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## **The Use of Strengths-Based Development Practices in Large South African Businesses**

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Master of Business Administration.

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## **Abstract**

The global workforce is stressed. Only one in seven employees. There is an emergence of an employee that seeks greater meaning and personal development, this has put employers under pressure to meet these expectations. The employer's search for value and the individual's search for a greater meaning has created a disconnect. Consequently, there's a growing movement premised on the positive psychology paradigm which argues that individuals and organisations should focus their people development efforts on maximising individual's strengths instead of fixing weaknesses.

The research report presents the findings of an empirical study in the use of Strengths-Based Development practices in large South African businesses collected through a web-based survey.

The study found that Strengths-Based Development practices are underutilised South Africa. The most important predictors of Strengths-Based Development practices are Human Resource practices, organisational design and positive psychological orientation. Immediate Bosses were found to have positively impacted the use of SBD practices. The implementation of SBD practices has had a positive impact on desirable business outcomes.

## Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

### **1.1. Introduction**

This chapter sets out to explain the need for an investigation into the use of Strengths-Based Development practices in large South African businesses. The research begins by defining the underlying structure of the research followed by a definition of Strengths-Based Development practices. The background to the research problem and its context are presented, followed by the statement of the research problem, purpose, and objectives. The chapter ends with a discussion on the scope and limitations of the research.

### **1.2. Strengths-Based Development Practices Defined**

In order to define Strengths-Based Development practices it is imperative the constructs are defined and understood.

#### **1.2.1. What is Strength?**

The concept of strengths is not a new one. It was defined as far back as 1961 by G.W. Allport. He defines 'signature strength' as a strength that a person owns, celebrates and frequently exercises (Foster, 2005). An alternative definition is provided by Peterson & Seligman who define strengths as fundamental, durable qualities that describe us at our best (2005). Given the various definitions, it is important to identify the definition that will be used for the purposes of this study. To this end, a strength is defined as the ability to provide consistent, near perfect performance in a given activity (Clifton & Harter, 2003).

Taken one step further, strengths can also inform personal development programs. The concept of Strengths-Based Development is defined below.

### **1.2.2. What is Strengths-Based Development?**

Strengths-Based Development (SBD) is premised on the notion that personal development should be tailored to focus on personal strengths (Foster, 2005).

It is useful to define Strengths-Based Development from both an individual level and from a managerial level.

On an individual level, strengths-based development involves three stages:

- The identification of the talent phase: Individuals increase their level of self-awareness and capitalise on opportunities to claim particular themes of talent. A talent in this context is defined as a recurring pattern of thought or behaviour (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001)
- The integration phase: Individuals are able to contextualise their behaviours with reference to their top talents and begin to define themselves in terms of their talents.
- Behavioural change: Individuals tie their successes back to their themes of talent. Furthermore, they report increases in satisfaction and as a result of a focus on what they do best (Hodges and Clifton, 2006).

On a managerial level, strengths-based development practices span the processes of selection, performance management and employee development.

In particular, strengths based development accentuates the following managerial principles:

- Selection: When selecting someone - opt for talent, not simply experience, intelligence, or determination;
- Objectives: When setting expectations, realise the importance of defining the right outcomes, not merely the steps to get there;
- Motivation: When motivating someone, focus on the person's strengths, not their weaknesses; and
- Employee Development: When developing someone, find the optimal fit between talent and role (Coffman, Gonzalez-Molina and Gopal, 2003).

Businesses that have adopted this Strengths-Based employee development approach have seen great gains in employee engagement and productivity (Coffman et al, 2003). Chapter 2 will explore in greater detail some of the benefits of the Strengths-Based Development approach.

### **1.3. Background to the Problem**

The global workforce is stressed. This manifests as disengaged employees; low morale and high staff turnover (Davis and Cable, 2006). A disengaged employee is essentially emotionally uninvolved - they find themselves putting in time but are devoid of passion and energy for their work (Gallup Management Journal, 2007). A recent Gallup survey found that only 26% of employees were engaged, 18% were actively disengaged and as many as 56% of employees are disengaged (Gallup Management Journal, 2007). Globally, only one in

seven employees is fully engaged, the rest are disengaged to varying degrees (Davis and Cable, 2006).

The average adult spends 25% to 33% of their lifetime at work. As much as 20% to 25% of the variation in adult life satisfaction measures can be attributed to work satisfaction (Harter et al, 2003). This highlights a very high correlation between life satisfaction and work satisfaction and serves to underscore that employee disengagement affects other spheres of employee wellbeing. Employee well-being is therefore in the best interest of both organisations and the broader community .

An emphasis on employee well-being is also a prerequisite for retaining talent. It has also been shown that satisfied employees are more productive, more time efficient and more likely to remain in continued employment for a longer period of time (Spector, 2007). This holds obvious benefits for the employer.

In summary, satisfied employees lead to an improved bottom line for the employer (in Harter et al, 2003). The employer's search for value and the individual's search for a greater meaning will require new systems, processes and new ways of thinking (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). It will require a paradigm shift – a shift from negative to positive psychology.

#### **1.4. Context**

In this section, the rationale for choosing business organisations is explained. The relevance of the research to South African businesses is also discussed.

- **Why Business Institutions?**

Business institutions bring together huge numbers of diverse people daily. Multinational companies such as General Electric, Coca-Cola and Unilever employ over 100 000 people across the globe. The fundamental challenge facing most companies lies in engaging their employees. Gallup Management Journal (2007) claims that actively disengaged employees cost the US economy approximately \$382 billion per annum due to a loss in productivity. Furthermore, 51% of actively disengaged employees would not recommend their company to any one else.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher has elected to investigate how businesses are responding to the challenge of creating a positive workplace through the use of SBD practices.

- **Relevance to South African Businesses**

South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 ended a long period of political and economic isolation from the rest of the world. Thirteen years later, South Africa is now fully integrated into the global economy to the extent that some South African businesses have gone on to become global giants. Companies such as SAB Miller, Richmond, Anglo American and De Beers, among others,

continue to compete successfully at a global level. Conversely, some South African industries, notably the textile industry were net losers once import protection controls were relaxed.

Exposure to global markets has increased the mobility of skilled employees, This has resulted in an outflow of a significant number of employees to markets such as Saudi Arabia, Australia, the United Kingdom and others – a phenomenon commonly referred to as the ‘brain drain’ (Motari, Quach, Thorsteinsdottir, Martin, Daar and Signey, 2004). The professions that have been most affected include nursing, teaching, accounting and medical doctors (Motari, 2004). The resultant skills shortage has put pressure on employers to retain and attract talent.

The skills shortage is further exacerbated by the legacy of ‘Bantu Education’, where Africans were purposefully offered inferior education under the Apartheid regime. This has contributed to large structural unemployment in South Africa. However, a number of interventions have been implemented to facilitate this redress within the South African labour market. One such intervention is the Employment Equity Act (Cockett, 2007).

South African businesses face the challenges of global competition, structural unemployment and skills migration. Further, the business environment is highly diversified with eleven official languages, multiple cultures and numerous religious denominations. Employers are under tremendous pressure to respond to the labour market challenges and to ensure that diversity does not generate

tensions. In short, employers face the challenge of creating a positive workplace. Given that SBD practices are shown to contribute to increased positivity in the workplace, a study into SBD in the SA business context is appropriate, and perhaps even overdue .

### **1.5. Problem Statement**

Exposure to global markets has increased the mobility of skilled employees turning the balance of power towards employees, and an outflow of a significant number of employees to other markets. Furthermore, surveys show that over half of actively disengaged employees would not recommend their company to anyone else. Companies need to engage their employees for their workforces to be productive. There is a critical need to investigate how managers and executives in large South African businesses are responding to the challenge of creating a positive workplace through the use of practices such as Strengths-Based Development for improving employee turnover, employee engagement, employee productivity, and ultimately improving profitability.

### **1.6. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the research is to investigate the use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses.

The research objectives of this study are:

- To determine the extent to which strengths-based development practices are used in South African businesses.

- To determine the degree to which individual and organisational factors influence the extent to which strengths-based development practices are used in large South African businesses.
- To determine whether the implementation of strengths-based developmental practices in large South African companies has yielded the desired business outcomes.

### **1.7. Research Scope**

The scope of the research is described below, together with definitions of relevant terms.

- The study is limited to business organisations – NGOs and public institutions such as hospitals are outside the scope of this research.
- A large South African business is defined as a business that employs more than 200 employees. The businesses can be either privately or publicly held.
- The term Human Resources (HR) Executive, Directors or Senior Managers refers to individuals who, by virtue of their job title:
  - Have significant responsibilities in the field of Human Resources;
  - Have managed at least one HR function or department;
  - Interact across functions; and
  - Have visibility across the entire organisations.



## **1.8. Conclusion**

There is increasing pressure on businesses to retain and attract talented employees .. Given the high cost of disengagement to the economy, to individuals and to the business itself, the central question faced by most South African businesses is how to engage their employees. Local businesses also face the additional pressure due to the inequity of the previous governmental regime. It is clear that there is a need to understand the extent to which managers and executives in large South African businesses are currently building employee engagement by using management practices such as SBD.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter outlines the literature used to derive the research propositions. The research sits within the broader field of psychology, with a specific focus on positive psychology. Initially, the researcher deals with matter of definition. The researcher defines positive psychology and identifies its link to the concept of strengths. The review then proceeds in four parts. Firstly, the concept of positive psychology is defined. Thereafter, the author proceeds to a discussion of a strengths-focus at an individual level. Both subjective and objective strengths identification approaches and their links to Strengths Based Development (SBD) practices are investigated. In the third part, the author explores a strengths-focus at an organisational level. This is achieved through an evaluation of the three most influential approaches to positive institutions. Lastly the author evaluates the factors that help and hinder Strengths-based development practices in the business context. The impact of Strengths-based development practices on individuals and organisations is also discussed.

### **2.2. What is Positive Psychology?**

Positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions (Gable and Haidt, 2005). It draws together scattered lines of thought around the value of life.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) provide a useful framework for the analysis of positive psychology at a subjective, individual and group level.

On a subjective level, positive psychology explores valued subjective experience along a continuum of well-being, contentment, and satisfaction in the past, hope and optimism for the future and flow and happiness at present. At the individual level, positive psychology is about positive individual traits - interpersonal skills, originality, future-mindedness, high talent, and wisdom (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). At the group level it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

- **The Positive Psychology Model**

Martin Seligman is credited for starting the Positive Psychological Movement (PPM) and as such has been labelled the 'Father of Positive Psychology Movement' (Gable and Haidt, 2005).

Seligman's model of Positive Psychology can be segmented into three segments: The Pleasurable Life, The Good Life, and The Meaningful Life (Pladott, 2003).

Pladott (2003) summarises the three segments as follows:

- The "Pleasurable Life" is about accumulating as many short term pleasures as one can, and learning how to savour and amplify them. Examples includes things like shopping, eating, drug use, meaningless

sex, etc. The research suggests that having more pleasures does not increase overall life satisfaction.

- The "Good Life", as defined by Seligman, is about understanding and using one's core strengths/virtues in work, love and play.
- Lastly, the "Meaningful Life" is when a person uses his/her strengths for a greater purpose. Choosing to live a life of faith, purpose and meaning, correlates to higher life satisfaction measures. .

The key insight coming out of this model is that the correct use of personal strengths does not only lead to the 'good life' but can lead to a 'meaningful life' when one chooses to live for others.

### **2.3. Positive Psychology and Strengths-Focus**

The study of positive psychology has now turned into a movement with studies and interventions focused across all three levels. Essentially, this movement can be described as the study of various positive approaches that contribute to the optimal functioning of individuals, groups and institutions (Foster, 2005). Examples of positive approaches include optimism, hope, positive emotions, happiness and subjective well-being. The overall personal benefits of being positive include satisfaction with life, longevity and improvement in relationships. Foster (2005) highlights that despite the fact that positive qualities are sometimes genetic or biological, approximately half of a persons' potential to be positive is influenced by learning and/or the environmental conditions. Therefore one can develop their positivity through behaviour modification and being in a supportive environment.

There are numerous change methods to help people become more positive. Foster (2005) argues that a strengths-focus is a definite way to being positive because this allows one's attention to be purposefully directed to their personal strengths or the strengths of others. They are compelled to focus on their own, or another's', positive attributes.. A strengths-focus can change how an individual perceives themselves.

The next two sections of this review focuses on the tools and methods that are targeted towards strengths identification and strengths articulation at both the individual and organisational level.

## **2.4. The Strengths-Focus at an Individual Level**

In order to develop one's strengths, one is required to first identify those strengths. To this end, there are objective and subjective approaches to strengths identification and articulation. This section will explore and contrast these in order to understand how they link to the use of SBD practices.

### **2.4.1. Subjective Approaches to Strengths Identification**

This section explores two approaches that enable individuals to identify their strengths. The author will first evaluate the Dependable Strengths approach and then explore the Reflected Best Self exercise.

#### **2.4.1.1. Dependable Strengths**

The Dependable strengths approach, first developed by Bernard Haldene in 1984, is an elaborate method of helping participants identify Dependable Strengths (Foster, 2005). Dependable Strengths (DS) are a planned sequence of experiences in which participants identify their strengths and talents, uncover hidden potential, and become motivated to strive for success (Centre for Dependable Strengths, 2007).

