

National Research University Higher School of Economics

*As a manuscript*

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ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL OF TALENTED EMPLOYEES FOR SELECTION  
INTO THE PERSONNEL RESERVE

PhD Dissertation Summary  
for the purpose of obtaining academic degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Management

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## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THESIS RESEARCH

**Statement and substantiation of the relevance of the researched scientific problem.** The shortage of talented employees who can make a significant contribution to a company's future performance has become one of the most serious challenges to the long-term successful development of both companies and society as a whole. The driving force behind this challenge is the intensification of global competition, which has led to a growing need for talented employees in the long-term horizon not only locally but also globally<sup>1,2</sup>. Providing a company with a steady stream of talent enables it to remain competitive in the long term<sup>3</sup>.

However, organizations face significant challenges in securing long-term talent. The traditional talent management approach, which focuses on short-term orientation, current performance and talent competencies, cannot guarantee the sustainability and performance of the organization in the future. Moreover, researchers note that organizations' demands on talent characteristics are increasing due to the unpredictability of the external environment and the need to adapt to them<sup>4</sup>.

According to research, 46% to 68% of organizations do not have a talent pool to ensure a steady flow of talent into key positions<sup>5,6,7</sup>. The challenges of selecting talent for the talent pool are exacerbated by the increasing pace of change in business and the

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<sup>1</sup> Lepak, D.P. The Human Resource Architecture: Toward A Theory Of Human Capital Allocation And Development / D.P Lepak, S.A. Snell // *Academy Of Management Review*. –1999. – Vol. 24. – No. 1. – P. 31-48.

<sup>2</sup> Collings, D.G. Strategic Talent Management: A Review And Theoretical Synthesis / D.G. Collings, K. Mellahi // *Human Resource Management Review*. – 2009. – Vol. 19. – P. 304-313

<sup>3</sup> Cadigan, F. Preferences For Performance Versus Potential In Promotion Recommendations / F. Cadigan, D. Kraichy, K. Uggerslev, K. Martin, N. Fassina // *Canadian Journal Of Administrative Sciences*. – 2020. – Vol. 37. – No. 2. – p. 180-192.

<sup>4</sup> Rotolo, C. T. Putting An End To Bad Talent Management: A Call To Action For The Field Of Industrial And Organizational Psychology / C. T. Rotolo, A. H. Church, S. Adler, J. W. Smither, A. L. Colquitt, A. C. Shull, K. B. Paul, G. Foster // *Industrial And Organizational Psychology: Perspectives On Science And Practice*. – 2018. – Vol. 11. – No. 2. – P. 176-219.

<sup>5</sup> Macrae, I. High Potential: How To Spot, Manage And Develop Talented People At Work / I. Macrae, A. Furnham, M. Reed. – London: Bloomsbury Business, 2018. – 360 p.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold, G. Designating High Potentials: What We Know And What We Don't / G. Arnold, D. Costanza // *Organizational Dynamics*. – 2021. – Vol. 51. – No. 2. – P. 1-8.

<sup>7</sup> Kwon, K. There Is No Good War For Talent: A Critical Review Of The Literature On Talent Management / K. Kwon, S. Jang // *Employee Relations*. – 2022. – Vol. 44. – No. 1. – P. 94-120.

increasing turbulence of the external environment<sup>8</sup>. In recent decades, organizations have placed a special focus on competencies when selecting and developing talent. However, nowadays the business environment is extremely complex and volatile, so HR specialists and managers have difficulties in predicting the required set of knowledge, skills and abilities for talent assessment and selection<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, the competency-based approach to securing key positions with talent, which focuses on a predetermined set of behavioral indicators, no longer meets the realities of business due to the turbulence of the external and internal environment<sup>10</sup>.

To meet their strategic need for talent, organizations need to focus on the characteristics of a talented employee that will help them assess the likelihood of success in a new position in an uncertain environment where neither the talent's future tasks nor the set of competencies required to implement those tasks can be predicted. Such a construct, which includes the characteristics noted above, can be potential, which can help predict the likelihood of a talented employee's performance by assessing his or her individual characteristics needed to accomplish a broad set of tasks under uncertainty. Thus, assessing potential is an important task in talent management and increasing business competitiveness in the long term.

In order to assess the potential of employees, it is critical for HR specialists and managers to use evidence-based approaches to assessing potential, so representatives of the scientific community are tasked with researching practices in the field of potential assessment, testing the validity of new assessment technologies, and offering business informed solutions. Currently, business practices are emphasizing the search for a

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<sup>8</sup> Ivanchenko, G.V. Ideya potenciala v naukah o cheloveke: ot «chelovecheskogo potenciala» k lichnostnomu / G.V. Ivanchenko, D.A. Leont'ev, A.V. Plotnikova // V: Lichnostnyj potencial. Struktura i diagnostika / D.A. Leont'ev, 2011. – M: Smysl, 2001. P. 42-58. (in Russian)

<sup>9</sup> Fernández-Aráoz, C. Why Potential Now Trumps Brains, Experience, And “Competencies.” / C. Fernández-Aráoz // Harvard Business Review. – 2014. – June. – P. 46-56.

<sup>10</sup> Cascio, W.F. Potential: The Forgotten Factor In Talent Management Research / W.F. Cascio, D.G. Collings // In: Talent Management: A Decade Of Developments / D.G. Collings, V. Vaiman, H. Scullion, 2022. – Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2022. – P. 65-84.

methodology to assess the potential of talented employees, whom the company could develop and direct to strategic positions<sup>11,12</sup>.

**The degree of the scientific development of the problem.** The problem of defining the term "potential" is widely discussed in the community of scholars in management sciences, as well as in organizational and business psychology both abroad and in Russia. The definition of potential is explored in the works of Eichinger R., Altman I., Dries N., Collings D., Leontiev D.A., Lombardo M., Mandrikova E.Y., Markov V.M., Mellachi K., Peppermans R., Silzer R., Fernandez-Araoz K., Finkelstein L., Church A.

A lot of research is also devoted to the problem of potential indicators. This topic has been dealt with in articles by Vlobergs D., Gietvay K., Dries N., Kotliar I., Perkisas B. Postumus J., Rotolo K., Silzer R., Trot E., Church A.

Researchers also focus on the topic of potential assessment tools. The works of Derr K., Cappelli P., Casio W., Makela K., McRae I., Posthumus J., Slan-Jerusalem R., Tregloun L., Furham E., Hausdorf P. are particularly noteworthy in this direction.

B Companies assess the potential of talents occupying different positions for different purposes: assessment of potential for appointment to a specific position, assessment of potential to confirm the status of talent, solving the task of selection for a comprehensive training program, etc. The dissertation is based on an exclusive approach to talent management and focuses on assessing the potential of a group of personnel consisting of employees identified by the company as talented employees. The dissertation is based on an exclusive approach to talent management and focuses on assessing the potential of a group of personnel consisting of employees identified by the company as talented employees. Talented employees in this study are defined as a group of key employees who make and are able to make the greatest contribution to the value

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<sup>11</sup> Church, A.H. How Are Top Companies Assessing Their High-Potentials And Senior Executives? A Talent Management Benchmark Study / A.H. Church, C.T. Rotolo // Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice And Research. – 2013. – Vol. 65. – P. 199-223.

<sup>12</sup> Church, A.H. Is There Potential In Assessing For High-Potential? Evaluating The Relationships Between Performance Ratings, Leadership Assessment Data, Designated High-Potential Status And Promotion Outcomes In A Global Organization / A.H. Church, B.W Guidry, J.A. Dickey, J.A. Scrivani // Leadership Quarterly. – 2021. – Vol. 32. – No. 5. – P.115-128.

creation and performance of the company in the medium to long term. The results of the talent potential assessment are used for the company to make further decisions about investing in their development and retention. It is in this sense that the term “talent potential assessment” is used in the text.

We can distinguish four blocks of problems in the field of potential assessment on the part of business and on the part of the academic community<sup>13,14,15</sup>:

- Given the existing variety of definitions of the concept of “talent potential”, there is no classification and comparative analysis of existing definitions in the scientific literature. Moreover, there is no discussion of approaches to assessing the potential, which allow to identify and evaluate its indicators in such a group of employees as talents, who are capable of high performance in the future and can occupy key positions in the company in the medium and long term;

- In the scientific literature, theoretical research in the field of talent potential assessment prevails over empirical research, so the articles lack a generalization of the existing practical approaches to assessing the potential, which are applied by companies for the purpose of selection to the talent pool;

- Researchers note that in practice, non-validated capability models are used to assess talent potential for talent pool selection. Consequently, talent pool selection may assess indicators that do not fit the capability construct;

- HR specialists are in need of an evidence-based methodology for assessing talent potential for selection into the talent pool. However, the greatest number of problems in the assessment of potential is concentrated precisely in the area of methodology of its assessment. There are both general and specific methodological problems of potential assessment tools. Consequently, it can be concluded that both researchers and HR

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<sup>13</sup> Mäkelä, K. How Do Mncs Establish Their Talent Pools? Influences On Individuals’ Likelihood Of Being Labeled As Talent / K. Mäkelä, I. Björkman, M. Ehnrooth // *Journal Of World Business*. – 2010. – Vol. 45. – No. 2. – P. 134-142.

