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Department of Economics and Management

DREAMT-PhD Program in Economics and Management of Technology

Talent Management at the University:
an experimental design to enhance students' employability

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Academic year 2015-2016

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The term talent was prominent in music, science and sport, but since McKinsey's proclamation of the 'war for talent' in the 1997 (Michaels et al., 2001) talent has also started to appear on the strategic agenda of organizations. In the past ten years, talent management (TM) has become a key management issue. In the same period the business environment has gone through a significant expansion with the removal of trade barriers and market globalization (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). There has been a shift from the commodity-based economy to the knowledge-based economy, where intangible organizational assets are increasingly important. The present post-industrialized knowledge-driven economy places increasing demands on the workforce and necessitates new forms of work-related skills (Hassard et al., 2008). At the same time the dynamic nature of labor markets and the changing nature of work has resulted in major transition in the shape of careers and their management within and outside organizations. In the last two decades, the topic of talent management has received a remarkable degree of practitioner and academic interest and is now at the top of critical Human Resources (HR) issue list. This relatively recent emphasis on talent management represents a paradigm shift from more traditional human resource management (HRM) towards the management of talent specifically suited to today's dynamic competitive environment (Huselid et al., 1997).

Talent management and talent more generally are at the center of a major debate among practitioners, in academic literature, on the internet and in social networks. In spite of this growing popularity TM and talent lack clarity. Numerous authors attribute the ambiguity inherent to TM to the inadequate operationalization of the underlying construct talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Quite surprisingly, TM scholars are rarely precise about what exactly they mean by talent, perhaps because it is easier to assume implicit theories about what talent is (Barab and Plucker, 2002). In fact, in many articles (e.g., Collings and Mellahi, 2009; O'Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000) and books (e.g., Cappelli, 2008; Lawler, 2008) about TM, talent as an underlying construct is taken for granted and thus not defined explicitly. In the HRM literature, both academic and practitioner-

based, we find a great number of organizationally specific definitions of talent, highly influenced by the type of industry or the nature of work and of the occupational field (Tansley et al., 2007). However, the quest for talent is timeless. It goes back to the ancient Greeks. Originally, talent represented economic value and it was an equivalent of capital. The term 'tálon' represented a unit of weight of precious metals (silver or gold). Later with the ancient Greeks talent indicated a unit of money and talent became a coin (Tansley, 2011). One talent was equivalent to the value of a large house and therefore talent was something exclusive that only rich people could possess. In the Middle Ages the term talent acquired new meanings in Europe (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). A shift from economic capital to human capital becomes apparent, but the exclusive character of talent was maintained. At first, the behavioral components of talent were highlighted, indeed the meaning of talent was will and desire. Later, in the 15th and 16th century, talent was interpreted as a special ability, aptitude or even a gift from God that needed to be used and developed. This interpretation of talent holds in the 17th century, although the link with divinity became less strong. From the 19th century talent was also referred to a person, and those considered as talented were able to demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in mental (the 'genius') and physical domains (Tansley, 2011;). Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) identify the rise of the 'talent scout' (or spotter) in the 1930's, referring to a person searching for new sporting or acting talent. The first principles of talent management became apparent.

The literature is mainly US centered and with a focus on private organization and multinationals. There is a scarcity of scientific literature dealing with the empirical implementation of the TM process, in general, and more specifically in public organizations. There has been a major debate among scholars about TM, whether it is just new label of HRM (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) as the title of Chuai et al.(2008) article underlines "Is talent management just 'old wine in new bottles'?". Moreover, the discussion about the maturity of this field of research is still open, as Thunnissen et al. (2013a) highlight with the paper "A review of talent management: 'infancy or adolescence?' ". TM appears to be a relative poorly developed research subject and to lack a clear distinct meaning. In fact, according to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015), who adopt a phenomenon-driven approach, this field is in a growth stage, facing the challenge of evolving towards a more mature field of study.

However, we can summarize some of the limitations in the TM field. First, it lacks a stable theoretical foundation. The literature on talent and TM is highly conceptual (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) and build on a broad range of academic traditions, including international HRM, strategic HRM, and Organizational Behavior (OB). These different disciplines contribute on one hand to provide multiple lenses and approaches to TM; on the other they demonstrate little consensus in the TM domain given the diversity in their approaches. It is clear that scholars have diverse perspectives on TM. Theoretical approaches are rarely integrated or linked and consensus on TM principles is therefore hard to find (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Collings and Mellahi, 2009;; Nijs, et al., 2014). According to Dries (2013b, p.3) 'vague but appealing rhetoric' even causes critics to question whether TM is not just a management fashion.

Moreover, this criticism is endorsed by the lack of empirical evidence for the conceptual models and ideas (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Dries, 2013b). Only recently has the number of empirical studies increased and generally the qualitative research is the prevalent method. According to Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2015) this is quite normal in an emerging field of study. Third, the current TM literature reflects a loaded, or even biased view of talent and TM. In most publications discussing TM the organizational perspective is adopted (e.g., Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Ulrich and Ulrich, 2010). The prevalent organizations' interest is also evident in empirical research on TM, in which HR professionals, managers and executives are the commonly targeted research population (Stahl et al., 2012). This emphasizes a little attention in experiences and opinions of talent or talented employees, although they are the central subjects in TM. Just a few empirical studies examine TM from an employees' perspective (e.g., Björkman et al., 2013; Dries and Pepermans, 2008; Dries, 2011;). Fourth, the TM literature mainly focuses the talent issues upon a select category of organizations. There is a strong focus on TM in private sector organizations, multinationals and organizations in the US-context (Collings et al., 2011; Powel et al., 2012). Many scholars present their theoretical frameworks as universal models, suitable to explain TM in all kinds of organizations. Actually, the characteristics and the environment of private sector organizations differ significantly from those in, for example, public or non-profit sector organizations (Christensen et al., 2007), and hence the current concepts and assumptions in the TM literature rooted in context of US-based, private and multinational organizations may be

probably less than adequate to describe and study TM in organizations in other contexts (Thunnissen, 2013a). The number of publications on TM in other continents than North-America has recently been increasing, such as publications on TM in Europe (e.g., Festing et al., 2013; Oltra and Vivas-López, 2013), Asia (e.g., Preece et al., 2013) or the Middle East (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). Although the Anglo-Saxon countries emerged as important it is worthy to note that 5 out of the 10 most 'productive' countries in terms of TM research are European, non-English speaking countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Finland. However, TM issues in non-profit, public or voluntary organizations, such as health care institutes (e.g., Groves 2011; Powell et al. 2012), education institutes (e.g., Davies and Davies 2010; Van den Brink et al., 2013) or public sector organizations (e.g., Glenn 2012; Harrisr and Foster 2013), remain under-explored.

1.2 Aim of the thesis

Many business leaders, practitioners and academics consider talent and TM as key issues but there is little known about how and how well TM works in practice.

In addition, current assumptions, viewpoints and actions appear to be based on a narrow and biased TM 'paradigm'. This research aims to identify and explain what happens in practice and to contribute to the building of a broader and a more balanced theoretical framework for TM. To pursue this aim the study implemented a TM process at the public Italian University of Pavia, School of Pharmacy, with students as targeted research population. To this end a clear definition of talent was created, this was operationalized through the talent identification, and then was implemented the talent development initiative by adopting an experimental design to measure the effectiveness in terms of students' employability. To achieve these objectives also an ongoing process of theory building and gathering data has been conducted, as suggested by the analytical approach to HRM of Boxall et al., (2007).

Boxall et al., (2007) propose that the fundamental mission of the academic discipline of HRM is "not to propagate perceptions of 'best practices' in 'excellent organizations' but, first of all, to identify and explain what happens in practice" (p. 4). This perspective comes along with the

phenomenon-driven approach to the TM as opposed to theory-driven approach (von Krogh et al., 2012; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Traditional theory-driven research follows a process whereby hypotheses are developed based on gaps detected within the current knowledge of a field—guided by established definitions, operationalizations and measures. Therefore, the analytical approach to HRM starts from descriptive research addressing the “what, why, how and for whom” questions that underpin the activity (Boxall, 2013). In order to get a rigorous understanding of what actually happens in practice and why, emphasize the point that the impact of the broader organizational context has to be considered in both the theoretical frameworks and in empirical research (i.e. contextually based research). In order to clarify how TM might work in practice, models and theories from related academic subfields need to be integrated in the process. Moreover, to get a clear understanding of the chain of processes that make TM work well or poorly, Boxall et al., (2007) argue that thorough evidence-based research is required. Finally, to get an answer to the questions of “for whom?” and “how well?”, analytical HRM is concerned with assessing outcomes at multiple levels “it is examining the extent to which employer and worker outcomes are mutually satisfying, and, thus, more sustainable in our society over the long run” (Boxall et al., 2007, p.7).

1.3 Research questions

The above reasoning results in the following research questions for the thesis:

What factors impact the design, implementation and effectiveness of TM at the University? To what extent is the university students' employability affected by the TM process?

In order to answer to these research questions, we first need to gain insight into the lessons learned in TM so far, and to increase our understanding of the context in which the study takes place. Therefore, the following conceptual and contextual sub questions will be answered:

1. What are the dominant themes and the leading assumption in the current TM literature?
2. What are the dominant themes and the leading assumption in the current Employability literature?
3. Which is the connection between these two concepts?

Subsequently, in the empirical study, the following more specific sub questions will be addressed:

1. What/how is the definition of talent in the research context?
2. Which is the content of the TD?
3. What are the design, implementation and effectiveness of the TD process implemented?
4. Which is the external evaluation about the effectiveness of the TD implemented?
5. Which are the perceptions of implemented TM activities and outcomes by (a) the organization, (b) the talented students and (c) external stakeholders?

1.4 Thesis structure

The overall study can be characterized as an explorative and descriptive study, in which several aspects of TM are profoundly examined in a continuing process of theory building and gathering data. In particular, the research focus is on the Talent Development (TD) phase with an experimental design, where students have been trained on a set of career management skills, with the aim to measure its effect on their employability. In this exploration a mixture of qualitative and

quantitative research activities is used. The thesis starts with a general exploration of the meaning of talent and TM. *Chapter 2* offers a review of the academic TM literature, mainly in the HRM and Organizational Behavior (OB) field, to provide a clear understanding of the lessons learned so far (research sub-question 1). In the discussion the one-dimensional and narrow approach to the topic is identified as a main limitation of the existing TM literature. This represents the theoretical framework for the following empirical chapters (4, 5, 6 and 7).

Chapter 3 takes into account the contextual relevance of TM and, after the second conceptual chapter, it represents the attempt to get a profound understanding of the research context (as formulated in the 2nd and 3rd research sub-questions). It describes the academic organization context and its inter-relation with the labor market at the light of recent reforms both in the internal and external environment. The information is gathered through a study of academic literature on Higher Education (HE) and policy documents on the Italian HE system. In this chapter a deep investigation of employability concept and related models is conducted, emphasizing that the link between employability and talent is represented by the competences. A description of the concept of competences, skills, soft skills, employability and career management skills is outlined. The theoretical framework developed in *chapter 3* lays the foundation for further theoretical and empirical explorations in the empirical chapters/part, in which new theoretical 'building blocks' are added to identify and clarify what happens in practice in more detail. Indeed, the conceptual and the contextual chapters offered significant input for the design of the empirical study.

The empirical part of the present study starts with the *chapter 4* in which a synthetic overview of the empirical study is given. The preceding chapters also made it possible to identify the key issues which needed further empirical investigation, including the more specific theoretical 'buildings blocks' necessary to complement the rudiments. *Chapter 4* therefore represents the introduction of the empirical part in which we describe the research method, setting and time frame. The research design of the present pilot study is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, indeed, encompasses different research methods for each different phase of TM implementation at the University. The main focus is on the implementation of TD with a randomized experimental design.

The empirical work starts in *chapter 5* with the definition of the meaning of talent and of the relevant soft skills for neo-graduates in order to be employable. The attempt is to overcome the limitations and the narrow approach, managerial and unitary, to TM and talent, described in *chapter 2*. At this end the research follows twofold paths. On one hand a multidisciplinary literature review integrates divergent streams of literature: giftedness, positive and vocational psychology. The aim is to obtain new and broadened perspectives on the concept of talent that are useful for the definition of talent in our context and its operationalization (sub-question 1). On the other hand, a multilevel explorative qualitative research study adopting the inductive rigor qualitative method. We interviewed twenty-seven representatives in the internal (University) and external (labor market) context. This represents the content of the TD in order to make the students employable (sub-question 2).

The *chapter 6* regards the implementation of the TD with an experimental design. Two online surveys, that serve as pre and post treatment tests, measure some dimensions through scales, validated and not, and adjunctive questions in order to assess the talent of the students (i.e. the potential in terms of employability). An in depth description of the research setting, the dimensions measured, and the related scales and questions is conducted. Furthermore, the analysis and the discussion of the results lead to the conclusions that the treated group has increased values in terms of talent (sub-question 3). The effectiveness of the TD initiative in terms of students' employability is described in the *chapter 7*. External HR professionals evaluated a randomized sample of CV and conducted job interviews within both groups (treated and control) in order to assess eventual differences (sub-question 4). Furthermore, this chapter also analyzes the feedback part of the overall TM process with a multilevel approach, involving actors at individual (students), organizational (University-professors and pro-rectors) and community level (representatives of the labor market) (sub-question 5).

In the final chapter of the thesis, *chapter 8*, the findings and conclusions of the previous chapters are connected with each other. We answer the aforementioned research questions and discuss the usefulness of the added theoretical 'building blocks' we have used in the study. At the end, we give directions for future research, and practical implications are presented.

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Chapter 2

A review of Talent Management and Talent

2.1 Introduction

The term Talent Management erupted into the management scene and became a key managerial issue since the McKinsey and Company group coined the phrase ‘the War of Talent’ at the end of 90’s (Michaels et al., 2001). In the same period the business environment has gone through a significant expansion with the falling of trade barriers and the globalization (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). There has been a shift from the commodity-based economy to the knowledge-based economy, where intangible organizational asset are increasingly important (Thunnissen et al., 2013a). The present post-industrialized knowledge-driven economy places increasing demands on the workforce and necessitates new forms of work-related skills (Hassard et al., 2008). This knowledge-based economy is characterized by new structures, new and continuously changing demands (Barnett, 2000; Brown et al., 2003; Sennett, 2006) with increasing competition of firms and with fast change of markets. Thus physical assets no longer seen as the unique key differentiator and the modern world is characterized by talent “the value of thinking-intensive workers is derived from the value of their minds – the ideas they develop and the decisions they make – and from the intangible by-products of that work, such as the knowledge, reputations and relationships they create” (Bryan and Joyce, 2007, p.7). The challenge of maximizing the competitive advantage of an organization's human capital is even more significant in the recessionary climate of the latter part of the opening decade of the twenty first century. At the same time the dynamic nature of labor markets and the changing nature of work has resulted in major transition in the shape of careers and their management within and outside organizations. In the last two decades, the topic of talent management has received a remarkable degree of practitioner and academic interest and it is at the top of critical Human Resources (HR) issue list (Sandler, 2006). This relatively recent emphasis on talent management represents a paradigm shift

from more traditional human resource management (Huselid et al., 1997) towards the management of talent specifically suited to today's dynamic competitive environment.

As the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2011) states, in these times of great economic and social changes it is strategic for organizations, private and public, as well for individuals to focus on talent and on talent development as a key competitive advantage factor.

These talent challenges have been intensively debated in popular and practitioner oriented literature, internet magazines and on social networking sites. At the end of 2014 LinkedIn has nearly 1500 professional groups discussing the ins and outs on TM.

However, despite its growing popularity, the concept of TM remains unclear (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Lewis and Heckman posit that “[i]t is difficult to identify the precise meaning of ‘talent management’ because of the confusion regarding definitions and terms and the many assumptions made by authors who write about TM” (2006, p.139). According to Tansley et al. (2007) focus on “the lack of a universal definition of talent or an established set of concepts and common language to refer to when talking about talent management” (p.67) as the reasons for TM being a complex research area.

There has been a major debate among scholars about TM whether it is just new label of Human Resources Management (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) as the title of Chuai et al. (2008) article underlines “Is talent management just “old wine in new bottles”?”. Moreover, the discussion about the maturity of this field of research is still open, as Thunnissen et al. (2013a) highlight with the paper “A review of talent management: ‘infancy or adolescence?’ ”. TM seems a relative poorly developed research subject and lacks a clear distinct meaning “there is still ambiguity inherent to the TM construct to the inadequate operationalization of the underlying construct talent that is often taken for granted and not defined explicitly” (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, p.290). In fact, according to the recent work of Gallardo-Gallardo (2015), that adopts a phenomenon-driven approach to talent management (von Krogh et al., 2012), the research field is in growth stage, currently facing the challenge of evolving in a more mature field of study.

2.2. Research method

The methodological approach of this review is the narrative integrative analysis, addressing new or emerging topics that would benefit from a holistic conceptualization and synthesis of the literature (Torraco, 2005 and 2016). This qualitative overview of the literature synthesizes the findings of literature gained from searches of computerized databases, hand searches and authoritative texts (Green et al., 2006). The review adopted criteria to allow rigorous analysis and synthesis of related literature. The review process followed the three main steps of literature review as articulated in Galvan (2006), which are searching, reviewing and writing the literature review (Gikandi et al., 2011).

We started our search for academic literature on TM with a query in the Google Scholar search engine. The number of hits was too large to review (over 400,000 hits for publications on TM between 2001 and 2015). This first search gave an insight into the broad range of publications and sources on the subject. The authoritative electronic databases ‘Scopus’ and ‘Web of Science’ were searched for a more detailed search to collect academic literature on TM. These databases were chosen because they are multidisciplinary and they give access to a broad variety of academic journals and publications.

Keywords were identified in our search: ‘Talent’ and ‘Talent Management’. The search was bounded between 2001, when the first peer-reviewed publication appeared, and 2015. We restricted our search to English-language publications in peer-reviewed academic journals that mentioned ‘talent management’ and ‘talent’ in their title, abstract or keywords. We excluded specific types of publications such as brief communications and commentaries, editorial notes and book reviews. We initially focused on the most cited publications according to Google Scholar, Web of Science and Scopus.

Although our focus was on scholarly peer-reviewed literature we also included some recent and not-yet-cited publications because the field is relatively young and we can gain interesting insights and different viewpoints on this argument.

We supplemented our review of the academic literature in the Management domain with a search into the linguistic origins of the term talent. We used the reference lists of the assembled

publications to gather interesting documents that did not appear in our search in the databases, applying the 'backtracking' method (i.e. review of the reference lists of the selected articles).

We limited the number of publications on global TM that overemphasize the international or multinational context but we included, however, the most frequently cited articles.

Our search procedure generated a list of 278 articles, all published between January 2001 and May 2015. In total, we collected 53 documents on the subject. Forty-three of the documents are (peer reviewed) articles from international journals. The other documents are conference papers, dissertations and books (or book chapters) on TM.

The number of publications is sufficient to accomplish the aim of the chapter, that is the description of the dominant themes, leading points of view and omissions (Green et al., 2006). The aim was to obtain an understanding of the general characteristics of the publications. The results of these analyses will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.1 Findings: mapping the field of TM

Before discussing the TM literature, we give a broad outline of the 54 publications that we analyzed. Most of these documents were articles published in peer-reviewed journal. We found that articles are present not only in typical HRM journals (e.g. Human Resource Management Review) but also in international management journals (e.g. Journal of World Business), business journals (e.g. Harvard Business Review) and journals for specific sectors of industry (e.g. Health Care Management Review). The wide variety of journals evidenced that the TM field does not yet have established outlets for publishing its research, that is a typical indication of it being in a 'growing' state (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). In other words, the TM literature is built on a broad range of academic traditions, including international HRM, strategic HRM and Organizational Behavior (OB). On one hand these different disciplines contribute to apply multiple lenses and approaches to TM; on the other hand implies that there is little consensus in the TM domain given the diversity in approaches (Thunnissen et al., 2013a).

We choose to focus the literature review of this chapter on the initial and main perspective that we adopted at the beginning of our research about TM and talent: the management domain (mainly HRM and OB). We are aware that there are some divergent streams of literature that explore these

two concepts such as, for example, Education and Psychology. Indeed we integrate literature of different domains, pertinent with the context of the present study (i.e. Giftedness, Positive and Vocational Psychology), in *chapter 5* in order to overcome some gaps present in the literature review of this chapter. The literature review also highlights a wide variety of authors' provenience. The majority of scholars is located in the USA and TM is often being accused to be US-centric (Collings et al., 2011; Thunnissen et al., 2013a). Considering the affiliation of all the authors listed on a TM publication, the US is at the top of the rank, closely followed by the UK, Ireland and Netherlands, and Australia. Although the Anglo-Saxon countries emerged as important it is worthy to note that 5 out of the 10 most 'productive' countries in terms of TM research are European, non-English speaking countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Finland.

The whole body of the literature claimed, as Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Collings and Mellahi (2009) proved, that TM lacks empirical research. However, there is a growing number of empirical research paper since 2010. Qualitative research in the empirical articles is most prevalent, as it easily can be expected in an emerging field (von Krogh et al., 2012). Quantitative research is less frequent and was not found at all prior 2010. Among empirical articles, mixed-method studies have been the least present (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). We found case studies which analyze practices in a single organization or in a certain region and country (Makela et al., 2010). Many studies consisted of surveys or interviews to HR managers to investigated their organization's talent management practices and their underlying rationale (Stahl et al., 2007). The most often-cited articles on talent management are rooted in a human capital/resource-based view (RBV) framework (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013b), although in recent years some work has focused on the experiences of individual employees (as well as groups of employees) from a more psychological/organizational behavior (OB) perspective (Björkman et al., 2013; Höglund, 2012; Dries, 2013b).

There are signs, however, that the field is rapidly growing. As a recent bibliometric analysis, conducted by Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2015) demonstrates, there has been an upsurge of research activity around the topic of talent management since 2010. Especially when conference presentations and symposia are included in the analysis, we observe that more and more authors

and research departments from around the world are doing 'something' relating to talent management (Dries, 2013b).

A number of reviews have been published in recent years, each approaching the TM literature from a different angle: Lewis and Heckman (2006) focus on the definition of TM based mostly on the practitioner literature; Collings and Mellahi (2009) develop a conceptual model of strategic TM, positing the centrality of 'pivotal positions'; Tarique and Schuler (2010) make advances in research on global talent management (GTM); Dries (2013a) identifies a number of discrepancies, tensions, and taken-for-granted assumptions based on a multidisciplinary review of TM literature; Thunnissen et al. (2013b) work is a critical review, drawing attention to the economic and noneconomic (i.e., social and moral) value that TM can generate at three levels: individual, organizational, and societal; and Cappelli and Keller (2014) review the challenges and uncertainties for TM theory and practice in the present labor market; Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) analyze the underlying philosophies of TM; Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) make a review adopting the approach to TM as a phenomenon-driven field with through a bibliometric and content analysis.

2.3 Review of TM literature

Talent Management and talent have been at the center of a major debate in the last decades as one of the most important human capital challenges. TM has been an increasingly popular topic (Chuai et al., 2008) since 1997, when a group of McKinsey consultants coined the expression 'war for talent'. Since that declaration the term 'talent management' has become one of the most common terms in the managerial lexicon and posited a fundamental belief in the importance of talent for achieving organizational excellence (Michaels et al., 2001). Talent management topic has grown exponentially, deep in an economic downturn, with a notable increase in the number of articles and books related to TM produced by academics and practitioners, understood more and more as a high-priority issue for organizations around the world because it can represent a source of sustained competitive advantage in the highly dynamic and volatile environment of the 21st century (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014). TM is considered a critical

determinant of organizational success (Beechler and Woodward, 2009) probably due to the fact that it “is said to be critical to organizational success, being able to give a competitive edge through the identification, development and redeployment of talented employees” (Iles et al., 2010, p.179). Moreover, it is currently related to a firm’s sustainability (Hatsumi, 2010) and it is seen as an imperative for the livelihood and sustainability of organizations (Lawler, 2008; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).

Although scholars have produced a considerable number of publications on TM and talent over the course of the past decades, in the academic field of HRM, TM seem to be a relative developed research subjects. This illustrates a gap between the practitioner and academic interest in the subject (Dries, 2013a). Indeed, most writing about TM, at the initial stage of the field, has come from consultants and practitioners, rather than from academic research, and a number of critical question remain for further empirical research and theoretical development (Iles et al., 2010). One of the most discernable consequences is the lack of clear definitions (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) and demonstrations of added value for the related concepts such as strategic HRM, competency management and knowledge management (Chuai et al., 2008), and solid empirical work (Dries, 2013b).

Talent management is increasingly discussed in the HRM literature and it is a set of practices that are implemented in organizations and refers to how organizations attract, select, develop and manage employees (CIPD, 2011), in an integrated and strategic way (Scullion and Collings, 2011).

In what follows we listed a series of TM definition in chronological order to represent the variety and complexity of this area of research.

Table 2.1: Definition of talent management

Source		Definition of talent management
2003	Sloan et al.	“Managing leadership talent strategically, to put the right person in the right place at the right time” (p. 236)
2005	Ashton and Morton	“TM is a strategic and holistic approach to both HR and business planning or a new route to organizational effectiveness. This improves the performance and the potential of people—the talent—who can make a measurable difference to the organization now and in future. And it aspires to yield enhanced performance among all levels in the workforce, thus allowing everyone to reach his/her potential, no matter what that might be” (p. 30)
2005	Dutta Gupta	“In the broadest possible terms, TM is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization. Its purpose is to assure that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time based on strategic business objectives” (p. 2)
2007	Slan-Jerusalim and Hausdorf	“High potential identification and development (also known as talent management) refers to the process by which an organization identifies and develops employees who are potentially able to move into leadership roles sometime in the future” (p. 934)
2008a	Cappelli	“At its heart, talent management is simply a matter of anticipating the need for human capital and setting out a plan to meet it” (p. 1)
2008b	Cappelli	“Talent management is the process through which employers anticipate and meet their needs for human capital” (p.1)
2009	Collings and Mellahi	“We define strategic talent management as activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potentials and high-performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization” (p. 2)
2010	Davies and Davies	“Talent management is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organization” (p.419)
2010	Silzer and Dowell	“Talent management is an integrated set of processes, programs, and cultural norms in an organization designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy, and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs” (p. 18)
2011	Scullion and Collings	“Global talent management includes all organizational activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles (those roles necessary to achieve organizational strategic priorities) on a global scale. Global talent management takes into account the differences in both organizations' global strategic priorities as well as the differences across national contexts for how talent should be managed in the countries where they operate” (p.7)

Although TM is becoming more widely used, it does not have a single, clear definition, as Table 2.1 shows, discussion about talent management often focus on which processes or components are included and what type of talent are managed (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). It has also been interpreted as a process, as an outcome and as a specific decision, which adds confusion.

The in depth exploration of the concept of TM (definitions) started with the work of Lewis and Heckman (2006), a milestone in the literature, in which their review of TM literature draws attention to the difficulty in coming to an unambiguous definition and conceptualization of TM.

They identified three streams of thought regarding TM. The first stream is not essentially different from HRM, it labels regular HRM practices as TM with some minor differences ('doing it faster or across the enterprise'). TM could be seen as a relabeling or rebranding activity, replacing the word 'people' by the word 'talent' to enhance HR's credibility showing a new 'fashionability'. This stream is related to the concept that talent equals human capital and hence TM equals HRM. According to Lewis and Heckman (2006), the second stream identifies TM as integrated HRM with a selective focus. TM may use the same tools as HRM, but the focus is on a relatively small segment of the workforce, defined as 'talented'. It focuses primarily on the concept of talent pools and regards TM as a process to ensure an adequate flow of employees throughout the organization.

They see a great deal of resemblance to succession planning or human resource planning intended to fill specific (mainly management) positions. Studies adopting this perspective borrows concepts from *marketing* theory, such as 'employer brand' and 'workforce segmentation'. The third stream, as identified by Lewis and Heckman, focuses on talent generically without any regard to specific positions or organizational boundaries. Within this perspective, there are two different points of view: the first focuses on talent with high potential or on high-performing talent (the recruitment and development of 'A-performers') and the second view states that everyone has their own talents and HR should help everyone achieve high performance.

These three perspectives show a tendency to concentrate on one single aspect of TM. Fortunately, another authoritative work in TM literature, wrote by Collings and Mellahi (2009), overcomes the deficiencies of other perspectives adopting a multiple-aspect approach to TM. They based their definition of TM on a combination of several theories on human capital and TM focusing on the relevance of key positions in the organizations (see Table 2.1 for the definition).

Most notably, a significant body of strategic HRM literature has pointed to the potential of human resources as a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Becker and Huselid, 2006), and argued that the resources and capabilities of talented individuals make up the firm's human capital pool (Cheese et al., 2008; Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Talent management includes a long list of HR processes and components, however, is more than a string of HR programs and processes, Gubman and Green (2007) claim the need for a shift from a programmatic approach (focus on initiative and activities) to a more systematic and integrated practice of managing talent in an organization. It is a new of thinking about, designing and implementing talent processes and systems. Boudreau and Ramstad (2007) propose that managing organizational talent and human capital should become a decision science like financial management, which they call it 'talentship'. They offer an analytical approach, based on a financial management model, to understanding the impact of business strategy on talent management and how investments in talent can provide strategic opportunities. Central to this interpretation is the use of evidence-based decision making regarding talent; however, because of the complex individual differences among people, it will be difficult for talent management to become a precise decision science. What is clear is that talent management systems and processes need to be strategically driven and fully integrated with each other. These qualities and others can take talent management efforts to much higher levels of effectiveness and greater organizational contributions (Silzer and Dowell, 2010).

The above review highlighted weaknesses and shortcomings in the literature of talent management, that have limited both scholarly work on the topic and its practical usefulness.

At this stage, it is of importance to summarize the dominant frameworks in the TM literature. In accordance with the review conducted by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) that defines four dominant frameworks, we consider all the body of the literature from the perspective of these four dominant theoretical frameworks, integrating them with other alternatives frameworks, building on the publications included in our literature review. The detailed exploration of this frameworks follows an order of frequency of their adoption.

- The first theoretical framework is the 'Resource based-view (RBV)' that is the most adopted in TM literature, where talent is interpreted as 'human capital' that is both highly valuable

and unique (Lepak and Snell, 1999). Uniqueness refers to what extent it is difficult to replace organization's human capital (high uniqueness) and it is on the opposite side easily copied by competitors (low uniqueness) (Lepak and Snell, 1999; De Vos and Dries, 2013). In addition, Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) have introduced the notion of 'pivotal positions', stressing that talent management is not only having the 'right' people but having them in positions that are of strategic importance to the organization. This is in line with the above definition (Table 2.1) of Collings and Mellahi (2009). The notion of workforce differentiation is central in the work of Huselid and Becker (2011) that conceptualized it as the practice of investing disproportionate amount of resources in employees or positions that promise to yield high return (Becker et al., 2009). The focus of research and practice is on the high-potential or high-performers. This framework interprets people as a source of sustainable competitive advantage, as organizational performance, that is the most common outcome of TM. Talent Management linked to performance posits the employee behavior as a crucial mediator and therefore, any successful TM strategy should aim to stimulate 'desired role behaviors' in employees (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). We found studies that move from the 'best practice' perspective- assuming that there is a universal configuration of TM practices that improve organizational performance- towards a 'best fit' perspective that takes into account the impact of the contexts, both internal and external, on the TM practices and outcomes (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008).

- The second theoretical framework is the 'international human resources management (IHRM)', that according to the review of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) is the second most prevalent in literature. The goal of IHRM is to help multinational companies (MNCs) be successful globally. According to Tarique and Schuler (2010), IHRM is about researching, applying and revising all HRM activities that impact the management of human resources in organizations across the globe to enhance the experience of multiple set of stakeholders. Articles adopting IHRM framework show as central construct 'global talent management' (GTM), rather than TM per se. A well-cited definition of GTM is present in the work of Scullion et al. (2010)- see Table 2.1. GTM studies encompass both typical TM practices, applied at an international level, and TM practices that are specific only to the context of

MNCs, such as the management of high-potential expatriates (Farndale et al., 2014). The underlying rationale assumption is that TM is more important and more challenging for MNCs than it is for 'local' companies, because of the higher levels of scale and complexity (McDonnell et al., 2010). Having IHRM as "a (primary or secondary) theoretical framework typically coincided with being coded as having an RBV and/or an institutionalist framework" (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015, p.271).

- The third framework is 'employee assessment' where the focus is on the identification of leadership talent; the other types of talent that employees should possess are less present in the literature (Church and Rotolo, 2013). This approach often coincides with the RBV framework (Dries et al., 2012b; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Studies with an employee assessment perspective on TM aspire to identify talent in a valid and reliable manner, promoting the use of standardized tools and methods for evaluating talent (Nijs et al., 2014). The literature on talent identification, therefore, tends to borrow concepts from industrial–organizational (I–O) psychology, especially from the literature on personnel selection and assessment centers (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Church and Rotolo (2013) posit that the identification of talent is often still based on rather 'unscientific' methods, and that any solid TM strategy should involve the establishment of an MTMM (i.e. multitrait multimethod matrix) talent assessment approach. Moreover, they suggest the combined use of 360-degree feedback, personality measures and face-to-face interviews as a best practice. A final topic within the employee assessment framework is employees' reactions to talent identification. Björkman et al. (2013) point out that talent identification can have a motivating effect on pivotal employees, indeed, employees who believe they are identified as talented by their organizations are more committed to improve their performance, to work on developing competences, to actively support their department's strategic priorities; moreover they have less turnover intentions than employees who believe they were not identified as talented. The authors draw attention on the fact that employees affirm that turnover intentions, in particular, will be strongly influenced by the extent to which organizations meet their high potentials' career expectations.

- The fourth most prevalent framework is ‘institutionalism’ that consists, on one hand, in the study of the impacts on institutions, such as cultures and organizations, caused by cognitive and normative principles and on the other hand in the study of the actors’ behaviors at lower levels, as result of the influence exerted in turn by those institutions —within the TM literature, mostly individual employees (Tarique and Schuler, 2010; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). More specifically, the research shows the attempt to examine how norms, schemas, rules and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for organizational behavior (Thunnissen et al., 2013a). In the TM literature, institutional theory is adopted to demonstrate how institutional factors, such as national and organizational culture, and existing power relations in organizations and labor markets, drive TM strategies, policies and practices (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). It is interesting to note that the majority of TM articles with an institutionalist framework have a more critical approach towards the notion of talent management than did other articles. The institutionalist framework often coincided with the IHRM framework, as culture is considered an important institutional factor in GTM (Hartmann et al., 2010). According to Boussebaa and Morgan (2008) therefore conclude that “by ignoring differences in institutional factors, the implementation of a transnational talent management system failed completely” (p. 25).

We found other alternative theoretical frameworks applied to TM such as:

- the ‘knowledge management (KM)’ that regards the knowledge, created and applied in a firm, as fundamental function and that is the result of collective learning (Vivas-López et al., 2011);
- the ‘career management (CM)’ that refers to all interventions to define careers’ paths in organizations, not only by the individual’s viewpoints but also, formally and informally, by their managers—this is reflected in the main distinction made between organizational career management (OCM) and career self-management (CSM) (De Vos and Dries, 2013);
- the ‘social exchange theory’ focuses on the reciprocal relationships, interactions and mutual ‘felt obligations’ between employees and their employers (Festing and Schäfer, 2014). Typical themes among TM research with a social exchange framework are psychological contract breach (Dries and De Gieter, 2014) and perceived organizational justice (Gelens et al., 2014);

-the 'strength-based approach' points out with the notion of workforce differentiation as a crucial issue to TM. The aim is to focus on the fulfillment of the natural potential of all employees, stating that everyone should benefit of the organizational opportunities, resources and support to apply and exploit the maximum of their capacities (Dries, 2013a). The main outcomes are positive psychological and physical health, which in turn are believed to increase employee productivity and, hence, organizational performance (Nijs et al., 2014).

The analysis of the theoretical frameworks synthesized above offers a general understanding of the research in the field. However, the debate in TM literature is marked by other issues and tensions. One of the main discussions that we have to take into account is about the inclusive versus exclusive approach to talent management (Garavan et al., 2012). It appears a crucial point because influences and shapes the design and the implementation of TM process (i.e. talent identification and development). The topic of talent management started for key positions and high-potential individuals, for a small portion of population and hence with an exclusive approach. In recent years, it is becoming more focused on a broad band of people. In fact also McKinsey Consulting Group, that opened the current debate on TM with its proclamation, at the beginning applied an exclusive approach and now advocates a more inclusive approach that develops not just 'A players' but also 'B players' (Ernst and Young, 2010). The inclusive approach suggests that all individuals should be regarded as great talent given their potential that could be enhance and develop. This approach is more common in public sector organizations, as a study reported in Public Personnel Management (Reilly, 2008), because it is very costly and time consuming to focus on the development of all individuals. In most of the organizations there is a great emphasis on this topic but only few adopt an inclusive approach. Nowadays more organizations are interested in improving the effectiveness of all employees and broadly include larger numbers of employees in development efforts. The maximizing approach of organizations and consultants (Smart, 1999) suggests that the organization benefits in many ways by hiring the best talent possible in every position. We found in Bersin (2010) an approach that is consistent with an innovation prospective on talent (Christensen et al., 2009), it calls the inclusive approach a form of talent segmentation but with the recognition that all groups of employees have an important contribution to

organizational success (Garavan et al., 2012). The mixture of exclusive and inclusive approaches is generally adopted as demonstrated by the practitioners (Silzer and Dowell, 2010) and scholars, that add, moreover, the argument that the hybrid approach may be more appropriate in terms of fairness and employee motivation (Ford et al., 2010). At the present in literature only in some cases “the talent” might refer to the entire employee population given their potential to generate added value.

The crucial issue that generate most of the tensions and discussion in TM literature is the definition of talent that affect all the design and the implementation of the talent management.

An increasing number of authors (e.g., Garrow and Hirsh, 2008; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Reilly, 2008; Tansley et al., 2007) attribute the ambiguity inherent to the TM construct to the inadequate operationalization of the underlying construct talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Quite surprisingly, TM scholars are rarely precise about what exactly they mean by talent, probably because there are widely held implicit theories about what talent is (Barab and Plucker, 2002). In fact, in many articles (e.g., Collings and Mellahi, 2009; O’Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000) and books (e.g., Cappelli, 2008; Lawler, 2008) about TM, talent as an underlying construct is taken for granted and thus not defined explicitly.

In HRM literature, both academic and practitioners, we find a great deal of organizationally specific definitions of talent, highly influenced by the type of industry or nature of work occupational field (Tansley et al., 2007).

In what follows, we first offer a discussion of the etymology of the term ‘talent’ and its linguistic evolution over time, with the purpose to shed some light on contemporary usage of the term in organizational settings (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012). Subsequently, we discuss different approaches to the conceptualization of talent within the world of work, considering different frameworks and then move on to discuss the implications of these different approaches for talent management theory and practice.

2.4 The definition of talent

Starting from the etymological history of the term

The term talent is everywhere. It is widespread use in the headlines of newspapers, journals and magazines. A simple Google search for the term Talent returns 525 million at the beginning of the 2016 and it was over 24 million results in the 2012 (Minbaeva, 2013), this shows a big and continuous increase of debates and popularity. The discovery and the development of talent is crucial topic in several performance domains such as sport, education, music, dance and entertainment. The term brings up over 55 million YouTube-videos of extraordinary music or dance performances on talent shows such as Idols, X-factor and Got Talent. In everyday parlance, talent is typically associated with people of extraordinary ability. Finding a clear definition is like “opening a can of worms” (Honey, 2004, p.11) and in the work context the situation is quite the same. The history of the word talent could represent a possible explanation for this conceptual ambiguity, considering the different acceptation that it had in its historical existence and that varied greatly with time, people and locality (Tansley, 2011; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).

However, the quest for talent is timeless.

Iles (2013) suggests that talent management field of research should broaden its scope to include cultural and language issues in the (social) construction of ‘talent’. We will start with the detailed exploration of the meaning of talent, following its changes overtime to have an in depth and complementary insight to the complex area of the definition of talent, especially in relation with the tension about talent interpreting it as a subject (talents as people) versus object (talented people).

The term talent dates back to ancient and biblical times, starting out as measure of weight used by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greek and Romans (Cresswell, 2009). The ancient Greek word *tálanon* [τάλαντον], which means “balance, weight, sum of money” (Hoad, 1996; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Initially it referred to a unit of weight, it corresponded to the mass of water required to fill an amphora, although its value differed depending on the region. In Ancient Greece was the equivalent of 25.86 kg (Howatson, 2011). Then it became a unit of currency, referring to the value equivalent to this mass of a precious metal -mostly, silver- (Howatson and Chilvers, 1996). Later

became a unit of money when monetary value was attributed to one talent of metal (gold, silver, iron or bronze) and corresponded to 60 minas or 6,000 drachmas (Howatson, 2011). This was an enormous amount of money since at that time 3.5 drachmas was the normal wage for a week's work (Darvill, 2008) and 50 minas (i.e. less than one was seen as the amount pay for a very large house- an ordinary dwelling could be bought for three minas (Howatson, 2011). Hence, talents were exclusive and only rich people had them (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).

The 'talent' became a coin as The Parable of the Talents in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament (25: 14–30) attests to the value attributed to talent.

“The parable talks about a wealthy man who, before going on a long journey, gives his three servants one, two, and five talents respectively—based on his perception of each of their abilities—for safekeeping. The servants who received five and two talents both use their coins well, doubling their value through hard work and trading. The servant who was given only one talent, however—afraid to lose his coin and anger his master—buries his coin in the ground. After an extended absence, the master returns, commending the two servants who doubled their talents as good and faithful (and rewarding them by letting them keep their profits), whilst calling the servant who had buried his coin wicked and slothful, and ordering him to hand over his one talent to the servant who has most” (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, p.292).

According to Tansley (2011), the man of the parable gave talents “according to his ability” and it could be seen as the origin of the current meaning of talent as a natural aptitude or skill. This may be the origin of the conceptualization of talent as a valuable thing and it allows some authors to state that “talent ... is and has always been to 'put value' in something” (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012, p.7).

In the Middle Ages the term talent acquired new meanings in Europe, an evident shift from economic capital to human capital but maintaining the exclusive characteristic of talent. As time has passed, the term has definitely grown in abstraction. In the 13th century, talent meant “inclination, disposition”, this highlights that at the beginning the behavioral component of talent was evident indeed in Old French was will and desire (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). After in the

14th we find the sense “mental endowment or aptitude” developed from the use of the word in the Parable of the Talents.

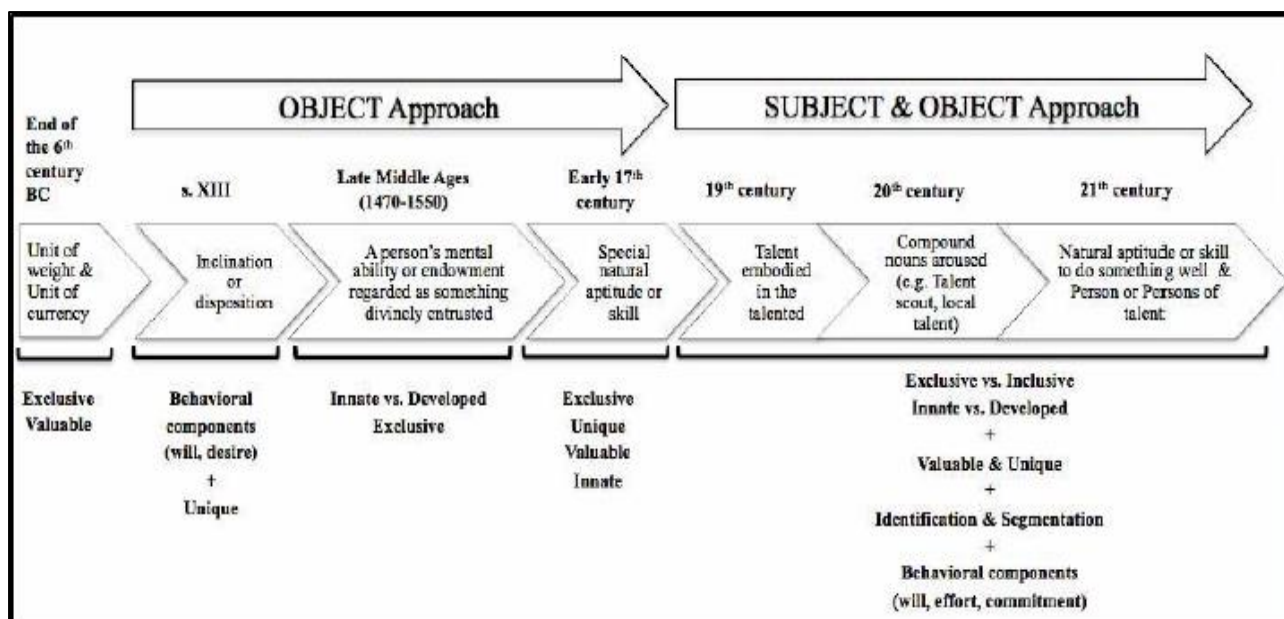
Later, in the 15th and the 16th century talent was seen as an extraordinary ability or a gift from God for personal use and improvement (Hoad, 1996; Knowles, 2005). This interpretation of talent was strongly influenced by Christian interpretations of the Parable of the Talents, which did not only stress the innate nature of talent, but also the fact that it is a person's duty to use and improve the talents gifted to them by God. This interpretation find resonance in the milestone work of Michaels et al. (2001) where we find “talent is a gift that must be cultivated, not left to languish” (2001, xiii). The same meaning was maintained also in the 17th but without a strong link with the divinity. The Parable has often been interpreted as if only few people were considered to be divinely entrusted with specific talents, and with this perspective the Parable contributed to exclusive interpretations of the term talent. In this interpretation lies the origin of talent being conceptualized as an inborn gift or natural aptitude (Gagné, 2000).

By the 19th century talent started to regard a person referring to talented people as those able to demonstrate extraordinary accomplishments in mental (the ‘genius’) and physical domains, talent as inborn aptitudes and skills possessed by special people—but without referring to divinity (Knowles, 2005). According to Tansley (2011), talent “was viewed as embodied in the talented—hence, a person of talent and ability” (p. 267). Here, we encounter for the first time a ‘subject’ approach to talent (i.e. talent as people), rather than an ‘object’ approach, which conceptualizes talent as characteristics of people. Over the course of the 20th century some new terms arose, for example, since the 1930s we found ‘talent scout’ (or spotter) is used to designate a person searching for new talent (Cresswell, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo et al.2013). We can affirm that “the first principle of talent management became apparent” (Thunissen et al., 2013a, p.8). Furthermore, at the beginning talent represented an economic value and therefore it was an equivalent of capital and since the New English Bible translates the Greek word ‘talent’ into the word ‘capital’, the parable of talents can be seen as one of the explanation of the reason why HR people use the term ‘human capital’ as synonymous to talent. (Tansley, 2011 p.267).

Looking for the term ‘talent’ in Contemporary English Dictionaries we find that ‘object’ and ‘subject’ approaches to the conceptualization of talent coincide, which could contribute to the confusion about what talent exactly is. Taking into account the linguistic evolution of the term talent, described earlier, we infer that the original meaning of the term talent refers to personal characteristics- talent as object (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). In English, as well as in other European languages, talent is typically first described as an innate ability that manifests in a particular field (Tansley, 2011). It is commonly understood as above-average ability for a specific function or range of functions. Rather than corresponding to ‘normal’ ability, talent is considered a special ability that makes the people who possess, develop, and use it rise out above the rest of their age peers in the specific area of their talent (Gagné, 2000). Consequently, talent is often equated to excellent performance in a given performance domain.

Nowadays, the Oxford Dictionary of English (2nd ed. revised) defines the term talent as “a natural aptitude or skill” and, also, “people possessing natural aptitude or skill”. Moreover, the Collins Thesaurus (2nd ed.) associates talent with words like ability, gift, aptitude, power, skill, facility, capacity, bent, genius, expertise, faculty endowment, flair and knack. Thus far, talent refers to nonphysical human traits, however “people often use it just to mean excellent performance or to describe those who are terrific performers” (Colvin, 2010, p.20).

Table 2.2: *The meanings of talent over time (adopted from Gallardo-Gallardo., 2012)*



In recent times talent was prominent in the domain of music, sport or science, but since McKinsey and Company group has conducted the research the 'War of Talent' in 1997 (Michaels et al., 2001) talent has also been on the strategic agenda of the organizations. In the last decade, talent management has become a key management issue and one of the most common terms in the managerial lexicon. Several studies so far have been premised on the idea of talent shortages as a formidable challenge that organizations and business leaders have to face (Paauwe 2007; Deloitte 2010). So even though there is currently a global economic slowdown organizations have come to the realization that in order to gain and sustain a global competitive advantage they consider finding talented people the most important managerial preoccupation (Tarique and Shuler, 2010).

The literature review conducted shows that the half of the articles contain a definition of talent. The other publications lacked a clear definition of talent.

Talent is currently used in a number of different ways, both in everyday parlance and in the workplace, which leads to conceptual ambiguity. In fact, the term is not unambiguously defined but it is simply taken as understood. In the 2006 on *The Economist* appeared that "companies do not even know how to define 'talent', let alone how to manage it". In the 2007 the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)—Europe's largest HR and development professional organism—stated that "the starting point for any research into talent management must inevitably be an exploration of what is meant by 'talent'" (p.3). One year later Maxwell and MacLean (2008) posited that "whatever the meaning/s of TM, it is a concept that centres on 'talent' which, in turn, needs to be defined" (p.822). This is a crucial issue since Blass (2009) draws attention on the importance of how an organization chooses to define talent to how successful its TM system will be (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012). The conceptualization of talent has become increasingly relevant for scholars and practitioners to make advances in the study of TM (Thunnissen, et al., 2013a; Tansley, 2011 and Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012). In the literature, less effort has been made to define the concept of talent than to define talent management, and no single definition of talent exists (Ashton and Morton, 2005; Blass et al., 2006; Cappelli, 2008b; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Thunnissen et al., 2013a). Hence companies have different practices of talent management and different definitions of talent (CIPD, 2013). In the literature on TM a cornucopia of talent definitions and opinions emerges. As Hatum states, "it seems that everyone

has their own idea of what the word talent describes or captures” (2010, p.10). The most discernable explanation is that “organizations find greater value in formulating their own meaning of what talent is than accepting universal or prescribed definitions” (Tansley et al. 2007, p.7). Hence, definitions are organizationally specific and highly influenced by industry type and the nature of the work dynamic. In accordance with Scott and Revis (2008, p.783), this happens because of the ability to fit and tailor the talent concept around organizational goals, leading organizations to prefer ‘local value’. A different explanation could be that companies think about talent in terms of “the competences needed and, since the competency catalogue is different and specific for each and every organization, the definition of talent is local” (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012, p.4).

Table 2.3: Definitions of talent

Source	Definition of talent
2000 Williams	“describe those people who do one or other of the following: regularly demonstrate exceptional ability-and achievement- either over a range of activities and situations, or within a specialized and narrow field of expertise; consistently indicate high competence in areas of activity that strongly suggest transferable, comparable ability in situations where they have yet to be tested and proved to be highly effective, i.e. potential.” (p. 35)
2001 Buckingham and Vosburgh	“Talent should refer to a person’s recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied.” (p. 21)
2001 Michaels et al.	“(…) the sum of a person’s abilities -his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow.” (p. xii)
2006 Lewis and Heckman	“(…) is essentially a euphemism for ‘people’” (p. 141)
2006 Tansley et al.	“Talent can be considered as a complex amalgam of employees’ skills, knowledge, cognitive ability and potential. Employees’ values and work preferences are also of major importance.” (p. 2)
2007 Stahl et al.	“a select group of employees- those that rank at the top in terms of capability and performance- rather than the entire workforce”. (p. 4)
2007 Tansley et al.	“Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential.” (p. 8)
2007 Ulrich	“Talent equals competence [able to do the job] times commitment [willing to do the job] times contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their work]” (p. 3)

2007	Glen	"is a product of ability (competence, education, training and experience) coupled with motivation (engagement, satisfaction, challenge and wellness) and opportunity".
2008	Cheese et al.	"Essentially, talent means the total of all the experience, knowledge, skills, and behaviours that a person has and brings to work." (p. 46)
2010	Silzer and Dowell	"In groups talent can refer to a pool of employees who are exceptional in their skills and abilities either in a specific technical area (such as software graphics skills) or a competency (such a consumer marketing talent), or a more general area (such as general managers or high-potential talent). And in some cases, "the talent" might refer to the entire employee population." (pp. 13-14)
2010	Silzer and Dowell	"An individual's skills and abilities (talents) and what the person is capable of doing or contributing to the organization." (p. 14)
2012	Bethke-Langenegger	"we understand talent to be one of those worker who ensures the competitiveness and future of a company (as specialist or leader) through his organisational/job specific qualification and knowledge, his social and methodical competences, and his characteristic attributes such as eager to learn or achievement oriented" (p. 3)
2012	Ulrich and Smallwood	"Talent = competence [knowledge, skills and values required for todays' and tomorrows' job; right skills, right place, right job, right time] x commitment [willing to do the job] x contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their job]" (p. 60)

Traditionally, talent is defined as a competence or quality carried by an individual. Multiple variations exist in how the term 'talent' is defined in the literature as well as across organizations, industries and sectors (CIPD, 2013).

Nevertheless, despite the enormous number of articles and books on talent management, there is little evidence of truly understanding and little consensus about the talent concept. In fact, in many articles and books addressing talent from a managerial point of view, and even in some reference works, this concept is not defined but it is simply taken as granted (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012). Moreover, as Mäkelä et al. (2010, p.135) note, "the existing literature appears to focus more on talent management practices (the 'how') and a general prescription to search for talent globally rather than the question of 'who' and 'why' someone in practice becomes or does not become to be considered as talent".

