RETENTION OF HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYEES AT MIDDLE MANAGEMENT LEVEL WITHIN A PLATINUM MINING ENTITY – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

LEHLOGONOLO VINOLIAH PATIENCE HADEBE

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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in the subject of

INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

at the

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SUPERVISOR: MS CEBILE TEBELE

01 November 2021

DECLARATION

I Lehlogonolo Vinoliah Patience Hadebe, student number 49056921, declare that this dissertation entitled "**Retention of high performing employees at middle management level within a platinum mining entity – an exploratory study**", is my own work and that all the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. The APA 7th edition guidelines for referencing style were applied in the dissertation.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality as verified by my supervisor.

I further declare that the study has been carried out in strict accordance with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (Unisa). I took great care that the research was conducted with the highest integrity, taking into account Unisa's Policy for Infringement and Plagiarism.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination for another qualification or at any other higher education institution

I further declare that the study has been carried out strictly in accordance with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (UNISA). I further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at UNISA 2019CEMS/IOP_018. Permission was also obtained from the participating organisations to conduct the research.

LPHadebe   1 November 2021

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Lehlogonolo Vinoliah Patience Hadebe   Date

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SUMMARY

RETENTION OF HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYEES AT MIDDLE MANAGEMENT LEVEL WITHIN A PLATINUM MINING ENTITY – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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SUPERVISOR	**:**	**Ms C Tebele**
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The purpose of the study was to explore the various retention factors that are key in retaining high-performing employees at middle management level in a mining company. High-performing employees are assets to most organisations, as they contribute towards the immediate success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the business. Therefore, it is important for organisations to always introduce and update retention strategies that are aligned with the needs of their high-performing employees as a strategy to keep them in the organisation. The study was exploratory and qualitative in nature, conducted within the constructivism paradigm. A purposeful sample consisting of five high-performing employees from a platinum mining entity was selected to participate in the research study. In-depth interviews were conducted, and data was analysed using content analysis. The study findings revealed that intrinsic factors related to the job itself which includes the challenging work responsibilities, sense of personal achievement, career advancement and growth, promotion opportunities, recognition for a job well done and responsibilities are considered as important by the high-performing employees who participated in the study to remain with the organisation. In addition, the study findings also indicated that external factors outside the job itself such as job security, salary, work conditions and interpersonal relationships also influence the decision of the high-performing employees to remain with the organisation.

The study findings revealed that both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors are important for high-performing employees in middle management level to remain with the organisation. The results were integrated with literature and theory to support the findings from the study. Recommendations were made to the organisation on the retention factors identified in the study that may help to retain their high-performing employees within the middle management level. Recommendations for future research were also made.

OPSOMMING

RETENSIE VAN TOPPRESTERENDE WERKNEMERS OP MIDDELBESTUURSVLAK BY 'N PLATINUMMYN-ENTITEIT – 'N NAVORSINGSTUDIE

Deur

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Die doel van die studie was om die onderskeie retensiefaktore te ondersoek wat belangrik is in die retensie van toppresterende werknemers op middelbestuursvlak in 'n mynmaatskappy. Toppresterende werknemers is 'n bate vir die meeste organisasies aangesien hulle tot die onmiddellike sukses, volhoubaarheid en mededingendheid van die besigheid bydra. Dit is dus belangrik vir organisasies om gedurig retensiestrategieë in te stel en by te werk wat in ooreenstemming is met die behoeftes van hul toppresterende werknemers ten einde sodanige werknemers vir die organisasie te behou. Die studie was ondersoekend en kwalitatief en binne die konstruktivismeparadigma uitgevoer. 'n Doelbewuste steekproef wat bestaan het uit vyf toppresterende werknemers van 'n platinummyn-entiteit, is gekies om aan die navorsingstudie deel te neem. Deurtastende onderhoude is gevoer en data is deur middel van inhoudsanalise ontleed. Die bevindinge van die studie het aan die lig gebring dat intrinsieke faktore wat met die werk self verband hou deur die toppresterende werknemers wat aan die studie deelgeneem het, as belangrik geag word in hul besluit om in die organisasie aan te bly. Hierdie faktore sluit in, uitdagende werkverantwoordelikhede, 'n gevoel van persoonlike prestasie, beroepsvooruitgang en -groei, bevorderingsmoontlikhede, erkenning vir goeie werk en verantwoordelikhede. Bykomend hiertoe, het die bevindinge van die studie ook aangedui dat eksterne faktore los van die werk self, soos werksekerheid, salaris, werksomstandighede en interpersoonlike verhoudinge ook die besluit van toppresterende werknemers om in 'n organisasie aan te bly, beïnvloed. Die bevindinge van die studie het aan die lig gebring dat beide intrinsieke en ekstrinsieke faktore belangrik is vir toppresterende werknemers op middelbestuursvlak om in die organisasie aan te bly. Die resultate is met literatuur en teorie geïntegreer om die bevindinge van die studie te steun.

Aanbevelings is aan die organisasie gemaak ten opsigte van die retensiefaktore wat deur die studie geïdentifiseer is, en wat dalk kan help om hul toppresterende werknemers op middelbestuursvlak te behou. Aanbevelings is ook ten opsigte van toekomstige navorsing gemaak.

SLEUTELWOORDE

Hoëprestasiewerknemers, mynmaatskappy, intrinsieke en ekstrinsieke faktore, retensiefaktore, middelbestuur.

KAKARETŠO

GO TŠWELA PELE GO THWALA BAŠOMI BAO BA ŠOMAGO KA MAATLA MAEMONG A BOLAODI A BOGARENG KA KHAMPHANING YA MOEPO WA PHOLATHINAMO – DINYAKIŠIŠO TŠA KUTOLLO

ka

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MOHLAHLI WA DINYAKIŠIŠO: Mdi C Tebele

LEFAPHA: Industrial and Organisational Psychology (*Dithutamahlale tša Menagano ka Diintastering le ka Dikhamphaning*)

KGRATA: MCom (Industrial and Organisational Psychology)

Maikemišetšo a dinyakišišo tše e bile go utolla mabaka a mehutahuta a go tšwela pele go thwala bašomi bao ba šomago ka maatla maemong a bolaodi a bogareng ka khamphaning ya moepo. Bašomi bao ba šomago ka maatla ke methopo ye bohlokwa go dikhamphani tše ntši ka ge ba tsenya letsogo go katlego ya ka pela ya khamphani, go go tšwela pele go ya go ile le go bokgoni bja kgwebo. Ka fao, go bohlokwa gore dikhamphani di dule di tsebagatša le go mpshafatša maano a go tšwela pele go thwala bašomi ao a sepelelanago le dinyakwa tša bašomi bao ba šomago ka maatla gore ba dule ba le ka khamphaning yeo. Dinyakišišo tše di bile tša kutollo le tša boleng ebile di dirilwe ka gare ga seemo sa kamano ya dikgopolo. Sampole ye e nago le maikemišetšo yeo e nago le bašomi ba bahlano bao ba šomago ka maatla go tšwa go khamphani ya moepo wa pholathinamo e kgethilwe gore e kgathe tema ka dinyakišišong. Dipoledišano tšeo di tsenelentšego di dirilwe gomme tshedimošo e sekasekilwe ka go šomišwa ga tshekatsheko ya diteng. Dikutollo tša dinyakišišo di utollotše gore mabaka a ka gare ao a amanago le mošomo ka bowona, tšeo di akaretšago maikarabelo a mošomo ao a lego boima, maikutlo a phihlelelo, go gatela pele ka mošomong le tlhatlošo, dibaka tša tlhatlošo, go lebogišwa ge mošomo o dirilwe gabotse le maikarabelo, di bonwa bjalo ka dilo tše bohlokwa ke bašomi bao ba šomago ka maatla bao ba kgathilego tema ka dinyakišišong gore ba dule ba šoma ka khamphaning. Godimo ga fao, dikutollo tša dinyakišišo di laeditše gore mabaka a ka ntle ga mošomo ka bowona, a go swana le tšhireletšego ya mošomo, moputso, maemo a ka mošomong le dikamano le batho, le ona a huetša sepheto sa bašomi bao ba šomago ka maatla go tšwela pele go šoma ka khamphaning. Dikutollo tša dinyakišišo di utollotše gore bobedi mabaka a ka gare le a ka ntle a bohlokwa go bašomi bao ba šomago

ka maatla maemong a bolaodi a bogareng go tšwela pele go šoma ka khamphaning. Dipoelo tša dinyakišišo di ile tša kopanywa le dingwalwa le teori go thekga dikutollo tša dinyakišišo. Ditšhišinyo di dirilwe go khamphani mabapi le gore bašomi ba tšwele go šoma ka khamphaning gomme di ditšhišinyo tše di ka thuša dikhamphani gore bašomi ba tšona bao ba šomago ka maatla ba bolaodi bja magareng ba tšwele pele go šoma ka fao khamphaning. Ditšhišinyo go dinyakišišo tša ka moso le tšona di dirilwe.

MANTŠU A BOHLOKWA

Bašomi bao ba šomago ka maatla, khamphani ya moepo, mabaka a ka gare le a ka ntle, mabaka a go tšwela pele ka mošomong, bolaodi bja bogareng.

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

This research focuses on exploring and understanding the importance of retention strategies of high-performing employees at middle management level within a mining entity. In this chapter, the background to and motivation for the study are discussed. The paradigms underpinning and applicable theories forming the actual boundary of the research are mentioned. Following this, the problem statement, research question and research aims are formulated. This is followed by a discussion of the research design, which is presented detailing the methodology, recording of data, data analysis techniques, and ethical consideration, with reference to the various phases of the research process. Finally, the chapter layout of the dissertation is provided.

1.1   BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The ability of organisations to retain high-performing employees is becoming one of the most important focus areas in the world of work, as various companies including mining companies face skills shortages (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018). Retaining employees who possess specific skills, experience, and knowledge appears to be critical to secure the sustainability and survival of organisations competing in today's national and international market, particularly in the professional and management level (Potgieter et al., 2018; Uitzinger et al., 2018). Failure of an employer to retain talented employees often results in them being easily head-hunted and attracted to better offers made the by competitors (Smit et al., 2015).

The aim of every organisation in today's rapidly changing environment is to be successful and achieve long-term progress. In this regard, research indicates that the modern markets and business environments are characterised by turbulence and unpredictable changes, which require businesses to be flexible, adaptable, and innovative in order to obtain competitiveness and survive in the market (Peric et al., 2018). This includes recruiting and retaining highly skilled employees who effectively contributes to the success of the business. Masibigiri and Nienaber (2011) points out that the market is competing aggressively for high performing employees by offering better opportunities and salaries to attract them, thereby providing more opportunities for high-performing and skilled employees, both nationally and internationally. In addition, unfavourable working conditions and unattractive remuneration and benefits have in most industries, especially in critical skills areas led to skills migration nationally and internationally (Kossivi et al., 2016; Schelchter et al., 2014). Kgoedi and Pillay (2018) found that employees tend to compare details of their incentives such as salaries as to other job requirements such as qualifications, skills, and experience. Research conducted in various

South African industries revealed that the best and brightest employees are being constantly poached by competitor organisations and multinational organisations, hence the need to focus on retention strategies (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Mabaso et al., 2021; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Schlechter, 2014).

Recruitment refers to a process of attracting potential applicants, who meet the minimum requirements for a position to apply, while selection is the process of formulating fair and relevant assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the applicants with the intention to hire (Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Ramson et al., 2016). Organisations invest in this process so as to ensure that potential employees are recruited with the intention to increase profit and form part of the value-adding activities that will add to the competitive advantage over other businesses (Kurdi et al., 2020; Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021; Roberts-Lombard, 2010). Employees who are normally sourced and successful in the recruitment process are those with the correct qualifications, experience, and competencies for the job. Barber (1998) states that the recruitment process does not end with sourcing successful applicants, but then again, the organisation ought to also be concerned with retaining and maintaining the interest of successful applicants, and influencing their job choice decisions on a long-term basis. Research conducted by Janse van Rensburg and Roodt (2009) indicates that the need for development of post-recruitment procedures such as retention and on-boarding strategies is likely to increase retention, which will enhance the company's image as employer of choice. The effective development of retention strategies for high-performing employees that exceed minimum performance expectation is likely to enhance the employee's decision to stay, and reduce their intention to leave the organisation (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Nayak et al., 2021).

Employee turnover has become one of the key concerns for organisations around the world as it places them at risk of losing business knowledge and sustainability (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017; Schlechter et al., 2016). Excessive employee turnover seems to be a key barrier to high-quality service in most organisations. Kgomo and Swarts (2010) assert that employee turnover tends to result in unbudgeted expenses that are related to employee replacements, loss of knowledgeable, highly-skilled employees, and loss of production. Morgan (2019) supports this view by indicating that employee turnover, especially voluntary employee turnover, tends to be a concern for most organisations, due to the potential for disruptions in service and associated costs. Schlechter et al. (2016) report that employee turnover presents the biggest threat to business sustainability in South Africa. The voluntary turnover normally occurs when high-performing employees are unhappy at the workplace and find that certain measures are not put in place by the organisation to ensure that their needs are being met (Morgan, 2019; Schlechter et al., 2016). Hence, there is a need to put the

effective retention strategies in place to keep such employees from leaving the organisation before the desired time. Shikweni et al. (2019) support this view by indicating that the recent trend of high employee turnover and exits of high-performing, skilled and experienced employees in organisations is due to various reasons, which may include employees not being happy with the kind of work that they do, lack of training and development, lack of proper career path, and unfair performance appraisals, amongst others.

Losing employees who demonstrate a consistently level of high performance does not only involve a loss of individual skill, but might also reduce the productivity of an entire work unit and cause stress among remaining team members due to extra work loads (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Kurdi et al., 2020). Hence, it is critical in today's competitive business environment that organisations need to prioritise more on retention, gain commitment from their employees, and manage employee turnover. Schlechter et al. (2016) point out that in order for organisations to remain competitive, they need to ensure that they retain their high-performing employees in an environment where there is a skills shortage. Retention refers to efforts made by an organisation to create and maintain a working environment that support the current high-performing employees to remain with the organisation, rather than making it difficult for employees who wish to leave (Ramson, et al., 2016).

Johennesse and Chou (2017) define retention as those initiatives taken by management to keep the employees that they want to keep, and not losing them for whatever reason, especially to competitors. These employees are normally those identified as high-performing skilled employees, who hold positions that are critical for the sustainability and success of the business. The retention of valuable, high-performing employees refers to when an organisation tries to understand the needs of its employees, considers the level of engagement of employees, recognition programmes and other measures that contribute to the retention of the identified employees in the organisation, and examines how these retention factors differ for high performers and those at different levels in the organisation (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Schlechter et al., 2016; Strydom et al., 2014). The retention of the high-performing employee's results in reduced labour costs involved in recruiting and training new employees and increases the competitive advantage of the organisation. Dhanpat et al. (2018) view these retention strategies as efforts or measures implemented and executed by an organisation to keep its high performing employees by being proactive and introducing innovative human resource practices that can be used as strategies to retain such employee. These retention strategies may include, amongst others: offering a great work environment that is safe and healthy; competitive remuneration and benefits either with internal or external colleagues and allowing career development in various business

areas (Dhanpat et al., 2018). The retention strategies may either be intrinsic or extrinsic factors.

Döckel (2003) found that there are six retention factors relevant to the South African context that may facilitate the employee's decision to leave or stay in an organisation namely: compensation, work-life balance, job characteristics, career opportunities, supervisor support, and training and development opportunities. Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) point out that factors that can be used to retain high-performing employees include: supportive leadership, a clear organisational mission and purpose, developmental opportunities, meaningful work, and the physical work environment. In addition to this, some of the retention factors that might also be considered valuable by high-performing skilled employees, especially at middle management level include: equity and enablement for high performance; a liberated and empowered culture; interactive and effective communication; performance management; career progression; and leadership development (Gaylard et al., 2005; Gupta et al., 2015; Kossivi, 2016; Mabaso et al., 2021). Tadesse (2018) supports this view by indicating that in order to retain the current high performing employees within the organisation, it is important to focus on influential factors such as work environment, effective communication, remuneration and benefits, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. Research indicates that the above-stated retention factors are perceived as important for employees to stay with an organisation and need to be taken into consideration when designing a retention policy to keep the best talent from leaving the organisation (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Mabaso et al., 2021).

Despite this, high-performing employees are at times overlooked as key assets in the organisation and may as a results become dissatisfied and disengaged from their current employer and begin to look for new and better opportunities where they feel more valued (Hughes & Rog, 2008; Nayak et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021). Hence, retention strategies aimed at keeping these employees satisfied and engaged are needed to retain them for the success of the organisation. Mohlala et al. (2012) found that the non-existence of employee retention strategies to which management can refer when recruiting and retaining employees in critical roles can lead to a high turnover rate, and disrupt the daily operations of the organisation. It is of importance that when the retention strategies are being drafted and implemented, the employer must consider the needs of high-performing employees in order to make sure that their needs are being met. The focus on retention strategies will prevent the high-performing employees from leaving the organisation, and in return, assist in achieving a competitive

advantage in the market. This needs to be constantly evaluated as the employees requests and preferences change from time to time (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021).

Additionally, the retention of highperforming employees at middle management level remains a primary concern for many organisations, as it has proven to strengthen the organisation competitiveness and sustainability (Hausknecht et al., 2009; Munsamy et al., 2009; Stafford, 2018). Skilled and knowledgeable employees, particularly in management positions, provide the competitive advantage that organisations depend on for future success, and may be perceived to be more important than the physical assets of most organisation (Khoele & Daya, 2014; Stafford, 2018). The current study focuses on the retention strategies that are key to retaining high performing employees at middle management level, who demonstrate a consistently high level of performance and contribute to the success of the daily operations of the business. Pertinent to the current study are high-performing employees in the platinum mining organisation, considering that retention of certain skills and knowledge is important to the daily operations and sustainability in this heavily regulated industry.

Amushila and Bussin (2021) state that employees who are identified as high performers and considered valuable are those who are normally targeted for retention, and encouraged to remain with the organisation. McKeown (2002) defines high-performing employees as the types of staff members who add value, contributing to the overall success of the organisation and inspiring others. Mey et al. (2021) indicate that a high performing employee is the individual who is highly skilled, engaged and contributes towards the success of the organisation. McKinsey and Company (2001) further describe a high-performing employee as someone who demonstrates consistent levels of high performance, is capable of lateral or upward movement, and has reached the potential to move into a management of supervisory role. For this study, the high-performing employee at middle management level is identified as the middle manager, who has the ability, skill, and knowledge to successfully carry out complicated and intense job demands that contribute towards the outstanding achievements of their departments, and also interpret and convey information from senior managers to the workforce in the platinum mining entity.