<sup>14</sup> Derr, C.B. Managing High-Potential Employees: Current Practices In Thirty-Three / C.B. Derr, C. Jones, E.L. Toomey // *Human Resource Management*. – 1988. – Vol. 27. – No. 3. – P. 273-290.

<sup>15</sup> Church, A.H. How Are Top Companies Assessing Their High-Potentials And Senior Executives? A Talent Management Benchmark Study / A.H. Church, C.T. Rotolo // *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice And Research*. – 2013. – Vol. 65. – P. 199-223.

specialists have difficulties in defining the term “talent potential” due to the lack of a systematic classification of approaches to this definition, which would allow focusing on employees who can show high performance in the future and occupy key positions in the company in the medium and long term. Although many studies discuss indicators of potential, critically few studies pay attention to their validation. This results in the widespread use of invalid capability models in business practice. In turn, the use of invalid capacity models leads to capacity assessment using irrelevant (subjective and past-oriented) capacity assessment tools.

Based on the above challenges in the field of talent potential assessment, the following problem of this thesis research can be formulated. In an environment of uncertainty and constant change, businesses have a need for a steady flow of talent to key positions in the long and medium term. One of the most common ways of meeting this need is to create a talent pool of talented employees who have shown high performance in current operations and who have the potential to occupy key positions in the company in the medium to long term. However, there is a lack of understanding in both the practitioner and researcher communities as to how to make predictions about the future performance of talent. In the opinion of the author of the thesis, it is a scientifically-based approach to assessing potential, including a definition of potential, a set of its indicators and tools for its assessment, reflected in practice in the methodology of potential assessment, that can become a solution to the problem.

**The research goal and tasks of the research.** The purpose of this dissertation research is to develop a science-based approach to assessing the potential for selecting talented employees in the company's talent pool.

To achieve the goal of the dissertation research **the following tasks** were set:

1. To conduct an integrative literature review to theoretically substantiate key concepts and form a conceptual framework for a science-based approach to assessing the potential of talented employees;
2. To identify practical approaches and problems of companies in assessing the potential of talented employees during selection to the talent pool by means of qualitative research;

3. Determine a set of indicators of the validated model of talent potential on the basis of the assessment data of potential candidates for the talent pool as a result of a quantitative (validation) study of the assessment tool “Test of Potential for Development”;
4. Develop a methodology for assessing the potential of talented employees for selection into the talent pool based on the conceptual scheme of the science-based approach to assessing the potential, as well as the results of qualitative and quantitative stages of empirical research for practical use in organizations.

**The subject of the study** is the approaches to assessing the potential of talented employees, which include the definition of the concept of potential and its indicators, as well as tools for selecting talented employees into the talent pool and other talent management programs.

**The theoretical object** of the study is the characteristics of the potential of talented employees who occupy and can occupy strategic positions in the company in the medium and long term.

**The empirical object** of the study is Russian companies and Russian divisions of international companies in various industries and services that use potential assessment to identify and select talented employees for their further development in the talent pool and other talent management programs.

**Theoretical and methodological base of the research.** The theoretical basis of this study is scientific articles and monographs of Russian and foreign researchers devoted to the assessment of potential within the framework of management sciences. The methodological basis of the theoretical study was formed by such general scientific methods of cognition as analysis and synthesis, comparison, systematization, and classification. The theoretical part of the thesis is based on such a method of literature analysis as integrative literature review, which allows a comprehensive theoretical study to be conducted<sup>16,17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Cronin, M.A. The Why And How Of The Integrative Review / M.A. Cronin, E. George // *Organizational Research Methods*. – 2020. – July. – P. 1-27.

<sup>17</sup> Post, C. Advancing Theory With Review Articles / C. Post, R. Sarala, C. Gatrell, J. E. Prescott // *Journal Of Management Studies*. – 2020. – Vol. 57. – No. 2. – P. 351-376.

The scientific base of this study was 166 articles, which included Russian and foreign scientific articles from Scopus and eLIBRARY databases. Bibliometric analysis of articles from the Scopus database was carried out with the help of an interactive application package Biblioshiny<sup>18</sup>, which is part of the Bibliometrix programming environment R<sup>19</sup>.

The empirical research was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative research methods and belongs to the category of mixed method research. The mixed method research allowed us to study the phenomenon of talent potential assessment in a comprehensive and in-depth manner: qualitative methods were used to analyze companies' approaches to potential assessment and to identify a methodological problem (the use of invalid potential models), which was solved by quantitative research (validation study)<sup>20</sup>.

At the stage of theoretical research, the main concepts of this study were defined, and a comparative analysis of existing definitions of potential was carried out. Also at this stage, a conceptual scheme of a scientifically based approach to assessing potential was proposed based on the integrative analysis of foreign and Russian publications.

At the subsequent stage of qualitative research the approaches to the assessment of potential used in Russian companies and Russian subdivisions of foreign companies were studied. It turned out that the most frequently used objective tool for assessing potential was the potential test, and the most serious problem in assessing talent potential was the use of invalid potential models. During the qualitative phase of the research, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview transcripts were

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<sup>18</sup> Biblioshiny app documentation  
<https://bibliometrix.org/biblioshiny/assets/player/KeynoteDHTMLPlayer.html#0> (accessed 23.02.2021)

<sup>19</sup> Aria, M. Bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis / M. Aria, C. Cuccurullo // *Journal of Informetrics*. – 2017. – Vol. 11. – No. 4. – P. 959-975.

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, R.B. Toward A Definition Of Mixed Methods Research / R.B. Johnson, A.J. Onwuegbuzie, L. Turner // *Journal Of Mixed Methods Research*. – 2007. – Vol. 1. – No. 2. – P. 112-133.



analyzed using NVivo 12 software according to two coding cycles: assigning codes to specific interview quotes and by analyzing the extracted codes<sup>21</sup>.

At the quantitative research stage, we conducted a construct validation of the tool “Development Potential Test” of the HR consulting company TalentQ Pro as the tool that best corresponds to the identified aspects of the potential assessment methodology at the theoretical and qualitative stages. The quantitative research was conducted on the basis of data from the results of the assessment of the potential of talented employees of Russian and Russian divisions of international companies. The data were analyzed in R.Studio software using multistage exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, which constituted the construct validation procedure.

The final stage of the thesis research is the development of a science-based methodology for assessing talent potential for selection into the talent pool with a description of practical tools for application.

**Information-empirical base of the research.** The sources of theoretical research were 166 scientific articles from Scopus and eLIBRARY databases, as well as studies of consulting companies and international organizations (UNDP, Aon Hewitt, ECOPSI, Hogan). The qualitative phase of the research was based on 45 in-depth semi-structured interviews with HR specialists in 21 industries (one respondent per company). The empirical basis for the quantitative stage of the research was the results of the assessment of the potential of 1,807 talented employees, which was conducted by the consulting company TalentQ Pro in 2019-2021 in nine Russian and five foreign companies for the purpose of further selection into the personnel reserve.

**The scientific novelty of the study.** The scientific novelty of this study lies in the development of a science-based approach to assessing the potential of talents for their selection into the talent pool. The main results of the present study, which reflect the scientific novelty, are:

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<sup>21</sup> Miles, M.B. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* / M.B. Miles, M. Huberman, J. Saldana. – Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014. – 408 p.

1. Based on the results of analyzing scientific publications, the conceptual scheme of the science-based approach to assessing the potential of talented employees as a component of the human resource management system, which is considered at the strategic and operational level and solves the problems of goal-setting, determining the indicators of potential and carrying out the assessment of potential is formed.
2. For the first time in the scientific literature, the thesis proposes a definition of the concept of talent potential from the perspective of resource theory, which includes a number of characteristics of individual employee resources that act as predictors of the performance of such an employee in a new role or future position. The classification of approaches to the interpretation of the term “potential of a talented employee” by the criteria of “breadth-narrowness” and applicability at the level of “organization-individual” is developed.

The qualitative research in Russian and divisions of international companies identified modern approaches to assessing talent potential in business, expanded the list of potential indicators used in practice, and identified tools that have not yet been studied in the literature as tools for assessing talent potential.

As a result of validation study of the data of talent potential assessment during selection to the talent pool, a new predictive model of potential was formed, which consists of six classes of indicators of individual general characteristics of a talented employee, which are predictors of his future performance. Three of them (“Social Intelligence”, “Creativity” and “Critical Thinking”) have not received in-depth coverage in the literature on potential assessment.

The author obtained the following **findings to be defended**:

1. From the point of view of resource theory, talent potential is a set of general individual characteristics that are predictors of talent's performance in the future and the basis for the development of specific individual characteristics.
2. The conceptual framework of a science-based approach to assessing talent potential includes two interrelated levels: strategic and operational. They solve the tasks of setting goals for assessing potential, determining it and implementing the assessment process using a set of tools.