Foster (2005) believes that the advantage of this approach is that it articulates the most subjective and meaningful strengths because it is anchored on personal experiences unlike the objective approaches explored in section 2.2.2. One of the drawbacks of the DS approach is that it requires relatively more time than any other approach described in this review. Another drawback is that it does not create a common language to enable individuals to compare and discuss their strengths.

#### **2.4.1.2. Reflected Best Self Exercise**

The Reflected Best Self (RBS) exercise is a tool developed by the Positive Organisational Scholars to help individuals understand and leverage their talents (Roberts et al, 2005). Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) is an area of positive research that encompasses on organisational behaviour

research that focuses on positive dynamics such as strength, resilience, vitality, trust etc. that leads to positive effects (Roberts et al, 2005).

The RBS exercise enables managers to develop a sense of their personal best in order to increase their future potential. The RBS exercise helps individuals remember their strengths and helps them to construct a plan to build on them (Roberts et al, 2005).

The key difference between Dependable Strengths and the RBS exercise is that the former requires one to reflect on their life experience in order to identify their strengths, while the latter requires one to use recently collected feedback. Both methods require a significant amount of time to get to a point where one understands their strengths, unlike the objective methods discussed below. RBS is also available free of charge on the web, unlike DS.

#### **2.4.2. Objective Approaches to Strengths Identification**

The two most dominant objective approaches to strengths identification and articulation are the Character Strengths model and the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile.

##### **2.4.2.1. Character Strengths and Virtues approach**

Peterson and Seligman (2005) developed the Values In Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths in 2004. In section 1.1 above, a character strength was defined as fundamental, durable qualities that describe us at our best

(Foster, 2005). Peterson and Seligman (2005) have now refined the definition by including a twelve point criteria of a character strength. The criteria for a Character Strength are:

- Ubiquity—is widely recognized across cultures.
- Fulfilling—contributes to individual fulfilment, satisfaction, and happiness broadly construed.
- Morally valued—is valued in its own right and not for tangible outcomes it may produce.
- Does not diminish others—elevates others who witness it, producing admiration, not jealousy.
- Non-felicitous opposite—has obvious antonyms that are “negative.”
- Trait like — is an individual difference with demonstrable generality and stability.
- Measurable — has been successfully measured by researchers as an individual difference.
- Distinctiveness — is not redundant (conceptually or empirically) with other character strengths.
- Paragons — is strikingly embodied in some individuals.
- Prodigies — is precociously shown by some children or youth.
- Selective absence — is missing altogether in some individuals.
- Institutions — is the deliberate target of societal practices and rituals that try to cultivate it.

In total, 24 character strengths are grouped into 6 virtues as reflected in the Appendix A.

One of the advantages of the VIA classification of strengths approach is that it is not context specific. This means that strengths/virtues identified should hold true for any institution, geographic location and culture unlike the Gallup's approach described in the next section. In addition, it is available free of charge unlike the Clifton StrengthsFinder.

#### **2.4.2.2. Clifton StrengthsFinder**

The Gallup approach to strengths identification and articulation is known as the Clifton's StrengthsFinder named after Dr. Donald O. Clifton, who was recognised by the American Psychological Association as the "Father of Strengths-Based Psychology" (Gallup website, 2007). It is by far the most popular approach with well over a million individuals having taken the test.

Following extensive research by the Gallup organisation, 34 themes of talents were identified. . For the purpose of this approach, a talent is defined as recurring pattern of thought, feeling or action (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001).

Clifton StrengthsFinder works in a similar manner as the VIA in that one's five most dominant themes or signature strengths are identified. However, Clifton Strengthsfinder has a distinct bias towards the workplace. It is the researcher's opinion that this is partially responsible for its popularity as one's strengths are explained in the context of work. However, individuals from different cultures, races, geographic locations and institutions have, and continue to, benefit from the use of Clifton StrengthsFinder.

This section examined both the subjective and objective approaches to identifying and articulating strengths. All the methods reviewed above have proved beneficial to individuals, albeit with different adoption and popularity levels. It appears that the objective approaches are, in general, more popular due to the relatively short turnaround time (hours) of identifying strengths compared to the days (and sometimes weeks) required for the subjective approaches. However, the subjective approaches appear to have the added benefit of being more personalised, given that they are either founded on personal life experiences or feedback from others. In addition, the subjective approaches are more process driven, in that a number of tasks need to be completed as part of the process of identifying strengths. The objective approaches, however, base the identification of strengths as a once-off event.. The effect of this difference is that individuals are more likely to leverage their strengths given the relatively higher emotional connection.

In conclusion, it needs to be mentioned that despite the fact that Clifton StrengthsFinder is developed by the Gallup Organisation, the researcher is of the opinion that Clifton StrengthsFinder is not a prerequisite to the use of SBD practices. What is important is that individuals must identify and understand their strengths irrespective of the approach.

## **2.5. The Strengths-Focus at an Organisational Level**

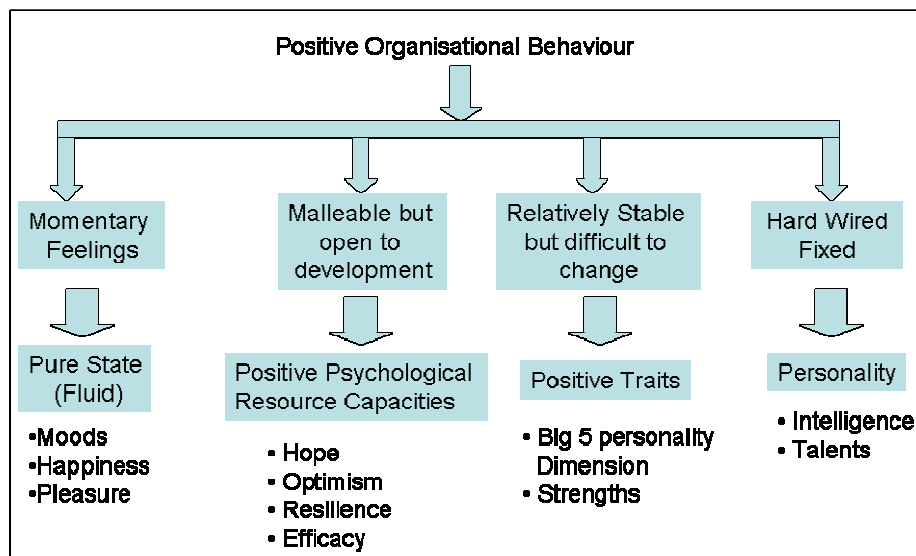
This section of the literature focuses on approaches to understanding and developing positive institutions or organisations. The researcher reviews

Positive Organisational Behaviour, Positive Organisational Scholarship and the Gallup's Strengths-Based Management approach.

### 2.5.1. Positive Organisational Behaviour

Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) is a complementary alternative to the Positive Organisation Scholarship and Positive Psychology approaches. The POB approach is relatively new and as such, a lot of research is under way to understand positive traits, state like capacities, organisations and behaviours.

**Figure 2.1: Diagram showing overview of POB**



Source: Luthans and Youssef (2007). Emerging Positive Organisational Behaviour. Journal of Management 2007.

Figure 5.2 shows a summary of Positive Organisational Behaviour. In this framework, character strengths are regarded as personality traits that relatively stable and difficult to change (Luthans and Youssef, 2007).

### **2.5.2. Positive Organisational Scholarship**

“Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) focuses on the dynamics in organizations that lead to the development of human strength, foster resiliency in individuals, make possible healing and restoration possible and cultivate extraordinary individual and organizational performance. It investigates virtuous elements in organizations such as compassion, forgiveness, dignity, respectful encounters, optimism and positive affect, integrity, and wisdom” (Pladott, 2007).

### **2.6. Strengths-Based Development**

Strengths-based development was defined at both the individual and organisational level. As a reminder, SBD entails the identification of talent, the integration into how one views himself or herself, and behavioural change. (Clifton and Harter, 2003). At an organisational level, SBD entailed putting talent and strengths at the center of the selection, recruitment, training and development and performance management processes (Hodges and Clifton, 2007).

The use of SBD practices has been found to have a encouraging impact on positive psychological measures such as hope, subjective well being and confidence (Foster, 2005). Furthermore, the use of SBD practices has impacted employee engagement favourably.

Gallup's research into the relationship between strengths development and innovation strongly indicates that organizations that emphasize developing

employee strengths may reap the benefits of increased levels of workplace innovation. This relationship is further intensified by employee engagement.

## **2.7. Factors Inhibiting Strengths-Based Development**

The literature surveyed identified three main inhibitors to the successful usage of Strengths-Based Development practices in organisations. These inhibitors are outlined below.

### **2.7.1. The Negative Psychology Paradigm**

Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) confirm that the prevailing hypothesis is one that is focused almost exclusively on personal weakness. They offer the following explanations:

“Negative emotions and experiences may be more urgent and therefore override positive ones. This would make evolutionary sense. Since negative emotions often reflect immediate problems or objective dangers, they should be powerful enough to force us to stop, increase vigilance, reflect on our behaviour, and change our actions if necessary. In contrast, when we are adapting well to the world, no such alarm is needed. Experiences that promote happiness often seem to pass effortlessly. So, on one level psychology's focus on the negative may reflect differences in the survival value of negative versus positive emotions” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Buckingham and Clifton (2003) argue that the negative psychological orientation is perpetuated by the following two flawed assumptions about people:

- Each person can learn to be competent in almost anything; and
- Each person's greatest room for growth is in his or her areas of greatest weakness. Their central argument is that talent is engrained. People do not change. Instead of spending time trying to make people competent in areas wherein they have no talent, the focus should rather be on maximising areas of existing talent.

### **2.7.2. The Effectiveness of Immediate Boss**

A 1998 Gallup survey proved that employee satisfaction and business outcomes such as productivity, profitability, employee retention and customer satisfaction are closely related. One of the key findings of the study was the realisation that it is the employee's immediate manager, rather than pay, benefits, perks, or prospects, that plays the critical role in building a productive workplace (Harter and Clifton, 2003). This is reinforced by a statement by Buckingham (2005) confirming that "People join companies but leave managers".

### **2.7.3. Flawed Human Resources Process and Practices**

Gallup further found that key human resources processes, such as recruitment, training and performance management are contributing factors in organisation's failure to adopt strengths-based development practices. These processes are still underscored by the belief that *people* can significantly change (Buckingham

& Coffman, 1999). As such the focus remains almost exclusively on allaying weaknesses and not on honing in on strengths. Each of these human resource processes is discussed in more detail below.

#### **2.7.4. Recruitment Practices**

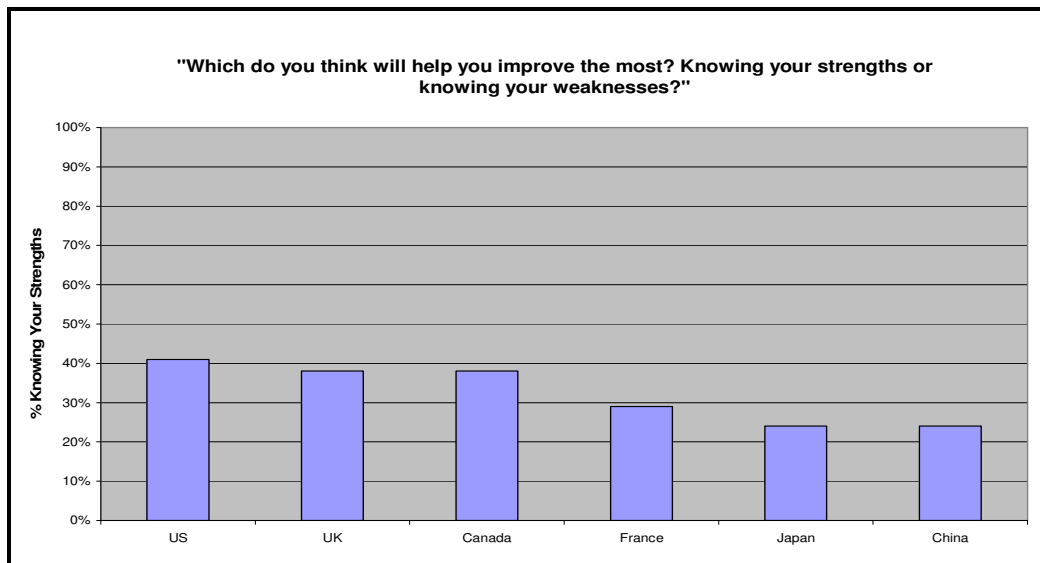
In recruitment, the emphasis is skewed toward skills, knowledge and experience - not talent. Buckingham & Coffman (1999) argue that the key to excellent performance is matching the right talent with the role to be performed. Without talent, no amount of new skills or knowledge can help an employee in unanticipated situations. Buckingham & Coffman (1999) use the example of the Mercury Space program's General Don Flickinger who selected seven men to be part of NASA's space program to set the foundation for all missions to the moon. The men all had the same qualifications, training, even physiques. Despite this 'uniformity', the success of each of the six missions corresponded to each individual's own talent. Two of the men, John Glenn and Gordon Cooper, possessed the talent to remain calm under extreme pressure and claustrophobic conditions. Their missions were the most successful. Every man reacted differently to the same external stimuli and they handled the same situation very differently (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999).