According to the literature review of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2012) there are two dimensions that are crucial in the definition of talent. They proposed a distinction between a subject approach (talent as people) and object approach (talent as a characteristic of people such as abilities, knowledge and/or competences). This is a crucial tension in literature and the etymological

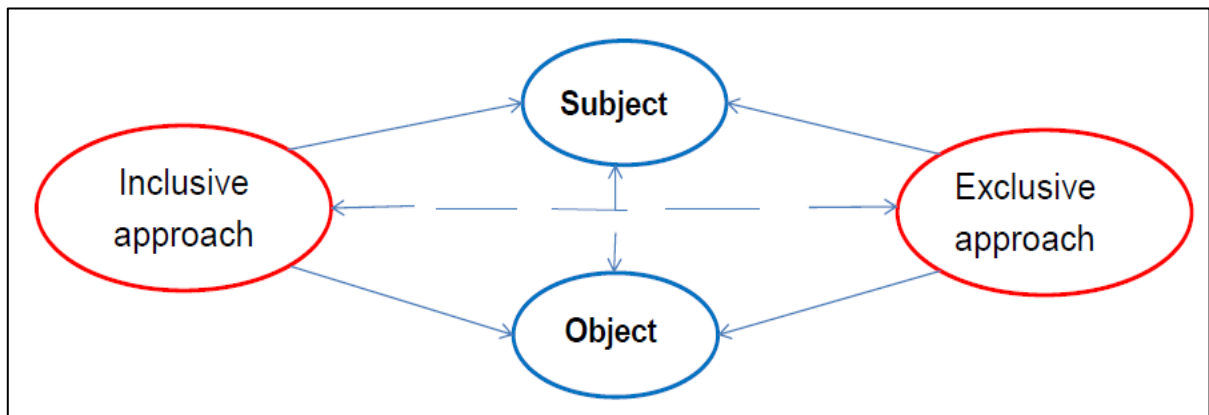
analysis, described above, about the changes in the meaning of talent over time, helps to have a clear understanding of the subject versus object discussion about talent.

Definitions can be even more divided into an inclusive approach -all employees- or an exclusive approach -a select group- (Powell et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2012). According to Sparrow et al., (2011) and Stahl et al. (2012) organizations use both the inclusive and exclusive approach, although the exclusive criterion seems to be most preferred. In global TM we found that many companies used a combination of both (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). Stahl et al. (2012) claim that ‘a hybrid approach allows for differentiation and skirts the controversial issue of whether some employee groups are more valuable than others’ (p.26). Collings and Mellahi (2009) also highlight the importance of a differentiated HR architecture.

In what follows we discuss the ‘tensions’ that we found in the publications included in our literature review.

Taken together these dimensions, that represent different definitions of talent, we combine the fundamental distinction of the inclusive versus exclusive approach with the other main tension, subjective versus objective, defining four main typologies, according to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2012)- as Table 2.4 summarizes.

Table 2.4: *Different dimensions that influence talent definition*



1. SUBJECT + EXCLUSIVE= the first typology based on Gallardo- Gallardo et al. (2012) concerns the exclusive approach to talent as a subject, is based on segmentation or differentiation of a small segment of the workforce. In this approach, talent refers to those employees who

rank at the top in terms of capability and performance and who make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the organization (e.g.; Stahl et al., 2007; Davies and Davies, 2010). These employees are often called A-players, high performers or high potentials. This has been the approach adopted at the beginning of TM existence as the McKinsey study (Michaels et al., 2001) attests focusing on the stars (“A” players).

One can differentiate the workforce by excellent performing individuals, positions or functions. Some authors state that TM should concentrate on key (or pivotal) positions, namely those positions that differentially contribute to the organization’s sustainable competitive advantage. The focus should be on strategic jobs or jobs that can provide an above-average impact over non-strategic jobs and jobs with marginal impact (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Lepak and Snell (2002), Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Collings and Mellahi (2009) apply the concepts of value, rareness, inimitability and uniqueness based on the resource based view (Wright et al., 2001) to determine which jobs are strategic and have an above-average impact. A commonly used differentiation is based on executive functions; but some studies offer a more profound description of the positions that TM should focus on (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Becker et al., 2009; Collings and Mellahi, 2009). This definition of talent comprehends also the high potentials, according to Silzer and Church (2009), potential can be defined as “the modifiability of unobservable structures that have not as yet become actual, or exist in possibility, capable of development in actuality (...) the possibility that individuals can become something more than what they currently are (...) it implies further growth and development to reach some desired end state (...) In work environments, potential is typically used to suggest that an individual has the qualities (e.g., characteristics, motivation, skills, abilities, and experiences) to effectively perform and contribute in broader or different roles in the organization at some point in the future” (p. 379). Whatever distinction is made, based on person or on position, the present interpretation of talent (‘exclusive-subject’ approach) emphasizes selection and output in terms of (potential) performance. This interpretation benefit of the ‘Matthew Effect’- i.e., the effect whereby the investment of disproportionate

resources to the high-performers in organization yield higher return on investment (Bothner et al., 2011) and the Pygmalion effect-i.e., the effect whereby expectation of performance determines actual performance, because it impact on motivation and self-esteem (McNatt, 2000). This typology has attracted adverse comments. Pfeffer (2001) claims that an exclusive approach to top performers, 'the happy few' (Keegan and Boselie, 2006), will lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy in reverse, as in, those labeled as less able become less able because they are asked to do less and get fewer resources (training, mentoring, et cetera), so they will not be able to develop themselves. Another point of criticism is the overemphasis on individual performance. Pfeffer (2001) thinks it is hazardous for the organization because it diminishes teamwork and creates a destructive internal competition that hinders learning and the spread of best practice across the organization.

- SUBJECT + INCLUSIVE= The second typology, the inclusive approach to talent as a subject and is addressed by authors who understand talent as the entire workforce of an organization. According to Peters (2006) there is no reason not to consider each employee as talented. The inclusive approach to talent is commonly justified in the literature using the argument that in knowledge-based economies companies cannot achieve profits (or succeed otherwise) without their people (Tulgan, 2002). In today's business environment, it is mostly employees—i.e., not technology, not factories or not capital—that are believed to create value for organizations, they are now the main determinant of organizational performance (Crain, 2009; Gallardo et al., 2013). This definition is usually found in strength-based approach to TM- i.e. the art of recognizing where each employee's area of natural talent lie, and figure out how to help each employee develop the job-specific skills and knowledge to turn those talents into real performance" (Buckingham and Vosburgh, 2001, p.22). According to this approach, every employee has his or her own strengths and thus, can potentially create added value for the organization. Inclusive, strength-based approaches to talent are believed to benefit from what is called the 'Mark Effect'-i.e. by treating everyone in the organization as equal, a more pleasant, collegial and motivating work climate is created (Bothner et al., 2011). The terms talent and people or human

capital are interchangeable, as in, for example, the definition of Cheese et al., (2008) "talent, therefore, is used as an all-encompassing term to describe the human resources that organizations want to acquire, retain and develop in order to meet their business goals" (p. 46). In this view is very difficult to distinguish between TM and SHRM. According to this interpretation, TM is a collection of typical HR processes such as recruitment, selection, development, training, performance appraisal and retention (Iles et al., 2010; Silzer and Dowell, 2010)—although some authors might add that TM refers to doing them faster and/or better (Lewis and Heckman, 2006). This typology has been criticized for being too broad and as completely meaningless (Lewis and Heckman 2006; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012).

- OBJECT + EXCLUSIVE= The third interpretation of talent, the exclusive approach to talent as an object, concentrates on those employees in the organization who have exceptional, above average abilities, and who are able to apply those abilities to achieve excellent performance. According to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2012) and Tansley (2011), it is difficult to separate the exceptional abilities from performance. In order to achieve exceptional results, employees must apply their above-average, differentiated competences. A talented employee is a committed employee, and hence, has to be willing to put their energy and effort into doing job. Moreover, scholars like Collings and Mellahi (2009), Ulrich and Ulrich (2010), Boudreau and Ramstad (2005), Martin and Schmidt (2010), Tansley (2011) and Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2012) stress the importance of elements such as (job and organizational) commitment, engagement and aspiration to put up an extraordinary performance now and in future positions. This conceptualization is often related to the interpretation of talent as a natural ability, most HRM scholars and practitioners seem to believe that talent is innate, at least to some extent.

According to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) the 'exclusive object' interpretation of talent is related to the AMO-framework (Appelbaum et al., 2000), which proposes that employee performance (P) is a function of the employee's ability (A), motivation (M) and opportunity (O) to perform. TM should give talented employees, with outstanding abilities, and who are

highly motivated, the opportunity to develop themselves and to achieve a high performance

- OBJECT + INCLUSIVE= The fourth typology of talent, the inclusive approach and talent as an object, allows every employee to reach his or her potential (Ashton and Morton 2005; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012). It can be characterized as a positive approach to HRM in which the development and training of the exceptional abilities (i.e. talents) of all employees is emphasized. Gallardo et al. (2013) in their analysis specify that talent as an object could be, either with exclusive or inclusive approach: a natural ability, innate characteristics, hardly to teach or learn; a mastery (where the focus is the deliberate practice and learning from experience) with an overlap with the literature on competence; a commitment, related to will, perseverance, motivation, interest and passion; as a fit refers to the fit between individual's talent and the work context. In their review different elements of talent are seen as multiplicative—e.g., “talent =competence × commitment × contribution”—such that high scores on one element (e.g., commitment) cannot compensate for low scores on another (e.g., competence) (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2012).

In summary, scholars are divided on whether or not to differentiate the workforce, and if so, on what basis (talent as an object or a subject). Despite different interpretations of talent, scholars agree on the impact of the context on the exact and precise description of talent. Talent is not absolute, it is relative and subjective. The mix of differentiating competences and abilities varies according to the organizational environment (e.g., sector, labor market, customer orientation), the type of work, the internal and external circumstances of an organization and across time (Ashton and Morton, 2005; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; McCauley and Wakefield, 2006; Tansley, 2011; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012).

If we go through the previous definitions, we can logically argue that the term talent is merely understood as people having some exceptional skills and abilities and/or are outperformers. In other words, talent is defining talented people (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, p.15).

Traditionally, the term talent within the corporate world has been associated with leadership and executive talent, but today it is associated with a broader group of people who are of strategic importance to the company. The challenge in defining the concept of talent is well described by Tansley (2011, p.266):

“...choosing a definition of talent is no easy task, not least because there are number of ways in which talent may be defined within a particular organization. For example, a common notion of organizational talent refers to those who are identified as having the potential to reach high levels of achievement. It is clear that certain pitfalls have to be avoided in settling on a definition of talent. For instance, we must beware of having a restrictive definition as this could make it impossible to find evidence to characterize talent. But then, some definitions of talent are so vague that one is forced to ask what the point is of using the term ‘talent’ at all. Why not use any other human resourcing term, such as ‘skills’ or ‘knowledge’ or ‘competences’?”

The definition of talent must be fitted to the particular organizational context, but in any case it cannot be too narrow or too broad, then it becomes meaningless. Recent talent management literature to a large extent emphasizes the context of talent and the reality that defines the particular talent practice in the particular organizational context (Tansley, 2011). The ‘best fit’ approach (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015) allow to take into account the context in the appropriate and adequate way, without too much rigidity.

2.5 Conclusions

We can conclude that in spite of its growing popularity and more than two decades of debate, however, the construct of TM suffers from conceptual confusion in that there is a serious lack of clarity regarding its definition, scope and overall goals (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007). The lack of theoretical foundations and conceptual development in the TM literature can be attributed in part to the fact that most of the literature in this field is practitioner- or consultancy-based (Illes et al., 2010). This generated in the literature a focus on practices (the ‘how’) rather than

on 'who' is considered talented and 'why'. Although at present there is limited consensus on to the definition of TM and talent, and the appropriate methods to study these constructs, the academic literature on TM is noticeably expanding from year to year (Thunnissen et al., 2013a), apparently unhindered by the common claim "lack of theory" (Reilly, 2008, p. 381).

A recent and innovative perspective is the consideration of the literature on TM categorized as phenomenon-driven, as opposed to theory-driven (Dries, 2013b). Von Krogh et al. (2012) identify two interdependent indications of a topic of study qualifying as a 'phenomenon': first, there is not a current available theory with enough scope to account for the phenomenon or for relevant cause-and-effect relationships associated with it; and second, there is not research design or methodology superior to others in exploring the different aspects of the phenomenon. Traditional theory-driven research follows a process whereby hypotheses are developed based on gaps detected within the current knowledge of a field—guided by established definitions, operationalizations, and measures. Phenomenon-driven research takes a different route (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015), one that "starts with the generation of facts, most typically from large-sample analysis, that can inform us as to what we need a theory for [...] Then, as we get into exploring the whys and hows, a combination of quantitative and qualitative studies will be fruitful" (Hambrick, 2007, p. 1349). There are four developmental stages: embryonic, growth, mature and declined (von Krogh et al., 2012).

Taking together the above considerations with the fact that TM emerged as a 'hot topic' in human resource (HR) practice almost a decade before it became an academic topic of interest (Chambers et al., 1998), as Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) highlight, concluding that TM as a field is, indeed, phenomenon-driven, it opens new perspectives for future research and theory development.

Considering the TM research field from a phenomenon-driven approach means that although the field is quite young, indeed the first mention of the TM phenomenon is in the 1998, talent management is nevertheless facing the challenge of transition from 'growing' to a 'mature' field of study.

The growing stage occurs when a phenomenon is visible to a larger academic community, with journals publishing special issues reviewing the relevant correlated literature, and when it is

established a 'core' scientific TM community constituted by recurring authors and editor teams. This stage is characterized by the existence of an increasing number of research methods, with the attempt to capture different aspects of the phenomenon investigated. The annual conference on TM, sponsored by the European Institute for Advance Studies in Management (EIASM), and the convergence of the publications in three main journals (i.e. Journal of World Business, International Journal of Human Resource Management and Human Resource Management Review) confirmed the 'growing' stage.

This could mean that the field of research has overcome the academic debate if the TM is still in its infancy or adolescence (Thunnissen et al., 2013a), and it reflects that in fact the reality usually evolves more and more fast than the theoretical conceptualization.

In this chapter, we gave an overview of the TM field, describing frameworks and tensions that characterized the open debate. The 'best fit' approach seems to be the more appropriate because it allows to choose the adequate frameworks and also to combine them on the base of the context. The tensions, analyzed above, are still present in the discussions but in the reality of the practice the opposite inclusive versus exclusive approach is overcome with the wide spread mixed or hybrid approach that build a bridge between these two opposite interpretations of the TM (Silzer and Dowell, 2010; Stahl et al., 2012). Furthermore, the other main tension, object versus subject, could be solved interpreting this contrast more as a tautological issue, since talented people could be talent and vice versa (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012).

A final and practical interesting viewpoint on many of these conceptualizations of TM is the interpretation of TM as a transformation process (input, process and output). From this perspective talent(s) represents the input. The HR practices constitute the 'process' and the development of it (them) the desired output. In accordance with the three elements of the transformation process, three central issues emerge in publications on TM: the definition of talent (issue 1), the intended effects and outcomes of TM (issue 2) and the TM practices (issue 3) necessary to obtain the intended outcomes (Thunnissen et al., 2013a, p.1749). In the following chapters (4, 5, 6 and 7), that constitute the empirical part of the present study, we will discuss these aspects in more detail

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Chapter 3

The relevance of the context: the link between talent and employability in the Italian University

3.1 Introduction

The analysis of the literature review done in the previous chapter has shown that finding talented people is one of the most important managerial preoccupation for this decade (Stahl et al., 2012). The competition for talent is increasingly intensifying and also Higher Education (HE) institutes in Europe have to confront with this issue. Education and training have recently been re-conceptualized through human capital theory as primarily economic actors, playing an important role in the strengthening of the European position in the global knowledge economy (Enders et al., 2011). It has been argued that the overall economic performance of Western countries is ever more directly related to their knowledge stock and learning capabilities (Foray and Lundvall, 1996; Bridgstock, 2009). Also for universities the 'human resources' are the most valuable asset for the success of the organization (Van den Brink et al., 2013). Hence, for excellence in research and education the availability of talented, creative, innovative and enthusiastic student is crucial (Florida, 1999).

All over the world universities are increasingly required to produce highly skilled graduates, able to respond to the ever changing and complex needs of the contemporary workplace (Sleezer et al., 2004; Possa, 2006; Bridgstock, 2009). It has been revealed an increasingly wide 'gap' between the skills and capabilities of graduates and the requirements and demands of the work environment (King, 2003; Yunus and Li, 2005; Andrews and Higson, 2008). Governments (particularly in the UK, Australia and Canada) have made public funding for universities bound up with demonstrable graduate outcomes and with an emphasis on the production of 'work ready' graduates (Barrie, 2006; Bowden et al., 2000), defined by Bridgstock (2009) as "who are competent within their disciplinary fields and possess the abilities necessary to negotiate a world of work that is in constant flux" (p.31).

The HE institutions have to face the significant change that occurred in the labor market policy orientation from job security and structural workforce interventions to a position of 'employability security' (Opengart and Short, 2002), where individual workers must constantly adapt to the rapid changes and requirements of the work environments, including emerging technologies (Butterwick and Benjamin, 2006; Bridgstock, 2009). These policy shifts have affected both the meaning of employability and the tertiary education sector in fundamental ways. European universities, in order to handle these challenges, are engaged with the definition of activities and instruments to attract, develop and retain excellent students (Van den Brink et al., 2013). In order to make the European HE system more competitive, a growing attention on to quality and excellence is emerging, combined with transparency, accountability and efficiency (Enders et al., 2011). A 'war for talent' is unavoidably bound up with this shift towards competition and excellence.

3.2 Research method

In the following analysis we have done a quality narrative overview of the literature synthesizing the findings of literature retrieved from searches of computerized databases, hand searches and authoritative texts (Green et al., 2006). The authoritative electronic databases 'Scopus' and 'Web of Science' were searched for a more detailed search to collect academic literature on TM. These databases were chosen because they are multidisciplinary and they give access to a broad variety of academic journals and publications. Keywords were identified in our search: Talent Management and Employability, Higher Education and Employability. The search was bound from the 2015 backwards. We restricted our search to English-language publications in peer-reviewed academic journals that mentioned 'talent management' along with 'higher education' and 'employability' in their title, abstract, or keywords, excluding specific types of publications such as brief communications and commentaries, editorial notes and book reviews. There is a large amount of conceptual literature, empirical studies and policy documents on universities in Europe and Italy. We selected the most cited publications according to Google Scholar, Web of Science and Scopus and starting from these we adopted a 'backtracking' method (i.e. review of the reference lists of the selected articles). Although we have obtained a list that is not exhaustive, we are

confident that it is at least representative of the cross-sectorial domain of talent and employability in the higher education institutions.

We added some documents and publications that refers to the strategic future development of the University in Italy, of the European Community, ANVUR, ELPGN and OECD in order to have a comprehensive overview of the state of art' of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in relation with the labor market and hence with the graduates' employability.

3.3 Findings

3.3.1 Internal context: Italian state University

The analysis of the context is important both for the definition of talent as for the consequent TM. In fact, it often occurred that the talent management policies tend to copy, on one hand, the model of the elite and private American universities, especially for the tenure track system (Van den Brink et al., 2013) and on the other hand, the TM policies of large multinationals. There is a big debate about whether these approaches and policies can be copied just as 'best practices' by organizations in other contexts, or if a different approach, like the 'best-fit' (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008; Van den Brink et al., 2013), that take into account the specific characteristics of the organization along with the external environment, as aspects that could affect the shaping of HRM policies and activities (Paauwe, 2004; Boxall et al., and 2007). The circumstances and characteristics of the European HE institutes are different from the American, and, moreover, there is a significant difference between public and private sector organizations (Christensen et al.2007). This implies that in studying and implementing TM policies in the University organization, the specific characteristics of the organization have to be taken into account.

For an appropriate understanding of the context it is therefore necessary to acknowledge the importance of that local dimension and to address the context of universities in one single country. This section therefore focuses on the context of a public funded University in Italy.

The universities are recognized as key actors in the pursuit of the European Agenda (Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020), that engaged Europe in becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based market in the world by 2020. Indeed, the Europe 2020 Strategy and the new Integrated Guidelines put knowledge at the heart of the Union's efforts for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2011). The European Commission is promoting the modernization process of HE with a call to action for IHEs in order to fulfill their crucial role in society. The agenda for the modernization of Europe's HE system (European Commission, 2011) underlines the need to improve the numbers of graduate students, the quality and relevance of developing human capital in HE by involving employers and labor market institutions in the design and delivery of study programs. The aim is also the promotion of practical experiences, internationalization and a great variety of study modalities "part-time, distance, and modular learning, continuing education for adult returners and others already in the labor market" (Fedeli et al., 2014, p.35). Moreover, the European Union encourages Member States and HEIs "[to make] the knowledge triangle work: linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development" (p. 7). This suggestion underlines a crucial aspect that makes it "the development of entrepreneurial, creative and innovation skills in all disciplines and in all academic programs, and promote innovation in higher education through more interactive learning environments and strengthened knowledge-transfer infrastructure" (p. 7). This implies encouraging in developing and strengthening partnerships and cooperation with the business world. The document advocates the need for "putting Higher Education at the center of innovation, job creation and employability" (p. 12). In accordance with Fedeli et al., (2014) this aim could be achieved through various activities supported by European funds (e.g. knowledge alliances between universities and business, mobility of teaching staff and students, etc.). Finally, the report highlights, "Higher education institutions and national policy makers in partnership with students should establish counseling, guidance, mentoring and tracking systems to support students into higher education, and on their way to graduation and beyond" (p. 45).

Hence universities have a key role for the development of modern societies and they are crucial institutional actors for the fulfilment of the European strategy to create a Europe of Knowledge

since “knowledge is the principal output and input of higher education institutions” (Córcoles et al., 2011, p. 358).

The university system is characterized by a greater autonomy with the emergence of a third mission (Molas-Gallart, 2005; Laredo, 2007), that implies the need for alternative funds and it is bonud up with the stakeholders’ demand for more transparency on public spending and increase competitiveness among research institutions. These circumstances are pushing universities towards the adoption of new management and reporting tools (Sánchez and Elena, 2006; OEU, 2006; Siboni et al., 2013). Universities have passed through significant changes, the most evident has been the gradual massification, marked by a shift from a closed institution, to preserve elites, to an open system for the education of wide range of students. Indeed, in the contemporary ‘knowledge-based economy’, universities are required “to contribute to the ongoing re-qualification of human resources, by tailoring their educational offer to the needs of, among others, secondary school graduates, mature students, people in full or part time employment and entrepreneurs” (Rossi, 2009, p.389). Moreover, universities are increasingly considered, from policymakers and the general public, as agents of economic development for the national economic growth (Slaughter and Leslie, 1999), not only through the education of the country’s workforce, but also through the production and introduction of new scientific knowledge into the economic system, and sometimes to directly engage in economic transactions (i.e. the universities’ ‘third stream’ activities such as patenting, consulting and spin-off creation). Finally, the increasing importance of the regional-policy level in Italy has also broadened of the functions that universities have to perform. Regional governments increasingly consider universities as part of the regional innovation system and expect them to interact with local businesses and institutions (Lawton-Smith, 2007; Rossi, 2009).

The university system, in the 2010-2011 academic year, comprised 89 universities, classified into 67 state and 29 non-state (CINECA, 2011). State universities are public entities funded by the national government for about 90% of their total needs. On the contrary, non-state universities are funded by government for about 10% of their total needs, and therefore have a higher autonomy in establishing fees (Del Sordo et al., 2011). In the 2011-2012 academic year, state universities represent the 92% in terms of students, of the overall Italian university sector (CINECA, 2011). Both

state and non-state universities are endowed with legal status and have scientific, teaching, organizational, financial and accounting autonomy (Agasisti, 2009; Siboni et al., 2013)

Since the late eighties the Italian university system has undergone profound reforms. On one hand, the transformations driven by the Bologna Process, where HE may implement a student-centered learning approach (Villa and Poblete Ruiz, 2012); on the other hand, the New Public Management approach that promoted the increasing introduction of a managerial culture focused on performance, driven by strategies and objectives, where the funding allocation system has been partially associated with results (Agasisti, 2009; Siboni et al., 2013). Since the mid-1990s there has been a reduction in public expenditure on higher education in Europe. This situation has been particularly noticeable in Italy where according to OECD figures, public expenditure decreased by over 13% between 1995 and 2005. In particular, since 2000, public expenditure has increased far less than the European average in relation to the GDP. Italian universities are autonomous institutions regulated by specific legislation (Law 168/1989) and are set up by ministerial decree within the three-year plan that has to be approved by the Association of Italian University rectors, the National University Committee, the National bodies for the evaluation of teaching and the regional coordination committees (Presidential Decree 27 January 1998, no. 25). The universities' during the first stage of the application of the Bologna process from 2001 to 2004 produced a disproportionate number of courses compared with user needs, and as a consequence induced the government to introduce increasingly the quantitative quality standards for universities that intended to start up programs (Ministerial Decree 508/1999 — Ministerial Decree 554/ 2007). Hence, the composition (number of credit points and examinations), duration and contents of each degree course were specified by law. In our national university system, the evaluation of academic courses is conducted by each university on a common form, which is regulated by a central institution called the National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR). This agency is affiliated with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), which is an umbrella organization that represents quality assurance organizations from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states (Fedeli et al., 2014).

3.3.2 External context: the University and the labor market

The inter-relationship between HE and the labor market has been considerably reshaped over time. This has been characterized by a number of key structural changes both to higher education institutions and in the nature of the economy. The most significant changes in HE, as we explained in the previous section, have been its gradual massification. It has coincided with a shift towards the post-industrialized knowledge-driven economy that places increasing demands on the workforce and necessitates new forms of work-related skills (Hassard et al., 2008). The relationship between HE and the labor market has traditionally been a closely corresponding one, although sometimes in loose and intangible ways (Tomlinson, 2012). HE has traditionally contributed with the flow of skilled, professional and managerial workers, regulating skilled labor and the overall matching of the supply of graduates leaving HE to their actual economic demand and utility (Bowers-Brown and Harvey, 2004). Furthermore, this relationship was marked by a relatively stable flow of highly qualified young people into well-paid and rewarding employment (Tomlinson, 2012). HE facilitated the anticipated economic needs of both organizations and individuals, effectively equipping graduates for their future employment. Thus, HE has been traditionally viewed as providing a positive platform for graduates that could integrate successfully into economic life and servicing the economy effectively. The correspondence between HE and the labor market has been conceptualized by Tomlinson (2012) around three main dimensions: “(I) the knowledge and skills that HE transfers to graduates and which then feeds back into the labor market, (II) the legitimatization of credentials significant to employers and enable them to ‘screen’ prospective future employees and (III) the enrichment of personal and cultural attributes” (p. 409). However, these three inter-linkages have been ruptured over time and recently they have become increasingly problematic, in particular because of the controvert discussion about the value and legitimacy of professional knowledge and the credentials that have traditionally formed (Young, 2009). This has coincided with the movement towards more flexible labor markets, an increasing intensification in global competition for skilled labor and increased state-driven attention to maximize the outputs of the university system (Harvey, 2000; Brown and Lauder, 2009).

In the last decades, the world of work has undergone changes both in the nature of work and in the emergence of new forms of work, due to the increasing competition, new form of knowledge and innovation and other factors (Brown et al., 2003; Sennett, 2006). There has been a shift from the commodity-based economy to the knowledge-based economy, where intangible organizational assets are increasingly important. This knowledge-based economy is characterized by new structures, new and continuously changing demands (Barnett, 2000; Brown et al., 2003; Sennett, 2006). The challenge in the world of work is to remain current with changes and adapt to the evolving needs of organizations. Learning is not associated with education and as a pre-career issue. There has been a shift from job security and lifelong employment to lifelong learning, employability and talent management. The formalized career structures in the collective paternalistic paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s no longer exist, career paths have become less predictable and more fluid. There is an increased focus on self-reliance and individual agency in a boundary-less career world of work, where workers are supposed to seek constant challenges and personal development (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Defillippi and Arthur, 1994). The labor market is characterized by outsourcing, increasing mobility and declining job security and organizational commitment (Nilsson and Ellstöm, 2012). Organizational success is increasingly associated with identifying, recruiting, managing and retaining high performers or talented individuals to meet the present and future demands. The demand and competition for highly skilled labor is intensifying on a global level (Florida, 2005; Frank and Taylor, 2004). It has become clear that the most important organizational asset, especially in knowledge-intensive organizations, are the people: the future competitiveness and prosperity of an organization depends on its employees (Nilsson and Ellstöm, 2012).

These profound changes, both in higher education institutions and in the world of work, have inevitably raised the questions if HEs are meeting the needs of both the labor market and the graduates. As Teichler (1999) points out, the increasing effort of universities to align with the labor market in part reflects continuous pressures to develop innovation that will contribute with added value to the economy, through research or graduates. The change in the HE–economy dynamic implies further significant issues such as those relating to the access in the labor market. The decline of the established graduate career trajectory has somewhat disrupted the traditional link

between HE, graduate credentials and occupational rewards (Ainley, 1994; Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Tomlinson, 2012). Increasingly central to the changing dynamic between HE and the labor market has been the issue of graduate employability. There is a big debate about how HE can contribute to graduates' overall employment outcomes or value-added in the labor market. In the past decade, there has been a strong emphasis on 'employability skills', with the rationale that universities equip students with the skills demanded by employers (Tomlinson, 2012). There have been concerns from industry concerning mismatches in the skills possessed by graduates and those demanded by employers (Archer and Davison, 2008). Universities have typically been charged with failing to instill in graduates the appropriate skills and dispositions that enable them to add value to the labor market. The problem has been largely attributable to universities focusing too rigidly on academically orientated provision and pedagogy and not enough on applied learning and functional skills (Tomlinson, 2012). There is an increasing desire among graduates to acquire more vocationally relevant skills to better equip them for the job market. However, while notions of graduate 'skills', 'competences' and 'attributes' are used inter-changeably, they often convey different things to different people and definitions are not always likely to be shared among employers, university teachers and graduates themselves (Knight and Yorke, 2004; Barrie, 2006).

3.3.3 Graduate students: the link between employability and talent

Organizations across the globe seek talented and employable workers. Talent challenge is underestimated in the University, especially at an organizational level, although it represents the outstanding example of talent organization. The terms 'talent', 'highly-gifted' or 'genius' are often used to refer to a philosopher or scientist with extraordinary insights, a great mind who realized critical breakthroughs in academic research. Today, universities are still looking for the most gifted and committed academics and students, even though the quest for talent and the talent development it is not being applied in a strategic and systematic way. This raises the question if, and how, this typical talent organization, the University, attracts and develops its students in a proper way.

According to Nilsson and Ellström (2012) in TM process the development activities enhance the individual talent of employees, and hence their employability is increased. Moreover, the authors sustained that talent and employability are overlapping concepts. Indeed, it is commonly taken for granted that talented individuals are generally employable individuals. We have to carefully take into account that employability does not merely involve talent. Being talented may be a necessary condition for being employable, but talent is not enough. Indeed, employability is associated with other aspects in addition to talent. To determine the focal point of talent management, it is important to discuss the meaning of talent and we will investigate with a multilevel explorative study and a multidisciplinary literature review in the empirical part of *chapter 5*.

What is important to underline at this stage of the present study is that employability is closely related to the notion of talent. Employability is a concept that has been increasingly present in policy debates, both national and international, and in various disciplines in the scientific literature during the last 20 years (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). The notion of employability has become a foundation of labor market policies and higher education and employment strategies in Europe and North America (the European Commission, 2010; ILO, 2000; OECD, 1998). The concept of employability is usually considered and framed by the perspective of policy makers and employers, who focus on the supply aspect of competence in the labor market (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). In literature we find different definitions of employability that reflect changes in the market and the demands of the workforce (Knight and Yorke, 2004). From the initially narrow understandings of employability, the definitions of this concept have expanded over time.

EMPLOYABILITY

The concept of employability at the beginning was characterized by a “dichotomous state, it included people considered to be either employable (i.e. a person who was able and willing to work in a regular manner) or unemployable” (Nilsson and Ellström, 2012, p.31).

Employability has often been interpreted as a set of competences and characteristics that are identified as important for meeting shifting demands in a rapidly changing and dynamic competitive market (Forrier and Sels, 2003; Knight and Yorke, 2004). This conceptualization is also closely associated with the ways in which talent is often portrayed (Collings and Mellahi, 2009).

'Employability' plays a crucial role for the labor market policy. The concept of employability has been deployed to describe the objectives of the economic strategies promoted by important supranational institutions and labor market policies at national, regional and local levels. At the supranational level employability constituted one of the four original pillars of the European Employment Strategy, a theme of the Extraordinary European Council on Employment (the so-called Jobs Summit), which took place in Luxembourg in November 1997 (CEC, 1999). Considering the revised European Employment Strategy document of 2003 that encompasses the promotion of employability in the workplace and among young people, the maintenance of inclusion of unemployed and other potentially disadvantaged groups in the labor market an important goal (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). In particular, the document emphasizes three overarching objectives: full employment; quality and productivity at work; and cohesion and an inclusive labor market (CEC, 2003a).

At the same time the United Nations (UN) has made employability one of its four priorities for national policy action on youth employment (along with entrepreneurship, equal opportunities between young men and women and employment creation). To this end, the UN's Youth Employment Network has suggested that "all countries need to review, re-think and re-direct their education, vocational training and labor market policies to facilitate the school to work transition and to give young people . . . a head start in working life" (UN, 2001, p. 4).

The concept of employability, as explained above, continues to be applied within a range of different contexts and defining a working definition is a complex issue (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005).

Today the concept of employability is commonly considered to incorporate both factors: on one hand, the individual's preparation for work and the ability to successfully manage a job; on the other hand, the individual's capability of becoming employed and re-employed (i.e. transitioning from education or unemployment to a job) or advancing within a career (i.e. from one job to another) (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005; Nilsson and Ellström, 2012).

Therefore, a central aspect of being employable is the ability to obtain a job and the individual's capabilities of successfully performing the tasks of a job. Another central aspect of employability, especially in a highly competitive context, is an individual's formal credentials and the ability of an

employee to sell himself or herself to an employer, that entails the negotiation and marketing of oneself, accentuating the appropriate forms of competence to a recruiter. In this situation, the employer becomes the customer and an employee's potential to complete the necessary work is the product (Knight and Yorke, 2004). In addition, an individual's social network, references and previous work experience has been shown to be increasingly important in the hiring decisions of employers and the labor market outcomes (Marsden and Gorman, 2001; Mencken and Winfield, 1998).

Nevertheless, the notion of employability entails more than an individual's ability. It is a complex, relational and multidimensional concept (Clarke, 2008; Clarke and Patrickson, 2008; Moreau and Leathwood, 2006) depending on the context, different professions and organizations. Hence employability cannot be understood only in terms of the competence or talent of individuals. Employability is also related to occupational structures and the demand and supply of skilled workers in the labor market (Brown and Hesketh, 2004).

The possibility to distinguish two main aspects of the notion of employability appears to be of importance: the individual and social dimensions.

The first aspect, individual's assets, can be represented by competences (including knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal characteristics), and can be associated with human capital and talent. The second aspect entails social capital and formal qualifications, and, moreover, the way in which an individual's resources are marketed to employers – and may not necessarily be associated with talent (Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Knight and Yorke, 2004; McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005).

Employability is an issue of concern in many areas of the economy, but in the present study, the focus is on students and graduates in Higher Education. Current interpretations of employability in HEIs range from the use of simple measures, such as whether or not a graduate has secured a job within six months of graduating (using graduate first destinations surveys), to in depth scholarly books on the subject (Dacre Pool and Sewell, 2007). The 'narrow' approach to employability, focusing on initial graduate destinations, have for some time been used as a performance indicator in higher education (HEFCE, 2001) and it is often adopted by funding bodies to assess graduate employability. It has, however, been widely recognized that they have been a crude measure. The

graduates' first-destination employment status a few months after course completion is used as the primary graduate employability performance indicator (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005; Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2002). This suggests that graduate's full-time employment rates have become, in many instances, easily measurable proxies for graduate employability. The use of first-destination data in this way is problematic and confounding, even if it could indicate a graduate's ability to obtain and maintain work, but it usually doesn't take into account the level of the jobs entered, and, moreover, focuses on a particular region (Coleman and Keep, 2001; Knight and Yorke, 2003b) or on a particular occupational grouping.

The labor market is acknowledge characterized by ever changing needs, and hence it required workers adaptable, that are able to integrate a patchwork of contract, part-time and self-employment opportunities- as the labor market and their personal circumstances require (Arnold et al., 2005; Baruch, 2004). According to Bridgstock (2009) it is ironic that 'full-time employment' remains the employability indicator of choice of university funding bodies, while the reality and also policy makers have embraced the move towards this knowledge-based economy where full-time positions form are a small proportion of employment opportunities. The consideration of having employment and first destination statistics have to take into account adequately other factors that could strongly influence employability after degree, as Smith et al. (2000) suggested, such as individual's class of degree, subject studied, prior qualifications and social class background or the fact that some graduates may have taken lower level jobs in order to deal with financial or personal pressures (Bridgstock, 2009).

Since the present study focuses on students that are one year before their graduation, we consider not this aspect of employability (first destination job) but their potential in terms of employability. This consists in a set of skills as the personal aspect of the employability concept explained above.

There are broadened definitions, that overcome criticisms about the focus on immediate employment, such as sustainable employability that is the ability not only to secure a first job but also to remain employable throughout one's life. As Knight and Yorke (2004) state employability "does not rest when the first graduate job is achieved' but needs 'to be constantly renewed to be

sustainable” (p.46). This definition includes not only the wider range of attributes required to be successful within jobs but also the attributes required to manage one’s career development in ways that will sustain one’s employability. Sustainable employability strongly focus on skills, variously framed as ‘personal transferable skills’, ‘key skills’, ‘core skills’, ‘generic skills’ and ‘employability skills’. This focus has more recently been widely criticized, chiefly on the grounds that ‘skills’ is too limited a concept to embrace what employability comprises (Holmes, 2001; Knight and Yorke, 2003a; 2004).

In recent years, a number of definitions and models have been defined with the attempt to capture and exemplify the meaning of the complex concept of employability. Over time a variety of conceptualization for the employability have been proposed, we summarized some of them in what follows, according to the materials present in our literature review.

- The Centre for Employability (CfE) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in the UK developed the DOTS model theoretical model (Law and Watts, 1977) as the results of their experience in practical solutions to enhance the prospects of students and graduates for over 10 years. The DOTS model consists of “planned experiences designed to facilitate the development of: Decision learning – decision making skills; Opportunity awareness – knowing what work opportunities exist and what their requirements are; Transition learning – including job searching, self-presenting skills and self-awareness – in terms of interests, abilities, values, etc.” (Watts, 2006, p.9).
- Hillage and Pollard (1998) suggest that “in simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. More comprehensively employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labor market to realize potential through sustainable employment” (p 2). They propose that employability consists of four main elements. The first of these, a person’s ‘employability assets’ consisting of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The second, ‘deployment’ includes career management skills, including job search skills. Thirdly, ‘presentation’ is concerned with ‘job getting skills’, for example CV writing, work experience and interview techniques. Finally, Hillage and Pollard also make the important point that for a person to be able to make the most of their ‘employability

assets' a lot depends on their personal circumstances (for example family responsibilities) and external factors (for example the current level of opportunity within the labor market).

- Bennett, Dunne and Carré (1999) proposed a model that serve for course provision in higher education which encompassed five elements: disciplinary content knowledge, disciplinary skills, workplace awareness, workplace experience and generic skills.
- The USEM account of employability (Yorke and Knight, 2004; Knight and Yorke, 2004) is probably the most well-known and respected model in this field. USEM is an acronym for four inter-related components of employability: Understanding; Skills; Efficacy beliefs and Metacognition. The USEM model forms part of a large body of research based, scholarly work on employability. However, this strength could also be perceived as a weakness in that it does not assist in explaining to non-experts in the field, particularly the students themselves and their parents, exactly what is meant by employability. Knight and Yorke (2004) suggested that behind the USEM model is: “an attempt to put thinking about employability on a more scientific basis, partly because of the need to appeal to academic staff on their own terms by referring to research evidence and theory...” (p 37).
- ‘The Key to Employability’ model (Dacre Pool and Sewell, 2007) a new theoretical and practical framework starting from the definition “employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful. It provides a clear, visual definition of what employability is” (p.284). It theoretically articulates the concept in a rigorous manner and, furthermore, the authors have done that in a way that is easily accessible both to practitioners and students. The design of the model entails that each component is absolutely essential and one missing element will considerably reduce a graduate’s employability.

3.3.4 The individual aspect of employability: employability skills

Since employability is composed also by an individual’s capacity to obtain and maintain work (Harvey, 2001; McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005) and thus contribute to economic productivity, there has been an increasing interest in graduate attributes as a part of the move towards developing

'human capital' to meet the needs of the 'new knowledge economy' (Curtis and McKenzie, 2001, p.vii). Graduate employability has been highlighted, in the previous section, as a key issue because of its influence on economic growth in a knowledge economy and the importance for universities it is self-evident. Universities have engaged with the graduate employability agenda by "re-examining which attributes their graduates should possess and by focusing on fostering generic skills in students that might make them appealing to multiple employers across multiple work contexts and disciplines" (Bridgstock, 2009, p. 31). Bowden et al.(2000) define the graduate attributes as "the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students would desirably develop during their time at the institution and, consequently, shape the contribution they are able to make to their profession and as a citizen" (para 1). In the context of a competitive knowledge-based economy with rapid and ever changing needs from the world of work, workers must be both immediately and sustainably employable. In order to be employable, they must possess, maintain and develop knowledge and skills that are specific to their own discipline or occupation, but they must also possess 'generic' skills, that make them adaptable to many occupational situations and areas.

The aim of the present study is to understand to what extent the implementation of TM at the University could enhance graduates' employability, placing an emphasis on the competences that make students employable and hence focusing on the talent development component as a crucial phase. In the literature review conducted about TM we found few papers that focus primarily on the talent development, a component of the overall TM process, representing a crucial activity considering the necessity to develop competences that could make graduates employable within this ever changing and competitive labor market. There is a significant debate in literature whether talent development processes should focus on the development of technical or generic competences or both. Traditionally authors posited that "the overriding factors leading to effective performance included technical credibility and the ability to use systems and processes to meet performance standards" (Garavan et al., 2012, p.7). This is also the belief of many managers in the initial stages of their careers, that often lead them to fall short on the performance expectations required of the role. Traditional talent development processes such as training are extremely effective at imparting technical competences and they can be developed also in isolation from the

workplace (Lahti, 1999; Hirsh, 2009). However, it is increasingly emphasized that the workforce must be proficient in working in diverse work contexts, (as the dynamic and complex labor market requires). As a consequence, there is an increased focus on generic competences.

The shift to generic competences is something that has occurred in the last two decades. Generic competences are considered to be important for potential and career advancement; however, it is clear that such generic competences are also highly contextual (Dierdorff et al., 2009). Talented employees are expected to display these generic competences in combinations that meet the demands of a unique and continually changing work environment (Garazonik et al., 2006). It suggests that on-going talent development processes need to be flexible, adaptable, capable of scalability and in tune with the evolving context. As a consequence, talent development must increasingly be work-based in order to develop capabilities to cope with the temporality or dynamism of work context (Garavan et al., 2012). Generic competences, unlike technical competence, provide more significant development challenges. They tend to be holistic, to overlap, and interweave (Capaldo et al., 2006), and they are intrinsically related to the kind of person that one is. For this reason, in what follows there is an attempt of defining these controversial concepts.

In what follows we describe briefly the concepts related to individual aspects of employability. Starting from the consideration of competences as a central aspect of being employable, we go more in depth, focusing little by little on a more narrow field. We initially identify the component of the generic competences, then the generic skills or soft skills, the employability skills and finally a subset of these, the career management skills (CMS). It is important to note that the terms 'skills' and 'competences' are often used in literature interchangeably, but the notion of 'competence' implies more than mere 'skill' or 'knowledge', indeed it involves values and attitudes as well (Sultana 2009a). We consider as useful to draw an overview of these constructs since also in literature there is a lot of confusion about competence, skill, soft skills, employability skills and career management skills. The present study highlights, through the literature review and the empirical work, that the University provides courses, especially for the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines, mainly on the hard skills. Since the employability skills are composed both by hard and soft skills, the focus of the TM, that has the aim to enhance

students' employability, is on the soft skills. Hence, we choose to focus on a subset of the employability skills, the career management skills, since they are appropriate for transition from education to work and for young people; and in particular we focus on the soft skills component of CMS, since the hard skills are already taught in the academic courses. Therefore, an overview on these aspects seems to be necessary and useful at this point

COMPETENCE

Competence is regarded as a central aspect of employability and talent, and it is a wide concept that transcends practical and theoretical knowledge. At this stage of the present study it is important to point out that competence entails “both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects, including knowledge, functional competence, values, motivational factors, personality traits, and behavioral competence and includes an affective component” (Nilsson and Ellström, 2012, p.34). Competence can be general and transferable, or it can be specific and context-bound (e.g. related to a specific workplace). The competence concept includes both conceptual competence, such as knowledge, understanding, and transcending meta-competence (e.g. learning to learn), and operational competence, such as functional applied skills and social competence (e.g. behaviors and attitudes) (Delamare Le Deist and Winterton, 2005). Some competences are easily mastered, whereas other types of competence are more complex or tacit. They are different from formal competence (i.e. credentials or qualifications) that is often regarded as an inexact proxy of an individual's actual competence (Ellström, 1997).

GENERIC COMPETENCES

The term “generic competences” emphasizes a range of qualities and capabilities that are important in the workplace. These include skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving and analytical skills (Garavan et al., 2012). Generic competences also include personal attributes such as imagination, creativity and intellectual rigor and personal values such as persistence, integrity and tolerance (Garavan et al., 2009; Sandberg, 2000). Competence is a wide concept that is related, often interchangeably substituted or confounded with skill.

GENERIC SKILLS

These generic skills are defined as ‘those transferable skills which are essential for employability at some level for most’ (Kearns, 2001, p. 2). Generic skills have also been variously known as ‘core skills’, ‘key competences’, ‘transferable skills’ or ‘underpinning skills’ (Mayer, 1992). Furthermore, as Bridgstock (2009) has highlighted, generic skills discourses often fail to engage with more adequate understandings of the actual career-salient skills.

SOFT SKILLS

Another important and widely used definition that could add confusion is “soft skills” that is often deployed instead of generic skills or generic competences. Literature highlights that the new workplace places emphasis on skills that go beyond the technical and include a full spectrum of soft skills. Hard skills are those achievements that are included on a résumé, such as education, work experience, knowledge, and level of expertise (Robles, 2012). Examples of hard skills include job skills like typing, writing, math, reading and the ability to use software programs (Investopedia, 2012).

The Collins English Dictionary defines the term soft skills as “desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/softskills>). Soft skills are “character traits, attitudes and behaviors—rather than technical aptitude or knowledge. Soft skills are the intangible, nontechnical, personality-specific skills that determine one’s strengths as a leader, facilitator, mediator and negotiator” (Robles, 2012, p.457). Soft skills are “personal attributes that enhance an individual’s interactions, job performance and career prospects. Unlike hard skills, which are about a person’s skill set and ability to perform a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are interpersonal and broadly applicable” (Parsons, 2008). Indeed, the deployment of soft skills is not limited to one’s profession and they could continually be developed through practical application during one’s approach toward everyday life and the workplace (e.g., Arkansas Department of Education, 2007; Magazine, 2003). Soft skills are as important as cognitive skills (John, 2009; Zehr, 1998).

The opportunity to equip students with soft skills could make the difference in being hired for a job in their field (Evenson, 1999), and the lack of soft skills can sink the promising career of someone

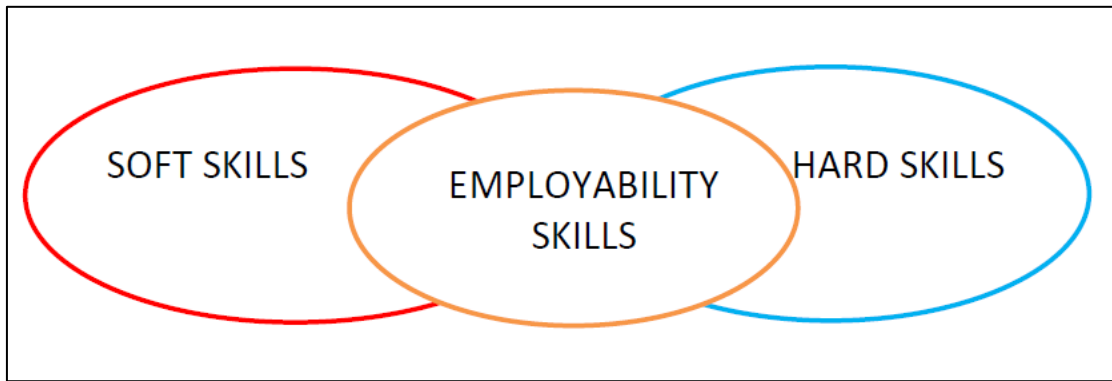
who has technical ability and professional expertise (Klaus, 2010). Wellington (2005) describes the soft skills of success based on his experiences in different management positions, primarily within human resources. Successful managers who were promoted had both excellent technical and soft skills, especially the willingness and ability to work positively with others. In fact, soft skills are so important that they are ranked as number one and extremely important for potential job hires in many occupations and industries (Sutton, 2002). Business executives and professors highlight that high school graduates do not have the set of soft skills they need to be successful in college or in the workplace (Gewertz, 2007; National Union of Students, 2011). A survey of 400 leading American corporate managers in 2007 indicated that 70% of high school graduates lack professionalism and work ethic skills (Bronson, 2007). Another report, analyzing data from the U.S. Department of Labor, indicated that even though managers value interpersonal skills most in new employees, business graduates were not being taught the skills that people needed (Mangan, 2007). As educators open the lines of communication with employers, soft skills continue to be a topic of discussion (Kilday, 1996). Companies are continuing to rate their employees' interpersonal skills as more important than their analytical abilities (Klaus, 2010). It is often said that hard skills will get you an interview but you need soft skills to get (and keep) the job. Success is based not only on what you know but also on how you can communicate it (Klaus, 2010). Technical skills are taught so that graduates can meet the job expectations and know-how (Magazine, 2003). Hard skills are easily justified and quantified, but (Robles, 2012). Soft skills are often described by using terms associated with personality traits (e.g. optimism, common sense, responsibility, a sense of humor and integrity) and abilities that can be practiced (e.g. empathy, teamwork, leadership, communication, good manners, negotiation, sociability and the ability to teach) (Parsons, 2008). At this point the question is about which kind of soft skills that are more appropriate and significant for graduates' employability.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Employability skills are those transferrable skills that are useful in many jobs but are specific to none. Employability skills are those directly pertinent to obtaining and maintaining work (Harvey, 2001; McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). They are composed of the generic and discipline-specific skills

required for performance in a work situation. Soft skills are a component of employability skills along with the hard skills. Employability skills are sometimes called general or generic skills.

Table 3.1: *Employability skills*



CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The career management skills (CMS) are a specific subset of the employability skills that are more appropriate for the design and the management of career path, particularly for graduate students that have not yet experienced the world of work. The CMS, being a subset of employability skills, encompass both hard and soft skills.

The term 'career management skills' is used to describe the skills, attributes, attitudes and knowledge that individuals need in order to manage their career. In accordance with Sultana (2012) "career management skills refer to a whole range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyze, synthesize and organize self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions" p.229). The task of careers work is accordingly conceived as fostering learning and personal development (Hooley et al., 2013). Career management can be viewed as the ability to build a career and to intentionally manage the interaction of work, learning and other aspects of the individual's life throughout the lifespan (Haines et al., 2003; Watts, 1998; Webster et al., 2004). Career management skills provides adequate preparation for transition to the world of work, and maintaining employability once there, involves activities such as clarification of personal aims and

abilities, understanding the requirements of the labor market and the ability to actively engage in the career building process, making a smooth transition from school to work.

3.3.5 The graduate students key for employability : CMS developed with the DOTS model

In the context of the present study we focus on the employability skills, the skills that are more appropriate and pertinent to enhance students' employability, in particular we focus on a particular subset: the career management skills.

Career management skills are increasingly advocated as necessary for all citizens, young and adult, considering the realities of employment and self-employment in a knowledge-based society, where 'protean', 'boundary-less', 'portfolio' careers are expected to become more and more the norm and lifelong career guidance an entitlement of all citizens (Sultana, 2012). In the 1990s, the term career management skills began to be used extensively within higher education. The term 'career management' had previously been used in the 1980s to describe policies and practices used by business organizations to develop the careers of middle and senior management ; increasingly, however, it has been used to describe 'career self-management' (King, 2004).

The career guidance reviews carried out by the OECD, the World Bank, and a range of EU agencies (i.e. the European Training Foundation, Cedefop, and the DG Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities), have all underlined the need for citizens to be well equipped with skills to manage the complex and non-linear transitions that mark contemporary education, training and working pathways. The prevalence of graduate underemployment, with educational and training attainments exceeding job requirements, suggests that a 'knowledge society' does not necessarily lead to a 'knowledge based economy'.

In fact, considering that the European unemployment rate for young people is 27% while the Italian youth unemployment rate is 40% (OECD, 2016). Thus far, there is an upsurge urgency to develop programs, at government and HEIs levels, to help young people to get into the labor market. As the experience of many countries have shown, investment in education and training can increase exponentially, but this does not necessarily translate into improved employment prospects, or into significantly higher percentages of new entrants into the labor market becoming

knowledge workers. The point is to draw attention on the content of these programs to effectively enhance employability, designing them in synergy with the labor market.

The notion of 'career' is not anymore a one-time 'choice' for lifetime. Nowadays it is central the notion that individuals need to actively construct 'portfolio', 'boundaryless' careers as well as career identities (in employment or self-employment) in ways that are open-ended and flexible, in response to the changing vicissitudes.

A common thread in all these reviews is the conviction that today, individuals are likely to face a certain degree of insecurity bound up with the experience of occupational options, opportunities and setbacks throughout their life, where change or the loss of employment occur with a greater degree of frequency than before. Thus, emphasizes the crucial role of the skills required in managing one's education, training, and career transitions are likely to become more and more useful, and necessary.

At a pan-European level, the EU Council of Ministers of Education has promulgated Resolutions which draw attention on the guidance services that has to focus on the acquisition of the skills that are needed to manage a career (career management skills) as an important priority, highlighting that CMS are crucial to successfully managing one's transitions between and within education, training and work, throughout life (Council of the European Union, 2004; 2008). There is, first of all, a greater awareness of the need to introduce or strengthen CMS in response to the need for skills in managing one's non-linear career pathways. The world of work is complex. Regardless of the wisdom of an initial career choice, individuals cannot depend on a job for life. In fact, they cannot even be sure that the field that they have chosen to work in at the start of their career will still exist when they retire. To enable individuals to function in this fluid environment they need to develop skills, behaviors and attributes which will support them to become effective and confident career managers.