3. The results of a qualitative empirical study indicate that many companies interpret the potential of talent without taking into account the business goals of the organization and experience a large number of methodological problems in assessing potential related to the choice of indicators and tools for its assessment. Companies use six groups of indicators as indicators of potential, among which indicators such as "Social Intelligence" and "Attitude to the employer" have not yet been studied by researchers in the field of potential assessment. To assess potential, tools such as performance assessment, management recommendations and competency assessment are most often used, which are based on retrospective indicators or are subjective judgments.
4. The predictive model of the potential of a talented employee, obtained as a result of a validation study of empirical data, which was conducted using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, includes six groups of indicators: "Achievement motivation", "Motivation to learn", "General abilities", "Critical Thinking", "Creativity" and "Social Intelligence".
5. In order to achieve medium- and long-term goals, companies should apply a methodology for assessing the potential of talents when selecting them for the personnel reserve, formed on the basis of a conceptual scheme of a scientifically based approach to assessing potential. This methodology will make it possible to predict the future performance of talents based on determining the potential of talents, taking into account the strategic goals of the company, evaluating validated indicators of potential using a balanced set of objective, subjective and comprehensive tools.

**The theoretical significance of the research.** This study offers a science-based approach to assessing the potential of talents, which includes the definition of potential, its indicators and assessment tools. Within the framework of talent management, this study proposes the definition of such an individual characteristic of talents as potential, evaluating which companies will be able to identify talented employees who can occupy strategic positions in the future by entering the talent pool. From the perspective of resource theory, the study details the concept of

potential, considering the general individual characteristics of human resources (general abilities, personal and motivational characteristics of talents) and offering a set of their validated indicators. This work also contributes to the development of the HR architecture model, offering a methodology for assessing the potential of talents as a special group of human resources that represent strategic value and uniqueness for the company.

**The practical significance of the research.** The applied result of this research is the methodology for assessing the potential of talented employees, which is based on a scientifically based approach to assessing the potential obtained as a result of the theoretical, qualitative and quantitative stages of the study. This methodology suggests that business practitioners use the definition of potential, focused on identifying and selecting talented employees who are able to contribute to the company's performance in the medium and long term, to test a new validated potential model containing potential indicators ("Achievement motivation", "Motivation to learn", "General abilities") when organizing the process of evaluating their potential.", "Critical Thinking", "Creativity" and "Social Intelligence"), and also apply a balanced set of objective tools (validated potential test), subjective (interviews, 360 assessment) and comprehensive tools (assessment center and personnel committee).

**Approbation of the research results.** The reliability of the theoretical research of the dissertation is provided by an interactive review of the literature, which made it possible to study the scientific contribution of the widest possible range of researchers and scientific communities to the problems of potential assessment. The reliability of the study is also ensured by a wide sample of respondents to a qualitative study, which is diversified by industry, origin of capital, respondents' experience and their job positions. The reliability of the quantitative research is based on the maximum compliance of the potential model of the TalentQ Pro tool with the results of the theoretical and qualitative stages of the research. The sample of the quantitative stage is differentiated by industry, number of employees and origin of capital.

The results of this dissertation research have been tested at the following scientific conferences and workshops of HR consulting companies specializing in potential assessment:

- 10th Talent Management Seminar (Brussels). The topic of the report: "Capacity assessment as a tool for selecting employees in the personnel reserve" (2021);
- International Scientific Conference of students, postgraduates and young scientists "Lomonosov-2021" (Moscow). Topic of the report: "Assessment of potential as a selection tool for the personnel reserve" (2021);
- TalentQ Pro Workshop (Moscow). Topic of the report: "On approaches to capacity assessment" (March 1, 2021);
- Assessment Systems Workshop (Moscow). Topic of the report: "Hogan's view on HiPo" (January 26, 2021);
- 9th Talent Management Workshop (Brussels, England). The topic of the report: "Defining and evaluating the potential of employees: theory and practice" (2020);
- International Scientific Conference of students, postgraduates and young scientists "Lomonosov-2019" (Moscow). Topic of the report: "Management systems for talented employees of Russian business organizations" (2019);
- 7th Talent Management Workshop (Helsinki). Topic of the report: "Attracting talents to Russian industrial and knowledge-intensive companies" (2018).

## MAIN FINDINGS TO BE DEFENDED

- 1. From the point of view of resource theory, talent potential is a set of general individual characteristics that are predictors of talent's performance in the future and the basis for the development of specific individual characteristics.**

Researchers who adhere to the resource theory and the theory of human capital consider potential as a characteristic of human resources that allows a company to achieve its competitive advantage<sup>22</sup>. High-potential employees themselves are considered valuable, rare, unique and difficult to limit the resources of the organization<sup>23</sup>. Their value is related to their contribution to the competitive advantage of the organization, and their uniqueness is related to the degree to which such a resource is difficult to replace<sup>24, 25</sup>.

There is a growing interest of researchers adhering to the resource theory in the characteristics of human resources, which are predictors of future employee performance<sup>26,27,28</sup>. However, most researchers use the theory of human capital, considering the human resources of an organization as an aggregated construct. The resource approach, developed since the mid-2010s by a number of researchers in combination with organizational psychology, shifts the focus to the individual level, while ignoring such

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<sup>22</sup> Robledo-Ardila, C. Potential: In Search For Meaning, Theory And Avenues For Future Research A Systematic Review / C. Robledo-Ardila, J. P. Román-Calderón // *Management Review Quarterly*. – 2022. – Vol. 72. – No. 1. – P. 149-186.

<sup>23</sup> Barney, J. Firm Resources And Sustained Competitive Advantage / J. Barney // *Journal Of Management*. – 1991. – Vol. 17. – No. 1. – P. 99-120.

<sup>24</sup> Collings, D.G. Strategic Talent Management: A Review And Theoretical Synthesis / D.G. Collings, K. Mellahi // *Human Resource Management Review*. – 2009. – Vol. 19. – P. 304-313.

<sup>25</sup> Dries, N. How To Identify Leadership Potential: Development And Testing Of A Consensus Model / N. Dries, R. Pepermans // *Human Resource Management*. – 2012. – Vol. 51. – No. 3. – P. 361-385.

<sup>26</sup> Ployhart, R. E. Resources For What? Understanding Performance In The Resource-Based View And Strategic Human Capital Resource Literatures / R. E. Ployhart // *Journal Of Management*. – 2021. – Vol. 47. – No. 7. – P. 1771–1786.

<sup>27</sup> Wright, P.M. Rediscovering The “Human” In Strategic Human Capital / P.M. Wright // *Human Resource Management Review*. – 2021. - Vol. 31. – No. 4. – P. 1-16.

<sup>28</sup> Robledo-Ardila, C. Potential: In Search For Meaning, Theory And Avenues For Future Research A Systematic Review / C. Robledo-Ardila, J. P. Román-Calderón // *Management Review Quarterly*. – 2022. – Vol. 72. – No. 1. – P. 149-186.

management theories as: strategic human resource management and talent management<sup>29,30</sup>.

Within the framework of the theory of human capital, the characteristics of human resources continue to be divided into general and specific, the first of which are not considered a source of competitive advantage for a company and are applicable in any organization, and the second represent knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics that are specific to a particular company and are not reproducible by competitors<sup>31</sup>.

However, there are a number of studies in the literature that call into question the fact that specific characteristics of human resources are the only source of a company's competitive advantage, while general characteristics cannot be such. Organizations use various combinations of common characteristics of human resources, thanks to which a competitive advantage is achieved<sup>32</sup>. It is also noted that specific characteristics are not, in fact, unique to a particular company, but rather accumulate within the professions. Special attention should be paid to the fact that the general characteristics of human resources are predictors of the success of mastering specific characteristics.

The researchers also note that predictors of employee performance are both general human resources (cognitive abilities and personal characteristics of employees), as well as specific resources (knowledge and skills necessary for a particular job)<sup>33</sup>. It is the common human resources that are fundamental and influence the development of more

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<sup>29</sup> Barrick, M. R. The Theory Of Purposeful Work Behavior: The Role Of Personality, Higher-Order Goals, And Job Characteristics / M. R. Barrick, M. K. Mount, N. Li // *The Academy Of Management Review*. – 2013. – Vol. 38. – No. 1. – P. 132-153.

<sup>30</sup> Nyberg, A. Human Capital Resources: A Call To Retire Settled Debates And To Start A Few New Debates / A. Nyberg, G. Reilly, S. Essman, J. Rodrigues // *The International Journal Of Human Resource Management*. – 2018. – Vol. 29. – No. 1. – P. 68-86.

<sup>31</sup> Ployhart, R. E. Human Capital Is Dead; Long Live Human Capital Resources! / R. E. Ployhart, A. J. Nyberg, G. Reilly, M. A. Maltarich // *Journal of Management*. – 2014. – Vol. 40. – No. 2. – P. 371–398.

<sup>32</sup> Lazear, E. Firm-Specific Human Capital: A Skill-Weights Approach / E. Lazear // *Journal Of Political Economy*. – 2009. – Vol. 117. – No. 5. – P. 914-940.