Monsen and Boss (2009) state that middle-level managers are usually departmental head and operational managers, who interpret and convey information between the workforce and the leaders of the organisation; and are experts in their respective fields. These high-performing employees at middle management level should be encouraged to stay with the organisation and should remain happy and productive for as long as possible; as they are the competitive

advantage of the business to ensure that the business objectives and goals are met (Strydom et al., 2014; Uitzinger et al., 2016).

Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) posit that organisations need to explore retention strategies that promote the retention of high-performing employees that are essential to the sustainability and competitiveness of the business. We theorise that retention strategies that are strongly aligned with individual needs of high performing employees at middle management level will positively influence their decision to stay with the organisation (Voigt & Hirst, 2015). Different organisations seen as perspective employers need to implement retention strategies and practices that will reinforce the high performing employee's decision to stay (Al-Emadi et al., 2015). Some of these retention strategies are most likely to be considered as important motivating factors to stay with the organisation (Ozsoy, 2019). For this reason, it is critical for organisations to develop retention strategies that are based on various needs of its high performers in order to successfully retain them and increase their commitment towards the organisation. Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) support this view, by indicating that organisations should implement retention strategies that are targeted at high-performing employees so as to ensure that their individual needs are met. Therefore, this study will focus on identifying the retention strategies that are important to the high-performing employees to stay with the organisation.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Voluntary turnover continues to be a significant problem for many organisations in today's work environment (Mabaso et al., 2021). Research indicates various reasons why employees voluntarily leave the organisation. These could either be personal, where there are changes in the family situation or a desire to learn a new skill or an attractive job offer; or reasons influenced by the current employer resulting from issues such as unfair treatment, lack of training and development, or lack of promotional opportunities (Amashila & Bussin, 2021; Scelchter et al., 2016). Losing employees appears to be a problem as it imposes extensive costs on both the employee and employer, and the leaving employee often takes with them valuable knowledge and expertise gained through experience (Schelchter et al., 2014; Schelchter et al., 2016).

Studies conducted in South African platinum mining companies indicate that many high-performing employees with key knowledge, expertise and skills have recently been attracted to other mining countries, particularly Australia, to satisfy the skills shortage in those countries, which has left South African mining companies with a shortage of labour and experience

employees to carry on with daily operations (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018). The high level of turnover might be due to the growth within the platinum mines. Research conducted in various South African companies found that those organisations that make use of remuneration or monetary compensation as their main form of retention system might find themselves challenged to sustain their employee's motivation, which supports the concepts of various rewards being preferred in attraction, retention, and motivation (Bussin & Toerien, 2015). Kossivi et al. (2016) assert that to effectively retain employees, employers need to determine what factors motivate their employees to stay with the organisation for the maximum desired time. Being knowledgeable of such factors will enable the employer to understand whether these factors are associated with the employee character, or with the nature of the work process, over which they may have control to retain their high performing employees, and maintain the competitive advantage (Dhanpat et al., 2018; Kossivi et al., 2016).

In the current study, retention refers to the ability to hold onto the high-performing employees at the middle management level that organisations want to retain for longer than their competitors (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). This study is expected to collect important information that could assist the organisation to retain high-performing employees in middle management level as their skills are central to the organisations ability to be economically competitive.

1.2.1 General Research question of relevance to study

The general research question that requires further investigation is:

What are the perceptions of employees who demonstrated consistent levels of high performance at middle management level about the retention strategies within a platinum mining company?

1.2.2 Research questions of relevance to the literature review

Research Question 1:   How is retention conceptualised in the literature?

Research Question 2:   How are high-performing employees conceptualised in the literature?

Research Question 3:   How are retention strategies conceptualised in the literature?

Research Question 4:   Is there a theoretical relationship between retention strategies and retention of high-performing employees at middle management level?

1.2.3 Research questions of relevance to the empirical research

Research Question 1:   What are the views of high-performing employees on retention strategies at middle management level in a platinum mining company?

Research Question 2:   What recommendations can be made to the organisation with regard to informing retention practices of high-performing employees?

Research Question 3:   What recommendations and areas for future research based on the research findings, can be proposed for the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology with regard to the retention of high performing employees at middle management level?

1.3   AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

In relation to the above problem, the following general and specific aims have been formulated:

1.3.1   General aim of the research

The general aim of the study will be to explore and understand the perceptions of high-performing employees on retention strategies within a platinum mining company.

1.3.2   Specific aims of the research

In terms of the literature review, the specific aims of this research are to:

Specific Aim 1:   Conceptualise retention from a theoretical perspective.

Specific Aim 2:   Conceptualise high-performing employee from a theoretical perspective.

Specific Aim 3:   Conceptualise retention strategies from a theoretical perspective.

Specific Aim 4:   Integrate the theories on retention and related strategies in relation to high-performing employees from a theoretical perceptive.

In terms of the empirical research, the specific aims of this research are to:

Specific Aim 1:   Explore the perceptions of high-performing employees on retention strategies at middle management level in a platinum mining company.

Specific Aim 2:   Provide recommendations on retention factors that can be implemented to retain the high-performing employees within middle management level in a platinum mining company.

Specific Aim 3:   To provide recommendations and areas for future research based on the research findings, for the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology with regard to the retention of high-performing employees at middle management level.

1.4   EVOLUTION OF INTEREST

My position as a talent management coordinator in a platinum mining company has exposed me to many sub-disciplines within Industrial and Organisational Psychology Department, in particular, talent management. This is a process that enables senior managers to identify and develop employees so as to ensure that the organisation retains the high performing employees who will assist to effectively meet the business and ensure its sustainability. Being in this department has also made me realise how important it is to retain employees with critical skills, who are dedicated and loyal to the company, and will assist to achieve its business goals and values.

Competitive salary packages are still used by most organisations, especially the mining sector, as a measure to attract and retain high-performing employees. I found it very interesting when conducting exit interviews within the Talent Management Department that most of the high-performing employees will still leave the company, even if they are paid above the market rate, because their other needs are not met by their employer, such as relationships with their supervisors, career growth and development, physical environment, amongst others. It is evident during the exit interviews conducted when managers voluntary exit the organisation that these skilled, qualified and high-performing employees seem to join organisations with expectations to grow, develop, influence and have meaningful relationship with their supervisors. When employers do not implement effective strategies that will ensure that the needs of the identified high-performing employees, that contributes towards the success and sustainability to the business are well taken care of, they stand at risk of losing these employees, which may disrupt the daily operation of the business, and put more pressure on the remaining employees.

The specific aims underpinning this study will assist the senior management and leaders to understand the retention factors that are important in today's work environment, and the importance of retaining the high-performing employees at middle management level in a

mining organisation. The ultimate aim is to provide recommendations on the retention strategies that are perceived to be important by the current high performing employees, which will assist the organisation to put in place measures that have not yet been implemented, in order to prevent the future loss of their high performers that contribute towards the competitiveness, success, and sustainability of the business.

I acknowledge that my current work as a talent management coordinator has exposed me to exit interviews on retention that may influence the study in some manner. Therefore, I conducted this study in an ethical and objective manner, which implied limiting my own opinions about the topic and personal impact on the outcomes of the results. I applied measures that ensured the quality of the results, and remained an objective researcher throughout the study.

1.5   SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

Orman (2016) refers to paradigms as shared beliefs within a community of researchers who share common beliefs about those questions that are most meaningful, and which procedures are most appropriate for answering the research question being investigated. In this regard, a paradigm is a system of ideas and world view used by a community of researchers to generate knowledge (Kanjere, 2017). The research paradigms reflect our beliefs of the world in which we live. It is a belief system that influences how we interpret the evidence collected through research. According to Popova-Nowak and Csech (2015), the paradigm perspective appears to stimulate debates and contributes towards the advancement of knowledge.

1.5.1   DISCIPLINARY RELATIONSHIP

The study was conducted within the discipline of industrial and organisational psychology and relates to sub-disciplines of career psychology and personnel psychology.

1.5.1.1   *Industrial and Organisational Psychology (I-O Psychology)*

Industrial and organisational (IO) psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour in the workplace and applies relevant psychological theories and principles to the organisation (Cilliers & Flotman, 2016; Wikis, 2014). I/O psychology contributes to an organisational success by focusing and improving the performance, satisfaction, training, retention, well-being of the employees and interaction between the individuals and their work environment. Schreuder and Coetzee (2010) assert that the various subfields of I/O psychology are studies

to generate new knowledge and solutions, with a view to addressing the critical challenges and issues stemming from the particular socio-economic contexts in which organisations are located. Career psychology at the workplace has to do with the career path of individuals, their development into more senior roles, empowerment, guidance and training in career areas that they may find challenging at the workplace (Watson & Stead, 2002). Personnel psychology is a study of individual differences in work settings and includes activities such as job analysis and criterion development; psychological assessments; employee selection and placement; employee reward and remuneration, employee training and development; career development; development support; employee performance evaluation; attracting and retaining scares and critical talent as well as ensuring compliance to employee related legislation (Lang, 2020).

1.5.1.2   Meta-theoretical statements

Overton and Muller (2012) state that the meta-theoretical statements define the context in which theoretical concepts are constructed and allow the integration of theory between unrelated phenomena.

Voluntarily Turnover refers to employee initiated turnover, where the identified valuable or high-performing employee seeks better employment conditions, prospects and job satisfaction, and moves out of the organisation to join another with more attractive benefits (Dhanpat et al., 2018; Schelchter et al., 2016).

Retention refers to the efforts made by an organisation to create and maintain a working environment that supports the current employees in remaining with the organisation (Ramson et al., 2016). Johennesse and Chou (2017) posit that retention as initiatives taken by management to keep the valuable and high-performing employees that they want to keep, and not losing them from the organisation for whatever reason, especially to competitors.

Organisational commitment refers to the employee's identification with and involvement with a specific organisation (Osei et al., 2017). It is demonstrated when an employee is committed to the organisation's values and goals and making efforts to ensure that the goals are being achieved within the set deadlines.

Job satisfaction is the pleasurable emotional estate, resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving one's job values (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Locke, 1969; Thokoa et al., 2021). There

are two types of satisfaction, internal job satisfaction, which reflects the level of fulfilment employees experience as a result of their performance on the job, whereas the extrinsic satisfaction refers to the level of fulfilment employees experience as a results of remuneration and benefits, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, and career advancement opportunities (Prabhu & Drost, 2017).

1.5.2 Constructivism as an underlying psychological paradigm in the study

The constructivism paradigm is based on the idea that individuals create their own knowledge through interactions with others and the environment (Hansen & Hamann, 2017; Kamii, 1985). This paradigm will help to understand the interaction between the employer and the employee, and how these interaction influences the retention of high-performing employees to stay or leave the organisation.

Chatterjee (2005) asserts that constructivists hold the view that the social world is inter-subjective, and a result of human consciousness, consisting of different kinds of communicative idioms that derive from some shared community or environment. Romm and Litt (2013) state that qualitative research within the constructivism paradigm considers the social world as being created through language constructions employed by people during social interaction with the organisation.

1.5.3 Hermeneutic phenomenology as the research paradigm

The hermeneutic paradigm holds that the ultimate goal of the research study is to interpret the meaning in relation to the phenomenon under investigation and giving the opportunity to understand the retention strategies important to keep the high-performing employees in the organisation (Traini et al., 2021; Woodgate et al., 2020). The hermeneutic paradigms aim to understand the situation through the eye of the participants in their work environment (Woodgate et al., 2020). This study explored the factors that are key for the retention of high-performing employees at middle management level by gathering and interpretating the experiences of such employees, as observed rather than what is already known (Mousavilar et al., 2019)

Before conducting this study, I had prior exposure and understanding of the importance of the retention concept of managers in the mining industry. However, in this study, these preconceptions were set aside, and I purely focused on the experiences of the high-performing employees at middle management level in a specific mining organisation. The interpretations

of the study results formulated new insights and understanding of the retention strategies that are important to the high-performing employees at middle management level.

For this study, I relied on the interpretive paradigm, which aims to explore and understand the perceptions of individuals through their personal experiences (Crowther et al., 2016; Frechette et al., 2020). The interpretive research paradigm is characterised by the fact that to understand the world, we should attempt to understand the fundamental aspects of the social world from a subjective point of view from the participant perspective to become receptive to different changes in the phenomenon of interest (Crowther et al., 2016; Gunbayi & Sorm, 2018). I focused on the high performing employees at middle management level in terms of their perception of retention strategies that are important for them to remain with the mining organisation (Muller & Jedlickova, 2020)

The following section provides a brief explanation of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological perspectives pertinent to the research paradigm.

1.5.3.1   Ontological perspective

Ontology is a philosophical system concerned with the nature of existence, where there is no right or wrong answer, and where we exist in our way of being with others (Stephenson et al., 2018). The ontology assists the researcher regarding the perceived importance of the existence of the object being studied (Crowther et al., 2016). Three major ontological positions exist in qualitative research, namely positivism, as well as interpretive, and critical positions.

The interpretive perspective was the most suitable for this study, as it would allow for exploration and in-depth understanding and meaning of the retention strategies that are critical for the retention of high-performing employees in middle management within the mining industry, and how the social interaction in the world of work affected the way they construct their decision to remain with the organisation. The interpretive perspective assumes that the social world consists of individual's subjective experience of the interaction of the work environment (Crowther et al., 2016; Gunbayi & Sorm, 2018).

1.5.3.2   Epistemological perspective

The epistemological perspectives focus the origin and limits of human knowledge regarding the relationship between the knower and what could be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The aim of epistemology is to clarify the origin of knowledge, understanding the processes of the

interpretation and how it is influenced by social interaction (Reiter, 2017). Furthermore, the epistemology on how we came to know what we know. The epistemology perspective is important, as it would have an influence on how I would structure the research study to discover new knowledge.

Ontology and epistemology focus on the nature and existence of knowledge and the development thereof (Crowther et al., 2016; Frechette et al., 2020). The ontological and epistemological perspective are translated into scientific methodologies. The next section explains the methodological perspectives for this study.

1.5.3.3   *Methodological perspective*

I approached the topic with the aim to explore and interpret the meanings in relation to the phenomenon under investigation (Traini et al., 2020). An idiographic methodological approach was used, following an ontological, interpretive, and epistemological perspective. The idiographic approach allowed the researcher to collect extensive data from the participants to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Peck & Mummery, 2019).

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of the research design is to guide and structure the research process and plan how to collect and analyse data that will assist in achieving aims and goals of the study (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). It is a plan of the actual practical steps to be followed in conducting the intended research. This study makes use of a qualitative research and in-depth interviews to collect data.

In the following section, I discuss the research design, specifically the research approach and methodology underpinning the current study.

1.6.1   Research approach

A qualitative exploratory research approach was followed in line with the paradigms and aims of the study. A qualitative research approach was used explore the perceptions of high-performing middle managers on retention strategies, this study has chosen to use the qualitative approach. Masson (2002) posits that qualitative research is exciting and rewarding, as it allows the researcher to explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the natural environments of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of

the research participants, and the significance of the meanings that they generate. The purpose of exploration is to gain in-depth understanding from the participants in their natural environment, which eliminates other factors that may influence the response of the participants and environments. The interpretative approach will give access to rich contextual data and reveal meaning from human experiences as perceived from the work environment. The interpretative approach tends to enable the researcher to become receptive to various and changing phenomenon of interest, rather than being limited to predetermined methods and anticipated meanings when conducting the study (Crowther et al., 2016).

1.6.2 Research method

The following section presents a detailed description of the research setting, entrée and the establishment of the researcher roles, sampling, and the manner in which data was collected, recorded and analysed. The section further presents an explanation of the strategies that were employed to ensure the quality of the data, ethical standards followed and way in which the results were reported.

1.6.2.1 Research setting

This study was conducted at one of the Platinum Group Metals (PGM) producing mining companies in South Africa. The platinum producing mine activities include integrated services, from mining the platinum underground, through to refining the raw material at the concentrators, smelter and base metal removal had the human resource attending to the individuals concerns and needs at the workplace. Due to the integrated nature of the sector, the mine depends on the expertise from their qualified, experienced, and knowledgeable employees from various departments to enhance their competitiveness, success, and sustainability within the industry. There are employees within the company from different disciplines such as mining, mine technical services, engineering, and human resources that are identified as high-performers due to their consistent high performance and their potential to advance beyond their current level. This research study focused on these employees identified by the mining company as high performers at middle management level.

1.6.2.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

My role in this study was to conduct interviews with participants, capture data, analyse data and report on the research results. I approached the Vice President Human Resource to obtain permission to conduct the study in the organisation and approval was granted (Appendix A).

An ethics clearance certificate was also granted by the College of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Research Committee at UNISA 2019_CEMS/IOP_018 (Appendix B).

As a result of the challenges and restrictions posed by Covid 19, the face-to-face interviews that were initially chosen as the data collection method were altered to telephonic interviews in order to align with the pandemic regulations set by the university to ensure the safety of both participants and the interviewer. Farooq and De Villiers (2017) reported that there is no difference in the nature and depth of responses between a face-to-face qualitative interview and telephonic interviews. Participants were contacted via email to inform them about the purpose of the research, data confidentiality, estimated time required, and were given a broad outline of the questions that would be asked during the interview. After the participants had consented to participate in the study, the researcher contacted them for a pre-interview telephonic conversation to address concerns, build rapport and explain the interview in detail (Drabble et al., 2016; Farooq & de Villiers, 2017). The consent forms were also sent through to them to sign and send back before the initial telephone interviews could be conducted (Appendix C). Interview times were set up with participants according to their availability.

1.6.2.3   The self as an instrument

The researcher was the primary data collection instrument in this study. In a qualitative study, the role of the researcher is to collect data and develop meaningful insights on the topic of interest (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Ravitch & Mittenfelrner-Carl, 2016). My role required me to be objective and fully understand the knowledge and influence that I brought to the study through my personal experience (Fusch & Ness, 2015). My role in the study included to make personal observations, conduct interviews with participants, record data, examine data, analyse the combined data, and report on research results. My experience in conducting exit interviews with junior, middle, and senior managers at work also assisted me to ensure that I remain professional as a primary research instrument.

1.6.2.4   Sampling

The sample size for the study consisted of 13 participants. The sample size was suitable for this study, where sample sizes are smaller in qualitative studies due to the extensive amount of data collected (Stafford, 2018). Barbie and Mouton (2001) assert that sampling in the qualitative paradigm is often purposeful. Purposive sampling increases the scope of the specific information collected, because participants in the study are being selected purposefully on the grounds of certain attributes relevant to the research study (Ravitch &

Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Creswell and Creswell (2017) define purposive sampling as selecting participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to the research question and those who will best answer the research question.

The participants were purposefully selected from a pool of employees who are identified as high performers at middle management level within platinum mining company. I ensured saturation by interviewing the participants until there was no new data. Saunders et al. (2017) point out that saturation is used in qualitative research as a criterion for discontinuing data collection when no additional data are being found.

