations

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Kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien johtaminen on nouseva ja arvostettu ala, joka keskittyy henkisen pääoman tulokselliseen johtamiseen kilpailuedun kehittämiseksi. Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma tarkastelee kattavasti kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien johtamista ja pyrkii selvittämään alan käsitteellisiä puutteita sekä esittämään monikansallisille yrityksille soveltuvan yhtenäisen viitekehyksen kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien johtamiselle. Kattavassa kirjallisuuskatsauksessa esitetään yleisimpiä haasteita, joita kansainväliset yritykset kohtaavat kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien johtamisessa, sekä elementtejä ja prosesseja, joista näiden järjestelmät koostuvat. Tarkastelemalla kattavasti kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien ja henkilöstöhallinnon tekijöitä tutkielma tarjoaa integroidun viitekehyksen kansainvälisten kykyjen johtamiselle. Teoreettisella tasolla tutkielma pyrkii täydentämään kirjallisuudessa esiintyviä aukkoja kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien johtamisen määritelmille ja tarjoaa integroidun lähestymistavan jatkotutkimuksille. Tämä tutkielma tarjoaa kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien johtamisen ajatuksenvaihdolle monipuolisen perspektiivin, joka huomioi eri osa-alueita, kuten esimerkiksi organisatorisia haasteita, kulttuurillisia seikkoja ja eettisiä näkökulmia. Käytännön merkitystä voidaan ammentaa eri sidosryhmien rooleista ja hyödyistä, jotka on sisällytetty järjestelmän eri osa-alueisiin ja huomioitu kunkin osa-alueen toteutuksessa. Lopuksi tutkielma tarjoaa, rajoitteensa huomioiden, herätteitä kansainvälisten kyvykkyyksien johtamiseen tavoitteenaan innostaa ja mahdollistaa aiheen jatkotutkimuksia.

Avainsanat: kansainvälisten kykyjen johtaminen, kansainvälinen henkilöstöhallinnointi, monikansalliset yritykset, kykyjen johtaminen

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1 Introduction

1.1 Global talent

The prosperity of global companies is crucially dependent on how they address the growing trends of globalization and the various challenges that come along with it. The integration of global economic impact in terms of globalization has affected the diversity of the workforce and added multiple dimensions of multiculturalism correlated to organizational cultures that did not exist prior and now must be accounted for (Inegbedion et al. 2020, 1). The impact of growing emigration and immigration cannot go unnoticed within human capital and talent flows (Tung 2008, 469) which requires additional mitigating and arranging talents in organizations. There have been many triggers for companies to compete over talented individuals, such as globalization and changing trends in the global world, in terms of attracting and retaining talent, as these individuals are competent in working in multicultural environments, and geographical contexts (Scullion et al. 2010; Luo 2016, 37), characteristics and individuals that are much sought after in today's business world. These types of characteristics are much needed if multinational companies are seeking both global and overall success. Many of the challenges that multinational corporations (MNCs) face are directly correlated to human capital challenges, which is why not only practitioners, but academics are more interested in the phenomenon of global talent management (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 131).

Talent Management (TM) is stated to become a focus area for both academics and practitioners in the second half of the 1990s (Vaiman & Collings 2014, 2; Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 110) due to events such as the War for Talent and the rhetoric of human strategic management in terms of organizational success (Scullion et al. 2010, 105, Vaiman & Collings 2014, 2). Various global forces across national borders persist to present challenges for organizations that challenge the traditional employment models due to continuously expanding diverse workforce (Beechler & Woodward 2009, 280). While the War for Talent was coined over two decades ago, it has been identified that the issues related to it are still highly relevant and topical to this day (Bonneton 2023, 1) with even more pressing challenges the world faces today.

While globalization and cross-national operations offer opportunities for firms, they equally raise global talent challenges, characterized, and include issues such as talent shortage, cost-related concerns in removing talent, relocation, and obtaining competent

talent wherever in the world with lower wages (Schuler et al. 2011, 507). The industrialization and rapid economic growth have not only spawn development within industries across the board but additionally, created millions of new jobs that were completely novel (Vance et al. 2013, 987) adding on to the existing hurdles. These offer firms opportunities to systematically use global talent management practices to solve rising problems and challenges they may face (Guthridge et al. 2008).

1.2 Research gap

The field of global talent management (GTM) is still a comparatively new field of study as well as the operational and strategic disciplines that come along with it (Schuler et al. 2011, 4). One of the main challenges to this day in terms of GTM is the absence of intellectual boundaries and academic rigour in terms of its concepts (Fernandes et al. 2023, 10). It comes as no surprise that the concept has been frequently criticized for a lack of a clear definition and “theoretical development in a global context” (Schuler et al. 2011, 5). The insufficient and limited definition is not the only issue, since there is also disparity among the scope of the field and the goals it aims to pursue (Lewis & Heckman 2006, 139). In addition, to talent management being a developing field, a main concern is the need of more conceptual elaboration (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 102) to tackle these aforementioned challenges. GTM is still inadequately understood as a process, practice, and the impacts it has, which make it increasingly challenging to execute as a strategy (Thite et al. 2023, 133) for organizations and put into practice. One of the main challenges and limitations within the field has been the lack of work in academic research to provide practitioners guidance and information for managerial work (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1772).

Global talent management is said to have two main predicaments. Firstly, scholars need to build consensus and identify a common meaning of both the theoretical and empirical perspectives. Secondly, the field needs to be separated from international human resource management as a field of its own. (Schuler et al. 2011, 6) The developing field is filled with disputes due to ambiguity, some of them include whether talent management is related to managing the talent of all employees or specifically the highly talented individuals with high performance (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 173) but also a clear agreement between researchers on when and how talent management has emerged as a topic, also contribute to the case (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 145). Not only has talent management

increased its popularity as an academic field, but additionally the speed has been one of the fastest growing academic topics (Collings et al. 2015, 233).

The benefit of this type of research has been stated often from a practical viewpoint as relevant topics such as “attracting, identifying, developing, mobilizing and retaining key employees” are crucial to the context of MNCs today (Vaiman & Collings 2014, 1) but as mentioned above the need for theoretical input is much desired.

1.3 Background of global talent management

Before introducing the research questions, the following sections present a brief overview of the main discussion concerning GTM and its input talent. These sections provide a general understanding before introducing the methodological component of the thesis, which is presented early on due to the iterative process that was adopted in the work.

1.3.1 Conceptualizing talent and talent pools in the context of global talent management and international context

Talent is often synonymous with individuals regarded as high-performers and high-potentials (Ewerlin 2013, 281). The proportion of high-value talent and employees varies across organizations (Stahl et al. 2012, 26) and is typically coined as a small percentage of the workforce (Swales 2013, 33). It can further be defined as employees who consistently exceed performance expectations and show the potential for further growth (Ewerlin 2013, 281), an outcome and compilation of knowledge, skills, and personal efforts (Björkman et al. 2013, 197). The potential extends beyond leadership roles to encompass specialized areas within the organization (Collings & Isichei 2018, 168). The concept of potential talent draws from insights in organizational behaviour and industrial and organizational psychology research (Vardi & Collings 2023, 663). In an international context such as MNCs, talents are those with cross-cultural adaptability, flexibility, and resilience (Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2056). International talent is highly valued by MNCs (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1448). Global talent comes in various forms, including host country and third-country nationals (Farndale et al. 2010, 164). Talents not only acquire knowledge but also leverage it effectively (Abeuova & Muratbetkova-Touron 2019, 848), emphasizing the significance of experience.

Talents are then grouped into talent pools, representing the collective human capital and skills within the organization or MNC (Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2056). Furthermore,

the value of global talent pools is stressed as a strategic means to efficiently manage the global talent supply chain. The establishment and coordination of these talent pools should be intricately linked to the MNE's strategic vision and international distribution (Collings et al. 2019, 560).

Despite extensive research, talent as well remains conceptually fragmented across academic disciplines (Vardi & Collings 2023, 661). It is important to note that not all positions require top-tier talent or A-players, as this may not always be financially feasible or sustainable (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1766) which is where the importance of effective management comes in. The field is under scrutiny not only for the lack of rigor and mismatch of definitions (cf. Thite et al. 2023, 133) but also questions of whether it is inclusive to the whole workforce or exclusive, aiming for just the high achievers and “A-players” (cf. Li et al. 2023, 3207; Wickham et al. 2021, 957; De Boeck et al. 2018, 200). The overarching goal of GTM with this talent is to create a balance of performance and potential (Aston & Morton 2005, 30) as the general view and tendency of GTM discussion is human capital centric (Crane & Hartwell 2019, 82). This now leads to the brief introduction of how this input is managed and the systems it is inputted in.

1.3.2 Brief explanation of global talent management

Historically TM emerged within the field of human resource management (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 793). While employment decisions were traditionally evaluated solely based on cost, this approach has evolved (Collings & Isichei 2018, 177). Early TM efforts focused on predicting, managing, and planning staffing needs in alignment with business requirements (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 110). Contextually, both GTM and TM have emerged in response to the War for Talent, as organizations compete for highly skilled individuals amidst talent shortages (Chambers et al. 1998; Tarique & Schuler 2010, 124; Farndale et al. 2010, 162). This challenge has been particularly pronounced for MNCs (Ewerlin 2013, 280), as seen in the U.S. where talent demand has outpaced availability (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1762). The talent gap, or talent deficiency, further intensifies this issue (Kim & McLean 2012, 571). Moreover, the War for Talent has expanded beyond domestic borders, fuelled by countries' migration policies favouring immigrants, as observed in Australia, Canada, the UK, Germany, and the USA (Khilji et al. 2015, 237). However, it is important to recognize that the current labour and skill imbalance necessitates a nuanced approach, moving away from the notion of a "war" (Farndale et

al. 2010, 162). Global talent shortages have underscored the significance and utilization of GTM (Preece et al. 2013, 3458).

As the world globalizes due to increased overseas investments, the importance of global talent increases (Kim & McLean 2012, 567) as indicated prior. GTM is of vital importance to the success of MNCs in the global economy in terms of international business strategy (Thite et al. 2023, 133) and a broad concept that can be adopted in versatile manners (Farndale et al. 2010, 167). The essence of GTM is that through the efficient management of human talent within a global context, results in the efficient management of the organization's knowledge capital (Vaiman et al. 2015, 282). Both the competitive nature and uncertainty of the global business environment have increased the importance and surfaced GTM (Nnenna Onwugbolu & Mutambara 2021, 216).

The need for talents is highlighted especially in cases, industries, and organizations becoming knowledge-based (Deif & Van Beek 2019, 870) and the rise of the knowledge-based economy of today (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 144). Research points out the connection of talent management with regard to the improvement of intellectual capital in MNCs (Chatterjee et al. 2023, 79). Simply stated, GTM is the management of talent or talented employees within the MNC (Li et al. 2023, 3210).

The shift of perspectives is based on the idea that competitive assets are not solely possessing physical assets, but rather superior human capital has brought on the focus of high potential and talent that can benefit organizations immensely (Amankwah-Amoah 2020, 343). Some of the foundational theories highlight the idea of GTM as a system that conducts and facilitates promoting global talent to fill critical positions within the MNC such as the higher management (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 144). Talent management has often been coined synonymous with human capital management (Stahl et al. 2012, 26) for these reasons.

Some of the most common patterns within the workforce affecting the need for TM solutions include demographic, economic, socio-political, and technological changes that have significantly impacted the labour market (Tucker et al. 2005, 2). While the global talent challenges have existed for a few decades, the struggle still exists to maximize the global talent that is characterized as strategically significant by the impact on firm competitiveness (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 89). GTM has been phrased as being challenging specifically in MNC contexts (Bonneton 2023, 5; Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1762).

Talent management has often been surveyed by executives as a clear challenge and lack of preparation (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1762). GTM also reflects the shift from competition of employers from country and national levels to regional and global scales (cf. Sparrow et al. 2013, 1778).

Some basic assumptions of TM are based on two outcomes and debates which imply that there is a positive effect with individuals recognized as talent and that TM creates differences among the workforce with individuals who are classified as talent and individuals who are not (De Boeck et al. 2018, 206).

1.3.3 Defining and illustrating global talent management and systems from traditional human resources

Within the field of GTM, challenges arise from the lack of clear definitions, according to researchers (cf. Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1763; Sparrow & Makram 2015, 249). Mitigating GTM processes face hurdles due to the broad range of issues and complexities involved, as noted in previous studies (Stahl et al. 2012, 25). Additionally, there remains a lack of consensus on what constitutes GTM (Cerdin & Brewster 2014, 248). Commonly, GTM systems encompass tasks such as identifying, selecting, deploying, developing, and retaining talent internationally to secure sustained competitive advantage (Cappelli 2008, 1-3; Scullion & Collings 2011, 6). Scholars suggest viewing GTM partially as a set of organizational routines and processes that support human and social capital advantages, with routines representing processes like identifying and managing global talent (Collings 2014, 257).

The thesis uses examples of both TM and GTM, where GTM is specifically defined as the global dimension and scope of TM (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 111). TM is in some cases also referred to as Global TM (Bonneton 2023, 5) and the processes as global TM processes (De Boeck et al. 2018, 201) which is why the thesis in some cases may refer to both GTM and TM. Figure 1 illustrates how this thesis and many other scholars present GTM and the system approach (cf. Lewis & Heckman 2006, 140-141). GTM system is an interconnected layer of elements and processes that lead to the GTM outcomes.

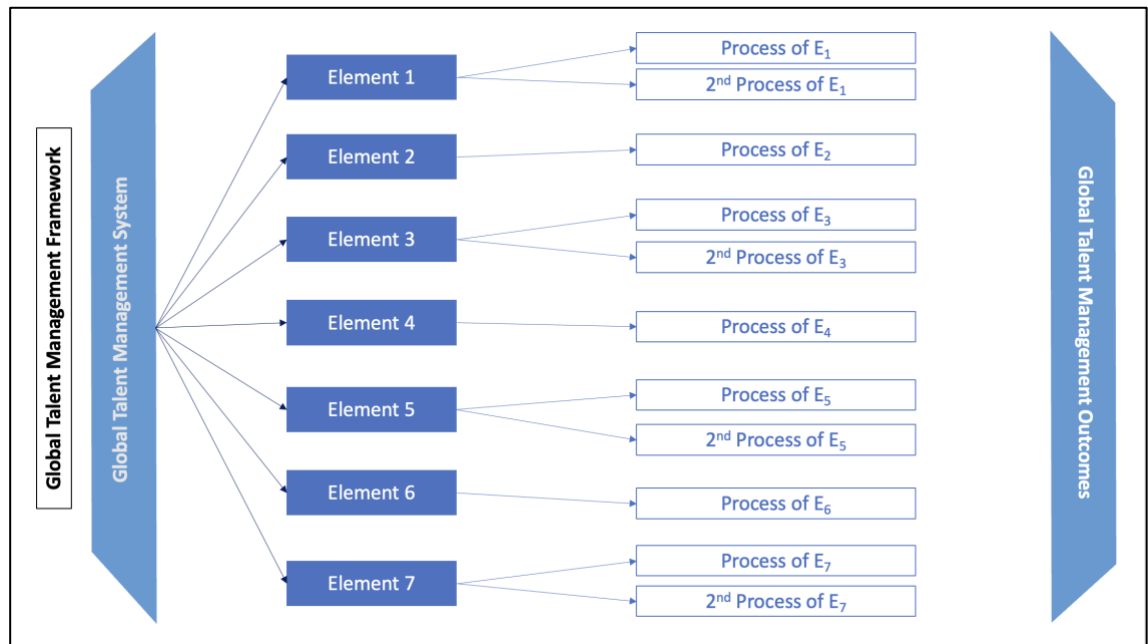


Figure 1. Global talent management system layers.

The disconnect between GTM and the definition of talent has been raised as a point of concern (Preece et al. 2013, 3459; Sparrow & Makram 2015, 249). Previous frameworks have identified global talent challenges, including ensuring the right numbers, positions/location, competencies, motivation, and price (Schuler et al. 2011, 507-510). A broad definition of TM includes activities like identifying, selecting, recruiting, developing, and retaining talents aligned with strategic company goals (Al Ariss 2014, 5). Some elements attributed to GTM include recruitment, training, performance management, and succession planning (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1944). Both industries and organizations implement talent management strategies involving attracting, selecting, developing, deploying, engaging, and retaining talents (Nnenna Onwugbolu & Mutambara 2021, 218).

GTM has often been associated with various branches of human resource management and they often face confusions, however, another approach of sustainable human resource management also shares similar characteristics of linking strategic human resource management to the idea of sustainable practices of impact on people management and both human and financial outcomes (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1944). The contribution of unique and new insights from previous human resource management is still fairly unknown (McDonnell et al. 2010, 150) similar to GTM. Another attribute is that GTM generally covers a wider geographic scope with its processes, differing from traditional human resource management (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 800). A simplified approach to

understanding GTM is the attraction, recruitment, development, and retention of a specific segment of highly qualified individuals from the global labour market (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 800), differing from general HR which emphasizes the entire workforce within the organization (cf. Collings & Mellahi 2009; Scullion et al. 2010).

1.4 Research questions

The thesis explores global talent management and its components of elements and processes and relate this to how it addresses typical challenges of the field in order to create an integrated framework for MNCs to approach GTM systems. In conjunction, the thesis contributes to existing research and theory by bridging gaps in the current knowledge by the approach of a systemic literature review. The purpose of the thesis is strongly correlated with the chosen methodology since the case where research is still fragmented and not as cohesive, a systemic literature review can be beneficial in collecting and gathering knowledge in addition to not only collecting existing data but synthesizing it as well. (Clark et al. 2021, 215)

The significance of research can be described as twofold. The academic spectrum and the one that applies in practice to real-life cases. Literature suggests that organizations still struggle with global management challenges when it comes to talent, and a similar challenge to the academic spectrum is to provide more research bodies to communicate and report these findings to managers about the topic (Vaiman & Collings 2014, 16; Vardi & Collings 2023, 661). Many of the challenges that multinational corporations face is directly correlated to human capital challenges, which is why not only practitioners, but academics are more interested in the phenomenon of global talent management (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 131; Bonneton 2023, 5; Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1762). These indications provide a robust basis for what the thesis proposes and aims to achieve.

The thesis is intended to provide useful information in terms of what global talent management consists of as well as for professionals such as human resource development research in terms of the topic or professionals within the field. To apply the knowledge, it is important to first construct and build GTM elements theoretically, which is what the thesis likewise attempts to achieve.

In an effort to answer the outlined research gap, the main research focus of the thesis is to concentrate on the challenges and concepts of GTM in order to create an integrated

approach on how MNCs can implement GTM systems. The thesis is guided by the following research question: *How can the elements address the challenges to form an integrated approach to GTM framework?* The question is split into three sub-questions:

R1: What elements does GTM consist of?

R2: What are the challenges of GTM?

R3: How do the elements of GTM interact?

The first sub-question outlines what constitutes GTM and elements that belong to the GTM system. The concepts are important to this thesis because as mentioned the definition and scope of GTM, have been disputed and remain unclear and vague. The second sub-question addresses the struggles of GTM by outlining the challenges it faces and lastly the final question poses how the challenges and elements interact and can be addressed by various factors and operators.

Chapter 1 introduced the topic and importance of GTM and why more research on the matter is necessary from a theoretical and managerial perspective. Additionally, the extension of Chapter 1 coined some of the key concepts and theoretical foundations required to understand prior to conducting further research on GTM. Chapter 2 among its subheadings introduce the methodology of how the research approach was suited with answering the research questions, as well as the evaluation process. Chapter 3 and 4 addresses the theoretical concepts and findings of the literature review addressing the research questions. It is key to bear in mind that the thesis was an iterative process, which implies that chapter 3 and 4 both combine some of the pre-screening materials and the findings of the systemic literature review.

2 Methodology

The methodology chapter of this thesis is dedicated to detailing the systematic literature review design that underpins the research. The objective of this section is to clarify the rationale behind selecting this method as particularly for the research questions of this thesis. In addition, chapter 2 will highlight the distinct characteristics of the chosen methodology. It will articulate how this approach is tailored to the research objectives, followed by a thorough explanation of the data collection and compilation processes. Subsequently, the chapter will discuss the strategies employed for data analysis and interpretation. The final section is devoted to establishing the criteria for assessing the quality of the research findings. To conclude, the chapter will set forth the criteria for evaluating the overall research in terms of its reliability and validity, ensuring that the scholarly work meets the highest standards of academic rigor.

2.1 Research approach

The systemic literature review, in general terms, is an overview of the existing knowledge and literature on specific topics (Fisch & Block 2018, 103) and an iterative process is especially beneficial to unfamiliar and novice domains (Lavallée et al. 2013, 181) such as GTM. Since one of the existing limitations and criticisms of GTM was the lack of connection between knowledge and definition, the systematic literature review can bridge and present the existing knowledge. Since it presents existing knowledge, it also can present gaps and where more research is needed. A literature review is a narrative account of information available and accessible (Jesson & Lacey 2006, 140). The systemic literature review approach was chosen because it is said to aid in delivering overviews and synthesizing existing theoretical concepts to provide insight on a meta-level (Snyder 2019, 333), which, in the case of GTM, is beneficial due to the fragmented nature of even its definition and general concepts of what it consists of.

The research approach is outlined in three distinct stages and eight common steps (Xiao & Watson 2019, 102). The thesis followed these processes, initially as a planning stage that included the foundation and formulation of the overarching question, detailed in the first chapters, following the selection and search of appropriate studies to synthesize and analyse (Xiao & Watson 2019, 102). Finally, the findings were reported by a suitable reporting measure (Xiao & Watson 2019, 102). The general process of a systematic

literature review is outlined below in Figure 2, which the thesis aimed to replicate and follow similarly.

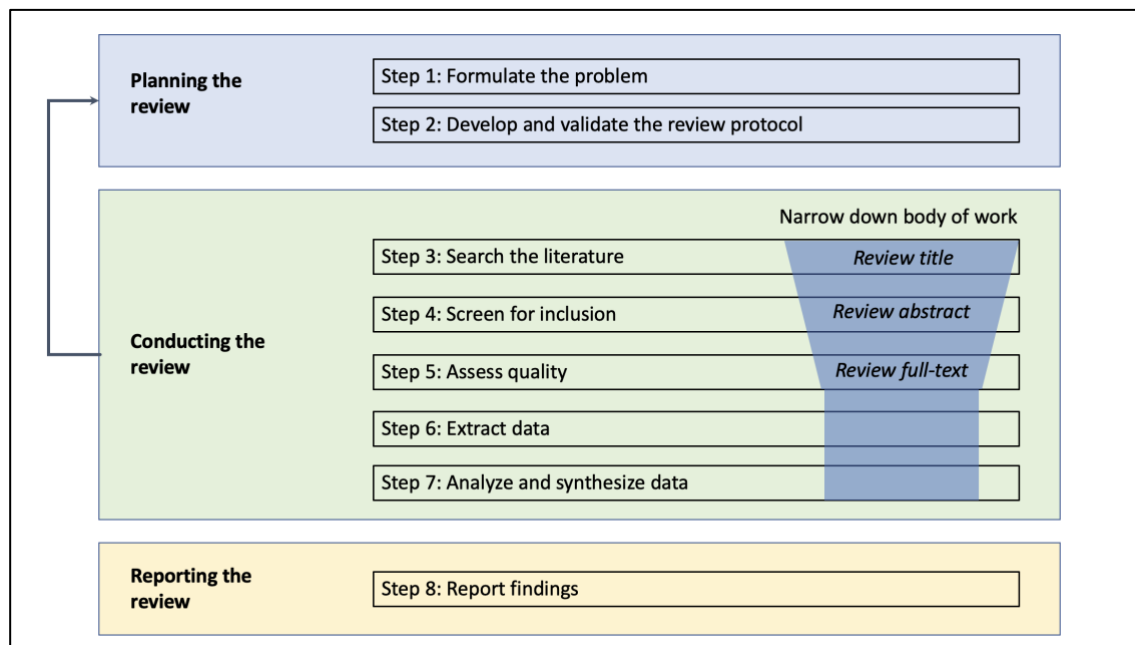


Figure 2. Process of systematic literature review (modified from Xiao & Watson 2019, 103).

The process of a systemic literature review in Figure 2 reflects the main steps and procedures taken in the research approach (Xiao & Watson 2019, 103). Because of the clear explanation and process, this thesis similarly followed this type of outline. In addition, the process ensured recommendations such as one of the critical factors and measures that needed to be taken into consideration was narrowing not only the topic but the scope and literature in order to avoid having too large of a selection (Xiao & Watson 2019, 102) which were essential steps in order to execute the thesis rigorously and successfully. These steps were also incremental in assessing relevancy and inclusion and exclusion, which occur in the conducting phases. Like the outline in Figure 2, Snyder (2019, 336-337) outlines four distinct phases that need to be taken in a systemic literature review: (1) designing the review, (2) conducting the review, (3) analysis, and (4) write up of the review. Combining these two processes of research, which in most cases support one another, offered a thorough research process that multiple authors have identified.

The first phase included the proposition of why the review is helpful and its purpose. It correspondingly included the definition and depiction of the research question and focus. The second phase followed up once the purpose, research question and approach were decided in the actual operation of the review. One primary action point in this phase was curating and testing the search terms and creating the search strings in the appropriate

search engines. Once the final sample was selected, there was a standardized manner in how the data was abstracted and used from every article, per recommendations. Data abstraction, in this case, transpired in the form of authors, year publications, topic and type of study, as well as the findings, which can be defined as descriptive. This step required careful consideration when abstracting data to ensure reliability and quality. Separate inclusion and exclusion criteria were created that allowed for data selection and remained transparent in the research process. This criterion is presented later in the chapter. The last phase was the production of the written work, which is a crucial form of communicating the thesis findings. One central idea that should clearly be stated is the motivation of the thesis as well as the need for it, which has been indicated earlier as GTM is a relatively new field that lacks rigour and precise definitions and requires further development in the field (cf. Schuler et al. 2011, 4; Lewis & Heckman 2006, 139).

Within research that is based as a phenomenon, binding theory and curating boundaries offer a proper foundation for future research and has been done in the case of TM studies (Dries 2013, 275), which is why this research approach not only strengthened existing studies but adds value to the relevantly new field. As a phenomenon, GTM is an exciting topic of research because, as with any new phenomenon, it requires explanations, and the emerging nature depicts this (von Krogh et al. 2012, 279), which is additionally another reason why the chosen methodology of a systemic literature review was selected.

2.2 Data collection

In order to utilize the literature review as the sole methodology, there needed to be proper processes to ensure the accuracy, precision and trustworthiness of the research and its findings (Snyder 2019, 334). Data was collected for the thesis by choosing and appraising data, in this case, journal articles. Once the critical step of narrowing a focus (Denyer & Tranfield 2009, 681), which in this case had been conducted earlier, one could start searching and narrowing appropriate data. In this particular occasion, the thesis focuses on existing literature on global talent management and talent management in a global context. A significant measure for this stage was finalizing the research question and sub-questions. Since many scholars highlighted the lack of a clear definition of GTM and TM, the question stemmed from the processes and elements of GTM and what type of purpose it serves. These questions led to the final research questions previously presented.

Identifying research began with scoping databases and manually searching for existing studies and journal articles. The database used for the database search was EBSCO Business Source Complete, as it claims to include over 1,100 articles and more in comparison to other well-respected databases (Business Source Complete 2023). This database was deemed suitable as well because in order to remain a credible systematic literature review, coverage needs to be ensured so that all relevant studies are included (Denyer & Tranfield 2009, 684). To benefit from the database most proficiently, a search string was needed to generate the required data to match the research focus. The goal of the search string is to strike a balance between being highly sensitive, yielding a high proportion of relevant articles, and highly specific, which inclines that have a low number of irrelevant articles (Petticrew & Roberts 2006, 81-82). Some of the exemplary search terms are listed in Table 1 that were utilized in the iterative process.

Table 1. Proposals of search strings used.

Search string proposals and ideation:

(+"Global Talent Management" OR "GTM") AND
 (+"interactions" OR "interaction" OR "interact" OR "interacting") AND
 (+"elements" OR "activities" OR "components") AND
 (+"challenges" OR "obstacles" OR "difficulties") AND
 ("case study" OR "analysis")

("Global Talent Management" OR "GTM") AND ("relationships" OR "components" OR "barriers") AND ("qualitative analysis" OR "qualitative study")

("Global Talent Management" OR "GTM") AND ("interactions" OR "elements" OR "challenges") AND ("case study" OR "comprehensive analysis")

The proposal search strings stated in Table 1 indicate how the thesis yielded the relevant data and ended up with the final search string. The search string used for the research was as follows: ("Global Talent Management*" OR "GTM*" OR "talent management strategy*" OR "International Human Resource Management*" OR "Strategic human resource management") AND ("talent management in global context*" OR "global talent process*" OR "global talent system*" OR "elements in global talent management*" OR "challenges in global talent management*" OR "strategies for global talent management*" OR "factors affecting global talent management*" OR "best practices in global talent management*" OR "global talent mobility*" OR "cross-cultural talent management*" OR "multinational talent management*" OR "talent management challenges in cross-border organization*" OR "global talent*")

A vital concept of the research is "talent management", "talent management processes", "global talent management processes", and "international global talent management", which had to be included in the search string in one form or another and were deducted from previous study key words utilized in the theoretical foundations (Chapter 1) section. Synonyms for talent management were found in a scoping review and included options such as: "talent acquisition" and "talent development", among others, if the search string was too narrow. The operator AND is essential to include as it connects terms and topics that might not be under the name "global talent management" and offers articles that were written prior to when the term was generalized as a joining operator. In addition, the operator OR was also considered in the cases where search strings proved to be too limited to incorporate all possible relevant search strings. However, many articles may also be irrelevant in content or scope, so it was important to remain critical when narrowing down the data. Search strings were reviewed throughout the research process and modified when results were deemed irrelevant or too narrow. Some limit functions were also used to maintain manageable search results, such as language and publication year being no earlier than 2000, as well as having the search terms in either title, abstract or keywords. All search results had to be peer reviewed as well.

