

From Talent Management to Talent Climate: A Conceptual Measurement Framework for Organizations and a Future Agenda for 2030, 2040, and India@100



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Abstract

In the present situation, organizations started to continuously invest in employee recruitment and selection, career development, compensation and benefits, succession, and retention. But these practices do not always create a positive employee experience in the organization. Employees nowadays judge whether talent decisions are clear, fair, useful, and consistently applied in the organization. These shared judgments create a positive talent climate. The idea became more visible after King (2017) formally introduced the construct in literature. However, researchers still lack a widely accepted measure for general organizational use. This conceptual paper addresses that need. It traces talent management from the “war for talent” debate to current concerns about inclusion, wellbeing, skills, and artificial intelligence. It then defines talent climate and separates it from talent management practices, organizational culture, engagement, and employer branding.

The paper proposes twelve dimensions for measuring talent climate. They cover strategy, attraction, fairness, performance, learning, mentoring, careers, empowerment, rewards, wellbeing, belonging, and responsible talent technology. A 36-item draft instrument is presented for later empirical validation. The paper also explains scoring, aggregation, reliability, validity, and measurement invariance. Finally, it offers reasoned outlooks for 2030, 2040, and 2047. The 2047 outlook connects organizational talent climate with India’s centenary development goals. The paper argues that future talent advantage will depend on trusted systems that help many people grow. It will not depend only on selecting a few high performers.

Keywords: Talent climate, talent management, measurement framework, organizational climate, employee perceptions, future of work, India@100

1. Introduction

Corporate strategy is a central component of strategic management because it defines the firm's overall scope,

Talent became as a buzz word and central concern for any organization across sectors. The skilled employees influence innovation, service, resilience, and long-term growth for the organization. This concern increased after McKinsey described a global “war for talent” during the late 1990s (Chambers et al., 1998). In the early talent management practices, attracting and retaining high performing employees within the organization was the main focus. Later literature added pivotal positions, talent pools, succession, leadership development, and global mobility (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). This progress created a broad field, but it also created confusion. Researchers disagreed that what will be considered as talent, and what are all the practices explain and related to talent management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Dries, 2013).

Organizations often report talent practices through policy documents. Employees may experience and understand those policies differently. A development policy may exist, but access may remain unequal within the organization. A succession plan may exist, but its decisions may appear hidden with the decision

makers and job management. This difference separates talent management from talent climate. Talent management concerns towards intended systems and managerial actions. Talent climate concerns the meanings that employees attach to those systems (King, 2017; Schneider et al., 2013).

King (2017) formally introduced a strategic climate for talent. Researchers argued that employees read talent practices as signals about organizational priorities. Clear and consistent signals can create a strong talent climate. The concept gained more importance because talent systems increasingly shape employee identity, fairness, and career opportunity. Employee reactions depend mainly on interpretations, not only on policy design developed (Gelens et al., 2013; De Boeck et al., 2018).

Recent changes have made this issue more crucial. The new normal hybrid work, skill disruption, demographic change, and artificial intelligence now affect every stage of talent among employees. Employers now expect major skill changes before 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2025). These shifts require a broader measure. A useful scale should examine attraction, development, contribution, and continuity. It should also capture fairness, wellbeing, employee voice, and responsible technology.

This paper addresses three questions.

- i. How did talent management evolve into the idea of talent climate?
- ii. Which dimensions should measure talent climate across organizations?
- iii. How may talent climate change by 2030, 2040, and India@100 in 2047?

The paper makes three contributions. First, it offers a clear history of the construct. Second, it proposes a general measurement framework. Third, it connects talent climate with future workforce conditions and India's 2047 goals.

2. Conceptual Review Approach

This paper uses an integrative conceptual review. This method connects with established ideas and builds a new framework from existing literature. It is suitable when a field contains several related research streams (Snyder, 2019). The review examined foundational in the existing literature and recent work on talent management, organizational climate, HR system strength, justice, support, and scale development. It also examined future-work reports from recognized international and Indian institutions.

The researcher gave priority to highly cited journal articles, recent reviews, and original conceptual papers. The attached scale studies explained the measurement structure (Knies et al., 2020; Yagalakshmi & Supriya, 2020). The review was not designed as a systematic literature review. It did not estimate publication frequencies or effect sizes. Its purpose was to concept building, dimension selection, and measurement guidance. In this paper, the researcher done analysis with four stages. First, the history of talent management was arranged by period. Second, repeated concepts were grouped by meaning. Third, overlapping dimensions were combined. Finally, future dimensions were checked against workforce trends.