The findings from the study is expected to collect important information that could assist the organisation to retain the high-performers at middle management level as their skills, knowledge, and expertise are central to the organisation's ability to be economically competitive.

1.6.2.5   Data collection

In-depth interviews will be used to interview individuals. The in-depth interview is a technique designed to obtain a clear picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic, where the person being interviewed is considered the expert and the interviewer the student (Milena et al., 2008). Furthermore, it is a method of conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of individuals to explore their perspective of the retention strategies. Milena et al. (2008) posit that the in-depth interview is an effective qualitative method of collecting data.

The results from the pilot study indicated that some of the wording needed to be rephrased so that the questions would be more clear to the participants and to avoid ambiguity. It was also evident that the method is effective for getting individual to talk about their personal feelings, opinions and experience; and offering the opportunity to gain insight into how individuals interpret their retention strategies at the workplace.

The in-depth interview guided the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the retention factors that are important to retain the high performing employees. Ravitch and Mittenfelner-Carl (2016) posit that the main goal of in-depth interviews in a qualitative study is to gain insight into how the participants make sense of their experiences. The advantage of conducting in-depth interviews was that the participants got to tell their stories in their own words (Stafford, 2018). Prior to conducting the actual interviews, I conducted a pilot study to verify whether the interview guide was clear and concise for participants to understand.

Loewen and Pionsky (2015) explain that a pilot study is normally conducted so as to ensure and verify that the research instrument measures what it intends to. Three participants who do not form part of the high-performing employees in the organisation where the research was conducted were selected to participate in the pilot study.

The results from the pilot study indicated that some of the questions needed to be replaced to align more with the aims, objectives and theoretical perspectives of the study. The responses and data obtained from the pilot study were not included in the actual research results, as these were only used for testing the questions in the interview guides.

1.6.2.6   Recording of data

Permission was obtained through a consent form that was given to the participants to digitally record interview and take notes during the process. Data was accurately recorded by making use of digital recording and verbatim transcript for accuracy. All digital recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed by the researcher (Rabie & Naidoo, 2016). It is critical for the researcher to record the interview as the digital recording contributes to the reliability of the data, as it allows for confirmation of the data.

1.6.2.7   Data analysis and interpretation

The recorded interviews were transcribed, and content analysis was used to analyse data. Content analysis is the scientific study of the content of communication with reference to the meaning, contexts, and intentions contained in messages collected (Prasad, 2008). It is a search for statements about the phenomenon of interest collected from the participants. The analysis of the data will start with reading the interviews to obtain and overall understanding, followed by writing interpretative summaries, and coding for the emerging themes. This will assist in the interpretation and analysis for each text, according to themes, ideas, concepts and interpretation of final draft (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Coding the interviews transcription eliminate data that could be otherwise be missed. The reason for using content analysis in this study was to identify specific words from the interview data collected during the interviews, and to make inferences about what was reported by participants.

1.6.2.8   Strategies employed to ensure quality

The use of triangulation assisted to reduce bias as it cross-examines the integrity of participant's responses. Anney (2014) points out that to ensure the quality in qualitative research, data has to be credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable.

- Credibility refers to the notion that the study measures what is actually intended to measure, and that data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to take part, and offer data freely (Anney, 2014). The utilisation of multiple sources that included field note and audio-recorded data for verification were utilised during data collection.

- Confirmability in qualitative research refers to the ability to confirm the research data (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). The research results from this study from selected participants is set to represent those of the entire pool of high-performing employees and could be confirmed by other researchers. Confirmability consists of measures implemented through triangulation to ensure that the findings from the study are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants.
- Dependability refers to the stability of research findings over time (Elo et al., 2014). The participants will evaluate the findings and the interpretation and recommendation of the study to verify whether they support the data received from the researcher.

- Transferability in qualitative study ensures that the findings of this study can be applied in other situations (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). This ensures that future researchers will be able to use these findings and conclusions as a basis to conduct other related research on retention strategies.

1.6.2.9   Reporting

Research results obtained from the study will be reported in the form of a research article in Chapter 3. The research article (Chapter 3) outlines the core focus of the study, the background to the study, trends from the research literature, the potential value added by the study, the research design, the results, a discussion of the results, the conclusions, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for practice and future research.

1.7   CHAPTER LAYOUT

The remaining chapters will be presented as follows:

Chapter 2: Literature review

The aim of this chapter is to explore the theoretical elements of retaining high-performing employees at middle management level. The literature will also explore the employee retention strategies from a literature perspective.

Chapter 3: Research article

The structure of this chapter will take the form of a research article. The core focus of the study, highlighting the background to the study, trends from the research literature, the potential value added by the study, and the research design (research approach and research method) will be presented. This will be followed by a presentation of the findings, a discussion of the findings, the conclusions, the limitations of the study and recommendations for practice and future research

Chapter 4: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

This will be the final chapter containing an integrated discussion and conclusion of the results. Recommendations for the organisation will be presented in this chapter as well. Limitations experienced during the research will be noted and recommendations made for future research and for the field of industrial and organisational psychology.

1.8   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter described the scientific orientation of the research study by firstly stating the background and motivation for the research, aims of the research, paradigmatic perspective and research design, the methodological approach, and the chapter layout of the complete dissertation.

CHAPTER 2:   LITERATURE REVIEW OF RETENTION FACTORS OF HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYEES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a brief description of the definition of employee retention, followed by a discussion on employee retention in organisations. Thereafter, a theoretical overview of recent retention strategies organisations will be discussed. This will be followed by a detailed description of the characteristics of high-performing employees within the platinum mining entity. The theoretical relationships between retention strategies and high-performing employees will also be discussed. This chapter will further review the motivational theories applicable to this study, with the intention to better understand workplace behaviour. This will offer an understanding of the way the employee relationship and certain factors related to the job, either external or internal, affect employee retention and other behaviours within the organisation. This chapter will present a theoretical overview of the retention strategies that have contributed toward the retention high-performing employees at the middle management level.

When employees believe that their contribution to the organisation outweighs the rewards and benefits that they perceive as important, they are likely to consider leaving the organisation and going where they more valued (Kgoedi & Pillay, 2018). This appears to be a challenge for most organisations, as high-performing employees are key to the sustainability and success of the organisation, especially in the mining industry, as they posit knowledge, skills and experience that might be difficult and expensive to replace (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018). Therefore, it is important to discuss the reasons behind high performing employees leaving the organisation and how it can be prevented to ensure the sustainability of the organisation, especially in today's competitive environment. The inability to retain these employees could have a negative impact upon the operational functions and productivity of the business specifically in the mining sector which has a major impact towards the economy of the country (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017).

This study focuses on high-performing employees at middle management level in a mining company. High performers are normally the most talented employees that have been identified in the organisation by their immediate managers, senior managers and the talent management department, through various methods, including performance ratings and outstanding work output (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Current individuals within the workforce who have the ability, skill, and knowledge to successfully carry out complicated and intense job demands

that contribute towards the outstanding achievements of their designated departments are those that are identified as high-performing employees (Park et al., 2017). In return, a high-performing employees' outstanding achievements within their departments have a positive impact upon the organisational competitive advantage.

South Africa has the world's largest reserves of platinum-group metals and this rich supply of minerals shows that the mining industry is making a substantial contribution to the economy of the country and to the African continent as a whole (Ledwaba & Nkomo, 2021; Ngqeza & Dhanpat, 2021; Van der Walt et al., 2016) However, the challenge faced by most mining companies in the platinum belt is the high turnover rate of high-performing, skilled, and knowledgeable employees and the dissatisfaction amongst its employees (Van der Walt et al., 2016). This is a major concern, as it indicates that high performing and skilled employees are likely to immigrate to other countries such as Australia, where their skills are required, or move easily from one mine to another mine within the platinum sector, where they perceive the package offers, incentives and working conditions to be more favourable than those of their current employer (Mey et al., 2021; Siwela & Van der Bank, 2021).

This chapter provides a theoretical overview of employee retention and the various retention strategies utilised in most organisations. The importance of retaining high-performing employees at a middle management level will also be discussed, followed by the theoretical overview of the relationship between retentions strategies and high-performing employees.

2.2 DEFINING EMPLOYEE RETENTION

High-performing, qualified, skilled, and experienced employees are the most valuable assets in an organisation. Employee retention is defined as a technique adopted by organisations to maintain an effective workforce, make some good policies, meet operational requirements, and achieve the organisation goals and success by keeping employees who are knowledgeable, skilled, and experienced in the perspective fields that are critical to ensure the success of the business (Al-Emadi et al., 2015; Mita et al., 2014; Munish, 2017). In addition, retention also refers to the necessary measures taken by the organisation to encourage employees to stay in an organisation for as long as possible, or until the completion of a specific project (Mabaso et al., 2021; Mey et al., 2021). It is efforts made by the organisation to keep in employment the employees that they have identified as high performer by creating an environment which engages these employees on a long-term basis (Chaminade, 2007; Dhanpat et al., 2018).

Alhussami (2017) reports that when attempting to retain employees, organisations are likely seek for effective, top-performing, talented, and well-integrated employees, who contribute towards the success and sustainability of the organisation. It is evident from studies conducted that the main purpose of retention is to prevent the loss of competent employees from the organisation, as this could have adverse effect on productivity and service delivery of the business (Al-Emadi, 2015; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). To ensure retention of high-performing employees, the retention programme needs to be continually evaluated as the needs and wants of the employee's changes over time, due to both internal and external factors.

2.3   EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN ORGANISATIONS

Today's competitive business environment has become unstable, and is characterised by a diversity of changes, making it difficult for organisations to retain their high-performing employees (Mabaso et al., 2021; Mangisa et al., 2021). This poses a threat to the organisation, as the qualified, high-performing, skilled, and experienced employees are the key contributing factor towards the growth, survival, and sustainability in most organisations (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Devi (2009) asserts that creating and maintaining a retention-rich organisation that attracts, engages and builds lasting loyalty among the high-performing employees is a key to the success of organisations in the modern globalised economy. The retention of the high performing employees at middle management level identified from various departments that offer essential and critical services is important in assisting the organisation to reach its desired goals and objectives (Amushila & Bussin, 2021). Gupta et al. (2015) asserts that retaining employees whose knowledge has high competitive value is becoming a critical and well-recognised challenge. For this reason, employee retention is important in and for organisations, because when the skilled high-performing employees leave the organisation unexpectedly, this move could easily disrupt the productivity and operational functions of the business, whilst adding workload and imposing stress on remaining employees. The loss of high-performing employees may cause serious damage to the organisation's future success, as the best, most stable and service employees are normally considered the organisational backbone (Tadese, 2018).

This notwithstanding, retaining the high-performing and skilled employees appears to be a challenge, due to local and international organisations competing aggressively for these employees by implementing competitive hiring policies, offering attractive packages, and other incentives that make it easier for high performers to switch organisations (Gillingham, 2008). High-performing employees switch employers every six years or less on average for various reasons (Al-Suraihi, 2021; Mey et al., 2021; Stovel & Bontis, 2002). This poses a challenge

for management when high performing employees move to competing organisations, as they take with them the knowledge and trade secrets acquired from their former employer (Gupta et al., 2015). Therefore, to successfully retain high-performing employees and prevent them from leaving the organisation and switching employers in a short period of time, relevant stakeholder in management and human resource department needs to identify the reasons of what the employees likes and what they dislike about their job and implement change that would assist in attracting and retaining essential high performing employees for a desired maximum period.

Kossivi et al. (2016) state that losing high-performing employees not only affects production, but is a very costly exercise in replacing these employees. The exercise may include the re-advertising strategies, recruitment expenses, training, and the induction of the new employees into the work environment. The cost of replacing a high-performing employee is calculated at 30% of an employee's annual salary (Dibble, 1999; El-Emadi, 2015). This can cause unnecessary and unbudgeted expenditure that could be avoided when proper retention strategies are put in place (Shikweni et al., 2019).

Successful retention of high-performing begins with recruiting the right qualified incumbents into the right positions, and continues to keep them engaged and committed to the organisation for a desired period of time. Qualified and high-performing employees who are identified as critical resources in the organisation appear to have many expectations from the employer, and if they feel that their expectations are not being met by the employer, they are likely to start searching for a new job and eventually leave the organisation (Gupta et al., 2015). The following section focuses on recruitment and selection, post-recruitment measures, and influence on turnover, as reasons that contributes to the importance of employee retention in organisations.

2.3.1   Recruitment and selection

Based on the literature review presented, one of the main activities in an organisation that impacts retention is how the recruitment and selection process of new employees into the organisation is carried out, as well as the promotion of existing internal employees (Amushila & Bussin, 2021). Recruitment is an important function in any organisation, as it aligns with the objectives of the organisation to ensure that candidates that will assist the organisation to reach their goals and remain competitive in the industry are selected in the process. Sealome and Chipunza (2020) point out that recruitment is an activity which generates a pool of applicants who wish to be employed and join the organisation, and from which suitable

candidates are selected. The selection from the pool of candidates who applied for the position is important as the correct selection of best qualified and suitable candidates creates a match between the capabilities and inclinations of prospective candidates against the demands and rewards inherent in the organisation (Sealome & Chipunza, 2020; Sutherland & Wocke, 2001).

However, the recruitment and selection may be a challenge based on the availability of smaller pool of qualified potential employees with critical skills, experience, and knowledge (Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021; Pitzrick, 2001). For this reason, it is important to have proper recruitment and selection techniques in place to successfully attract, engage, and retain qualified, skilled and experienced candidates in a competitive work environment.

The recruitment process in an organisation is also dependent on the type of vacancy that needs to be filled. Methods that are used to fill vacancies within the administrative supporting service departments may not be appropriate when searching for skilled, experienced and talented candidate to occupy the hard to fill roles (Al-Suraihi, 2021; Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021). The ability to recruit qualified, skilled, experience and high-performing candidates from outside the organisation will depend on a multitude of factors, including the financial stability and location of the organisation, the nearby areas cost of leaving, the remuneration and benefits from the organisation, and potential career path and advancement within the organisation (Chovwen et al., 2014; Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018).

2.3.2 Post-recruitment measures

The post-recruitment outcomes are likely to affect employees who have been appointed from outside the organisation than those that have been promoted internally (Mey et al., 2021). Moser (2005) suggests that internal employees who have been promoted and appointed into higher level positions are likely to stay with the organisation, as they are already familiar with the policies and process, and know what to expect from the business. During the recruitment and selection processes, it is critical that the stakeholders involved communicate the relevant information regarding the job offer, such as the terms and conditions of employment, compensation and benefits, wellness benefits, training, work environment and the reporting structure, so as to allow applicants to better evaluate the offer made before joining the organisation (Bazana & Reddy, 2021; Mangisa et al., 2020). Shibly (2019) indicates that reasons for employees exiting the organisation early may include, amongst others, their roles not being clearly defined, a perceived mismatch, or difficulties fitting in or being engaged in the organisation. Unmet expectations, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment appear to be some of the common reasons why high-performing employees leave the organisation

early (Thompson & Aspinwall, 2009). Thompson and Aspinwall (2009) also revealed that employees in the current world of work are becoming concerned with balancing their work and family lives and likely to seek for employment with organisations that will help them achieve this balance.

Yumnam and Singh (2019) have suggested that some of the most important factors that ought to be kept in mind after recruiting the successful incumbent into the right position is to ensure that they stay with the organisation includes empowering the employee to execute the work, proper induction to create a sense of belongingness to organisation, clear communication and feedback, making organisation moral high and giving recognition to the performers, and creating an environment where employees can enjoy one another's company.

2.3.3   Employee turnover

Managing employee turnover appears to be a huge challenge in most organisations, especially those that employ highly qualified, skilled and technical employees. Employee turnover of high performing employees emerges when individuals are not happy in their work environment (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2020). When high-performing employees leave the organisation before the expected period of time, this can cause destruction, which results in the loss of operational functions, relationship, and can even impact the goals and objectives of the business (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Schlechter et al. (2016) also adds that other consequences that high-performing employee's turnover can have towards the business is a loss of organisational knowledge, and ultimately, reduced profit. The high turnover of skilled, experienced, and high-performing employees not only cause destruction, but can also cause unnecessary expenses in the organisation, because every time these employees exit the organisation, a replacement must be recruited, selected, trained, and allocated adequate time on the job to gain the requisite experience (Bazana & Reddy, 2021; Mangisa et al., 2020).

Agony and Majola (2018) argue that factors that may impact turnover and failure to retain high performing employees include psychological factors, job dissatisfaction, stress and work overload, demographic factors and economic factors. Research indicates that employers are making use of targeted and untargeted approaches to assist in managing employee turnover (Schlechter et al., 2016). Western and Yamamura (2007) state that untargeted approaches are usually the generic organisational practices that increase the organisational commitment and retain employees. These approached include the compensation and benefits, promotions, training and development, flexible working hours, and status-driven incentives (Schlechter et al., 2016). On the other hand, the targeted approaches focus more on the high-performing

employees who are likely to leave the organisation by providing them with retention bonuses and incentives to encourage them to stay (Schlechter et al., 2016). The targeted approach seems to be expensive and not necessarily successful in most cases, as organisation might have to increase the package based on what the potential employer is offering the employee, to try and convince them to stay. However, both the targeted and untargeted approaches are implemented in order to manage the voluntary turnover of high performing employees and ensure the success and sustainability of the organisation. Therefore, it is important for employee turnover to be taken seriously to effectively implement the retention strategies within the organisation. If employee turnover is not taken seriously, it may also impact loss of productivity, relationships, and sustainability of the organisation.

2.4   RETENTION STRATEGIES

Today's competitive work environment is characterised by various factors that motivate and keep the employees happy in their work environments. Research indicates that retention factors are increasingly moving towards focusing on employee commitment and empowering the employee to take greater responsibility to participate in their work environment as techniques to produce high levels organisational effectiveness and performance (Dhanpat et al., 2018; Döckel, 2003; Gupta et al., 2015; Mabaso et al., 2021; Mey et al., 2021; Nayak, 2021).

Retention factors that motivate the employee to join and stay with an organisation go beyond monetary gain. Remuneration packages alone are not sufficient to assist employers in retaining their high performing employee, but other factors need to be in place to keep the employee happy at their workplace (McKeown, 2002; Mangisa, 2020; Mey et al., 2021). For this reason, it appears that organisations are more inclined to implement and introduce various healthy workplace practices to retain high performing employees, such as involvement in the decision-making process, providing adequate pay, training and developments, career advancement opportunities, providing a work-life balance, performance management, and leadership development (Tadesse, 2018). The next discussion will focus on common six key factors that contribute towards retaining employees (Dhanpat et al., 2018; Shikwen et al., 2019; Tadesse, 2018).

