

## **Title**

*It's not what you do; it's the way that you do it: An exploratory study of talent management as an inherently motivational process in the hospitality sector*

## **Abstract**

*Purpose:* This paper draws on the key tenets of self-determination theory (SDT) to explore the possibility of deploying Talent Management (TM) as an inherently motivational process within the hospitality industry and examines the role of managers in leveraging it.

*Methodology:* The study is rooted in social constructionism and employs qualitative methods and techniques to provide rich insights into employee perceptions and experiences of TM and related managerial attitudes and behaviours.

*Findings:* Although the current TM process is skewed towards performance outcomes, compelling evidence indicates variation in attempts to address employees' motivational needs mediated by highly-influential managerial attitudes and behaviours and importantly, suggests ample scope for embedding TM as an inherently motivational process.

*Research limitations/implications:* The findings are based on a relatively small sample but can be extrapolated with moderation to the wider research context and other similar organisational settings.

*Practical implications:* The paper develops an operational framework which contains clear guidelines that can be effectively translated into practice keeping in view its potential benefits.

*Social implications:* In line with SDT, the study foregrounds the social and relational context conducive to TM as a motivational process.

*Originality/value:* The paper is the first of its kind to conceptualise TM as an inherently motivational process via the systematic application of SDT and offers early empirical insights into the phenomenon, which can serve as a solid platform for further research.

*Keywords:* Talent management, self-determination theory, manager role and behaviours, hospitality industry.

Article classification: Theoretical-empirical paper

## ***Introduction***

The purpose of this paper is to explore the possibility of deploying Talent Management (TM) as an inherently motivational process within the hospitality industry and examine the role of managers in leveraging it. Taking the pulse of TM, it is fair to say that it is now well established as a distinctive field of research and practice, and that there is a wide recognition amongst both academics and practitioners of its strategic value and the significant impact it can have on sustainable business growth and success (CIPD, 2017; Horner, 2017; Hughes and Rog, 2008). This view is particularly applicable to the hospitality industry where there is a renewed focus on TM as a means of leveraging the organisation's talent pool to optimise performance and achieve competitive advantage in a global business context characterised by economic uncertainty, unpredictable labour markets and ever-increasing competitive pressures (Madera *et al.*, 2017).

While the primary concern with TM as a strategic lever is understandable, it has also served to legitimate a predominantly 'performative' approach – where TM is primarily focused on performance, productivity and profits with scant attention paid to its human dimension (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). However, with the growing realisation of the importance of the human dimension of the TM process, there is also an emerging stream of literature that places greater emphasis on the need to address people-centred issues in TM and on managerial behaviours that can effectively promote employee motivation, development and well-being as a precondition for releasing the potential and optimising the performance of the organisation's talent pool (Thunnissen, 2016). Of particular significance is a growing debate on the role of motivation in TM – but much of this debate is also anchored in a performative discourse and mostly driven by a primary concern about how motivation in the TM process can be used as a means to optimise performance outputs (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013; Kraiger *et al.*, 2015).

This paper contends that the reduction of motivation in TM as a 'mere means-to-an-end' constitutes a loophole and what is needed is an alternative way of conceptualising TM – where it can be construed as an *inherently motivational process* which can be deployed to achieve a much-needed symmetry between employees' genuine motivational needs and the strategic objectives of the organisation. Such a conception of TM is particularly relevant to hospitality organisations in their attempt to attract, develop and retain a unique type of talented and highly-motivated employee to deliver a unique type of excellence in customer service that is seen as a key differentiator of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010; Tracey, 2014). Of equal importance is the vital role that managers are called to play in this process – where, by virtue of their relational proximity to their subordinates and the positive influence they can exert with their peers and superiors, they can help bring about the conditions for TM practices that are *inherently motivational* – leading to the following overarching research questions on which this paper is centred:

*How can the concept of TM as an inherently motivational process be effectively deployed within the context of the hospitality industry?*

*What is the role of managers in leveraging this process?*

In addressing these questions, the paper sets out to apply the key tenets of Self-Determination Theory (*hereinafter*, STD) to the TM process. In so doing, the paper begins with an exposition of SDT to provide a comprehensive discussion of its key elements as a motivational composite and to draw attention to

the vital role of managers in fostering self-determination and how they can effectively contribute to the satisfaction of employees' basic psychological needs of *competence*, *autonomy* and *relatedness* that have been identified in SDT literature as the building blocks of self-determination. The paper moves on with a critique of the primarily performative orientation of TM and develops an argument as to why the application of SDT to TM can transform it into an *inherently motivational process* which can bring about the conditions for employee self-determination whilst keeping in view the strategic objectives of the organisation. A case is made regarding the appropriateness of the hospitality industry as a fertile terrain for experimentation in TM as a motivational process – leading to the presentation of a conceptual framework which models the key concepts and variables arising from the literature review and which is used as a theoretical lens to conduct the primary research.

After this, the paper turns on to the empirical component of the study to first provide a detailed account of the methodology developed to effectively address the overarching research questions outlined above. It proceeds to present an in-depth analysis of the research findings which suggest some scope for embedding a motivational approach to TM. Theoretical insights from the literature review are then combined with empirical insights from the field to generate the final research output: a theoretically-grounded, evidence-based and practically-oriented framework for enabling the deployment of TM as an inherently motivational process within the context of the hospitality industry and across other similar organisational settings. The paper concludes with the consideration of the contribution of the study and its implications for further research and practice.

### ***The key tenets of SDT***

SDT is an encompassing and evidence-based theory of human motivation and personality that foregrounds the importance of developmental and growth tendencies, processes of behavioural self-regulation and the type of social environments that are conducive to autonomous motivation, social integration and optimal human functioning (Fernet *et al.*, 2015; Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997; Ryan and Deci, 2000a). While SDT can be traced back to traditional theories of human motivation (e.g. Porter and Lawler's (1968) model of intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation; Kanfer's (1987) bipolar notion of distal/goal-oriented v. proximal/self-regulating motivational mechanisms; or Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory that distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators), it transcends the dichotomous, *either / or* mode of thinking in which such theories are predominantly rooted. As an encompassing theory of human motivation, SDT goes beyond the view of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as separate, discrete notions to focus on the nature of the interlocking processes underlying both types of motivation and importantly, on the social environment in which they unravel – all of which can either foster or frustrate the possibility for degrees of self-determination (Gagné and Deci, 2005). In this regard, human motivation is often construed within SDT as a motivational composite or complex consisting of the following key elements: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, self-regulatory processes underpinning autonomous motivation, and social environment.

#### ***Intrinsic motivation***

Intrinsic motivation entails an activity carried out by someone because of its inherent value and the spontaneous and uninhibited satisfaction or enjoyment that is derived from it – even in the absence of material or social reinforcers (Sansone and Harackiewicz, 2000). Therefore, an intrinsically-

motivated activity is one which is non-instrumental (separate from any pre-determined goals or outcomes), an end-in-itself (conducted for its own sake or out of pure interest) and borne out of an internal perceived locus of control and causality (self-endorsed and free from any external influence) (Ryan and Deci, 2000b). As such, intrinsic motivation harbours a positive set of assumptions about the 'natural' propensity or tendential disposition in human beings to continuously learn and self-develop in the pursuit of things that reflect their 'true' needs and interests, free from external pressures or even the prospect of material rewards. As aptly put by Ryan and Deci (2000a, p.70), 'no single phenomenon reflects the potential nature of human nature as much as intrinsic motivation, the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn'.

### ***Extrinsic motivation***

By contrast, extrinsic motivation involves an activity which is carried out, not because of its inherent value or the spontaneous satisfaction it provides, but because of the prospect of some 'separable' consequences in the form of some desired outcome or in/tangible reward, which is usually dependent on the power of some external agent (Gagné and Deci, 2005). Therefore, an extrinsically-motivated activity is one which is instrumentalised (performed in order to achieve certain separate goals or outcomes), a means to an end (not conducted for its own sake) and induced by an external perceived locus of control and causality (subject to the evaluation or appreciation of another individual or group of people). Typical of the behaviouristic school of thought propounded by the likes of Pavlov, Skinner and Watson, extrinsic motivation entertains a view of human behaviour as primarily goal-oriented where people do things so as to obtain some valued reward or avoid some dreaded sanction or punishment – which is usually granted or inflicted by an external agent and which can be construed as the 'efficient cause' of human activity (Locke and Latham, 1990; Mace and Critchfield, 2010).

