



Griffith College

**The secret to winning the "War for Talent" -
Understanding High-performance employee
retention experience of the small and medium-
sized company in Ireland in a scarce talent
Market.**

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of **MBA in International Business** -Griffith College Dublin

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22nd May 2020

Candidate Declaration

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: An exploratory study to understand How Small Medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Ireland retain high-performance employees in a scarce local talent market.

Submitted for the degree of **MBA in International Business** is the result of my work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

Candidate signature:



Date:

Supervisor Name: Dr. Julius Nyiawung

Supervisor signature:

Date:

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone that made part of this chapter in my life. First of all, I may say thanks to my family and Louise for supporting me during my MBA course.

To professor Justin Keogan, my thanks for the initial guidance and feedback in the making of my Research Methods.

To the Speaking, training & CEO Coaching Don Phin, my thanks, for the feedback and the support throughout this process.

To my supervisor Dr.Julius Nyiawung, my thanks, for the wise lessons, and the support throughout this process.

This dissertation is also dedicated and special to my friends and classmate Ana, Maria, Jose(s), Monica, Hansoo, Praveen, Peter, Anne, Jefferson, Collis, Triest, and Soso.

In short, I thank you all for everyone.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all my MBA lectures from Griffith College Dublin and to my supervisors Justin Keogan and Dr. Julius Nyiawung whom I have to thank for their constant encouragement, patient guidance, and useful critiques of this research work. I would also like to say a special thanks to all SMEs that open the door to make this exploratory work in Dublin.

To my friends and family, for their understanding of the commitment required to bring this scholarly pursuit to fruition.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the management Griffith college to offer us the study room available 24 hours per day and all college resources in running the MBA program. My special thanks to Aine Mc Manus and Mary Whitney from the GBS department for all support during the course.

Finally, I wish to thanks to Louise my Family Maria my mother, Francisco my stepfather my siblings Alexandre and Thais for their support and encouragement throughout my study

The secret to winning the "War for Talent" -High-performance employee retention experience of the small and medium-sized company in Ireland in a scarce talent Market

Artur Faraco

Abstract

Studies in HRM have mentioned that many SMEs are not using their performance management systems productively to retain and develop high-performance talented employees strategically. Moreover, studies in the USA, predicted that the make-or-break for firms in the next two decades would be the ability to attract, develop, and retain talent.

The review of the available literature allowed the development of an original conceptual framework to inform my approach to primary research. This study also demonstrated, The secret to winning the "*War for Talent*". I proposed an original framework to analyze the hypothesis of retaining high-performance employees strategically as the key to improving the effectiveness of organizations and their employees, hence winning the "*War for Talent*" in the scarce Irish labor market.

The data collected on the face-to-face interview using mixed-methods implied that the high-performance retention practice in SME is usual, once that 75% (3 from 4) of companies analyzed in this study had enough talent to drive the business in a short and long -run.

The findings also showed circumstantial evidence that high-performance employees working in key functions can inspire subordinates impacting positively the company and teams performance, making the SME achieve goals sustainable and balanced of talents. The findings also suggest that retention of high-performance employees is more efficient when the SME companies had a differentiated approach to treats high-performance employees, offering a package of benefits and high wages.

These effects on the special treat and high-performance retention could be argued are casually ambiguous in their link to a sustainable competitive advantage for SMEs. I have therefore concluded additional research is needed to establish this link. For future research, I also suggest that the aim is to show how SMEs monetary benefits when increasing the Human Capital Value Added (HCVA) retaining high-performance employees in their talent pool.

Keywords: retain, high –performance, “War for Talent”, Talent Management

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List of Abbreviations

AAPOR	American Association for Public Opinion Research
AFP	Arrow Flow Pyramide
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DDI	Development Dimensions International
EDP	Executive Develop Plan
EIU	Economist Intelligence Union
EU	European Union (28 countries)
FDRS	Forced Distribution Rating System
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
HCVA	Human Capital Value Added
HCVG	Human Capital Value per Group
HR	Human Research
HRM	Human Research Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LMX	Leadership-Member Exchange (Leadership Theory)
MNEs	Multinational Enterprises
MSG	Management Study Guide
NFIB	National Federation of Independent Business
SHRM	Strategic Human Research Management
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TM	Talent Management
VOC	Value Overal Contribution
WLB	Work-Life Balance

1. Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background about the importance of SMEs to Ireland's economy and contextualizes the " War for Talent " in time of shortage talent as in Ireland labor market, sets out the aims, objectives and research questions and issues around the topic. It establishes the significance of the study and sets out the structure of the exploratory study.

1.1. Overview

" I am often asked whether the ‘‘ War for Talent’’ has arrived. And the answer is: yes, there is already an acute talent shortage, which is due to increase". Trost (2014: 1)



Fig.01: War for talent illustration adapted from (Source: ISS)

“War for Talent” was an expression created In the mid-1990s during a study by Steven Hankin of McKinsey & Company that refers to an increasingly competitive landscape for recruiting and retaining talented employees”. The study in 1997 suggested that companies prioritize talent management strategies containing recruitment, retention, and employee development to supply the talent shortage available. In the meantime, during the following years, the world faced several economic global crises, including the 2000s economy collapse and We came across another possible big financial world crisis due to the Convid-19 pandemic that the work is struggling to find a solution using the

"Lockdown" approach. However, nowadays in Europe and around the world, the situation is uncertain because of the Convid-19 and more uncomfortable than a financial crisis. From an Irish perspective, After all those crises plus the Convid-19 pandemic, the country may return economic growth and began to increase demand for talent. Despite the short-term, cyclical fluctuation for talent demand in Ireland.

I believe that Talent Management can be the key tool for improving the effectiveness of organizations and their employee when properly implemented. **Unfortunately, many SME companies are not using their performance management systems productively to retain and develop high-performance talented employees strategically in times of shortage talent as the Irish labor market.**

During the last 30 years, issues involving high-performance employee turnover have been receiving a lot of attention in HRM literature. While the causes and consequences of high-performance employees turnover have received so much academic literature, interest in the more positive perspective of factors of talent retention has been slower to develop, especially in SME companies. The Small- and Medium-sized companies (SME) have been supporting the European Union (EU) economy as a backbone from the block: over 98% of the organizations that have been operated in the EU no-financial business sector in 2018 were SMEs. This type of organization has a great impact on the European labor-force representing 67% of the total employment in the EU no-financial business sector.

The purpose of Talent Management (TM) is to present a detailed plan for developing and implementing a successful performance management system for retaining and developing high performance. Moreover, the Human Resource management process of retaining and developing employees should be aligned with the business strategy of the company to make sense of all those investments. To illustrate some issues within the talent management field recently was discovered a study in Germany. Festing et al. (2013) claim that:

"54% of the surveyed companies in the SME sector focus their Talent Management (TM) activities on all employees – compared to 8% that target high-potential employees – is a clear indication that there are differences in TM practices between Multinational companies(MNEs) and SMEs, meaning that SMEs adopt a more inclusive TM approach. This is contrary to the identified best practices of TM in MNEs which focus on smaller, more exclusive groups of employees based on their contribution, high performance, or potential".

(Festing et al.,2013 p.1878)

However, the best practice recommends that all employees from the organization have to be trained, some should be developed, and a few educated. Those employees who are high-performance should be retained and developed lined up from the company strategy. Another important study in the USA conducted by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) was mentioned on The Epoch Times ([online] 2018) claims that: *"25 percent of small business owners cited the difficulty of finding qualified workers as their single most important business problem".*

Finally, We have the Young baby Boomers generation in Ireland that start the process of retirement and all those employees must be replaced in time of talent shortage. The Service Futures ([online] 2018) argued that the economy has once again recovered, and the power is in the process of shifting from employers to employees. Various estimate that by 2020, employers in the wealthiest countries Will be short of nearly 18 million college-educated workers. Besides, as baby boomers start to approach their retirement, the situation Will become even more critical.

Another important academic research in the USA about the retirement from Young baby boomers, Dohn (2018) states that:

"The youngest baby-boomers Will be of retirement age. Aggravating the situation is a much smaller pool of workers immediately following the baby boomers".

(Dohn,2018 p.17)

Below, we can see some key issues identified by SME stakeholders BY Seanad Public Consultation Committee in 2018 (See Figure 02).

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY SME STAKEHOLDERS

(submissions and presentations to the
Seanad Public Consultation Committee)

Finance and funding:
SMEs accessing loans;
relatively high capital gains tax; supporting diverse forms of enterprises – social, family, community-based.



Broadband and mobile phone infrastructure:
poor connectivity in regional areas impacting eCommerce.

Innovation among SMEs:
SMEs lagging behind large firms; poor uptake by SMEs of R&D tax credit regime; focus on technology-led R&D in public supports.



Entrepreneurship culture, training and education:
poor perception of entrepreneurship as a career choice; access to entrepreneurial training outside of main cities; lack of entrepreneurship education at primary and post-primary level.

Focus of policy:
export-oriented, high-technology enterprises and inward foreign direct investment (FDI).

SME Supports:
difficulty navigating the myriad of supports, associations and bodies focusing on SMEs.

BREXIT:
uncertainty and the non-economic issues make it challenging to anticipate and plan for.



Fig.02:Source: Seanad Public Consultation Committee in 2018

The issues around the topic above gave me the reference and guide me to provide the framework in this exploratory study to understand how SME companies have retained high- performance in times of talent shortage in Ireland. The Irish time ([online] 2018) states that: “*The Irish labor market has seen a return to pre-recession levels of demand for talent across all sectors, with 81 percent of companies saying they are suffering from skills shortages, according to CIPD, the professional body for Human Resources and People Development*”.

The objective is to understand the problem round the Irish labor Market using the SME companies to achieve this goal, I have identified and plan to focus on the following problem statement, objectives questions, and research questions:

1.1.1. **Objective one**

Which departments are the most strategic for the company? How many key positions there are in this department? How many employees work at the company?

1.1.2. Objective Two

How many employees were identified as Low –performance and Low-potential?

1.1.3. Objective Three

How many employees were identified as High potential and High-performance?

1.1.4. Objective issue One

What is the company's strategy for retaining high-performance?

1.1.5. Objective issue Two

What is the company's approach with low-performance employees?

1.1.6. Objective issue Three

How many percent is the turnover from the company that involves high potential and high performance in Vertex Group? What are the main reasons?

1.1.7. Objective issue Four

High potential and low-performance in a Key position, How the company has been analyzing and reverting it? How many employees the company has in this situation.

1.2. Research Purpose

This academic work is an exploratory study to understand How SMEs in Ireland retain high-performance employees in a scarce local talent market, winning the “*War for Talent*”. The interest on researching topic about Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) arose after a past semester studying SHRM and e-learning studies using material from the professor Dr.Armin Trost and also my experience working as a General Administrator in a Small Medium-sized company for two years and nine years working as an SAP Controlling and Project Systems Consultant. Furthermore, this working as a consultant gave me an idea of how important it is to retain an above-average performance employee in a key function in all those Global, Multinationals and Small-medium sized companies that I passed as an SAP consultant.

Another key research of this study is about the preference of most SMEs in Europe prefer a more inclusive approach to Talent Management and target all or most

employees, in contrast to the best practice or MNEs where a more elitist approach is headed. Furthermore, the practice also recommends that the retain and development approach does not apply to all employees from the organization. Those employees who are in a strategic function and high performance should be retained on the business to be developed from the company to achieve goals strategically. Armstrong (2014) comments that “*The strategy has to be aligned to the context of the organization and its business strategy.*” (Armstrong,2014 p.241)

1.3. Significance of the Study

The finding of this study to the potential to understand the benefice when SMEs retain and develop high-performance in a scarce labor Market to achieve strategic goals in the long-run. In Ireland, the competition between companies is huge to recruit new talent to support the companies growth and business strategy. However, SMEs companies should protect their talent pool to be competitive thinking in the long run. The Irish time ([online] 2020) Introduce that: “*Ireland is facing” its worst talent shortage in a decade, according to a new study by Manpower Group that shows over a quarter of employers are struggling to find suitable employees’.*”

This research by Manpower shows that the shortage of talent or skills gaps have been growing by more than five times over the past 10 years, rising 5 percent in 2009 to percent in 27 percent last year (2019).

1.4. Research Objective

My objectives are specific, How medium-sized companies in Ireland retain high-performance employees in a scarce local talent Market to meet the companies objectives and also to guarantee that the company has enough talents to create and maintain a talent pool to support the company growth in the long run.

SHRM ([online] 2018) defines talent pool as “*Groups of employees Who are being trained and developed to assume greater responsibilities within the organization. Often,*

but not always, they have been identified as high-performing and high-potential individuals".

WTC ([online] 2018) states that:

"As the labor market tightens, SMEs increasingly have to compete for employees with large multinationals. SMEs can lose trained staff to FDI companies paying higher salaries and this particularly restricts the development of management capacity as SMEs find it difficult to compete with FDI companies on salaries for high-level management roles."

WTC ([online] 2018) complemet that:

"A strong management team is central to SME success and can also help with succession through a management buy-out. Incentives to retain staff, such as the Keep scheme, were seen as important to tackle this. For counties in the Greater Dublin Area, promoting 'reverse commuting' with SMEs encouraged to establish in commuter towns to take advantage of the pool of talent currently commuting into Dublin, was highlighted".

With focus and briefly, the issues that were observed by the author and based the construction of this proposal are: SME companies in Ireland is struggling with the shortage of talent in the local market and due that, retain high-performance employee becomes so important in the Irish local labor market. What is the strategy the SME companies to retain high-performance employees in times of talent shortage?

The objective is to understand the problem round the Irish labor Market using the SME companies to achieve this goal, I have identified and plan to focus on the following problem statement, objectives questions, and research questions:

1.4.1. *Objective one*

Which departments are the most strategic for the company? How many key positions there are in this department? How many employees work at the company?

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How many employees were identified as High potential and High-performance?

1.4.4. Objective issue One

What is the company's strategy for retaining high-performance?

1.4.5. Objective issue Two

What is the company's approach with low-performance employees?

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How many percent is the turnover from the company that involves high potential and high performance in Vertex Group? What are the main reasons?

1.4.7. Objective issue Four

High potential and low-performance in a Key position, How the company has been analyzing and reverting it? How many employees the company has in this situation.

In this angle of research, the areas that will be encompassed are Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) and Business Strategic Planning. In Talent Management, I was able to provide information and about Identify Talent, Assess competencies and Skills, Develop Talent, and Engage/Retain Talent. However, I found a potential gap in SHRM literature that I am going to explore more in this research work. The gap is about, how Medium-sized companies have been splitting, working, analyzing, and moving their employee's group around the company in four different assemblies on the Arrow Flow Pyramid that is an original approach having as parameter performance and potential.

1.5. Structure of the Study

1.5.1. Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the "War for Talent" and an overview of the research topic, How Small Medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Ireland retain high-performance employees in a scarce local talent market. It will also outline the SME company context of this study, using four Small –Medium –Sized company to explore and make a comparison. The approach to retain high -performance in SMEs in time of short taken is

the case from which I will base my research. I will also outline the purpose of my research and research objectives.

1.5.2. Chapter 2 Literature Review

The literature review chapter will provide a critical and original framework about my topic and also seeks to review the HRM literature and introduce an original approach using the best practice in business to support the literature available. Finally, this chapter will outline the topic in a conceptual framework from which I will base my research methodology.

1.5.3. Chapter 3 Methodology and Research Design

This chapter explains the research design and how the research was leaded and introduce, including the paradigm, methodology, and methods of collecting data. It sets out the reasoning behind selection criteria and interviewing style. Details of the participants contributing to primary research are outlined along with issues with access and ethical issues.

1.5.4. Chapter 4 Presentation and discussion of findings

This chapter discusses and sets out the findings of the research using an inductive approach to explore the objective issues around the topic.

1.5.5. Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter will discuss the implications of the findings and contributions made. I will also discuss the limitations of the research and make any recommendations to further the research or future practice. This chapter includes a conclusion of the research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview

The objective of this literature review critically analyzes the literature that exists and also introduces an original framework as it relates to the research objectives and Objective issues outlined in section 1.4. The literature review is conducted under the following sub-headings, to relate directly to the research objectives:

- Talent Management
- Retain Talent
- Management Performance
- Arrow Flow Pyramide
- The monetary benefits when the company retains high-performance.

2.2. Talent Management (TM)

As an MBA student, I have experience working as a Manager and General Administrator in SMEs in Brazil. I know which important is Talent Management to empower teams and companies to achieve goals strategically. Using my previous experience in Brazil I would like to understand, how an SME in Ireland retains high-performance employees in a scarce talent market.

How this relationship between SME and high-performance employees retained in the SME companies may help to create a loyal, motivated, and healthy workforce in Ireland supporting SME to achieve goals.

How an SME company retain talent to achieve its strategic goals?

Talent Management (TM) is an integrated system of policies and strategies that have been supporting organizations to identify, develop, and retain talent to achieve their goals strategically also aligned with the future business needs.

Talent Management is not simply a different term for human resource practices Talent Management is the strategic execution of a series of human capital systems that is wedded directly to achieving a strategic competitive advantage, this is not the administrative kind of staff support role that traditionally Human Resource (HR) has been associated, Talent Management is clearly to add value and support the companies to manage the strategic human resource.

The idea of managing talent is not recent. It has been exploring for over 50 years. However, only in the last two decades, that organization is taken far more seriously. One example is a research conducted in 2008 by Development Dimensions International (DDI) and the Economist Intelligence Union (EIU) introduced that the main concern was about the insufficient leadership talent to meet future demand.

Talent management is related to how companies make uses of those gifts, abilities, and aptitudes to SME company strategic direction. A Critical part of our strategic plan is around talent retention, that It will be analyzed on the Vertex group on Arrows Flow Pyramid (AFP). Armstrong (2010) complements that:

“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”.

(Armstrong, 2010 p.51)

Talent management is the process of identifying, developing, recruiting, retaining, and deploying those talented people.

Development Dimensions International (DDI, 2018) complement that talent management as a hard and critical process that guarantee organizations have enough quantity and quality of employees with the companies to meet their short-run and long-run business priorities. The process is comprehensive and very important of an employees' ``Life cycle`` selection, development, succession and performance management.

High-performance and talent (Vertex Group)

An important function in Talent Management is to identify talent, more specific focus on the issue of leadership, talents, key function, and strategic staff as these "High Potential" leaders are retained in an SME company. What competencies, abilities or skills are important for an SME company Leaders, talent, and strategic staff.

Before discussing competencies and skills, We need to understand what is “Competency Model”. In brief, the Competency model list of which competencies and skills that the company believes somebody should have to succeed in a specific position. Nowadays, many organizations have been used competency models as a reference to analyze their performance management systems, those as competencies are

connects the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that are deemed to be most useful for achieving positive organizational targets and outcomes.

Furthermore, there are so many job analysis techniques to identify leaders and talents, such as job observations, interviews or 360-degree Assessment, focus groups, and surveys, which are used to identify key competencies and associated critical work behaviors. Below an SHRM Competency model.

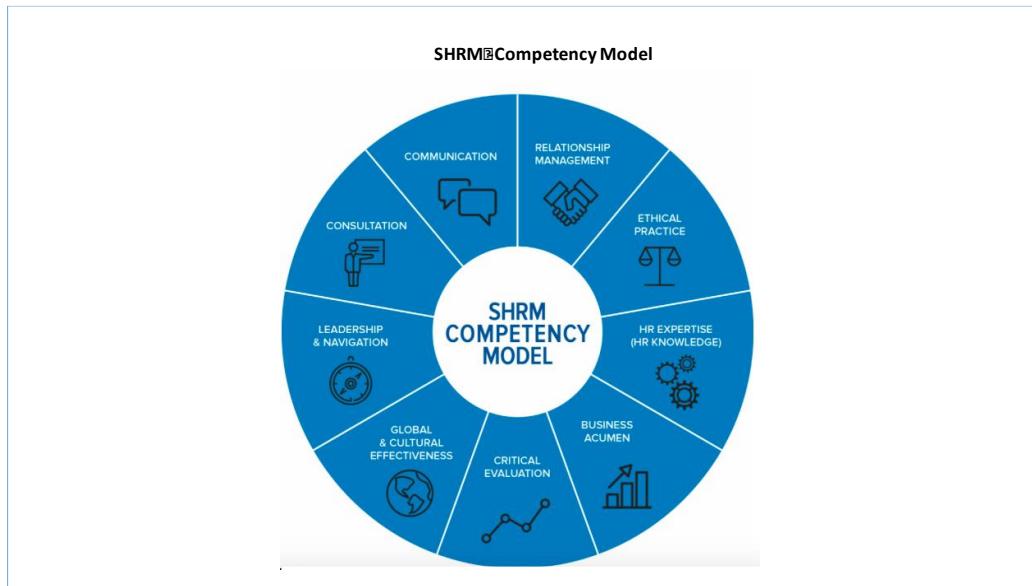


Fig.03:Source Society for Human Resource Management(2017)

Normally, companies have been used no least than five and no more than 9 or 10 key competencies to identify leaders and talents. Moreover, all those competencies are linked with the strategy from the companies to support the company achieves its goals. (Pulakos, 2017).

Armstrong (2010) contributes to the explanation about identify talent and develop talent, Armstrong argues that ``*Organization needs to decide on the extent to which it 'makes or buys' talented people. Should it grow its talent (a promotion from within policy) or should it rely on external recruitment (bringing 'fresh blood' into the organization)? The policy may be to recruit potentially high performers who will be good at their present job and are rewarded accordingly.*'' (Armstrong, 2006 p,400)

Trost (2010) complements the process of Identify talent ‘ ’*Talents, which do not become visible as talents on their own steam, are not considered talents. It would be helpful in this scenario to create opportunities for them.*’’

2.3. Retain Talent

(Online, Service Future, 2018) commented that " *Employee retention is an important factor in the war for talent, effective employee engagement will always be a great card to play. Especially because 87% of organizations consider culture and engagement as their top challenge, and less than half of them believe that they have good enough programs in place to engage and retain employees.*"



Fig.04: The War for Talent High-performance-Vertex Group(Faraco,2020)

What is the best approach to retain talent in an SME company?

What is the percentage of turnover in an SME involving high- performance?

The study, conducted by AchieveGlobal in 2013, which surveyed 738 managers worldwide, found that: retention issues affect organizations differently from one geographic region to the next. In the United States and Asia, managers reported that their highest levels of attrition occur in employees younger than 25, followed by midlevel and frontline managers. Meanwhile, in Europe, attrition rates are particularly severe for IT professionals and frontline managers (although managers in Europe also were more likely to report that retention is not an issue for their companies). Managers worldwide agreed on the three top causes of attrition:

- Insufficient compensation and benefits

- Lack of growth and development opportunities
- Lack of recognition for achievements by management.

Managers worldwide also agreed on the best ways to combat attrition: reversing the three causes above, and adding the fourth strategy— ensuring a healthy work-life balance. The study adds that providing development opportunities for key employees and incentives that strengthen employee loyalty are two must-haves for an effective retention strategy.

Meanwhile, Turnover of key employees was mentioned as a risk for SME companies, because the number of employees is limited to 250 individuals per company and each one has a specific role within the SME company, Furthermore, the employee needs to be multiple tasks and work in different subject and positions. According to Robbins (1998, p.92), "turnover is one of the variables most closely related to job dissatisfaction. The current human resource (HR) practices of most relevance to increasing job satisfaction are the Work-Life Balance (WLB)practices for employees, as they can help foster the employees' quality of life and, as a consequence, workers will be more satisfied, motivated and committed to the firm (Carrasquer and Martí in 2005; Hughes and Bozionelos 2007).

Succession Planning

Some times is not possible to retain a high-performance employee that is in the process of retirement and In this case, the SME company should start a succession planning process for all leadership or key function. So what is succession planning?

(Desna , 2005,p.24) commented that succession planning '*It is a process by which an organization assures necessary and appropriate leadership for the future through a talent pipeline with the capabilities of sustaining an institution's long-term goals. In other words, it is having the right people in the right place at the right time. It develops key candidates in anticipation of future openings*'.

However, for the company is not harder to predict the percentage of turnover or retired

per year, Trost(2014) argues that:

"If we assume that this will remain stable in the future, we can also predict how many employees will voluntarily leave the company over the next few years. Quantitative predictions of retirement and voluntary turnover operated at a very pragmatic, practical level."