The effort to face the difficult situation of employability in the present economic downturn is proved by the constitution of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), a European commission-funded network made up of policy-maker representatives from the 27 European Union (EU) member states and two European Economic Area countries (Iceland and Norway). The ELGPN, set up in 2007 and benefiting from European Commission support under its Lifelong

Learning Program, aims to stimulate European cooperation on lifelong guidance. While there is a long history of policy interest in career guidance in the EU (Watts et al., 2010), the network is best seen as one of the outcomes triggered by the spate of reviews that started with the 2000 OECD study (2004), which was followed by those commissioned by a range of EU entities and agencies, including the ETF – European Training Foundation (Sultana, 2003; 2007a; 2007b), CEDEFOP – the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Sultana, 2004; 2008), and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Sultana and Watts, 2006a; 2006b). These reviews, together with others carried out in middle- and low-income countries by the World Bank (Watts and Fretwell, 2004), in the Middle East and North Africa (Sultana and Watts, 2007; 2008), and in the West Balkans (Sweet, 2006; Zelloth, 2009) by ETF, used much the same methodology, and together constitute the most extensive and comparable database that has been generated internationally on career guidance policy and practice, involving over 50 countries in all (Watts and Sultana 2004; Sultana, 2012).

From these documents emerged the focus on career management skills.

However, the terminology of ‘career management skills’ is not well understood in all countries.

There is an increasing attention on CMS and this is confirmed by the existence of the ‘Blueprint’ framework, that represents the output of a series of interlined policy initiatives in the USA, Canada and Australia. It is a competency framework that articulates the concept of career management skills for a range of audiences (careers workers, policy-makers, teachers and users (Hooley et al., 2013). One way of stimulating the development of national curricular frameworks is by promoting the emulation of those that already exist. The US National Career Development Guidelines of 1988, for instance, inspired the development of the Canadian Blueprint of 1998, which in turn was the basis for the Australian Blueprint for Career Development of 2008. The ELGPN (i.e. European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) thematic work group considered and reflected on the possibility of defining a ‘blueprint’ which would be widely applicable to EU member states. It was soon discovered that the development of supra-national curricular frameworks faces a number of challenges, particularly in a region whose constituent countries have diverse education and training traditions, of which they are justifiably proud. The main obstacle for developing a European ‘Blueprint’ has been the difficulty to define a shared, Europe-wide understanding of

what is being referred to by CMS, let alone to formally define it. The notion of a 'Blueprint', has given the impression that there is 'one best way' of doing things, that a degree of harmonization between diverse education and training systems is possible, and that policies and practices can be borrowed in unproblematic way. While, therefore, the Blueprint had appeared to be an attractive and practical model for national aspirations to develop a CMS curriculum, it highlighted disagreements with underpinning philosophies, concepts and practices. It initially appeared to be an easily assimilative model but, in fact, had a strong specificity to it linked to the context in which it was developed. While countries can learn from each other's experiences, and while globalization and Europeanisation forces may be intensifying homogeneity and convergence in a range of areas, the specificity of contexts cannot be ignored (Green et al., 1999; Sultana, 2012).

Career Management Skills is the term used to describe the skills, attributes, attitudes and knowledge that individuals require in order to manage their career. The focus on CMS is upon competence in making and implementing decisions that determine one's career. They can be viewed as a subset of employability skills, a set of meta skills which enable individuals to develop and use the full range of their other skills (Watts, 2006).

Definitely CMS define a set of learning outcomes that will support individuals to develop their careers throughout life. In a learning paradigm the development of CMS becomes one of the key objectives of lifelong guidance.

CMS underpin a paradigm shift in lifelong guidance which abandons matching paradigm in favor of a learning and development paradigm (Jarvis, 2003). Career management is a process of learning and development which goes on throughout life (Super et al., 1996). Careers are constructed rather than chosen, it is a process of building and CMS framework should ensure, at least in part, that individuals are aware of their skills, strengths and achievements and that they know how to find and evaluate information and support to help their career development. CMS are divided into two categories of competence: self-management and career building.

Career management skills and knowledge are essential for employability as they play a large part in determining which, to what extent, in what manner, when and where generic and discipline-specific skills are learned, displayed (e.g. in applying for a job) and used.

It is clear that CMS is a particularly Anglo-Saxon term and it is not obvious the meaning of CMS in a European context; moreover, how these skills are being promoted, particularly through the delivery of career guidance services in the education and labor market sectors in different countries.

Stressing CMS could also inadvertently lead to the blanket portrayal of young people as deficient in lifeskills. There is a danger, therefore, of failing to acknowledge the richly textured lives of individuals, all of whom will have, formally or informally, built up a range of CMS as part of their everyday experiences— experiences that relate to their class, gender and ethnic background. Many young people have already worked in part-time, after-school and summer jobs, and as a result will have developed several insights as well as knowledge, skills and attitudes through their interaction with peers and adults in a variety of contexts within and out of formal institutions. The assumption must therefore not be made that young people come to CMS with a ‘tabula rasa’, but rather that CMS can in fact help students and adults become aware of what they already know and to build on that in self-reflective ways – a process that broadens and deepens learning through the acquisition of ‘metacognitive skills’ (i.e. self-awareness regarding learning, and capacity to reflect on it – see King 2004; Santrock, 2007; Sultana, 2012).

One of the tensions around the use of the term ‘CMS’ refers to its apparent focus on work-related aspects of a person’s development. Broader terms such as ‘lifeskills’ or ‘Personal and Social Education’ (PSE) more explicitly encourage a more life-wide approach which includes, but is not restricted to, employment – though of course, the term ‘career’ is also commonly used in the UK, North America, Australia and New Zealand to apply to wider forms of work, and includes learning too. The terminology used to describe career development learning in higher education has fluctuated, with career(s) education and career management skills as alternative formulations. Career(s) education was defined by Law and Watts (1977), as consisting of planned experiences designed to facilitate the development of: However, it is only fairly recently that this concept has been integrated into careers education through, for example, the DOTS and new-DOTS model of career development learning (Law, 1999), a model that underpins many CMS modules in HE institutions. Most of the CMS-related programs taught within schools and in PES contexts cover themes that easily fall within the DOTS framework (Law and Watts, 1977; Law, 1999).

In the previous sections we described employability concept and we summarized some of the most-often applied models for employability. We analyzed these models and we decided to adopt the DOTS model. It represents the “how” aspect of the talent development, how we will design and administered the pathway in order to enhance students’ CMS and hence their employability.

We chose the DOTS model on the one hand because of its simplicity, as it allows individuals to organize a great deal of the complexity of career development learning into a manageable framework, especially for transition from education to work and for young people. On the other hand because it represents the initial framework from which depart, and have been conceptualized, mostly of other models. Indeed, a number of different conceptual models have also been developed under the influence of the DOTS model (Watts, 2006) with vary adaptation over time (e.g. the ELPGN work, in the definition of Hillage and Pollard, 1998, p.17). A broadly similar model was used in the cognitive processing theory of career development developed in the USA by Peterson et al. (1991), though with more attention to the ‘processing’ of career development. Law (1996), too, has adapted the model by adding a process dimension to indicate the stages through which learning in these respects can be developed. Many of the behaviors identified by King are in effect merged with elements of the DOTS model in the list of career management skills developed earlier by Hawkins and Winter (1997), who also refer to them as self-reliance and effective learning skills. AGCAS (2005) reframes the DOTS learning goals somewhat, and states that “any theoretical model for careers education provision should ‘be congruent with, and encompass as a minimum all these four elements, if it is to enable students to implement fully informed and sound career plans” (p.5). McCash (2006), on the other hand, argues that the persistent and hegemonic status of the DOTS model has impeded the adoption of more innovative theories and more creative frameworks. He acknowledges that the model can be stretched to meet some of its limitations, but contends that it would be better to start again from first principles (Watts, 2006).

The DOTS model consist of:

- D-decision learning,
- O-opportunity awareness,

- T-transition learning,
- S-self-awareness.

Decision learning- skills and awareness that students need in order to integrate what they know of themselves with what they know of their opportunities, and in order to convert these two kinds of knowledge into an implementable decision. Individuals will need to take account of the risks involved in decision making - balancing the desirability of different outcomes against the probability that they will occur.

Opportunity awareness- refers to the exploration of the different paths and strategies which are open (or closed) to particular individuals for gaining entry to those opportunities. And at the level of the individual referring to the combination of demands, offers and strategies which match (or at least do not mismatch) a particular individual's characteristics.

Transition learning- the awareness and skills needed to cope with the growing transitions and upon the particular decisions they make. It concerns gaining a realistic understanding of what will come later in the career development, and to acquire the coping of skills they will need to make this transition appropriately and successfully. It could mean, for example, gaining some understanding of how school life is different from work life - more attractive and manageable in some respects, less so in others. It could also mean helping them to acquire the skills and information they need to cope with the new situations they will meet - communication skills, interpersonal skills, budgetary skills, information about trade unions, information about supervisory patterns at work, and so on.

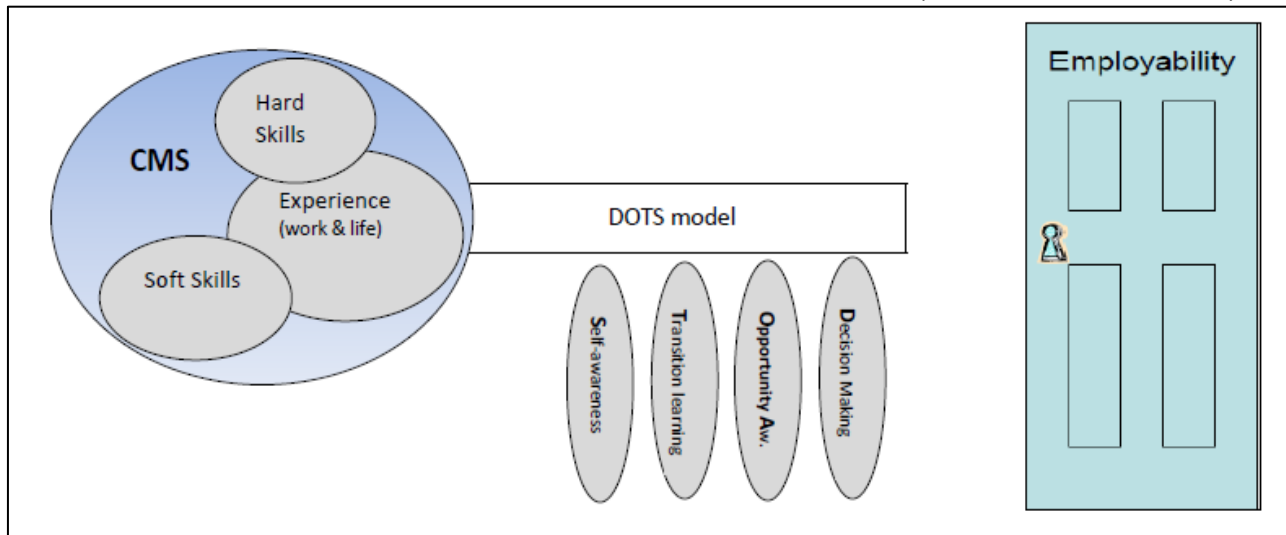
Self-awareness the development of students' own sense of themselves as unique individuals, with personal characteristics which in some ways are like other people's but in other ways are not. It is to address the question 'what kind of personality do I take with me to implement in the world of opportunities that exist for me?' . It involves an exploration of actual and potential personal strengths - qualifications, abilities, aptitudes, practical skills, personal qualities, and physical strengths. It is also the exploration of personal needs, involving questions about what kind of satisfactions are sought, what kind of interests are developing, what personal aspirations are being formulated, and what is most valued in one's experience of the world.

Some of the needs expressed by a young person will be deeply internalized, some will be specific to the situation and transitory. To some extent all of the curriculum and extra-curriculum of the school - and especially perhaps subjects like art and music - provide an opportunity for such self-exploration. To incorporate a self-awareness component into a careers education program is to pay attention to the importance of the self-concept in the facilitation of career preferences and choices.

However, the model has recently attracted some criticism. McCash (2006) argues that the model is over reliant on a mechanistic matching of person and environment and therefore underplays other critical issues such as social and political contexts. He also points out that there is an implication that failure to secure a 'self-fulfilling' occupation can be presented, or experienced, as the fault of the unsuccessful individual. These criticisms overlook the fact that the elegant simplicity of the DOTS model is precisely why it has proved so enduring and popular. They also seem to suggest that students introduced to basic concepts of career development through DOTS, would be incapable of developing and learning about more sophisticated analyses through this simple introductory structure. The concerns raised in the CfE about DOTS in relation to employability are different. For some time, it has become evident that the model has shortcomings when it is applied beyond careers education to the broader concept of employability. An early effort to capture the CfE definition of employability was reported in Hinchcliffe (2001) "Reflecting the range of views we see Peter Sewell of the CLASS Faculty Centre for Employability making the career development case and defining employability as: Having a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make a person more likely to secure, and be successful in their chosen occupation." (p 8). The most recent articulation of this, which incorporates an important additional new element of 'satisfaction', stems from the recognition that from an individual's perspective a person may be successful in their chosen occupation but not necessarily satisfied.

We elaborated a pictorial version of the DOTS model, matching this framework with the exemplification and pictorial version of the Career Edge model (Dacre Pool and Sewell, 2007), applying the necessary adjustments. It seemed a practical way of explaining the concept of employability and indicates that it is the 'key' to choosing and securing occupations in which the graduate has the opportunity to achieve satisfaction and success.

Table 3.2: Pictorial version of the DOTS model adapted from the Career Edge Model
 (Dacre Pool and Sewell, 2007)



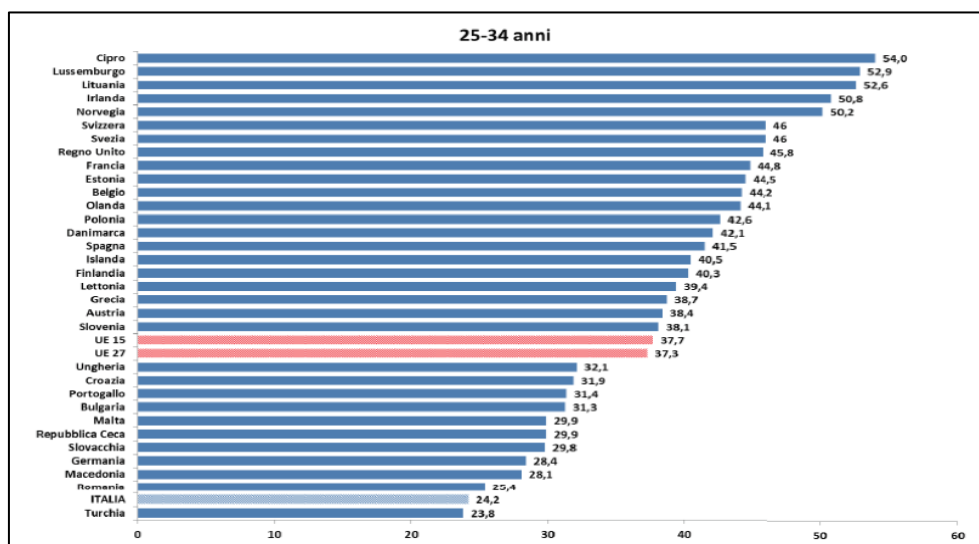
3.4 Conclusions

It has been observed and described above a growing attention at the Government level and in the HEIs about the necessity to develop programs to enhance students' employability. Education in this way could respond to student motivations and to policy concerns. It can reinforce rather than threaten traditional academic values, but it may also require organizational change within higher education (Watts, 2006).

Concerning HEIs we highlighted that they should focus on sustainable employability, focusing longer-term career development. The attention within higher education to enhancing students' employability responds to students' motivations for entering higher education. A survey of school students found that the most important personal reasons cited for going to university were, alongside 'to study a subject that really suits me', three vocationally-oriented reasons ('to have a professional career', 'to improve my job prospects', 'to gain entrance to a well-paid career'): each of these four reasons was rated by around four-fifths as extremely or very important (Connor et al., 1999, p.12).

Moreover, this could help to contrast the continuous decreasing of the enrolment of young people at the University in Italy and at the same time the abandonment of the University before completion, probably due to the economic downturn and the decline of the credibility of the University credentials to find a job. Some studies (see ANVUR, 2016; XVII Profilo AlmaLaurea-Almalaurea (2010); OECD, 2016a) show a decrease of the 20 % in the enrollments from the 2003 (with 338.000) till the 2013 (with 270.000) for young people between 25-34 years. The young Italians in this age range who have a graduate degree is 24%. The point is that in the other countries this rate is higher: UE with 38% and with the 40% in mean in the OCSE countries. ANVUR (2016) confirm this reduction in Italy in the amount of 22% from the 2007, highlighting a certain asymmetry with the North of Italy (-17%), in the South (-23%) and in the Center (-28%). The critical situation is even more arduous for the high level of leaving before the graduation complex, only the 58% of the students achieve the first degree of graduation.

Table 3.4: Eurostat (2014)– Education and training statistical database



Concerning Government there is a rationale for investing large sums in higher education: the contribution to the development of the country’s human capital (see Yorke, 2004, p.3). The more employable students are, the greater the economic yield is likely to be from this investment. Expanding higher education is also designed to serve social-equity goals by increasing access for disadvantaged groups. To achieve such goals, attention needs to be paid not only to ensuring the

participation of these groups in higher education but also to enhancing their subsequent success in the labor market (Morey et al., 2003).

Governments at all levels are beginning to recognize the importance of tertiary education in preparing students for a constantly changing world of work and requested that strategies to ensure that policies and programs relating to pathways from education to work be developed.

Given recent labor market movement away from job security and towards continual task and role change, one might expect that career management skills – the abilities required to proactively navigate the working world and successfully manage the career building process, based on attributes such as lifelong learning and adaptability – would be explicitly included in the employability and generic skills policy debates, would play a prominent role in university programs. However, there is evidence to suggest that the potential for student career management skill development remains mostly unrealized in universities (Watts, 2005) and that many university graduates are under-prepared for the bewildering array of shifting employment and training options between which they must construct a career (Lamb and McKenzie, 2001; OECD, 2002a). The OECD's (2002a) Review of Career Guidance Policies – Australia Country Note commented that 'many students in tertiary education appear to have little idea of why they are there or where it is leading' (p. 18). Although benefits of career management have been acknowledged in terms of individual and societal wellbeing (Gillie and Gillie Isenhour, 2003; Rychen and Salganik, 2003), a less-promoted effect of well-developed career management skills is an improved contribution to economic growth, through enhanced employability, productivity and education/work efficiencies (Killeen et al., 1992; Mayston, 2002). Skills are important for enhancement of graduate employability and career management plays an integral part.

The employability concept is bound up with skills that make students employable. In particular, we focused on the employability skills that encompass both hard skills and soft skills that are required for a certain job. Since the University system is structured on the development of the hard skills far more than on the soft skills, that are mostly absent in the academic courses and highly advocate in the literature and in the labor market in order to be an employable graduate (OECD-AHELO project; ANVUR (2014)-TECO project). Hence the talent development that we will implement in the

empirical part will be focused on the soft skills, and in particular on a subset: the career management skills.

The principal means of developing talent to secure a supply of highly skilled people in a knowledge-driven economy. There is commonly assumed to be a linear relationship between education and productivity or between learning and earning. The dominant discourse is characterized by a relatively narrow and market-based concept of education, competence, employability and talent (Brown and Tannock, 2009; Moreau and Leathwood, 2006) with little emphasis to the substance of learning. A formal degree is often regarded as a proxy for an individual's knowledge and skills or for his or her productive capability. The relationship between the content that is learned in formal education and the demands of the world of work is complex. Investments in formal learning increase the employability of graduates, but it is unclear as to whether such investments actually increase the productive capabilities and competence of graduates. Formal learning may not always be capable of directly preparing students for work (Jørgensen, 2004; Nilsson, 2010a). Talent is closely related to an individual's actual capabilities of performing a job (i.e. an individual's competence). Therefore, to discuss the substance of talent, it is important to consider the substantive content of knowledge, the 'what' aspect, is often neglected. In many studies, knowledge has become an empty, positively normative concept that is devoid of substance or a 'voice' (Young, 2009), especially in discussions of talent management and in the technical rational perspective that dominates the employability debate and labor market and educational policies in Europe and North America. There is often a call for increased learning and formal education and training, but less emphasis is generally placed on how and what knowledge is actually learned and how this knowledge is related to the demands of the labor market.

Career development learning offers an additional dimension to institutional strategies designed to foster the employability of students. It makes the value of such strategies transparent to students; it also strengthens the sustainability of their benefits. In most cases, they currently cover only a minority of students; in a few, they have been extended to larger numbers or even made obligatory (Watts, 2006).

Research suggests that hard skills are the technical abilities and knowledge that one possesses, whereas soft skills are those personal attributes and interpersonal qualities that are intangible. Hard skills are critical above all to get the job, whereas soft skills are important to maintain it. Employers request new employees with strong soft skills (Robles, 2010). Only a constructive alliance forged between the University and the labor market, reexamining the employability agenda and the pedagogic reform, could lead to the results of 'work ready' graduates. (Watts, 2006).

The list of soft skills and CMS is broad, as we pointed out. In the next empirical part of the present study we will begin with an in depth investigation of which CMS are valuable by employers through an explorative study in the labor market. Because the soft skills valued by employers are developed largely through active teaching and learning processes, all activities that are encompassed in the talent development, we will try to face this challenge through the empirical implementation of the talent development process at the University of Pavia.

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Chapter 4

The empirical side of Talent Management: the implementation at the University of Pavia- School of Pharmacy

4.1 Introduction

In the first two chapters of the present study we have done a qualitative overview of the literature, they represent the theoretical framework of the empirical part of the present study that starts with this chapter. In the literature review conducted in *chapter 2* about talent management and talent we gave a comprehensive overview of the theoretical frameworks, the tensions and the limitations related with these two concepts. *Chapter 3* contributed to outlining an overview of the context, internal (an Italian public University) and external (the labor market), in which the TM process has been implemented, clarifying that the nexus between these two dimensions is the graduates' employability. Talent and employability have common aspects that are the possession and development of competences. We explained in particular that the focus is on career management skills, a subset of employability skills, that are crucial for building satisfactory career paths and of importance especially for transition from education to work, especially for the target population of the process, undergraduate students.

In the present chapter we illustrate the overall empirical framework of the TM implementation at the public University of Pavia- School of Pharmacy. We investigate and analyze in depth every phase of the process in the following chapters (5, 6 and 7), one for each phase.

Talent Management, as we explained in the previous chapters, is a set of practices that are implemented in organizations (CIPD, 2011), and refers to how organizations attract, select, develop and manage people in an integrated and strategic way (Scullion and Collings, 2011). Talent development represents an important component of the overall talent management process (Novations, 2009; Cappelli, 2009). We highlighted that there is a scarcity of empirical studies, especially about the operationalization of the talent identification and the implementation of the TD.

In this pilot study we favorably embrace the shift from the 'best practice' approach to the 'best fit' perspective that recognized the impact of the specific internal and external context of the organization on TM practices and outcomes (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). The best fit approach affirms that talent management has no single perspective on talent that is objectively better than another (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005). As Garrow and Hirsch (2008) assert, talent management is not a matter of best practices, but rather, of best fit—i.e. “fit with strategic objectives, fit with organizational culture, fit with other HR practices and policies, and fit with organizational capacity” (Dries, 2013, p.283). Organizations need to realize that ad-hoc approaches to talent management almost always lead to discrepancies between theory and practice (Gill, 2002).

The fit approach is essential to the discussion of talent management as it emphasizes the importance of context, implying that the meaning of talent is relative rather than absolute, and subjective rather than objective (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). It is said that in a given organizational setting, talent should be defined and operationalized in light of the organization's culture, environment (i.e., industry, sector, labor market) and type of work (Pfeffer, 2001).

4.2 Empirical framework

The theoretical part of the present study has shown that TM process is mostly empirically implemented in organization by practitioners and this highlighted lack of scientific clarity and coherence in the design.

We try to shed some light on the implementation of TM in a public Italian university- the University of Pavia- with the students as the target population of the process. We aspire to contribute to the recent TM field of research, characterized by a scarcity of scientific literature about the empirical implementation of the TM process, in general, and, in particular, in public organizations (e.g., Glenn 2012; Harris and Foster 2013), such as education institutes (e.g., Davies and Davies 2010; Van den Brink et al., 2013) that remain under-explored.

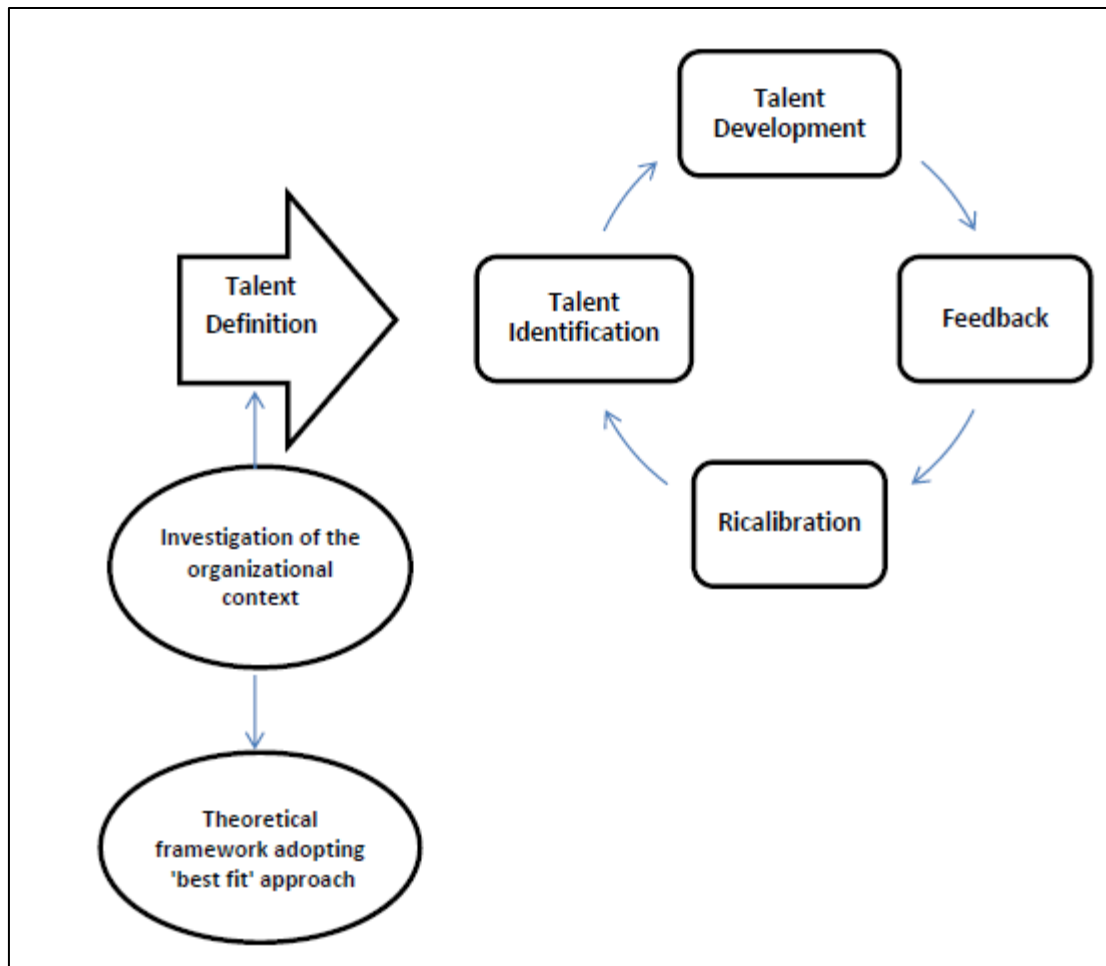
Since 2010 some empirical research papers appear, mostly based on qualitative method, as can be expected in an emerging field (von Krogh et al., 2012). Quantitative research is less present and mixed-method studies are the least present. The literature review done shows that in particular there are few academic paper that focus primarily on talent development and mostly from a conceptual point of view. The empirical part of the present study aspires to contribute in filling the gap described above.

We found two studies about TM in HEIs. The first study of Van den Brink (2010) conducted a multi-level investigation about TM involving population staff and PhD students of Dutch Universities. It regards professorial recruitment and selection in the Netherlands. The second study is a project on talent management policies and practices at five Dutch universities (Thunnissen et al., 2010). Both the studies are based on semi-structured interviews. Hence, the literature review conducted shows that there are no studies, as far as we know, about the implementation of the overall TM process at the University. The present pilot study represents a contribution to this gap.

We believe and suppose that a TM system at the University, implemented in a strategic and integrated way, with a multi-level approach involving representative of the labor market, and with students as targeted population, could help the University to fill the gap, highlighted both in literature and on the field through the explorative study in the world of work, preparing 'work ready' graduates.

We synthesize the talent management as a process that starts with the talent definition, then encompasses the talent identification or acquisition, followed by the talent development and, at the end, the feedback phase- see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: *Visual synthesis of the of TM process implementation*



4.2.1 Research team

We built a research team (2 researchers in Management and 1 in Psychology) to avoid subjective bias in the research design and protocol, data collection and analysis.

4.2.2 The target population of the talent management: the sample identification

We analyzed and defined some criteria to identify a sample that could fit with the aim of the thesis and the requirements of the research design.

The criteria responded to the attempt to avoid threats of internal validity. First of all, we need to find a course that was mandatory for the students because the participation at the treatment on a voluntary base could also affect the consistency of the TD effectiveness. If the students self-selected into experimental and comparison groups, this could affect the results. Voluntary participation might imply that we could have in the classroom students that choose to participate maybe for their high level of soft skills, working experiences or self-awareness that could represent an upstream bias. We also need homogeneity to avoid upstream bias due to some differences inside the sample that may affect the measurement of the effectiveness of the treatment (nationality, educational background, work experiences etc.).

We ran an explorative investigation inside the University in order to find a School available and interested to participate at the empirical implementation of the TM process. We found as adequate, and available to collaborate, the Department of Pharmacy.

4.2.3 Research methods

The present study adopts different research methods for the empirical implementation of each different part of the overall TM process. The main focus is on the TD initiative that has a randomized experimental research design. The research questions are: ***What factors impact the design, implementation and effectiveness of TM at the University? To what extent is the university students' employability affected by the TM process?***

We decide to adopt the experimental design for TD since we aspire to demonstrate that the intervention focused on the soft skills component of the CMS (the 'what') through the DOTS model (the 'how') with students as targeted population ('to whom') could increase their employability (output). This is the most appropriate method to measure the eventual increase of the soft skills developed through the TD pathway with a pre and post-test, and also to compare the results between two randomized groups, the treated and control group. In TM field there is a scarcity of empirical research and in particular we didn't find studies on the implementation of a TM process at the University, neither of TD and ,least of all, a TD adopting a randomized experimental design.

The implementation of the overall TM process encompasses different phases (as depicted in table 4.1) and therefore we adopt different research methods, both qualitative and quantitative, depending from the phase that we implement. The mixed-methods are at least present in literature and therefore we aim to contribute with a study based on them. In what follows we describe the different phases and methods.

TALENT DEFINITION

The definition of talent is often taken for granted in literature and this could compromise the success of the TM system (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012). Talent is organizationally specific, highly influenced by industry type and by the nature of work dynamic. Theoretical foundations for talent management based on a clear definition of talent appear largely absent in the academic literature (Silzer and Church, 2009). *Chapter 2* illustrated the narrow and one-dimensional approach to TM, based on the management studies perspective. Since the pilot study of the implementation of the TM process is an Italian public university we adopt a ‘best fit’ approach. We stated the definition of talent in *chapter 5* in two main ways. On one hand, we conducted a multidisciplinary review with the attempt to overcome the limitations and the lack of clarity about talent in the HR domain. We integrated different and divergent streams of literature, appropriate for the context of our pilot study, that are represented by the giftedness, the positive and vocational psychology. On the other hand, we conducted a multilevel investigation through semi-structured interviews, inside the organization (professors and pro-rectors) and in the external context (representatives of the labor market). The explorative study analyzed the definition of talent and the relevant soft skills that students have to possess in order to be employable (for the questionnaire see Appendix 3). The panel of the interviewees has been defined identifying the students’ future job profiles (as described in *chapter 5*): public institution employee, researcher, professor, pharmacist and private company employee (pharmaceutical representative, product manager, public affair manager etc.).

The qualitative data gathered, are first hand data, and they are recorded, transcribed and analyzed. The methodology that we adopted is the inductive research with qualitative rigor as defined by Gioia et al. (2013). The outcome is the definition of talent adequate to our context and the identification of the relevant soft skills for neo-graduate students to be employable.

TALENT IDENTIFICATION

The definition of talent implies a further step in the TM system that is the talent identification and in some cases the talent acquisition. It consists of a bundle of HR tools usually applied in the assessment phase. Since in our case, a public Italian university, the targeted population is represented by students and, hence, we adopted an inclusive approach, involving all the students, the talent acquisition phase is not implemented. In the present pilot study the talent identification corresponds, since there are no exclusion criteria, more to the mapping of talent. At this aim we defined a survey that encompassed a series of scales and questions, some open ended, to measure the dimensions that are relevant for the talent definition and for the soft skills highlighted by the explorative study in the labor market. The survey has been administered online and served also as a pre-treatment test. We gathered both quantitative and qualitative data.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The talent development encompassed formal and informal training activities focused on the CMS, that the explorative study in the labor market has emphasized as relevant for neo-graduate students to be employable. The research method is randomized experimental design with the control group. We divided randomly the sample in two equivalent groups. The treatment adopted the DOTS model (as we explained in the chapter 3), the theoretical framework that refers to how to develop these skills,. The talent identification phase represents the pre-treatment test. After the treatment we administered to all the students the post-test in order to measure the eventual improvement of the treated group.

TD EFFECTIVENESS

We analyzed the TD effectiveness adopting an external evaluation from two representatives of HR professionals. The aim was to detect an eventual difference between students of the two groups, treated and control, about their employability in the labor market. We randomly selected 20 curriculum vitae, 10 from the treated group and 10 from the control group. The HR professionals analyzed them through a format and adjunctive notes (see Appendix 4). Furthermore, we selected 10 students randomly, again 5 from the treated group and 5 from the control group, to have a job

interview. The Professional evaluated through a format the students' interviews considering the dimensions that are relevant when they have to hire neo-graduate students (see Appendix 5). In this phase we adopted a qualitative research method for the analysis of the data collected. The HR professionals were not informed about the belonging of the students involved to the two different groups.

FEEDBACK PHASE

The TM design encompassed, as last stage, the feedback phase to gather the perception of the different actors involved in the process implemented. This information are crucial to understand the effectiveness perceived and to recalibrate the process in the future to be more effective. This analysis and perspective is not so common in the literature that usually considers only the managerial evaluation and point of view. We applied a multilevel feedback approach. First of all we considered the perception of the target population, that often is left behind and forget. We gathered data through the post-treatment survey administered to the students. After that, we added qualitative interviews conducted inside and outside the organization. The research method is the analysis of the qualitative data gathered.

4.2.4 The time frame of TM implementation

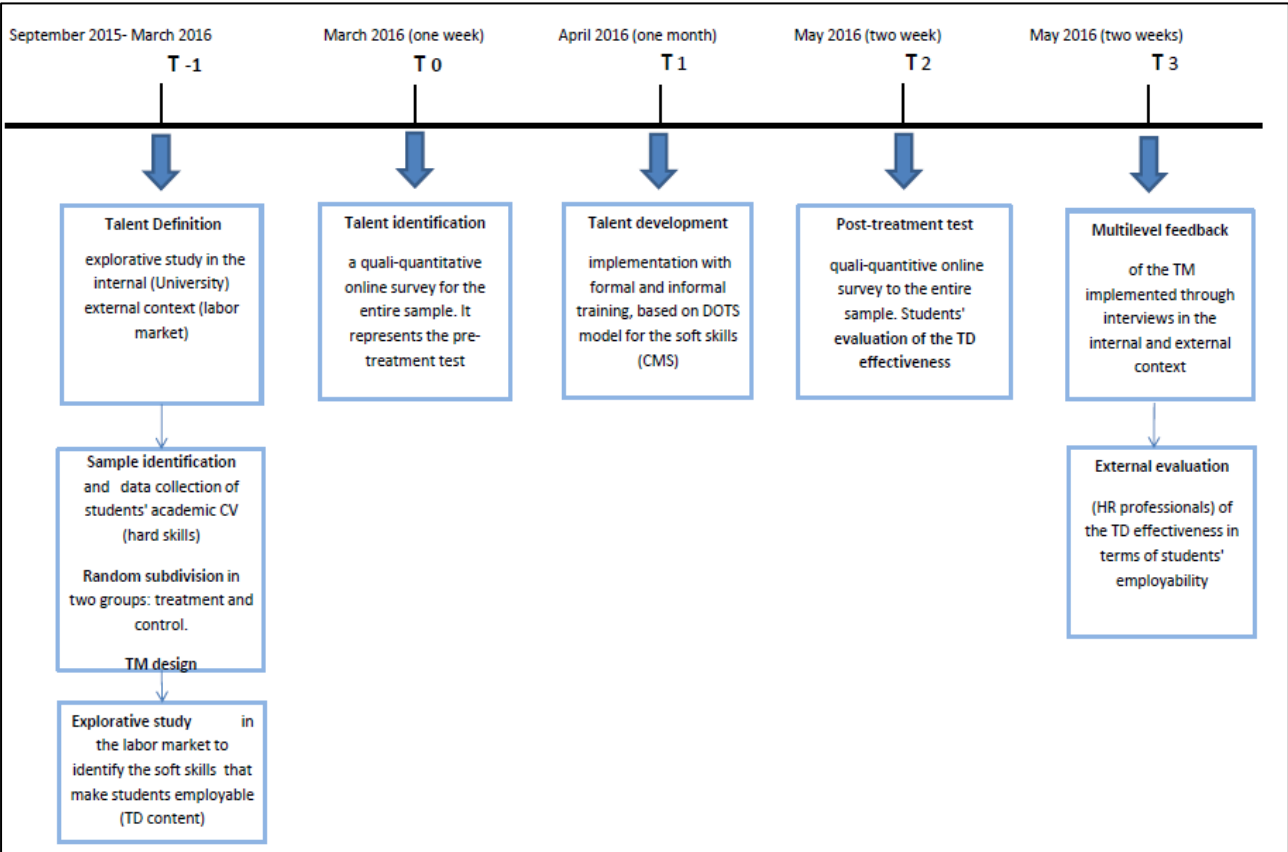
The talent management process covered 8 months and it is composed by talent identification, talent development and feedback phase (see Table 4.2).

- At Time -1 (T -1) we have a phase that lasted 6 months. In the first four months we conducted a series of interviews in the labor market, in order to have a clear understanding about the meaning/definition of talent and which soft skills are important for graduates to be employable, that represent the TD content (described in *chapter 5*); it required 3 other months for the definition of talent, the design of the process and to define the questionnaires for the pre-test and the post-test. Moreover, in this stage we identified the sample for the TD and we randomly divided them in two groups: the treatment and the

control groups. The assignment to the two different groups was by the alphabetical order. This is described in *chapter 6*.

- At Time 0 (T 0) we have the pre-treatment phase that consisted of the talent identification/mapping with a quali-quantitative online survey submitted by the entire sample (control group and treated group), that corresponded to the pre-test. It lasted one week and it took place before the beginning of the TD treatment. The phase from Time 0 to Time 2 is analyzed and described in *chapter 6*.
- At Time 1 (T 1) we have the treatment phase that encompassed the TD initiative and consisted of 12 hours of training- following the DOTS model. The implementation of the talent development covered one month and this is described in *chapter 6*.
- At Time 2 (T 2) we have the post-treatment phase encompassed a quali-quantitative online survey submitted to the entire sample, that corresponded to the post-test, with the aim to measuring the effectiveness of the TD (in terms of students' employability). This phase lasted one week and it is described in *chapter 5*. In this survey we also gathered students' feedback about the TD implemented in order to build a multilevel feedback analysis considering the point of view of the people involved in the treatment that usually is left behind.
- At Time 3 (T 3) we have a double outcome: the first one is to obtain an evaluation of the eventual increasing of the students employability for the treatment group. The evaluation has been conducted by two HR professionals. At the end of the experiment, we selected 20 CV, 10 for each group (treated and non treated), that were analyzed by two HR professionals that filled out a form to evaluate them in terms of being employable. In addition, we selected other 5 students for each group to have a job interview with them in order to enhance the evaluation, measuring the effectiveness of the TD and therefore whether there is a difference between the two groups. It required two weeks.
The second outcome is represented by the feedback about the TM process implemented. In this case we applied a multilevel approach and it required two weeks for interviewing, individually and with focus groups, internal and external stakeholders. This is described in *chapter 7*.

Table 4.2: Time frame of Talent Management implementation



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Chapter 5

Talent definition: a multidisciplinary and a multilevel approach to the operationalization

5.1 Introduction

Over the course of the last two decades, the talent management topic has grown exponentially, deep in the economic downturn, and it is considered a critical determinant of organizational success (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). Organizations seem to have become increasingly convinced that the identification of talent is crucial to achieve competitive advantage (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Lewis and Heckman, 2006). Also for universities the 'human resources' are the most valuable asset for the success of the organization (Van den Brink et al., 2013). Hence, for excellence in research and education the availability of talented, creative, innovative and enthusiastic students is crucial (Florida, 1999).

However, as we concluded in *chapter 2*, human resource management practitioners report great difficulty in defining what talent is, let alone measuring it accurately for identification purposes (Tansley, 2011). Quite surprisingly, TM scholars are rarely precise about what exactly they mean by talent, probably because there are widely held implicit theories about what talent is (Barab and Plucker, 2002). In fact, in many articles (e.g. Collings and Mellahi, 2009; O'Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000) and books (e.g. Cappelli, 2008; Lawler, 2008) about TM, talent as an underlying construct is taken for granted and thus not defined explicitly. Hence in spite of its growing popularity and two decades of debate, however, the construct of TM suffers from conceptual confusion and lack of clarity regarding its definition, scope and overall goals (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007). An increasing number of authors (e.g. Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Reilly, 2008; Tansley et al., 2007) attribute the ambiguity of the TM construct to the inadequate operationalization of the underlying construct talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012). Theoretical foundations for talent-management based on a clear operationalization of talent appear largely absent in the academic literature (Silzer and Church, 2009a). The operationalizing and measuring of talent is currently one of the major challenges in the talent-management field (Wacker, 2004).

In this chapter, we face the challenge to define and operationalize talent in the context of the present study. We try to shed some light on this issue, that represents a crucial gap in the academic TM literature, especially for the nature of the organization where the empirical implementation took place, an higher public education institute, and for the target population, undergraduate students.

The attempt is to broaden the existing one-dimensional and narrow approach to TM into a more pluralistic one, overcoming the limitations of TM literature, underlined in the *chapter 2*, of being unitarist and managerialist with a single perspective approach (Van Den Brink et al., 2013). The aim of this study is the development of a broader, more balanced approach to TM in the University that takes the importance of context into account in two main ways: on one hand, conducting a multidisciplinary literature review outside the HRM domain; and on the other hand, through a multilevel exploratory study of the labor market.

First of all, we conduct a multidisciplinary review of the literature and we systematically incorporate insights from the divergent literature streams, starting from the HRM perspective on talent. Mostly HRM scholars are convinced that TM is a recent field of study with very few theoretical frameworks for talent-management. Actually, exists a whole body of literature outside the HRM domain with the potential of offering interesting insights into the operationalization and measurement of talent (Nijs et al., 2014). The academic traditions are rarely integrated or linked and conceived into a broader perspective. In addition to being one-dimensional, it leads the dominant views in academic TM literature to be too narrow and biased. The one-dimensional and biased approach to TM may be suitable for studying and implementing TM in multinational and private organizations, but it is probably inadequate to describe TM in, for example, public organizations or small enterprises.

These in depth insights in other domains outside the HRM could counteract some of the limitations inherent to the HRM literature and therefore can help establish better conceptual foundations for talent-management. Three literature streams were identified, in addition to the HRM literature, as being of particular relevance for this purpose: the giftedness, the vocational and the positive psychology literature. These integrated insights fragmented across these different disciplines are

appropriate and pertinent with the context of the present pilot study, the University (as has already been analyzed in the chapter 3).

Secondly, we include different actors for an effective definition of talent through an explorative study in the labor market. Indeed, the multidisciplinary integration, even if we consider multiple perspectives at the same time “using theories in concert” (Greenwood and Miller, 2010, p. 82) and overcome the short view on talent, is not sufficient for the definition and operationalization of talent that we aspire to implement in this empirical part of the present study. At this aim, considering talent as context-bound, we conducted an explorative study in order to investigate the internal and external context of the organization. The aim is to have a broader and effective perspective about the meaning of talent, referred to the students of Pharmacy, and in relation with the employability skills that make them employable and valuable in the pharmaceutical labor market.

In the present chapter we adopt two different methodological approaches: one regards the multidisciplinary literature review and the other one the multilevel explorative study in the labor market.

5.2 A multidisciplinary literature review

5.2.1 Research method

In the following analysis we conduct a quality narrative overview of the literature synthesizing the findings of literature retrieved from searches of computerized databases, hand searches and authoritative texts (Green et al., 2006). The authoritative electronic databases ‘Scopus’ and ‘Web of Science’ were searched for a more detailed search to collect academic literature on TM. These databases were chosen because they are multidisciplinary and they give access to a broad variety of academic journals and publications.

We restricted our search to English-language publications in peer-reviewed academic journals that mentioned ‘talent management’ along with ‘higher education’ and ‘employability’ in their title, abstract, or keywords, excluding specific types of publications such as brief communications and

commentaries, editorial notes and book reviews. We selected the most cited publications according to Google Scholar, Web of Science and Scopus and, starting from these, we adopted a ‘backtracking’ method (i.e. review of the reference lists of the selected articles). Although we obtained a list that is not exhaustive, we are confident that it is at least representative of the cross-sectorial domain of talent.

We selected the most cited articles about talent, in particular tracking the articles that had ‘talent’ in their titles. The focus was on talent in the context of the world of work and education, hence we selected this term in addition to the search done in the databases. We defined our selection of articles starting from the most cited and recent (Gagnè, 2004; Nijs et al., 2014 and Renzulli, 2005) and matched these findings with the results of ‘the backtracking method’ (i.e. review of the reference lists of the selected articles) between 2015 and 1993 (Nijs et al., 2014). The exclusion criteria were with regards to the articles that have been already analyzed in the literature review of the HRM domain in *chapter 2*.

5.2.2 Findings

The human capital perspective on talent described in *chapter 2* is typically originated from a resource-based view on humans, in which employees are directed toward creating added value for their organizations (Dries, 2013a). Inkson (2008) highlights the potential pitfalls of labeling employees as ‘human capital’ as if they are manageable toward certain outcomes in the same way other resources are. By characterizing humans as capital, as something fixed, there is no adequate consideration for the changing and highly unpredictable nature of individual attitudes and behaviors (Dries, 2013a; De Vos and Dries, 2013;). Therefore, investigating talent and talent management purely from a resource-based view seems to be insufficient to capture the psychological mechanisms that has a part when managing individuals.

Moreover, in general, we posit—in line with Lewis and Heckman (2006)—that the talent-management literature is characterized by a lack of clarity regarding its definitions, scope and overall scope. This is partly due to the limited perspective that the human capital viewpoint offers

about the precise meaning of the underlying construct 'talent' (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Tansley, 2011). Thus far organizations have only minimal theoretical foundations for their talent-management decisions (Thunnissen et al., 2013b). For this reason, in what follows, starting from the previous literature review (*chapter 2*) based on the HRM domain, we integrate new perspectives from divergent streams of literature- the giftedness, the vocational and positive psychology- in accordance with the work of Nijs et al. (2014). From this different viewpoint, we investigate new dimensions related to the definition of talent, that were left unexplored previously, in order to shed some light on a clear definition of talent that fits with the context of our empirical investigation: a higher public education institution- the University.

This perspective, built outside the broader HRM domain, is of importance at this stage of the present study for the attempt to address the research gap, about a clear definition of talent, since it has the potential to overcome the specific limitations inherent to the talent-management field. Moreover the different views on talent through psychological aspects offers a deep understanding that could enhance in better defining the boundaries of the concept and leading us to a definition. Across all the relevant literature streams, talent is frequently associated with, and sometimes equated to, excellent performance. Nijs et al. (2014) posit that "talent can be operationalized as an ability and affective component which function as necessary preconditions for achieving excellence" (p.182). The first component that we consider is the ability component. This finds a resonance, for instance, in the definition widely used in educational settings of the United States "talented individuals are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance" (Periathiruvadi and Rinn, 2013, p. 153). Themes related to this component are mainly found in the giftedness literature, in the field of education (Brown et al., 2005; Mayer, 2005) but they are also frequently applied by HR practitioners. Nijs et al. (2014) propose also, starting from Gagnè (1998a; 2004), two predictors of the ability component: innate abilities and systematic development.

The first predictor, innate abilities in a specific domain of human functioning is rooted in the giftedness literature. At the beginning of the giftedness literature in 1920, talented children were identified by high IQ scores because of a fixed innate trait. This was reflected in psychometric definitions of talent that were bound up on achieving a certain score, typically IQ test, referring to

intellectual giftedness (Robinson and Clinkenbeard, 1998). However, it has resulted, that the mere correlation between IQ score and exceptional performance later in life was rather weak (Ericsson et al., 1993). Indeed, scholars in the giftedness literature currently tend to advocate a multidimensional conception of talent building on domain-specific theories of multiple intelligences referring to different areas of human functioning (Bailey and Morley, 2006; Robinson and Clinkenbeard, 1998). Adopting this perspective, the following conceptualization of talent that Gagne' (2004) defines in his Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMTG) is frequently cited. This theory of Multiple Intelligences (in Bailey and Morley, 2006; Baldwin, 2005) comprehends nine forms of intelligence (i.e., linguistic intelligence, logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, existential intelligence, and spiritual intelligence). Moreover, Gagne' distinguished between four ability domains (i.e., intellectual, creative, socio-affective, and sensori-motor) that can lead to extraordinary performances in seven domains of human functioning (i.e., academics, arts, business, leisure, social action, sports, and technology). We also found other conceptualizations of talent that closely resemble the one of Gagne', but that differ slightly in terms of categorization and specificity of the ability domains and the human functioning domains considered (Feldhusen, 1994). Scholars of the giftedness literature sustain that the aptitudes necessary to develop talent in a specific domain are only present in a small proportion of the population because they are genetically inherited. Although many people believe that genius depends merely on genetics—known as the 'Amadeus Myth'—innate dispositions are, although necessary, not sufficient to ensure high-level achievement (Robinson et al., 2000).

Innate abilities, defined by Gagne' (1998a) as gifts, must be nurtured into talents in order to achieve excellent performance in at least one domain of human functioning (Baldwin, 2005). Hence, extended and deliberate practice is a necessary condition for the manifestation of talent into excellence. These results can be attained by engaging in formal or informal learning activities inside or outside of the school or workplace (Ericsson et al., 1993; Gagne' , 2004; Pfeiffer, 2009). This is related with the second predictor of the ability component, as defined by Nijs et al. (2014): systematic development.

Moreover, Nijs et al. (2014) highlight the second component of talent that is the affective component. There are numerous studies that interpret this component as vital to excellent performance (Bailey and Morley, 2006; Gagne', 2010; Robinson and Clinkenbeard, 1998). Kane (1986- in Bailey and Morley, 2006, p. 222) summarize the main viewpoint of these studies defining the factors that are ultimately accounting for achievement are likely to be the unique personal and behavioral dispositions that the individual brings to the actual performance. Attention for the affective component of talent is present in the giftedness literature, the positive psychology literature and the vocational psychology literature. While the ability component of talent focuses primarily on multiple intellectual abilities, the affective component considers non-intellectual attributes and how these affect the performance of individuals: "To predict which environments an individual is likely to enter, work in, and thrive in, you must not only know what they can do (their abilities, capabilities), you must also know what they want (their interests, needs, or motives)" (Lubinski and Benbow, 2000, p. 146). Nijs et al. (2014) individuate that the affective component has two main predictors: 'motivation to invest' (i.e., activities in which one wants to invest energy) and 'interest areas' (i.e., activities one likes and finds important).

The giftedness literature draws attention mainly to the concept of motivation, in relation to investments. The frequently applied work of Renzulli (1986) focuses on the three-band talent definition gives an adequate understanding about the importance of motivation. It states that talent is the combination of three clusters: high ability (general or specific), task commitment and motivation. Numerous other authors argue that motivation plays a central role in achieving excellence and it exerts a positive influence on the willingness and capacity to engage in deliberate practice (Bailey and Morley, 2006; Ericsson et al., 1993; Feldhusen, 1994). Deliberate practice refers to activities that are structured, goal-orientated, that require effort, with an average of ten years elapsing between first work and best work. In the positive psychology literature the term strengths, instead of talent, is used to denote positive characteristics that allow individuals to thrive and prosper (Luthans, 2002). The key issue is to detect one's unique strengths in order to deploy them in activities one is passionate about. The assumption is that only in activities that are conducted with passion, peak performances (i.e., episodes of superior functioning; Privette, 1983) can be achieved (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The interpretation of the concept of

'passion' is the inclination towards an activity one likes, finds important and in which one wants to invest energy (Vallerand et al., 2003). These considerations highlight the essential role of motivation and interests in attaining excellence (Rea, 2000). Next to motivation to invest, interests, the second predictor of the affective component, are widely discussed in the giftedness literature and the vocational psychology literature, assuming that they have a positive influence on excellent performance (Bailey and Morley, 2006). Gagne' (2004) traditionally addresses this factor in his Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) as an interpersonal catalyst that influences the development of gifts into talents. In 2009, Gagne' revised his Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) and replaced the seven domains of human functioning he initially distinguished by six major occupational groups (i.e., technical, science and technology, arts, social service, administration and sales, and business operations) based on Holland's work on vocational interests (Holland, 1997). This shift reflects the increasing attention given to interest areas when investigating talented children, adolescents and adults, that are also called 'preferences' and 'orientations' (Milgram and Hong, 1999). Identification of interest areas is believed to be crucial in order to locate activities in which interests can be reinforced and actualized, leading ideally to the delivery of excellent performance (Lubinski and Benbow, 2000). Vocational psychologists assess interests as a key component of talent with the goal of supporting individuals in finding a fit between the person they are and the job or career they aspire to, so that extraordinary performance might be achieved (Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Greenhaus and Callanan, 2006). From the 1990s onwards, several authors also in the giftedness literature have addressed this issue by advocating that person-environment fit is crucial for obtaining optimal achievement. This gets predicted by a match between personal abilities and ability requirements of the environment on one hand, and a match between personal preferences and reinforces available from the environment on the other (Achter et al., 1999). The importance of 'interest' lead Nijs et al. (2014) to define this as the second predictor of the affective component: the interest. Moreover, there is another important aspect related to excellence that affects the definition of talent and hence the TM process: the distinction between interpersonal and intrapersonal excellence.