The data collection included some criteria of inclusion and exclusion for the data, such as relevancy and inclusion of the search term in some manner, peer-reviewed and written in English (cf. Denyer & Tranfield 2009, 684) as well as contextual requirements outlined in the data collection procedure in Figure 3. These requirements have specific justifications for why they need to be included in terms of quality and credibility. Another purpose of Figure 3 and the data collection section is to improve repeatability, a foundation of systematic literature reviews (Lavallée et al. 2013, 175). In addition, relevancy is considered regarding applicability to the research question. SCImago rating was conducted on the journals if any questions arise, based on the journal name to ensure the quality of the journal in terms of credibility of the review. Figure 3 outlines the data collection procedure and the process of elimination with the studies included in the review. Starting off with the fundamental search with the developed search string (included as Appendix 1) to the final 84 articles included in the review (list included as Appendix 2).

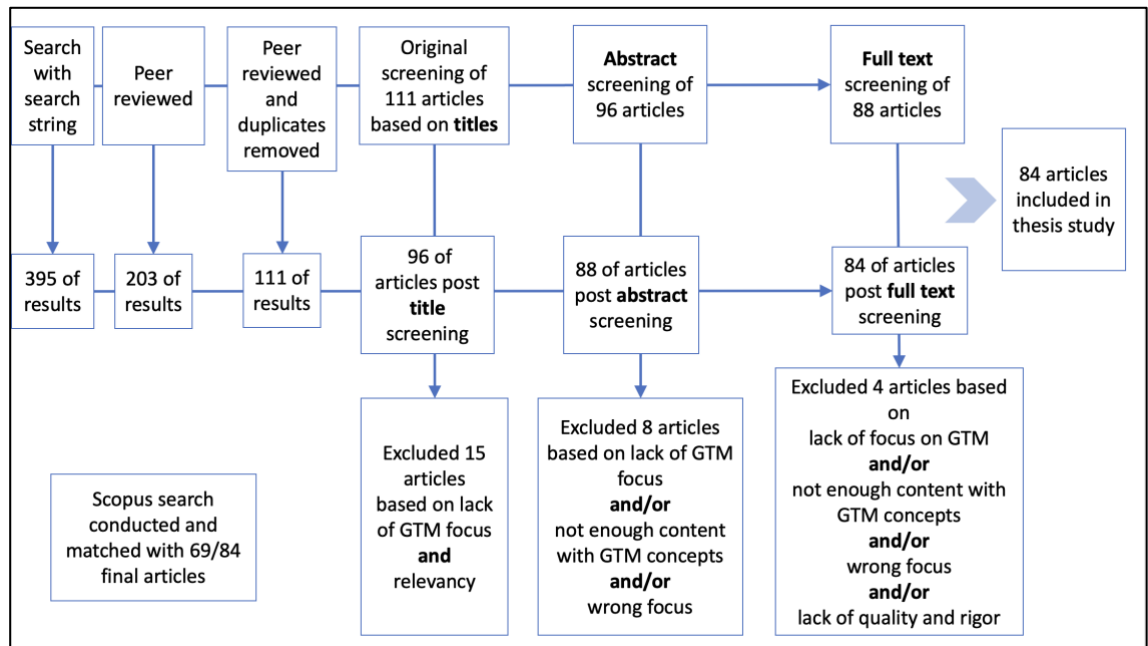


Figure 3. Data collection procedure.

The screening process of the data is highlighted in Figure 3 and includes the general phases within data selection, as well as the reasonings as to how the sample pool came about. Some of the precautions taken into account at this stage were done in order to improve validity and credibility (Booth et al. 2012, 19). Firstly, a specific occurrence that can happen in a systemic literature review is what is referred to as selection bias (Booth et al. 2012, 19; Nightingale 2009, 382), which is when the researcher selects studies that conform with their own beliefs. This threat was addressed in the thesis by having explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria (Figure 3) along with a transparent and comprehensive search process outlined in Chapter 2, all of which constituted and comprised a systematic method of selection. Additionally, another search result was conducted on Scopus to confirm that relevant articles were chosen and appeared from the search, where all except 15 articles were duplicated, confirming that the search string is transferrable to other databases. Due to the iterative process and nature of the research gap secondary data was used, however, the iterative process should mitigate some issues due to its benefits on synthesis and consolidation research bodies (Lavallée et al. 2013, 180) as well as maximize existing research on GTM.

The data collected included certain characteristics such as certain authors who have significantly contributed to literature Collings, Scullion, and Farndale appeared the most and notable is that authors contributed over several years such as Collings from a span of 2009 to 2019. Additionally, two journals Journal of World Business and International

Journal of Human Resource Management were dominantly represented in the data set. Common themes based on the key words were the challenges of GTM, the integration of global mobility with GTM, and the impact of GTM on organizational and individual performance. The distribution of article publications spanned from 2007 to 2023, with a peak in publications occurring in 2023, where 12 articles were published included in the study. Otherwise distribution was fairly even with a smaller peak in 2013 with 9 articles. This 2023 peak potentially suggests a strong development or re-emerging interest in the field, indicating that GTM as a field of research throughout the period is either expanding or maintaining a strong, established interest, and thus represents a continuation to the previous publications and advancements. Additionally, many articles covered the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which could influence the peak and timeline.

With the preliminary surface level examination of the data the thesis moves on to the actual analysis process including the coding used and more about the sense-making process in order to fulfil the purpose of a systematic literature review.

2.3 Data analysis

Analysis of data happens after it has been extracted and done by organizing according to the review method (Xiao & Watson 2019, 107). Data extracted from the chosen data pool is guided by the research question (Popay et al. 2006, 9), which in this case entitles that elements of GTM and its challenges are guiding themes of data acquired and themes listed in the search strings. The general idea was to depict understanding and information through a process of coding themes in relevant articles that consist of fitting concepts and key theoretical outlooks that can then be synthesized into relatively new insights and potential propositions (Watson & Webster 2020, 129). An example of potential propositions was deducted from descriptive themes that arose from the review and can then be derived into analytical themes (Thomas & Harden 2008, 7).

Once data was collected, an Excel spreadsheet (Appendix 2) was created with particular tabs to document the findings and keep track of all necessary components. When analysing individual data, all necessary information was documented throughout the process to keep the task manageable. The spreadsheet contained critical information such as title, author(s), publication date and journal where the article was found. Furthermore, the Excel sheet summarised general themes and concerns addressed in the paper as well as the main idea of the paper often expressed in the abstract. In order to maintain a logical

scheme for analysis, the articles were handled based on the publication date from oldest to newest published article. In the case that there were several articles within the same timeframe, the articles were secondly arranged in alphabetical order based on the author.

One reminder from the literature that ties in with this specific thesis was focusing on the concepts rather than the studies (Fisch & Block 2018, 105; Watson & Webster 2002, 16). This approach suggested including a concept-centric approach to identify debates and discrepancies, which can be done by utilizing the themes and elements of GTM talent planning, talent identification, talent attraction, talent acquisition, talent development, talent deployment and talent retention (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93). Concepts have been coined as foundations and building blocks for building and testing new theories (Watson & Webster 2020, 130), which is why the thesis focused on how these concepts are emphasized and utilized within existing literature on GTM processes. These concepts aligned with the research purpose as the chosen data analysis approach of a narrative review and especially the thematic synthesis, which strives to extend existing theory, creating new insights and perspectives by nature (Xiao & Watson 2019, 97, 100).

The data analysis approach followed some of the objectives and characteristics of a narrative review, which has four potential objectives. Firstly, the narrative review aims to build and develop theoretical models, which is fitting in the case where definitions are mixed and the GTM field lacks conformity in what is meant by the terms and curating an integrated framework approach. Connected to this confusion is the second potential goal, which seeks to clarify and offer perspectives on controversial or complex matters. This is the nature of GTM due to the ambiguity creating disagreements on how the topic should be approached. The third aim of narrative reviews is to supply information that would aid practitioners in adopting optimal practices, which further nurtures the ultimate goal of GTM practices to manage a global talent pool for organizational success effectively. Finally, the last objective of narrative reviews is to introduce novel perspectives on critical and emerging topics, which is to provide discussions for future research. (Rumrill et al. 2001, 166-168) To support the narrative take on analysis, a thematic synthesis was also taken into the approach due to the nature of bringing together findings based on concepts, which in this case are themes and the earlier mentioned elements (Booth et al. 2012, 226).

Thematic analysis is standard for qualitative studies and especially ideal for any research aimed at uncovering insights through interpretations and characterized as a structured process in data analysis (Alhojailan 2012, 10). The process of conducting the thematic synthesis follows the steps from Thomas and Harden (2008, 4-7), who outline three stages of thematic synthesis. The three stages can be outlined as (1) coding the data, (2) developing descriptive themes, and (3) generating analytical themes. The codes were modified: t planning, t identification, t attraction, t acquisition, t development, t deployment, t retention, and general GTM elements, if the article did not have a sole focus on certain elements but rather a general or holistic coverage.

The first stage is stated as coding the text, which in the example is done in line-by-line coding (Thomas & Harden 2008, 4). To render meaningful results and findings, coding was done with the help of NVivo software, which is helpful in not only coding, but also grouping and clustering data based on themes and ideas (Alhojailan 2012, 9). A coding rule (Aguinis et al. 2018, 98) was based on the elements found in the literature (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93) mentioned earlier in the data collection section. The coding rule was to ensure that the research aimed to be guided by synthesis rather than a summary, which is a common pitfall researchers encounter when conducting systemic literature reviews (Watson & Weber 2020, 130). One coding process was to first categorize the codes based on the descriptive themes, which later were formed into analytical themes (Barnett-Page & Thomas 2009, 3/11) based on the GTM elements and the processes that go with them. This coding is similar to the process and follows the scheme of stage two, stated previously, where descriptive themes are developed by advancing the codes into clusters and finding relationships between themes (Thomas & Harden 2008, 6). An example of this is illustrated in Figure 4, which outlines the purpose and goal of the second stage in the thematic synthesis in terms of finding relationships between the descriptive themes and concepts/themes (Watson & Webster 2020, 131; Thomas & Harden 2008, 6).

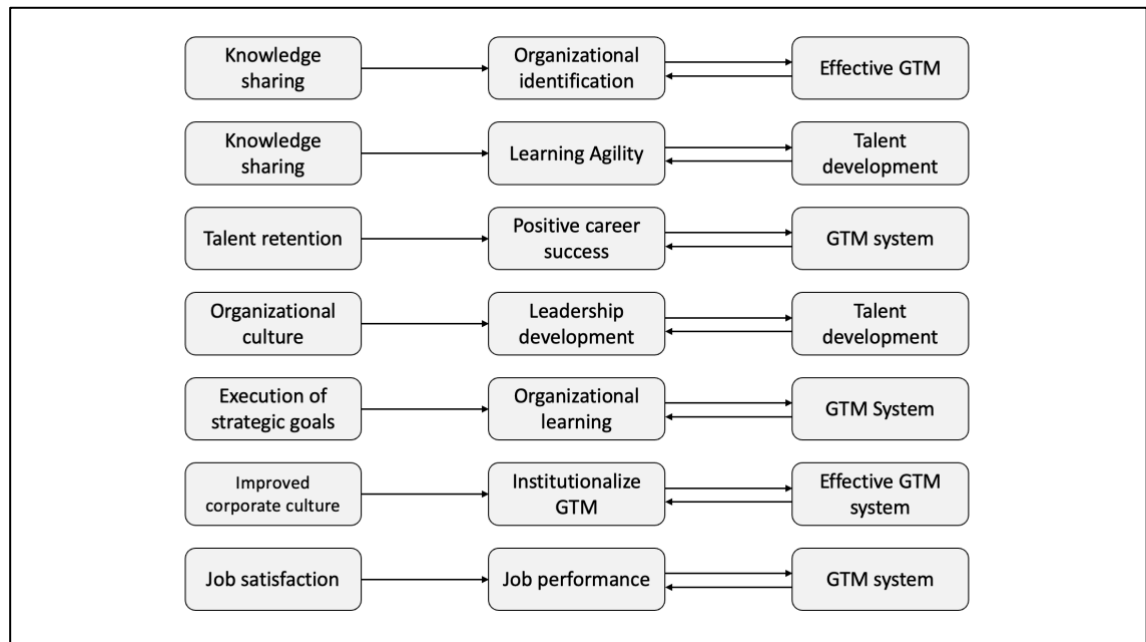


Figure 4. Element relationship map (modified from Watson & Webster 2020, 131).

The purpose of coding and cultivating the codes into clusters, later to descriptive themes, was to yield meaningful relationships and translations between data (Thomas & Harden 2008, 4-6). Simply stated, data was coded based on the elements of GTM and later clustered as analytical themes to link the relationships of various elements and processes. This purpose is also critical in the final stage of the thematic synthesis outline, phrased as the third step, which is to generate analytical themes from the data. The point of this last stage is the crucial component of synthesis as the core function and notion of exploring beyond the known scope of literature and providing novel aspects. An example of this not listed in Figure 4, is for example the observation of how TM is a transitional force of empowering talents and how the power shifts from the organization to the individual and their potential (Pachura 2019, 278). Thematic synthesis is not only challenging to explain in detail but is often dependent on the judgements and insights of the researcher. (Thomas & Harden 2008, 7) This is why step 8 in Figure 2 was not undermined and is listed as reporting that the review thoroughly addresses these pitfalls.

To follow recommendations to improve methodological transparency, all constructs used were defined as measures that were used in order to allow the reader to draw independent conclusions about the validity and distinctiveness of measurement indicators and constructs, which is crucial for ensuring the reliability and reproducibility of the study conclusions (Aguinis et al. 2018, 97).

2.4 Evaluation of the thesis

A strong systemic literature review is likely to derive a fruitful stream of research (Clark et al. 2021, 230) and an indication of high quality in terms of comprehensiveness of literature and concentration on concepts in the work (Watson & Webster 2002, 15). One quality criterion for systemic literature includes themes of depth and rigour, replicability, and usability. The review should be easily replicated and provide benefits and value to practitioners and scholars (Palmatier et al. 2018, 4-5). Depth and rigour connect to how and why articles are included or excluded. Two downfalls are included in this criterion: when a systemic selection process is not used or when the author fails to synthesize, organize, or critically evaluate the articles used. These guidelines are connected to this thesis by guiding systematic analysis and synthesis of articles that explore various aspects and details of GTM, illustrating how a carefully curated selection process enriches the research landscape within talent management and avoids the pitfalls of insufficient synthesis or lack of critical evaluation.

Replicability involves providing detailed criteria for what is included or excluded, enabling others to duplicate the study. Furthermore, the analysis and data extraction methods must be clearly and thoroughly described to facilitate this process (Palmatier et al. 2018, 5) and this is applied in Figure 3 and the data analysis section. The difference between a systemic literature review and a general narrative literature found at the beginning of most studies lies in replicability and a process that is described as scientific and transparent (Tranfield et al. 2003, 209). Similar concepts and the importance of replicability are provided by transparency within research especially systematic literature reviews (Depraetere et al. 2021, 670). Transparency is stated to act as a continuum, meaning that studies can fall between a spectrum of either high or low transparency, as the depth and detail of the research explain decisions and steps taken during the research process, also known as methodological transparency (Aguinis et al. 2018, 84) which is indicated throughout this chapter by explicitly explaining the methodological process.

This means that when evaluating the research, an essential aspect is based on the explanations and degree of detail explicitly stated to the reader. A pivotal role is in inferential reproducibility, which applies to researchers reaching not similar results but instead emphasizing similar conclusions, which is why transparency plays a key role and can have a critical impact (Aguinis et al. 2018, 84-85). This highlights the importance of

the coding and thematic connections presented in Appendix 2 and Figure 4 as well as the detailed explanations in chapter 2. A significant measure that is also taken to account for these concerns is clearly stating the research focus and aim because it allows other researchers to adopt a similar perspective and mindset, as well as objectively measure if any assumptions have played a role in reaching the research goals (Aguinis et al. 2018, 93). Chapter 1 not only outlines the research questions but also presents a landscape of GTM and the preliminary information about it.

Usability refers to the benefit of the research. As literature reviews often act as foundational knowledge, there must be clear definitions and explanations of concepts, constructs, and theories, among others. The authors suggest an integrated conceptual model to organize cited works and, in general, emphasize the importance of figures and tables (Palmatier et al. 2018, 5). An alternative way to look at usability is in terms of applicability; since the prior criteria refer to the strength of evidence, this criterion alludes to how robust are the findings and proposals in a practical context (Booth et al. 2012, 154), while the research has a theoretical and academic focus, it is essential to keep in mind that ultimately the results should yield benefits that down the line imply to those who are in daily contact of these practices and processes. One potential approach to this is providing theoretical frameworks and synthesis that can be produced for probable propositions to test in practical settings, in this case managers and executives in large MNCs to efficiently manage globally dispersed talent.

A unique feature of a systematic literature review that gauges its success is its ability to provide readers with insightful information on the subject and inspire them to consider innovative contributions to the topic and further the field's development (Palmatier et al. 2018, 5). This implies that the reader should not only have a clear understanding of what is meant by GTM and its current state but also an eagerness and clarity of what should be done next and what is left to discover. This applies to the basis that literature reviews serve as a “benchmark” for readers and, hopefully, future research (Watson & Weber 2002, 20).

A limitation in a sense is the manner in research since it has been highlighted that one main avenue for further research is within empirical studies (Bonneton et al. 2022, 228) which is something that is not depicted within this research. While the aim is to combine and synthesize data (Fisch & Block 2018, 103) the thesis runs risks of subjectivity, bias,

and limited time and resources. As the research was conducted by a single researcher there is limited time and resources that affect the number of publications chosen in the review. Selection, language, and publication bias were mitigated by a clear inclusion and exclusion criteria and transparency within the chosen literature. Access to materials was provided through databases of the University of Turku, which is why EBSCO was selected, as it included a variety of articles that were peer reviewed and provided full access and details. The systemic literature review provided challenges in synthesizing various articles and data that were both qualitative and quantitative which raised the problem in the variability and heterogeneity of studies, however, this was partly the reason for choosing the specific methodology.

Chapter 3 and chapter 4 combine and further present the relevant theoretical framework and GTM systems. The thesis was done by an iterative manner, which is the reasoning of combining these two chapters. The combination of the two allows for a strong understanding of the developments within the field and in regard to the research questions.

3 Conceptualizing global talent management systems and the ecosystem

This section provides a theoretical foundation for the study by commencing with the most commonly adapted origins of GTM as well as the most widely used definitions. The section later goes on to describe the processes and elements related to addressing the importance of GTM systems. Talent is conceptualized and explained in detail as the portrayal of GTM systems. The chapter also includes some of the findings based on the iterative process mentioned earlier, that appeared in the literature review.

Chapter 3 and 4 delve into the extensive body of literature reviewed from 2007-2023 including various methodologies from single case studies to comparative analysis papers and qualitative studies. All peer-reviewed articles were available in English and had various perspectives and approaches to GTM from a country-level perspective or context based or focused on a specific element of GTM and TM, or process such as global mobility. Several authors appeared more than once in the review (examples such as Collings, Scullion, and Farndale) and certain journals such as *Journal of World Business* and *International Journal of Human Resource Management* were widely represented.

3.1 Understanding talent as an input of global talent management systems

The following sections delve further into the discussion of talent. How is talent defined and then further classified and grouped into talent pools. The latter part concentrates on a general debate of talent identification and ethical problems related to it.

3.1.1 Talent and talent classification processes

Talent is often phrased as the “lifeblood of organizations” (Silzer & Church 2009, 213) which coins the pivotal role and impact it has on MNCs and their operations. When considering talent certain questions arise from how it should be considered. Talented individuals are suggested to be better prepared and equipped to build and foster strong internal networks and human career capital also known as knowing-whom career capital (Bonneton et al. 2022, 211), which refers to “attachments, relationships, reputation, sources of information and mutual obligations that we gather as we pursue our careers” (Inkson & Arthur 2001, 51).

A similar type of confusion and mismatch of how talent is referred to can be said to happen in TM literature itself, as one of the critical issues within the field is defining and operationalizing talent itself (Vardi & Collings 2023, 662). Valid questions such as: is talent referring to people as subjects or rather solely characteristics, which would be objects? Besides, it is important to consider whether talent can be mastered or if it is a naturally gifted ability. (Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013, 291) The importance of defining what talent fulfils lies in the fact that it provides a guideline for how employees are to be developed, designing specialisations, and designing learning programs, which make up for vigorous processes and policies within organizations (Tansley 2011, 266). Talent also needs to be defined by either the motivation and potential it brings or the output and outcome it generates (Vardi & Collings 2023, 670).

Talent is often coined as capital for the organization (cf. Dries 2013, 275) and can be categorized as four forms of capital: human, social, political, and cultural. Human capital refers to knowledge, characteristics and how these translate into economic value through labour and is also listed as “knowledge, information, ideas, skills and health of individuals” (Becker 2002, 3). Social capital is considered the entire resources that through membership contribute to the organization's network. Political capital includes one's reputation, and how one within the organization is able to legitimize and build support within the network. Cultural capital ties in the habits and traditions that are passed within the organization and transmitted. (Farndale et al. 2010, 164-165) All these conditions of capital have in common the factor of serving as an asset to an organization, which is why they typically are of interest and especially how to maximise them as best as possible. Managers in large MNCs are said to require multiple forms of capital (Farndale et al 2010, 163).

A basic and general definition of talent is individuals who possess “superior mastery of systematically developed abilities or skills” (Gagné 2000, 67) as well as employees that rank at the top of the field in terms of capability and how well they perform (Stahl et al. 2007, 4). Talented individuals are often characterized as motivated and the work they perform is mediated by work motivation, organizational commitment, and extra-role behaviour (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 5). Talent does not refer to the entire workforce of the organization, and generally, there is a consideration of these individuals as either potential current or future leaders (Mäkelä et al. 2010, 135). Talent has also been defined as individuals who consistently exhibit outstanding skills and accomplishments in a wide

range of activities or within a specific, specialized area, as well as consistently showcasing a high level of competence that implies the ability to excel in untested situations (Williams 2000, 35). The concept of potential is again a common topic when it comes to talent definitions and a popular term among scholars. A talented individual deemed with high potential is considered as an individual possessing the competence, capabilities, dedication, and ambition to advance and excel in higher-level, more pivotal roles (Tansley 2011, 272), this can also be phrased as potential of possibility and promise of what can be expected of an individual (Silzer & Church 2009, 214).

The question then surfaces as to how these individuals are identified or classified. Mäkelä et al. (2010, 135) provide a two-folded process of how MNCs classify internal talent. In brief, the process consists of *performance appraisals* which are experience-based based, classified as on-line search. The second stage consists of a *talent review* and *talent pool inclusion* by the managerial decision-making party. Traditional standards also include common actions that affect whether an individual is considered a talent, such as performance appraisal ratings done by line managers/superiors (Mäkelä et al. 2010, 135) however, in some cases, it neglects earlier mentioned fits and potential. In addition, there are many problems with solely relying on performance appraisals as they offer limited knowledge, bias, and lack of internationalization (Mäkelä et al. 2010, 135). A further recommendation is made that talent identification and classification would not solely rely on performance appraisals and scores, since they only reflect current and present abilities but not an outlook of future promise and potential (Nijs et al. 2014, 185).

A newly suggested model for identifying and evaluating talent focuses on performance appraisals established on experience (on-line) and serves as an input to cognition-based (off-line) managerial decisions on the inclusion or exclusion of the talent pool (Mäkelä et al. 2010, 135). Cognition in this context refers to the beliefs about the linkage between action and their outcomes (Gavetti & Levinthal 2000, 114). These decision-making processes offer insight into the decisions behind whether an individual is categorized as qualified talent or not. Performance has been suggested to be measured as performance management that should encompass the measurement, assessment, and enhancement of performance that extends beyond what is determined solely from the job analysis (Wright & Boswell 2002, 259; Aman et al. 2018, 8; Luo 2016, 32) which in hindsight draws characteristics of how job role development affects needed skills to perform well in the position. On-line assessments imply that knowledge is based on previous experiences and

accumulated feedback, different from off-line which inclines to the forward-looking alternatives to evaluate the outcome of different options (Gavetti & Levinthal 2000, 115).

Once the "past" has been investigated in terms of performance appraisals, which reflect the past achievements and on-line search is reviewed, the general stage next is a talent review meeting, which entails most of the off-line search such as concentrating on future challenges and needed competencies that should be relevant (Mäkelä et al. 2010, 136). One should note that the reason why the model is classified into two stages is related to the issues of performance appraisals, and the difference in who is involved as with talent reviewing meetings divisional heads or vice presidents are more involved (Mäkelä et al. 2010, 136) which also eliminates the risk of bias or local variations if solely relied on performance appraisals to depict whether or not to include and classify an individual as talent. Another threat that lies within exclusively relying on performance audits is neglecting the social aspect of inter- or intrapersonal skills and competence, which likewise holds value to an organization (Nijs et al. 2014, 185). Talent paradox is something that may occur by the individuals recognized as talent and is said to be: "the odd mixture of power and powerlessness experienced by individuals identified and celebrated by management as talents" (Daubner-Siva et al. 2018, 75).

Along with the discussion of defining talent, due to the multidisciplinary nature of GTM, the following section raises various conceptualizations of talent throughout other academic domains to further understand talent.

3.1.2 Conceptualization of talent across various academic domains

Dries (2013) studied talent and how it is referred to in various literature, exposing tensions among perspectives and theories (278-279, 281). One main tension that they identify is the debate between inclusive versus exclusive approach, whether all employees are talented or just a smaller group (cf. Dries 2013, 279; Fedorova et al. 2020, 6; Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2065). A clear danger is within the division of talent management initiatives especially how and where the boundary is set (Huang & Tansley 2012, 3687) how talent is classified and whether it is inclusive or exclusive. Consequently, an underlying issue is the absence of a connection between various literature with contradicting perspectives as well as no overarching discussion, which has been found when investigating how talent is operationalized in various literature (Dries 2013, 281). However, an argument about broadening the exploration of TM is that psychology

literature should be included as part of the discussion (Dries 2013, 276). This has besides been a misconception that while talent and concepts related lack depth within HR discourse and field, there has, however, been much research done outside of the traditional Human Resource Management (HRM) domain (Nijs et al. 2014, 180) which is behind the reason why the thesis brings up other characteristic and aspects of talent in equivalent corresponding fields and reviews some examples in this chapter, although briefly. The conceptualization of TM is grounded in the idea of recognized human capital, which is more commonly referred to as talent (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss 2018, 2056). Human capital is distinguished to have two specifies either firm-specific or location-specific, which imply the degree of internal firm knowledge and location knowledge individuals may carry (Morris et al. 2016, 724-725). The arguments made that as human capital can be categorized differently, it needs to be positioned and managed differently compared to others (Morris et al. 2016, 725-732).

When it comes to management studies, psychology often presents primary behaviour trends and applies to many managerial practices. This is why definitions from gifted education psychology may provide more depth and insight into defining talent. Gifted education psychology revolves around to main components of giftedness and talent (Gagné 2004, 119; Periathiruvadi & Rinn 2013, 153). Giftedness refers to natural abilities which rank an individual within the top ten percentile, while talent is when an individual has mastered an ability or is knowledgeable in something that places them within the same top ten rankings. (Gagné 2004, 119-120) Gifted educational research even has similar definitions to talent that state: “talented individuals are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance” (Davis et al. 2011, 18) which confirms that while the two fields may have different approaches, the underlying themes and definitions have some commonalities and form of agreement. Studying talent, which commonly is an operational resource for organizations, from a purely management resource-based starting point cannot grasp the human aspect and psychological mechanisms (Nijs et al. 2014, 181) which highlights the value of what other discourses such as psychological research can offer for GTM studies.