2.4.1 Compensation

Most organisations make use of the compensation system to attract and retain qualified, skilled, experienced and high-performing employees. Studies indicate that when an organisation has an excellent competitive package, it is normally a sign that shows strong commitment to its employees (Kgoedi & Pillay, 2018; Ogony & Majola, 2018). Döckel (2003) states that the financial rewards are extrinsic monetary rewards that organisation deliver to their employees for service delivered by them. The mining houses in South Africa offer attractive remuneration packages and allowance to retain critical skills within the organisation for a desired period of time (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018; Rampfumedzi, 2009). Research also found that the reward system or remuneration should not be based on a one-size-fits-all strategy, but should instead be flexible in the structuring of the pay for different employees, especially those with the critical requirements in middle management level that are needed for the success and sustainability of the organisation (Schlechter et al., 2014). For this reason, market salary rates, especially in the competitive mining industry, should always be reviewed and open for negotiation to high-performing employees in order to attract and retain them for the maximum period of time (Ogony & Majola, 2018).

2.4.2 Work-life balance

Work-life balance refers to the balance that an employee is able to maintain between work life and family life, and tends to affect the employee's decision to stay or leave the organisation (Shikweni et al., 2018). Assisting the employee to balance work with life is critical in the work environment. The strain experienced by high-performing employees in the demanding and competitive mining environment is likely to spill over from the work situation to the home domain, causing these two important spheres in an employee's life to interfere with one another (Mabaso et al., 2021; Mostert & Rathbone, 2001; Siwela & Van der Bank, 2021). The strain experienced in the work environment by high-performing employees may result in the work-life conflict, if the work and non-work demands are incompatible. Work-life balance appears to be an important factor that is directly associated with employee turnover in the work environment. Kossivi et al. (2016) indicate that employees across different industries, including mining, value flexible work schedules that allow them to take care of both their personal and their work life. Employees are more likely to value work that grants them access to flexible hours, having a job with more control and being in roles where there is less work-to-family related stress (Bristol et al., 2008; Mabaso et al., 2021; Siwela & Van der Bank, 2021). This is more practical in the mining industry, as employees are mostly located in remote areas with minimal support facilities, which makes employment in such locations unattractive

for some employees, especially those with families. Organisations that have effective work-life policies in place are likely to be in a better position to attract and retain high-performing employees (Bristol et al., 2008; Mabaso et al., 2021).

2.4.3   Job characteristics

Mostert and Rathbone (2001) indicate that owing to the important contribution that the mining industry makes to the economy of the country, it is important that organisations maintain a competitive advantage in complying with the demands for change; as a result they require a high level of outputs from their employees. Employees' responsibilities are characterised by demanding job characteristics, such as high workload, high need for accuracy, time pressure, and delivering and meeting customer expectations. Mostert and Rathbone (2001) wrote that these job characteristics in the mining industry appear to be characterised by negative outcomes such as depression, a sense of failure, fatigue and loss of motivation. However, high-performing employees are likely to thrive under such pressure, perform their best when engaging in tasks that are challenging, and require maximum use of their skills and expertise (Mangisa et al., 2020). The job characteristics in this high demanding work environment could influence the high performing employee's decisions to leave or stay with the organisation if a mismatch of skills is evident that might lead to the employee being unable to meet and deliver results required from them (Dhanpat et al., 2018).

2.4.4   Career opportunities

The skills shortage is a major concern in most mining houses, which creates a need for career advancement opportunities for their current workforce, especially those employees who have been identified as high performers to retain their skill and knowledge in the organisation (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018). Career advancement opportunities of employees who are identified as high performers tends include a formal programme that is organised and well-planned so as to accomplish the balance between the requirements of organisational workforce and individual career needs (Irshad & Afridi, 2011). According to Letchmiah and Thomas (2017), high-performing employees have a need to learn, advance, and remain competitive when compared to their peers, and they perceive this as leading to opportunities for promotion and career advancement. When the high-performing employees do not feel recognised by leadership or perceive opportunities for career advancement, they are likely to leave the organisation and explore new external job opportunities in the other mining organisations.

2.4.5 Leadership support

Employees at middle management level value leadership support from their employer, especially being the direct link between top management and the lower-level employees (Mey et al., 2021). The styles of leadership in an organisation have a profound effect on retention of high-performing employees at middle management level, as they value supervisors who know and understand them, treat them fairly, and are leaders that they can trust (Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011). Döckel (2003) states that leadership support has to do with the behaviour from the top management that encourage and supports the continuous high performance of employees. Employees value feedback from their leaders as a method to know that they are still on the right track and their skills are still important to the organisation. Proper and frequent feedback is important to retain employees because perceived organisational support increases the affective commitment of employees in the long term (Dhanpat et al., 2018). Research conducted by Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) revealed that poor leadership support appears to be a contributing factors as to why employees leave their organisations, and that leadership support is the reason as to why employees stay with their current employer. For this reason, leadership support appears to be one of the key contributing factors towards retentions, as the employee tends to value leaders who are easily accessible and motivate employees to achieve best performance (Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Mey et al., 2021; Trevisan et al., 2004).

2.4.6 Leadership Development

Leadership development is intended to expand the capacity of employees to perform effectively in leadership roles in an organisation. Leadership development tends to be a well-structured programme that enhances the high-performing employees at management level to think strategically, establish direction, and have a vision for the future, lead, and drive change (Terblanche et al., 2017). Leadership development appears to be important in progressive organisations, including the mining industry, where competition is tough and high-performing employees at middle management level are expected to influence employees in such a way that they start to share common goals, attitudes and values in order to work together as a team towards the achievement of the values, mission, and objectives of the organisation (Bartram & Casimir, 2007).

2.4.7 Performance management

Performance management refers to the formal and systematic communication between senior managers and employees regarding behavioural expectations, objectives and goals, and ensures that feedback is provided to the employees relating to their performance (Uitzinger et al., 2016). Research reveals that performance management is the wheel driving employee engagement in organisations and can be seen as the framework for guiding managers in their efforts to increase work engagement (Bwowe & Marongwe, 2018). In this regard, performance management simply includes activities to ensure that goals are consistently met in an effective and efficient manner. The main purpose of performance management is its focus on achieving results (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). According to Mone et al. (2011), the benefits of performance management of high-performing employees in middle management level include: understanding and agreement of what has to be accomplished; alignment between organisational, team and individual objectives;   understanding and agreement of how performance will be measured; the ability to track and communicate corporate, team and individual performance; and to meaningfully reward teams and individuals and to determine training and development needs. The purpose of performance management is to ensure that there is an alignment in the organisation of what is expected especially from employees in management level to ensure the sustainability and success of the organisation in todays' competitive environment.

2.4.8 Training and development

The high-performing employees within the mining industry need to at all-times keep themselves updated with the new technology and skills introduced in the industry. Armache (2014) asserts that training and developments equips high-performing employees with the updated skills and knowledge that enables them to perform their work effectively, to enhance job satisfaction, and to contribute towards the organisation. Dhanpat et al. (2018) posit that organisations that provide advance and recent training and development opportunities to their high-performing employees may have a psychological influence on them, which might cause the employees to stay with the organisation as they perceive opportunities to grow and apply their acquired skills and knowledge. According to Irshad and Afridi (2011), training is a sign of organisational commitment to its employees and reflects the organisation's intention to add value, rather than lowering costs. In addition, training and development opportunities of new and advanced skills within the organisations open promotional opportunities into senior positions, which assist in retaining the high-performing employees (Chowdhury & Nazmul 2017).

2.5   THE NEED FOR AN EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGY

The competition for critical skilled high performing employees has resulted in employee attraction and retention being regarded as the greatest challenge for human capital management across various industries, including the mining industry (Van der Walt et al., 2016). The effective implementation of employee retention strategies and policies will ensure that the current employees who are identified as high performers in occupational categories where skills shortages exist are experiencing job satisfaction to ensure the retention of these employees (Van der Walt et al., 2016). It appears that high-performing employees are more inclined to be loyal, stay longer, and work to their full potential in organisations, where they have a sense of pride and value (Gupta et al., 2015). Know and Rupp (2013) assert that building and maintaining a positive and strong organisational reputation within the industry is likely to enhance the ability to attract more applicants of higher quality with which to replace the high-performing leavers. It is evident that the retention of high-performing employees is complex, and there is no single strategy for keeping employees at an organisation (Gupta et al., 2015). The implementation of retention strategies for high-performing employees is important for managers, as they are likely to benefit from the investment already made in these employees (Tadesse, 2018).

Gupta et al. (2015) found three main reasons for the need for retention strategies, namely:

- turnover is costly and leads to loss of time, money and resources in new hiring;
- turnover has a negative impact on the organisation's performance; and
- turnover may become difficult to handle, especially with high-performing employees at middle management level.

2.6   HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES

South Africa is experiencing a general skills crisis, especially pertaining to the retention of high-performing and knowledgeable workers (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009; Mangisa et al., 2020; Siwela & Van der Bank). This leads to loss in intellectual and technical employees that contribute vastly to the economic and social growth of the country (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009). Hence, the retention of high-performing and qualified employees is critical, not only for success and sustainability of the organisation, but also towards the economic growth of the country. As stated in section 2.2, the platinum group metal mining in South Africa is the largest

sub-sector of employment and competes globally as it contributes largely to the export revenues (Bowman, 2018).

Employees who have been identified as high performers are an important resource for any organisation due to their critical character, knowledge and skills, and it is their characteristic that makes them the most valuable assets in an organisation (Gupta et al., 2015). These employees also have the potential to advance beyond their current level, due to their expertise. Hence, it is critical to attract and retain such incumbents in order to enhance the success and sustainability of the organisation as the high-performing employees might at sometimes be overlooked as organisational assets (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017).

2.6.1   Defining a high-performing employee

A high-performing employee is an individual who works effectively with a sense of commitment, knowledgeable, innovative, bright and an expert in their field of work (Gupta et al., 2015). Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) assert that a high-performing employee is someone who demonstrates consistent levels of high performance, drives exceptional business performance through competence, commitment and occupy management or supervisory roles. Based on high-performing employees' distinctive character, skills, knowledge, and growth potential, they usually have a clear career path and in the succession plan for higher management positions within the organisation. High-performing employees at middle management level are more inclined to continuously learn about new developments and technologies within their fields as compared to the average lower-level employee. Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) further argue that continuous learning for high-performing employees enhances their status to remain competitive in their industries, with better chances for promotion and career advancement. In todays' world of work, employees with a good reputation for being a high performer and expert in their designated field, are likely to easily move from one organisation to another, as they gather good referrals from their peers and are headhunted without even applying for a vacancy.

2.6.2   Characteristics of a high-performing employee at middle management level

The high-performing employees at middle management level constitute the link between the first level supervisors and the top level management. The main activity of the employees at this level is to implement the decisions and structures proposed from the top management into the rest of the organisation (Chinyamurindi, 2016). The high performing employee at this level appears to be highly competent, skilled, innovative and strategic to successfully carry out the

operational functions needed for the success and sustainability of the business. (Chinyamurindi, 2016). It also appears that the high performing employee at this level has to be an individual who is able to cope in a highly pressurised environment and easily adopt to change in order to carry out the continuously changing direction from top management that are critical for the success of the organisation, as they are directly affected by change (Mbokazi et al., 2004). In this regard, it appears that one of the requirements of the high-performing employee is that top management and human capital department value their skills and abilities, and actively recognised the contribution that they are making into the organisation (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009).

2.6.3 The importance of retaining high-performing employees in middle management

For an organisation to achieve its desired outcomes and remain competitive within its industry, it needs to retain its high-performing employees on the job for long term as they assist to successfully achieve the desired goals and outcomes for the business (Kossivi et al., 2016). Having retention strategies in place that are important to high performers is likely to motivate and enhance employee commitment, which contributes to the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the organisation (Amushila & Bussin, 2021). Being able to retain high-performing employees at middle management level might give the senior management the confidence and assurance that they have the best team in place to make decisions and implement strategies critical to carrying out job requirements effectively, and delivering the desired results on time. However, lack of relevant and proper retention strategies may lead to loss of the immediate, most capable, experienced, and reliable high-performing employees, who are essential to the immediate success of the business (Voigt & Hirst, 2015). Furthermore, if an organisation cannot hold on to its immediate high-performing employees, it may incur the extra financial costs involved with the recruitment and training of new employees (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Mey et al., 2021).

Middle managers are critical to the success of most organisations as their roles include strategic roles, administrative roles, leadership, decision making and communication (Rezvani, 2017). Their roles are crucial in generating and implementing ideas that are essential for the success of the business. They also help to effectively communicate relevant information from top management to the rest of the lower-level workforce. The role of middle managers is operational and appears the link that influence both upper and lower-level employees (Chinamurindi, 2016). Furthermore, retaining high performing employees in middle management level plays an important role in the retention of key knowledge, skills and

experience for the organisation, as the loss of these employee is likely to impact the intellectual capital with regards to competence capital, relationship capital and structural capital (Uitzinger et al., 2016). High-performing employees at the middle management level are close to the employees at lower levels and have a big influence to successfully implement new innovative ideas that will help the organisations reach their objectives.

2.7   THEORIES OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION

There are various reasons why individuals become attracted to, join and stay with the specific organisation for a desired period of time. Different employees at different levels are motivated by different measures, according to various internal or external reasons. Various reasons have also been given as to why employees leave one organisation for another (Almaaitah et al., 2017). Retaining well-motivated employees is important to the success and sustainability of any organisation. Bargraim et al. (2011) posit that it is important to understand theories that motivates employees, because every employee has needs and is attracted to particular set of goals. The two theories to be discussed for this study are social exchange theory and the Herzberg's two-factor theory, to understand the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that could assist with retention of the high-performing employees.

2.7.1   Social exchange theory

The social exchange theory focuses on the interaction between the employer and employee. In the theory of social exchange, the parties involved in the exchange process take responsibility for one another and also depend on one another (Almmaitah et al., 2017). Blau (1964) indicates that the interaction between both parties, which is the employer and employee in our study, is usually seen as mutually dependent and contingent on the actions made by the other individual. Research conducted by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2007) revealed that the social exchange relationship in the work environment might be one of the major determinants of whether one decides to stay or leave the organisation. Therefore, it can be argued that one employee can form distinguishable social exchange relationship either with her immediate supervisor, co-worker, organisations, customers as well as the suppliers, where these distinct relationships have implications on their behaviour (Almmaitah et al., 2017).

Flowing from the backdrop on the social exchange theory, it could be stated that employees are likely to continue the relationship and stay with the organisation when they perceive that there is a mutually beneficial relationship between themselves and the employer for example the pay reward, or other external incentives, career growth, and so forth; and likely to leave

when they do not perceive the relationship rewarding to them (Houssein et al., 2020). For this reason, employees who have been identified as high performers are likely to stay with the organisation, as their superior performance leads to both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. These differences in the perceptions held by employees on the social exchange relationship could impact on the retention of high performing employees.

2.7.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Motivation plays a critical role in high-performing employees choosing to stay rather than leave the organisation (Ozsoy, 2019). According to Samuel and Chipunza (2009), Herzberg has argued that employees are motivated by internal values, rather than values that are external to their work. In other words, this indicates that motivation is internally generated. Maidani (2001) posits that the Herzberg two-factor theory attempts to differentiate between the intrinsic job content and extrinsic job context of the job. There are certain factors that are related to the content of the job and provide satisfying experiences to employees called motivators or satisfiers, which include achievement, recognition, duties and responsibilities at work, career growth and advancement (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). The hygiene or dissatisfying factors are identified as those that are not as satisfying to the employees or work-related, where these include: company policies, salary, interpersonal working relationships with co-workers, and leadership styles (Steers & Porter, 1991). The Herzberg two-factor theory will be used to explain and understand factors that act as motivators for high-performing employees to stay with an organisation. The Herzberg theory asserts that employees seem to be motivated by intrinsic rather that extrinsic values, which may influence their decision to either stay or leave the organisation. This study explores which retention factors are considered important motivators for the retention of high-performing employees in a platinum mining company.

Employees who are considered high-performers in the organisation are those who currently have outstanding job performance and are most capable of delivering results that contribute towards the sustainability, success, and competitiveness of the business. They are normally the best talented employees in the organisation (Park et al., 2017). These employees have the required skills and experience needed to function effectively in their roles. High-performing employees also show some kind of dedication, motivation, and commitment to the organisation, which enables them to assist in sustaining and maintaining the competitiveness of the business at the required standards. Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) found that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and advancement opportunities are central to the retention of high-performing employees. The study will help to understand which of these retention factors are

important to the high-performing employees and could contribute to them staying in the organisation.

2.8   CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 explored the theoretical aims indicated in Chapter 1. The concept of retention was defined and explored, followed by a discussion on the importance of employee retention in organisations and factors that influence retention of high-performing employees in organisations.

The theories which are applicable to this study were also explored in detail, namely the social exchange theory and the Hertzberg two-factor theory, which indicates that individuals will maintain a relationship if they perceive that there is a mutually beneficial exchange between the employee and the organisation. Furthermore, that there are certain factors that are related to the content of the job and provides satisfying experiences for employees, which are called motivators or, and which include achievement, recognition, responsibility, career advancement, and growth (Almaaitah et al., 2017).

It is evident from the literature reviewed that one of important tasks with which the Human Capital Department is faced is to retain the employees who are high performers, as it is cost-effective and impacts the success and competitiveness of the organisation. High-performing employees, especially at middle management level, appears to be the backbone of the organisation, as they have the required qualifications, skills, knowledge, experience and competencies needed towards the sustainability and success of the organisation.

The following research aims were achieved in this chapter:

Specific Aim 1:   To conceptualise retention from a theoretical perspective.
Specific Aim 2:   To conceptualise high performing employee from a theoretical perspective.
Specific Aim 3:   To conceptualise retention strategies from a theoretical perspective.
Specific Aim 4:   To integrate the theories on retention and related strategies in relation to high performing employees from a theoretical perceptive.

Chapter 3 presents the study findings and addresses the empirical aims of the study in the form of an article.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH ARTICLE[1]

Retention of high-performing employees at middle management level within a platinum mining entity – An exploratory study

Abstract

Orientation: The retention of high-performing employees has become an important focus point in most organisations. High-performing employees have proven to be the most valuable assets that any organisation can have as they possess the knowledge and skills needed to assist achieve its immediate and future goals and objectives.

Research purpose: The purpose of the study was to explore and understand the perceptions of high performing employees at middle management level on the retention strategies that are important for them to stay with one of the PGM producing mining companies in South Africa.

Motivation for the study: Employees who are high performers in their designated fields of work are head-hunted by competitors; change jobs in a short space of time; and do not stay in organisations for as long as required by their employers. One of the reasons for this kind of work behaviour in high performing employees' is the lack of effective retention strategies within the organisation that motivates them to stay with a specific employer for the actual desired period of time.