#### **2.7.5. Training & Development and Performance Management Practices**

The dominant thinking in Training and Development and Performance management is informed by the desire to fix weaknesses (Hodges & Clifton,

2003). Hodges and Clifton (2003) refer to a global Gallup study where employees were asked what they believed would improve their performance the most. As seen from the figure 1 below, the majority of respondents in the study believe that improving their weakness will help them improve their performance.

**Figure 2.2: Results of a global Gallup study**



Source: Buckingham, M. (2005). *Just One Thing: Unlocking the key to Great Management and Leadership*. Harvard Business Review. Seattle: Harvard Business School publishing.

Consequently training and development and performance management is oriented towards this belief.

## 2.8. A More Balanced Approach

It must be acknowledged that the world in general, and our workplaces in particular, are in need of a more balanced approach that takes into consideration both the positive and the negative by building on strengths and correcting weaknesses (Luthans and Youssef, 2007). We need to guard

against the temptation to ignore individual weaknesses under the guise of a strengths-based approach (Brim, 2007). Weakness, defined as a shortage or misapplication of talent, skill or knowledge that causes problems for the individual and or others, still remains an important concern. The key issue which needs to be addressed, is to ensure that the managerial approach to developing employees, at any level, is strengths-based rather than weakness based.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

Positive Psychology is not a new concept to effective management. It is an amalgamation of all the concepts and research that aim to study what is right with the world. What is new, is that the study of these concepts has now been brought under one umbrella of Positive Psychology. Concepts of hope, optimism, subjective well-being, happiness, and strength-focus are all encompassed into a common field - positive psychology.

Being positive is thus desirable given the benefits to individual, institutions and communities. One sure way to be positive is to focus on strengths. A strengths-focus pushes you to embrace the positive aspects of yourself and others. Therefore, one needs to develop a language that enables them to articulate their strengths and those of others. This is the necessary first step to being positive.

Subjective and objective approaches have been developed to help individuals identify and understand their strengths. The popularity of Clifton StrengthsFinder and VIA classification of strengths indicates a disposition

toward objective approaches, rather than the more process oriented and time consuming subjective approaches.

Individuals who maintain a focus on maximising their strengths will be of benefit to organisations. A strengths-focus improves employee engagement and high employee engagement has been shown to be beneficial for a number of reasons - with the key benefit being improved productivity.

It must also be acknowledged that there is a downside to a one dimensional focus on strengths. Both individuals and institutions need a balanced approach that allows us to manage around our weakness as we maximise our strengths.

Strengths-Based Development enables individuals and organisations to benefit mutually, in that individuals get to maximise their strengths and organisations get to improve their business outcomes.

However, this review has indicated that there are factors such as the effectiveness of the immediate boss, flawed human resources process and the excessive focus on weakness correction are hindering the usage of SBD practices. Conversely, organisations that have created an environment that is supportive of positive psychology appear to be reaping the benefits that come with having a highly engaged workforce.

Lastly, there is clearly a need to help individuals and organisations become more positive in the developing world, specifically South Africa. However, the

literature is notably skewed towards the West, specifically the United States, and as such the extent to which South African organisations are positive is not understood.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The literature review has identified a number of areas to be investigated. Firstly, it is important to understand the extent of the use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses. Secondly, it is useful to understand whether a relationship exists between individual and organisational factors and the use of strengths-based developmental practices. Thirdly, it is imperative that the impact of the prevailing psychological paradigm on the use of strengths-based development practices is examined. Fourthly, the nature and the type of HR practices utilised by these large companies and the impact thereof on the use of strengths-based practises needs to be understood. Finally, the impact of the immediate superior on the implementation of strengths-based development practices deserves some investigation.

### **3.2. Research Propositions**

According to Neuman (2006), a proposition is “a theoretical statement that specifies the relationship between two or more concepts and says something about the kind of relationship it is.” (p.58). In this study, the researcher stated propositions on the factors that impact SBD practices in large businesses and the outcomes thereof. Furthermore, because the researcher wished to investigate the truthfulness of the propositions in the context of large businesses in South Africa, the propositions were converted into hypotheses for empirical testability using the data collected in this research. As such, the

hypotheses framed are the empirically testable versions of their corresponding theoretical propositions. After evaluating the hypotheses empirically, the truthfulness of the SBD propositions is evaluated.

It should be noted that the hypotheses are stated in the form of research hypotheses, in other words they are stated in words equivalent to the statistical alternative hypotheses. The corresponding statistical null hypothesis would be framed using defined parameters, and would posit no relation between the independent and dependent variables.

### **3.2.1. Proposition 1**

The following factors impact the use of strengths-based development practices in large businesses:

- Human Resource Processes:
  - Performance Management practices
  - Training & development practices
  - Reward & recognition practices and
  - Recruitment & selection practices
- Psychological orientation
- Immediate boss effectiveness and
- Organisational design
  - Organisational structure and
  - Organisational culture

To investigate whether the proposal framed in Proposition 1 pertains to large businesses in South Africa, the following research hypothesis is stated:

### **3.2.1.1. Research Hypothesis 1**

The use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is associated with:

- Human Resources practices, specifically:
  - Performance Management practices
  - Training & development practices
  - Reward & recognition practices and
  - Recruitment & selection practices.
- Positive Psychological paradigms
- Negative Psychological paradigms
- Immediate boss effectiveness and
- Organisational design:
  - Organisational structure and
  - Organisational culture.

### **3.2.2. Research Proposition 2**

The use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is positively associated with the following:

- Employee turnover; and
- Other business outcomes.

To investigate whether the proposal framed in Proposition 2 pertains to the South African context, research hypothesis 2 is stated as follows:

### **3.2.2.1. Research Hypothesis 2**

The use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is positively associated with the following:

- Improvement in employee turnover; and
- Improvement in other business outcomes such as:
  - Improved employee engagement;
  - Improved productivity; and
  - Improved profitability.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

The two research propositions that formed the basis for the two research hypotheses are used to develop the survey questionnaire as outlined in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter sets out to outline and defend the methodology used in the present study as well as to define the unit of analysis, population, sampling method and sample size. The questionnaire used is described, followed by the description of the procedure used for data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with the discussion of the limitations of the research.

### **4.2. Research Design**

The methodology used in the current study may be described as a survey. According to Neuman (2006), researchers use a written questionnaire or interview to ask large samples of people several questions in a short space of time. In the current survey, respondents were required to answer a number of questionnaire items at a single point in time. As such, the design was cross sectional and quantitative in nature. The survey researcher does not manipulate the situation or condition to examine how people react, and the survey is thus classified as non-experimental. Accordingly, descriptive and correlation results rather than causal results were drawn. The results of the survey were then used to test hypotheses that examined whether international Strengths-Based Development practices are relevant in the South African context.

### **4.3. Sampling**

The sampling used for the study is discussed in terms of the target population, the sampling frame and unit of analysis, the sampling method, sample size and description of the sample.

#### **4.3.1. Target Population**

The target population is the collection of elements or objects that possess the information required by the researcher (Chip, 2007[Amphora (2000:352)]).

The target population for this study was Human Resources (HR) Executives and/or Senior Managers in large South African businesses. Large companies were defined in this study as those with at least 200 employees.

#### **4.3.2. The Sampling Frame**

Neuman (2006) defines a sampling frame as a list of cases that closely approximates all the elements or units of analysis in a population. However, in this study, the target population comprised of both unlisted and listed large companies in South Africa, and the researcher did not have access to a single source that could be used to define the sampling frame. Instead, three separate sources of company names were used to generate the sampling frame. These sources comprised a total of 165 companies from the Best Employers database, the South African Graduate Association and a list of companies known to the researcher with at least 200 employees.

The researcher was given access to the database of the organisers” and publishers of Best Employers 2007 survey, formerly known as the Best Companies to Work For”). This gave the research access to 70 HR Executives /Directors/Senior Managers.

The researcher also approached specific HR executives and senior managers known to him via email and requested them also in turn forward the questionnaire to fellow HR executives and managers that were in a position to participate in the survey. There were 20 such direct approaches. The researcher was also given access to the South African Graduate Recruitment Association (SAGRA) membership list - an organisation consisting of members who support, recruit, employ, develop and offer services to the graduate market. This list consisted of Senior HR Managers from large South African businesses as per Appendix C. The invitation to participate was sent via email to 75 companies.

#### **4.3.3. Unit of Analysis**

According to Neuman (2006), the social world can be thought of as being made up of many units, for example, individuals, groups and institutions. The unit of analysis is thus the element of social life that is under consideration in the study. In this study, the unit of analysis is the HR Executive Directors or Senior Managers in South African businesses with more than 200 employees.

#### **4.3.4. Sampling Method**

As quantitative survey research is characterised by large samples, the ideal sampling method is to use probability sampling that yields a large sample and thereby ensures that the results obtained may be generalised to the target population (Zikmund, 2003). In probability sampling, random selection is used to select potential respondents from the sampling frame. To draw the random sample, the researcher uses a mathematically random process, such as a table of random numbers, to select sampling elements or units. The results based on this random sample are then inferred to the entire underlying population of scores. (Neuman, 2006).

However, in the present research, the size of the sampling frame was limited to 165, and thus all 165 companies - rather than a random sample of them - were targeted as potential respondents. The sampling methodology was thus non-probability purposive sampling which aims to obtain the responses of all respondents in the sampling frame. According to Neuman (2006), purposive sampling selects cases with a specific purpose in mind, and is often used when the population is difficult to reach. It is valuable in exploratory research.

It must be acknowledged that the non-probability sampling method included snowball sampling as the invitation to participate in the study appealed to the respondents to pass the survey on to other respondents whose views would potentially contribute to the objectives of the study. Snowball sampling is a sampling method that begins with a few people and spreads, based on the linkages among sampling units in a network (Neuman, 2006).

Although the initial intention of the researcher was to target only HR personnel, the effect of this snowball sampling was the inclusion of non-HR executives as respondents passed on the survey to their non-HR executive colleagues.

Another risk of using snowball technique was that the respondents would forward to HR Executives/Directors/Senior Managers in Small/Medium Enterprises or Government departments. This risk was partially mitigated as the email invitation requested respondents to forward it to HR Executives, Directors and Senior Managers in large businesses only.

#### **4.3.5. Sample Size and Description**

In the present study, a response rate of 44.2% (73 of the 165 potential respondents) was obtained.

The target population comprises senior managers and executives as they have sufficient understanding of the Human Resources function and its associated challenges in their respective organisations. HR executives in government departments, NGOs, and other non-profit making organisations were excluded from this study since it focussed on large for-profit businesses. However, HR executives or senior managers from State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) were included.

#### **4.4. Data collection**

This section outlines the data collection method and the development of this method.

#### **4.4.1. Data collection method**

The electronic data collection method used is efficient both from an economic and logistics perspective, and is thus ideal for the purposive sampling when the entire sampling frame is targeted, as is the case of the sampling method used in the present study.

The researcher elected to use a web-based questionnaire because geographic flexibility and speed was very important given that he was based in Durban and the target population is spread out nationally with the majority being in Gauteng. An internet based questionnaire allows users instantaneous access 24 hours a day (Zikmund, 2003). This flexibility is important to the target population given that their time is precious. A web-based questionnaire was also chosen in order to avoid interviewer bias.

An email invitation containing the link to the web-based questionnaire was sent to HR Executives, Directors and Senior Managers of large South African businesses. The respondents were asked to confirm that they were indeed HR Executives/Directors/Senior Managers. If they answered 'no', then they were requested to enter their job title. This was used as a control mechanism to ensure that only the relevant people participated.

Anonymity and confidentiality are enhanced through the use of a web-based questionnaire (Zikmund, 2003). In the current study, anonymity was important because the target population was prompted for their professional opinion, which may not be necessarily be aligned to their companies' official position.

#### **4.4.2. Development of the Method**

Each response was stored in a simple spreadsheet-based database. The database was administered by the designer of the website.

#### **4.5. The Survey Questionnaire**

It was important to the current study that the respondents share their honest views without fear, embarrassment or any other feeling that will taint their response. This study's unobtrusive method of data gathering was thus ideal. Furthermore, the questionnaire was also designed in such a way that those respondents that prefer to remain anonymous could do so.

An itemised rating Likert-type scale was used for the questionnaire, given that the objective was to measure the extent of the usage of strengths-based development practices. Three types of five-point Likert-type scales were used in the survey questionnaire. The first type ranged from 'very weakly' to 'very strongly'. The second type ranged from 'rarely' to 'all the time'. The third five point Likert-type scale type ranged from 'very negatively' to 'very positively'. These three different types of Likert scales were used following feedback from respondents of the pilot test phase who noted some inconsistencies between the survey questions and its corresponding rating scale. The questionnaire was re-drafted and then re-tested until it passed the pilot test phase and was accepted by the researcher's supervisor.

Strictly speaking, the Likert-type scale is ordinal measurement scale as the responses are not necessarily equally spaced. However researchers, for

example Stacey (2005) claim that for analysis purposes, the Likert-type scale may be considered as an equal interval scale provided it has five rating categories.