<sup>33</sup> Ployhart, R. E. Resources For What? Understanding Performance In The Resource-Based View And Strategic Human Capital Resource Literatures / R. E. Ployhart // *Journal Of Management*. – 2021. – Vol. 47. – No. 7. – P. 1771–1786.

company-specific characteristics of human resources<sup>34,35</sup>. There is a request in the scientific community for a more detailed study of the general characteristics of human resources as predictors of the effectiveness of employees and the company as a whole<sup>36,37</sup>.

From the point of view of resource theory, the potential of talented employees can be considered as a predictor of future performance, that is, performance not only in current conditions, but also in those that are difficult to foresee, whether it is a new role for an employee or unforeseen situations for the company. Consequently, the potential of talented employees contains their common individual characteristics (general abilities, personal and motivational characteristics), which will be the most important source of competitive advantage for the organization<sup>38</sup>.

Let's take a closer look at the very concept of the potential of talented employees. An integrative review of the literature helped to identify five approaches to the interpretation of potential, which were classified on two grounds: the narrowness and breadth of approaches, as well as the organizational and individual level of application (*Figure 1*).

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<sup>34</sup> Schmidt, F.L. General Mental Ability In The World Of Work: Occupational Attainment And Job Performance / F. L. Schmidt, J. Hunter // *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*. – 2004. – Vol. 86. – No. 1. – P. 162-173.

<sup>35</sup> Sackett, P. R. Individual Differences And Their Measurement: A Review Of 100 Years Of Research / P. R. Sackett, F. Lievens, C. H Van Iddekinge, N. R. Kuncel // *Journal Of Applied Psychology*. – 2017. – Vol. 102. – No. 3. – P. 254-273.

<sup>36</sup> Nyberg, A. Human Capital Resources: A Call To Retire Settled Debates And To Start A Few New Debates / A. Nyberg, G. Reilly, S. Essman, J. Rodrigues // *The International Journal Of Human Resource Management*. – 2018. – Vol. 29. – No. 1. – P. 68-86.

<sup>37</sup> Ployhart, R. E. Resources For What? Understanding Performance In The Resource-Based View And Strategic Human Capital Resource Literatures / R. E. Ployhart // *Journal Of Management*. – 2021. – Vol. 47. – No. 7. – P. 1771–1786.

<sup>38</sup> Robledo-Ardila, C. Potential: In Search For Meaning, Theory And Avenues For Future Research A Systematic Review / C. Robledo-Ardila, J. P. Román-Calderón // *Management Review Quarterly*. – 2022. – Vol. 72. – No. 1. – P. 149-186.



<i>Broad approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource approach</li> <li>• Adaptability approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career approach</li> <li>• Future performance approach</li> </ul>
<i>Narrow approach</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contextual approach</li> </ul>
	<i>Individual level</i>	<i>Organizational level</i>

Figure 1 - Classification of approaches to determining the potential of talents based on two criteria: breadth-narrowness and level of application.

Source: compiled by the author based on [Derr et al., 1988; Lombardo, Eichinger, 2000; Pepermans et al., 2003; Velichko, 2004; Silzer & Church, 2009; Ready et al., 2010; Thomason et al., 2011; Dries et al., 2012; Fernández-Aráoz, 2014; Posthumus et al., 2016; Finkelstein et al., 2018].

It follows from this classification that most approaches (four out of five) relate to a broad approach, when potential is considered as a set of universal characteristics or indicators. In this dissertation research, the potential will be considered from the point of view of combining a broad interpretation at two levels – organizational and individual, which reflects the call of the scientific community to link different levels of research on the characteristics of human capital resources<sup>39,40,41</sup>.

Also, in this study, the potential will be determined based on two approaches: a resource approach and an approach in terms of future performance. The resource approach reflects the attempts of proponents of both the resource theory and the theory of human capital to study in detail the characteristics of human resources at the individual level and in various combinations, which are the competitive advantage of the

<sup>39</sup> Ployhart, R. E. Human Capital Is Dead; Long Live Human Capital Resources! / R. E. Ployhart, A. J. Nyberg, G. Reilly, M. A. Maltarich // Journal of Management. – 2014. – Vol. 40. – No. 2. – P. 371–398.

<sup>40</sup> Ployhart, R. E. Resources For What? Understanding Performance In The Resource-Based View And Strategic Human Capital Resource Literatures / R. E. Ployhart // Journal Of Management. – 2021. – Vol. 47. – No. 7. – P. 1771–1786.

<sup>41</sup> Wright, P.M. Rediscovering The “Human” In Strategic Human Capital / P.M. Wright // Human Resource Management Review. – 2021. - Vol. 31. – No. 4. – P. 1-16.

organization<sup>42,43</sup>. Considering potential as a predictor of future performance develops the authors' research directions in the field of talent management as strategic resources of an organization and links it to the question "why should companies evaluate potential"<sup>44</sup>.

Thus, in this study, **talent potential** is interpreted as a set of common individual characteristics of talented employees as a special group of human resources of the organization, allowing them to show the expected high results in a future position, which, in turn, will help the company implement its strategy in the medium and long term.

This interpretation simultaneously links both the organizational and individual level of potential study, and also connects the future realization of potential with its source – a common set of individual characteristics of the talent itself. A broad approach to the interpretation of potential allows us to move away from the current organizational context and consider the potential of talent in conditions of rapid and constant change.

This definition contributes to the development of resource theory and expands the understanding of the potential of a talented employee as a set of common individual characteristics that are used at the organizational level and can serve as a source of competitive advantage for the company in the medium and long term<sup>45</sup>. The author's definition of the potential of a talented employee offers a new look at the ratio of general and specific individual characteristics of talents as a special group of human resources and develops a research direction in which the general individual characteristics of human resources are considered as the basis for the development of specific characteristics<sup>46</sup>. It is the potential as a general characteristic of individual human resources that determines

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<sup>42</sup> Ready, D.A. Are You A High Potential? / D.A. Ready, J.A. Conger, L.A. Hill // Harvard Business Review. – 2010. – Vol. 88. – No. 6. <https://hbr.org/2010/06/are-you-a-high-potential> (accessed: 19.02.2021).

<sup>43</sup> Dries, N. How “Boundaryless” Are The Careers Of High Potentials, Key Experts And Average Performers? / N. Dries, F. Van Acker, M. Verbruggen // Journal Of Vocational Behavior. – 2012. – Vol. 81. – No. 2. – P. 271-279.

<sup>44</sup> Silzer, R. The Pearls And Perils Of Identifying Potential / R. Silzer, A. H. Church // Industrial And Organizational Psychology. – 2009. – Vol. 2. – P. 377-412.

<sup>45</sup> Barney, J. Firm Resources And Sustained Competitive Advantage / J. Barney // Journal Of Management. – 1991. – Vol. 17. – No. 1. – P. 99-120.

<sup>46</sup> Coff, R.W. Human Assets And Management Dilemmas: Coping With Hazards On The Road To Resource-Based Theory / R. W. Coff // The Academy Of Management Review. – 1997. – Vol. 22. – No. 2. – P. 374-402.

the pace of development of specific ones, and therefore is a predictor of the future performance of talented employees<sup>47</sup>.

**2. The conceptual framework of a science-based approach to assessing talent potential includes two interrelated levels: strategic and operational. They solve the tasks of setting goals for assessing potential, determining it and implementing the assessment process using a set of tools.**

There is no discussion in the scientific literature about evidence-based approaches to assessing the potential of talents that will solve the business problem in identifying employees who will be able to occupy key positions in companies in the medium and long term<sup>48,49,50</sup>. As a response to this gap in research, the dissertation proposes a conceptual scheme of a scientifically based approach to assessing the potential of talents. This conceptual framework for assessing talent potential consists of two interrelated levels: strategic and operational (*Figure 2*).

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<sup>47</sup> Nyberg, A. Human Capital Resources: A Call To Retire Settled Debates And To Start A Few New Debates / A. Nyberg, G. Reilly, S. Essman, J. Rodrigues // *The International Journal Of Human Resource Management*. – 2018. – Vol. 29. – No. 1. – P. 68-86.

<sup>48</sup> Ready, D.A. Are You A High Potential? / D.A. Ready, J.A. Conger, L.A. Hill // *Harvard Business Review*. – 2010. – Vol. 88. – No. 6. <https://hbr.org/2010/06/are-you-a-high-potential> (accessed: 19.02.2021).

<sup>49</sup> Dries, N. How “Boundaryless” Are The Careers Of High Potentials, Key Experts And Average Performers? / N. Dries, F. Van Acker, M. Verbruggen // *Journal Of Vocational Behavior*. – 2012. – Vol. 81. – No. 2. – P. 271-279.

<sup>50</sup> Church, A.H. Is There Potential In Assessing For High-Potential? Evaluating The Relationships Between Performance Ratings, Leadership Assessment Data, Designated High-Potential Status And Promotion Outcomes In A Global Organization / A.H. Church, B.W Guidry, J.A. Dickey, J.A. Scrivani // *Leadership Quarterly*. – 2021. – Vol. 32. – No. 5. – P.115-128.