For these reasons, extrinsic motivation is usually seen as having an invariably negative relationship with intrinsic motivation – a view which tends to be justified in empirical investigations which point to the adverse effects of extrinsic motivators (such as tangible rewards, deadlines, surveillance, evaluations) on feelings of autonomy and a shift of perceived locus of causality from internal to external (e.g. see Amabile, DeJong and Lepper, 1976; deCharms, 1968). However, as a counterpoint to this seemingly logical conclusion, research has also shown that the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is not that straightforward. For example, a number of studies tend to substantiate the fact that some extrinsic factors such as entrusting employees with challenging tasks, giving them greater choice in certain areas of their jobs, promoting a sense of competence and responsibility, and providing constructive feedback can have a positive effect on feelings of autonomy and trigger a shift towards internal perceived locus of causality where people feel that they are the 'primary cause' of their actions and have control over what they do – all of which are key features of intrinsic motivation (Zuckerman *et al.*, 1978; Ryan, 1982; Deci, 1971).

In light of the above evidence, it is safe to claim that extrinsic motivation can be both positively and negatively related to intrinsic motivation. This realisation has been the source of spirited debates about how extrinsic and intrinsic motivators can be combined to maximise job satisfaction and of an advocacy of the additive possibilities of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Porter and Lawler, 1968). However, SDT is not so much concerned with the additive possibilities of

extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as with the self-regulatory processes involved in the integration of extrinsic motivators as a key dimension of an autonomous motivation complex.

**Self-regulatory processes underpinning autonomous motivation**

Leading proponents in the area, Deci and Ryan (1985) developed a sub-theory which they referred to as the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). Importantly, OIT led to the development of a continuum of self-determination which highlights the different processes of self-regulation individuals go through to achieve different degrees of self-determination (refer to Fig.1 below for a partial reproduction of the Deci and Ryan’s self-determination continuum).

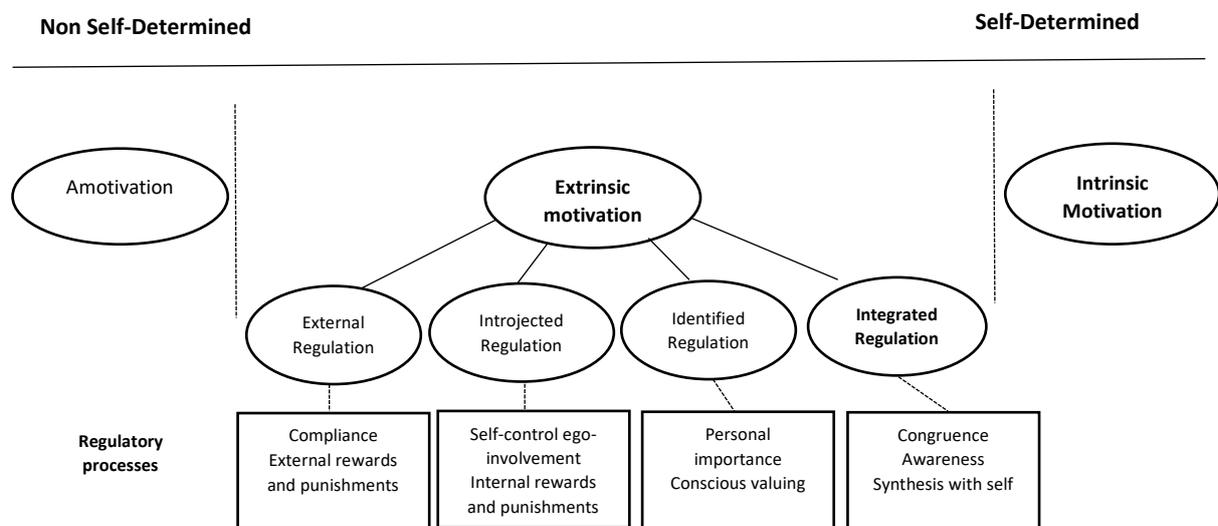


Fig.1 Partial reproduction of Ryan and Deci’s (2000) Self-Determination Continuum

At the far-left end of the self-determination continuum is amotivation – a state of absence of motivation and of any intention to act. At the opposite end is the state of intrinsic motivation where people are engaged in highly-autonomous and inherently valuable and satisfying activities – which, according to the authors, ‘represents the prototypic instance of self-determination’ (*Ibid.*, p.72). But what is particularly illuminating about the self-determination continuum is how it foregrounds, between the two polar opposites of *amotivation* and *intrinsic motivation*, the different types of regulatory processes individuals can go through as they grapple with extrinsic motivators. From the perspective of SDT, the most desirable type of extrinsic motivation is achieved through integrated regulation. This is where required activities or behaviours – although still external and geared towards separable outcomes – are brought into alignment with one’s own values, needs and interests. When combined with intrinsic motivation with which it shares many qualities, integrated regulation can contribute to the formation and maintenance of a strong autonomous motivation composite or complex (*ibid.*).

**Social environment**

Since self-determination cannot play out in a motivational vacuum, much of SDT research is centred on the extent to which social environments and workplace settings are conducive to it. This has enabled the identification of the interrelated social mechanisms that can potentially either foster or frustrate the possibility for self-determination. Non-supportive environments offer little scope for autonomous behaviours and are typified by a ‘crowding’ of extrinsic motivators such as monetary rewards or sanctions tied to task performance, high power distance reporting structures, pressured evaluations and performance appraisals, and strict directives and deadlines (Frey and Jegen, 2001) – all of which tend to undermine intrinsic motivation, maintain an external perceived locus of causality and contain regulatory processes of individuals within a mode of compliance – leading to a lack of intentionality and connectedness, feelings of incompetence and being undervalued, experiences of stress, anxiety and depression, and estrangement from self, others and work (Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 1999; Putra, Cho and Liu, 2017). In short, from an SDT vantage point, an unsupportive social environment is one in which social structures are transformed into shackles and human agency is reduced to forced action – perpetuating the undesirable and disorientating outcomes of amotivation, psychopathology and alienation (Osborne, 2005).

In contrast, supportive social environments are conducive to autonomous behaviours and can effectively serve as a catalyst for both intrinsically-driven activities and the regulatory processes underlying the internalisation and integration of extrinsic motivators. Supportive social environments are characterised by a ‘crowding out’ of extrinsic motivators and the reinforcement of processes and practices that aim to sustain and increase intrinsic motivation and the integration of ‘positive’ extrinsic motivators (Frey and Jegen, 2001). This can include the removal of purely monetary incentives or a ‘loosening’ of their links to task performance, a flattening of reporting structures, open communication and participative forums, positive feedback, a developmental approach performance appraisal, recognition for discretionary behaviours, and increased opportunities for autonomous working and engagement in challenging activities or innovative ways of working (Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 1999). Such an approach to social life and work can significantly enhance the possibility for the expression of intrinsic motivation, preserve an internal perception of locus of causality, and nurture the integration of extrinsic motivators which can effectively be brought into congruence with individuals’ own values, needs and interests – leading to a sense of connectedness, trusting working relationships, feelings of competence and being valued, experiences of well-being and engagement with self, others and work (*ibid*). Thus, from an SDT perspective, a supportive social environment is one which sustains enabling social structures and trusting relationships and which empowers human agency towards desirable and flourishing outcomes of self-determination, social integration, psychological safety and well-being, and optimal human functioning (Fernet *et al.*, 2015; Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997; Ryan and Deci, 2000a).

### ***The vital role of managers in fostering self-determination***

Managers – by virtue of their intermediate position in the organisation and involvement in the strategy formation process as middle managers or proximity to frontline employees as line managers (Wooldridge, Schmid and Floyd, 2008) – have a vital role to play in fostering self-determination. While their role and responsibilities in this area are manifold, we limit discussion in this section to managers’ contribution to the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs of *competence*, *autonomy* and

*relatedness* that have been identified in SDT literature as the ‘nutriment for intrinsic motivation and internalization (*sic*)’ and self-determination (Gagné, and Deci, 2005, p.336).

*Competence* is an ability or a demonstrable set of knowledge, skills and aptitudes that are essential to perform a task efficiently and successfully (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2018a). Competence-supportive managers are adept at developing in their subordinates a strong *sense of task mastery* and convincing their superiors of the importance of taking a leading role and investing in competence-developing activities (Hurrell, Scholarios, and Thompson, 2013; Kinicki *et al.*, 2004). For example, before assigning tasks to their subordinates, line managers can consult with them to account for individual differences and to ensure that such tasks match their level of competence. Ideally, competence-enhancing tasks should also offer the optimal degree of challenge, open up opportunities for further learning and development, and enable employees to experiment with new ways of working that can maximise their job satisfaction whilst remaining in synch with the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation (Gabriel, Moran and Gregory, 2014).

*Autonomy* refers to the capacity of an agent to make informed, uncoerced decisions and choices and to independently and intentionally pursue preferred courses of action without the unnecessary control or intervention of an external party (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2018b). As such, it provides people with a *sense of agency* as they feel trusted and empowered to exert control over the processes or events that unfold in their everyday (working) life. Autonomy-supportive managers have to enter into a dialogical relationship with their subordinates to explore and negotiate, in good faith, the possibility for greater job flexibility or enlargement – whereby the latter can experience a sense of volition, intentionality, freedom and meaningfulness in the discharge of their specific roles and responsibilities (Kuvaas, 2009; Thomas, 2009). It is also important for line and middle managers to demonstrate how greater employee autonomy can lead to a ‘mutuality of gains’ between employer and employee and to exert their influence to ensure the critical support of employee-autonomy initiatives at top-management level (Baard, Deci and Ryan, 2004; Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017).