The questionnaire was designed to address the two hypotheses of the study.

The questionnaire items map to the hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis 1 -> Question 1 - 2, Question 4 -12

Hypothesis 2 -> Question 13 – 14.

#### **4.5.1. The Questionnaire Pre-Test**

The questionnaire was pre-tested with a sample of four people. The sample consisted of a HR Senior Manager (Legalwise), HR Vice President (Unilever), Research Analyst and an Industrial Psychologist. The researcher pre-tested the questionnaire because it had never been used before in research. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), pre-testing the measuring instrument improves its reliability and the validity of the data collected. The results of this pilot test phase have been excluded from the main research results.

#### **4.6. Data Management and Administration**

This section describes the steps that were taken in the management and administration of data.

Initially, a sample survey questionnaire was developed. As discussed above, the questionnaire (Appendix D) was pre-tested and approved by the researchers' supervisor. Given that the chosen medium was the internet, a web-based questionnaire (Appendix E) was developed by an external service provider. Essentially, the questionnaire (appendix D) served as the briefing document to the web developer. The web-based questionnaire had its own URL ([www.fishnet.com/mba2007](http://www.fishnet.com/mba2007)). Respondents were then invited via an email (Appendix F) containing the link to the web-based questionnaire. Respondents were given two to three weeks to respond.

Each response was stored in a simple spreadsheet based database. The database was administered by the designer of the website. On completion of the survey, raw data was then forwarded to the data analyst (statistician). All results were calculated using Microsoft Excel and the STATISTICA statistical software package.

#### **4.7. Data Analysis Techniques**

Under the assumption that the Likert-type scales of the questionnaire may be considered as equal interval measures, parametric analyses were computed in addition to the descriptive and graphs presented. The statistical methods used to test the research hypothesis 1 entailed examining the relations between the individual and organisation factors and SBD practices via the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients, multiple regressions and supporting graphs. Descriptive statistics as well as the T-Test on mean responses were used to test research hypothesis 2. All analyses were preceded by a test to investigate whether the responses of HR and non-HR respondents were comparable.



#### **4.8. Data Validity**

Validity, according to Zikmund (2003), is the ability of a measure to measure what it is supposed to measure. Specifically, face validity refers to the subjective agreement among professionals that a scale logically appears to reflect accurately what it intends to measure (Zikmund, 2003). The researcher is of the view that the questionnaire covers all aspects of strengths-based development practices.

Construct validity is the ability of the measure to confirm a network of related hypotheses generated from a theory based on the concepts (Zikmund, 2003). This is addressed in detail in Chapter 5.

Discriminant validity is the ability of some measures to have a low correlation with measures of dissimilar concepts (Zikmund, 2003). The researcher expects that the responses would correlate highly with other measures of the usage of SBD practices and less highly with other measures of other constructs.

#### **4.9. Data Reliability**

According to Yin (1994), reliability refers to the extent to which similar outcomes would be obtained if the same study were conducted later by another researcher. The approach adopted by the researcher in this particular study is easy replicable given the use of a user friendly web based questionnaire.

#### **4.9.1. Internal Consistency of the Questionnaire**

The scale was made up of eight SBD practice indicators that had high internal consistency as measured by the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85. Cronbach's alpha provides a summary measure of the average of the intercorrelations between the items of the scale. It is thus a measure of the scale's internal consistency reliability (Neuman, 2006).

#### **4.10. Research Methodology Limitations**

The following research limitations were identified:

- One of the assumptions of the statistical techniques used is that the observations derived from the units of analysis are independent.
- In this study, there were instances where more than one person from a company responded, which may violate the assumption of independent observations. However, in the main, there was only one respondent from each company or from each company division.
- According to Zikmund (2003), the snowball sample technique is useful for locating members of rare populations i.e. people who are experts on the subject matter that may have not been part of the initial respondents list. However, Zikmund (2003) warns about the inappropriateness of projecting data beyond the sample given that the sample units are not independent.
- Given that the chosen sample technique is non-probabilistic, the sample is not representative of the population. Consequently, statistical inferences may not be drawn.

- Given that the researcher elected not to collect data on the demographics of the respondents, it is possible that there maybe demographic patterns that were not picked up by this study.
- The questionnaire does not prompt the user to enter information about their companies. Consequently, company variables that may be related to the use of SBD practices were not examined.
- There was no objective measure of desirable business outcome. An objective outcome measure would have allowed the researcher to test the relation between SBD practices and desirable business outcomes.

#### **4.11. Research Methodology Assumptions**

The following assumptions were made with regards to the study respondents:

- That the target population has access to both email and the internet in order to complete the online questionnaire;
- That the HR Executives, Directors or Senior Managers had the relevant experience and expertise to engage on the subject matter.

#### **4.12. Conclusion**

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The above discussion highlights the research methodology, design, and the sample identified for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, the sample frame, together with the unit of analysis, the nature and the size of the sample were also defined.

The researcher has clearly defined the data collection, research instrument and the techniques used to analyse and administrate the received data.. The research instrument is shown to be reliable, valid and internally consistent. In conclusion, the research limitations and assumptions were addressed.

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

### 5.1. Introduction

The results of the study are presented into two main sections. The first section deals with the amalgamation of items tapping the same construct into subscales. Thereafter, the sub-groups (HR and non-HR) are compared on these subscales as well as on the individual items, and the sample is described in terms of its two strata HR executives and non-HR executives.

The second section deals with the results pertaining to the two research hypotheses of the study, namely:

#### **Research hypothesis 1:**

The use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is associated with:

- Human Resources practices, specifically:
  - Performance Management practices;
  - Training & development practices;
  - Reward & recognition practices; and
  - Recruitment & selection practices;
- Positive Psychological orientation;
- Negative Psychological orientation;
- Immediate boss effectiveness; and
- Organisational design.
  - Organisational culture and
  - Organisation structure.

### **Research Hypothesis 2:**

The use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is positively associated with the following:

- Employee turnover; and
- Other business outcomes.

## **5.2. Discussion of Results**

This section of the chapter describes the mapping of the items to subscales and then proceeds to compare the subscales means of the HR and non-HR subgroups to see whether the remaining analyses can be conducted on the entire sample, or whether the HR and non-HR groups should be analysed separately. The analysis would be based on the entire sample if the means of the two groups are not significantly different. This section ends with a description of the research results.

### **5.2.1. Mapping of Items to Subscales**

As the literature merely identifies, but does not analyse, the impact of each of the individual HR practices, the HR practice items of the scale were combined into a single HR practice score for further analysis. Accordingly, the following items were combined into one HR practices subscale score:

- Item 4: To what extent do you focus on individuals' strengths in the recruitment process?

- Item 5: To what extent does your training and development programme focus on developing individuals' strengths?
- Item 6: When managing performance, to what extent do u focus on peoples' strengths?
- Item 7: To what extent does your reward system encourage individuals to maximise their strengths?
- Item 8: To what extent are individuals recognised for capitalising on their strengths?
- Item 9: To what extent does your talent management strategy focus on maximising individuals' strengths?

The items tracking organisational design i.e. items 11 (“How has your organisation's structure impacted strengths-based development practices?”) and item 12 (“How has your organisation’s culture impacted strengths-based development practices?”) were combined to form the organisational design subscales. Refer to table 5.1 below for a complete mapping of items to subscales, as well as a description of the level (individual/ team or group/ organisational) of each subscale and the subscale category.

**Table 5.1: Mapping of subscales into items**

Level	Subscale	Category	Item
Individual	Positive Psychological Orientation	Psychological Orientation	1
Individual	Negative Psychological Orientation	Psychological Orientation	2
Team/Group	Immediate Boss Effectiveness	Management	10
Organisational	HR Practice	Reward & Recognition	7, 8
Organisational	HR Practice	Training & Development	5
Organisational	HR Practice	Performance Management	6, 9
Organisational	HR Practice	Selection	4
Organisational	Organisational Design	Structure	11
Organisational	Organisational Design	Culture	12
Organisational	Desirable Business Outcomes	Business Outcome	13, 14
Organisational	Usage of SBD practices	Usage of SBD practices	3

### 5.2.2. Comparison of the subscale means of the HR and Non-HR groups

In order to compare the means of HR and non-HR executives on all 14 items, T-tests ( $df = 71$ ) for independent groups were computed. None of these tests were significant (see table 5.2 for the comparison of the subscales and appendix G for items scores respectively).

**Table 5.2: T-test comparison of responses of HR and non-HR to SBD practices subscales and items (n1 = 18; n2 =55)**

Subscales	Mean non-HR	Mean HR	t-value	p	Std.Dev non-HR	Std.Dev. HR
HR practices	3.10	3.30	-1.05	0.2979	1.10	0.70
Organisational design	3.40	3.50	-0.50	0.6205	0.70	0.80
Positive psychological orientation	3.60	3.80	-1.13	0.2643	1.20	0.80
Negative psychological orientation	2.20	2.40	-1.06	0.2916	0.70	0.80
Immediate boss effectiveness	3.30	3.70	-1.76	0.0836	1.00	0.80
Usage of strength-based development practices	3.10	3.00	0.07	0.9446	1.00	1.00
Desirable business outcomes	3.50	3.60	-0.98	0.3288	0.40	0.60

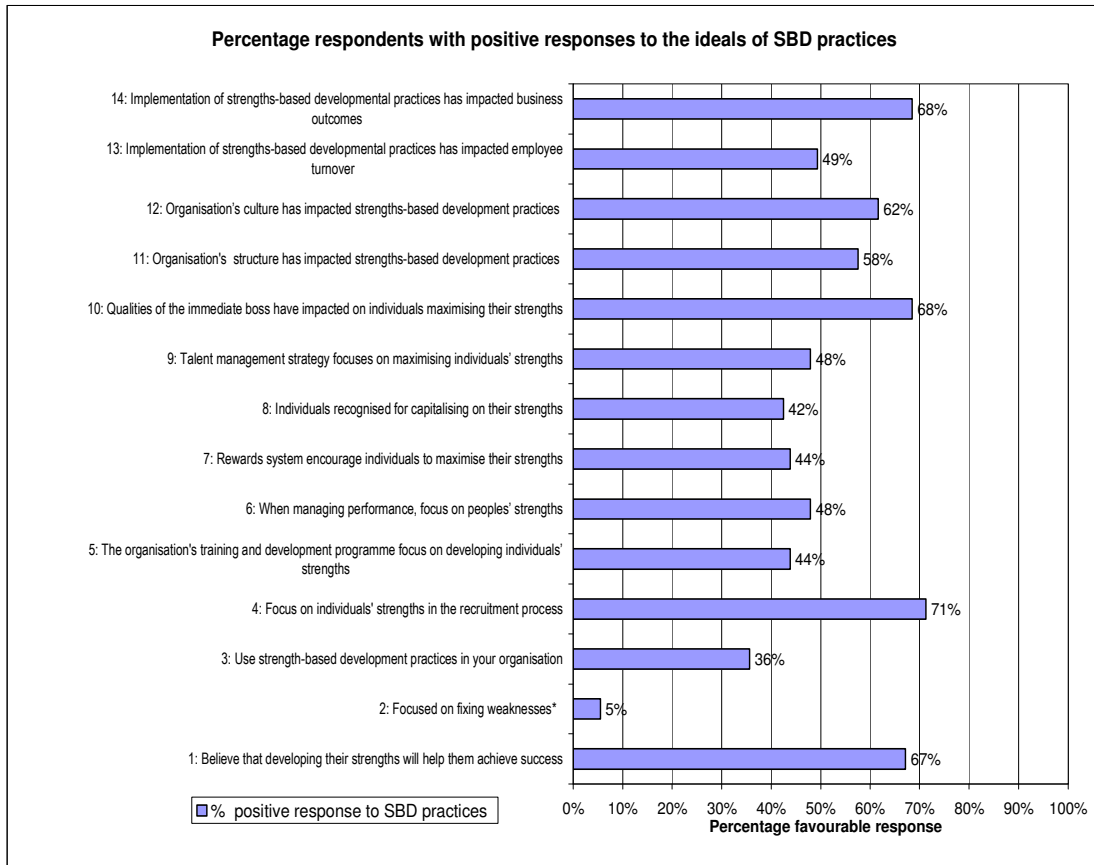
It should be noted that despite the unequal sample sizes of HR and no-HR sample groups, the group variances were not found to differ significantly and therefore the two group T-tests for homogeneous groups was used.

Owing to the large number of univariate T-tests used, a stringent level of significance of 1% was adopted so that the researcher was not capitalising on chance by finding spurious significance results. Based on these results, HR and non-HR executives were considered as a single group in all the remaining analyses.

### 5.2.3 Graphical representation of descriptive statistics of entire sample

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of respondents with positive responses to the ideals of SBD practices. A favourable response was defined as the combination of the responses of 'very strongly' and 'strongly', or 'very positively' and 'positively', or 'all the time' and 'most of the time', depending on the scale of the item.

**Figure 1: Percentage respondents with positive responses to the ideals of SBD practices.**



It is evident from Figure 1 that the majority of respondents were positively disposed to SBD practices with the exception of item 2 (Focusing on fixing weaknesses). Please refer to the Appendix for additional descriptive statistics.

### 5.3. Tests of Research Hypotheses

This section comprises two sub-sections, each devoted to the testing of a research hypothesis.