(Trost, 2014, p.31)

Engagement of employees is also associated with the Carrot Principle: How managers use reward and recognition to engage their team, retain talent, and accelerate performance. *Gostick and Elton(2007) argue that ``The Carrot Principle unveils the groundbreaking results of one of the most in-depth management studies ever undertaken. This study, involving 200,000 people over a ten-year monitoring period, shows that the central character of the most successful managers is that they provide their employees with frequent and effective recognition. Dramatically greater business results were obtained when managers offered constructive praise and meaningful rewards in ways that motivated employees to excel".*

On another side, The Carrot Principle has been criticized by several different authors, Indeed, Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992) as 'managerialism'. As Armstrong (1996) wrote: '*It looks at the employment relationships purely from management's point of view and regards employees as objects to be motivated by the carrot and stick. It is a dismal theory, which suggests that people cannot be trusted.*'

Armstrong concluded that "*A strategy for increasing engagement through the work environment will be generally concerned with developing a culture that encourages positive attitudes to work, promoting interest and excitement in the jobs people do and reducing stress.*" (Armstrong,2012, p173)

What is the best practice to retain and develop high-performance in an SME company?

After the company identifies high potential leaders it needs to retain and develops those people using the nine more important competencies and skills that the organization believes somebody should have to ascend in a specific position. Kinney (2015) explains that “ The individual is responsible for developing their competencies while the

company is responsible for providing an avenue to get there”.

Develop Talent is long-term and is more deeply than looks like, It is about how companies development successors (thigh potentials)for those positions that are strategic for the company to achieve their goals in the long run. Armstrongs (2010)said “The approaches required involve emphasizing ‘growth from within', regarding talent development as a key element of the business strategy, being clear about the competencies and qualities that matter, maintaining well-defined career paths, taking management development, coaching and mentoring very seriously, and demanding high performance. ” and Armstrong Complement about Develop Talent and programs“*Motivation strategies aim to create a working environment and to develop policies and practices that will provide for higher levels of performance from employees. They include the development of total reward systems and performance management processes, the design of intrinsically motivating jobs, and leadership development programs.*”(Se figure 11. Competency Band Career Progression System.

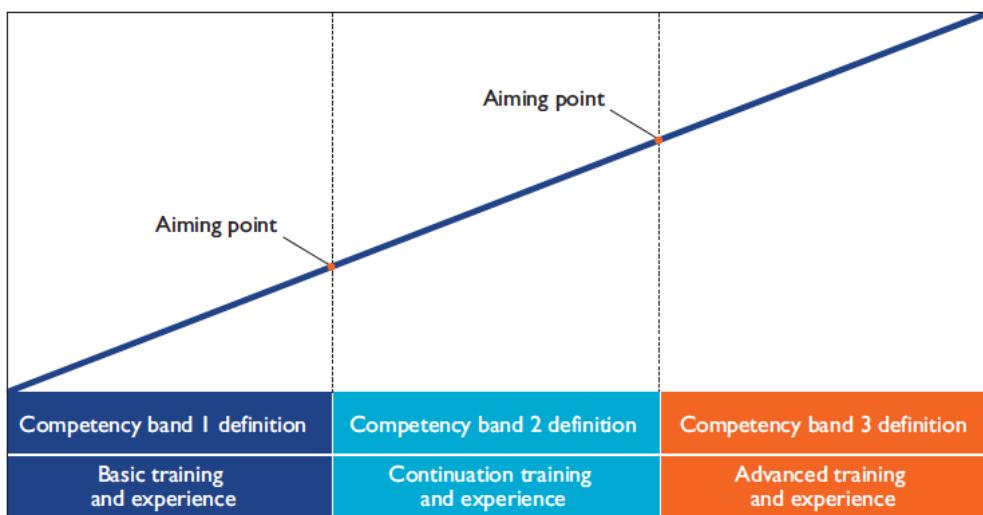


Fig.05: Competency Band Career Progression System

As reported by Ready and Conger (2007), at Proctor & Gamble, “ destination Jobs” are identified or rising stars, which are attainable only if the employee continues to perform, impress and demonstrate growth potential.”Kinney (2015) explains that “ The individual is responsible for developing their competencies while the company is responsible for providing an avenue to get there”.

2.4. Management performance and employee life cycles

Managing Employee Life Cycles To Improve Labor Retention

(Linkedin E-Learning, Sharon,2019) argued that " Effective talent management increases a company's ability to innovate, grow, and adapt quickly. Focusing on talent management generates 26% more revenue. Despite these benefits, in a recent study, 40% of executives rated their talent management as ineffective and said that it got in the way of achieving their business goals."



Fig.06: Management performance Illustration Source: ISS

An important study in the USA by (Gallup, 2018,p.6) revealed that “*Employees who are not engaged or are actively disengaged at work are most likely to be low-performing employees as well as the employees most likely to quit. Recent research, however, reveals that managers should not ignore high-performing employees as they, too, maybe disengaged and swift to quit. As Gallup researchers note: Highly talented employees who are not engaged were among those who had the highest turnover ... on par with low talent, disengaged employees. In other words, when your best employees are not engaged, they are as likely to leave your organization as your employees who tend to have performance issues and are unhappy*”.

How an SME company should use the performance management to retain and engage high performance

Arrows Flow Pyramide (AFP) in (chapter 3- Topic 3.6.1.) was created to follow-up and split the employees around the company making a distinction of performance and potential promoting leaders and talents within the company and offer more focus to invest and develop most strategically employees from the company.

Furthermore, AFP is also to identify the reasons that high-performance employees are showing poor performance between an assessment and others. Of course, the idea is also to recover the high- performance employees showing low-performance using LMX theory to explain the Base Right Group. Norhouse (2004) explains that `` LMX makes the relationship between leaders and followers the focal point of the leadership process.'' Sears and Mcdermontt (2003), comments that:

“Not surprisingly, GE has been one of the pioneers in this process, differentiating companywide among the top 20 percent of employees, the bottom 10 percent, and the middle 70 percent. Sun Microsystems likewise ranks its 43,000 employees in three groups (20 percent are "superior"; 70 percent are "Sun Standard"; 10 percent are "underperforming"). The company then alerts underperforming staff to their tenuous status and provides one-on-one coaching to help redeem their performance.”

(Sears and Mcdermontt, 2003 p.7)

The relationship between high performance versus job satisfaction, this explanation could be quite useful to understand the reason of poor performance within the Base Right group, Armstrong (2010) states that:

“It can be argued that it is not job satisfaction that produces high- performance but the high-performance that produces job satisfaction and that a satisfied worker is not necessarily a productive worker and a high producer is not necessarily a satisfied worker. “People are motivated to achieve certain goals and Will be satisfied if they achieve these goals through improved performance. They may be even more satisfied if they are then rewarded by extrinsic recognition or an intrinsic sense of achievement”.

(Armstrong,2010 p.146-147)

Analyzing the Base Left group (employees with low potential and low- performance) Welch (2008 cited in Barton 2008a) states that you cannot promote the top 20% without firing the bottom 10%. Trost (2014) argues that:

“In most roles at companies, an employee’s performance is proportional to the added value generated. If a staff member Works 10% faster or more

productively than another, the difference in added value between these two people will also be 10%”.

(Trost, 2014 p41)

This is a particular case that happens standardized processes in case of production division, for example, One employee assembly 100 packages in a shift, and the other 90. The value-added form the company differs according to the performance of each employee. However, When this type of performance different and It comes in key functions can drastically increase the company's value. An emblematic example is pharmaceutical companies such as AstraZeneca and Bayer that have been investing billions of Euros in sales by developing new products in Its R&D department and putting it quickly on the market. These companies have an innovation strategy that allows the P&D department to perform the key function. However, other pharmaceutical companies instead pursue a price strategy and seek to set up the prices of generic medication as low as possible, competitiveness is determined by completely different key functions in the same industry because the strategy of each one is different.

2.5. The Monetary Benefits when the company retains high performance using Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) to illustrate it.

This topic “The Monetary benefits” it will be explored in future research collecting sensitive data by the author or by another researcher. However, In this research, I did not collect sensitive data such as revenue, total cost, and HR cost to make a financial conclusion. Despite this, It was used as a standard *Value Overall Contribution* (VOC) of €10,000 to calculate the *Human Capital Value Added* (HCVA) and Human Capital Value Group (HCVG) to illustrate financially that retain high –performance or high – performance in Key function increase the human value contribution.

Whats is the return on investment (ROI) retain high-performance employees, analyzing the human value contribution KPI (Key Performance Indicator).

Another important reason for this framework in Talent Management, identifying and developing high performance and high potential to see the monetary benefit when an

SME company use strategically its HRM department aligned with the main business strategy from the company in the long-run. The main financial KPI to analyze this approach will be the return on investment (ROI), which can be calculated by comparing it with the investment and operation expenses in an SME. In general, use financial KPIs in HRM is essential for the department speaks the same FCO and CEO language. (Trost, 2014) claims that:

"While you may instinctively think that HRM is a "soft" discipline with many humans aspects which cannot be illustrated financially, this is a dangerous attitude to adopt. We tend to underestimate the possibilities of calculating benefits in HRM, Whereas we overestimate those in other areas. Anyone with sufficient experience must admit that even in "hard" disciplines, such as production, logistics, and purchases, not all calculations and appraisals are as valid they may initially appear. These areas also involve a lot of estimation, daily".

(Trost, 2014 p.143)

Below, we can see the estimating ROI model, it is not useful and relevant to Talent Management, but rather to all approach with HRM, in this way encourage that every HR head and manager adopt it.

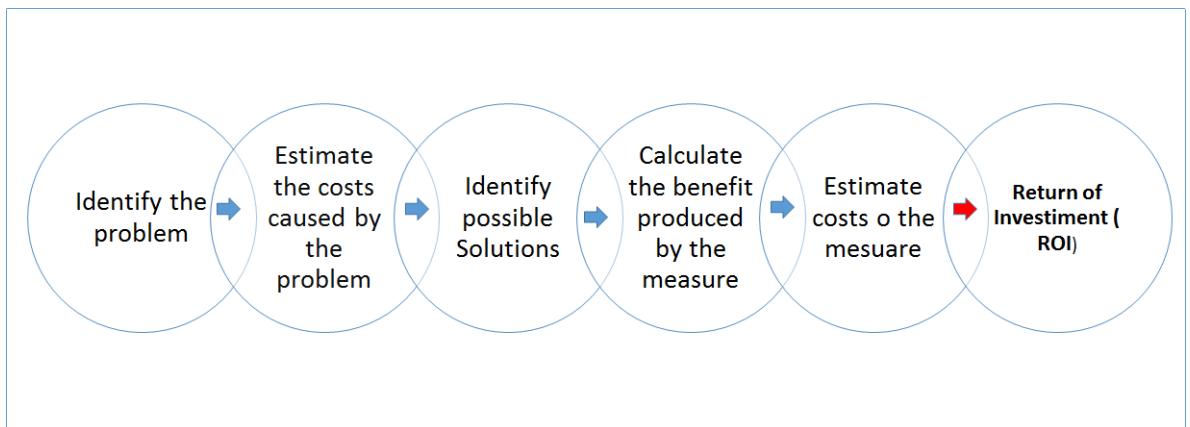


Fig.07:Flow chart for estimating ROI in HRM (Trost, 2014 p.144)

From a business management perspective, a problem is only a problem if you can identify the cost caused by the problem. Of course, the company needs to act to solve the problem and eliminate this cost and add more human capital value. The HCVA stands for "Human Capital Value Added" which is a formula that represents an employee's average value contribution. Below, we can see the formula of HCVA created by the Saratoga Institute, Jac Fitz-Enz (2009). The institute was investigating the issue around an employee's average value contribution.

$$\text{HCVA} = \frac{\text{Revenue} - (\text{Total Costs} - \text{HR Cost})}{\text{FTE}}$$

Fig.08: Formula HCVA (Trost 2014,p.144)

The Idea of the HCVA is measuring an employee's average value contribution. The company that has been using HCVA should be measuring it on the quarterly, semester, or annual. The frequency of it could be different between companies.

How is it measured?

Corpa ([online] 2017) states that the data needed for this KPI can be extracted from standard financial reports and statements. You can calculate HCVA by subtracting all corporate expenses except for pay and benefits from the revenue generated and dividing the adjusted profit by many full-time employees (FTE). Total costs are the difference between revenue and profit before taxes, employee costs are pay and benefits, and FTE is the average number of full-time employees.

(Jac-Fitz-enz, 2009,p.11) complement that:

“When we speak of measuring the value of people, we have to acknowledge the two aspects of that issue: the economic and the spiritual. We can accept the intrinsic spiritual value of people and focus on the economic side. In essence, all measures of value contribution are measures of human value as economic units and as spiritual beings. Only people generate value through the application of their intrinsic humanity, motivation, learned skills, and tool manipulation”.

(Jac-Fitz-enz, 2009 p.11)

To clarify, the explanation above, We have an example of a fictitious number with the following parameters and values:

- **Revenue:** 100 Million Euros
- **FTE(Full time Equivalent) :** 100
- **Total Costs:** 95 Million Euros
- **HR Costs:** 90 Million Euros

$$\text{HCVA} = \underline{100,000,000 \text{ €} - (95,000,000\text{€} - 90,000,000\text{€})} = \underline{\underline{10,000,000\text{€}}^1}$$

100

When we apply the HCVA formula per employee we are going to see the average contribution of 10,000,000 Euros per Employee. This average contribution is very general like the total of revenue, total HR cost, or the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). However, We would like to now Human Capital Value Added (HCVA) based on Key function and level performance using the Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) groups to analyze the distinction between performance and Human Capital Value Added. Some assumptions are quite important in this context :

- The key function within the vertex group value contribution is higher of the other groups such as Intermediate Face, Base Left, and Base Right.
- The value contribution of each AFP group is correlated with their performance. For example, the value contribution from Vertex Group that has high-performance employees is higher than in the Others AFP group that there are average performance or low performance.

After the two assumptions above, We need to understand how much the value contribution in the Vertex Group where we have a key function and hight performance is compared to other groups from AFP. They are more two assumptions need to be applied to proceed with the calculation of the value contribution in each AFP group.

High-performance employees working in Key Function in the Vertex group provide double the Value Contribution(VOC) than those employees mentioned in the Intermediate Face with standard performance. For example, We know that the overall value contribution from the company, calculated before in this topic was 10,000,000€ Euros per employee without considering the AFP groups or Key position or high performance. The formula, below.

¹ VOC-Value Overall Contribution = Value BASE used in the chapters 3 (p.24) and 4 (p.54,61,68 and 73) to make the monetary benefits when retain high-performance employees.

$$\underline{\text{HCVG} = \text{HCVA} \times (\text{AFP Group} \times \text{VOC Group})}$$

Fig.09: Human Capital Value per Group (HCVG) using AFP (Faraco,2020)

The Human capital Value APF group (HCVG) contribution on Vertex group in key function is double than the average, for example: ($\text{HCVG} = \text{HCVA} \times 2$) and the valuable contribution by high –performing employee on (Vertex Group) in position, not the key is 50% higher than that an average employee performance on (Intermediate Face group) that represent employees average performance ($\text{HCVG} = \text{HCVA} \times 1$).

The Low–performing employees on (Base Right and Base Left)only will generate half percent ($\text{HCVG} = \text{HCVA} \times 0,5$) than that an average employee performance from the (Intermediate Face group).

Factor express the relative Value Contribution(VOC) of different groups

AFP group x VOC =HCVA			Number of Employees		
AFP Groups	*VOC	% Emp	High Performance Key function	Average Performance	Low Performance
Vertex- Key Function	x 2	10%	5 Employees		
Vertex- High Performance	x 1,5		5 Employees		
Intermediate Face	x 1	80%		80 Employees	
Base Right	X 0,5	5%			5 Employees
Base Left	X 0,5	5%			5 Employees
Total		100%			Total:100 Employees

Fig. 10: Factor express the relative value contribution (Faraco, 2020)

The example above used one employee in each group to explain the value contribution from the AFP approach to measuring the value contribution and approach per group.

Below, I used in each performance from AFP an employee to illustrate the idea of the VOC(Value Overall Contribution) is interchange the performance with the different AFP groups.

Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) Groups Employees x Human Capital Value Added (HCVA) = HCVG²(*) (Human Capital Value Added Group)

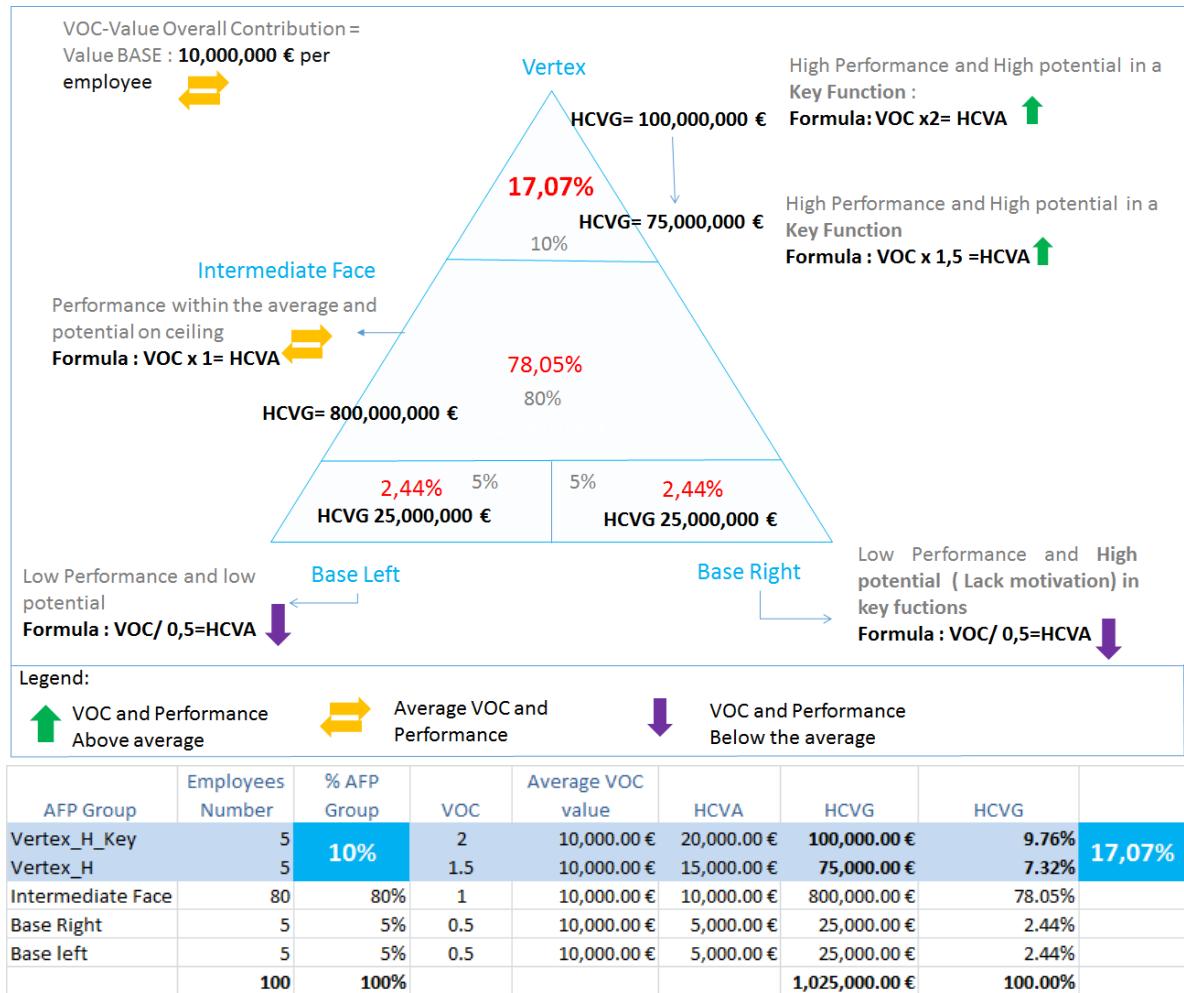


Fig.11: Arrow Flow Pyramide and HCVA per group (Faraco, 2020)

High-performance increase Human capital Value-Added? What is the Vertex contribution (HCVG)?

10 % of employees on the Vertex group represented 17.07% of the company's Human Capital Value Added Vertex Group(HCVG). With this mathematic formula from the (topic 2.5, p.32, and p. 33) and made above was possible to see that high –performance employees increase the Human capital Values Added around the company and their

² (HCVG) Formula in the topic 2.5, p.23

departments. In this example the group contribution was 17,07% being 7,07% more than the statistical number of employees of the Vertex group.

2.6. Conceptual Framework –Operationalisation

Miles and Huberman(1994) claims that:

“Explains either graphically, or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts or variables – and the presumed relationship among them”.

(Miles and Huberman, 1994 p.18)

In this chapter, used relevant bibliography to the chosen topic was selected, reviewed, and listed for further review, supporting the construction of the conceptual framework, the elaboration of the research design, and questions to achieve the research objectives. Below the conceptual framework and the operationalization that it will be explored in this chapter with literature support, Meanwhile, it is going introduced the Arrow Flow Piramide (AFP) to analyze the high performance (Vertex Group) group using Talent Management subject with a focus on Engage and Retain Talent, and Performance Management.

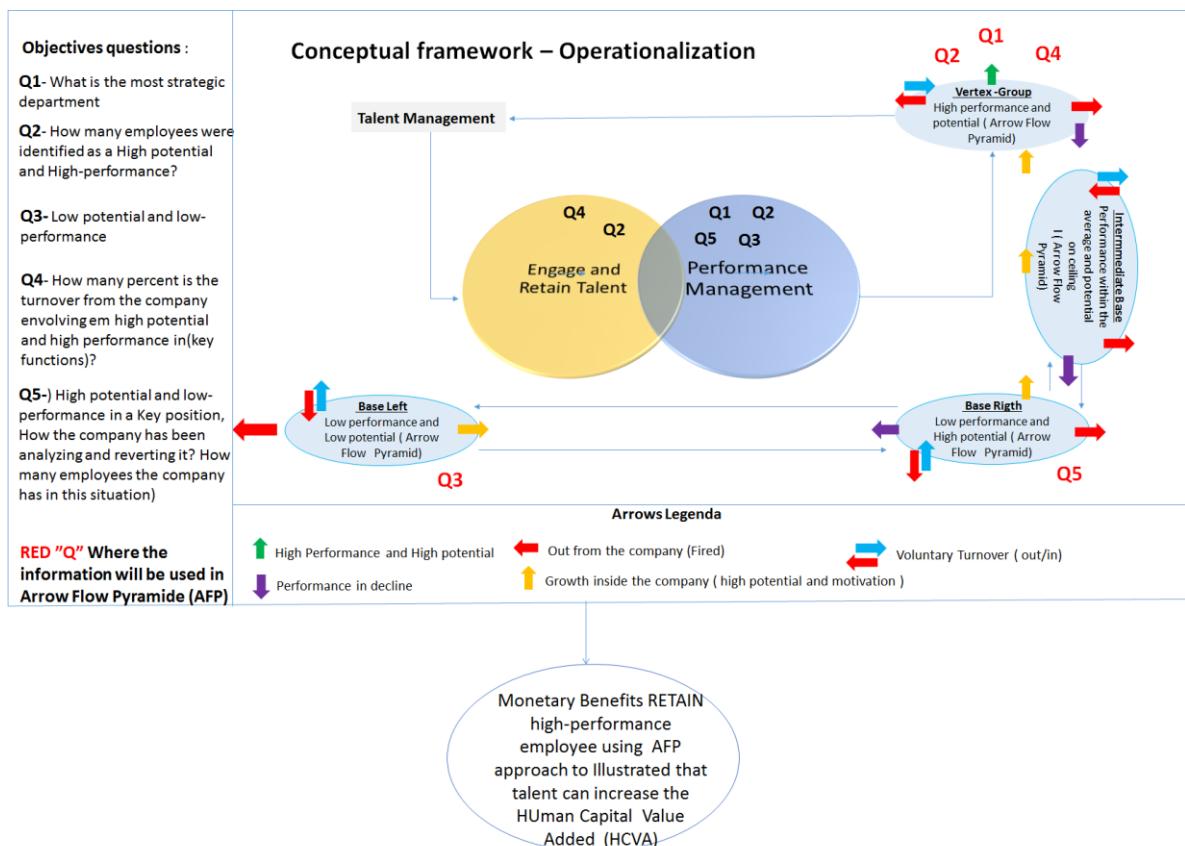


Fig.12: Conceptual Framework - Operationalization (Faraco, 2019)

2.7. Conclusion

This research makes a contribution to the HRM strategy field and for my knowledge about Talent Management. First, the topic from the literature reviewed shows how important are Talent Management policies and strategies for organizations to retain and develop talent to achieve their goals strategically also aligned with future business needs. It includes a past article that mentions that Talent Management is not a recent subject, It has been exploring for over 50 years. However, The subject has been growing interest in recent years because of the scarce of talent and fence the “ War for Talent”. One of the main reasons for this framework and original approach is to see the monetary benefits when SME companies retain high performance.