*Relatedness* is perhaps best described as a *sense of belonging* or connectedness amongst members of a particular social group – usually because of a shared purpose or the need to collectively achieve some common goals and objectives (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2018c). Managers can enact relatedness-supportive behaviours across a range of people-centred activities: facilitating supportive learning processes such as coaching, shadowing and mentoring; providing non-judgemental and constructive feedback, adopting a non-punitive and developmental approach to performance appraisals; and championing participative forums geared towards relationship building, problem solving and teamworking. Thus, by building and maintaining a network of inclusive, supportive and enabling relationships, managers, at different organisational levels, have a significant role to play in developing in employees a sense of belonging and connectedness – which can have a positive knock-on effect on employee commitment and engagement, career progression and retention (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2008).

### ***Talent management as an inherently motivational process***

Although much has already been said about TM, there still seems to be an ongoing lack of clarity regarding its conceptual contours, scope and purpose (Collings, Scullion and Dowling, 2009; Lewis and Heckman, 2006). The many definitions of TM in extant literature present it as a multi-faceted and

holistic process – the key stages of which tend to recurrently encompass traditional HRM functional activities, the most topical ones being: *workforce planning and recruitment, learning and development, performance appraisal and reward, and career progression and succession planning* (e.g. refer to Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Kichuk, Horner and Ladkin, 2014; Watson, 2008; D’Annunzio-Green, 2018). Notwithstanding the variations in the conceptualisation of TM, the dominant order of discourse points to a primarily ‘performative’ and hard-nosed business approach to the phenomenon, where the firm intent is to harness the TM process to the strategic objectives of the organisation and leverage its talent pool to sustain competitive advantage and optimise performance, productivity and profit (e.g. Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Horner, 2017). This is unsurprising, given the current economic climate characterised by political uncertainty, increasing competitive pressures, eroding profit margins and the sheer difficulty of attracting and retaining high potential talent and sustaining a differentiated talent pool that can enable an organisation to compete and thrive across global and globalising markets (Collings and Mellahi, 2009).

There is, however, an emerging stream of literature that serves as a valuable counterpoint to the dominant performative conception of TM and pays attention to its people dimension and to the wide range of ‘soft’ managerial behaviours and aptitudes that underpin it (Bhatnagar, 2007; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Collings and Mellahi, 2009). These include managing people with integrity, effective leadership and communication skills, being supportive and promoting employee development and well-being, which can be seen as critical to releasing the potential and optimising the performance of the organisation’s talent pool (D’Annunzio-Green, 2018). Of particular significance, researchers have also begun to focus on the significant role of motivation in the context of TM – e.g. Tymon, Strumpf and Doh (2010) who developed and tested a model of TM in India and found the experience of intrinsic rewards to be a crucial element in the deployment of TM activities.

There is also a growing debate around the role and significance of motivation in TM – (e.g. as to whether talent depends more on ability or motivation) – but much of this debate is grounded in an *input-output* perspective and centred on how motivation, as an input, can be leveraged in the TM process to generate and maximise desirable outputs in the form of greater employee engagement and effort and higher performance and productivity (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013; Kraiger *et al.*, 2015). There is a sense amongst critical analysts that although employers recognise the fact that a motivated workforce can be a key determinant of growth and competitive advantage, they are reluctant to deploy resources and seek tangible ways to leverage motivation within the TM process (Thunissen, 2016). This is understandable – for it is far easier (and less politically and financially risky) to assess TM based on hard-performance data than on motivational variables which tend to remain elusive and difficult to quantify, especially in terms of return on investment (Larsen *et al.*, 1998).

However, this paper contends that focusing on the motivational variables of TM is an exercise that does not necessarily have to be resource-intensive or systematically quantified – especially in monetary terms. What is needed, is a qualitative change to the approach taken to leveraging motivation along the TM process from a psycho-social vantage point. While no study has been conducted from this angle, it is claimed here that this can be achieved through an application of the key tenets and principles of SDT (discussed in the preceding sections of this paper) to the main stages of the TM process and the wide range of activities that underpin them. Such an exercise can lift TM to a new level of understanding where it can be construed as an *inherently motivational process – de-instrumentalised* to a certain extent and re-calibrated to achieve a much-needed balance between

organisational and employee needs and interests. Importantly, such a conceptualisation of TM can be translated into a practical framework to guide management behaviours to open up the possibility for a move towards working conditions conducive to degrees of employee autonomous motivation, social integration and optimal functioning whilst keeping in view the strategic objectives of the organisation (Fernet *et al.*, 2015; Ryan and Deci, 2000a; Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997). The next section provides an overview of the research context in which such possibility is explored.

### ***The hospitality industry: A fertile terrain for experimentation in TM as motivational process***

The hospitality industry is facing increasing competitive pressures due to the rapid pace of business globalisation and free trade. Moreover, the industry remains particularly vulnerable to macro-level challenges such as Brexit which could cause a reduction in global migration and labour mobility, resulting in major labour and skills shortfalls and the erection of barriers to culturally-diverse labour markets upon which the hospitality organisations – especially in the UK – are heavily reliant (Baum, 2008; Sheehan, Grant and Garavan, 2018). To compound these issues, the industry as a whole suffers from a poor reputation and high labour turnover stemming from low wages, long and unsocial working hours and few career opportunities (Barron, Maxwell and Broadbridge, 2007). As observed by some researchers, this negative image has even detracted high-potential, talented graduates in tourism or hospitality from contemplating a career in the hospitality industry and obscured the wide scope of job opportunities that it offers (O’Leary and Deegan, 2005; Walsh and Taylor, 2007; YouGov, 2018).

Unsurprisingly, such ongoing challenges have prompted leadership teams across hospitality organisations to focus on TM as a means to adopting a more strategic approach to the management of their most expensive and valuable resource – people (Madera *et al.*, 2017; Ramdhony and D’Annunzio-Green, 2018). However, when it comes to TM, the hospitality industry needs to attract, develop and retain a unique type of employee to deliver a unique service product. As elegantly explained by Hemmington (2007), the hospitality industry offers a well stage-managed, designed-for-purpose and complex *servicescape* consisting of a tangible physical product (including outstanding facilities and accommodation, security, food and drink, etc.) and another intangible yet critical dimension – customer service (in the form of hospitableness, social engagement, assistance and support, etc.) which is usually viewed as a key differentiator of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ramdhony and D’Annunzio-Green, 2018; Tasci and Semrad, 2016).

It is argued here that such a unique *servicescape* warrants a unique type of talented, intrinsically-motivated employees who have a natural disposition to serve others, value learning and self-development, and thrive on opportunities to display autonomous, discretionary behaviours in contributing to the delivery of the kind of excellence in customer service that goes beyond formal job specification – but which speaks directly to the organisation’s need to optimise performance and sustain competitive advantage and business growth (Kusluvan, *et al.*, 2010; Tracey, 2014). However, the notion of *servicescape* has a less appealing flip side: customer facing employees in hospitality organisations very often have to face emotionally-draining situations and attend to difficult guests whilst maintaining high standards of hospitableness and professionalism, warranting a constant self-regulation of emotions and of stress levels – which makes emotional labour a critical yet underrated

feature of customer service. It is argued that such emotional drain can be counteracted by enhanced opportunities for self-determination and intrinsic rewards through which customer-facing employees can maintain their level of engagement with work and commitment to the organisation (Wharton, 1996). In addition, given that the hospitality industry is resource-intensive, and the availability of monetary incentives and other extrinsic motivators is very limited, an approach to TM that gives more emphasis to intrinsic motivation and rewards makes perfect business sense. For the above reasons, the hospitality industry is a fertile terrain for experimentation in TM as a motivational process of the kind put forward in this paper.

### **Conceptual framework**

Fig.2 below presents the conceptual framework derived from the literature review. It models the relationships between the key concepts and variables discussed in the review – where a case was made for the application of SDT to the TM process, keeping in view the mediating role of managers and the intended behavioural outcomes ‘in context’.