The concepts have in common three elements referring to human abilities, normative by nature and referring to unnormal individuals due to their behaviours. This can help explain why often the terms are used interchangeably and often confounded within discussions together. (Gagné 2004, 120) Incorporating other streams and fields of

literature not only aids with some of the immanent limitations when it comes to HRM research but can in fact offer propositions and theories to further develop conceptual frameworks in terms of talent and how to manage it better (Nijs et al. 2014, 180).

Some of the approaches and variations to talent, its definition and operationalization in the context of TM and GTM have been collected in Table 2 (Dries 2013, 275). This is specifically useful and beneficial to look at since while talent management and other concepts related to the field have been criticized for lack of substance within HR discourse much research has been conducted outside of the traditional HRM field (Nijs et al. 2014, 180) which is why elaborating on other perceptions and disciplines can potentially further develop human resource management discourse.

Table 2. Summary of relevant theoretical perspectives of talent (modified from Dries 2013, 275).

Literature stream	Operationalization of talent	Main criterion	Main contribution	Main gap
HRM	Talent as capital	Contribution to organization	Links individual talent to organizational context	Lack of theory and empirical evidence
Industrial /Organizational psychology	Talent as individual difference	Predictive validity	Long research tradition in personnel selection, promotion systems, and performance appraisal	Criterion problem— talent for what?
Educational psychology	Talent as giftedness	Domain-specific excellence	Strong (causal) theoretical frameworks	Mostly conceptual work; no research in adult populations
Vocational psychology	Talent as identity	Self-concept crystallization	Recognition of the dynamic nature of talent, as a construct, over the course of a person's life	Mostly narrative research; difficult to reconcile with more positivistic approaches
Positive psychology	Talent as strength	Self-actualization	Treats positive outliers as research subjects of choice, rather than measurement error	Assumption of strength-based approach as 'win-win' for individuals and organizations
Social psychology	Talent as the perception of talent	Rater accuracy	Brings in element of social perception— i.e., talent that is not acknowledged does not 'exist'	Generalization of experimental findings to real-life settings?

The purpose of Table 2 is especially beneficial when it comes to analyzing various perceptions of talent management and how distinctively it can be defined as well as operationalized. Human resource management literature due to the proximity as a field in management studies is most referred to in GTM research and when alluded to talent. Huselid and Becker (2011, 427) suggest that to further develop the field investigations in both micro and macro levels in psychology, sociology, and strategy, even economics is

required, which is why Table 2 is a good commencement of investigating other possibilities and definitions within integral parts of GTM. The sentiment of importance related to including psychology in GTM and TM discourse is also shared, which is the reason behind the inclusion of industrial and organizational, educational, vocational, positive, and social psychology are included as domains (Dries 2013, 276). The danger here lies in the gaps and definitions that are further developed without a common overarching consensus. TM should be considered as a relational construct (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 176).

As talent has been defined and conceptualized as an individual level construct the following section delves into the collective level input of talent pools, where individual talent is grouped into units of talent pools.

3.1.3 Talent pools

The most common practice within organizations is clustering and grouping talent into what is stated as talent pools. Talent pools can be defined as a group or assembly that has been formed because the members have been identified as talent (Tansley 2011, 270) or recognized for exceptional abilities. Managing talent on a local and global scale is where the global aspect in global talent management comes into play. It should be noted that while management is a balancing act of its own, managing global-scale talent pools is a trapeze of its own. There is a fine line between talent pool depth and diversity, for instance, global standardization with limited local differentiation provides companies with a deeper talent pool, however, in order to adapt to varying conditions there is no diversity ought to do so (Stahl et al. 2012, 30). If there is solely local attention the talent pool is more diverse, however, simultaneously limits the capabilities of capitalizing in scaling when it comes to economies of scale in other areas of hiring, training, and retaining (Stahl et al. 2012, 30).

The combination of local leadership and global branding is the key to success, as global standardization and local implementation create a deep enough talent pool that holds diversity (Stahl et al. 2012, 30). In some cases, national or company-specific regulations require a quota of local individuals, which can add on top of other GTM challenges, such as individuals included in TM programs where either they are not committed or the MNC lacks motivation in it (Sidani & Al Ariss 2014, 221). Another perspective and simplified narrative to TM is that talents are operationalized as production resources, when

operational there should be a high return on investment, and the MNCs act as talent factories that contain talent pools with talent ready to be positioned in specific roles (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss 2018, 2062).

Figure 5 illustrates an example of what talent pools look like in an example of an MNC (Huang & Tansley 2012, 3681). The fundamental idea behind the talent sourcing is that MNCs pursue the global talent pools to fulfil various tasks and positions based on the specific needs they have (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 95). The figure outlines the layers and how the pool of talent decreases the more top-level the position is. A noteworthy mention is to highlight when it comes to the diversity of the talent pool, this is correlated with the strategy implemented in an MNC (Collings et al. 2018, 5). Figure 5 likewise represents a common trend of how talent can be classified in varying pools based on potential versus position, for example grouping separately executive leaders and potential future talent or local talent (Tansley 2011, 207).

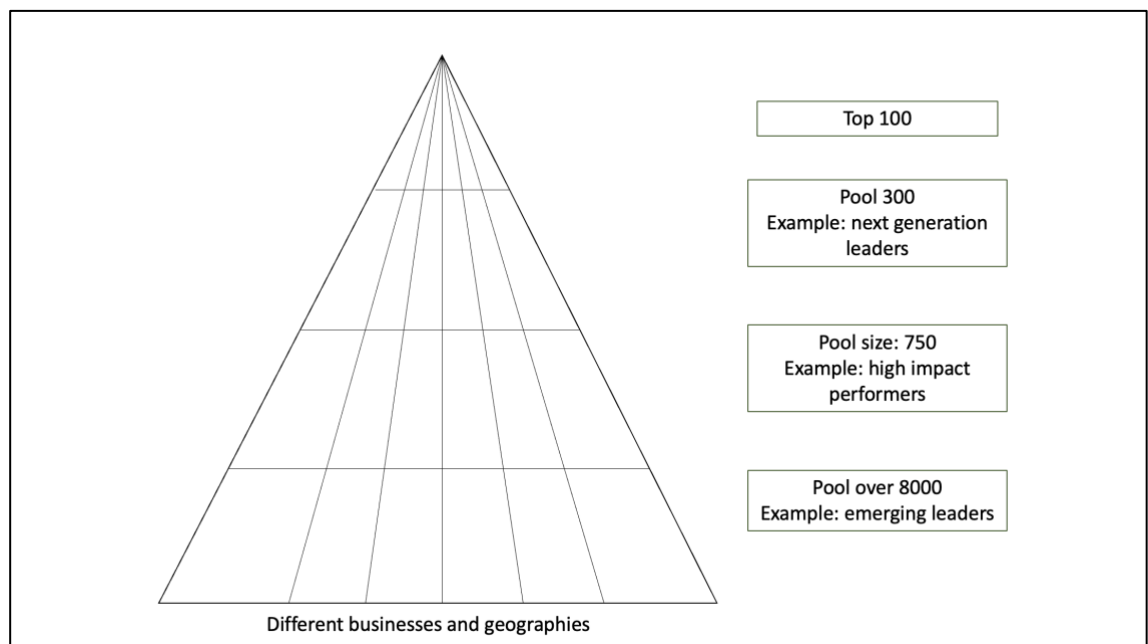


Figure 5. Example of talent pools (modified from Huang & Tansley 2012, 3681).

Talent pools as illustrated through an example case company in Figure 5, generally have an approach of decreasing in size the higher the ladder they go. The layers are also meant to signify some of the divisions that can be perceived as levels that have clear layers and borders (Huang & Tansley 2012, 3682). The aspect of global talent pools, benefits companies by having the opportunity to tap into a worldwide talent pool, however, this also presents challenges, including the need to adjust talent strategies to address the

diverse and constantly changing conditions that define the global conditions (Collings et al. 2018, 2). In many case headquarters tend to focus on the national talent pool more closely than the global pool (Collings et al. 2019, 556). TM and GTM focus not only on the current workforce but the potential employees as well (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss 2018, 2056). Additionally, the question whether or not MNCs engage with the external partners such as suppliers and contractors as external HR and include them in the talent pool should be analysed in each context, because this can imply inclusion in training and development opportunities (Civera et al. 2023, 2663).

3.1.4 Inclusive versus exclusive approaches in global talent management

Talent is referred to as an important capital for organizations (cf. Dries 2013, 275) and in short refers to the individuals with higher ranks comparatively to the pool in terms of capability and performance (Stahl et al. 2007, 4). Classifying and defining talent has been said to be pivotal for organizations, although it has both positive and negative consequences such as employees appreciating their worth, acknowledging their capabilities, and having the means to access organizational assets, on the other hand, it may potentially create unwanted divisions and stigma of elites as well as resentment from others that negatively impacts work outcomes (Tansley 2011, 270).

This raises the query and long debate about whether or not talent should be inclusive or exclusive (cf. Dries 2013, 279, Fedorova et al. 2020, 6) meaning that the whole workforce should be included or just certain individuals in classifications and a holistic talent pool. The War for Talent also has impacted the result of creating two-tiered experiences for employees, one that offers a differentiated and exclusive experience to individuals coined as talent (Swales 2013, 32). Huang and Tansley (2012, 3684) studied the rhetoric of talent management within a case company and their findings indicated that individuals deemed talented described "feeling special and different" in addition to recognition as well as appreciation which exemplifies the ethical issues of the debate and how exclusion can create inequality and discrepancy in the workplace along with resentment of others by creating a margin of only certain individuals deemed better than others (Tansley 2011, 270; Fedorova et al. 2020, 6). Talent management can take on both approaches, either an egalitarian (inclusive) or differential (exclusive) of whether to solely invest in the best individuals or offer equal opportunities to all, however, these approaches require varying implementation strategies (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1779).

Iles et al (2010, 181-182) studied an inclusive versus exclusive approach based on two categories of people and positions. An exclusive people approach implies that not all members of the organization can be labelled as talent, alluding that they need to be managed differently based on either their past performance or potential (Iles et al. 2010, 181). Their definition of an exclusive perspective concerning people, entitles that talent is not linked to job titles or positions but is instead determined by segmentation and sections dividing the workforce into distinct sections that are treated differently, often through customized “employee value proposition” (Iles et al. 2010, 182). The significance of this is to manage expenses because individuals cannot be managed all in the same method and the perspective in this case is that talent is a scarce investment, organizations do not have the luxury to overspend on (Iles et al. 2010, 182).

The notion behind an exclusive position approach is matching top talent, with what are described as key positions in the organization (Iles et al. 2010, 182). The argument here is that top-level talent is not going to curate much benefit unless it is positioned into suitable and right roles (Huselid et al. 2005, 112). This does not mean that organizations should remove any "C players" but rather ensure that the proper level and amount of talent is positioned where it makes the most sense. Financially and resource-wise companies are not able to maintain top-level players in all positions (Huselid et al. 2005, 113). The commonalities between these exclusive approaches lie within the points of differentiating and distinguishing individuals, which as a result creates different compensations and attention based on either competence or position. More than half of recent academic literature advocates for an exclusive view on GTM (Vardi & Collings 2023, 667). The exclusive and A-player view on talent management draws upon the resource-based approach and theory (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 794).

However, it should be mentioned that this exclusion of other individuals and employees is risky and poses threats (Huang & Tansley 2012, 3674) in addition to creating discrepancies. One hazard is within the correctness and whether it is fundamentally against equality, which nowadays for some organizations is a core value and principle. In addition, the subjectivity of managers who typically classify and cluster subordinates as talent does not ensure a fair process according to some (Walker & LaRocco 2002, 12). Exclusion and TM in general have faced criticism on the basis that the sole focus is on elite individuals, and the process of acquisition, retention, development, and management

specifically for these talents that are aligned with the strategic goals and requirements of the organization (Huang & Tansley 2012, 3674).

On the other hand, there is an argument for an inclusive approach which could be characterized in general terms as more humane because it believes that everyone encompasses talent and managers should aim to curate it out of all the employees (Iles et al. 2010, 182). Inclusive approach is advocated by scholars who see the impact when focusing on the whole workforce and where justice and ethics are applied to all (De Boeck et al. 2018, 200). In some cases, the approach is based on the belief that instead of a full focus on individual the greater results lie within a team intended focus (Quifors et al. 2017, 155). They also believe that the exclusion does not only lead to missing out on talent programs and development, but additionally individuals can miss out on key HR processes (De Boeck et al. 2018, 200). TM can be described as aiming for inclusivity in trying to yield as much performance as possible from all levels of the organization regardless of position (Ashton & Morton 2005, 30).

However, the type of holistic and total inclusion is more uncommon in TM discourse (Iles et al. 2010, 182). Some adopt the War for Talent mentality by highlighting the fact that while traditional TM thinking aims for the top tier within the talent pool, other individuals and workers cannot be overlooked or efforts diminished (Guthridge et al. 2008, 55). A collective inclusive approach is considering segments and sections rather than individuals, and questioning how expertise and skill can be applied to segments within talent pools (Guthridge et al 2008, 56). It is also important to note the social factors and trends that influence the MNC environment, which also has created the push for the inclusive aspect of talent management due to social responsibility increasing as a theme (Fedorova et al. 2020, 2). The inclusive approach outlines that implicitly each individual possesses a unique and special human capital that prove to be valuable for the organization (Valk 2022, 1520). In summary the inclusive versus exclusive debate is around the question of what relative percentage of the staff or workforce should be identified as talent (Vardi & Collings 2023, 667). A shift is also required to moving beyond a traditional elitist TM view to a wider approach (Vardi & Collings 2023, 677) and the following section will tackle the ethicality of the traditional elitist view.

3.1.5 Ethicality of labelling individuals as talent and within an exclusive approach

It goes without saying, however, problems lie within the exclusion and the ethicality of an exclusive approach, since the assumption of it within talent pools creates differentiated opportunities and attitudes among individuals (De Boeck et al. 2018, 200). The ethical debate on exclusive versus inclusive approach should be noted because the award of being recognized as talent i.e. the inclusion or exclusion has effects on features such as turnover intention and organizational citizenship behaviour (Wikham et al. 2021, 958), all of which coin back to the sense of belonging and success of an MNC. Organizational citizenship behaviour refers to the "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (Organ 1988, 4) which embodies a coveted result for the organization in terms of individual input (Wikham et al. 2021, 959).

Turnover intention refers to "the conscious or deliberate willingness to leave an organization" (Tett & Meyer 1993, 262) which ties into the characteristic of retention in GTM. Ethically differentiated treatment in the exclusive approach such as compensations or support in terms of development are delicate issues for organizations to handle and manage (Björkman et al. 2013, 196). Some argue that the assumption of TM is considered an elitist view (Swales 2013, 32). Further research is still needed to investigate the ethics of sole focus on considered elites, since many of the rising TM literature lack the mention of ethical issues that organizations may face (Swales 2013, 33).

It has been studied what are the implications of whether or not individuals are aware that they either belong or do not belong within the talent pool (Björkman et al. 2013, 207). Perception of belonging to the talent pool displayed higher: dedication to elevate performance expectations, cultivating skills that hold significance for the MNC, and actively endorsing the MNCs strategic objectives, alignment with the central unit, and reduced inclination to leave (Björkman et al. 2013, 207). The results indicated that informing talented individuals the recognition and the status of being labelled as talent aligns with the logic of TM as well as motivational effects (Björkman et al. 2013, 207). Results also showed that the difference between not knowing or perceived as not included within the talent pool was insignificant (Björkman et al. 2013, 207). While the typical connotation being named as "global talent" is positive, the individual bearing the name

can have mixed reactions when it comes to the demands and expectations of the global requirements and the identity changes related to the naming (Kirk 2021, 214). Another ethical aspect of naming global talent is the responsibility of the employer/MNC to evaluate the implications of the global talent working lives, as well as the demands such as expectations of global mobility (Kirk 2021, 216).

In a practical example of GTM systems globally consistent talent nomination criteria faced challenges due to local interpretations, introducing variations influenced by cross-cultural differences and social dynamics (Gakovic & Yardley 2007, 204). Organizational career development is specifically highlighted in the exclusive approach to TM (Bonneton 2023, 6). It fundamentally creates an inequality and paradox, as implying talent would also state that some are non-talents (Vardi & Collings 2023, 661). The "label of talent" in some cases becomes recognizable for anyone in the organization (Bonneton 2023, 13). In the specific context of MNCs and GTM in the global context one harsh reality that has occurred in the field is the unfortunate reality of discrimination faced by migrants by exclusion of the talent pool (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss 2018, 2067).

3.2 Evolution and framework of global talent management: definitions, distinctions and debates

As talent has been fully explored it is time to move on to the system it is intended to operate in. The following sections intend to explore the evolution and definitions of global talent management further evolve the discussion around it, and finally present initial criticism it has received as a field.

3.2.1 Historical evolution of global and talent management

Recent trends indicate that management and organizational research have been influenced by emerging phenomena that have subsequently garnered significant scholarly interest (von Krogh et al. 2012, 278). This phenomenon is also evident in the heightened attention towards GTM and advancements in the field (Anlesinya et al. 2019, 148).

Furthermore, alongside a fragmented definition, there exists a conflict regarding the evolution of talent management and when this evolution occurred (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 145). Most scholars and contributors to this topic attribute the major influence on the War for Talent, a phrase coined by Steve Hankin in 1997 (cf. Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss 2018, 2055; Michaels et al. 2001). The War for Talent is seen as a response to the

challenging circumstances and competitive nature faced by enterprises in the 1990s, where companies were fiercely competing to develop and retain top-level talent amidst shortages (Chambers et al. 1998; Tarique & Schuler 2010, 124; Farndale et al. 2010, 162).

The War for Talent is based on two foundational assumptions (Dries 2013, 273). The first assumption is rooted in the idea that human knowledge is a valuable and renewable resource that cannot be easily imitated or acquired by competing entities (Iles 1997, 350). The second assumption concerning the origin of the War for Talent is linked to shifts in authority within the job market. These shifts manifest as more frequent job changes and demographic transformations, such as increased mobility, greater diversity, and the pervasive influence of technology (Tucker et al. 2005, 8-22), which have substantially evolved the dynamics of the job market. The increasing pace of technological advancements, evolving economic landscapes, and shifting workplace dynamics has led to a notable rise in job changes. This trend is fundamentally reshaping traditional employment norms and expectations, prompting individuals to adapt to new professional challenges and opportunities with greater frequency than in the past. Another significant factor influencing this transformation is the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which has impacted HR practices through demographic shifts, technological advancements, and globalization (Claus 2019, 208, 213). This revolution has not only transformed organizational landscapes but has also had implications for employees themselves (Claus 2019, 208, 213).

The War for Talent is also characterized as a period during which companies frequently hire top-tier talent from one another, resulting in a lose-lose scenario (Claus 2019, 208). This occurred because the acquired talents were not retained for significant periods; instead, companies frequently switched between key personnel, creating disadvantages for all parties involved (Claus 2019, 208). Key personnel were unable to fully grasp their responsibilities, and companies couldn't fully leverage their potential due to the rapid personnel changes. Fortunately, the emphasis has shifted towards engaging and retaining existing talent (Claus 2019, 208). This implies that the focus is no longer solely on talent acquisition but on providing engaging experiences for talented individuals. While the War for Talent was a popularized term in previous decades, the relevant issues have been recognized still as highly relevant and topical in the current employment climate (Bonneton 2023, 1). One of the additional origins for the rise and popularity of talent

management has also been accepted as the recognition of how important effective and quality of human resources of an MNC (Pachura 2019, 272-273).

Now that the background has been explored of the events that led to the rise of GTM, it becomes crucial to explore its definition and its role in addressing the aforementioned circumstances and origins.

3.2.2 Definitions and conceptualizations of global talent management

When studying GTM there exists a clear need and a noticeable gap in comprehending the essence of it and the factors at play. As stated repeatedly one of the major issues within talent management is the absence of a clear and precise definition, which carries the risk of talent management not being taken seriously and an ill-fitting mismatch between various concepts (Reilly 2008, 381; Wikham et al. 2021, 957). To this day a clear deficit in terms of GTM is the absence of intellectual boundaries and academic rigour in terms of its concepts (Fernandes et al. 2023, 10).

Academic human resource management theoretical research and literature has also been criticized for having a large variety of definitions regarding the topic (Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013, 291) which speaks to the confusion being primary and fundamental from the get-go. Most TM literature is focused on the knowledge-based and resource-based approaches (Lee et al. 2022, 356). A commonly accepted definition of GTM (Anlesinya et al. 2019, 147) is defined as “including organizational activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles on a global scale” (Scullion et al. 2010, 106). A more concise definition of GTM that begins to explain some of the elements that are often referred to as an organization's comprehensive efforts to attract, select, develop, and retain key talented employees on a global scale (Stahl et al. 2012), which already highlights some of the key words and concepts that lie within the GTM processes. Talent management can be operationalized in a traditional high-potential approach (Cerdin & Brewster 2014, 246).

A comprehensive definition of GTM that has been referred to commonly in today's literature (cf. Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2055; Kim & McLean 2012, 568; Al Ariss et al. 2014, 174), as defined by Mellahi and Collings (2009, 2010) encompasses the: “systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage on a global scale, the development of a

talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles which reflects the global scope of the MNE, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with the best available incumbent and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization” (Mellahi & Collings 2009, 304; Mellahi & Collings 2010, 143-144).

In general, Collings and his colleagues (Collings et al., 2018) have conducted extensive research and work on global talent management systems and approaches, with a particular focus on how multinational corporations align their strategies with GTM systems (Collings et al. 2019, 5). This is one of the most widely and commonly adopted definitions of talent management in a global context (cf. Collings et al. 2018, 5). This widely used definition has further been broken down into three subareas: “(1) the systematic identification of pivotal positions that differentially contribute to an organization’s sustainable competitive advantage on a global scale; (2) the development of a talent pool of high-potential and high-performing incumbents who reflect the global scope of the MNE to fill these roles; and (3) the development of a talent pool of high-potential and high-performing incumbents who reflect the global scope of the MNC to fill these role” (Collings et al. 2018, 5). The definition of macro GTM is defined as: "The activities that are systematically developed by governmental and nongovernmental organizations expressly for the purpose of enhancing the quality and quantity of talent within and across countries and regions to facilitate innovation and competitiveness of their citizens and corporations" (Khilji et al. 2015, 237).

Notably definitions within general HR development and scholarly research have work to do in terms of clarity of definitions, and distinguishing concepts and meanings (Wright & Boswell 2002, 248) implying that the issues regarding clarity are not solely specific for GTM or TM, but rather a larger dilemma and concern across the higher-level field. To illustrate the variations and other attempts in defining TM, a collection has been summarized in Table 3 (Dries 2013, 274) which is compiled of recent research concerning the topic. TM is traditionally and associated with the conceptualization of human capital in the context of the organization (Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2056).

Table 3. Definitions of talent management found in the human resource management literature (modified from Dries 2013, 274).

Reference	Definition of TM or GTM
Sloan, Hazucha, & Van Katwyk (2003, 236)	“Managing leadership talent strategically, to put the right person in the right place at the right time”
Pascal (2004, 9)	“Talent management encompasses managing the supply, demand, and flow of talent through the human capital engine”
Ashton & Morton (2005, 30)	“TM is a strategic and holistic approach to both HR and business planning or a new route to organizational effectiveness. This improves the performance and the potential of people—the talent—who can make a measurable difference to the organization now and in future. And it aspires to yield enhanced performance among all levels in the workforce, thus allowing everyone to reach his/her potential, no matter what that might be”
Duttagupta (2005, 2)	“In the broadest possible terms, TM is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization. Its purpose is to assure that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time based on strategic business objectives”
Warren (2006, 26)	“In its broadest sense, the term can be seen as the identification, development, engagement, retention and deployment of talent, although it is often used more narrowly to describe the short- and longer-term resourcing of senior executives and high performers”
Jerusalim & Hausdorf (2007, 934)	“High potential identification and development (also known as talent management) refers to the process by which an organization identifies and develops employees who are potentially able to move into leadership roles sometime in the future”
Cappelli (2008, 1)	“At its heart, talent management is simply a matter of anticipating the need for human capital and setting out a plan to meet it”
Collings & Mellahi (2009, 304)	“We define strategic 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 potentials 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”
Silzer & Dowell (2010, 18)	“Talent management is an integrated set of processes, programs, and cultural norms in an organization designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy, and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs”

While many similarities and keywords appear in the collection of definitions along with shared elements of GTM, there are notable differences in the emphasis. These variations

encompass aspects such as scope of talent, integration of processes, purpose, and strategic alignment, to name a few. For instance, Duttagupta (2005, 2) emphasizes strategic alignment in terms of business objectives, while Cappelli (2008, 1) views it as the anticipation of human capital needs and development in its core. Differences in the scope of talent can be observed in definitions from Warren (2006, 26) who focuses on senior executives and talent potential, while Jerusalem and Hausdorf (2007, 934) categorize employees as high potential. Table 3 demonstrates certain tendencies in the TM literature regarding definitions, which are often rhetorically appealing but also vague (Dries 2013, 274). Some argue a single definition of GTM may not be necessary if firms create clear boundaries and both scholars and practitioners clearly define the terminology in each case the terms are employed (Vaiman & Collings 2014, 18) however this may be one of the main causes to the common mistakes of applying synonyms and interchangeably using terminology, which creates confusion. There are similarities that can be drawn from supply chain management procedures into talent management that impact performance (Cappelli 2008, 10-11).

Lewis and Heckman (2006) conceptualize talent management as comprising three distinct streams, aligning with GTM standards (Fernandes et al. 2023, 10). The first stream advances traditional HR practices through technological enhancements for efficiency and company-wide talent strategies (Lewis & Heckman 2006, 140-141; Olsen 2000, 24; Ashif 2019, 32; Tucker et al. 2005, 5; Fedorova et al. 2020, 2). The second stream prioritizes expansive talent pools and internal succession, leveraging enterprise software for staffing and progression (Lewis & Heckman 2006, 140; Burbach & Royle 2010, 415; Schweyer 2004, 20). The third stream focuses on identifying and rewarding high-potential individuals, regardless of their roles, promoting a performance-centric approach to TM (Lewis & Heckman 2006, 141; Petković & Đorđević 2013, 802). These streams emphasize the multifaceted nature of TM, allowing organizations to adapt their approaches to evolving workforce needs. The following section continues the discussion of GTM through distinctions between various similar fields of human resources and its subfields.

3.2.3 Theoretical distinctions between global talent management and human resources and its subfields

Global talent management is commonly regarded and referred to as a bridge field between international human resource management and talent management as it is a strategic issue

for any multinational firm (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 131). Global talent management includes all organizational activities related to attraction, selection, development and retention of talented individuals into strategic roles (Scullion et al. 2010, 106) yet while the problem has been emphasized numerous times, issues lie within the clarity of the term as well as identifying differences between other similar processes such as HR or international/strategic HR. Part of TM as a differentiating force from HR management is that in order to solve efficiently the challenges related to GTM developing and revamping the human resource management architecture within the organization (Ashif 2019, 32).

When examining global talent management, terms are often used interchangeably, and phrases are commonly mistakenly cross-referenced. For instance, talent management is frequently used synonymously with human capital management (Stahl et al. 2012, 26). Global talent management can be vaguely and broadly defined as HRM activities and processes in the context of international business and managing talent in differentiated roles within a global setting including talent attraction, retention, and development (Scullion et al. 2010). This added layer of a global landscape represents a dynamic nature and certain complexity to it but indicates where mistakes are commonly made since referral to HR processes is made. Strategic human resource management has been defined as: “the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable the firm to achieve its goals” (Wright & McMahan 1992, 298) which does apply similar grounds to GTM, however does not apply the global aspect nor the focus of talent and capitalizing it.

One key difference that sets GTM apart from HRM is that GTM focuses on key employees and talent rather than the entire human capital of the organization (cf. Collings & Mellahi 2009; Scullion et al. 2010). This represents a shift in which strategic human resource management concentrates on processes and practices that influence human capital rather than on human capital itself (Wright & McMahan 2011, 93). Addressing the distinction between global talent management and international human resource management is crucial to further evolve the specific field of GTM (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 145). By narrowing the focus to key players, organizations can maximize the potential in certain roles and positions where top performers can fully capitalize on their abilities (Collings et al. 2019, 5). While talent management is more human-focused and emphasizes the human development within the organization, human resource management is considered technical and transactional (Ansar & Baloch 2018, 220). GTM

literature ranges in various management topics and focuses on the leveraging of talent which is differentiated in individuals with high potential (King 2015, 2).

In addition, TM is viewed as a competitive advantage as it enables firms to identify, develop and redeploy talented employees (Iles et al. 2010). The global context of talent management is seen to establish links and connections between international human resource management, especially the strategic side of it (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 145). Within the GTM field there is a clear need to differentiate itself from other fields such as international human resource management (Schuler et al. 2011, 6). Talent management is also characterized as a subset of strategic human resource management by aiding organizational effectiveness with people and goal alignment by the highest management, as well as leveraging human capital (Swailes 2013, 32).