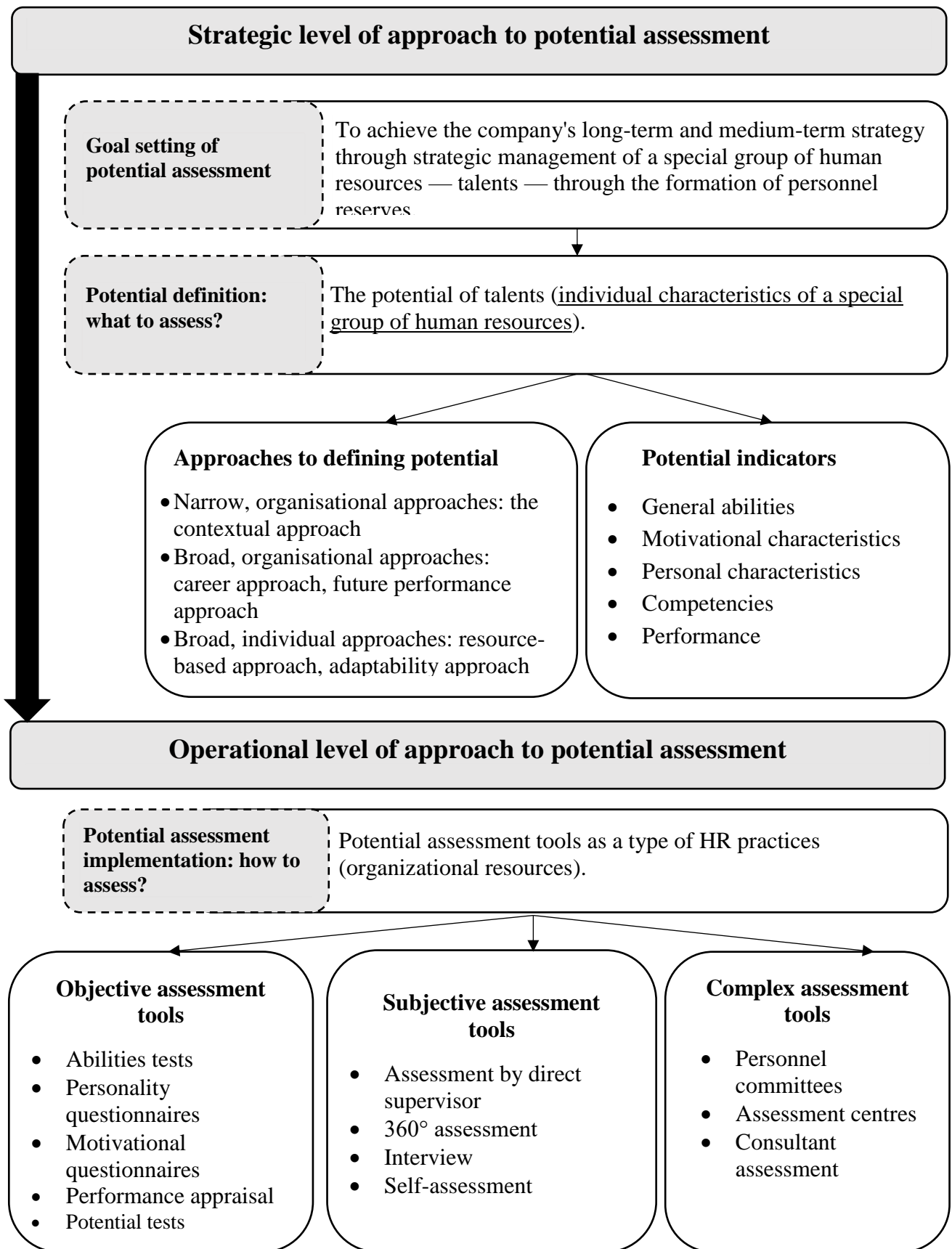


Figure 2 — Conceptual framework of a scientifically based approach to assessing the potential of talented employees.

Source: compiled by the author.

At the strategic level of the approach, the goal setting of potential assessment (why companies evaluate potential) and its definition (what should be understood by potential) are considered. At the operational level, the issue of implementing a potential assessment is being studied (with which tools it can be assessed). Let's look at each level of the conceptual scheme in more detail.

At the strategic level of the conceptual scheme, the purpose of evaluating the potential of talents in business is determined. The answer lies in the need to form a talent pool with the potential that is necessary to ensure the implementation of the strategy in the medium and long term. This answer lies at the intersection of strategic human resource management and HRM subsystem such as talent management. Also, at the strategic level of the conceptual scheme, the problem of determining potential is reflected, that is, what should be understood by the term "potential of a talented employee". The answer to this question is based on the resource theory and the theory of human capital, in which potential can be considered as a set of common measurable individual characteristics of talented employees, which act as predictors of the future performance of talents.

At the operational level of the conceptual framework of the capacity assessment approach, the issue of implementing a capacity assessment is considered. That is, how will companies be able to identify the potential of talented employees, in particular, when selecting them for the personnel reserve? The answer to this question is related to the use of organizational resources such as capacity assessment tools, which represent a separate type of HR practice.

The conceptual scheme of a scientifically based approach to potential assessment developed within the framework of the dissertation research reflects the theoretical contribution to talent management, resource theory and the theory of human capital. From the point of view of talent management as a subsystem of HRM, the conceptual scheme links a special group of human resources with their contribution to the implementation of the company's medium- and long-term strategy. Turning to the resource theory, it can be argued that this conceptual scheme considers a complex combination of individual human resources (potential) and organizational resources (potential assessment tools) as a way to achieve a company's competitive advantage. From the perspective of the theory of

human capital, the analysis of approaches to determining potential and its indicators expands the understanding of the totality of common individual characteristics of a special group of human resources (talents) as a predictor of their future performance.

- 3. The results of a qualitative empirical study indicate that many companies interpret the potential of talent without taking into account the business goals of the organization and experience a large number of methodological problems in assessing potential related to the choice of indicators and tools for its assessment. Companies use six groups of indicators as indicators of potential, among which indicators such as "Social intelligence" and "Attitude to the employer" have not yet been studied by researchers in the field of potential assessment. To assess potential, tools such as performance assessment, management recommendations and competency assessment are most often used, which are based on retrospective indicators or are subjective judgments.**

*The problematic field of assessing the potential of talents in companies*

Graphically, the localization of potential assessment problems from the point of view of a two-level conceptual scheme of a scientifically based approach is shown in *Figure 3*.