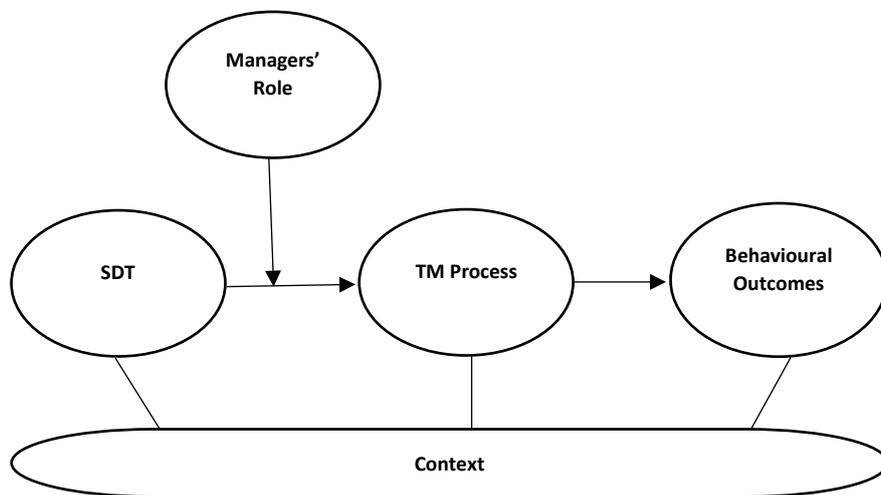


Fig.2 Conceptual framework underpinning empirical component of the study

Importantly, it allows for a combination of both deductive and inductive research approaches where ‘theoretical insights’ from extant literature are blended with ‘empirical insights’ from the research context to generate the research outputs which are presented in the final section of this paper. The methodology for this exercise is detailed in the following section.

## **Methodology**

### **Philosophy and Design**

This study endorses ontological and epistemological assumptions rooted in social constructionism – where the authors entertain a view of TM processes as situated and socially constructed through human cognition, discourse and action; and that calls for an in-depth, context-sensitive and meaning-rich understanding of employees’ ‘subjectively constructed accounts’ of the TM process and of the role of managers within it across a set of hotels in Scotland – as seen through a theoretical lens

enriched by the key tenets of SDT (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Gioia and Pitre, 1990; Morgan and Smircich, 1980). The study also accommodates an emancipatory interest in that it anticipates a move towards working conditions in which TM can be transformed into a motivational process and employee self-determination can become a real possibility (Habermas, 1987).

### ***Data collection and sampling***

Data collection was carried out over a period of 4 months (June -September 2018) and consisted of 26 individual in-depth interviews with 'high-potential' employees across 10 mid-scale and upper-midscale hotels representing 5 hotel brands and located in the South East and West regions of Scotland (Hotel Analyst, 2018). The main approach to sampling involved a variant of stratified purposive sampling (Jankowicz, 2005; Tremblay, 1982). A gatekeeper was identified from each hotel based on a set of selection criteria including their interest in the research area, their status as line/managers with at least eight direct reports, and their ability, as key informants, to facilitate access to high-potential employees through either their involvement in talent identification processes or formal performance appraisals or simply their acquaintance with the latter for having worked with them.

Each gatekeeper was asked to recommend direct reports or employees who they thought could be classified as 'high-potential' employees – loosely defined here as employees deemed to be currently performing at a high level and/or who have the potential to progress their career within the organisation. 35% of such employees were selected through talent identification or performance appraisals and the rest were acquaintances of gatekeepers through personal/working relationships. High-potential employees were purposively selected because it was felt they were more likely to consider TM and related managerial behaviours as central to their development and career progression and would place a high value on the extent to which their motivational needs were being/or could be addressed to enable them to excel in the discharge of their roles and responsibilities.

An attempt was also made to access high-potential employees across key 'organisational strata' (kitchen, restaurant, bar) to achieve a degree of representativeness of the target population (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015). Determination of the sample size followed a non-probability logic and was subject to 'data saturation' – i.e. when the researchers felt that the data collected 'yielded' the necessary information which was representative of the prevailing views relating to key issues under scrutiny and that increasing the sample size would 'cease to add new information and insights to the investigation' (Anderson, 2004, p.163).

The majority of the in-depth interviews (90%) were carried out face-to-face within the hotel premises while the rest were conducted over the telephone or Skype. The interviews lasted between 40-90 minutes and followed the usual ethical protocols to ensure voluntary participation and informed consent, and to provide assurances relating to data protection and anonymisation of the findings – thus minimising the risk of harm to research participants (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015). The research instrument used for conducting the in-depth interviews was a broad interview schedule informed by the conceptual framework in Fig.2 above (Refer to Appendix 1).

### ***Data analysis***

The data analysis was rooted in an interpretivist 'modus operandi' and employed King's (2004) template analysis as the main analytical tool to allow for a high level of 'interpretive sensitivity' in the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data (refer to Appendix 2 for a blank copy of the modified version of template analysis which framed the data analysis and interpretation process). Recourse to template analysis enabled an iterative process of coding, splitting and categorisation, identification of emerging patterns of evidence via the triangulation of coded data, and a distillation and interpretation of key findings (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994).

A hierarchical coding scheme was developed (refer to Appendix 3) – where key concepts and variables arising from the literature review were treated as main and sub themes revolving around the following: employee perceptions and experiences of TM and related managerial behaviours, opportunities for self-determination, the role of managers in the satisfaction of employees' basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness, and the possibility for embedding TM as a motivational process. These themes/sub-themes were then converted into *a priori* codes and applied to the raw data whilst leaving ample scope for emergent codes (King, 2004). After the coding of 17 interviews no further codes were added and the researchers were satisfied that a robust coding and categorisation of the data had been achieved. The coded data were regarded as analysable units of evidence which were used to populate the analytical template described above – and were then selectively included as compelling pieces of evidence in the final analysis to enable both a 'thick description' and a 'sharp interpretation' of the key research findings 'in context' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 2013).

### ***Credibility of findings***

In a research context, credibility refers to the extent to which the research findings are plausible, relevant and valuable (Jankowicz, 2005) and can therefore be described as trustworthy and able to 'stand the closest scrutiny' (Raimond, 1993, p.55). In this case, the credibility of the research findings was assessed against three evaluative criteria: validity, reliability and transferability (Anderson, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

It is felt that the study achieved a *high level* of both *construct validity* and *internal validity* in that (i) the constructs (SDT and TM in particular) under consideration were expounded and 'operationalised' in light of authoritative literature and carried the 'intended meanings' attached to them by experts in the field; and (ii) the empirical investigation was rigorously conducted and grounded in theory and sound analytical procedures – leading to research findings which were deemed 'internally valid' and largely representative of the social reality of the research participants with regard to SDT and TM (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Riley, 1996; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015).

Reliability refers to the extent to which 'data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p.149). The authors recognise the fact that people-centred research is never free from subjective bias as a result of circumstantial or perceptual effects in both the researcher and the researched – which inevitably has an adverse effect on the consistency of the research findings. However, this study achieved a *reasonable level of overall reliability* through a consistent approach to data capture, analysis and sense-making – where the research instruments were tightly linked to the literature and the empirical data was analysed and interpreted in a transparent and rigorous manner (Silverman, 2001; Yin, 2003).

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the 'research findings apply to other subjects, other groups and other conditions' (Ticehurst and Veal, 2000, p.24). Given the reliance on a relatively small sample, the authors do not claim that the research findings are applicable to the wider hospitality industry across Scotland or elsewhere. However, the theoretical and empirical insights emerging from this study can be transferred, *with moderation*, to the wider research context and other similar organisational settings which operate, more or less, under the same conditions with regard to TM (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Heracleous, 2004; Yin, 2003).

### ***Thematic analysis***

The thematic analysis that follows forms part of a wider range of data sets and pieces of evidence which are beyond the scope of this study. It selectively presents excerpts from the template analysis (refer to Appendix 3) to provide early insights into the chosen research topic and is developed along three thematic axes: employee perceptions and experiences of TM and related managerial behaviours, the role of managers in addressing employees' basic psychological needs, and the possibility of embedding TM as an inherently motivational process. The mode of analysis adheres to the following basic structure: introduction of the main theme, presentation of evidence, and sense-making in light of extant literature and prior research in the area.

#### ***Employee perceptions and experiences of the TM process and related managerial behaviours***

This first thematic axis takes stock of the overall state of TM within the chosen research context as seen from the (subjective) perspectives of high-potential employees. In line with the focus of the literature review undertaken in this study, the analysis here pays particular attention to the extent to which the TM process is perceived by respondents as predominantly performative or people-focused whilst allowing for a preliminary understanding of how managers' attitudes and behaviours exert an influence on such process (Bhatnagar, 2007; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Collings and Mellahi, 2009).