The second topic from the literature reviewed to explain the importance to retain talent to ascend as a leader within the organization to support the strategy from the company in the long run. Furthermore, The third literature reviewed covers a list of nine essential competencies and skills that the company believes somebody should have to succeed in a specific position. The fourth and fifth topics from the literature reviewed use these main competencies as a reference to develop talent and explore more questions about voluntary turnover and retain talent issues such as job satisfaction.

The original part from the research, the AFP contributes significantly to the framework from the literature reviewed by providing the first empirical approach on the Conceptual Framework about employee retention priority, focus on the Vtex group. It also identified the variety of approaches and best practice taken to Talent Management by different companies type and highlights the reasons and issues around the topic

In conclusion, It will answer one of the key questions in business (*What is the monetary benefits of this approach?*) Trost (2014) argues that:

“From a business management perspective, however, a problem is only a problem if you can identify costs caused by the problem, which may be real costs, hidden costs, or even opportunity costs”.

(Trost, 2014 p.143-144)

3. Methodology and Research Design

3.1. Overview

In my review of the literature in Chapter 2, it is evident that retaining high-performance employees can impact positively the company productivity and outcomes strategically in the long-run. The research design is more complex than just to write a proposal. Thus, a framework is needed that combines the elements of philosophical ideas, strategies and mixed methods across qualitative findings plus quantitative results in an exploratory sequential design, being quantitative "Discrete Data" that has distinguishable space between values using a semi-structured interview to collect data applying a set of questions for the participant on the study making more simple and uniform to synthesize and analyze data and are comparable, using two employees in the Company A and B and one employee in the company C and D.

The quantitative research was also used to confirm the hypothesis from the Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) that the SME company should work with a percentage from 10% to 30% of high-performance employees in the Vertex group. Moreover, the quantitative research was also combined with qualitative findings to measure the AFP score per company to confirm the idea that the SME has a balance and equilibrium of high-performance around the company to achieve goals in the short and long run. The qualitative research method was applied to express in words(coding) the strategy of the company to retain those high performances employees and also understand the approach to revert high-performance employees showing low-performance.

3.2. Research Philosophy and Approach

To collect the primary and secondary data to support the research that is a mixed-method being quantitative statistical method and qualitative coding method. The ideal scenario is that all primary data will be collected through a semi-structured interview with a manager and a staff in two SME companies to compare the perception of high-performance employees between the employees. Moreover, I did a data collection in

more of two SME companies getting data with a manager and staff of the company to get the perception about high-performance around the company.

The primary data was collected sending a spreadsheet formulary for four SME companies, followed by a visit to explain all questions and collect data in a face-to-face interview. The data collected were not sensitive and preserved the anonymity of the work and to introduce the idea of the topic face to face and the secondary data was predominantly with the auto-study around the topic and literature review to support the answer that will be passed within the Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP).

I chose a mixed- methods of primary data collection and semi-structured interviews, preparing open and closed questions to encourage the interviewee to be numeric specific and also open about the topic and to allow for other questions to develop throughout the semi-structured interview I have chosen a hybridization of deductive and inductive approaches as it allows me to approach the primary research with an informed view of existing theory while also allowing for the potential to see connections between variables not apparent in the theory.

I selected four SME companies in Ireland where the retention of high- performance employees are important to winning the “War for Talent” once that the business has high-performance employees working in key function or critical skills position in Ireland. In the first moment, I selected two employees in each company with a professional or, academic background in Talent Management to introduce the topic and conduct a face-to-face semi-structured interview. After selected the company and employees, I sent an email to the participants with a spreadsheet contains the topic of research and objective questions of the study. The interviews Will have different types of questions and as Saunders et al. (2009) explain, the key point according to the author is to maintain cohesiveness and fitness to the research aims.

3.3. Research Strategy

The overall aim of my research was to establish the experience of SMEs in Ireland winning the “War for Talent” pursue to retain high-performance employees in times

of shortage talent. I set out four research objectives to underpin that aim. I choose randomly four SMEs in Ireland to provide the ‘real-life context’.

I approached the secondary research; articles, books, online reports, archival records, and company documents by way of deductive Analysis. Recognizing the importance and complexity of the topic, I choose an inductive approach to analyzing the data developing an original framework. Further inductive analysis allows me to develop theoretical generalizations in light of the data resulting from qualitative collection methods. Figure 13 is a graphical representation of my research design.

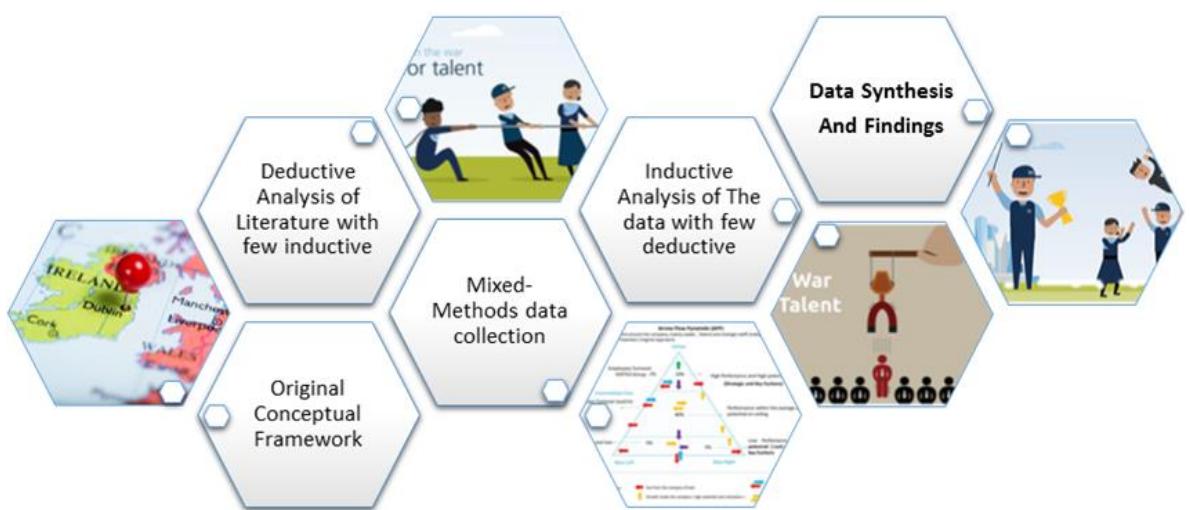


Fig.13: Research Strategy process (Faraco, 2020)

By way of an interpretivism perspective and predominantly inductive with mixed-methods quantitative and qualitative approach to my research. “According to the interpretivism approach, it is important for the researcher as a social actor to appreciate differences between people”. On another side, Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2012) argues that: “Interpretivism studies usually focus on meaning and may employ multiple methods to reflect different aspects of the issue”.

The Philosophical ideas must be set up with external approaches to research (strategies and objective questions) and implemented with specific procedures (methods). Thus, a framework is needed to combines the elements of philosophical ideas, strategies and mixed methods across qualitative findings plus quantitative results in an exploratory sequential design, being quantitative ‘*Discrete Data*’ that has distinguishable space

between values using a semi-structured interview to collect data which questions are the same to be easy to synthesize and analyze data and are comparable, using two employees per SME company and four different SME companies. I have designed a research strategy that best fits with my overall research aim. What becomes important, in the research process, is a recognition of the 'what' and 'how' relationship. That is 'what' is being researched will influence 'how' data was collected;

Who	Identified 4 SME companies
Where	Ireland labour market
What	Face-to-face semi-structured interview
How	Asking questions about the performance of employees
How many	Total of 6 Interviews , being : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 interviews (2 couple – with a Manager and Staff within the same company in private sections to comparing different perception about high-performance employees) • 2 interview (2 simple- a manager and a staff from different companies)
Why	Collecting primary data for answering the research objective question and objective issues in combination with secondary data

Fig.14: Research process (Faraco, 2020)

3.4. Collection Primary Data

My primary method of collecting data is through semi-structured interviews with six employees of four SME companies, being two interviewees in the company A and B, and one participant from the company C and D being a staff and a manager, respectively. (See figure 15 the data collection flow)

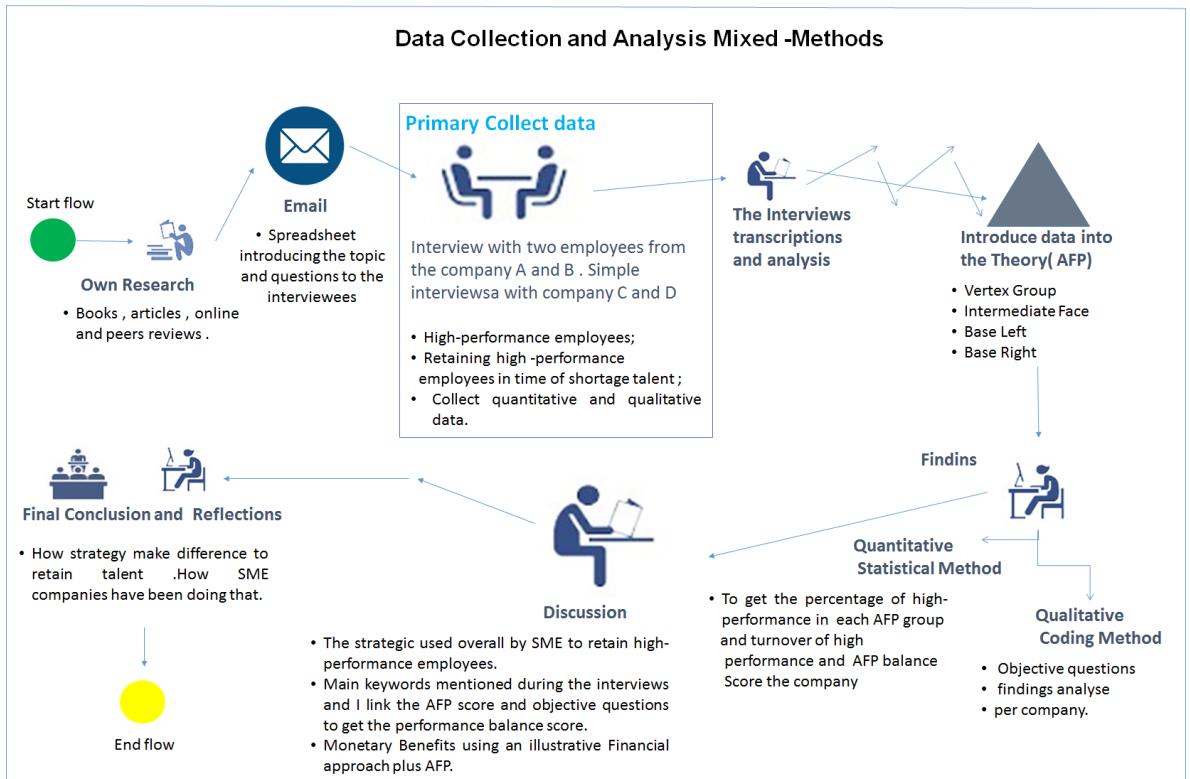


Fig.15: Data collection and Analysis Methods (Faraco, 2020)

3.4.1. Sources

The analysis technique for this research is the quantifying method as a main analytical procedure that emphasizes the use of semi-structured interviews face-to-face as an instrument to collect qualitative (coding analysis) and quantitative discrete data (statistical Method analysis) in mixed methods research. Creswell (2014) defined mixed methods research as “a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and ‘mixing’ both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or series of studies to understand a research problem” (p. 537). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) succinctly stated that mixed methods studies must include at least one qualitative strand and one quantitative strand. The qualitative research methods are to provide insights and understand the problem at hand. Qualitative research involves quality or kind,i.e.When the research is made on human behavior, attitudes, cultures, and experiences based on observation and interpretation.

Initially, I sent an email for the participants to introducing the topic and the objective questions and the participants started to think about the answers that will be collected by interview face-to-face, being two interviewees in the company A and B and one

participant from the company C and D being a staff and a manager, respectively. This approach of sending an email followed by an interview was used due to the technicality of the questions, involving quantitative and qualitative methods, in fact, a mixed-methods convergent type, being quantitative and qualitative data were collected together and used to triangulate the findings and answer the objective questions. Mixed methods emerged as a research approach during the latter half of the twentieth century. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) consider mixed methods research to be an “alternative to the dichotomy of qualitative and quantitative traditions” (p. 4), referring to the approach as the “third methodological movement” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 5)

Overall, I conducted secondary research to understand the literature around the topic followed by in-depth semi-structured interviews to collect primary data using mixed-methods to analyze the data. The qualitative findings from those interviews explain and provide a voice to the quantitative results. In this way, mixed methods research concurrently addresses confirmatory and exploratory questions through the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the companies, A and B, I conducted two face-to-face interviews using the same set of questions for two employees in different roles to analyze two distinctive views inside the same company, once that, the appraisal performance in SMEs are not structured as in Multinationals companies or Global Companies. The interviewees provided exhaustive details about the topic under discussion and I also asked for an explanation from the interviewees about unclear answers, Moreover, the interviews were recorded and transcribed to be deeply analyzed.

3.4.2. Access and Ethical Issues

Hammersley (2012) states that: “*All researchers need to think about research ethics and for a variety of reasons it is an increasingly important part of research methods training.*”(Hammersley, 2012 p.175)

The researcher must be truthful to the research and not misuse the access obtained during the research process, ensure the accuracy by maintaining objectivity, and attaining to scientific investigation methods, not misrepresenting and disseminating faulty conclusions all work needs to be conclusive. To ensure the confidentiality about

the database, interviews, and information on email. I made great use of good sense as a guide and I followed the code of ethics for the American Association for Public Opinion (AAPOR) throughout the whole process. AAPOR (2015) states that:

“We pledge to maintain the highest standards of scientific competence, integrity, accountability, and transparency in designing, conducting, analyzing, and reporting our work, and in our interactions with participants, clients, and the users of our research”.

(AAPOR, 2015 p.1)

3.5. Approach to Data Analysis

The Data Analysis approach was building to understand the SME companies' experience and strategy to retain talent and also to measure the percentage of high-performance employees have been working in those SME companies. I recorded six semi-structured interviews face-to-face in four SME companies and then I did the transcription of the interviews to a word document using the Amber Script software. I read each transcription from the interviews and performed an initial reading of the text (See appendix F for an example of a transcribed interview). I checked deeply the specific text segments as related to the research aim, objectives, AFP percentage performance level, and conceptual framework.

For this data analysis, I used the mixed-methods is a “mix[ing] or combin[ing] quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Mixed methods researchers offer an alternative to the qualitative versus quantitative debate by employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques in their research. They justify this blending of methodologies by “advocating the use of whatever methodological tools are required to answer the research questions under study” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 7). See Figure 16, above with the data analysis approach.

Implications of Findings for the Research Questions

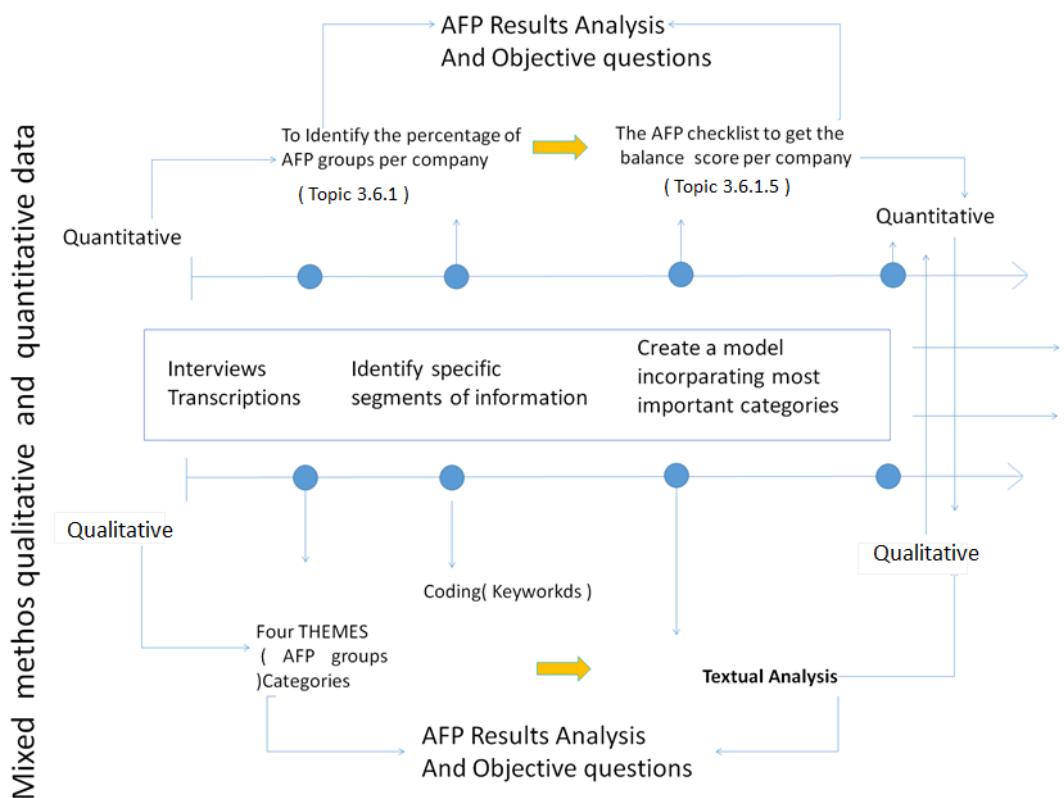


Fig.16: The qualitative and quantitative data collection Process -Inductive Analysis(Faraco,2020)

I recorded six semi-structured interviews face-to-face in four SME companies and then I did the transcription to word document using the Amber Script software(<https://www.amberscript.com/>)³. I read each transcription from the interviews and performed an initial reading of the text (See appendix D for an example of a transcribed interview). I checked deeply the specific text segments as related to the research aim, objectives, AFP percentage performance level, and conceptual framework. I coded each piece of text into four themes that the bias was the objective questions or themes that were relevant to understand the problem around the topic. I then developed works flow with sub-themes driven the overall analysis by the data emerging from the interviews.

For the quantitative results, I measured the number of employees was present in each AFP groups to get the percentage of each group per level of performance and potential analyzing the relationships among variables from AFP groups percentage range versus company results collected in this exploratory study. (topic 3 subtopic 3.5.1)

³ Transcription as a apêndix D

For the qualitative finding, I created a code flow using keywords extracted from the transcription of the interviews. And I also used pieces from the transcription to illustrate the views from each company about the four objective questions or themes. In this coding process, I checked the relevance and I observed if the interviewee explicitly stated that such word or process is important. For the finish, I analyzed if those coding had a link with the literature around the research. The coding qualitative data collection was reduced into four themes that were filled by keywords flow for each interviewee and company (see topic 4.3 Discuss to view the thematic coding flow). After reducing the codes and themes I made a manual qualitative data analysis using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint to create the flows.

The thematic analysis of the data, while inductive was supported by the conceptual framework developed following a deductive review of the secondary data/literature available. (see appendix F for example of the manual data Analysis process and theme table).

I combined the qualitative and quantitative findings to fill the AFP checklist (from the Topic 3 subtopic 3.5.1.5) to get the AFP score per company and I made an overall conclusion about the research as well. Moreover, In this AFP checklist, I mixed quantitative and qualitative findings to make a ranking from each SME company covering the main questions about the topic. The aim of summarizes is to help the identification and make relationships between the parts of the mixed-methods data quantitative and qualitative collected, enabling to correlate with the new approach developed (AFP) and to elaborate an integrated conclusion using primary and secondary data.

3.6. Conclusion

In an inductive approach for this exploratory research, I began by collecting data that is relevant to my topic of interest. Once a substantial amount of data has been collected, I started to analyze the data collected, stepping back when necessary to enhancement the original approach used to get a bird's eye view of the data collected in SME companies.

At this stage, I looked for patterns in the data, working with quantitative and qualitative data to develop a relationship that could explain those patterns.

The aim of summarizes is to help the identification and make relationships between the parts of the mixed-methods data quantitative and qualitative collected, enabling to correlate with the new approach developed (AFP) and to elaborate an integrated conclusion using primary and secondary data. The main coding themes emerging from the theoretical analysis are:

- Retention and Long term relationship between a high-performance employee and SME over a sustained period.
- Enough Talent covering the entire SME company to value add.
- Followup the SME employee's movement and level of performance to future analysis and intervention if necessary.
- Human Capital Value-added per group of employees by performance and potential—focused on Key function and key for organizational success.

3.6.1. Research approach using Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) – Original work.

Korzybski (1995: 58) states that: “*The map is not the territory... The only usefulness of a map depends on the similarity of structure between the empirical world and the map*”. However, the map Will help us to navigate in our problem.

Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) should be used as a map to analyze employee's performance per AFP group such as Vertex, Intermediate Face, Base Left, and Base Right having as a parameter the level of performance and potential. (See Figure 17). In this example below to illustrate the approach, the company “X” has a hundred employees that were split by the level of performance and potential around the company. Being ten- percent on the Vertex group, five-percent on the Base Left group, also five- percent on the Base Right group and, eighty- percent on the Intermediate Face group.

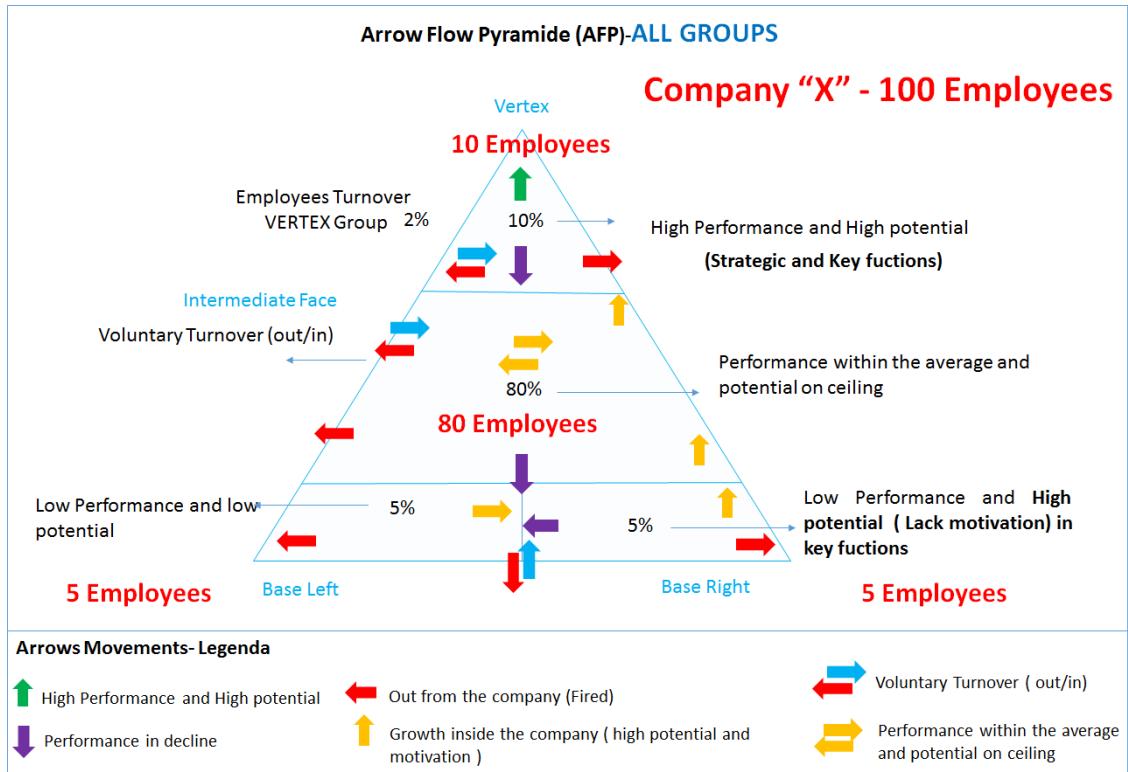


Fig.17: Arrows Flow Pyramid Movements for a strategic vision in SHRM (Faraco, 2019)

Below a short explanation about each group from the Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) .