Scholars in the giftedness literature hold the belief that not all individuals can be talented. This is due to their assumption of a genetic basis for talent (Gagne', 1998a; 1998b). According to Ericsson

et al. (1993), along with the majority of scholars in the giftedness literature, the motivation to engage in lifelong deliberate practice differs amongst individuals. Only a few individuals, the so-called outliers, show the motivation to invest 10,000 hours in perfecting certain talents, which is being demonstrated to be crucial for achieving top performances (Gladwell, 2009). Therefore, these authors argue that high-level performances are not feasible for everyone (Milgram and Hong, 1999). In this stream the emphasis lies on the identification of those individuals who perform significantly better than others of the same age or experience due to the presence of rare talents (Brown et al., 2005; Mayer, 2005).

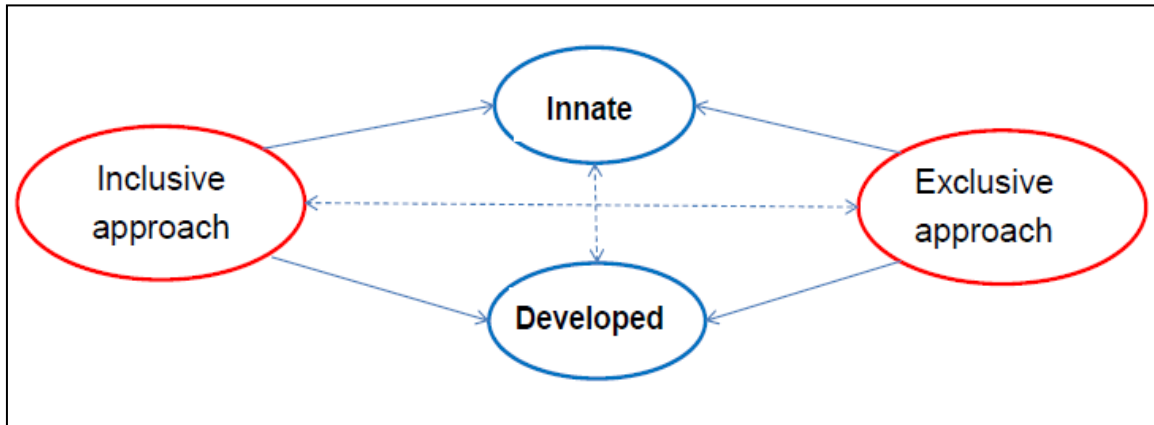
In the HRM literature, it is typically argued that these employees deserve disproportionate investments because they promise to yield high return, enhancing organizational performance by their capacity to achieve excellence (Lepak and Snell, 1999). Organizational decision makers who operationalize excellence as performing better than other individuals of the same age or experience in a specific domain of human functioning, are more likely to adopt talent-management practices in which there is differential investment—i.e., orientation of a select group of high performers toward activities they like, find important and in which they want to invest energy. This reflects the exclusive approach that we described in the *chapter 2*. Although the operationalization of excellence, as performing better than others, with a focus on A players (Becker et al., 2009), remains to a large extent dominant today, Renzulli advocated a more ‘inclusive’ conception of talent already in 2005. He stated that “everyone has a role to play in societal improvement, and that everyone's role can be enhanced if we provide all students with opportunities, resources, and encouragement to aspire to the highest level of talent development humanly possible” (p.84) and hence it is necessary to fully exploit the potential through maximization of their involvement and motivation. Renzulli’s (2005) approach to talent which is uncommon in the giftedness literature, with the ‘non-selective’ viewpoint, is more closely related to the perspective typically adopted by authors in the positive psychology and the vocational psychology literature. Positive psychologists Buckingham and Clifton (2001), for instance, affirm that each individual possesses a certain set of strengths (e.g., adaptability, discipline) and that it is the specific constellation of strengths that makes everyone unique. According to these authors, innate factors determine merely which set of strengths can be developed and not whether or not you can develop talent at all, as is assumed in

the giftedness literature (Dries, 2013a). Thus far, it is essential to detect one's unique strengths in order to deploy them in activities one is passionate about (Vallerand et al., 2003). This will result in performing consistently at one's personal best (i.e., the maximum of one's capacity) as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) state. The 'strengths-based approach' advocates that utilizing everyone's strengths is crucial. This generates positive physical and psychological health outcomes, such as individual fulfillment, which is believed to substantially increase the productivity of employees and in turn positively affect organizational performance (Wood et al., 2011).

This positive psychology approach to the definition of talent is therefore strictly related to motivation and interest that determine the performance at one's personal best.

In *chapter 2* we reported the four typologies that synthesize the combination between the main tensions in HRM literature related to the definition of talent: subject (people) versus object (characteristics), and inclusive versus exclusive approach (Gallardo et al., 2013). Then we added these insights from other domains and this led us to consider other relevant distinctions, dimensions and tensions that animate the debate about the definition and operationalization of talent: innate/stable versus acquired/developed (Meyers et al., 2013). Literature on strategic human resource management (SHRM) has identified underlying philosophies about the nature of human resources as key determinants of the specific shape of HR practices (Becker and Gerhart, 1996). The most salient tension concerns the exclusiveness or inclusiveness of talent management. A second distinct discussion point refers to the question of whether talent is a stable and enduring trait (Peterson and Seligman, 2004), or a mere potential that can (or even has to) be developed (Cohn et al., 2005). Combining these two tensions results in four distinct talent philosophies: exclusive and stable; exclusive and developable; inclusive and stable; inclusive and developable (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014). In what follows we analyze these new four added typologies of talent in addition to the four of the *chapter 2*, for a total of 8 typologies, according with publications included in our literature review- as summarized in the Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: *New typologies of talent from divergent streams of literature*



- **INNATE/STABLE + EXCLUSIVE=** The first typology is based on the definition of talent as “a natural ability to be good at something, especially without being taught” (Talent, Cambridge Dictionary on line, 2013). The assumption of innate talent is prevailing in the business context (Burkus and Osula, 2011) and is confirmed by the fact that people commonly understand talent as a scarce and genetically determined construct. This implies an invariably work differentiation into two groups that is: a small group of people ‘with talent’ (the A players, top performers, or star employees) and a much bigger group of people ‘without talent’ (the B and C players), or average and bottom performers (Axelrod et al., 2002). Opinions of the prevalence of talent in the working population differ, but, typically not more than 20 percent of the workforce is identified as A player (Welch and Welch, 2005). A players are often thought of as people with a particular combination of intelligence, personality, and motivation (DeLong and Vijayaraghavan, 2003). Consequently, as both intelligence and personality are understood as stable characteristics, the differentiation between A, B, and C players is seen as mainly irrevocable, meaning that employees either ‘have’ talent or ‘do not have it’ (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014). This interpretation is deeply rooted in literature on resource-based view of the firm.
- **INNATE/STABLE + INCLUSIVE=** The second typology assumes that employee and organizational success can best be achieved by focusing on the positive qualities or the

talents lying in every individual (Peterson and Park, 2006). In contrast to the exclusive philosophy, talent is thus seen as universal, in fact everyone possesses certain positive traits (Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In addition, talent in itself is defined in very broad terms. This interpretation is rooted out of the HRM domain, in positive psychology, defined as “the science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions” (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). There is whole body of literature on positive individual traits, in particular, individual strengths, throughout the last 15 years (Peterson and Park, 2006, 2011; Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Based on literature on positive psychology and individual strengths, talents can be interpreted as employee attitudes and behaviors that come naturally to them, for this reason they easily drive, motivate and energize them. Moreover, they are aspects that employees value, like and make them feel authentic and true to themselves (Linley and Harrington, 2006). These individual talents are supposed to be mainly enduring and stable and can only be slightly refined through, for instance, acquiring new knowledge and skills (Buckingham, 2005; Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

- DEVELOPED + EXCLUSIVE= The third typology conceptualize talent as a potential, implying that talent represents “the possibility that individuals can become something more than what they currently are” (Silzer and Church, 2009, p. 379). Therefore, talent is latent: something that is not yet there, but makes certain promises for the future (Altman, 1997; Silzer and Church, 2009). Csikszentmihalyi (1998) states that “talent is not an all-or-nothing gift but a potential that needs to be cultivated to bear fruit” (p. 411). This definition implies a distinction between, on one hand, talent as a latent potential and, on the other hand, realized potential that becomes manifest in superior performance (Gagne’, 2004). From this perspective, potential will bear fruits only if it is developed. It regards the presumably rare occurrence of talent or potential: few individuals show great promise for becoming highly performing employees in the future whereas the majority of employees do not. Commonly, around 10–15 percent of an organization’s employees are identified as high-potentials (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2012). This interpretation considers talent to be rare and at least partly innate, as the stable with exclusive approach typology, the difference is that here

talents are often latent and can only be unveiled through development (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014).

- DEVELOPED + INCLUSIVE= The fourth typology is based on the fundamental assumption that individuals not only have the capacity but also the inner need to grow and fulfill themselves (i.e., need for self-actualization; Maslow, 1954). This interpretation aims to develop ordinary employees into extraordinary performers. This ambition is related to a pronounced growth mindset (Dweck, 2006, 2012), i.e. individuals believe that all people have a “great capacity to adapt, change, and grow” (Dweck, 2012, p. 614). Here we found two approaches. The first approach understands talents as individual “potentials for excellence that can be cultivated through enhanced awareness, accessibility, and effort” (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011, p.106). This means that everyone has the potential to become excellent in a specific domain depending on his or her specific potential or strengths constellation (Yost and Chang, 2009). However, it does not mean that everyone possesses the potential to become, for instance, an excellent leader (Yost and Chang, 2009). In contrast to this, the second approach assumes that everyone can become excellent in almost any domain (Colvin, 2010; Ericsson et al., 2009). This implies that “experts are always made, not born” (Ericsson et al., 2007, p. 116). In particular, it has been argued that not a single innate factor—except for height and body size in sports—limits the maximum performance that an individual can achieve (Ericsson et al., 2007). Instead, the maximum performance of an individual heavily depends on the accumulative learning opportunities he or she had (Gladwell, 2008).

Hence the current debate on the concept of talent, as we just described, involves a discussion about whether talent is innate or learned. Scholars who investigate talent or talent-related constructs still disagree as to whether talent is mainly determined by innate factors or by learning opportunities (Dai, 2009; Dai and Coleman, 2005). Although most scholars agree that talent comprises both innate and acquired components, they differ greatly in the extent to which they ascribe importance to either one component or the other (Walker et al., 2010). Choosing either one of these approaches might be easier when keeping in mind that the assumption of innate

talent also holds that a few employees are endowed with certain qualities while others are not. In contrast, defining talent as mainly acquired implies that any person can become an excellent performer in almost any field. Consequently, defining talent as rather innate implies exclusive talent management practices, while defining talent as mainly acquired calls for rather inclusive approaches to talent management. The definition of talent as mainly innate or mainly acquired has many further-reaching consequences for the acquisition, identification, and development of talent in organizations. Assuming that talent is innate, for instance, implies that talent management might focus much more on the identification and recruitment of talented employees than on their development. In spite, assuming that talent can be developed, in contrast, implies that talent management might have a strong focus on the training and development of employees and selection decisions might be based on applicants' prior learning experiences (Meyers et al., 2013). Organizations not commonly distinguish between innate and acquired elements of talent, but rather, focus on proven achievements in their assessments of talent (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). Pragmatists might even argue that the nature-nurture debate comes down to semantics (Tansley, 2011).

In European culture, talent is primarily considered an innate gift, whereas in non-European cultures, talent is primarily considered a learned skill that can be acquired and developed (Tansley, 2011). When it comes to the talent management literature, it is worth considering that the majority of contributions on talent management come from American writers (Collings et al., 2011), who have a cultural tendency to perceive talent as something that can be acquired and developed – hence the hype implied in speaking of a ‘war for talent’, and through which talent management surfaced as a people issue.

The work of Nijs et al. (2014) focuses on the components of talents and the correlated predictors also for people who are currently not performing excellently but possess the ability to achieve this level in the future. They can be managed and lead toward excellence by encouraging them to discover and engage in activities that match their motivation and interest areas. We adopt this viewpoint in the present study, since the focus of TD intervention is on skills that match students' interest area, i.e. career aspiration. Moreover, in accordance with Silzer and Church (2009a),

talent-identification practices should not only aim to detect the talent already manifested in a given organizational setting, but also those people who have the potential to be excellent in different (larger) roles or activities in the future. Thus is in contrast with the widespread talent-identification decisions based merely on performance scores—which only reflect currently deployed abilities— because they only evidence what is manifest at the present time. Such decisions lack the power of predicting the sustained interpersonal and intrapersonal excellence in which organizations are interested. This assumption fits with the context of our empirical implementation, that regards students that are not yet in the labor market. Indeed, the TD focuses on the development of the students' potential in terms of employability.

5.3 A multilevel perspective: the explorative study in the labor market

In the conclusion of *chapter 2* we highlighted the ambiguity inherent to the TM construct due to the inadequate operationalization of the underlying construct of talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). This lack of clarity is due mostly to the fact that the definition of talent is taken for granted and because most publications focus on one dimension of the academic organization or its external environment, with one-sided view of reality, obscuring other perceptions on reality (Thunnissen et al., 2013b). The one-dimensional and biased approach to TM may be suitable for studying and implementing TM in multinational and private organizations, but it is probably inadequate to describe TM in public organizations. In this chapter we argue that it is necessary to broaden the existing one-dimensional and narrow approach to TM into a more pluralistic one. A pluralistic approach implies the use of multiple perspectives at the same time. The main aim of this section is the adoption of a broader, more balanced approach to TM that takes into account the importance of context, and of the different actors involved. These new perspectives are integrated into a multilevel perspective of TM at the strategic HRM (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; 2007; Boxall and Purcell, 2011). Nevertheless, they are still quite uncommon in the field of TM. Moreover, in the literature review conducted in the HRM domain, in *chapter 2*, we concluded adopting the best fit approach (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008) for all the empirical part of the present study and considering the TM research field from a phenomenon-driven perspective (von Krogh et al., 2012), that has

implications for future research because it opens new prospects. Thus, talent management is facing the challenge of transition from a growing stage to a mature one (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). These assumptions led us to adopt a research method for the explorative study that gives value to this viewpoint, allowing and supporting us to capture concepts of this developmental field of research.

The explorative study conducted in both the internal and external context gave us the opportunity to gather two different streams of concepts: the first is about the meaning of talent and the second is about the soft skills that are considered crucial by representatives of the labor market. In both investigations, we adopted the qualitative rigor inductive method.

5.3.1 Research method

The necessity of broadening the unitaralist view point on talent and the importance of considering TM from a phenomenon-driven approach leads us to understand the importance of implementing a multi-level explorative study. On one hand we conducted semi-structured interviews inside the organization, with professors and pro-rectors, and, on the other hand, outside the organization, in the labor market with the representatives of the different job profiles to which students of Pharmacy could aspire.

We paid extraordinary attention to the initial interview protocol, to make sure that it was focused on the researches question (i.e. the main one: to what extent the implementation of a TM process in the University of Pavia could enhance students' employability? And the other sub-questions: which is the meaning and the definition of talent in our context-a public Italian University? Which is the content of the TD in order to be effective in making students employable?) and that there were no leading-the witness questions (e.g. Would you agree that...?). We adopted the qualitative rigor in inductive research that Gioia et al. (2013) define in a systematic approach that fits with the new concept development or grounded theory articulation. The authors affirm that "the precepts of the traditional scientific method, which often leads us to engage in progressive extensions of existing knowledge, as a way of discovering new knowledge. This venerable orientation, however, most often trains our attention on refining the existing ideas

we use to navigate the theoretical world. Such an approach is appropriate much—and perhaps even most—of the time and, in fact, has dominated the conduct of theory and research in the field for many years” (p.16). For this reason they claim to build new tools, in order to shed light on new concepts that might better capture the phenomena “relevant to the human organizational experience in terms that are adequate at the level of meaning of the people living that experience and adequate at the level of scientific theorizing about that experience” (Gioia et al., 2013, p.17). They devise a systematic inductive approach to concept development as a rigorous qualitative research methodology. The concept development consists in two phases.

- The first phase of research is represented by the interviews conducted to gather qualitative data. In this crucial part it is very important to not impose prior construct or theories as a sort of preferred a priori explanation for the understanding of the phenomena. It is important to be open to the interviewees’ point of view, take notes, record and transcribe. This could be an opportunity to discover the reality of the phenomena, through the identification of new concepts rather than the affirmation of existing ones. We decided to adopt a multilevel perspective to survey the definition of talent by the relevant stakeholders.
- The second phase is the interpretation of the qualitative data gathered. It is an interpretative research, that implies a storyline, engaging with the narrative style and with a lot of insightful observations. This usually raise a scientific skepticism. Gioia et al. (2013) build a rigorous method to analyze in a systematic way these kind of data: the presentation of the data in two different progressive stages of aggregation to come up with final synthetic concepts. The “1st- order” analysis of the interviewees terms and definitions and the “2nd- order” that consists in a first stage of aggregation finding common aspects between terms, concepts, themes and dimensions. This analysis has been conducted by the research team that, as we described in the previous chapter, is composed by 3 researchers of different field of research (Management and Psychology) to avoid subject and unitary interpretation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The explorative study detects, on one hand, the definition of talent and, on the other hand, the consequent content of talent development (i.e. the soft skills). The heart of this research are the semi-structured interviews, that have been conducted in Italian and then we translated them. We interviewed at organizational level: The Director of the School of Pharmacy, Professors (3) and Pro-Rectors (4); and in the labor market: Public organizations (3); Pharmacy (3); Parapharmacy (2); Research centers (2); President Association of the young pharmacist; President of the Pharmacist order; Company (7) (see Table 5.2). We chose this panel of actors for two main reasons. Firstly, we need to interview both representatives of the internal and the external context to have a multi-level approach for the definition of talent. The attempt is to avoid the bias of the managerial and unitary point of view that is common in the literature (Thunnissen et al., 2013a) and to broad the viewpoint on the targeted research population. Secondly, we selected representatives of the possible future job profiles for Pharmacy students. At this end, we defined four main typologies for the future job profile of the students: in the University or in a research center (public or private), as researcher and/or academic professor; in a pharmaceutical company, as pharmaceutical representative, product or public affair manager; in a pharmacy or parapharmacy, as employee or owner; and finally in a public institution (i.e. ASL, AIFA etc.), as employee or manager.

In the private organization we interviewed HR professional. We selected a group of Multi National Company (MNC) in different part of Italy (e.g. Milan, Invrea, Rome) to have a wide perspective. We also considered medium sized Italian pharmaceutical companies, but of the 4 selected just one accepted to be interviewed in the time frame of the present study. We added the interview to the Director of a recruitment company for the pharmaceutical sector. Moreover, we interviewed the President of the Pharmacists order and the President of the young Pharmacists. The attempt has been to have a deep understanding of the definition of talent and the relevant soft skills for neo-graduate students through a multi-level approach (i.e. inside and outside the University).

Table 5.2: *Explorative study in the labor market*

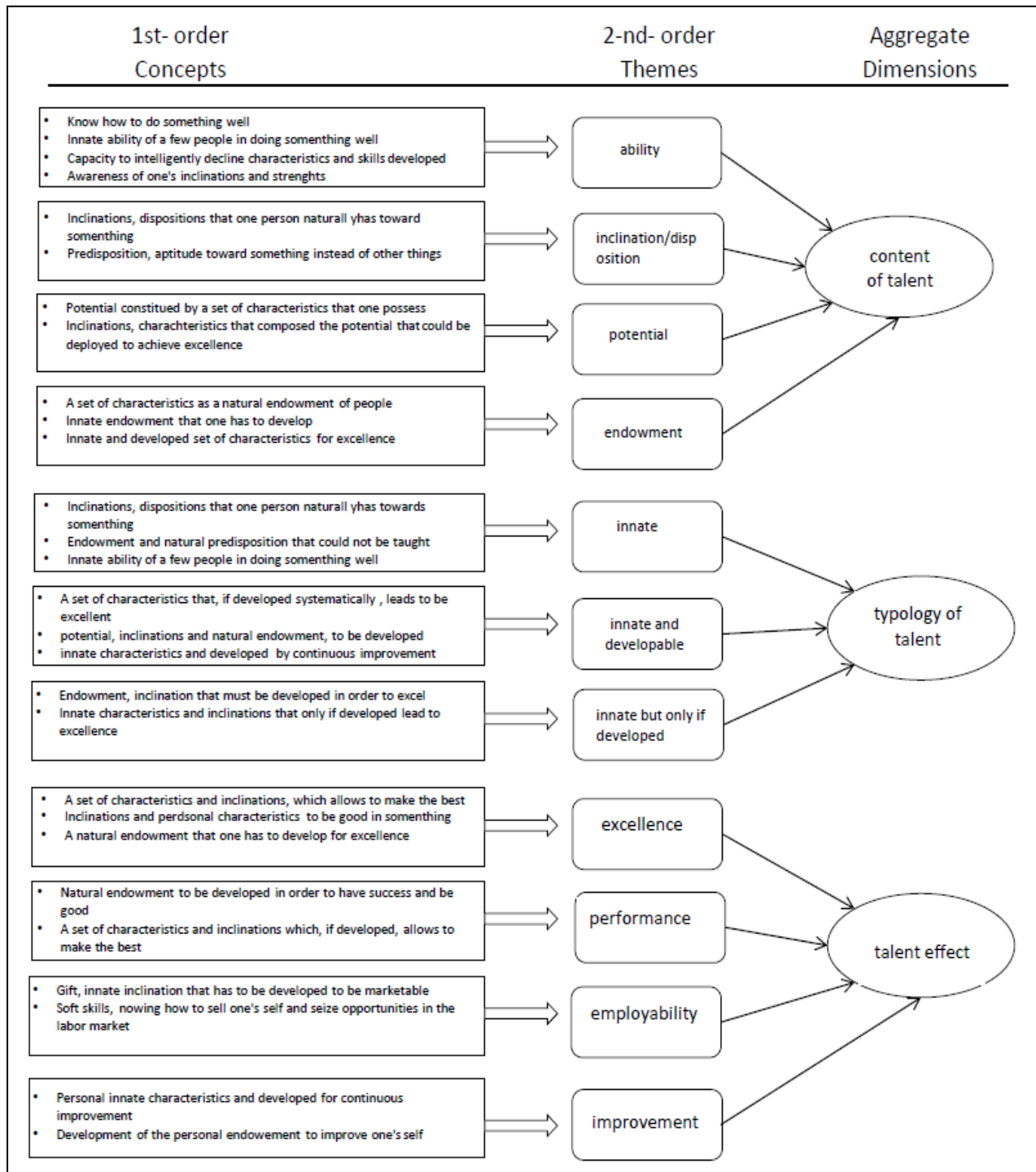
Organization	Data types	Amount and source	List of interviewees
Public Institution	3 in depth semi-structured interviews	3 interviews for a total of 4 hours	Pharmacy Director- ASL Pavia Pharmacy Director-ASL Milano Employee-AIFA
University of Pavia	8 in depth semi-structured interviews	8 interviews for a total of 10 hours	Director School of Pharmacy 3 Professors 4 Pro-Rectors
Research center	2 in depth semi-structured interviews	2 interviews for a total of 3 hours	Researcher- private center Genoa Director – Private center Milano
Company	7 in depth semi-structured interviews	7 interviews for a total of 10 hours	HR-MNC- -Roma HR- MNC- - Milano HR- MNC- Ivrea HR-MNC- Milano HR- MNC- Roma HR- Medium Italian Company- Pavia Director- recruitment company for pharmaceutical sector - Milano
Association	2 in depth semi-structured interviews	2 interviews for a total of 3 hours	President of the pharmacist order- Pavia President of the young pharmacists- Pavia
Pharmacy	3 in depth semi-structured interviews	3 interviews for a total of 4 hours	2 Owners- pharmacy in the center of Pavia Employee of a public pharmacy- Milan
Parapharmacy	2 in depth semi-structured interviews	2 interviews for a total of 2 hours	Owner- parapharmacy in the center of Pavia Owner- parapharmacy in a small town

5.3.2 Findings

5.3.2.1 The meaning of talent

The empirical investigation of the meaning of talent through an explorative study inside and outside the organization has as a core aspect: the qualitative interviews, based on semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix 3). We conducted this exploration before the multidisciplinary literature review and before the in depth analysis of the HRM literature about talent. This allowed us to gather information without preconceptions or strong conditioning. The literature review inside and outside the HRM domain helped us to better the concepts emerged during the explorative study.

Table 5.3: Visual graphic of the process of data analysis about the meaning of talent



We gathered a lot of qualitative data constituted by terms and definitions. This 1st-order analysis is characterized by the attempt to adhere faithfully to the information gathered, thus implies little attempt to distill categories. Indeed, numerous terms and categories emerged early in the

research. For this reason, at the beginning of a study the number of categories tended to be numerous (Gioia et al., 2013). Researchers of qualitative/interpretative work assert that it is artificial to parse the interviewing and the analyses, since they tend to proceed together (Langley, 1999; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Locke and Golden-Biddle, 1997). The analysis of 1st-order produced categories with the number and identification of categories that initially seemed overwhelming and confused. Gioia et al. (2013) affirm that it is important to get lost at this stage “you gotta get lost before you can get found” (p.20). Indeed, the initial sensation was “I’m lost” with no clear idea about how to make sense of all these data that don’t seem to hang together.

At this stage of the analysis we had some phrases. We list some of them, built in the following points putting together isolated pieces of the overall discourses in response to the question “Which is your definition of talent?”:

- Talent is the know how in doing something well, entails an innate part of the person but could also be learned. It leads to be excellent (Medium Italian company);
- Talent is the innate ability of a few people in doing something well, very easily and spontaneously. It is a natural predisposition that could not be taught and allow to be successful (Public institution);
- Talent is the capacity to intelligently decline characteristics and skills that one has, as innate characteristics and developed. It is related to soft skills, knowing how to sell one's self and seize opportunities in the labor market (Research center);
- Talent is the awareness of one's inclinations and strengths, innate characteristics and developed for continuous improvement, in order to be excellent (University);
- Talent is a predisposition, aptitude toward something instead of other things (Pharmacy);
- Talent is the potential constituted by a set of characteristics that one possess, inclinations, characteristics that composed the potential that could be deployed to achieve excellence, high potential people (MNC);

- Talent is a set of characteristics that constitutes a natural endowment of people that one has to develop for excellence (University);
- Talent is a set of characteristics that, if developed systematically, leads to be excellent (Research center);
- Talent is the potential, inclination and natural endowment, to be developed, through continuous improvement (MCN);
- Talent consists of some innate characteristics and inclinations that, only if developed, leads to excellence in one domain (University);
- Talent is a set of characteristics and inclinations, which allows to make the best. In some cases without training just for the possession of them. In other cases talent need a training to be developed (University);
- Talent is to have inclinations and personal characteristics that allows to be good in something. The only possession is not sufficient and the development phase is necessary (Parapharmacy);
- Natural endowment to be developed in order to have success and be good (HR company);
- A set of characteristics and inclinations, as one's natural endowment, which, if developed, allows to make the best (MNC);
- Gift, innate inclination that has to be developed to be marketable in this competitive and ever changing labor market (MNC);
- Talent is an inclination and characteristics to be developed in order to be competitive in a difficult, complex and ever changing labor market (Public Institution);
- Talent is a personal endowment to develop in order to improve one's self to have a better life and be successful at work place (Research center);

Fortunately, as the research progressed, we started seeking similarities and differences among the many categories, a process that could reduce the germane categories to a smaller number. Then, we gave those categories labels or phrasal descriptors (preferably retaining original terms) and considered the array.

The further stage was to try to understand this set of descriptions and to identify if there was a deeper structure in this array. As Gioia et al. (2013) assert “it is at this point that we treat ourselves as knowledgeable agents who can (and must) think at multiple levels simultaneously (i.e., at the level of the informant terms and codes and at the more abstract, 2nd-order theoretical level of themes, dimensions, and the larger narrative—answering the important question “What’s going on here?” theoretically)” (p. 20).

In this 2nd-order analysis we entered in the theoretical realm, asking whether the emerging terms and themes suggested concepts that might help us to describe and explain the phenomena we were observing.

At this stage we had 11 concepts, identified from phrases of the 1st-order: inclinations/dispositions, endowment, potential, ability, innate, innate and developed, innate but only if developed, excellence, performance, employability, improvement.

Therefore, a workable set of concepts were identified (and the culmination of the theme and concept development process leads to what Glaser and Strauss [1967] termed “theoretical saturation”), we investigated whether it is possible to distill the emergent 2nd-order themes even further into 2nd-order “aggregate dimensions.”

The aggregate dimensions emerged are: content (components) of talent, typology of talent and effect of talent.

At this point when we have the full set of 1st-order terms and 2nd-order themes and aggregate dimensions, we have the basis for building a data structure (see Figure 5.3). The data structure adopt from Corley and Gioia (2004) allows us to configure our data into a visual aid. It also provides a graphic representation of the progression of the analysis process, from raw data to terms and themes, a key component of demonstrating rigor in qualitative research (Pratt, 2008; Tracy, 2010).

According to Corley and Gioia (2004) in this way, the act of constructing a data structure leads and forces us to start thinking about the data theoretically and not just methodologically. This does not mean that the data structure should capture relationships among the 2nd-order themes, this is indeed a step that comes later in the theorizing process. However, this forced “stepping-up” in abstractness does lay the foundation for balancing the deep embeddedness of the interviewees’ viewpoint in living the phenomenon with the necessary view often required to draw forth the theoretical insights. After the initial stages of the analysis of the data gathered, we also begin working between emergent data, terms, themes, concepts and dimensions with the relevant literature. The objective is to see whether what we are finding has precedents and also whether we have discovered new concepts.

Lastly, at this aim, we defined a research team of different fields of research, we dealt with the issue of different researchers interpreting some interviewees’ terms and passages differently. Where the agreements about some interpretation were low, we revisited the data, engaged in mutual discussions, and developed understandings for arriving at consensual interpretations. We reconcile differing interpretations by developing consensual decision rules about how various terms or phases were needed to be coded.

DEFINITION OF TALENT

The analysis conducted allows us to affirm that, in the context of the present study, talent emerges, from the analysis of the qualitative data gathered through the explorative study, as an object (i.e. ability, inclinations, potential, endowment) instead of a subject. Furthermore, data show about the typology of talent that the innate aspect of talent is present but it is prevalent the viewpoint of innate and developed talent at the same level: talent is innate and has to be developed. Indeed, few interviews highlight the development aspect as preminent (innate is subordinated to the development). The analysis of the data indicates about the effect of talent that the prevalent interpretation is about excellence and employability. This last aspect could be affected by the fact that interviewees were aware that the target population is young graduates. The link between talent and the world of work is strong as the title of the work of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) highlights “the meaning of talent in the world of work” this could be due to

the fact that this field of research starts from practitioners inside organizations. This is confirmed by the presence of the term performance in the data gathered. Less common is the personal improvement that we found mostly inside the University public organization. We assume that the employability aggregate dimension, as the data analysis showed (Table 5.3) for the effect of talent, comprehends both the performance and excellence aggregate dimensions. Indeed, on one hand performance is bound to outcomes of people already working in the labor market and in the present study we deal with students. On the other hand excellence implies the employability dimension. Hence, we consider the employability aggregate dimension for the effect of talent for our targeted population.

The data gathered show slightly more interpretation as an object component of all the individuals. Furthermore, the nature of the public institution leads us to consider the appropriateness of involving all students adopting an inclusive approach. Although, with regards to this aspect, we have to add the consideration that, in fact, students at the University are already a selected category of people.

We can conclude defining that “talent is the potential that students possess, in terms of employability, that could be systematically developed to excel at one’s personal best, in line with their career aspirations”. This definition implies that each student has a differentiated potential, of course, that allows them to achieve excellence not at interpersonal level but at personal level, performing at one’s personal best. In accordance with Silzer and Church (2009a) the talent identification activity should focus also on those people who have the potential to be excellent in the future. This is in contrast with the widespread talent identification practice that is based on performance score and, hence, on evidence that is manifested at the present time. This assumption is in line with the context of our pilot study, where students are not yet in the labor market. Moreover, the term potential is related to the lack of students’ awareness about their talent (i.e. employability) and highlights appropriately the possibility that could be waste or leave undiscovered without tailored a TD pathway focused on the CMS, since they could not have the chance to exploit it.

Furthermore, we pointed out in the previous chapter that in the University the hard skills are widely provided while the soft skills, and in particular, the CMS, are not systematically taught. This makes the students weak during the complex transition from the educational to the work world. Especially in the present labor market, characterized by a significant economic downturn and with a high rate of youth unemployment, that makes the students uncertain about the future. We investigate more in depth this aspect in the following section with the explorative study in the pharmaceutical sector to detect which skills are relevant for employers to make graduate student employable.

5.3.2.2 The talent development content : relevant soft skills for the labor market in the pharmaceutical sector

All over the world universities are increasingly required to produce highly skilled graduates, able to respond to the ever changing and complex needs of the contemporary workplace (Sleezer et al., 2004; Possa, 2006; Bridgstock, 2009). An increasingly wide 'gap' has been revealed between the skills and capabilities of graduates and the requirements and demands of the work environment (King, 2003; Yunus and Li, 2005; Andrews and Higson, 2008).

According to Nilsson and Ellström (2012) in TM process the development activities enhance the individual talent of employees (i.e. the skills), and, hence, their employability is increased. Employability has often been interpreted as a set of competences and characteristics that are identified as important for meeting shifting demands in a rapidly changing and dynamic competitive market (Forrier and Sels, 2003; Knight and Yorke, 2004). This conceptualization is also closely associated with the ways in which talent is often portrayed (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). This approach shows a great deal of resemblance to human resource development or competency management. In order to achieve exceptional results, employees must apply their above-average, differentiated competences. A different explanation could be that companies think about talent in terms of "the competences needed and, since the competency catalogue is different and specific

for each and every organization, the definition of talent is local” (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012, p.4).

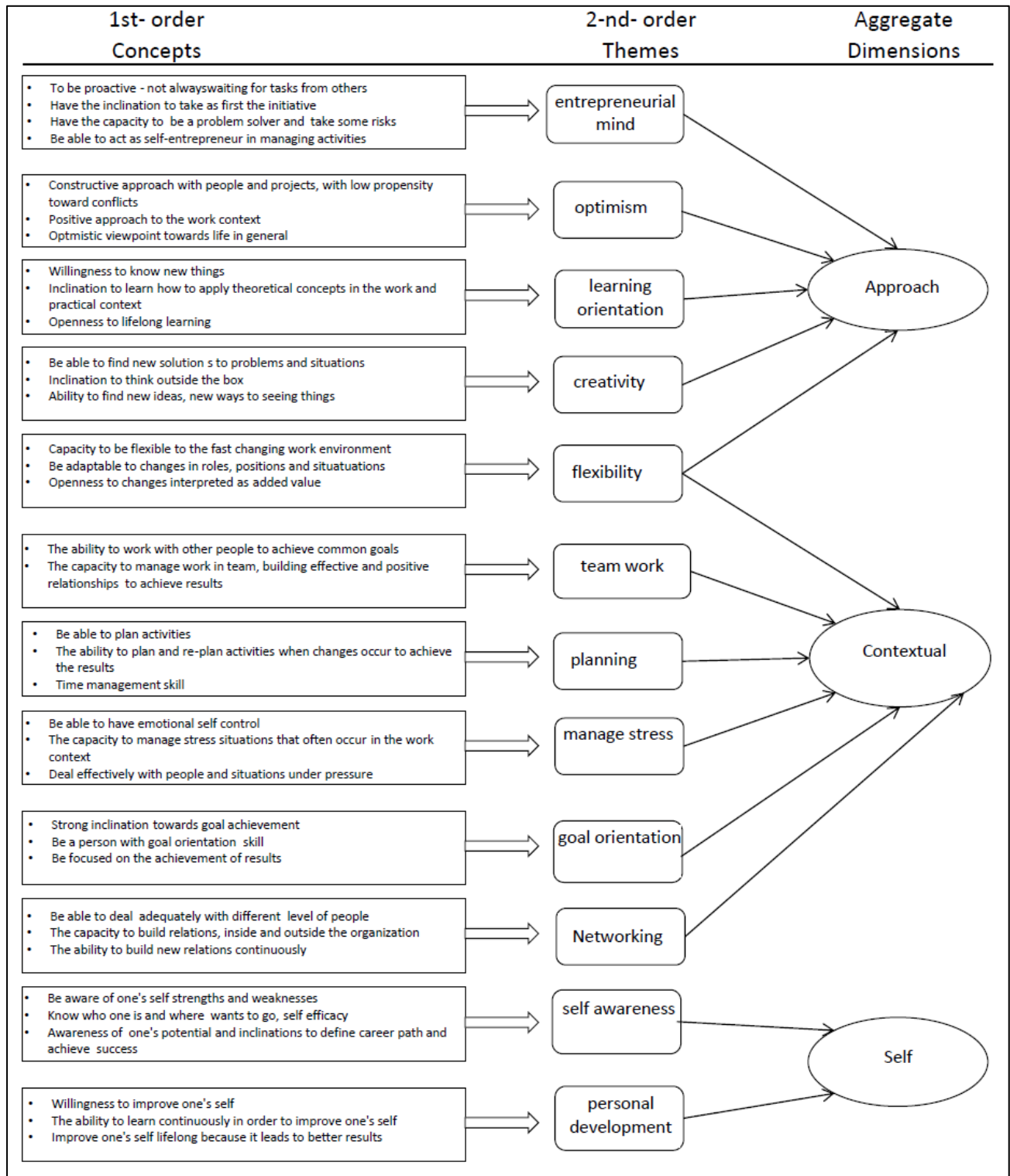
In particular, the mix of differentiating competences and abilities varies according to the organizational environment (e.g., sector, labor market, customer orientation), the type of work, the internal and external circumstances of an organization and across time (Ashton and Morton, 2005; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; McCauley and Wakefield, 2006; Tansley, 2011; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2012).

In the explorative study conducted to define the meaning of talent we also detected which soft skills are evaluated as relevant by representatives of the labor market in the pharmaceutical sector for neo-graduate students. The conclusion of *chapter 3* highlighted that for employers the soft skills in addition with the hard skills are more and more significant. We found out that there is a gap between the competence that graduates possess after graduation and the requirements of employers. We concluded drawing attention on the fact that the hard skills are already taught in the academic courses while the soft skills are mainly absent. In particular, we focused on the soft skills component of a subset of the employability skills, the career management skills.

Hence, we have to consider, on one hand, the importance of the soft skills to be employable underlined both by employers and literature; on the other hand, the lack of preparation for graduate students in soft skills. In addition, we have to take into account that, the results of the explorative study about the meaning of talent and the multidisciplinary literature review, emphasized the ability component, the nurture issue and the interpretation of excellence at one’s personal best (i.e. inclusive approach).

Taking together these considerations the necessity at this stage of the empirical implementation of the TM process, the definition of talent, is to detect which soft skills, in detail, are crucial to enhance students’ employability. This is a key point for the talent identification but also for the content of the talent development path.

Table 5.4: Visual graphic of the process of data analysis about the relevant soft skills



We asked how they evaluate hard and soft skills for neo-graduate students. The results are that all employers agree about the equal importance.

We proceeded adopting the same analysis procedure described above. The 1-st order of analysis led us to assemble the following terms and dimensions. Some examples:

- It is important to be proactive and not always waiting for tasks from others, have inclination to think outside the box, creativity, otherwise research will not improve. It is fundamental to have a constructive approach with people and projects, with low propensity for conflicts, the ability to work in team and the capacity to build international network (Research center);
- Have the inclination to take as first the initiative, new ways of seeing things, have the capacity to be a problem solver and to take some risks. It is of importance to be able to find new solutions to problems and situations, openness to changes as added value (Pharmacy owner);
- First of all be able to act as self-entrepreneur in managing activities, then the capacity to be flexible to the fast changing work environment, be open to lifelong learning and have a strong inclination towards goal achievement. It is fundamental to be able to have emotional self-control and the ability to build new relations continuously. Moreover, the awareness of one's potential and inclinations to define career path and achieve success (HR recruitment company);
- Inclination to learn how to apply theoretical concepts in the work and practical context, positive approach to the work context, be humble and kind, be able to deal adequately with different levels of people (Public pharmacy employee);
- Have an optimistic viewpoint towards life in general, building effective and positive relationships to achieve results, moreover the ability to plan and re-plan activities when changes occur to achieve the results. Improve one's self lifelong because it leads to better results (Public institution);
- Willingness to know new things, the ability to work with other people to achieve common goals, be adaptable to changes in roles, positions and situations. The capacity to manage stress situations that often occur in the work context (MCN);
- It is important to have the ability to find new ideas, the capacity to build relations (inside and outside the organization), the capacity to manage team work and be a person with goal

orientation skills. Moreover the ability to learn continuously in order to improve one's self (University);

- Be aware of one's self strengths and weaknesses, willingness to improve one's self, deal effectively with people and situations under pressure, be focused on the achievement of results (Medium Italian company);

Fortunately, as the research progressed, we started seeking similarities and differences among the many categories, a process that could reduce the germane categories to a smaller number. We then gave those categories labels or phrasal descriptors (preferably retaining original terms) and considered the array.

In this 2nd-order analysis, occurred the entrance in the theoretical field, asking whether the emerging terms and themes suggested concepts that might help us describe and explain the phenomena we were observing.

At this stage, we had the following soft skills: entrepreneurial mind and proactivity, optimism and positive approach, passion, learning orientation, creativity and curiosity, flexibility and adaptability, team work, planning, managing ambiguity, goal orientation, networking, self-awareness, personal development.

Therefore, a workable set of concepts were identified (and the culmination of the theme and concept development process leads to what Glaser and Strauss [1967] termed “theoretical saturation”), we investigated whether it was possible to distill the emergent 2nd-order themes even further into 2nd-order “aggregate dimensions.”

The aggregate dimensions emerged for the soft skills of CMS are: approach, contextual and self.

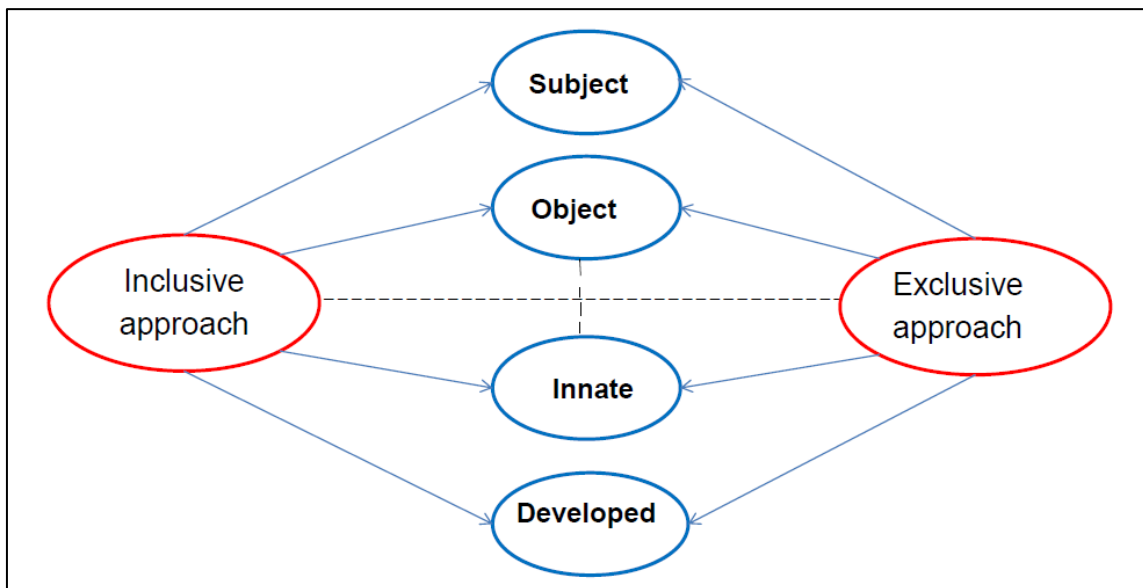
At this point when we have the full set of 1st-order terms and 2nd-order themes and aggregate dimensions, then we have the basis for building a data structure (see Figure 5.4).

5.4 Conclusions

The present chapter contributes to the clarification of what talent is, its components and the meaning, both through the multidisciplinary literature review and the qualitative explorative study in the labor market. We concluded the theoretical part of the thesis (*chapter 2*) drawing attention to the main tensions (object versus subject; inclusive versus exclusive) existing in literature about the definition of talent. This is a complex research issue that affects the effectiveness of the overall TM process. For this reason, we broadened the perspective on talent both theoretically, including divergent streams of literature, and empirically gathering different viewpoints on talent definition, inside and outside the organization.

The multidisciplinary literature review allowed us to identify another important tension about the definition of talent, innate versus developed, that we combined with the inclusive versus exclusive approach, obtaining four more typologies of talent to add to the previous four typologies that we identified in the *chapter 2*, for a total of 8.

Table 5.5: *The combinations of the tensions about the definition of talent*



We concluded *chapter 2* highlighting that the object versus subject approach could seem to be a tautological issue (Gallardo et al., 2012) because those who have talent (object approach) could be defined as talented (subject approach). At the same time the nurture and nature debate, about

whether talent is innate or developed, shows interaction underlying the importance of both innate and acquired talent, placing them as at the center of a continuum (Meyers et al., 2013). In particular, the focus is on the fact that innate features are necessary, and that each individual has, but it is not sufficient for future achievement, one needs to develop them through practice. Csikszentmihalyi (1998) summarized this idea by stating that “talent is not an all-or-nothing gift but a potential that needs to be cultivated to bear fruit” (p. 411).

We stated our definition in “talent refers to the potential that students possess, in terms of employability, that could be systematically developed to excel at one’s personal best, in line with their career aspirations”.

This definition is rooted in positive psychology where each individual is believed to possess a certain set of strengths and this specific constellation of strengths makes everyone unique (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001). Thus far, it is essential to detect one’s unique strengths in order to deploy them in activities one is passionate about (Vallerand et al., 2003) otherwise the risk is to waste this potential or leave it undiscovered. Talent identification and development in our pilot study has this aim. The definition is linked also to vocational psychology where assessing interests is a key component of talent with the goal of supporting individuals in finding a fit between the person they are and the job or career they aspire so that excellence might be achieved (Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Greenhaus and Callanan, 2006). This will result in performing consistently at one’s personal best (i.e., the maximum of one’s capacity) as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) state. It is clear that we adopted also a ‘strengths-based approach’ based on the assumption that utilizing everyone’s strengths is crucial. This generates positive physical and psychological health outcomes, such as individual fulfillment, which is believed to substantially increase the productivity of employees. Identification of interest areas is believed to be crucial in order to locate activities in which interests can be reinforced and actualized, leading ideally to the delivery of excellent performance (Lubinski and Benbow, 2000).

This positive psychology approach to the definition of talent is therefore strictly related to motivation and interest that determine the performance at one’s personal best.

In order to analyze data gathered we adopted the data structure that also visually synthesizes the analytical process conducted on the qualitative data gathered. Nevertheless, the data structure is a static picture of a dynamic phenomenon, research doesn't actually investigate processes unless the static picture, like a photograph (Gioia et al., 2013). This research method adopted in this chapter seems to be the more appropriate for a growing development field of research that adopted a phenomenon-driven approach (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). Therefore, we keep a front-and-center focus on our ultimate goal of building a vibrant inductive model that is grounded in the data (as exemplified by the data structure), one that captures the interviewees' viewpoint in theoretical terms. The result is bound up with grounded theory, with the attempt to show the dynamic relationships among the emergent concepts that describe or explain the phenomenon of interest and one that makes all relevant data-to-theory connections clear (thus allaying the usual concern that qualitative research too often does not show just how data relates to theory).

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Chapter 6

Talent development: the implementation with an experimental design

6.1 Introduction

Talent development represents an important component of the overall talent management process (Novations, 2009; Cappelli, 2009). In *chapter 2* we analyzed the literature about talent management, talent and talent development. We found that there is a scarcity of empirical studies, especially about the operationalization of talent and the implementation of the TD. The aim of the present study is to shed some light on the empirical process of the TM implementation, in particular on the Talent Development, to fill the gap with a small square of the big mosaic.

We concluded the previous chapter stating, on the base of the multidisciplinary literature review and the multilevel explorative study, our definition of talent as “talent is the potential that students possess, in term of employability, that could be systematically develop to excel at one’s personal best, in line with their career aspirations”. This is the first crucial step for the overall TM process and hence also for the design and the architecture (Garavan et al., 2012) of the TD. Indeed, starting from the definition of talent we can consider a lot of implications and assumptions: the approach is inclusive, talent is an object (CMS) and it could be developed. Hence we can affirm that we adopt the ‘inclusive/developable talent’ philosophy (Meyers and Woerkom, 2014). This has an effect on the TM practices with a strong focus on the development initiative and not on the acquisition, attraction and selection, of talent from the external context.

The present TD initiative involves all the individuals of the sample “allowing everyone to reach his/her potential, no matter what might be” (Ashton and Morton, 2005, p.30). TM is a set of practices that are implemented in organizations (CIPD, 2011), and refers to how organizations attract, select, develop and manage people in an integrated and strategic way (Scullion and Collings, 2011). Talent management systems necessarily underline the importance of HR development and make use of a diverse set of HR practices with the aim of expanding students' CMS. The TD path, in this case, could be composed by formal and informal training encompassing networking, individual development plans exercise and reflection (Meyers and Woerkom, 2014).

The aim of TD is to teach the students how to use their given potentials and strengths in order to enhance their employability. This implies, as Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) define, that they have (I) to understand the strengths they own and how could make interact with one another, (II) to be aware of the context in order to make an appropriate fit between strengths and situations, (III) to be able to regulate the use their strengths, in terms of intensity and frequency (Meyers and Woerkom, 2014). According to Yost and Chang (2009) individuals have to be placed in adequate positions that allow them to deploy and expand their potential. The 'object' approach to talent, in our case, refers to the fit between an individual's talent and the context within which he or she aspires to work.

This empirical implementation of the TD aspires to demonstrate the possible effectiveness of the present TD in enhancing the students' employability by designing a process tailored for the target population and in synergy with the labor market. This allows us to overcome the difficulty highlighted in *chapter 3* about the inter-relation between the University and the labor market. The focus is on the development of the CMS, as emerged by the explorative study described in *chapter 5*, adopting the DOTS model as the theoretical framework that defines the "how" aspect of the TD activities, in order to make the students employable in the labor market. The present study hypothesizes that a TD based on the DOTS model and focused on the CMS development could enhance students' employability. This a new interpretation of the DOTS model for a TD intervention and we didn't find another study adopting the DOTS model for TD.

In *chapter 2* we analyzed and described the theoretical frameworks of the TM. In the TD implementation, as explained in *chapter 4*, we adopt a best fit approach, that takes the relevance of the context into account. The framework that seems more adequate is one of the alternative frameworks, compared to the mains and more common, according to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015), the Career Management (CM)- in which exists a distinction between organizational career management (OCM) and career self-management (CMS) as De Vos and Dries (2013) describe. This approach fits with our conclusions and assumptions about the talent definition of the previous chapter. Furthermore, this comes along also with the phenomenon-driven perspective on TM that we adopted (described in *chapter 2*). Therefore talent management is a phenomenon rather than a theoretical construct, so it makes sense to study it as such, "by being open to a plurality of

perspectives found in HR practice rather than departing from normative frameworks advocating ‘one right way’ of approaching or studying talent management” (Dries, 2013b, p.4). The best fit approach allows us to combine some of the alternative frameworks conceptualized by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015). Hence, we add the Career Management with the strength-based approach. We can summarize that the Career Management framework in our case encompasses the strength-based approach. According to Dries (2013a) and Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) the strength-based approach is the fulfillment of the natural potential of all employees, advocating that everyone is entitled to the organizational opportunities, resources and encouragement required to apply the maximum of their capacities.

The research design of the present study is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods according to the requirements of each different TM phase. In particular, Talent Development adopts an experimental design because it is the method that responds more adequately to the aim of investigate the effectiveness of the TD pathway. The implementation of the TD allow us to face also the lack of empirical research about the implementation of TM, in general, and, in particular, about TD.

The aim of this pilot study is to fill the gap about empirical implementation of the TM in a public higher education organization, adopting an inclusive approach, that means involving all the students in the treatment without selection criteria. We also adopted an object approach to the concept of talent: talent indeed is the potential that each student has, in terms of employability skills, that is represented by the sum of the hard and soft skills required to be employable. Since the sample, the students at the School of Pharmacy, attended academic courses mainly on the hard skills we decided to focus the TD intervention on the soft skills component. In particular we focused on a subset of the employability skills, the CMS, that help students to be aware of their strengths and how these could combine with their career aspiration. The CMS are widely recognized (see The career guidance of World Bank; the ‘Blueprint’ of Canada-US and Australia; OECD 2004; ELPGN; ANVUR- TECO project) as crucial for students to enter in the labor market and build satisfactory careers, to manage the transition from education to the world of work. Actually CMS are not systematically provided by the Universities, in general, and in particular in Italy.

In what follows we analyze the pre-treatment survey (pre-test) and the post-treatment survey (post-test). The pre-treatment survey corresponds to the talent identification, or the mapping of talent, concerned to the characteristics, CMS, aspirations and potential of the students in a future career perspective. At this aim Silzer and Church (2009a) provide talent management practitioners with several suggestions about the assessment of potential. First the importance of the question, “The potential for what?”- that is attuned to the aim and the desired outcomes of the TM. In our case are the CMS that enhance the students’ employability. The authors have made a useful contribution in drawing together the differing views of potential into an integrated model consisting of three dimensions, that could vary over time. The first dimension is a foundation dimension refer to stable, consistent aspects, difficult factors to develop as cognition (IQ) and personality. The second dimension is the growth dimension that includes factor that predict future learning and development such as adaptability, learning orientation, and motivation or drive (Meyers at al., 2013, p.317). Finally, the last dimension of potential is the career dimensions which encompasses factors that can be developed over time, such as technical and functional knowledge, leadership ability, performance rewards, and knowledge and value (Silzer and Church, 2009a; McDonnell, 2011). These three dimensions imply consequences for talent management: first of all, talent identification should focus on factors of growth dimensions as indicators of potential. In order to implement a talent identification it can make use of assessments of growth related factors, such as learning agility (Spreitzer et al., 1997). Second, after identifying potential in these dimensions, training and development should concentrate on growing the factors related to enhance individual’s career-specific skills (Silzer and Church, 2009a). Based on this argument, several authors have stressed that factors predicting the growth dimension such as adaptability, flexibility, learning orientation, learning agility, feedback seeking, and drive are crucial components of potential (Eichinger and Lombardo, 2004). The growth dimension is, however, the most difficult dimension to assess (Silzer and Church, 2009a). We integrate all of these aspects in the talent identification and development, measuring them in surveys through a combination of scales and questions.