Tarique and Schuler (2010) have explored the differences and challenges of GTM and international human resource management. They identify three key distinctions between the terms, that often are used incorrectly and interchangeably (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 124). Firstly, international human resource management encompasses more stakeholders and serves a broader field, while as the immediate impact of effective GTM systems affects just the employees and the organization. In addition to having a larger impact international human resource management also contains a broader range of elements and activities than GTM. The third difference lies in HR practices, which international human resource management places a greater emphasis on compared to GTM. (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 124) GTM is coined as "set of HRM activities undertaken in the context of international business to manage talent for differentiated roles" (King 2015, 275) which indicates the difference of how individual HRM activities make up for GTM. In summary the field of GTM, while having similarities and elements of international human resource management, is a more focused and narrower field that looks at subsets of topics within international human resource management. Even international human resource management has been criticised for lack of agreement in what it stands for (Festing et al. 2013, 162).

While this thesis utilizes prior research of TM and frames it within the context of GTM when applicable, it is important to note that differences between the two concepts exist, however, in many cases, they can be used interchangeably. A main feature that differentiates the two is the aspect of global mobility such as expatriates, which allows

for organizations to locate and move key individuals to align with the needs of the organization or employees (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1780). However, talent management has also been defined as a function that highlights elements of the talent lifecycle from attraction to retention regardless of geography (Schiemann 2014, 282) which negates the geographical and global aspect of GTM and connecting the two. GTM is also stated to require more theoretical development in the global context (Schuler et al. 2011, 5) which is where the use and analysis of TM elements applied to global settings may provide further insights. Another critical discussion following is related to the criticism faced by GTM and TM, which provides gaps and disputes within the field.

3.2.4 Criticism of talent management

TM has furthermore the tendency in discussions to be in the grey area as to whether or not it should be referred to as a management fashion (Iles et al. 2010, 129). Management fashions are typically curated by practitioners such as consultants or business schools for example and contain an urgency that is not tied to evidence nor theory but rather an ambiguous concept it aims to respond to (Iles et al. 2010, 131). The ambiguity of TM makes it subject to increasing interpretations and increases the capacity for confusion as well as dispersion (Iles et al. 2010, 137). Talent management is said to refer to an area with "fragmented knowledge" which underlies the crucial need for further research (Fedorova et al. 2020, 1). On the bright side, this opens the field for others to fill this diffusion by claiming solutions by resolving this issue (Iles et al. 2010, 137). In cases where interest has peaked in terms of scholarly literature and material, this may influence creating fragmented literature, which allows for others to categorize and cluster the varying and diverse ideas, and specifically in the case of TM create a multidisciplinary approach to talent management (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 90).

While it has been stated numerously that one of the main issues is the lack of clarity surrounding the field and clear definition (cf. Lewis & Heckman 2006), it is rarely framed as a problem of a lack of consensus on what talent implies in the workforce (Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013, 297) which is an interesting approach to the problem. A response to the TM discourse has been a wide discussion that has been contributed by many scholars in multiple fields, yet the diversity of scope brings up an issue about the concepts being characterized as normative, due to a lack of accuracy and depth by such a vast array of concepts that are taken as objective facts (Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013, 297). GTM and

TM literature is said to ignore the fact that the best practices approach for one MNC and one country does not necessarily represent nor project the same results (Civera et al. 2023, 2644).

While it is a practical concerning topic, criticized by the nature of most literature coming from consultants and practitioners who do not answer the needed critical questions which in hindsight does not enable for further theoretical development of the field (Iles et al. 2010, 179). An issue often found within GTM and TM research is that it does not contribute to how MNCs and organizations can manage talent effectively (McDonnell et al. 2010, 152). Practical approaches likewise describe TM processes as robust systems that are necessary for successful talent strategy (Guthridge et al. 2008, 54) yet the problem lies that to achieve effective TM systems before describing them as robust, one should be aware precisely of what is included in the robust system and its purpose, otherwise it risks being vague and lacks concrete measures that address the needs. TM and GTM often face debates and strain as a result of the common issues.

Some example tensions refer to some of the most common discussions about talent (Dries 2013, 278) and could furthermore affect the disparities between definitions and concepts within TM itself. To summarize an example of such tensions of an integral component of talent, five identified tensions are as follows: (1) what is considered or who is considered as talent (2) how widespread and extensive is talent, meaning by what principles are resources distributed (3) is talent teachable, and can someone learn it (4) does talent concern ability or motivation (5) lastly does talent depend on the circumstances in the environment it prevails? (Dries 2013, 278) Talent management raises the criticism of being unitarist in nature and being narrow minded (Civera et al. 2023, 2640).

TM has been characterized as not a set of guidelines that apply to all but rather a case of suitability and finding what suits best in each case and scenario (Garrow & Hirsch 2008, 394-395). This means that it is a case of customization yet there is limited discourse and space for it when the topic itself has frequently been described as ambiguous. Finally, while GTM and TM have been defined as having a role in gaining a competitive advantage when implemented successfully, there remains research to be done on the impact on performance the GTM has (Collings et al. 2018, 30). The recent trends have indicated that larger MNCs have a tendency to adopt GTM processes unlike the medium and small-size organizations (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 174) creating problematic scenarios

with where the discussion and processes are headed. These are all added on top of the debate of ethicality when it comes to some selected approaches such as the traditional exclusive and elitist perspective on talent management, begins with the selection and recognition of who is included as talent, since the risk of bias and politics play a role (Swales 2013, 35-36). One key criticism of TM research has been the narrow focus on performance orientation of financial returns (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 111).

3.3 Global talent management applications and challenges

Once the theoretical foundations, criticism, and talent have been thoroughly discussed it is time to move on to more concrete functions of GTM and its challenges. The following sections will dive into the rationales and challenges of GTM and will delve into how these frameworks are operationalized within multinational corporations, addressing the challenges, and leveraging the opportunities presented by global talent management strategies due to GTM elements and structures.

3.3.1 Drivers, forces, and requirements of global talent management

TM theories focalizes and centralizes on human capital as the core concept (Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2058) and is required to have a strategic focus in terms of addressing globalization (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1442). Various drivers influence the enactment of GTM practices (Anlesinya et al. 2019, 153). The motivators and restrictions of implementing GTM policies can also be framed as rationales such as economic and organizational rationales that need to be considered (Stokes et al. 2016, 2314). As an example, an economic rationale for not engaging in GTM practices is based on the limitation and constraints of resources (Stokes et al. 2016, 2314). Research also strengthens this by agreeing that MNCs would adopt GTM policies based on the relative economic strength (Froese et al. 2020, 8). Many of the approaches to GTM are often driven by external factors (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1448). Some instances of this include the size of the firm, pressure, sector, extent of standardization of products, and global human resource policy handiness (Al Ariss et al. 2014; Anlesinya et al. 2019, 153; Iles et al. 2010; McDonnell et al. 2010).

External factors, often coined as drivers, are uncontrollable for the organization such as globalized talent migration, demographic changes, deficits in demand and supply, and legal environment are uncontrollable (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 126). Furthermore, factors, for instance, demographic change, globalization, and an increase in the overall

knowledge of individuals affect the need for GTM systems and processes (Guthridge et al. 2008, 50) in a similar sense as they were factors for the War for Talent and its rise. From an organizational rationale an SME for instance, does not contain the complexity and hierarchies of large MNCs (Stokes et al. 2016, 2314).

GTM is subject to many trends in the business world that drive the change and adaptation of processes as for example and call for open innovation has proved for companies. The open innovation internal platforms have demonstrated that there is a requirement to involve talent outside of the traditional organizational boundaries. (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 90). Because of the competitive field, many MNCs adopt TM processes and GTM elements due to noticing the success that it is responsible for with competitors, this is also labelled as mimetic pressure, which causes MNCs to engage in GTM practices and systems (Sidani & Al Ariss 2014, 217). Additionally, there is the possibility of MNCs reacting to normative pressures and coercive pressures. Coercive pressures are examples of the legislative burdens that companies have when moving between borders and differences between national policies. Normative pressure comes from various norms and conventional behaviours that impact along with beliefs and values how MNCs align their GTM practices with what is deemed customary or appropriate in their specific context, but the direction of this influence can vary based on factors like industry, region, and organizational values. (Sidani & Al Ariss 2014, 217)

Additionally, external global phenomena such as the global financial services crisis in 2008, impacted the importance of GTM due to departures of key employees (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1777). The Covid-19 pandemic also has induced MNCs to significantly expand the geographical focus of their GTM practices (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1940). The emphasis of a knowledge driven economy has been one of the drivers of influencing the spread and development of GTM systems (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 5). A proactive network stance is required familiarizing understanding of both talent markets and the capabilities fostered by different providers and practices are essential role requirements for GTM systems (Farndale et al. 2010, 166).

Figure 6 presents a simplified GTM model along with drivers and challenge interactions which illustrates some of the factors of why organizations engage in GTM practices (Kim & McLean 2012, 579). Figure 6 outlines the following sections as well as illustrates the drivers of GTM frameworks. Necessity comes from the various drivers and origins in

terms of the War for Talent and the relevant challenges that are topical to this date (Bonneton et al. 2023, 1), the competition for talent is additionally a factor that curates the need to engage talent more seriously (Claus 2019, 208). The deficiency of talent is categorized as the talent gap (Garavan 2012, 2430). The integral human resource development tools are critical in driving the strategic approach to GTM (Kim & McLean 2012, 579). Harnessing elements of geographic distance and operational differences is key within GTM and its assumptions (Morris et al. 2016, 744). MNCs require strategic solutions in regard to global workforce integrations (Hedricks et al. 2008, 335) such as the global HR policy body.

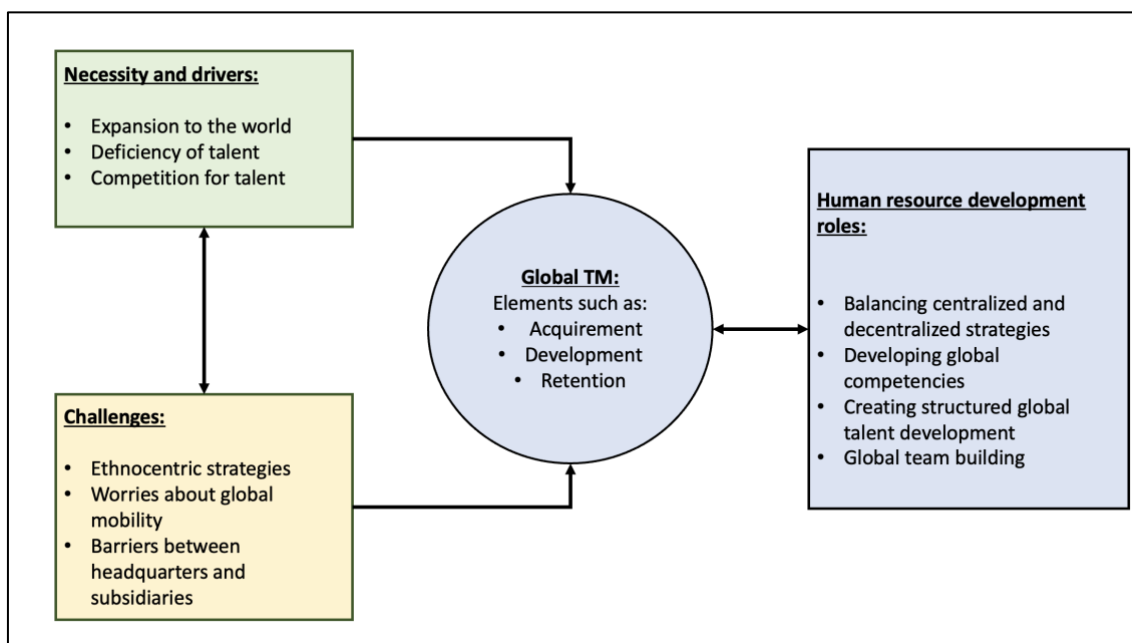


Figure 6. Conceptual framework of the necessity, challenge, and human resource development roles for global talent management (Kim & McLean 2012, 579).

In the research conducted by McDonnell et al. (2010), the results indicated that firms are unaware of where their talent is located and how to fully exploit it, based on the practices that firms engaged in. Some of the independent variables in this research, which affected the adoption of GTM systems were due to country of origin, sector, global employment, level of standardization of product/service, and policy formation of global HR functions. Their results indicated that several factors take effect such as firms' size in terms of global talent. (McDonnell et al. 2010, 155-157) One of the main focal points within GTM is the increased differentiation within HR systems (Collings et al. 2019, 541). The comprehensive and differentiated structure of talent practices could be distinctly tailored around a higher-level core HR process (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1788). Worries about

mobility and ethnocentric strategies, such as national politics play a major role in some of the challenges (Fedorova et al. 2020, 1; Horak et al. 2019, 471). Organizational needs and structural challenges play a role in the obstacles MNCs face in GTM implementations (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1767; Tansley & Kirk 2018, 40). Research posits that the operationalization of GTM retains certain roles within the purview of corporate HR (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013, 1763). Integral roles at the intersection of corporate HR and GTM encompass management development, succession planning, career mapping, strategic workforce allocation, executive compensation, and the transnational mobility of managers (Farndale et al. 2010, 165). Consequently, GTM is delineated as a specialized branch of international human resource management, distinguished by its direct influence on personnel and organizational operations, albeit within a more defined and targeted international HR framework (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 124; King 2015, 275; Festing et al. 2013, 162).

The economic impact and investments within GTM processes respectively have been noted as quite extensive, due to the high benefit they have the potential of bringing to MNCs (Bonneton et al. 2022, 204) which in some cases can affect the capability of engaging in GTM. The ethicality of GTM systems also needs to be reviewed and assessed based on the core business strategy and culture of the organization as for instance a profit seeking versus public sector culture could have drastic differences in how they characterize and evaluate the morals about their decisions in GTM strategies and choices (Swales 2013, 42). GTM systems are most often supported and benefitted from shared company values such as inclusion and diversity (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1949). However, the following subsections aim to address the common pitfalls and challenges that MNCs face in GTM implementation.

3.3.2 Common challenges multinational firms face when implementing global talent management systems

The second sub question aims to understand what some of the most common challenges of GTM implementation are, in order to comprehend how the elements interact to combat and address these challenges. One could imply that the challenges offer for the context in which GTM acts on. Challenges are context-specific, wherein organizational, and managerial factors heavily influence the GTM strategy.

From an organizational standpoint, the lack of global leadership and management skills at middle and current management levels impedes GTM efforts, as does organizational resistance to cooperation and resource sharing across domains (Preece et al. 2013, 3474; Schuler et al. 2011, 514). Moreover, challenges in acquiring, motivating, and retaining talent correlate with corporate human resources hurdles like global competition and evolving forms of global mobility (Guthridge et al. 2008, 49; Farndale et al. 2010, 162).

Managerial responsibility plays a critical role in GTM implementation risks. Struggles with sustaining leadership and the alignment of senior management with program objectives present significant barriers (Newhall 2012, 5; Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1770). An example of this managerial shortcoming is evident in recruitment practices that lack forward planning and talent development approaches that underutilize specialized skills (Huffaker 2013, 153; Collings & Isichei 2018, 178). Additionally, career development strategies face obstacles such as inadequate knowledge among employees and managers' lack of skill in supporting career progression (Huffaker 2013, 152).

Misinterpretations within organizations, particularly regarding talent mobility and immediate outcome expectations, are also prevalent challenges (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1767). Individual-level resistance to being designated as global talent and mixed responses to global mobility requirements necessitate MNCs to define roles and expectations carefully (Kirk 2021, 209).

In addressing talent identification, development, and retention, practical solutions to identified challenges include strategies such as broadened job placement approaches, utilization of social media for recruitment, and explicit entry-level requirements (Aman et al. 2018, 7). To combat talent retention issues, innovative knowledge and employability learning opportunities are proposed alongside payment-based incentives (Aman et al. 2018, 8). Considering market environments, the surge in emerging markets calls for novel GTM strategies. Addressing the talent deficit in these markets involves creating organizational capacities to attract and retain talent (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 80; Civera et al. 2023, 2667-2668).

Within the MNC context, coordinating GTM systems and processes, especially across a network of subsidiaries, poses unique challenges. The complex relationship between headquarters and subsidiaries can create significant barriers to GTM policy execution (Lee et al. 2022, 356; Malik et al. 2021, 2). MNCs must navigate the balance between

maintaining control at headquarters and empowering subsidiaries to retain top talent (Lee et al. 2022, 359).

GTM challenges also stem from phenomenon-based research and the nature of it, which calls for advancements in global talent management to address strategic implementation concerns (Dries 2013, 275; von Krogh et al. 2012, 279; Anlesinya et al. 2019, 148). A deeper comprehension of GTM impacts is crucial, as mismatches between talent demand and supply continue to pose significant strategic challenges (Farndale et al. 2010, 162; Thite et al. 2023, 133).

3.3.3 Challenges and complexities specific to global talent management and the global context

The previous section touched upon general implementation challenges of GTM systems, and briefly highlighted the upcoming section that is specifically devoted to the contextual challenges of global hurdles in talent management. External factors, such as large-scale political changes favouring restricted immigration and nationalistic policies, present formidable challenges in the GTM landscape (Horak et al. 2019, 471). Additionally, the rapid pace of various global political, social, and economic problems introduces new crises and fast-paced developments, impacting the need and urgency for new solutions and research within GTM as well as approaches (Fedorova et al. 2020, 1).

In the intricate landscape of GTM, MNCs navigate a maze of challenges that span from internal structural issues to the shifting sands of the global socio-political climate. Restrictions on immigration and rapid political and social shifts demand agility and innovation in talent strategies (Horak et al. 2019, 471; Fedorova et al. 2020, 1).

Cultural understanding plays a pivotal role in GTM, with tangible barriers such as language and cultural practices often impeding the human resource management process (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1950). In homogenous societies with strong cultural heritages, such as in Confucian-influenced regions, there is a marked contrast to the more diverse and multilingual environments of western MNCs (Froese et al. 2020, 7). Cultural norms shape not just leadership styles and expectations, such as the nurturing leadership anticipated in Korean contexts (Vance et al. 2013, 989), but also recruitment and selection processes, where perceptions and expectations around interviews can vary dramatically due to cultural differences (Griswold et al. 2022, 2997). National culture even influences how

individuals perceive an employer's global diversity values, adding another layer of complexity to talent management across borders (Phillips et al. 2023, 181).

Expatriation emerges as a central GTM component, crucial for the strategic deployment of talent. However, challenges abound, from financial limitations precluding overseas opportunities to a general undervaluation of the human capital of skilled migrants, leading to potential talent pool exclusion (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss 2018, 2058; Farndale et al. 2014, 207). Navigating the intricate dynamics of expatriation, inpatriation, and repatriation becomes a delicate act, where every stage from preparation to reintegration presents unique obstacles (Moeller et al. 2016, 993; Collings & Isichei 2018, 170). The use of expatriation by MNCs and the worry of global mobility (Kim & McLean 2012, 579) can be theoreticized by contingency theory which states that as the corporate business strategy that looks to expand and is triggered by new clients or global markets, a key strategy is to move key individuals to the foreign destinations in order to facilitate the expansion (Farndale et al. 2014, 205).

Figure 7 serves as a collection of abovementioned challenges and examples of specific challenges that MNCs face with or prior to GTM implementation in the previous section.

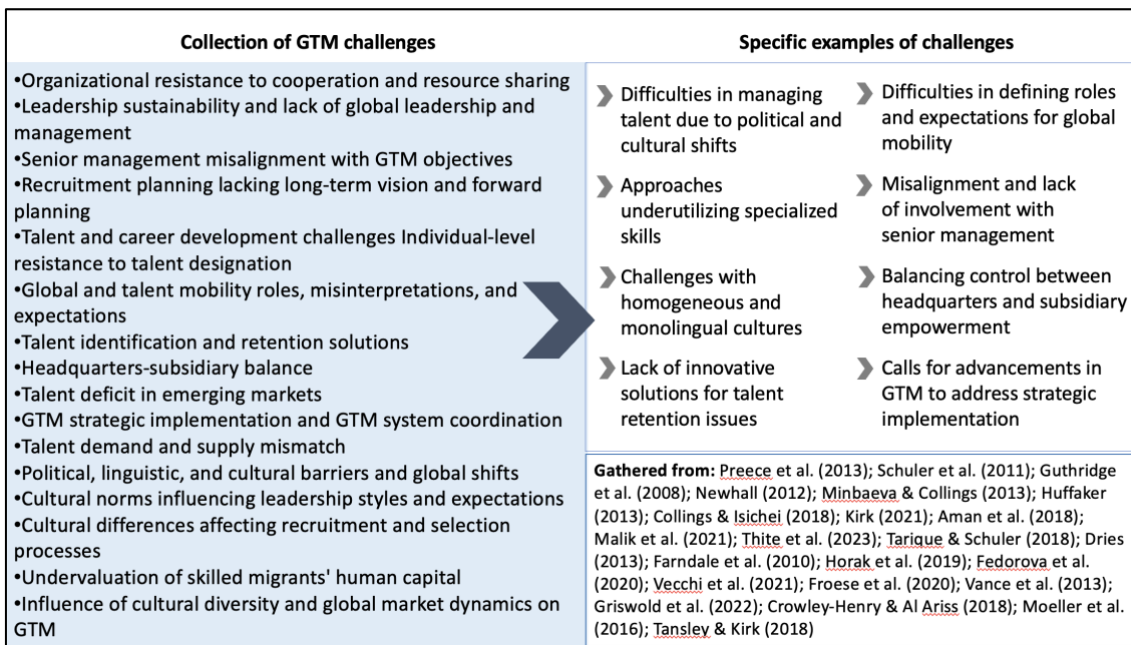


Figure 7. Collection of global talent management challenge categories and specific challenge examples.

Figure 7 indicates the magnitude and variety of challenges within GTM systems and implementation. In order to harmonize GTM strategies with organizational needs and the diverse cultural and individual expectations of the global workforce, MNCs must tread a

fine line. The interplay between headquarters and subsidiaries, the nuanced considerations of talent mobility, and the pervasive influence of cultural diversity and global market dynamics are all part of the GTM equation (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1767; Tansley & Kirk 2018, 40). Balancing organizational and global GTM challenges is not just about aligning strategic goals but also about recognizing and managing the human element within the talent management process. Global talent and GTM issues should be addressed from a cross-disciplinary perspective (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 112). As the contextual concepts have been addressed the following sections outline the actual system and layers of GTM along with the elements of GTM.

3.3.4 Global talent management system, structure, and layers explained

The GTM system is considered a sophisticated collection of actions, which while independent they have significant implications of the system and has been phrased as tweaked HR functions with added technological advancements (Lewis & Heckman 2006, 140-141). A successful global TM system includes sufficient information about each core element (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 102). Executives should consider the scope of their GTM systems and how broadly should they reach within the organization (Collings et al. 2009, 8). Global TM elements and processes can be defined and categorized into organization and individual levels. Organization-level elements that are managed and oriented from the leaders of the organization and include examples such as talent philosophies, TM objectives, degree of workforce differentiation and TM systems. These have an impact on how the individual-level factors such as talent status and TM practices are driven. (De Boeck et al. 2018, 201) In research to measure the factors impacting positively on GTM and international performance the variables chosen were: identifying critical positions, competence training, development, and reward management (Fernandes et al. 2023, 11-13) which can all be conceptualized as elements of GTM.

GTM should be considered as a set of organizational routines and processes that support the organizations human and social capital advantages (Collings 2014, 257). Routines represent processes such as identifying and managing global talent or managing global staff flows (Collings 2014, 257-258). GTM systems are consisted of various programs, processes, and activities implemented by various instruments and operators (Ewerlin 2013, 281). These processes then in turn carry the knowledge overflow, and talent surplus management (Aman et al. 2018, 4).

In literature there were certain elements identified that compose talent management systems: talent planning, talent identification, talent attraction, talent acquisition, talent development, talent deployment and talent retention (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93). An example of one of the processes within the element is the identification of key positions and how do these positions adapt of shift depending on i.e., business model changes (Collings et al. 2018, 8). Ewerlin (2013, 282) summarizes some of the main elements of GTM into four stages. First element is based on identifying and acquiring talent. Second element is concerned with deploying talent into the correct concrete position. The third element is developing the talent further from example performance assessments or competence requirements, long term career planning is involved. Lastly the fourth element is coined as retention of also motivating individuals, benefitting the organization from lowering financial impacts and retaining knowledge that occurs from talent fluctuation. Another similar interpretation of its elements stated is the process of: “sourcing, screening, selection, onboarding, retention, development, deployment and renewal” which are said to happen in the junction of various hiring, management and development processes and can be expressed as talent optimization (Schweyer 2004, 38). Global talent management is not solely and exclusively about hiring and retaining top level talent, but on top of this the conveyance and handover of skills and expertise (Newhall 2012, 31) these can be identified as some of the seven elements mentioned earlier. Figure 8 outlines the mentioned process from an individual level perspective as the talent lifecycle (Schiemann 2014, 282).

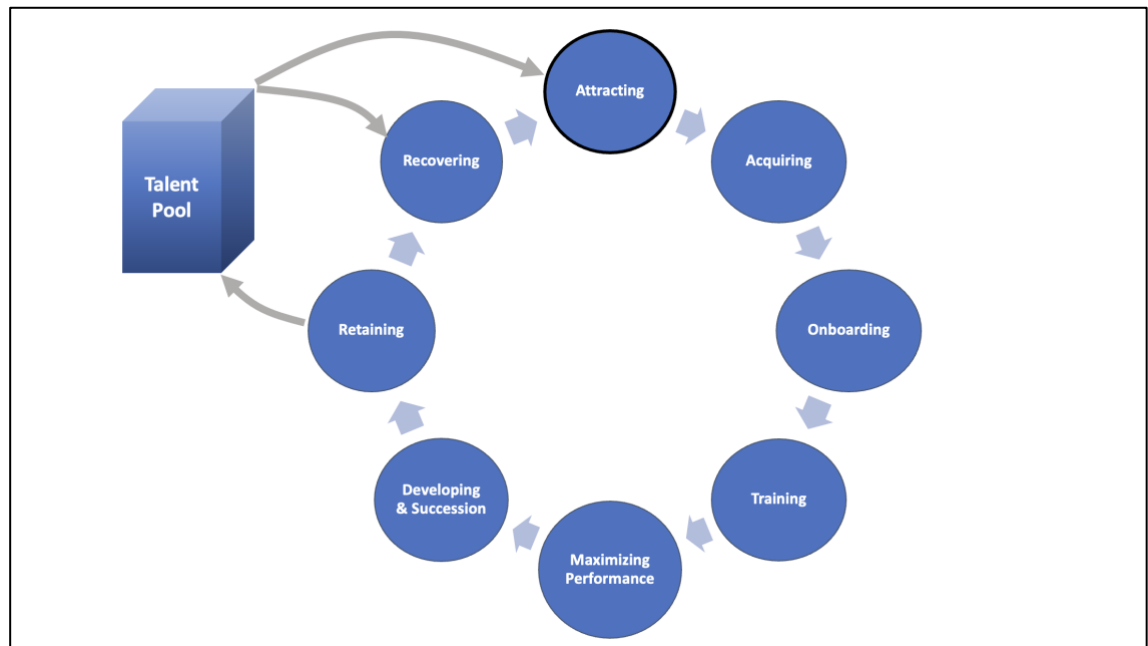


Figure 8. Talent lifecycle (modified from: Schiemann 2014, 282).

Figure 8 represents the individual level pathway of a talent lifecycle (Schiemann 2014, 282). Some of these elements have also been coined part of the talent lifecycle, which highlights the journey for an individual (De Boeck et al. 2018, 201) from the talent pool, either internal or external, from attracting talent to the last stage of retaining it (Schiemann 2014, 282). The GTM lifecycle, involving actions from talent attraction to retention (Schiemann 2014, 282; De Boeck et al. 2018, 201) and the strategic actors within GTM were identified as pivotal for successful delivery and coordination (Valk 2022, 1518; Stahl et al. 2007, 8).

Additionally, some elements of GTM systems have been summarized and categorized (Garavan 2012, 2430) further to explain the functions and actions of GTM systems. Firstly, GTM elements and processes have an approach on multiple levels classified as local, regional, and global when it comes to sourcing and hiring talent. Secondly, employment branding is a holistic and international task across the organization. Thirdly, specialized units concerned with issues such as talent development, talent mobility and retention are centralized. Fourthly, organizations should adopt frameworks and strategies to mitigate risks within talent gaps and global risks. Fifthly, the recommendation of implementing strategies in terms of expatriate use and managing mobility in the talent pool aligns with organization-wide strategies and goals. Lastly, GTM systems should incorporate as many stakeholders as possible and captivate their interest in engaging them in global, regional, and local GTM processes. (Garavan 2012, 2430) These ideas can

likewise be framed as applying strategic human resource management to attract, develop and retain talent and assure and sustain corporate success within global markets (Anlesinya et al. 2019, 149).

The nature of GTM practices is characterized as based in routines and patterns which can be identified with various individuals contributing to them, serving as the fundamental means through which creates an effective outcome (Collings et al. 2018, 3). Figure 9 presents an example of a collection of interlinked routine-like processes and their actions along with further details.

