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Do People Want to be Designated as a High Potential? The Relationship Between Designation, Managerial Aspirations, Leader Development Efficacy, and Task Persistence.

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ABSTRACT

DO PEOPLE WANT TO BE DESIGNATED AS A HIGH POTENTIAL?
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIGNATION, MANAGERIAL ASPIRATIONS, LEADER DEVELOPMENT EFFICACY, AND TASK PERSISTENCE

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Northern Illinois University, 2022
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High-potential programs are becoming increasingly popular in organizations, and the academic literature lacks research to inform the structure of these programs. Participants in these programs are often selected from the broader organization and then are put through a series of developmental activities (such as mentoring and stretch assignments). These programs are time-consuming for both the employee and the organization. Therefore, the organization must be selecting individuals that genuinely want to be a participant. It is also essential to understand the individual differences that make an individual more likely to succeed in a high-potential program. These individual differences include managerial aspirations and leader development efficacy. This research has two main goals: 1) test a theoretical model of supporting constructs that may increase an individual's drive upon being designated and 2) determine different reasons individuals desire to participate in high-potential programs or not. The first goal was investigated through study 1, using an online survey design with 545 full-time employees. Participants were given a task that purportedly measured potential but were then randomly designated as high potential or not. Study 1 found that there were no significant relationships between this manipulated designation and leader developmental efficacy, managerial aspirations, and performance. The results indicate that being informed of designation status might not influence
an individual’s desire to perform at a higher level. However, when the manipulation check was used in place of the random designation (self-identified designation) several hypotheses were supported. The latter goal was achieved through study 2, a qualitative study that asked for individuals' reasons for participating in a high-potential program. Content analysis procedures revealed several different thematic codes for both those individuals who did and did not want to participate in high potential research. Across both groups it was clear that career motivations were a deciding factor in whether an individual wanted to participate in a high-potential program. This dissertation sets to add to the high potential literature in two significant ways: informing reasons as to why individuals may desire to participate in a high-potential program or not and determining individual differences that positively impact one's performance.
DO PEOPLE WANT TO BE DESIGNATED AS A HIGH POTENTIAL?
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIGNATION, MANAGERIAL
ASPIRATIONS, LEADER DEVELOPMENT EFFICACY,
AND TASK PERSISTENCE

BY
ALEXANDRIA BROWN
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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Lisa M. Finkelstein
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents and my sibling who have supported me throughout this entire process, especially on weekly calls of me complaining. I would not be the successful person I am today without their love and support.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to all my best friends who have watched me grow over the years and supported me every step of the way.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Nannie and Max – who both watched me start this journey and are now watching me finish from above. Max, I hope Nannie is giving you tons of head scratches in heaven.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Organizations are increasingly investing in developing their employees, and high-potential programs have been a critical way to keep individuals engaged and excited about their development (Lee, 2018). An integral aspect of any development program is the willing participation and desire from the employee to grow beyond their current role; this might not be true across employees. Some individuals may lack career aspirations to reach a level higher than an individual contributor within the organization. A subset of employees may have the skills and capabilities for a leadership role but do not desire to engage in development or grow beyond an individual contributor. Talent development programs (including high-potential programs) are a significant investment for the organization in monetary value and resource value (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). Therefore, companies must select employees that will benefit the most from the opportunity to participate in development programs.

Unfortunately, companies often implement a "one-size-fits-all" talent development program, unlikely to appeal to all employees (Garavan et al., 2011). To create a successful high-potential program, a company must understand what the employees hope to gain from such a program and which employees will benefit the most from participation. From an academic perspective, further investigation of the interworking of high-potential programs - what attracts employees to them vs. detracts capable employees – can continue to grow the relevance of theoretically-grounded organizational research to practical applications. There is an opportunity
to utilize well-researched psychological theories, such as social exchange theory, to help guide an understanding of the dynamics of participation in high-potential programs by employees. Academic researchers rarely research high-potential programs and what motivates individuals to participate in these programs. I have the opportunity to inform future directions of high potential literature.

Prior research has found several positive organizational outcomes associated with talent development programs, including high-potential programs. These organizational outcomes include an increase in positive relationships among staff (Zheng, 2009), decrease in turnover rates of employees (Zheng, 2009), an increase in team learning and team spirit (Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018), increase in commitment to the organization (Cho & McLean, 2009), an increase in adaptivity in a changing workplace (Kunasegaran et al., 2016), and an increase in self-efficacy among the group (Black & Earnest, 2009). The organizational outcomes are often a result of the increase in self-efficacy among the group, which occurs due to the group's influence and social comparison of one's performance to others (Black & Earnest, 2009). This increased self-efficacy impacts self-motivation, which indirectly relates to an increase in task persistence and goal-directed behaviors – an indication that performance will increase amongst these individuals.

Organizations invest many resources into high-potential programs, such as financial resources and time from both the employees and those training them, so, understandably, the company would want to see positive effects of participation in the program. As mentioned above, several positive organizational outcomes are associated with high-potential programs, such as increased organizational commitment (Cho & McLean, 2009); higher levels of organizational commitment have been related to an increase in performance (Meyer et al., 1989). While
performance has not been directly measured due to high-potential programs, I expected to see an increase in persistence by participants who believed they were designated as high potential in high-potential programs due to the performance of the relationship has with measured outcomes from previous literature.

It is often assumed that if given the opportunity, any employee would willingly participate in a development program that could potentially increase their chances at a promotion or more exposure to senior leaders. However, is that a fair assumption? If given the opportunity, does everyone want to be designated to participate in a high-potential program? High-potential programs require a good amount of involvement and time investment on the employees' side to stay engaged and make active decisions about their development. A specific individual may not have the motivation or aspiration to progress in their careers beyond their current level. Individuals may also fear that they do not have the capabilities and skill set to complete these high-potential programs. The research aims were two-fold: 1) to test a theoretical model of supporting constructs that may increase an individual's performance on a persistence task upon being designated and 2) to determine different reasons individuals desire to participate in high-potential programs or not.

High potential literature is scant, and most companies rely on ‘popular press’ to inform their high potential strategies. Academia has the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on high potential individuals and the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of these programs. Organizations and academics need to understand the individual and contextual factors that differentiate employees who want to participate in these programs and those who do not. I looked at an individual's career motivations and managerial aspirations to understand the difference between individuals' desires to participate in a high-potential program. An individual's
career motivation is a multidimensional construct that measures how the situation influences employees' reactions and how these reactions reflect an individual's decisions and behaviors (London, 1983). Managerial aspiration is the desire to move into a higher position (management or upper management depending on the original position) regardless of difficulties in that progression (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). Career motivations and managerial aspirations are both under-investigated. However, they may hold essential information about the potential variance in employees' desires to be designated as a high potential and be set on a fast-paced career trajectory.

Some research has been conducted on characteristics that might define an employee as high potential and on reactions to discovering whether or not one has been designated as a high potential (Ready et al., 2010; Silzer & Church, 2010; Wang-Cowham et al., 2012). However, there is still a significant gap in whether all employees would like an opportunity to participate in high-potential programs (Dries & Pepermans, 2008; Gelens et al., 2014). To further understand why certain employees may not want to participate in a potential program, I investigated their career motivations (London, 1983).

To fully understand the psychological processes behind an individual's desire to be designated and participate in these high-potential programs, I utilized several psychological theories. These theories include social exchange theory, self-efficacy (specifically, leader developmental efficacy), career motivations, and managerial aspirations. Social exchange theory can be utilized to understand the employee's perception of fairness from a singular event with the organization that then becomes engrained with their perceptions of the organization affecting the employee's attitudes and behaviors (Masterson et al., 2000). Self-efficacy will be utilized to understand which individuals believe they can complete the high-potential program; leader
developmental efficacy will be measured (Maurer, 2001). Efficacy tends to be task-specific and generalizes to one domain that it is measured within; therefore, domain efficacy describes the individual's efficacy that directly impacts that outcome (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Leader developmental efficacy is defined as the belief in oneself to develop as a leader (Reicherd et al., 2016).

Lastly, career motivation and managerial aspirations are one motivational force that may steer an individual’s desire to participate in such a program. Career motivation is a multidimensional construct internal to the individual, influenced by the situation, and is reflected in the individual's decisions and behaviors (London, 1983). Managerial aspirations are the desire to move into or higher in the managerial hierarchy by measuring the individual's preference, desire, liking, and ambition for a managerial position (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). The employee's career motivation is essential in understanding why an individual may be motivated to complete a program such as a high-potential program. At the same time, managerial aspirations are a more direct line of sight into whether the individual wants to progress outside of an individual contributor position.

Utilizing the scientific rigor of academic research and psychological theory allows for insight into different characteristics that determine whether an individual desires to be part of these development programs. In addition, I set out to investigate supporting behaviors and motivations that lead to higher performance in leadership positions. This academic research can then be translated to practitioners to know and understand whether all individuals want to be designated as a high potential or not and identify those individuals. High-potential programs and their associated leader development training programs cost the company financial and human capital resources. They often require the individual to participate in other events beyond their
daily work. The question as to whether or not every individual wants to participate in a high-potential program can help inform questions such as, why do some participants not succeed after a high-potential program and others do? What type of individuals can I identify that will be the best return on investment? Can employees' career motivations help inform whether they desire to participate in a high-potential program?

This research set out to address the question as to whether all individuals – if given the opportunity – to participate in a high-potential program would take that chance, and, importantly, why, or why not. A quantitative study explored this question to test a theoretically grounded model that proposes a role of both managerial aspirations and self-efficacy in predicting performance a persistence task. The quantitative study was followed with a qualitative study to capture why an individual may or may not want to participate in a high-potential program. This research mainly focuses on understanding the individuals who are designated as high potential but have low managerial aspirations and those who are not designated as high potential but have high managerial aspirations.

In the first stage of my research, I investigated how high potential designation affects performance on a persistence task, proposing a partial mediation through an individual's self-efficacy of their leadership development. Additionally, the effect of career motivations was investigated to see how those motivations would impact the relationship between high potential designation and performance on a persistence task. The second study sought to capture themes and reasoning related to why an individual desires to participate in a high-potential program to inform the quantitative findings further. The model in Figure 1 depicts the proposed relationships. The theoretical foundations for these hypothesized relationships are explicated in Chapter 2.
Figure 1. Proposed relationships between high potential designation, managerial aspirations, leader developmental efficacy, and performance.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout this chapter, I review the literature pertinent to the support of the proposed model. This literature review covers talent development programs, designation as a high potential, outcomes associated with talent development programs, leader developmental efficacy, and managerial aspirations. Psychological theories such as social exchange theory (SET), self-efficacy, and managerial aspirations are utilized to provide evidence for the study at hand. This chapter also introduces the hypotheses associated with Study 1 and the research questions associated with Study 2.

Talent Development Programs

Talent development programs are a critical component of an employee's ability to maintain a high skill level and further develop capabilities. Talent development can be defined as "planning, selection, and implementation of development strategies…to ensure that the organization has the talent to supply future strategic objectives and positions" (Garavan et al., 2011, p. 6). Larger organizations tend to have in-house talent programs that discretion how talent is rated/designated and to determine employees' development activities. In addition, some talent development programs specifically target a subset of employees and do not offer access to others – these are often targeted specifically at 'high potential' employees. High potential has been defined in many ways in the literature. A high potential employee is predicted to possess skills,
characteristics, and capabilities that will be key to strategic positions within the organization (Finkelstein et al., 2017).

High-potential programs require the organization to invest financial and temporal resources; therefore, the investment must be in the right individuals who will take full advantage of the program. Several organizational outcomes (such as an increase in job satisfaction; Razaei & Beyerlein, 2018) have been linked to high-potential programs – but little focus on individual outcomes such as performance. This research set out to establish a direct relationship between high potential identification and the individual's persistence on a task.

Talent development programs are often specific to an organization or team, indicating they lack standardization regarding the types of development opportunities employees are granted. There are three major approaches to developing talent management: an inclusive approach, an exclusive approach, and a differentiation/segmentation approach (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). The first, an inclusive approach, suggests that talent management should be available to all employees to view that everyone has potential strengths that can add value. With this approach, an organization invests in all employees regardless of future potential or position to help strengthen the overall workforce (Lee, 2018). An inclusive approach can also lead to competitiveness among sustainable employees and create an environment of constant improvement (Lee, 2018).

A differentiation/segmentation approach is one in which every employee in the organization is identified as having a particular talent level. The organization focuses its development budget on the individuals they expect the greatest return on investment (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). In this approach, all employees are slotted into a talent pool. The pools of employees vary on criticality or specialization; however, each pool still receives some degree of
talent development (Lee, 2018). This approach can create a significant divide among the workforce due to the disproportionate investments in the differing talent pools, resulting in segmentation among the employees based on strategic contributions, specific positions, or even specific skillsets employees hold (Huselid & Becker, 2011).

A final approach is an exclusive approach that identifies an essential set of employees/jobs that should create disproportionate value addition to the organization (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). High-potential programs are included in this approach – when talent is considered comprised of elite individuals with unique characteristics (Lee, 2018). In an exclusive approach, organizations look for employees who offer a unique combination of human capital, attitudinal elements, and behavior that indicates the future potential to succeed at a more prominent role (Lee, 2018). This approach is often taken when there is a limited developmental budget, so the organization wants to ensure the best bet employees are given access to talent development (Lee, 2018). High-potential programs are an exclusive approach that seeks to identify individuals who will most likely succeed and be placed in strategically important roles (Cappelli & Keller, 2014).

However, there will likely be a disproportionate investment into high potential employees because these individuals tend to be the ones organizations refer to as their "best bets" to being key players in its future success (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). As there is a heavy organizational investment in these individuals, employers want to know the best way to identify an employee who could be of high potential (Dries & Pepermans, 2008). As discussed below, there are several different ways in the literature regarding what may signal an individual a high potential and procedures described for identifying them from the general workforce.
High Potential Employee Designation

Finkelstein et al. (2017) searched to identify individual differences that may be individual indicators of potential for employees. Utilizing previous literature, Finkelstein et al. (2017) identified several indicators of potential that included cognitive ability, personality, social competence, growth and learning competencies, learning agility, developmental readiness, and typical intellectual engagement. General cognitive ability (g) and cognitive complexity, decision making, and strategic thinking may be utilized to differentiate among employees with more potential. When looking at personality, a high potential employee is theorized to have an even temperament that will suit high-stress situations in leadership roles (Finkelstein et al., 2017). Along with personality, a successful leader must have a social competence level to negate any potential workplace politics that may arise when in a leadership position. Growth and learning competencies, learning agility, developmental readiness, and typical intellectual engagement are all measures that may indicate an individual's ability to adapt quickly and also have the growth trajectory into a more prominent role (Finkelstein et al., 2017).

Every organization has a different process for identifying high potential employees. Some occur before entering the organization, while some are cohort-based programs. Designation of high potential employees focuses on what the individual may do in the future based on their current standing and what KSAs are needed to get them to the next level (Finkelstein et al., 2017). Silzer and Church (2010) proposed a typical identification process that is as follows: agreement on potential categories and definitions, solicitation, nomination, assessment, review, and acceptance, and finally, development. Following the identification process brings the question of alerting the individuals who have been designated of their designation status.
There is often a debate around whether high potential employees should be notified of their designation (e.g., Dries & Pepermans, 2008). The main argument against transparency is a fear of employees becoming complacent with their designation as high potential and, therefore, a falloff in their performance, while those not designated by reciprocating by lowering their attitudes and behaviors because they may feel invalidated by the organization for their work (Dries & Pepermans, 2008; Gelens et al., 2014).

The theoretical underpinnings of SET (Blau, 1964) have been proposed by some researchers to understand employees’ reactions when finding out whether they are designated or not (Swailes & Blackburn, 2016). Social exchange theory suggests that negotiation occurs between an employee and their organization in which one party's actions lead to reciprocal actions by the other party. The basic premise of SET dictates that individuals go through a cost-benefit analysis when forming relationships and repeat behaviors that have been rewarded in that relationship (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Social exchange theory has been studied in many different settings. It is imperative to call attention to the changing dynamics of the workplace and workforce, including remote work and contract workers (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). However, the integral dimensions of social exchange theory still hold and can be utilized to navigate the organizational and contextual realities (Frieder, 2018). Previous research studied the relationship between HR practices and outcomes such as organizational commitment and perceived favorability; in this research, SET was used as a framework to explain that employees perceive HR practices as a sign of commitment to them as employees (Marescauz et al., 2013). The findings, however, indicate a non-linear relationship between organizational commitment and perceived favorability, especially in the context of development practices. These results suggest that some employees may feel that receiving more developmental opportunities (such as
a high-potential program) is negative, resulting in lower organizational commitment (Marescauz et al., 2013).