### **5.3.1. Research Hypothesis 1**

Research hypothesis 1 states that the use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is associated with:

- Human Resources practices, specifically:
  - Performance Management practices;
  - Training & development practices;
  - Reward & recognition practices; and
  - Recruitment & selection practices;
- Positive Psychological orientation;
- Negative Psychological orientation;
- Immediate boss effectiveness; and
- Organisational design.

#### **5.3.1.1. Relationship between the Sub-Scales and Usage of SBD Practices**

In order to test the linear relation between the five subscales and usage of SBD practices, Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients were computed between each indicator subscale score and the usage of SBD practices score.

See table 5.3.



**Table 5.3: Pearson Correlation coefficients between each indicator subscale score and the SBD practices usage score**

	Means	Std.Dev.	HR practices	Organisational design	Positive psychological orientation	Negative psychological orientation	Impact of immediate boss	Usage of strength-based development practices	Desirable business outcomes
HR practices	3.28	0.82	1.00	0.64	0.61	0.21	0.41	0.56	0.39
Organisational design	3.47	0.75	0.64	1.00	0.46	0.08	0.39	0.54	0.44
Positive psychological orientation	3.77	0.92	0.61	0.46	1.00	0.25	0.38	0.51	0.36
Negative psychological orientation	2.33	0.75	0.21	0.08	0.25	1.00	-0.07	0.00	0.17
Impact of immediate boss	3.59	0.88	0.41	0.39	0.38	-0.07	1.00	0.35	0.26
Usage of strength-based development practices	3.04	1.01	0.56	0.54	0.51	0.00	0.35	1.00	0.42
Desirable business outcomes	3.58	0.55	0.39	0.44	0.36	0.17	0.26	0.42	1.00

The correlation between:

- HR practices and usage of SBD practices,
  - organisational design and usage SBD practices, and
- positive psychological orientation and usage of SBD practices were significant at the 0.1% level of significance (Pearson correlations  $r = 0.56, 0.54, 0.51$  respectively).

Furthermore, the correlation between immediate boss effectiveness and usage of SBD practices was at 1% level of significance ( $r = 0.35$ ). However, the correlation between negative psychological orientation was not significant ( $r = 0.01, p > 0.05$ ).

Thus apart from negative psychological orientation, the other indicator subscales are associated with the usage of SBD practices. The results therefore support research hypothesis 1 with the exception of negative psychological orientation.

### 5.3.1.2. Analysis of subscales as predictors of SBD practices

For further clarification of the relation between these indicators of SBD practices subscales and the usage thereof a stepwise multiple regression analysis was computed. This analysis identified the variable that explains the most criterion variance, followed by a predictor that explains the next highest proportion of criterion variance in the presence of the first predictor, and so the process continues until no predictor remains that explains any further significant criterion variance in the presence of other predictors.

**Table 5.4: Summary of the stepwise regression results of subscales indicators of SBD practices usage**

Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: Usage of strength-based development practices R= .64 R <sup>2</sup> = .41 Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .38 F(3,69)=15.706 p<.00000 Std.Error of estimate: .79						
	Beta	Std.Err. of Beta	Std.Err. of B	Std.Err. of B	t(68)	p-level
Intercept			-0.179	0.488	-0.368	0.714
HR practices	0.244	0.137	0.298	0.167	1.788	0.078
Organisational design	0.283	0.122	0.379	0.163	2.327	0.023
Positive psychological orient	0.226	0.118	0.247	0.129	1.912	0.060

In this study, HR practices was found to explain the most variance in SBD practices usage ( $R^2 = 0.32$ ), followed by organisational design which explained an additional 6% of the variance in usage of SBD practices. None of the other predictors contributed significant variance in the presence of these predictors.

Given that the HR practices is the most important subscale predictor of usage of SBD practices, further analysis was conducted on the individual items as predictors of usage of SBD practices.

### **5.3.1.3. Analysis of Items as Predictors of Usage of SBD Practices**

When the individual items are considered as predictors of usage of SBD practices, item 7 (“To what extent does your reward system encourage individuals to maximise their strengths?”), predicts the most variance ( $R^2 = 0.27$ ),  $p < 0.001$ , followed by item 1 (“To what extent do people believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success?”) which contributes an additional 9.2% to the explanation of the variance, and finally item 12 (“How has your organisation’s culture impacted strengths-based development practices?”) contributes an additional 3.5%. Jointly these three variables explain 39.3% of the variance in usage of SBD practices (see Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5: Items as predictors of SBD practices usage**

subscale	Items	R	R-squared	p =
Positive Psychological orientation	1: To what extent do people believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success?	0.505	0.255	0.000
Negative Psychological orientation	2: To what extent are people focused on fixing weaknesses?	0.000	0.000	0.998
HR Practices	4: To what extent do you focus on individuals' strengths in the recruitment process?	0.315	0.099	0.007
	5: To what extent does your training and development programme focus on developing individuals' strengths?	0.399	0.160	0.000
	6: When managing performance, to what extent do u focus on peoples' strengths?	0.490	0.240	0.000
	7: To what extent does your reward system encourage individuals to maximise their strengths?	0.516	0.266	0.000
	8: To what extent are individuals recognised for capitalising on their strengths?	0.478	0.229	0.000
	9: To what extent does your talent management strategy focus on maximising individuals' strengths?	0.415	0.172	0.000
Effectiveness of Immediate boss	10: How have the qualities of the immediate boss impacted on individuals maximising their strengths?	0.349	0.122	0.002
Organisations design	11: How has your organisation's structure impacted strengths-based development practices?	0.460	0.212	0.000
	12: How has your organisation's culture impacted strengths-based development practices?	0.483	0.233	0.000

However, predictors such as item 6 (“When managing performance, to what extent do you focus on peoples’ strengths?”) and item 8 (“To what extent are individuals recognised for capitalising on their strengths?”) are less correlated  $R = 0.49$  and  $r = 0.48$  respectively. It should be noted that the item 2 (“Focussing on fixing weaknesses”) was uncorrelated ( $r = 0$ ). In addition, item 10 (“Effectiveness of immediate boss”) is significantly correlated and was the third least correlated of the predictors ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However on its own it would explain 12.2% of the variance. This means that in the presence of other variables, item 12 does not explain any additional variance.

**Table 5.6: Summary of the stepwise regression results of item indicators of usage of SBD practices**

Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: 3: Use strength-based development practices in your organisation R= .639 R <sup>2</sup> = .409 Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .374 F(4,68)=11.742 p<.00000 Std.Error of estimate: .796						
	Beta	Std.Err. of Beta	B	Std.Err. of B	t(68)	p-level
Intercept			0.598	0.505	1.184	0.241
7: Rewards system encourage individuals to maximise their strengths	0.285	0.114	0.238	0.095	2.504	0.015
1: Believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success	0.318	0.112	0.348	0.122	2.850	0.006
12:Organisation's culture has impacted strengths-based development practices	0.209	0.112	0.234	0.125	1.861	0.067
2: Focused on fixing weaknesses	-0.130	0.097	-0.175	0.131	-1.339	0.185

### 5.3.2. Research Hypothesis 2

Research hypothesis states that the use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is positively associated with the following:

- Employee turnover; and
- Other business outcomes.

Item 13 (How has the implementation of strengths-based developmental practices impacted employee turnover?) and item 14 (How has the implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted business outcomes?) were used to assess the impact of SBD practices practises on employee turnover and other business outcomes as stated in research hypothesis 2. . A single group T-test was conducted, comparing the mean responses to each of these two items against a reference constant of 3, the neutral point on the Likert scale. This directional T-test was therefore testing positive responses or agreement on these items.

**Table 5.7: Positive relationship between desirable business outcomes and the use of SBD practices**

	Mean	Std.Dv.	N	Std.Err.	t-value	P
13: Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted employee	3.45	0.62	73	0.07	6.18	0.0000
14: Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted business	3.71	0.63	73	0.07	9.60	0.0000

As shown in Table 5.6, the mean response 3.5 to item 13 (“Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted employee turnover”) was significantly greater than 3 ( $t = 6.18$ ;  $df = 72$ ;  $p > 0.001$ ). Similarly, the mean response of 3.7 on item 14 (“Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted business outcomes”) was significantly greater than 3 ( $t = 9.6$ ,  $df = 72$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). There is thus support for research hypothesis 2.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the results from Chapter 5 in terms of the research hypotheses and in the literature related to the research objectives. The researcher will conclude this chapter by indicating whether the research objectives have been met.

### **6.2. Evaluation of the findings**

The purpose of the research is to investigate the use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses. Therefore the finding will be evaluated in the context of the original research objectives.

#### **6.2.1. Research objective 1: To determine the extent to which strengths-based development practices are used in large South African businesses.**

In order to infer the extent to which large South African businesses use SBD practices, two research proposition and hypotheses were developed. The correlation co-efficient of the indicator subscales and the usage of SBD practices shows the degree of association.

##### **6.2.1.1. Research Hypothesis 1**

Research hypothesis 1 states that the use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is associated with:

- Human Resources practices, specifically:
  - Performance Management practices;

- Training & development practices;
- Reward & recognition practices; and
- Recruitment & selection practices;
- Positive Psychological orientation;
- Negative Psychological orientation;
- Immediate boss effectiveness; and
- Organisational design.

Items 1, 2 & 4 – 12 of the questionnaire were directly related to research hypothesis 1.

As presented in Chapter 5, the hypothesis testing revealed the following associations between the usage of SBD practices and the indicator subscales:

- **HR Practices Association with the Use of SBD Practices**

The literature review referred to Gallup studies which found that key HR processes are contributing to the failure to adopt strengths-based development practices. According to Buckingham and Coffman (1999), these processes remain informed by the paradigm that people can significantly change and as such focus almost exclusively on allaying weaknesses and not on honing strengths.

The test for research hypothesis 1 sort to determine whether there is a relationship between these HR practices and the usage of SBD practices. The results indicated that the correlation between HR practices and usage of SBD

practices was significant ( $R = 0.56$ ) at 0.1% level of significance. This confirmed the hypothesis that there is indeed a relationship between HR practices and the usage of SBD practices. Therefore HR practices are associated with SBD practices. Thus the research hypothesis is correct.

The literature drilled down to a level lower in looking at the sub-processes of HR. Specifically, recruitment, performance management and training & development were identified as having direct impact on the usage of strengths-based development practices. The literature review and the results of the tests are discussed below:

- **Recruitment practices association with the use of SBD practices**

Buckingham and Coffman (1999) argue that the emphasis of many recruitment practices is skewed toward skills, knowledge and experience - not talent. They argue that organisations are predominantly not focussed on individual talent (and strengths) in their recruitment and selection practices. They are looking to match the role with the persons' skills and experience rather than his or her talents (and strengths) (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999). According to Buckingham & Coffman (1999), this lack of focus on talent impacts negatively on the use of SBD practices.

The results of this study as presented in Chapter 5 indicated that an association exists between recruitment processes and the use of SBD practices. The results indicated that in SA, 16% of large companies focus on talent in their recruitment processes "all the time" whilst 55% focused on talent

merely “most of the time”. Based on this result, it appears that it is incorrect to contend that large SA businesses are overly focussed on skills and experience and not on talent in their recruitment processes.

In addition, SA has a legislated economic redress programme, the Employment Equity Act. It requires that businesses discriminate fairly on the basis of race in employment decisions. In addition to skills and experience, demographic characteristics of the candidate must be taken into consideration. In light of these overarching social objectives, it is reasonable to expect that employers be swayed to trade off an ideal fit between the individual’s strengths and the role and the objectives of employment equity.. The central point is that employment decisions cannot be separated from social objectives and the broader transformation agenda, Employers’ employment decisions are tempered by these factors. This may lessen the effective focus on strengths as recruitment tool.

- **Training & Development and Performance Management Practices Association with the Use if SBD Practices**

The literature review did not handle training & development and performance management separately – consequently, this section will cover these two practices together.

Hodges and Clifton (2003) argue that training & development and performance management impact the use of SBD practices. According to Hodges and Clifton (2003), the dominant thinking in training & development and

performance management practices is informed by the desire to fix weaknesses.

The results of this study, as presented in Chapter 5 confirm that both training & development and performance management are associated with use of SBD practices. Furthermore, when the respondents in this current study were asked about the extent to which their companies focussed on people's strengths when managing performance, only 48% responded favourably. Therefore 44% responded favourably when asked about the extent to which their organisation focussed on developing individual strengths as part of their training and development practices.

- **Organisational Design Association with the Use of SBD Practices**

The correlation between organisational design and usage of SBD practices was significant ( $R = 0.54$ ) at 0.1% level of significance.

- **Immediate Boss Effectiveness Association with the Use of SBD Practices**

One of the key findings of the Gallup 1998 study was the realisation that it is the employee's immediate manager, rather than pay, benefits, perks, or prospects, who plays the critical role in building a productive workplace (Harter & Clifton, 2003).

The results of the survey indicate that an association exists between the effectiveness of immediate boss and the usage of SBD practices.

69% of respondents in the current study indicated that the immediate boss has been effective in maximising individual employee's strengths. In large SA businesses, the immediate boss has thus contributed positively to individuals' maximising their strengths.