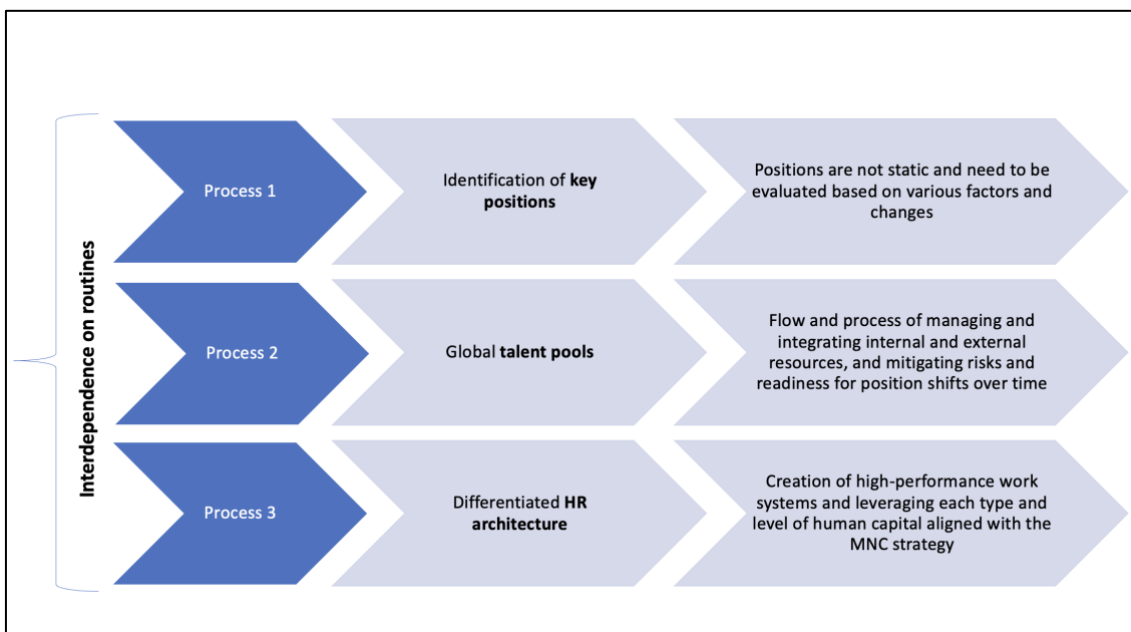


Figure 9. Routine examples of global talent management processes (modified from Collings et al. 2018, 8-12).

The exemplary routines and processes illustrated in Figure 9 showcase some of the action points and routine like tasks associated with global talent management processes (Collings et al. 2018, 8-12). Collings et al. 2019 identify three significant routines MNCs need to adopt in regard to GTM strategy: (1) identifying pivotal positions, (2) developing global talent pools (3) developing differentiated HR architecture (545-547) which portray crucial elements and processes of GTM structures. Firstly, in order to fill pivotal positions with necessary talent, the positions need to be analysed and continually evaluated based on changing needs. Secondly, while positions require analysis, so do the individuals aimed to fill these roles, meaning that talent pools need to be managed to prepare for even sudden needs or changes. Lastly the differentiated HR architecture inclines that MNCs establish high performance work systems and elements that leverage the full capability and capacity of talent, aligned with overarching strategic goals. Examples of these include

processes such as job assignments, selective staffing, appraisal systems, that are organizational routines that aim to develop the human capital on multiple levels. (Collings et al. 2018, 8-12)

However, the consequent issue with interpretations such as this one is the confusion and lack of systematic structure. The following Figure 10 aims to strengthen the initial conceptualization presented in Figure 1 with concrete examples of elements and processes of GTM further developed.

Some of these elements have previously been identified within human resource and management or are simple things that are not as emphasized, however for the purpose of their study these elements act similar as constructs in order to classify and conceptualize talent management (Yildiz & Esmer 2022). GTM processes are framed by organizational strategy and requirements, such as the need for mobility that can be led by the need to expand to new and emerging markets (Tansley & Kirk 2018, 46). An important link that has been argued to relate to GTM and performance is the competitive strategy of an MNC and the connection points (Collings et al. 2018, 4) which is not as frequently highlighted in literature as it potentially should be. The role of GTM is also based on smaller actions that can have a profound effect such as recognizing competencies, employee motivation as well as replacement of key talent in vital roles (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1944) or the earlier example of feedback loops (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 98).

Figure 10 illustrates what talent management systems look like in global settings and includes some of the commonly accepted elements, which the combinations can then furthermore be described as GTM structures. The following figure presents elements and process examples within the GTM system, of both organizational and individual level processes (De Boeck et al. 2018, 201). These elements and processes represent set of organizational routines and processes that support both the human and social capital (Collings 2014, 257) within the organization. Core elements such as planning, identification, attraction, acquisition, development, deployment, and retention were identified as integral to GTM practices, necessitating seamless integration (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93). Routines and patterns emerged as foundational elements contributing to the effectiveness of GTM, exemplified in Figure 8 and Figure 9, depicting routine-like tasks associated with the processes (Collings et al. 2018, 3; Stahl et al. 2007, 8; Schiemann 2014, 282).

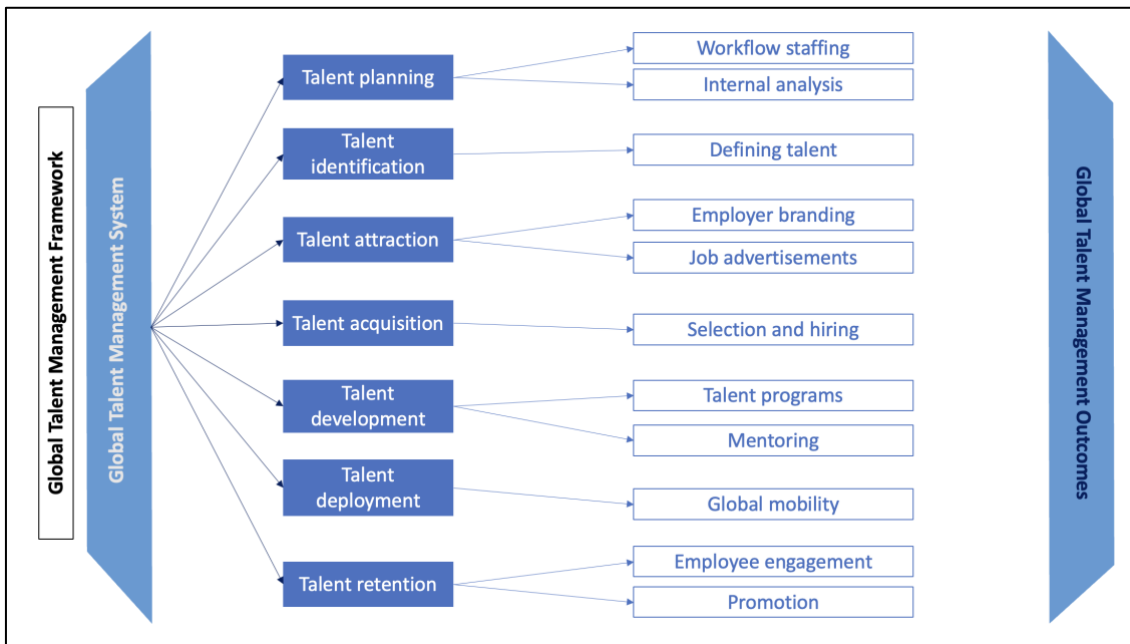


Figure 10. Developed global talent management structure and system framework (based on Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93).

Morris et al. (2016, 724) leverage terminology such as architecture of GTM which refers to the framework that implies the form of a GTM and how talent functions with the integrated strategies of the MNC, presented in Figure 10. Actions such as training and development, typically also cited as onboarding, or performance management each have significant roles in terms of gaining a talent and being able to eventually retain them as long as possible. However, when it comes to retention, the sense of urgency and priority may often vary depending on the business situation and circumstances, MNCs that have a fairly stable business environment are able to prioritize and dedicate the time and efforts for retention (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1954). MNCs employing both formal succession and development programs exhibit a heightened strategic orientation toward talent management compared to organizations lacking such systems (McDonnell et al. 2010, 152). Staff flow management or succession planning in Figure 10 expects certain mobility of human resource functions and accounts for the fact that the modern business environment is one that is propelled by intense cross-border collaboration and cooperation (Pachura 2019, 274). Retention is impacted as evidence when individuals that participated and were recognized in TM programs had a lower cumulative turnover rate (Bonneton et al. 2022, 223). Global mobility keeps developing into new forms and should answer to the modern needs (Farndale et al. 2010, 161). Furthermore, the proficient implementation of performance management as another crucial element within a successful GTM systems (McDonnell et al. 2010, 152). Some initiatives that MNCs can

do include: location planning and management, HR planning, staffing (attraction, selection, retention, reduction, and removal), training/development, performance assessments, and compensation (Schuler et al. 2011, 507-514).

Typically, the take on GTM processes is framed and suited to how the organization strategy is positioned, for example, how operations are centralized or decentralized, in other words, global integration or local response (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1781). The main difference between the two approaches in the context of GTM systems is the degree of standardization and oversight in cases where a more centralized approach requires increased integration and unification of international operations and more robust central governance of GTM processes, which can be framed as implementing extensive GTM procedures that are uniformly administered within the corporate level.

On the contrary, the decentralized approach can work with a more informal oversight from the corporate level, as the local operations have more liberty and independence in devising their suitable approaches, which can also be characterized as adaptable and responsive to GTM policies while customizable to local customs and requirements. (Scullion & Starkey 2000, 1063) Global TM has been phrased as a transformation process, as talents are the input which are processed and developed with appropriate systems and processes in the end to achieve the wanted output (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 6).



Figure 11. Talent management wheel (modified from Stahl et al. 2012, 26).

Figure 11 outlines the interaction of GTM elements and strategic approaches in the form of guiding principles (Stahl et al. 2012, 26). The elements positioned in the outer rim present some of the common universal elements (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93) and the inner rim outlines some of the prior considerations and guiding principles (Stahl et al. 2012, 26; Farndale 2014; Swales 2013, 41). Research found six principles that MNCs need to account for in terms of success in GTM processes: 1. strategy alignment 2. consistency internally 3. embedded in culture 4. involving management 5. balancing local and global needs 6. employer branding through differentiation (Stahl et al. 2012, 25).

As the structure and dynamics of GTM systems have been thoroughly discussed it is important to incorporate HR and how it connects and functions within GTM systems. Following with the rationales and desired outcomes in terms of the importance of GTM and TM should be incorporated to the discussion.

3.3.5 Connection points of human resource to global talent management

As mentioned, GTM and TM have many characteristics that relate to human resource development and processes; however, research looks at these fields as an integrative approach (Kim & McLean 2012) as well as refers to the inputs and management of human capital as strategic investments (Nijs et al. 2014, 181). While there is extensive theoretical discussion about the connection and links of human resources and GTM (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 131; Ashif 2019, 32; King 2015, 277) it is useful to discuss how HR interacts within larger GTM systems and its purpose as corporate HR plays a pivotal role in emphasizing a joint approach to GTM (Farndale et al. 2010, 165). One of the primary connections within the HR discipline is also because TM is a commonly discussed issue within the human resource management discipline and relates to the idea of talent as human capital (Dries 2013, 275-276). Another reason is the integration, which TM typically faces challenges of human resource management (Iles et al. 2010). Human resource development roles are integral to GTM as they aim to develop employees with the potential to work globally in sustainable talent supply (Kim & McLean 2012, 574). Talent management has also been referred to as an HR innovation and evolving HR practice (Huang & Tansley 2012, 3673), adding to the confusion of what the concept means and what type of practice it holds.

The HR development roles are integral to GTM since they offer the operational and some of the elements related to the strategic approach of GTM (Kim & McLean 2012). TM

covers many activities that are generally associated with human resource management, however, the difference is within the content and the specificities to which they are tailored to (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 796). HR departments have their struggles when it comes to managing and tackling the global talent challenges, which hinders the ability to implement GTM actions (Schuler et al. 2011, 514) one of the main differences is the challenge HR faces is executing this across cultural and national differences (Schiemann 2014, 282). Some of the roles of corporate human resources in GTM systems have been defined as: champion of processes, guardian of culture, network leadership & intelligence, and managers of internal receptivity (Farndale et al. 2010, 162).

Research has shown that human capital architectures that are heterogenous and entail variety, are increased by chances to curate new knowledge within the environment internally and externally (Morris et al. 2016, 731). The purpose of Figure 12 is to present how GTM is manifested within corporate human resources (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1764) as can be seen by the interaction and the differentiated HR architecture. The developments of TM and GTM was deemed to coincide with the broader evolution of business strategy, reflecting increasingly limitless and interconnected organizational systems. Specifically, TM applies this concept by dismantling barriers between HR silos and interconnecting various elements of HR. (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 111)

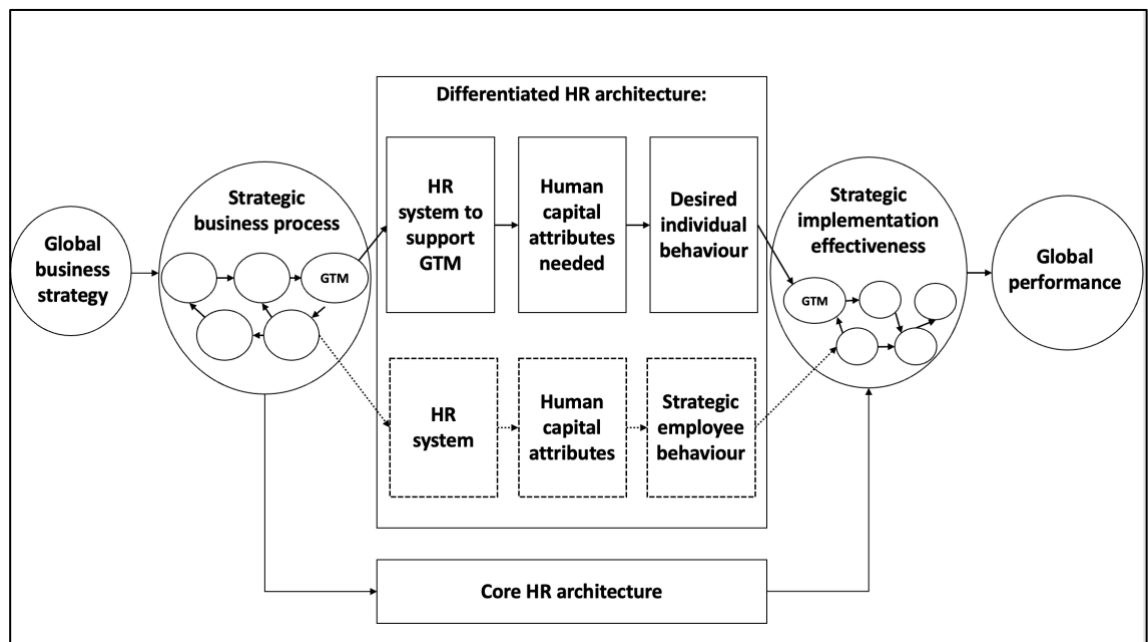


Figure 12. Differentiating human resources architecture as a strategic process (modified from Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1764).

The conceptual framework in Figure 12 provides professionals and scholars with strategic and systematic approaches when looking at the structural needs of GTM by utilizing operational roles of HR to apply to an organization (Kim & McLean 2012, 579; Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1764; Huselid & Becker 2006, 906). Research argues that certain role of GTM operationalization should remain with corporate HR (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1763). Some of the key roles that are intertwined within corporate human resources and GTM are: management development, succession planning, career planning, strategic staffing, rewards of top management, and mobility of international managers (Farndale et al. 2010, 165). GTM is thus a subset of international human resource management having a direct impact on employees and the organization but with a narrower scope, emphasizing specific HR practices in the international realm (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 124; King 2015, 275; Festing et al. 2013, 162). GTM is additionally a key component of delivering the strategic goals of the organization (Collings & Isichei 2018, 167) indicated in Figure 12 by the strategic emphasis on business processes and implementation effectiveness (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1764).

Part of balancing GTM systems and protocols is recognizing the strategic needs of each international strategy and the balancing act between subsidiaries and headquarters. In the case of multidomestic international business strategies the increasing responsibility on subsidiaries to quickly react to local client needs and demands requires efforts in local human capital in generating success and opportunities, contrary to a meganational strategy that places high emphasis on corporate human capital to generate shared global best practices aligned with centralized decision making (Morris et al. 2016, 732, 735). GTM processes also indicate organizational support (Li et al. 2023, 3222) which in this case is the interaction and operation of HR processes and structures. Some argue that GTM is a functional level of human resource management in addition to specific aspects of human resource policies, that tackle the aspects of mobility, plans and forecasts on staffing, development, and evaluations, as well as other factors that account for the regulatory and employee pool in terms of the strategic directions (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 6).

The interaction between GTM and HRM can also be defined as “adopting a systems theory approach is helpful to understanding GTM as nested within the wider systems of HRM” (King 2015, 277). A new HR approach of sustainable HR is closely linked with some of the objectives of GTM, by connecting strategic human resource management

with sustainability and emphasis on the people management policies from both a human and financial standpoint (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1944). To summarize GTM is an emerging functional activity of HR (Garavan 2012, 2430) meaning that the processes of GTM stem from the strategy and facilitation of human resources in some cases (Schuler et al. 2011, 513) such as HR rules and legislation (Civera et al. 2023, 2665). The following section carries on the discussion by emphasizing the importance of GTM and the potential benefits that lie within it.

3.3.6 Importance and significance of global talent management systems in practice

Talent management should be noted as an applicable topic to all MNCs as it appears that there are benefits from TM processes when integrated with human resource management practices, regardless of the MNC size (Ashif 2019, 32). One of the goals of GTM, which has been stated several times, is the concept of retention for high-level performers and talented individuals as well as success in terms of outcome can be considered by the knowledge transfer that happens within the MNC (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 93) which can additionally be phrased as an importance of having the system in place. A result of TM outcomes when TM systems flourish is employee engagement (Sidani & Al Ariss 2014, 222), correlated to how organizations can retain individuals who require meaningful jobs (Guthridge et al. 2008, 51).

Various global talent management programs within MNCs have the power to allow for talent to holistically learn about the MNC while developing a sense of belonging, all of which result in motivation increases (Bonneton 2023, 14). At the end of it all, one of the critical purposes of successful GTM is the positive exploitation of human capital in terms of talent, as it has been proven that human capital is an apparent driving force of competitive advantage (Wright & McMahon 2011, 94) which universally applies to most if not all MNCs. It is said that an effective GTM system in an MNC is able to improve the resilience of the global operations in the context of crisis and events with global impacts (Lee et al. 2022, 357) as well as contribute to implementation of strategy within the MNC (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1764).

What can be drawn from several literature and theoretical backgrounds is the conclusion that GTM goes beyond solely human resource management, leadership development programs, or succession planning but rather represents a holistic strategy for acquiring,

retaining, and nurturing talent within the organization, with a long-term perspective in mind. It encompasses more than previously mentioned, including elements like strategic planning, organizational culture, and change management. (Iles et al. 2010, 181) It is said that effective TM carries strategic significance and importance (Ashton & Morton 2005, 28).

Successful GTM can address social changes and needs. As described, an effective and prosperous GTM is capable of retaining top-level talent, which is highlighted in the prerequisite of adapting to the changing demands of the workforce since the next generation of talent has been portrayed as insisting on flexibility, increased compensation, work-life balance, liberty, and meaningful positions to work for (Guthridge 2008, 51). This connects to the importance of talent management within generational gaps as (Guthridge et al. 2008, 51) the new generation of talent is within the talent pipeline (Deif & Van Beek 2019, 863). Efficient and successful GTM processes lead to an increased capacity to generate, acquire, manage, store, transfer and apply the knowledge within the MNC that is carried within the talents (Vaiman et al. 2015, 282).

Effective GTM processes have the capability of increasing aspects such as organizational identification, which impacts knowledge sharing within MNCs (Li et al. 2023, 3211). Organizational identification correlates on how individuals identify with their employing organization and results in increased self-esteem and motivation, on an individual level and cooperation among various units on a group level, since values and loyalties are common for all (Björkman et al. 2013, 199). Why would organizations care about naming and recognizing talent? Research showed that, employees that have been recognized and identified as talent, who are aware of it are more likely to stay in their organizations and show less signs of intentions to leave (Bonneton et al. 2022, 208). The following section synthesizes the discussion thus far by presenting some of the integrations, connections, and factors of GTM.

3.4 Global talent management connections and integration of factors

A key insight to guide the thesis is and its outcome is the fact that GTM systems are contextual, meaning that the allegory of one size does not fit all applies strongly (Stahl et al. 2012, 32). The synthesis of Figure 13 combines the antecedents and influencing factors mentioned as rationales and challenges along with the elements within a GTM system. In addition, the synthesis includes outcomes and inputs to the system, as well as the

breakdown of the elements and processes within the system. GTM systems can be stated as bundles of GTM policies and practices (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 82) which accounts for the constitution of various actions and elements that make for the system. The principle of the GTM system is that various policies work together to support the general goals, as an example how attracting talent or expats that have leadership potential requires employee development (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 86). GTM policies should create synergies through the variations of use and configuration of GTM systems (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 86). The appropriateness of a GTM system and strategy is contingent on the overall strategy of the MNC, which inclines that there is no universal solution or system suitable for all (Collings et al. 2019, 548).

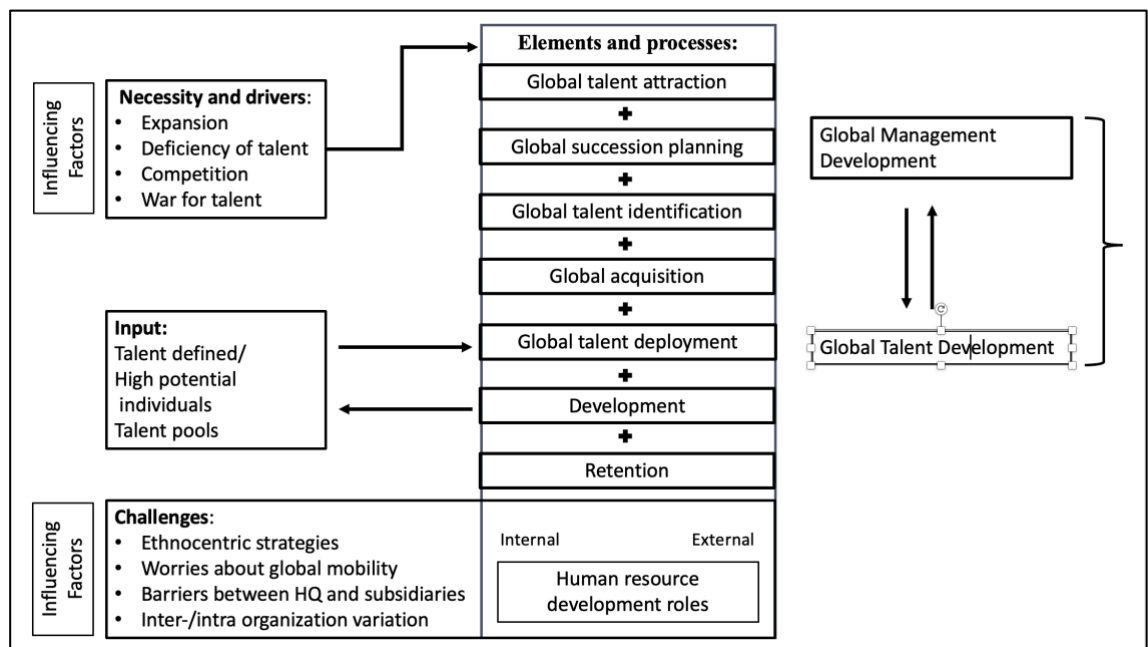


Figure 13. Synthesis of global talent management elements, factors, and antecedents (based on McDonnell et al. 2010, 157; Kim & McLean 2012, 579; Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93).

The necessity comes in as argued that if not identified, nurtured, nor management efficiently, talent has very little strategic value to an organization (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 144). In previous research and listed on the left, the context of GTM was depicted into forces and shapers or influencing factors, global talent challenges and various GTM initiatives that are taken into account (Schuler et al. 2011, 507-508). Some of these forces and shapers for GTM formed were identified as globalization, demographics, the demand for competent and motivated workers, and the supply of these motivated and competent workers (Schuler et al. 2011, 507-509). The seven elements (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93) frame the core function but indicated in Figure 13 are the drivers and example challenges,

and HR function that are widely linked. The shift of research has been towards a rigorous change towards global competence instead of global HR practices (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 107) which is why the elements are separated from the HR development roles.

4 Elements and approaches to global talent management systems

As listed earlier research has identified seven common elements and various processes of global talent management: talent planning, talent identification, talent attraction, talent acquisition, talent development, talent deployment and talent retention (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 93). Each element possesses various processes such as employer branding linking with attraction, and compensation and benefits that link with retention, deployment has a high interaction with global mobility (Stahl et al. 2007, 8) to name a few examples. The following chapter highlights the various elements and processes in detail, offering solutions and viable options that were mentioned and lastly proposes an integrated approach to curating a suitable GTM system.

4.1.1 Implementation of global talent management systems

One critical observation about GTM is that there is no universal solution or single approach that can be applied to all organizations and MNCs (Fedorova et al. 2020, 5). TM processes and systems are flexible and can be utilised in various manners and elements, inclining that it can be reinterpreted based on for example projects and various types of project management (Pachura 2019) or organizational structures and contexts. Initiatives can be pushed through by the senior managers using, policies, rhetoric, and vision statements, which as a result increase the initiatives taken by talents by becoming self-initiative in expatriate assignments to lead by example (Tansley & Kirk 2018, 46) and these are iterated additionally as strategic praxis (Valk 2022, 1518). As GTM systems are flexible, so are the various approaches. Cultural cognition can be an example of a primary approach to GTM in the first stages, for instance generally Scandinavian managers tend to view talent as an inclusive approach (Quifors et al. 2017, 154). Another factor is strongly linked to organizational strategy and structures. Characterizing specifically GTM strategy solely based on centralization versus decentralization and inclusive versus exclusive approaches may be overly vague and imprecise (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1794). In some cases, the trigger to decentralize GTM operations is external, such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Cooke et al. 2020, 8). Some of the barriers to various GTM initiatives were identified in research and included examples of how MNCs can deliberately approach these blind spots.

Research suggests on an approach of strategic position identification or talent segmentation, rather than solely the idea of relying on gaining the best talent, but to ensure that the key positions are filled accordingly (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1765) indicating that various approaches can be taken but also holistic consideration is required, which will be detailed and outlined later in the Chapter 4. In order to best exploit talent and gain the most out of it, the MNC should initially examine the most critical positions that are tied to performance as some positions are deemed more critical than others (Kim & McLean 2012, 569; Collings et al. 2009, 8). Talent segmentation is considered not only identifying the top and high positions, but the strategic key positions as well (Cerdin & Brewster 2014, 246). This includes evaluations of how these positions and roles contribute to the organization, why they are considered key positions (Collings & Isichei 2018, 168). Even the starting point contextually plays a role for how a GTM system should start off with identifying talent, for instance in emerging markets and similar contexts talent needs to be discovered and developed by managers (Civera et al. 2023, 2644).

A set of guidelines were conducted for MNCs to decide the best GTM approach to system implementation. Firstly, the MNC needs to identify the specific global talent challenges they face (Schuler et al. 2011, 513). The planning of GTM begins with an internal review including an environment analysis of opportunities and threats, as well as the current existing internal human capital (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 801). Secondly assessing the effectiveness and readiness of the existing HR policies for the identified challenge, and then consider the rigour and sophistication level they bring to the table. Thirdly the MNC must depict the unique characteristics within itself such as management, values, structure etc. Additionally, the organization needs to identify the necessary HR policies that align with the characteristics and lastly select the most suitable manners that address the global talent challenges. Lastly it needs to monitor the factors that affect the global talent challenges and consistently evaluate the suitable HR policies, as well as facilitating any necessary changes and strategy adaptations. (Schuler et al. 2011, 513)

In terms of operators and actors in the system, MNCs need to employ holistic involvement. On an organizational level it is important to not only involve employees, but rather managers as if they do not have the ownership or understanding of GTM goals and actions they are unaware of how best to support employees and the organizational practices (Schuler et al. 2011, 514). When it comes to management and managers there

is a lack of importance placed on TM which can be seen as a lack of involvement in employee's careers as well as the reluctance to accept that individual's performance may vary and fluctuate (Schuler et al. 2011, 514). Career culture conversations for instance are important when engaging senior leaders on career development (Huffaker 2013, 154) and in general alignment with GTM systems. Tailoring GTM systems and processes for individuals, while it being an enormous challenge, creates a unique experience for talents, who appreciate the personalized experience and are more likely to benefit to the organizational goals and more likely to retain in the MNC (Malik et al. 2021, 5).