This first cluster of evidence points to a shared sense of the TM process as skewed towards performance outcomes, which can be detrimental to employee development and well-being:

*We set goals but it's narrow and driven more by the manager than me (...) He [the line manager] gets instructed on what he needs to do and he passes that on to me.*

*[There is] strict adherence to policy and procedures (...) controlling managers who live in fear of the next bad review and gave no scope for creativity and flexibility.*

*I have got lots to offer (...) an untapped resource that no one wants to listen to so we talk a lot about what we can do to improve things amongst ourselves, but the manager never hears about this.*

*The impact of bad [customer] feedback is very demotivating and can make me feel a bit insecure especially if I am named in this feedback. It's like a cloud over our heads. We know that a lot of the (social media) data is not accurate but when a bad review comes in we all feel insecure.*

The above pieces of evidence, which are representative of the prevailing sentiment across the research context, suggest goals and objectives tend to cascade down the organisational hierarchy from above and channelled through strict policies and procedures which are enforced by controlling managers – leaving little scope for employee voice, input and autonomy. The primary concern with customer feedback as a critical success factor that is to be constantly (and religiously) monitored is typical of hospitality organisations and thus, arguably, legitimate – but it can also be detrimental to employees, resulting in feelings of being stifled in their development, devalued, insecure and demotivated. This is reflective of an imbalance in the overall approach to TM which pans out under the all-too-visible hand of the market and the much-dreaded customer feedback – which in turn justifies the need to maximise performance outputs and customer satisfaction which can have, as in this case, adverse effects on employee autonomy, well-being and motivation and capability to make any significant contribution in their respective roles (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Horner, 2017).

With regard to the key stages of the TM process identified in this paper - *workforce planning and recruitment, learning and development, performance appraisal and reward, and career progression and succession planning* (Kichuk, Horner and Ladkin, 2014; Watson, 2008) – the following ‘thick excerpts’ capture the essence of the discursive order that reflects respondents’ views and opinions:

*Managers need to make sure they recruit the right people with potential and the right skills otherwise we are all affected. It's so important. If people can't do the job then it puts pressure on everyone else (...) You need an experienced team before you can give people autonomy. It comes down to recruiting people who feel comfortable with it.*

*Managers need to be more aware of training needs of the team. There should be specific chats about this. It would help me feel more valued and that they value my development. I know many staff who have left and they have had no training except for quick induction.*

*The performance management process here is much more about current job role than future career development. Maybe they are afraid we will all leave but whether we discuss it or not people will still aspire to other jobs in other areas so surely its best to be open and transparent (...) Not convinced my line managers wants me to move onwards and upwards so I keep my career intentions quiet until I have to discuss.*

*There should be a clear progression path from one role to another. That would allow us to manage our own progression as well as rely on our manager for support...In an industry with high turnover I don't think there is much incentive for manager to attend to our career development needs.*

Respondents demonstrate a sharp awareness of the range of activities that underpin the key stages of the TM process and hold strong views on how these need to be carried out to be effective – pointing to the shared perception of the need to: (i) achieve the right job-person fit through appropriate recruitment activities as a precondition for consistency in service delivery, (ii) develop and sustain training activities that address the actual learning needs of employees, and (iii) adopt a developmental, supportive and strategic approach to performance that can open up pathways for career progression.

More importantly, from an employee perspective, the discursive order around TM is not so much focused on the ‘formality’ of the process as on the mediating and highly influential role that (line-)

managers are called to play within in. This is a *leitmotif* that consistently runs through participants' responses and that tends to reinforce the point arising from the literature regarding the vital role of managers in leveraging the TM process by virtue of their relational proximity to their direct reports (Wooldridge, Schmid and Floyd, 2008). Of particular significance here, is the type of attitudes and behaviours that high-potential employees expect of their managers including the right level of competence, a positive disposition to build trusting and enabling relationships with their direct reports, and an understanding of the necessary conditions for employee autonomy and a greater balance between employee and organisational needs (Baard, Deci and Ryan, 2004; Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 1999; Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017). The next thematic axis allows for deeper insights into managerial attitudes and behaviours as the analysis turns on the role of managers in contributing to the satisfaction of employees' basic psychological needs.

### ***Role of managers in addressing employees' basic psychological needs***

Within SDT, the basic psychological needs of *competence*, *autonomy* and *relatedness* are considered as the building blocks of intrinsic motivation and self-determination (Gagné and Deci, 2005). Competence-supportive managers aim to develop a strong sense of task-mastery in their subordinates by investing in their development and clearing the path for further learning and experimentation in innovative ways of working (Gabriel, Moran and Gregory, 2014). When probed along this particular line of questioning, respondents made the following comments which are illuminating of the tension between their own competence and that of their managers:

*The manager sets [learning] objectives but there is little follow up. I have asked to get involved in certain projects as I want to move on in my role and I am well qualified, but if I didn't do that there would be no manager tapping my shoulder and asking me what my training needs were.*

*They need more time to get to know us and what support we need. They are either rushed off their feet or hidden away in the office. They need more interpersonal and communication training not just technical skills.*

*In my last job here my manager used coaching (...) tell me something you have done well today and something you would like to improve on. I need other networks to draw on (...) the line manager is not the best person to attend to my development needs (...) I have kept in touch with previous managers and I draw on them as mentors to help my development.*

A significant number of respondents drew attention to the fact that their line managers were perhaps not the best person to address their competency needs – for various reasons, including a lack of commitment to their learning and development, time and resource constraints or the fact that line managers are not themselves properly trained to instil in their direct reports a sense of mastery and the necessary confidence to excel in their jobs and further their career. The point relating to managers' lack of training requires elaboration. What can be safely inferred from the above evidence is that employees feel that their managers would have done a much better job in supporting the learning and development need had they themselves received proper training – which explains why employees are looking beyond the boundaries of their own department and immediate working relationships to find (discreet) coaching and mentoring support. There seems to be a positive tension between management learning and development and employee sense of task mastery which seems to be

locked in a mutually-beneficial relationship – a key finding which resonates with prior research in the area (Hurrell, Scholarios, and Thompson, 2013; Kinicki *et al.*, 2004).

Autonomy-supportive managers are those willing to develop dialogical relationships with their subordinates to explore the possibility of enhanced job flexibility or job enlargement whereby employees can experience a sense of agency and feel empowered to make uncoerced decisions and intentionally pursue certain courses of action with any unnecessary intervention or control from their superiors (Kuvaas, 2009; Thomas, 2009). Triangulated evidence across departments allows for a nuanced understanding of employees' experiences and expectations:

*If you treat us like (ro)bots, we'll act like (ro)bots (...) the manager can help by giving us more variety and responsibility.*

*Micromanagers are the worst (...) we went from having a micro manager who seemed so stressed all the time to having a manager who really expected us to step up and take responsibility.*

*After the briefing I feel really pumped up to do a good job. She has a charismatic way (...). I know where I stand and I know that my manager and the customers are relying on me to deliver.*

*(...) Sounds odd, but for me to feel comfortable to work more autonomously I need to work even more closely with my manager (...) being able to work in partnership with my manager is important.*

The allusion to being treated like robots (and responding accordingly) is a well-rehashed metaphor but is still telling of how employees feel strongly about the odds of staying in mechanical, repetitive and 'dehumanised' jobs that do not offer any possibility for some degree of autonomy and innovative ways of working. From the respondents' perspective, managers have a crucial role to play in opening up such a possibility; and their responses suggest that the prospect of greater autonomy in the workplace is a function of individual managers' leadership and communicative style, willingness to delegate responsibilities (and the authority that comes with it) and trust in the ability of their direct reports to fulfil such responsibilities. The seemingly contradictory comment in the final excerpt subtly draws home the point that autonomy is not synonymous with isolation but is more likely to generate positive outcomes (for both the individual and the organisation) when it unfolds within a network of supportive relationships – which is further discussed below (Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 1999; Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017).

Relatedness-supportive managers endeavour to build and maintain a network of inclusive, supportive and enabling relationships in order to develop in employees a sense of belonging, connectedness and commitment to both their immediate social group and to the wider organisation (Gagné and Deci, 2005). This sub-theme was considered of particular importance by respondents as exemplified by the following comments:

*The manager controls the department. I don't particularly get on with my manager at the moment but I don't want that to influence my progression so I will "play the game".*

*He [line manager] gets us together as a team and it's the teamwork that helps me stay motivated. We are all in it together having a laugh and covering each other. This environment can be tough so having someone who pulls it all together and keeps us upbeat is really important.*

*The way that managers carry out these [performance management] processes on a day to day basis is more important than formal meetings. I have great ongoing communication with my manager, and this helps me feel trusted.*

The above pieces of evidence once again place the onus on managers to bring about the conditions that are conducive to the development of a sense of belonging in employees. The manager is portrayed as the central figure who controls their department (and the social relationships within it) and who has an inevitable bearing on the working life and career prospects of their direct reports – where sometimes ‘playing the game’ to remain in their good books is the only option. But more importantly, the reference to the pivotal role of the line managers in keeping teams together and providing constant support to preserve and nurture employees’ motivation and sense of belonging speaks volumes.

Also, the inclusion of the excerpt pertaining to performance management in connection with the notion of relatedness is deliberate as it is a recurrent issue in the larger data set. It is a powerful reminder of the critical importance of a developmental approach to performance management within the TM process; and of how managers have to keep in place a range of supportive social mechanisms to preserve a positive relationship between performance management and employees’ sense of relatedness – such as the provision of constructive feedback, the identification of learning needs, the facilitation of learning activities, and a collaborative approach to career development (Deci, 1971; Ryan, 1982; Zuckerman *et al.*, 1978).