3. From Personnel Planning to Talent Management

3.1 Foundations before the "war for talent"

Talent management did not begin with one article. Its roots lie in manpower planning, succession, career management, leadership development, and strategic human resource management. These fields already addressed workforce quality and continuity. The resource-based view gave people a stronger strategic position. It argued that valuable and difficult to copy resources can support lasting advantage (Barney, 1991). Human knowledge and capability could meet these conditions. Strategic HRM then examined bundles of practices, rather than isolated activities. Recruitment, development, performance, and rewards were viewed as connected systems (Huselid, 1995; Wright et al., 2001). These foundations prepared the field for talent management. However, the word "talent" gave greater attention to scarcity, potential, critical roles, and competitive advantage.

3.2 The competitive era: 1997 to 2005

The phrase "war for talent" became influential after the McKinsey study in 1997. The published article argued that managerial talent would become scarce and strategically important (Chambers et al., 1998). Michaels et al. (2001) expanded this argument. They encouraged leaders to build a talent mindset, strong employee value propositions, and differentiated development. Talent became a senior management responsibility. This period had a clear message. Organizations needed better people than competitors. Recruitment, high-potential identification, leadership pipelines, and employee retention therefore received strong attention by the researchers. At the same time the approach also had its own limitations. It often treated talent as a small elite group inside the organization. It could create internal competition, status divisions, and narrow judgments about potential (Pfeffer, 2001; Swales, 2013).

3.3 The definition and strategy era: 2006 to 2012

Lewis and Heckman (2006) provided an important critique. They found three broad meanings of talent management. Some studies renamed normal HR practices. Others focused on talent pools. A third stream emphasized talent positions and flows. Their review showed that the field lacked with a clear theoretical base. It also showed that talent management needed a system-level perspective. This critique moved research beyond popular management language.

Collings and Mellahi (2009) then offered a strategic definition for talent management. They placed pivotal positions at the center. Organizations should identify critical roles, create talent pools, and build a differentiated HR architecture. Global talent management also developed during this period. Research examined multinational staffing, mobility, global leadership, and coordination across locations (Tarique & Schuler, 2010; Scullion et al., 2010). Cappelli (2008) questioned long-range talent forecasts. He proposed a demand-based approach that balanced internal development with external hiring. This view treated talent decisions as uncertain investments.

3.4 The employee and context era: 2013 to 2017

Research after 2013 examined the meaning of talent more closely. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) separated subjective and objective views. Talent could mean certain people, or valued qualities that people possess. Meyers et al. (2013) examined and identified that talent may be seen as distinctive or developable. These beliefs influence investment, selection, and employee opportunity.

Dries (2013) brought psychological questions into the field. Talent status can affect identity, motivation, expectations, and career behaviour. This view placed employee experience beside organizational strategy. Justice research showed that exclusive talent systems may create mixed reactions. Selected employees may feel valued. Others may feel ignored or unfairly

judged (Gelens et al., 2013; Swailes, 2013). Context also gained importance. Talent systems vary across countries, sectors, occupations, and organizational sizes. A single “best” system cannot suit every setting (Thunnissen et al., 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). King (2017) connected these developments through talent climate. The researcher argued that employees interpret connected talent practices as organizational signals. Those signals become meaningful when they are distinctive, consistent, agreed, and contextually relevant.

3.5 The responsible and future-ready era: 2018 to 2026

Later research questioned several common assumptions. Talent identification does not produce uniformly positive responses. Outcomes depend on communication, opportunity, fairness, support, and personal meaning (De Boeck et al., 2018). Responsible talent management expanded the field’s moral boundary. It asked whether differentiation respects dignity, equality, and social responsibility

(Swailes, 2020). Inclusive talent development also received renewed support (Kaliannan et al., 2023).

Digital tools changed talent decisions. Organizations began using analytics, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence across hiring, learning, performance, and retention. These tools can improve speed and personalization. However, technology can also increase opacity, surveillance, and bias. Employees therefore judge whether digital talent decisions are understandable and contestable. Trust has become part of talent effectiveness. The pandemic also changed employee expectations. Flexibility, wellbeing, meaningful work, and employability became central retention concerns. Future-proof talent management now requires resilience and continuous skill renewal (Van der Merwe et al., 2023). Current research therefore views talent management as a contextual and dynamic system. It connects organizational capability with employee opportunity, fairness, and sustainable work (Evans et al., 2025).

Period	Main question	Dominant talent focus	Key evidence
Before 1997	How can organizations plan and develop people?	Workforce planning, succession, careers, strategic HRM	Barney, 1991; Huselid, 1995
1997-2005	How can organizations win scarce talent?	Attraction, high potentials, leadership pipelines, retention	Chambers et al., 1998; Michaels et al., 2001
2006-2012	What is talent management, and how is it strategic?	Talent pools, pivotal positions, global talent, demand planning	Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Collings & Mellahi, 2009
2013-2017	How do meaning, context, and fairness shape talent outcomes?	Talent philosophies, employee reactions, context, climate	Dries, 2013; King, 2017
2018-2026	How can talent systems become inclusive, responsible, and future-ready?	Employee experience, wellbeing, skills, digital trust, sustainability	De Boeck et al., 2018; Swailes, 2020; Evans et al., 2025

4. The Emergence of Talent Climate

4.1 From intended practice to experienced climate

Senior leaders design talent strategies for the organization. HR teams convert those strategies into policies. Line managers deliver many daily talent practices. Employees then interpret what they actually experience. These four stages may not align. A policy may promise career opportunity, while managers repeatedly favour familiar employees. The intended system then differs from the experienced system.