In the revised DMGT 2.0, Gagné (2010) emphasized the intrapersonal catalyst motivation. Very often, desired end-state competences, such as leadership skills, can easily be developed if an

employee disposes of strong growth factors such as the motivation to perform well in a particular domain (Meyers et al., 2013). Since motivation's importance for talent development has also been acknowledged by other researchers (e.g., Rea, 2000), the intervention should apply motivation-enhancing practices such as self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985), expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) and goal-setting theory (Locke and Latham, 1990). The second catalyst of talent development mentioned in the DMGT (Gagné, 2004, 2010) is the context in which talent development takes place. Since talent cannot be considered a part from its context (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011) and since a specific context might influence different people in different ways (Papierno et al., 2005), talent management should be dynamic and adaptable to either the context or the individual. Talent management should aim to create an organizational context that facilitates talent development and prevents innate talent from being wasted earlier (Meyers et al., 2013, p.317). To this end the necessity to tailor training and development trajectories to early indicators of career-specific potential has been highlighted by theories on person–environment interactions. These theories propose that an optimal fit between initial conditions (individual potential) and stimulating environmental factors (training) results in a chain of synergistic or multiplicative person–environment interactions that lead to disproportionate gains in a given skill or ability (Schmitt et al., 2003). This means that individuals can show remarkable improvements of abilities after participating in a training that matches their potential (Papierno et al., 2005).

We take into account both catalysts factors of talent development, define by Gagné (2010). Hence we base the TD on the motivational factor, of importance especially in our context, a public Italian University, involving testimonials in informal training sessions, from the real world of work. In this way we embrace also the second catalyst factor, the person-environment interaction. The University, that offers this path enhances the students' motivation and sense of membership and identification with the University institution.

The TD is even more important because the term potential, present in our definition and pertinent with the student condition, implies that it could remain otherwise undiscovered. Consequently without specific and tailored developmental pathways at the University it could become unrealized or wasted potential (Gladwell, 2008; Papierno et al., 2005).

Moreover, university is a crucial time in young people's learning path and for career development (Gore and Metz, 2008). The early maturation of these skills makes it easier to assume an attitude and a way of proactive behavior than the management of personal history and to address the decision-making events and life transitions through a design of self over time (Grimaldi et al., 2015).

6.2 Research method

In the empirical investigation we adopt an experimental design that encompasses a pre-treatment and a post-treatment test, with a control group, to measure the TD effectiveness in enhancing students' employability. The pilot study surveys undergraduate students who are enrolled in the School of Pharmacy -at the University of Pavia, in the Northern Italy.

Causation is naturally difficult to establish in the social sciences. We attempted to help establish causation with the nature of the experimental design. By having a control group, we can rule out a "history" effect (e.g., some third variable might be causing the TD/Employability relationship). The control group also confirms the covariation of the cause and the effect. If X, then Y. If not X, then not Y. If the talent development (treatment), focused on the soft skills required by the labor market and administered following the DOTS model, increases employability, and without TD designed in this way employability of the students doesn't increase, then is plausible that talent development causes an increase of the employability (Ramsey and Lorenz, 2016).

Internal validity encompassed whether the results of the study (i.e. mean difference between treatment and control group) are legitimate because of the way the groups were selected, data was recorded or analysis performed. We defined a proper study design and we followed a strict protocol execution in order to have high levels of validity. Internal validity refers to the adequacy of our study design and the degree of control we have exercised in our data gathering. Good internal validity is ensured by application of the concept of control that is very important in research.

6.2.1 Research setting

The talent development was implemented in a mandatory academic course in “Economics and Management for Pharmaceutical Sector”. The research setting is relevant for the research method and the success of the TD. We have a sample of students that are in a scientific academic field of study, pharmacy, and therefore focused on the hard skills and technical competences. It is clear that just administering a treatment to students that don’t have any idea of the soft skills, management and career will lead us to have a positive confirmation of the TD effectiveness.

The selection of students already attending a course in management with a training about companies, with labor market testimonials and visit to the companies, implies, indirectly, that they all have some idea of the concepts that are important for the labor market and in somehow for career. The treatment implemented aspires to demonstrate that a management course it is not sufficient to develop skills that make students to be “work ready” and employable. Many people believe that to improve the quality of working life and promote employment is necessary to promote educational programs that enable the development of a set of skills and soft skills that make individuals more employable (Gamboa et al., 2009). In a recent study De Vos et al., (2011) show that for organizations it is not sufficient to organize training, learning on the job and practices for career advancement, but it is important to create a stimulating learning environment in which participation in skills development is supported by the organization at all levels. In particular, we have to take into account, as we already mentioned, that the University period is a crucial time in young people’s learning path and for career development (Gore and Metz, 2008). It is important to choose the right framework and to design a tailored pathway leading students to be aware of their strengths and how these could join the future job profiles.

The aim is to demonstrate that implementing a TM with a tailored TD pathway could add more value to the employability level of the students than traditional academic courses.

6.2.2 Data collection

Data collection for the study was done using a questionnaire approach. The surveys, both pre and post-treatment, encompassed standardized self-assessment tools and open ended questions to have an in-depth insight about students and their evolution during the TD.

The surveys, pre and post treatment, consisted in three main parts: (I) respondents' profiles, (II) assessment of the soft skills that are relevant for the students' employability and career, and (III) the feedback about the implemented talent management process. All the questionnaires were in Italian and administered online. The aim of the first part was to review the undergraduates profile in terms of: (I) personal and demographical status, (II) the scholastic background, (III) the working experience and conditions. The second part encompassed a battery of tests, all of them (excepted one) validated, with the purpose to define the undergraduates future expectations about career and to measure the dimensions that are relevant to be employable graduates.

6.2.3 Talent development treatment

The TD pathway consisted in 6 lessons of 12 hours in total, 2 hours for each lesson. It has been a short intervention but research demonstrated that it could be enough to successfully increase some CMS in students (Feldman and Dreher, 2012).

We designed the treatment following the DOTS model (for the reason of this choice see *chapter 3*) interpreting and modulating it on the base of our context. The research team in synergy with the HR experts of the labor market defined the architecture of the TD (Garavan et al., 2012) that is summarize in the Table 6.1. The lessons were administered by the research team together with HR experts, professional trainers and testimonials of the world of work. This model fits with the concept of Employability and furthermore with the shortness of the initiative. We focus the TD on the DOTS model components to lead students to the understanding of their characteristics and strengths; and how these could be combined with their future aspirations in order to be effective in pursuing a career achievement through an action plan.

We followed the DOTS model in this way:

- S= Self-awareness

We focused the first two lessons on this concept because it is very important for students. They usually don't have confidence with this construct and in addition this is the first crucial step to be successful in the labor market (Law and Watt, 1977). Self-awareness makes one person aware of who she/he is and of which constellation of characteristics is composed. The self-awareness is worthy also in the world of work because it leads people to search for the job that they aspire with conscientiousness, with more efficacy, instead of just searching for a job in general.

In the first lesson, after a brief introduction about CMS, a Psychologist led students to reflect about their-self: values, future aspirations, weaknesses, strengths, abilities and personal characteristics. We have administered exercises for reflection (Meyers and Woerkom, 2014). In the second lesson we worked on the self-efficacy, that belongs to the self-awareness concept, but it represents a first step towards the world of work (i.e. the external context) starting from an individual and internal dimension (self-awareness).

- T=Transition Learning

The third lesson was taught by a professional trainer that explained the importance of the personal network, how to build it, how to manage effective communication and how to be self-confident in order to market oneself in the labor market with a portfolio of competences and characteristics.

The fourth lesson was administered by an HR professional and was about how to write a Curriculum Vitae that promote one's characteristics in order to be employable in the labor market. This lesson also included a part about the job interview with some simulations. This part comprehended also how the students could apply the abstract and conceptual knowledge to the practical activities of the world of work.

- O=Opportunity awareness

The fifth lesson consisted in a panel of different representatives of the labor market, one for each of the future job profiles that we identified in the previous phase, the explorative study in the labor market (*chapter 5*). The students were enthusiastic of this session and asked a lot of questions that helped them to have a clear and real idea of the job profiles in the workday life. This offered them

also the opportunity to start to develop their personal network, gathering some important contacts. Indeed, networking is an important aspect (Meyers and Woerkom, 2014).

- D= Decision Making

The last lesson was about the decision making, how to make an action plan to achieve one's goals. We have done individual development plan exercises and reflections (Meyers and Woerkom, 2014) to help the students to define a clear future path with progressive steps. This part encompasses the development of an action plan, starting from the characteristics and strengths of the students and matching them with their career aspirations.

At the end of the last lesson we added 30 minutes for a narrative interview in which students' filled out open ended questions. The aim was to have an in depth understanding of their path during the TD and their perception of it. The narrative interview and the self-reflection exercises, that the students have done during the TD path, are methods that support individuals to reflect on their-self and to form ideas of what one might become in the future. On this basis individuals can make more effective career decisions (Nijs et al., 2014).

At the same time, in other external contexts, students develop personal and professional skills while living away from home, travelling, doing voluntary or community work, and participating in clubs and societies, that impact upon their confidence and consequently increase their employability (Atkins, 1999). Even if these learning experiences can be harnessed and translated back into the classroom through critical reflection, it is usually not until they are included in students' learning objectives and formally assessed, that their importance for their future careers is fully accepted by students (Bennett, et al, 2000; Crebert et al., 2004).

TD focuses on strengths because it is more motivational to work on strengths where the individuals are leveraging a talent that comes naturally to them, than to develop a skill, knowledge or capability that they have little or no natural aptitude for, especially in a short time period treatment (Ross, 2013). This seems to be also appropriate for the shortness of our TD. We adopted this approach by leveraging strengths appropriately, developing skills and mitigating weaknesses in order to ensure that these factors do not derail students at a future date. The talented students,

indeed, are particularly vulnerable to derailment at key transition stages as explained by Charan et al. (2011, p. 7-9)

Table 6.1: *Talent Development intervention*

S	• First lesson: the self-awareness (values, strengths, aspirations) with reflection exercises
S	• Second lesson: self-efficacy- the strengths and the match with the job aspirations
T	• Third lesson: how to market itself (self-confidence, network and communication)
T	• Fourth lesson: the CV and job interview
O	• Fifth lesson: four testimonials for the four job profiles and other new opportunities
D	• Sixth lesson: the decision making about the career and the action plan

6.2.4 Data analysis

We gathered primary data, original, unedited and 'first-hand'. Descriptive statistical analysis was adopted to analyze data and this study used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21. The raw data were analyzed using descriptive statistic that is used, in general, to reveal patterns through the analysis of numeric.

6.2.5 Participants

The sample consists of 157 undergraduates students enrolled in the University of Pavia- School of Pharmacy at the 4th academic year in a course of five years.

We adopted an experimental design methodology that encompassed both pre-test and post-test survey. We decided to consider as valid the respondents to both surveys, in total 157 valid cases, excluding 10 students that didn't complete both the pre and post-tests.

This choice helped us to avoid a threat to the internal validity due to the experimental mortality- i.e. the differential loss of participants across groups that could affect the results. This is a threat for any design with more than one group but in this way we have the same number of participants make it through the entire study in both experimental and comparison groups.

The sample has been randomly divided in two groups, following the alphabetical order, to have a treatment (71) and a control group (86). This random subdivision helped us to have a consistent validity. Selection, indeed, could be a threat for the two group design, because it could determine whether an experimental treatment/condition makes a difference or not and if there is sufficient evidence to support the claim. Bias in group composition (i.e differential selection) could be represented by conveniences in creating comparison groups that cannot be assumed to be equivalent (e.g. the groups are not equal because they were not randomly chosen). Randomization (random assignment) of group membership is a counter-attack against this threat. In our case the students were selected by random assignment, all had an equal chance of being in treatment or comparison groups, and we verified that the two groups were equivalent at the beginning of the study, analyzing the control variables. The individuation of the sample it has been important because we needed homogeneity to avoid upstream bias due to some differences inside the sample that might affected the measurement of the treatment effectiveness. For the validity it was important to find a course that was mandatory for the students because the participation at the treatment on a voluntary base could also affect the consistency of the TD effectiveness. Voluntary participation could imply that we have students in the classroom that might choose to participate on the basis of their high level of soft skills or self-awareness and that could represent an upstream bias.

The sample consists of 157 undergraduate students with a common cultural and social background. The most of them are Italian (95.54%) with few foreign students: 5 from Camerun (3.18%), one student from Albany and one from Peru. All of them speak Italian and attended

academic courses in Italian. The 75.79% are women (n=119) and the 24.20% men (n=38). The median age is 23 years (Mage=23.77 and SD=1.56) and the most of them is born in the 1993 (56.05%) .

The survey gave us the opportunity to know the linguistic competences of the students. Only one student doesn't speak any foreign language. All the other students speak English, the 18.58% has a sufficient level of knowledge and the 34.61% discrete one. The 37.17% has a good knowledge and the 9.61% an excellent level. The 50.31% know two languages, English and French mostly. For the French the 50.31% doesn't know the language, 5.73% knows the language very well, 6.36% good, 10.19% discrete and 27.38% with a sufficient level.

We investigated the daily use of communication tools. The students use technology to communicate but they use scarcely some of the chat communication tools (the 80.89% didn't use them at all, 13.37% for less than 30 minutes and 5.09% for more than 1 hour a day) such as blog, forum, skype and twitter. They use frequently facebook, whatsapp and telephone. In a medium range we had the use of messenger and email. We also investigated the students social life and we discovered that they don't go frequently to cultural associations (85.35% never), theatre (74.52% never) or associations in general (75.79% never). This situation is the same for the church (74.52% never) and voluntary associations (71.97% never). Instead, the situation is different for sport activities where we saw that the 57.32% usually practice sport than once a week and 21.65% once a week.

The ethnographical and linguistic homogeneity, Italian, congruous with their Italian cultural and social background was important. Indeed we needed to investigate aspects and dimensions, soft skills, that are very subtle and, for this reason, it was important to have this kind of homogeneity.

Internal validity is linked with the extraneous variables: variables that may compete with the independent variable in explaining the outcome of a study. Researchers must always worry about extraneous variables when they make conclusions about cause and effect. We identified some control variables to avoid this threat to the internal validity. It is important to verify the lack of

alternative explanation condition: relationship between variable A and variable B must not be attributable to a confounding/extraneous variable.

In order to verify the absence of a selection bias in the distribution of the two groups we defined some extraneous control variables useful to verify the homogeneity of the sample. We assembled the control variables in three groups:

- Demographical (gender, nationality and age);
- Educational background (secondary school, final grade and academic grades mean);
- Working and experiences background (mandatory internship, working experience, student condition and foreign experiences).

It is always important to consider the first group in every statistical analysis to verify internal validity. We added some more control variables that are significant in our context, the second group of variables, that consist in the educational background. The literature underlines how relevant the educational background variables are when the analysis is conducted within the university context (Yoon et al., 2015). The third group is represented by the variables that could affect the treatment related to the career management skills according to the literature (Crebert et al., 2004). Indeed, in other external contexts, students develop personal and professional skills while living away from home, travelling, doing voluntary or community work, that impact upon their confidence and consequently increase their employability (Atkins, 1999). There are, for sure, some more variables that one could consider but, according to the literature review, the control variables considered in the present study seem to be representative enough to analyze the sample and to evaluate the homogeneity within the distribution in the two different groups.

First of all we conducted a T test for the continuous variable and a χ^2 test for the categorical variables, to verify the homogeneity and the overall results show $\alpha > p$ value 0.05 therefore the H_0 (the variables are not correlated to the belonging to the two different groups) is accepted and the homogeneity confirmed (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Analysis of demographical control variables

		Percentage		Test χ^2 ^a
		Treatment group	Control group	
Gender	Female	74,64	76,74	0,093 (p value 0,760)
	Male	25,35	23,25	
Nationality	Italian	97,18	94,18	0,820 (p value 0,365)
	Non italians	2,81	5,81	
		Mean		T test ^b
		Treatment group	Control group	
Age		23,66	23,87	-,837 (p value 0,404)

^a Test Pearson chi-square , two tailed: $p < 0,05$

^b T test independent sample, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

Then we verified the educational background where we found that the majority of the students has a high school educational background (91.08%), for the final grade the mean range score is 71-80 (21%) and for the academic grades mean, the mean range is 22-26 (62.42%)- Table 6.3

Table 6.3: Analysis of the Educational background control variables

		Percentage		Test χ^2 ^a
		Treatment group	Control group	
Secondary education	High school	94,36	89,53	2,994 (p value 0,559)
	Technical and commercial institute	4,22	5,81	
	Professional institute	0,00	2,32	
	Other	1,40	2,32	
		Mean		T test ^b
		Treatment group	Control group	
Final grade		77,99	76,44	1,329 (p value 0,186)
Academic grades mean		23,80	23,46	-,247 (p value 0,805)

^a Test Pearson chi-square , two tailed: $p < 0,05$

^b T test independent sample, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

Considering the experiences and working background of the students the analysis showed that only the 17.83% had a foreign experience, for study or work, while 78.34% was lacking in this aspect. It is a low score and it is interesting to consider that the 28.66% declared to have foreign friends in Europe and 17.19% out of Europe. The 45.22% had already done the mandatory internship. We had the 3.18% as working student, 21.01% that was working occasionally and 75.79% was only student. Considering the working experiences we asked if they had one, excluding the mandatory internship, and 32.48% answered affirmatively while the 67.51% negatively. The 49.04% declared that they didn't have a working experience because they want to focus only on the study, the 10.82% because they didn't have the necessity of doing it and the 4.45% because they are not interested in this kind of experiences. The 21.65% had some training experience outside the University and the majority of them attended languages courses (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Analysis of the working and experiences background control variables

		Percentage		Test χ^2 ^a
		Treatment group	Control group	
Mandatory Internship	Yes	42,25	47,67	0,461 (p value 0,497)
	No	57,74	52,32	
Student condition	Only student	74,64	76,74	0,464 (p value 0,793)
	Occasionally working	21,12	20,93	
	Working student	4,22	2,32	
Foreign experience	Yes	16,90	18,60	3,655 (p value 0,600)
	No	80,28	76,74	
	Other	2,81	4,65	
Training experience	Yes	18,30	24,41	0,855 (p value 0,355)
	No	81,69	75,58	

^a Test Pearson chi-square , two tailed: $p < 0,05$

6.2.6 Data Collection Procedures

The pre-treatment test consists in an online Italian survey and has been completed by 157 students, that completed both the pre and the post-tests. The questionnaire is composed of 55 questions, a combination of 4 standardized self-assessment tools, validated and not validated, and other further questions, some of them open ended, that allowed us to investigate in depth the overall situation for each student (Appendix 1). It required 30 minutes and it was longer than the survey for the post-treatment test because in the pre-treatment phase we gathered, in addition, some personal information data. The post-treatment questionnaire, in fact, consists in 30 questions and required 20 minutes to be completed (Appendix 2). In both cases the students read an introduction page to understand how to fill out the survey.

6.3 Measurements and Results

We combined different type of questions in order to have both quantitative and qualitative measures.

The definition of talent and the relevant soft skills for students to be employable have been investigated and analyzed in *chapter 5*. This led us to choose scales and questions that were appropriate to measure the dimensions highlighted by the explorative study.

The key skills for graduate students in Pharmacy in order to be employable are: Adaptability, Flexibility and Managing Ambiguity; Creativity and Curiosity; Entrepreneurial Mind and Proactivity; Learning Orientation; Team Work; Goal Orientation; Networking and Marshal of Resources; Passion; inclination for Personal Development; Self-Awareness; Planning; Optimism and Positive Approach (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: *CMS emerged in the labor market*

CMS emerged in the interviews
Adaptability, Flexibility and Managing Ambiguity
Creativity and Curiosity
Entrepreneurial Mind and Proactivity
Learning Orientation
Team Work
Goal Orientation
Networking and Marshal of Resources
Passion
Personal Development
Self-Awareness
Planning
Optimism and Positive Approach

We selected standardized self-assessment tools to measure the skills listed above (Table 6.6). The dimensions measured by the scales indicated us the potential level of the students' employability. We selected scales (HCCI, SCSS, CMS and AVO) that have already been applied in other studies for similar targeted population (young people) and in similar context (education or placement) for develop employability and career (Grimaldi et al., 2014; Niles et al., 2010; Amundson et al., 2013). Each scale and sub-scale is described and analyzed in depth in this section.

Table 6.6: Scales adopted and correlation with the soft skills CMS

Scale	Validation	Subscale	Correlated soft skills emerged by the explorative study
HCCI Hope Centered Career Inventory	Validated	HOPE SELF-REFLECTION SELF-CLARITY VISIONING GOAL SETTING IMPLEMENTING ADAPTING	Optimism Self-awareness Self-awareness Optimism, Visioning Goal orientation Goal orientation and Planning Adaptability and Flexibility
AVO- Adaptability Self Evaluation Occupability	Validated	FUTURE ORIENTATION LEARNING ORIENTATION GOAL ORIENTATION FLEXIBILITY AND OPENNESS TO CHANGE	Optimism, Goal orientation, Learning orientation Learning orientation, Adaptability, Curiosity and Self-awareness Goal orientation, Entrepreneurial Mind, Proactivity and Planning Adaptability and Flexibility, Managing Ambiguity, Creativity
SCSS The Subjective Career Success Scale	Validated	FINANCIAL SECURITY FINANCIAL ACHIEVEMENT POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP POSITIVE IMPACT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Learning orientation, Self-awareness and Flexibility
CMS Career Management Skills	Not Validated	SELF-AWARENESS SELF-EFFICACY DECISION MAKING MANAGING AMBIGUITY CREATIVITY TEAM WORK PLANNING MARSHAL OF RESOURCES ENTREPRENEURIAL MIND	Self-awareness Self-awareness Goal orientation, Proactivity Managing Ambiguity Creativity Team Work Planning Networking Entrepreneurial Mind, Proactivity, Creativity, Managing Ambiguity

We carefully verified to avoid instrumentation error that is error of measurement due to:

- Changes in the assessment instrument (e.g., shortening a test, adding different items, changing the scoring procedure);
- Changes in the observers (e.g., different observers at T1 and T2, some observers using different standards than others, or training of observers changes from one treatment to the next);
- Changes in the equipment (e.g., a fault in the equipment, non-standardization of equipment prior to study, loss of calibration).

We verified the normal distribution for all the scales. This was important to define which test, parametric or non parametric, is better to use in order to measure and analyze results. We adopted the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to verify normal distribution and the results were with $\alpha < 0.05$ p value, it means that we can reject the H₀ (the scores have not a normal distribution) and we can accept the H₁ (the scores have a normal distribution). Considering the normal distribution we can use parametric test. Internal consistency concerns the reliability of the test components, it measures consistency within the instrument and questions how well a set of items measures a

particular behavior or characteristic within the test. For a test to be internally consistent, estimates of reliability are based on the average inter-correlations among all the single items within a test. The most popular method of testing for internal consistency in the behavioral sciences is coefficient alpha, that we adopted in the following analysis of results.

HCCI scale- Hope Centered Career Inventory

We used the Hope-Centered Career Inventory (HCCI) to measure hope within our sample.

The HCCI (Niles et al., 2010) is a 28-item self-report measure designed to assess the degrees of hope and hope-related career development competences. The HCCI contains seven subscales that include Hope, Self-reflection, Self-clarity, Visioning, Goal setting and Planning, implementing, and Adapting. Each subscale has four items that are rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = definitely false; 2 = somewhat false, 3 = somewhat true; 4 = definitely true). Higher scores indicate a greater degree of hope-centered career competences. Sample items are as follows:

- Hope: I am hopeful when I think about my future.
- Self-reflection: I think about what is the common theme among the things I like.
- Self-clarity: I can list at least five things that I am good at.
- Visioning: I often vision my future 2, 5, or 10 years from now.
- Goal setting and planning: I set deadlines to complete my goals.
- Implementing: I work hard to meet my goals even when there are distractions.
- Adapting: I change my plans when needed in order to reach my goals.

Niles and Amundson (2011) developed the Hope-Centered Model of Career Development (HCMCD) using hope as a central construct in the model. The HCMCD integrated and synthesized three theories based on Bandura's (2001) human agency theory, Hall's (1996) career meta-competences, and Snyder's (2002) hope theory. Further development (Niles et al., 2010) focused on the creation of an inventory based on the model, the end result being the Hope-Centered Career Inventory (HCCI).

The first dimension that we decided to investigate in the present descriptive analysis is the students' perception of the future, in particular hope and hope-related career development competences. We adopted this scale because of the hope central construct is relevant for our targeted population (Niles et al., 2010) and also because allow us to measure other important dimensions that emerged as relevant during the explorative study in the labor market (e.g. Optimism, Positive Approach and Proactivity).

There are various conceptualizations of hope. As understood by many people in the general public, hope is defined as the feeling that what is wanted can be obtained or that events will turn out for the best (Sung et al.2013). Hope is to look to the future with reasonable confidence, and to feel that something desired may happen. Snyder et al. (1991) conceptualized hope as a cognitive set that is directed at goal attainment and is defined as “the perceived capacity to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways” (p. 249). One of the more prominent conceptualization of Hope is Snyder's (1994) cognitive-motivational theory, the Psychology of Hope. Hope is the perceived capability to pursue desired goals and to construct pathways toward these goals (Snyder, 2002) and it is an important construct in the positive psychology literature. More recently, hope has been proposed to be a critical resource for vocational pursuits (Sung et al., 2013) and organizational behaviors (Luthans and Jensen, 2002). Research suggests that hope is meaningfully related to pivotal organizational outcomes, such as job performance (Valero et al., 2016). In particular, researchers have found that hope predicts positive outcomes in work and academic lives. With regard to workplace behaviors, studies have revealed that workers with higher hope are likely to demonstrate better job performance (Combs et al., 2010), higher job satisfaction (Tombaugh et al., 2011), higher workplace happiness (Youssef and Luthans, 2007) and lower absenteeism (Avey et al.t, 2006) than workers with lower hope. Despite the considerable amount of attention given to the relationships between hope and workplace outcomes, few studies have examined the role of hope in the career development process of higher education students. These researches show that hope plays an important role in students' career development. Relatively few studies have addressed this topic, however, and the samples have focused on students in the United States. Therefore, the literature review underlines that further studies are needed to examine the linkages between hope and career development

among diverse university students beyond those in the Europe. Overall, research evidence supports the importance of hope for university students' seeking to achieve their career and academic aspirations (Amundson et al., 2013). Hope is linked to other important positive career-related variables in the life of young people such as vocational identity, career decision self-efficacy and career-related beliefs

Table 6.7: HCCI scale scheme (from Niles et al., 2010)

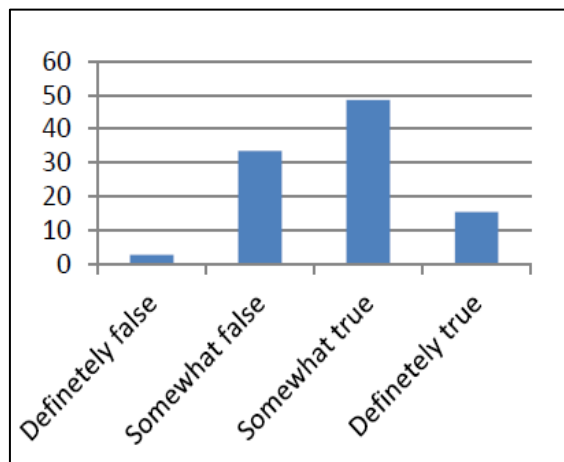


In our sample the overall scale had a coefficient alpha of .92, indicating strong internal consistency reliability. The reliability level of the seven components of the scale are: $\alpha = .70$ (hope), $\alpha = .69$ (self-reflection), $\alpha = .73$ (self-clarity), $\alpha = .83$ (visioning), $\alpha = .83$ (goal setting and planning), $\alpha = .74$ (implementing) and $\alpha = .739$ (adapting). The HCCI has sound internal validity with seven distinct factors tested by confirmatory factor analysis for the factor structure (Niles et al. 2010).

RESULTS

In this study the mean of the overall scores, in the pre-treatment for the entire sample, suggested that students reported a partial positive view (64.01%) on their levels of hope and hope-centered career competences on average. The HCCI scale in the pre-treatment test showed that the 48.54 % of the students answered that their approach is positive enough (“Somewhat true”), 15.46 % considered absolutely positive the future career whilst the 33.30 % was not enough positive (“Somewhat false”) and the 2.68 % absolutely negative.

Table 6.8: *The HCCI overall mean scores*



The distribution of the mean scores showed us that the highest score in the Pre-treatment survey, for both the treatment and control group, is for Visioning (2.95), followed by the Implementing (2.85) and the Personal Flexibility (2.84), Hope (2.73), Self-Reflection (2.70), Goal Setting (2.66) and at the end Self-clarity (2.62)- see Table 6.9

In the Post-treatment survey, considering the treatment group, the means scores showed us that the after the TD the highest score is for the Adapting (3.25), then for Visioning (3.22) and Implementing (3.20), therefore Hope (3.13), Self-Clarity (3.07), Goal Setting (3.04) and at the end Self-Reflection (2.45). The mean scores above 3 (“Somewhat true) suggested that students reported a relative positive view on their level of adaptability, setting specific goals and making plans towards goal achievement, hope and self-clarity.

Table 6.9: Summary of the HCCI subscales results

		Hope	Self-Reflection	Self-Clarity	Visioning	Goal Setting	Implementing	Adapting
Pre-treatment	Treatment	2,64	2,55	2,45	2,90	2,55	2,70	2,66
	Control group	2,81	2,82	2,76	2,99	2,76	2,97	2,98
Post-treatment	Treatment	3,13	2,45	3,07	3,22	3,04	3,20	3,25
	Control group	2,76	2,76	2,74	2,99	2,73	2,89	2,97
Difference pre-post treatment	Treatment	0,49	-0,10	0,62	0,32	0,49	0,50	0,59
	Control group	-0,05	-0,06	-0,02	0,00	-0,03	-0,08	-0,01

The major increased value after the treatment regard Self-Clarity with 0.62, that is very important because it allows students to be aware about the matching between their strengths and abilities with their future career aspirations. We spent much effort during the first two lessons on this dimension. We had increased scores also for Personal Flexibility (0.59), Implementing (0.50) and at the same increased value Hope and Implementing (0.49). Followed by Visioning that was very high already in the Pre-treatment test.

SUBSCALES:

Hope being hopeful is essential for managing one's career development. Hopefulness relates to envisioning a meaningful goal and believing that positive outcomes are likely to occur in case specific actions should be taken. Having a sense of hope allows the person to consider the possibilities in any situation and propels the individual to take action. The general conviction of high-hope individuals that their goals can be met should also fuel occupational self-efficacy, the belief that work-related tasks can be successfully completed. Additionally, high-hope individuals are more likely to conceive different pathways to reach their goals when confronted with challenges, which should also enhance their self-efficacy beliefs (Amundson et al., 2013). Thus, there are three components to hopeful thinking: a) agency thinking, b) pathways thinking, and c) goals. Without hope, people are not likely to take positive action in their lives. In a study of graduate students, Alexander and Onwuegbuzie (2007) found that students with higher levels of hope were less likely to procrastinate on tasks such as writing papers, studying for tests, and

completing reading assignments when compared to students with lower levels of hope. This study highlights the pervasive importance of having a sense of hope in managing all aspects of career development. Hope helps people believe that they will be able to take specific steps to achieve future goals. Having a hopeful attitude becomes a catalyst for identifying one or more goal-related action steps. When persons encounter insurmountable barriers to goal achievement, they must demonstrate personal flexibility to identify and pursue action steps around the obstacles that will allow them to achieve their goals. Thus, the three components of hope (agency thinking, pathways thinking, and goals) are cornerstones for effective career self-management (Niles et al., 2010). Example of two items of this dimension are: I think positive about my future and I am convinced that my dreams will come true.

The Hope subscale is at the fourth position, considering the seven components of the HCCI, both in the Pre-treatment and in the Post-treatment: the question that had the lowest score in this subscale is "I believe my dreams will come true". It means that they are hopeful but without enough self-clarity and self-confidence to pursue their aspirations. In the Post-treatment survey Hope increased but not so much as other dimensions. The question that had the highest score in this subscale in the Post-treatment is "I think positively about my future".

Self-reflection involves the capacity to examine one's thoughts, beliefs, behaviors and circumstances. It is a thinking style that uses introspective analysis of experiences to obtain greater self-awareness (Daudelin, 1996; Seibert and Daudelin, 1999). It is an important skill for students to develop as it drives the quality of learning insights that comes from feedback. Self-reflection is, in essence, an internal Socratic dialogue, where one asks oneself questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of one's behavior in past situations as well as the impact on others (Nesbit, 2007). It requires the willingness to consider questions such as: What is important to me? What do I enjoy? What skills do I enjoy using? What skills would I like to develop? What opportunities are presented to me in my environment? What sort of lifestyle do I hope to have? How effectively am I using the talents I want to use, engaging in activities that I enjoy, and participating in activities important to me? Am I living the life I want to live? Do I have a vision for my future? etc.

Self-reflection involves taking a "time out" to consider one's evolving self-concept. Self-reflection is not the same thing as rumination, which is related to cyclic thought patterns reliving experiences

(Mackoff and Wenet, 2001). Nor is self-reflective thinking the same as self-criticism, which leads to critical self-assessment. In contrast to other thinking approaches, self-reflection is a process that endeavors to focus on what one can learn from experience and how it will inform one's behavior in the future. The ultimate aim of self-reflection is learning: producing a capability to act more effectively in the future (Daudelin, 1996; Kolb, 1984). Self-reflection requires conscious effort in thinking about experiences. Regular engagement in self-reflection provides a solid foundation for subsequent career planning and increases the probability that new information will be considered in career planning (Niles et al., 2010). One of the problems in developing self-reflection skill is that some persons engage in self-reflection all the time but rarely examine the quality of their reflections. Consequently, many people may consider mistakenly their self-reflection skills as already developed. However, self-reflection from the perspective of self-development requires more than just introspective thinking, it also requires learning from that thinking and building behavioral intentions to operate more effectively (Kolb, 1984; Seibert and Daudelin, 1999). Daudelin (1996) has proposed that a self-reflection process should proceed through a number of distinct stages. The process begins with a stage of 'event articulation' which entails providing a description of the events, people and actions that are being reflected on. This stage seeks to produce a relatively objective account of what happened, as well as descriptions of the actions of people involved. This leads to the second 'reflective analysis' stage where one questions why things happened as they did. Specifically one asks "Why did this happen?" "Why did I do this?" "Why did I feel this?", and the like. An important aspect of this stage is to challenge one's insights and answers, as we often initially seek to protect our self-concept in this process. However, through conscious effort and an orientation to learn from insights brought about by our questioning, one can arrive at answers to help explain events, behavior, and underlying feelings. (Nesbit, 2007).

Example of two items of this dimension are: I spend time to analyze my thoughts and my sensations and I think about my past experiences.

In the Pre-treatment the entire sample showed that the 14.80% applies this method to everyday life and 44.26% quite enough. It means that the majority (59.07%) consider to be able to learn from past errors and experiences. We can observe that scores of "Somewhat false" (37.26%) and

“Somewhat true” (44.26%) responses were not so far. In this subscale scores were higher when the students have to consider self-reflection in general, about past experiences and their influence on the present. They were less positive with questions that require a deep reflection about sensation and thoughts or when they have to reflect about common aspects between things that they love.

Self-reflection is a process and it requires time to spend in self-reflection and in the Post-treatment test it emerged as the only value that decreased. This is due to the fact that it is related to some personality traits that could hardly change in one month treatment. Further aspects to be considered are, on one hand, the social desirability effect, that could influence the surveys. Self-reported measures could, unfortunately, reflect the human tendency to present oneself in the best possible light and this could significantly distort the data (Fisher, 1993). On the other hand, the fact that before the treatment students have a more simple concept of self-reflection than after the treatment and this renders them unconfident when become conscious of the complexity of concept, thus their evaluation decreased.

Self-clarity self-reflection could lead to self-clarity. In this way, self-reflection and self-clarity are linked. It is a process because the requirement to engage in self-reflection to develop self-clarity is a task that one never completes-it is ongoing and lifelong. Self-clarity emerges with consistent effort, driven by a sense of hope. In many ways, the process is similar to developing a photograph. Self-reflection is like entering the photographer's darkroom to develop the negative that results in a clear image (i.e. self-clarity). The ancient Greek philosopher Socrate highlighted the importance of self-clarity when he emphasized the importance of "knowing thyself" to live life effectively. This advice is essential to effective career self-management. Everything starts from the foundation of self-awareness. If one has developed self-clarity, then one has developed the readiness necessary to engage in goal identification. In the area of career development, learning more about oneself is often linked to taking a test, that to this end can be helpful (Niles et al., 2010).

Self-clarity overlaps with personality and a number of other, more traditional constructs. One construct with obvious overlap is that of identity (achievement, status, integration, etc.), that, however, has a much richer and more complex set of elements than clarity (Marcia, 1980),

characteristics that make the identity construct rather difficult to assess empirically. The literature also contains a plethora of overlapping constructs that have a narrower focus than clarity. Self-clarity is a characteristic of people's beliefs about themselves (i.e. their self-concepts). It is a component of self-concept that can be usefully subdivided into knowledge components and evaluative component (Campbell, 1996). Examples of knowledge components include beliefs about one's specific attributes (i.e. traits, physical characteristics), as well as roles, values and personal goals. Evaluative components include the positivity of specific self-beliefs and self-esteem, a global self-evaluation that is the product of viewing "the self" as an attitude object. Structural characteristics of the self-concept refer to how the knowledge components or specific self-beliefs are organized. It is mute with respect to the accuracy of those beliefs and therefore does not necessarily imply self-knowledge in the sense of insight or awareness of one's behavioral potentials (Wicklund and Eckert, 1992). A person could hold highly articulated self-beliefs that one might argue, on the basis of behavior, be inaccurate (Campbell, 1996). It is a skill related to awareness of strengths, abilities, roles and it is more related with career achievements. Acquire self-clarity, that is to have a clear idea about personal interests, values, and skills is crucial since the targeted population is represented by students that seek to identify career options.

Example of two items of this dimension are: I know who I am and I am able to describe clearly my strengths.

In the Pre-treatment we had the 55.25% of the students with a relative positive trend and 44.74% "Somewhat true", very similar results that we found for the self-reflection dimension. A significant difference is that the overall scores for the "Somewhat false" (41.40%) and "Somewhat true" (44.74%) responses were even closer with just 3.34% of difference.

In the pre-treatment test the lowest score for this dimension resulted when they had to consider self-clarity about their strengths. This aspect is strictly related with high-performance in the labor market and it is very important for career success. It was slightly better for self-clarity about who they are in general. We had better scores for self-clarity concerning roles. The overall trend about self-awareness indicates that there were higher score when we consider it as a general aspect but analyzing it much more in deep it is not so easy for students to be aware of their-self (i.e. strengths

and abilities). In post-treatment resulted the highest increased value for Self-clarity subscale. In the post-treatment, for the treatment group, the highest score was for what their expectations on their roles were (students, daughter/son, brother/sister etc.). This was the highest score also in the pre-treatment for the entire sample. The lowest score both in the pre and in the post is when they have to evaluate their clear idea about their strengths.

Visioning is the other subscale that measures the confidence towards the future. In the literature vision has a variety of definitions, all of which include a mental image or picture, a future orientation and aspects of direction or goals. Vision provides guidance by articulating what are wishes to attain. However, vision is more than an image of the future. It has a compelling aspect that serves to inspire, motivate and engage people. Vision has been described by Manasse (1986) as "the force which molds meaning for the people of an organization." It is a force that provides meaning and purpose to the work of an organization. Vision is a compelling picture of the future that inspires commitment. Visioning involves brainstorming future career possibilities and identifying desired future outcomes. Brainstorming focuses on quantity rather than quality. In this instance, quantity relates to using your self-clarity to develop as many career options as possible. Once a sufficient list of options has been generated, self-clarity is once again used to identify those options that are most desirable. Options found to be desirable are then focused on for greater exploration and information gathering to develop in depth knowledge of them and ascertain whether they continue to be desirable. From this list, specific career goals are selected (Niles et al., 2010).

Example of two items of this dimension are: I often dream and imagine my future and I spend some time to think about what will happen in my future.

In the Pre-treatment we had the higher positive scores with 72.61% (adding the score "Definitely true" and "Somewhat true"), so it means that they are able to imagine and dream about their future but, as the hope scores revealed, they are not so confident that they could actually achieve them. After the treatment we had the lowest score for this dimension, maybe because, on one hand, the score was already the highest in the Pre-treatment test and, on the other hand, one month of treatment could not affect so much the visioning capacity of the students about their

future (e.g. I often dream about my future). In particular this last item of the Visioning subscale is the one that had the highest score both in the pre and post test. The lowest score in both times was for the item that refers to imagining their future in 5 or 10 years. This confirms the trend of the scale: students are more positive in self-evaluation when they have to consider items related to general and abstract aspects while they have more difficulties when they have to evaluate more specific and practical aspects.

Goal Setting is an important cognitive process affecting motivation (Bandura, 1988; Locke and Latham, 1990; Schunk, 1989a). This link can be illustrated by students who set a goal or are given a goal by teachers. They are likely to experience an initial sense of self-efficacy for attaining it. They also are apt to make a commitment to attempt it, which is necessary for goals to affect performance. As they work at the task, they engage in activities they believe will lead to goal attainment: attend to instruction, rehearse information to be remembered, expend effort, and persist. Self-efficacy is substantiated as learners observe goal progress, which conveys they are becoming skillful (Elliott and Dweck, 1988). The hypothesized benefits of goal setting have been obtained in several studies. Bandura and Schunk (1981) found that, during a subtraction instruction program, providing children with a proximal goal heightened motivation (rate of problem solving), self-efficacy, and skill acquisition, more than providing them a distant or general ("Do your best") goal. Allowing students to set goals may enhance goal commitment. Schunk (1985) found that self-set goals also promote self-efficacy.

Example of two items of this dimension are: I often do a list of things that I have to do to achieve my goals and I elaborate a plan before act.

In the Pre-treatment survey students showed lower scores in the 56.21% as positive overall trend, adding 'Somewhat true' and 'Definitely true'. The 42.35% was evaluated 'Somewhat true' and the 40.45% 'Somewhat false'. The questions in this sub scale with lowest score, both in the pre and the post test, was for the item "I often list things that I need to do to reach my goals". The highest score, again both in the pre and the post test, was for the item "I elaborate a plan before act".

Implementing The dimension that is related with Goal setting is and refers to work hard to meet goals even when there are distractions. An implementation plan is a comprehensive list of

expenses, objectives, problems and itineraries needed to fulfill the primary goals. Implementation plans require a great deal of preparation and research before they are executed. The process of moving an idea from concept to reality. The implementation phase is the doing phase, and it is important to maintain the momentum.

Example of two items of this dimension are: I face, one after another, the following steps that are necessary to achieve my goals and I act since I have clear goals.

In this aspect that implies translate reflections and plans into actions students seemed to be more positive and confident. In fact we had in the Pre-treatment the 68.94% as the overall positive trend, with 16.87% absolutely positive and 52.07% positive enough with 'Somewhat true'. The lowest score was for "I work hard to achieve my goals even if there are distractions" both in the pre and post-test. The highest score was for the item "I take every necessary step, one after another, to achieve m goals" in both surveys.

Adapting The last dimension refers to being able to change plans when needed in order to reach goals. The students showed a very positive perception in evaluating their behavior. In particular they had a high score for the openness to new experiences that could help to achieve their goals and lower scores in changing plans.

Example of two items of this dimension are: I change my plans when it is necessary to achieve my goals and I am open to changes that could improve my probabilities to achieve my goals. The highest score was for the item "I change my plans when it is necessary to achieve my goals" both in the pre and post-test. The lower score was for "I am open to changes that could improve the probability to achieve m goals" in both surveys.

The Table 6.10 shows means differences for the treatment group. The scores show increased values in the treatment group for all the sub-scales of the HCCI except for the Self-Reflection, as we explained previously. We analyzed results by a T test paired sample size, for the treatment group, that measured the differences between pre and post-test, considering mean scores. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H_0 (the equivalence of the means) except for the Self-Reflection α (0.119) $< p$ value 0.05, where we have to accept the H_0 .

Table 6.10: Comparison of the mean scores for the treatment group

Treatment group	Mean Pre-treatment test	Mean Post-treatment test	Means difference	T test ^a p value
Hope	2,6444	3,1373	,49296	,000
Self-Reflection	2,5528	2,4542	-,09859	,119
Self-Clarity	2,4542	3,0739	,61972	,000
Visioning	2,9085	3,2254	,71831	,000
Goal Setting	2,5528	3,0458	,09859	,000
Implementing	2,7007	3,2042	,50352	,000
Adapting	2,6655	3,2570	,59155	,000

^a T test paired sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

We considered the increase in the HCCI scale factors between the beginning and the end of the experiment for both groups, in order to estimate if the increase of the treatment group is significantly higher, from a statistical point of view, than the control group. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H_0 (the equivalence of the means) except, again, for the Self-Reflection because there is not an increased value before and post the treatment (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: Comparison of the post-treatment means

Delta means			Difference Delta Means	T test ^a p value
Sub-scales	Groups			
	Treatment group	Control group		
Hope	,4930	-,0436	,53656	,000
Self-Reflection	-,0986	-,0610	-,03755	,650
Self-Clarity	,6197	-,0174	,63716	,000
Visioning	,3169	,0029	,31399	,000
Goal Setting	,4930	-,0233	,51621	,000
Implementing	,5035	-,0756	,57910	,000
Adapting	,5915	-,0087	,60027	,000

^a T test independent sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

AVO scale- Self Evaluation Occupability- Adaptability

It is a 28-item self-report measure designed to assess the degrees of career adaptability competence. The AVO contains four subscales that include Future Orientation, Learning Orientation, Planning Orientation and Flexibility. The scale is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = definitely false, 2 = somewhat false, 3= neither false or true, 4 = somewhat true, 5 = definitely true). We adopted a 5-point Likert scale instead of the 6-point Likert scale as the validated tool comprehends because all the other scales are with 4 and maximum 5- point Likert scale with the aim of stress and polarize the students' responses results. Higher scores indicate a greater degree of adaptability competence. Sample items are as follows:

- Future Orientation: I have projects for my future
- Learning Orientation: I search situations that allow me to develop new competences
- Planning Orientation: When I set a goal I adopt all the strategies to achieve it

- Flexibility and Openness to change: When I have a new assignment, I like to challenge myself

We decided to analyze this scale after HCCI scale because they have a correlated concept such as Hope and Visioning (HCCI) with Future Orientation (AVO), although this last sub scale is wider than the mere sum of the two HCCI's subscales. Indeed, it encompasses also Goal Setting and Implementing, so it is more transversal and could be useful also as test control in order to have a deep and comprehensive overview of the sample. We have other connections between the two scales: Adapting (HCCI) and Flexibility & Openness to change (AVO), Implementing and Goal Setting (HCCI) with Goals Orientation (AVO). Furthermore in AVO we have Learning Orientation that is absent in the HCCI scale but it is correlated with Self-reflection and Self-clarity (HCCI).

The theme of adaptability is considered a key variable of the person's employability level. With the 'adaptability' term as the willingness to face the developmental tasks and to prepare to participate in the work role actively (Savickas, 1997; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012). The adaptability lifetime includes both the ability to navigate the current environment and to "look around "(career exploration), it is the tendency towards the future, the "imagine forward "(career planning) and therefore the ability to assess different career options (Savickas, 2002). The definition of adaptability, in which is rooted the scale built by Isfol, is based on the model developed by Savickas (1997; 2005; 2012; Savickas, Nota et al., 2009) and that is expressed along the following four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity and confidence.

The Isfol Institute started from the Savickas conceptualization of Adaptability and re-elaborated it in order to adapt it to a different context- that has been investigated through an explorative study about what Occupability is in Italy. The Isfol reorganized and integrated the four Savickas's points in the AVO validated scale as: Future Orientation (Orientamento al futuro), Learning Orientation (Orientamento all'apprendimento), Planning Orientation (Orientamento alla Pianificazione) and Flexibility&Openness to change Flessibilità ed Apertura al cambiamento) (Grimaldi et al., 2016).

In the initial form of the AVO, before the validation, we found in a paper (Grimaldi et al., 2015) the following subscales: Future Orientation (Orientamento al futuro), Learning Orientation (Orientamento all'apprendimento), Results/Control/Planning Orientation (Orientamento

all'Obiettivo/Controllo/ Pianificazione) and Flexibility&Openness to change (Flessibilità ed Apertura al cambiamento).

There is one dimension that changes slightly in the validated release that is Planning Orientation versus Goal/Control/Planning Orientation. We are oriented to interpret this last dimension- taking the detailed analysis of the questions into account and the necessity to translate appropriately the definition of the subscales from Italian to English language- as Results, Control and Planning Orientation instead of just Planning Orientation.

Table 6.12: *Conceptualization at the base of the AVO scale (from Grimaldi et al., 2015- scale and conceptualization are in italian)*



The scale is based on the individual concept of Employability as the ability to adapt to career circumstantial changes, the so called "career resilience" that is part of the individual occupational identity. It is related to optimism and self-efficacy. Optimists readily embrace a career change, while those who perceive a new experience negatively are less likely to bring on psychological well-being or work satisfaction in case of relocation. It is shown that the attachment to the previous work is a very strong predictor of adverse reactions to job loss.

The overall scale had a coefficient alpha of .97, indicating strong internal consistency reliability. The components of the scale: $\alpha=.91$ (future orientation), $\alpha=.91$ (learning orientation), $\alpha=.95$ (goals orientation) and $\alpha=.91$ (flexibility and openness to change).

RESULTS

The overall mean scores of the Pre-treatment, for the entire sample, showed that the students were uncertain about the adaptability competence in its complex. Indeed, we had a mean average score of 3.4 that corresponded to “Neither true or false” and in the post-test, only for the treated group, 3.86. In pre-treatment we had a 3.58 score for Goals Orientation, 3.47 for Learning and Development and 3.43 for Future Orientation. The Flexibility and Openness to change had the lowest score with 3.36. In the Post-treatment, only for the treatment group, we had 4.12 for Goals Orientation and very close Learning and Development with 4.11, followed by Flexibility and Openness to change with 3.92 and at the end with 3.29 for Future Orientation- Table 6.13.

Table 6.13: Summary of the AVO subscales results

		AVO scale means			
		Future Orientation	Learning Orientation	Goals Orientation	Flexibility&Openness to change
Pre-treatment	Treatment group	3,2918	3,3310	3,4491	3,1796
	Control group	3,5864	3,6163	3,7261	3,5480
Post-treatment	Treatment group	4,0523	4,1150	4,1283	3,9296
	Control group	3,6262	3,6337	3,7442	3,5741
Difference post-pre treatment	Treatment group	0,76	0,78	0,68	0,75
	Control group	0,04	0,02	0,02	0,03

The two subscales that increased more after the treatment, for the treated group, are Learning Orientation 0.78 and Future Orientation 0.76. These dimensions were with the average mean score of 3.4 (“Neither true or false”) in the Pre-treatment. Followed by Flexibility & Openness to change 0.75 and Goals orientation with 0.68.

SUBSCALES

Future Orientation: understood as the propensity to ‘worry’ for the future, to be actively and positively oriented towards it, to project forward in a tangible way by planning functional actions to pursue aspirations and goals. That disposition is linked to the perception and idea that the future is controllable and depends on us, on our choices, from the deployment of our ability and willingness. Such dimension, from a project perspective, implies a specific and concrete definition of the goals to achieve (whether educational, professional or career) and a coherent action plans. In particular, the future orientation is articulated in different sub-dimensions: the disposition to anticipate, imagine/think of the possible and different future scenarios, to assess adequately the feasibility in function of personal resources and characteristics (abilities, skills, motivation, etc.) and external factors (context, market, training opportunities, etc.). The perception and representation of the future as ‘not far’ but concrete, manageable, such as ‘a thought of today’ and one constant space in the present in which merge aspirations, goals, plans, programs and actions; the disposition to believe ‘to be able’ to achieve objectives and have an optimistic expectation toward future events; awareness of the impact they will have on their future initiatives, choices and decisions already taken or still to be assessed and carried out; propensity to define the medium or long-term objectives and planning consistent actions (Grimaldi et al., 2015).

Example of two items of this dimension are: I prepare for the future trying to increase my skills; I have plans for the future.

The question with the highest positive score was, both in the pre and the post-test, “I prepare for the future increase of my competences” and the lowest, again for both times, was “I create situations in order to make happen things that I am interested in”. Students in general showed a positive tendency about projects for the future and the propensity to prepare for the future studying and acquiring competences; it is understandable, indeed, that this represented their comfort zone, what they are used to do in the present. Their confidence towards the future decreased when they have to act and behave actively to achieve specific goals and to make things happen; it was slightly better but still low if they have to imagine not only future in general but

their future job and their satisfaction, in line with their aspirations, and the capacity to grasp the opportunity to enter in the labor market.

Learning Orientation refers to professional curiosity, the willingness to explore the environment with the aim of learning about oneself and about context, to know new situations, contents and contexts, to get involved in the processes of formal and informal learning. It expresses interest in personal growth, educational and professional, the orientation to grasp and to give value to every learning opportunity and to place oneself in a perspective of continuous development and improvement. The learning orientation is a key aspect of adaptability. The individuals with high levels of employability made often efforts in the achievement of information and opportunities for personal development. The results and the consequences of their actions constitutes for individuals a feedback that allow them to evaluates- in different situations, efforts, opportunities and available resources- and adapt to them. Lifelong learning is an important determinant especially in reference to career success (Hall and Mirvis, 1995; Savickas, 2002). In addition, attitudes, motivations and personal dispositions favoring adaptability and employability in general.

The learning orientation is structured in several sub-dimensions: the disposition to enrich their knowledge, professional experience and tools, to seek situations and activities that might allow to express, acquire and exercise new skills, to identify and seize learning opportunities, professional growth and development. The propensity to measure up with new situations in which individuals can experiment and test their-selves in a perspective of continuous improvement; orientation to assume an active reflection position against direct and indirect experiences, content and knowledge acquired; awareness of its strengths and their areas of improvement in order to be able to imagine, define and plan its own path of development (Grimaldi et al., 2015).