In this light, employees designated as high potential may feel an overwhelming sense of obligation to reciprocate the positive relationship with increased positive attitudes and behaviors. On the other hand, individuals who find out they are not designated may reciprocate by lowering their attitudes and behaviors because they feel that the organization did not validate their work (Gelens et al., 2014). However, there likely are employees who do not want to be designated as a high potential. With the theoretical underpinnings of social exchange theory, this specific individual is likely to perceive this action by the organization (designated into a high-potential program) as a hostile, or at least unwelcomed, action; therefore, this person will likely reflect that in their actions going forward similar to the behavior of an individual who was not designated and felt invalidated by the organization. On the other hand, this individual who does not want to be designated nor part of the program could perceive not being designated as a positive and their leader ‘taking care of them.’ In this scenario, the employee will have a positive attitude from this action and most likely engage in positive work behaviors (Frieder, 2018).

Swailes and Blackburn (2016) found that employees who were not in talent pools felt less support from their line managers. The individuals not in the talent pool were more concerned about unfair access to talent pools and lower access to development opportunities. They also had lower impressions of their recent personal development, lower motivation towards career development, and reduced perceptions of the organization’s commitment to their development (Swailes & Blackburn, 2016). Masterson et al. (2000) utilized social exchange theory to understand an employee’s perceptions of the fairness of a singular event. These perceptions of fairness become integrated with the organization’s feelings and can affect the individual’s
attitudes and behaviors towards the organization. A sense of stigma could result if employees feel that they are being labeled as unchosen. Not being identified as talented and not accessing exposure to a range of personal development opportunities are likely to be interpreted by individuals as an expression of a lack of support from the organization. Conversely, being part of a program should raise commitment to the organization (Swailes & Blackburn, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative to understand how social exchange theory can explain the relationship between individuals who are not designated but still desire to be promoted to higher levels.

Once a cohort is identified for high potential designation, an organization must decide what components to include in their high potential development program. Several methods to develop high potential employees were identified through a survey of several prominent organizations (Enterprise, 2011). These methods include personal assessments, mentoring, exposure to senior executives, individual development planning, coaching, direct access to the CEO, leadership programs, stretch assignments, special workshops/training, technical training, functional training, and soft-skills training (Enterprise, 2011). These are some options to develop high potentials, characterized as three main components in other literature. These components are individual skill development, socializing development interventions, and action/strategic learning initiatives (Garavan et al., 2011). In addition, understanding what happens in a high-potential program, what is expected of participants, and time commitments can be crucial to understanding why some individuals who can complete the program choose not to participate.

To fully capture and understand why qualified individuals may not want to participate in a high-potential program, the second study of this dissertation questioned a sample of participants about their reactions to being designated to join a high-potential program. There are very few investigations in the literature examining reactions to high potential designation. A
previous study on the individual, organizational, and community outcomes indicated in their open-ended questions one major downfall of participating in leadership development programs; 38% of participants indicated their relationship with their spouse and family worsened (Black & Earnest, 2009). There may be a pre-conceived notion that participation in high-potential programs will lead to worse relationships with families, contributing to their lack of desire to participate in these programs. A more thorough investigation was imperative to fully understand why an individual may or may not want to participate in a high-potential program.

Model Testing

Although it is still unclear why individuals may or may not want to participate in these programs is largely under-investigated, there are constructs in the literature that can provide a starting point to investigate this relationship. I have hypothesized relationships among these variables that were tested in the quantitative study. However, further investigation into these motivational factors were investigated in study 2, the qualitative study. These constructs had not to date been directly applied to the investigation of high-potential programs. However, they should offer some reasoning for different reactions to designation and how that subsequently affects outcomes. In the next section, I will provide justification for my theoretical model tested in the first study of my dissertation.

Outcomes Associated with Talent Development Programs

With the investment in leadership development programs, such as high-potential programs, organizations want to see a direct change in the employees due to the program. However, there tends to be a lack of research that focuses on the relationship between talent
development and outcomes (Razaei & Beyerlein, 2018). There is a persistent lack of clarity between management development and leadership development, the varying approaches, desired outcomes, and evaluation methods for these outcomes (McGurk, 2009).

Razaei and Beyerlein (2018) sought to review the talent development literature, examining the interventions put in place, everyday issues that arise with implementing talent development programs, and typical outcomes. Specific outcomes tend to be associated with implementing these programs, such as an increase in productivity, job satisfaction, and a decrease in absenteeism (Razaei & Beyerlein, 2018). There is a need for extensive research to focus on the relationship between various talent development interventions and individual and organizational level outcomes such as performance, return on investment (ROI), knowledge sharing, brand awareness, satisfaction, commitment, among others (Razaei & Beyerlein, 2018). Participants in leadership development programs have also reported a deeper understanding of organizational strategy, greater effectiveness in working with objectives, service improvements, improved collaborative skills, and business outcomes (McGurk, 2009).

There is an apparent lack of research between interventions and outcomes, with an opportunity to focus on different antecedents of talent development programs and interventions to different outcomes. The current research will only tap into a fraction of what is yet to be investigated; this research will begin to investigate performance as an outcome of talent development programs.

Performance may be under-investigated concerning high potential designation due to how industries can define performance and individuals' various tasks in these programs. Performance criteria may also vary depending on the industry. Therefore, it was necessary to identify a specific mechanism to measure performance, such as a persistence task. An individual who
wants to be designated as a high potential will likely feel the effects of social exchange theory – indicating that they think they owe the organization something in return for the opportunity. Therefore, the individual will likely persist through an unsolvable task to give back to the organization.

There is little empirical research into the relationship between designation as high potential and subsequent performance. Task persistence was operationalized in place of actual performance and is the outcome measurement due to the implied desire that an employee's investment increase will produce better work products. Traditionally, anagram tasks have been used to measure an individual's persistence levels (Sandelands et al., 1988). Performance will be measured by each participant's mean time spent attempting to solve the unsolvable anagrams and compared to the rest of the participants. Task persistence was used instead of attitudes or perceptions about a hypothetical organization that I would be required to ask to imagine they work for in the scenario due to the lower likelihood that an individual would imagine this scenario in their workplace. The designation was randomly assigned after an imitation designation task, allowing me to see if persistence varies depending on an individual's managerial aspirations and leadership development efficacy regardless of their actual ability.

\( H1 \): Those designated as high potential will have higher average task persistence than those not designated.

**Leader Developmental Efficacy**

Some of the distinctions between the employees who desire to be designated and participate and those who do not may come down to the belief that they can be a successful high potential employee. Leader developmental efficacy is a domain-specific measure of self-efficacy.
Before exploring leader developmental efficacy as a potential mechanism, the difference between general and domain-specific self-efficacy needs to be understood.

General self-efficacy is defined as how one believes in themselves to perform specific actions required to deal with prospective situations (Bandura, 1977). General self-efficacy has a broad definition due to the construct's nature, which is not always beneficial when investigating whether individuals have the self-efficacy to perform in a specific domain (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Task efficacy is too narrow in focus and does not generalize beyond that specific task, while domain-specific efficacy is broader, which allows for generalization outside of a specific task (Woodruff & Cashman, 1993). Domain efficacy is theorized to combine multiple related task efficacies into one and is more strongly linked to task-specific performance than general self-efficacy (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Besides, a focus on a specific self-efficacy will inform the study more directly regarding the participant's belief in being a leader than generalized self-efficacy (Schwoerer et al., 2005).

Leader developmental efficacy (LDE) is defined as one's belief in their ability to develop as a leader and develop a specific ability or skill to employ in certain leadership contexts (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Reicherd et al., 2016). Leader developmental efficacy develops similarly to general self-efficacy in that an individual depends on individual characteristics such as their learning preparedness, career, and situation variables to inform their ability (Maurer et al., 2003). An individual may also reference external sources to inform their level of efficacy, such as personal resources utilized for development, career orientation towards development, and support and resources for development – all of which should increase an individual's belief that they will succeed in development (Maurer et al., 2003). The extent to which an individual has
these factors will increase their self-efficacy and therefore result in confidence and a positive experience from participating in development activities (Maurer et al., 2003)

Self-efficacy can be increased by four methods: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, emotional arousal, and verbal persuasion (Hackett & Betz, 1981). An employee designated as high potential can indicate successful performances, create emotional arousal, and feel that their capabilities are reinforced (verbal persuasion). Employees’ beliefs that they are capable of career development are related to past participation in development activities and the intention to participate in development activities in the future (Maurer, 2001). An employee's self-efficacy also increases for completing a talent development program when they have positive attitudes around the program (Maurer, 2001). Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) meta-analysis found a large effect size (\(d = 0.82\)) between self-efficacy and work-related performance. These studies indicate that higher levels of self-efficacy led to higher levels of performance. Self-efficacy is associated with performance in organizations. Therefore, it is essential to consider when assessing leadership development programs (Packard & Jones, 2013). Participants attributed a change in their self-efficacy to participation in the leadership program. This change in self-efficacy increased four aspects of work (increased responsibilities, increased quality or quantity of work, improved performance as a leader, and improved performance as a manager) (Packard & Jones, 2013).

The successful engagement in leader developmental activities increases an individual leader's developmental efficacy and increases the likelihood the individual will engage in these experiences again in the future (Reicherd et al., 2016). Similarly, another form of domain-specific self-efficacy is leader efficacy. However, there is an essential distinction between leader developmental efficacy and leader efficacy – leader efficacy is the level of confidence an
individual has in their knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the act of leading others (Hannah et al., 2008). On the other hand, leader developmental efficacy is the level of confidence an individual has in successfully improving their leadership knowledge and skills (Reicherd et al., 2016). While leader efficacy is a valid measurement of a leader's self-believed ability to lead others, this research explicitly investigates whether individuals feel they have the skillset to improve and focus on those skills needed for leadership (Reicherd et al., 2016). Previous research has also linked leader developmental efficacy to an individual's intention to develop above and beyond the current standing (Reicherd et al., 2016).

This research investigates the relationships between high potential designation, leader developmental efficacy, and persistence task performance. Following the logic and findings of previous literature, an individual designated as high potential and therefore recognized as having abilities beyond their current position should have higher levels of leader developmental efficacy (Maurer et al., 2003). Those individuals who have higher levels of leader developmental efficacy should perform better on a persistence task than those with lower levels. Therefore, individuals designated as high potential are likely to perform better on a persistence task than those not designated due to the support, they feel from the high potential designation. Therefore, the high potential designation will partially affect persistence task performance through the individual's leader developmental efficacy.

\[ H2 \]: Those who are designated as high potential will have higher levels of leader development efficacy.

\[ H3 \]: Higher scores on a measure of leader developmental efficacy will be related to higher scores of task persistence.
**H4:** High potential designation will indirectly affect task persistence via leader developmental efficacy levels.

**Career Motivation/Managerial Aspirations**

To fully engage employees in leadership development programs, it must be within the individual's personal goals to develop and intend to participate in these developmental activities (Reicherd et al., 2016). Career motivations and managerial aspirations can be the motivation behind why one may want to participate in a high-potential program.

Career motivation can be used to identify an employee's career goals and intentions. Situations influence an individual's career motivation and, in turn, are reflected in their decisions and behaviors (London, 1983). Specifically, career motivation can be thought of as individual characteristics, career decisions, and behaviors that reflect an individual's career identity, insight into factors affecting their career, and resilience in the face of unfavorable conditions (London, 1983). Career identity can be thought of as the direction of motivation; insight is the motivation component that energizes the individual to career plan and make career decisions; and career resilience is the maintenance and persistence of the component (Alníaçık et al., 2012). Each of these three subsections of career motivation can inform the reasoning behind different employee decisions.

Career identity is defined as the extent to which one defines themselves by their work and consists of two subdomains: work involvement and desire for upward mobility (London, 1983). Work involvement includes job involvement, professional orientation, commitment to managerial work, and identification with the organization. Upward mobility includes the employee's need for advancement, recognition, dominance, and money (London, 1983).
The second individual characteristic of career insight relates specifically to the employee's ability to judge the trajectory of their career by creating feasible career goals and identifying one's strengths and weaknesses (London, 1983). During an employee's career development, the individual needs to have realistic goals for developing their skills. Career insight will help individuals understand where they lie on the spectrum of leadership behaviors and engagement in developmental activities.

The final individual characteristic, career resilience, is an individual's ability to adapt to changing circumstances even when discouraged (London, 1983). Career resilience will benefit an individual participating in leadership development since there is likely to be a failure along the way, so it will be necessary for the individual to adapt and overcome (London, 1983). Career resilience also includes having the self-confidence to take risks and looking forward to working with new individuals (Alñaçiók et al., 2012). There are three subdomains to career resilience that include self-efficacy, risk-taking, and dependency. An individual high on career resilience does not mean that they will not feel the effects of situational variables. However, they will adapt when there is a change in condition (London, 1983).

Following the logic of career motivation, an individual must have internal motivation to advance their career to work through turmoil experienced during developing into a leader (Silzer & Church, 2010). A highly involved individual, aware of their current standing, and see the need for development will have a higher level of engagement in development (Maurer et al., 2003). Studies have also found a relationship between an individual's career plans and the organization's career plans for that individual and a higher career motivation level (Noe et al., 1990). When an employee feels as if their career aspirations are aligned with the organization's plan for them and
opportunities and timetables, the individual will have higher levels of career motivation due to the organization's support (Noe et al., 1990).

Career motivation should be at its highest when the individual desires career development and has support from the organization – in this case, an individual designated as high potential and wants to be designated as a high potential who also believes that they can complete the program. However, there is the case that an employee who desires to be designated as a high potential and has high levels of career motivation does not get chosen to be high potential. In this case, the high level of career motivation should buffer their lack of support from the organization and not affect their leadership performance.

In a situation such as high potential designation, finding out you are not designated can be seen as an obstacle to rising into a managerial position. Therefore, individuals who do not have strong managerial aspirations and are not designated as high potential will likely have a lower score on leadership performance than those with lower managerial aspirations but were designated. While the individuals who are not designated but have high career motivations may not feel the organization's support directly, their desire to advance in their career should enhance their performance on the persistence task. On the other hand, a designated individual with low career motivations should still perform well on the persistence task; they should not score as high due to a lack of desire to become a leader. An individual who does not want to be designated is similar to a student who has been designated as 'gifted' in school but then turns out to be an 'underachiever.' Research has pointed out that underachievers may lack motivation or self-regulation to achieve academically. The lack of motivation may be due to the lack of value placed on academic goals (McCoach & Siegle, 2003). To translate to high potential designation,
an individual may be identified as a high potential but does not have the motivation or value to become a leader in the organization – resulting in lower persistence.

Managerial aspirations are a specific form of career motivation that focuses solely on the individual's desire to move into a management position. Managerial aspirations appear to be essential for advancement when difficulties exist for progression into managerial positions (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). Determining an individual's managerial aspirations involves measuring employee preference, desire, liking, and ambition for managerial positions and responsibility and influence over others (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). When developing and confirming the measure for managerial aspirations, it was found that managerial aspirations influence career attitudes and behaviors when difficulties exist for progression into or within the managerial hierarchy (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). Personal desires are an important motivational driver to continue persisting even when progression to a managerial position is difficult (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). An individual who has higher managerial aspirations will likely persist through adversity even if not selected for a high potential development program (when they wanted to be chosen).

Tharenou and Terry (1998) developed the managerial aspirations scale into its current form due to the dissatisfaction with previous measures, specifically because they were not accounting for the desire for upward mobility. Steel et al. (1987) had previously developed a measure for managerial aspirations among college students based on preferences between managerial tasks and nonmanagerial tasks rather than investigating the desire to move upwards in an organization. Upward mobility encompasses employees' need for advancement and recognition, and historically managerial aspirations have been related to the processes leading to advancement instead of directly influencing advancement (Tharenou & Terry, 1998).
The present research investigates the impact an individual's managerial aspirations have on the relationship between high potential designation and performance on a persistence task. An employee with high managerial aspirations should protect the individual against disappointment when discovering they are not designated as a high potential. Individuals with high managerial aspirations should desire to perform well even if they find out they are not designated due to their innate desire to become a manager. On the other hand, designated individuals but with lower managerial aspirations will not perform as well on the persistence task.