HR attribution research explains this difference. Employees ask why practices exist and whose interests they serve. Their answers influence attitudes and behaviour (Nishii et al., 2008). Organizational climate research provides the next step. Climate represents shared meanings attached to

connected workplace experiences (Schneider et al., 2013). A specific climate forms around a valued organizational priority. A safety climate forms when employees see that safety is truly rewarded. A service climate forms when service receives consistent support. A talent climate forms when growth and contribution receive credible support.

4.2 Definition of talent climate

The author defines talent climate as follows: Talent climate is the shared employee perception that organizational systems consistently help people join, grow, contribute, and continue with fairness and dignity. This definition contains six choices. First, talent climate is a perception. Second, it becomes a climate when perceptions show sufficient agreement. Third, it concerns connected organizational systems.

Fourth, it covers the complete talent relationship. Fifth, it includes fairness and dignity. Finally, it allows inclusive and exclusive strategies, but requires transparent opportunity and responsible treatment. The definition extends King's (2017) strong talent system. It adds attraction, contribution, wellbeing, responsible technology, and workforce continuity. These additions reflect current organizational conditions.

4.3 What talent climate is not

Talent climate is not the same as talent management practices. Practices are actions and systems. Climate is the meaning employees draw from those actions. Talent climate also differs from organizational culture. Culture concerns deeper values and

assumptions. Climate concerns visible experiences and shared interpretations around talent (Schneider et al., 2013). It differs from employee engagement. Engagement describes an employee's energetic connection with work. Talent climate describes the surrounding conditions that may support engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006). It differs from employer branding. Employer branding communicates an employment promise to labour markets. Talent climate tests whether employees experience that promise after joining. It also differs from a talent management scorecard. A scorecard may track vacancies, learning hours, promotions, and turnover. Talent climate captures whether employees experience those activities as meaningful and fair.

Construct	Main focus	Typical evidence	Key difference from talent climate
Talent management practices	Policies and managerial actions	Policy presence and implementation	Climate concerns employee meaning
Organizational culture	Deep values and assumptions	Stories, norms, and shared beliefs	Talent climate has a specific talent focus
Employee engagement	Energy and involvement at work	Individual psychological state	Engagement is a likely outcome
Employer branding	External and internal employment promise	Reputation and brand communication	Climate tests the lived promise
Talent scorecard	Talent activity and outcome metrics	Hiring, promotion, learning, and turnover data	Climate measures shared perceptions

5. Theoretical Foundations

5.1 Resource-based view

The resource-based view explains why talent matters strategically. Knowledge, relationships, and coordinated capabilities can support advantage when competitors cannot easily copy them (Barney, 1991; Wright et al., 2001). Talent climate adds a practical condition. Human capability creates value when the organization helps people use and renew it. Possessing skilled employees alone is not enough.

5.2 HR system strength and attribution

Bowen and Ostroff (2004) argued that strong HR systems send clear signals. Distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus reduce uncertainty about expected behaviour. King (2017) applied this logic to talent. Talent practices should be visible, coherent, agreed by decision makers, and relevant to the context. Otherwise, employees receive mixed messages. Attribution theory explains employee interpretation. Employees judge why talent decisions occur. Fair and developmental reasons can build trust. Political or cost-saving reasons can weaken it (Nishii et al., 2008).

5.3 Social exchange and organizational support

Social exchange theory suggests that valued treatment creates a felt obligation to reciprocate.

Development, support, and recognition can therefore strengthen employee commitment and contribution. Perceived organizational support applies this logic to employment. Employees respond positively when the organization values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

5.4 Organizational justice

Talent systems distribute valuable opportunities. Selection, promotion, rewards, and development therefore raise justice questions. Employees judge outcomes, procedures, explanations, and interpersonal treatment. Fairness is especially important when organizations identify a small talent group. Clear criteria and respectful communication can reduce harmful reactions in the organization (Gelens et al., 2013; De Boeck et al., 2018).

5.5 Job demands, resources, and psychological safety

The job demands-resources model explains sustainable performance. Challenging work can support growth when employees also receive resources, autonomy, feedback, and recovery (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Psychological safety supports learning and employee voice. Employees learn faster when they can ask questions, admit mistakes, and offer ideas without fear (Edmondson, 1999).