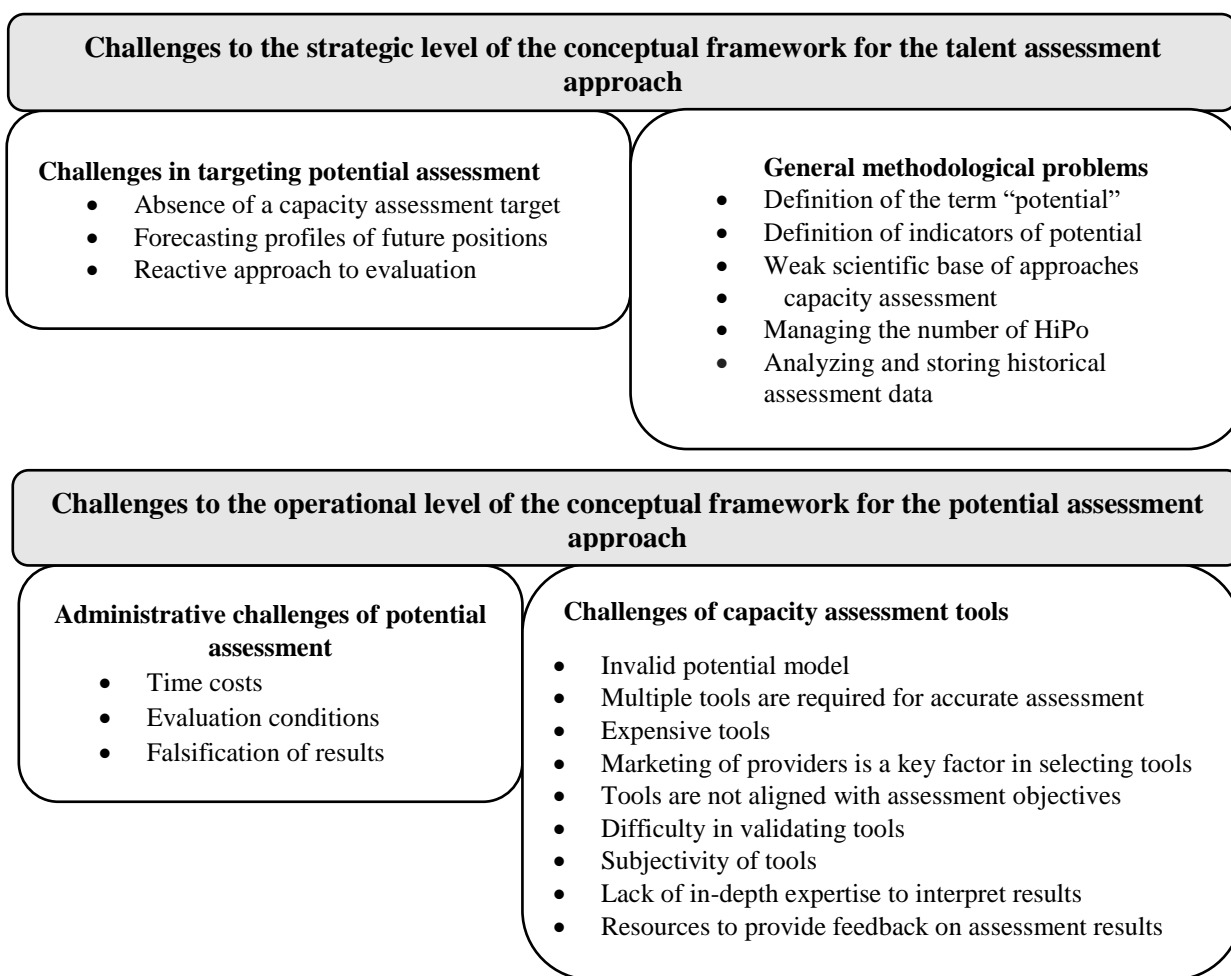


Figure 3 – Potential assessment issues in terms of their localization in the conceptual framework of the capacity assessment approach

Source: compiled by the author based on analysis of interview transcripts

During the analysis of 45 in-depth semi-structured interviews with HR specialists, it was found that the most serious problem in assessing the potential of talents for selection to the personnel reserve was the lack of a clearly formulated goal of evaluating potential in companies, which affects the effectiveness of all work with highly potential employees.

The greatest number of problems of companies in assessing potential lay in the field of methodology: both general and related to capacity assessment tools. Respondents noted that the field of potential assessment has a weak scientific base, and many procedures, both developed internally and offered on the consulting services market, are based on the subjective opinions of HR specialists.

The problem of determining the potential and its indicators remains relevant for HR specialists both due to methodological uncertainty and the difficulty of creating a single term for all departments. HR specialists most often noted the problems of subjectivity of potential assessment tools. The second most frequently mentioned issue was the validity of potential assessment tools (potential tests, personality questionnaires, cognitive ability tests and motivational questionnaires).

*Potential indicators that organizations use to assess potential*

At the initial stage of coding, 38 different indicators of potential were identified, which at the second step of coding were combined into 6 classes of indicators using the classification that was identified in the integrative literature review, where each class of indicators corresponds to a certain individual characteristic of talent (*Table 1*)



Table 1 – Classes of potential indicators generated from interviews with HR practitioners

Classes of potential indicators	Indicators of potential	
Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General ability</li> <li>- Ability to think systemically</li> <li>- Ability to think critically</li> <li>- Analytical skills</li> </ul>	
Motivational characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Motivation to achieve</li> <li>- Motivation to learn</li> </ul>	
Personality characteristics	Learning ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speed of learning</li> <li>- Willingness to learn</li> <li>- Transfer of experience</li> </ul>
	Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performing tasks without experience</li> <li>- Working in a new environment</li> <li>- Working in uncertainty</li> </ul>
	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stress resistance</li> <li>- Resistance to failure</li> <li>- Willingness to take risks</li> </ul>
	Socialising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social intelligence</li> <li>- Influence</li> <li>- EQ</li> </ul>
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional competences</li> <li>- Managerial competences</li> </ul>	
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current performance</li> <li>- Past performance</li> </ul>	
Attitude to the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commitment</li> <li>- Involvement</li> <li>- Loyalty</li> </ul>	

Source: compiled by the author based on analysis of interview transcripts

The class of indicators "**Attitude to the company**", which includes commitment, loyalty and engagement, has not yet been studied by the scientific communities in the framework of potential assessment and is a new class of potential indicators. However, there is a good reason why HR specialists consider the attitude towards the company as an indicator of potential. HIPOs are a special category of personnel in which the HR department and management make the highest possible investments in terms of training and development. That is why HiPo retention is the main task of HR specialists. This set of indicators has also not been studied in the literature on potential assessment to date,

and this may be due to the fact that potential and attitude towards the employer may be indirectly related or may not have a statistically significant relationship at all. This fact requires further theoretical and empirical research.

**Social intelligence** is also a new indicator of potential, which is already widely studied by researchers within the framework of leadership issues, but it is a new indicator in the field of evaluating the potential of employees. Social intelligence, unlike emotional intelligence, has not yet been used by researchers to assess potential, although many researchers have studied it within the framework of organizational leadership. However, this indicator is closely related to a serious management problem. Often, management decides to raise people with high social intelligence, rather than the overall value of potential, taking activity for future performance.

#### *Talent potential assessment tools used by organizations*

During the initial transcript encoding cycle of interviews with HR experts, 17 different potential assessment tools were discovered. In the second coding cycle, they were grouped into three classes on the basis of "objectivity – subjectivity". A detailed description of the assessment tool classes can be found in *Table 2*.

Table 2 – Classification of potential assessment tools used in Russian and foreign organisations for personnel reserve selection

<b>Objective tools</b>	<b>Subjective tools</b>	<b>Complex tools</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tests of potential</li> <li>-Personality questionnaires</li> <li>- Abilities tests</li> <li>-Motivational questionnaires</li> <li>- Knowledge tests</li> <li>- Competency tests</li> <li>- Involvement Test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interview</li> <li>- Review conversation</li> <li>- Manager's assessment</li> <li>- Self-assessment</li> <li>- 360° evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personnel committees</li> <li>- Assessment Centre</li> <li>- Consultancy advice</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the author based on analysis of interview transcripts

Objective tools include specialized potential assessment tests, personality and motivational questionnaires, as well as cognitive ability tests. It should be noted that business practitioners use such objective tools as engagement surveys and competency tests, which have not yet been studied in the literature as tools for assessing the potential of employees. Subjective tools are based on the assessment of potential by specific actors (managers, colleagues, or HiPo themselves), and often rely only on value judgments. Complex tools include the use of several objective and subjective tools at the same time, but the final result of the assessment is still determined subjectively. This category of tools includes assessment centers, consultant recommendations, and personnel committees.

Most often, companies use such tools for selection to the personnel reserve, which are focused on the indicators obtained in previous periods: effectiveness, recommendations of the head and the results of the competence assessment. This follows from the frequency analysis of the selection criteria for the personnel reserve, which is shown in *Figure 4*.

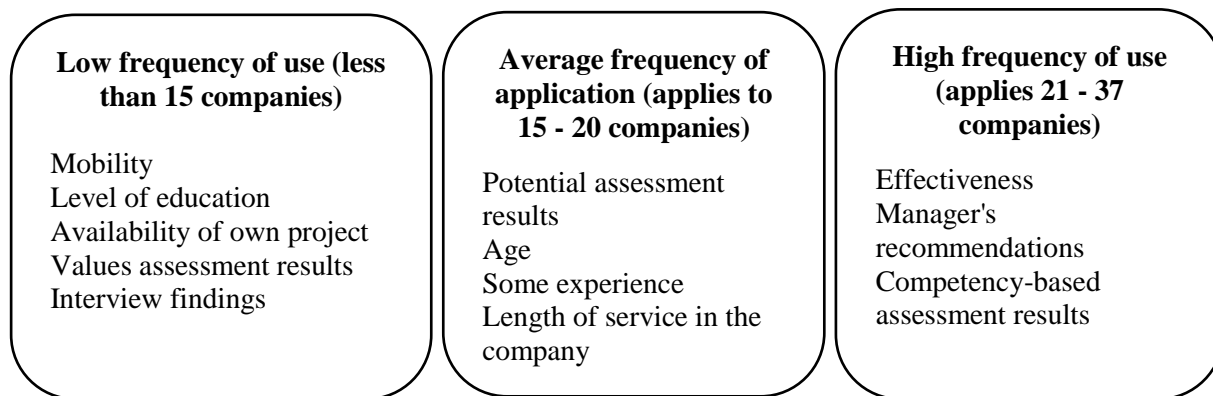


Figure 4 – Analysis of the frequency of application of the selection criteria in the personnel reserves

Source: compiled by the author based on analysis of interview transcripts

This fact contradicts the very nature of identifying highly potential employees who are able to show their effectiveness in the future, as well as managing them in the future for 5-10 years.

- 4. The predictive model of the potential of a talented employee, obtained as a result of a validation study of empirical data, which was conducted using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, includes six groups of indicators: "Achievement motivation", "Motivation to learn", "General abilities", "Critical Thinking", "Creativity" and "Social Intelligence".**

As a result of three iterations of the exploratory factor model of Talent Q Pro potential, which made up the design validation procedure, 36 variables out of 53 were excluded from the analysis. The final stage of the quantitative study – confirmatory factor analysis was conducted 8 times to find the best indicators of model quality. As a result, with the help of the lavaan package, it was possible to build an updated potential model with the highest quality indicators, as follows from *Table 3*.