Example of two items are: I'm looking for situations that may enable you to develop new skills and I try to identify my weaknesses to I can improve.

The item that had the highest score in this subscale both in the pre and post-treatment phase was “I am committed to continue learning new things”. Students showed a positive trend towards the questions related to facing new situations, finding new solutions, learning new things and changing activities. They had more difficulties with regards to self-awareness and self-improvement. The

lowest score in the Pre-treatment is for the question “I try to identify my weaknesses to improve”. The lowest in the Post-treatment is “I used to apply practically what I learned”. We spent much effort in the first two lessons about Self-awareness and Self-clarity. In all the lessons we highlighted that it is very important the continuous improvement of competences and the personal growth especially in the present, continuing changing and competitive, labor market. It is positive that after the treatment their conscientiousness of their weaknesses and the correlated strengths increased.

Goals orientation: expresses a willingness to take action with determination to achieve prefixed goals on time, even through a good plan and organization of activities. Professional control is an important variable of Adaptability construct and is connected to the belief that the people have to be able to exercise control over their lives and their future professional, taking responsibility for their own choices. The goal orientation is based on different sub-dimensions: a willingness to take action to influence the course of events, formulating proposals and alternatives to achieve the goal; orientation to turn energies and efforts towards situations and problems on which one believes to realistically exercise a control or to make a change; the disposition to take the initiative, to take action before the particular situation required it and to provide an answer timely to specific problems, needs, change; orientation to transform ideas, proposals and projects, into actions, initiatives and results; the disposition to seek and seize the opportunities that the present life offers and to translate them into concrete and satisfying results; the disposition to plan activities, by defining priorities, actions and timing, and to mobilize energies and individual resources to the pursuit of the goal (Grimaldi et al., 2015)

Example of two items : When I ask myself a goal put in provide all necessary strategies to achieve it; I plan my activities based on the objectives I have set.

The highest positive trend, both in the pre and post tests, was for the question “I focused myself on what I have to do”. The lowest was for “I used to plan my activities”. In general students showed a positive tendency when they have to take responsibility of their choices, to take efforts in order to achieve the goals on time, to complete commitments and they not surrender to the difficulties. There were lower scores when they have to combine action with self-reflection,

evaluating consequences of their actions, or with self-efficacy, implementing all the possible strategies to reach a goal set.

Flexibility and Openness to Change: expresses the ability to adapt to change and to new situations, the willingness to face in an actively, secure and flexible way in changing and uncertain contexts. It is the disposition to welcome and value different point of views, to adopt flexible patterns of thinking/ reasoning, not anchored to preconceived ideas. In summary, it is characterized as a cognitive and relational flexibility. Openness to change is another important variable that characterizes the individual adaptability and promotes the possibilities for personal development and continuous learning. It is associated with a good ability to deal with unfamiliar or unknown situations. The possession of flexibility allows to better address changes and uncertainties (Arora and Rangnekar, 2015). Several authors argue that individuals likely to make new experiences appear more flexible to the demands of the labor market and therefore potentially more employable.

Flexibility and Openness to Change are declined through different sub-dimensions: the disposition to adopt constructive and positive relational modes, to be open to solutions and new and different viewpoints, and to use, in an active and conscious way, various behavior styles according to the characteristics of the interlocutors and context; a willingness to find mediation solutions in the presence of a contrast between different needs and positions; orientation to identify and to manage a problem through a wide range of possible solutions and to adopt, at the cognitive level, various and flexible interpretations of the phenomena, not linked to specific frames of reference points; the disposition to confront their-selves with demanding and challenging objectives and to deal with new situations and problems with curiosity and awareness of their resources (Grimaldi et al., 2015).

Example of two items are: When I rely a new task, I like to test myself; They tend to deal with change assuming risks.

The question with the higher positive trend in this subscale was “Dealing with a problem I try to identify various possible solutions” both in the pre and the post test. The lowest score in both times was for “I consider myself ready to face the uncertainties of the labor market”. In this dimension students had positive tendency when they have to experiment new things and

situations, also to test them-selves, but they had less scores when they have to adapt rapidly to the changes or to face changes taking risks.

We considered the increase in the AVO scale factors between the beginning and the end of the experiment for both groups, in order to estimate if the increase of the treatment group is significantly higher, from a statistical point of view, than the control group. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H_0 (the equivalence of the means) except, again, for the Self-Reflection because there is not an increased value before and post the treatment- Table 6.14.

Table 6.14: Comparison of the post-treatment means

Sub-scales	Delta means		Difference Delta Means	T test ^a p value
	Groups			
	Treatment group	Control group		
Future Orientation	0,7606	,0399	,72070	,000
Learning Orientation	0,7840	0,0174	,76660	,000
Goals Orientation	0,7500	0,0262	,72384	,000
Flexibility&Ope nness to change	4,1283	0,0181	,66110	,000

^a T test independent sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

We analyzed results for the AVO scale by a T test paired sample size, for the treatment group, that measured the differences between pre and post-test, considering mean scores. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H_0 (the equivalence of the means)- Table 6.15

Table 6.15: Comparison of the mean scores for the treatment group

Treatment group	Mean Pre-treatment test	Mean Post-treatment test	Means difference	T test ^a p value
Future Orientation	3,2918	4,0523	,76056	,000
Learning Orientation	3,3310	4,1150	,78404	,000
Results/Control/Planning Orientation	3,4491	4,1283	,75000	,000
Flexibility&Openness to change	3,1796	3,9296	,67919	,000

^a T test paired sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

The SSCS scale- Subjective Success Career Scale

The SCSS is a 18-item self-report measure designed to assess the degrees of the subjective students' perception of the career success: what is important for them. The SCSS contains five subscales: Financial Security, Financial Achievement, Learning & Development, Positive Impact and Positive Relationship. It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = definitely unimportant; 2 = somewhat unimportant, 3 = neither important or unimportant, 4= somewhat important, 5 = definitely important). Sample items are as follows:

- Financial Security: having financial security
- Financial Achievement: achieving wealth
- Positive Impact: to make a better places and persons as results of my career
- Positive Relationship: experience positive relationship with my peers and my colleagues
- Learning & Development: having a job that give me the opportunity to learn

Historically, career success has been measured through objective factors, such as salary and promotions (Hall, 2002; Ng et al., 2005). However, these traditional objective factors are becoming less aligned with the landscape of contemporary organizations and the attitudes of contemporary employees. Specifically, organizational hierarchies have become increasingly flat, providing limited opportunities for upward advancement (Hall, 1996). Simultaneously, many employees have

adopted a self-directed protean (Hall, 2002) or boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) mindset, no longer anticipating lifelong, mobile career trajectories within a single organization. Together, these structural and attitudinal shifts highlight the increasingly important role of non-objective factors in career success, a concept known as subjective career success (Arthur et al., 2005; Sullivan, 1999; Shockley et al., 2015). Career success is defined by Arthur et al. (2005) as the “accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person’s work experiences over time” (p. 179). As previously noted, career success encompasses both objective and subjective criteria (Hughes, 1958) especially in the educational career field when the people have not faced yet the labor market and the direct job experience. The literature generally focuses on the definition of the objective criteria as it is directly observable and thus can be easily measured. Verify imply that there are additional components to career success beyond objective factors that require subjective evaluation. Based on several contemporary career theories, we argue that a person’s career success is driven by objective factors in addition to those that are less tangible in nature and require subjective interpretation. For many people, career success extends beyond traditional objective factors. For example, Hall (1976) proposed the concept of the protean career, highlighting the importance of flexibility, freedom, continuous learning, and intrinsic rewards for many people navigating the modern career landscape. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) introduced the boundaryless career, defined as a career that is independent from traditional organizational career arrangements with a single organization (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1996). Subsequent research on the topic suggests that certain factors are more important to success in those with a boundaryless mindset, such as learning and development (Granrose and Baccili, 2006) and work–life conflict (Wille et al., 2013). Lastly, the kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006) describes how people change their career to match different aspects of their lives both inside and outside the work. Although these theoretical perspectives differ to some extent in their focus, the idea that success has an internal evaluative component based on multiple criteria is a consistent theme. Furthermore the vast majority of career-related studies conducted continue to focus on the external organizational factors and material incentives related to career progression and career success (Herr et al., 2004), other researchers seem to increasingly emphasize more subjective measures of career success (Arnold and Cohen, 2008). These measures focus on the career self-

concept or career identity, the internal career orientation and the core self-evaluations related to people's psychological career resources (Fugate et al., 2004; Kanye and Crous, 2007; Kuijpers and Scheerens, 2006; Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006; Coetzee, 2008; Coetze and Schreuder, 2009). This is of importance especially in our context where the targeted population of our intervention is represented by the students that are not yet in the labor market. For this reason we can't consider the objective factors. In fact the focus is on the future career path and, hence, the subjective factors are crucial.

The SCSS scale is important to measure what drives individuals in building their career path and what helps them to be motivated, in finding the organization that fits them, in having high performances and organizational satisfaction (Hall and Chandler, 2005). The aim is to understand career success from the individual point of view (Heslin, 2005) identifying career preferences, determinants and predispositions as drivers of the future career. What are the key individual's priorities: stability, money, positive relationship, learning and personal improvement, positive impact for other people and places. All this sub scales are related to dimensions that rarely could change in a short period like the one that we had for the treatment phase. The values for the pre and post test are quite stable especially for financial determinants aspects.

The overall scale had a coefficient alpha of .88, indicating strong internal consistency reliability. The components: $\alpha=.70$ (positive relationship), $\alpha=.78$ (positive impact), $\alpha=.86$ (learning and development), $\alpha=.70$ (financial achievement) and $\alpha=.71$ (financial security).

RESULTS

The overall mean score in the Pre-treatment, for the entire sample, was 4.23 with a positive trend of the students perception of the importance of the dimensions. In the Pre-treatment phase we had the highest score for Financial Security with 4.45, then Learning and Development with 4.28 and Positive Relationship with 4.25; followed by Positive Impact with 4.17 and Financial Achievement with 3.99. In the Post-treatment, considering only the treatment group, we had Learning and Development with the highest score 4.55 and then Financial Security with 4.44: they were in the highest position like in the Pre-test but with an inversion of the two dimensions. After

this resulted Positive Relationship with 4.38 and Positive Impact with 4.35. At the end Financial Achievement with 4.11- see Table 6.16.

Table 6.16: *Summary of the SCS subscales results*

		Financial security	Financial achievement	Positive relationship	Positive impact	Learning and Development
Pre-treatment	Treatment group	4,4131	4,0000	4,1901	4,1549	4,2582
	Control group	4,4961	3,9942	4,3198	4,1977	4,3043
Post-treatment	Treatment group	4,4460	4,1127	4,3803	4,3556	4,5587
	Control group	4,5078	4,0291	4,3256	4,2297	4,3198
Difference post-pre treatment	Treatment group	0,03	0,11	0,19	0,20	0,30
	Control group	0,01	0,03	0,01	0,03	0,02

The higher increased mean score, for the treated group, is for Learning and Development with 0.30 that has high values also in the Pre and Post treatment phase. Followed by Positive Impact with 0.20 and Positive Relationship 0.19, that are very close; then Financial Achievement with 0.11 and Financial Security with 0.03.

SUBSCALES:

Financial Security is an important drive that could predict the tendency for a stable and safe career path, without extraordinary aspirations or ambitions. This dimension is about what they believe about money and which kind of means it has in their life priorities. It represents a clearer understanding of personal perspective on money.

This subscale encompassed three items and had the highest mean value both in the pre and post test while the increased value is the lowest. This disposition along with Financial Achievement are drivers of the future career that couldn't easily change in one month treatment; they are rooted in the cultural, social and family background in which students grew up. The highest score was for the question "having economic security" both in the pre and post test. The other two questions were with equivalent score slightly lower. This dimension indicated that students' desired economic stability. They were little less interested in having economic security just to satisfy basic needs. They showed, even in the present labor market context, characterized by continuous changing and competitiveness, the aspiration for a secure and stable job.

Financial Achievement is the other dimension of the SSCS that investigates the importance and meaning of money in the work life. It is the opposite of the Financial Security and represents the willingness to achieve economic satisfactions, such as benefit and bonus, and a wealthy life. It is an ambitious disposition towards the future career. In this case money is often seen by people as the measurement of their success, employability value and satisfaction.

This subscale is composed of two items: achieving bonus and I and achieving wealthy status.

It had the second lowest increased value, after Financial Security. The students showed the highest score for the achievement of wealthy status and slightly less importance for obtaining bonus and benefit.

Positive Relationship To join a profession means to enter into a community of people. The relationships with individuals and groups constitute the environment in which we live our professional lives. Such environments can be positive sources of learning, inspiration, and enjoyment, or they can be destructive sources of frustration and injury. They send us powerful messages about who we are and how we are valued. They shape our expectations about what/how our careers could be, or ought to be. Commensurate with the relevance and impact of these forces, there is a considerable literature on the importance of workplace relationships for individuals career (Gersick, 2000). Positive relationship with peers and with superiors determinate a positive work climate and engagement. Positive relationships are a vital component of health and wellbeing. There is compelling evidence that strong relationships at the work place contribute to a long, healthy and happy life. The support offered by colleagues could provide a buffer against the effects of stress.

The subscale is composed of two items: experience positive relationship with peers and with colleagues; experience positive relationships with superiors.

The highest score was for the positive relationship with peers whereas the positive relationship with superior was not so positive. These results could be affected by the students point of view, they used to be in close relationship more with peers than with superiors, that are often seen as standing a part. They probably don't understand yet the strategic value of having positive relationships with superiors.

Positive Impact is a disposition that is related to individual values grounded in the cultural, social and family context. It is giving importance to the positive consequences of our job in relation to the context. It represents success as satisfaction, that is a consequence of coherence between what we do and what we believe is important for the external context. It is a dimension that measures to what extent one doesn't have a selfish point of view.

The subscale is constituted of four items and it had the second major increased value after the treatment.

By way of example the following two items relating to this subscales are: Contribute to the development of other people; Making better place and persons as result of my career.

The lowest score both in the pre and post test was for "contributing to others development". Students attributed, indeed, less importance in evaluating the item "make better places and persons as result of my career". The highest score was for the item "helping other" in the pre test while in the post test was the highest score, for "fulfilling a 'mission' or 'calling' through one's career".

Learning and Development expresses interest in personal growth, educational and professional, refers to professional curiosity. It is the willingness to explore the environment with the aim of learning about them-selves and about context, to know new situations, to get involved in the processes of formal and informal learning. The disposition to grasp learning opportunity and to place themselves in a perspective of continuous development and improvement. Lifelong learning skills consist of actively seek to learn new things in lectures, take courses to develop specific hobbies or skills or successfully fit into a new work environment. This disposition includes some sub-dimensions such as: being open to new ideas and techniques; contributing to the learning community at the workplace; actively seeking a range of mediums to learn- mentioning, peer support, workshops or networking; having enthusiasm for ongoing learning; being willing to learn in any setting- on and off the job; being prepared to invest time and effort into learning new skills. This skill refers to your ability to manage your own learning and contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in your own knowledge and skill set. This also refers to the ability to learn workplace skills and expectations specific to organizations.

By way of example the following two items relating to this subscales are: Have a job that gives me the opportunity to learn; experiment challenges in my job.

Learning and Development had the major increased value after the treatment and it is the second major mean value both in the pre and post test after the Financial Security. The highest score was for the question “continuous learning along my career path” both in the pre and post tests. The lowest score was for “experiment challenges in my job”. In general students had positive trends about learning that decrease for dimensions related with personal development “becoming a better person as results of my career” and “having the opportunity to be innovative”. This result is easy understandable because the part related to learning is in their comfort zone, what they already used to do at the University. These results were already underlined in the Future Orientation subscale of the AVO scale. In both cases we had the highest increased values for the relatives scale. The learning orientation is key aspect of adaptability as we pointed out in this same dimension of the AVO scale.

We considered the increase in the SSCS scale factors between the beginning and the end of the experiment for both groups, in order to estimate if the increase of the treatment group is significantly higher, from a statistical point of view, than the control group. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H_0 (the equivalence of the means) except, again, for the Self-Reflection because there is not an increased value before and post the treatment- Table 6.17.

Table 6.17: Comparison of the post-treatment means

Sub-scales	Delta means		Difference Delta Means	T test ^a p value
	Groups			
	Treatment group	Control group		
Financial security	0,0329	,0116	,02124	,001
Financial achievement	0,1127	0,0349	,07779	,000
Positive relationship	0,1901	0,0058	,18433	,000
Positive impact	0,2007	0,0320	,16873	,000
Learning and Development	0,3005	0,0155	,28497	,000

^a T test independent sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

We analyzed results for the SCS scale by a T test paired sample size, for the treatment group, that measured the differences between pre and post-test, considering mean scores. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H₀ (the equivalence of the means)- Table 6.18.

Table 6.18- Comparison of the mean scores for the treatment group

Treatment group	Mean Pre-treatment test	Mean Post-treatment test	Means difference	T test ^a p value
Financial security	4,4131	4,4460	,03286	,000
Financial achievement	4,0000	4,1127	,11268	,000
Positive relationship	4,1901	4,3803	,19014	,000
Positive impact	4,1549	4,3556	,20070	,000
Learning and Development	4,2582	4,5587	0,3005	,000

^a T test paired sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

CMS scale- career management skills

Career Management Skills (CMS) is the term used to describe the skills, attributes, attitudes and knowledge that individuals require in order to manage their career. CMS represent a set of skills that allow each individual to adopt a structured way to collect, analyze, synthesize and independently organize information in education and work or to make decisions and deal with moments of transition. Careers are constructed rather than chosen and this process of building is, at least in part, a process of learning and personal development. CMS allow students to take a more proactive approach in their own career development and is often only seen as adding value. Graduates must be able to proactively navigate the world of work and self-manage the career building process (Bridgstock, 2009).

Individual employability involves the possession of the technical and generic competences required by employers. The explorative study conducted in the labor market, (described in chapter 3), where representatives have been interviewed, we highlighted the soft skills component of the CMS that make students employable (Table 6.6).

We divided the CMS in two main subsets on the base of the “aggregate dimensions” emerged in the data analysis (Table 5.4) of the explorative study: contextual and self.

- The first group regards CMS more focused on the internal dimension of individuals (Self-awareness) and includes the skills related to the progressive transition between the internal and external dimensions (Self- Efficacy and Decision Making). Indeed, everything starts from the foundation of self-awareness (Niles et al., 2010) that helps students to have a proactive approach to their future career corresponding, furthermore, to two aspects defined in the DOTS model, that consists in: Decision Making, Opportunity Awareness, Transition Learning and Self-awareness.
- The second one is about the CMS gathered through the explorative study from the world of work, as listed before, as key factors to be employable: Team work, Creativity/Curiosity, Adaptability/Flexibility, Entrepreneurial mind, Goals orientation, Managing ambiguity, Networking, Optimism, Passion and Planning. We considered, for the choice of this scale, the CMS not yet explored through the other scales adopted in the survey: Entrepreneurial

Mind, Managing Ambiguity, Creativity, Team Work, Marshall of Resources (that corresponds to Networking) and Planning. This group of CMS is bound with the external dimension of individuals, the context, indeed we can define these as contextual, linked to the pharmaceutical sector investigated. This aspect embraces both the best fit approach between talent and the nature of work (Pfeffer, 2001) and the considerations of Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) about how students have to use their given potentials and strengths.

CMS scale is a 27-item self-report measure designed to assess the degrees of the students' CMS: what they considered to be able of. The CMS scale contains eight subscales: three subscales for the "self CMS" connect with the DOTS model and five for the "contextual CMS". It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4= agree, 5 = definitely agree).

Sample items are as follows for the first group:

- Self-awareness: I know which capabilities I have
- Self-efficacy: I now which job match better with my weaknesses and strengths
- Decision Making: I know how to find by myself the opportunities to enter in the labor market

Sample items are as follows for the second group:

- Managing Ambiguity: Managing uncertainties in the projects and processes
- Creativity: Think out of the box
- Team Work: Work with other people
- Planning: Define the plan of a project
- Marshal of resources: Establish new contacts
- Entrepreneurial mind: I am often the first person that suggest new solution to the problem

The overall scale had a coefficient alpha of .95, indicating strong internal consistency reliability. Concerning CMS related to the internal dimension we had $\alpha=.91$ and for each components: $\alpha=.85$

(self-awareness), $\alpha=.84$ (self-efficacy) and $\alpha=.86$ (decision making). For contextual CMS $\alpha=.94$ and for each dimension: $\alpha=.81$ (managing ambiguity), $\alpha=.90$ (creativity), $\alpha=.85$ (team work), $\alpha=.88$ (planning), $\alpha=.86$ (marshal of resources) and $\alpha=.75$ (entrepreneurial mind).

RESULTS

The overall mean score in the Pre-test was 3.26 that corresponded to the evaluation “Neither agree or disagree” for the question: I am able of... . It means that students are not so confident with these dimensions. The highest value was for Self-awareness with 3.46, after we had Self-efficacy with 3.34 and at the end Decision Making with 2.97. In the Post-test, considering only the treatment group, we had Self-awareness with 4.05 and Self-efficacy with 3.95, at the end Decision Making with 3.50.

The major increased value was for Self-awareness .81, followed Decision Making .79 and Self-efficacy .75 (Table 6.19).

Table 6.19: Summary of the self CMS subscales results

		Self-awareness	Self-efficacy	Decision Making
Pre-treatment	Treatment group	3,2488	3,2113	2,7183
	Control group	3,6899	3,4709	3,2384
Post-treatment	Treatment group	4,0563	3,9577	3,5070
	Control group	3,4767	3,3081	3,0291
Difference pre-post treatment	Treatment group	0,81	0,75	0,79
	Control group	-0,21	-0,16	-0,21

SUBSCALES

SELF CMS

Self-awareness is having a clear and realistic perception of who you are. Self-awareness is not about uncovering a deep dark secret about yourself, but understanding who you are, why you do what you do, how you do it, and the impact this has on others. It helps you create achievable goals

because you can consider your strengths, weaknesses and what drives you when setting for goals-. Use what you have learned about yourself to inform decisions, behaviors and interactions with other people. Self-awareness begins with the ability to identify and understand needs, interests, strengths, limitations and values. It is part of self-determination and it is the first step followed by other six components: self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, decision-making, independent performance, self-evaluation and adjustment (Martin and Huber Marshall, 1995). Self-awareness is important to identify and demonstrate student's own skills, interests and motivations in the context of career decision making. As Socrates quote "Know thyself" (attributes, competences, knowledge, strengths, aspirations) then you can move forward towards the external context (with decision making, setting goals, action plan etc). Self-awareness is not being learned through a book, but achieved through self-reflection as we explained in the Self-reflection subscale of the HCCI.

We have, indeed, to point out that some of these CMS were already investigated in other subscales of the survey. Self-awareness has been analyzed in the subsets: Self-reflection and Self-clarity of the HCCI scale. Furthermore this CMS scale serves to have a comprehensive overview of this important dimension. It is the first step that students have to take in order to acquire career competences.

This subscale is composed of three items. The following two items as examples on size "Self-awareness": I know which capacities I have and I know which profession I am interested in.

Students showed the highest increased value for this dimension after the treatment. The Item with the highest score was "I know which professions I am interested in" both in the pre and post test and the lowest score was for "I know which are my goals of professional development" in both surveys. It means that they have a general idea about the future profession but they are not able to go deep inside a detailed view of it. The same situation we had for their characteristics, they knew in general but they had more difficulties to have an in depth reading.

Self-efficacy is strictly correlated to Self-awareness but it represents the first step forward towards the external context. In the Self-awareness students know who they are, what aspirations they have but with Self-efficacy they go more in depth identifying which are their weaknesses and

strengths and therefore which job profile fit better with their characteristics. This construct is the ability to match a constellation of characteristics, of which an individual is aware, with the set goals. Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994) posits a positive reciprocal relationship between career outcomes and self-efficacy, generally defined as the beliefs people have about their abilities to complete a task. Self-efficacy has been applied to specific domains, including occupational and career self-efficacy (e.g., Williams and Betz, 1994; Kossek et al. 1998; Ramsey and Lorenz, 2016). To explore the options open to individual students and to identify the specific skills and qualities required in chosen opportunity. Self-efficacy often is referred to as self-confidence – the belief that you expect to obtain your goal. Self-efficacy theory postulates that people acquire information to appraise efficacy from their performance accomplishments, vicarious (observational) experiences, forms of persuasion, and physiological indexes. Information acquired from these sources does not automatically influence efficacy; rather, it is cognitively appraised (Bandura, 1986). Efficacy appraisal is an inferential process in which persons weigh and combine the contributions of such personal and situational factors as their perceived ability, the difficulty of the task, amount of effort expended, amount of external assistance received, number and pattern of successes and failures, their perceived similarity to models, and persuader credibility (Schunk, 1989b). An individual also acquires capability information from knowledge of others. Self-efficacy is hypothesized to influence the choice and direction of much human behavior (Bandura, 1989b; Schunk, 1991).

We investigated a close concept with the Self-clarity subscale in the HCCI. The Self-efficacy subscale encompassed only two items: I know my weaknesses and my strengths and I know which job profile match better with my weaknesses and strengths.

Self-efficacy had the lowest increased value in this internal group of CMS. This confirms the previous results in the other subscales, they had a generic idea of their characteristics but they had more difficulties to be aware of their weaknesses and strengths as emerged in the Self-awareness subscale. The question with the highest score, in both surveys, was “I know my weaknesses and my strengths” and the lowest “I know which job profile match better with my weaknesses and strengths” that is the item closer to the consequent external phase that is decision making.

Decision Making is another step forward towards external context from an interior dimension. It is the dimension that allows students to identify those skills that may need to develop further in order to achieve personal career goals, to evaluate how student's personal priorities and constraints may affect career decisions and to formulate the action needed to achieve career goals. The thought process of selecting a logical choice from the available options. When trying to make a good decision, a person must weight the positives and negatives of each option and consider all the alternatives. For effective decision making, a person must be able to forecast the outcome of each option as well, and based on all these items, determine which option is the best for that particular situation. Decision making skills can be very important in a career contexts: Which career should I choose? What is the purpose of the decision? What is the expected outcome? Evaluate each option against the key factors to consider the combined effect of all the factors. Weight each factor in terms of importance paying particular attention to any critical factors. Being able to make decisions is also crucial to moving things forward.

Although it may be important to take time to gather information to ensure that the decision is right, there may come a time when any decision is better than none. Decision-making is the complex skill of setting goals and standards, identifying information to make decisions and considering past solutions, generating new solutions if needed, and choosing the best option to develop a plan. Identify the key elements of career decision-making, in the context of life planning, relate self-awareness to knowledge of different opportunities, evaluate how personal priorities may impact upon future career options, devise a short/medium-term career development action plan, identify tactics for addressing the role of chance in career develop, review changing plans and ideas on an ongoing basis. It allows people to guide them-self down the right path by choosing to pursue the opportunities that are the best fit for your skill-set, preferences and tendencies. It makes us identify situations and people that hit our triggers and anticipate our own reactions easier. It allows to make positive behavioral changes that can lead to greater personal and interpersonal success.

This subscale is constituted by two items: I know how to find by myself training opportunity to increase my competences and In the case of need I am able to explore the labor market to find

opportunities to enter in it. The students had the lowest score for this dimension both in the pre and the post test, but this subscale has the second major increased value, and it is very important considering their weakness in this career management skill, that represent a skills that is far from the students' comfort zone.

CONTEXTUAL CMS

Table 6.20: Summary of the contextual CMS subscale results

		Managing Ambiguity	Creativity	Team Work	Planning	Marshal of resources
Pre-treatment	Treatment group	3,1315	3,1937	3,3850	3,1596	3,1408
	Control group	3,6628	3,7442	3,9535	3,8527	3,7713
Post-treatment	Treatment group	3,7700	3,7641	3,9953	3,8638	3,8545
	Control group	3,4922	3,6628	3,6085	3,5465	3,4651
Difference pre-post treatment	Treatment group	0,64	0,57	0,61	0,70	0,71
	Control group	-0,17	-0,08	-0,34	-0,31	-0,31

RESULTS

The overall mean score for the Pre-treatment phase was 3.49 that corresponds to “Neither agree or disagree” for the students perception of their abilities. It is the same average score that we had for the other group of CMS.

In the Pre-treatment we had the major mean score for Team Work 3.66, then Planning with 3.50, Creativity 3.46 and Marshal of Resources 3.45, at the end Managing Ambiguity with 3.99. In the Post-treatment we had with the highest value Team Work 3.99, then Planning 3.86 and Marshal of Resources 3.85, at the end Creativity with 3.76.

The major increased value was for Marshal of Resources with .71 and very close to the second, Planning, with .70. Followed Managing Ambiguity .64, Team Work .61 and Creativity at the end with .57. The first two dimensions are CMS that students could easier experience, considering their

context and activities, while the Managing Ambiguity and Team Work dealing more with workplace situations. The last dimension is very difficult to improve in one month treatment: we have done some exercises and simulations but it requires more time to learn how to think differently. We analyze and describe them in the order of increase starting from the major.

SUBSCALES

Marshal of Resources corresponds to the capacity to build a network. The importance of networking is a crucial step in defining a strategy for career development and exploration. Everyone has a network and when it comes to job searching, this network may be just as important as your skills and experience. A personal network is that group of people with whom individual interact every day – family, friends, parents of friends, friends of friends, neighbors, teachers, bosses and co-workers. With these people, information and experiences are exchanged for both social and potential professional reasons. Networking occurs every time students participate in an academic or social event, volunteer in the community, visit with members of religious group, talk with neighbors, strike up a conversation with someone at the store or connect with friends online. In this era of boundaryless careers, with individuals making frequent career moves and needing to get up-to-speed quickly, networking is seen as a critical competency. Developing and maintaining relationships with others for the purpose of mutual benefit can help individuals search for and secure employment opportunities, gain access to needed information or resources— especially on short notice—and obtain guidance, sponsorship, and social support. Such networking skills are crucial for career and personal success. Networking represents proactive attempts by individuals to develop and maintain personal and professional relationships with others for the purpose of mutual benefit in their work or career (Forret and Dougherty, 2001). In the present boundaryless work environment, characterized by frequent movement within and across organizations (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan, 1999), the responsibility for one’s career has shifted from the organization to the individual (Hall, 1996; 2002). Hence, forming multiple developmental relationships through networking to support one’s career has taken on greater emphasis (de Janasz et al., 2003; Higgins, 2000; Higgins and Kram, 2001). Multiple developmental relationships build on Kram’s (1985) concept of the relationship constellation, which proposes that career and

psychosocial support can come from a multitude of people both inside and outside one's organization. Such developmental relationships enhance our social capital. That is, our relationships with others are a resource that can provide new ideas, timely information, job opportunities, business leads, influence and social support (Baker, 2000; de Janasz, 2008).

This subscale consists of three items and two examples are: Building a network (establishing contacts and share information with others) and Establishing new contacts. This dimension had the major increased value. During the third lesson, a formal class training, that included the personal network, and in the fifth, with the testimonials of the labor market, we strongly underlined the importance of building a network. The highest score, both in the pre and post test, was for the question "create the right group to solve a problem or achieve a goal". The other two questions were equal for the both phases.

Planning is a process which helps to focus ideas and decide on the steps one needs to take in order to achieve a particular goal. Planning skills are essential to achieve goals – they help to keep being focused on doing the right tasks, set priorities and give confidence that one is following one's personal roadmap to the target destination. Planning is vital at all levels in the work place: plan tasks and time.

This dimension is also essential for surviving in today's hectic world with so many time pressures. Good planning skills can greatly help reduce the stress associated with today's society, make one feel more in control of its life and help in managing time better. Planning means to find different ways to get organized, how to set priorities, how to use planners and schedules, some other useful planning tools such as To Do lists, Grass Catcher Lists and Action Plans. These skills allow to develop an adequate and appropriate understanding of causes and consequences to help them anticipate events and adjust planned actions over time. Some sub-dimensions are: Considering and assessing multiple possible futures; Making use of diverse types of data from many sources; Considering contingencies and uncontrollable factors; Assessing the likelihood of events; Identifying possible courses of action and goal-setting. Planning is the process of designing a consistent integrated program of actions that when carried out will accomplish specific goals. Planners must be skilled at evaluating and comparing possible courses of action. In a planning situation, alternative plans or courses of actions need to be evaluated against normative criteria to ensure their "goodness".

When one compares alternative plans to accomplish the same mission and long-term objectives a list of specific criteria related to effectiveness and efficiency need to be developed. The specific criteria should then be used to make comparisons among the alternatives.

Finally, planning is a skill that concerns implementing and monitoring plans. Once a plan has been communicated to those who will execute it, people must carry out their tasks in executing the plan and assist those people who need help. It is also important to interpret signals and feedback from others who are involved in the plan. Effectively implementing and monitoring a plan that has been skillfully crafted can greatly increase the likelihood of its success. It involves the ability to identify what is required in a given situation and to manage people and resources effectively to achieve results. It also involves being able to manage time efficiently and prioritize what tasks need to be done to achieve an overall goal.

The subscale is composed by three items and examples are: “set the goals of the projects” and “defining the tasks and the assignments of a project”. This dimension had the second higher increased value and could be related to the fact that somehow they have seen an utility for this dimension in their present life, at the University; furthermore we have done some simulations and one exercise of action plan for the future. The question with the highest score in the pre-treatment was for “defining goals of the projects” and for the post-treatment for “defining the plan of a project”. The lowest score was for both the phases for the item “defining the tasks and the assignments of the project”.

Managing Ambiguity is the disposition to make decisions on the basis of the information that one has, even if that isn't the whole picture: cope with uncertainty and risk, and adapt to change. Nowadays change is the only certainty in the world of work and the pace of change is ever increasing. We all know that change isn't easy. Every day that passes we need to deal with an increasing amount of ambiguity. Ambiguity creates complexity and the decision making is more and more difficult. Ambiguity creates uncertainty and stress. However, to be successful in business today you need to be good at dealing with ambiguity. It is the capacity to cope positively in a crisis and any crisis is likely to bring up uncertainty, to learn to act without the complete picture. In an ambiguous world it is will never have all the information ones needs for absolute certainty. It is the

capability to get all the information available, make the best decision one can and acts on it. It means to suppress person urges to control things and often the results is stress, when ambiguity enters the scene. The business world is getting more complex and therefore students need to suppress the notion that you are 'in control of everything'. Ambiguity means sometimes ones will make the wrong decision and doesn't let that put ones off. Being a good business person is about making more right decisions than wrong ones. Get comfortable with making mistakes by looking at them as learning opportunities, learn to deal with uncertainty. To deal with ambiguity students need to be comfortable with uncertainty and be confident in their-self and their abilities. Indeed part of learning to deal with uncertainty is to have confidence in ones' ability to respond to what ones can't control, that means learn to deal with your stress.

This subscale encompassed four items and two examples are: Work under stress and pressure and Continuing the work although there are problems. The highest score, both in pre and post test, was for the question "I continue the work although there are problems" that refers to the resilience skill. The second major score was in the pre-treatment for "Dealing with suddenly changes and unexpected event" while for the post-treatment was for "Managing uncertainties in projects and processes". The lowest score for the both phases was "Working under stress and pressure". Students indeed are not used to find and manage them-selves in this situation because probably they didn't have the chance to experience it so much.

Team Work is the disposition of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal. It is often a crucial part of a job performance, as it is often necessary for colleagues to work well together, trying their best in any circumstance. Team work means that people will try to cooperate, using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals. Team work is more complicated than cooperation among workers. While cooperation is essential to team work, it is only partially able to help teams reach their goals. Team work is when a group of people work together cohesively, towards a common goal, creating a positive working atmosphere, and supporting each other to combine individual strengths to enhance team performance. The aim is to achieve common purpose and clear goals, use the

necessary skills and resources, having a common approach to work and the willingness to share information. This involves working well with others to achieve results and recognizing the value of other people's contributions and ideas, trust and support in each other, having the ability to work through conflict and the willingness to take responsibility for team actions.

The team exists when individual strengths and skills are combined with team work, in the pursuit of a common direction or cause, in order to produce meaningful results for the team members and the organization. Only when the skills and strengths of individual team members are joined with shared goals, and a focus on collective performance, you will start to see the benefits of a team at work. It should also foster an increasing maturity of relationship, where people are free to disagree constructively, and where both support and challenge are a part of helping teams work. Trust in colleagues to deliver what they promise. The sub-dimensions of Team Work are: Willingness to help when needed; Sharing of a common vision of the future; Co-operation and blending of each others' strengths; Positive attitudes, providing support and encouragement; Active listening; All members pulling their weight and in the same direction; Giving the benefit of the doubt; Consensus building; Effective conflict resolution and Open communication.

This subscale encompassed three items and two examples are: Promote my ideas and opinions when I work in team and Actively participate in team works. The highest score was, both in the pre and post test, for “working with other people” and the lowest, again for both phases, was “I promote my ideas and opinions when I work in a team”.

Creativity is possible in all areas of human activity, including the arts, sciences, at work at play and in all other areas of daily life. All people have creative abilities and all in a different way. When individuals find their creative strengths, it can have an enormous impact on self-esteem and on overall achievement. They focus on the analysis and identification of problems and issues, the exploration of ideas and the processes by which these ideas are realized, implemented, evaluated and refined. Creativity is a process which generates ideas that have value to the individual. It involves looking at familiar things with a fresh eye, examining problems with an open mind, making connections, learning from mistakes and using imagination to explore new possibilities. Creativity is a complex concept which can impact on young people in many ways. This dimension

comprehend other sub-dimensions which support the creative process: be motivated and ambitious for change for the better, including in their own capabilities; be confident in the validity of their own viewpoint; be able to apply a creative process to other situations; be able to lead and work well with others, where appropriate; be adaptable and inventive in changing circumstances in, for example, the workplace or through enterprise activities; challenge the status quo constructively, and generate ideas for improving it; have a sense of control over their lives; and make a positive contribution to society.

This subscale is composed of four items and two examples are: Propose new ideas and solutions and Find new way to do things. This is the lowest increased value in the contextual CMS scale. The question that had the highest score in this dimension was for the pre-treatment phase “Think out of the box” and for the post-treatment “Find new ways to do things”. The lowest for both the phases was “I propone new ideas”.

We considered the increase in the CMS scale factors between the beginning and the end of the experiment for both groups, in order to estimate if the increase of the treatment group is significantly higher, from a statistical point of view, than the control group. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H_0 (the equivalence of the means) except, again, for the Self-Reflection because there is not an increased value before and post the treatment (Table 6.21).

Table 6.21: Comparison of the post-treatment means

Sub-scales	Delta means		Difference Delta Means	T test ^a p value
	Groups			
	Treatment group	Control group		
Managing Ambiguity	3,7700	3,4922	,80904	,000
Creativity	3,7641	3,6628	,65182	,000
Team Work	3,9953	3,6085	,95529	,000
Planning	3,8638	3,5465	1,01043	,000
Marshal of resources	3,8545	3,4651	1,01982	,000
Self-awareness	4,0563	3,4767	1,02069	,000
Self-efficacy	3,9577	3,3081	,90927	,000
Decision Making	3,5070	3,0291	,99803	,000

^a T test independent sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

We analyzed results for the CMS scale by a T test paired sample size, for the treatment group, that measured the differences between pre and post-test, considering mean scores. The $\alpha < p$ value 0.05 lead us to reject the H₀ (the equivalence of the means)- see Table 6.22.

Table 6.22: Comparison of the mean scores for the treatment group

Treatment group	Mean Pre-treatment test	Mean Post-treatment test	Means difference	T test ^a p value
Managing Ambiguity	3,1315	3,7700	,63850	,000
Creativity	3,1937	3,7641	,57042	,000
Team Work	3,3850	3,9953	,61033	,000
Planning	3,1596	3,8638	,70423	,000
Marshal of resources	3,14085	3,85446	,71362	,000
Self-awareness	3,2488	4,0563	,80751	,000
Self-efficacy	3,2113	3,9577	,74648	,000
Decision Making	2,7183	3,5070	,78873	,000

^a T test paired sample size, two tailed: $p < 0,05$

We left this contextual CMS at the end of our analysis because we measured it only in the pre-treatment phase because the three items would very hardly change in one month of TD.

Entrepreneurial mind it is a disposition to face situations and difficulties with positive approach, trying to find solutions, be able to see opportunity where people only see problems, be proactive, take action before the situation requires it. The willingness to deal with reality identifying new solution. It is the ability to proactively plan actions to achieve results and the capacity to manage stress situations. The seed of an entrepreneurial mind is the ability to see things differently and creativity is a foundational mental skill. People with Entrepreneurial Mind ask the “what ifs” that drive inquisitiveness and they are able to let go of what they already know to source fresh information and new ways of thinking about a problem. It concerns creating something new, is in a heated evolutionary contest, and no one can know the outcome with any amount of certainty. Indeed, uncertainty is the very essence of an entrepreneurial mind. We think about how to teach people to think outside the box and how to develop innovative thinkers. Optimism is truly an asset,

and it will help get through the tough times that many entrepreneurs experience as they find a business model that works for them. This dimension implies to have a vision. Entrepreneurial Mind comprehends also taking initiative and desire for control. Other sub-dimensions are: Drive and Persistence (Are you self-motivated and energetic? And are you prepared to work hard, for a very long time, to realize your goals?); Risk Tolerance (Are you able to take risks, and make decisions when facts are uncertain?); Resilience (Are you resilient, so that you can pick yourself up when things don't go as planned? And do you learn and grow from your mistakes and failures?); Creative Thinking (Are you able to see situations from a variety of perspectives and come up with original ideas?); Problem Solving (How good are you at coming up with sound solutions to the problems you're facing?); Recognizing Opportunities (Do you recognize opportunities when they present themselves? Can you spot a trend? And are you able to create a plan to take advantage of the opportunities you identify?); Goal Setting (Do you regularly set goals, create a plan to achieve them, and then carry out that plan?); Planning and Organizing (Do you have the talents, skills, and abilities necessary to achieve your goals? Can you coordinate people to achieve these efficiently and effectively?).

As it is easily evident this dimension is transversally linked with a lot of subscales analyzed before. Other sub-dimensions are correlated with some of the subscales of this CMS scale: Planning, Creativity and Managing Ambiguity. This involves being able to see innovative ways of doing things, seize opportunities, and take initiative. It may involve a newer way of looking at a situation or the addition of a new idea to improve or streamline an existing process.

This subscale encompassed three items, example of two items for this dimension: I see opportunity where others see problems and I am often the first person that suggest a new solution for a problem. The highest score was for "I continue to try since I find the solutions for a problem", followed by "I am often the first person that suggest a new solution for a problem" and with the lowest score "I see opportunity where others see problems".

6.4 Discussion

The following analysis is based on a transversal reading of the results, both of the scales and subscales adopted, from the viewpoint of the soft skills (listed in Table 6.5), emerged through the explorative study. This perspective, furthermore, helps to highlight interrelations between scales and subscales (listed in Table 6.6). In addition, we report in the following discussion the analysis of the open ended questions present in the surveys in order to have a comprehensive overview about the sample's situation. Finally, we integrated these results with the narrative interviews of the students. In the present study the sample is constituted by students enrolled in a School of Pharmacy located in Northern Italy at the 4th academic year in a course of five years. This School has 85,4% of employment rate (Istat, 2012). This consideration has to take into account along with the fact that the labor market during the last five years has become more challenging for graduates students, also for the School of Pharmacy that has a low unemployment rate. Indeed the unemployment rate is constantly increasing in Italy in the last years, especially for young people, even when they are graduated (Istat, 2014). The OCSE and Eurozona Data depicted a similar picture where the young unemployment rate is 37.9% at the end of the 2015 while in Europe the mean unemployment rate is 22%. Compared to Italy only Greece (48.6%) and Spain (46%) have higher unemployment rate. In addition, in Italy we have a situation whereby people often have job with a low profile (respects to their education degree) and/or that is far from their competency profile. Indeed, Grimaldi et al. (2014) conducted a study that underlines an high 'mismatch' rate (70%) and this situation has negative repercussions on the individual potential of employability because of the crisis. This implies that young people are often demotivated and frustrated when thinking about their future job aspirations. These considerations led us to investigate the students' future perception, with the HCCI and the AVO scales .

According to this perspective we start the discussion of the results from the Optimism skill, that is emerged in the explorative study in the contextual "aggregate dimension" of the data analysis (Table 5.4).

We start with the Hope subscale (HCCI) as a strictly correlated dimension to the Optimism, pointing out that hope and optimism are two related but distinct constructs that we can consider as dual indicators of a single global dimension reflecting future orientation (Bryant and Cvengros,

2004; Santilli et al., 2016). Optimism it is an important dimension because it shows us the positive students' perception towards the future. The entire sample of the students had, for the overall mean score of the HCCI scale in the pre-treatment, although the low unemployment rate, a partial positive view (64.01%) since the majority of them (48.54%) showed an approach that is not completely positive (3="Somewhat true").

If we look at the specific Hope subscale we can observe that the mean score of this dimension was in a median position compared with others dimensions of the HCCI scale, both in the pre (2.73 between 2="Somewhat false" and 3="Somewhat true") and in the post-treatment test (3.13), with the forth increased value, for the scale of seven dimensions, after the treatment showed a transition to more a positive tendency. The narrative interview helped us to better understand this result, explaining that they feel unconfident and disoriented towards the future career mostly because of the negative perception of the labor market that the common people and media transmit. We found that after the TD, for the treatment group, there is a more positive perception, as the open ended question n.4 (Appendix 2) showed ("How you feel if you think about the future?") together with the question n.15 ("Compared with the survey before the TD do you look at the future with more hope?").

Optimism and Hope are correlated also with Visioning (HCCI) that is the forethought capacity to imagine the future free from a tangible approach. In the Visioning subscale we had the highest score in the Pre-treatment (2.95), for the entire sample, and the second highest score in the post-treatment (3.22) only for the treated group. These results highlighted that the sample is inclined to imagine and dream about future.

This analysis of Hope and Visioning of the HCCI showed that students are optimistic and hopeful when they daydream, think about their future dreams and aspirations in general and in an abstract way. They are less hopeful when they have to believe that their dreams will become true.

Optimism is truly an asset and it is the disposition to believe "to be able" to achieve objectives and to have an optimistic expectation towards future events. Hopefulness relates to envisioning a meaningful goal and believing that positive outcomes are likely to occur if specific actions be taken. Having a sense of hope allows the person to consider the possibilities in any situation and propels the individual to take action. The general conviction of high-hope individuals that their goals can be

met and the belief that work-related tasks can be successfully completed. This line of reasoning led us to consider as a correlated concept the Goal Orientation soft skill (see Table 6.5)

We start considering the AVO scale that embraces both the concept of future perception (Optimism, Hope and Visioning) and Goal Orientation, in only one subscale: Future Orientation; indeed this dimension includes a more proactive and practical meaning of the look towards the future, actively and positively oriented. Students showed uncertainty in evaluating this disposition with the average score of 3 that correspond to “Neither false or true”, both in the pre and post-test, and with the second highest increased value for the treated group. This result supports the consideration that they have a positive approach when they have to think about the future in general, but they find more difficult to go in depth identifying which goal to pursue. The increased value highlights that via a specific and tailored training, that in fact has been done in lesson 2 through reflection and personal development plan exercises, their Future Orientation (AVO) increased- i.e. they became more confident in identifying goals and planning to pursue them. This dimension show us, furthermore, that they felt more confident in this dimension when they have to pursue learning goals than practical outcomes. This is understandable since learning is in the students’ comfort zone (the University context) and they don’t usually think, yet, about the future in tangible manner.

Concerning the Goal Orientation, as a soft skill emerged during the explorative study in the labor market, we have to consider the subscales: Goal Setting (HCCI), Planning (CMS) and Goal Orientation (AVO). These components don’t measure exactly the same dimension. The Goal Setting (HCCI) is more specific and defined respect to Goal Orientation (AVO), indeed it regards the capacity to fix timelines, to do lists , to set and achieve goals set and to have a plan. The average scores showed that the entire sample of the students had the second lowest score, compared to the other subscales of the HCCI, and for this dimension in the pre-treatment there was an uncertain position (2.66) between 2=“Not enough” and 3=“Yes enough”. It had the fourth increased value in the seven components scale and in the post treatment the average score (3.04) showed a transition to a positive tendency “Yes enough”. Planning of the CMS scale is a very close measurement to Goal Setting (HCCI), very specific and defined. Analyzing this subscale we had the average score of 3.50 in the pre-test, for the entire sample, that corresponds between 3= “Neither

I disagree or agree” and 4=“I agree”. After the treatment, for the treated group, we had the mean score of 3.86 that shows a transition to a more positive self-evaluation. The Planning subscale had the second increased value in the CMS scale for the contextual group.

Goal Orientation (AVO) is a wider construct, compared to the previous two analyzed, and it means the willingness to take action in order to achieve goals through a plan, whilst adapting to changing circumstances. This dimension had the highest mean score both in the pre-test, for the entire sample, (3.58) and in the post-test, only for the treatment group (4.12)- where 3=“Neither false or true” and 4=“True”- with the lowest increased value, probably because it was very high, respect to the other three subscale of the AVO, already in the pre-treatment phase. We can deduce, summarizing the analysis of the three subscales, that students showed for the Goal Orientation soft skill a positive tendency when they have to take responsibility for their choices, to take efforts in order to achieve the goals on time, to complete commitments and they do not surrender to the difficulties. There were lower scores when they have to combine action with self-reflection, evaluating consequences of their actions, or with self-efficacy, implementing all the possible strategies to reach a goal set.

Considering again Optimism, as the beginning step of the present discussion, we can say that optimists readily embrace a career change, while those who perceive a new experience negatively are less likely to bring psychological well-being or work satisfaction in case of relocation. It is shown that the attachment to the previous work is a very strong predictor of adverse reactions to job loss. The individual aspect of the Employability concept is bound up with the ability to adapt to career circumstantial changes, the so called "career resilience" that is part of the individual occupational identity, and it is related to optimism and self-efficacy (Grimaldi et al., 2015). The general conviction of high-hope individuals that their goals can be met, should also fuel occupational self-efficacy and the belief that work-related tasks can be successfully completed (Self-efficacy and the correlated Self-awareness skill).

Following this line of reasoning we identified two other dimensions that are related to the Optimism and Goal Orientation: Adaptability and Self-awareness skills (listed in the Table 6.6).

Starting from Self-awareness we can analyze the Self-awareness subscale of the CMS scale. This dimension means having a clear and realistic perception of who one is, implies a cognitive process

involving introspective self-reflection and the active synthesis of these insights into self-concepts. (Nesbit, 2007). Self-awareness had the highest average score, both in the pre (for the entire sample) and post-test, for the treatment group, comparing with the other dimensions of the self CMS group, and it also had the highest increased value after the treatment. Self-awareness in this sense can be considered a skill and, as with other skills, improvement in self-awareness (accuracy and acceptance of insights) can also be developed through training as the results confirm. Students showed a high self-evaluation of Self-awareness when related to questions that underline a clear idea of who they are and what they want in the future in general. In fact if we consider Self-efficacy construct, it is strictly correlated to Self-awareness, but it represents the first step forward towards the external context. The students had lower self-evaluation in this dimension. In the Self-awareness students know who they are, what aspirations they have but with Self-efficacy they go more in depth identifying which are their weaknesses and strengths and therefore which job profile fits better with their characteristics, generally defined as the beliefs people have about their abilities to complete a task. Efficacy appraisal is an inferential process in which persons weigh and combine the contributions and acquired information to pursue a goal. This dimension had an average score of 3="Neither I disagree or agree" both in pre (for the entire sample) and post-test (only for the treatment group). It had the lowest increased value, compared to the other two dimensions of the self CMS (i.e. Self-awareness and Decision Making).

The HCCI gives us the opportunity to measure also the Self-Reflection and Self-Clarity dimensions that are strictly related to Self-awareness and Self-efficacy.

Considering the subscales Self-clarity and Self-reflection (HCCI), we can have more in depth insight on a part of the self-awareness of the students. Self-reflection is a process and requires time to spend on it. Self-reflection requires conscious effort in thinking about experiences. One of the problems in developing self-reflection skill is that students engage in self-reflection but rarely examine the quality of their reflections. Consequently, many students may mistakenly consider their self-reflection skills as already developed. It requires regular engagement in self-reflection that provides a solid foundation for subsequent career planning and increases the probability that new information will be considered in career planning. It requires more than just introspective thinking, it also requires learning from that particular thinking and building behavioral intentions to

operate more effectively (Kolb, 1984; Seibert and Daudelin, 1996). Self-Awareness had low mean score both in the pre and post-test and it was the only value that decreased after the treatment. A reason might be that the concept relates to some personality traits that hardly can change in one month of TD treatment. Further aspects to be considered are, on one hand, the social desirability effect, that could affect the surveys, and, on the other hand, the 'rebound' of the self-awareness training; in fact it could be that they acquired awareness of the complexity of the concept and this implied that their evaluation of this dimension decreased, as we explained in details in the results of the previous section.

Self-Clarity is strictly related to Self-reflection, that involves taking the time to ask questions about themselves. Self-clarity occurs when persons develop answers to these key questions and their circumstances. With consistent effort, driven by a sense of hope, self-clarity emerges. This advice is essential to effective career self-management. Everything starts from the foundation of self-awareness, that is the base for all the self CMS. If one has developed self-clarity, then one has developed the readiness necessary to engage in goal identification. Self-Clarity had the lowest mean score in the HCCI pre-test (2.62- where 2="Somewhat false") for the entire sample. The major increased value after the treatment is truly noteworthy. The reason could be because the questions of this subscale were about in depth view about strengths and weaknesses on which students didn't have a clear idea before the treatment. Indeed the students, before treatment, had positive trend when they have to think about themselves in general but they are insecure about specific dimensions.

In order to have an in depth insight on this possible weaknesses of the students we analyzed 2 questions of the HCCI scale (Appendix 1), both in pre-treatment and in the post-treatment survey, that measure the abilities (item n.10 of the HCCI scale) and the strengths (item n.24 of the HCCI scale). These aspects, furthermore, are strictly related to the performance in the labor market and they are crucial to build a successful career path.

We found that in the Pre-treatment, the entire sample, had low mean score concerning strengths and slightly better for abilities. In the Post-treatment both strengths and abilities increased significantly in the treatment group.