5.6 Signalling and employer attractiveness

Applicants cannot fully observe and understand an organization before joining. They use reputation, recruitment behaviour, social responsibility, and employee stories as signals about the organization. These signals shape employer attractiveness. After joining, employees compare the promises done before joining with daily experience. A positive talent climate therefore connects external attraction with internal credibility.

6. A General Framework for Measuring Talent Climate

6.1 Framework structure

The proposed framework treats talent climate as a higher-order construct. It contains twelve related

dimensions. Each dimension captures a distinct part of the employee's talent experience. The dimensions fall across four connected domains. Direction provides clear signals. Access brings people into opportunity. Growth enables contribution. Continuity supports sustainable careers and retention. Talent intelligence connects all four domains. It helps organizations anticipate skills and personalize support. The framework remains transparent, fair, and human centered and designed for general organizational use. It avoids sector specific terms. Researchers may later test its structure across industries, countries, occupations, and employment forms.

Starting point		
Organizational talent strategy and leadership signals		
A. Direction	1. Strategic talent clarity and consistency	12.Talent intelligence and responsible technology A cross-cutting enabler supporting every talent stage.
B. Attraction and access	2. Employer purpose and attractiveness 3. Inclusive opportunity and fairness	
C. Development and contribution	4. Performance enablement and innovation 5. Mentoring and managerial support 6. Continuous learning and skill renewal 7. Career mobility and leadership continuity 8. Voice, autonomy, and psychological safety	
D. Retention and sustainability	9.Recognition and total rewards 10.Wellbeing and sustainable work 11.Belonging, trust, and workforce continuity	
E. Retention and sustainability	Recognition and total rewards Belonging, trust, and workforce continuity Wellbeing and sustainable work	
Employees interpret the visibility, fairness, consistency, and value of these signals.		
Shared organizational perception		
Talent climate		
The organization helps people join, grow, contribute, and continue with fairness and dignity. The climate becomes stronger when employees receive clear and consistent talent signals.		
Join	Grow	Contribute
		Continue

6.2 Dimension 1: Strategic talent clarity and consistency

Employees should understand what the organization means by talent. They should also understand how talent priorities support organizational goals. Repeated managerial actions should match stated priorities. This dimension reflects HR system strength. Clear, consistent, and agreed signals help employees form shared meanings (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; King, 2017).

6.3 Dimension 2: Employer purpose and attractiveness

People are attracted by more than salary. They also consider purpose, reputation, meaningful work, job quality, and social contribution. Existing employees influence these signals through their stories. This dimension links attraction with lived credibility. A

strong climate exists when the employment promise matches daily experience (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

6.4 Dimension 3: Inclusive opportunity and fairness
Talent opportunity should not depend on hidden sponsorship or personal similarity. Employees need fair access to selection, development, projects, and advancement. Inclusive development broadens the talent base. Transparent criteria also reduce harmful reactions to talent differentiation (Gelens et al., 2013; Kaliannan et al., 2023).

6.5 Dimension 4: Performance enablement and innovation

A talent climate should help employees perform, not merely judge them. People need role clarity, useful feedback, resources, technology, and permission to improve work. Performance systems should connect

present contribution with future growth. Support for experimentation strengthens innovation and adaptive performance (Pulakos et al., 2000; Knies et al., 2020).

6.6 Dimension 5: Continuous learning and skill renewal

Learning should be available before skills become obsolete. Employees need relevant learning, protected time, practice, and opportunities to apply new skills. This dimension has become critical because skill requirements are changing quickly. Employers now identify skill gaps as a major transformation barrier (World Economic Forum, 2025).

6.7 Dimension 6: Mentoring and managerial support

Line managers convert formal policies into personal experience. They allocate assignments, provide feedback, recommend employees, and create daily learning conditions. Mentoring employees provide guidance, confidence, networks, and career knowledge. Meta-analytic provided evidence by connecting mentoring with career benefits (Allen et al., 2004; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

6.8 Dimension 7: Career mobility and leadership continuity

Employees need visible pathways for movement. These pathways may include promotion, lateral roles, project assignments, international exposure, and specialist careers. Organizations also need leadership continuity. Succession should create prepared choices, rather than secret replacement lists. Mobility and succession therefore belong within one career system (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

6.9 Dimension 8: Voice, autonomy, and psychological safety

Talented contribution requires room to think and act. Employees should influence work decisions, question weak practices, and propose improvements. Voice remains weak when disagreement carries personal risk. Psychological safety therefore supports learning,

innovation, and responsible challenge (Edmondson, 1999).

6.10 Dimension 9: Recognition and total rewards

Employees compare their contribution with the rewards they receive. Pay matters, but so do recognition, growth, flexibility, benefits, and meaningful assignments. A positive climate does not require identical rewards. It requires understandable principles and credible links between contribution, opportunity, and recognition (Gelens et al., 2013).