### ***Possibility of embedding TM as an inherently motivational process***

This third and final thematic axis is a corollary to the other two preceding axes in that it revisits and reinforces some of the key issues discussed therein. It is also forward-looking as it considers the possibility of embedding the concept of TM as an inherently motivational process across the chosen research context – which, from the perspective of SDT, has to do with the extent to which TM practices are conducive to an autonomous motivation complex consisting of the following key elements: intrinsic motivation, the integration of intrinsic motivators and a supportive social environment (Gagné and Deci, 2005; Ryan and Deci, 2000a).

As previously explained, intrinsic motivation involves an internal perceived locus of causality and the pursuit of one’s true needs and interests even in the absence of external motivators (Sansone and Harackiewicz, 2000). The following aggregation of brief yet sharp comments point to clear appetite for intrinsic motivation amongst respondents:

*Up until then I never realised how good it felt to take on the responsibility and feel like I could make a difference (...) That sense of satisfaction is internally driven for me but there is no doubt that the manager can influence it. I probably just need recognition from my manager that I am internally driven and so he can let me get on with it. That gives me the most satisfaction.*

*Autonomous working requires risk taking. I have to trust my manager before I would do that, and she needs to trust me.*

*It's a fine line between feeling responsible and having freedom to act and feeling dumped on by my manager.*

The first quote above is reflective of a strong desire to take on responsibility because of the uninhibited satisfaction it provides – resulting from the feeling of being able to ‘make a difference’ even in the absence of external motivators (*I am internally driven*) and without the interference of an external party (*so he can let me get on with it*). This makes a compelling case for greater opportunities for internally-driven activities which are a key source of intrinsic reward and through which employees can experience a sense of being the ‘primary cause’ of their action – borne out of an internal perceived locus of control and causality (Ryan and Deci, 2000b). The second quote is insightful as it shows that employees are conscious of the risk involved in being given more autonomy – for both the manager who needs to have enough trust in their subordinates to delegate more responsibility to them, and for employees who need to deliver to maintain that trust. The final comment is also of particular significance as it indicates that employees can draw the line between real autonomy and ‘being taken advantage of’, which goes against the very essence of autonomy.

The regulation of extrinsic motivators is a sub-theory of SDT which draws attention to the self-regulation processes involved in the internalisation and integration of extrinsic motivators which are brought into alignment with an individual’s own values needs and interests (Ryan and Deci, 1985). Processes of self-regulation are mostly invisible and have to be subtly extracted from the responses of the research participants, a sample of which is selectively included below:

*I need to know I am working for a kind, ethical person (...) that makes me feel secure (...) It's got to feel right (...) You need to feel connected to the manager as well. If your values are similar it makes things less complicated.*

*I feel proud of what I do and I enjoy it a lot. It is great when we get great feedback on the food or service.*

*I am looking for a positive work environment. I have a lot going on in my life outside of work so while I am willing to give a lot of energy to this place but I need to hold some back for me and my family. Progression fills me with dread in terms of the effect on work life balance.*

*It's the informal bit that are important (...) recognition that we have lives outside work or a thankyou after a shift. My manager is really good at the formal appraisal process but that tends to be the only time she talks to me one-to-one.*

Respondents are more likely to internalise and integrate extrinsic motivators if these are perceived as ‘positive’ and can be more easily brought into congruence with their own values, needs and interests. Positive extrinsically-grounded behaviours and activities in this case include things such as showing kindness, providing constructive feedback, giving due recognition for a job well done outside the strictures of formal performance appraisals, engaging in meaningful conversations to understand employees’ actual development needs and career aspirations, and maintaining a supportive working environment – all of which can serve as a catalyst for the integration of organisational goals and objectives whilst triggering a shift towards an internal perceived locus of control and causality as they bring such goals and objectives in alignment with their own values and interests (Ryan and Deci, 1985). Respondents were prompt to underline the vital role of managers in this – a common thread which runs through all the central themes that were unpacked in this section.

Supportive environments are described in SDT literature as conducive to intrinsic motivation, social integration and the self-regulation of extrinsic motivators – geared towards psychological safety, well-being, enabling and supportive relationships and ‘optimal human functioning’ (Fernet *et al.*, 2015; Ryan and Deci, 2000a; Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997). Supportive social environments can also involve a ‘crowding out’ of extrinsic motivators and the reinforcement of processes and practices that aim to sustain and increase intrinsic motivation and the integration of ‘positive’ extrinsic motivators (Frey and Jegen, 2001). This final sample of evidence casts light on the nature of the social environment in which respondents operate:

*I need to be proud of where I work. I want to feel I make a difference and deliver quality work in a supportive environment.*

*At our catch-up sessions our manager says ‘look out for each other, support each other (...) you are the team and you need to work together cause I am not always here. That’s a great message regarding belonging to the team and taking responsibility.*

*I need to have a connection and a belonging otherwise, what is the point? I like what this organisation stands for. It has some good ethical policies and environmental policies.*

*If people ask me about the organisation I work for I like to be able to tell them about the bigger picture (...) this sense of identification and belonging has become more important.*

Respondents attribute their ability to perform well on the job and work autonomously to the trusting and mutually-supportive relationships they have developed over time with both their managers and colleagues. The above comments carry emotional overtones that point to how employees feel strongly about the need to ‘have a connection’ and maintain a sense of belonging so as to be able to identify with the organisation and take pride in their work – an intrinsic need which seems to override concerns of a purely material or pecuniary nature – ‘*otherwise, what is the point?...*’ ‘*this sense of identification and belonging has become more important*’. This serves to reinforce the theoretical proposition that socially-supportive environments that are conducive to intrinsic motivation and rewards can also accommodate a ‘crowding out’ or reduction of extrinsic motivators without any adverse effects on employee well-being and engagement (Frey and Jegen, 2001).

A distillation of the above thematic analysis, yields the following core finding: Although TM across the hospitality organisations researched is primarily driven by performance outcomes, there is, from the perspective of high-potential employees, compelling evidence indicating variation in attempts to address employees’ motivational needs, which are mediated by highly-influential managerial attitudes and behaviours. Importantly, in line with employee expectations, there is ample scope for embedding TM as an inherently motivational process that can have a more positive impact on employees’ intrinsic motivation, social integration and performance levels. The next section develops an operational framework to this effect.

