Talent Development Approaches For Competitiveness among Five Star Hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

The hospitality sector in Kenya is experiencing a shortage of critical knowledge, skills and abilities in key positions. The adoption of talent development approaches for critical positions and for the high performers and potential individuals within the sector would create great value that would generate a competitive edge. In the backdrop of this, the study sought to establish the extent to which talent development approaches influenced the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. Using the exclusive talent management concept, this study hypothesized that there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. Mixed method research design was used in which there were two levels of respondents. Level one comprised of the human resources executives (talent and training executives) whose sample was 22. Level two consisted of the line executives (food and beverage production, food and beverage service, front office, finance, and housekeeping) whose sample was 55. Data was obtained using both semi-structured questionnaires and interviews respectively. The results confirmed the initial hypothesis of the causal relationship all the eleven of the talent development approaches on the competitiveness among five star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This suggests that the approaches profiled for talent development have not generated the impact that is expected of them. Therefore; the content, the manner of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these approaches need to be reviewed for improvement. This study focused only on talent considered high potentials and performers (exclusive talent management) which would limit the generalizability to other levels of the workforce. Therefore, other studies based on inclusive talent management are proposed for generalizability purposes. The five – star hotels looking to be competitive and sustainable by creating unique products to adopt the retention of talent and tacit knowledge approaches

based on the concept of exclusive talent management. This is one of the first studies dealing with the approaches of talent and knowledge retention based on the exclusive talent management concept in the hospitality sector of Kenya.

Key words: *Talent development, talent management, unique knowledge, skills, and abilities*

1.0 Introduction to Talent Development

Sessional Paper No.1 of 2010 on Enhancing Sustainable Tourism in Kenya (GoK, 2011) and *The National Tourism Strategy 2013 – 2018* (GoK, 2013) noted that the hospitality sector in Kenya is experiencing a shortage of critical knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) in key positions, as well as the development and retention of those individuals. These challenges appear to have been unresolved eight years later according to the World Bank (2018) report on *Kenya-Capturing Skills Requirements and Assessing Skills Gaps in the Modern Economy.* The report revealed that over 60% of organizations experience difficulties in finding required skills, 30% developing and retaining both talent and tacit knowledge. The report further contended there are weak product diversification and differentiation in the hospitality industry in Kenya. Research works by Collings (2014) and Kaewsaeng-on (2017) demonstrate that talent development within the organization can create a pool of individuals with critical KSAs for strategic positions.

Talent development is component of talent management. Talent management is a concept based on "talent as some people" and "talent as characteristics of people" (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013). Thus, it is the managing of those employees who have exceptional, above-average abilities, and who can apply those abilities to achieve excellent performance (Thunnissen, 2015). These employees are also referred to as high perfomers (HiPe) or and high potentials (HiPo) (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013). Whelan and Carcary (2011) recommended that talent development initiatives are devoted to nurturing the KSAs of the individuals considered to as HiPe and HiPo. Holland (2017) contends that if the KSAs of the talent are not developed their value would be lost. A survey by Tomany (2012) noted that successful organisations develop 80% of their talent internally and obtained 20% from the external sources for their critical positions (Tomany, 2012). Therefore; the specific critical positions, KSAs, and the individuals to be developed need to be identified by a comprehensive framework. Charron, Harrington, and Wiggin (2014) recommended that critical KSAs to be nurtured in the talent are identified by the critical skills gap analysis scheme. Lucy (2016) advocates that the individuals to be developed would best be selected based on the nine-box grid in Table 1.

Table 1: Nine-Box Grid

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

Potential (vertical axis) — Performance (horizontal axis)

Adopted from Lucy (2016)

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

This study adopted individuals falling on the high potential/high-performance grid as talent or 'A-performers' as the ones to be developed. Tomany (2012) supports this view by noting that, those individuals that feature in the top right-hand corner of the grid are both high performers and high potentials; and arguably the individuals upon whom the company should develop. Jooss (2018)'s study findings noted that some hotels' human resources questioned the reliability of a linear, two-dimensional nine-box grid but conceded that there is a lack of viable alternatives. In Tomany (2012)'s work, the model is criticized because it focuses solely on an individual's attributes and performance, although most organizations rely on collaborative working and interdependent action. The current study did not embrace this critique; instead, it was informed by the TM concept of exclusivity. When the concept of exclusivity is put into context, there is clarity on who is to be developed and in Table 1; it is those at the top right-hand corner, while the rest will be managed accordingly.