6.11 Dimension 10: Wellbeing and sustainable work

Talent cannot remain productive under continuous exhaustion. Sustainable work protects physical health, mental health, recovery, and manageable work demands. Flexibility should support different life stages without career penalty. This dimension places wellbeing inside talent strategy, rather than treating it as a separate welfare activity.

6.12 Dimension 11: Belonging, trust, and workforce continuity

Retention begins with belonging and trust. Employees remain when they feel respected, connected, and able to imagine a future within the organization. Continuity also depends on knowledge transfer and succession. Strong retention does not mean preventing every employee from exit. It means sustaining capability through fair relationships and planned transitions.

6.13 Dimension 12: Talent intelligence and responsible technology

Talent technology can support skill mapping, internal mobility, personalized learning, and workforce planning. Artificial intelligence may improve speed and pattern recognition. However, employees need transparency, privacy, review, and human accountability. Responsible technology therefore becomes a climate dimension, not only an operational tool (International Labour Organization, 2023; Evans et al., 2025).

No.	Dimension	What employees should experience	Main evidence base
1	Strategic clarity and consistency	Clear talent priorities and aligned managerial action	Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; King, 2017
2	Employer purpose and attractiveness	A credible and meaningful employment promise	Beechler & Woodward, 2009
3	Inclusive opportunity and fairness	Fair access, transparent criteria, and respectful treatment	Gelens et al., 2013; Kaliannan et al., 2023
4	Performance enablement and innovation	Resources, feedback, challenge, and support for improvement	Pulakos et al., 2000
5	Continuous learning and skill renewal	Timely learning and chances to apply new skills	World Economic Forum, 2025

No.	Dimension	What employees should experience	Main evidence base
6	Mentoring and managerial support	Coaching, guidance, sponsorship, and developmental support	Allen et al., 2004; Knies et al., 2020
7	Career mobility and leadership continuity	Visible careers, internal movement, and credible succession	Collings & Mellahi, 2009
8	Voice, autonomy, and psychological safety	Freedom to contribute, question, and learn safely	Edmondson, 1999
9	Recognition and total rewards	Fair, clear, and meaningful recognition	Gelens et al., 2013
10	Wellbeing and sustainable work	Healthy demands, recovery, and flexible support	Bakker & Demerouti, 2007
11	Belonging, trust, and continuity	Respect, connection, confidence, and planned knowledge continuity	Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002
12	Talent intelligence and responsible technology	Useful analytics with fairness, privacy, and human review	ILO, 2023; Evans et al., 2025

7. How Talent Climate Should Be Measured

7.1 Measure employee experience, not policy presence

The primary respondent should be the employee. Senior leaders can describe intended policy, but employees report the experienced climate. Both sources may be compared during validation. Items should use an organizational referent. "In this organization" is better than "I receive." This wording encourages respondents to judge shared conditions, not only personal outcomes.

The proposed instrument uses a five-point agreement scale. Response choices range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A five-point scale is simple and familiar across workforces. The initial instrument contains 36 items. Each dimension has three items. Later studies may retain, revise, or remove items after rigorous testing.

7.2 Establish content and response quality

Scale development should begin with construct definition and item-domain mapping. Each item should express one idea. Double questions, technical terms, and sector-specific language should be avoided (Hinkin, 1998; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). An expert panel should assess relevance, clarity, and coverage. The panel should include HR scholars, psychometric experts, line managers, and employees from varied sectors.

Cognitive interviews should follow expert review. Employees should explain how they understand each item. Their answers can reveal hidden ambiguity, cultural meaning, and difficult wording. A small pilot should test completion time, missing responses, extreme scores, and item variation. Items with little variation may not distinguish strong and weak climates.

7.3 Validate the structure with separate samples

Exploratory factor analysis should examine the initial structure. Parallel analysis should guide factor retention. Oblique rotation is appropriate because the dimensions should relate. Confirmatory factor analysis should use a separate sample. It should compare correlated factors, a higher-order model, and plausible alternatives. Model choice should follow theory and evidence. Ordinal estimators are preferable for Likert items when distributions are non-normal. Researchers should report loadings, factor correlations, residuals, and established fit indices.

Internal consistency should not rely only on Cronbach's alpha. Omega and composite reliability should also be reported. Very high reliability may indicate repeated items rather than strong measurement. Convergent validity should compare talent climate with perceived organizational support, justice, and learning climate. Relationships should be positive, but not so high that constructs become identical.

Discriminant validity should compare talent climate with engagement, employer attractiveness, and organizational culture. Talent climate should remain empirically distinct from these related constructs. Criterion validity should examine attraction, internal mobility, skill growth, innovation, commitment, wellbeing, and intention to stay. Objective indicators may include vacancy acceptance, promotion, and regretted turnover. Predictive validity requires time separation. Talent climate should be measured before later employee and organizational outcomes. This approach reduces claims based only on simultaneous correlations.