Table 6.23: Summary of the abilities and strengths mean scores

	Definitely false		Somewhat false		Somewhat true		Definitely true	
	Treated	Control	Treated	Control	Treated	Control	Treated	Control
Abilities Pre	3	1	38	28	24	48	6	9
Abilities Post	1	2	9	27	45	48	16	9
Strengths Pre	4	4	41	35	25	42	1	5
Strengths Post	0	1	15	39	44	40	12	6

Table 6.24: Overall mean scores about abilities

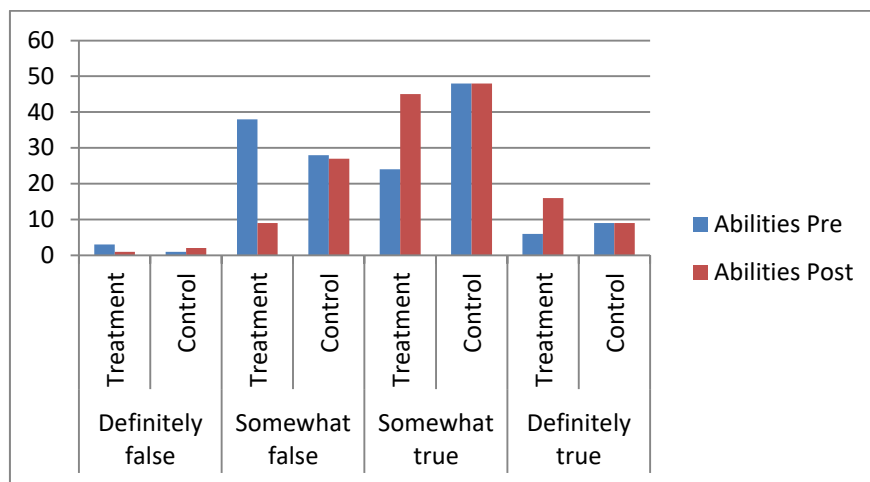
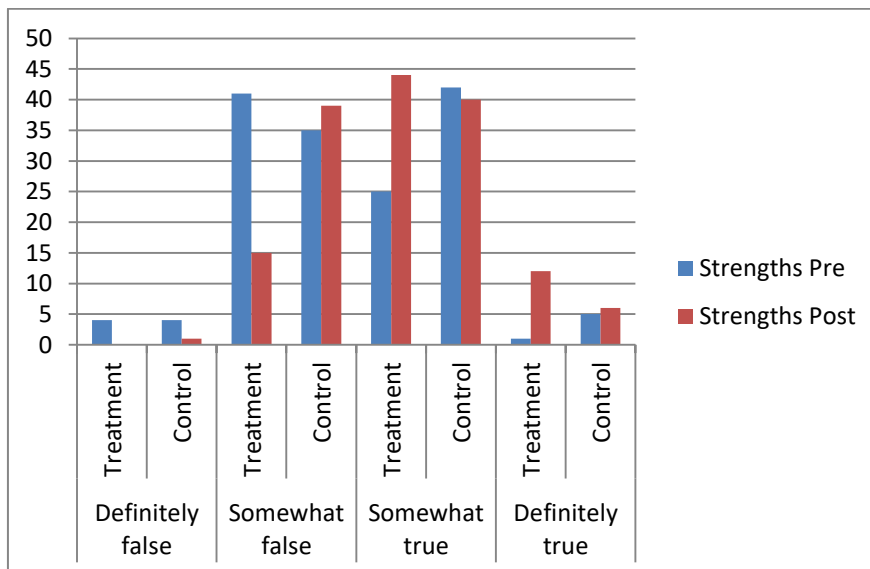


Table 6.25: Overall mean scores about strengths



We have done this in depth analysis on the Self-awareness and Self-efficacy because they are the first crucial steps that students have to take in order to build their future career path, starting from 'Who they are', 'What they want' and 'How to achieve the Goal'.

The results highlighted that it is crucial to develop tailored talent development pathways for undergraduate students in order to enhance their individual employability (potential) and that the academic course in Management, that they already attended, was not sufficient to improve this dimension.

The other construct that we mentioned, that belongs to the contextual CMS along with Optimism and Goal orientation, is Adaptability (Table 6.5). Individuals with high level of career adaptability, who consider themselves able to build their own future career aspiration and to cope with career transition and difficult work situations, show high level of hope and life satisfaction (Santilli et al., 2014). For this aspect and because the Adaptability is one of the soft skills-CMS emerged during the explorative study in the labor market we included the AVO scale, that measures the Adaptability construct with its subscales. The overall mean score of the AVO scale in the pre-test, for the entire sample, was 3.46 (3="Neither false or true") and in the post-test, only for the treated group, 3.86. The specific subscale of AVO that measures Adaptability, more than other constructs, is Flexibility and Openness to change. This dimension expresses the ability to adapt to change and to new situations, the willingness to face in actively, secure and flexible way changing and uncertain contexts. It is a very important skill in the present labor market characterized by continuous and fast changes. The Flexibility and Openness to change had the lowest score with 3.36 in the pre-test, for the entire sample, (3=Neither false or true; 4=Somewhat true) and in the post-test, only for the treated group, 3.92, with an increased value after the treatment is 0.75 (in the third position of the AVO's four elements). In this dimension students had positive tendency when they have to experiment new things and situation, as general and abstract perspective, also to test themselves but they had less scores when they have to adapt rapidly to the changes or to face changes taking risks.

Adaptability is measured also with the Adapting subscale of the HCCI scale, that had an average mean score in the pre-test (2.84) and the highest value in the post-test (3.25), only for the treated group (2=Somewhat false; 3=Somewhat true); furthermore it had the second major increased

value after the treatment. The students showed positive self-evaluation for new experiences and lower scores when they have to change plans. This subscale might have had higher value respect to the subscale Flexibility and Openness to change (AVO) because the Adapting (HCCI) has a 4-point Likert scale with a pushed polarization of the results and, furthermore, the HCCI subscale is more general compared to the AVO subscale that declined some specific dimensions such as taking risk. Adaptability, and in particular Openness to change, comprehends an important variable that characterizes the individual adaptability and promotes the possibilities for personal development and continuous learning. It is associated with a good ability to deal with unfamiliar or unknown situations. Following this line of reason we encounter the Learning Orientation skill, that is another soft skills emerged during the explorative study in the labor market, in the “aggregate dimension” of contextual CMS as the data analysis showed (see Table 5.4). We measured this dimension with the subscale Learning Orientation (AVO) and with Learning and Development (SSCS).

The Learning Orientation subscale (AVO) showed an average score of 3.47 in the pre-test, for the entire sample, and of 4.11 in the post-test, only for the treated group (3=“Neither false or true” and 4=“True”). It represents the major increased value after the treatment. In this scale Learning Orientation comprehends, as the Adaptability has already highlighted, some aspect of the ability to adapt to new context and situation. It is the willingness of new learning opportunity and of continuous improvement, development of themselves. This subscale is correlated also with Curiosity and Self-awareness soft skills of the listed CMS (Table 6.5), and with the subscales Adapting and Self-clarity (HCCI).

Considering the Learning and Development of the SSCS scale we can observe that the meaning is similar to the one in the AVO but in this subscale there is more evidence for personal development in connection with the continuous learning. In the pre-test we had the average score of 4.28, for the entire sample, and of 4.55 in the post-test, only for the treatment group, that was the highest score (4=“Somewhat important”). It had the major increased value after the treatment, as we found in the AVO scale for the same dimension.

In summary, students, as the Future Orientation has already shown, feel more confident when they have to pursue learning goals in order to prepare for future opportunities rather than to pursue other practical and specific goals. This aspect builds a link between the Learning Orientation

subscale (AVO), Learning and Development (SCSS) with Future Orientation (AVO). Learning agility has been defined as an individual's "willingness and ability to learn new competences in order to perform under first time, tough, or different conditions" (Lombardo and Eichinger, 2000, p. 323). People differ considerably in their level of learning agility and differences in learning agility have often been highlighted as valid predictors of individual career success (Eichinger and Lombardo, 2004; Lombardo and Eichinger, 2000). It is a dimension that allows people to react adequately to today's highly dynamic business environments (Spreitzer et al., 1997).

In general, the learning Orientation skill is very high in the self-evaluation of the students during the surveys, the reason might be that it is the field where they feel more self-confident, indeed it represents their comfort zone, while other dimensions such as Self-awareness (Self-clarity, Self-efficacy), Decision Making, Goal Orientation and Managing Ambiguity are less positive because the students are not used to spend time in develop this Career Management Skills that are so crucial for preparing to enter in a complex labor market.

We have to point out that we spent much effort in the first two lessons about Self-awareness and Self-clarity. During all the TD we underlined the message that is very important the continuous improvement of competences and personal growth, especially in the present, continuing changing and competitive, labor market. It is positive that after the treatment their conscientiousness of their strengths and the correlated weaknesses increased.

In the surveys we asked about the students job profile aspirations, making a distinction between future desired job and probable future job through two different questions with multiple answers. In the pre-test for the desired future job we had the 59.87% of the responses for becoming entrepreneur while in the question about the probable future job this answer decreased to the 29.29%. In the post treatment we have for the desired future job the 62.42% of the responses for become entrepreneur, a slightly increase compare with the pre-test, and the 27.38% for the probable future job.

It is interesting to observe that the students desire to become entrepreneur but they evaluated that it is difficult to really achieve this goal. This results lead us to consider, at this stage, the Entrepreneurial Mind skill, that we investigated only in the pre-treatment phase through the CMS

scale, where we had 3.74, that is the highest value in the pre-test of this scale(3="Neither I agree or disagree")- see Table 6.26 and Table 6.27.

We investigated in depth the perception and the development of the students through a narrative interview that they have done at the end of the treatment. This qualitative insight allows us to understand better these results, deducing that they want to become entrepreneurs but with the crisis of the labor market, the negative perception of the future, that the media usually propagate and thus they have, they feel non confident in starting a business. They declared that they would appreciate if the University or other institutions could organize some trainings for support these aspirations and help them to better understand which steps they have to take in order to become entrepreneurs.

In general, we can summarize that students had a tendency in dreaming about the future, indeed the Visioning dimension is high, while they demonstrated that they are not so hopeful, optimist and confident towards the future when is related to more specific and practical aspects, as the Goal Orientation dimension showed. After the treatment they increased this last aspects even if the TD lasted for a short time.

Indeed, students were quite confident about self-awareness but not about self-clarity, this confirmed that they are more confident about abstract aspects, they think to know their-selves but an in-depth insight showed that they have some difficulties in the practical implementation of their beliefs, dreams and aspirations, as the Decision Making item showed. The Adaptability dimension highlighted the uncertainty in students' self-evaluation. It increased when comprehended abstract dimensions "new things and situations" and personal aspects while decreased when it concerns more practical aspect such as change rapidly plans.

The students in the pre-test are interested, for the future job, mostly in the private sector, that increased in the probable future job in detriment to the public sector. We can observe as the family business increases in the probable future scenario compared to the desired one.

Table 6.26: Future desired career in the pre-test

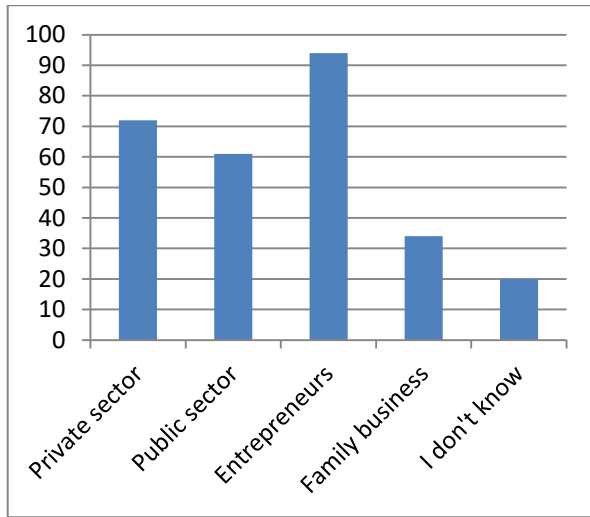
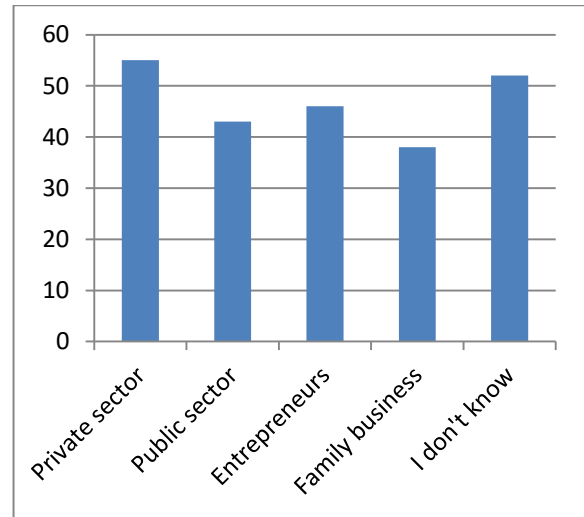


Table 6.27: Future probable career in the pre-test



If we look to the post-test we can observe an increase for the private sector both in the desired and probable future career scenario (Table 6.28 and 6.29). The narrative interview explained us that it is due to the influences of the testimonials of the fifth lesson that helped them to be more hopeful about future career in this sector, especially regarding the pharmaceutical representative job profile. A lot of students were interested in this job profile but they were discouraged because of the difficulty of the labor market for this job. Testimonials suggested them different ways to achieve this job aspiration (for example starting and experimenting also different job profiles that could lead at this aim if they keep a clear goal in mind about where they want to go). Testimonials suggested also other new and different profiles that enhanced the opportunity in the private sector such as: Pharmaco-economics and Marketing.

Table 6.28- Future desired career in the post-test

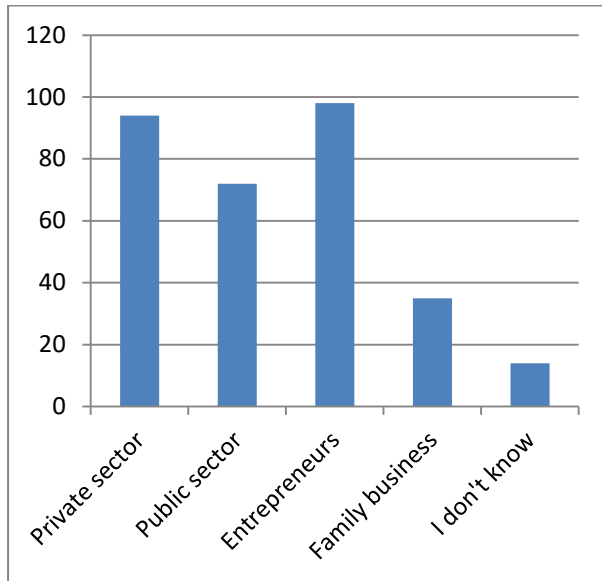
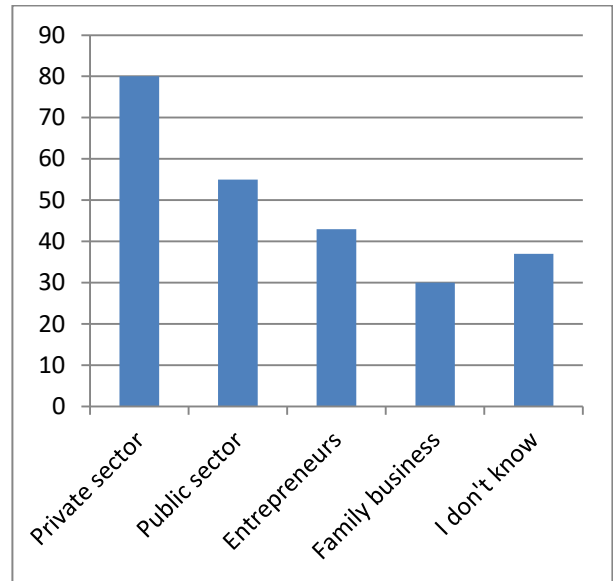
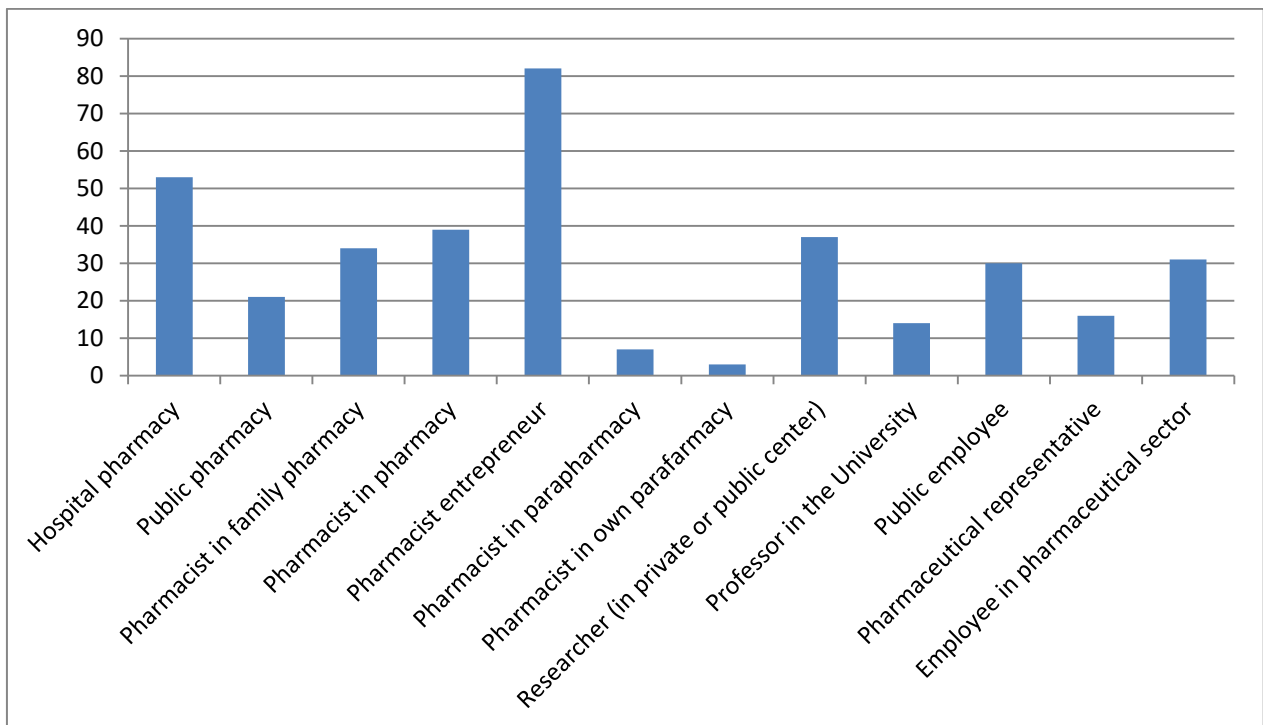


Table 6.29- Future probable career in the post-test



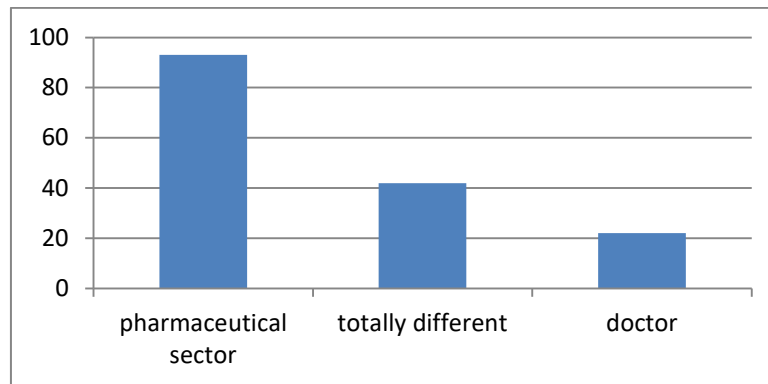
We asked also about their aspiration job profile coherent with the field of study to have a more in depth insight (Table 6.30).

Table 6.30: Future career coherent with field of study



We asked also about the Dream job and it is very interesting to observe that the 26.75 % of them desired to do something that is very far and different from the pharmaceutical sector. They varied from being a lawyer, archeologist or pastry chef. The 14.01 % wanted to become a doctor that is close to pharmacy field (Table 6.31).

Table 6.31: Dream job



The people that influenced, above all, the students in the career choice were parents with the 54.14%, followed by relatives (10.82%) and professors (5.73 % the majority at the high school than at the University).

The narrative interviews helped us also in understanding that some of the students desired to study humanistic disciplines or to do something very different, but with the difficulties times of the labor market, their families suggested them pathways that ensure them a job. One student declared: “I was studying Philosophy but my family helped me to understand that is more important to have a safe future career path, since we have a Pharmacy, so I will have free time and the opportunity to have a family”. Some of the students reported this point of view, also with some frustration because their passion and motivation is not in this field of study. They added the consideration, after the treatment, that the University might implement systematically talent development paths at the beginning of their academic career, to support them in order to understand their real aspirations and the real opportunities of the labor market. Otherwise they just continue to follow a path that they don’t really feel as their own.

We explained before that we adopted the DOTS model for the architecture of the Talent Development (Table 6.1) and that the DOTS' dimensions correspond to some of the subscales of the Self CMS scale. We specified that the CMS scale is divided in two main groups: the contextual and the self CMS as emerged from the data analysis of the explorative study (Table 5.4). In the second group we had the subscales: Self-awareness and Self-efficacy, that correspond to S of DOTS and Decision Making that corresponds to the D. In this scale lacked T-transition learning and O-opportunity awareness. We supplied this with other questions in the surveys. In particular Opportunity awareness could be investigated only after the treatment because is a dimension that could not measure a priori.

We asked (question n.5- Appendix 2) after the treatment to the entire sample if they changed their future job profile aspiration and the 15.28 % answered affirmatively, we verified that they are all students of the treatment group. We also investigated through another question (n.6- Appendix 2) if they identified new paths for their future career and the 26.75 % responded affirmatively, again we verified that they are all students of the treated group. A last consideration is about the mandatory internship that the students have to do. The 45.22% has already taken it and the 68.15% considered it useful. The explorative study in the labor market showed that all the stakeholders evaluated positively an internship for new graduated candidates.

6.5 Conclusions

The discussion of the results showed that, even in a School with a low unemployment rate, students are in any case disoriented and not so confident towards the future. They lack in the soft skills component of the Career Management Skills but a treatment focused on CMS could help students to fill this gap and build a successful career path. The TD demonstrated that a tailored pathways, even if for a short time, could enhance their CMS that otherwise, also in an unusual and innovative Economics and Management mandatory course for the School of Pharmacy, couldn't be developed appropriately.

The analysis focused initially on the description of each scale and of related subscales. The discussion, instead, is based on the interpretation of the results from the soft skills (component of CMS-gathered through the explorative study in the labor market) perspective and also underlined that some of the subscales are correlated to each other. The only exception is for the SSCS scale that has only one dimension correlated with the other scales, Learning and Development, while all the other components were useful to understand some drivers that lead the students' choices for the future career path (importance of Positive Impact or Positive Relationship, Financial Security or Achievement).

The analysis showed that the treatment group had increased values and a positive tendency about the individual awareness, strengths and aspirations, and more self-clarity concerning how they could combine them in order to have a successful future career.

We had positive increased results for all the dimension investigated except for the self-reflection subscale.

About results we have to take into account that the assessment of the students who believed they were identified as talented by the University were more committed to improve their performance, to work on developing skills valued by the professors, according to Björkman et al. (2013).

Furthermore, we found in literature that this positive effect could be, in part, also for the Pygmalion effect. Indeed, as suggested by Yost and Chang (2009), considering the whole workforce as talented, entails positive outcomes in terms of learning success. The Pygmalion effect assumes that one person's expectations of another are often fulfilled (Rosenthal, 2002). Meta-analytic findings support this assumption by showing that superiors' positive expectations (professors) of subordinates (students) enhance their subsequent performance (Kierein and Gold, 2000). For that reason, organizations that consider all of their people talented might observe greater positive developments in their workforce after investing in training activities. Although the inclusive approach adopted for the TD regarded all the students involved in the treatment, the fact that we divided in two groups the sample, it is not a consequence of the exclusive approach but for the methodology of the experimental design. Students of the two groups were informed about this subdivision, and they were aware that we will have administer the same treatment to the control group but after the post-test, for the application of social perceived justice and equality. This

subdivision in any case could impair their motivation (McDonnell, 2011). This negative effect could be partially confirmed by the fact that there is a slightly decrease of the values after the treatment for the control group.

These considerations about indirect effect due to the implementation of the treatment induce us to be cautious about the positive increase after the TD intervention for the treated group. Hence, we have to take into account that there has been not such a significant increase and that, for the most of the results, the control group had a decrease after the treatment.

In the pre and post-treatment survey we set four battery of tests and some other questions. The scales included in the surveys could be seen as very similar, and for some aspects they are, but they were important for us because they give us the opportunity to measure some constructs transversally and to have control between results, as the discussion above demonstrated through the subscales correlation.

In particular some critics could be moved because we included both the AVO and HCCI scales that have similar dimensions. The point is that the AVO's subscales are correlated with some subscales of the HCCI (Hope, Goal Setting, Implementing, Adapting) but AVO has less subscales (4) and, furthermore, they are more transversal, comprehending also some other dimensions of the CMS and SSCS scales. This helped us to have a better interpretation of the results and a comprehensive overview of the whole picture. It has been useful also as a control function between the various tests.

Future research could develop a comprehensive tool that is a synthesis of the scales used in our surveys in order to be more effective.

Although the CMS literature enthusiastically spells out the benefits of having a 'boundaryless' career, the results indicated that stable and traditional organizational careers were, in fact, desired by a lot of respondents.

The TD implemented, nevertheless, had positive effects. We could consider that this might be for the combination of personal characteristics and environmental factors (e.g., higher education institution), the overall effect of person and environmental factors combined is bigger than the

sum of their unique effects (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1993; Papierno et al., 2005). This phenomenon has been referred to as the multiplier effect (Ceci et al., 2003) and the synergistic effect (Schmitt et al., 2003). The occurrence of such effects has, amongst others, been explained by selective attention and different thresholds for perceiving cues; by attitudes and values that motivate a person to emphasize information that is value-congruent and ignore information that is not; and by memory biases that result from differences in the depth of information processing (Schmitt et al., 2003).

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Chapter 7

Talent development effectiveness and TM multilevel feedback

7.1 Introduction

The Talent Management is a process and consists in a set of practices that characterized different phases such as talent identification, talent acquisition or mapping, talent development and the feedback. We implemented TM at the University of Pavia, School of Pharmacy, focused on the development of CMS soft skills component adopting the DOTS model with the aim to enhance students' employability.

In order to consider and implement the entire process, the present study, after having analyzed and described the talent definition, the talent identification or mapping and the talent development, necessitate to face the last phase that is the feedback part.

This is an important and crucial part because allows to understand the effectiveness of the process, in terms of perceptions, and gives elements for future recalibrations. We applied a multilevel feedback approach. First of all, we considered the perception of the target population, that often is left behind and forget; then we investigated the point of view of internal stakeholders, professors of the Department and pro-rectors of the University, and external stakeholders in the labor market.

The present chapter has twofold objectives. On one hand we verified the effectiveness of the TD implemented in terms of students' employability by external evaluation; on the other hand we conducted a multilevel feedback investigations, inside and outside the organization, about the perceptions of the effectiveness of the process implemented.

This part of the TM process adopted a 'best fit' approach (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008), as for all the other parts, previously analyzed and described. The theoretical framework, described in the *chapter 2*, that resulted valuable for the implementation of the multilevel feedback part of research is the social exchange theory (Gallardo-Gallardo, 2015). The social exchange theory

focuses on the reciprocal relationships and interaction between employees and employer, underlining the importance of the psychological contract and the perceived organizational justice. The social exchange framework implies studying the employer (i.e. stakeholders involved)–employee (i.e. students) relationship, rather than one party (professors and pro-rectors) or the other (students affected by talent management practices) and moves the focus of research away from HR practices and individual perceptions, towards relationships and processes. Several papers and commentaries of this framework directly or indirectly discuss the ethical dimension of talent management. Possible areas for research include studying talent management in relation to corporate social responsibility, business ethics, organizational justice, and employee well-being, burn-out, and stress (Dries, 2013b). The TD intervention has been administered only to the treated group in compliance with the experimental research design of the present study. The students before the TD initiative were all aware and informed, that after the post treatment test, crucial for the experimental measurements, the control group would receive the same TD path administered to the treated group. The aim was to apply an equal treatment to the two groups and hence drew attention to the organizational justice and well-being of students in a public Italian University.

This perspective allowed us to overcome, also for this part of the TM, the main critical comment on the contemporary TM literature: the narrow and one-dimensional approach with unitarist viewpoint and managerial orientation, as we described in the implementation of the talent identification (*chapter 5*).

7.2 Research method

We adopted two different research methods for the two different parts of the present study.

7.2.1 The effectiveness of the TD implemented

After the TD intervention two HR professionals of the Pharmaceutical sector collaborated with us in order to obtain an external evaluation about the possible differences between students of the two groups (treated and control) in terms of employability as a consequence of the TD

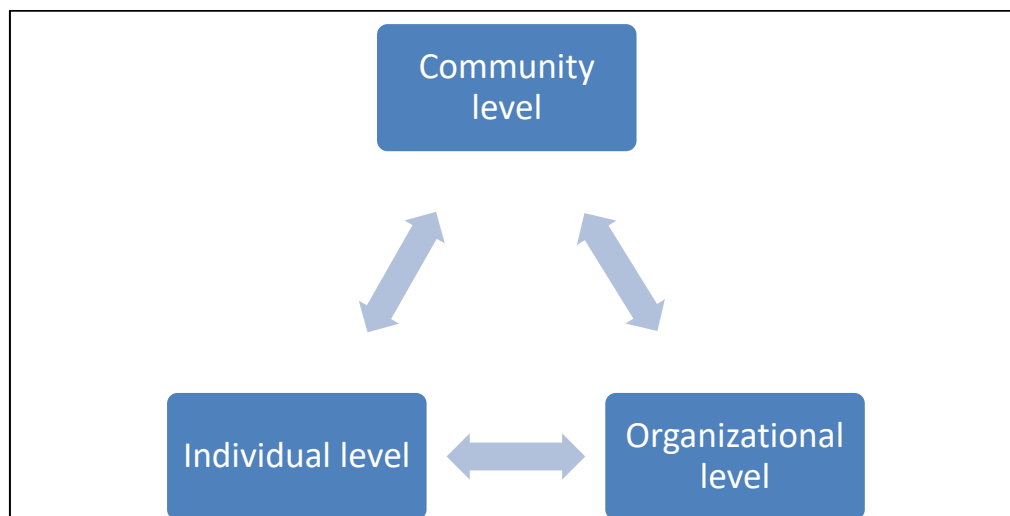
implemented. We selected randomly 10 students for each of the two groups and we gathered a total of 20 Curriculum Vitae. The HR specialists were not informed about the students belonging to the two different groups. Furthermore we selected, 5 students for each group (treated and control) to have job interviews. Hence, the HR professional evaluated 20 CV and 10 job interviews that allow us to attain an external evaluation of the effectiveness of the TD implemented in terms of increased employability for the treated group. They filled out a form to evaluate them with space for some adjunctive notes. The external HR considered the dimensions that they usually take into account when they have to hire new graduates, these dimensions find a big compliance with the HR literature about recruitment (Colombo, 2006).

We adopted a descriptive analysis of the qualitative data gathered.

7.2.2 The multilevel feedback of TM implemented

We adopted a multilevel approach to feedback considering all three perspective on TM (Table 7.1). At individual level, we have students (affected by the TM practices), at organizational level, professor and pro-rectors of the University of Pavia, and at community level, the external stakeholders.

Table 7.1: *Multilevel feedback in Talent Management process*



The data, both qualitative and quantitative, are collected through online survey, questionnaires and interviews, written narrative interviews.

- At the individual level, we gathered data about the students' perceptions through some questions administered in the post-test treatment. We collected also the narrative interviews of the treated group that allow us to have a deep understanding of the overall picture;
- At organizational level, we interviewed Professors at the Department of Pharmacy to reveal their perceptions and evaluations of the TM process implemented. In order to have a broader perspective we interviewed also Pro-Rectors at the University;
- At community level, we interviewed representatives of the labor market, some of them participated as testimonials or trainers during the TD treatment lessons. This allowed them to have an in depth insight on the intervention implemented.

We adopted a descriptive analysis both for the qualitative and quantitative data.

7.3 Findings

7.3.1 The effectiveness of the TD implemented

In order to have an in depth understanding of the effectiveness of the TD implemented in terms of students' employability we involved two HR specialists of the pharmaceutical sector with the aim to obtain an external evaluation. They asked to maintain utmost discretion about their identity, because they need to be approved from their companies and it required a long procedure that will be not compatible with the time frame of the experiment design implemented.

We selected randomly 20 students, 10 for each group, treated and control group. The HR evaluated their Curriculum and they also conducted job interviews. The evaluators were not informed of the different belonging of the students to the two groups.

About the evaluation of the CV they filled out a form of 5 –point Likert scale (where 1=Not sufficient and 5=excellent) and space for adjunctive notes (Appendix 4).

They evaluate the following dimensions:

- Appropriate length
- Written communication skills
- Logical structure with appropriate headings
- The effectiveness as personal marketing tool
- Clear language without spelling or grammatical mistakes
- The completeness of the CV about the 'history' of the candidate
- The clearness of the lay out
- Well organized and easy to read
- Highlights the relevant skills?
- Qualifies for a job interview?

The HR professionals indicated these dimensions as relevant aspects that they usually consider when they have to select neo graduate students. Hence, we embraced their perspective since we aspire to verify their employability (i.e. the potential to be hired in the labor market). Furthermore, the dimensions evaluated find a big compliance with the HR literature about recruitment (Colombo, 2006) .

They found that the students of the treated group had an average overall score of 4.5 while the control group had an average overall score of 1.4.

The CV of the treatment group had a good format, clear, orderly, synthetic and with a logical construction. The students showed the ability to emphasize their strengths, the life experience and the characteristics that match appropriately the aspired job profile.

The control group showed CV that were mostly long winded and confused, disorganized, without clear job profile aspiration except one that want to become pharmacist because his family possess a Pharmacy. As a whole they didn't have a clear idea of their strengths and how to give value to their life, educational or working experiences.

The HR professionals conducted also 10 job interviews filling out a form to evaluate them (see Appendix 5). The job interviews conducted lasting for 30 minutes in mean. They evaluated with a 5 point Likert scale (where 1=Not sufficient and 5 =Excellent) the following dimensions:

- The capacity of sustain the job interview
- The presentation capacity
- Readiness answers
- Communication skills
- The behavior during the interview
- The coherence between the characteristics of the candidate and the job profile aspirations
- The clarity of the exposition
- Awareness about the opportunities in the labor market
- Behaviuoral interview
- The self-confidence and self-awareness

The HR professionals conducted one to one interview with a traditional format. The treated group had a 4.4 average evaluation that regards communication and presentation skills, having a clear idea of their strengths and aspirations. The HR specialists found that they have prompt answers and good motivation. They are aware about the different opportunities of the labor market and they show flexibility in order to achieve their goal. They also demonstrated a clear idea of the career path and the action plan to achieve it. In general they transmit a perception of good self-confidence and self-awareness.

The students of the control group had an average evaluation of 1.3. They were insufficient because they felt non self-confident, this is highlight by the nervous and uncomfortable behavior held during the job interviews. In complex they were vague about their strengths and aspirations except one because their parents have a Pharmacy and he already know that this is his future career path. They were uncertain about which opportunity of the labor market grasp in the future and also which path or action plan follow in order to achieve the desired job.

The external analysis conducted by the HR professionals highlighted that the treated group has higher evaluations about their overall value of being employable in the labor market. Hence they confirm that in fact exists a difference between the treated and the control group, in terms of employability, as the result of the effectiveness of the TD implemented. It is important to underline that this outcome emerges in a particular context, fourth year of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Pavia, the only one in Italy with a course of management and business economic. Therefore all the students attended a mandatory academic course with contents about companies, characterized by testimonials of the labor market and visits to the companies, thus implies, indirectly, that they all have some idea of the concepts that are important for the labor market and in somehow for career: the structure of the organizations and their roles, notions about economic and management. These considerations emphasize the value of the TD implemented with the design tailored on the specific context. Indeed it is clear that just administer a treatment on CMS to students, of a scientific field, that don't have any idea of the soft skills and management career will lead us to have a positive confirmation for the effectiveness of the TD using the control group.

7.3.2 Multilevel feedback of the TM implemented

Individual level: STUDENTS

In order to have a multilevel feedback it is important the individual level that regards people affected by the TM practices and that is usually left behind, assuming a managerial and unitary point of view in the evaluation of the TM implemented. The data about the perceptions of the effectiveness of the TD were collected through the pre and post-test online survey.

In the pre-test we had a question for both groups (n.24- Appendix 1) if they evaluate that University supports in an proper way students to enter in the labor market. The 19.10% answered affirmatively while the 57.32% negatively and the 23.56% didn't know. We also asked if they were favorable to the creation of a career center with specific training paths to help them to enter in the labor market: the 95.54% declared "Yes". The 72.61% preferred that this kind of courses are part of their academic path and that they give them the approved credits.

In the post-test we asked them if they evaluate positively the TD implemented for them in order to enter in the labor market (question n.25- Appendix 2). The treatment group, that consists of 71 students, answered affirmatively in the 90.14% and the 9.85% with “I don’t know”, none negative response.

In the following open question (n. 26) they explained why. We found that some students declared “it is important to deal with this concrete and practical aspects of the world of work at the University, thing that has never happened before” and others with “it is important path to have clear ideas after the graduation” , “I discovered new job opportunities”, “I found it very interesting and useful to understand better myself and hence my future career” or “I found it important but I suggest to anticipate it at the beginning of the academic path in order to understand if it is the right one in appropriate time”.

The aim of the TD was to develop some CMS that are relevant for the pharmaceutical sector in order to enhance the students’ employability. Some questions both in the pre and in the post-test give us the opportunity to have a deep insight also about their knowledge of the skills.

We asked about the soft skills to the entire sample in the pre-test and we have that 62.42% don’t know what soft skills are and the 34.39% is not sure of what they are. The 36.94% evaluated the hard skills more important than the soft skills in the labor market and the rest of the students evaluated both, hard and soft skills, of equal importance. Only 3 students considered soft skills more important than the hard skills.

In the post-treatment survey we asked again if they now what soft skills are and the 94.36% of the treated group answered affirmatively while the 87.20% of the control group answered negatively. The majority of the treated group answered that they have learned that in the labor market are important both hard and soft skills.

In the pre and post-test we have a scale, not validated, to evaluated professors in terms of support perceived by students. This is an important aspect also for the social exchange framework that focuses on relationship between different actors. This perspective is important especially to evaluate perception of the students about the organization that professors represent, the University. The scale is a 6-Likert scale (where 1=“I strongly disagree” and 6=“I definitely agree”). Two examples of the items of the perception of the students are: “I feel that they support me” and

“They teach content aligned with the present requirements”. In our sample the overall scale had a coefficient alpha of .85, indicating strong internal consistency reliability.

In the pre-test we found that the overall average score shows that the 31.56% had a positive evaluation, the 42.03% was uncertain and the 26.39% negative. The question with the highest positive score is “They are helpful/available”, then we had “They teach content that are appropriate with the present time”. The scores decreased in questions such as “They pay attention to my ideas” and the lowest score are for “they teach me to think in a creative way” and “they say that is good to commit some errors”. The average score is 2.89 (where 2=“I disagree” and 3=“Neither agree or disagree”). (See Table 7.2)

Table 7.2: Comparison of the mean scores

Professors scale means		
		Means
Pre-treatment	Treatment group	2,8983
	Control group	3,1202
Post-treatment	Treatment group	3,5806
	Control group	2,9173
Difference post-pre treatment	Treatment group	0,68
	Control group	-0,20

In the post-test we asked about the students’ perception of the Professors after the TD implemented and considering the treatment group we had the 60.40% with a positive overall score. The question with the highest score was the same of the pre-test and the average score was 3.58. The Table 7.2 shows an increased value of 0.68. This result reveals that the TD implemented at the University and centered on the students’ needs enhance the positive

perception of the professors and, more in general, of the University institution. Indeed students considered the University more present and close to their needs, as an authoritative reference point that help them to enter in the world of work, with which this HEI has an effective connection.

Community level: PROFESSORS AND PRO-RECTORS- UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

The feedbacks at organizational level are of importance since, Professors and Pro-Rectors, represent the actors that promoted the TM initiative. Moreover, they are directly affected by the outcomes and the perceptions other stakeholders about the process implemented. On one hand we have the internal stakeholders, the students, in line with the Bologna Process, where HE may implement a student-centered learning approach (Villa and Poblete Ruiz 2012); and wide spread claimed in literature and institutional documents regarding HEIs. On the other hand the external stakeholders, representatives of the labor market, that are crucial for HEIs to 'produce work-ready' students and play a role in the development of the workforce and the economy of the Country. This is the level that has to be aware of the strategic value of implementing a TM process at the University in order to build a bridge with the labor market and furthermore about making students more employable.

We interviewed the Director of the Department of Pharmacy and 4 professors. We had interviews also with 4 Pro-Rectors of the University. We asked them about their perception of the TM process implemented and the effectiveness in enhancing employability of the students. The data collected are qualitative and were recorded and transcribed.

All the professors were satisfied about the TD implemented and, in particular, the Director of the Department who allowed us to do the experiment and that has made in the past the strategic choice to introduce in the School of Pharmacy an Economics and Management mandatory course. The Professor that gave us the hours for TD lessons during his mandatory course was satisfied of the work done. He participated to all the lessons and he evaluated the initiative as an added value for the students and the University institution. Furthermore, he appreciated the close connection and the synergy with the labor market in the design of the TD architecture and in the

implementation of the path, participating as testimonials or professional trainers during the lessons.

The other professors were interested in the TD and they have a positive evaluation for the impact and the perceptions of the students after the treatment but they didn't participate at the lessons. They were satisfied also for the close connection build with the world of work that actively participate to the TD design and implementation, as trainers or testimonials.

They all desire to continue this pilot in the future in order to enhance this pathway within the academic didactic program and don't left it a part or behind. This seem to be of importance to build a different and more close connection both with the students and the labor market needs. They were not disturbed by the difficulties, created by the organization of the TM implementation, that they had to manage to make it possible.

We have to pointed out that this School of Pharmacy is quite innovative, it is the only one in Italy that has implemented an Economics and Management course in the academic program, that usually is focused only on the pharmaceutical disciplines (i.e. technical competences and hard skills).

The interview of the pro-rector for Third Mission was favorable impressed from this initiative that is aligned with the Third Mission of the Italian Universities, as he declared. The TM implemented is in line also with the ANVUR (the Institution that evaluate Universities performances) experimental project, TECO, that promote soft skills at the University trying to build a bridge between University and the labor market. The attempt is to counteract the common assumption that the academic world lives like in an ivory tower, distant from the real world and in particular from the labor market.

We also discovered that the present pilot study joined the favor of the Pro-Rector of Didactics and of the Well-Being of the students. The reason is that the current challenge for the University is to be able to develop 'work ready' students, and not only academically prepared, to support the future development of people and of the economy. This pathway improve also students well-being at the University as the literature analyzed show (Warren, 2006; Dries, 2013b). Furthermore the Pro-Rector of the Fund Raising was very interested for the fact that TM build a strong bridge with the labor market. The representatives of the world of work declared that they are interested to be

involved in TD tailored path focused on soft skills. All this considerations find resonance with the literature analyzed in *chapter 3* about the inter-relation between University and the labor-market.

Community level: REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LABOR MARKET

During the implementation of the TD we had some professional trainers and some testimonials of the labor market that administered some lectures. We gathered their perceptions and evaluations. The testimonials were very enthusiastic and open to participate in order to contribute to the development of the students through the contribution of their work and personal experiences. They evaluated positively the intervention and especially the connection between the University and the world of work. They considered the time of the intervention quite short and they auspicated that in the future, after this pilot study, it could be longer. They appreciated that we designed the architecture of the TD in synergy with them. They showed openness to build common paths for students in the future with also the availability to invest economically in this activity. Indeed emerged that training employees on the soft skills it is very expansive in terms of economic investment for the long time required. Usually graduate students lack of this preparation and it requires big effort from employers perspective. They conclude sustaining that if the University it is able to 'produce work-ready' graduates in synergy with the labor market, using and taking advantage of the long time that students have to spend at the University, in any case, it will be a great competitive factor.

7.4 Conclusions

To conclude, the results confirm that a TM system is valuable for students in order to enhance their employability when it addresses tailored pathways that help them to get into the labor market. This strategic aim could be achieved only taking into account both internal and external stakeholders of the organization. In this way the strategic value of the TM is worthy at all levels: individual, organizational and community.

The outcomes and the perceptions of the TM implemented are positive at all levels.

Adopting the strategic decision-based perspective on the TM process at the University we can affirm that the aim is to create a growth mindset among the people involved and an organizational culture for students employability development (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011; Yost and Chang, 2009). This is part of the strategic value of the TM implemented.

Indeed people who experience a talent-management system with the inclusive approach are likely to feel supported and valued by their organization, because they are in an environment that is generally appreciative and supportive of their talents. Consequently, people make positive attributions regarding the goals of talent management (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014). This might mean, for instance, that individuals assume that talent management implies also to enhance their well-being. People that perceive talent management as an indicator of their organization's concern for their well-being, have the consequent result to enhanced their commitment (Nishii et al., 2008). The inclusive/developable talent philosophy (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014) can therefore be seen as especially conducive to students affiliation. In addition the University could improve its capacity to attract students because they want to be educated in an organization where they can utilize their talents (O'Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000). Another opportunity that this approach entails is based on the idea that using talents is a source of happiness, energy and motivation, as authors of positive psychology sustain (e.g. Buckingham, 2005; Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

Most publications focus on one dimension of the academic organization or its external environment. They therefore provide a simplified and one-sided view of reality, obscuring other perceptions on reality. In this chapter we expanded this unilateral approach by using multiple lenses together in order to fully understand the nuances of the academic organization, concerning the TM implemented, and the challenges regarding talent it has to face (Birnbaum,1988, Bolman and Deal,2008; Greenwood and Miller,2010).

Adopting the pluralist view of the workplace in the field of TM has several consequences. The managerial and unitary orientation on the achievement of organizational goals needs to be expanded. The orientations, needs and goals of stakeholders other than management need to be considered as well. According to Boselie (2010), HRM in general involves management decisions

aimed at achieving individual, organizational and societal goals. In the case of TM, individual and societal goals must be added as equivalent objectives of TM. Employee well-being is no longer a means to achieve organizational goals, but a separate objective. However, only few studies discuss the preferences of talented employees, for example the studies of Dries and Pepermans (2008) and of Dries et al. (2011) on the careers of high potentials. What is new in this pluralist approach to TM is the introduction of societal well-being as a goal or effect of TM. Only Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) referred to these goals as an aspect of sustainability. Acknowledgement of a pluralist view also implies that it is not just management that has a say in the typical features of talent (definition of talent), but also other stakeholders, such as employees, colleagues, peers and society as well.

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Chapter 8

Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In the introductory chapter we argued that although practitioners and many scholars give increasing and remarkable attention to talent management, there is scarcity of empirical research and hence little known about how and how well TM really works in practice. Moreover, we underline that current viewpoints and actions appear to be based on a narrow and biased TM 'paradigm', the organizational and managerial perspective (in particular of organizations in the private sector, multinationals and organizations in the US-context- see Thunnissen et al., 2013a). In the present research study we therefore aimed to identify, and explain through empirical research, what actually happens in practice, and we intended to contribute to the building of a broader and more balanced theoretical framework for TM. To achieve these goals we started an ongoing process of theory building and data gathering, based on the principles of the analytical HRM of Boxall et al. (2007). This approach involved the use of theoretical approaches from related academic fields, such as HRM, Organizational Behavior (OB), organization theory and educational psychology, to identify and clarify what actually happens in practice. We contextualized talent and TM and took the impact of the organizational context and the interrelated actors into account. Hence, the interests and perceptions at the internal organizational level of professors, pro-rectors and talented students were investigated. In accordance with the analytical HRM approach, we have also applied a contextually based research design, focused on TM in a specific context, public Italian University. The empirical data were collected through the implementation of the TM at the School of Pharmacy with different research methods depending on the different phase of the process. A particular focus is dedicated to the TD that adopted a randomized experimental design. Other qualitative data were gathered through an explorative study inside and outside the organization about the meaning of talent, to state our definition of talent, and about which skills are relevant to make students employable, to define the content of TD. The central topics in the study were: the definition and operationalization of talent, TM objectives (students' employability), TM practices and in particular the TD initiative, the chain of processes in developing

and implementing TM (including the factors that influence that process), and the perceived outcomes and effects, through a multilevel perspective: organizational (University- professors and pro-rectors), individual (students) and external stakeholders (representatives of the labor market).

The thesis addressed the following research questions: ***What factors impact the design, implementation and effectiveness of TM at the University? To what extent is the university students' employability affected by the TM process?***

This central research question is worked out in the following eight sub- questions:

1. This final chapter starts by answering these research questions. The findings in the conceptual and contextual chapters, *chapters 2 to 3*, are used to respond to the first three research sub-questions. The main research question is addressed in *chapters 6*. The other research sub-questions (from 4 to 8) are addressed in the empirical *chapters (5 and 7)*, in which we approached them from different angles and perspectives. In this final chapter we will combine the data from multiple chapters to give a complete overview of the main results. Next, the contributions and limitations of the study are presented, including directions for future research. What are the dominant themes and the leading assumption in the current TM literature?
2. What are the dominant themes and the leading assumption in the current Employability literature?
3. Which is the connection between these two concepts?
4. What/how is the definition of talent in the research context?
5. Which is the content of the TD?
6. What are the design, implementation and effectiveness of the TD process implemented?
7. Which is the external evaluation about the effectiveness of the TD implemented?
8. Which are the perceptions of implemented TM activities and outcomes by (a) the organization, (b) the talented students and (c) external stakeholders?

8.2 Main research findings

8.2.1 A conceptual exploration

The meaning of TM and talent

The thesis starts with a literature review in the Human Resources Management about talent and talent management in *chapter 2*. In this chapter we attempted to get an understanding and a general overview of the dominant themes, frameworks and tensions existing in talent management field. We also described four different typologies of talent, according to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) and we integrated the exploration of the talent concept with an etymological analysis of the term, in order to have a deeper understanding of the meaning. The field of TM lacks of stable theoretical foundations and the approach is usually from a single and narrow biased perspective. The debate about whether TM is in ‘infancy or adolescence?’ (Thunnissen et al., 2013a) is still open and TM seems a relative poorly developed research subjects with a lack of a clear distinct meaning. In actual fact, according to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015), that adopted a phenomenon-driven approach, this field is in a growth stage, evolving rapidly, and currently facing the challenge of becoming a more mature field of study. This means that the real state of art of the phenomenon is actually more grown than the theoretical conceptualization consider. The phenomenon-driven approach is opposed to theory-driven (von Krogh et al., 2012), indeed research takes a different route “starts with the generation of facts, most typically from large-sample analysis, that can inform us as to what we need a theory for [...] Then, as we get into exploring the whys and hows, a combination of quantitative and qualitative studies will be fruitful” (Hambrick, 2007, p.1349). Therefore talent management is a phenomenon rather than a theoretical construct, so it makes sense to study it as such, “by being open to a plurality of perspectives found in HR practice rather than departing from normative frameworks advocating ‘one right way’ of approaching or studying talent management” (Dries, 2013b, p.4).

Contextually based researched

A contextual analysis is provided in *chapter 3* to get a profound understanding of the research context: a public Italian University. A literature review is conducted about the internal organizational context, the University, and the external context, the labor market, exploring also their inter-relations. The analysis highlighted the significant changes that occurred both in the University and the labor market. Furthermore, since the competition for talent is increasingly intensifying and also Higher Education (HE) institutes in Europe have to confront with this issue (Enders et al., 2011), universities all over the world are increasingly required to produce highly skilled graduates, able to respond to the ever changing and complex needs of the contemporary workplace (Sleezer et al., 2004; Possa, 2006). It has been revealed an increasingly wide 'gap' between the skills and capabilities of graduates and the requirements and demands of the work environment (King, 2003; Yunus and Li, 2005; Andrews and Higson, 2008). This chapter emphasizes graduates' employability as an important link between the University and the labor market. The Employability concept is analyzed through the consideration of the existing conceptualizations and models in literature. This lead to underline that the crucial aspect, at individual level, are the competences that in turn represent the link between employability and talent, two overlap and close concepts. A description of competences, skills, soft skills, employability skills and career management skills (CMS) is provided. In order to 'produce work ready graduates' the chapter focuses on the CMS that are a sub-set of the employability skills.

8.2.2 The empirical implementation of TM at the University of Pavia

The theoretical framework developed in the first two chapters lays the foundation for further theoretical and empirical explorations in the empirical part, in which new theoretical 'building blocks' are added to identify and clarify what happens in practice in more detail. The conceptual and the contextual chapters offered significant input for the design of the empirical study. This research, indeed, aims to identify and explain what happens in practice, with the attempt to contribute to the building of a broader and more balanced theoretical framework for TM.

This part of the thesis is focused mostly on the experimental design adopted for the TD initiatives and, also, on other different research methods that are added for different the phases of TM process.

The definition of talent

An explorative study is conducted inside and outside the organization to gather qualitative data about the definition of talent. This allow to overcome the narrow and biased perspective present in the literature. The analysis adopted the qualitative rigor in inductive research that Gioia et al. (2013) define in a systematic approach that fits with the new concept development or grounded theory articulation. To broaden the managerial and unitary point of view on TM, due to the Management domain perspective, we expanded the literature review to divergent streams pertinent with our context- giftedness, positive and vocational psychology. The integration of this insights with the literature review conducted in *chapter 2* allowed to identify new dimensions, tensions and typologies related to the talent issue. This multilevel and multidisciplinary perspective on the meaning of talent, conducted in *chapter 5*, led to the definition of talent: “talent is the potential that students possess, in terms of employability, that could be systematically developed to excel at one’s personal best, in line with their career aspirations”.

The content of TD

The explorative study conducted about the meaning of talent served also to detect which skills are relevant in the labor market to make students employable. Since CMS are composed by hard and soft skills and the School of Pharmacy provided courses only on the hard, we decided to focus on the soft skills component of the CMS. Indeed, they are absent in the academic path and, both the literature review and the explorative study in the labor market, indicated them as crucial to be employable. Hence, in the same interviews about the meaning of talent were gathered qualitative data about the content of the TD intervention. The analysis adopted the same research method utilized to define talent, the qualitative rigor in inductive research of Gioia et al. (2013). The identification of the skills, defined in *chapter 5*, has been a crucial phase for the design of the TD.