This study set out to establish whether talent development is administered upon the HiPe and HiPo among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study also set out to determine the extent to which the profiled talent development approaches are applied and their implications on the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Therefore; the study objective was, to establish the extent to which talent development approaches influenced the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. The corresponding null hypothesis (H_0) was stated as; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. Talent management oriented organizations use various development

approaches and some that this study adopted are as follows (Aswathappa, 2013; Mansoori, 2015): external career development courses, in-house development programmes, 360-feedback assessment technique, technology-based training (TBT), coaching systems, mentoring (buddying) systems, job rotation, action learning, special projects assignments, stretching assignments, and job shadowing.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 External Career Development Courses

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

2.2 In-House Development Programmes

Mansoori (2015) stated that the implementation of TM is an uphill task, and its actualization varies from organization to another. Its success depends on individuals who have special KSAs. One of the techniques of imparting or improving KSAs in individuals is the utilization of in-house development programmes. Kichuk (2017)'s study informants praised them for their capacity to increase knowledge and better performance. On this account talent gain self-efficacy that makes them approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. Lyria (2014)'s study revealed overwhelming support for in-house development programmes by company executives at 90%. As well, they improved the KSAs of talent who would then handle assignments they had less incentive to take before. This assertion aligns with CIPD (2010) study on learning and talent development which indicated that in-house development programmes were rated at 56% and ranked as one of the most effective learning and development practices. This reveals that critical talent that would offer an organization a competitive edge is developed.

2.3 360-Feedback Assessment Technique

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

2.4. Technology-Based Training is used to Develop Talent

A study by Dirani (2018)'s revealed that business, academia, and government within the United Arab Emirates adopted online training platforms for functional and soft skill training, and employees taught the courses. Lyria (2014) assessed the adoption of technology-based

training in companies listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange. It was established that E-learning was of great importance with 83% of executives embraced it, 12% did not while 5% were uncertain. The findings implied that the adoption of technology-based learning was a factor in organizational performance. Keen selection and utilization of the technique would create benefits that are rare with competitors. Kichuk (2017) agreed with this assertion and added that exposing talent to technology-based training may present opportunities to study new material connected to their jobs via interactive computer learning packages.

2.5 Coaching Systems are used to Develop Talent

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

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

2.6 Mentoring (Buddying) Systems are used to Develop Talent

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

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

2.7 Job Rotation is used to Develop Talent

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

2.8 Action Learning

Action learning, in the form of cross-functional, enterprise-wide strategic projects, could complement the overall learning experience and benefit both participants and organizations alike (Bialek, 2014). Action learning is an approach for developing leaders, solving complex problems, and building teams. Therefore; action learning provides an environment for participants to learn and develop leadership skills while working on high-impact initiatives and solving problems important to the organization. Action learning projects utilizing sponsors and the opportunity to present project results and recommendations to senior leaders also provide high-potentials greater visibility and access to senior-level leaders. The organization can further benefit by utilizing the intellectual horsepower and talent of high-potentials to complete initiatives related to organization strategy (Bialek, 2014). Mensah and Bawole (2017) found action learning helped match employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities with job requirements.

2.9 Special Project Assignments

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

2.10 Stretching Assignments used to Develop Talent

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

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

2.11 Job Shadowing

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

However, the description of job shadowing by Fabricant, Miller, and Stark (2014) is different from that of Anaya (2015). They defined it as an activity that involves observing and following a person in a work setting. The person following does not participate in work-related activities, other than learning and asking questions. The current study will adopt the former because the nature of hospitality work requires one to have a combination of KSAs and participating in the work guarantees these. A study by Mensah and Bawole (2017) on Person–job fit matters in parastatal institutions found job shadowing was used and it helped match employees' KSAs with job requirements.