7.4 Test climate as a shared construct

Talent climate begins as an individual perception. It becomes a team or organizational climate only when employees show sufficient agreement. Researchers should report within-group agreement and intraclass correlations. These tests show whether aggregation is justified. A simple organizational average is not enough (Bliese, 2000).

Climate level and climate strength should both be examined. Climate level is the average score. Climate strength reflects the amount of agreement among employees. Two organizations may have the same average score. One may have strong agreement, while the other has divided experiences. The second organization has a weaker and less stable climate. Researchers should collect responses from enough teams and organizations for multilevel analysis. Employees are nested within managers, units, locations, and organizations.

7.5 Test fairness across groups and contexts

A general scale must work similarly across groups. Measurement invariance should be tested across gender, age, career level, employment type, language, sector, and country. The scale should also be tested across inclusive and exclusive talent philosophies. Some items may behave differently when "talent" means everyone or a selected group. Translation should use forward translation, independent back-translation, and cognitive interviews. Literal translation alone cannot preserve workplace meaning.

7.6 Score and interpret with care

Each dimension score should equal the mean of its valid items. Researchers should require at least two

completed items within each three-item dimension. An overall score should be calculated only when the higher-order structure receives support. Until then, the twelve-dimension scores provide the safer interpretation. No fixed dimension weights should be imposed before validation. Equal weights are transparent. Evidence-based weights may later be developed for specific predictive purposes. Organizations should compare scores across time, units, and relevant benchmarks. Small differences should not be treated as meaningful without confidence intervals or practical effect sizes. Results should guide conversation, not employee ranking. Talent climate data should never identify or punish individual respondents. Confidentiality supports honest reporting.

7.7 Combine perceptions with organizational evidence

Climate scores show how systems are experienced. Operational measures show what happens. Both forms of evidence are needed for responsible diagnosis. Attraction evidence may include applicant quality, offer acceptance, and new-hire expectations. Development evidence may include learning access, skill use, internal movement, and succession readiness. Retention evidence may include wellbeing, regretted turnover, career exits, and knowledge transfer. Technology evidence may include audit findings, appeal rates, and detected bias. A practice should not be judged successful only because participation is high. Participation can be compulsory. Employee meaning and later outcomes remain important.

Measurement stage	Main task	Minimum evidence expected
Construct design	Define the domain and map items	Clear definitions and item coverage
Content review	Use experts and cognitive interviews	Relevance, clarity, and cultural meaning
Pilot testing	Test response quality	Variation, missingness, timing, and comprehension
Exploratory testing	Examine possible dimensions	Parallel analysis and interpretable loadings
Confirmatory testing	Compare measurement models	Fit, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity
Multilevel testing	Justify climate aggregation	Agreement and intraclass correlations
Invariance testing	Compare groups and contexts	Configural, metric, and scalar evidence
Predictive testing	Link climate with later outcomes	Longitudinal and multi-source evidence

8. Conceptual Propositions

The framework supports several testable propositions. These propositions connect talent system design with employee interpretation and organizational outcomes.

Proposition 1. Clear and consistent talent signals will increase agreement about the organization's talent priorities. This proposition follows HR system strength theory. Employees form stronger shared meanings when leaders and managers send aligned signals (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; King, 2017).

Proposition 2. Inclusive opportunity and procedural fairness will strengthen employer attractiveness, belonging, and trust. Fair access improves both actual opportunity and the meaning attached to talent decisions. It may also reduce negative reactions among employees outside formal talent pools (Gelens et al., 2013).

Proposition 3. Learning, mentoring, and career mobility will increase skill renewal and perceived employability. Development becomes more credible when learning connects with work, coaching, and movement. Training without application may produce weak climate effects.

Proposition 4. Managerial support will strengthen the relationship between formal talent practices and experienced talent climate. Line managers deliver many practices and explain their purpose. Their behaviour can strengthen or weaken the intended system (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Knies et al., 2020).

Proposition 5. Voice, autonomy, and psychological safety will strengthen innovative contribution. Employees contribute more fully when they can question routines and test ideas. Fear can silence valuable knowledge, even among highly skilled people (Edmondson, 1999).

Proposition 6. Fair rewards and sustainable work will reduce harmful turnover through support and trust. Retention will not depend on rewards alone. It will depend on whether employees view the full employment relationship as valuable and sustainable (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Proposition 7. Responsible talent technology will strengthen trust when employees understand decisions and retain access to human review. Opaque technology may weaken climate, even when it improves speed. Transparency and accountability should therefore shape employee reactions to talent analytics.

Proposition 8. Talent climate will predict employee outcomes beyond the reported presence of talent practices. This proposition captures the paper's central argument. Practice presence matters, but experienced meaning should explain additional variation in employee behaviour.