This relationship is like students who have been identified as 'gifted' but are underachievers due to the low value they put onto academic achievements resulting in the low effort put into performance (McCoach & Siegle, 2003). Similarly, individuals who do not place a high value on achieving a leadership position at work will not invest in their effort into work. Managerial aspirations are important for advancement in a career, especially when difficulties arise (Godshalk & Sosik, 2003). Individuals with lower levels of managerial aspirations are less likely to persist in the face of resistance to becoming a manager, so finding out they are not designated will likely be a large barrier (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). Along with this, individuals who have higher managerial aspirations will more likely be impacted by discovering they are designated. It aligns with their career goals to move upward and, therefore, better performance on the persistence task.

Previous research shows that influence over career attitudes (such as career satisfaction and intentions to leave the job) and behaviors likely stem from personal desires when progression is complex, enabling the high effort and persistence needed to progress (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). Leadership developmental self-efficacy develops the same way as general self-efficacy. Research indicates that employees' beliefs that they are capable of career development
are related to past participation in development activities and the intention to continue participating in them (Maurer, 2001). Leadership developmental efficacy grows from successful performances and encouragement by the organization (Maurer et al., 2003). Combining this research suggests that an individual's reaction to being a high potential stems from their innate desire to become a manager, not their belief that they can complete leadership training.

**H5:** Managerial aspirations and leadership developmental efficacy will be positively related.

Managerial aspiration is proposed to moderate the direct relationship between high potential designation and task persistence. If someone is designated but has no desire to be a manager, then designation should not affect their persistence to the task. An individual being designated that does not want to be a manager can be explained similarly to the gifted student's literature, where the lack of motivation to complete a task is likely due to the lack of value placed on becoming a manager. On the other hand, if the person is not designated but does want to be a manager, they should persist more towards the task than those who do not. These former individuals should persist to task because their higher levels of managerial aspirations will help them persevere in times of difficulty, enabling more effort and high levels of persistence to progress (Tharenou & Terry, 1998)

**H6:** Managerial aspirations will moderate the relationship between designation and leader task performance. For individuals with higher managerial aspirations, task persistence will be less affected by their designation status.
**Exploratory Outcome: Employability**

Employability is defined as the qualities and competencies and individual holds that help the employee reach their full potential at work (Confederation of British Industry, 1999). Employability will be utilized as an exploratory outcome. The addition of employability will help capture whether individuals feel they can be leaders and give back to the organization.

Social exchange theory states that negotiation occurs between an employee and their organization in which one party’s actions lead to reciprocal actions by the other party (Blau, 1964). In the measure of employability – an employee may rank higher on these characteristics if they believe that the organization has given them something (i.e., a high potential designation). Therefore, individuals who have lower managerial aspirations (do not want to be managers) and are designated as a high potential may perceive this as a negative and therefore rate themselves lower on the employability characteristics. These individuals may not want the organization to believe that they have good characteristics of an employee with potential. Employability is utilized as an exploratory outcome and was investigated with the original hypotheses in place of persistence (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Overall theoretical model with employability as an exploratory outcome testing the same hypotheses.](image-url)
Why Do People Want to be High Potentials?

To thoroughly investigate and gain an understanding as to why individuals may or may not want to participate in a high-potential program, it is essential to talk with potential participants in high-potential programs. Situational variables and career decisions/behaviors are vital to consider as potential reasons individuals may or may not want to participate in these programs. Situational variables include staffing policies and procedures, leadership style, job design, group cohesiveness, career development programs, and the compensation system in the organization (London, 1983). Individuals may not want to participate in a high-potential program due to certain situational variables such as the perceived procedures used to choose participants for the program. Situational variables can impact an individual’s career decisions and behaviors differently depending on how salient and stable a situational characteristic is over time (London, 1983).

The second study was a qualitative with a sample of alumni from a Midwestern university, individuals from personal social media, as well as participants from Cloud Research. This study set out to address the findings from study 1 and discover any other possible reasons why individuals may not want to participate in a high-potential program.

The following research questions were addressed in Study 2:

*RQ1:* Why do individuals want to participate in high-potential programs?

*RQ2:* Why do individuals not want to participate in high-potential programs?
CHAPTER 3
STUDY 1 METHOD

Participants

For Study 1, 545 participants were recruited using Cloud research (Chandler et al., 2019). Cloud research allows the researcher to select certain populations that have been vetted by MTurk as quality responders. Specifically for this study, I used Prime Panel which allows access to 50 million participants who are considered high quality. Research has demonstrated that respondents from the Prime Panel application provide quality data across surveys (Chandler et al., 2019). Cloud utilizes a data quality filtration system called Sentry that incorporates technological and psychological/behavioral measurement in order to identify problematic respondents. The technology measurements include things such as a CAPTCHA and psychological/behavioral measurement includes association questions and automated open-ended checks (Chandler et al., 2019).

The total number of respondents ranged from 502-544 on main variables of interest. Participants (age 18-79, $M = 38.11$, $SD = 12.48$) responded to an online Qualtrics survey including three questionnaires, a logic and anagram task, as well as demographic questions (Appendix A). In order to participate respondents had to hold a full-time job (80.9%) or a part-time job (19.1%). These participants were in their career for less than 1 year to 46 years ($M = 10.16$, $SD = 8.85$). Participants were asked about the nature of their current role; most participants reported being an individual contributor (42.6%), 19.3% reported being a manager
of others, 15% reported being a manager of teams, 8.4% reported being an executive, 7.3% reported being a manager of managers (7.3% not reporting).

A majority of participants reported being Caucasian (63.5%), 13% reported being Black or African American, 7.7% reported being Hispanic/Latino, 2.4% reported being Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.8% reported being multi-racial, 0.6% reported being Native American, and 3.7% reported multiple races (7.3% of participants not reporting). The analyzed sample included a majority women (53.8%), 38.2% men, 0.4% genderqueer, genderfluid, or non-binary, and 7.5% choosing to not respond.

Participants were given a list of 26 industries to choose from, as well as “other” if their industry was not listed. The other responses were reviewed and coded into one of the original categories if it fit (i.e., some participants wrote “technology” which would fit in to the ‘high technology’ category). Participants were spread out among these industries (Figure 3 displays the full list), some of the most common ones included banking (15.4%), professional services (11.6%), retail (9.2%), and high tech (8.6%). The sample had a wide array of education experiences, with 21.7% reporting a bachelor’s degree in college, 21.5% reporting some college but no degree, 19.1% reporting they graduated from high school, 13.9% have a master’s degree, 9.7% reporting an associate degree, 3.9% reported having a professional degree (JD, MD), 1.7% reporting less than a high school degree, and 1.3% reported having a doctoral degree (7.3% participants did not respond).
Data Quality Checks

Two of the main variables (managerial aspirations and leader developmental efficacy) were investigated for consistent responding in several methods including long string, Mahalanobis distance, time to complete the survey, and psychometric synonyms (Meade & Craig, 2012). Multiple methods were utilized due to the uncertainty of whether these indices are accurate on leadership scales that are not personality due to much of the research on these methods focusing on personality scales (Goldammer et al., 2020). Therefore, several different methods were utilized to detect consistency.

Long string was first explored, which investigates how many times does a respondent answer the same to items on the same page (DeSimone et al., 2015). This index is recommended...
for scales that have a mix between positive and negative questions, making it useful for managerial aspirations, the cutoff is 6 questions that respondents answer the same to in a row. This index found that respondents did not respond carelessly to managerial aspirations, however, could not be conducted on leader developmental efficacy.

Mahalanobis Distance was investigated also recommended by Meade and Craig (2012) for identifying inattentive responders, which indicated only eight cases were identified as outliers. Mahalanobis distance while traditionally used to detect multivariate outliers, is used in the context of careless responders under the assumption that strong deviating patterns from the norm might indicate careless responders (Goldammer et al., 2020).

Response time was investigated under the assumption that a minimum amount of time is needed to read and respond to a question (Goldammer et al., 2020). To capture response time, the total amount of time spent on the survey was divided by the number of questions, any participant that had an average response time of two seconds (Huang et al., 2012) were flagged. According to this method, no participant was flagged as a careless responder.

Last, psychometric synonyms were explored. A psychometric synonym is items within a scale that are highly positively correlated with one another, this indicated by .60 correlation or above (Meade & Craig, 2012). Psychometric synonyms assume that participants are not meant to contradict themselves over the course of the questionnaire (Goldammer et al., 2020). This was tested using the careless package on R specifically the psychsyn command. As a result of this test, only 26 respondents for managerial aspirations and 19 for leader developmental efficacy were identified as responding in non-careless manner. This identified that many participants responded in a careless manner. When utilized across both measures, 304 participants were identified as careless responders and 181 as responding with care.
Overall, because three of the four consistency indexes used indicated that respondents responded in a caring manner, I conclude that most of the participants responded appropriately and with care. The eight cases identified by Mahalanobis distance were removed from the analyses.

Normality of the data was conducted and will be further discussed in preliminary analyses.

Procedure

Pretest

Specific measures were pre-tested on Industrial/Organizational Psychology graduate students (N = 20) that were recruited through personal networks such as email and LinkedIn. The pre-test included the logic test (Appendix B) and the anagram test (Appendix C). Participants were asked whether they believed the high potential test was a good measure of their potential (Appendix D). Previous research (Remus, 1996) has found that graduate student responses tend to generalize more to managers than undergraduates.

The pre-test was utilized to investigate whether the logic test and the anagram task would be believable to a participant as an indication of potential. The description of a high potential measure was also investigated to determine if it was clear what the program would entail as well as understanding what a high potential employee means.

Due to the pre-test, a timer was put on the logic test to try and negate participants from quickly clicking through the test without meaningful answering it. The anagram task was reduced from the original 20 anagrams with 10 unsolvable ones, to 10 anagrams with only 3
unsolvable ones. Feedback from the pre-test indicated this task was tedious as well as seemed impossible. In addition, the description of high potential was expanded upon how much additional time per work week the program may take as well as how high potentials are typically identified within organizations.

Main Study

Participants were given a consent form (Appendix E), and a series of measures follows a brief explanation of high potential employees. Participants were instructed that the research aims to identify what individual characteristics tend to lead to the most success in a leadership position. Participants were first screened out depending on their employment status as well as industry. Originally, individuals had to be employed full time or part time as well as working in specific industries (banking, chemicals, consumer products, defense & security, engineering, high tech, insurance, life sciences, professional services, and telecommunications). After two weeks of data collection, the decision to not limit participants to specific industries was made to collect enough data. This decision was made due to lack of respondents in addition to no solid evidence that other industries did not have high-potential programs.

Participants first completed the measure of managerial aspirations prior to manipulating high potential designation vs. not (Appendix F). Following this, the participants completed a logic test (Appendix B) for high potential designation, although the designation was randomly assigned. Following the designation, randomly chosen individuals were reminded what it means to be a high potential employee. All participants then took the leadership development efficacy measure (Appendix G), buried with another to conceal the measure I care about to the participants. The other measure is the BFI-2-S (Soto & John, 2017; Appendix H). The last
measure (see Appendix C) is an anagram test used to measure persistence to goal. The anagram measure was presented to the participants as if the researchers were validating their original status of being a high potential employee or not. For our purposes, the anagram test will be used to measure persistence/motivation to a task. The complete process is outlined in Figure 4.

Measures

Logic test. This test was developed as a practice exam by JobTestPrep for non-verbal inductive and logical reasoning questions. There are nine complete pattern questions with five to six possible correct answers (Appendix A). This measure was presented to the participants as the measure of high potential, when in reality potential was randomly designated to participants.

Managerial Aspirations. The individual differences of managerial aspirations was measured by the Desired Managerial Aspirations Scale developed by Tharenou and Terry (1998). This 13-item scale is reported to have high reliability ($\alpha = .94$) (Appendix F). This 13-item scale had a reliability of $\alpha = .84$ in the current study. The items are scored on a 1 (completely false) to 5 (completely true) scale. A sample item includes, "My aspirations are very high in regard to professional recognition and achievement."

Leadership Development Efficacy. The individual differences of leadership developmental efficacy will be measured by the Leadership Development Efficacy Scale
Figure 4. Survey process for participants.
developed by Reichard et al. (2016). The five-item scale is reported to have good reliability ($\alpha = .82$) (Appendix G). This scale had a reliability of $\alpha = .92$ in the current study. The items are scored on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale. A sample item includes, “I am confident that I can achieve the levels of leadership ability to which I aspire.”

Distractor measure. A measure of personality will be measured in the survey as a distraction to the real measures of interest. Personality will be measured by the BFI-2-S (Soto & John, 2017; Appendix H). The 30-item scale is reported to have good reliability ($\alpha = 0.82-0.90$).

Persistence. Persistence is a function of an individual's belief to achieve a goal – the more the individual is likely to persist through the insolvable problems, the more likely the care about being designated as a high potential. Individual persistence levels were measured using an anagram task to measure the individual's persistence to solve unsolvable anagrams. This task had a combination of solvable and unsolvable anagrams. There was a total of three unsolvable anagrams that will be intertwined with 7 solvable anagrams. Only three anagrams were unsolvable, so the participants do not feel overwhelmed that there is an unsolvable task (Sandelands et al., 1988). Prior to the pre-test there were originally 20 anagrams presented with a total of 10 unsolvable; the results indicated this task took too long as well as appeared to be impossible.

The participant's mean time for each unsolvable problem served as the primary measure of persistence. Traditionally, anagram tasks have been used to measure an individual's persistence levels (Sandelands et al., 1988). Participants had 10 minutes to complete the task. Participants were instructed to answer as many as possible and to skip any if they feel they cannot complete it, but once they skip one, they cannot return to it later. In this experiment,
participants were instructed that this is another measure of high potential which should activate their desire to either achieve that title or not. This scale had a reliability of $\alpha = .70$ in this study.

*Employability.* Employability was utilized as an exploratory outcome. Employability is the possession of characteristics and competencies required to meet the changing needs of employees. This was assessed using an employability scale (Appendix I) created by Christman and Slaten (1991) that listed 22 adjectives and participants were to rate themselves 1 (not like me) to 9 (most like me). This scale had a reliability of $\alpha = .96$ in this study.

*Manipulation check.* Participants were asked at the end of the survey, “In this survey were you designated as a high potential or not?” The manipulation check was utilized to ensure that participants paid attention to their designation status in order to properly test the hypotheses.
CHAPTER 4

STUDY 1 RESULTS

Preliminary Diagnostics

The main factors of interest were investigated for normal distribution, skewness, and outliers; these factors included managerial aspirations, leader developmental efficacy, and persistence. The two exploratory factors were also investigated for normal distribution, skewness, and outliers which were the Big Five personality characteristics and employability.

According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality all the variables of interest did not follow a normal distribution all having \( p \)-values less than 0.05. All factors were then investigated for their skewness. Managerial aspirations were not skewed therefore no outliers were deleted. The five personality variables (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) and leader developmental efficacy were all moderately skewed. Task persistence was highly skewed and investigated further for outliers.

Outliers were investigated by multiplying the standard deviation of each variable by 2 and adding/subtracting it to the mean. Utilizing this method, any score above 133 was considered an outlier in task persistence (or below -65 which is not realistic due to being a time variable). This method identified 20 cases of participants that had a higher persistence score than 133 and were excluded from analyses in persistence. Transforming this variable was considered but transformations led to negative scores which are not possible in a timed variable. Persistence will be used as an outcome variable.
Levene’s test of equality of variance was utilized to assess homogeneity of variance. Most variables of interest met this assumption of the variance of residuals being equal across subjects which is represented by a non-significant result. However, extraversion did not meet this assumption (F(501 = 19.34, p < .001). The assumptions of collinearity, homoscedasticity, and normality were all met.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted for each of the variables in the model and the exploratory outcome (managerial aspirations, leader developmental efficacy, persistence, and employability). A Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric used to test for significant differences in means across more than two groups. The test showed that there were statistically significant differences between the industries and managerial aspirations (p <.001), leader developmental efficacy (p = 0.02), and employability (p = 0.04) but there were no statistically significant differences between the industries and persistence (p = .35).

Participants were randomly designated as high potential (N = 278) or non-high potential (N = 280); they were asked if they had been designated during the survey. Approximately 44% of participants either identified themselves as high potential when they were designated as non-high potential or identified themselves as non-high potential when they were designated as high potential. Exploratory analyses further explored relationships between the participants who correctly identified themselves and those who did not by either indicating they were designated when not, or that they were not designated when they were designated. These analyses are reported after the proposed hypothesis tests. Individuals who failed the manipulation check were not dropped based on Aronow et al.’s (2019) findings that dropping participants in this manner can lead to bias estimates or undermine identification for causal effects. In addition, if the individuals who failed the manipulation test were dropped the sample would become extremely
uneven, with only 30% of participants being randomly non-designated and 70% of participants being randomly designated. An uneven sample could lead to false conclusions due to a heavy presence of randomly designated individuals.