GTM strategies are also characterized as flexible due to the variation based on the stages of the internationalisation process the MNC is going through (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1781) following the trend with flexible implementation. Human capital and the processes behind it should be able to cope with the uncertainties of the global dynamic and complex environment (Nnenna Onwugbolu & Mutambara 2021, 220). MNCs must consider the delivery costs and parallel strategic considerations (Farndale et al. 2014) when implementing GTM systems and composing the unique architecture. Internal and external flexibility is required from MNCs in GTM implementation (Stokes et al. 2016, 2333). In some research GTM policies were also implemented by entrepreneurial actions, which implied learning by doing (Preece et al. 2013, 3469). Organizations and MNCs undertake an intermediary role, where GTM practices and policies take place (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 176).

Research has found that solely employing GTM programs does not always signify positive associations without adding cultural dimensions (Ewerlin 2013, 297). MNCs have been required to seek for new tools, coordination, and processes to take on more acquired GTM systems (Farndale et al. 2010, 166) which is what the remainder chapter will address. But first the following section takes on the discussion of how GTM approaches vary based on strategy and context in the MNCs.

4.1.2 Variety in approaches of global talent management strategies and systems

It has been established that there most likely is no universal approach to GTM (Fedorova et al. 2020, 5) which is why alternative and unique approaches should be introduced based on each existing context and strategies (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1781, 1788). A best fit or contingency perspective argues that there is no one size fits all, and that talent is not equal

in terms of how they can achieve strategic objectives as well as the alignment of strategy when it comes to GTM systems (Garavan 2012, 2432). Talent management approaches are not always based in specific contexts but can be tied in specific conditions such as a network talent management. In a network talent management approach, organizations carry out projects within a cross-organizational network, leveraging the talents within that specific network. Essentially, network talent management acts as an intermediary stage between talent management at the organizational level and the broader scope of global talent management. It involves utilizing the collective talents within a collaborative network for the successful execution of projects. (Pachura 2019, 276)

Variation in GTM approaches is due to the value placed on the views of capital either on the individual and collective levels (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1793). Structural characteristics play a determining factor such as inter-organization and intra-organization systems for GTM cannot be uniformed (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1448). A collection of various considerations is presented in Table 4, which provides a holistic overview of various considerations and prerequisites, which have been collected from research and framed for organizations prior to GTM implementations. Table 4 addresses one common pitfall of GTM implementation in MNCs, which is related to the lack of information and lack of time to collect information (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1771).

Table 4. Considerations and prerequisites for global talent management system implementation

Category	Consideration	GTM element	Process phase
Strategic alignment	Alignment with strategy	General	Continuous
	Scope of GTM system	General	Pre-phase
	Identifying strategic positions/talent segmentation	Talent planning	Pre-phase
Approach and culture	Exclusive vs. inclusive approach	Talent identification and talent attraction	Continuous
	Culture analysis	General	Pre-phase
	Cultural embeddedness	General	Continuous
	Balancing local and global need	General	Continuous
GTM structure and planning	Environmental analysis	General	Pre-phase
	Resource analysis	General	Pre-phase

Table 4. Continued.

Category	Consideration	GTM element	Process phase
Management and development	Internal review	General	Pre-phase
	Management involvement	Talent development	Pre-phase
	Entrepreneurial actions and learning	General	Continuous
	Change facilitation and implementation	General	Post-phase
Evaluation and adaptation	Challenge identification	General	Pre-phase
	Centralized vs. decentralized stage	General	Pre-phase
	Process adaptation	General	During
	Strategy adaptations and monitoring	General	Post-phase
	Policy standardization	General	During
Financial and HR structures	Ethical evaluation and value assessment	General	Post-phase
	Financial investment	General	Pre-phase
	Identifying existing HR structures and processes	General	Pre-phase
Outcome measurement	Outcome measures ROT (return on talent)	Talent retention	Post-phase
Organizational structure	Inter- and intra-organization structure and differences	General	Continuous

Table 4 presents the variety of considerations and prerequisites that MNCs need to account for when implementing GTM systems and various dimensions that are prerequisites such as financial investments or other considerations such as the ethicality of the system. The effectiveness and efficiency of GTM systems requires both micro-scale improvements which touch upon the internal environment in the MNC and macro-scale adjustments such as global expert networks and global external factors (Pachura 2019, 274). Global TM strategies need to account for differences and nuances within national cultures, such as values and local needs for example work-life balance (Thite et al. 2023, 137). In some cases, it is a delicate balance of "making, buying, and borrowing" talent, to highlight how MNCs need to be cautious of how much investments need to be

made in GTM (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1441) representing the mindset needed when designing or implementing GTM systems.

In the case where a GTM program creates an outcome of more good than alternative options the moral worth and ethical costs can be considered covered (Swales 2013, 40) these of course need to be weighed by the organization and the tradeoffs it considers worthy. Stakeholder theory is said to address some of the commonly mentioned criticisms towards TM and solutions related are based on five responses: purpose-driven organization, translation attitude, empowerment-based engagement, cross-country relationship network, and external HR approach (Civera et al. 2023, 2641-2644). What was indicated that instead in some cases the lack of experts or the existing level and standard of management may be the reason why some approaches are out of the question or not applicable (Fedorova et al. 2020, 5). For example, the industry of high technology has indicated in several countries, facing the challenge of talent and personnel shortage, which has forced it to adopt a more inclusive approach, by working with a bulk of employees rather than single individuals (Fedorova et al. 2020, 5). An approach to the cry for flexible policies is strategy of centrally managed flexibility, establishing elevated levels of policy standardization. This approach facilitated the customization of policies to cater to a broader range of mobility populations.

Previous case studies indicated an expansion in the number of policy options considered satisfactory by respondents, with several organizations now providing tailored policies for various international employee groups. (Farndale et al. 2014, 209) Other suggestions to approach GTM for multinational corporations involves adopting a contingency perspective, discouraging a universal approach. It emphasizes aligning GTM system design with the overarching MNE strategy, specifically identifying pivotal positions that exert significant influence on organizational performance, going beyond the conventional focus on leadership succession. (Collings et al. 2019, 560)

Strategic choices in terms of for example and innovation-focused strategy affect the GTM choices by in this case forcing the MNC to rely on their own resources (Malik et al. 2021, 3). In some cases, such as Korean MNCs, have adopted hybrid practices of blending both U.S. and Japanese customs (Froese 2020, 180) indicating that the future will likely have more holistic and collective cultures rather than solely national origins. Talent is contextual in the sense that the corporate culture and other factors influence the success,

and results may not be the same in other MNCs (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1768). Industries affect in some cases such as the level of control given to local subsections and subsidiaries (Stahl et al. 2012, 30). Commonalities in GTM approaches for various matters such as expatriation, stem from convergence of similar challenges MNCs face rather than similarities in organizational culture, strategic goals, or design (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1448) or in cases where a regional approach is suggested for fostering mid-level managers (Luo 2016, 35). Research aiming to explain the factors that may or may not influence MNCs to engage in GTM identified five independent variables that can contribute to the question. While not being the full list introduced earlier, some variables included: country of origin, sector, employment size, level of standardization/differentiation of products and services, and presence of global HR policy formation body. (McDonnell et al. 2010,152-153) The following sections delve into each elements of GTM to develop understanding of the element-level actions and considerations.

4.2 Elements of global talent management

The elements of GTM systems were raised in different manners and emphasis during the review. The following section provides overview to the various elements of GTM systems and their processes.

4.2.1 Talent attraction and planning

TM and GTM are concerned not only with the current employees of the organization, but additionally the potential individuals (Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2056) which is where talent attraction comes in. Similar with the connections to supply-chain management (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 178; Cappelli 2008, 10-11) forecasting product demand corresponds to forecasting talent needs. Estimating efficient production methods parallels developing talent. Deciding which parts of the process to outsource is closely tied to external hiring. Ensuring timely delivery relates to planning for succession. (Cappelli 2008, 10-11) Workforce planning is key to ensure that talent and skilled individuals are placed in roles that offer enough challenge and development and when offshoring or other methods can be used, which can align with a differentiated approach or however the MNC approach it (Collings & Isichei 2018, 178) promotions are one example of how succession planning can be implemented and how talent development is aimed at (Napathorn 2020, 549).

Global succession planning was one of the most used approaches within research in nation specific MNCs (McDonnell et al. 2010, 154).

Attracting talent in general or specific groups such as self-initiated expatriates occur with proactive engagement, clear organizational expectations and goals, and mentoring systems (Vaiman et al. 2015, 283). In cases of attracting local talent MNCs should engage with local institutions, which also acts as a development element (Thite et al. 2023, 138). Organizations have increased visibility of GTM systems, indicating that it is expected to be connected with employer attractiveness and branding (Ewerlin 2013, 280).

Some practical approaches arose from literature as examples of processes to this specific element. Job advertisements are important tools for MNCs to influence talent pool characteristics and potential talent (Phillips et al. 2023, 184). Innovative means have also been employed when it comes to job titles and descriptions of attracting talent, which allows for unique talent attraction and development by going beyond traditional job expectations (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1952). As the critical roles and positions in MNCs are dynamic, so should the definition of talent due to the everchanging role-specific requirements (Vardi & Collings 2023, 675). More flexible options for global staffing are required from MNCs, which need to be advertised more (Farndale et al. 2010, 163). MNCs have been required to offer variety in their global approaches to global staffing (Collings & Isichei 2018, 167).

Marketing such as employer branding is critical of GTM (Farndale et al. 2010, 167). A key perspective of the GTM program in practical case was refining the EVP (employee value proposition), which in an example case incorporated themes of rewards and recognition, career development, work environment, and work-life balance (Gakovic & Yardley 2007, 203). Employer branding is the act of marketing the organization to prospective talent (Stahl et al. 2012, 30). Employer branding which is also critical in organizational value creation becomes necessary in managing and attracting human resources (Pachura 2019, 273) and a critical component to attract talent (Napathorn 2020, 553). Part of employer branding has been conducted over GTM programs, websites, and job advertisements (Ewerlin 2013, 280). Often philanthropic actions are included in employer branding (Stahl et al. 2012, 31). TM can also be seen as a tool to curate employer branding within subsidiaries (Napathorn 2020, 550). Diversity is also a mean of employer branding as it was stated to be an important factor of attraction on top of

performance (Phillips et al. 2023, 158). Naturally the subsequent stage is concerned with acquiring and recruiting talent, which is what the following section addresses.

4.2.2 Talent acquisition and recruitment

When managing talent acquisition and recruitment, MNCs often weigh the benefits of nurturing internal candidates against recruiting from the external labour market, each with its unique advantages and implications for investment and strategy (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 801). Internal hiring is frequently more successful than seeking talent externally (Newhall 2012, 9), while robust employer branding and recruitment practices form the backbone of MNCs' strengths (Froese 2020, 180). Recruitment methods range from career fairs and hackathons to job auditions and trial periods, which help in identifying and developing local talents through connections with local stakeholders (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1940; Civera et al. 2023, 2667). Virtual interviews, both synchronous and asynchronous, offer cost-effective, flexible solutions for global-scale recruitment, with synchronous formats being generally more favourable to applicants (Griswold et al. 2022, 2992, 3008, 3012). However, recruiters must be mindful of cultural expectations, as misalignment can lead to disappointment regarding job skills (Tseng 2021, 2300).

Selection criteria in GTM include cultural distance, homophily, and network size, all influencing the likelihood of a candidate's selection (Quifors et al. 2017, 152). Other factors affecting applicant interest and fit include person-organization fit, attractiveness of the employer, and job intentions (Griswold et al. 2022, 3011). In some contexts, recruitment and succession planning occur more organically (Stokes et al. 2016, 2324). Additionally, impact sourcing has emerged as a socially beneficial recruiting trend with potential in Southeast Asia, tapping into untapped talent pools in rural areas (Aman et al. 2018, 2-4). Recruitment testing methods like assessments and interviews help identify cultural fit and are essential in GTM (Newhall 2012, 9; Stahl et al. 2012, 28). Compensation, international experience, and personality and value assessments are all critical in attracting and selecting talent, as is accommodating various cultural backgrounds and values (Ewerlin 2013, 283, 286; Luo 2016, 32, 38; Vardi & Collings 2023, 675; Phillips et al. 2023, 163).

Researchers suggest utilizing personality data to establish global norms for equitable candidate comparisons, aiding MNCs in mitigating cross-cultural challenges (Hedricks et al. 2008, 342). The trend toward centralized management in rapid globalizations helps

handle complexity (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1788). The following section delves into how talent can be retained, and the role of rewards concerned with retention.

4.2.3 Talent retention and rewards

Retention is crucial within GTM systems, with effective talent management being closely linked to employees' intentions to stay, as indicated by research emphasizing the role of organizational practices in talent development and retention, shaping organizational careers (Bonneton et al. 2022, 223; Bonneton 2023, 7). While financial incentives were traditionally the main focus, current strategies also value expanded responsibilities and professional growth to address psychological needs and promote career development within MNCs (Fedorova et al. 2020, 5; Bonneton et al. 2022, 204). Individualized training and mentorship that align with personal aspirations are essential for effective retention (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 802).

Retention strategies must consider individual aspirations and corporate goals, especially in expatriate assignments (Farndale et al. 2014, 204), and require cultural support for individualization (Farndale et al. 2014, 212). Retention varies by talent origin, emphasizing loyalty, commitment, and leadership as retention correlates (Sidani & Al Ariss 2014, 220; Stokes et al. 2016, 2332; Newhall 2012, 6).

Rewards in GTM systems should balance financial and non-financial benefits, as financial incentives alone are solely insufficient for retention. A holistic reward system is more effective, incorporating intrinsic rewards that enhance work-life balance and organizational productivity (Tymon et al. 2010, 118; Petković & Đorđević 2013, 803). A key determinant of retention is highlighted as career success (Bonneton et al. 2022, 229) and the following section offers a key contribution of how talent is developed and trained.

4.2.4 Talent development and training for perceived talents

GTM systems should have a significant emphasis on individual career success in order to succeed in talent development and retention, which means investments in career-related TM elements (Bonneton et al. 2022, 229). The core of talent development is the combination of the strategic objectives of the organization, in addition to the individual talent needs (Aman et al. 2018, 5). When implementing training regimes, MNCs need to consider the initial hurdles and struggles they aim to address through training (Martin 2011, 293) listed in the considerations (see Table 4). Various factors affect career

development of individuals such as the lifecycle of the organization, industry, and size (Huffaker 2013, 152) which speaks to the multitude of factors that need to be considered when thinking about the best-process for talent development. Cultural differences present challenges in the expectation of the type of training regime that should be provided, for in the case of Japan the training regimes are tied to long-term employment incentives and gaining firm-specific skills (Tseng 2021, 2292). In addition to challenges in developing local talent which is resource intensive in terms of time and cost (Luo 2016, 34). The general belief is that talent development should attain to develop broader abilities so that employees have awareness of the various functions of the organization, not solely their own function or segment (Quifors et al. 2017, 153).

Training plays a crucial role in terms of motivating employees on all positions and levels of an organization as well as a sense of fulfilment, challenges and fostering new skills (Vance et al. 2013, 987). Simply human capital can be developed by coaching, training, and mentoring (Aman et al. 2018, 5) which serve as examples of talent development processes within the element. Some of the best practices in training are noted as enhancing the perceived relevance of training, emphasizing its value and practicality for future success, giving employees control over the learning process, utilizing feedback effectively, fostering a supportive and friendly learning environment, and prioritizing the transfer of training to real-world application (Vance et al. 2013, 989-991). In practical cases of GTM the focus within training and development has been focused within building international competences (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 801). In some cases, growing in-house talent proves to be especially challenging or too big of an issue (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 91). The solution in some cases is not necessarily moving talents from one position to another, but rather expanding and in-role development of stretching assignments (Huffaker 2013, 153).

In some cases, however, career development and objective career success may have a negative effect on retaining talent, if the case is that the individual feels that there is lower room for future raises, or having reached a the full limit, may be constituents for talent to seek other opportunities (Bonneton et al. 2022, 226). Corporate e-learning has been mentioned in GTM literature as an implementation and development tool of GTM systems (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 5). An example of a ten-course module was implemented in a case study to provide structure and a unified leadership development program (Newhall 2012, 7).

Some MNCs have the capacity and implement individual development plans for employees, which include specific training programs and modules (Martin 2011, 294). Some practical advances and recommendations based on research to managers incorporated the duality of development of both "on the job" in forms of international job assignments and providing cross-over opportunities in subsidiaries and foreign markets, as well as personal monitoring and coaching on an individual level (Bonneton et al. 2022, 229). Some individual level outcomes have been studied and include skills that talent development is after collaboration abilities, catching information, and its critical evaluation (Quifors et al. 2017, 153). Developmental practices have an increase on the individual career capital, and in some cases can act as accelerated learning opportunities (Bonneton 2023, 5).

One strategy to empower local young talent, which can often be neglected and overlooked, is designing empowerment initiatives that utilize innovative measures and today's technological tools with a timely and appropriate local topic to spark local interest in the youth (Civera et al. 2023, 2667). One key concept of TM system is applying learning agility, implying the willingness to learn, and applying this knowledge (Church & Seaton 2022, 237-238). An example of leadership training includes a model where 70% of skills is acquired through hands-on experiential learning, 20% is through learning from others and 10% comes from formal training (Newhall 2012, 10).

Studies found that GTM systems require structures to build global leadership capabilities (Thite et al. 2023, 137) which takes into the aspect of global management development. A case study utilised design training programs across the MNC to promote leadership within talent management strategies and found that most of the areas of improvement were to do with people management, coaching, development, and engagement (Newhall 2012, 7). A simple tool to develop leadership is simply including line managers in GTM processes (Stahl et al. 2012, 29).

In some cases, trainings are mandated across the organization in order to gain understanding of what the organization does (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1950). In many cases development programs for local talent are globally harmonized (Luo 2016, 35). Cultural learning has also been implemented in some large MNCs as part of training programs (Luo 2016, 37). Talent management programs have benefitted from companies valuing talent development and realizing its importance (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1950).

Successful career development is ultimately a collective effort and facilitated by leaders and thus the corporate culture as a shared responsibility (Huffaker 2013, 152). The outcome of development practices in terms of talent is the transferal of tacit knowledge within a globally and geographically dispersed organization (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 7). TM programs offer not only benefits to the organization, but individually towards accelerated career growth through status (Swales 2013, 34). Strong links between training and long-term future career success in terms of leadership and responsibility have been identified (Vance et al. 2013, 998).

The next section carries on the discussion of GTM elements by raising the element of talent deployment and addressing some of the global contextual challenges raised previously in chapter 3.

4.2.5 Talent deployment and overcoming global contextual challenges

GTM systems must navigate the complex terrain of local and global talent coordination. GTM differentiates from domestic talent management with its emphasis on global mobility and expatriation, critical for the strategic placement of key talents (Sparrow et al. 2013, 1780). Historically, expatriates were dispatched due to local talent deficits in overseas operations (Vilet 2012, 29), but modern strategies involve utilizing skilled migrants to fulfil GTM objectives (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss 2018, 2063). The challenge for many MNCs is the international competition for high-quality talent willing to accept global assignments (Collings 2014, 255).

Local needs are addressed by granting autonomy to overseas subsidiaries, allowing for the localization of GTM systems (Thite et al. 2023, 137). However, subsidiaries are dependent on both local employees and the global workforce to maintain competitive (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 80). Acknowledging cross-cultural variations is essential, particularly in personality assessments that influence recruitment and development decisions (Hedricks et al. 2008, 335). The debate over subsidiary autonomy revolves around selecting and empowering global managers (Moeller et al. 2016, 1001), with expatriation outcomes having a significant impact on GTM effectiveness (McNulty & De Cieri 2016, 12).

Experiences of expatriates within GTM systems reveal alignment between personal goals and organizational objectives is key for mutual satisfaction (Valk 2022, 1524). Long-term

expatriation poses economic burdens, prompting MNCs to explore alternatives such as self-nomination and self-initiated expatriation (Farndale et al. 2014, 205). These forms of mobility necessitate adaptable GTM policies (Farndale et al. 2014, 206) and bi-directional support for both expatriation and inpatriation (Moeller et al. 2016, 997). Meeting international assignment requirements such as mobility, work-family balance, and skillsets remains a priority (Welch & Welch 2015, 1078). There becomes a paradox that while high skilled talent is hard to attract and acquire, they are more selective in the assignments they choose to accept (Farndale et al. 2010, 164).

Cultural agility and cross-cultural competencies are vital adaptations for global talents, encompassing cultural self-awareness, linguistic skills, and flexibility (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 800; Luo 2016, 37). Emphasizing local nuances, MNCs develop varied talent pools for different career stages (Gakovic & Yardley 2007, 203). GTM strategies must also monitor turnover rates, particularly during repatriation (Böhmer & Schinnenburg 2016, 88). Additionally, task management approaches of cultural adaptation, cultural minimization, or cultural integration (Caliguiri & Caprar 2022, 2430-2432) should be considered in mitigating cultural boundaries.

International assignments serve as platforms for knowledge and innovation expansion, leading to a competitive edge (Collings 2014, 255). MNCs face a choice of global mobility forms, with a trend towards short-term assignments (Vilet 2012, 31; McNulty & De Cieri 2016, 21). Research into Chinese expatriates' adjustment strategies indicates motivational cultural intelligence's positive effects (Song et al. 2023, 359). Skilled migrants and bi-cultural talents provide global leadership and facilitate internationalization (Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2066; Furusawa & Brewster 2015, 134).

An MNC's strategic direction, whether global, multi-domestic, or transnational, dictates the behaviour of headquarters and subsidiaries and aligns with GTM strategies (Collings et al. 2018, 4). Flexibility within GTM policies allows for tailored approaches to suit diverse cultural settings and individual circumstances under expatriation (Farndale et al. 2014, 206). Expatriation is a critical component of a global approach to human resource management and talent development (Cerdin & Brewster 2014, 247). This factor emphasizes the importance of strategically coordinating talent deployment and mobility within GTM systems, recognizing the diverse needs of global and local talent pools and the nuanced approaches required for effective talent management across borders.

4.2.6 Career success and individual level experiences

The concept of career, defined as the progression of jobs, roles, and related attitudes experienced by an individual, has evolved with changes in employer-employee dynamics (Welch & Welch 2015, 1073). International experience is increasingly recognized as a significant factor in career success, with talent requiring global exposure to acquire and apply knowledge for career advancement (Abeuova & Muratbetkova-Touron 2019, 847, 853). Career orientation, which involves strategic planning for career progression, is a distinctive trait of talent (Böhmer & Schinnenburg 2016, 77). Retention issues often arise from the tension between personal/professional growth and organizational objectives (Vaiman et al. 2015, 284). While expatriate experiences are pivotal for talent development (Cerdin & Brewster 2014, 246), there's a challenge in addressing the needs of individuals who seek growth beyond the internal career opportunities offered by organizations (Farndale et al. 2014, 205). The consequent section builds from this discussion to move on to an organizational-level aspect of the subsidiary level dynamics within the GTM system.

4.2.7 Subsidiary level dynamics and actions in global talent management systems

In the architecture of GTM within MNCs, subsidiary-level actions play a nuanced role. While formal succession planning is more likely to be centralized, indicating a corporate-led process (McDonnell et al. 2010, 154), regional headquarters and subsidiaries often develop global competencies at the local level, suggesting a degree of autonomy within the GTM framework (Lee et al. 2022, 357, 359). This is further exemplified by certain MNCs implementing strict guidelines from the corporate headquarters in subsidiary operations (Napathorn 2020, 546).

Key factors such as cross-cultural human capital and motivation contribute to GTM outcomes like cross-cultural learning and knowledge transfer, demonstrating the importance of mediating variables at the subsidiary level (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 91). The GTM implementation within subsidiaries is influenced by the degree of control, resource allocation, and strategic priorities (Cooke et al. 2020, 10).

Subsidiaries often tailor GTM systems to their specific contexts, a practice that is particularly evident in emerging markets where organizations might adopt AI-driven GTM platforms to facilitate personalized talent management practices (Malik et al. 2021,

16; Quifors et al. 2017, 156). Regional headquarters act as intermediaries, bridging GTM policies between the corporate centre and local subsidiaries, acknowledging the value of managing talent regionally and the challenges it brings, such as ensuring TM initiatives' prioritization at the local level (Preece et al. 2013, 3457, 3474).

MNCs are encouraged to utilize a global GTM template, while also allowing flexibility for subsidiaries to adjust practices to local needs (Stahl et al. 2012, 30). This addresses the demand for local autonomy in GTM processes (Thite et al. 2023, 137). To optimize talent development, large MNCs need to provide incentives to subsidiary managers that encourage talent cultivation, potentially extending beyond their immediate jurisdiction (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 146). The importance of a multi-level framework has been highlighted due to the typical structure of MNCs in relation to its subsidiaries. The multi-level approach accounts for four distinct levels that subsidiaries are within the MNC: individual, business units, organizational and country level, which can be identified as balancing the centralized and decentralized strategies (Kim & McLean 2012, 579). The multi-level framework additionally takes into consideration the interlinks between these previously mentioned levels (individual, business unit, organizational and country) to various factors such as national cultures or business strategies that need to be considered in subsidiaries. Factors such as national culture and /or strategy create interdependencies across levels and variables, which is where the multi-level framework is adapted both theoretically and conceptually. (Tarique & Schuler 2018, 81)

Effective GTM requires balancing control and standardization with the need for adaptability within subsidiary operations. It is critical to mitigate issues that may arise from managerial mobility and the formation of operational silos (Vardi & Collings 2023, 677; Thite et al. 2023, 138). This balance ensures a cohesive, yet adaptable GTM system that aligns with both corporate objectives and subsidiary needs. Connected often to subsidiaries are talent that is dispersed geographically and managing diverse talent pools, which is what the next section covers.

4.2.8 Talent pools and external or geographically dispersed talent

Organizations today recognize human capital as an essential, intangible asset, pivotal to sustaining competitive advantage (Pachura 2019, 271). In the realm of GTM, both inclusive and exclusive strategies towards talent pools are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can coexist within an organization to harness diverse capabilities (Stahl et al. 2012,

26). The concept of open talent acquisition and management extends beyond traditional organizational limits, advocating for the integration of geographically dispersed talents, such as local talents through R&D centres and varied development programs (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 90, 91). Addressing the global talent gap involves engaging underrepresented groups, notably by increasing female participation in the workforce (Böhmer & Schinnenburg 2016, 74; Sidani & Al Ariss 2014, 220), and recognizing two-tier systems that categorize local and foreign talent (Sidani & Al Ariss 2014, 219).

Assessment centres are gaining prominence, offering nuanced ways to evaluate managerial competencies that go beyond the scope of traditional evaluation methods (Guenole et al. 2013, 6, 18). Companies increasingly employ success profiles at the recruitment stage, especially for leadership roles, to ensure effective succession planning (Newhall 2012, 9). Perceptions of value within the organization promote knowledge sharing, anchored in the principles of social exchange theory (Li et al. 2023, 3211). Self-initiated expatriates, characterized by their higher education and global adaptability, are crucial to the global talent pool (Vaiman et al. 2015, 282).

To foster a more inclusive talent pool, GTM must embrace diversity, including gender and cross-cultural competencies (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 177). Yet, the challenge lies in the tacit and complex nature of talent, which is more about potential than performance, posing difficulties in measurement and evaluation (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 147; Ewerlin 2013, 281). Managing global talent additionally raises a paradox as the experienced talent increases in organizational value due to increased globalization simultaneously talent that is globally mobile is challenging to attract, motivate, and retain (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1439). GTM systems should therefore consider including external employees or part-time workers in their scope (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 112) and focus on developing local talent to compete effectively for global talent (Luo 2016, 33). Despite recognizing the benefits of diversity, its implementation within MNCs remains sporadic (Luo 2016, 37).

Talent identification should adopt a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” approach, acknowledging the broad spectrum of characteristics that define talent (Vardi & Collings 2023, 676). A diverse language and cultural pool are essential for MNCs, ensuring a workforce capable of fostering global inclusion and collaboration despite linguistic and cultural differences (Phillips et al. 2023, 155). This comprehensive approach to talent

pool strategy in GTM systems acknowledges the need for broader considerations and adaptive methods to meet the dynamic demands of the global talent landscape.

An important element of today's world and management are virtual and technological tools. The next consideration aims to consider how GTM can benefit from virtual tools and impact on GTM systems.

4.2.9 Benefitting from virtual and technological tools of the first stream in global talent management

Innovative intermediaries, particularly virtual teams, are key to engaging global talent pools, building robust learning communities, and leveraging platform-enabled expertise to address challenges and outsource business functions (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 92). E-learning platforms overcome the obstacles of geographic separation, offering convenient asynchronous learning opportunities, although it is important to consider potential downsides like reduced human interaction and technology-related anxiety (Mulin & Reen 2010, 11; Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 9). Such platforms have been vital in developing leadership skills and supporting strategic organizational initiatives (Martin 2011, 292, 294). The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to virtual training modalities (Sengupta et al. 2023, 104).