9. Talent Climate in 2030, 2040, and 2047

Future statements should not be presented as certain facts. They are reasoned outlooks based on current

workforce, technology, demographic, and sustainability signals.

9.1 Talent climate in 2030: the skills and trust climate
By 2030, skill disruption will shape most talent decisions. The World Economic Forum expects many job skills to change before that date. AI, data, cybersecurity, creativity, resilience, and lifelong learning will gain importance (World Economic Forum, 2025). Employees will judge organizations by their reskilling promise. A positive climate will provide learning before displacement. It will also connect new skills with real work and career movement.

AI will support recruitment, learning, performance, and workforce planning. Employees will ask clear questions. What data were used? Can a decision be explained? Who remains accountable? Internal talent marketplaces will become more common. Work may be matched through skills and projects, rather than only through fixed jobs. Access and visibility will become important climate signals. Hybrid work will remain uneven across occupations. Fairness will require job-sensitive flexibility, not identical arrangements. Organizations must avoid creating a hidden status gap between remote and frontline employees. The leading 2030 talent climate will therefore combine skills, mobility, trust, and human review. Development speed will matter, but perceived fairness will decide employee acceptance.

9.2 Talent climate in 2040: the human-AI talent ecosystem

By 2040, many organizations may manage work as changing bundles of tasks and skills. Careers may move across roles, projects, platforms, and partner organizations. Artificial intelligence may act as a work partner, coach, and decision aid. Talent advantage will depend on productive human-AI combinations, not simple labour replacement.

Employees may carry verified skill records across organizations. Learning credentials may become smaller, continuous, and portable. Internal career systems will need to recognize learning from several sources. Longer working lives may increase age diversity. Talent systems will need repeated reskilling, phased careers, caregiving support, and knowledge exchange across generations.

Climate risks will also increase. Continuous data collection may feel like surveillance. Algorithmic recommendations may narrow career choices. Platform work may weaken belonging and mutual obligation. A positive 2040 climate will protect agency. Employees should influence how technology shapes their work. Organizations should provide appeal, explanation, privacy, and routes for human judgment. The 2040 climate will therefore resemble an ecosystem. Talent will move across internal and external boundaries. Trust, portability, and shared standards will hold the ecosystem together.

9.3 Talent climate in 2047: India@100 and capability for all

India will complete one hundred years of independence in 2047. The centenary offers a meaningful point for examining national and organizational capability. India's development goals place importance on human capital, future-ready skills, productive employment, wellbeing, equity, and dignity. These priorities appear in recent NITI Aayog initiatives (NITI Aayog, 2025, 2026).

By 2047, India may hold one of the world's largest and most diverse talent ecosystems. Its advantage will depend on converting population scale into broad capability. Organizations will need to reach talent beyond major cities. Tier-two cities, rural districts, women returning to work, persons with disabilities, and experienced older workers will remain important talent sources. Digital public infrastructure may connect education, credentials, work, entrepreneurship, and social protection. Organizational talent systems could use these connections while protecting consent and privacy. Language inclusion will matter. AI-enabled

translation may widen access to learning and skilled work. However, local language support must preserve meaning and avoid new digital barriers. India's 2047 talent climate should also support green and socially useful work. Climate adaptation, care, health, manufacturing, infrastructure, education, and frontier technology will require different talent pathways.

The centenary climate should move beyond the "best and brightest" idea. It should help more people become capable, visible, mobile, and trusted contributors. This change does not remove excellence. It creates a larger and fairer base from which excellence can emerge. Inclusive systems can still recognize exceptional contribution. The desired 2047 climate can be described through five promises. Opportunity should be visible. Skills should remain renewable. Technology should remain accountable. Work should remain dignified. Contribution should support national progress.

Horizon	Dominant talent question	Expected climate features	Main measurement emphasis
2030	Can employees renew skills and trust AI-supported decisions?	Rapid reskilling, internal mobility, hybrid fairness, explainable AI	Skill access, mobility, transparency, and human review
2040	Can people thrive within fluid human-AI work ecosystems?	Portable skills, project careers, longer working lives, shared ecosystems	Agency, portability, privacy, ecosystem belonging, and adaptability
2047	Can India turn population diversity into broad and dignified capability?	Inclusive opportunity, regional access, multilingual learning, green skills, digital public infrastructure	Equity, dignity, national capability, responsible technology, and sustainable work

10. An India@100 Talent Climate Agenda

The 2047 outlook needs action before the centenary year. Organizations, educators, government, and professional bodies should build shared workforce foundations.

10.1 Build skill visibility

Organizations should maintain current skill information and employee aspirations. Skill profiles should support development, not permanent labels. Employees should be able to review and correct their records. National and sector skill standards can improve movement across education and work. Portable evidence can help smaller employers recognize capability.