Table 3 – Quality indicators of the confirmatory model

Quality indicator of the confirmatory model	Confirmation model quality indicator values
Chi-square /df	1,76
p-value Chi-square	0,065
CFI	0,9
TLI	0,85
RMSEA	0,048
SRMR	0,047

Source: compiled by the author

All significant quality indicators of the model – CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR – are within acceptable limits. The ratio of xi-squared statistics to the number of degrees of freedom turned out to be 1.76 (ratio 2202 to 1246), which indicates the acceptable quality of the model. The p-value of chi-squared statistics turned out to be insignificant ( $p < 0.065$ ), which confirms that the data correspond to the proposed theoretical potential model.

A graphical representation of the predictive model of the potential of a talented employee is shown in *Figure 5*.

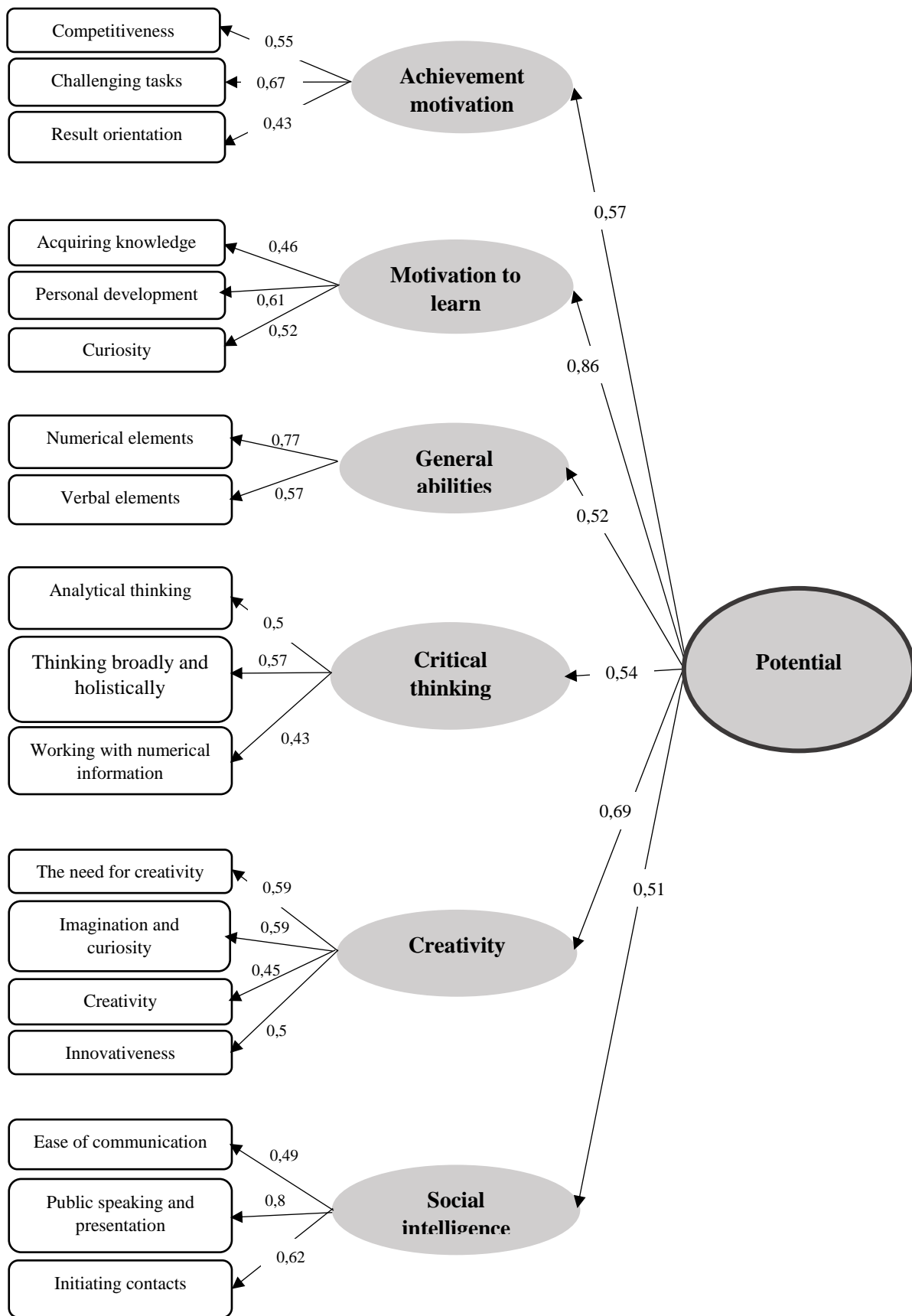


Figure 5 — A predictive model of a talented employee's potential.

Source: compiled by the author.

As can be seen from *Figure 5*, the updated potential model consists of six indicators: "Achievement Motivation", "Motivation to Learn", "General Abilities", "Critical Thinking", "Creativity" and "Social Intelligence". Since the original potential model of TalentQ Pro was significantly changed, it was decided to give it a new name: "Predictive model of the potential of a talented employee." This name reflects the specifics of the resulting model, which will allow companies to predict the future performance of talents in an uncertain external and internal business environment.

Classes of potential indicators such as "Achievement Motivation", "General Abilities" and "Learning Motivation" are often highlighted by business practitioners and researchers as indicators of potential assessment. "Social intelligence" is described by HR specialists as a significant indicator of potential, whereas in scientific publications this indicator is discussed only in the business literature. According to the results of qualitative research, the class of indicators "Critical thinking" was also included in the indicators of the potential model. On the contrary, "Creativity" has not yet received a detailed description among potential assessment researchers, and HR specialists at the qualitative stage of the study also did not place a semantic emphasis on it.

According to confirmatory factor analysis, it is the general individual characteristics listed above that describe the potential of a talented employee. This model indicates that highly potential employees should be motivated to learn and be able to learn, develop new ideas, critically rethink available information, and have developed social intelligence. It should be noted that such indicators of potential as "Motivation to learn" and "Creativity" received the greatest factor loads, which indicates potential as an integral general individual characteristic of talents aimed at the future.

As a result, the design validation procedure allowed us to improve the potential model of TalentQ Pro. In the future, this validated potential model will become the basis for the development of the potential assessment methodology proposed in this dissertation study.

- 5. In order to achieve medium- and long-term goals, companies should apply a methodology for assessing the potential of talents when selecting them for the personnel reserve, formed on the basis of a conceptual scheme of a scientifically based approach to assessing potential. This methodology will make it possible to predict the future performance of talents based on determining the potential of talents, taking into account the strategic goals of the company, evaluating validated indicators of potential using a balanced set of objective, subjective and comprehensive tools.**

During the theoretical and empirical stages of this study, a comprehensive methodology for assessing potential was developed, consisting of strategic and operational levels. Its scientific validity is due to the definition of potential derived from an integrative literature review, validated indicators of the potential model corresponding to the results of theoretical and qualitative research, as well as the availability of all classes of potential assessment tools (objective, subjective and complex), which allows you to compare the results of the assessment for each indicator of potential.

This methodology can be used by HR specialists and talent managers to conduct a potential assessment in practice.

The proposed methodology will allow HR specialists:

- To carry out the preparatory stage of assessing the potential of talents: identify stakeholders, prepare the necessary resources and methods for assessing potential
- To organize a step-by-step assessment of the potential of talents, starting with the consolidation of definitions and procedures in local regulations, ending with obtaining the result of a potential assessment
- To select talented employees in the personnel reserve based on a scientifically based approach

Therefore, the proposed methodology responds to the business request for a comprehensive methodology for assessing potential, which is based on the results of

scientific research (theoretical, qualitative and quantitative). The practical contribution of this methodology lies in the fact that it organizes the activities of HR specialists in assessing potential through a step-by-step process, offers a set of ready-made methods for assessing potential, as well as a way to aggregate their results, on the basis of which a decision can be made to include talent in the personnel reserve. This is what will allow the company to have a steady flow of talent to key positions in the future, which, thanks to their individual characteristics, will be able to implement the company's strategy in the future.

The methodology is based on a conceptual scheme of the approach to assessing potential, developed at the stage of theoretical research and supplemented taking into account the results of the qualitative and quantitative stages of the study. The proposed methodology is graphically shown in *Figure 6*.