Hypothesis Testing

High potential designation was randomly assigned to the participants automatically through a function in Qualtrics; the final sample consisted of 50.2% non-designated and 49.8% designated (coded as 0 non-designated, 1 designated). The main outcome variable, persistence to task, score was created by the average of time it took the participant to solve both of the unsolvable anagrams.

Bivariate correlations can be found in Table 1. According to the correlations managerial aspirations ($r = .04, p = .42$), leader developmental efficacy ($r = .002, p = .96$), and employability ($r = -.03, p = .523$) were not related to high potential designation. Employability, the exploratory outcome, was positively related to managerial aspirations ($r = .42, p <.01$), leader developmental efficacy ($r = .63, p <.01$), and persistence to task ($r = .16, p <.01$). Leader developmental efficacy and managerial aspirations were positively related to one another ($r = .55, p <.01$). Leader developmental efficacy ($r = .15, p <.01$) and managerial aspirations ($r = .21, p <.01$) were positively related to the outcome variable, persistence to task.

Hypothesis 1 stated that those who were designated would have higher levels of persistence than those who were not; this was not supported. A non-significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 486) = 0.614, p = 0.43$), with an $R^2 = .036$; $b = 0.04$, $SE = 2.45$, $t(486) = .78$, $p = 0.43$) (Table 2).
Table 1
Bivariate Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. High potential designation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Managerial aspirations</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Leadership developmental efficacy</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Persistence to task</td>
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<td>.15**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Employability</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>26.23</td>
<td>7.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>27.09</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01; Alpha is on the diagonal

Hypothesis 2 stated that those who were designated would have higher levels of leader developmental efficacy; this was not supported. A non-significant regression equation was found (F(1, 511) = 0.017, p = 0.90), with an $R^2 = 0.006$; $b = 0.02$, SE = .09, t(481) = .00, $p = 0.90$ (Table 3).

Hypothesis 3 stated that those who have higher levels of leader developmental efficacy would have higher levels of persistence; this was supported. A significant regression equation was found (F(1, 486) = 15.349.94, p < .001), with an $R^2 = 0.04$; $b = .21$, t(486) = 4.70, $p < .001$ (Table 4).

Hypothesis 4 stated that high potential designation will indirectly affect persistence scores via leader developmental efficacy, to test this a mediated path analysis was conducted. The path model found a nonsignificant mediated equation was found (F(2, 457 = 0.11, $R^2 = .002$, $p = .736$). Hypothesis 4 was not supported. The indirect relationship was not significant (ab = -0.175, 95% CI [-1.29, 0.83]) and the direct relationship between designation and persistence was not supported ($p = 0.33$).
### Table 2

Regression Coefficients with Persistence as the Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.614</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Leader Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>11.58</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

Regression Coefficients with Designation as the Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Leader Development</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Regression Coefficients with Employability as the Outcome (Exploratory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Developmental Efficacy</td>
<td>0.631</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>332.64</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>109.77</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 5 stated there will be a positive relationship between managerial aspirations and leader developmental efficacy, this was supported using bivariate correlations ($r = 0.55, p < .01$). (See Table 1).

Hypothesis 6 stated that managerial aspirations will moderate the relationship between designation and performance on the persistence task. This hypothesis was not supported by a moderated path analysis, though the moderated path equation was significant ($F(3, 454) = 3.43, \ p = .017$), with an $R^2 = 0.022$). The moderated relationship was not significant ($p = 0.40, 95\% \ CI [-9.33, 3.76]$). The path equation was significant due to a significant direct relationship between managerial aspirations and persistence to task ($p = .008$).

**Exploratory Analyses**

A moderated, mediated path analysis was conducted to test the whole model (see Figure 1) and a significant equation was ($F(4, 453) = 5.27, \ p < .001$), with an $R^2 = 0.044$), however there was a non-significant interaction between leader developmental efficacy (the mediator) and managerial aspirations (the moderator) ($t(453) = -0.74 , p = 0.46, 95\% \ CI[=8.93, 4.03]$).

**Employability**

Similar relationships were explored with employability as an exploratory outcome. The relationship between designation and employability was tested; a non-significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 503) = 0.14, \ p = 0.71$), with an $R^2 = 0.016$; $b = -0.02, \ SE = .12 \ t(503) = -0.37, \ p = .71$) (see Table 4); meaning when individuals were designated, they were not more likely to have higher employability scores. There was a significant regression equation found between leader developmental efficacy and employability ($F(1, 502) = 332.64, \ p < .001$), with an
\[ R^2 = 0.63, b = .63, SE = .05, t(503) = 18.24, p < .001 \) (see Table 4). A multiple regression equation explained a significant amount of variance between designation, leader developmental efficacy, and employability (\( F(3, 501) = 111.01, p < .001 \)), with an \( R^2 = 0.63 \) (Table 5). Leader developmental efficacy significantly predicted persistence (\( b = .60, SE = 0.07, t(501) = 12.79, p < .001 \)). However, designation did not have a significant relationship with employability (\( b = -0.02, SE = 0.09, t(501) = -0.56, p = 0.57 \)) and the interaction was not significant (\( b = 0.04, SE = 0.10, p = 0.40 \)).

A mediated path analysis was conducted to investigate if there was a mediated relationship between designation and employability with leader developmental efficacy acting as a mediator. The path analysis indicated there is a significant regression equation (\( F(2, 473) = 157.92, p < .001 \), with an \( R^2 = 0.40 \)). The path analysis indicated a non-significant indirect relationship (\( ab = 0.002, 95\% CI [-0.154, 0.159] \)), there was not a significant direct relationship between designation and employability (\( p = 0.58 \)). The regression equation was significant due to a significant relationship between leader developmental efficacy and employability (\( p < .001 \)).

Managerial aspirations were also explored in relation to employability. There was a significant regression equation found between managerial aspirations and employability (\( F(1, 502) = 109.77, p < .001 \), with an \( R^2 = 0.42, b = .76, SE = 0.07, t(502) = 10.48, p < .001 \)) (see Table 3).

A multiple regression equation explained a significant amount of variance between designation, managerial aspirations, and employability (\( F(3, 500) = 36.84, p < .001 \)), with an \( R^2 = 0.44 \) (see Table 5). Managerial aspirations significantly predicted employability (\( b = 0.72, SE = .10, t(500) = 6.9, p < .001 \)). However, designation was not significantly related to employability.
Table 5

Regression Coefficients for Interactions for Exploratory Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Designation x Leader Developmental efficacy</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>166.25</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Developmental Efficacy</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Designation x Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>55.14</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.582</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b = -0.08, SE = .11, t(500) = -.77, p = .44) and the interaction was not significant (b = 0.09, SE = .15, t(500) = .60, p = .55).

A mediated path analysis was conducted and indicated a non-significant mediated relationship between designation and employability with managerial aspirations as a mediator. There was a significant regression equation, (F(2, 472) = 51.53, p < .001, with an R² = 0.18) due to a significant relationship between managerial aspirations and employability (p < .001). There was not a significant indirect relationship (ab = .06, 95% CI[-0.50, 0.16]). In addition, there was a significant moderated path analysis between designation, managerial aspirations, and employability (F(3, 471) = 34.43, p < .001), with an R² = 0.20. There was not a significant moderated relationship (t(471) = 0.60, p = 0.55, 95% CI[-0.20, 0.38]).

A moderated, mediated path analysis was tested with managerial aspirations as the moderator and leader developmental efficacy as a mediator between designation and employability. There was a significant regression equation (F(4, 470) = 80.22, p < .001, with an R² = 0.41). There was a non-significant interaction between leader developmental efficacy (the mediator) and managerial aspirations (the moderator) (t(470) = 1.12, p = 0.26, 95% CI[-.107, .391]).

The bivariate correlations revealed that extraversion was significantly related to managerial aspirations (r = .20, p < .001), leader developmental efficacy (r = .28, p < .001), and employability (r = .26, p < .001). Agreeableness was significantly related to leader developmental efficacy (r = .11, p < .05) and employability (r = .10, p < .05). Consciousness was significantly related to employability (r = .09, p < .05). Neuroticism was significantly related to managerial aspirations (r = .14, p < .001), leader developmental efficacy (r = .11, p < .05), and employability (r = .19, p < .001). And openness to experience was significantly related to managerial
aspirations ($r = .23, p < .001$), managerial aspirations ($r = .20, p < .001$), and employability ($r = .26, p < .001$).

**Self-Designation – Exploratory Hypothesis Testing**

The analyses utilized to test they hypotheses indicated that random designation did not show relation to any of the variables. However, utilizing the manipulation check measure we can investigate how participants perceived themselves as having high potential or not and whether that had an impact on any of the variables studied. Bi-variate correlations can be found in Table 6. These correlations indicate a significant relationship between designation and managerial aspirations ($R = .13, p < .001$), leader developmental efficacy ($R = .20, p < .001$), and employability ($R = .18, p < .001$).

Table 6

Bivariate Correlations with Self-Identified Designation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<td>1. High potential designation (self-identified)</td>
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<td>2. Managerial aspirations</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>$\alpha = .84$</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Leader developmental efficacy</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>$\alpha = .92$</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Persistence to task</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>$\alpha = .70$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Employability</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>$\alpha = .96$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>26.23</td>
<td>7.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>27.09</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01
For exploratory purposes, this measure of identification was used in replacement of the random designation to test the hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 stated that those who were designated would have higher levels of persistence; this was not supported when using self-identification high potential. A non-significant regression equation was found (F(1, 481) = 0.80, \( p = .78 \)), with an \( R^2 < .001 \); \( b = -.76, t(481) = -.28, p = .78 \) (Table 7).

Hypothesis 2 stated that those who were designated would have higher levels of leader developmental efficacy; this was supported when using self-identification high potential. A significant regression equation was found (F(1, 501) = 17.73, \( p < .001 \)), with an \( R^2 = 0.04 \); \( b = .20, t(501) = 47.97, p < .001 \) (Table 8).

Hypothesis 4 stated that high potential designation will indirectly affect persistence scores via leader developmental efficacy; to test this a mediated path analysis was conducted. The path model found a significant mediated equation was found (F(1, 481 = 17.61, \( R^2 = .03, p < .001 \)). Hypothesis 4 was supported when using self-identification high potential. The indirect relationship was significant (\( ab = 2.40, 95\% \text{ CI} [1.15, 3.978] \)) and the direct relationship between designation and persistence was not supported (\( p = 0.24 \)).

Hypothesis 6 stated that managerial aspirations will impact the relationship between designation and performance on the persistence task. This hypothesis was not supported by a moderated path analysis, though the moderated path equation was significant (F(3, 454) = 3.43, \( p = .017 \)), with an \( R^2 = 0.022 \). The moderated relationship was not significant (\( p = 0.40, 95\% \text{ CI [-9.33, 3.76]} \)). The path equation was significant due to a significant direct relationship between managerial aspirations and persistence to task (\( p = .008 \)).
Table 7

Regression Coefficients with Persistence as the Outcome (Self-Identified Designation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Designation (self-identified)</td>
<td>-0.762</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>-6.05</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

Regression Coefficients with Designation as the Outcome (Self-Identified Designation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome (self-identified)</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Leader Developmental Efficacy</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.135</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>19.84</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>17.04</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar relationships were explored with employability as an exploratory outcome. The relationship between designation and employability was tested, a significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 501) = 30.11, p < .001$), with an $R^2 = 0.03$; $b = .18$, $t(501) = .13$, $p < .001$) (Table 9). A multiple regression indicated there was a significant relationship between designation, leader developmental efficacy, and employability ($F(2, 500) = 182.94, p < .001$), with an $R^2 = 0.40$). A significant multiple regression equation also revealed a relationship between designation, managerial aspirations, and employability ($F(2, 499) = 88.56, p < .001$), with an $R^2 = 0.44$). (Table 10).

A mediated path analysis was conducted to investigate if there was a mediated relationship between designation and employability with leader developmental efficacy acting as a mediator. The path analysis indicated there is a significant mediation equation ($F(2, 500) = 166.43, p < .001$, with an $R^2 = 0.40$). The path analysis indicated a significant indirect relationship ($ab = 0.35$, 95% CI [0.189, 0.529]), there was not a significant direct relationship between designation and employability ($p = 0.086$).

**Self-Identified Designation – Exploratory**

To further explore the distinctions between the effects of random designation and self-identified designation, I compared four groups: those whose random identification as high potential matched their self-designation, those whose random identification as not high potential matched their self-designation, and the two non-matching groups. Comparing the self-identification and the random designation there was a 20% increase in those who thought they had been identified as a high potential. The predictor variable of designation was randomly assigned and that was what was utilized for analyses. To further explore the manipulation check
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Designation (self-identified)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>17.04</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Lower Limit</th>
<th>Upper Limit</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Designation (self-identified) x Leader Developmental Efficacy</td>
<td>Designation (self-identified)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>166.43</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Developmental Efficacy</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Designation (self-identified) x Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>Designation (self-identified)</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>60.74</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managerial Aspirations</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-10.7</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with a difference of 20%, participants were broken into four groups based on their random designation and whether they indicated they were designated. Thirty-point eighty percent of participants reported they were designated, but they were not designated, 29.2% were correct in stating they were designated, 13.3% participants reported not being designated but in fact were, and 11% of participants reported that they were not designated and in fact were not designated (Table 1).

Table 1

Match Between Participants Self-Identification of High Potential vs. the Random Designation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Random designation</th>
<th>Self-designation/manipulation check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High-potential %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-potential</td>
<td>29.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-high potential</td>
<td>30.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once these groups were identified, the means for the variables leader developmental efficacy, managerial aspirations, persistence to task, and employability were investigated. Utilizing ANOVA, there were no significant differences for any of the groups, however there were some interesting patterns (Figures 5-7). Individuals who indicated they were high potential and were randomly designated had trending higher averages on leader developmental efficacy, managerial aspirations, and employability overall all the other groups. Those who indicated they were not designated but in fact were persisted more to task than any other group. In line with original hypotheses, the participants who indicated they were not designated, and were not, had
lower average scores on leader developmental efficacy, managerial aspirations, and persistence to task.

Figure 5. Self-identification groups and leader developmental efficacy and managerial aspirations.
Figure 6. Self-identification groups and employability scale.

Figure 7. Self-identification groups and persistence to task.
CHAPTER 5

STUDY 1 DISCUSSION

The purpose of Study 1 was to determine the relationships between designation, leader developmental efficacy, managerial aspirations, and task persistence. Organizations invest heavily in talent development programs in terms of money and personnel resources (Cappelli & Keller, 2014); understanding these relationships was to better direct organizations to identify employees who want to participate in these programs. Some individuals may not desire to participate in a high potential development program due to a lack of motivation or aspirations to move beyond their current role. An individual's career motivation is essential when selecting individuals for a high protentional program to help understand how situations influence the employees' reactions that result in decisions and behaviors (London, 1983). There is a need in both the academic and business world to understand further the individual who desires to participate in a high potential development program. In the following sections, the purpose of the study will be reviewed, followed by a review and discussion of the findings from study 1.

Overview

The current study was designed so that participants, independent of current employment, could consider how they would react to designation and focus on internal motivations to complete a high-potential program. The study aimed to examine whether designation led to an increase in performance due to underlying personal motivations and beliefs that an individual holds concerning participating in a high-potential program. At the core of this research is the idea
of the relationship between one’s motivations and confidence to complete a high potential developmental program. The evidence of the relationship between one’s career motivations and confidence to complete a high-potential program begins to answer this question. To explore these relationships without interference from an individual’s current organization or creating a fake organization, the participant was made to believe they were tested for designation.

Overall, there was mixed support for the relationships. It is important to note that approximately 44% of participants failed the attention check, 13.3% indicated they were not designated when they were randomly designated and 30.8% indicated they were designated when they were not randomly designated. It is also important to note that all analyses involving the designation manipulation were not significant, indicating that whether someone was informed that they were designated as a high potential employee did not have an impact on their leader developmental efficacy, persistence to task, or employability. The lack of relationship between high potential designation and leader developmental efficacy is an interesting result because being designated as a high potential is generally viewed as a positive and is connected to an increase in leader developmental efficacy (Maurer et al., 2003) and task performance (Razaei & Beyerlein, 2018). Individuals may not have felt connected to their designation status as they would if it came from their organization or through a battery of tests instead of just one test. These may include things such as organizational support or organizational commitment (Cho & McLean, 2009) – variables that were not measured in the current research.