Embracing AI-driven innovations can offer significant benefits to GTM systems by creating personalized experiences across a global talent pool (Malik et al. 2021, 16, 4-5). While e-learning tools are cost-effective over the long term, initial investments and setup can be substantial (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 8). The sharing and exchange of knowledge via AI-mediated tools enhance innovation culture within MNCs, as evidenced during the Covid-19 pandemic (Malik et al. 2021, 3; Chatterjee et al. 2023, 79). E-learning is not only effective and economical but also allows for consistent, convenient learning experiences without sacrificing engagement (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 5).

The anticipated future of TM predicts that technological tools, including social media, will play a pivotal role in shaping trends (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 177-178). As GTM evolves, it's expected that technology will not only facilitate but also enhance talent management capabilities, drawing on marketing and supply-chain principles. GTM will aim to minimize labour market boundaries and prioritize unity within diversity by emphasizing shared organizational values (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 178). Advances in technology are also providing solutions to the challenges of geographical distance, with changes in work

practices facilitating communication and collaboration across global teams (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 147; Collings & Isichei 2018, 166). Technological innovations are poised to significantly alter the talent management landscape, making it increasingly global and integrated. The subsequent section covers the social aspect and networks of global talent management and their role in GTM systems.

4.2.10 Social networks in global talent management

In the GTM system, a fundamental attribute is the facilitation of collective communication and collaboration across international and organizational boundaries, addressing issues inherent in hierarchical decision-making structures (Civera et al. 2023, 2646). Research has shown that MNCs employing social network platforms improve talent management and knowledge exchange, leading to higher success rates (Chatterjee et al. 2023, 83-84). Implementing control mechanisms like social networking and more frequent cross-level meetings enhances this effect (Garavan 2012, 2441-2442).

The contribution of cross-functional and multinational teams bolsters social capital, as does the mentoring of talents, where the exchange of knowledge benefits both the mentor and the mentee, fostering long-term organizational commitment (Crane & Hartwell 2019, 90; Abeuova & Muratbetkova-Touron 2019, 851; Böhmer & Schinnenburg 2016, 87). Expatriates become valuable assets for their ability to transfer knowledge between headquarters and subsidiaries (Song et al. 2023, 360). Socialization within the organization cultivates a shared culture and collective intelligence, leading to more efficient problem-solving than what could be achieved individually (Deif & Van Beek 2019, 864; Nnenna Onwugbolu & Mutambara 2021, 220).

An organizational culture that emphasizes social exchange and identity can significantly impact GTM outcomes, as it underscores reciprocity in the treatment of employees (Li et al. 2023, 3209). The internal networks created within MNCs, which include mentoring and diverse teams, are highly beneficial and contribute to the development of global expertise networks that span across geographic locations, enhancing the global dissemination of knowledge (Bonneton 2023, 13-15; Pachura 2019, 274; Liu et al. 2014, 715).

Feedback mechanisms within GTM systems are critical, providing dynamic and bidirectional communication that should be tailored to serve the intended employment

purposes (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 96, 98) which include the social aspect strongly present in talent development. This comprehensive approach to communication and collaboration via social networks within GTM systems emphasizes the need for adaptive and inclusive strategies to optimize talent management practices. As the various elements have been covered in GTM systems the following section moves on to the outcomes of effective GTM and thus the benefits of it.

4.3 Outcomes of effective global talent management

The multifaceted impact of effective GTM extends beyond the confines of large MNCs to encompass organizational learning, the internationalization of family firms, cross-sectional communication, and innovation. Multicultural management within GTM underscores the significance of diversity in the evolutionary trajectory of an organization's culture. By fostering a multicultural environment, organizations may see a transformation from a static to a dynamic and evolving culture, enriched with new values (Pachura 2019, 278). Teagarden (2020, 327) posits that GTM facilitates organizational growth and cross-sector innovation.

GTM is credited with positively shaping organizational culture by fostering unity and influential leadership over traditional command structures (Tucker et al. 2005, 19-20). Schuler et al. (2011, 514) suggest that MNCs that effectively develop and institutionalize GTM capabilities, overcoming implementation barriers, can significantly enhance their corporate culture. Diversity within talent pools is particularly advantageous in collaborative innovation efforts (Sarkar & Kedas 2023, 98), and a well-implemented GTM system is pivotal for organizing social relationships and ingraining knowledge sharing into organizational platforms (Malik et al. 2021, 3).

Successful GTM structures are known for circulating success stories and best practices within organizations, thereby fostering a knowledge-sharing culture (Vaiman et al. 2015, 282; Li et al. 2023, 3211). Such systems are essential in MNCs for disseminating and transferring knowledge across organizational units (Crane & Hartwell 2019, 90) and have proven resilient during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Lee et al. 2022, 356).

Moreover, GTM's role in enhancing organizational identification is linked to the willingness to share knowledge (Li et al. 2023, 3211). Effective GTM outcomes are bolstered by diverse strategies that emphasize flexibility, talent management, and job

performance, ultimately contributing to job satisfaction, organizational effectiveness, IT culture, professional growth, and the strengthening of interpersonal and occupational ties (Vecchi et al. 2021, 1944). In the context of a knowledge economy, GTM's impact resonates with the necessity of expertise sharing (Pachura 2019, 274; Mellahi & Collings 2010, 144) and is reinforced by a strong organizational climate (Li et al. 2023, 3223).

Finally, GTM programs can yield tangible benefits such as increased job security, the creation of new business opportunities through quality leadership, and enhanced career development pathways (Swailes 2013, 40).

Ironically while GTM definition has many deficiencies, talent management failure is well agreed upon (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 145). Failure of talent management can be summarized as prioritizing individual performance over teamwork, fostering internal competition; idolizing external talents over internal ones, potentially demotivating insiders; perpetuating a self-fulfilling prophecy by excluding less identified individuals from development opportunities; overlooking systemic, process, and cultural issues in pursuit of 'star players'; and the risk of cultivating an elitist and arrogant attitude (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 146). The perception of failure within talent management can have critical outcomes for the organization. Some common cases include an overemphasis on an individual, which creates unhealthy internal competition, playing down talents within the company and demotivating the existing talent pool by elevating external talent, creating a prophecy where those with less potential become less skilled and are not included from development opportunities, and lastly ignoring the existing cultural, systemic or other internal problems a company may hold since the sole focus is searching top talent that will magically solve all the problems (Mellahi & Collings 2010, 145).

MNCs that did not engage in global management development and global succession planning were deducted in research as in the worst position of being aware where their talent is and utilizing it (McDonnell et al. 2010, 157). In some scenarios GTM systems that have been identified as not sufficient enough in the eyes of talent and enhancing employee satisfaction fail to attract and retain talent (Furusawa & Brewster 2015, 139). It has been stated that the costs of failing talents in the global scene are potentially many times higher than on a national scale, the costs mainly stem from the replacement of a talent and the loss of efficiency (Petković & Đorđević 2013, 799). Lack of preparation for future challenges is a huge pitfall for organizations such as filling in gaps of the talent

pipeline (Newhall 2012, 10). While there are many benefits of efficient GTM there lies an ethical consideration, which is what the consequent section covers by evaluating moral costs and considering the ethicality of talent management approaches.

4.4 Ethicality of talent management approaches and evaluating moral costs

A main criticism that should not be the sole driving force of GTM systems is that performance within the GTM practices is evaluated and conceptualised solely in the form of shareholder returns, which is a narrow perspective on the benefits and measurement index (Civera et al. 2023, 2646). Evaluating basic philosophical belief systems against TM, as discussed by Anlesinya and Amponsah-Tawiah (2020, 280), is essential in understanding how organizations approach the utilization of talented individuals ethically and philosophically. The optimal utilization of talent, emphasized by the same authors (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah 2020, 279), becomes crucial for MNCs aiming to attain sustainable growth and a competitive advantage. This underscores the significance of aligning philosophical beliefs with talent management strategies to foster organizational success.

Swales (2013) analysed various ethical belief systems and applied these to talent management and its various aspects such as talent identification. From the various existing ethical belief systems and the basis of the most common assumptions of TM an ethical evaluation framework was created (Swales 2013, 40-41). The purpose of the ethical framework is not to solely provide one final answer but rather the ability to frame various processes and evaluate them (Swales 2013, 41). The framework defines the four common stages of GTM systems, when shaped as programs: the imagining talent stage, identification, development, and evaluation of the impact the program had. The questions behave as guiding decision making in terms of whether the specific step matches with the ethical considerations. These considerations should then be evaluated against organizational needs and values, to determine the end effects. The framework can and should be used to reflect on the strategic choices and positions needed to be filled. (Swales 2013, 41) The importance of social responsibility has been highlighted as a factor of how employees perceive their organization and a source of pride (Tyman et al. 2010, 118). Some scholars argue that a purely elitist GTM approach is not sufficient enough to take on the challenges in the labour market (Böhmer & Schinnenburg 2016, 75).

One option of overcoming the ethicality and challenges that stem from the naming and identification of talent has been self-nomination. Examples of self-nomination, stated as an open system, where high performance is rewarded, which led to increased variety of forms of global mobility and opportunities (Farndale et al. 2014, 208). Transparency within decision making, when it comes to core GTM aspects and changes has often been highlighted as a key control and function (Huffaker 2013, 154). In many experiential cases core business values lead GTM actions, such as a concept of integrity which was a founding principle of transparency in talent identification (Gakovic & Yardley 2007, 201). Additionally, the adoption of a stakeholder theory mindset has been stated to address some of the downfalls of traditional elitist GTM by benefitting a larger talent pool and including elements of well-being to a larger group of stakeholders (Civera et al. 2023, 2640). An example of this and an evaluation framework that MNCs are able to adopt to consider the impact of GTM elements and processes is illustrated in Figure 14. Thus Figure 14 presents a four-stage evaluation framework (Swales 2013, 41).

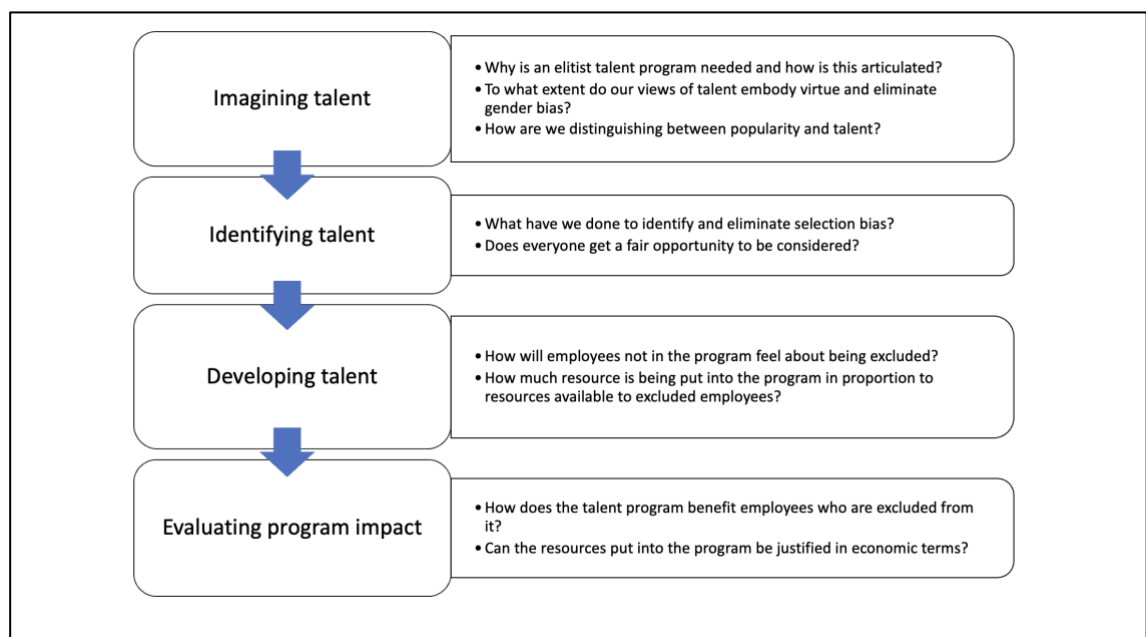


Figure 14. Four stage evaluation framework (modified from Swales 2013, 41).

The importance of Figure 14 lies in the considerations that are included, to evaluate impact (Swales 2013, 41) which in this case can be alluded to ethical considerations in the context of an exclusive approach. From an organization perspective an important practice is nurturing a reputation of social responsibility within the organization which serves talent management and retention (Tymon et al. 2010, 118) and ethicality.

The final section of chapter 4 presents the integrated approach for GTM systems for MNCs through synthesis and the strategic integrations of GTM practices. The section combines previous information presented and includes the preliminary Figure 1 to synthesize findings and integrate them to the framework approach to GTM systems.

4.5 Synthesis and strategic integration of global talent management practices

The challenge that GTM aims to address requires an innovative solution (Farndale et al. 2010, 166) which is proposed as the output of the integrated framework approach to GTM systems. A localized approach to managing and identifying critical positions significantly impacts the talent pool composition within MNCs, underscoring the importance of tailored GTM practices, especially for SMEs where MNC strategies may not directly apply (Collings et al. 2019, 556; Stokes et al. 2016, 2311). The perceived strength of a GTM climate—how employees view GTM efforts—plays a crucial role in achieving positive GTM outcomes (Li et al. 2023, 3212). Another necessity that is linked with GTM is the case of dynamic capabilities, which in this case refers to the organization's ability to intentionally generate, expand, or alter its pool of resources (Harsch & Festing 2020, 44).

Adapting to organizational changes suggests that subtle modifications often yield better results than wholesale transformations, with a well-executed GTM system being agile enough to handle potential disruptions (Seaton et al. 2021, 118, 121). The cultural orientation towards long-term planning significantly correlates with effective GTM practices, facilitating a readiness for and promotion of changes (Deif & Van Beek 2019, 870). A particular aspect that has also been identified within HR disciplined resource is the need and importance to align employees and the organization strategy, to ensure that there is a general understanding so that individuals are able to contribute towards the common goals through work efforts (Wright & Boswell 2002, 265).

Knowledge sharing within the host country is vital, with host country nationals more inclined to share knowledge when GTM processes are robust (Li et al. 2023, 3219, 3222). Strategic GTM processes should be integrated within HR architecture, advocating for broad ownership beyond the HR department to effectively tackle global challenges (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1764; Stahl et al. 2012, 29; Farndale et al. 2010, 165).

The roles within international human resources have evolved, becoming more interconnected with global business complexities, highlighting the necessity for GTM to align with corporate strategies and operational decisions, including centralization or decentralization (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 110; Sparrow et al. 2013, 1781, 1788).

Figure 15 conceptualizes a strategic and holistic GTM framework including the GTM system and the variables and factors influencing it and the process itself. The integrated framework approach combines the findings from the review and the main research question by integrating challenges, considerations, and prerequisites to the GTM system itself along with the continuous and final evaluations of performance and impact. Global talent management is envisioned as a transformative cycle where talent, serving as the initial variable, undergoes a development phase via targeted mechanisms and frameworks to meet organizational goals (Wong & Sixl-Daniell 2017, 6). Starting off with talent as an input which has already been established that requires clear definitions and works as a foundational input for GTM success (Vardi & Collings 2023, 662). Senior and line managers, along with HR, are depicted as pivotal operators in the GTM architecture, driving its implementation and aligning it with phases of internationalization and other forms of organizational strategy (Valk 2022, 1518; Sparrow et al. 2013, 1781; Stahl et al. 2007, 208). The differentiated HR architecture forms the core structure from which GTM evolves, demanding a strategic approach to managing talent within a global context (Civera et al. 2023, 2639). The integrated framework approach is purposefully abstract (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 107) due to the recommendations of a "best practice" approach of GTM convergence of context based (Al Ariss et al. 2014, 174).

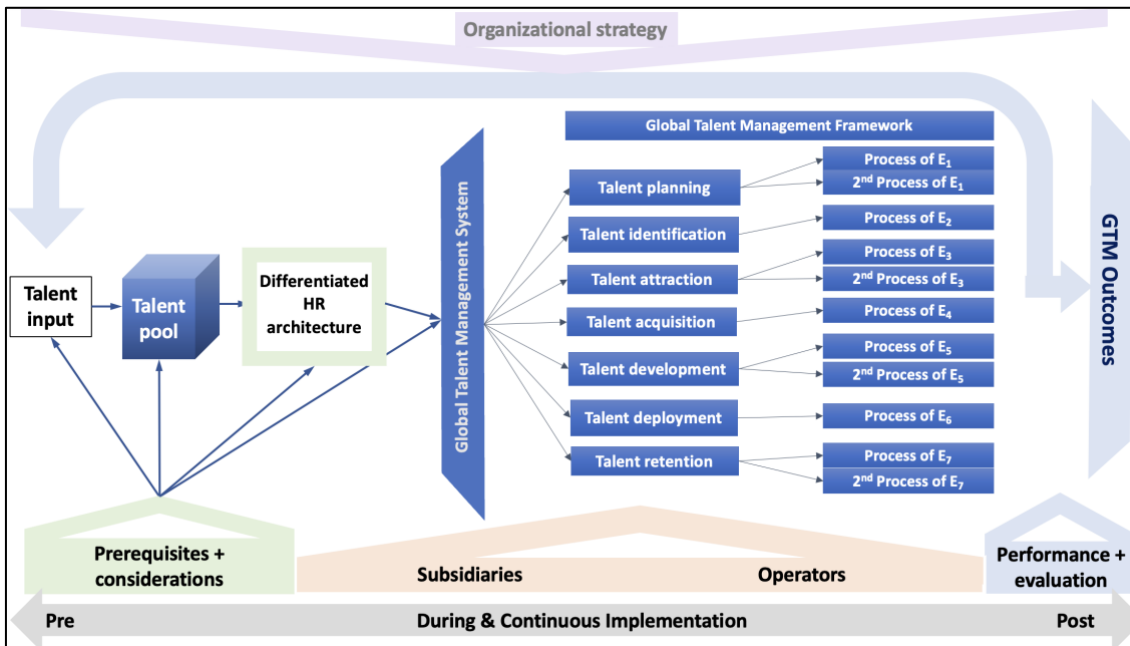


Figure 15. Integrated framework approach to global talent management systems.

Figure 15's timeline indicates GTM considerations across various stages, where prerequisites such as challenges are addressed before GTM implementation, while performance evaluation post-implementation measures the system's efficacy and some considerations mentioned in Table 4 as continuous. Considerations include principles of effective GTM such as strategic alignment, internal consistency, cultural embeddedness, involvement of managers, balancing local and global requirements, and employer branding via differentiation (Stahl et al. 2012, 26-30). The core of Figure 15 is built a developed from the initial Figure 1 and Figure 10 with the global talent management system as a function and the surroundings based on the findings from the thesis incorporated within the big picture and a systems approach to GTM for MNCs.

Within this framework, the GTM system varies based on the strategic internationalization phase and is underpinned by effective talent development programs and strategies for nurturing and retaining talent (Swales 2013, 34). MNCs are encouraged to adopt best practices to ensure GTM convergence, effectively translating business needs into coherent talent strategies (Guthridge et al. 2008, 58) and utilizing operators of human resources are required in GTM implementation as it is a strategic business within the HR architecture (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1764). Figure 15 emphasizes the importance of integrating efforts at the corporate, subsidiary, and individual levels, encompassing cultural, professional, and structural dimensions, to effectively cultivate talent pools (Luo 2016, 39) and thus outcomes.

Ultimately, GTM's strategic goal is to foster a robust talent pool and system, from elements and processes such as balancing employer branding, and global mobility, and culminating in a successful organizational outcome (Pachura 2019, 273). GTM outcomes can be defined and measured in various forms. One proposed example highlighted earlier is return on talent (RoT) which assesses whether key talents demonstrate behaviours that uphold the organization's fundamental values and mission (Minbaeva & Collings 2013, 1771). This coherent structure presents GTM not just as an HR task but as a strategic business process, essential for nurturing and retaining talent in alignment with the overarching corporate strategy and the diverse challenges of global operations.

5 Conclusions

The final proper chapter of the thesis concludes with the theoretical contributions the thesis provides along with practical implications. Theoretically the thesis identified research gaps within general GTM that it addressed more specifically with the research questions. Managerial implications are bound to be formed due to the practical nature of GTM, which is outlined in chapter 5. The final section outlines the limitation of the thesis along with potential future research avenues to further develop GTM discourse.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This thesis contributed to the existing and fragmented literature of GTM in several ways and by elaborating on the conceptual side of it (Yildiz & Esmer 2022, 102). Firstly, the manner in which the research question and sub-questions are answered and addressed is a systematic literature review, which has the ability to present the overview of the topic as well as synthesize to provide new insights (Snyder 2019, 333) in this case on GTM concepts and the main challenges that it aims to address. This thesis enriches the field by using a systematic literature review to synthesize existing knowledge and provide fresh insights, thus addressing key GTM challenges more comprehensively. This is important as it enhances understanding and offers a more integrative perspective of GTM. Along with this and other contributions the thesis addresses the research gap presented in Chapter 1 section 1.2. The main research gap of broadening the discussion, providing intellectual boundaries, and improving rigour (Schuler et al. 2011, 5; Fernandes et al. 2023, 10) is addressed by providing a robust discussion of the definition and conceptualization of GTM. The thesis simply contributes and agrees with prior research by identifying relevant constructs and theories to further study TM (Dries 2013, 282) as well as contributions by expanding the intellectual boundaries of GTM and TM in a global context (Vaiman et al. 2015, 280).

The presented work extends the intellectual discourse on TM and GTM, offering a systematic approach that integrates diverse GTM topics. Its importance lies in its holistic view, which addresses the contextual factors essential in GTM processes that prior literature often overlooked. This contributes to literature as it presents a systematic integrated approach for GTM systems, bridging varying topics and viewpoints of GTM (Kim & McLean 2012, 579). Something that the thesis succeeds in is what many other research and practical applications forget and ignore, which is all the contextual factors

that need to be considered in GTM processes (McDonnell et al. 2010, 152) which have been included in the integrated framework approach to GTM in Figure 15.

Prior systemic literature reviews with varying focus have framed the benefits as offering valuable guidance to practitioners and multinational corporations, enhancing understanding of the factors influencing talent management in a global context, which in turn enables more informed and comprehensive approaches in designing and implementing global talent management strategies, benefiting both researchers and practitioners (Anlesinya et al. 2019, 148) which is what this thesis has been able to do. Research has stated that a major default of prior research is solely focusing on a narrow scope such as organization-level perspectives (Khilji et al. 2015, 238) which is why the thesis adopts a wide range of GTM elements and processes, integrates with considerations to address challenges and the various operators and actors that contribute to the system. By adopting a broad scope encompassing various GTM elements and actors. This is significant as it provides a more nuanced understanding that can guide the development of GTM strategies in diverse organizational contexts. The thesis furthermore contributes theoretically to GTM discussion by clarifying and distinguishing the role and differences between HR and GTM, which have previously been under scrutiny (Tarique & Schuler 2010, 131; Ashif 2019, 32; King 2015, 277), this can be seen in the previous discussion that identifies GTM as incorporating differentiated and advanced HR architecture based on the consensus of what was found in the review. Finally, by distinguishing between HR and GTM, the thesis builds on the work of Tarique & Schuler (2010, 131) and others, clarifying their roles within organizations. This distinction is vital as it can influence the strategic management of global talent and shape future research directions.

The findings of the thesis similarly to other previous studies contributes to develop both theoretical approaches as well as from a managerial point by providing practical suggestions for how to approach a GTM framework (Kim & McLean 2012, 568). As GTM to this date faces criticism for under-development and needing further research this thesis contributes to the academic research by simply adding to the existing body of research (Collings et al. 2009, 16). Aligning with these scholars the thesis not only adds to the theoretical realm but also offers practical GTM applications, addressing the need for further research and practical guidance in this underdeveloped area.

Several propositions can be made from the findings of the thesis. For instance, the integrated framework for GTM systems Figure 15 enhances the understanding of the complexity within global talent dynamics by consolidating multifaceted elements, considerations, prerequisites, and other concepts into a cohesive structure. Figure 15 addresses some of the initial challenges MNCs face with GTM (Bonneton 2023, 5) by providing a comprehensive and conceptual framework to address GTM facilitation. Additionally, as has prior research within GTM and TM offered transferability when adapted to various contexts or industries (Kravtiri & Johnston 2020, 76) which is plausible with the foundations of this thesis.

Along with reviewing the theoretical contributions of the thesis it is beneficial to revisit the evaluation criteria presented in section 2.4. Firstly, the literature review can be characterized as strong, due to the numerous connections and proposals that can be drawn from it and synthesized to the final chapters. The thesis provides value for both practitioners and scholars (Palmatier et al. 2018, 4-5) by drawing future streams of research within GTM agenda and propositions. Clearly, when it comes to the criterion of usability the thesis provides stellar guidance and practical use. In addition, Figure 15 provides a key contribution (Palmatier et al. 2018, 5) of both theoretical and managerial applications for further studies and use. Additionally, one could expect the reader to gain much excitement and prospect based off this thesis, which was emphasized as a measure of success (Palmatier et al. 2018, 5) by providing a novel integrated framework approach for GTM based on the existing theories and research.

5.2 Managerial implications

Along with the potential findings and synthesis to bridge new theoretical connections, the thesis likewise aims to produce practical outcomes for managers to incorporate as GTM processes for better organizational success. The practical relevance of the topic relates to the fact that what is referred to as global staffing is positively correlated with innovation, organizational learning, and corporate consolidation within MNCs (Collings et al. 2009, 1254) and while the theoretical discourse is still finding its place practitioners have for considerable time advocated for the importance of these practices and systems (Tansley 2011, 273). Due to the phenomenon and nature of GTM the thesis serves many practical implications to various stakeholders. This section provides insights to the practical relevance of the thesis and how it can best serve practitioners. Holistically and generally

the thesis holds practical benefit by introducing a holistic approach to GTM systems, and the challenges associated by incorporating a broad range of elements and considerations. Additionally, the thesis holds value to many stakeholders, which are highlighted in Table 5.

Table 5. Practical relevance and managerial implications of global talent management systems.

Stakeholder	Benefit	Managerial implication
Talents	Career development opportunities	GTM systems provide a structured pathway for personal and professional growth such as expatriation, broaden skills, and enhance global market understanding.
	Increased job satisfaction	By aligning talents with the roles that are best suited with skills, career, and potential can increase job satisfaction and employee engagement.
	Global networking	Participation in a GTM system can expand the network of talents from collaboration and innovation.
Line manager	Enhanced leadership skills	Involvement in GTM processes, such as providing feedback and supporting individual career development, helps line managers develop essential leadership and people management skills.
	Improved team performance	By understanding and leveraging the strengths of global talents, line managers can build more effective and diverse teams that are better equipped to tackle complex challenges.
	Strategic contribution	Line managers gain insights into the broader organizational strategy through their role in GTM, enabling them to contribute more significantly to the company's global objectives.
Executives	Strategic advantage	Executives can leverage GTM to align global talent with the organization's strategic objectives, enhancing global competitiveness and performance.
	Risk management	Understanding the challenges of GTM, such as cultural differences and compliance issues, enables executives to mitigate risks associated with global operations.

Table 5. Continued.

Stakeholder	Benefit	Managerial implication
Executives	Innovation and growth	By fostering a diverse and skilled global workforce, GTM can drive innovation and support the company's growth and adaptation in rapidly changing markets.
Subsidiaries	Local adaptation with global alignment	GTM allows subsidiaries to benefit from global talent strategies while adapting to local needs and markets, ensuring both global consistency and local relevance.
	Enhanced collaboration	GTM facilitates better communication and collaboration between the headquarters and subsidiaries, leading to more cohesive and unified global operations.
	Talent pool access and understanding	Subsidiaries gain access to a broader pool of talents, enabling them to fill key positions effectively and enhance their operational capabilities.

Table 5 identifies various stakeholders and a range of practical implications to the specific stakeholders related to GTM systems. The current global workforce and knowledge-based economy emphasize the fact that it is critical to be aware of managing and structuring GTM systems to best exploit the human capital available within the MNC to gain competitive advantage over others. Human capital being a key resource to organizations it is essential that MNCs are aware of how to best leverage it.

5.3 Limitations and future research avenues

While the extensive theoretical and managerial implications have been indicated there remain some limitations in the study. Firstly, while providing a thorough reasoning for the search string and database used this methodological approach poses a risk. It may have constrained the thesis' scope and possibly overlooked relevant research due to the specificity of the search criteria. The thesis incorporated only 84 studies due to time and resource constraints. This limitation could lead to a risk of superficial analysis as the depth and breadth of research might not comprehensively cover the GTM field and its nuances. The focus on management studies surfaced from the search represents a limitation (Kim & McLean 2012, 579). The predominance of this main academic field while highly relevant and specific authors such as Collings, Scullion, and Farndale, which means that the research may lack a multidisciplinary perspective and variety, potentially missing

insights from a wider range of academic fields that could contribute to a more holistic understanding of GTM.