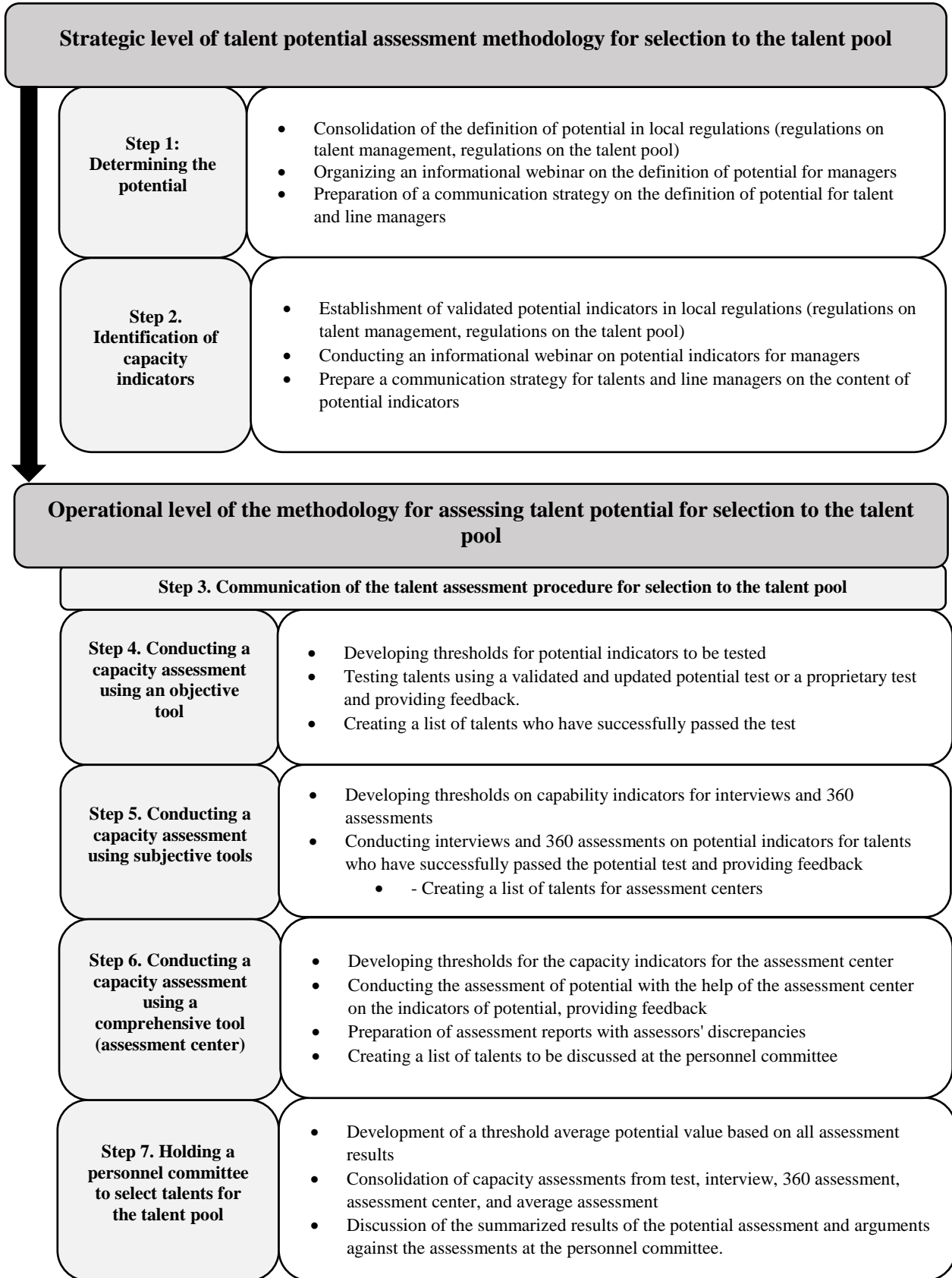


Figure 6 - Graphical representation of the capacity assessment methodology

Source: compiled by the author

We shall start considering the methodology from **the strategic level**. During the theoretical and qualitative stage, it was revealed that the potential of talented employees is a set of common individual characteristics of talented employees as a special group of human resources of the organization, allowing them to show the expected high results in a future position that will help the company implement its strategy in the medium and long term. This definition allows us to consider potential from the point of view of a broad approach at both the organizational and individual levels, which will allow organizations to avoid being tied to specific characteristics of a position, company and industry, which is especially important in case of turbulent changes in both the internal and external environment of the organization.

Companies that decide to use this methodology should consolidate these definitions in local regulatory documents, as well as broadcast them in internal communications both among HIPOs themselves and among direct managers and HR specialists. This will help all employees of the organization to have a common understanding of the semantic content of concepts and avoid terminological ambiguity. HR specialists should consolidate the definitions in local regulations. Next, it is necessary to develop a communication strategy for managers and ordinary employees on the definition of talent, potential and their significance for the company, as well as conduct an informational webinar on the content of talent and potential for heads of departments and divisions.

It is also necessary to consolidate in local regulations the content of validated indicators of potential (achievement motivation, learning motivation, general abilities, critical thinking, creativity, social intelligence), conduct an informational webinar for managers and create a communication strategy for line managers and ordinary employees. Let's move on to the consideration **of the operational level** of the potential assessment methodology. Before starting to assess the potential of talents using three classes of assessment tools, it is necessary to convey a step-by-step algorithm for this assessment to the talents themselves, their immediate supervisors, as well as all HR specialists. Such communication can be done by sending an e-mail, as well as conducting an informational webinar.

After that, HR specialists, together with the heads of business areas, should choose an **objective assessment tool** that allows them to evaluate validated indicators. This may be a separate development with the involvement of external consultants in the field of psychometrics, or an updated potential test that has passed the constructive validation procedure. After selecting the tool, it is necessary to develop thresholds for the results of the potential test to create a further funnel of talents for inclusion in the personnel reserve. After the evaluation, each talent who has passed the evaluation should be sent the evaluation results and given feedback on the development of potential indicators and make a list of those who have passed this stage of evaluation in accordance with the values of the selection criteria.

Next, HR managers, together with the heads of departments, should also develop thresholds for the results of potential assessment using **subjective assessment tools**: interviews and 360 assessments. Next, all talents who have successfully passed the potential test must pass this assessment. All participants in the assessment should provide brief feedback. Those talents who have successfully passed the subjective assessment tools are invited to the assessment center. After passing it, all talents are given brief feedback and a final list of candidates is formed for discussion at the personnel committee.

**The personnel committee** is the final comprehensive potential assessment tool, as a result of which an average potential assessment is derived for each indicator of the potential model, a result is given from both objective assessment tools (potential test), subjective (interviews and 360 assessment), as well as from a comprehensive (assessment center). As a result of the discussion of the results of the potential and risk assessment, a list of participants in the personnel reserve is formed for each candidate.

## THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The present study is designed to scientifically solve the managerial problem of assessing the potential of talents for selection to the personnel reserve, which is widely discussed by researchers.

Within the framework of the theoretical research, a conceptual scheme of a scientifically based approach to potential assessment was developed, which solves the issues of goal-setting for assessing the potential of talents and defining this term (strategic level) and tools for its assessment (operational level).

Also in this dissertation research, the author's interpretation of the potential is proposed.

According to the results of a qualitative study, it was found that many companies evaluate the potential of talent without taking into account the business goals of the organization, and also find it difficult to define this term, its indicators of potential, and experience a large number of methodological problems.

As a result of the quantitative validation study of the TalentQ Pro potential model, which was conducted using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, a new model of the potential of a talented employee was obtained. This model includes six indicators: "Achievement Motivation", "Motivation to Learn", "General Abilities", "Critical Thinking", "Creativity" and "Social Intelligence".

Based on the results of the theoretical, qualitative, and quantitative stages of the research, the author has developed a methodology for assessing the potential of talents for selection to the personnel reserve, which is an organizational resource in terms of resource theory. This methodology will help HR specialists to put into practice the process of assessing potential.

This research contributes to the expansion of understanding of the phenomenon of talent management, as well as to resource theory. Within the framework of talent management, this study proposes the definition of such an individual characteristic of talents as potential, evaluating which companies that adhere to an exclusive approach to

talent management will be able to identify employees who can occupy strategic positions in the future by entering the talent pool.

Within the framework of resource theory, this work develops a line of research focusing on the characteristics of human resources as a source of a company's competitive advantage. This study examines in detail the potential and its indicators as individual general characteristics of human resources, which are predictors of their future performance.

Within the framework of the theory of human capital, which is used in resource theory, this study focuses on the individual level of consideration of the human resources of an organization and details the understanding of the individual general characteristics of human resources. This work also contributes to the development of the HR architecture model, offering a methodology for assessing the potential of talents as a special group of human resources that represent strategic value and uniqueness for the company.

Together, both the potential itself and the methodology for assessing potential are resources that contribute to achieving the competitive advantage of the organization.

The present study has a number of limitations. Despite the fact that Russian representative offices of international companies participated in the study, the results of the study are not applicable to other countries due to cross-cultural restrictions. Also, in the process of validating the tool, only internal validation was used. The respondents took only one potential test, and did not complete other tests and questionnaires that would help assess the external validity of the studied potential test.

In the future, researchers are encouraged to focus on:

- Longitudinal studies of a new potential model obtained in the course of this study;
- Validation studies of other potential tests that are used to assess potential;
- Cross-cultural studies of potential assessment issues;
- Comparative studies of the perception and interpretation of potential by HR specialists, managers and high-potential employees themselves.

## PUBLISHED PAPERS

The main results of the dissertation research were published in four articles of scientific journals: three of them are included in the list of recommended journals of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, and the fourth one is Scopus Q2. The total volume of the main publications amounted to 6.17 p.l. The author's personal contribution was 2.95 p.l.

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