Outcomes From Designation

There is a gap in the literature around the outcomes of talent development programs. Previous research has indicated that specific outcomes are associated with implementing talent
development programs, such as increased productivity, job satisfaction, and decreased absenteeism (Razaei & Beyerlein, 2018). Task persistence was theorized to be used as an indicator of employee performance in the workplace after finding out if they were designated as high potential or not. There is little representation in the literature on any change in performance after the designation of high potential, possibly due to the differing nature of how industries define performance. Therefore, task persistence was thought to be a good indicator of how employees may work harder or not, depending on their designation status across industries.

Task persistence was the chosen outcome measure as opposed to attitudinal or perceptions about a hypothetical organization due to the nature of the study not taking place in an organization but rather on an online survey platform. In addition, task persistence was utilized as a performance measure over an actual work product due to the variable nature of “performance” throughout industries. Likely, this may have not been an adequate test of the hypothesis due to the hypothetical nature of the study. Participants did not feel a strong desire to persist more towards a task if designated than non-designated since the study was not taking place in their workplace and/or did not have actual consequences on their work.

Social exchange theory states that employees may perceive fairness from the organization by a single event and carry that attitude forward in their interaction and attitudes towards the organization (Masterson et al., 2000). Participants' social exchange theory was likely not activated due to this survey being separated from their organization. Though there was no organizational agent social exchange theory was expected to be activated because participants will still feel as if they owe the ‘organization’ something in return for being designated. The ‘organization’ in the study could be perceived as the researcher who created the survey and had designated the participant.
Task persistence was theorized to measure individuals' motivation after finding out they are designated to do better for the organization. However, the random designation of potential did not show a relationship between designation and task persistence. Task persistence was not only utilized as a performance indicator but also as a measure of motivation the individual must get through a seemingly impossible task. The motivation to get through a challenging task can then be translated into the motivation an individual would have within an organization to complete complex tasks. Motivation was operationalized as persistence in this study, which may not have been a strong enough connection with the random designation to create a reaction from participants.

Employability was utilized as an exploratory performance measure that was added to capture whether individuals feel they can be leaders and give back to the organization in terms of traits they hold. Employability can be defined as the qualities and competencies that an individual believes they hold that help them reach their full potential as an employee at work (CBI, 1999). Social exchange theory is important here as the theory states that negotiation occurs between an employee and their organization in which one party’s actions lead to reciprocal actions by the other party (Blau, 1964). The measure of employability consists of ranking oneself on a list of characteristics, employees may rank themselves higher on these characteristics if they believe the organization gave them something (high potential designation) and they are happy about the designation (high managerial aspirations). The non-significant relationship between designation and employability indicates that there was no significant impact on an individual’s ranking of themselves due to being designated or not.

Prior research indicated positive organizational outcomes, such as high-potential programs, associated with talent development programs. Positive organizational outcomes
included an increased commitment to the organization (Cho & McLean, 2009). In addition, designation did not have a significant relationship with employability, demonstrating that there was no impact on employability rankings due to random designation. Participants likely did not feel a connection to their organization through random designation and therefore did not feel like they owed them anything in terms of higher employability characteristics.

Self-Identification of Potential

On the other hand, participants were asked at the end of the survey to identify whether they were designated as high potential. This measure was initially used as a manipulation check and further investigated, with the random designation being replaced with the participants' belief that they are high potential employees (or not). The relationship between self-identification and persistence indicated that those who believed they were identified as high potential, regardless of what condition they were originally in, were more likely to persist towards the unsolvable anagrams than those who did not think they were identified as high potential. The manipulation check was measured after the persistence task, indicating that it may be possible participants were more likely to believe they were high potential based on how well they felt they did on the task.

If I suppose the manipulation check is operationalized as self-reporting of designation, this relationship supports the theory that those who believe they were designated as high potential are likely to increase their commitment to the organization through work tasks. Interestingly, there is a stark difference between the random designation of potential and the self-identified perception of potential – this may be a connection to the participant's current
job/organization. This difference may be indicative that it matters more if the individual believes they are high potential as opposed to being told if they have potential or not.

In addition, self-identified designation also had a significant positive relationship with employability; those who self-identified as designated were more likely to rank themselves higher on the characteristics in employability. This result resembles the original thought, that individuals may be more likely to rank themselves higher in exchange for something positive from the organization – i.e., a high potential designation if desired to be a high potential employee. However, this designation was self-identified so this result can more likely be an indicator that individuals who believe they hold more of these employability characteristics are likely to self-identify as high potential.

The intriguing difference between the results for persistence between the random designation and self-identification designation offers a unique opportunity for organizations. If we operationalize the participants' answers to the manipulation check as their own belief if they are designated or not, it is easy to see that participants felt more connected to their identification than the random designation. What this means for organizations is an opportunity to create a more meaningful connection to designation for the employees than demonstrated in this survey. This may be achieved through social categorization theory, which involves understanding how people categorize themselves and others (Turner, 1987). Individuals categorize themselves by comparing oneself to others with similar features and characteristics. Organizations can utilize this knowledge to create groups of individuals with similar characteristics (something like graduating from the same college) which will increase the closeness individuals feel to their designation. In addition, as opposed to being designated by a test it might be more effective in creating a connection to a high potential designation through a more interpersonal relationship.
This may be achieved by having someone who the designated individual respects or looks up to like a mentor.

Organizations are much more likely to designate individuals due to different factors such as cognitive ability, personality, and social competence, among other factors (Finkelstein et al., 2017). It will be important for organizations to understand and plan for what employees see as a valid assessment of designation to be selected into the development program and maintain a sense of ownership over their designation. Organizations will want to create this positive attachment to their designation and excitement to be in a development program to reap the employees' positive benefits. Past research indicates that participants in leadership development programs often have an increased understanding of organizational strategy and greater effectiveness in working objectives (McGurk, 2009).

Internal Motivations to be a High Potential

Managerial aspirations are a specific career motivation that focuses on the individual's desire to move into a management position (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). An individual's career motivation is at its highest when the individual feels supported by the organization (Noe et al., 1990), which in the context of high potential development programs would be designated or not. In this research, managerial aspirations were measured prior to random designation, so it cannot be verified that random designation impacted an individual's managerial aspirations. However, organizations need to understand that an individual's managerial aspirations can be vital to understanding whether a participant will be successful in a high-potential program – if it aligns with their career motivations.
In this study, managerial aspirations had a positive relationship with task persistence. This result indicates that individuals with higher managerial aspirations persist more to the task, regardless of designation. Organizations can take away the idea that participants are likely to demonstrate key success factors identified by previous research from participation in development programs such as an increase in work products (Sandelands et al., 1988) if they are high in managerial aspirations.

Managerial aspirations were explored in relation to employability and a significant relationship was found. Participants ranked themselves higher on employability characteristics when their managerial aspirations levels were higher. An individual who holds higher career motivations likely perceives themselves as holding more of these positive employability characteristics than those individuals with lower career motivations. Or the opposite could be true, those who see themselves holding more of these employability traits have higher managerial aspirations. Employability characteristics are indicators of a desirable employee, individuals with high career motivations are likely to have positive perceptions of themselves as a leader, therefore see themselves as holding more of or to a higher degree these employee characteristics.

However, utilizing the manipulation check question of whether the participant was designated, a relationship emerges in which managerial aspirations is positively related to designation. This relationship indicates that those with higher managerial aspiration levels are more likely to believe they were designated as high potential. So, while I cannot measure the impact random designation had on the participant's managerial aspirations, it is demonstrated that those with higher levels of managerial aspirations were more likely to identify as high potential regardless of whether they were randomly designated.
Career resilience is essential here because if a participant believed they were designated as non-high potential, those with higher managerial aspirations were still more likely to persist in the unsolvable task. Career resilience, an aspect of career motivations, is the individual’s ability to change circumstances even when discouraged (London, 1983). An individual high in career resilience will adapt when there is a change in a condition – not necessarily that they will not feel the effects of the situational variables, but that the individual has the efficacy to overcome adversity (London, 1983). Using the operationalization of the manipulation check as self-identified potential and relation to managerial aspirations and performance suggest that there are individuals who want to progress into a more elevated position.

Belief to Develop as a Leader

Leader developmental efficacy is defined as one’s belief in their ability to develop as a leader and a specific ability or skill to employ in certain leadership contexts (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Reicherd et al., 2016). Individuals depend partially on external sources to increase their self-efficacy (Maurer et al., 2003); in this case, learning they are designated as a high potential employee should be a source of external validation. Self-efficacy is associated with organizational performance, making it essential to consider leader development programs (Packard & Jones, 2013). Past research has demonstrated that individuals attribute their change in self-efficacy due to participation in leadership programs. This change historically shows an improvement in work (Packard & Jones, 2013).

In this research, leader developmental efficacy was also explored with the outcome of task persistence. There was evidence to support that higher levels of leader developmental efficacy was associated with an increase in persistence in the task. Past research has shown a
significant relationship between a high level of self-efficacy and high levels of past performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). It is also indicated in previous research that successful engagement in leader developmental activities directly increases an individual leader’s developmental efficacy (Reicher et al., 2016). Therefore, it is easy to infer those employees with higher levels of leader developmental efficacy are likely to have higher performance, in this case, persistence in a task. The takeaway for organizations is that it will be an excellent investment to identify potential participants who are high in leader developmental efficacy for their high-potential programs. These specific individuals will likely put much effort into these programs and continue participating as their efficacy increases.

Individuals with higher levels of leader developmental efficacy were also more likely to have higher scores of employability. High levels of leader developmental efficacy are an indicator that the individual believes the hold the characteristics that would make them successful in completing a development program, these favorable characteristics are likely captured in the employability measure. The reverse may be true as well, those who had higher levels of employability characteristics were more likely to have high levels of leader developmental efficacy.

Higher levels of leader developmental efficacy were theorized to result from being designated as a high potential due to evidence from past literature that employees tend to take designation as positive reinforcement and increase efficacy (Maurer, 2001). Organizations would benefit from having participants in a high-potential program have high levels of leader developmental efficacy due to previous research demonstrating that these individuals have firmer beliefs and believe they can complete developmental activities (Maurer, 2001). In this research, if the participant was designated as high potential, it was thought that the individual would have
a firmer belief that they would be able to complete a high-potential program. However, no relationship was found between the random designation and leader developmental efficacy. This relationship may not have been evident in the current study due to the disconnect between designation and the employee's job and/or current organization. However, when the manipulation check is operationalized as a self-identified designation, there is a significant positive relationship with leader developmental efficacy.

Individuals with higher levels of leader developmental efficacy were likelier to self-report as designated as high potential than those with lower levels of leader developmental efficacy. This relationship may exist due to the belief in oneself to complete a leadership developmental program would mean to an individual that they have the capabilities to be designated as a high potential employee – as indicated by their self-identification. The extent to which individuals have a high level of leader developmental efficacy will result in confidence and a positive experience from participating in development activities (Maurer et al., 2003).

Managerial aspirations and leader developmental efficacy were also significantly related, indicating that individuals with higher levels of managerial aspirations are also likely to have higher levels of leader developmental efficacy. Participants with high levels of managerial aspirations and leader developmental efficacy may have self-identified as high potential due to a belief they completed the activities throughout the survey even if not randomly designated as high due to protection from adversity thanks to their high levels of managerial aspirations.

Psychological synonyms were utilized to investigate careless responding for both leader developmental efficacy and managerial aspirations. According to this data quality index, respondents did not respond in a caring manner due to the item-pairings not meeting the .60 threshold established by Meade and Craig (2012). Psychological synonyms have traditionally
been used on personality indices. When further investigated, leader developmental efficacy inter-item correlations barely reached the threshold of .60, and managerial aspirations did not, across all of the items. It is likely that due to the larger number of items in managerial aspirations scale, the low inter-item correlations were present, while leader developmental efficacy was a short scale. Thus, the threshold determined for personality may not be appropriate for these sorts of measures.

An individual’s desire to move higher in their career (managerial aspirations) significantly positively impacted one's belief in the ability to develop as a leader. Managerial aspirations were positively related to leader developmental efficacy. Managerial aspirations indicate one's desire to grow in their career, while leader developmental efficacy is the belief in oneself to complete a training program.

Conclusions

This study set out to test a theoretical model of how designation may impact an individual’s performance on a persistence task. Overall, there was no support for the relationship between designation and performance on a persistence task. However, there was evidence of relationships between managerial aspirations, leader developmental efficacy, and task persistence. In addition, when the manipulation check was utilized as a self-designated measure of designation, instead of the random designation, there was evidence for support of the theoretical model. From this research, we can begin to understand the impact that designation has on an individual’s performance, specifically when the individual believes they should be designated. Random designation did not have an impact on performance, indicating that organizations should create a meaningful relationship with designation to reap the benefits of
designation through social exchange theory. This study continued to demonstrate the importance of an individual’s managerial aspirations and leader developmental efficacy in persistence through difficult tasks.

Study 1 Limitations

As stated previously, this research did not take place within an organization but rather through an online survey platform. It is likely that participants did not feel as engaged or invested in the task at hand as if they would on a task at their workplace/within their work. This study was completed outside of an organization to allow for experimental manipulation and to allow participants to respond without fear that their organization may get ahold of their responses.

Participants were randomly assigned designation after a false task that they believed was a test of potential. While this allowed investigation into the factors with experimental control, many organizations have multiple indicators of potential. However, utilizing a pre-test I had confidence that the fake designation test did appear to be a real test of potential to participants. I designed the study as such so that there was no attempt at creating a fake organization for participants to care about, but rather just their experience in the moment of being designated as a high potential. This designed allowed experimental control, but it is possible that there were no significant effects with random designation due to the lack of organizational realness. A portion of the model was based on social exchange theory being activated, however without a true organizational agent it appeared that social exchange theory was not activated.

Cloud research was utilized to collect this data which has been demonstrated to have high quality participants across surveys (Chandler et al., 2019). I conducted four data checks to ensure
that participants were answering in a meaningful response, and one test indicated that
participants were not answering in a meaningful manner while the other three indicated that a
majority of participants were responding in a meaningful manner. The data quality index,
psychological synonyms, that indicated the participants were not answering in a meaningful
manner has not been researched enough on leadership scales to guarantee that they are accurate
(Goldammer et al., 2020). Therefore, the three other data checks were conducted and indicated
that the participants were answering in a meaningful manner, so psychological synonyms were
disregarded. The data quality is a limitation of the current study, I cannot be sure that the
respondents answered in consistent, meaningful ways across scales due to the one quality index
that indicated careless responding.

In addition, a limitation of this research was not asking the participants if they believe
they believe that they are high potential employees or if they believe they have the potential to be
designated. In this research, the manipulation check was operationalized as self-identified
designation, but I cannot be sure that when participants were answering this question, they were
self-identifying or simply not paying attention. It would be beneficial to have a measure that
more specifically addressed whether participants believe they have potential.

Future Research

Future research should establish a protocol where participants can be recruited from
within an organization while going through the recruitment process for high-potential programs.
This will allow researchers to examine these factors in a scenario where the individual is truly
connected to their designation status. Completing this research in an organization will also likely
increase participant’s belief that the designation is an accurate representation from their
organization and likely activate social exchange theory. Recruiting participants from organization’s while going through the recruitment process for high-potential programs would be a quasi-experimental design. Researchers would not randomly assign individuals to either designation or not but rather observe what occurs once they find out their designation. A quasi-experimental design does not allow for tests for causality, which will not allow for cause-and-effect explanations but rather just observations of relationships.

Future research would benefit from validating these indices on leadership scales and continuing to further understand what it means for a participant to answer in a meaningful way across scales. Some of the indices that were utilized to investigate whether respondents answered in a meaningful way were originally developed and have been used in personality scales as opposed to leadership scales. It would benefit the literature to continue to test these indices, such as psychological synonyms, on leadership scales such as managerial aspirations to further investigate what psychological synonyms means in leadership context. Future research can also further develop indices to investigate meaningful responses across leadership scales to ensure that researchers are getting quality data from respondents.