**An operational framework for deploying TM practices as motivational process**

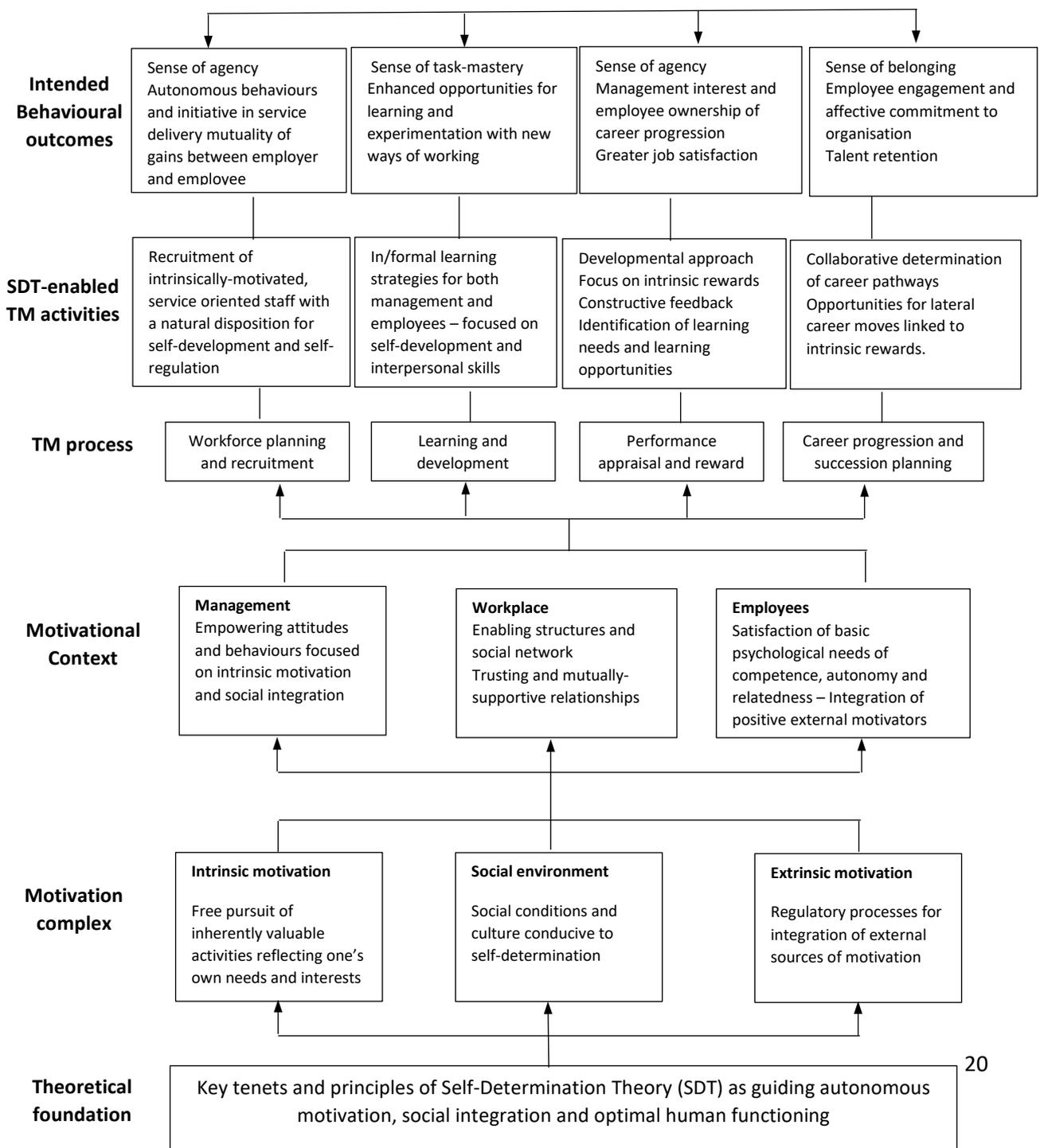


Fig.3 Operational framework for deploying TM practices as motivational process

Fig.3 above integrates the theoretical insights derived from the literature review with empirical insights emerging from the primary research to present an operational framework for translating the concept of TM into practice. Since the framework is largely self-explanatory, no attempt is made to re-describe its contents, but it is worth paying to the rationale which underpins it. First, the framework is not meant to be a prescriptive, doctrinaire blueprint but should be viewed as a steering device that can be appropriated and 'applied to context' by TM professionals or change agents, keeping in view the forces of necessity and opportunity at play within the specific business environment in which they operate. Second, the framework accommodates the theoretical proposition (which was reinforced by the empirical research) relating to the possibility of 'crowding out' extrinsic motivators whilst reinforcing practices that aim to promote intrinsic motivation and the integration of 'positive' extrinsic motivators (Frey and Jegen, 2001). Lastly and most importantly, the activities and processes included in the framework are not resource-intensive, nor are these driven by quantitative measures. Instead, what is posited here is a recalibration of well-established TM practices and a qualitative change to stakeholder attitudes and behaviours underpinning such practices through which TM can be leveraged as an inherently motivational process – which harks back to the catchphrase in this paper's title: *It's not what you do; it's the way you do it.*

### **Conclusions**

This study makes a small but significant contribution at three distinct levels. At a *theoretical level*, it is the first of its kind to systematically apply the key tenets of SDT to TM to expand the current conceptualisation of the phenomenon as an inherently motivational process. At an *empirical level*, it attempts an early foray into hospitality organisations to provide rich insights into employee perceptions and experiences of TM and the role of managers within it, and to consider the possibility of embedding TM as a motivational process – which can serve as a robust platform for further research. At a *practical level*, the study develops, on the basis of its theoretical and empirical contribution, an operational framework that provides clear and concrete guidelines on how to effectively translate TM as an inherently motivational process into practice, keeping in view its potential benefits. This operational framework can be 'appropriated' by TM practitioners and change agents and applied to the specificity of the organisational contexts in which TM is deployed.

In light of the above, the study sets the scene for further research of both a *situated* and a *comparative* nature. The first type of research would be the next logical step – where the empirical investigation remains situated in the same research context but adopts a longitudinal approach and integrates ethnographic, immersive features to allow for a first-hand, deeper understanding of how TM practices

unravel over time from the perspective a wider stakeholder base; and importantly, how TM can be progressively embedded as an inherently motivational process across hospitality organisations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Research of a comparative nature could involve a series of small-scale case studies using the operational framework developed in this study as an analytical lens to enable comparative analyses across the hospitality sector in the UK or elsewhere – as an effective way of advancing the research agenda set out in this study (Yin, 2003).

In view of promising research findings, it is hoped that, in time, the concept of TM as an inherently motivational process will gain traction with both academics and practitioners as a primary lever of employee motivation, engagement and retention – and, by extension, sustainable business growth and success across global business contexts in which competition is becoming ever so fierce and labour markets ever so unpredictable.

## **References**

Amabile, T.M., DeJong, W. and Lepper, M.R. (1976) 'Effects of externally imposed deadlines on subsequent intrinsic motivation', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.34, pp.92-98.

Anderson, V. (2004) *Research Methods in Human Resource Management*, London: CIPD.

Baard, P.P., Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2004) 'Intrinsic need satisfaction: A motivational basis of performance and well-being in two work settings', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 34, No. 10, pp. 2045-68, [Online] Available at: <http://doi: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb02690.x> (Accessed 10.11.2018).

Barron, P.E., Maxwell, G.A. and Broadbridge, A. (2007) 'The experiences, perceptions and expectations of careers in the hospitality industry: Views from Generation Y', *The Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, Vol.14, No.2, pp.119-128.

Baum, T. (2008) 'Implications of hospitality and tourism labour markets for talent management strategies', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.20, No.7, pp. 720-29.

Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T. (1967) *The Social Construction of Reality*, London: Allen Lane.

Bhatnagar, J. (2007) 'Talent management strategy of employee engagement in Indian ITES employees: Key to retention', *Employee Relations*, Vol.29, No.6, pp. 640-63.

Bowen, D.E. and Ostroff, C. (2004) 'Understanding HRM-firm performance linkages: The role of the 'strength' of the HRM system', *Academy of Management Review*, Vol.29, No.2, pp. 203-21.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2015) *Business Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

deCharms, R. (1968) *Personal Causation: The Internal Affective Determinants of Behavior*, New York: Academic Press.

CIPD (2017) *Talent Management: Understanding the changing context and business case for talent management, and the key features of a talent management strategy*, [Online] Available at <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/resourcing/talent-factsheet> (Accessed 07.11.2018).

Collings, D.G. and Mellahi, K. (2009) 'Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda', *Human Resource Management Review, Elsevier Inc.*, Vol.19, No.4, pp. 304-13.

Collings, D., Scullion, H. and Dowling, P. (2009) 'Global staffing: A review and thematic research agenda', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol.20, No.6, pp.1253-1272.

D'Annunzio-Green, N. (2018) 'Conclusion: is talent management a strategic priority in the hospitality sector?', *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol. 10 Issue: 1, pp.117-123.

D'Annunzio-Green, N (2018) Cornerstones of talent management as a strategic priority in the hospitality', *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol. 10 Issue: 1, pp.5-13.

Deci, E.L. (1971) 'Effects of externally mediated rewards on intrinsic motivation', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.18, pp.105-115.

Deci, E.L., Koestner, R. and Ryan, R.M. (1999) 'A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation', *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol.125, pp.627-668.

Deci, E.L., Olafsen, A.H. and Ryan, R.M. (2017) 'Self-Determination Theory in work organizations: The state of a science', *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol.4, pp.29-43.

Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (1985) *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*, New York: Plenum.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1998) 'Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research'. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp.1-34.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2000) (eds) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Fernet, C., Trépanier, S-G., Austin, S., Gagné, M. and Forest, J. (2015) 'Transformational leadership and optimal functioning at work: On the mediating role of employees' perceived job characteristics and motivation', *Work & Stress: An International Journal of Work, Health & Organisations*.

Frey, B.S. and Jegen, R. (2001) 'Motivation crowding theory', *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Vol.15, No.5, pp.589-611.

Gabriel, A.S., Moran, C.M. and Gregory, J.B. (2014) 'How can humanistic coaching affect employee well-being and performance? An application of self-determination theory', *Coaching*, Vol.7 No.1, pp.56-73, [Online] Available at: <http://doi: 10.1080/17521882.2014.889184> (Accessed 08.11.2018).

Gagné, M. and Deci, E.L. (2005) 'Self-determination theory and work motivation', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol.26, pp. 331-62.

Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Dries, N. and Gonzalez-Cruz, T. (2013) 'What is the meaning of talent in the world of work?' *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol.23, pp.290-300.

Gallardo-Gallardo, E. and Thunnissen, M. (2016) "Standing on the shoulders of giants? A critical review of empirical talent management research", *Employee Relations*, Vol.38, No.1, pp.31-56.

Gioia, D.A. and Pitre, E. (1990) 'Multiparadigm perspectives on theory building', *Academy of Management Review*, October, Vol.15, No.4, pp.584-602.

Habermas, J. (1987) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hackman, J.R. and Oldham, G.R. (1980) *Work Redesign*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hemington, N. (2007) 'From service to experience: Understanding and defining the hospitality business', *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol.27, No.6, pp.747-755.