These limitations among the contributions of the thesis represent future research avenues. A simple improvement and future research would be to extend the scope and disciplines included in the thesis to provide more specific results. One of the key deficiencies within GTM research itself has been the disconnect between research leading to evidence-based management practices in expatriation for example (Meyskens et al. 2009, 1447) which is why it is important to propose for future research for both practitioners and scholars. GTM has limited data and studies that have measured it quantitatively (Bonneton et al. 2022, 214) which provides a suggestion combined with the proposed integrated framework to quantify the outcomes of the return of talent, to measure impact of GTM system. Like other studies this thesis provides empirical basis for further research either quantitative or qualitative (Thite et al. 2023, 138) to explore GTM impacts and outcomes utilizing the proposed integrated framework in Figure 15.

Additionally, since the definition is further bridged a future research avenue of talent management is studying the correlation between competitive advantage in terms of the development of competencies (Pagan-Castaño et al. 2022, 534), however, to be able to do this the field requires theoretical and practical input to commonly and fully define the concept and its elements which is a contribution the thesis makes.

In the future it may be possible that a mitigating factor is a more global culture that phases out national cultures (Griswold et al. 2022, 3010), which can explain and predict some of the upcoming changes in the future to be expected and potential openings for further research within the domain of adopting more integrative GTM systems and adopting mitigating factors for cultural changes and developments that have a significant effect on various elements of GTM. Along with other suggestions of potential areas of research, Table 6 provides comprehensive overlook on how GTM as an academic field can be developed further.

Table 6. Future research avenues within the scope of global talent management.

Research area	Description	Potential research question	Potential contributions
Quantitative measures of GTM impact	Explore the outcomes of GTM systems quantitatively	What quantitative impact do GTM systems have on organizational outcomes? And how can this be measured?	Bridge the gap in GTM literature by providing empirical evidence of GTM's effectiveness of evidence-based practices.
Correlation between GTM and competitive advantage	Study the relationship between GTM practices, talent development competencies, and competitive advantage.	How do GTM practices influence competitive advantage through talent management?	Insight into GTM's contribution to competitive advantages both theoretically and practically.
Mitigating global versus national cultures in GTM	Investigate global culture's effect on GTM processes and system as a whole.	How can GTM systems be adapted to mitigate the challenges posed by cultural differences?	Strategies for managing cultural dynamics in GTM.
The role of HR and IHRM in GTM	Further discussion on the role of HR, international human resource management, and GTM.	What roles do HR and IHRM play in shaping effective GTM systems across different organizational contexts?	Clarified roles of HR and IHRM, enhancing global talent strategies in various organizational contexts.
Organizational and collective level studies of GTM	Examine GTM from a system-wide perspective, focusing on organizational and collective impacts rather than individual HR practices.	How does GTM impact organizational and collective outcomes compared to individual practices?	Offer a nuanced understanding of GTM's organizational benefits, encouraging the adoption of holistic GTM strategies.
Addressing global generational divides	Research the implications of global generational divides and demographic changes on GTM strategies.	What are the effects of global generational divides on GTM strategies, and how can GTM systems respond effectively?	Provide guidance on tailoring GTM strategies to address the challenges and opportunities presented by global demographic trends, contributing to the sustainability of talent management practices.
Strategic alignment of global talent management systems	Study how various strategy initiatives and combinations affect GTM systems	What is the impact of strategic alignment on the efficiency of GTM systems in MNCs?	Develop more nuanced GTM systems that can be further tailored for MNCs based on strategic differences and provide policy recommendations.

Future research should build on bridging gaps of various actors and global talent management (Crowley & Al Ariss 2018, 2054) which can be interpreted from the suggestions in Table 6, such as furthering the discussion of HR roles and IHRM in the context of GTM systems. In general, there is a clear shift in research to examine GTM from GTM system lens instead of individual human resource practice (Cascio & Boudreau 2016, 107) which opens the opportunities to provide organization and collective level studies. GTM is predicted to remain an interesting and relevant area for research due to the global generational divide and world population dynamic changes (Khilji et al. 2015, 243) indicating the importance of curating more research and discussion within the domain.

6 Summary

The thesis presents a comprehensive exploration of Global Talent Management (GTM) within the context of modern multinational corporations (MNCs). It takes a deep dive into the diverse aspects of GTM, clarifying the challenges and strategies pivotal to the successful navigation of the global talent landscape. GTM has been an emerging academic discourse within various HRM academia due to the advantage MNCs gain from effectively managing their talent. GTM emerges as a key strategic response, vital for attracting and maintaining a talented, culturally adept workforce. Highlighted as a primary focus since the 1990s for both scholars and practitioners, GTM's academic development and precise definition have remained elusive, presenting a significant gap the research aims to fill. The work posits GTM as an expansive concept, integral for navigating the complexities of international human talent management and contributing to an organization's knowledge capital and immaterial resource.

Methodologically, the thesis is anchored by a systematic literature review, carefully selected for its strength in synthesizing new insights from fragmented research areas like GTM through an iterative process. It describes the rigorous three-part process of planning, executing, and reporting this review, ensuring the research is rooted in comprehensive coverage and quality. The chosen databases and search strings reflect a meticulous strategy for collecting high-quality research, with EBSCO Business Source Complete providing a wide array of relevant articles and outlining the coding that is based in the GTM elements.

In detailing the GTM applications and challenges, the thesis underscores the diverse practices and obstacles MNCs face. Strategic elements and case studies are explored to illustrate the effectiveness of GTM practices, revealing the intricate balance between global strategies and local market adaptability. Such insights are crucial for organizations seeking to develop contextually aware talent management strategies that can support both global integration and local responsiveness along with other strategic contexts.

The fourth chapter breaks down GTM into key strategic components named elements and processes, with a keen understanding that a uniform approach is infeasible. Flexibility and strategic alignment with the organizational strategy are emphasized as GTM is examined through various lenses including planning, identification, attraction, acquisition, deployment, development, and retention of global talent.

The thesis makes a significant contribution to GTM literature, not only by advancing theoretical discussions but also by offering practical suggestions for GTM framework implementation by the integrated framework approach (Figure 15). Practical implications are highlighted across different stakeholders, reinforcing GTM's role in professional growth, job satisfaction, and network expansion for global talents. Additionally, the thesis provides a framework for addressing GTM challenges, blending the varying elements of GTM with operational considerations into a comprehensive approach.

However, the research is not without its limitations, which include a potential bias from specific search criteria and a dominant focus on management studies that may limit multidisciplinary perspectives needed. Future research is encouraged to delve deeper into empirical studies, particularly to quantify GTM outcomes and to test the efficacy of the integrated framework in varying organizational contexts. As the global workforce continues to evolve demographically and culturally, the relevance and importance of GTM are only expected to increase, highlighting the thesis's contribution as both timely and impactful.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Search string used for data collection

("Global Talent Management*" OR "GTM*" OR "talent management strategy*" OR "International Human Resource Management*" OR "Strategic human resource management") AND ("talent management in global context*" OR "global talent process*" OR "global talent system*" OR "elements in global talent management*" OR "challenges in global talent management*" OR "strategies for global talent management*" OR "factors affecting global talent management*" OR "best practices in global talent management*" OR "global talent mobility*" OR "cross-cultural talent management*" OR "multinational talent management*" OR "talent management challenges in cross-border organization*" OR "global talent*")

Appendix 2 Articles included in the systematic literature review

Title	Author(s)	Year	Journal	Main purpose / Aim	GTM Function	Activities / Process / Details / Examples / key words
Global talent management: Shaping the careers of internationally educated talents in developing markets.	Abeuova & Murabekova-Touron	2019	Thunderbird International Business Review	Analyze the impact of a country-level GTM practice on the careers and career success of its talents (Kazakhstan)	t development, t deployment, t retention	Career success, international experience, developing markets, mobility
Talent management: Current theories and future research directions.	Al Ariss, Cascio & Paauwe	2014	Journal of World Business	Overview of TM gaps and potential future research (multiple levels and contexts)	general GTM elements	future of GTM, TM, TM theory
Overcoming Talent Shortage through Impact Sourcing.	Aman, Yunus, Embong, Maelah & Ahmad	2018	Jurnal Pengurusan	Explore the adoption of impact sourcing as a strategy by global business services firms in Malaysia and Sri Lanka to address talent shortages	t identification, t development, t retention	impact sourcing, developing markets, global context
A Review of Empirical Research on Global Talent Management.	Anlesinya, Dartey-Baah & Amponsah-Tawiah	2019	FIIB Business Review	comprehensive review of empirical global talent management research identifying drivers, outcomes, and challenges to enhance MNC strategies	general GTM elements	developed countries, challenges, outcomes, drivers, mobility, actors and operators
How gender and career concepts impact Global	Böhmer & Schinnenburg	2016	Employee Relations	global talent management and career theories, focusing on	general GTM elements	gender, career concepts, individual level career, career success

Talent Management.				modern career concepts		
Talents as career capitalists: how talent management programs influence individual career paths.	Bonneton	2023	Human Resource Development International	impact of GTM on talent career path	t dvelopment, t retention	career success, individual career path, impact, career capital
Discovering and nurturing local key stakeholders' talent in emerging economies: using fsQCA to test the external human resources approach.	Bonneton, Schworm, Festing & Muratbekova-Touron	2022	International Journal of Human Resource Management	study link between GTM with talent retention	t attraction, t retention, t development	individual career, talent development, global scale, career capital, career success
Becoming culturally agile: Effectively varying contextual responses through international experience and cross-cultural competencies.	Caliguri & Caprar	2023	International Journal of Human Resource Management	studies if employees with cross-cultural skills and international experience can adapt their behaviors to meet the cultural requirements of their work environment more effectively	t deployment	cultural context, cross-cultural competence, international experience, expatriation
The search for global competence: From international HR to talent management.	Cascio & Boudreau	2016	Journal of World Business	the evolution of the search for global competence through content analysis and review of published research in TM and IHRM	general GTM elements	global competence, strategy, social trends, challenges
Talent management and expatriation: Bridging two streams of research and practice.	Cerdin & Brewster	2014	Journal of World Business	overlap and differences of GTM and expatriation	t mobility	global careers, globalization, expatriation, strategic management
Global talent management by multinational enterprises post-COVID-19: The role of enterprise social networking and senior leadership.	Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, Vrontis, Mahto & Kraus	2023	Thunderbird International Business Review	study issues of MNC GTM after covid-19	general GTM elements	covid-19, knowledge management, social networks
Learning agility as a key driver of leadership potential for talent identification, pipeline development, and succession	Church & Seaton	2022	Consulting Psychology Journal	relating learning agility to core TM elements	t identification, t development, t retention, t planning	learning agility, leader performance, potential, succession plans, leadership

planning in organizations.						
Discovering and nurturing local key stakeholders' talent in emerging economies: using fsQCA to test the external human resources approach.	Civera, Casalegno, Couturier, Zardini & Ishizaka	2023	International Journal of Human Resource Management	stakeholder theory to respond to TM criticism	general GTM elements	value creation, job involvement, HR architecture, stakeholder theory, emerging markets
Integrating global mobility and global talent management: Exploring the challenges and strategic opportunities.	Collings	2014	Journal of World Business	integrating global mobility and GTM	t deployment, t development, t planning	human capital, social capital, staffing flows, talent pools,
The shifting boundaries of global staffing: integrating global talent management, alternative forms of international assignments and non-employees into the discussion.	Collings & Isichei	2018	International Journal of Human Resource Management	reviewing contemporary issues in global staffing	t deployment, t acquisition	recruitment, mobility, IHRM, staffing
Global talent management: the law of the few.	Collings, McDonnell & Scullion	2009	Poznan University of Economics Review	expanding knowledge of TM by drawing on "law of the few"	general GTM elements	leadership, roles, TM theory, social capital, organizational effectiveness
Global Talent Management and Performance in Multinational Enterprises: A Multilevel Perspective.	Collings, Mellahi & Cascio	2019	Journal of Management	Theoretical framework to links of performance between headquarters, subsidiary, and employee level	general GTM elements	headquarters, organizational performance, subsidiary, routines, human capital, alignment
Talent management: Progress and prospects.	Collings, Scullion & Vaiman	2015	Human Resource Management Review	summary of current state of TM	general GTM elements	value, conceptual and theoretical boundaries
Human resource management research and practice in Asia: Past, present and future	Cooke, Schuler & Varma	2020	Human Resource Management	TM in Asian context and culture	general GTM elements	HRM in Asia, growth
Global talent management: A life cycle view of the interaction between human and social capital.	Crane & Hartwell	2019	Journal of World Business	theoretical model that describes the interaction between social and human capital in GTM	t acquisition, t development, t identification	social capital, human capital
Talent management of skilled migrants: propositions and	Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss	2018	International Journal of Human Resource Management	conceptualizing skilled migrants in TM	t deployment	migrants, human capital, international career, strategic

an agenda for future research.						implementation, performance
National culture insights on manufacturing competitiveness and talent management relationship.	Deif & Van Beek	2019	Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management	relationship between manufacturing competitiveness and talent management	general GTM elements	culture, competitiveness, performance, skills, national culture
The influence of global talent management on employer attractiveness: An experimental study.	Ewerlin	2013	Zeitschrift für Personalforschung	influence of GTM programs to employer attractiveness and culture moderation	t attraction	employer branding, cultural background, GTM programs, war for talent, job advertisements
Balancing individual and organizational goals in global talent management: A mutual-benefits perspective.	Farndale, Pai, Sparrow & Scullion	2014	Journal of World Business	mutual-benefit approach to global mobility and expatriation with MNCs	t deployment	self-initiated expatriation, global mobility, organizational goals, psychological contract
The role of the corporate HR function in global talent management	Farndale, Scullion & Sparrow	2010	Journal of World Business	role of corporate HR in GTM and MNCs	general GTM elements	corporate hr, emerging markets, corporate culture, organizational behaviour, mobility
Global talent management during the COVID-19 pandemic? The Gods must be crazy!	Fernandes, Veiga, Lobo & Raposo	2023	Thunderbird International Business Review	impact of GTM in large MNCs during covid-19	general GTM elements	remote working, covid-19, impact, performance
Current issues in International HRM: Alternative forms of assignments, careers and talent management in a global context	Festing, Budhwar, Cascio, Dowling & Scullion	2013	Zeitschrift für Personalforschung	current issues in IHRM	t deployment, t development	global assignments, IHRM, expatriation, self-initiated expatriation, local talent
Ready for global success? Strengths and weaknesses of Korean HRM.	Froese	2020	Asian Business & Management	Korean HRM, the perspective of national and international culture	general GTM elements	skilled migrants, staffing strategy, organizational culture, foreign employees
Liability of Asianness? Global talent management challenges of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean multinationals	Froese, Shen, Sekiguchi & Davies	2020	Human Resource Management Review	GTM challenges in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean MNCs face	general GTM elements	divergence, institutional distance, ethnocentric staffing, home-country, language policies, performance appraisals, headquarter, organizational culture
The bi-cultural option for global talent management: The Japanese/Brazilian Nikkeijin example.	Furusawa & Brewster	2015	Journal of World Business	studying bi-cultural talents in MNCs context Japanese immigrants in Brazil	t deployment	immigrants, second and third generation migrants, expatriation, IHRM, localization

Global Talent Management at HSBC.	Gakovic & Yardley	2007	Organization Development Journal	Case study concerning GTM strategy in a large MNC	general GTM elements	people strategy, organizational change, organizational behaviour, leadership, management
Global talent management in science-based firms: an exploratory investigation of the pharmaceutical industry during the global downturn.	Garavan	2012	International Journal of Human Resource Management	GTM strategy in science-based companies during global downturn	general GTM elements	change management, decision making, organizational change, best-fit perspective, resource dependency theory, subsidiary, structural alignment
Global differences in applicant reactions to virtual interview synchronicity.	Griswold, Phillips, Kim, Mondragon, Liff & Gully	2022	International Journal of Human Resource Management	studying how culture can moderate reactions to virtual interviews and selection process	t attraction, t identification, t acquisition	virtual interviews, asynchronous, synchronous, applicant reactions, culture, selection process, relationships
More than a mirage: A large-scale assessment centre with more dimension variance than exercise variance.	Guenole, Chernyshenko, Stark, Cockerill & Drasgow	2013	Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology	modern assessment center designs measuring talent dimensions	t acquisition, t development	culture, dimensions, assessment centers, measurement,
Creation of Norms for the Purpose of Global Talent Management.	Hedricks, Robie & Harnisher	2008	International Journal of Testing	personality scores constructing global norms in high-performing individuals	t identification, t acquisition	personality scores, global norms, culture, cross-cultural comparisons, job applications, social norms
International human resource management in an era of political nationalism.	Horak, Farndale, Brannen & Collings	2019	Thunderbird International Business Review	studying international policy effects on international careers and highly skilled migrants	general GTM elements, t deployment emphasis	human capital, skilled labour, emigration, immigration, politics, restrictions, knowledge based economy
Creating a culture of career development in corporations.	Huffaker	2013	Career Planning & Adult Development Journal	creating career development culture in MNCs	t development, t acquisition, t identification	career development, corporate culture, job skills, promotions, selection
Global talent management and multinational subsidiaries' resilience in the Covid-19 crisis: Moderating roles of regional headquarters' support and headquarters-subsidiary friction.	Lee, Yahiaoui, Lee & Cooke	2022	Human Resource Management	GTM role in resilience of MNCs during crisis such as covid-19	general GTM elements	decision making, corporate culture, resilience, organizational capability, agency, bounded rationality, subsidiary level
Incorporating the macro view in global talent management.	Khilji, Tarique & Schuler	2015	Human Resource Management	macro view to GTM	general GTM elements, t deployment emphasis	emigration, immigration, knowledge flows, talent flows

Global Talent Management: Necessity, Challenges, and the Roles of HRD.	Kim & McLean	2012	Advances in Developing Human Resources	integrative conceptual framework to GTM proposing challenges, necessity and roles	general GTM elements	HRD challenges, HRD roles, necessity, challenges
Global talent management.	King	2015	Journal of Global Mobility	conceptual framework for GTM and specifies the main components: strategy, practices, experiences and systems	general GTM elements	talent markets, expatriate talents, actors, systems view
Sticks and Stones: The Naming of Global Talent.	Kirk	2021	Work, Employment & Society	Reactions and consequences of naming individuals as talent	t identification, t development, t deployment	identity, naming, identification, career, mobility
Promoting knowledge sharing in foreign subsidiaries through global talent management: the roles of local employees' identification and climate strength.	Li, Froese & Pak	2023	International Journal of Human Resource Management	impact of GTM to host-country national knowledge sharing	t identification, t deployment	knowledge sharing, social exchange, local employees, climate, host country nationals
Toward a reverse adaptation review in cross-cultural management.	Luo	2016	Cross Cultural & Strategic Management	reverse adaptation in cross-cultural management	t development, t retention	cross-cultural management, knowledge sharing, reverse adaptation, human capital
Elevating talents' experience through innovative artificial intelligence-mediated knowledge sharing: Evidence from an IT-multinational enterprise.	Malik, De Silva, Budhwar & Srikanth	2021	Journal of International Management	case study of leveraging AI for knowledge sharing and mediated social exchange	t development	AI, knowledge sharing, IT, social exchange
Lafarge develops employee talent through e-learning.	Martin	2011	Industrial & Commercial training	remote learning in the context of talent development	t development	E-learning, remote learning, skills, globally dispersed
Developing tomorrow's leaders—Evidence of global talent management in multinational enterprises	McDonnell, Lamare, Gunnigle & Lavelle	2010	Journal of World Business	analysis of the extent to which MNCs engage in GTM and factors	t development, t planning	leadership, succession, corporate culture,
Linking global mobility and global talent management: the role of ROI.	McNulty & De Cieri	2016	Employee Relations	conceptualizing GTM elements with expatriates and the link of global mobility in GTM	t attraction, t development, t retention, t deployment	psychological contract, organizational commitment, mobility, expatriation, impact

The barriers to effective global talent management: The example of corporate élites in MNEs	Mellahi & Collings	2010	Journal of World Business	TM failure and barriers to TM	general GTM elements	agency theory, bounded rationality theory, subsidiary, corporate culture
The paradox of international talent: alternative forms of international assignments.	Meyskens, Von Glinow, Werther & Clarke	2009	International Journal of Human Resource Management	Alternative international assignments from expatriation	t identification, t deployment, t acquisition	international assignments, expatriate assignments, global mobility, recruitment, selection, role adjustments
Seven myths of global talent management.	Minbaeva & Collings	2013	International Journal of Human Resource Management	debunking common myths of GTM and offering alternatives	general GTM elements	organizational effectiveness, performance, IHRM, global scale, myths
Global talent management and inpatriate social capital building: a status inconsistency perspective.	Moeller, Maley, Harvey & Kiessling	2016	International Journal of Human Resource Management	organizational support within GTM aiding in inpatriation and social capital building at HQ level	t deployment, t retention, t development	innovation, social capital, inpatriation, staffing, subsidiary, headquarter, status, status inconsistency
An architectural framework for global talent management.	Morris, Snell & Björkman	2016	Journal of International Business Studies	development of human capital at various levels	t development emphasis, general GTM elements	knowledge based economy, human capital, location-specific, firm-specific
Arkadin develops employee talent through e-learning.	Mulin & Reen	2010	Strategic HR Review	e-learning in GTM context	t acquisition, t development, t planning	distance learning, job skills, engagement, recruitment challenges, mobile learning
How do MNCs translate corporate talent management strategies into their subsidiaries? Evidence from MNCs in Thailand.	Napathorn	2020	Review of International Business & Strategy	how MNCs manage GTM in developed and emerging countries to other emerging economies	general GTM elements	skill shortage, developed economies, emerging economies, translation
Preparing our leaders for the future.	Newhall	2012	Strategic HR Review	leadership development and effectiveness	general GTM elements	leadership, succession, development, leadership quality
Talent Management Strategies and Employees' Job Performance in the Retail Sector of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: A Structural Model.	Nnenna Onwugbolu & Mutambara	2021	African Journal of Business & Economic Research	impact of GTM on performance in the context of South African retail sector	general GTM elements	job performance, retail sector, cultural differences, potential
Talents, projects and management - Attempt at synthesis	Pachura	2019	TALENTY, PROJEKTY I ZARZĄDZANIE - PRÓBA SYNTEZY.	To study talent management issues in projects and project management	t identification, t development, t retention	Employer branding, flow management of staffing,

Global talent management as a factor of multinational companies' competitiveness.	Petkovic & Dordevic	2013	Economic Themes	GTM as a requirement for competitiveness	general GTM elements	sustainable competitive advantage, effectiveness
Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome: language and national culture diversity messages as strategic recruiting tools for diverse organizations.	Phillips, Griswold, Shiverdecker & Castellano	2023	International Journal of Human Resource Management	Linguistic impact on recruitment and diversity	t attraction, t acquisition	language, diversity, immigrants, recruitment, country of origin
MNE regional head offices and their affiliates: talent management practices and challenges in the Asia Pacific.	Preece, Iles & Jones	2013	International Journal of Human Resource Management	Regional structures in GTM context in Asia Pacific	general GTM elements	decentralization, centralization, process, challenge, regional, headquarters, subsidiaries
Global Talent Management in Scandinavian Multinational Enterprises In Singapore – A Subsidiary Perspective.	Quifors, Andersen & Rasmussen	2017	Annual International Conference on Enterprise Marketing & Globalization	subsidiary local TM in the context of Singapore	general GTM elements, emphasis t identification, t development	subsidiary level, identification, development, corporate culture
Globally distributed talent communities: A typology of innovation problems and talent characteristics.	Sarkar & Kedas	2023	Thunderbird International Business Review	globally distributed external talent in GTM context	general GTM elements	distributed talent, innovations, rewards, external talent, competencies
Global talent management and global talent challenges: Strategic opportunities for IHRM	Schuler, Jackson & Tarique	2011	Journal of World Business	GTM challenges and strategic opportunities within IHRM	general GTM elements	strategic planning, knowledge management, human capital, IHRM
Leadership in the time of COVID: Should we really throw the baby out with the bathwater?	Seaton, Church, Allen, Jain, Dickey & Guidry	2021	Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice	defining leadership	t development	leadership, industrial organizational psychology
Wind of change brought by COVID-19: Exploring the response and the new normal from the perspectives of Indian flexpatriates.	Sengupta, Patel, Mohyuddin, Prikshat, Rajesh & Rana	2023	Thunderbird International Business Review	how flexpatriates in India responded to change during Covid-19	t deployment emphasis, general GTM elements	organizational change theory, flexpatriates, mobility, covid-19, collaboration, communication
Institutional and corporate drivers of global talent management:	Sidani & Al Ariss	2014	Journal of World Business	influence of institutional drivers for GTM	general GTM elements	corporate drivers, localization, efficiency, local

Evidence from the Arab Gulf region.						adaptation, assimilation
Motivational cultural intelligence and expatriate talent adjustment: an exploratory study of the moderation effects of cultural distance.	Song, Varma & Zhang	2023	International Journal of Human Resource Management	relationship between motivational cultural intelligence and cultural adjustment of expatriates through cultural distance.	t deployment	expatriates, cultural distance, cultural intelligence, emerging markets, motivational cultural intelligence
An empirical study of the role of the corporate HR function in global talent management in professional and financial service firms in the global financial crisis.	Sparrow, Farndale & Scullion	2013	International Journal of Human Resource Management	role of corporate HR in GTM theory driven	general GTM elements	organizational structure, corporate human resources, context
Six Principles of Effective Global Talent Management.	Stahl, Björkman, Farndale, Morris, Paauwe, Stiles, Trevor & Wright	2012	MIT Sloan Management Review	principles in GTM success	general GTM elements	talent pipeline, evaluate talent, manage talent, value, potential, identification, key activities
Managing talent across advanced and emerging economies: HR issues and challenges in a Sino-German strategic collaboration.	Stokes, Liu, Smith, Leidner, Moore & Rowland	2016	International Journal of Human Resource Management	factors impact on an advanced economy SME's TM in emerging economies	general GTM elements	SME, emerging economy, integration, economic challenges, organizational challenges
You've Been Framed-Framing Talent Mobility in Emerging Markets.	Tansley & Kirk	2018	Thunderbird International Business Review	consequences of TM framing in emerging markets	t deployment	emerging markets, mobility, individual choices, frame positions
A multi-level framework for understanding global talent management systems for high talent expatriates within and across subsidiaries of MNEs.	Tarique & Schuler	2018	Journal of Global Mobility	multi-level framework with expats in subsidiaries	t deployment, general GTM elements	subsidiary, expatriation, mobility, system levels
Talent management in the "new normal"—Case study of Indian IT services multinationals in China.	Thite, Rammal & Ferreira	2023	Thunderbird International Business Review	case of GTM in Indian IT	general GTM elements	pandemic, policies, emerging market, localization, performance
Becoming global talent? Taiwanese white-collar migrants in Japan.	Tseng	2021	Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies	skilled migration research in Japan	t deployment	skilled migration, skilled migrants, social contexts

Exploring talent management in India: The neglected role of intrinsic rewards	Tymon, Stumpf & Doh	2010	Journal of World Business	investigate the impact of intrinsic rewards	t retention	satisfaction, career success, rewards, employee engagement, career success
Recognizing the important role of self-initiated expatriates in effective global talent management.	Vaiman, Haslberger & Vance	2015	Human Resource Management Review	GTM problems with self-initiated expats	t deployment, t development	retention, employee engagement, expatriates, host country, labour market
A squeezed lemon or an appetizing olive? Exploring expatriate and repatriate talent management.	Valk	2022	Employee Relations	GTM approach on deployment goal congruence	t development, t deployment	expatriations, praxis, human capital, repatriation, mobility, goal congruence
Analysis of Korean expatriate congruence with Chinese labor perceptions on training method importance: implications for global talent management.	Vance, Chow, Paik & Shin	2013	International Journal of Human Resource Management	effectiveness of training programs of Korean MNCs in China	t development	knowledge-management, employee training, local adaptation, host country
What's in a name? talent: A review and research agenda.	Vardi & Collings	2023	Human Resource Management Journal	research on talent	general GTM elements	human capital theory, matching theory, competencies, talent
Talent management processes and outcomes in a virtual organization.	Vecchi, Della Piana, Feola & Crudele	2021	Business Process Management Journal	GTM adoption in virtual environments	general GTM elements	work arrangements, virtual, sustainable human resources, covid-19
It's a New Era for Expatriates.	Vilet	2012	Compensation & Benefits Review	historical overview of GTM in expat perspective	t deployment, general GTM elements	globalization, local talent, mobility, expatriation, strategy
How global careers unfold in practice: Evidence from international project work.	Welch & Welch	2015	International Business Review	global careers of international project workers	t development, t retention	global careers, career capital, citizenship behaviour, knowledge transfer
Examining the Effectiveness of Corporate E-Learning in Global Talent Management.	Wong & Sixl-Daniell	2017	International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning	effectiveness of global TM e-learning	t development	e-learning, training, considerations about digital learning and training