2.12 Summary of the Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

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

3.0 Methodology

The study was conducted in eleven 5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. It adopted a mixed method research design. There were two levels of respondents. Level one comprised of the human resources executives (talent and training executives) who sample was 22. The response rate achieved was 100%, and their responses were quantitative obtained through semi-structured questionnaires. Level two consisted of the line executives (food and beverage production, food and beverage service, front office, finance, and housekeeping) who sample was 55. The response rate was 39 translating to 71%, and their responses were qualitative

obtained using semi-structured interviews. The response rates are in accordance with Johnson and Wislar (2012) who asserted that a response of above 60% is generally accepted as a threshold for survey quality in social sciences. Pre-testing of the research instruments was carried out in two, 5 (five) star-rated hotels which eventually did not participate in the study. Items that posted a Cronbach's coefficient Alphas of less than 0.6 were dropped. Data analysis was done using; descriptive statistics, content analysis and multiple linear regression analyses.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

Talent and training executives were asked to note talent development approaches which they considered applicable in their respective hotels. Findings are revealed in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
External career development courses are used to develop talent (x_1)	10 (45.5%)	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.64	0.658
In-house development programmes are used to develop talent (x_2)	8 (36.4%)	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	1.95	1.046
360-feedback assessment technique is used to develop talent (x_3)	7 (31.8%)	14 (63.6%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.73	0.550
Technology based training is used to develop talent (x_4)	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.1%)	8 (36.4%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	2.09	1.109
Coaching systems are used to develop talent (x_5)	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.36	0.492
Mentoring (buddying) systems are used to develop talent (x_6)	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.36	0.492
Job rotation is used to develop talent individuals (x_7)	7 (31.8%)	7 (31.8%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	2.41	1.368
Action learning is used to develop talent individuals (x_8)	7 (31.8%)	7 (31.8%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	1 (4.5%)	2.32	1.249
Special projects assignments are used to develop talent (x_9)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (31.8%)	4 (18.2%)	7 (31.8%)	3.55	1.299
Stretching assignments are used to develop talent (x_{10})	5 (22.7%)	3 (13.6%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	2.77	1.270
Job shadowing is used to develop talent individuals (x_{11})	7 (31.8%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	4 (18.2%)	2.73	1.549
Competiveness (talent development allow talent to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors)	16 (72.7%)	6 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.27	0.456

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

Source: Researcher (2022)

4.2 Inferential Statistics Analysis

Null hypothesis (H_0) posited that; was stated as; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County. Linear regression was conducted, and the regression model summary is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
0.770a	0.594	0.147	0.473	0.594	1.328	11	10	0.331
a Predictors: (Constant), (x_1), (x_2), (x_3), (x_4), (x_5), (x_6), (x_7), (x_8), (x_9), (x_{10}), and (x_{11})								

Source: Researcher (2022)

Results in Table 3 revealed that the regression model correlation coefficient R was (0.770) indicating that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. Moreover, results showed a significant overall regression model coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.594$, indicating that approximately 59.4% of the variance in competitiveness (talent development allow individuals to gain critical KSAs that are difficult to imitate by competitors) of five-star hotels could be explained by the model significant predictor variables. Moreover, this finding is emphasised by ANOVA[a] in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA[a] Model

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.265	11	0.297	1.328	0.331b
Residual	2.235	10	0.223		
Total	5.500	21			
a Dependent Variable: Competiveness- Talent development allow individuals to gain critical KSAs that are difficult to imitate by competitors					
b Predictors: (Constant), (x_1), (x_2), (x_3), (x_4), (x_5), (x_6), (x_7), (x_8), (x_9), (x_{10}), and (x_{11})					

Source: Researcher (2022)

The ANOVA[a] establishes whether the regression model explains a statistically significant part of the variance. It utilizes a ratio to compare the extent to which the linear regression model predicts the outcome. It predicts that the association between the means of the dependent variable and the predictors (independent variables) is not statistically significant (p=0.331>0.050). The overall regression model was not significant (p<0.05) as demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.302	0.784		0.385	0.708
External career development courses are used to develop talent (x_1)	0.097	0.231	0.124	0.419	0.684
In-house development programmes are used to develop talent (x_2)	0.120	0.125	0.304	0.961	0.359
360-feedback assessment technique is used to develop talent (x_3)	0.529	0.274	0.569	1.93	0.082
Technology based training is used to develop talent (x_4)	-0.093	0.151	-0.201	-0.613	0.553
Coaching systems are used to develop talent (x_5)	-0.055	0.269	-0.053	-0.205	0.841
Mentoring (buddying) systems are used to develop talent (x_6)	-0.020	0.316	-0.019	-0.062	0.952
Job rotation is used to develop talent individuals (x_7)	0.138	0.279	0.369	0.495	0.632
Action learning is used to develop talent individuals (x_8)	-0.138	0.233	-0.337	-0.594	0.566
Special projects assignments are used to develop talent (x_9)	0.006	0.210	0.013	0.030	0.976
Stretching assignments are used to develop talent (x_{10})	0.032	0.126	0.081	0.258	0.801
Job shadowing is used to develop talent individuals (x_{11})	-0.043	0.118	-0.129	-0.361	0.725

a Dependent Variable: Competiveness-Talent development allow individuals to gain critical KSAs that are difficult to imitate by competitors
*$P<0.05$