3.6.1.1. Vertex Group

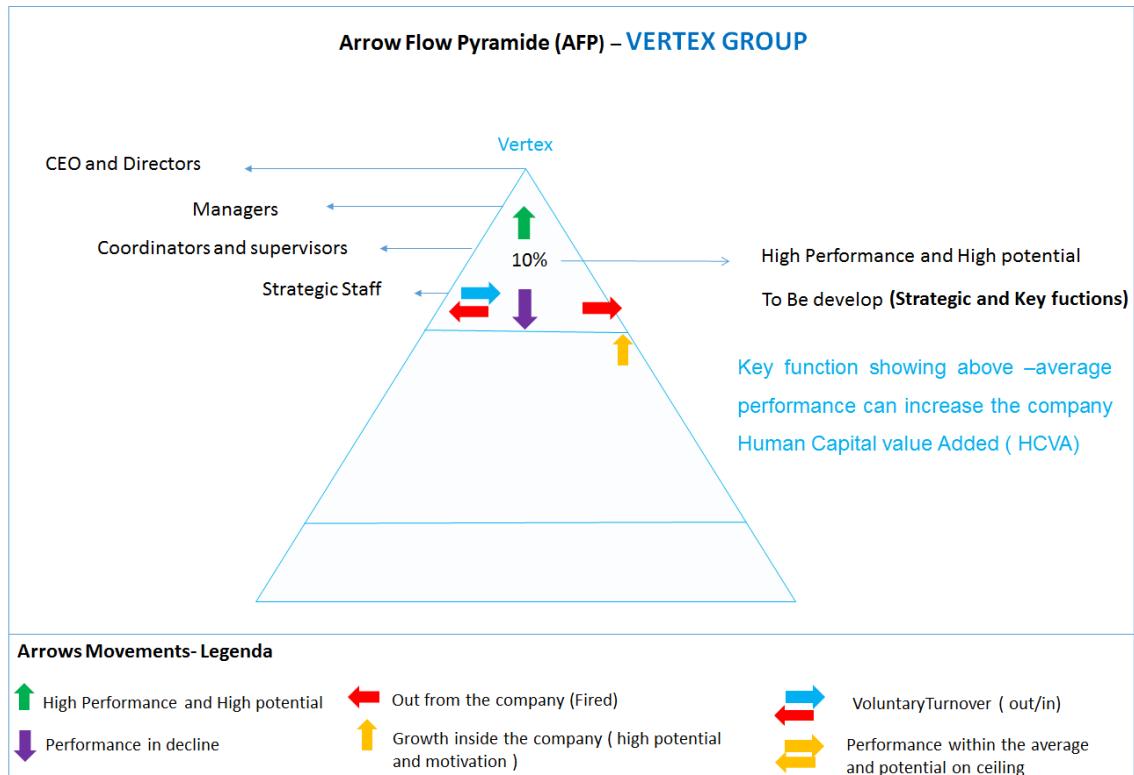


Fig.18: Vertex Group -Arrows Flow Pyramide (Faraco, 2019)

In this group, high-performance employees were identified in key functions or departments to be retained and developed within the organization to support the strategic from the company in the short and long run. This small group of employees may represent 10 to 30 percent of the total of employees in the SMEs, however, depends on the type of the company and field this range could change.

The illustration below using approximately range for different types of companies. (See Figure 19).

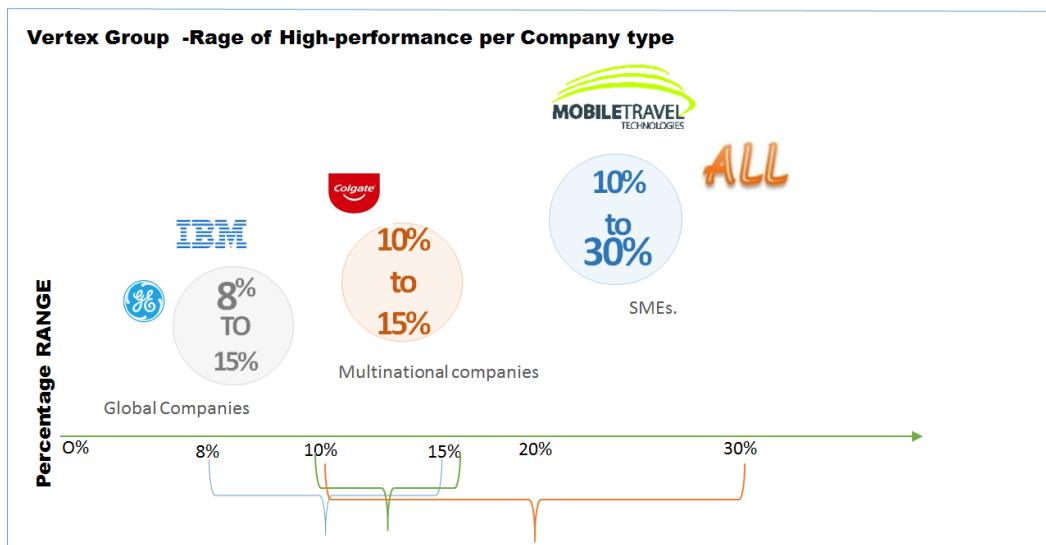


Fig.19: Type of companies VS percentage of high- performance per AFP Group (Faraco,2020)

The Vertex group is the most important to win the “*War for talent*” and this group will be the focus on this exploratory study research.

The best practice recommends that the development process does not apply to all employees, because is an expensive and strategic program and should be more selective such as in multinational and global companies. Despite, all employees from the company have to be trained, but only some of them should be developed, just those employees who are in a strategic function and showing high -performance and potential to drive the company in the long-run to achieve goals strategically.

Moreover, the Vertex group is responsible for the future from the organization, this group has the culture and values from the company, briefly, the group has the “*DNA*” from the organization and core values to share internally for their subordinates each

department. “For any group or organization to function well, its work principles must be aligned with its members’ life principles.”(Dalio, 2017).

Within the vertex group we are going to work with two different types of key functions such as leaders and talents, that represent the most strategically part from the Vertex group such as Chief Executive Ofice (CEO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and executive directors and the second one there are Managers, Coordinators, Supervisors and Strategic staff in the key position, but less strategic the top of the pyramid. However, this second group is extremely important for the operation from the company and responsible for controlling the budget, subordinates, and share company's value and culture, once that this group manages employees from the mos, massive group, from the AFP the Intermediate face. Armstrong(2014) emphasize that :

“A strategy for providing development and growth opportunities should be based on the creation of a learning culture. This is one that promotes learning because it is recognized by top management, line managers, and employees generally as an essential organizational process to which they are committed and in which they engage continuously”.

(Armstrong,2014 p. 342)

Trost(2014) complemente that :

“For those employees above-average performance, be strategically for the organization all of then need to be in a key position within the company achieving above-average value through above-average performance”.

(Trost,2014 p.21)

Implication- Critical case 1: Nowadays, retaining high-performance employees is essential to SMEs to be competitive in a shortage of talent market and succession planning has been a critical issue as well because replace leaders within the organizations is not a simple task in a scarce talent market as in Ireland. Another important point SMEs have been developing all employees from the company when the best practice is to develop just strategic employees in key functions to make strategic decisions for the company in the short and long run.

Implication- Critical case 2: Value Contribution-Human Capital Value Added (HCVA)
The Value contribution on Vertex group in key function is double (HCVA x2) and the valuable contribution by high –performing employee on (Vertex Group) in position, not

the key is 50% higher than that an average employee performance on (Intermediate Face group) that represent employees average performance (HCVA x1).

3.6.1.2. *Intermediate Face*

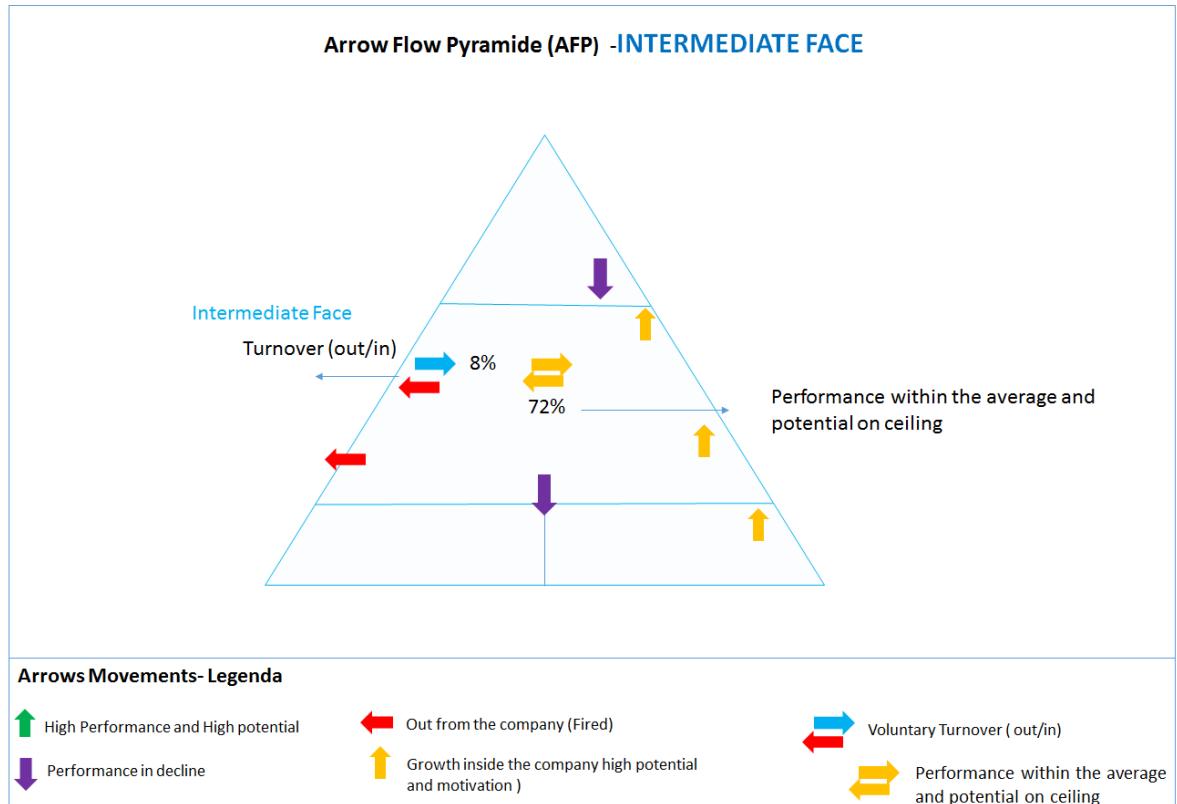


Fig.20: Intermediate Face -Arrows Flow Pyramide (Faraco, 2019)

It is the most massive group from the company, There are employees with an average performance and potential on the ceiling in this group has a great percentage of voluntary turnover but without damage from the business, The employees this group is easy to be replaced, It is not strategic for the company, but it is a quite important one! Because of that, the Intermediate Face group must be trained and motivated to not compromise the entire operation of the company.

Furthermore, It is not the best practice to make a massive investment in training in this group, just enough to improve the operation process and productivity from the company. This huge group of employees may represent 60 to 80 percent of the total of employees from the company. Over 80 percent in this group or less than 60 percent is indicated that the company is unbalanced. The percentage of voluntary turnover in this

group should be also controlled to not exceed the average turnover for the segment and not prejudice the operational structure of the company.

Approach and Analyse: In this group Intermediate Face is not necessary an exploratory work of research or collect data, this group will be the difference between the total of employees from the SME company fewer other three groups from the Arrow Flow Pyramide. Furthermore, This group of intermediate Face has a standard performance and potential on the ceiling, which means that this group is perfect for the company calibrates evaluation from the company.

Implication - Critical case 1: The great question about this group is Which people here on Intermediate Face might be reallocated for another group, such as Vertex or Left Base using performance to assessment.

Implication - Critical case 2: The Intermediate Face group represents employees with an average performance (Human Capital value Added(HCVA x 1).

3.6.1.3. *Base Left*

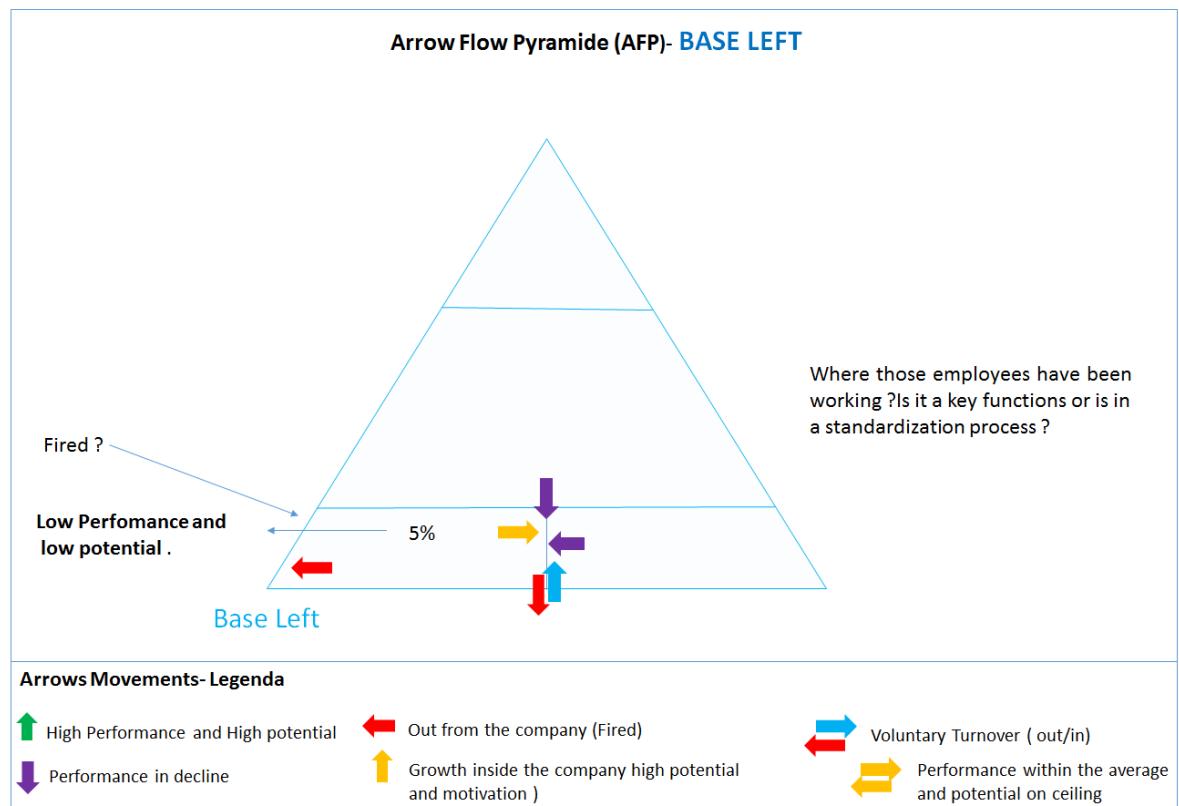


Fig.21.: Base Left -Arrows Flow Pyramide(Faraco, 2019)

Low performance and low potential employees, this group usually is replaced for other employees with high-performance or average performance decreasing the number of Low performance within the company and increase other groups form the AFP such as Intermediate Face and Vertex. Trost (2014) argued that: "*Poor performance in most functions significantly harms company success and competitiveness*".

(Trost 2014, p.21)

This small group of employees may represent no more than 10 percent of the total of employees from the company, more than 10 percent in this group reduce the productivity or revenue from the company drastically if those people are working in a production or sales department for example. This group is not about firing people so much as opening space for new employees or to revert the low-performance from the current employees with training for that employees can access new AFP groups such as Vertex or Intermediate Face increasing the productivity the company.

Approach and Analyse: The suggestion here is that SME companies use '*rank and yank*' systems or a kind of. A study at Drake University comment about the "*rank and yank*" system. Scullen (2005) said that:

"Forced distribution rating systems, where a predetermined percentage of low-performing employees are fired every year, can be an effective way to improve a company's workforce, although these benefits diminish over time".

(Scullen, 2005 p.23)

The systems usually and caustically termed "rank and yank" have been spread to some 20 percent of US companies, among the major employers such as General Electrics, Conoco, Ford, Sun Microsystems, and Microsoft and (the emblematic) Enron. Employers who labor-rank generally align employee evaluations with predetermined performance distribution percentages.

For example, the Sun Microsystems likewise ranks its 43,000 employees in three groups: 20 percent are "superior" that is equivalent the high performance from the to Vertex group, 70 percent are "Sun Standard" that is equivalent to Intermediate face with average performance and 10 percent are "underperforming" that is equivalent with Base Left plus Base Right with low performance. The company has been kept in touch with

underperforming staff to their tenuous status and provides one-on-one coaching to help redeem their performance.

Implication- Critical case 1: To Fire or Coaching to help redeem its performance. The company has been kept in touch with underperforming staff to their tenuous status and provides one-on-one coaching to help redeem their performance.

Implication - Critical case 2: The Low –performing employees on (Base Left) only will generate half percent (HCVA x 0,5) than that of average employee performance from the (Intermediate Face group).

3.6.1.4. *Base Right*

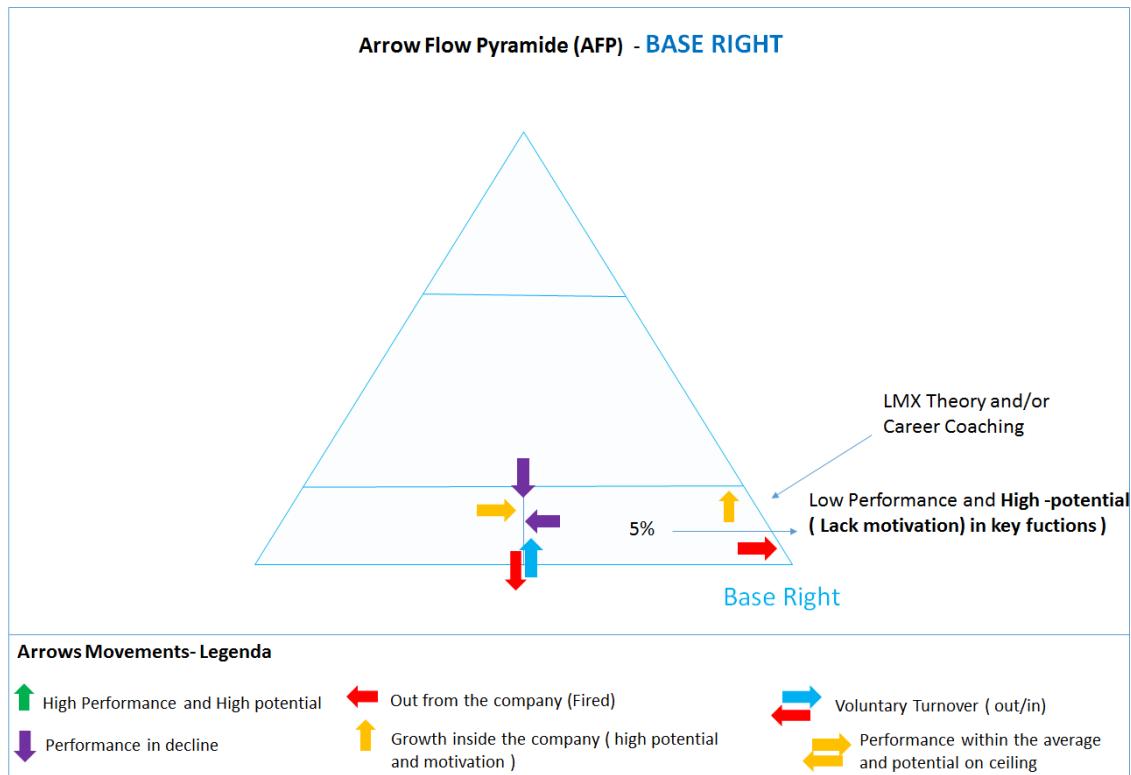


Fig.22: Base Right -Arrows Flow Pyramide (Faraco, 2019)

Employees that have low-performance and high-potential, however for some reason the employees are turning off from the job. We need to understand and explore the reason for this low performance and propose actions to reverse it. This small group of employees may represent no more than 5 percent of the total of employees from the company. Peoples in this group still are strategic from the company and more than 5%

percent of the company employees in this group would impact the power of decision-makers from the company in the short and long run.

Approach and Analyse: This group may be analyzed initially by the Leadership-Member Exchange theory (LMX) and in a second moment, offer a career coaching for those employees, If applicable.

LMX theory for those employees with a problem within the work environment and, career coaching for those employees with technical deficiency. In case of employee showed both, pass them first LMX theory and then by career coaching. Armstrong (2014) commented about programs to support employes in a hard moment: “*Culture support and reinforcement programs aim to preserve and underpin what is good and functional about the present culture*”.

(Armstrong 2014, p.395)

Purcell et al. (2003) complement that:

“*Successful firms can meet people's needs both for a good job and to work 'in a great place'. They create good work and a conducive working environment. In this way, they become an 'employer of choice'. People will want to work there because their individual needs are met –for a good job with prospects linked to training, appraisal, and working with a good boss who listens and gives some autonomy but helps with coaching and guidance*”.

(Purcell et al.,2003 p.496)

Implication - Critical case 1: In this group, we are going to work with employees that have high potential but with low-performance. Sometimes, employees have to lack motivation because their workplace does not have a positive work environment or low motivation is for personal reasons. To resolve this, management could make a meeting to understand the reason an employee is showing poor performance.

After applied the LMX Theory or career coaching, If the employee does not show more of a lack of motivation or relationship problems, He should be relocated to the Vertex group or Intermediate Face, where the employee was before the trouble of performance.

However, if the opposite takes place, the employee not overcome the lack of motivation problem and still has a bad relationship with the team and boss, the employee should be

moved to Base Left to be analyzed carefully in some moment, perhaps He may be fired. Northhouse(2016) define LMX as:

“Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory describes the dual relationship and the interactions between a leader and subordinate. All the leadership theories we have learned so far address the relationship between the leader and the subordinates as a group. LMX theory is a unique leadership technique because unlike traditional leadership theories, it focuses on the dyadic relationship and addresses the specific relationships between the leader and each subordinate”.

(Northhouse, 2016 p.144)

Implication- Critical case 2: Value Contribution-Human Capital Value Added (HCVA)
The Low –performing employees on (Base Righ)only will generate half percent (HCVA x 0,5) than that an average employee performance from the (Intermediate Face group).

3.6.1.5. Company Overall analysis using Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP)

The aim of summarizes is to help the identification of the parts in the data collected using AFP to make a deep analysis of talent movement and retention around the SME company. The data collected using the answer the objective questions to analyze in each SME company per group from Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP). Moreover, I applied the summary below to identify distortion in each AFP group and to understand the level of performance from the SME company during retaining talent process in this study.

1) Retention and Long term relationship between a high-performance employee and SME over a sustained period.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Yes (X)- Score 15%

- ✓ Company voluntary turnover involving high-performance employees from 0% to 10% during the last 12 months.
- ✓ Vertex Group voluntary turnover of at least 20% last 12 months.

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ Company turnover involving high-performance employees over 14% during the last 12 months.
- ✓ Vertex Group voluntary turnover of at least 24% last 12 months.

Partially (X)- Score 8%

- ✓ Company turnover involving high-performance employees from 10,1% to 13,9% during the last 12 months.
- ✓ Vertex Group turnover no less than 20,1% and no more than 23,9% last 12 months.

2) Enough Talent covering the entire SME company to value add.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Yes (X)- Score 15%

- ✓ The company has a high-performance employee in key functions working in the most strategic departments of the company.

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ The company does not have a high-performance employee in a key function working in the most strategic departments of the company.

Partially (X)- Score 8%

- ✓ The company has a high-performance employee working outside the strategic of departments the company or as a staff.

3) Followup the SME employee's movement and level of performance to future analysis and intervention if necessary.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Yes (X)- Score 15%

- ✓ The company has been analyzing the issues around the AFP group to revert it such as Level of talent in Vertex group, rotativity around Vertex group, Level of the low-performance employee in the Base Left group, and level of High-performance employees showing temporary low-performance in the base Right group.

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ The company has not to intervene in the AFP group to revert performance or voluntary turnover issues around the company appropriately.

Partially (X)- Score 8%

- ✓ The company has been partially analyzing the issues around the AFP group to revert it such as Level of talent in Vertex group, rotativity around Vertex group, Level of the low-performance employee in the Base Left group, and level of High-performance employees showing temporary low-performance in the base Right group.

4) The Vertex group Human Capital Value-added involving high-potential employees is over than 30%

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Yes (X)- Score 15%

- ✓ Company Vertex (HCVG) involving key function is over than 30%

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ Company Vertex (HCVG) involving key function is less than 25%

Partially (X)- Score 8%

- ✓ Company Vertex (HCVG) involving key function is no less than 25,1% and no more 29,9%.

5) The Vertex Group, This small group of high-performance employees may represent 10 to 30 percent of the total of employees

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Yes (X)- Score 10%

- ✓ The high-performance employee's group represents 10 to 30 percent.

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ The high-performance employee's group represents less than 10 %.

Partially (X)- Score 5%

- ✓ The high-performance employee's group represents more than 31 %.

6) The Intermediate Face, This massive group of employees may represent 60 to 80 percent of the total of employees from the company.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Yes (X)- Score 10%

- ✓ The average performance employees represent 60 to 80 percent.

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ The average performance employees represent less than 49% or over 81 %.

Partially (X)- Score 5%

- ✓ The average performance employees represent 50 to 59 percent.

7) The Base Left, This small group of employees may represent no more than 10 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Yes (X)- Score 10%

- ✓ The low-performance employee's group represents no more than 10%.