Research design, approach and method: The study was qualitative and exploratory in nature and conducted within the constructivism paradigm, which resulted in a deeper understanding of the retention factors and strategies that are important to the high performing employees in middle management level. A purposeful sampling consisting of five high-performing employees at the middle management level from one of the Platinum Group Metals (PGM) producing mines in South Africa was utilised. In-depth interviews were conducted, and data was analysed using content analysis.

Main findings: The findings indicated that the high performing employees at middle management level are motivated by internal factors such as advancement, recognition, achievement, responsibility, and the work itself, to remain with the organisation. It was also found that external factors such as remuneration, job security, company policy, interpersonal relations and work condition also enhances job satisfaction, which prevents high-performing employees from leaving the organisation.

Practical/managerial implications: Every employee must be motivated to stay with the organisation for as long as possible. This is more applicable to the high-performing employees who are considered to be the best talent in the organisation, and actively contribute towards the sustainability and competitiveness of the organisation.

Contribution/value-add: This study provides insight into strategies that can be effectively implemented by the organisation to retain and ensure that high-performing employees at middle management level who contribute towards its sustainability, success, and competitiveness stay with the organisation for the desired and extended period.

Key words: Retention, high-performing employees, motivation, job satisfaction, middle management, platinum mine.

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[1] This chapter provides a detailed summary of the study findings presented in the form of a research article in accordance with the guidelines stipulated by the South African Journal of Industrial and Organisational Psychology (SAJIP).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Background to the study

High-performing employees are the most valuable assets in an organisation. The retention of high-performing employees is a major concern for most organisations in today's highly competitive and economically strained business environment (Bussin & Mouton, 2019). Globalisation has also made it difficult to retain high performers, as they are both ready and willing to change jobs and relocate internationally (Mabuza & Proches, 2014; Siwela & Van der Bank, 2021). Organisations that fail to retain their high performing employees are more inclined to lose key knowledge that is crucial to the sustainability, success, and competitiveness of the business (Al-Emadi et al., 2015; Mangisa et al., 2020; Mey et al., 2021; Prabhu & Drost, 2017). This appears to be applicable to both public and private sectors, including the mining companies, as the retention of high-performing employees enhances the organisation's performance, competitiveness, and productivity (El-Emadi et al., 2015; Mabaso et al., 2021). Banerjee (2019) found that proper retention strategy improves the performance of an organisation, in terms of production quality and profitability ratio.

Employee retention plays an important role in organisations by ensuring that highly-skilled and competent employees do not leave as they contribute towards the sustainability, success and competitiveness of the organisation. However, like most organisations, the mining industry is likely to face shortage of high performing employees who assist to meet the production needs due to lack of proper retention strategy resulting in employees being poached by other competing mines, resignations, fear of downsizing, and so on (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018; Van der Walt, 2016). The competition for high-performing skilled employees has resulted in employee retention being regarded as one of the greatest challenge faced by most organisations (Mangisa et al., 2020; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). This also applicable to the mining industry, which is characterised by unprecedented levels of talent mobility, as employees, especially those that are highly skilled and qualified seek to also satisfy their own individual needs and advance in their careers (Lumley et al., 2011; Siwela & Van der Bank, 2021).

Furthermore, the ability to retain the high performing employees who possess organisational knowledge, skills and experience promotes the competitive advantage for the organisation and is a long-term investment (Uitzinger et al., 2018). Attracting highly-skilled and qualified employees tends to be easier than retaining them, as different employees are motivated by various factors that cause them to stay with an organisation. Failure of an organisation to have

such measures in place and retain high-performing employees in middle management positions is likely to lead to the inability for teams to work effectively and meet the daily operational targets that might place the competitiveness and sustainability of the business at risk. In addition, today's work environment consists of employees from diverse demographic groups, which have different expectations and demands from their work environment (Pregnolato et al., 2017). This diversity in the workforce indicates that different employees are motivated by various factors that cause them to stay with the organisation. It is crucial for organisations to implement employee retention policies that are geared towards addressing the diverse needs of the employees, as an attempt to retain them (Adom, 2018). Adom (2018) states that the retention of high-performing employees is important to the development and the accomplishment of the organisation's goals and objectives. As a result, the high-performing middle managers ought to be viewed as assets for most organisations, as they assist towards the business competitiveness and its sustainability (Dhanpat et al., 2018).

3.1.2 Research purpose

The loss of high-performing middle managers who have the skills, knowledge, and experience that is required to meet the immediate and future production needs; and contributes towards the success, competitiveness, and sustainability, is a concern for most organisations, including the mining companies of South Africa (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017; Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018). Kossivi et al. (2016) points out the need for an organisation to not only focus on attracting the best talent, but also on the necessity to retain this talent for a long period of time. As a result, the number of employees who exit various organisations annually have forced employers to better understand the various factors that retain the high performing middle managers (Pregnolato et al., 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of the retention factors and strategies that are important to high-performing middle managers long-term in a platinum mining company. The aim was to explore and understand the perceptions of high performing middle managers on retention strategies within a platinum mining company.

The specific literature aims of the study were to:

Specific Aim 1:   conceptualise retention from a theoretical perspective.
Specific Aim 2:   conceptualise high-performing employee from a theoretical perspective.
Specific Aim 3:   conceptualise retention strategies from a theoretical perspective.

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Specific Aim 4:   integrate the theories on retention and related strategies in relation to high-performing employees from a theoretical perceptive. The specific empirical aims of this study were to:

1.   explore the views of high performing employees on retention strategies at middle management level in a platinum mining company;
2.   provide recommendations to the organisation on retention practices that can be used to retain the high performing employees; and
3.   provide recommendations areas for future research based on the research findings, to the field of industrial and organisational psychology with regard to the retention of high-performing employees at middle management level.

3.1.3   Contribution of the study

It is important for South African mining companies to ensure the retention of qualified and high-performing middle managers, who effectively contributes towards the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the business. The retention of high-performing employees is crucial, and should be a long-term perspective, as it is a vital source of competitive advantage for any organisation (Giri & Gayatri, 2018; Otto & Acquah, 2018). Furthermore, the retention of high-performing middle managers can play a crucial role towards the accomplishment of the organisation's goals and objectives, as they are likely to be the department managers that effectively communicate information from top management to the rest of the workforce (Chinyamurindi, 2016). This study provides insight and recommendations on the retention strategies that can be implemented to minimise the loss of high-performing middle managers in the organisation who have the potential to advance beyond their current level and actively assist in the sustainability and competitiveness of the mine.

3.1.4   Literature review

Employee retention is a concern for most organisations in South Africa. For an organisation to remain operational and competitive, it needs to employ the best employees in the market, who can assist to achieve its operational needs. The sustainability, success, and competitiveness of most organisations depend on the retention of their qualified, experienced, skilled, and high-performing employees (Otoo & Acquah, 2018; Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018). In today's work environment, organisations make every effort possible to strive to acquire and retain high-performing employees, who effectively contribute towards its sustainability and competitiveness (Park et al., 2017). Pregnolato et al. (2017) support this view by indicating

that the retention of high-performing employees is necessary in terms of running a successful and sustainable business. Lack of effective retention strategies can harm an organisation as the high performers leave with the knowledge and trade secrets acquired from their former employer with the competing organisation (Mangisa et al., 2020; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Siwela & Van der Bank, 2021). For this reason, it is important for organisations to analyse and take actions that reflect a commitment to retaining high-performing middle managers. Munish (2017) suggests that retention is the process according to which the employer implements measures and good policies that prevents the high-performing employees from leaving the organisation.

The Covid 19 pandemic has introduced a new normal in today's work environment signified by change and development in technology. Buheji and Buhehi (2020) found that the retention of high performing employees has even become more critical post the Covid 19 pandemic, as organistions are expected to respond and adapt to the new world environment. The Covid 19 pandemic has introduced flexible work arrangements to sustain the organisation and also balance employees work-life (Agba et al., 2020).

Effective employee retention is a systematic effort by the employer to create and foster needs in an environment that encourages current employees to remain with an organisation and at the same time meet the operational needs (Alhussami, 2017; Giri & Gayatri, 2018). Employee retention is likely to target employees who have the potential to be future leaders, or in leadership positions who are qualified, highly competent, and form critical resources of organisational competitiveness (Park et al., 2017). Ashley (2018) points out that to successfully retain employees, the human capital department ought to value these employees more than just drivers of the organisations, but by their personal values. The implementation of good policies also appears to enhance the retention of high performing and valuable employees. Letchmiah & Thomas (2017) state that organisations should develop retention strategies based on the needs of their high-performing employees, as the key assets of the organisation.

Research indicates that to effectively retain key knowledge, as well as improve organisational performance and competitiveness, organisations must develop and implement employee retention strategies such as rewards, work-life balance, fair and competitive wages, training and development, career opportunities, and incentives to keep their high performers from leaving (El-Emadi et al., 2015; Macule & Ngoepe, 2018). Employee retention strategies can be viewed as social exchange practices, as employees seems to remain with their respective organisations if management value and effectively implement the retention strategies that also

meet their personal needs (El-Emadi et at., 2015; Mabaso et al., 2021; Nayak et al., 2021). Park et al. (2017) support this view by indicating that by providing strategies such as competitive salaries and fast-track promotions to high performers, enhances the retention and job satisfaction of these employees.

Khanna (2017) further asserts that there are certain factors that can assist the high performing employees to achieve personal as well as organisational goals and objectives. For this reason, organisational leaders should aim to implement retention strategies that will successfully motivate the high performers to keep them happy and in the organisation. The Herzberg two-factor motivation theory suggests that motivation factors that are directly related to the job itself, such as achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth, may enhance the retention of high-performing employees (Mabuza & Proches, 2014; Ozsoy, 2019). In addition, there are also hygiene factors, which are not directly related to work, but which might affect employee's attitude towards work, which is the organisational policies and administration, relationship with senior managers and co-workers, working conditions, salary, and other incentives (Khanna, 2017; Ozsoy, 2019). All these factors need to be taken into account in order to retain the high performers who actively contribute to the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the organisation. Herzberg's theory suggest that the absence of either motivation or hygiene factors can cause job dissatisfaction among high performing employees, which might result in them seeking alternative employment and leaving their current employer.

The work environment consists of employees from diverse demographic groups with different needs. Pregnolato et al. (2017) points out that employees coming from diverse demographic groups have different expectations and demands from their work environment. Nevertheless, research indicates that high-performing employees are still inclined to leave their respective organisations, due to reasons such as the work itself, role overload from perspective job demands, and poor-quality relationship with their managers and co-workers (Pregnolato et al., 2017). Research conducted by Otto and Acquah (2018) posits that factors such as employee recognition, training and development, well-defined career path, responsibility, and working conditions are tools that can be implemented in organisations for employee retention. Park et al. (2017) have stated that even though organisations can offer good and competitive benefits to attract and keep their high-performing employees, such employees can still become dissatisfied and decide to leave. For such reasons, Munish (2017) reported that it is critical for management to know and understand the perception and mobility of their employees dynamically as they can be in a position to implement competent retention strategies all the time.

High-performing employees are the most valuable assets an organisation has (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017, Mangisa et al., 2020; Mey et al., 2021). High-performing employees are those employees who are qualified, skilled, and have the experience needed to ensure the sustainability, success, and competitiveness of the organisation. For this reason, the retention of such employees is essential to the success and sustainability of most organisations.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2.1   Research approach

The study was conducted within the constructivism paradigm to gain a deeper understanding on which retention strategies are important to high-performing employees. Chatterjee (2005) states that constructivists hold the view that the social world is inter-subjective and a result of human consciousness consisting different kinds of communicative idioms that derive from some shared community or environment.

A qualitative, exploratory research approach was followed in this study. The approach was in line with the paradigm and aims of the study. The qualitative approach in the form of in-depth interviews was used to collect information. Kaur (2017) asserts that in-depth interviews with small number of respondents are often used when conducting qualitative study as it provides very rich information from the individual and avoiding the influence of others on the opinion of an individual.

The following section presents a detailed description of the research setting, entrée, and establishment of researcher roles, sampling, and collection and recording of data, and how it was analysed. The section further presents the strategies that were employed to ensure the quality of the data, how the ethical standards were maintained throughout the study, and the reporting of the results.

3.2.2   Research strategy

A pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the interview guide with individuals who did not form part of the study sample. The responses from the pilot interview are not included in the overall data collection, analysis and discussion of this study. The response from the pilot study indicated that some of the questions were not clear to the participants, and as a result, were refined and amended accordingly. The feedback from the pilot study also estimated the

time required to conduct the telephonic interviews and pointed out potential technical issues likely to arise during the actual telephonic interviews. A hands-free telephone was used and switched to speaker to enable the interviewer to take notes during the interview sessions. Five in-depth interviews were conducted with the high-performing middle managers to collect data and the content analysis was used to analyse the data collected.

The research sample consisted of thirteen participants, who initially formed part of the research study. However, after interviewing the 5th participant, the researcher did not proceed with the remaining participants, as a point of saturation was reached. The saturation phase revealed that new themes or additional data could no longer be attained from the research participants (Saunders et al., 2018). The decision not to proceed with interviews was made based on the depth of data already collected.

3.3   RESEARCH METHOD

3.3.1   Sampling

Purposive sampling was chosen as a method to collect data, as it granted access for the researcher to critically choose a population size, where the social phenomena being studies is mostly like to occur (Silverman, 2013). The high-performing middle managers were found to be the best source of rich and valuable information, as they are likely to be the ones that valued due to their consistent high performance and prevented to leave the company.

In-depth telephonic interviews were conducted with five participants who are identified as high performing middle managers in a platinum mining company. Data saturation was reached after the fifth participant was interviewed as there was no new information found and repeats of themes were identified (Saunders et al., 2017).

The below table present the biographical information of the research participants in the study. The information was used to create descriptive pseudonyms of the participants in the findings of the study.

Table 3.1

Biographical Information of the Research Participants

Participant	Age	Race	Gender	Tenure (years)
P1	43	African	Male	8
P2	37	African	Male	4
P3	36	African	Male	11
P4	33	White	Female	5
P5	30	African	Male	6

*Source: Authors own work

3.3.2 Research setting

This study was conducted at one of the Platinum Group Metals mining companies in South Africa, one of the deepest platinum mine in the world, located in the bushvelds of Limpopo Province. The principal consumers of PGMs are the motor-manufacturing and jewellery industries. The mine employees a total of 9000 employees from semi-skilled, skilled, to professional occupations. The mine has three main business divisions, namely the mining, process, and sustainability.

3.3.3 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

My role as an interviewer was influenced by experience gained through conducting interviews at work and theoretical knowledge from academic study, where I undertook the role of an interviewer, data capturer, and interpreter of the research results. The relevant stakeholders signed all the necessary documentation and approval was obtained from the University, the company and the research participants before data was collected. All approval letters are attached as appendices. Appendix A presents a letter from the Executive human resource from the mining company where the research was conducted, and Appendix B presents the ethics clearance certificate from UNISA (2019_CEMS/IOP_018).

The human resource manager sent out emails to heads of department in the organisation, informing them of the research study. A different email was also sent out to participants, informing them that the researcher will be communicating with them to participate in the telephonic interviews. Emails were sent out to participants from the researcher's personal email, inviting them to partake in the study, and that participation was voluntarily, and not part of any form of activity or appraisals in the organisation. The participant information sheet was also sent out to participants to inform them about the purpose of the research study and that

participation was voluntary. This was followed by the exchange of numerous emails with the participants to ensure that the consent forms were signed and sent back to the researcher to save prior to the research interview (Appendix C). The interviews were also scheduled via email to set the time and date to conducting telephonic interviews. The email correspondence between the researcher and participants were kept in a folder to further review during the data analysis process. The interviews were conducted on different date as per availability of the participants.

3.3.4   Data collection methods

A phenomenological approach of the study prompted the use of in-depth interviews as a method of data collection to explore and understand the high-performing middle managers' experiences and expectations on retention strategies within the mining company (Mohajan, 2018). According to Padilla-Diaz (2015), phenomenological interviews should be open-ended so as to enable the participants to describe their experiences in detail. The use of in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to gain insight and clarity from the participants during the interview.

The in-depth interview guide (Appendix D) was designed and tested through a pilot study with individuals who did not did not form part of the actual interviews. The questions that were used to conduct the pilot study were the same comprehensive questions drafted for the study. This was done to test the effectiveness of the instrument. Once the interview guide was tested, it was adjusted and improved accordingly to acquire a clear and detailed interpretation from the research participants. The response obtained during the pilot study are not included in the final reporting.

Permission was requested from the relevant stakeholders of the organisation to carry out the research on the high performing middle managers in the organisation. The human resource manager at the mining operations provided the researcher with email addresses of high-performing middle managers from various departments within the operation. Interviews were scheduled via email for 30 minutes with the participants to allow ample time to address any questions and technical issues that may arise prior to the interviews. The consent forms were signed and returned to the researcher before the interview date and safely stored in the password protected electronic device. On the day of the actual interview, the researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study, data collection methods and how the results will be reported. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary.

The interview sessions were conducted in English, which is the business language for most companies.

3.3.5   Recording of data

After obtaining the signed, informed consent from the participants to continue with the study, an audio-recording device and handwritten interview notes were used to record what was said during the interview (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The audio recording was used to ensure data was correctly collected and that the researcher concentrated on the interview and building rapport with the participants than being distracted with extensive interview taking (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The interview data was then transcribed verbatim, which assisted the researcher to become familiar with the research data collected (Rutakumwa et al., 2019).

Data collected during the study was stored in a locked cupboard and electronically in a password protected device. All participants signed the consent form, which stipulated that the data would be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of the research study.

The following section provides a detailed description of how data in this research study was collected.

3.3.6   Data analysis

The process of data analysis assists the researcher in reducing the volume of text collected, identify categories thematically, and obtain some understanding from these (Bengtsson, 2016). For this study, content analysis was used to analyse data that was obtained during the data collection process. The main objective of using content analysis is to systematically transform a large amount of text into a highly organised and concise summary of key results (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

To start with the process of content analysis, transcripts were read several times to make sense of the phenomenon as a whole, and to gain a general understanding of what the participants were talking about during the interview (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Petterson et al., 2019). The purpose of this phase was to become familiar with the data, and to start to generate points and ideas of what the participants were saying during the interview sessions (Elo et al., 2014).

After being familiar with the data collected, the written text was divided into smaller parts known as meaning units, with specific words and sentences that retained the same core meaning from the initial interviews (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). The meaning units were further condensed into smaller texts to make sense of data and gain a clearer understanding of core meaning that came out of the initial interview sessions (Elo et al., 2014). Data was analysed by organising it into smaller categories based on themes and concepts, which provided a means to describe a phenomenon to increase understanding and generate knowledge (Elo et al., 2014). Some data that was organised into categories did not fit the categorisation frame, but new concepts were created based on the principle of inductive content analyses (Elo & Kings, 2007).