Source: Researcher (2022)

Table 5 yielded the values of the coefficients to be estimated and their corresponding significance values (p-values). The p-values were used to test the hypothesis about β, the coefficients. In this test, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis whenever the p-values were less than 0.05.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis

NO.	RESPONDENT	RESPONSE
1)	FBPE01 (Food and Beverage Production Executive 01)	Yes we allow for external career courses as long as the employees are self-funding
2)	FBPE12 (Food and Beverage Production Executive 12)	We use external courses in colleges, job rotation, in-house programmes, coaching, mentoring, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment.
3)	HEE05 (Housekeeping Executive 02)	Sure we train our key employees through internal development programmes
4)	HEE06 (Housekeeping Executive 06)	There are many important trends in the industry and we assist our staff to learn them through online technologies
5)	FBPE05 (Food and Beverage Production Executive 05)	Key in our development programmes is coaching and mentoring by the line experts
6)	FBP06 (Food and Beverage Production Executive 06)	We use various methodologies for example job rotations and action learning
7)	FBPE02 (Food and Beverage Production Executive 02)	We have some difficult tasks and as such we employ special projects assignments and stretching assignments in training
8)	FBSE07 (Food and Beverage Service Executive 07)	We use various ways such as coaching, learning by doing, job rotations and action learning
9)	FOE08 (Front Office Executive 08)	Sure we commonly use job rotations, 360-feedback assessment external courses, custom design programmes within our department, coaching, mentoring, and action learning

Source: Researcher (2022)

5.0 Discussion

5.1 External Career Development Courses

Table 2 shows that talent and training executives leaned towards agreement on whether "external career development courses are used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ =1.64; SD = 0.658; strongly agree (45.5%), agree (45.5%), uncertain (9.1%), disagree (0%) and strongly disagree (0%)". This suggests that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County largely, depended on external career development courses to develop talent. The mean (1.64) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.658, indicating a normal variation in the respondents' responses. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County depended on external career development courses in universities or colleges to pass critical KSAs to talent. This allowed the hotels to equip their talent with competencies aimed at contributing positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

The findings were supported by Mishra *et al.* (2019) who found that external career development courses adopted in the hospitality industry have a significant relationship with organizational performance. However, these results were inconsistent with the observation by

CIPD (2015) which noted that hospitality organisations are likely to use in-house career development courses rather than external ones. Kichuk (2017) also did not back this finding and concluded that unless external career courses are funded by the individuals themselves, hospitality organisations have little incentive in sponsoring them because of financial implications. The results of the regression analysis of this study are also consistent with the views of CIPD (2015) and Kichuk (2017). The coefficients of the external career development courses as the means of developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.097$, $p = 0.684$). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

5.2 In-House Development Programmes

Majority of the talent and training executives inclined towards disagreeing that, "in-house development programmes are used to develop talent ($\bar{x} = 1.95$; SD = 1.046)". This finding was not consistent with the findings of other researchers. Most of the respondents; 36.4% strongly agreed while 45.5% agreed with the statement. This is an indication that in-house development had been largely adopted for developing talent. The mean (1.95) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 1.046, indicating a substantial divergence of the participants' responses. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's in-house development programmes are widely used to develop talent, and they may be gaining a competitive advantage out of this.

The findings were supported by CIPD (2015) which noted that hospitality organisations prefer to use in-house career development courses for developing their talent. Mansoori (2015) agreed with the findings as well and further noted that in-house career development courses develop KSAs in talent that is critical for the organizational performance. Kichuk (2017)'s study results also agreed with the current study and praised them for their capacity to increase knowledge and better performance. A study by Lyria (2014) revealed overwhelming support for the in-house development programmes by the company executives at 90% and noted that they improved the KSAs of the talent. However, the results of the regression analysis of this study were contrary to these findings and views. The coefficients of the in-house development programmes as means of developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.120$, $p = 0.359$). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted. It can further be implied that the approach was sufficient in developing KSAs that were not complicated for unique products, services and performance.