10.2 Expand opportunity across geography

Talent should not be defined through location alone. Distributed work, regional centers, apprenticeships, and local learning partnerships can widen access. Regional access also supports inclusion and resilience. It can reduce forced migration while strengthening local economic capability.

10.3 Strengthen the education-to-work bridge

Organizations should co-create curricula, internships, apprenticeships, and applied projects. Students need evidence of capability, not only course completion. Faculty and managers should also share current knowledge. Stronger institutional links can shorten the distance between learning and productive work.

10.4 Support women across career stages

Women's talent participation requires safe work, fair progression, flexible careers, care support, and return pathways. These practices should not carry hidden promotion penalties. The issue is both social and strategic. India cannot build full national capability while major talent groups face avoidable barriers.

10.5 Protect dignity in digital talent systems

Employees should know when AI influences a decision. They should understand the purpose, important data, and available review process. Independent audits should examine bias, privacy, security, and unintended harm. Efficiency cannot replace accountability.

10.6 Connect talent with sustainable development

Talent systems should prepare people for green transition, care work, public services, advanced manufacturing, and digital infrastructure. These areas combine national need with future employment. Organizations should measure whether development reaches vulnerable employees during transition. Reskilling after displacement is often too late.

11. Discussion

This paper began with a simple problem. Talent practices exist in many organizations, but employees do not always experience a supportive talent environment. The talent climate concept explains this gap. Employees interpret connected practices, leadership behaviour, and career outcomes. Their shared interpretations influence whether talent strategy becomes credible.

The history of talent management shows a steady widening of focus. The field moved from scarcity and elite selection toward context, fairness, inclusion, wellbeing, and future skills. The proposed twelve dimensions reflect this development. They retain attraction, development, and retention. They also add strategy, contribution, justice, safety, and responsible technology.

This framework does not assume that every employee must receive the same outcome. It requires fair access, clear criteria, respectful treatment, and credible development. The framework also treats managers as climate makers. Employees usually experience talent policy through assignment, feedback, sponsorship, and everyday decisions. Manager behaviour should therefore be measured beside HR policy.

Another contribution is the distinction between climate level and climate strength. A positive average can hide unequal experiences. Agreement patterns can reveal whether opportunity is shared or concentrated. The future outlook extends the construct beyond current practices. By 2030, skill renewal and AI trust should become central. By 2040, agency within talent ecosystems should matter more. By 2047, Indian organizations may need to connect talent climate with national capability. Regional access, inclusion, dignity, and sustainable skills will become strategic concerns.

12. Practical Implications

Organizations can use the framework as a diagnostic map. The twelve dimensions scores can show where the talent promise loses credibility. Low strategic clarity suggests mixed leadership messages. Low fairness suggests unequal access or unexplained decisions. Low mobility suggests that learning does not lead to opportunity. Leaders should examine score gaps across groups and units. A strong overall score can hide weak experiences among frontline employees, women, contract workers, or regional teams. Talent climate should be reviewed with operational evidence. A low retention score may

reflect wellbeing, careers, rewards, leadership, or external labour demand. One response will not solve every cause.

Managers should receive local results and development support. They should not receive employee identities. Confidentiality is necessary for honest climate assessment. Boards can review talent climate beside business risk. Weak skill renewal, poor succession, and low trust can limit strategy execution. These are not only HR concerns.

13. Limitations and Research Agenda

This paper is conceptual. The twelve dimensions and 36 items require empirical testing. Their number and wording may change after content review and factor analysis. The framework is intentionally broad. Some sectors may require additional modules. Healthcare may need professional credential climate. Universities may need academic career and research support. Future research should test whether the dimensions form one higher-order construct. A network model may also be possible. Some dimensions may influence others without one common factor. Longitudinal research should examine how talent climate changes after major events. Leadership change, mergers, technology adoption, and restructuring may alter employee interpretations quickly.

Multilevel research should compare intended, enacted, and experienced systems. Data should come from executives, HR leaders, managers, and employees. Researchers should also test whether inclusive and exclusive systems create different climate patterns. Fairness may depend on both principles and personal position (Dries & Kase, 2023). The future horizons remain scenarios. Technology, policy, climate, and economic shocks may change their timing. Repeated reviews should update the framework.

14. Conclusion

Talent management began as a response to competitive scarcity. It later developed into a strategic system for pivotal positions, talent pools, development, and continuity. The field then learned an important lesson. A well-designed practice has limited value when employees interpret it as unclear, unfair, or inaccessible. Talent climate captures that interpretation. It asks whether people experience a consistent environment for joining, growing, contributing, and continuing with dignity. The proposed framework offers twelve dimensions and a clear validation path. It can support research across organizations, sectors, and countries. The future will make talent climate more important, skills will change faster and technology will influence more decisions. Careers will cross more boundaries. India's centenary adds a larger purpose. The strongest organizations in 2047 should not only find talent, they should create conditions where diverse people can become talent.

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