The next step was to read and break down the condensed text into codes by reading the texts and writing key words and labels that describe all aspect of the content (Elo et al., 2014; Erlingsson & Brysiewics, 2017). This was done to make it easy to identify the connection between words, sentences, and concepts that kept reoccurring as the researcher examined the data. Coding also assists to sort the large mass of data in order to quickly retrieve relevant parts of it. Coding can be draining and cause fatigue for the researcher, hence it was necessary to recheck the codes meaning and consistency after coding the full data set (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Thereafter, the researcher examined the data to draw conclusions and this process involved identifying relationships between categories and testing these categories against the complete data set (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). After drawing conclusions, the final step was to report the findings.

3.3.7   Strategies employed to ensure quality of data

Credibility, confirmability and transferability were strategies employed to ensure the data quality in this research study.

Credibility refers to the reassurance that the results from the qualitative research are credible and true from the perspective of the participants in the research study (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The credibility of the data in this research was ensured by reporting results as they were obtained from the participants without making any changes to it. Accuracy of the transcribed interviews were also verified by listening to the audio recordings to ensure that no relevant data has been excluded (Bengtsson, 2016).

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the data collection and the extent to which others can confirm the research results who read and review them (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). A clear

description of how data was gathered and processed during the course of the research study was presented so as to enhance the accuracy of the information received from the participants and its interpretation (Elo et al., 2014).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be generalised or transferred to other settings or groups (Bengtsson, 2016). A detailed description of the research context is provided so that other researchers are able to make judgements about the finding's transferability to other similar research topics (Elo et al., 2014; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

3.3.8 Reporting

A diagram is used to summarise the results from the study. This is followed by the in-depth discussion of the results integrated with the literature applicable to the study.

3.4   FINDINGS

The findings of this study aim to address the specific aims relation to the study. The specific aims of the study were to:

1.   Explore the perceptions of high performing employees on retention strategies at middle management level in a platinum mining company.
2.   Gain an understanding on how the retention strategies at the platinum mining company influence the decision of the high performing middle managers to remain within the organisation.
3.   Provide recommendations on retention factors that can be implemented to retain the high performing employees at middle management level in a platinum mining company.

The coded results were categorised into themes from the Herzberg two-factor model. The themes were also categorised into motivator and hygiene factors based on the two-factor model. Findings from the study also indicated that some of the hygiene factors also served as retention and motivating factors for the high-performing middle managers to stay with the organisation. Participants are cited verbatim.

Figure 3.1

Summary of Study Findings
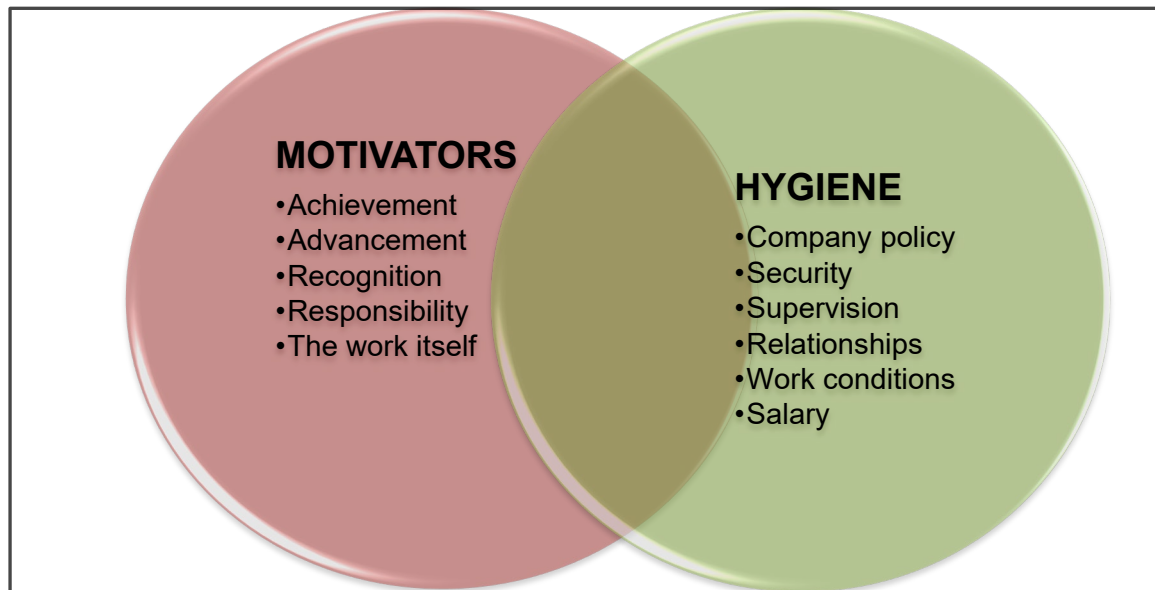
Source: Author's own work

In Figure 3.1 the coded results were separated into motivator and hygiene factors based on the responses from the participants. A detailed description of the above results follows in the next sections.

3.4.1 Perceptions of high-performing employees on retention strategies at middle management level in a platinum mining company

Every employee has different reasons as to why they choose to join a specific organisation and stay with it for a desired period of time. These factors can either be personal or influenced by the job itself and the working condition. As a start, I had to firstly explore the general elements as to what attracted these employees to join the organisation and how this factor has contributed you them staying with the organisation. The specific questions and subsequent responses are presented below:

Question: What job factors attracted you to join this organisation?

Based on the responses from the participants, the main reason they joined the organisation was due to the nature of the work itself and work conditions in the mining sector. The work experience, academic, and legal qualifications, which in most cases are the core requirement in the mining industry for certain departments, appeared to be the most common job factor

that attracted the participants to join the organisation. From the various responses given by the participants, it also appeared that the mine itself would actually go to the extent of actively seeking for individual with a specific legal qualification to join their organisation. Participant 3 said "*As an engineer to be legally appointed, you need a GCC, I do not know how the company found out, they just called me to come join, and I was working for another mining company*." Other job factors that served as motivators included the growing opportunities within the company and remuneration package, which participants viewed as good when compared with their previous employers. Participant 1 said "*What actually pulled me toward the company was a growing company and a lot of opportunities, there are many opportunities to learn and grow with the company I do not want to be stagnant; I am very young and have a choice to specialise in few years on 10.*" When I probed further on this question, it was evident that Participant 1, Participant 3 and Participant 5 researched the organisation before accepting the employment offer, and their decisions were mostly based on the fact that there are more opportunities for career growth and being exposed to new experiences, as compared to other organisations. What also came out of the interviews with the high-performing middle managers was that opportunities for career growth and exposure actually weighed higher than remuneration packages when deciding to join the organisation. The high performers reported that experience and the opportunity to advance in their careers was one of the important job factors that motivated them to stay with the organisation.

To further explore and understand how these various job factors have actually influenced and motivated their decision to stay with the organisation, the following was asked:

Question: How have these factors contributed to you staying with the organisation?
Findings indicated that career advancement, achievement, recognition, responsibility, work itself, remuneration and job security were identified as factors which mostly influenced the high performing middle managers to stay with the organisation.

The responses from the participants indicated that high-performing middle managers are influenced by the presence of the motivator factors based on the Herzberg two-factor-model to remain part of the organisation. Participant's responses also pointed out that Hertzberg hygiene factors such as remuneration, job security and working conditions also contributes towards the retention of employees, as the salary and other incentives offered are good when compared to other mining entities. Other hygiene factors, such as relationship with direct manager and colleagues and supervision were discussed during the interview sessions. Even though these factors appeared as important to the participants, the absence of one or two factors were a concern to others.

The findings of the results are separated into the motivator and hygiene factors based on the responses from the participants.

MOTIVATOR FACTORS

Achievement

Achievement refers to the new and challenging assignments, maximum utilisation of talents, and ability to perform well in the tasks assigned to the high-performing employees (Khanna, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:

"You just don't learn but given opportunities to run the department and implement new systems and processes that contributes towards the success of the business and employees".

Participant 2 indicated:

"It is really motivating to see that something that you have sort of researched and something you come up with and it get implemented and you see that is a satisfying feeling."

Participant 1 also added:

"Being able to implement changes sort of gives me a sense of purpose in the organisation."

"Acting is another learning curve, when they are not here to automatically fill in".

Participant 3 indicated:

"As an engineer to be legally appointed, you need a GCC."

Participant 3 also added:

"I do not know how the company found out, they just called me to come join, and I was working for another mining company."

Participant 4 indicated:

"I am a legal appointee so hence I need to keep a balance of making sure that the operations are going as safe as possible and economic as well."

Participant 5 indicated:

"Having to join and be allowed to put all those things to practice that were not in place has contributed to one staying behind."

Achievement for high-performing middle managers resulted from being given opportunities to run their various departments and implement new systems and processes that contributes towards the success of the business and employees.

Recognition

Recognition refers to the attention, appreciation and favourable note given to the high-performing employees for outstanding behaviour (Khanna, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:

"They do recognise you by saying and giving you a thank you sometimes and that makes a difference, just saying thank you is a word that is so much more sometimes than a bonus cheque or something."

Participant 1 also added:

"*They took us out for lunch and braai to say thank you, that was nice."*

Participant 2 indicated that:

"We do not have individualised KPI's but recognised as a business unit or team and everyone gets the same score."

Participant 3 indicated:

"*Money is temporary, they can give you money today and tomorrow will be less, being motivated in what you are doing is the key, at least someone can see that I am making a difference."*

Participant 4 also added:

"In this department, your value is seen in the long run, when the recognition happen they do say guys you have done well and we have reached 10 million fatalities, it does happen."

Participant 5 indicated:

"*But you do get satisfied when you get recognition from the lower-level young and old people who have been here for so many years say they never thought in the history of this we thought we had a good company but you came and turned it around."*

Participant 5 also added:

"*So hmmmm, whenever someone is not at work, everybody assumes that I would just fill in and work for them."*

"That is fulfilling but from your senior guys that is absent, and you need to hear it from everyone, if the general manager does not say that you get worried, and there are times where you say if I get another opportunity I will leave but if you get told I mean by everyone you see can actually contribute to you staying."

It was evident that the high-performing middle managers valued being recognised in the organisation for their efforts and work that they do and being told "thank you, you have done well", does make them feel good about their achievement and appreciated by management and lower-level employees.

Responsibility

Responsibility refers to the freedom, power, additional challenging jobs given to the high-performing employees to perform task in their own way (Khanna, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:
"It definitely gave me a sense of purpose and responsibility for them to say you are a champion for one and two in other departments."

Participant 3 indicated:
"I was welcomed here and given the opportunity to make changes where I could, and ever since I came here everyone has been believing in me and happy about how I work and that encourages me to carry one."

Participant 3 also added:
"I enjoy doing what I am doing and deal with different companies to buy material and run the department."

Participant 5 indicated:
"I realised that there were so many things not in place and being allowed the responsibility to put all those things in place has contributed to one staying."

"Providing development opportunities to employees and influencing transformations intervention in the organisation, you have to push for development and line manager not taking accountability of people's development, so having to enforce people to go for training."

"The other managers will tell you that it is part of your job and you will get the recognition from your direct manager."

Participant 2 also indicated that:

"My manager micromanages, and I am comfortable till he goes on leave them I am stuck here by myself cause then I have issues. If I were to change something about him, I would be for him to micromanage less."

Participant 3 indicated:

"I do enjoy what I am doing and for this company to allow me to practice my legal qualification and learn, I am given an opportunity when the boss is not at work and given the confidence of running the business."

Participant 1 also added:

"I have gained so much knowledge since I have started working here as jack of all traits, not just in what I do but in a very broad spectrum so that actually opens up my CV so that when I want to specialise I have options."

"Sometimes I feel abused because I know a lot and I do and I am part of a lot but I still learn."

The high performing middle managers spoke positively about the high level of responsibility of work that they have in their various department. They seemed to enjoy the level of responsibility and trust given to them by their senior managers. From their responses, one could also ascertain that they are allowed to run their different department without any interruptions. They also expressed how they are equipped and given the opportunity to make changes where possible for the success of their departments.

Advancement

Advancement refers to training and development opportunities to assist the high-performing employees to become experts and add value to the organisation, which makes them feel more fulfilled (Khanna, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:

"What actually pulled me toward the company was a growing company and a lot of opportunities. There are many opportunities to learn and grow with the company I do not want to be stagnant, I am very young and have a choice to specialise in few years on 10."

Participant 2 indicated:

"All my career plans in this company happened at the exact age as planned even I am at a way better position I never planned for."

Participant 3 indicated:

"To know that I have room for growth and the company has plans for me."

Participant 4 indicated:

"Someone of my age has a career plan so the organisation must have that so that I can be able to align my career plan with what they have planned for themselves so for me is a centre stage of retention."

"To have that development done in a way that is proper and structured as well and clear in terms of timelines and who is responsible for what and how you do it, for example I want to do my master's now, how do I go about starting that process."

Participant 1 also added:

"I can get information about where we are and how we can get better through conference and causes."

Participant 5 indicated:

"For me I would say learning and development and opportunities in once career progression and succession planning in place for people, coaching and mentoring."

"The retention strategies are obviously being coaching and mentoring and to have a transparent talent pool and succession pool and enhancing development interventions and opportunities."

Participant 1 added:

"I feel a lot of people feel stuck in their positions because of their background and qualification, like back then you could get into the mine with matric and work your way up, but know everything has changed, I mean we are looking for qualified people, so there was no opportunity for them to grow. But everybody that I know stay and nobody leaves, I can't wait for people to actually go on pension to have a career path here."

Participant 2 added:

"The manager is on leave and I am acting in the position and the guy is 65, so there is a good thing that could happen that could change my life, in order to be promoted, you have to wait for that guy to go on pension."

"Some will move for better opportunities like maybe my boss is two years younger than me, so chances are this guy is not going anywhere."

The high-performing middle managers expressed that one of the reasons that attracted them to the organisations was the opportunity to grow and advance in their careers. The organisation gave them the opportunity to grow and learn new skills and knowledge that they would find challenging. They expressed that the organisation gives them exposure to other departments that broadens their career and opened more options up for them to specialise in going forward.

The work itself

The work itself refers to the feeling that the actual work that the high-performing employees perform is important and meaningful to the organisation (Khanna, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:

"Something new every day and challenging but it is nice, and give me opportunities to travel, see other sites, get information and interact with people from other companies."

Participant 2 indicated:

"My work is mostly technical, so the technical stuff is not an issue for me, I love doing it anyway. Something that needs to be sorted scientifically is not a problem for me."

Participant 3 indicated:

"Technically, I am a very good person for the job that I do. The management style is different here, not shouting I used for a mining company, where you will leave at 11 at night. It does happen with other companies where people are shouted and looked down at."

"I am always thinking the current management in three to four years is going to on pension so there will be a change in management. Should the new management not change the style of management I will definitely stay."

Participant 4 indicated:

"We are responsible for the design of support, filling systems so all those things you will measure them over the long run to see whether are we having more falls of ground."

Participant 5 indicated:

"I will like to do less of administrative, even to work more manually and outside of digital platform or electronic platform, Less of paper work, why can't we do everything on a digital platform? You still have to do the paperwork and put everything in a system, is a time wastage there."

"Created a platform for open engagement at all levels without people fearing for victimisation, and also a situation where the can be inclusive diversity at the workplace and not discrimination especially where there is white against black."

"Seeing the organisation where an engagement is top-down being not bottom-up, but you respect senior managers and don't engage, the mangers take total control and whatever they say is correct and I had to confront those things."

What I could pick up is that the high-performing middle managers enjoy being part of the platinum mining entity, due to the actual work itself, as they have the skills and requirement to do the job effectively.

HYGIENE FACTORS

Company policy

Company policy refers to clear and fair procedures that can reduce retention among high-performing employees (Khanna, 2017).

Participants 1 indicated:

"Have an open door policy if there is a meeting an I am interested why should I be excluded if it is something about my work, have information sharing session and just."

Participant 2 indicated:

"It is difficult especially when it comes to hr, I don't know how to work with people. That has been difficult I haven't mastered that as yet. Sometimes people just know how to frustrate you. HR is a problem for me, the complaints, concerns, or grievances. There will be times for

disciplinary hearings and you have to initiate some time and be the chairperson. That depresses me."

"The communication is not straightforward with the lower levels, like if there is an issue or problem, I believe it needs to be sorted right there, but they have other ways of doing things, they prefer to go around before they actually address an issue."

Participant 3 indicated:

"I think they couldn't fit in the management style and culture of the company and politics, where some people end up leaving."

Participant 4 indicated:

"Then the alignment of the objectives of the organisation, the values from the bottom to the top the value with obviously the way the organisation evolves with the development of the individuals."

Participant 5 indicated:

"I realised that there were so many things that were not in place, like the HR development and training programmes that were implemented for the first time. Even your policies that guided the support of employees were that you go and achieve and we will pay later or we borrow money and deduct every month."

"For me, I would say transformation at its best, including inclusion of mostly women in technical high level positions. We really don't have, so, and obviously being responsible for transformation as well as employment equity; that will actually keep me if it would actually happen, some people left because of discrimination and victimisation and not being able to cope."

Participant 2 also added:

"I have seen the company transform, I mean, where people were called sir or ma'am, so; but lately I have seen there has been couple of changes where senior managers are being addressed by their first names. Our company was rigid like did not like change like we know what we know and it aligns with the business plans. But I have seen lately things have started to change so we are not that rigid anymore. There is a bit of flexibility."

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"When government was pushing for transformation, it was quite key for me, because I was if I go to other mines I will compete with a whole lot of guys so I might as well stay here where I am the only black guy in my department."

Participant 1 also added:

"There was a time when there were only few white managers and I am talking just after 2010, and it was only now recently 2015, 16 & 17 when you see a lot of black managers."

Supervision

Supervision refers to the problems faced by the high performing employees at the workplace (Khann, 2017).

Participant 2 indicated:

"When someone has transgressed company policies and you need to dismiss them, that is the most painful thing that we have to do and it is bad."

Participant 4 indicated:

"We really getting challenges with supervision especially where we have to instil discipline. In my view, HR needs to make sure that our supervision is helping people and they are equipped to actually ensure discipline in workplaces."

"Most incidents that we have always point towards failure in supervision and discipline, In fact even me today I am due for a misconduct management course and there are interventions that are being put in place."

Relationships

Relationships refers to health and positive interpersonal relationship with colleagues and managers in an organisation (Khann, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:

"I might not be part of top management, but I am still part of the group, we have a close relationship. I think we are very supportive towards each other, if they have some bad going on I try to assist I see you are struggling with something personal and let me help you if I can."

"My manager and I have a good relationship; I have a few line managers that I sort of supports technically. I gets difficult in terms of entailment, but with my actual manager we get along

very well believe I get along with everybody but every now and then will be a fight and miscommunication, it like family some good days and bad days."