5.3 360-Feedback Assessment Technique

Most of the talent and training executives inclined towards agreement whether "360-feedback assessment technique is used to develop talent ($\bar{x} = 1.73$; SD = 0.550)". The majority of the respondents, 31.8% strongly agreed while 63.6% agreed with the statement. The implication is that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County largely, utilized 360-feedback technique assessment for developing talent. The mean (1.73) implies that respondents leaned towards agreement rather than strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.550, indicating a normal variation in the informants' responses. The findings disclose that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County have found the 360-feedback assessment technique to be successful in developing talent. This has allowed the hotels to innovate or and create new or improve KSAs which may have contributed positively to the competitiveness of these hotels.

The study results were consistent with those of Dirani (2018) who revealed that 360 feedback assessment techniques were applied in business, academia, and government in the United Arab Emirates to create or improve KSAs among talent. Bialek (2014) was also in agreement and further revealed that it improves the effectiveness of talent especially the leaders because they are the ones targeted by the tool. Thus the technique creates valuable KSAs in talent whose application in the workplace offers organizations valuable benefits in the form of quality products and services. However, the results of the regression analysis of this study were different from these findings and views. The coefficients of the 360-feedback assessment technique as an approach of developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β = 0.529, p = 0.082). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

5.4. Technology-Based Training is used to Develop Talent

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

These findings were slightly different from the study conducted in Qatar by Mohannadi (2017) who found that talent who relied on technology-based training as the essential factor in supporting knowledge dependency was 48.78%. According to Nonaka and Takeushi (1995), there are two types of knowledge; tacit and explicit. Explicit knowledge is collected, stored, distributed, and shared primarily as electronic or paper documents (Kunwar, 2018). Moreover, Lyria (2014) assessed the adoption of technology-based training in companies listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange also agreed with the current results. The researcher found out that E-learning was of great importance with 83% of executives embraced it, 12% did not while 5% were uncertain. The findings implied that the adoption of technology-based learning was a factor in organizational performance. Kichuk (2017) agreed with this assertion and added that exposing talent to technology-based raining may present opportunities to study new material connected to their jobs via interactive computer learning packages. On the contrary, the coefficients of the technology based training as n approach of developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β = -0.093, p = 0.553). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted. It can be interpreted that TBT approach was only successful in developing KSAs among talent that were only enough for the ordinary performance of the hotels.

5.5 Coaching Systems are used to Develop Talent

The majority of the talent and training executives strongly accepted that they use "coaching systems are used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ =1.36; SD = 0.492)". The majority (63.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed with the statement. This showed that coaching

systems to a large extent backed five-star hotels in Nairobi City County developing critical talent. The mean (1.36) implies that research informants leaned towards a strong agreement. The standard deviation was 0.492, indicating a normal variation in the responses. The findings implied that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County overwhelmingly use coaching systems to develop talent. This may have created knowledge resources that have been used to enhance and sustain a competitive advantage.

CIPD (2010)'s study supported the findings of this study by noting that coaching especially by line executives was ranked at 51% among the top effective learning and development practices. Besides, the findings of the study match those by Mansoori (2015) who revealed that coaching was widespread in Dubai's organizations in developing talent based on the appraisal outcomes. The findings were also consistent with Mensah and Bawole (2017)'s work which noted that coaching is an effective development process that helps employees to match their KSAs with job requirements. Bialek (2014)'s study on peer-group coaching in the USA, was also in the same accord with the current study. The researcher noted that coaching supports collaborative learning which increases confidence and facilitates the application of KSAs. However, the coefficients of the coaching systems used to develop talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β = -0.055, p = 0.841). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted. A further implication suggests that if the coaching approach is enriched the hotels would boast increased competitive advantages.

5.6 Mentoring (Buddying) Systems are used to Develop Talent

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

These findings for the most part resembled a trend found by Lyria (2014)'s survey whose respondents strongly agreed that coaching and mentoring systems were used to develop talent were 28.40%, agree 51.2%, neutral 0%, disagree 9.90%, and strongly disagree 20%. Findings by Lyria (2014) emphasised that mentoring occurs between the talent and superiors by focusing on performance levels and taking actions to maintain effective performance. The findings of this study also correspond with surveys by Cutajar (2012); Keoye (2014) that, the mentoring system enabled the development of talent by transferring to them knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The study results also agreed with those of Kaewsaeng-on (2017)'s study in Thai hotels which identified the adoption of mentoring/ buddying. It noted that when hotels recruited or promoted talent into position, they also assigned them, buddies, to help them improve their performance. Mansoori (2015); Dirani (2018)'s studies were consistent with the current study, and their reports showed that businesses, academia, and the government in the United Arab Emirates have actively engaged the technique to support the transfer of expert knowledge from professionals to junior employees. However, the coefficients of the mentoring (buddying) systems used to develop talent did not have a

significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = 0.952$). Therefore; the H$_0$; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