The first stage of the research was to investigate how high potential designated affects performance on a persistence task, while investigating the relationships with leader developmental efficacy and managerial aspirations. Future research should continue to investigate these relationships and different tasks that can be used as the designation task. The logic task was utilized as the random designation due to its appearance as part of an IQ test. It would be interesting to see the difference of impact in random designation due to different tasks that can be utilized as the designation task. Past research has indicated that organizations identify high potentials through performance appraisals, recommendations, input from peers, and
educational background among other methods (Enterprise, 2011). Future research studies can utilize personality assessments, as well as manipulating participants to believe they were recommended for the high-potential program through senior leadership/their manager. It would be interesting to see if there were any differences in outcomes depending on the way that designation was manipulated, in addition to investigating whether different methods of random designation led to higher pass rates of manipulation checks.

Future research should ask individuals whether they believe they are a high potential employee regardless of the designation they are told. Research would benefit from the findings as to the differences between individuals who believe they have the potential to be designated or are a high potential employee. The current research began to investigate this by operationalizing the manipulation check as self-identified designation, however I cannot be sure that participants were just not paying attention and failed as opposed to answering the question in a self-identified manner. When utilizing the manipulation check there were indication for the hypothesized relationships, it is possible that respondents simply did not agree with their designation status and therefore answered in a manner of believing they are high potential or have the characteristics to be designated. Future research should still randomly designate high potential to have experimental control, however it would be beneficial to add questions at the end of the survey to ask participants if they believe they can be designated as a high potential. The manipulation check should come earlier after the original message of designation or not – researchers can then be sure that if individuals were not paying attention and failed the manipulation check those participants can be thrown out. Adding in questions later around whether the participant believes they can be designated as a high potential will allow researchers to investigate the differences between people who were designated and believe they are high
potential vs. those who were designated and do not they are high potentials and the opposite pairs.

Future research would benefit from further investigating and understanding the characteristics of individuals who would not want to participate in a high-potential program even if they have the characteristics to succeed in a high-potential program. If future researchers can identify this subset population, it will continue to add to the understandings of what type of individuals want to participate in a high-potential program; as well as starting to understand if and why there are individuals who have the capability to participate in a high-potential program but simply do not want to participate.

Finally, the current study investigated task persistence as the operationalization of performance. Performance outcomes are under investigated in relation to high-potential programs, therefore task persistence was used in its place to measure whether a participant was more likely to persist more if the participant was happy about their designation status. Future research would benefit from clarity around performance outcomes in high-potential programs and what performance outcomes mean across industries. In addition, it will be beneficial for future research to measure participants motivation to increase or decrease their performance depending on their satisfaction with designation.

Although study 1 did not fully support the hypothesized model, there was indication that managerial aspirations and leader developmental efficacy were both important outcome factors. Study 2 set out to investigate and understand the reasonings employees have that drives their desires to be involved in a high-potential program or not more specifically. The qualitative investigation allowed for further insight into what characteristics separate individuals who want to participate in a high-potential program vs. those who do not.
CHAPTER 6

STUDY 2 METHOD

Study 2 is an inductive qualitative study attempting to pinpoint why individuals may or may not want to participate in a high potential development program. This study expands upon study 1’s findings around the mechanisms that drive an employee to want to participate or not to participate in high-potential programs and to inform the literature further. Qualitative studies are helpful in myriad scenarios, from establishing context around a theory or confirming a theory.

In this specific study, the qualitative methods will assist in identifying more reasons and unanticipated reasons for wanting or not wanting to participate in a high-potential program (Maxwell, 2008). Previous literature has stated how qualitative research has an advantage over quantitative research in addressing more practical goals. These goals include generating results and theories that are relevant to the people studied (Bolster, 1983), helping to improve existing practice or literature as opposed to determining the outcomes of the practice (Scriven, 1991), and encouraging more collaborative research between practitioners and participants (Maxwell, 2008). In addition, qualitative research allows for purposeful sampling – focusing on a specific population to achieve accurate representativeness of the population most likely to be experiencing the phenomenon (Maxwell, 2008). Purposeful sampling allows for more confidence in the conclusions from the data. Overall, qualitative research can enhance the richness of the theoretical underpinnings by allowing for deeper exploration of the topic.
Participants

Participants were recruited via Northern Illinois University alumni network’s social media, personal social media, and Cloud research to achieve the desired sample size. Approximately 629 participants responded to my initial survey from the alumni network, with only 5 participants indicating that they would not want to participate in a high-potential program. After the first day of recruitment, sixty-two participants had responded and were sent the follow-up survey, 58 of which indicated they would want to participate in a high-potential program and five indicated they would not like to participate in a high-potential program. The proposed strategy was if the first group of participants did not respond to the survey to achieve the desired sample size, a next sample of participants would be sent the follow-up survey. In response to the second survey, I received 46 positive (individuals who would want to participate in a high-potential program) respondents and 0 negative (individuals who would not want to participate in high-potential program) respondents. One positive respondent was excluded due to a reported age of less than 18. Through the various other recruitment methods there were approximately 53 negative respondents in total.

Participants included in the analysis (age 22-87, $M = 41.81$, $SD = 16.44$) responded to an online two-part Qualtrics survey including questions regarding whether they would like to participate in a high-potential program, whether they have participated in a program before, an open-ended question for an explanation of why they would or would not want to participate, managerial aspirations scale, and demographics. These participants were in their career for 0 years to 62 years ($M = 13.19$, $SD = 12.8$). Participants were asked about the nature of their current role; most participants reported being a manager of teams (33.3%), 20% reported being a
manager of others, 18.3% reported being an individual contributor, 11.7% reported being an executive, 11.7% reported being an executive, and 5% did not respond.

A majority of participants reported being Caucasian (50.0%), 13.6% reported being Black or African American, 11.8% reported being Hispanic/Latino, 9.1% reported being Native American, 2.7% reported being Asian or Pacific Islander, 2.7% reported being multi-racial, and 5.4% reported multiple races (4.5% of participants not reporting). The analyzed sample included a majority women (51.8%), 44.5% women, and 3.6% choosing to not respond.

Many participants (33.6%) reported having a bachelor’s degree in college, 21.8% reported having a master’s degree, 16.4% reported having some college but no degree, 11.8% reported being a high school graduate, 10% reported having an Associate degree, 1.8% reported having a Doctoral degree, 0.9% reported having less than a high school degree, and 3.6% did not report.

Procedure

The survey was divided into two parts. First, the participants were given a questionnaire explaining what high-potential programs are, the general requirements for participation, and the outcomes associated with the program. Following this explanation, the participants were asked would you participate in such a program? (yes/no). Once the answer was selected, participants were prompted to input an email address to be reached for the second part of the survey.

The second survey included a reminder of what a high-potential program is as well as one of two questions: “Please explain your reasoning as to why you indicated that you would participate in a high-potential program” or “Please explain your reasoning as to why you indicated that you would not want to participate in a high-potential program.” The format is
considered a presupposition question. These types of questions are essentially prompting the interviewee to know they are supposed to have a response in a specific direction (Patton, 1990). When questions are asked like this, they are likely to increase the likelihood the respondent will have something to say (Patton, 1990). Following the questionnaire, the participants were given the managerial aspirations scale (Appendix F) to see if there is a relationship between individuals who would or would not want to participate and their managerial aspirations. Managerial aspirations were investigated to see if there are significant differences between the groups of participants who indicated they would or would not want to participate in a high-potential program.

Qualitative Analysis

For study 2, the qualitative data was collected and coded by the proposed coding strategy. The coding strategy did not differ from the proposed guidelines (Figures 8 and 9); a fourth category or “other/does not fit” was given, with no relevant responses indicated in that category these responses were then discarded from further coding. The coders included me and one other doctoral candidate who was also utilizing qualitative methods for her dissertations. Each coder conducted the initial coding round independently; the two codes were compared and discussed once complete. Any codes that were different were discussed and decided on a common code. The coding strategy followed the recommendations of Williams and Moser (2019), who broke down coding into three main parts. The first part is open coding which is when the concepts and themes are identified for distinct categorization. Open coding creates a broad thematic domain to organize the data (Williams & Moser, 2019). The second level is axial coding which focuses on identifying emergent themes and further refining, aligning, and
Figure 8. Coding guidelines for responses indicating that individuals would like to participate in a high-potential program.
Figure 9. Coding guidelines for responses indicating that individuals would not like to participate in a high-potential program.
categorizing the themes. Once this is done, the data can be refined and categorized with the distinct goal of creating thematic categories in preparation for the final step (Williams & Moser, 2019). Finally, selecting coding will be done in which the data that is now organized into thematic categories can be integrated into cohesive and meaning-filled expressions. This final process allows the data to be organized to provide a straightforward narrative (Williams & Moser, 2019).

These results are presented in terms percentage of the two groups (those who would and would not participate) into similar categories from the coding scheme. The results are organized in this manner to facilitate a discussion around the reasonings for and for not participating in high-potential programs. Respondents were divided into two groups (those who would and would not participate) and were compared on managerial aspirations. The relationship between the desire to participate and managerial aspirations is presented in a linear relationship.

Measures

*Managerial Aspirations.* The individual differences of managerial aspirations will be measured by the Desired Managerial Aspirations Scale developed by Tharenou and Terry (1998). This 13-item scale is reported to have high reliability ($\alpha = .94$) (Appendix F). This 13-item scale had a reliability of $\alpha = .76$ in the current study. The items are scored on a 1 *(completely false)* to 5 *(completely true)* scale. A sample item includes, "*My aspirations are very high in regard to professional recognition and achievement.*"
CHAPTER 7

RESULTS

Participants answered yes or not to wanting to participate in a high-potential program, which were coded (0 = no, 1 = yes).

The second survey included the managerial aspirations scale to investigate whether there was any relationship between one’s managerial aspirations and their desire to participate in a high-potential program or not. The assumptions of collinearity, homoscedasticity, and normality were all met.

Participants who did want to participate in a high-potential program ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.51$) and participants who did not want to participate in a high-potential program ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 0.81$) managerial aspirations were compared. Utilizing an independent samples test, it was found that the variance in managerial aspirations is significantly different if participants indicated they were not interested in participating in a high-potential program ($t(87.13) = -9.54$, $p < 0.001$).

Wants to Participate

In total, 52 open ended responses from 46 participants were coded as positive responses. These 52 answers went through three rounds of coding. First, the responses were categorized into personal, organizational, combination, or does not fit. Many of the responses were coded as personal (80%), 11% were coded as a combination, 4% were coded as organizational, and 5% of
respondents did not fit into one of the three categories. In total, 2 responses were coded as did not fit and were dropped from further coding rounds (“Learn more about the unknown” and “Knowing more about the unknown will do you no harm”).

The second round of coding involved categorizing the responses into reasonings in order to further organize them into buckets of explanation. Though the first round of coding divided the answers into three major categories (personal, combination, and organization) the second level resulted in similar themes across the three categories. This was a variation from the original coding plan where instead of having different categories for across personal, combination, and organization, the responses were coded altogether due to similar themes across the categories. Responses were coded within the category they were assigned (e.g., personal), however once the codes were looked at across all responses it was clear that respondents reasoning’s were similar regardless of the original category. Therefore, all the responses were coded into nine categories identified as enrichment, advancement, future aspirations, self-knowledge, identification, financial, competition, skill-improvement, and altruism.

In the final round iteration of coding, the nine categories identified were further refined and aggregated into five themes for the individuals who responded they would like to participate. Percentage of responses within each theme is presented in Figure 10.

1. Career advancement/education – theme encompasses responses that expressed desire to continue to learn new skills and ability in their respective careers, creating stronger relationships across the organization, and increasing one’s experience in their current career.
2. Future aspirations – theme encompasses responses that indicated the desire to attain a higher level of job, continue to improve for future positions, as well as fast track to promotion/leadership position.

3. Financial interests – theme encompasses any responses that expressed interest in increasing their salary or other financial value from the job.

4. Competition among coworkers – theme encompasses any responses that indicated the motivation was to learn more about their coworkers' skills, understand more deeply what others are better at, as well as know where their fellow coworkers stand in comparison to oneself.

5. Helping others – theme encompasses any responses that expressed the desire to learn more about high-potential programs to identify them more effectively among the team as well as help develop high potentials in the future.

Figure 10. Themes for respondents who indicated they wanted to participate.
Does Not Want to Participate

In total, 52 open ended responses were coded from 51 participants as negative responses. These 52 answers went through three rounds of coding. First, the responses were categorized into personal, organizational, combination, or does not fit. Most of the responses were coded as personal (69.23%), 0.02% were coded as a combination, 0% were coded as organizational, and 26.9% of respondents did not fit into one of the three categories. In total, 42 responses were coded as did not fit and were dropped from further coding rounds as well as respondents who indicated they were retired (“Not sure” and “No answer”). Figure 11 shows

The second round of coding involved categorizing the responses into reasonings in order to further organize them into buckets of explanation. Like the respondents that answered they did want to participate in a high-potential program, these respondents were coded across the three categories. This coding resulted in 8 categories that include age, time commitment, disability, no knowledge of the program, doesn’t work, no trust in the designation, doesn’t want too, and doesn’t have confidence to complete the program. Only one participant indicated they did not work and was excluded from further analysis.

In the final round iteration of coding, the 8 categories identified were further refined into three themes for the individuals who responded they would like to participate (Figure 11).

1. **Temporal** – theme encompasses all responses that indicated they did not feel they had enough time to participate either due to job commitments or already too much work.

2. **End of career** – theme encompasses all responses that indicated the participant either felt too old to participate or are ready to retire.
3. *Motivation* – theme encompasses all responses that indicated the participant either did not feel like they could complete the program or that they simply did not want to participate.

![Pie chart showing distribution of themes for respondents who indicated they did not want to participate.]

Figure 11. Themes for respondents who indicated they did not want to participate.
The goal for Study 2 was to identify any themes as to why individuals would or would not want to participate in a high-potential program. The responses were expected to give insight into an individual's motivations to complete or not complete a high-potential program and any nuances that organizations might not consider when developing these talent programs. I theorized that there would be individuals with the skill set to complete a high-potential program but do not want to for various reasons, including family life or compliancy in a job role.

The study's qualitative nature was explored to understand why individuals would or would not want to participate in a high-potential program. I was hoping there would be rich context and responses from individuals who would and would not participate in a high-potential program allowing additional insights. These additional insights could be utilized to identify and designate high potentials to participate in these development programs.

There was loose guidance and expectation around the reasonings I expected to find from participants. There were some surprising results, mainly for participants who would not want to participate in a high-potential program. Through various recruitment methods, there was an overwhelming response from individuals who would want to participate in a high-potential program, with a relatively small number of those who do not want to participate in a high-potential program.
The relationship between managerial aspirations and individuals who indicated they did or did not want to participate is explored further. In addition, the categories of themes for both wanting to or not wanting to participate in a high-potential program are explored further. The themes are also explored in relation to one another to discover similarities and differences.

**Managerial Aspirations**

Managerial aspirations were measured in the second survey allowing an exploration of the respondents' desire to advance into leadership positions. The results indicated that those who responded that they did want to participate in a high-potential program had significantly higher managerial aspirations than those who did not want to participate. Previous research indicates that career motivations impact and are reflected in an employee's decisions and behavior (London, 1983). Individuals with higher levels of career motivation are also more likely to see the need for development and have a higher level of engagement in development (Maurer et al., 2013).

Managerial aspirations is a specific type of career motivation that focuses on the individual's desire to move into a managerial position in their career. Career insights are an essential component of an individual's career motivations. They indicate the employee's ability to judge the future trajectory of their career by creating feasible career goals (London, 1983). Employees must set realistic goals to continue developing and fulfilling their career motivations. In the current study, it was interesting to investigate further individuals' reasons why they would or would not want to participate in a high-potential program. The measure of managerial aspirations allowed me to differentiate further between the two groups with a clear positive relationship with those individuals who do want to participate in high-potential programs. The
significant relationship gives insight into the idea that those individuals who would participate in a high-potential program likely have higher career motivations and, therefore, career insight in setting appropriate goals for their careers.

Individuals must have internal motivation to advance their careers and overcome adversity that may be experienced while developing into a leader (Silzer & Church, 2010). On the other side, there are individuals who do not have the internal motivation to advance their careers. Both reasonings can be seen throughout the results of the qualitative study.

Wants to Participate

The overwhelming number of positive responses in the initial rounds of data collection indicated that individuals want to participate in a high-potential program. However, it is also essential to consider that there might have been an overwhelming response of wanting to participate in a high-potential program due to the social expectation that one should want to continue to advance in their career. This heavy weighting toward positive responses does align with the organization's traditional "one-size-fits-all" talent development programs, where it is assumed that all employees would like to participate in a program if given the opportunity (Garavan et al., 2011).