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ The low-performance employee group represents more than 15%.

Partially (X)- Score 5%

- ✓ The low-performance employee group represents 10,1 to 14,9 percent.

8) The Base Right, This small group of employees may represent no more than 5 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			

Table 01:The overall table to analyze companies AFP Score (Faraco, 2020)

Yes (X)- Score 5%

- ✓ The low-performance employee group represents no more than 5%.

NO (X)- Score 0 %

- ✓ The low-performance employee group represents more than 10%.

Partially (X)- Score 5%

- ✓ The low-performance employee group represents 5,1 to 9,9 percent.

Total AFP Score:100%

AFP Score analyzes per performance balance.

- Excellent performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (from 80% to 100%)
- Good performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (from 70% to 79%)
- Razoavel performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (from 60% to 69%)
- Poor performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (less than 59%)

4. Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1. Overview

My research aims to understand the experience of SMEs to retain high-performance employees in a time of shortage talent as in the Irish market and hence winning the “War for Talent”.

Chapter three Outlined the methodology and approach to my research and I discussed why I chose an exploratory research strategy whereby primary data is collected through semi-structured interviews with four SMEs. The mixed-methods convergent type was selected to cover all objectives questions, being quantitative and qualitative data collected together and used to triangulate the findings and answer the objective questions.

The results of the quantitative phase serve to complement the research questions and variables in the qualitative phase. This design is particularly suitable for elucidating an unclear frame of reference, better exploring a little-known or a new theory or phenomenon, or defining questions or variables used to develop tools for the quantitative phase. Having reviewed the available literature outlined in section 2 and explained in the conceptual framework internationalization. I will now discuss my findings using an inductive analyzes data introducing AFP.

All of the findings in this chapter were analyzed based on the research methodology used in chapter three on the themes and sources collected in chapter two.

4.2. Findings

There is extensive literature which studies that explore the impact on hight performance employee retention practices but little existing literature discussing a link of high-performance retention practice and competitive advantage, in the long run winning the "War for Talent " in time of shortage talent in Ireland.

The chosen research methodology, strategy, and subsequent mixed-methods data collection were used to support the finding and to make conclusions as they relate to my research objectives. A large amount of primary data was collected from four SMEs in six semi-structured interviews. I have performed a statistical quantitative and coding qualitative analysis and found:

1. The profile of the SME companies per level of performance using the AFP approach, interviews performance level perception, and Human Capital Value Added in Vertex Group (HCVG). (*Quantitative*)
2. SMEs experience retaining High-performance employees in Ireland in times of shortage talent. (*Qualitative*) and the ability of the participants to identify the high-performance and low-performance employees around the company. (*Qualitative*)
3. Finally, all data collected during the interviews were summarized into the AFP Score to analyze the balance of the SMEs using an original approach. (*Conclusion Using quantitative statistical score plus qualitative information to evaluate each point*).

The interviewee's profile is quite interesting and They have academic and professional experience in different fields, such as Food, Services, Retail, Business, and academic experience doing Master and Ph.D. The restaurant's sector contributed with 2 participates, and two other segments also contributed such as Service with 2 interviewees and Retail with more 2 participants. Figure 23 shows a summary of the participates profile.

Respondents	Gender	Function	Qualification	Experience in years (SME)	Company
Interviewee 1	Male	Staff	IT Master student	2 years	A ↓
Interviewee 2	Male	Manager	PhD in Oncology studys	4 years	A ←
Interviewee 3	Female	Staff	Secundary school	20 Years	B ↓
Interviewee 4	Female	Manager	Secundary school	15 Years	B ←
Interviewee 5	Female	Staff	Master Student	1 Years	C →
Interviewee 6	Male	Manager	Master Student	1 Years	D →

Fig.23: Bio-Data of Participants

Quantitative Results –Company “A”

4.2.1.3. Company A- Couple of interviews (Manager and Staff)

4.2.2. -Profile of the SMEs per level of performance using AFP.

COMPANY A is a very well-highly regarded takeaway restaurant in Dublin with the current 20 employees.

All the information collected during the semi-structured interview with a manager and staff from the SME company was put in one of those groups of the Arrow Flow Pyramid (AFP) to analyze strategically the level of performance. The focus on this study was the Vertex group to understand How SME company has retained talent in scarce Market labor as the Irish.

(See figure 24)

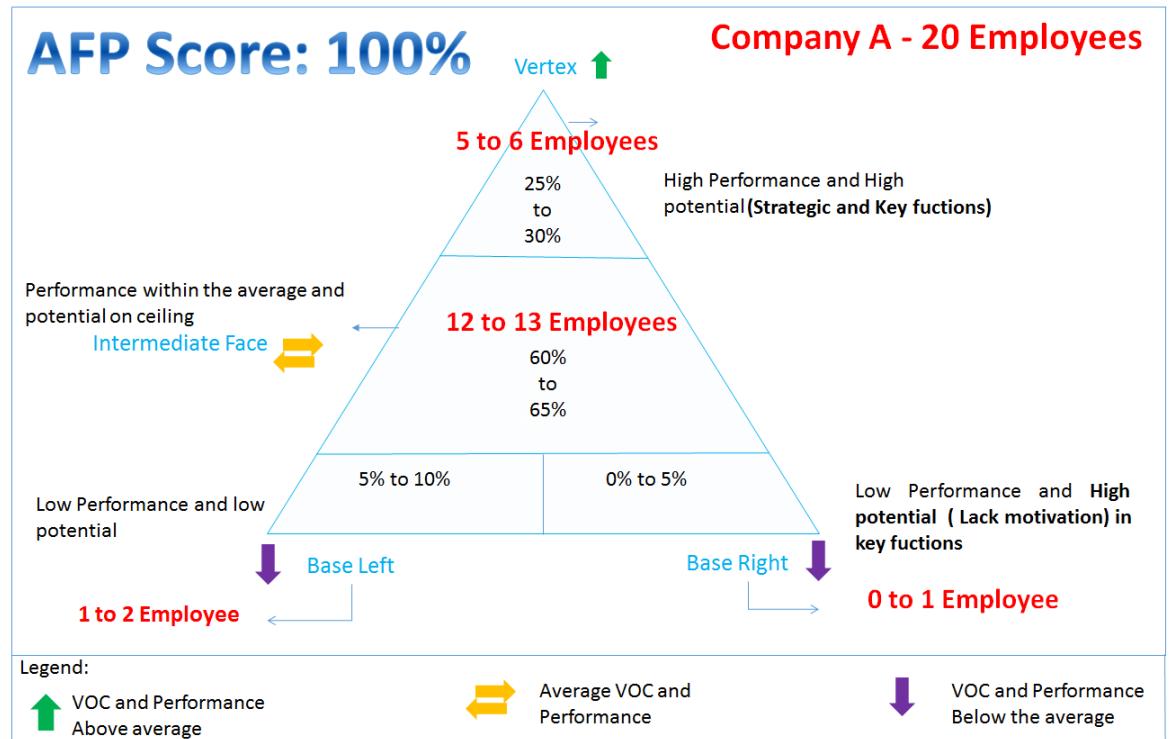


Fig.24: AFP company profile per group performance level

In this quantitative AFP design, I examine relationships among variables from AFP groups percentage range versus Company A results in this exploratory study:

- Vertex group percentage Range (10 to 30 percent)
 - SMEs research results (25 to 30 percent)
- Intermediate group percentage Range (60 to 80 percent)
 - SMEs research results (60 to 65 percent)
- Base Left group percentage Range (no more than 10 percent)
 - SMEs research results (5 to 10 percent)
- Base Right group percentage Range (no more than 5 percent)
 - SMEs research results (0 to 5 percent)

Below the different perceptions from the interviews about performance level around the AFP group.

	Total	Vertex ↑	Intermediate Face ←	Base left ↓	Base Right ↓	% Turnover Vertex group	% Turnover High-performance Company A ←
Interviewee 1	100.00%	30%	65%	5%	0%	14%	5%
Staff Employee(s)	20	6	13	1	0	1	1
Interviewee 2	100.00%	25%	60%	10%	5%	14%	5%
Manager Employee(s)	20	5	12	2	1	1	1
# Perception Employees		1	1	1	1	0	0

Arrows Legenda

- ↑ High Performance and High potential
- Average Performance And potential on ceiling
- ↓ Performance in decline
- ← Voluntary Turnover (out/in)

Fig.25: Company A –Table about performance employees perception each interviewee (Faraco, 2020)

Vertex Group – Human Capital Value per Group (HCVG)

In this research, I did not collect sensitive data such as revenue, total cost, and HR cost to make a financial conclusion. Despite this, It was used as a standard value to KPI - Value Overall Contribution (VOC) of € 10,000 to illustrate financially that retain high –performance employees could increase the human value contribution, such as productivity and outcomes from the business.

- a) Vertex Group- Formula to find Human capital Value per Group (HCVG)
 - 1) The company High Performance and High potential in a Key Function (5 to 6 employees)

$$VOC \times 2,0 = HCVA$$

$$HCVA=10,000 \text{ €} \times 2,0$$

$$\text{HCVA}=20,000 \text{ €}$$

$$\text{HCVG}= \text{Vertex Group Employees} \times \text{HCVA Group}$$

$$\text{HCVG}= 5 \text{ or } 6 \times 20,000 \text{ €}$$

$$\text{HCVG}= 100,000 \text{ € (5 employees)} \text{ to } 120,000 \text{ € (6 employees)}$$

- 1) The company did not have High Performance and High potential in a Key Function

VOC x 1,5 = HCVA
HCVA=10,000 € x 1,5
HCVA=15,000 €

HCVG= Vertex Group Employees x HCVA Group
HCVG= 0 X 15,000 €
HCVG= 0 €

Qualitative Findings –Company “A”

4.2.1. SMEs experience retaining High-performance employees in Ireland in times of shortage talent.

- a) **Vertex Group- Represented 25% to 30% (5 to 6 employees was mentioned as high-performance)**

“In the context of competitive advantage, high-performance work systems act as a strategic lever for developing core competencies of the workforce and a necessary condition for implementation of the strategy” (see Huselid and Becker, 1997, for review)

The company has a perception that there are 5 to 6 high-performance employees in Key functions around the company that represents 25% to 30% of the company employees. Those high – performance employees were identified working in Key functions in three departments such as Manager, Kitchen, and Driver, being three of them working in a manager position, two as a chef kitchen, and one as a Driver Management. The SME company to retain those high-performance has been offering a good wage over than offered by the market, free food during the work time, company car, and packaging of stuff and work permit for a foreigner that showed high-performance working in critical skill position like chef Kitchen. This was revealed by a participant who noted that:

High potential star. It doesn't matter which department they're working on. If someone is showing good performance the company offering them a work permit. Because in our company mostly foreigners are working in a key function. So that's another thing the company is doing to keep the high-performance employee in this company. .(Interviewee 1, 2020)

The voluntary turnover involving high-performance in the Vertex group last year was 16%. One high -performance employee left the company to work in another SME to get a better wage. The company has more Two high-performance employees working as a Chef Kitchen and the permanent absence of the high-employer that went out is not prejudice for the business. The company has an employee backup and succession planning to replace a high-performance in key function or position If required. Liu (2009) states that:

“These high-performance work systems, which include rigorous staffing procedures, employee participation, job redesign, investments in training, and alternative approaches to compensation (skill-based pay and group incentive compensation), are widely believed to improve organizational performance through their impact on employees’ competencies, discretionary authority, and motivation”.

(Liu, 2009 p.109)

b) Intermediate face – Represented 60% to 65% (12 to 13 Average performance employees and potential on the ceiling)

This group represents 60% to 65% (12 to 13 employees) represent the operational part of the company and It was not analyzed deeply.

c) Base left – Represented 5% to 10% (1 to 2 low-performance and low-potential)

Jassawalla (2009 cited in Rubino 2009a) states that as time passes, however, team members differentiate between individuals with high- and low-performance histories and many low performers rely on their high-performing teammates to do a disproportionate share of the work. By causing an increase in social loafing, performance diversity influences team effectiveness negatively.

The company has been offer training for two employees that showed low-performance last year. Moreover, the company has an inclusive approach in which an employee with a skill gap is training, and the employees with low-performance are fired only if extremely necessary. However, the company put this low-performance employee in observation to follow-up (wait-to-see) if the performance of the employee increase. The interviewee 2, the Manager, pointed out,

Low potential employees there being observed and the company replaces them if they are not performing well. (Interviewee 2, 2020)

d) Base Right - Represented 0% to 5% (0 to 1 Low-performance employee with high-potential)

The manager mentioned during the interview that a high-performance employee last year was showing low-performance and the quality of the work this employee was dropping down faster. However, the manager that builds trust and respected relationship with the employee had a private conversation with him to understand the reason for the poor quality of work recently. The employee argued that they were going through a personal problem. The manager gave to employee two free weeks to resolve this personal Family problem. The manager also mentioned that after two free weeks the employees resolved the personal problem and started to show a high-performance like before.

Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings – Company “A” _ AFP Score

The AFP Score to analyze the balance the SMEs –Company A

Conclusion Using a quantitative statistical score plus qualitative findings to summarize and evaluate each point.

- 1) Retention and Long term relationship between a high-performance employee and SME over a sustained period.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			The turnover involving high-performance in the vertex group was 16%.

Score:15%

- 2) Enough Talent covering the entire SME company to value add.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			The company has high-performance in Key functions in three different departments to covering the entire SME company strategically.

Score:15%

3) Followup the SME employee's movement and level of performance to future analysis and intervention if necessary.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			The company has been analyzing each AFP group strategically and doing intervention if necessary.

Score:15%

4) The Vertex group Human Capital Value-added involving high-potential employees is over 30%.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			Human Capital Value per Group (Vertex)HCVG= 100,000€ (5 employees) to 120,000€(6 employees) that represent 25% to 30% of all Company Human Capital Value Added (HCVA).

Score:15%

5) The Vertex Group, This small group of high-performance employees may represent 10 to 30 percent of the total of employees

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			25 % to 30%

Score:10%

6) The Intermediate Face, This massive group of employees may represent 60 to 80 percent of the total of employees from the company.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			60% to 65%

Score:10%

7) The Base Left, This small group of employees may represent no more than 10 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			5% to 10%

Score:10%

8) The Base Right, This small group of employees may represent no more than 5 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			0% to 5%

Score:10%

Table 02:The overall table to analyze company A (Faraco, 2020)

Company A-Final AFP Score:100%

- a) Excellent performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (80% to 100%)
- b) Good performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (70% to 79%)
- c) Razoavel performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (60% to 69%)
- d) Poor performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (less than 59%)

Quantitative Results –Company “B”

4.2.1.1. Company B- Couple of interviews (Manager and Staff)

4.2.2. The profile of the SMEs per level of performance using AF

COMPANY B is a prestigious hair salon in Dublin with the current 24 employees.

All the information collected during the semi-structured interview with a manager and staff from the SME was put in one of those groups of the Arrow Flow Pyramid (AFP) to analyze strategically the level of performance. The focus on this study was the Vertex group to understand How SME company has retained talent in scarce Market labor as the Irish.

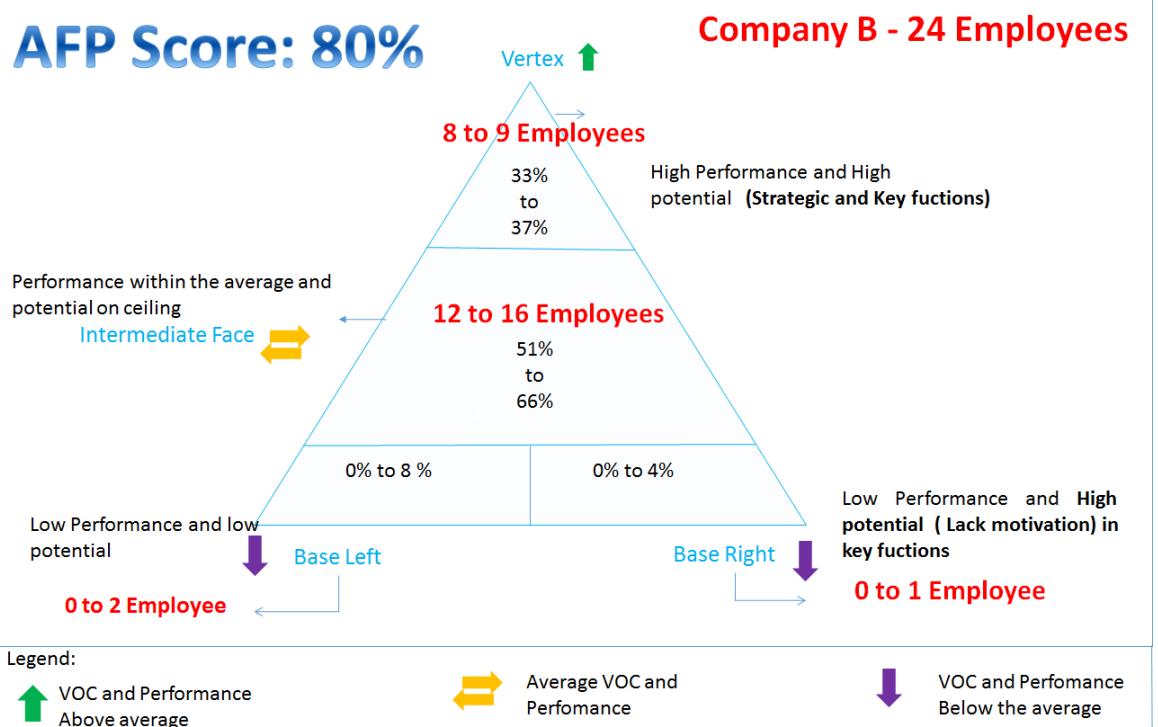


Fig.26: AFP company profile per performance level

In this quantitative AFP design, I examine relationships among variables from AFP groups percentage range versus Company B results in this exploratory study:

a) Vertex group percentage Range (10 to 30 percent)

- SMEs research results (33 to 37 percent)

b) Intermediate group percentage Range (60 to 80 percent)

- SMEs research results (51 to 66 percent)

c) Base Left group percentage Range (no more than 10 percent)

- SMEs research results (0 to 8 percent)

d) Base Right group percentage Range (no more than 5 percent)

- SMEs research results (0 to 4 percent)

Below the different perceptions from the interviews about performance levels around the AFP group.

	Total	Vertex ↑	Intermediate Face ←	Base left ↓	Base Right ↓	% Turnover Vertex group ↘	% Turnover high-performance company B ↙
Interviewee 3	100.00%	33%	67%	0%	0%	27%	12%
Staff Employee(s)	24	8	16	0	0	3	3
Interviewee 4	100.00%	37%	51%	8%	4%	27%	12%
Manager Employee(s)	24	9	12	2	1	3	3
# Perception Employees	0	1	4	2	1	0	0

Arrows Legenda

- ↑ High Performance and High potential
- Average Performance And potential on ceiling
- ↓ Performance in decline
- ↔ Voluntary Turnover (out/in)

Fig.27: Company B –Table about performance employees perception each interviewee (Faraco, 2020)

Vertex Group – Human Capital Value per Group (HCVG)

In this research, I did not collect sensitive data such as revenue, total cost, and HR cost to make a financial conclusion. Despite this, It was used as a standard Value Overall Contribution (VOC) of € 10,000 to illustrate financially that retain high –performance employees could increase the human value contribution, such as productivity and outcomes from the business.

a)The company has around 2 to 4 employees mentioned as a High Performance and High potential in a Key Function.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VOCx } 2,0 &= \text{HCVA} \\ \text{HCVA} &= 10,000 \text{ €} \times 2,0 \\ \text{HCVA} &= 20,000 \text{ €} \end{aligned}$$

HCVG= Vertex Group Employees x HCVA Group

HCVG= 2 or 4 X 20,000 €

HCVG= 40,000 € (2 employees) to 80,000 € (4 employees)

b) The company has around 5 to 6 employees mentioned as a High Performance and High potential around the company outside the most strategic department.

VOC x 1,5 = HCVA

HCVA=10,000 € x 1,5

HCVA=15,000 €

HCVG= Vertex Group Employees x HCVA Group

HCVG= 5 or 6 X 15,000 €

HCVG= 75,000 € (5 employees) to 90,000 € (6 employees)

Qualitative Finding –Company “B”

4.2.3. SMEs Retain High-performance employees in Ireland in times of shortage talent (Quantitative)

- a) **Vertex Group- Represented 25% to 30% (5 to 6 employees was mentioned as high-performance)**

The company has a perception that there are 8 to 9 high-performance employees around the company that represent 33% to 37% of the company employees. However, 2 to 4 high – performance employees were identified as working in key functions in the most strategic department of the company. The SME to retain those high-performance has been offering a freelancer position. As a freelancer the professional having control over your workload, the clients you work with and increases the monthly income. Burchell (1999 cited in Heery 2004a) defines that freelances are self-employed workers who provide labor services, usually to several employers, on a fixed-term, temporary or intermittent basis. They can, therefore, be classified as 'dependent self-employed' and generally have the status of 'workers' in Ireland law, although an unknown proportion may also be engaged in bogus self-employment or have uncertain employment status. Mettling(2017,p.31) claims that "According to a study conducted by UpWork and the Freelancers Union, 35 percent of America's workforce is made up of freelancers".

The voluntary turnover involving high-performance in the Vertex group last year was 27%. Three high-performance employees left the company to work in another SME to get a better wage in a permanent position.

This was revealed by an interviewee who noted that: “*The company makes a register of the employees and pay labor tax to all of them to support the functionary in the future in case of unemployment*”. (*Interviewee 3,2020*) .However, interviewee 3 also mentioned that the main competitors from the company have been paying the same tax and offering the same benefits package. However, She also complemented that the main competitors have been offering a better wage to permanent employees

Gray, Phillips, and Norman (2006 cited in Leiva 2012) argue that;

Among the costs of turnover among key employees, the literature highlights the loss of knowledge and know-how, the costs associated with tasks, areas unattended, the recruitment and training of new employees and the lower levels of performance until a new employee is adapted to the job (Gray, Phillips, and Norman 1996).

b) Intermediate face – Represented 51% to 66% (12 to 16 Average performance employees and potential on the ceiling)

This group represents 51 to 60% (or 12 to 16 employees) working in the operational part of the company and It was not analyzed deeply.

c) Base left – Represented 10% (2 low-performance and low-potential)

The company does not offer training for low-performance employees. The company expects those low-performance employees to seek professional improvement on their own. Moreover, The company does not fire low- performance employees.

d) Base Right - Represented 0% to 5% (0 to 1 Low-performance employee with high-potential)

The manager mentioned during the interview that a high-performance employee has been showing low-performance and the quality of the work him dropped down faster. However, the manager that built trust and respectful relationship with the employee had a private conversation with him to understand the reason for the poor quality of work recently. The employee argued that was passing for a personal delicate moment.

As a solution, the manager gave to employee a month's vacation to resolve this personal problem. The manager also mentioned that this employee still on vacation.

Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings – Company “B” _ AFP Score

The AFP Score to analyze the balance the SMEs – Company B

Conclusion Using a quantitative statistical score plus qualitative findings to summarize and evaluate each point.

- 1) Retention and Long term relationship between a high-performance employee and SME over a sustained period.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
	X		The company had 12 % of high-performance turnover last year. When We analyzed this turnover in the VERTEX group the percentage turnover is 27 %. In 12 months three high-performance employees left the company to work in the main competitors.

Score: 0

- 2) Enough Talent covering the entire SME company to value add.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			The company has high-performance in Key functions in the most strategic department the company and around the company.

Score:15%

- 3) Followup the SME employee's movement and level of performance to future analysis and intervention if necessary.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			The company has been analyzing each AFP group strategically and doing intervention if necessary.

Score:15%

- 4) The Vertex group Human Capital Value-added involving high-potential employees is over than 30%

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			High performance working in key function represented 13% to 27 % the Human Capital Value Added Group(HCVG) Vertex. Moreover, the HCVG total from the Vertex group was 45% to 53% including now high-performance in a staff position or no key function.

Score:15%

5) The Vertex Group, This small group of high-performance employees may represent 10 to 30 percent of the total of employees

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
		X	33% to 37% the company has a great number of employees mentioned as a high-performance, however, part of that high-performance are freelancers without employment links with the company.