5.7 Job Rotation is used to Develop Talent

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

The findings complement the results of the study by Brunila (2013) who found out that talent is permitted to perform various jobs at different times. Talent typically has to stay for a while at the same job so that this individual has a deeper understanding of the role. Glaister *et al.* (2017) also agreed with the finding and added that job rotations allow for collaboration and teamwork and create conditions for sharing knowledge. Lyria (2014) was supported this finding and pointed out that job rotation helps move people into roles where their skills are most suited and their aspirations are best met. Mensah and Bawole (2017); Saad and Mayouf (2018) agreed with the findings as well and added that that job rotation allows hotel staff to discover their abilities and skills whose application drives up the competitiveness of the target organizations. On the contrary, The coefficients of the job rotation approach for developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.138$, $p = 0.632$). Therefore; the H$_0$; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

5.8 Action Learning

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

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

(2017) who observed that action learning supported organizations to match talent's KSAs with job requirements. The regression analysis' coefficients of the job rotation approaches for developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β = -0.138, p = 0.566). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

5.9 Special Project Assignments

Majority of the talent and training executives inclined towards disagreeing that, "special projects assignments are used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ = 3.55; SD = 1.299)". This finding was not consistent with the findings of other researchers. Most of the respondents; 31.8% were uncertain, 18.2%, disagreed, and 31.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. It appears that special project assignments are not common in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County. The standard deviation was 1.299, which showed a substantial divergence of responses in which more strongly disagreed and more others uncertain. The mean (3.55) established that research respondents leaned towards a strong agreement. The findings suggest that most five-star hotels in Nairobi City County do not fully benefit from special projects assignment which ought to develop critical KSAs among talent. Similarly, the coefficients of the special projects assignments approach for developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β = 0.006, p = 0.976). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

These findings differed with those of Detuncq and Schmidt (2013) which revealed that special projects assignments were utilised but more on talent targeted for leadership. Murugesan (2011)'s book did not support the finding as the book endorsed project assignments for providing real opportunities to build and lead teams, facilitate strategic thinking, and help participants cultivate communication skills. Additionally, Glaister *et al.* (2017)'s work did not agree with the findings. They wrote that special project assignments were critical in creating collaboration, teamwork, and an environment that encourages knowledge sharing. The findings again were not supported by Mishra *et al.* (2019)'s work which revealed that special project assignments were used in the hospitality sector in India to grow personal and team competencies to contribute to organizational stability and compete better in the market.

5.10 Stretching Assignments used to Develop Talent

Most talent and training executives leaned towards uncertainty on whether "stretching assignments are used to develop talent ($\overline{x}$ = 2.77; SD = 1.27)". The majority of the respondents, 22.7% strongly agreed and 36.4% remained undecided whether stretching assignments are used to develop talent. These imply that assignments have been adopted in less than half of the five-star hotels surveyed. The standard deviation (1.27) suggests that the results were unevenly distributed but skewed towards uncertainty according to the mean (2.77). The findings disclose that five-star hotels in Nairobi City County; allow their talent to participate in stretching assignments that allow critical learning to develop specialist talent in pivotal positions. However, the assignments are moderately used because the informants leaned towards uncertainty when asked whether they are used to develop talent. Nonetheless, the number of stretching assignments used may have contributed to the competitiveness of hotels. Similarly, the coefficients of the stretching assignments approach for developing talent did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β = 0.032, p = 0.801). Therefore; the H_0; there were no

significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

The findings slightly differed with studies by Cutajar (2012); Brunila (2013); Keoye (2014) who found that; organizations use stretching assignments to nurture talent's creativity and share knowledge. The findings were also slightly inconsistent with the work of Glaister *et al.* (2017) who noted that stretching assignments facilitated collaboration, teamwork, and an environment that encourages the sharing of knowledge. The findings again slightly differed with those of Mishra *et al.* (2019) who noted that stretching assignments have a significant relationship with organizational performance in the hospitality sector in India. This statement was affirmed by Tomany (2012) who noted that stretching assignments were preferred to provide prospects to grow KSAs, among talent for increasingly broad and complex appointments.