Heracleous, L T. (2004) 'Interpretivist approaches to organizational discourse'. In Grant, D., Hardy, C., Osrick, C. and Putnam, L. (2004) (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp.175-192.

Herzberg's F. (1966) *Work and the Nature of Man*, Cleveland, OH: World.

Horner, S. (2017) (ed.) *Talent Management in Hospitality and Tourism*, Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers Limited.

Hotel Analyst (2018) 'The Hotel Brands Report, January 2018, [Online] Available at <https://hotelanalyst.co.uk/product/the-hotel-brands-report-2017/> (Accessed 20.11.2018).

Hughes, J.C. and Rog, E. (2008) 'Talent management: A strategy for improving employee recruitment, retention and engagement within hospitality organisations', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.20, No.7, pp.743-757.

Hurrell, S.A., Scholarios, D. and Thompson, P. (2013). 'More than a humpty dumpty term? Stengthening the conceptualisation of soft skills', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 158-79.

Jankowicz, A.D. (2005) *Business Research Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: International Thomson Business Press.

Kanfer, R. (1987) 'Task-specific motivation: An integrative approach to issues of measurement, mechanisms, processes and determinants', *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, Vol.5, pp.237-264.

Kichuk, A., Horner, S. and Ladkin, A. (2014) 'Understanding talent management in hospitality: Developing the conceptual framework', *32<sup>nd</sup> EuroCHRIE Conference*, Dubai 6-9 October, Dubai: The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management.

King, N. (2004) 'Using templates in the thematic analysis of text'. In Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2004) (eds) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp.256-270.

Kinicki, A.J., Prussia, G.E., Wu, B.J. and McKee-Ryan, F.M. (2004). "A covariance structure analysis of employees' response to performance feedback", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 89 no. 6, pp. 1057-69.

Kraiger, K., Passmore, J., Rebelo dos Santos, N. and Sigmar Malvezzi, S. (2015) *The Contribution of TM to Organisational Success: The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Training, Development, and Performance Improvement*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Kusluvan, S., Kusluvan, Z., Ilhan, I. and Buyruk, L.. (2010) 'The human dimension: A review of human resources management issues in the tourism and hospitality industry', *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, Vol.51, No.2, pp. 171-214.

Kuvaas, B. (2009) 'A test of hypotheses derived from self-determination theory among public sector employees', *Employee Relations*, Vol.31, No.1, pp.39-56, [Online] Available at <http://doi:10.1108/01425450910916814> (Accessed 20.11.2018).

Larsen, H. H., London, M., Weinstein, M., and Raghuram, S. (1998) 'High-flyer management development programs: Organizational rhetoric or self-fulfilling prophecy?' *International Studies of Management & Organization*, Vol.28, No.1, pp.64–90.

Lewis, R.E. and Heckman, R.J. (2006) 'Talent management: A critical review', *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol.16, No.2, pp. 139-54.

Locke, E.A. and Latham, G.P. (1990) *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mace, F. C. and Critchfield, T.S. (2010) 'Translational research in behaviour analysis: Historic traditions and imperative for the future', *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, Vol.93, No.3, pp.293–312.

Madera, J.M., Dawson, M., Guchait, P. and Belarmino, A.M. (2017) 'Strategic human resources management research in hospitality and tourism: A review of current literature and suggestions for the future', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.29, No.1, pp. 48-67.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (2013) *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Morgan, G. and Smircich, L. (1980) 'The case for qualitative research', *The Academy of Management Review*, October, pp.491-500.

O'Leary, S. and Deegan, J. (2005) 'Career progression of Irish tourism and hospitality management graduates', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.17, No.5, pp. 421-32.

Osborne, P. (2005) *How to Read Marx*, London: Granta Books.

Oxford Dictionaries (2018a) *Definition of hospitable* [Online] Available at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/competence> (Accessed 22.10.2018).

Oxford Dictionaries (2018b) *Definition of talent* [Online] Available at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/autonomy> (Accessed 22.10.2018).

Oxford Dictionaries (2018c) *Definition of talent* [Online] Available at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/relatedness> (Accessed 22.10.2018).

Porter, L.W. and Lawler, E.E. (1968) *Managerial Attitudes and Performance*, Homewood, IL: Irwin-Dosey.

Putra, E.K., Cho, S. and Liu, J. (2017) 'Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on work engagement in the hospitality industry: Test of motivation crowding theory', *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol.17, No.2, pp.228-241.

Raimond, P. (1993) *Management Projects*, London: Chapman & Hall.

Ramdhony, A. and D'Annunzio-Green, N. (2018) 'A dialogic reframing of talent management as a lever for hospitableness', *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol.10 Issue: 1, pp.14-27

Riley, J. (1996) *Getting the Most from your Data: A Handbook of Practical Ideas on How to Analyse Qualitative Data*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Bristol: Technical and Educational Services Ltd.

Ritchie, J. and Spencer, L. (1994) 'Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research'. In Bryman, A. and Burgess, R.G. (1994) (eds) *Analysing Qualitative Data*, London: Routledge.

Ryan, R.M. (1982) 'Control and information in the intrapersonal sphere: An extension of cognitive evaluation theory', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.43, pp.450-461.

Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2000a) 'Self-Determination Theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being', *American Psychologist*, Vol.55, No.1, pp. 68-78.

Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L. (2000b) 'Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions'. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, Vol.25, No.1, pp.54-67.

Ryan, R.M., Kuhl, J. and Deci, E. (1997) 'Nature and autonomy: Organizational view of social and neurobiological aspects of self-regulation in behaviour and development', *Development and Psychopathology*, Vol.9, pp.701-728.

Sansone, C. and Harackiewicz, J.M. (2000). *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: The Search for Optimal Motivation and Performance*, Academic Press, San Diego, CA.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2015) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 7<sup>th</sup> edn, Harlow: Pearson Education, FT Prentice Hall.

Schaufeli, W.B. and Salanova, M. (2008) 'Enhancing work engagement through the management of human resources'. In Näswall, K., Sverke, M. and Hellgren, J. (eds) *The Individual in Changing Working Life*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp.380-92.

Sheehan, M., Grant, K. and Garavan, T. (2018) 'Strategic talent management: A macro and micro analysis of current issues in hospitality and tourism', *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol.10, No.1, pp. 28-41.

Silverman, D. (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods of Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Tasci, A.D.A. and Semrad, K.J. (2016) 'Developing a scale of hospitableness: A tale of two worlds', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol.53, pp.30-41.

Thomas, K. W. (2009) 'The four intrinsic rewards that drive employee engagement', *Ivey Business Journal*, Nov/Dec, [Online] Available at: <https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/the-four-intrinsic-rewards-that-drive-employee-engagement/> (Accessed 25.11.2018).

Thunnissen, M. (2016) 'Talent management: For what, how and how well? An empirical exploration of talent management in practice', *Employee Relations*, Vol.38, No.1, pp.57-72.

Ticehurst G.W. and Veal, A.J. (2000) *Business Research Methods: A Managerial Approach*, Australia: Pearson Education Pty Ltd.

Tracey, J.B. (2014) 'A review of human resources management research: The past 10 years and implications for moving forward', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.26, No.5, pp. 679-705.

Tremblay, M.A. (1982) 'The key-informant technique: A non-ethnographic technique'. In Burgess, R. (ed.) *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, London: Allen and Unwin, pp.151-163.

Tymon, W.G., Stumpf, S.A. and Doh, J.P. (2010) 'Exploring talent management in India: The neglected role of intrinsic rewards', *Journal of World Business*, Vol.45, No.2, pp. 109-21.

Walsh, K. and Taylor, M.S. (2007) 'Developing in-house careers and retaining management talent:

What hospitality professionals want from their jobs', *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Vol.48, No.2, pp. 163-82.

Watson, S. (2008) 'Where are we now? A review of management development issues in the hospitality and tourism sector: Implications for talent management', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality*, Vol.20, No.7, pp.758-780.

Wharton, A. S. (1996) 'Service with a smile: Understanding the consequences of emotional labor'. In MacDonald, C.L. and Sirianni, C. (Eds.) *Working in the Service Society*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp.91-112.

Wooldridge, B., Schmid, T. and Floyd, S.W. (2008) 'The middle management perspective on strategy process: Contributions, synthesis, and future research', *Journal of Management*, Vol.34, No.6, pp.1190-221.

Yin, R.K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., London: Sage Publications Ltd.

YouGov (2018) 'Why is Hospitality Retention so low?' [Online] available at: <https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2018/08/08/Why-is-hospitality-staff-retention-so-low> (Accessed 07.02. 2019).

Zuckerman, M., Porac, J., Lathin, D., Smith, R. and Deci, E.L. (1978) 'On the importance of self-determination for intrinsically motivated behavior', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol..4, pp.443-446.