This finding is surprising given the prevalence of the immediate boss phenomenon and its negative impact thereof on the use of SBD practices as articulated in chapter 2. One possible reason for this difference might be just geographic given that the current study is SA specific. Section 6.1.2.1 below discusses the immediate boss predictive subscale impact on the use of SBD practices in detail. However, it is safe to suggest that perhaps the phenomenon is not as prevalent as found in the Gallup studies.

- **Psychological Orientation Association with the Used of SBD Practices**

Both positive and negative psychological orientations and their association with the use of SBD practices are covered below:

- **Positive Psychological Orientation Association with the Use of SBD Practices**

The results presented in chapter 5 showed a correlation between positive psychological orientation and usage of SBD practices was significant ( $R =$

0.51) at 0.1% level of significance. Thus the research hypothesis is correct. This result is to be expected given that SBD practices are grounded in positive psychology.

- **Negative Psychological Orientation Association with the Use of SBD Practices**

Hodges and Clifton (2003) refer to a global Gallup study where employees were asked what they believed would improve their performance the most. The Gallup study found that the majority of respondents in the study believed that improving their weakness will help them improve their performance (Hodges and Clifton, 2003).

In the current study, 67% of respondents, compared to 41% in the US, believed that individuals in their organisations are aware that developing their strengths will help them achieve success. However, when the same respondents were asked about the extent to which people in their organisation focused on fixing weaknesses, 8% answered 'all the time' and 58% indicated 'most of the time'.

The percentage difference between the international responses and the SA study needs to be clarified. Firstly, the question asked in the international study, (Which do you believe will help you achieve success? Knowing your strengths or knowing your weaknesses?), was worded differently to this study (To what extent do people believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success?). The South African question is much more strongly worded and also talks to an active process (developing strengths).

The US question can, in a sense, be described as a weaker statement because it refers to only knowledge or information about strengths and weaknesses. The second possible explanation is that the target populations for the two studies are different: The Gallup study asked the individuals directly whilst this study targeted the opinions of HR executives on employees in their organisations. However, the pilot test did not indicate that the target population was confused about the question. Consequently, one must conclude that the result reflect the intent of the target population.

The response to item 2 indicating only 5% of respondents responding favourably supports the claims by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) that the prevailing paradigm is one that is focused almost exclusively on personal weakness. The researcher concludes that the majority of employees in large SA businesses spend most of their time fixing weaknesses rather than developing their strengths despite their belief that developing their strengths will help them achieve success. This seems contradictory to the strengths focus that is professed above.

Furthermore, as presented in Chapter 5 above, it must be noted that negative psychological orientation is not associated with SBD practices given that its correlation was zero. Thus negative psychological orientation is not a predictor of SBD practices usage.

This is an important finding because it indicates that the focus should not be on this item as it has no impact on the usage of SBD practices. However, the fact that 95% of respondents believe individuals in their organisations are focussed on fixing weaknesses is irrelevant in the context of the usage of SBD practices.

However, the key issue that this result indicates is the imbalance between the focus on strengths versus the focus on weakness correction. This strengthens the need for positive psychological orientation given that it is associated with the use of strengths.

**6.2.2. Research Objective 2: To determine the degree to which the individual, group and organisational factors influence the extent to which strengths-based development practices are used in large South African businesses.**

As presented in Chapter 5, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was computed in order to understand the extent to which both the predictive subscales and items influence the use of SBD practices in large SA businesses. The analysis of the results for both subscales and items are discussed in section above.

**6.2.2.1. Discussion of Subscales and Items as Predictors of SBD Practices Usage**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature has identified three main inhibitors to the usage of SBD practices. The inhibitors were negative psychological

orientation, ineffective immediate boss and flawed HR processes and practices. In addition, positive psychological orientation and organisational design were identified as enablers. Section 6.1.1 above discussed the association between these subscales and the usage of SBD practices. However, the question as to whether these inhibitors and enablers are also predictors of the usage of SBD practices still needs further clarification.

To this end, the results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis for the five predictive subscales revealed that HR practices, organisational design and positive psychological orientation were the best predictors of the usage of SBD practices. Effectiveness of immediate boss and negative psychological orientation individual contribution was insignificant in the presence of the other variables.

- **HR practices as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

As discussed in section 6.1.1 above, the literature review revealed that key HR processes are contributing to the failure to adopt strengths-based development practices (Gallup, 1998). The results of the current study indicated that the best predictor of usage of SBD practices is HR practices. HR practices explain 31% of the variance. Therefore, for one to understand the usage of SBD practices in large SA businesses, an analysis of the organisations HR practices must be a starting point given that it explains 31% of the variance.

However, it is insufficient to look at a subscale level only. For a holistic view, one will have to drill down to the item level. To this end, HR practice subscale was broken into six items (items 4 to 9) in order to determine which ones could reliably predict the usage of SBD practices.

- **Recruitment practices (item 4) as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

The literature review identified the recruitment and selection practices as one of the key HR practices. Buckingham and Coffman (2003) argue that organisations are predominantly not focussed on individual talent (and strengths) in their recruitment and selection practices. They are looking to match the role with the persons' skills and experience rather than his or her talents (and strengths). This lack of focus on talent impacts negatively on the use of SBD practices. Section 6.1.2.1 above confirmed the association between the recruitment practices and the usage of SBD practices. The results of the regression analysis in Table 5.6 indicates that for large SA businesses, recruitment and selection processes was not found to be one of the predictors of SBD practices usage. This means that although the recruitment and selection processes are associated with the use of SBD practices, it does not explain a major portion on the variance on the use of SBD practices.

This results, although unexpected as far as the literature is concerned, is unsurprising following the finding that the majority (66%) of large SA businesses believe that their organisation focus on individual strengths. The researcher's view is that large SA business are perhaps overestimating their focus on

strengths but nevertheless agree with the finding that, in the presence of other variables, recruitment practices is not a significant predictor of SBD practices usage.

- **Training & Development (item 5) and Performance Management (item 6) practices as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

Similarly, training & development and performance management were identified by Hodges and Clifton (2003) as key in explaining the variance in the usage of SBD practices. Although the association to the use of SBD practices had been established in section 6.1.1 above, the results of the stepwise regression analysis indicated that training & development and performance management were not significant in the presence of the other variables.

Therefore, in larger SA businesses, both training & development (item 5) and performance management (item 6) are limited predictors of the usage of SBD practices.

- **Reward practices (item 7) as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

Item 7 (To what extent does your reward system encourage individuals to maximise their strengths?), was found to be the strongest predictor of SBD practices usage as presented in section 5.2.1.3 above. This means that for large SA businesses, the extent to which the reward system encourages individuals to maximise their strength has a significant impact on the usage of SBD practices. 45% of the respondents felt that their organisations' reward system is encouraging individuals to maximise their strengths. [

- **Performance Management (item 8) as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

Item 6 (performance management) was found not to be a significant contributor in predicting the use of strengths-based development practices. This was unexpected given studies that had been done in the United States. Although almost half the respondents had answered favourably to item 6, the results of the stepwise regression test indicate that in the presence of other variables, this subscale does not contribute a lot in predicting the extent of the usage.

- **Talent Management (item 9) as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

Item 9 (talent management) was found not to be a significant contributor in predicting the use of strengths-based development practices. Talent management was also included by the author because large businesses, in general, tend to have special plans to managing key talent which are often very different from the rest of the employees. The results thus confirm that for large businesses in SA, talent management in the presence of other variables, is a predictor of SBD usage.

- **Organisational design (Item 11 & 12) as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

The results of the stepwise regression analysis indicated that Organisational design was the second best predictor of the extent of the use of SBD practices. The decision to include organisational design as one of the predictive variables validated the author's intuition that the culture of the organisation and the way it

is structured must have some impact on the extent to which organisations use SBD practices. It should be noted that culture (item 12) was the item that was found to explain the most variance when compared to structure (item 11).

Therefore, in large SA businesses, the culture of the organisation will help predict the extent to which SBD practices are utilised.

- **Positive psychological orientation (item 1) as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

As discussed in Chapter 5, an association between positive psychological orientation and the use of SBD practices was established. The results of the stepwise regression analysis indicated that positive psychological orientation was the second best predictor of usage of SBD practices as per Table 5.4. This result is in line with literature on positivity which argues that a strengths-focus pushes one to look at those positive aspects about themselves and others (Davies et al, 2006). The author's conclusion is that employees in large SA businesses believe that a strengths focus will help them get success but have not internalised the implications and trade off necessary to achieve that success. The belief has not fully translated to a change in behaviour. The researcher's view is supported by the response to item 2, covered below.

- **Effectiveness of immediate boss as a predictor of SBD practices usage**

As per Table 5.6, effectiveness of immediate boss, although significant, was the third least correlated with the use of SBD practices. However, the results of the

stepwise regression analysis indicated that 'immediate boss effectiveness' was not good predictor of the usage of SBD practices.

Again it must be noted that the results are surprising in the context of extensive literature on the 'effectiveness of immediate boss' and the impact on employee engagement. The researcher interpretation of this is that large South African businesses have not yet fully appreciated the impact that immediate boss have on the use of strengths and therefore are exaggerating their effectiveness. This would have to be a subject of another study. Perhaps HR people don't believe that it is the role of the immediate boss to implement strengths-based development. It could be something that they feel is within their

**6.2.3. Research Objective 3: To determine whether the implementation of strengths-based developmental practices in large South African companies has yielded the desired business outcomes.**

Research hypothesis states that the use of strengths-based development practices in large South African businesses is positively associated with:

- Employee turnover; and
- Other business outcomes.

Items 13 and 14 of the questionnaire were directly related to research hypothesis

Gallup's 1998 survey proved that employee satisfaction and business outcomes such as productivity, profitability, employee retention and customer satisfaction

are closely related (Harter & Clifton, 2003). The current study, as stated in the research hypothesis 2, sort to determine whether a positive association between desirable business outcomes and the usage of SBD practices in large SA businesses exists.

The tests results shown in Table 5.6 indicate that since the implementation of SBD practices, 49% of the businesses have seen a positive impact on employee turnover. And as far as other business outcome is concerned, 68% indicated that they have seen improvements in business outcome post the implementation of SBD practices. These results indicate that the majority of companies believe that they have positively benefited following the implementation of SBD practices.

The results are in line with numerous studies in the US by Gallup into strengths-based development and engagement. The next challenge is whether we can use item 3 (usage of SBD practices) to predict item 13 (employee turnover) & 14 other business outcomes (employee engagement, improved productivity, etc). This was out of scope for this current study.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter highlights the main findings of the research in relation to the research objectives stated in chapter 1. Recommendations to the relevant managers of large businesses are presented as well as suggestions for future research.

### **7.2. Summary of the Research Findings**

The main finding of this research study is that SBD practices are under-utilised in large South African businesses. Specifically, only 4% of the companies use SBD practices all the time and 32% use them most of the time. Disappointingly, 64% of large businesses in SA use SBD practices sometimes, occasionally or rarely.

In SA, the three most important subscale predictors of usage of SBD practices are:

- HR practices;
- Organisational design; and
- Positive psychological orientation.

At an item level, the usage of SBD practices is maximised when:

- The business' reward systems encourage individuals to maximise their strengths;
- Individuals believe that maximising their strengths will help them achieve success; and

- The organisation's culture encourages the use of SBD practices.

The major surprise of this study is that even though the immediate boss is not found to be a good explanatory variable for the use of SBD practices, the majority of respondents believed that 'immediate bosses' in their organisations had positively impacted the use of SBD practices.

Lastly, the implementation of SBD practices has had a positive impact on desirable business outcomes such as employee engagement and productivity. In fact, almost half the respondents felt that the use of SBD practices has positively impacted employee turnover.