Score:5%

6) The Intermediate Face, This massive group of employees may represent 60 to 80 percent of the total of employees from the company.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			51% to 66%

Score:10%

7) The Base Left, This small group of employees may represent no more than 10 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			8%

Score:10%

8) The Base Right, This small group of employees may represent no more than 5 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			4%

Score:10%

Table 03: The overall table to analyze company B (Faraco, 2020)

Company B -Final AFP Score: 80%

a)Excellent performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (80% to 100%)

b)Good performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (70% to 79%)

c)Razoavel performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (60% to 69%)

d)Poor performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (less than 59%)

Qualitative Results -Company “C”

4.2.3.3. Company “C”-Single interview with a Staff

4.2.4. The profile of the SMEs per level of performance using AF

COMPANY C is a small grocery in Dublin with the current 7 employees. All the information collected during the semi-structured interview with staff from the SME company was put in one of those groups of the Arrow Flow Pyramid (AFP) to analyze strategically the level of performance. The focus on this study was the Vertex group to understand How SME company has retained talent in scarce Market labor as the Irish.

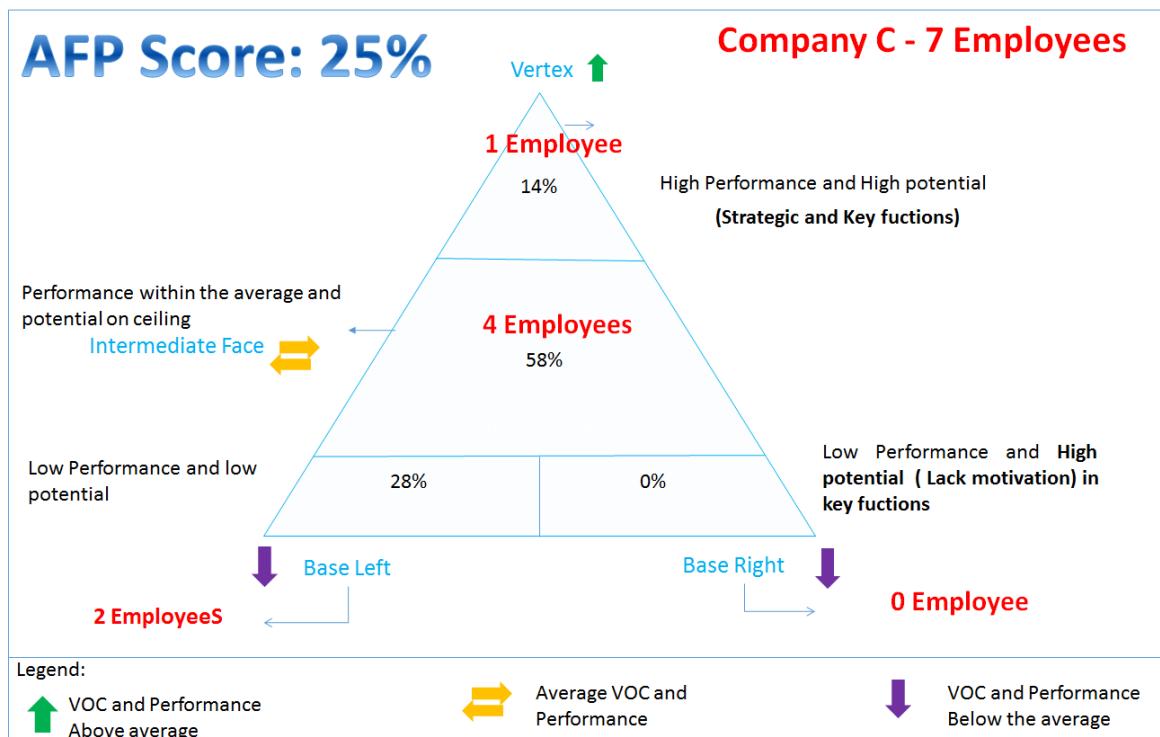


Fig.28: AFP company profile per performance level

In this quantitative AFP design, I examine relationships among variables from AFP groups percentage range versus Company C results in this exploratory study:

a) Vertex group percentage Range (10 to 30 percent)

- SMEs research results (14 percent)

b) Intermediate group percentage Range (60 to 80 percent)

- SMEs research results (58 percent)

c) Base Left group percentage Range (no more than 10 percent)

- SMEs research results (28 percent)

d) Base Right group percentage Range (no more than 5 percent)

- SMEs research results (0 percent)

Below the interview's perception of the company employee performance levels.

	Total	Vertex	Intermediate Face	Base left	Base Righ	%Turnover Vertex group	% Turnover high-performance Company C
Interviewee 5	100.00%	14%	58%	28%	0%	50%	14%
Staff Employee(s)	7	1	4	2	0	1	1

Arrows Legenda

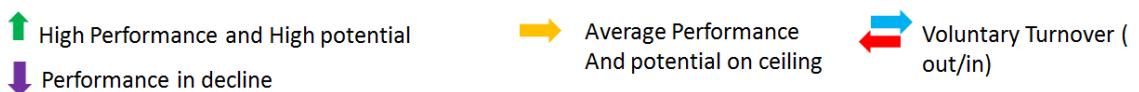
- 
- ↑ High Performance and High potential
 - Average Performance And potential on ceiling
 - ↓ Performance in decline
 - ↔ Voluntary Turnover (out/in)

Fig.29: Company C –Table about performance employees perception each interviewee (Faraco, 2020)

Vertex Group- Human capital Value per Group (HCVG)

In this research, I did not collect sensitive data such as revenue, total cost, and HR cost to make a financial conclusion. Despite this, It was used as a standard value to KPI - Value Overall Contribution (VOC) of € 10,000 to illustrate financially that retain high -performance employees could increase the human value contribution, such as productivity and outcomes from the business.

1)The company did not have High Performance and High potential in a Key Function in this company

VOC x 2,0 = HCVA

HCVA=10,000 € x 2,0

HCVA=20,000 €

HCVG= Vertex Group Employees x HCVA Group

HCVG= 0 X 20,000 €

HCVG= 0 €

2)The company had a High-Performance and High potential in a Key Function in this company

VOC x 1,5 = HCVA

HCVA=10,000 € x 1,5

HCVA=15,000 €

HCVG= Vertex Group Employees x HCVA Group

HCVG= 0 X 20,000,00 €

HCVG= 0 €

Qualitative Findings –Company “C”

4.2.5. Company C -SMEs experience retaining high-performance employees in Ireland

a) Vertex Group- Represented 14% (from 1 Staff employee was mentioned as high-performance)

The interviewee 5 has a perception just one high-performance employee is working in the company as a staff that represents 14 percent of the company employees. However, this high-performance employee was not working in a key function or as a manager.

The SME does not have a special approach or strategy to retain high-performance employees and the turnover last year involving high-performance was around 14 percent.

During the interview, the interviewee 5 mentioned that the main issues around the business had been caused due to the management department does not have a high-

performance employee working there to manage the business appropriately. Patchen(1962) claims that:

"When the supervisor is interested in the welfare of his subordinates and is accepted by them as a member of their "team," then his close attention to what his subordinates are doing may be welcomed by them. When the supervisor is around and showing interest in what they are doing, subordinates may be eager to please him and to win his approval. On the other hand, when the supervisor is seen by subordinates as indifferent to their welfare, or even as a hostile outsider, then his close supervision will probably be met with apathy or resentment".

(Patchen, 1962 p.290)

- b) Intermediate face – Represented 58% (4 Average performance employees and potential on the ceiling)**

This group represents 58% (three staff and one manager) The group are not be analyzed deeply.

- c) Base left – Represented 28% (2 low-performance and low-potential)**

The company has not been offer training for two employees that showed low-performance. In this group, The company has a manager in a key function that was mentioned as low-performance and also "Rude".

- d) Base Right - Represented 0% (0 Low-performance employee with high-potential)**

The company did not have an employee showing low-performance and high-potential.

Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings – Company “C” _ AFP Score

The AFP Score to analyze the balance the SMEs- Company C

Conclusion Using a quantitative statistical score plus qualitative findings to summarize and evaluate each point.

- 1) Retention and Long term relationship between a high-performance employee and SME over a sustained period.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
	X		The turnover involving high-performance around the company was 14% last year. The Vertex group voluntary turnover was 50% involving high-performance employees.

Score:0

2) Enough Talent covering the entire SME company to value add.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
	X		The company did not have high-performance in Key functions to covering the entire SME company strategically. Just a staff was mentioned as a high-performance employee.

Score:0

3) Followup the SME employee's movement and level of performance to future analysis and intervention if necessary.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
	X		The company did not have been analyzing each AFP group strategically and doing intervention when necessary.

Score:0

4) The Vertex group Human Capital Value-added involving high-potential employees is over than 30%

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
	X		Human Capital Value per Group (Vertex)HCVG= € 15,000 (1 employee) working in a staff position that represents 23% of all Company Human Capital Value Added (HCVA).

Score:0

5) The Vertex Group, This small group of high-performance employees may represent 10 to 30 percent of the total of employees

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			14% (one staff employee) - However, The high-performance employee did not work in Key function or as a manager.

Score:10%

6) The Intermediate Face, This massive group of employees may represent 60 to 80 percent of the total of employees from the company.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
		X	58%

Score:5%

7) The Base Left, This small group of employees may represent no more than 10 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
	X		28% (The manager was mentioned as a Low-performance and one staff).

Score:0

8) The Base Right, This small group of employees may represent no more than 5 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			0%

Score:10

Table 04: The overall table to analyze company C (Faraco, 2020)

Company B -Final AFP Score: 25%

- a) Excellent performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (80% to 100%)
- b) Good performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (70% to 79%)
- c) Razoavel performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (60% to 69%)
- d) Poor performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (less than 59%)**

Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings – Company “D” _ AFP Score

4.2.5.1. Company D (Single interview -Manager)

4.2.6. Profile of the SMEs per level of performance using AFP

COMPANY D is a relaxing SPA in Dublin with the current 20 employees.

All the information collected during the semi-structured interview with a manager from the SME company was put in one of those groups of the Arrow Flow Pyramid (AFP) to analyze strategically the level of performance. The focus on this study was the Vertex group to understand How SME company has retained talent in scarce Market labor as the Irish.

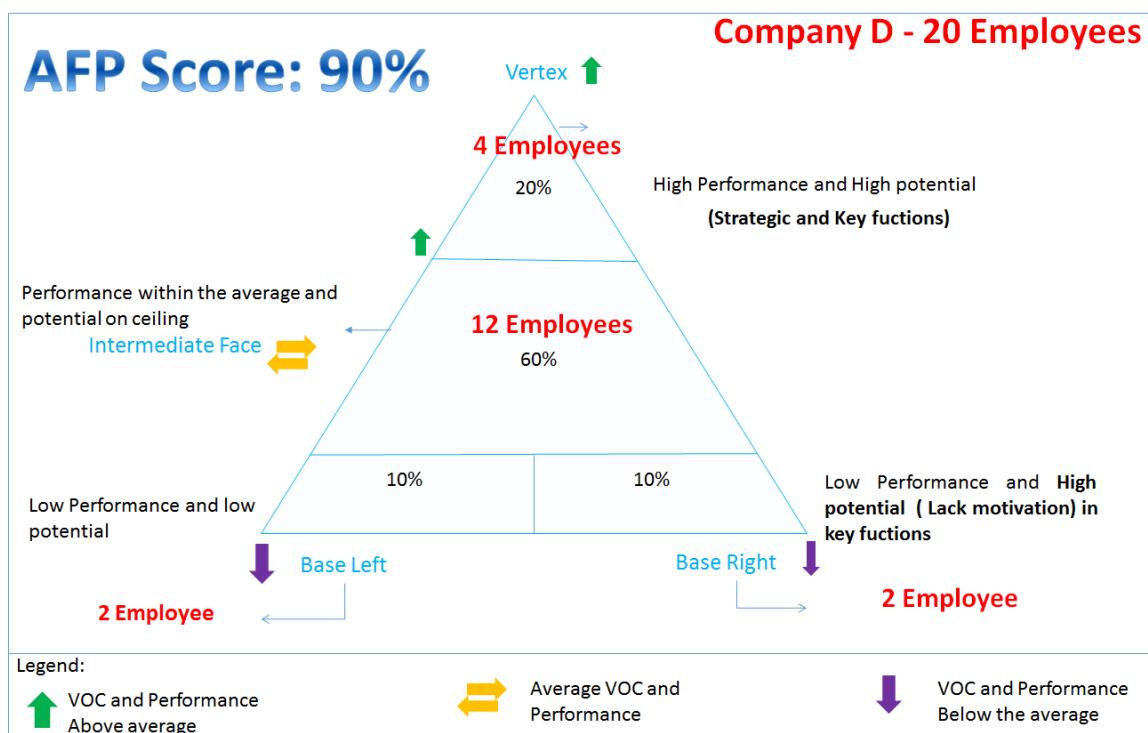


Fig.30: AFP company profile per performance level

In this quantitative AFP design, I examine relationships among variables from AFP groups percentage range versus Company D results in this exploratory study:

a) Vertex group percentage Range (10 to 30 percent)

- SMEs research results (20 percent)

b) Intermediate group percentage Range (60 to 80 percent)

- SMEs research results (60 percent)

c) Base Left group percentage Range (no more than 10 percent)

- SMEs research results (10 percent)

d) Base Right group percentage Range (no more than 5 percent)

- SMEs research results (10 percent)

Below the interview's perception of the company employee performance levels.

	Total	Vertex ↑	Intermediate Face ←	Base left ↓	Base Right ↓	% Turnover Vertex group ←→
Interviewee 6	100.00%	20%	60%	10%	10%	0%
Manager Employee(s)	20	4	13	2	2	0

Arrows Legenda

-
- ↑ High Performance and High-potential
 - Average Performance And potential on ceiling
 - ↔ Voluntary Turnover (out/in)

Fig.31: Company D –Table about performance employees perception each interviewee (Faraco, 2020)

Vertex Group- Human capital Value per Group (HCVG)

In this research, I did not collect sensitive data such as revenue, total cost, and HR cost to make a financial conclusion. Despite this, It was used as a standard value to KPI - Value Overall Contribution (VOC) of € 10,000 to illustrate financially that retain high -performance employees could increase the human value contribution, such as productivity and outcomes from the business.

1) High Performance and High potential in a Key Function (2 employees)

$$VOCx 2,0 = HCVA$$

$$HCVA=10,000 \text{ €} \times 2,0$$

$$\text{HCVA}=20,000 \text{ €}$$

HCVG= Vertex Group Employees x HCVA Group

HCVG= 2 X 20,000 €

HCVG= 40,000 € (2 employees in Key Function)

2)High -Performance and High potential working as staff in a operation position (2 employees)

VOC x 2,0 = HCVA

HCVA=10,000 € x 1,5

HCVA=15,000 €

HCVG= Vertex Group Employees x HCVA Group

HCVG= 2 X 15,000 €

HCVG= 30,000 € (2 employees in operation role as a staff)

Qualitative Findings –Company “D”

4.2.7. SMEs experience retaining High-performance employees in Ireland in times of shortage talent

a) Vertex Group- Represented 20% (4 employees was mentioned as high-performance)

The company manager has a perception that there are four high-performance employees around the company, two in Key Function working as a manager and two staff that represent 20 % of the company employees. The SME company retains that high-performance with a well-structured process of performance appraisal per day, but the company analyzes all the employee's performance in one month to pay the reward monthly to the best employees. The interviewee 6, mentioned that the approach the company to retain high-performance is a reward monthly program using a “Rank and Yank” performance appraisal. The interviewee 6, claims that:

They get a reward like a bonus, income or something like that. Good thing that's a good way that has your employees work harder. (Interviewee 6, 2020)

The company offers extra bônus for those employees with performance above the average every month. Patchen, (1962) argues that :

“The individual's perception that rewards Will accompany higher productivity and penalties will accompany lower productivity is, of course, greatly affected by the actions of his immediate supervisor.” (Patchen, 1962 p.277)

The company did not have high-performance employee turnover in the past year.

b) Intermediate face – Represented 60% (12 Average performance employees and potential on the ceiling)

This group represents 60% (12 employees) is the operational part of the company and It was not analyzed deeply.

c) Base left – Represented 10% (2 low-performance and low-potential)

Company D has not been offer training for employees that showed low-performance to revert it, the company prefers a more direct approach to resolve the low -performance issue. The approach the company is fired employees that showed low-performance and replace those employees for others with better performance. Company D has a well-structured performance appraisal and the manager understands that eliminating the low-performance employee the business can increase productivity in the short-run and the most important, the manager sends a message for the rest of the team which low-performance employees is not accepted there for a long time. It is a different approach applied by the company "A" that it was more passive and inclusive with low-performance employees but quite logical for company "D" where employees' productivity is important to make more with less. The interviewee 6 states that:

Because of my kind of services we always have one or two staff every year being fired by low-performance.(Interviewee 6, 2020)

However, an important study in the USA conducted by Baker College in 2011 explains the Influence of Voluntary Turnover involving companies with the Rank and Yank approach. Blume (2009 cited in Mulligan 2011) argues that: Individual perceptions of performance appraisal format can have organizational consequences. One of the most disconcerting results of research on FDRS (Forced Distribution Rating System) is the relationship found between the use of this type of format and rate reports of lower job satisfaction, lower perceived fairness, and higher intentions to turnover.

The strategy used by the company D has a link with the literature review that mentions in the (Topic 2.) about finding and the engagement of employees is also associated with

the Carrot Principle, the manager the company D has been using reward and recognition programs to engage their team, retain talent and accelerate performance. *Gostick (2007) argue that*

"The Carrot Principle unveils the groundbreaking results of one of the most in-depth management studies ever undertaken. This study, involving 200,000 people over a ten-year monitoring period, shows that the central character of the most successful managers is that they provide their employees with frequent and effective recognition. Dramatically greater business results were obtained when managers offered constructive praise and meaningful rewards in ways that motivated employees to excel".

(Gostick ,2007p.01)

On another side, linking with the literature, the Carrot Principle has been criticized by several different authors, Indeed, Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992) as 'managerialism'.

As Armstrong (2005) wrote:

"It looks at the employment relationships purely from management's point of view and regards employees as objects to be motivated by the carrot and stick. It is a dismal theory, which suggests that people cannot be trusted".(Armstrong,2005 p.111)

Armstrong (2014) concludes that :

"A strategy for increasing engagement through the work environment will be generally concerned with developing a culture that encourages positive attitudes to work, promoting interest and excitement in the jobs people do and reducing stress. '' (Armstrong, 2014 p. 173)

d) Base Right - Represented 10% (2 low-performance employees with high-potential)

The manager mentioned that occasionally high-performance employees have been showing low-performance after one or two years doing the same job. The approach the manager understands the reason the made this high-performance dropped down. The manager complimented that the main reason for high-performance employees dropped down is that some staff after one or two years of working in the same position for so long they lost the motivation to do the same work. In this case, the manager has been

offering a new position to the employee introducing new goals, routines, and challenges. Armstrong (2002) argues that :

“However, according to Herzberg (1968) money does not result in lasting satisfaction. People may feel good when they get an increase as, apart from the extra money, it is a way of making ample feel they are valued. But the feeling of euphoria can die away and it must be reemphasized that different people have different needs. Some will be much more motivated by money than others. What cannot be assumed is that money motivates everyone in the same way and to the same extent.”

Armstrong (2002, p.145)

Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings – Company “D” _ AFP Score

The AFP Score to analyze the balance the SMEs- Company D

Conclusion Using a quantitative statistical score plus qualitative findings to summarize and evaluate each point.

- 1) Retention and Long term relationship between a high-performance employee and SME over a sustained period.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			. The company did not have turnover involving high-performance last year.

Score:15%

- 2) Enough Talent covering the entire SME company to value add.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			The company has high-performance in Key functions in two different departments (Management and Operational) to covering the entire SME company strategically.

Score:15%

- 3) Followup the SME employee's movement and level of performance to future analysis and intervention if necessary.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			The company has been analyzing each AFP group strategically and making intervention if necessary.

Score:15%

- 4) The Vertex group Human Capital Value-added involving high-potential employees is over than 30%

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			Human Capital Value Added per Group (Vertex)HCVG was of 70,000 € (4 employees) that represent 33% of all Company Human Capital .

Score:15%

- 5) The Vertex Group, This small group of high-performance employees may represent 10 to 30 percent of the total of employees

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			20%

Score:10%

- 6) The Intermediate Face, This massive group of employees may represent 60 to 80 percent of the total of employees from the company.

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			60%

Score:10%

- 7) The Base Left, This small group of employees may represent no more than 10 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
X			10%

Score:10%

- 8) The Base Right, This small group of employees may represent no more than 5 percent of the total of employees from the company

Yes	No	Partially	Observation
	X		<p>10% (The manager claimed that employees have been dropped down the performance after one or two years working in the same position for a long time because they lost the motivation to do the same work.)</p> <p>In this case, the manager has been offering a new position to the employee introducing new goals, routine and challenge</p>

Score:0

Table 05: The overall table to analyze company B (Faraco, 2020)

Company D-Final AFP Score: 90%

- a) Excellent performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (80% to 100%)
- b) Good performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (70% to 79%)
- c) Razoavel performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (60% to 69%)
- d) Poor performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (less than 59%)

4.3. Discussion

In this exploratory research, it was conducted with a bias of understanding high-performance employee retention experience of the small and medium-sized company in Ireland in a scarce talent Market as the Irish. During the creation of the research objectives.

I developed an original conceptual- operationalization framework setting out my research methodology and design. I discussed my findings using a mixed-methods quantitative and qualitative data collected using an exploratory sequential design(or qualitative exploration) to apply an original approach using the Arrow Flow Pyramide (AFP) because there are not existing instrument out there to measure a certain phenomenon as the percentage of employees performance existing in a company.

Finally, I mixed quantitative and qualitative discussions in AFP questionnaire to measure the overall score from the four companies.

The discussion that emerged from the interview data are:

- Quantitative Discussion – The Overall AFP profile the four companies
- Qualitative Discussion –Coding analysis.
- Mixed Methods discussion- Combined the quantitative results plus qualitative information to measure the AFP score the companies from the exploratory study retain talent.

Overall Quantitative Results –Companies “A, B, C, D”

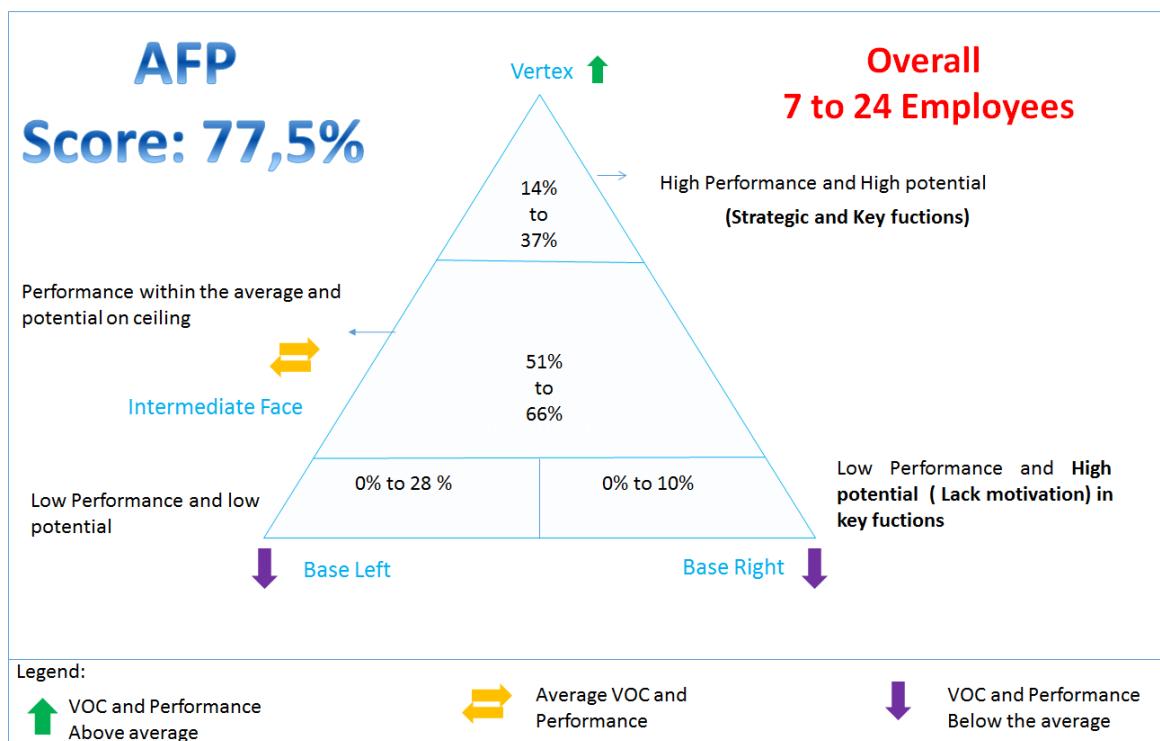


Fig.32: AFP company profile per performance level

In this quantitative AFP design, I examine relationships among variables from AFP groups percentage range versus the Overall results in this exploratory study:

- 1) Vertex group percentage Range (10 to 30 percent)
 - SMEs research results (14 to 32 percent)

- 2) Intermediate group percentage Range (60 to 80 percent)
 - SMEs research results (51 to 66 percent)

- 3) Base Left group percentage Range (no more than 10 percent)
 - SMEs research results (0 to 28 percent)

- 4) Base Right group percentage Range (no more than 5 percent)
 - SMEs research results (0 to 10 percent)

Overall Qualitative Findings –Companies “A , B, C, D”.