A small subset of participants was then contacted for the second survey to explain their reasons for wanting to participate in a high-potential program. These responses were then looked at to investigate if they were personal, organization, or a combination of both. The personal category involved any reasonings that were around advancement in career or any answer that revolved around self-improvement or self-serving reasonings. Organizational reasons included responses that dealt with wanting to improve the organization, make more connections across the
organization, or because the organization had a great high-potential program. Finally, combination responses were a mix of both, these responses had some personal reasonings and some organizational. Most of the responses were personal, indicating that the sample wanted to participate in high-potential programs for self-centered reasons.

The responses' personal nature can indicate that these respondents would want to participate in a high-potential program regardless of the organization. Very few responses of why an individual would want to participate in a high-potential program were due to organizational reasons; the reasons revolved around a desire to learn to be a better people manager and gain access to higher leaders in the organization. These responses indicate that individuals want to participate in high-potential programs for reasons related to their development as a leader instead of reasons related to the organization.

The responses were then coded further into more specific reasoning. The result thematic categories can be separated into two separate reasonings, one as more positive and growth-centered and the other as more self-promoting reasonings. The positive themes included career advancement/education, future aspirations, and helping others. A clear theme emerged from the responses related to one's career motivations and aspirations. Many participants mentioned wanting to participate in the program to continue to grow in their career, learn new skills, or because they had future aspirations to become a leader. Some other responses indicated a desire to help others grow into their full potential and understand how to better identify high potentials early on in their career. These reasonings seem to be more focused on the development of oneself in many different aspects, from being a better leader to identifying high potential individuals better. These reasons can be classified as more personally motivated and aligned with
career motivations. Respondents in these categories desired to grow beyond their current position and skillset to further their career goals.

On the other side, two themes emerged that are considered more selfish: financial interests and competition among coworkers. The individuals in the financial interests theme indicated they wanted to continue to advance in their careers to increase their compensation expectations. While the participants in the competition among coworkers expressed interest in understanding the competition at a deeper level and developing more skills than their peers could do so (if not in the high-potential program). These responses seemed more self-centered on advancing one's interests without considering how one's personal growth can contribute positively to the organization. The individuals in this subset of themes appear to be extrinsically motivated to participate in a high-potential program.

It is interesting to see two sides emerge from the thematic review. The exploratory analysis of the individuals who want to participate in high-potential programs revealed many reasons to participate. Some of these reasons further validate the theory that an individual's career motivations/aspirations indicate wanting to participate in a high-potential program. As mentioned above, individuals need intrinsic motivation to complete a development program and to continue setting career goals for themselves (Silzer & Church, 2010). The subset of the sample that indicated they wanted to participate in high-potential programs for reasons such as career development, future aspirations, and helping others demonstrated career motivations to continue to grow their career.
Does Not Want to Participate

It is essential to address that it took several different methods of recruiting participants to reach the desired sample size of participants who did not want to participate in a high-potential program. The struggle to acquire negative respondents may indicate that there are not many people out there who would not want to participate in a high-potential program. The struggle can also indicate that individuals are less likely to admit they would not want to. In addition, about half of the respondents that did respond mentioned they did not have a reason for not wanting to participate. Many participants responding that they simply did not want to participate and did not have a reason is an interesting find, indicating that potentially there is no real force/reason behind the desire to not participate in high-potential programs for a majority of people. The finding that a majority of participants did not have a reason to not participate in a high-potential program may also indicate a lack of ability to articulate their reasonings possibly due to social desirability. Participants may not want to share their reasonings behind not wanting to participate in a high-potential program because they feel as if their reason is not good enough.

These respondents did not seem to display high levels of career motivations, which was evident by the much lower average managerial aspirations score than respondents who wanted to participate in a high-potential program. Career motivations influence how individuals react in situations and the decisions employees make (London, 1983); therefore, it is easy to assume that individuals who are low in career motivations would not want to participate in a high-potential program. These individuals would likely not want to participate in a high-potential program because they have low motivations to move upward in their careers. These individuals are likely to be well aware of their career insights and set realistic goals to maintain the level they are at in
the organization/not advance towards higher positions, excluding participating in a high-potential program.

These organizational reasons may be a relationship between employer and employee, resources of the organization, and longevity at the organization, among other reasons. These respondents offered reasonings such as “not sure” or “no need,” indicating that it is likely that completing a high-potential program does not appear on their career goals. In addition, most respondents indicated the reasons for not wanting to participate in a high-potential program were personal. In contrast, one respondent was a combination of both personal and organization, and no respondents responded that they did not want to participate for organizational reasons. Organizations can take this result as a positive. The lack of organizational reasons is evident that most individuals do not want to participate in a high-potential program due to their reasons, regardless of the organization. Lack of organizational reasons is also a positive because organizations can work to identify individuals who are personally motivated to participate in these programs and not worry about organizational reasons. On the other hand, lack of organizational reasons can be seen as a negative because organizations do not have control over employees personality/motivations, but they do have control over creating an appealing high-potential program.

The responses were finalized into three categories discrete categories. These three categories were temporal, end of career, and motivation. Two of the three categories (temporal and motivation) were expected, but it was interesting to see many respondents indicate they were about to retire/end their careers. In the career stages literature, there is evidence to suggest workers who are nearing the end of their career desire more focused training (Duarte & Lopes, 2018); therefore, this result may be due to a sampling error. However, it is still important to
consider the implications of why there was a group of respondents who indicated they would not want to participate in a high-potential program because of their proximity to retirement.

When selecting viable candidates for high-potential programs, organizations can ask the potential candidates whether they feel they have enough time left in their intended career to make an impact due to participation in a high-potential program. Individuals do not want to invest more time in progressing their careers if they feel they are ready to retire/exit the workforce. Respondents ready to retire are an essential group of individuals to consider; however, they do not eliminate all potential candidates that may appear later in their careers. Organizations may also want to consider where someone is on their intended career timeline to determine whether that individual has the desire to continue to grow in their career later in their lifetime.

In the context of older workers, it is important to consider career stages theories that are utilized to explain individual worker satisfaction levels and motivations throughout their career (Duarte & Lopes, 2018). Historically, there are four career stages that include establishment, advancement, maintenance, and decline (Super, 1980). While the four stages may not be as accurate representation presently, career stages can be thought of periods of psychological and behavioral exploration, adaptation, and stabilization in the workplace following pivotal work-related events (Post et al., 2013).

Research has shown that older workers tend to ask for more focused training opportunities – but gain fewer opportunities for learning (Duarte & Lopes, 2018). In the current research, there was a subset of respondents who indicated they would not want to participate in a high-potential program because they are close to retirement. These respondents may truly not want to participate due to being in a later career stage, however they may also feel as if they
would not be supported by their organization to participate in such focused training. The number of workers in mid- and at late career stage is increasing, organizations need to capitalize on this demographic change and shift focus on their workforce investments (Post et al., 2013). While the current research indicates there are a group of individuals who do not want to participate in a high-potential program due to proximity to retirement, it will be imperative for organizations to investigate whether there is a hidden population of older workers who want to participate in this much more specialized training program.

In addition, research suggests late career psychological tasks focus on developing a self-image dependent from work, engaging in society in new ways, and questioning life structure adopted in earlier stages of life (Post et al., 2013). While individuals in mid-career stage focus more on financial stability, promotion, and status in the workplace (Post et al., 2013). The respondents who indicated they were close to retirement may not want to participate in a high-potential program because they are more focused on evolving outside of the workplace, in contrast workers who are more in the middle of their careers are focused on increasing their status in the workplace.

Quite a few respondents mentioned they would not want to participate in a high-potential program due to time commitment. It is a common assumption that high-potential programs are time-consuming or may add additional responsibilities to someone's already full plate. Organizations can take away that there are individuals who do not desire to participate due to the anticipated amount of time it would take in addition to their routine jobs. Time commitment concerns can be handled by either reducing the amount of time that a high-potential program would require, clearly outlining the time commitments of the program, or reducing the
participant's workloads/expectations so they can participate in this program without additional duties.

Finally, it was clear that there are many respondents who do not possess the career motivations to participate in such a program. Potential participants will likely select out of participating in a high-potential program if they do not possess the motivation to move beyond their current role or to continue progressing in their careers. Organizations can eliminate candidates for high-potential programs with low career motivations to move beyond their current roles.

A small group of respondents indicated they did not want to participate in a high-potential program due to their lack of confidence in completing the program successfully. Organizations should consider this subset of respondents differently from those who do not possess the motivation to complete a high-potential program. It is crucial to identify these potential candidates and give them opportunities to increase their self-confidence to complete a high-potential program through things such as stretch assignments or mentorship. This self-confidence to complete a leadership development program, such as a high-potential program, can be operationalized as leader developmental efficacy. Leader developmental efficacy is an individual’s belief in themselves to develop as a leader whether through a specific skill or ability in a leadership context (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Reicherd et al., 2016).

Individuals rely on individual characteristics such as learning preparedness, career, and situation variables to inform their ability to develop as a leader (Maurer et al., 2003) and according to these findings there are individuals who do not feel they have these individual characteristics. Organizations can look to further develop and support individuals in creating a
space for an increase in learning to assist individuals in increasing their leader developmental efficacy.

Comparison Between the Two

Table 12 shows examples of responses for each category for the does want to participate and does not want to participate. Overall, there were not many surprises that came from individuals who would want to participate or those who would not want to participate in high-potential programs. The most surprising finding was the lack of reasons that had to do with features of the organization. This finding is both positive and negative. On the positive side, these findings can be generalized across organizations because no findings were specific to any one organization. In addition, the organizations do not have to worry about copying what another organization is doing to create interest in participating in a high-potential program. However, it is harmful because there were no clear reasons why someone would want to participate in their organization's high-potential program. The downside means there does not appear to be any indicators that organizational commitment or organizational identity have a hand in deciding whether someone wants to be designated as a high potential or not. In addition, participants may not have had many organizational reasons to want to or not participate in a high-potential program due to not having a specific organization in mind. Participants were not asked specifically if they would want to participate in a high-potential program at their current organization, they were just asked if they generally would want to participate.

Most of the respondents' reasons were personal, whether it was due to career motivations (or lack thereof), financial reasons, or required time. Career motivations were evident in both groups, which aligns with a career motivation theory. Individuals will act and behave in specific
Table 12
Example Responses of Wants to and Does Not Want to Participate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive (Wants To)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition among coworkers</td>
<td>Through potential training, you can quickly learn the strengths and weaknesses of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Aspirations</td>
<td>To become better at my job and to move up in the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>As a people manager I’m interested in how I can identify high potential employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial interests</td>
<td>I want to improve my standard of living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment</td>
<td>Learn more about things you don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (Does Not Want To)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>I acknowledge the experience could vary from person to person, employer to employer, but for me, it generally meant more work for no extra pay and no real guarantee for advancement/raises/etc. Simply put, unless I have a lot more concrete data suggesting otherwise, my impression of something like that is more like: high risk, moderate to low reward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>I don’t think I’m qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age/disability</td>
<td>I'm on disability, can't work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ways due to their career goals (London, 1983); therefore, it aligns those individuals who want to progress in their career indicate they would want to participate in a high-potential program to learn new skills and abilities. While those who do not want to participate in high-potential programs either feel they do not want to increase their skills or do not have the confidence to complete a program.

Study 2 Limitations and Future Research

Due to the lack of responsiveness for negative respondents, the sample for study 2 had to come from many different sources. These sources include the proposed targeted population of university alumni, as well as participants from personal social media, and finally participants from Cloud research. Results from one study coming from many different sample populations can limit the conclusions. The samples gathered from the separate population may have different characteristics that were not accounted for outside of the demographics collected. In addition, when recruiting from Cloud research there were respondents who had not had any years of experience in the workplace. This is a potential limitation because these respondents may not have any context for high-potential programs in their careers.

The limitation also extends past the differences in population, to the fact that all the positive responses came from the same source, while all the negative responses came from several different sources. The respondents for all the positive responses coming from one source limits the diversity of their experiences specifically around education. The original targeted population was alumni from a four-year university, this population is where all the respondents who wanted to participate in a high-potential program. While the sample that was utilized for the
negative respondents (those who would not want to participate) came from across different sources, the targeted participants may have not graduated from a four-year university.

Future research will benefit from targeting and receiving responses from the same population that contain both respondents who do and do not want to participate in a high-potential program. The same population will allow more widespread conclusions from the results that are not limited by the differing population caveats. From the current research, it was learned that managerial aspirations have a connection to individuals who would or would not participate in a high-potential program and future research may benefit from recruiting individuals low in career motivations to investigate reasons as to why they would not want to participate in such a program.

Future research should also explore whether participants have more organizational reasons when asked if they would participate in a high-potential program at their current organization. It would be interesting to see if specifying the organization would lead participants to have organizational reasonings or continue to have mostly personal reasonings.

Future research would benefit from exploring this question without providing the specific label of “high potential” programs. Participants should still be given a description of a high-potential program but removing the wording “high potential” may lead to more individuals to state that they would not want to participate in such a program. The description of a high-potential program without the label may be seen as remedial to individuals, as these programs involve additional trainings and mentorships, which may take away the potential effect of social pressure to want to participate in such a program.

The exploratory study was limited in the depth of responses to the open-ended question. The limit of depth is likely due to this research being an online survey without additional probing
questions. The study was designed in this way to allow individuals to answer freely without any pre-convictions of what the responses may be for why they would or would not participate in a high-potential program. The survey allowed the reasonings for why individuals do or do not want to participate in a high-potential program to begin to become clearer. However, future research would benefit from a semi-structured interview protocol. A limitation of a semi-structured interview would be the fear that individuals may not be honest because they do not want to respond in a non-socially expected manner. In the current study it was very evident the struggle to find participants that would admit they did not want to participate in a high-potential program. A semi-structured interview will allow researchers to probe further for deeper answers from participants, but that research may still struggle in the recruitment process.

A limitation of this research is that it was not conducted cross-culturally to see if there are differences among cultures. Certain cultures may feel as if they deserve additional training, while others may be more grateful for the opportunity. Future research would benefit from exploring relationships between the desire to participate or not in a high-potential program and different cultures. In addition, future research should explore what it means to be a high potential across cultures.

Lastly, the current study faces a limitation in terms of what traits were surveyed from participants. Managerial aspirations was measured in the second survey to investigate the difference between respondents who would or would not want to participate in a high-potential program. From the findings of this exploratory study, a scale of self-efficacy should be added. Future research should investigate self-efficacy, specifically leader developmental efficacy, in order to see the differences between the sample respondents of those who would or would not want to participate in a high-potential program.
CHAPTER 9
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across two studies in a mixed method design, high potential designation was further investigated to understand whether, if given a chance, everyone would want to participate in a high-potential program. It is important that individuals who are selected for high-potential programs are willing and desire to participate in the program. Talent development programs are becoming increasingly popular as a tool for retention of talent and these programs are a significant investment for organizations (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). The current dissertation was conducted to add to the academic literature around what characteristics individuals may possess that perform well in a high-potential program in addition to understanding individuals reasons for wanting to participate in a high-potential program. To date, little research has been conducted on outcomes associated with high-potential programs as well as research attempting to understand what type of individuals desire to participate in a high-potential program.

Study 1 was a quantitative study aimed at understanding a theoretical model of managerial aspirations and leader developmental efficacy in predicting performance on a persistence task due to random designation. Study 2 was a qualitative study developed to further investigate individual reasonings for wanting to or not to participate in a high-potential program. The main goal of the research was to understand individual motivations further to participate in a high-potential program as well as potential indicators for success in those programs.
One of the main goals of this research was to understand individuals who were designated as high potential but have low levels of managerial aspirations and those who were not designated as high potential but have high managerial aspirations. In study 1, it was demonstrated that managerial aspirations were related to participants' self-identification designation that took place after the random designation. Participants demonstrated that regardless of whether they were designated as high potential (unbeknownst to them randomly), those with high managerial aspirations were more likely to self-identify as high potential. There was not a distinct group of participants designated as high potential and with low levels of managerial aspirations. However, across both studies, it is apparent that career motivation is important in high-potential programs. The results indicate that individuals who have higher levels of career motivation are more likely to desire to participate in a high-potential program as well as show a higher level of persistence.