### **7.3. Suggestions and Recommendations to Managers**

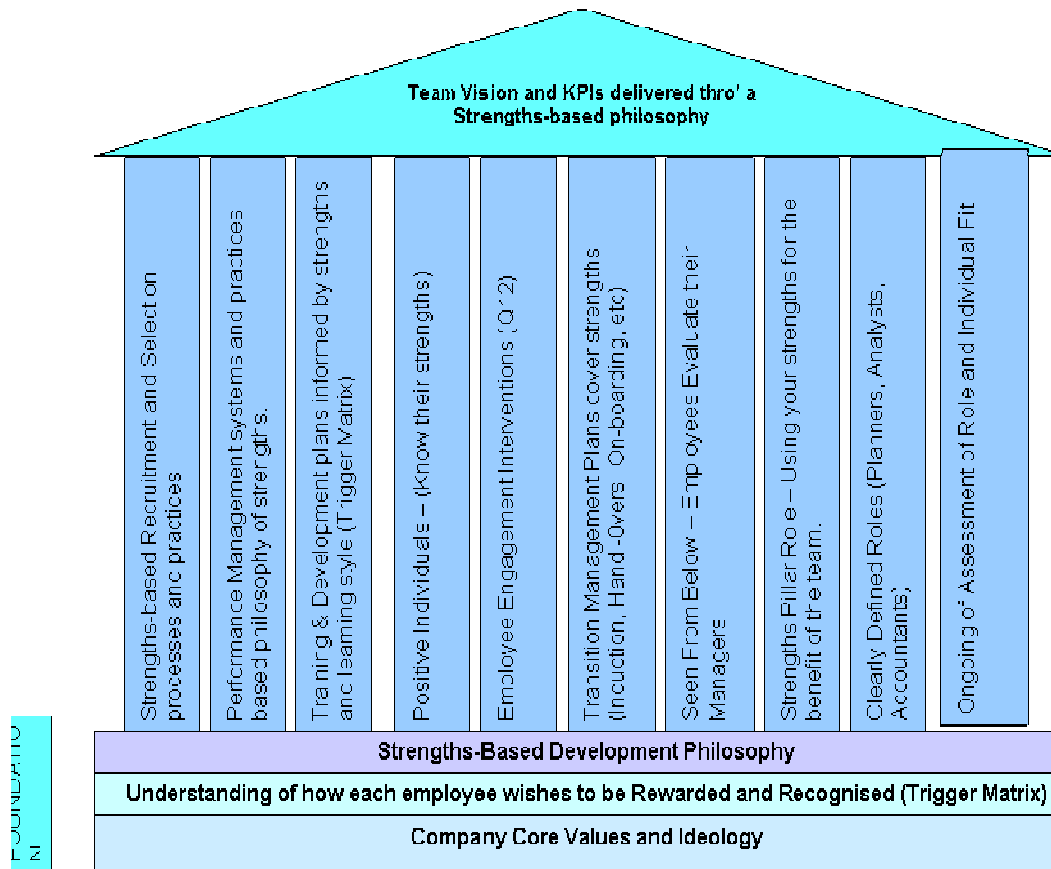
This section of covers recommendations to managers. In formulating these recommendations, the author was weary of coming up with recommendations that have no practical relevance to managers on the ground. Therefore, the recommendations proposed below have a strong bias towards the practice and not the theory of management.

- **Strengths-Based House**

The authors' point of departure is the need to increase usage of SBD practices, it is therefore imperative that the recommendations must be such that they increase awareness, access and incentivise managers to behave in the desired manner. To this end, the strengths-based house is proposed. The strengths-based house can be regarded as a guide or toolkit to managers which, if used

properly, will help managers deliver their business goals whilst creating a positive workplace.

- Description of the Strengths-Based House



The Strengths-Based House is comprised of the foundation, pillars and roof as depicted in Figure 7.1

### The Foundation

Underpinning everything is the company's way of doing business which is largely informed by its culture and the manner in which it chooses to structure itself. It was established in chapter 5 that company culture is a good predictor of the usage of SBD practices. Furthermore, positive psychological orientation was also found to be a predictor of usage of SBD practices and consequently has been included as part of the foundation. All this is done in an environment where individuals are clear of their role and have the necessary skills to carry out their tasks.

### The Pillars

Pillars, in this particular context, constitute those items that have been found to be associated with the use of SBD practices. Performance management, training and development, recruitment and selection, and positive psychological orientation were found to be associated with the usage of SBD practices. For completion, the researcher has included practices which have been found in other studies to have a positive impact on organisational culture which in turn would influence the usage of SBD practices.

### The Roof

The roof is about the team's vision and goals that are achieved through a strengths-based approach.

### How does it work?

The strengths-based house should serve as a checklist for managers with employees reporting to them. For illustration purposes, the recruitment and selection pillar is used. Some of the checklist questions for this pillar include:

- What processes are in place to assess the candidates' strengths?
- Which questions in the interview guide test for strengths?
- What specific strengths are required in this role?
- Do this individual's strengths match the requirements for the role?

Similarly, all pillars will have associated questions that ultimately will set the minimum standards that each manager must comply with.

Instead of coming up with a number of fragmented recommendations, the author has chosen to focus on how to integrate what is already available and package it in such a way that it user friendly and accessible to managers on the field. It is the author's view that the strengths-based house, when used properly, will help both managers and employees maximise their strengths.

#### **7.4. Future Research Suggestions**

- The hypothesis test used in the current study was designed in such a way that it allows for a two way relationship between the indicators and SBD practices. Elaborate statistical techniques such a structural equation modelling could be used to examine the causal relationship in more detail, but this was outside the scope of this research.

- Other questions that could be explored are:
  - To what extent does the effectiveness of immediate boss influence the use of SBD practices in large SA businesses?
  - To what extent does the Employment Equity Act impact the usage of SBD practices in large SA businesses?
  - To what extent does the SA skills shortage impact the use of SBD practices in large SA businesses?
- Future studies to obtain objective measures of company output to allow for a more objective evaluation of the value of SBD practices for company profitability should be conducted. If this is done it would mean that item 3 (usage of SBD practices) can be used to predict item 13 (employee turnover) and 14 other business outcomes, for example, employee engagement, improved productivity, etc.

## **7.5. Conclusion**

The usage of SBD practices in South African business is very poor. This underutilisation cost both employees and employers. The employers reward system coupled with an enabling organisational culture and positively orientated employees will improve the usage of strengths based practices. The greatest paradox of human psychology is that people remember criticism but respond to praise (Seligman, 2000)

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## APPENDIX A: VIA CLASSIFICATION OF STRENGTHS

Signature Strength Survey is a 240 question survey that has been taken by hundreds of thousands of people. The VIA Signature Strengths Survey measures 24 character strengths that are taken from Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification by Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, Oxford University Press, 2004. The 24 character strengths are listed below. The results page will show you your 5 greatest character strengths.

**Creativity (originality, ingenuity):** Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things.

**Curiosity (interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience):** Taking an interest in ongoing experiences for its own sake; exploring and discovering

**Open-mindedness (judgment, critical thinking):** Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; weighing all evidence fairly.

**Love of learning:** Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally.

**Perspective (wisdom):** Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people

**Bravery (valor):** Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; acting on convictions even if unpopular.

**Persistence (perseverance, industriousness):** Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles.

**Integrity (authenticity, honesty):** Presenting oneself in a genuine way; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions

**Vitality (zest, enthusiasm, vigor, energy):** Approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated

**Love:** Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated.

**Kindness (generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "niceness"):** Doing favors and good deeds for others.

**Social intelligence (emotional intelligence, personal intelligence):** Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself.

**Citizenship (social responsibility, loyalty, teamwork):** Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group.

**Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others.

**Leadership:** Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same maintain time good relations within the group.

**Forgiveness and mercy:** Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful

**Humility / Modesty:** Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is.

**Prudence:** Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.

**Self-regulation (self-control):** Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions.

**Appreciation of beauty and excellence (awe, wonder, elevation):** Appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life.

**Gratitude:** Being aware of and thankful of the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.

**Hope (optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation):** Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it.

**Humor (playfulness):** Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side.

**Spirituality (religiousness, faith, purpose):** Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose, the meaning of life, and the meaning of the universe.

The information above is based on the book *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook*



## APPENDIX B: CLIFTON STRENGTHSFINDER 34 THEMES

STRENGTHSFINDER®  
THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

### **Achiever**

People strong in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.

### **Activator**

People strong in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.

### **Adaptability**

People strong in the Adaptability theme prefer to "go with the flow." They tend to be "now" people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.

### **Analytical**

People strong in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.

### **Arranger**

People strong in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

### **Belief**

People strong in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.

### **Command**

People strong in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.

### **Communication**

People strong in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.

### **Competition**

People strong in the Competition theme measure their progress against the performance of others. They strive to win first place and revel in contests.

### **Connectedness**

People strong in the Connectedness theme have faith in the links between all things. They believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has a reason.

### **Context**

People strong in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.

### **Deliberative**

People strong in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.



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### **Developer**

People strong in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.

### **Discipline**

People strong in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.

### **Empathy**

People strong in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others' lives or others' situations.

### **Consistency**

(formerly Fairness) People strong in the Consistency theme are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same. They try to treat everyone in the world with consistency by setting up clear rules and adhering to them.

### **Focus**

People strong in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, then act.

### **Futuristic**

People strong in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.

### **Harmony**

People strong in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.

### **Ideation**

People strong in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

### **Includer**

(formerly Inclusiveness) People strong in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.

### **Individualization**

People strong in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.

### **Input**

People strong in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.

### **Intellection**

People strong in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.



## STRENGTHSFINDER®

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### **Learner**

People strong in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

### **Maximizer**

People strong in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.

### **Positivity**

People strong in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.

### **Relator**

People who are strong in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.

### **Responsibility**

People strong in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.

### **Restorative**

People strong in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.

### **Self-Assurance**

People strong in the Self-assurance theme feel confident in their ability to manage their own lives. They possess an inner compass that gives them confidence that their decisions are right.

### **Significance**

People strong in the Significance theme want to be very important in the eyes of others. They are independent and want to be recognized.

### **Strategic**

People strong in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

### **Woo**

People strong in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.



## APPENDIX C: THE SAMPLE FRAME

Absa Bank	Financial Intelligence Centre	Network Healthcare Holdings
Absa Capital	First National Bank	Palabora Mining Company
Accenture	FNB	Pfizer Laboratories
Adams & Adams	Hannover Reinsurance Group Africa Limited	PKF (Jhb) Inc.
African Rainbow Minerals	Harmony Gold Mining	PPC
Alexander Forbes	Hatch Africa	PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc
Allan Gray	Hillside Aluminium	Public Investment Corporation
Auction Alliance Group	Hollard Insurance	Rand Merchant Bank
Bayside Aluminium	Internet Solutions	Rand Water
BDO Spencer Steward	Investec Bank	RMB Private Bank
Bell Dewar & Hall	Janssen-Cilag SA	Roche
Bestmed Medical Scheme	Johannesburg Stock Exchange	Rossing Uranium Limited
Beyond Outsourcing	Johnson & Johnson (Pty) Ltd (Consumer)	Routledge Modise Attorneys
BHP Billiton	JP Morgan Chase Bank	SA Post Office
BHP Billiton Energy Coal SA	JP Morgan Worldwide Security Services	Safcor Panalpina
BMW South Africa	Kellogg Company of South Africa	Safmarine (Pty) Ltd
British American Tobacco	KPMG Inc.	Samancor Manganese (Pty) Ltd
Cadbury South Africa	Kumba Iron Ore	Sanlam Life Ltd
Cadiz Holdings	L Oreal South Africa	Sanofi-Aventis
Cell C	Levi Strauss	Sappi Management Services
Chubb Security	Liberty Life	Sasol
Coca Cola Southern and East Africa (Pty) Ltd	Louis Group	Shell South Africa Energy (Pty) Ltd
Daimler Chrysler	Marine Data Solutions	Shoprite Checkers
De Beers	Mars Consumer Goods Africa (Pty) Ltd	South African Breweries Limited
De Beers	Massmart Holdings	South African Revenue Services
Dell Computer SA	Matrix Vehicle Tracking	Standard Bank Limited



Deloitte	McKinsey & Co.	Telkom SA
Deneys Reitz Attorneys	Medikredit	The Foschini Retail Group (Pty) Ltd
Deutsche Securities (Pty) Ltd	Metropolitan Holdings	Tiger Brands
Development Bank of South Africa	Microsoft	Transnet Projects
DHL International (PTY) Ltd	Missing Link	UCS Solutions
Edcon	Momentum	Unilever
Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs	Momentumaspire	Vodacom
Element Six (Production) Pty Ltd	MTN SA	Vodacom (Pty) Ltd
Eli Lilly	Multichoise	Volkswagen of South Africa
Ericsson	Murray & Roberts Limited	Werksmans
Ernst & Young	Nampak	WesBank
Exxaro Resources	Nedbank Limited	Woolworths
FCB	Nestle	



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## APPENDIX D: STRENGTHS QUESTIONNAIRE (PRE-TEST)

### **MBA Research Project 2007**

#### **Introduction to Strengths Questionnaire:**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the use of 'Strengths-based development practices' in large South African businesses.

'Strengths-based development practices' encompass the following key elements:

- **Selection:** When selecting someone - opt for *talent*, not simply experience, intelligence, or determination;
- **Objectives:** When setting expectations, realise the importance of defining the *right outcomes, not the steps to get there*;
- **Motivation:** When motivating someone, focus on the person's *strengths, not their weaknesses*; and
- **Employee Development:** When developing someone, find the optimal *fit between talent and role*.

The questionnaire is targeted at Human Resources Executives/Senior Managers.

Your submission will remain confidential.

The questionnaire should take approximately 7 minutes to complete.

#### **Demographic Profile:**

Please indicate your choice with a cross (X).

Are you a *Human Resources Executive* or *Senior Manager* within your organization?

Y

N

If no, please capture your title here:



### **Strengths Questionnaire:**

Please indicate your response to the next 14 questions with a cross (X). Please answer candidly!

1. To what extent do people in your organisation believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

2. To what extent are people in your organization overly focused on fixing weaknesses?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

3. To what extent do you use strength-based development practices in your organization?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

4. To what extent does your organisation focus on individual strengths in the recruitment process?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

5. To what extent does the organisations' training and development team focus on developing individual strengths?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

6. When managing performance, to what extent does your organisation focus on peoples' strengths?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

7. To what extent does your organisation's reward tools encourage individuals to maximise their strengths?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

8. To what extent are individuals in your organization recognised for capitalising on their strengths?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

9. To what extent does your talent management strategy focus on maximising individual's strengths?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

10. To what extent do the qualities of the immediate boss have an impact on individuals maximising their strengths?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

11. To what extent does your organisational structure (for example matrix) impact on the implementation of strength-based development practices?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

12. To what extent does your organisational culture have an impact upon strengths based people development?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

13. To what extent have you seen an impact on employee turnover since implementing strengths-based practices?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

14. To what extent have you seen an impact on business outcomes since implementing strengths-based development practices?