Participant 2 indicated:

"My manager and I we are good, in a way that I would say I understand him and I think he understands me."

"In my departments is me and the engineer, he does his thing we rarely clash he is independent I am independent. So most of the time we talk about social things. The relationship is good, but there will be those where the relationship is not good. I mean everyone is down to have his or her favourites. I prefer people who listen to what I tell them and not do their own thing."

Participant 3 indicated:

"I have never experienced any problems since coming here, I have a good working relationship with all our managers, with my peers it is good although there will be that one problematic individual we have different characters so we have to accommodate to work together to achieve a common goal."

"Sometimes it is challenging dealing with people, they do have problems, but you learn to deal with different characters. Because every person has their own character at the work place and you learn to accommodate each individual, but I did gain experience dealing with people, I learn a lot from working with people."

"I do have a good working relationship with everyone nevertheless you will always have that individual but it is not the end and reason to resign."

Participant 4 indicated:

"The relationship is awesome with my current manager I really enjoy working with him especially form an experience point of view, he has a lot of experience in deep-level mining."

"The relationship with my peers is good to such an extent that we share experiences cause in as much as we are working in the same mine also the conditions vary."

Participant 5 indicated:

"My relationship with my manager is good 100%, she has helped me to settle in the operation and gave me feedback on my work, we have become friends even outside the company."

"I have good relationship with my peers that we actually engage outside work, we socialise and meet for braais and engage and we do all these things."

Work conditions

Work conditions refers the physical environment and conditions that makes the high performing employees feel proud to work for the organisation (Khann, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:

"Opportunities every now and then to leave an hour earlier to play golf with my fellow employees, act outside work, leave early and do extra mural activities."

"I like the bushveld, keep the setting as it is and just make it more inclusive and team building functions, where we socialise and get to know everybody."

Participant 1 also added:

"Some people might have left because they want to move close to the city, we are in the bushveld. People leave because of their personal reasons and what they want to achieve."

Participant 2 indicated:

"I started here as a graduate, so if I were to leave I will miss everything about the company."

Participant 3 indicated:

"What I like about the company is the working hours, you start at seven and you leave a four, and you go and interact with your family, whether the job is done or not you go at four tomorrows is still a day. But, because the employees are happy, they end up completing their jobs on time and are allowed expressing themselves."

Participant 4 indicated:

"Not interacted with people who have left the company people that are here stay longer than 10 years, I found them here."

Participant 5 indicated:

"Most of the guys sticking around even if there are other reasons because of the money, you are retained even if you don't want to be."

"I think the other one is just flexibility, where people are working in departments than can allow for flexible working hours, sometimes even working from home remotely. Those elements could be produced that we actually come to the office twice a week at the minimum and the rest can actually work from home."

Remuneration

Remuneration refers to the financial compensation and rewards that the high performing employee (Khann, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated:

"I do get my quarterly bonuses that everybody gets, a good salary and good benefits in terms of your bonus and incentives schemes like a share scheme."

"As a company, you look at the salary, setting, the working hours, the culture that we have is good, good medical, housings and all these extra benefits."

Participant 2 indicated:

"People need to be remunerated properly that is important because if you are not happy. You are not going to be at your best."

Participant 3 indicated:

"The company has good shared scheme that is very good compared to other companies, so that kept me as well."

Participant 4 indicated:

"Also the remuneration package was good compared to where I was. Financially if you are remunerated well financially you will be at your best."

Participant 5 indicated:

"The mining sector has good incentives as well, so if I were to leave, then I know those incentives anywhere, I don't think there is any other employer who gives such incentives, I would say financial benefit from remuneration and incentives point of view."

Job Security

Job security refers to safety and security related to the job itself (Khann, 2017).

Participant 2 indicated:

"So I figured for job security wise, it was a good company for me to be at, that is why I never left."

"I had friends that would be a year into a job and then retrenched, that is why I didn't leave. If I go, and the next thing I am retrenched. Number one would be job security and number two was for the opportunities that I see was going to come in the future and where I want to be."

Participant 3 indicated:

"The first is job security, if I know that the company will still exist for a long time and it is doing well to sustain the business I will feel great to stay."

Participant 4 indicated:

"What I have seen is the issue of retention, especially on the production side, you find that people are rotating a lot so this one come and the turnover is quite high, so once you have that you lose the experience even the knowledge."

The following section will present the findings on the retention strategies by the high performing employees in middle management level in a platinum mining entity.

3.5   DISCUSSION

Section 3.4 presented the responses obtained from the participants under study. Figure 3.1 summarised the results that highlight the retention factors that influence and are considered important by the high-performing employees in middle management level to stay with the platinum mining entity. This section will integrate the research findings with the theory applicable to the study.

3.5.1   Retention strategies

Factors that contribute to the retention of high-performing employees are related to the content of their work and factors outside their job (Busatlic & Mujabasic, 2018). The study findings indicate that there are intrinsic factors related to the job itself that motivates and influence the decisions of high performing middle managers to remain with the organisation, besides the

good competitive salary offered when compared to other mining entities. These include challenging work responsibilities, a sense of personal achievement, career advancement and growth, promotion opportunities, recognition for a job well done, and assigned roles and responsibilities on job itself. The findings also show that there are other factors outside the job itself that influence their decision to remain with the organisation. Most of the participants agreed that external factors, such as job security, salary, work conditions, and interpersonal relationships have contributed to them remaining with the organisation even though opportunities are there to leave and join other mining entities. Some of the study participants reported at there have been some challenges with some of the external factors such as company policy and supervision at the workplace but does not influence their decision to remain with the organisation. Research conducted by Bexheti and Bexheti (2016) reported that employees with both internal and external factors related to the job are likely to be the high-performers and retained in the organisation.

The Herzberg two-factor theory assisted to explore and understand the intrinsic and external factors, which contributes towards the retention of the high-performing middle managers a mining organisation. Most of the study participants agreed that attaining achievement through complex and challenging workload has motivated them to remain with the organisation. Being given the opportunity to implement new systems in their various departments has given them a sense of purpose, which has contributed to them staying with the organisation. Uitzinger et al. (2018) found that high-performing employees in middle management level are likely to leave the organisation due to lack of challenging workloads.

Most of the study participants agreed that they joined the organisation because of the growth opportunities and the new experiences that the mining entity presented. The participants also indicated that they were excited about the continuous learning, career advancement, and growth opportunities present in the organisation. Most of the participants also indicated that having a clear career path and development opportunities would motivate them to remain with the organisation. The participants suggested that attending conferences with colleagues from other mining organisation could assist in their career advancement. Ziya-Ur-Rahman et al. (2018) found that attending workshops and conferences enhances the knowledge and understanding of the high performing employees and helps them in their career advancement within the organisation. Reynard and Snelgar (2016) reported that employees are encouraged to remain with their organisation when they are given room for growth and to advance in their careers. Uitzinger et al. (2018) also reported that the provision of quality developments or training opportunities was identified as one of the retention strategies that can effectively keep the middle managers from exiting the organisation. Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) found that

the high-performing employees are likely to remain with the organisation when there are developmental opportunities that assist them to grow, achieve, and advance in their careers. It was also reported during the interviews that some colleagues have exited have left the organisation due to a lack of relevant qualifications that are requirement to progress in the organisation. Pregnolato et al. (2017) found that employees with only matric qualification in managerial positions do not show interest in career advancement and are prone to leave the organisation.

Likewise, the participants also valued the responsibility that they have in the organisation. The participants reported that being given the power and freedom to run their various departments has motivated them to remain with the organisation. The participants indicated that being allowed to make changes where applicable gives them a sense of confidence and responsibility in the organisation. Park et al. (2017) reported that assigning challenging roles and responsibilities to high-performing employees is a useful manner to enhance their competencies and retain them in the organisation. Some of the participants indicated that their direct managers could give more responsibility whilst they are at work, and not actually wait to only assign certain roles and responsibilities when they go on leave, as this leaves the employees overwhelmed by the workload. Park et al. (2017) highlighted that high performing will feel dissatisfied if they perceive their workload to be burdensome.

The results also indicted that most of the high-performing middle managers appreciate being recognised for their efforts, and the roles and responsibilities that they perform in the organisation. Most of the participants responded that even though they are happy with their salaries and other benefits offered by the company, it means so much more to them when been shown acts of appreciation both by their direct managers and also other managers within the organisation as the various departments support and work together to achieve the organisational goals and objectives. Most of the participants reported words of thanks as a sign of appreciation from others. Ziya-Ur-Rahman et al. (2018) reported that appreciating efforts made by the high-performing employees and recognising them for their hard work makes them feel valued by the organisation, and motivates them to stay. Some of the high-performing middle managers indicated that they are not recognised as individuals, but as a team for the job well done. Chowdhury and Nazmul (2017) indicated that managers should not make use of the quantitative approach when evaluating and recognising their employees as these can increase employee turnover. The employees need to be individually recognised for their work and efforts in the organisation in order to retain them.

The study findings indicate that most of the participants in the current study find meaning in the work they do in the organisation. Some of the high-performing middle managers felt that their jobs added value to the employees and the organisation itself. Most also indicated that they are very good with jobs that need their technical specialities, however, finds it a bit challenging when having to complete tasks outside the realm of their expertise. It was also evident that platforms need to be created to accommodate changes in the world of work to illuminate repetitive and never-ending monotonous tasks. The study findings support the Herzberg two-factor theory, which states that employees are motivated mostly by the intrinsic factors to remain with the organisation.

The high-performing middle managers who participated in the current study agreed that job security was one of the reasons that motivated them to join and stay in the organisation when compared to other mining entities. It was apparent that the fact that the organisation will still exist for a long time gave the high-performing middle managers a sense of job security, especially in the mining industry.

The participants further indicated that in the years that they had been part of the organisation, they had witnessed some changes and transformation taking place. Changes in management position with the appointments of African managers, and the implementation of policies and procedures that supports the transformation in the organisation. It was also evident that supervision is still a challenge within the organisation, as most of the incidents that happen are due to lack of supervision. Uitzinger et al. (2018) found that it is important for the human resource professionals to assist the middle-level managers with aspects such as developing communication and trust with their direct reports and supporting them in other work activities. Some of the participants indicated that measures are being put in place to assist managers with supervision and other grievance procedures in the work environment. The high-performing middle managers also indicated that some of their colleagues have left the organisation because they could not fit into its culture. It also appeared that some high-performing middle managers valued good leadership in the workplace, and attributed good leadership as the reason they have not left the organisation. One of the participants indicated that the current leadership will be going into retirement soon and one of the reason that will keep him in the organisation is if the new management maintain the current leadership style. Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) found that supportive leadership is an overarching reason the high performing employees stayed with their current employer.

Most high-performing middle managers did not seem concerned about the working conditions, which is likely to be because of the setup of the mining organisation. Most of the mining entities

have the same setup and the necessary safety and health measures are put in place for the well-being of the employees. The high-performing middle managers also expressed that they are happy with their working conditions especially when it comes to working hours. The participants feel that the organisation has a good culture, which requires them to be at work for eight hours, and gives them time to spend with their families after work. Some of the study participants suggested that their work conditions could be further improved by introducing activities that could enhance flexibility and teamwork within their various departments. The study participants also indicated that some of their colleagues have left to be closer to their families, due to the mine being located in the bushveld. Ogony and Majola (2018) found that better working conditions constitute one of the aspects that influence the employee's decision whether to stay or leave the organisation.

Most of the participants agreed that the organisation pays fairly well when compared to other mining entities, which increases their satisfaction levels. The participants also agreed that the organisation has good benefits and incentives, which causes them not to leave the organisation. Ziya-Ur-Rahman et al. (2018) found that showing appreciation to employees through monetary benefits like salary and other fringe benefits could be used as a retention strategy to keep high-performing middle managers from leaving the organisation. Pregnolato et al. (2017) reported that benefits such as 100% employer contribution towards retirement fund and highest level of medical cover had a huge influence on the attraction and retention of employees.

All of the participants felt that they had good working relations with their managers, and reportedly tended to find support whenever required. Most of the study participants also felt that they had good relations with their colleagues. However, two of the five participants indicated that their relations with co-workers might at times be a bit strained due to personality clashes and insubordination. Letchmiah and Thomas (2018) found that relationships are one of the most important factors that influences the retention of high-performing employees, as they tend to enjoy being surrounded by people who are hardworking and passionate.

The findings indicate that the participants are motivated by intrinsic rewards to stay in the organisation. These motivating factors have to do with the actual job itself, such as achievement from the challenging jobs assigned to them; the responsibility that came with carrying out the challenging jobs; recognition for a job well done, and the training and development opportunities available within the organisation. Most high-performing middle managers also agreed that external factors, such as salary, working conditions and interpersonal relations does cause some levels of satisfaction in the company, but will not be

a reason for them to leave the organisation. This is supported in the research conducted by Pregnolato et al. (2017), which confirms that offering external customised rewards that are fair and reasonable can aid in the retention of high-performing employees. Gangan and Sankar (2019) also reported that even though some external factors such as unfavourable organisational policies, poor working conditions, and relationships extended working hours and inappropriate pay benefits may not be the main reasons why high performers leave before the desired period set by the organisation, they might however, be responsible for the poor retention rates and high turnover in most organisations. It is evident from the results that some of the factors considered as hygiene factors from the Herzberg two factor theory, such as salary, working conditions, relationship with others and job security, were found to be as important as the motivating factors for most of the high-performing middle managers.

Ultimately, it was found from the research findings that the high-performing middle managers perceive both motivator and hygiene factors as important retention strategies. The presence of internal motivating factors such as advancement, achievement, recognition, responsibility, and the work itself at the workplace enhances job satisfaction, and is important for the retention of high-performing employees (Gangan & Sankar, 2019; Ziya-Ur-Rahman et al., 2018). Likewise, the presence of the hygiene factors such as interpersonal relationships, remuneration, supervision, work condition, and job security prevent any dissatisfaction that the high-performing middle managers could experience, and therefore enhance employee retention. Anderson (2017) found that having employees who are motivated and satisfied at their workplaces do not only cause them to do their job well, but also causes them to stay with the organisation.

3.5.2   Challenges faced by the high-performing middle managers

Reflecting on the results of the current study, high-performing middle managers experienced challenges relating to advancement in terms of promotional opportunities, concerns over changes in leadership and management styles in the coming years, working with outdated technology, supervision at the workplace, and concerns over human resource issues.

The findings from the current study indicate that most of the high-performing middle managers might harbour concerns over the promotional opportunities within the organisation. The high-performing middle managers revealed that they only get promotional opportunities when their managers are due to retire. Some of the participants even revealed that the positions to which they aspire are occupied by young managers, who do not have any intention of leaving the organisation, which poses a concern regarding their career advancement. As a result, some

of their colleagues have left the organisation to pursue their careers in other mining entities. Chowdhury and Nazmul (2017) found that high-performing employees who are educated have a competitive advantage to be sought after to be employed somewhere else, based on their qualification and experience, when compared to those who do not have these qualifications. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these employees are retained, and promotional opportunities are made available to them inside the organisation.

Most high-performing middle managers in the current study agreed that they were happy with the current leadership and management style. The high-performing middle managers reported that when compared to other mining entities, the organisation enjoyed good leadership and management styles, motivating them to stay rather than to leave. Some of the high-performing middle managers indicated that one of the reasons they left their previous employer and chose to stay with their current employer is because of their leadership style. The study findings are supported by research which reported that high-performing middle managers value the good leadership experienced in the company, and identifies it as one of the leading retention factors that motivates them to stay with the organisation (Chowdhury & Nazumul, 2017; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017).

However, some of the high-performing middle managers in the study had some concerns, as they stated that the current leaders in the company will soon retire, raising the question of the potential for a change in leadership style. The high-performing middle managers expressed that, should the management style change, then they are likely to also leave the organisation. Prahu and Drost (2017) found that good leadership was identified to be one of the important retention strategies that assist to ensure that the high-performing employers are well informed about what is happening in the organisation and get ongoing feedback on their job. According to Johennesse and Chou (2017), managers and leaders are accountable and responsible to create a positive work environment that motivates employees and enhances employee retention. Having good leaders who practice good management styles can motivate the employees to perform their roles and responsibilities well, which will cause them to stay with the organisation Prahu and Drost (2017).

The findings from the current study also indicate that the high performing middle managers harbour concern around using outdated technology at the workplace. This is more applicable to administrative work that is done manually, where employees feel digital platforms could be introduced. Chu and Kuo (2017) reported that unfavourable technical aspects related to the job can cause some dissatisfaction in the work environment. In most cases, it is important to avoid unpleasantness, especially amongst their high-performing middle managers in order to

prevent them from leaving organisation (Alshmemri et al., 2017). The study findings also indicate that the high-performing middle managers felt that Covid 19 pandemic introduced a new norm in the workplace, where some departments that are not technical, can work from home and only come to the office when required.

Supervision was also highlighted as a concern for the participants in the study. This is a concern, as the high-performing middle managers indicated that most of the incidents that they have in the mine are due to a lack of supervision. Korobkov et al. (2018) state that a lack of discipline and supervision continues to be a challenge in the mining industry. The lack of supervision leading to mine incidents and injuries appeared to be a concern for some of the study participants, as safety is important in the mining industry, and form part of their evaluations. Non-compliance behaviour and lack of supervision is likely to have a negative impact upon organisational productivity (Ogunkuande. 2016; Shibiti, 2019). For that reason, the study participants indicated that they need more support from the human resource department regarding how to handle disciplinary procedures, which can minimise injuries and lay-off employees. Putri and Wardi (2020) found that employee work discipline may have an impact on the performance of an organisation. The study participants indicated that if the disciplinary procedure is handled properly from the beginning, then it is unlikely to reach the dismissal phase. Some of the study participants indicated that their jobs are mostly technical in nature, hence they have challenges with human resource issues when they are required to discipline and manage difficult subordinates.

Research indicates that the above-mentioned external hygiene factors, which includes career advancement, leadership styles, outdated technology, and supervision experienced by the high-performing employees at middle management level might cause some level of job dissatisfaction and unhappiness in the workplace (Alshmemri et al., 2017; Chu & Kuo, 2015). The current study findings indicate that hygiene factors cause some unpleasantness at the work environment, and most high-performers recommended that the intervention from management and the human resource department can effectively address the challenges in the work environment. The implementation of proper procedures and strategies that focus on these challenges may decrease job dissatisfaction, which will make the employees happy, and satisfied in their work environment (Almaaitah, 2017; Chu & Kuo, 2015).

3.6 CONCLUSION

The study sought to explore and understand the various retention strategies that could be used to keep high-performing employees from leaving the mining entity.

Most organisation in today's working environment have to make an effort to understand the retention strategies that are important to retain their high-performing middle managers. This needs to be done in order to maintain the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the organisation. When high-performers exit the organisation before the completion of certain projects, they interrupt the productivity of their teams, takes with them company knowledge and trade secrets, and increase the recruitment costs involved in hiring and training a new employee (Johennesse & Chou, 2017; Rakhra, 2018;).