5.11 Job Shadowing

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

The study findings slightly agreed with Anaya (2015) which holds that job shadowing is adopted by talent management-oriented companies so that talent can share common experiences, skills, and knowledge regarding specific competencies. The book further insisted that job shadowing is critical because it helps spread the special abilities of the most competent workers to others in the discipline. The findings also differed slightly with a study by Mensah and Bawole (2017) on person-job fit matters in parastatal institutions which revealed that job shadowing was used and it helped match employees' KSAs with job requirements. Likewise, the coefficients of the job shadowing used to develop talent individuals did not have a significant relationship with the competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β = -0.043, p = 0.725). Therefore; the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

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

competencies. The findings also imply that; five-star hotels in Nairobi City County's talent development approaches have a positive contribution towards the competitiveness of the hotels in developing talent to gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors.

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

However; the results of the regression analysis indicated that, the talent development approaches profiled have not yielded competitive advantage for the hotels. Based on the values of the coefficients, the corresponding linear regression equation on the relationship between talent selections approaches and the competitiveness of five–star hotels was thus expressed as;

$$y = 0.302 + 0.097x_1 - 0.120x_2 + 0.529x_3 - 0.093x_4 - 0.055x_5 - 0.020x_6 + 0.138x_7 - 0.138x_8 + 0.006x_9 + 0.032x_{10} - 0.043x_{11} \dots \dots (i)$$

The H_0; 'there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County', was tested through linear regression. The analysis revealed positive results but they were not significant ($\beta = 0.302$, $t = 0.385$, $p = 0.708$) thus, the hypothesis was accepted meaning that approaches profiled for the development of talent did not yield individuals with unique KSAs.

Line executives were interviewed and identified external career development courses, in-house development programmes, technology-based training, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, action learning, special projects assignments, stretching assignments, job shadowing, and 360-feedback assessments as approaches for developing talent. When probed further as to which approaches were commonly used, they picked; career development courses, in-house development programmes, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment. For instance, FBE12 said that *"we use external courses in colleges, job rotation, in-house programmes, coaching, mentoring, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment"*. FOE08 noted that *"sure we commonly use job rotations, 360-feedback assessment external courses, custom design programmes within our department, coaching, mentoring, and action learning"*. The line executives were further probed on whether it is all the employees that are developed or it is the HiPe and HiPo individuals only. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the executives noted that it is the majority of the employees that are developed. This is contrary to the concept of talent management which recommends only HiPe and HiPo individuals to be developed so as the organisational resources are focussed on them. This can partly explain why the H_0; there were no significant talent development approaches that influenced competitiveness among five–star hotels in Nairobi City County was accepted.

5.12 Implications for Research and Practice

Talent and training executives strongly agreed that the talent development approaches adopted by their hotels created competitive resources ($\bar{x} = 1.27$; SD = 0.456). External career development courses, in-house development programmes, 360-feedback assessment techniques, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, and action learning were the most preferred approaches. Line executives were probed on commonly used talent development approaches

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used, and they picked; career development courses, in-house development programmes, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, action learning, and 360-feedback assessment. Additionally, most line executives (74%) indicated that most of their staff is developed which does not conform to the concept of talent management that requires the development in critical positions and HiPo or HiPe individuals only. The regressing of the talent development approaches with competitiveness, generated positive results that were not significant ($\beta = 0.302$, $t = 0.385$, $p = 0.708$). This suggested that talent development approaches profiled for survey in the five–star hotels in Nairobi City County did not succeed in developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs that drive them into greater levels of competitiveness. Therefore; the stakeholders would need to enrich these approaches or adopt them if they are not available for these hotels create HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs. Finally, other studies can be done on inclusive talent management using the same propositions to expand the generalization of the findings of the overall talent management approaches of talent development.

5.13 Conclusions

Talent development was praised for developing HiPo, HiPe, or talent with unique KSAs so that they gain competencies that are difficult to imitate by competitors. The regressing of the talent development approaches with competitiveness, generated positive results that were not significant ($\beta = 0.302$, $t = 0.385$, $p = 0.708$). This suggests that the approaches profiled for talent development have not generated the impact that is expected of them. Therefore; the content, the manner of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these approaches need to be reviewed for improvement.

6 Acknowledgements

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