Research Objective issue One - What is the strategy for the company to retain those high-performance employees?

The main goal is to understand the high-performance employee retention in a time of shortage of talent in the Irish labor market is a primary interest of this research. Firstly, the findings and results of my research question show circumstantial evidence that SME companies know who are the employees around the company with high-performance working in key function or as a staff. The data from the interviews also suggest that part form SME companies have been offering a package of benefits to retain high-performance employees such as reward, good wages, work-permit, and promotions. Moreover, the SME companies showed a better AFP score (80% to 100) and to retain talent when the manager or leader the company also show a high-performance.

According to Delaney and Huselid (1996), clarifications, performance, and results depend upon the way the managers are used to deal with their employees. So, manager support and capacity building can directly affect employee performance and business outcomes. Employee performance can be developed by accepting special measures that include job-related skills, knowledge, social capital, organizational capital, leading role, employee job development, authorization, redesign of work, training and development programs based on skills, evaluation, and reward system (Pfeffer & Jeffrey, 1998).

On the other hand, The data also showed that managers or leaders showing low-performance in SMEs had great difficulty in motivated and retain their high-performance subordinates. The practical example was company C that had 7 employees in total and the only manager from the company was cited as a low-performance showing a lack of leadership skills and the company AFP score was 25% (unbalanced). The notion that poor-quality leadership has negative effects on individuals is not new. (Hamblin 1964 Cited in Barling 2004) Poor leadership also has been associated with increased levels of employee stress. (Offermann 1996 cited in Barling 2004).The Interviewees keywords about their company's strategy to retain high-performance. .(See Figure 33 List of Codes)

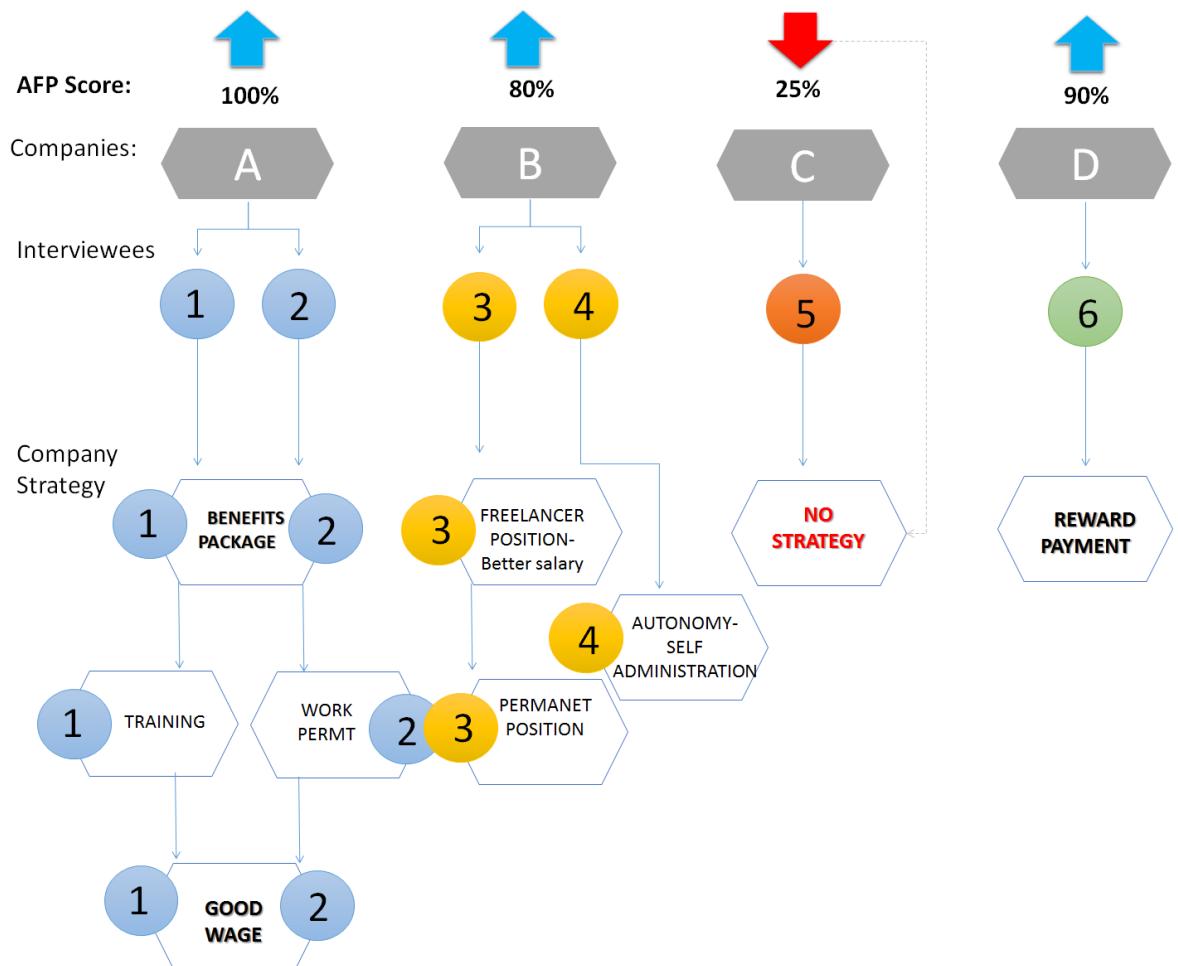


Fig.33:Overall keywords (list of codes)to retain high-performance strategy

Research Objective issue Two-What is the company's approach with low-performance employees?

Firstly, the findings of my research show circumstantial evidence that SME companies know who are the employees around the company with underperformance. The data from the interviews also show that part from SME companies has been training and putting low-performance employees in observation. However, SMEs have been laying off those underperformance employees if the problem persists for a long time after the employees are trained. The main problem mentioned by the manager and staff to describe employees showing low-performance was the skills gap and lack efficiency day-by-day that has reduced the company productivity.

Moreover, SMEs in this research have been showing a conservative style with the employees showing low-performance, in 75% of the companies analyzed the managers prefer to use the approach of “wait-and-see”.The findings, in line with the literature, (Theisen, 2004) states that :

“Some managers and supervisors prefer to use the “wait-and-see” approach. That is, wait and see if they will leave. Unfortunately, other effective employees may leave out of frustration with such inaction. These managers leave themselves open to much criticism, which, with time, will erode their credibility as a leader”.

(Theisen, 2004 p.131)

The literature complements the impact that the low-performance employee could make in company productivity and reputation the leader. Theisen(2004) also argue that :

“Allowing poor performance to go on without being properly addressed will not only cost you a lot of time, but it will also impede your productivity and damage your reputation as a leader. The longer a problem is allowed to persist, the more difficult it can be for the employee to make the needed changes”.

(Theisen, 2004 p.133)

The Interviewee's keywords about their companies strategy with low-performance employees. .(See Figure 34 List of Codes)

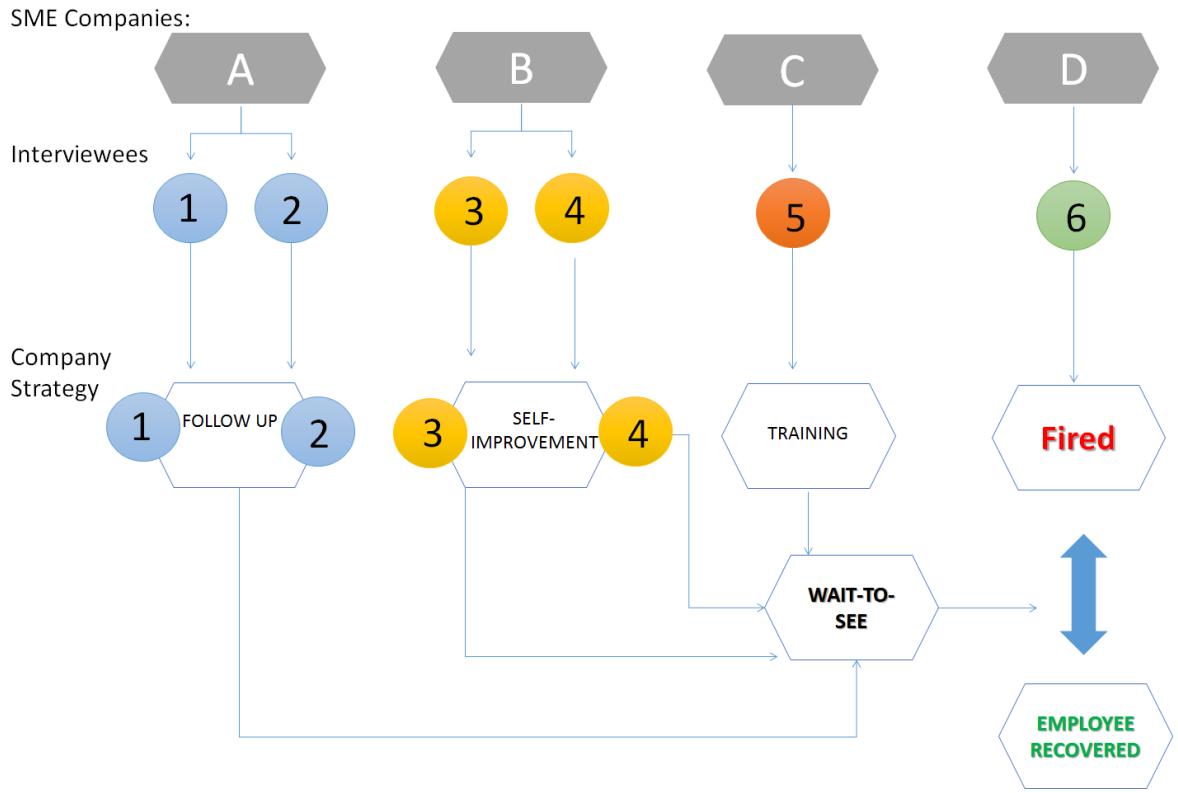


Fig.34:Overall keywords (list of codes)low-performance SMEs approach

Research Objective issue Three - What percentage of the turnover from the company that involves high potential and high performance in Vertex Group? What are the main reasons?

Retain high-performance employee is the central issue of this exploratory study and the voluntary turnover involving high-performance employee is the direct effect when the company failed in retaining those talents. In the literature review chapter (2), in Talent Management (topic 2.2) and also in Retain Talent (2.3), I showed how important is for an SME company building a strategic process to improve employees' knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitude, motivation, and capability necessary to perform well at work. Usually, the positive impact of the capacity building affects organizational revenue, competitiveness, performance, and talent retention.

Despite all efforts from SME companies interviewed to retain high-performance employees the voluntary turnover involving high-performance employees is a big issue for the companies analyzed. The percentage of voluntary turnover in the Vertex group

was 14% in the company A, 27% in the company B, being 50% in the company C and the company D did not have voluntary turnover involving high-performance.

The literature introduces the impact of high-performance employees' voluntary turnover. Bassi (1997 cited in Wassem 2019) states that losing the most significant employees of an organization not only affects the economical growth but also organizational growth. Knowledge is gained by experience and formal education, and it is applied to meet customer expectations. Knowledge management is a process of acquiring and sharing knowledge to improve a firm's performance.

Another important issue identified is that SME has been lost part of those high-performance employees for the main competitors from the company. The high-performance employees left the SME to work in another SME to get a better wage or to increase the challenge in the same field and type of business.

The Interviewee' keywords about their company's voluntary turnover reason involving high performance. .(See Figure 35 List of Codes)

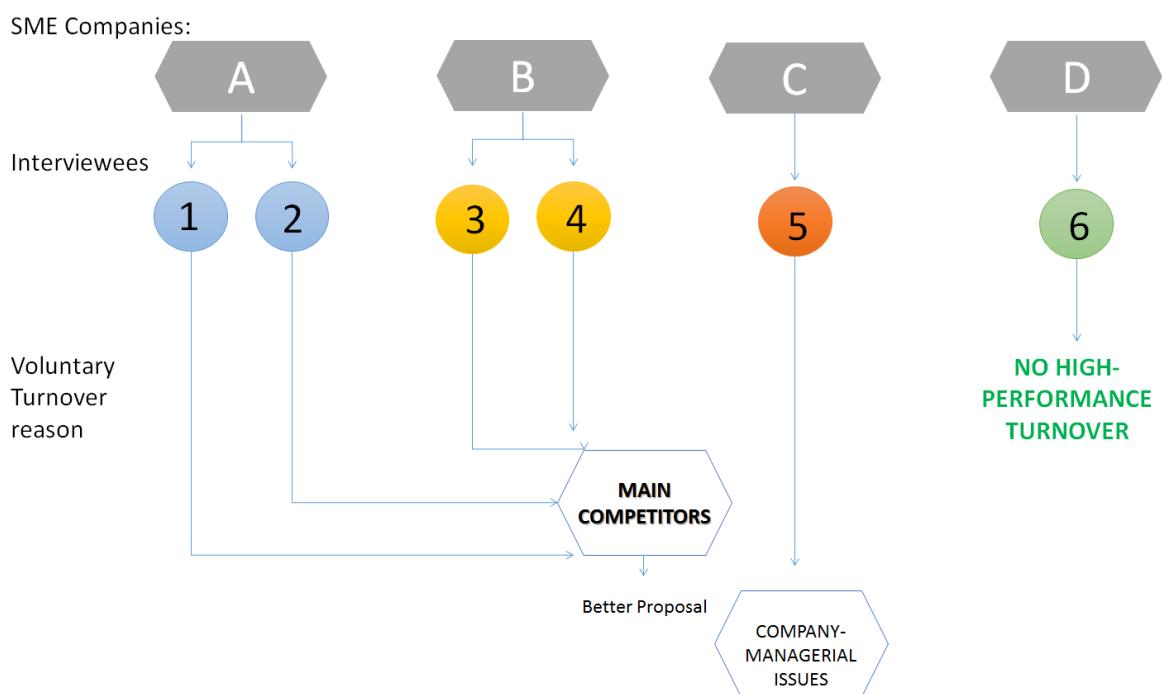


Fig.35: Overall keywords(list of codes)to voluntary turnover reasons

Research Objective issue Four- High potential and low-performance, How the company has been analyzing and reverting it? How many employees the company has in this situation.

This exploratory study was mentioned by SME companies in several cases in which a high-performance employee is showing low-performance due to a personal problem. During the interviews for this study, managers and staff commented that the company in this type of situation invites the employee for a meeting to understand the reasons for the current low-performance to find out a way to revert it.

O'Hara states in Harvard Business Review ([online] 2018) that: Often a manager's first challenge is simply recognizing the warning signs that an employee is going through a difficult time. Invest time in building good relationships with employees so you'll be able to detect any problems early. If you maintain an atmosphere of compassion in the office, people are more likely to proactively come to you when they're going through a tough period.

LMX theory and trust relationships between manager and subordinate was mentioned throughout the literature (topic 3.6.1.4 p.54) When an employee is first dealing with a crisis, we have no hope of their being effective on the job, says Don McIver, vice president of human resources for MWW Group, a public relations firm in East Rutherford, New Jersey. "My position has always been to support, to empathize with their situation, and to work collaboratively on getting them through it." Graen & Uhl Bien (1995) complement that:

"Research found that high-quality LMX produced less turnover, more positive performance evaluation, high frequency of promotions, great organizational commitment, more desirable work assignments, better job attitudes and more attention and support from the leader, great participation, and faster career progress".

(Graen & Uhl Bien, 1995 p.232)

The Interviewees keywords about their companies involving high performance showing low-performance. (See Figure 36 List of Codes)

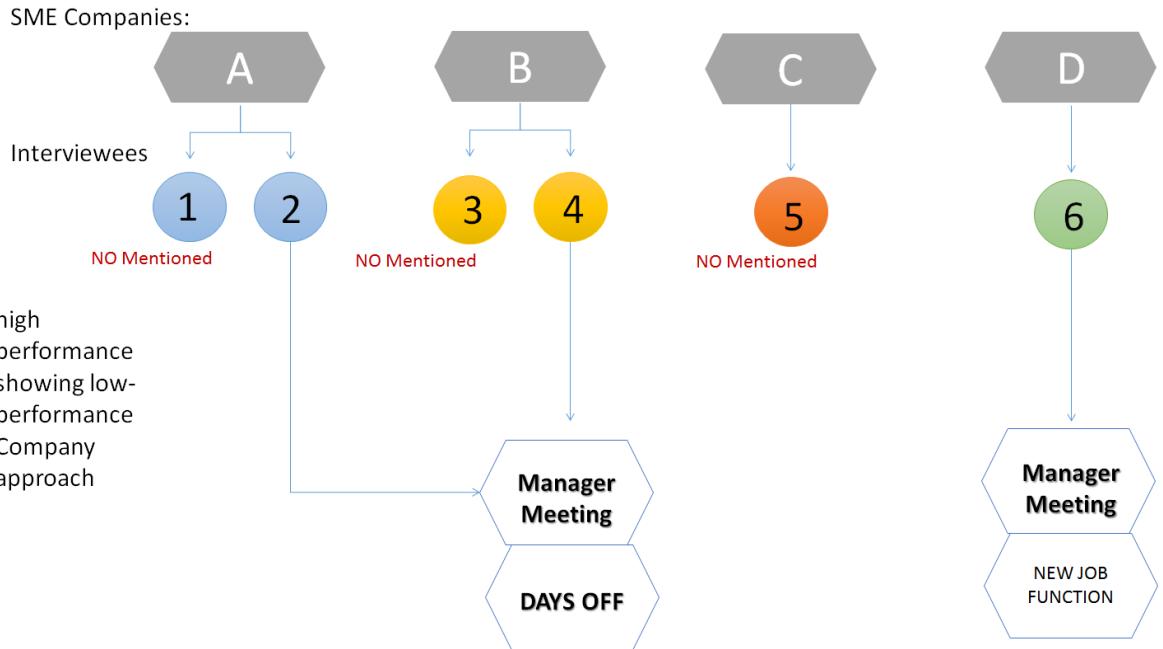


Fig.36: Overall keywords (list of codes)to high-performance showing low-performance SMEs approach

Overall -Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings –Companies “A, B, C, D” (AFP Score)

Mixed qualitative and quantitative discussion using AFP questionnaire.

This AFP questionnaire was mixed qualitative findings plus quantitative results to measure the AFP Score from the companies of this exploratory study. Combined with the score of the four SME companies, The AFP score was 77,5%.

Quantitative final analysis - Overall score AFP from the SMEs of this research		Yes	Score pts.	No	Score pts.	Partially	Score pts.	
1	Retention and Long term relationship between a high-performance employee and SME over a sustained period.	50%	30	50%	0			
2	Enough Talent covering the entire SME company to value add.	75%	45	25%	0			
3	Followup the SME employees movement and level of performance to future analysis and intervention if necessary.	75%	45	25%	0			
4	Human Capital Value-added per group of employees by performance and potential—focused on Key function and key for organizational success.	75%	45	25%	0			
5	The Vertex Group , This small group of high-performance employees may represent 10 to 30 percent of the total of employees	75%	45			25%	5	
6	The Intermediate Face , This massive group of employees may represent 60 to 80 percent of the total of employees from the company.	75%	30			25%	5	
7	The Base Left , This small group of employees may represent less than 10 percent of the total of employees from the company	75%	30	25%	0			
8	The Base Right , This small group of employees may represent less than 5 percent of the total of employees from the company	75%	30	25%	0			
Total Score available 400 pts			300		0		10	310 pts
AFP Overall balance score			75%				2,5%	77,5%

Options:

Yes



Score AFP

300 pts. from 400 = 75%

No



0 pts. from 400 =

0%

77,5%

Partially



10 pts. from 400 =

2,5%

Fig.37: Overall AFP score (Faraco, 2020)

Below, We have four different levels of "Performance Balance" possible using this AFP approach. The overall score from SMEs in this study was of **77,5%**. The SMEs were classified by the APF score as "*Good performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (from 70% to 79%)*", option B.

AFP Overall SMEs score:

- a) Excellent performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (80% to 100%)
- b) Good performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (70% to 79%)**
- c) Razoavel performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (60% to 69%)
- d) Poor performance balance and high-performance employee retention. (less than 59%)

4.4. Conclusion

Following the analysis of the data and the findings of this exploratory study, I conclude using circumstantial evidence that 75% of the companies analyzed in this study had enough talent to achieve goals strategically in the short and long run. Also circumstantial I complement that the overall voluntary turnover involving high-performance employees in SME companies in the Vertex group was 22,5%. To obtain better wages and benefits packages it was the main reason identified for high-performance employees to leave their current SME company to work in the main competitor. Moreover, offer better wages and benefits packages were also mentioned as the main strategy used by SME companies in Ireland to retain high-performance employees, following closely by “Work Permit”, training (development), autonomy to work and rewards.

The major problem identified in 25% of the SME companies analyzed was the lack of strategy to maintain high-performance employees for a long time without a voluntary turnover to the main competitors. I also conclude circumstantially that SMEs that had high-performance manager working in key function can retain high-performance subordinates more efficiently because getting the respect and admiration from the employees to build a trust relationship.

The SME companies had an impressive capacity to identify and recover high-performance showing low-performance. The data collected from the face-to-face interviews were useful to understand the SME companies' approach and strategy to retain the high-performance employee. The work is quite limited because of the size of the sample but possible to make circumstantial conclusion the SMEs companies have using different strategies to retain high-performance employees in a shortage of talent markets. The company should continue fulfilling its side correspondingly at the bottom, intermediate, or top from all AFP groups ethically. Because The reasoning here is that the employer-employee relationship is human before its economic.

5. Concluding Thoughts on the Contribution of this Research, its Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1. Implications of Findings for the Research Questions

In the previous chapters such as Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, and Research Design. They were useful to assess the findings that emerged from the data collection using mixed methods qualitative and quantitative, and those findings set up with the conceptual framework operationalization developed in chapter two (2.6). I also discussed the findings in the context of my four research objectives.

In this chapter, I will discuss the implications of the findings for the four-research objectives.

There are a few numbers of research available in Ireland to measure the impact of high-performance employees in times of shortage of talent in SMEs, available. However, limited research dedicated to the topic of retention of high-performance employees emerged in recent years. The literature that does deal with this link has not focused only on high -performance employee, it was also explored the different biases around the employee's performance.

The SMEs have deployed practice and strategies to retain high-performance in times of shortage talent, however, the voluntary turnover involving high-performance employees is also high, the main reason is an external offer from the main competitor from the SMEs to their high-performance employees. The literature implication about Talent Management mentioned in the (topic 2.2) was the same found in 75% of the SMEs on this exploratory study that Talent Management is clearly to added value and support the companies to manage the human resource strategically.

The findings of this exploratory research imply that the high-performance retention practice in SMEs has been impacting positively outcomes the companies to achieve goals strategically, once that the companies have enough talent to drive the business in a short and long -run. The implication is by acknowledging the high -performance employees as inspiring leaders that impact performance the company and teams around them, making the SME achieve goals sustainable and balanced of talents. The literature

implication about Retain Talent in the (topic 2.3) mentioned that employee retention is an important factor in the “War for Talent”.

The potential to sustain this competitive advantage is through the special treats to retain those high-performance offerings, good wage, career challenges, a benefits package, a good work environment, and a development plan for high-performance employees. As mentioned in the topic (2.3 Retain Talent). Managers worldwide agreed on the three top causes of attrition: **insufficient compensation and benefits, lack of growth and development opportunities, lack of recognition for achievements by management.**

5.2. Contributions and Limitations of the Research

The exploratory research on high-performance employees retention by SMEs in Ireland in times of shortage talent provided a comprehensive base from which to develop my original conceptual framework introducing a new approach using Arrow Flow Pyramide using the mix-methods quantitative and qualitative using an exploratory sequential design across qualitative findings and quantitative results of the primary research allowed for additional themes to emerge from the data.

Some limitation and weaknesses of Mixed methods research include: the research can consume more time during the exploratory study and also the research can meet conflict because methodological purists maintain that researchers should work within either a quantitative or a qualitative research design never mixing the two designs in a single study (Cronholm, & Hjalmarsson, 2011). However, in other handsome authors as Caruth(2013) argue that:

“Mixed methods research evolved in response to the observed limitations of both quantitative and qualitative designs and is a more complex method”.