Rarely		Occasionally		Sometimes		Most of the time		All the time	
--------	--	--------------	--	-----------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--



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## APPENDIX E:

### WEB-BASED STRENGTHS QUESTIONNAIRE



GORDON INSTITUTE  
OF BUSINESS SCIENCE  
University of Pretoria

#### MBA Research Project 2007

#### An Investigation into the use of Strengths-Based Development Practices in large South African businesses

##### Introduction to Strengths Questionnaire:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the use of 'Strengths-based development practices' in large South African businesses.

'Strengths-based development practices' encompass the following key elements:

- **Selection:** When selecting someone - opt for talent, not simply experience, intelligence, or determination
- **Objectives:** When setting expectations, realise the importance of defining the right outcomes, not the steps to get there
- **Motivation:** When motivating someone, focus on the person's strengths, not their weaknesses; and
- **Employee Development:** When developing someone, find the optimal fit between talent and role.

Progress - Page 1 of 6

Introduction

Are you a Human Resources Executive or Senior Manager within your organization?



YES



NO

Proceed

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Job Title:

Question 1

To what extent do people in your organisation believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success?

- Very Weakly
- Weakly
- Neutral
- Strongly
- Very Strongly

Question 2

To what extent are people in your organisation focused on fixing weaknesses?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Question 3

To what extent do you use strength-based development practices in your organisation?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Question 4

To what extent does your organisation focus on individuals' strengths in the recruitment process?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Proceed



Question 5

To what extent does the organisation's training and development programme focus on developing individuals' strengths?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Question 6

When managing performance, to what extent does your organisation focus on peoples' strengths?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Question 7

To what extent does your organisation's rewards system encourage individuals to maximise their strengths?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Question 8

To what extent are individuals in your organisation recognised for capitalising on their strengths?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Question 9

To what extent does your talent management strategy focus on maximising individuals' strengths?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time

Proceed



Question 10

In your organisation, how have the qualities of the immediate boss impacted on individuals (subordinates) maximising their strengths?

- Very negatively
- Negatively
- None
- Positively
- Very positively

Question 11

How has your organisation's structure (e.g. matrix, etc) impacted strengths-based development practices?

- Very negatively
- Negatively
- None
- Positively
- Very positively

Question 12

How has your organisation's culture impacted strengths-based development practices?

- Very negatively
- Negatively
- None
- Positively
- Very positively

Question 13

How has the implementation of strengths-based developmental practices impacted employee turnover?

- Very negatively
- Negatively
- None
- Positively
- Very positively

Question 14

How has the implementation of strengths-based developmental practices impacted business outcomes?

- Very negatively
- Negatively
- None
- Positively
- Very positively

Proceed



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University of Pretoria

MBA Research Project 2007

Progress - Page 5 of 6

Final Stage / Confirmation

Thanks for your time.

If you would like a copy of the results, please enter you email address below:

Email :

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[www.fishnet.co.za](http://www.fishnet.co.za)



## APPENDIX F: EMAIL INVITE

Use of 'Strengths' in South African Businesses - Message (HTML)

This message will be sent via Microsoft Exchange Server.

To: [Redacted]  
Cc: [Redacted]  
Subject: Use of 'Strengths' in South African Businesses

Dear Colleague,

*"Competitive companies get their strengths together and make their weaknesses irrelevant"* - Peter Drucker. According to Marcus Buckingham, companies that focus on cultivating employees' strengths rather than simply improving their weaknesses stand to dramatically increase efficiency while allowing for maximum personal growth and success. Do we have Strength-Based businesses in South Africa? To this end, the Gordon Institute of Business Science MBA Research Project is [investigating the use of Strengths-Based Development practices in large South African businesses](#).

Given your understanding of HR and employee engagement, please can you contribute towards this national research by completing this web-based questionnaire. It will take you approximately 10 minutes.

Please complete the questionnaire now: <http://www.fishnet.co.za/mba2007/>

Otherwise please make your contribution no later than the **07th of October 2007**.

PS> I encourage you to pass on this invite to fellow HR Executives/Directors/Snr Managers/Professionals you think can add value to this research.

Please contact me should you require clarity.

Go to <http://www.fishnet.co.za/mba2007/> - to complete (10 minutes).

Regards,  
Martin Mvulane  
Planning Director  
Unilever South Africa  
Tel : +27 31 570 2679  
Cell : +27 82 452 9936  
E-mail : [m.mvulane@unilever.com](mailto:m.mvulane@unilever.com)

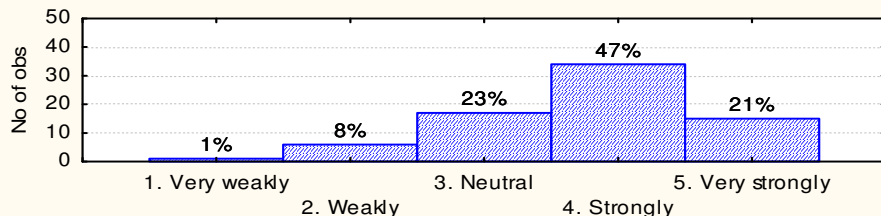
start | 3 Microsoft Office ... | 2 Microsoft Office E... | 5 Microsoft Office ... | Adobe Reader | EN | 10:27 PM

## APPENDIX H: T-TESTS COMPARISON OF HR AND NON-HR

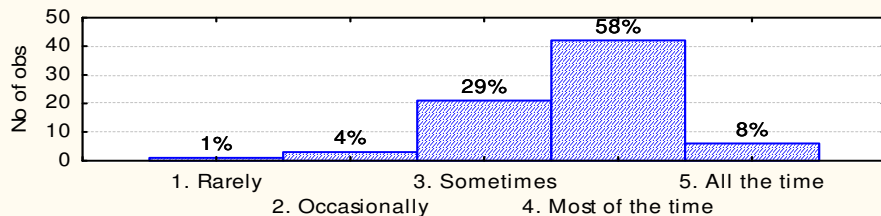
<b>Subscales</b>	Mean non HR	Mean HR	t-value	P	Std.Dev. non HR	Std.Dev.H R
HR practices	3.1	3.3	-1.05	0.29785	1.1	0.7
Organisational design	3.4	3.5	-0.5	0.62051	0.7	0.8
Positive psychological orientation	3.6	3.8	-1.13	0.2643	1.2	0.8
Negative psychological orientation	2.2	2.4	-1.06	0.29161	0.7	0.8
Immediate boss effectiveness	3.3	3.7	-1.76	0.08357	1	0.8
Usage of strength-based development practices	3.1	3	0.07	0.94458	1	1
Desirable business outcomes	3.5	3.6	-0.98	0.32882	0.4	0.6
<b>Items</b>	Mean non HR	Mean HR	t-value	P	Std.Dev. non HR	Std.Dev.H R
1: Believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success	3.6	3.8	-1.13	0.2643	1.2	0.8
2: Focused on fixing weaknesses	2.2	2.4	-1.06	0.29161	0.7	0.8
3: Use strength-based development practices in your organisation	3.1	3	0.07	0.94458	1	1
4: Focus on individuals' strengths in the recruitment process	3.4	3.9	-1.68	0.09708	1.2	0.8
5: The organisation's training and development programme focus on developing individuals' strengths	3.1	3.3	-0.49	0.62917	1.4	1
6: When managing performance, focus on peoples' strengths	3.3	3.2	0.33	0.73986	1.2	1
7: Rewards system encourage individuals to maximise their strengths	2.8	3.1	-1.02	0.31323	1.4	1.1
8: Individuals recognised for capitalising on their strengths	2.9	3.3	-1.19	0.23983	1.2	1
9: Talent management strategy focuses on maximising individuals' strengths	3.1	3.3	-1	0.32207	1.2	1
10: Qualities of the immediate boss have impacted on individuals maximising their strengths	3.3	3.7	-1.76	0.08357	1	0.8
11: Organisation's structure has impacted strengths-based development practices	3.3	3.5	-0.53	0.5951	0.8	0.8
12: Organisation's culture has impacted strengths-based development practices	3.4	3.5	-0.34	0.73708	0.9	0.9
13: Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted employee turnover	3.3	3.5	-0.93	0.35641	0.6	0.6
14: Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted business outcomes	3.6	3.7	-0.78	0.43918	0.5	0.7



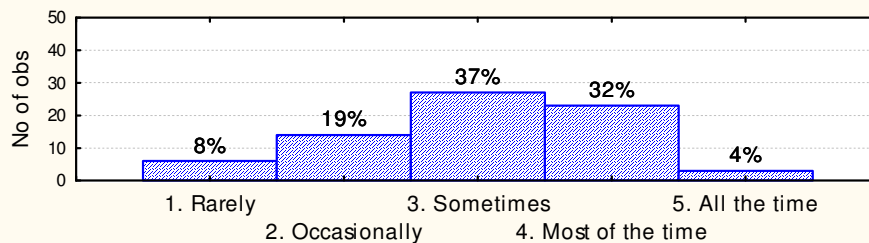
### APPENDIX H: ITEM RESULTS



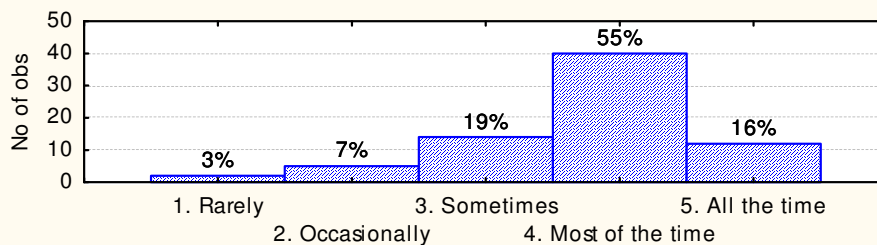
1: Believe that developing their strengths will help them achieve success



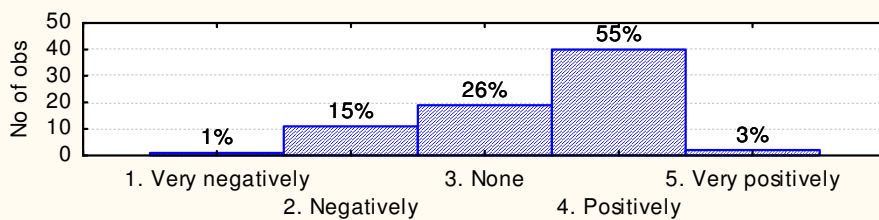
2: Focused on fixing weaknesses



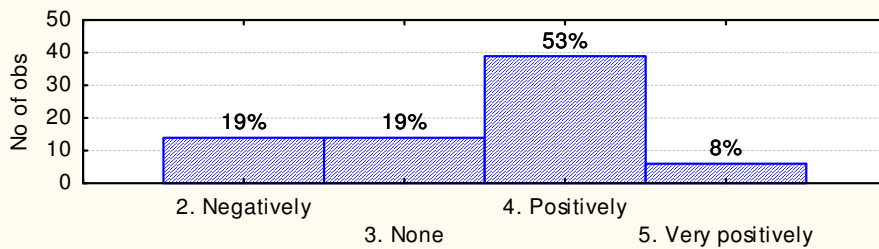
3: Use strength-based development practices in your organisation



4: Focus on individuals' strengths in the recruitment process



11: Organisation's structure has impacted strengths-based development practices



12: Organisation's culture has impacted strengths-based development practices



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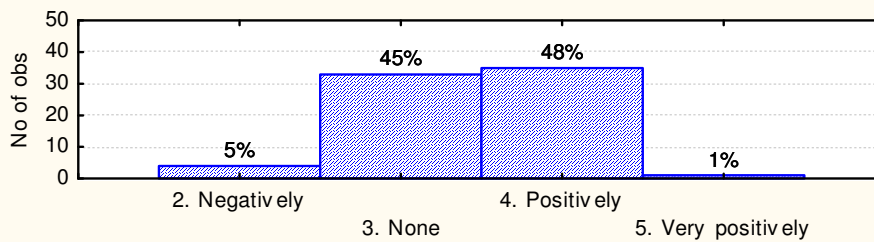
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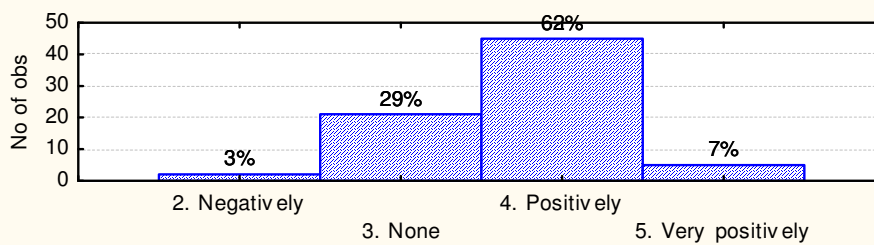
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13: Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted employee turnover



14: Implementation of strengths-based developmental practices has impacted business outcomes