TD implementation

The implementation of the TD analyzed and described in *chapter 6*, is based on the definition of talent and the content of TD, defined in *chapter 5*. The research design is experimental with control group, the most appropriate to measure the effectiveness of the treatment. We identified an adequate sample at the Department of Pharmacy, we divided them randomly in two groups. Hence, in the pre and post-tests we combined scales and questions that were useful to measure dimensions revealed as relevant in the exploratory study. A pre and post treatment online surveys were administered to the entire sample. The approach adopted is the best-fit, that allowed us to combine different theoretical frameworks: the CMS and the strength-based. The analysis of the results underlined the increase of the values measured for the treated group. This means that the TD effectiveness in terms of students' employability is confirmed.

TD effectiveness

In order to measure the effectiveness of the TD implemented in terms of employability the study involved two external HR of the pharmaceutical sector. They evaluate through a form 20 CV and 10 job interviews of the students, selected randomly within the two groups. The HR professionals were not informed of the belonging of the students to the two different groups. The qualitative data gathered confirmed that the treated group is evaluated as more employable than the control group.

Multilevel perceptions of TM implemented

The last phase of the TM process consisted in the feedback activity. In literature the evaluation of the perceptions about the TM implemented is usually unitary and managerial. The study broadened this perspective and adopted a multilevel investigation. Inside the organization it involved both individual level (students), usually left behind, and the organizational level (professors and pro-rectors); outside the organization at community level (representatives of the labor market). All these levels considered the TM implemented as an added value both for the University and the students.

8.3 Discussion

The research questions address the effectiveness of TM implemented at the University in terms of how and if the TD develop students' employability. This is bound up with the fact that the talent challenge is underestimated in the University although it that represents the outstanding example of a talent organization. This raises the question if, and how, this typical talent organization, the University, attracts and develops their students in a proper way. The competition for talent is increasingly intensifying and also Higher Education (HE) institutes in Europe have to confront with this issue (Enders et al., 2011). Also for universities the 'human resources' are the most valuable asset for the success of the organization (Van den Brink et al., 2013). Hence, for excellence in research and education the availability of talented, creative, innovative and enthusiastic student is crucial (Florida, 1999). All over the world universities are increasingly required to produce 'work ready' graduates (Bridgstock, 2009). The career guidance reviews carried out by the OECD, the World Bank, and a range of EU agencies (i.e. the European Training Foundation, Cedefop, and the DG Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities), have all underlined the need for citizens to be well equipped with skills (CMS) to manage the complex and non-linear transitions that characterize contemporary education, training and working pathways.

Taking into account the fact that the European unemployment rate for young people is 27% while the Italian youth unemployment rate is 40% (OECD, 2016). Moreover, drawing attention to the continuous enrolment decrease of young people at the University in Italy and, at the same time, the leaving before the graduation completion. These aspects are probably due to the economic downturn and also to the decline in the credibility of the University as credentials to find a job (Tomlinson, 2012).

Considering that Governments at all levels are beginning to recognize the importance of tertiary education in preparing students for a constantly changing world of work. There is a growing request for strategies to ensure that policies and programs relating to pathways from education to work are developed. Indeed there is a rationale for significant Governments' investments in higher education: the contribution to the development of the country's human capital (e.g. NCIHE, 1997, p.9; Yorke, 2004, p.3). The more employable students are, the greater the economic yield is likely

to be from this investment. Expanding higher education is also designed to serve social-equity goals by increasing access for disadvantaged groups. To achieve such goals, attention needs to be paid not only to ensuring the participation of these groups in higher education but also to enhancing their subsequent success in the labor market (Morey et al., 2003).

Thus far, taking together all these considerations there is an upsurge urgency to face the crucial issue of graduate employability in the Italian University system through the development of systematic programs, to help young people to get into the labor market.

Indeed this objective will be effective in so far as the University share a common strategy and implement systematically a system/process that supports and develops students' employability in synergy with the labor market. Adopting the strategic decision-based perspective on the TM process at the University we can affirm that the aim is to create an organizational culture and a growth mindset among the people involved for the students' employability development (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011; Yost and Chang, 2009). This is part of the strategic value of the TM implemented.

In fact in the Italian Universities there are some pilot programs focused on generic competences, soft skills and employability (e.g. projects: TECO of ANVUR; EmpandCo -Employability and Competences of six Italian Universities -Padova, Firenze, Siena, Napoli, Molise, Roma Sapienza; Competency center at University of Ca' Foscari- Venezia) or spotted initiatives to get closer students and labor market (AVO project of ISFOL; CAMPUS MENTIS- itinerant residential training for students all over the country, including meetings with representatives of the labor market, promoted by the University La Sapienza). The point is that all these initiatives are with great added value for the university context but disconnected. Usually these activities regard some Departments and not all the University where they are implemented.

Hence the present study advocates the necessity of implementing systematically TM process in the Italian University, strategically designed, involving internal and external stakeholders, in order to achieve a fundamental outcome: students' employability. This will give added value at the HEIs and will offer the opportunity to be a crucial actor in the development of the workforce of the Country and hence of the Country as a whole.

This raises the question whether the students (i.e. the talented people) consider that their needs are best served. This comes along with the adoption of student centered learning, as the Bologna process suggests. None university has an explicit policy to support, systematically and strategically, students for the transition to the work environments.

The environmental, strategic, organizational and internal fit (Paauwe et al., 2013; Wright and Nishii, 2013) are important for the successful implementation of TM strategy. To conclude, the study reveals that TM is not a 'stand-alone tool' as depicted in the TM literature; the interdependence between the TM strategy, the organizational context and various stakeholders involved needs to be considered for the effectiveness of TM practices and activities.

To design adequately this process we adopted the 'best fit' approach since it recognizes the impact of the specific internal and external context of the organization on TM practices and outcomes (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015). The best fit approach affirms that talent management has no single perspective on talent that is objectively better than another (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005). As Garrow and Hirsch (2008) assert, talent management is not a matter of best practices, but rather, of best fit—i.e. “fit with strategic objectives, fit with organizational culture, fit with other HR practices and policies, and fit with organizational capacity” (Dries, 2013b, p.283). Organizations need to realize that ad-hoc approaches to talent management almost always lead to discrepancies between theory and practice (Gill, 2002). This approach has been essential for the design and implementation of talent management as it emphasizes the importance of context, implying that the meaning of talent is relative rather than absolute, and subjective rather than objective (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). It is said that in a given organizational setting, talent should be defined and operationalized in light of the organization's culture, environment (i.e., industry, sector, labor market), and type of work (Pfeffer, 2001).

Furthermore another approach has been added, because is of importance for the present study, the phenomenon-driven, that interprets talent management as a phenomenon rather than a theoretical construct. According to Dries (2013b) this perspective allow to study TM as such, “by being open to a plurality of perspectives found in HR practice rather than departing from

normative frameworks advocating ‘one right way’ of approaching or studying talent management” (p.4).

The best fit approach has made possible the combination of some TM theoretical frameworks, described in the theoretical part of the thesis, for the TM implementation. The framework that seems more adequate is one of the alternative frameworks of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015), that is the Career Management (CM). It has been added the strength-based approach that is the fulfillment of the natural potential of all employees, advocating that everyone is entitled to the organizational opportunities, resources and encouragement required to apply the maximum of their capacities. The research also applies the social exchange theory for the multilevel feedback part about the TM implemented (Gallardo-Gallardo, 2015). The social exchange theory (i.e. the focus is on the reciprocal relationships and interaction between the organizational and the individual level, where are important the psychological contract and the perceived organizational justice), placing the talent management in relation to corporate social responsibility, business ethics, organizational justice, and employee well-being (Dries, 2013b).

Besides stretching the conceptual TM paradigm, we go one step further, and identify through empirical research whether a broader theoretical framework is indeed required to explain what actually happens in practice. The empirical data for this study are collected in a sector of industry that is underrepresented in TM research – i.e. public sector organizations -, since the majority of TM publications focuses on multinationals and private sector organizations (Powell et al. 2012; Vaiman and Collings 2013). Just a handful of publications pay attention to TM issues in organizations in other contexts, such as health care institutions (e.g., Groves, 2011; Powell et al., 2012), educational institutes (e.g., Davies and Davies, 2010; Van den Brink et al., 2013) or public sector organizations (e.g., Glenn, 2012; Harris and Foster, 2013). As a result, the thesis will also contribute to TM studies in public organizations sector.

The first crucial building block is the definition of talent. In the present study is the results of a multilevel exploratory study inside and outside the organization, in order to broaden the perspective on the meaning of talent, usually narrow and biased, since consider only the organizational point of view. We state that “talent is the potential that students possess, in terms of employability, that could be systematically developed to excel at one’s personal best, in line

with their career aspirations". Considering all the theoretical typologies of talent we can conclude that this definitions implies an object approach (i.e. talent is the potential in terms of employability) combined with a developable approach (i.e. that could be develop) and an inclusive approach (i.e. that each students has in order to excel at one's personal best). This is important for the definition of the TD intervention because defines that the approach is inclusive, hence all the students are involved in the talent development initiative. Furthermore to define effectively the content of TD in order to make students employable we conducted an explorative study, again inside and outside the organization, in particular with representatives of the labor market.

The multilevel exploratory study gives us the opportunity to overcome the lack of attention to multiple goals at multiple levels that has been highlighted in TM field, especially in public organizations.

Moreover, we took in to account that for public sector organizations legitimacy and societal well-being are of great importance (Christensen et al., 2007). Also, we would argue that the study gives evidence that the impact of the New Public Management principles becomes manifest in the academic TM system (Deem, 2001; Smeenk, 2007; Zomer and Benneworth, 2011).

The TD implemented reveals results with an overall trend of increased values and a positive tendency for the treatment group about the individual awareness, strengths and aspirations, with more self-clarity concerning how to combine them in order to have a successful future career. The discussion of the results showed that students in a School with low unemployment rate are in any case disoriented and not so confident towards the future. They lack in the Career Management Skills but, as the TD implemented demonstrated, a treatment focus on CMS could help students to become employable. The TD emphasized that a tailored pathways, even if for a short time, could enhance their CMS that otherwise, also in an unusual and innovative Management mandatory course for the Department of Pharmacy, couldn't be developed appropriately. TD is focused on strengths because it was appropriate for the shortness of our TD intervention and, moreover, it is motivational to work on strengths where the individual is leveraging a talent that comes naturally to them, than to try to develop in someone a skill, knowledge or capability that they have little or no natural aptitude for, especially in short time period treatment (Ross, 2013).

The analysis and the discussion of the results highlighted that the adoption of the scales is based, mostly, on the CMS soft skills component gained through the explorative study in the labor market, in addition to one scale that is related to the drivers of the students in terms of the definition of the future career (importance of Positive Impact or Positive Relationship, Financial Security or Achievement) and some further questions to have an in depth understanding. In the pre and post-treatment survey we set four battery of tests and some other questions. The scale included in the surveys could be seen as very similar, and for some aspects they are, but they were important for us because they give us the opportunity to measure some construct transversally and to have control between results, as the discussion in *chapter 6* demonstrated through the inter-correlation between the subscales.

It is fundamental to underline that University is a crucial time in young people's learning path and for career development (Gore and Metz, 2008). The early maturation of these skills makes it easier to assume an attitude and a way of proactive behavior than the management of personal history and to address the decision-making events and life transitions through a design of self over time (Grimaldi et al., 2015).

The University represents a point of reference for the students and when it is able to implement developmental pathways that support students towards the labor market, this aspect assumes a crucial significance for students. Literature highlights that the combination of personal characteristics and environmental factors (e.g., education) is important. Indeed the overall effect of person and environmental factors combined is bigger than the sum of their unique effects (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1993; Papierno et al., 2005). This phenomenon has been referred to as the multiplier effect (Ceci et al., 2003) and the synergistic effect (Schmitt et al., 2003). The occurrence of such effects has, amongst others, been explained by selective attention and different thresholds for perceiving cues; by attitudes and values that motivate a person to emphasize information that is value-congruent and ignore information that is not; and by memory biases that result from differences in the depth of information processing (Schmitt et al., 2003).

The experimental TD implemented came along also with the 'soft' approach to HRM that is based on McGregor's theory Y, which assumed that employees are humans with their own emotions and needs that direct their behavior (Truss et al., 1997; Legge, 2005). In the 'soft' approach to HRM the

interests and rights of the employee are a concern, in parallel to the interests of the organization (Guest, 2007; Greenwood, 2002). The 'soft' approach promote that managers (and in our case also professors) need to have confidence in the responsibility of the employees (in our case students) themselves, and support and stimulate employees in their development instead of exerting control by sanctions and pressure (Legge, 2005). The practices in the 'soft' approach focus on enhancing commitment, personal and professional development, for example through 'high commitment systems' and communication (Truss et al., 1997). Where the 'hard'-production approach focuses on the individual, the 'soft'-people approach also takes the group, the 'social system', into consideration (Greenwood, 2002). In TM, the 'soft' approach can be connected to the inclusive TM approach since is founded on the belief that all employees are talents or have talents which can or should be developed (Gallardo- Gallardo et al., 2013). Moreover the soft' approach is connected with the social exchange theory adopted.

An effective talent management is important because ensures that organizations can successfully acquire and develop essential talent. Moreover it enhances the engagement of the people involved. According to Morton (2005, p. 11) "Talent management is integral to engaging employees in the organization". The ability to effectively address both of these issues has become a primary determinant of organizational success and in some cases, even survival (Hughes and Rog, 2008). Companies have long understood the benefits of developing successful brands for their products and services. Particularly in highly competitive markets, a strong brand is often considered essential. Given increased competition for human resources, the development of an employer brand is now becoming recognized as being important. Hence, we propose that an important and strategic final outcome that TM at the University could produce is the talent brand. It encompasses the organization's values, systems, policies and behaviors towards the objectives of attracting, motivating and developing, students in order to produce high qualified workforce and 'work ready' graduates that are employable in the labor market.

Effective employer branding helps to keep current and potential students constantly and actively aware of the organization's value proposition and the benefits of being committed to it. Like talent management, "employee engagement" is an often cited term that lacks a precise definition. According to Gibbons (2006) "employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual

connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that in turn influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work” (p. 5). In other words, the more highly engaged the people, the more likely they will be to say positive things about the organization, thereby contributing to the development of a positive employer brand; they want to remain in contact with the organization, thereby producing a positive, dynamic and wide network when the students will be in the labor market; moreover the companies will be more inclined to invest in the University due to the close inter-relation represented by TM design with them and by satisfied alumni that are now in the word of work; and regularly exert a superior level of effort, thereby potentially influencing such variables as quality, customer satisfaction, etc. In reviewing the results of 12 major research studies Gibbons (2006,) identified the top drivers of employee engagement. These include: career growth opportunities – the extent to which individuals have opportunities for “career growth and promotion” or have a clearly defined career path; people development – the extent to which efforts are made to develop the individual’s skills; and personal relationship with one’s superiors (i.e. professors) – the extent to which the student values this relationship. Many of these drivers arguably reflect an overall management philosophy that assumes that professors and pro-rectors at all levels of the organization are expected to behave with integrity, treat students with respect, communicate effectively, involve students, foster personal relationships and engender pride in students. Employee engagement has been associated with a number of important organizational outcomes, many of which are directly related to talent management such as ease of recruitment, development and retention (that in our case is represented by maintaining a positive relationship in the future with students as alumni in the labor market). Arguably one of the most significant internal factors influencing talent management policy and practice is its definition. According to Morton (2005), a “talent mindset...must cascade from the top, with the CEO as the driver” (p. 9). These considerations could also be useful in demonstrating the impact of talent management on organizational outcomes (e.g. consideration of high qualified HEI, students engagement, funds, share value), which may be important for justifying continuing investments and directing future talent management efforts.

To conclude a positive outcome of implementing a TM system at the University, with students as targeted population, that is effective in terms of students' employability could also imply to build a talent brand.

Hence, this consideration highlights that TM system is valuable also in terms of talent brand that means stronger inter-relation with the labor market, involving also the representatives of the world of work in the TM process; building stronger relationship with students, developing a sense of belonging to the Institution and, hence, of identity. These outcomes could lead to positive returns. On one hand at economic level, receiving more funds, public and private, for developing at the University this tailored TD pathways that make student employable, taking advantage of the times that students have to spend at the University to become graduates. On the other hand at institutional level considering the University of Pavia as a valuable place where to study, building a sense of identification that will last when students will be in the labor market; moreover, giving the opportunity, to the University of Pavia, to be a crucial actor in the development of the workforce of the Country and hence of the Country as a whole.

8.4 Limitations and future research

The analysis of the TD highlighted positive results about the effectiveness of the TD implemented and about the perceived perception of the internal and external stakeholders. Nevertheless we are aware that the assessment of the students who believed they were identified as talented by the University were more committed to improve their performance, to work on developing skills valued by the professors, as Björkman et al. (2013) describe. This could influence positively the results. Furthermore in literature we found that this positive effect could be, in part, due to the Pygmalion effect. In accordance with Yost and Chang (2009) this aspect implies that considering the whole workforce as talented entails positive outcomes in terms of learning success. The Pygmalion effect assumes that one person's expectations of another are often fulfilled (Rosenthal, 2002). Meta-analytic findings support this assumption by showing that superiors' positive expectations (professors) of subordinates (students) enhance their subsequent results (Kierein and

Gold, 2000). For that reason, organizations that consider all of their employees talented might observe greater positive developments in their workforce after investing in training activities. This consideration lead us to be cautious about the positive results, although they remain nevertheless positive.

Moreover, we observed that even though the CMS literature enthusiastically spells out the benefits of having a 'boundaryless' career, the results indicated that stable organizational careers were in fact desired by a lot of respondents. This aspect could be investigated more in depth.

We are also aware, according to the claim of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2012), that another aspect to consider is that the object versus subject approach could seem to be a tautological issue because who has talent (object approach) could be defined as talented (subject approach). At the same time, also, the nurture and nature debate, about whether talent is innate or developed, shows interaction underlying the importance of both innate ad acquired talent, could placing them as at the center of a continuum (Meyers et al., 2013). In particular, in our context, means that innate features are necessary, and each individual has them, but this is not sufficient for future achievement, one needs to develop them through practice. Csikszentmihalyi (1998) summarized this idea by stating that "talent is not an all-or-nothing gift but a potential that needs to be cultivated to bear fruit" (p. 411).

Some critics could be moved for the length of the pre-test survey and, in particular, for the adoption of numerous and long scales. It has been helpful to identify interrelation and to verify measures, comparing similar subscales. Above all, especially the inclusion of both the AVO and HCCI scales that measure similar dimensions. The point is that the AVO's subscales are correlated with some subscales of the HCCI (Hope, Goal Setting, Implementing, Adapting) but the AVO has less dimensions (4) and they are more transversals, comprehending also some dimensions of other subscales present in other scales: the CMS scale and SSCS scale dimensions. We have to point out that it has been helpful to have an in depth interpretation of the results and to have a comprehensive overview of the picture. It has been useful also as control between the vary tests. Nevertheless future research could develop a comprehensive tool that is a synthesis of the scales used in the surveys in order to be more effective.

The analysis of the results identified strengths and areas for growth to enable students to develop their personal career self-management plans. The shortness of the TD intervention lead us to focus only on the training intervention, certainly a longer period with individual feedback and personal counselling paths could be more effective. This is a suggestion for future TM implementations at the University with the aim to make students employable.

In general, the shortness of the TD is a weakness, even if literature underlines that it could be enough to successfully increase some CMS in students (Feldman and Dreher, 2012). A TD initiative longer than one month would be useful to have a better understanding of the process and its effectiveness.

Moreover, a longitudinal study, that was impossible to develop within the present research timeframe, focused on the analysis of the sample, involved in the experiment, but with data related to students' entry in the labor market, and also after some years of their presence in the world of work, would be suitable for the evolution of the present research.

A limitation of the present study is the context of the pilot study, a public higher education institution in Italy, and in particular at the Department of Pharmacy. This aspect, for sure, has been also positive since allows us to fill a gap in the empirical research, implementing a contextual based research. However future research could investigate the implementation of TM in other departments and universities expanding the pilot study of the present study at the Department of Pharmacy- University of Pavia. This could allow to broaden the perspective on TM process implemented through the comparison of the different data.

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Appendix 1: Pre-treatment online survey

Benvenuto alla rilevazione del tuo talento

ISTRUZIONI

Gentile studente,

stai per iniziare un percorso che prevede la compilazione di un questionario, che ha l'obiettivo di comprendere e migliorare le modalità e i processi di inserimento nel mondo del lavoro dei neolaureati.

Prima di iniziare, accertati di essere in un luogo tranquillo in modo da non venire disturbato e di avere a disposizione circa 30 minuti per la compilazione.

Per prima cosa, ti chiediamo per favore di leggere attentamente le domande proposte, prendendoti il tempo necessario per capirle. Poi segna la tua risposta, utilizzando la modalità che di volta in volta ti verrà indicata. Dovrai barrare una casella in caso di risposte multiple; se non ti ritrovi in nessuna delle alternative, puoi scegliere "altro" specificando nello spazio bianco la tua scelta. In caso di domande aperte, dovrai compilare con un testo libero dove trovi una casella di testo vuota.

Ricorda che le domande sono state formulate perché ciascuno possa esprimere la propria opinione pertanto non ci sono risposte giuste o sbagliate. Perché i risultati possano essere validi, ti prego di rispondere sempre con la massima sincerità, indicando l'opzione che più si avvicina a come ti senti di essere veramente. I dati raccolti saranno resi anonimi e trattati in modo aggregato.

Grazie per la tua collaborazione

Sezione anagrafica

1. Dati personali

Nome e Cognome

Matricola

Data di nascita

Nazionalità

Residenza

Domicilio

2. Patente di guida

- si
- no

3. Figli

- si
- no

4. Disabilità in famiglia

- si
- no

5. Dove alloggi? (possibilità di risposta multipla)

- presso la mia famiglia di origine tutta la settimana
- presso la mia famiglia di origine solo alcuni giorni a settimana
- mi sono trasferito a seguito dell'iscrizione all'Università
- vivevo già fuori dalla mia famiglia di origine prima di iscrivermi all'Università

6. Quale è la tua condizione?

- single
- coniugato
- convivente
- con una relazione

7. Titolo di studio del padre

- dottorato
- laurea
- diploma
- media inferiore
- altro

8. Titolo di studio della madre

- dottorato
- laurea
- diploma
- media inferiore
- altro

9. Professione del padre (se pensionato indicare il lavoro svolto in precedenza)

- imprenditore
- dirigente
- professionista (avvocato, medico etc)
- impiegato
- lavoratore manuale
- altro

10. Professione della madre (se pensionata indicare il lavoro svolto in precedenza)

- imprenditrice
- dirigente
- professionista (avvocato, medico etc)
- impiegata
- lavoratrice manuale
- casalinga
- altro

11. I tuoi genitori lavorano nel settore farmaceutico?

	No	Informatore scientifico del farmaco	Docente universitario	Ricercatore	Farmacista dipendente	Farmacista in proprio
madre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
padre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

altro

Sezione: le mie caratteristiche

In questa sezione ti chiediamo di rispondere senza rifletterci eccessivamente, non esiste una risposta giusta o sbagliata

13. Quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni?

	Sono fortemente in disaccordo	Non sono d'accordo	Sono né in disaccordo né d'accordo	Sono d'accordo	Sono fortemente d'accordo
sono spesso la prima persona a suggerire una nuova soluzione al problema	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
continuo a provare finché non trovo la soluzione ad un problema	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vedo delle possibilità dove gli altri vedono problemi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Sono in grado di...

	Sono fortemente in disaccordo	Non sono d'accordo	Sono né in disaccordo né d'accordo	Sono d'accordo	Sono fortemente d'accordo
affrontare improvvisi cambiamenti e imprevisti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pensare fuori dagli schemi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
proporre nuove idee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lavorare sotto stress e pressione	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
proporre nuove e diverse soluzioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
continuare il lavoro nonostante i problemi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
trovare nuovi modi per fare le cose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
gestire le incertezze nei progetti e nei processi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lavorare insieme ad altre persone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
creare il piano di un progetto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
creare il giusto gruppo/squadra per risolvere un problema/raggiungere un obiettivo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
partecipare attivamente nei lavori di squadra	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stabilire gli obiettivi dei progetti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stabilire una rete di contatti (ovvero stabilire contatti e scambiare informazioni con altri)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
promuovere le mie idee e opinioni quando si lavora in gruppo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
definire gli incarichi di un progetto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stabilire nuovi contatti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Sezione: la tua futura carriera

15. Se chiudi gli occhi ed immagini il tuo lavoro dei sogni, anche al di fuori del tuo campo di studi, quale è? (descrivi brevemente)

16. Quale figura ha maggiormente influito sulla tua aspirazione lavorativa ed in che modo? (per es. genitore, insegnante, persona nota) (descrivi brevemente)

17. Se penso al mio futuro professionale

	Sono fortemente in disaccordo	Non sono d'accordo	Sono né in disaccordo né d'accordo	Sono d'accordo	Sono fortemente d'accordo
so quali capacità possiedo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quali professioni mi interessano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quali sono i miei punti di forza e di debolezza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quali sono i miei obiettivi di sviluppo professionale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quale lavoro si sposa meglio con i miei punti di forza e di debolezza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
saprei come trovare da sola/o opportunità formative per aumentare le mie competenze	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
se fosse necessario, saprei esplorare nel mercato le mie possibilità di inserimento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Se penso al mio futuro professionale, mi piacerebbe...(possibilità di risposta multipla)

- lavorare in un'azienda privata
- lavorare in un'azienda pubblica
- creare la mia impresa/attività
- rilevare l'impresa di famiglia
- non lo so ancora
- altro

19. Se penso al mio futuro professionale, penso probabilmente che...(possibilità di risposta multipla)

- lavorerò in un'azienda privata
- lavorerò in un'azienda pubblica
- creerò la mia impresa/attività
- rileverò l'impresa di famiglia
- non lo so ancora
- altro

20. A quali di questi profili lavorativi, coerenti con il tuo percorso di studi, ambisci (possibilità di massimo 3 risposte)

- farmacista ospedaliero
- farmacista comunale
- farmacista in farmacia di proprietà della mia famiglia
- farmacista in farmacia altrui
- farmacista in proprio
- farmacista in parafarmacia altrui
- farmacista in parafarmacia propria
- ricercatore (in centro di ricerca pubblico e/o privato: IIT, CNR, Ospedali)
- docente universitario
- impiegato in istituzione pubblica (ASL, AIFA)
- informatore scientifico del farmaco
- dipendente in qualsiasi funzione purché in azienda farmaceutica
- altro

21. Pensando al mio successo di carriera, considero questi aspetti

	Per nulla importante	Poco importante	Né importante né non importante	Abbastanza importante	Molto importante
provvedere alle necessità di base	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
gestire una mia attività	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sperimentare relazioni positive con i miei pari e i miei colleghi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
soddisfare una missione o una chiamata	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sperimentare relazioni positive con i superiori	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
contribuire allo sviluppo degli altri	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avere sicurezza economica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

acquisire competenze legate al mio lavoro attraverso percorsi di studio e formazione formale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fare un lavoro che mi dia l'opportunità di imparare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sperimentare sfide nel mio lavoro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ottenere benessere economico	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
diventare una persona migliore come risultato della mia carriera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avere l'opportunità di essere innovativa/o	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ottenere incentivi benefit e bonus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
gestire/coordinare altre persone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
aiutare gli altri	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
poter migliorare le persone ed i luoghi come risultato della mia carriera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
apprendere continuamente lungo tutta la mia carriera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avere un lavoro sicuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lavorare secondo le mie idee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sperimentare le mie passioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Quanto concordi con le seguenti affermazioni, pensando al tuo comportamento e ai tuoi atteggiamenti?

	Non mi descrive assolutamente	Non mi descrive abbastanza	Si mi descrive abbastanza	Si mi descrive assolutamente
sono pieno di speranze quando guardo al mio futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
dedico del tempo ad analizzare i miei pensieri e le mie sensazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

sono in grado di descrivere chi sono	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spesso mi capita di immaginare e fantasticare sul mio futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi pongo delle scadenze per raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi concentro in modo da portare a termine i miei piani	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vorrei provare nuove esperienze che potrebbero aiutarmi a raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono convinto/a che i miei desideri si realizzeranno	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi capita di pensare a cosa hanno in comune le diverse cose che mi piacciono	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
posso elencare almeno cinque cose che sono in grado di fare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spesso immagino come fra due, cinque o dieci anni sarà il mio futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spesso faccio un elenco delle cose che debbo fare per raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lavoro duramente per raggiungere i miei obiettivi anche quando ci sono distrazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cambio i miei piani quando ciò è necessario per raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
penso al mio futuro in modo positivo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

penso alle cose che in passato mi sono accadute	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi è chiaro cosa ci si aspetta da me nel ruolo che ricopro (per esempio, come studente/ssa, come figlio/a, come genitore, come lavoratore/ricce...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spesso immagino eventi futuri che potrebbero capitare nella mia vita	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
faccio un elenco delle cose che voglio portare a termine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
affronto, uno dopo l'altro, i passi successivi che sono necessari per raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono aperto/a ai cambiamenti che potrebbero migliorare la probabilità di raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
anche di fronte alle difficoltà che incontro nella mia vita cerco di mantenere viva la speranza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
penso spesso a come le diverse situazioni che vivo mi influenzano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono in grado di descrivere chiaramente i miei punti di forza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
passo del tempo a pensare a quello che accadrà nel mio futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
elaboro un piano prima di passare all'azione	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
passo all'azione non appena ho ben chiari i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
quando è necessario sono disposto/a a modificare i miei programmi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Valuta le seguenti affermazioni

	Completamente falso	Falso	Né Falso né vero	Vero	Completamente vero
immagino il mio futuro soddisfacente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi impegno per continuare a imparare cose nuove	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
quando mi affidano un nuovo compito, mi piace mettermi alla prova	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
creo situazioni per far sì che le cose che mi interessano accadano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono abituato a programmare le mie attività	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi preparo per il futuro cercando di accrescere le mie competenze	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi attivo per cercare soluzioni nuove ai problemi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi interessano i diversi punti di vista delle persone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ho dei progetti per il futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
non mi arrendo di fronte alle difficoltà	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi informo su ciò che accade nel mondo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i cambiamenti mi spaventano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
interagisco con interesse con persone di culture diverse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

nell'affrontare un problema cerco di individuare una gamma ampia di possibili soluzioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pianifico le mie attività sulla base degli obiettivi che mi sono prefissato	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi assumo le responsabilità delle mie scelte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi considero pronto ad affrontare le incertezze del mondo del lavoro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ricerco situazioni che mi possano consentire di sviluppare nuove competenze	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono portato ad affrontare i cambiamenti assumendomene i rischi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi adatto rapidamente alle situazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi impegno per raggiungere gli obiettivi nei tempi previsti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
valuto con attenzione le possibili conseguenze delle mie azioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono abituato a mettere in pratica quello che apprendo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
quando affronto un progetto importante esprimo al meglio le mie capacità	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
colgo le opportunità che si presentano per inserirmi nel mondo del lavoro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
quando mi pongo un obiettivo metto in atto tutte le strategie necessarie per raggiungerlo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

mi piace provare le novità	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in futuro ritengo di poter realizzare progetti importanti per me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono portato ad accogliere con apertura le osservazioni critiche che mi rivolgono	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi incuriosisce la possibilità di svolgere nuove attività	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi annoiano le attività sempre uguali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
troverò un lavoro che soddisfi le mie aspettative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono abituato a portare a termine gli impegni presi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cerco di individuare i miei punti di debolezza per potermi migliorare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi concentro su quello che devo fare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Ritieni che l'Università aiuti a sufficienza gli studenti per affrontare l'ingresso nel mercato del lavoro?

- si
- no
- non so
- altro

25. Saresti favorevole alla creazione di un career center in Università con corsi di formazione che ti aiutino ad entrare nel mondo del lavoro?

- si
- no
- non so
- altro

26. Se si, preferiresti che questi percorsi consentissero la maturazione di crediti per la tua carriera universitaria?

- si
- no
- non so
- altro

27. Sai cosa sono le soft skills?

- no
- non so
- si, specifica quali

28. Ritieni che nel mondo del lavoro siano più importanti le competenze tecniche o le soft skills? oppure entrambe? (descrivi e motiva brevemente)

29. Che cos'è il Talento? (descrivi e motiva brevemente)

Sezione istruzione

30. Quale scuola hai frequentato?

- liceo
- istituto tecnico commerciale
- istituto professionale
- altro

31. Voto di maturità

32. Sei mai stato bocciato?

si

no

33. Hai mai cambiato percorso di studi?

si

no

34. Se si, quando (Scuole Superiori o Università)?(descrivi brevemente)

35. Come preferisci studiare? (possibilità di scelta multipla)

da solo

in gruppo

con un compagno

altro

36. Hai mai partecipato a corsi di formazione o iniziative di formazione fuori dall'Università? (per es. corsi di lingue, imprenditorialità)

si

no

37. Se si, quali? (descrivi brevemente)

38. Sento che i docenti del Dipartimento di Scienze del Farmaco....

	Sono fortemente in disaccordo	Non sono d'accordo	Nè d'accordo nè in disaccordo	Sono d'accordo	Sono fortemente d'accordo
mi supportano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi incoraggiano a partecipare ad attività supplementari	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono disponibili	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ascoltano le mie idee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi hanno insegnato a pensare in modo creativo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
dicono che va bene sbagliare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi stimolano a proporre idee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
impartiscono insegnamenti al passo con i tempi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ci incoraggiano ad applicare la teoria appresa alla pratica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

altro

39. Hai mai trascorso un periodo di studio o lavoro all'estero?

- fino ad 1 mese
- da 1 a 3 mesi
- da 4 a 6 mesi
- fino ad 1 anno
- no
- altro

40. Con quale programma di scambio?(possibilità di scelta multipla)

Erasmus

Leonardo

nessuno

altro

41. La tua conoscenza delle lingue straniere?

	Ottima	Buona	Discreta	Sufficiente	Nessuna conoscenza
Inglese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Francese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spagnolo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tedesco	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

altro (specificare)

42. La tua condizione?

studente non lavoratore

studente lavoratore

studente con lavori saltuari o secondari (per es. ripetizioni, cameriere, commessa)

43. Hai avuto esperienza di tirocinio curriculare?

si

no

44. Ritieni sia stata un'esperienza utile?

si

no

45. Sotto quale aspetto? Ho imparato... (possibilità di risposta multipla)

	Si molto	Abbastanza	Né si né no	Non molto	No
la capacità di relazionarmi con i clienti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
la capacità di vendita	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a relazionarmi con dei datori di lavoro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
aspetti che non conoscevo di questo lavoro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ad essere responsabile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
il valore dell'organizzazione e della pianificazione	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l'applicazione pratica dei concetti teorici sui farmaci appresi in Università	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cose nuove	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

altro

46. Hai esperienze lavorativa o stage oltre al tirocinio curriculare?

- si
- no

47. Se sì, qual è stato il lavoro svolto? (descrivi brevemente le tue esperienze)

48. Se hai risposto sì alla n. 27, per quanto tempo hai lavorato? (elenca brevemente le tue esperienze)

49. Se hai risposto sì alla n.27, lo hai svolto nel tuo Paese di origine?

- si
- no

50. Se hai risposto si alla n.27, ritieni sia stata un'esperienza utile?

- si
 no

51. Se si, sotto quale aspetto? (per es. nel relazionarmi con i clienti, essere responsabile etc)(descrivi brevemente)

52. Se non hai mai avuto un'esperienza lavorativa, oltre al tirocinio curriculare, perchè?

- ho preferito concentrarmi solo sullo studio
 non ne ho avuto necessità
 per ora non mi interessa
 altro

Sezione attività sociali

53. Con quale frequenza partecipi ad attività associative e di svago?

	Mai	Più di una volta a settimana	Almeno una volta alla settimana	Almeno una volta al mese
circoli culturali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
teatro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
associazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
volontariato	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
parrocchia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
scout	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
partiti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

54. Io uso la tecnologia per: (possibilità di risposta multipla)

- attività sociale (amici)
- attività di studio
- raccolta di informazioni e studio
- altro

55. Utilizzo giornaliero degli strumenti di comunicazione

	Mai	Meno di 30 minuti	Fino ad 1 ora	Da 1 a 2 ore	Da 2 a 3 ore	Più di 3 ore
telefono	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
whatsapp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
messenger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
skype	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
forum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
chat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
blog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

altro

56. I tuoi amici sono: (possibilità di risposta multipla)

- solo italiani in Italia
- italiani in Europa
- per la maggior parte italiani in Italia
- alcuni stranieri in Europa
- alcuni stranieri fuori dall'Europa
- altro

Appendix 2: Post-treatment online survey

Benvenuto alla rilevazione del tuo talento

ISTRUZIONI

Gentile studente,

stai per iniziare un percorso che prevede la compilazione di un questionario, che ha l'obiettivo di comprendere e migliorare le modalità e i processi di inserimento nel mondo del lavoro dei neolaureati.

Prima di iniziare, accertati di essere in un luogo tranquillo in modo da non venire disturbato e di avere a disposizione circa 20 minuti per la compilazione.

Per prima cosa, ti chiediamo per favore di leggere attentamente le domande proposte, prendendoti il tempo necessario per capirle. Poi segna la tua risposta, utilizzando la modalità che di volta in volta ti verrà indicata. Dovrai barrare una casella in caso di risposte multiple; se non ti ritrovi in nessuna delle alternative, puoi scegliere "altro" specificando nello spazio bianco la tua scelta. In caso di domande aperte, dovrai compilare con un testo libero dove trovi una casella di testo vuota.

Ricorda che le domande sono state formulate perché ciascuno possa esprimere la propria opinione pertanto non ci sono risposte giuste o sbagliate. Perché i risultati possano essere validi, ti prego di rispondere sempre con la massima sincerità, indicando l'opzione che più si avvicina a come ti senti di essere veramente. I dati raccolti saranno resi anonimi e trattati in modo aggregato.

Grazie per la tua collaborazione

Sezione: Università e carriera

1. Dati personali

Nome

Cognome

Matricola

2. Sento che attraverso il corso fatto sul futuro lavorativo il Dipartimento di Scienze del Farmaco....

	Sono fortemente in disaccordo	Non sono d'accordo	Nè d'accordo nè in disaccordo	Sono d'accordo	Sono fortemente d'accordo
mi supporta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi incoraggia a partecipare ad attività supplementari	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
è disponibili	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ascolta le mie idee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi ha insegnato a pensare in modo creativo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
dice che va bene sbagliare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi stimola a proporre idee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
impartisce insegnamenti al passo con i tempi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ci incoraggia ad applicare la teoria appresa alla pratica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

altro

3. Sono in grado di...

	Sono fortemente in disaccordo	Non sono d'accordo	Sono né in disaccordo né d'accordo	Sono d'accordo	Sono fortemente d'accordo
affrontare improvvisi cambiamenti e imprevisti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pensare fuori dagli schemi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
proporre nuove idee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lavorare sotto stress e pressione	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
proporre nuove e diverse soluzioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
continuare il lavoro nonostante i problemi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
trovare nuovi modi per fare le cose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
gestire le incertezze nei progetti e nei processi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lavorare insieme ad altre persone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
creare il piano di un progetto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
creare il giusto gruppo/squadra per risolvere un problema/raggiungere un obiettivo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
partecipare attivamente nei lavori di squadra	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stabilire gli obiettivi dei progetti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stabilire una rete di contatti (ovvero stabilire contatti e scambiare informazioni con altri)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
promuovere le mie idee e opinioni quando si lavora in gruppo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

definire gli incarichi di un progetto

stabilire nuovi contatti

4. Come ti senti se pensi al futuro? (descrivi brevemente: per es. serena, entusiasta, disorientato, spaventato)

5. Rispetto al primo questionario online hai cambiato il profilo di lavoro a cui ambisci?

si

no

non so

6. Durante il percorso hai individuato nuovi percorsi di carriera che prima non avevi considerato?

si

no

non so

7. Se si, descrivi quali? (descrivi brevemente)

8. Se chiudi gli occhi ed immagini il tuo lavoro dei sogni, anche al di fuori del tuo campo di studi, quale è? (descrivi brevemente)

9. Se penso al mio futuro professionale

	Sono fortemente in disaccordo	Non sono d'accordo	Sono né in disaccordo né d'accordo	Sono d'accordo	Sono fortemente d'accordo
so quali capacità possiedo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quali professioni mi interessano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quali sono i miei punti di forza e di debolezza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quali sono i miei obiettivi di sviluppo professionale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
so quale lavoro si sposa meglio con i miei punti di forza e di debolezza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
saprei come trovare da sola/o opportunità formative per aumentare le mie competenze	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
se fosse necessario, saprei esplorare nel mercato le mie possibilità di inserimento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Se penso al mio futuro professionale, mi piacerebbe...(possibilità di risposta multipla)

- lavorare in un'azienda privata
- lavorare in un'azienda pubblica
- creare la mia impresa/attività
- rilevare l'impresa di famiglia
- non lo so ancora
- altro

11. Se penso al mio futuro professionale, penso probabilmente che...(possibilità di risposta multipla)

- lavorerò in un'azienda privata
- lavorerò in un'azienda pubblica
- creerò la mia impresa/attività
- rileverò l'impresa di famiglia
- non lo so ancora
- altro

12. A quali di questi profili lavorativi, coerenti con il tuo percorso di studi, ambisci?(possibilità di massimo 3 risposte)

- farmacista ospedaliero
- farmacista comunale
- farmacista in farmacia di proprietà della mia famiglia
- farmacista in farmacia altrui
- farmacista in proprio
- farmacista in parafarmacia altrui
- farmacista in parafarmacia propria
- ricercatore (in centro di ricerca pubblico e/o privato: IIT, CNR, Ospedali)
- docente universitario
- impiegato in istituzione pubblica (ASL, AIFA)
- informatore scientifico del farmaco
- dipendente in qualsiasi funzione purché in azienda farmaceutica
- altro

13. Quanto concordi con le seguenti affermazioni, pensando al tuo comportamento e ai tuoi atteggiamenti?

	Non mi descrive assolutamente	Non mi descrive abbastanza	Si mi descrive abbastanza	Si mi descrive assolutamente
sono pieno di speranze quando guardo al mio futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
dedico del tempo ad analizzare i miei pensieri e le mie sensazioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono in grado di descrivere chi sono	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spesso mi capita di immaginare e fantasticare sul mio futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi pongo delle scadenze per raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi concentro in modo da portare a termine i miei piani	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vorrei provare nuove esperienze che potrebbero aiutarmi a raggiungere i miei obiettivi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono convinto/a che i miei desideri si realizzeranno	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi capita di pensare a cosa hanno in comune le diverse cose che mi piacciono	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
posso elencare almeno cinque cose che sono in grado di fare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spesso immagino come fra due, cinque o dieci anni sarà il mio futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

spesso faccio un elenco delle cose che debbo fare per raggiungere i miei obiettivi

lavoro duramente per raggiungere i miei obiettivi anche quando ci sono distrazioni

cambio i miei piani quando ciò è necessario per raggiungere i miei obiettivi

penso al mio futuro in modo positivo

penso alle cose che in passato mi sono accadute

mi è chiaro cosa ci si aspetta da me nel ruolo che ricopro (per esempio, come studente/ssa, come figlio/a, come genitore, come lavoratore/rice...)

spesso immagino eventi futuri che potrebbero capitare nella mia vita

faccio un elenco delle cose che voglio portare a termine

affronto, uno dopo l'altro, i passi successivi che sono necessari per raggiungere i miei obiettivi

sono aperto/a ai
cambiamenti che
potrebbero migliorare la
probabilità di
raggiungere i miei
obiettivi

anche di fronte alle
difficoltà che incontro
nella mia vita cerco di
mantenere viva la
speranza

penso spesso a come le
diverse situazioni che
vivo mi influenzano

sono in grado di
descrivere chiaramente i
miei punti di forza

passo del tempo a
pensare a quello che
accadrà nel mio futuro

elaboro un piano prima
di passare all'azione

passo all'azione non
appena ho ben chiari i
miei obiettivi

quando è necessario
sono disposto/a a
modificare i miei
programmi

14. Rispetto al primo questionario online compilato, oggi guardi al futuro con maggiore consapevolezza?

si

no

non so

15. Rispetto al primo questionario online compilato, oggi guardi al futuro con maggiore speranza?

- si
 no
 non so

16. Pensando al mio successo di carriera, considero questi aspetti

	Per nulla importante	poco importante	Né importante né non importante	Abbastanza importante	Molto importante
provvedere alle necessità di base	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
gestire una mia attività	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sperimentare relazioni positive con i miei pari e i miei colleghi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
soddisfare una missione o una chiamata	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sperimentare relazioni positive con i superiori	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
contribuire allo sviluppo degli altri	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avere sicurezza economica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
acquisire competenze legate al mio lavoro attraverso percorsi di studio e formazione formale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fare un lavoro che mi dia l'opportunità di imparare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sperimentare sfide nel mio lavoro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ottenere benessere economico	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

diventare una persona migliore come risultato della mia carriera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avere l'opportunità di essere innovativa/o	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ottenere incentivi benefit e bonus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
aiutare gli altri	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
poter migliorare le persone ed i luoghi come risultato della mia carriera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
apprendere continuamente lungo tutta la mia carriera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avere un lavoro sicuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Oggi hai più chiari in mente i passi successivi che dovrai muovere quando entrerai nel mercato del lavoro?

- si
- no
- non so

18. Se sì, quali sono i primi passaggi che farai quando entrerai nel mercato del lavoro?

19. Oggi hai più chiari in mente i tuoi punti di forza?

- si
- no
- non so

20. Descrivi brevemente quali sono?

21. Oggi hai più chiaro quali profili lavorativi si sposano meglio con i tuoi punti di forza?

- si
- no
- non so

22. Come ti immagini tra 3 anni?

23. Come ti immagini tra 5-7 anni?

24. Valuta le seguenti affermazioni

	Completamente falso	Falso	Né Falso né vero	Vero	Completamente vero
immagino il mio futuro soddisfacente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi impegno per continuare a imparare cose nuove	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
quando mi affidano un nuovo compito, mi piace mettermi alla prova	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
creo situazioni per far sì che le cose che mi interessano accadano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono abituato a programmare le mie attività	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

mi preparo per il futuro cercando di accrescere le mie competenze	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi attivo per cercare soluzioni nuove ai problemi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi interessano i diversi punti di vista delle persone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ho dei progetti per il futuro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
non mi arrendo di fronte alle difficoltà	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi informo su ciò che accade nel mondo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i cambiamenti mi spaventano	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
interagisco con interesse con persone di culture diverse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
nell'affrontare un problema cerco di individuare una gamma ampia di possibili soluzioni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pianifico le mie attività sulla base degli obiettivi che mi sono prefissato	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi assumo le responsabilità delle mie scelte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi considero pronto ad affrontare le incertezze del mondo del lavoro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

ricerco situazioni che mi possano consentire di sviluppare nuove competenze

sono portato ad affrontare i cambiamenti assumendomene i rischi

mi adatto rapidamente alle situazioni

mi impegno per raggiungere gli obiettivi nei tempi previsti

valuto con attenzione le possibili conseguenze delle mie azioni

sono abituato a mettere in pratica quello che apprendo

quando affronto un progetto importante esprimo al meglio le mie capacità

colgo le opportunità che si presentano per inserirmi nel mondo del lavoro

quando mi pongo un obiettivo metto in atto tutte le strategie necessarie per raggiungerlo

mi piace provare le novità

in futuro ritengo di poter realizzare progetti importanti per me

sono portato ad accogliere con apertura le osservazioni critiche che mi rivolgono	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi incuriosisce la possibilità di svolgere nuove attività	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi annoiano le attività sempre uguali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
troverò un lavoro che soddisfi le mie aspettative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sono abituato a portare a termine gli impegni presi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cerco di individuare i miei punti di debolezza per potermi migliorare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mi concentro su quello che devo fare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Sezione: Feedback

25. Ritieni che il corso fatto serva in Università per affrontare l'ingresso nel mercato del lavoro?

- si
- no
- non so
- altro

26. Se si, perchè?

27. Sai cosa sono le soft skills?

- si
- no
- non so
- altro

28. Ritieni che nel mondo del lavoro siano più importanti le competenze tecniche o le soft skills? oppure entrambe? (descrivi e motiva brevemente)

29. Descrivi alcune delle soft skills che secondo te sono importanti (descrivi e motiva brevemente)

30. Note e commenti rispetto al percorso di sviluppo del talento effettuato in 6 lezioni (importante per chi ha già frequentato il corso)

Appendix 3: semi-structure interview for the explorative study in the labor market

Sezione 1: dati intervistato

Nome.....
età.....
genere.....
Contatti.....

- 1 Posizione aziendale:**
- a Responsabile HR
 - b Impiegato settore HR
 - c Farmacista
 - d Ricercatore
 - e Professore
 - f Funzionario pubblico
 - g altro

Sezione 2: dati azienda/organizzazione

- 2** Denominazione e ragione sociale.....
Settore di attività.....
Indirizzo.....
Sede principale.....
Sito web.....
Sede principale.....

- 3 Tipologia di organizzaione:**
- a multinazionale farmaceutica
 - b azienda farmaceutica italiana
 - c farmacia
 - d università
 - e istituzione pubblica
 - f agenzia interinale
 - g altro.....

- 4 Dimensioni:**
- a micro (< 10 dipendenti e giro d'affari o bilancio ≤ 2 milioni di euro)
 - b piccola (<50 dipendenti e giro d'affari o bilancio ≤ 10 milioni di euro)
 - c media (<250 dipendenti e giro d'affari o ≤ 43 milioni di euro)
 - d grande

- 5 Numero dipendenti:**
- a fino a 10
 - b da 11 a 49
 - c da 50 a 249
 - d da 250 a 499
 - e più di 500
 - f altro.....

Sezione 3: intervista su talento e soft skills

- 6 Sulla base della sua esperienza l'azienda attraverso quali canali sceglie il candidato?**

- a enti scolastici o di formazione
- b sito web aziendale
- c social network
- d fiere del lavoro
- e servizi pubblici
- f agenzie private di selezione
- g bando pubblico
- e reclutamento da altre aziende
- f siti online
- g giornali
- c agenzie interinali
- d passaparola
- e altro.....

- 7 Quale ritiene essere più appropriato?**

.....
.....

- 8 Sulla base della sua esperienza quanto dura in media la scelta del candidato?**
.....
.....
- 9 Fattori di successo dei neolaureati per le diverse fasi (CV, colloquio, periodo di prova)?**
.....
.....
- 10 La sua azienda che percentuale assume di laureati in Farmacia:**
.....
.....
- 11 Mi può raccontare la storia di un neolaureato assunto?**
.....
.....
- 12 Valutate positivamente il periodo di tirocinio**
a si
b no
- 13 Se si, perché?**
.....
.....
- 14 Sulla base della sua esperienza la sua azienda come verifica il possesso di competenze da parte del neolaureato?**
(intervista/colloquio; Assessment; Tirocinio/periodo di prova)
.....
.....
- 15 Mi potrebbe descrivere cosa sono per lei le competenze tecniche o hard skills?**
.....
.....

- 16** Mi potrebbe descrivere cosa sono per lei le competenze trasversali o soft skills?
.....
.....
- 17** Sulla base della sua esperienza sono più importanti le hard skills o le soft skills?
.....
.....
- 18** Sulla base della sua esperienza la sua azienda come testa il possesso di soft skills da parte del candidato?
.....
.....
- 19** Porebbe farmi un esempio?
.....
.....
- 20** Sulla base della sua esperienza quali sono le principali difficoltà che la sua azienda incontra nel verificare il possesso di soft skills?
.....
.....
- 21** Sulla base della Sua esperienza o percezione, durante la fase di selezione/reclutamento di candidati ad alta professionalità, la sua azienda quali aspetti considera importanti? (Formazione, precedenti esperienze lavorative, lingue straniere, soft skills, hard skills, referenze, vicinanza di residenza)
.....
.....
- 22** Secondo lei, quali sono le più importanti soft skills che un candidato deve possedere per lavorare nella sua azienda?
.....
.....

23 La sua definizione di talento?
.....
.....

23 L'Università, a suo avviso, forma adeguatamente gli studenti?
.....
.....

24 Sulle soft skills?
.....
.....

25 Punti di forza e di debolezza dell'Università rispetto alla formazione che i neolaureati possiedono?
.....
.....

26 Se l'Università strutturasse dei percorsi di sviluppo delle soft skills per preparare gli studenti ad entrare nel mercato del lavoro, questo sarebbe un vantaggio per la sua azienda?
a si
b no

27 Perché?
.....
.....

28 Se l'Università organizzasse dei percorsi di talent development sulle soft skills, in sinergia con il mercato del lavoro, favorendo altresì un incontro puntuale tra richiesta ed offerta, la sua azienda fruirebbe di questo servizio?
a si
b no

29 Perché?
.....
.....

30 Secondo lei l'Università come dovrebbe costruire questi percorsi?

.....
.....

31 Ritieni che la sua azienda ne trarrebbe un vantaggio economico?

.....
.....

32 La sua azienda sarebbe disposta ad investire in un centro dell'Università che offre questi servizi?

.....
.....

33 La sua azienda sarebbe disposta a collaborare per sviluppare percorsi di questo tipo?

.....
.....

Appendix 4: Form to evaluate CV

Nome e Cognome Candidato			
	Non sufficiente	Sufficiente	Discreto	Buono
Chiarezza lay out	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Ben organizzato e di facile lettura	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacità di comunicazione scritta	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Linguaggio chiaro senza errori	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Lunghezza appropriata	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Struttura logica e titoli appropriati	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Completezza informazioni	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidenza delle skills del candidato	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Efficacia come strumento di marketing personale	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
E' qualificante per poter ottenere una job interview	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Valutazione complessiva	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Note			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			

Appendix 5: Form to evaluate job interview

Nome e Cognome Candidato			
Durata intervista			
	Non sufficiente	Sufficiente	Discreto	Buono
Approccio iniziale	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacità comunicativa	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Prontezza delle risposte	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Empatia	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Comportamento/atteggiamento	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Motivazione	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Behavioral interview	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Chiarezza sulle aspirazioni lavorative	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Coerenza tra profilo ed aspirazione lavorativa	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Conoscenza opportunità nel mercato del lavoro	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Valutazione complessiva	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Note			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			