(Caruth, 2013 p.112)

It is thought that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods presents a more enhanced insight into the research problem(s) and question(s) than using one of the methods independently (Creswell, 2012; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Hong & Espelage, 2011). If mixed-methods research (MMR) is used, however, the researcher(s) must have a working knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative methods designs to

combine effectively the methods. Hence, MMR is more advanced, time-consuming, extensive, and may necessitate the use of a research team (Creswell, 2012).

The contributions from the interviewees were of a high standard and their experiences as a manager or staff contributed with different perceptions about employees' performance from the SMEs. There a few numbers of search on Talent Management area in times of shortage talent involving SMEs in Ireland and I also mentions as a limitation of the research the lack of peer-reviewed literature available on the study of retaining high-performance in a scarce local market as in Ireland. Some useful studies are linking SMEs and high-performance around Europe countries such as Germany that explain the competitive advantage when SME retain the high-performance employee in a plentiful talent market as the German, However, the situation in Ireland is different from Germany, The Irish local labor market is scarce as I informed in my research objectives and overall research aim.

The HRM has been developing new approaches and theories around the research objectives to fill literature gaps around the subject. This has the effect of limiting my focus and ability to answer the research questions conclusively. However, in this research, I introduced a new approach to smooth the impact of the literature gaps and also introduce an AFP score to measure the balance of performance level and quality around the company. Finally, the limited number of SMEs involved in this research (sample size) and the fact that I did not collect sensitive financial and cost data to calculate the financial real impact from each company when retaining high-performance employees, both factors impacted the overall of the findings.

5.3. Recommendations for Practice

The retention of high-performance employees has been common practice in many SMEs in Ireland as the circumstantial results and findings of the research showed for us. Moreover the 'War for talent', thus is also present in the Irish SME labor market, I found circumstantial results and findings in which high-performance employees recently have been left their SMEs to work in the main competitors for a better wage and benefits. This increase is reflected in the research which indicates that the trend towards retaining

high-performance in Ireland -SMEs is quite important to get a competitive advantage. Due to the limitations of the research which I undertook, I cannot make any recommendations concerning the impact of high-performance employee retention for SMEs in Ireland in times of shortage talents. However, I suggest that SME acknowledges the importance of identifying and retaining high-performance employees like a strategic trend driving the Talent Management allow to retain high-performance employees to set up the best practice lining up the business strategy with HRM strategy to achieve goals in a short and long-run with enough talent to drive the company.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

Given the increasing trend of expression "War for Talent" and the importance of retaining high- performance employees in times of shortage talent, examining this situation around SMEs in Ireland. As a result of the findings of my exploratory research to understand how those companies in Ireland retain the high-performance employee in a scarce local talent market to get a competitive advantage, I recommend the following:

Firstly, the findings of my research show circumstantial evidence to support the idea and hypothesis that retaining high-performance talent can create a positive impact on SMEs outcomes increasing productivity and team performance around the business. The findings suggest that SMEs that have high-performance employees in key functions are more accepted by the teams creating a good work environment and trust between high-performance managers and subordinates.

The findings also suggest retention of high-performance employees has enabled a more efficient when the SMEs had a differentiated approach to treats high-performance employees. When the company recognized a high-performance as an important resource from the company and set up a development plan to develop and retain those employees. Linking with the literature, Gallup (2018) reveals that:

"Recent research, however, reveals that managers should not ignore high-performing employees as they, too, maybe disengaged and swift to quit. As Gallup researchers note: Highly talented employees who are not engaged were among those who had the highest turnover ... on par with low talent, disengaged employees. In other words, when your best employees are not engaged, they are

as likely to leave your organization as your employees who tend to have performance issues and are unhappy”.

(Gallup, 2018 p.06)

I would recommend further mixed-methods quantitative and qualitative research to measure the impact on high-performance employee retention in the SMEs in a scarce labor talent Market.

Finally, the findings of my exploratory work research suggest that SME's human capital can be more efficient when working with a comfortable number of high-performance employees in a key position managing the business and teams to achieve goals strategically. This would further support this exploratory study in understanding the strategy of SMEs retain high-performance employee to get a competitive advantage against the main competitors and increase the outcome of the company.

5.5. Final Conclusion and Reflections

This research study found that retaining high-performance employees can impact positively the company work environment because high-performance employees can add value through increased productivity and improved performance of their subordinates or department. Moreover, I also found that SMEs that had high-performance manager working in key function can retain high-performance subordinates more efficiently because getting the respect and admiration from the employees to build a trust relationship.

The companies had an impressive capacity to identify and recover high-performance showing low-performance. The data collected from the face-to-face interviews were useful to understand the SMEs' approach and strategy to retain the high-performance employee. The research linked with the literature showed circumstantial pieces of evidence that to win the “War For Talent” the SMEs should avoid attrition with the high-performance employees. Proposing a different treatment for them, offering: sufficient compensation and benefits, plenty of growth and development opportunities, plenty of recognition for achievements by management.

The work is quite limited because of the size of the sample but possible to make circumstantial conclusion the SMEs have using different strategies to retain high-

performance employees in a shortage of talent markets. The company should continue fulfilling its side correspondingly at the bottom, intermediate, or top from all AFP groups ethically. Because The reasoning here is that the employer-employee relationship is human before its economic.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Quantitative and Qualitative Questionnaire to collect data

Cover with the Topic and objective questions

 GRIFFITH COLLEGE CORK Topic:	Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MBA in international Business	
An exploratory study to understand How Small Medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Ireland retain high performance employees in a scarce local talent market .		
Student : Artur Cicero Martins Faraco Number: 3000696 MBA in International Business		Supervisor :Dr. Julius Nyiawung
Topic -SHRM Contextual Objective Question 1 Objective Question 2 Objective Question 3 Objective Question 4 Objective Question 5		

- **First question**

GRIFFITH COLLEGE CONTEXTUAL -Objective QUESTIONS 1	
1)What department is the most strategic from the company? How many high performance there are in this department? How many employees work at the company?	
Answer 1:	
Topic -SHRM Contextual Objective Question 1 Objective Question 2 Objective Question 3 Objective Question 4 Objective Question 5	

- **Second question**

A

 Objective QUESTIONS 2

2) How many employees were identified as High potential and High-performance in all company including The most strategic department? What is the company's approach to retaining all high-perfomance?

Answer 2 :

Topic -SHRM Contextual Objective Question 1 Objective Question 2 Objective Question 3 Objective Question 4 Objective Question 5



- ***Third question***

 Objective QUESTIONS 3

3) How many employees were identified as a Low potential and low-performance? Low potential and low-performance, How is the company approach with this group of employees?

Answer 3 :

Topic -SHRM Contextual Objective Question 1 Objective Question 2 Objective Question 3 Objective Question 4 Objective Question 5



- ***Fouth question***

 **Objective QUESTIONS 4**

4) How many percent is the turnover from the company involving em high potential and high performance(key functions) ?
What are the main reasons?

Answer 4 :

Topic -SHRM Contextual Objective Question 1 Objective Question 2 Objective Question 3 **Objective Question 4** Objed

- ***Fifth question***

 **Objective QUESTIONS 5**

5) How many employees the company has High potential and low-performance ? How the company has been analyzing and reverting it?

Answer 5 :

Appendix B – Participant consent Form

Consent Form

I _____ the undersigned, hereby consent to participate in Artur Faraco's research study. The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing. I am participating voluntarily. I understand that I can withdraw from the study, at any time, before it starts or while I am participating. I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity if required.

(Please tick one box:)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview.
Yes No

(Please tick one box:)

I give permission for my interview with Artur Faraco to be audio recorded.

Yes No

Signed: _____

Date:

PRINT NAME: _____

Appendix C – Invitation to participate

From: arturcicero,martinsfaraco <arturcicero.martinsfaraco@student.griffith.ie>
Sent: 09 March 2020 21:51
To: arturfaraco@hotmail.com <arturfaraco@hotmail.com>
Cc: t [REDACTED] @outlook.com <[REDACTED]@outlook.com>
Subject: [REDACTED] v: MBA-Dissertation Artur Faraco- SMEs

Dear T [REDACTED],

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is Artur Faraco, I am an International Business MBA student in the final semester at Griffith College. I am writing this email to you regarding my current academic dissertation, about "**How Medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Ireland retain high-performance employees in a scarce local talent market.**" My dissertation is primarily focused on human resource management.

However, to go forward and complete my dissertation, I would like to make an appointment with you, to explain my work in detail and to collect survey data from the company, the survey is extremely short, with only five questions and I assure that no sensitive data, such as financial information will be collected through the survey. As mentioned before, the survey is focused on human resource management.

Please let me know if you need any clarifications on the topic. It will be of great help if you could get back to me regarding this request soon.

Kind Regards
Artur Faraco - MBA Student
353-089 447 0848
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Appendix D- *Transcribed Interviews*

Company A-Interview two (Manager)

00:00:02

Interviewer: I'm going to start the second interview about company A. I am here with the manager. Thank you for your time management. Let's go start.

00:00:13

Interviewer : What is the more strategic department of the company?

00:00:17

Interviewee 2 : The most strategic part of the company is the manager on the front shelf and the packing department and the staff from manager's job is to take the orders to entertain the customer and shift they have to perform very well and to prepare the food value in time and at the same time. On the other hand, guys are packing the food to be delivered or to be paid by the customer. So they are you can say that the high performer's activity of the business.

00:00:57

Interviewer : Thank you. How many employees It was identified as a high performance working in the strategic department?

00:01:07

Interviewee 2 : It's five to seven people have been identified as the high performers giving high performers in these in this department to maintain the quality of food and to deliver it to the customers.

00:01:23

Interviewer : Five.

00:01:24

Interviewee 2 : Yes.

00:01:26

Interviewer : Okay. How many employees work in the company?

00:01:31

Interviewee 2: In our branch almost 15. The total number of employees is 15 almost 15. And some two or three employees who call the break. So if somebody is sick they can cover their shift including the managers five to four chefs and the packing staff and the driver including drivers almost 15 ..

00:01:57

Interviewer : Three employees that to work as a freelancer so there are 15 permanent workers more threes that you told me that is like a freelancer.(18 employees + 2 new employees) 20 employees)

00:02:09

Interviewee2 : They are. They are also a kind of permanent employees but they are not normally scheduled in a week. They are only on the. You can see those on-call employees.

00:02:22

Interviewer : Okay. Thank you. Let's go to a second question. **How is the strategy to the company to retain high-performance employees?**

00:02:26

Interviewee2 : Sorry come again.

00:02:51

Interviewer : **How is the strategy for the company to retain high-performance employees?** What the company offered to retain these high-performance employees.

00:02:51

Interviewee 2 : Yes the car company normally offers every month to training, refreshing course for them and they are also employing them a bonus in case of good business.

00:03:03

Interviewee 2: And they have very good backing for their holidays and different facilities like sick leave paid leave. They can go if they are sick they can go for leave with pay. So these are the most important benefit to have to keep to their performance at a certain level.

00:03:27

Interviewer : **The third question is how many employees where the identity has a low potential and low performance?** What is the approach of the company to revert it? It's employed. That is the work. It's not good enough. Maybe because it's a new employee. Uh, in fact, the work performance it's low than the average head of the company.

00:03:56

Interviewee 2: There is someone with this type of uh yes I praise of some time the employees who are actually packing the food they make some basic mistake in packing the food mixing the orders.

00:04:13

Interviewee 2 : So this is you know you can say that's the kind of low potential work there and they're all within the observation and the company keeps keep on watching them and replace them if they are not performing well.

00:04:27

Interviewer :Okay ! They approached the company basically to replace the employee with low performance but at the moment there are two employees within the company in this condition, one or two? There were two of them but they were sent back for the training again.

00:04:44

Interviewee 2: There were two of them but they were sent back for the training again. They were not fired but they were sent back to their training because they were not doing satisfactory your perceptual to employees.

00:04:52

Interviewer : OK thank you. Now you told me that there are five employees like high performance. **How was the turnover involving high performers the last year?** What is the turnover involving high performance in the company? **Uh in this group someone left for the company to work in another place?**

00:05:40

Interviewee 2: Or you mean to say that if one of the employees leave the company is in this business. Yes. So what will be the loss to the company? Yeah. One employee. So if the one you play leaves the company and then they always keep a backup they don't go with. If they need two chefs they will always keep three or four in a backup. So if one or two are going to turn down the two can handle the situation very well. So they always have a backup.

00:06:15

Interviewee 2: But in the last year someone left the company and like a manager or a chef or a chef left last year he was from South India. Is this guy that he left. It was high performance.

00:06:30

Interviewee 2 : Yes yes he was actually the main chef and he got a good offer from another Thai restaurant chain. I guess the name was giddyup Thai food in the city center. And but it didn't make any difference for their business because they had a good backup and high performance. They did the job.

00:06:55

Interviewer: You told me that the last year just a one year high performance left to the company?.

00:06:59

Interviewee 2 : Yes. And it wasn't to come. He didn't leave the company for any reason that he was not happy with the company.

00:07:09

Interviewer : But he had he just changed his mind on his own but otherwise he was happy with the company.

00:07:16

Interviewer : Thank you, the last question is uh .**There are someone with within the company with high potential and low performers?** in this case is someone that was high performers to before with for some reason the performers drop it down because maybe motivation personal problems.

00:07:42

Interviewee 2 : Yes it happened very soon. Recently it happened a guy he was performing very well but he has some his own private family problems and he was not feeling good and his performance was very low. But our manager here realized the situation he talked with him and asked him that if we can help him. So they did. He listened to him and they solved this problem amicably and in this way he went for two weeks holidays and then he came back.

00:08:15

Interviewee 2: He was fresh and his performance was restored in this case just one case recently and the company use it correctly approach analyze first the situation that involve the family gave him time to resolve it.

00:08:33

Interviewee 2 : You didn't take it as an offense from him but he just realized that he's out of play and we have to figure out what's going wrong with him and decided it amicably in a very good way because he thank you for your time.

00:08:48

Interviewer : I appreciate it a lot. Thank you.

Company A – Interview ONE (Staff)

00:01:13

Interviewer : Thank you.(XXXXXX) thank you for your time. I appreciate a lot of thinking.

00:02:14

Interviewee 1: Thank you.

00:02:17

Interviewee 1: What is the strategy for the company to retain these right

performance. Did you mention that there are three of them in the most strategic department and more in another department? Uh.Two of them in the Kitchen and more one driver. Yeah. What is the strategy of the company to retain those employees?

00:02:44

Interviewee 1 : Actually they give a very good rate. Look my secret is very good. Then other companies for all the staff, not just the management not just the kids and even the drivers like packing stuff all the staff getting very nice wages compared to other companies. And uh we had our company also gave permission. For the.

00:03:09

Interviewee 1: High potential. It doesn't matter which department they're working on. If someone is showing good performance a company offering them. A RIDE HOME ARE SPECIAL LIKE because our company mostly foreigners are working here. So that's another thing the company is doing to keep the staff in this company.

00:03:32

Interviewee 1 : And there are other benefits like you can have free food and you can get a pension and stuff like that to stay long longer with that company and depends on the longer run.

00:03:45

Interviewer: Thank you. And this.

00:03:47

Interviewer: Uh low potential and low performance. What is the company approach? We fit this group. And how many this type of employee do you identified your company as low performance and low potential. What is the approach of the company in this case?

00:04:12

Interviewee 1: So we have this uh only one guy in the company. Actually, he wasn't really. Yeah. This guy he was uh working our company for a long time but he's can't hold pressure.

00:04:31

Interviewee 1 : You know sometimes the pressure too much pressure after work and all the things. So his performance is going down and he's not doing the right thing.

00:04:42

Interviewer: What is the approach the company to resolve this situation does employ receive some type of coaching trainee?

00:04:50

Interviewee1 : So in that situation like what the company into the senior management and the store manager area manager or operations they can they just talk to this guy to consult with them. What is your problem? Like what's going on you? Your performance ?. It was good. Now it's getting down. R e e s not good but I like it s you have from us is just on one is not going Oh not good. Not just limited to the wise average. It s like average you know why is it average or even working in the company of a longtime CEO. The higher like seniors you know and the kids do the explaining that to this guy it was with a low.

00:05:37

Interviewee 1: Performance you know but it was a performance it, Sally. Other Asian performances before and sometimes it's outrageous sometimes are low. Yes, it was. It was good before.

00:05:52

Interviewer : Not these days it is sort of a Down is not really that fast and work. Okay let's go for the fourth question of how many percents is the turnover. That involves.

00:06:07

Interviewee 1: A high-performance employee.

00:00:01

Interviewer : How many percents are the turnover of the company involving high -performance?

00:00:12

Interviewee 1: The main reasons. Uh there was a uh recently one guy who left a company and he got a better option. And. So he just left.

00:00:23

Interviewee 1 : Company. That's it

00:00:24

Interviewer : Thank you. Uh. The last question. High potential and low performance in key position. How the company has been analyzing inverting it ?. This type of situation. Someone that was identified like performance and potential before and But for some reason the potential. dropped down.

00:00:54

Interviewee 1: Oh we don't have any situation like this so far. The people who are. Running the company that is very active managers.

Appendix E – Plain Language Statement

Griffith College GBS Plain Language Statement

A Plain Language Statement should use language that reflects the participant age group and corresponding comprehension level. It should generally contain the following information. The headings are there for guidance and do not need to be included in your form.

I. Introduction to the Research (Exploratory) Study

Identify the Research Study Title, the university department involved, the principal investigator (including his/her contact details) and any other investigators

II. Details of what involvement in the Research (Exploratory) Study will require

E.g., involvement in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-taping of events, estimated time commitment

III. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research (Exploratory) Study (if greater than that encountered in everyday life)

IV. Benefits (direct or indirect) to participants from involvement in the Research (Exploratory) Study

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

VI. Advice as to whether or not data is to be destroyed after a minimum period

VII. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

State that participants may withdraw from the Research (Exploratory) Study at any point.

VIII. Any other relevant information

For example:

if the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for privacy/anonymity if participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers, a clear statement that their involvement/non-involvement in the project will not affect their ongoing assessment/grades/management

A Plain Language Statement should end with the following statement:

If participants have concerns about this exploratory study and wish to contact an independent person.

Please contact:

Dr Julius Nyiawung,

Griffith College Research Ethics Committee

South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

Mail: julius.nyiawung@griffith.ie

Tel: +353 085 2121106

Appendix F – Manual qualitative Analysis using Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint

Microsoft (theme(objective questions) and keywords)

Company A Interviewee 2 Manager [Modo de Compatibilidade] - Microsoft Word

[U1] Comentário: Training, benefits

Interviewer: How is the strategy for the company to retain high performance employees?
What the company offered to retain these high performance employees.

Interviewee 2: Yes the car company normally offers every month to training ,refreshing course for them and they are also employing them a bonus in case of good business.

[U2] Comentário: Benefits package

Interviewee 2: And they have very good backing for their holidays and different facilities like sick leave paid leave. They can go if they are sick they can go for the leave with pay. So these are the most important benefit to have to keep to their performance at a certain level.

[U3] Comentário: Basic mistake

Interviewee 2: The third question is how many employees where identify has a low potential and low performance? What is the approach of the company to reverted it. It's employed. That is the work. It's not good enough. Maybe because it's a new employ. Uh in fact the the work performance it's low than the average the head of the company.

Interviewee 2: There are someone with this type of uh yes I praise of some time the

Interviewee 2: There are someone with this type of uh yes I praise of some time the employees who are actually packing the food they make some basic mistake in packing the food mixing the orders.

[U4] Comentário: Wait-to-see

Interviewee 2: So this is you know you can say that's the kind of low potential work there

This speech-to-text was created by www.amberscript.com

Company A Interviewee 2 manager.m4a

and they're all within the observation and the company keeps keep on watching them and replace them if they are not performing well.

Interviewer: Okay ! They approached the company basically replace the employee with low performance but at the moment there are two employee within the company in this condition , one or two? There were two of them but they were sent back for the training

turnover involving high performance in the company. Uh in this group someone left to the company to work in another place?

00:05:40

Interviewee 2: Or you mean to say that if one of the employee leave the company is in this business. Yes. So what will be the loss to the company. Yeah. One employee. So if the one you play leaves the company and then they always keep a backup they don't go with. If they need two chefs they will always keep three or four in a backup. So if one or two are going to turn down the two can handle the situation very well. So they always have a backup.

[U6] Comentário: Employees Backup succession

00:06:15

Interviewee 2: But in the last year someone left the company and like a manager or a chef or a chef left last year he was from South India. Is this guy that he left. It was a high performance.

00:06:30

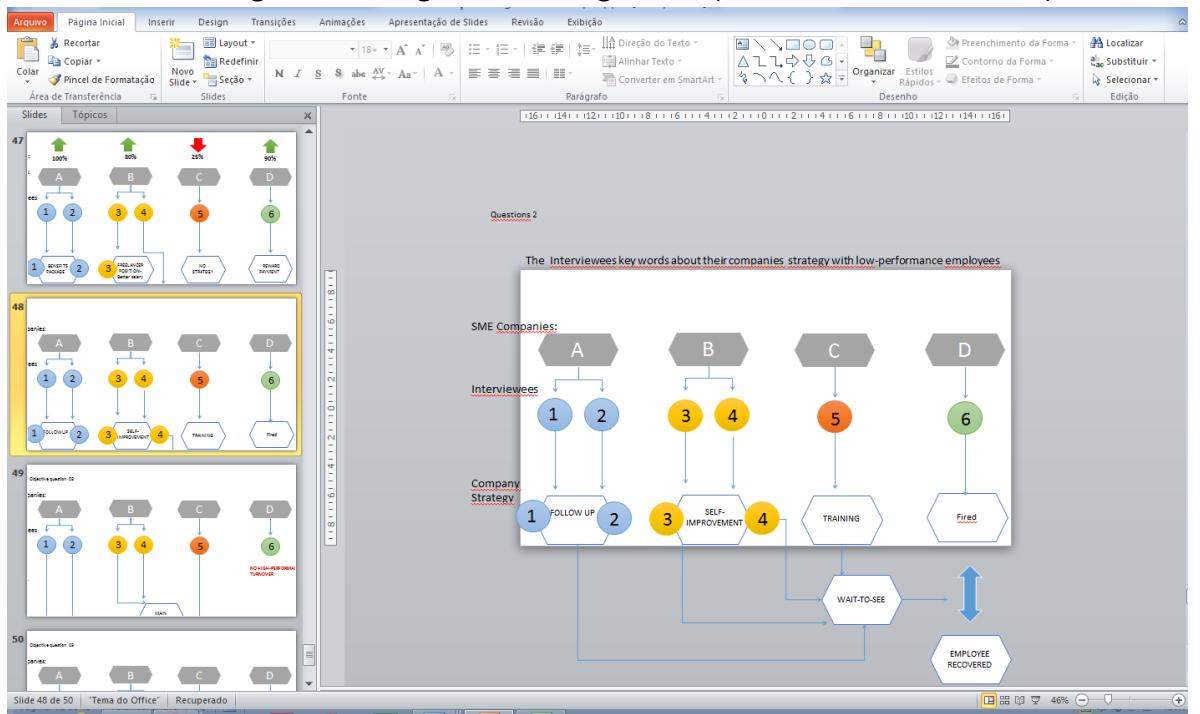
Interviewee 2: Yes yes he was actually the main chef and he got a good offer from another Thai restaurant chain. I guess the name was giddyup Thai food in city centre. And but it didn't make any difference for their business because they had a good backup and high performance. They did the job.

[U7] Comentário: Work in the main competitor

Appendix G – Thematic Coding table –Microsoft Excel

Empresa A - Interview 1 Manager			
	Themes (objective Issues)	Sub Themes Flow	Code
1	SME strategy to retain high-performance	Benefist package Training Good Wage	1.1 1.2 1.3
2	SME strategy with low-performance employees	Followup Wait-to-see Employee Recovered Fired	2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4
3	SME voluntary turnover reason involving high performance	Main Competidor Better Proposal	3.1 3.2
4	SME involving high performance showing low-performance	Manager Meeting Days OFF	4.1 4.2

Thematic coding Flow using the coding table per interview manually.



Appendix H – Gantt Chart

Task	Week																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
1) The beginning																	
Receive and discuss BRM2 feedback																	
Refine research objectives																	
2) Literature																	
Expand and refine literature																	
3) Methodology																	
Review of methodological approach																	
Review and adjustment to research design																	
4) Data collection Select sample - contact Head HR																	
Select sample - contact Head HR																	
Prepare questions for interviews																	
Pilot test and revise questions																	
Perform interviews																	
Transcription of data																	
5) Data analysis																	
Start coding process																	
Identify findings in interviews																	
Analyse findings																	
Compare findings to literature																	
6) Discussion																	
Review of collected data																	
7) Final write -up																	
Finalize literature review																	
Conclude findings																	
Write final report																	
Revision																	
Print, bind and submit																	
Milestones																	
			X		X		X		X		X		X		X		

Q