Career motivations drive an individual's response to situational variables as well as drive the individual's behavior towards career advancement (London, 1983). Across two studies, career motivation was a clear indicator of a desire to participate in a high-potential program and an indicator of positive performance on task persistence. Career motivation was operationalized as managerial aspirations in study 1, defined as the individual's desire to move into a management position (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). Managerial aspirations were found to have a significant positive relationship to task persistence, meaning that individuals with higher managerial aspirations were more likely to persist. Managerial aspirations were measured prior to random designation in study 1 therefore not allowing a relationship to be investigated; however, career motivations were a clear theme throughout study 2, where individuals could self-report reasons, they wanted to or not participate in a high-potential program. From the self-
report reasonings, I learned that managerial aspirations are driven by the desire to become better at one's job, move up in the organization, as well as financial reasonings. Some respondents have a desire to participate in high-potential programs to increase their status in the workplace.

Multiple facets of career motivations were highlighted in this research, precisely career insight and career resilience as measured by managerial aspirations. Career insight is the ability of the individual to set realistic career goals by understanding where they lie on the spectrum of development and what they need to do to achieve higher levels (London, 1983). Career resilience is the ability to overcome and adapt to changing circumstances promptly and appropriately (London, 1983). These two facets of career motivations appeared in the results across the studies; however, they are connected by the underlying relation to career motivations. In study 1, though not a true designation measure, the self-identification designation question positively relates to managerial aspirations highlighting career resilience. In study 2, both groups of respondents (those who would participate and those who would not participate in a high-potential program) indicated that motivation significantly impacted their decision. Study 2 highlights career insights; individuals could understand their career goals and decipher if a high-potential program would help progress these goals.

Both studies clearly show that measuring and understanding participants' career motivations in high-potential programs will be necessary. The current research suggests that organizations can expect to find individuals with higher career motivations want to participate in the high-potential program.

Across both studies, it was also apparent that self-efficacy to complete a leadership program was essential. Self-efficacy was investigated in study 1 with the use of leader developmental efficacy, which is defined as one's belief in their ability to develop as a leader.
Leader developmental efficacy allowed further investigation into the belief of participants to complete a program which is a factor in the decision to want to participate in a high-potential program, as found in study 2. A handful of respondents in study 2 indicated they did not have the confidence to complete a high-potential program. Therefore, they would not like to participate in such a program. Study 1 indicates that while leader developmental efficacy was not related to random designation, it was positively related to self-identified designation. While this is an exploratory analysis, the result can be utilized to understand that designation and leader developmental efficacy are related. Moreover, higher levels of leader developmental efficacy were positively related to task persistence – which participants at the time believed was a task to identify designation. The relationship between leader developmental efficacy and task persistence (participants believed it was a test of designation) demonstrates that the individuals who believe they can complete a leader development program are more likely to perform better.

The importance of confidence in one's skills to complete a leadership development program, operationalized here as leader developmental efficacy, is a signal to organizations that to increase participants' success, they must increase their employees' efficacy. Leader developmental efficacy can be increased similarly to traditional self-efficacy through performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, emotional arousal, and verbal persuasion (Hackett & Betz, 1981). While study 1's results did not indicate a relationship between leader developmental efficacy and random designation theorized initially to act as verbal persuasion – organizations can focus on further developing employees' self-efficacy through other methods. Self-efficacy can also be increased through methods of performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, and emotional arousal (Hackett & Betz, 1981). Performance accomplishments are
the strongest source in increasing self-efficacy (Hackett & Betz, 1981), with this in mind it is likely that participants may have a stronger relationship to their designation if they believe they achieved it through successful performance in their role.

The random designation was utilized to have an experimental design; however, in an organization, there will likely be a set of procedures to identify individuals with high potential that may be subjective, but the employee feels more connected to it due to relationship to the organization. Even though random designation was not significantly related to any of the variables in study one, the designation was investigated through the operationalization of the manipulation check question as the self-identified designation. The random designation did not relate to any of the variables due to a low or no engagement of participants' social exchange theory due to this study taking place outside their organization. When participants self-identified as designated, the theorized relationships were present; this can indicate that designation leads to higher levels of leader developmental efficacy, task persistence, and employability and has a positive relationship with managerial aspirations. However, this relationship might only occur when the individual genuinely believes in their designation, or the participant feels that their designation was due to a proper procedure. I cannot know for sure what the reasoning is behind it because I did not directly ask participants if they felt they should have been designated vs. not.

This dissertation is the beginning of research into genuinely understanding what motivates and leads to successful completion in a high-potential program. The two-part study allowed further insight into what characteristics play an integral part in not only the success of a high-potential program but also the desire to participate in a high-potential program, such as career motivations and leader developmental efficacy.
Limitations and Future Research

Due to the nature of a two-method study, a handful of limitations must be considered when understanding the results. First and foremost, the sample for study 1 and study 2 came from different populations. Samples from two different populations do not allow results from the qualitative study to be verified in the quantitative study. Instead, I looked for further reasoning for the findings in study 1 in study 2. If the sample were the same between both studies, the variables could have been investigated further to see the connection between individuals who indicated they would or would not like to participate in a high-potential program. The sample for both studies had a large presence of individuals who indicated they had a bachelor’s degree, but the sample for study 1 had 7% more participants who indicated they were a high school graduate over study 2. This difference indicates that respondents in study 1 had higher levels of education vs. participants in study 2. In addition, study 1’s mode age is 35, while for study 2 the mode age is 29 representing that there was a younger population response to study 2.

In the current research, the two studies were separated to test the theoretical model independent from the exploratory analyses of reasonings participants gave for the desire to participate in or not participate in a high-potential program. Now that there is some understanding that managerial aspirations and self-efficacy impact reasonings and performance, future research should look to combine study 1 and 2 to investigate the same individuals for their desire to participate in a high-potential program or not in addition to the variables measured. Future researchers should take what was learned in this two-part study and tailor the investigation more closely to those variables (managerial/career motivations and self-efficacy). In addition, future research would benefit from investigating respondents desire to participate in
a high-potential program prior to randomly designating the respondents and understanding how that has impacted their performance.

Another limitation is that both samples did not come from the same or similar organizations. While I wanted to create an experimental design and not attempt to create a fake organization for participants to believe they are in, I cannot control for outside forces that may carry over from their organization. These outside factors mean that a participant may have had a bad experience in a high-potential program in the past and therefore carries that adverse reaction whenever they hear of a high-potential program. Future research would benefit from collecting the sample population from the same source to further understand situational variables that may impact participants responses.

General Conclusion

Organizations should veer away from a 'one-size-fits-all' traditional talent development program and start to understand what employees genuinely want out of a high-potential program. This research allows insight into the beginning of understanding individual characteristics that are important in the success of high-potential programs. While high-potential programs are still new and under-researched, it is a significant investment for organizations and employees. Organizations often must invest monetary and human capital resources, and employees have to invest time and mental resources in completing these programs. It will benefit both organizations and employees for properly identifying high potential employees in terms of those with the skillset and those who want to be part of a high-potential program. The current research has begun to explore this aspect and can be utilized to understand that organizations should identify
individuals who are high in career motivations as well as have a good level of leader
developmental efficacy to lead to successful outcomes.

A major takeaway from these two studies is that managerial aspirations and self-efficacy
are important to successful and desire to participate in a high-potential program. Individuals who
have high career motivations to continue to move up in their careers paired with a high level of
self-efficacy for development are the participants organizations should select for high-potential
programs.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE
Participants Demographics

1. How old are you?

2. Which of the following best describes your gender?
   a. Genderqueer, nonbinary, or genderfluid
   b. Man
   c. Woman
   d. Prefer to self-describe:
   e. Prefer not to respond

3. Please select the race/ethnicity that best describes you (check all that apply):
   a. Black or African American
   b. Asian or Pacific Islander
   c. Hispanic/Latino
   d. Multi-racial
   e. Native American
   f. White
   g. Not listed (please specify):

4. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
   a. Less than high school degree
   b. High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
   c. Some college but no degree
   d. Associate degree in college (2-year)
   e. Bachelor’s degree in college (4-year)
f. Master’s degree

g. Doctoral degree

h. Professional degree (JD, MD)

5. How would you best describe your current role:

   a. Individual contributor
   
   b. Manager of others
   
   c. Manager of teams
   
   d. Manager of managers
   
   e. Executive

6. About how many years have you been in your career?
APPENDIX B

LOGIC TEST
Logic test- high potential designation

For this research, I will be determining whether you are a high potential employee by a logic task. This is a common method for assessing one’s potential to go above and beyond their current work role.

You will be informed whether or not you have been selected as a high potential employee immediately after the test.

Instructions: Please choose the image that completes the pattern:

1.

Answer options:
2.

Answer options:

3.

Answer options:
4. Answer options:

5. Answer options:
6.

Answer options:

7.

Answer options:
8. Answer options:

9. Answer options:
APPENDIX C

PERSISTENCE TASK – ANAGRAM TEST
Persistence Task – Anagram Test

In the beginning of this survey, you were designated as either high potential or not high potential based off of a logic test. However, I would like to ensure that this designation was correct and therefore I am conducting a second designation task.

You will have 10 minutes to unscramble the following 10 anagrams. All anagrams should result in common words. If you are struggling with one too much you may skip it and move on. However, once you have a skipped an item you cannot return at the end.

Nonsensical words:
1. jeftak
2. mekqul

Sensical word:
1. asec (case)
2. knsi (skin)
3. erhate (reheat)
4. hurcch (church)
5. rsou (sour)
6. niro (iron)
7. tfla (flat)
8. trfiu (fruit)
Pretest Questions

*Instructions:* Now that you have completed both the measures of high potential, please answer how much you agree with the following questions:

1. Do you believe that the first measure of high potential (the logic test) could be believable as a measure of high potential?
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

2. Did you believe that the second measure (anagram task) of high potential could be believable as a measure of high potential?
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

3. Other comments/suggestions:
APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT AND HIGH POTENTIAL DESCRIPTIONS
Study Title: Leadership designation

This study is being conducted by Alexandria Brown M.A. in the psychology department at Northern Illinois University. The study examines factors contributing to identifying what individual characteristics lead to the most success in a leadership position. By participating in this research project, you will contribute to the general knowledge base on designation of leaders.

In this study, you will be asked to complete a survey, which will include demographics and questions about leadership characteristics. Please read the instructions carefully as you complete the measures. If you have any questions, please feel free to email the researchers. You are free to skip questions that you prefer to not answer.

The completion time for this survey is expected to be approximately 45 minutes.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You as a participant have the right to discontinue the study at any time without penalty.

There are no physical risks in participating in this study. You might experience some mild psychological discomfort while answering questions about your career goals. However, the psychological risks are not greater than those ordinarily encountered while career planning.
Confidentiality of the data will be upheld. Your responses to this survey will be retained in an electronic data file. Your responses will be aggregated with those from other participants and will be analyzed for publications and presentations based on this research.

IP addresses will be collected to verify that no duplicate surveys are submitted. After the data have been verified, the IP addresses will be removed from the data set (prior to analysis).

If you have any further questions, you may contact the primary investigator, Alexandria Brown by email (alexandriabrown24@yahoo.com) Alternatively, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at (815) 753-8588. If the completion of this study instigated any unintended distress or psychological discomfort, university counseling services are available to assist you (815-753-1206).

By proceeding to the survey, I am indicating that I am at least eighteen years of age. I have read the informed consent form and understand the terms of participating in this study.

Continue Exit the Survey

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Introduction to high-potential programs

Many organizations offer talent development programs and divide their employees into groups depending on their potential for long-term career growth. A high-potential program is a structured program designed to find talented employees who have a high potential for growth. Those with the highest level of potential are generally designated as high potential employees. Organizations typically have their method for identifying high potential employees; some include performance appraisals, recommendations from senior management, talent assessment, etc.
These programs generally involve several different activities such as personal assessments, mentoring, more exposure to senior executives, coaching, stretch assignments, etc. These programs generally involve extra time commitment from participants on top of their regular work schedule however – these employees often have high visibility with senior leadership. Participation in the program is generally voluntary but highly encouraged once selected. Not all employees are selected to be participants in a high-potential program. While participation in the program may not directly lead to a promotion, it is more likely that high potential employees will be put on a fast track to leadership positions. High-potential programs vary in length and may be temporary until the employee moves into a leadership position or may exist to some length regardless of position in the organization.

Re-introduction of what a high potential employee is

You have been designated as a high potential employee. As a reminder, this means that you have been chosen as an individual who shows higher than average potential to be in a leadership position. A high potential employee will go through a talent development program as previously mentioned. These programs range in activities such as personal assessments, mentoring, coaching, stretch assignments, etc. While participation in this program is voluntary, it is highly encouraged by your superiors. This program will be in addition to your current workload. In order to accurately answer the next set of questions, imagine you will be taking in part of this program at your current organization.

Non-designated

You have not been designated as a high potential employee. As a reminder, this means that you did not show higher than average potential to be in a leadership position. In order to
accurately answer the next set of questions, imagine that you will not have direct access to the resources provided in a high-potential program.

Debriefing

We are interested in identifying whether individuals would have the motivation to participate and complete a high-potential program while investigating their individual differences. As you may have gathered, I am focusing on individual desires to want to become a leader in the organization vs. not.

In regard to your high potential status, you were randomly assigned and the task itself was not an actual indicator of high potential.

Thank you for your participation. I will be happy to provide any information I can to help answer questions about this study.

Do you have any questions about the research or what I hope to accomplish?

If you have questions about your participation in the study, please contact Alexandria Brown at (aleandriabrown24@yahoo.com)

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at 815-753-8524.

Thank you for your participation!
APPENDIX F

MANAGERIAL ASPIRATIONS
Tharenou and Terry (1998) Desired Managerial Aspirations Scale

Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 (*completely false*) to 5 (*completely true*) as if you would if either:

a) in a higher position then you are currently if you are already in a managerial position
or
b) in a managerial position if you currently do not hold a managerial position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My aspirations are very high in regard to professional recognition and achievement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I have no ambition to advance to a management position (if a nonmanager) or a higher-level position (if a manager)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I would like to be in a position of greater influence in the department/organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. It would not bother me if I was to continue to do the same type of work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I do not wish to advance to a position of more responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I would like to move into a higher position within management over the next 5 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. For me the hassles of being in a higher position within management would outweigh the benefits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I would like to advance to a position where I can have an influence or a greater influence on policy decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A promotion to a higher position within management means more worries and should be avoided for that reason</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. It would be good to be in a position in which I could develop, manage, and coordinate the policies and activities of a work area (if you are a nonmanager) or a more substantial work area (if you are a manager)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
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<td>Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would like to get into jobs with higher levels of responsibility, and</td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>would not mind if I eventually moved out of work specifically related to</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>my area of technical expertise</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intend to apply for a higher position within management</td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My plans include attaining a higher position within management</td>
<td>Completely false</td>
<td>Partly false and partly true</td>
<td>Completely true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EFFICACY
Please rate your level of agreement with the following items on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I am confident that I can achieve the levels of leadership ability to which I aspire</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. I am certain I can perform new leadership approaches as well.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. I believe that I could become an exemplary leader</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<th>4. I am able to learn new leadership approaches quickly</th>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. I am confident that I will benefit from the leadership development I receive in my organization.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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APPENDIX H

BIG FIVE INVENTORY-2-SHORT
Big Five Inventory-2-Short (Soto & John, 2017)

Instructions: Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please rate your agreement for each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 3 = Neutral, 5 = Strongly agree)

1. Tends to be quiet
2. Is compassionate, has a soft heart
3. Tends to be disorganized
4. Worries a lot
5. Is fascinated by art, music, or literature
6. Is dominant, acts as a leader
7. Is sometimes rude to others
8. Has difficulty getting started on tasks
9. Tends to feel depressed, blue
10. Has little interest in abstract ideas
11. Is full of energy
12. Assumes the best about people
13. Is reliable, can always be counted on
14. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
15. Is original, comes up with new ideas
16. Is outgoing, sociable
17. Can be cold and uncaring
18. Keeps things neat and tidy
19. Is relaxed, handles stress well
20. Has few artistic interests
21. Prefers to have others take charge
22. Is respectful, treats others with respect
23. Is persistent, works until the task is finished
24. Feels secure, comfortable with self
25. Is complex, deep thinker
26. Is less active than other people
27. Tends to find fault with others
28. Can be somewhat careless
29. Is temperamental, gets emotional easily
30. Has little creativity.
APPENDIX I

EMPLOYABILITY MEASURE
## Employability Measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Characteristics</th>
<th>1 (not like me)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9 (most like me)</th>
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<tbody>
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Employment Characteristics
Personality
1 (not like me) 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (most like me)