According to Khalid and Nawab (2018), most organisations cannot prohibit their high-performing employees from looking for career advancement opportunities and attractive salary packages from their competitors. However, the aim and purpose of retention strategies is to make the employees stay with the organisation as they enhance the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of their business (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). The study findings revealed that the presence of retention strategies motivates the high-performing middle managers to become loyal and stay with the organisation for a longer period than desired.

It is the responsibility of an organisation to ensure the retention of their high-performing middle managers as they are key to the success and the sustainability of the organisation (Gani et al., 2017; Schaap & Olckers, 2020; Sharma, 2019). Job security and career advancement was identified as the most common factors attracting most high-performing middle managers to join the organisation, and to remain with it to date. The participants from the current study agreed that the organisation under study has the potential to survive for a very long time based on the products being produced. Therefore, programmes and other retention measures needs to be put in place to enhance job satisfaction and motivate its employees to stay in the organisation. This study revealed that, to retain the high-performing middle managers, the organisation needs to ensure that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors are put in place in various departments to enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction (Chu & Kuo, 2015). Mahpara and Muzaffar (2018) assert that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors have a positive effect upon the retention of high-performing middle managers. These include motivation factors that impacts the personal development of the employee at the workplace including achievement, career advancement, recognition, responsibility, and the actual work itself (Bexheti & Bexheti, 2016). These also include the external hygiene factors, such as proper implementation of the company policies, job security, supervision, relationship with peers, physical work conditions, and the remuneration, which reduces unhappiness at the work environment (Bexheti & Bexheti, 2016).

The implementation of the retention strategies that are still a concern to the high-performing middle managers will reduce feelings of unpleasantness and unhappiness, which will prevent them from leaving (Alshmemri et al., 2017). It costs less to retain high-performing middle managers than it does recruiting and training new employees (Khalid & Nawab, 2018; Mabuza & Porches, 2014).

3.7   RECOMMENDATIONS

High-performing middle managers are one of the key resources that the organisation has to reach its operational goals and objectives. Most companies strive to keep their high-performing middle managers from leaving, as they possess the critical knowledge, skills, and experience needed to enhance the organisational success, sustainability, and competitiveness (Park et al., 2017). The talent department, together with the support from senior managers and the human resource department, needs to make it a priority to focus on how they can keep the high-performing middle managers from leaving the organisation, as they are important for its long-term survival and success (Giri & Gayatri, 2018; Uitzinger et al., 2018).

The study findings revealed that both intrinsic and extrinsic job factors including salaries, job security, career advancement opportunities, responsibilities, and the work itself are important to keeping high-performing middle managers from leaving the organisation. Research conducted by Pregnolato et al. (2017) also found that most high-performing middle managers considered the financial benefits, such as salary, bonuses, and other incentives as an important factor that forms part of the total package that leads to their retention in the organisation. Some of the participants mentioned that there is no employer who gives such benefits as this organisation, and they are happy to be part of it. However, the external factors, such as salary and job security, on their own do does not retain employees; intrinsic rewards seem to be as equally important. Intrinsic rewards, such as developmental opportunities, roles and responsibilities, and recognition were also found to lead to the retention of high-performing middle managers in the organisation (Bussin & Mouton, 2019). Both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are critical towards the retention of high-performing middle managers. This indicates that the organisation is doing well in these areas, which serves to keep its high-performing middle managers from leaving.

The participants in the current study also indicated that they are happy with the current leadership style in the organisation. However, they expressed that the current leadership is about to retire and would wish that the new leaders who might replace them maintain the

current leadership style in the organisation. This will also cause them to stay with the organisation in the coming years. Supportive leadership, ethical leadership, and good communication reduces unpleasantness and unhappiness at the workplace, which encourages the high-performing middle managers from doing their best and remaining with the organisation (Appanah & Pillay, 2020: Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). It is recommended that in order to maintain the current leadership style, leaders ought to identify their successors for development purposes, so as to equip and transfer the knowledge and skills needed going forward. This will ensure the retention of the high-performing middle managers, even after the change of leadership in years to come.

The study findings revealed that most of the managers are concerned about the supervision in various departments, with employees reporting directly to them. They expressed how unhappy they felt when they had to dismiss an employee due to misconduct, and other cases that could have been prevented. It is recommended that interventions are implemented that would equip the managers on the disciplinary procedures that are applicable in organisation, together with the assistance from the employee relations and human resource department. Furthermore, the organisation can implement disciplinary and grievance procedures that will assist both the employee and managers on actions to take before final dismissal. Depending on the nature of the case, counselling and other interventions that could help the employee with their problems can be introduced as measures that the organisation can implement for their employees before laying them off. Such initiatives can assist managers with the supervision frustration that they experience at the workplace and the impact this has when dismissing subordinates. This unpleasantness can be minimised through programmes and workshops that will equip the managers with the skills needed for supervision. Perceived support from the organisation is essential for the retention of high-performing middle managers (Mahpara & Muzaffar, 2018; Pregnolato et al., 2017).

Above all, the high-performing middle managers are happy to be working for the organisation and feel that others are also happy, hence there might not be sufficient opportunities for career advancement and growth, as those in higher positions are not intending to leave the organisation. Those who leave the organisation are doing so due to opportunities outside to be closer to their families. In order to retain the high-performing middle managers, who leave to be close to their families, the organisation may employ and accommodate their spouses when opportunities arise in order to retain them. Research conducted by Otto and Acquah (2018) found that retention strategies ought to be known and made easily accessible to employees.

3.8   LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were noted. There were methodological limitations while conducting the study, due to the restrictions and regulations of the pandemic. The face-to-face interview research method had to be adjusted to telephonic interviews, which were approved by the University as a measure to protect both the research participants and researcher during the pandemic. This may have negatively impacted the number of research participants, as it is easier to postpone a telephonic interview than a face-to-face one, as there are no travelling costs involved. Furthermore, when conducting a face-to-face interview, the participants can actively dedicate the entire hour for the session, making it possible for the researcher to probe further and administer the interview, as opposed to a telephonic session. This posed certain limitations, as the telephonic interview were conducted at time when the participants were available for a shorter time than planned, and also after hours due to other work commitments and crises that required their attention.

The limitations of conducting the research study was that not all of the participants who were identified as high-performing middle managers were available for interview sessions as initially planned, even after several attempts made to arrange new time slots with them via email. This limited the research participants only to high-performing middle managers, who could avail themselves for telephonic interviews. Most of the high-performing middle managers who participated in the study were from the Process and Engineering Department, and did not represent other departments within the organisation. This was a limitation because the perception of high-performing middle managers on retention strategies may differ amongst various departments within the organisation.

Lastly, the participants in the study were not representative of the high-performing middle managers different age groups in the organisation, which could have had an impact on the findings of the study. It might be expected that, should the high-performing middle managers who participated in the study vary in age, then the results may have differed in terms of the internal and external factors identified as retention strategies.

3.9   FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research on the retention strategies of high-performing employees at the middle management level in mining entities ought to focus on a larger sample, covering the various departments within the organisation. A larger sample that focuses on high-performing employees in middle management from various key departments that contributes towards the

sustainability and competitiveness of the organisation will provide greater insight on the importance of retention strategies across the high-performing groups.

The study focused on the various retention strategies in the organisation that keeps the high-performing middle managers from leaving. Future research might look into the specific factors, such as the leadership style, organisational cultures, career development, and other variables that can assist organisations to strategically implement programmes that will retain their high-performing middle managers. The study also focused only on the middle-managers, where future research might also take into account different management and official levels, as they are also important towards the sustainability and success of a given organisation.

It is further recommended that focus might be placed on how age difference might impact the retention of high-performing employees at middle management level. Looking into this attribute will help us to understand and identify which internal and external factors are applicable to retention of high-performing individuals at middle management level from different age groups across the mining organisation. In addition, a quantitative study could be conducted in future to ascertain the influence of biographical variables, such as age, gender, and tenure, on retaining high-performing middle managers.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study explored the retention strategies of high-performing employees in middle management from a platinum mining entity. In this chapter, I discuss the study conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

In this section, I will discuss the conclusions obtained from the theoretical aims and empirical aims achieved in the study.

4.2.1 Theoretical aims

The following section presents a summary of the findings form the literature reviews and conclusion drawn on the theoretical aims. Below is a summary of the finding from the literature.

Specific Aim 1: *To conceptualise retention from a theoretical perspective.*
Shaheeb (2017) has reported that today's competitive world of work has made it easy for high-performing employees to switch jobs for various reasons, which may include, amongst others, conflict with supervisor, not fitting into the organisation culture, or being attracted to another employer who meets their expectations. This increasing job mobility and voluntary job changes among the high-performing middle managers that are key to most organisations' competitiveness, success, and sustainability, has been the main point of focus behind the development of management tool known as employee retention (Mabaso et al., 2021, Wakabi, 2016).

Singh (2019) defines employee retention as the various measures taken by organisations to encourage its employees to stay with it for a longer duration of time. It is a voluntary process, implemented to encourage employees to remain with the organisation for a desired maximum period (Sishuwa & Phiri, 2020; Wakabi, 2016). Schaap and Olckers (2020) reported that employee retention does not just happen in an organisation, but that various strategies need to be implemented in order to motivate the high-performing employees to stay. This indicates that organisations need to come up with strategies on how they are going to invest into their employees in order to prevent them from leaving the organisation. Schaap and Olckers (2020) posit that it is important for management to understand the retention factors and prioritise on

how to effectively implement them to prevent employees from leaving the organisation. The presence of the retention factors that indicates the commitment of the employer towards the career advancement and well-being of the employees is important to prevent the employees from leaving the organisation (Gani et al., 2020; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017).

Specific Aim 2: *To conceptualise high performing employee from a theoretical perspective.*

High-performing employees are of great value for most organisations. Their skills and expertise are key for the organisation to meets its desired goals and objectives. They also possess leadership and technical competencies that are key for the success of their department, and the business as a whole. Winiarska-Janusewicz and Winiarski (2014) described high-performing employees as individuals who deliver strong results as set by the organisation, progress through multiple tasks and have the potential to succeed into more senior positions. Pregnolato et al. (2017) describe high-performing employees as individuals who add value to the organisation because of their knowledge, hard work, and skills. These individuals perform well at tasks allocated to them. The high-performing employees are critical to the competitiveness, success and sustainability of the organisation (Hansen, 2016; Winiarska-Janusewicz & Winiarsk, 2014).

Specific Aim 3: *Conceptualise retention strategies from a theoretical perspective*

Retention strategies are necessary to ensure the organisational stability, competitiveness, sustainability, and success (Schlecter et al., 2016; Singh, 2019). Park et al. (2017) have reported that high-performing employees are prone to leaving the organisation, regardless of the competitive benefits and reward offered by the employer. For this reason, it is critical for employers to identify the reasons why their high performers leave the organisation before the maximum desired period and come up with retention strategies that will prevent them from leaving (Park et al., 2017). To have effective retention strategies in place allows organisations to build strong relationships with their high-performing middle managers and to understand their expectations as to what will make them stay (Singh, 2019). Johennesse and Chou (2017) also point out that retention strategies to keep the high-performing middle managers are important as they impact the profits, goals, and objectives of the business.

Specific aim 4: *To integrate the theories on retention and related strategies in relation to high-performing from a theoretical perspective.*

The retention of high-performing employees in most organisation is connected with the satisfy/motivator and dissatisfy/hygiene factors stated by the Herzberg two-factor theory (Almaaitah, 2017). According to Msengeti and Obwogi (2015), satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction have long been recognised as predictors of employee retention. The Herzberg

two-factor theory states that the presence of certain job attributes leads to job satisfaction, and their absence to a lack of satisfaction in the workplace (Habib, 2017). These factors are known as motivator factors, which are related to the content of the job, and are based on the individual's needs for personal growth and satisfaction, which may retain them in the organisation (Almaaitah, 2017; Chu & Kuo, 2015). These motivating factors include recognition, achievement, advancement, growth, the work itself, and responsibility (Alrayad & Arif, 2017). Chu and Kuo (2015) found that motivation factors help to increase the job satisfaction of the individual and the actual organisational effectiveness that may motivate them to stay for a longer period than desired.

According to the Herzberg, two-factor theory, the absence of hygiene job elements leads to dissatisfaction (Alrayad & Arif, 2017; Habib, 2017). This indicates that hygiene factors prevent a level of job dissatisfaction which is also important for employee retention in the organisation. Chu and Kuo (2015) assert that the fulfilment of hygiene factors does not necessarily make the employees satisfied, but removes the discomfort and unhappiness from the work environment. The hygiene factors are seen as measures that the organisation actively puts in place to avoid unpleasantness within the work environment by their employees (Chu & Kuo, 2015). These hygiene factors include the company policy, job security, remuneration, supervision, and the working conditions (Almaaitah, 2017). The Herzberg two-factor theory was identified as the most suitable theoretical foundation to explore and understand which factors that motivates the high-performing middle managers to stay with the company. The results of the study indicated that some of the hygiene factors, like job security and remuneration, were found to be important factors motivating high-performing employees to stay in the organisation. For this reason, it can be suggested that both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are crucial to motivate the employee to stay for a longer period with the organisation and should be taken into consideration when establishing and implementing the various retention strategies.

4.2.2 Empirical study conclusions

The specific aims relating to the empirical study were to: (1) explore the perceptions of high performing employees on retention strategies at middle management level in a platinum mining company; (2) provide recommendations on retention factors that can be implemented to retain the high performing employees within middle management level in a platinum mining company; and (3) recommendations and areas for future research based on the research findings, for the field of industrial and organisational psychology with regard to the retention of high-performing employees at middle management level. The study themes and subthemes

found in the study granted insight on factors considered important by the high-performing employee to stay in the organisation. The conclusions that were drawn relating to the aims of the study are presented below.

Empirical aim 1: *To explore the perceptions of high-performing employees on retentions strategies at middle management level in a platinum mining company.*

Retention strategies and factors considered important by high-performing employees at middle management level included: achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, the work itself, supervision, remuneration, and job security. This study revealed that hygiene factors also serve as a source of motivation for high-performing middle managers. Factors such as company policy, relationships, and supervision were also identified in the study, not as motivating factors, but that the effective implementation of these strategies by the organisation will illuminate and enhance job satisfaction.

MOTIVATOR FACTORS

The high-performing middle managers under this study considered the intrinsic motivating factors as important factors in their decision to stay with the organisation.

Achievement

The high-performing middle managers expressed how they are motivated by the fact that the organisation gives them opportunities to implement new ideas and systems, make changes within their departments, and practice their legal appointments that contributes to the success of the business. Their perception of achievement appeared to be related to the amount of workload allocated to them, and the opportunity to learn. Khanna (2017) reported that achievement for most high-performers is related to the assignments allocated to them as per their capabilities, talents, and personal skills. The study results are also in line with the findings from the research conducted by Mabuza et al. (2014), which indicated that the high-performing middle managers would like to be given work that is challenging, and that enables them to add value to the organisation.

Recognition

Most high-performing middle managers expressed that they are recognised for the hard work and effort that they put into the success of their departments. They said that they are actually recognised as professionals and given the opportunity to make changes where possible in their various departments. However, it also came up during the interview that some of the high performers are not recognised individually, but as a team. Research conducted by Bowe and Marongwe (2018) found that the feeling of individual performance not being recognised can

have a great impact on the individuals motivation and commitment to the organisation. Management ought to implement retention strategies so as to ensure that high-performing middle managers receives the appropriate recognition within the organisation (Ntimba et al., 2020).

The high performing middle managers also indicated that even though the organisation compensates them well, sometimes being given thanks made them feel valued, which made them to want to stay with the organisation. Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) reported that high-performing employees appreciated recognition, as this gives them a feeling that they are being recognised for the value that they add to the organisation. Some also suggested that gestures such as being taken out for a lunch or braai, team-building activities, or even being given a t-shirt for meeting the key performance area can also be a good initiative that can be implemented to recognise them for a job well done.

Responsibility

The high-performing middle managers spoke positively about the high level of responsibility of work that they have in their various department. The high-performing middle managers seem to enjoy the level of responsibility and trust given to them by their senior managers. Renard and Snelgar (2016) found that a sense of responsibility and performing meaningful work gives the employees a feeling that they play a vital role within the workplace. The lack of challenging work responsibility is likely to present the human resource department with challenges in retaining the high-performing middle managers (Uitzinger et al., 2018). From their responses, one could also determine that they are allowed to run their different department without any interruption. They also expressed how they are given the opportunity to make changes where possible for the success of their departments. Others even replied that they even enjoy helping out and take up additional responsibilities from other departments, as they know that they will learn, gain exposure and opportunities from other areas, which will improve their qualifications. However, the high-performing middle managers expressed that, at times, having too many responsibilities and extra workload meant the potential for overwork, even though the organisation itself has generally good measures in place to prevent this. It was also revealed that for others, the level of responsibility was limited, and exposure only given when the manager was not at work.

Advancement

The high-performing middle managers expressed that one of the reasons that attracted them to the organisations was the opportunity to grow and advance in their careers. To most of these managers, the organisation offered new experiences and opportunities in the industry

that they found exciting. The organisation gave them the opportunity to grow in their careers. This is supported by the research conducted by Letchmiah and Thomas (2017), which also found that high-performing employees valued their organisation for providing various development opportunity to advance in their careers. The organisation gave them the opportunity to grow and learn new things that they found challenging. The high-performing middle managers expressed that the organisation gives them exposure to other departments that broadens their career and opens more options to specialise in going forward. The high-performing middle managers also indicated that the organisation ought to have the individual development plan in place for them to align their career plan with what the organisation is planning for them. The managers expressed that there are opportunities for them to move up in the organisation into senior positions, mentioning that most of their senior managers are about to retire, meaning that there will be opportunities to be promoted into those position in three to four years. The sense of career advancement also came from acting in higher positions when the managers are not at work. However, limitation for career advancement was expressed when the managers reported into younger senior managers, who had no intentions to leave the organisation. This is a challenge because in order to get promoted, you had to wait for your line manager to leave or retire. Some managers expressed that there were opportunities for career advancement for them due to them being historically oppressed, due to the government push for transformation in the mining industry. Some managers expressed the need to actively interact with colleagues from other companies so that they might know how they are functioning as an organisation, and how they can improve, based on experiences and knowledge from others. The findings of the study also indicated that career advancement has also been a limitation for other employees, which has resulted in them leaving the company.

The work itself

Most managers expressed that they enjoy being in the mining sector and find their work challenging. When they initially joined the organisation, they wanted to gain new experiences in their careers and the organisation offered that. They seemed excited to be part of a team that design, build new systems and implement changes to the organisation. It is important to the high performers to find their work challenging and intellectually stimulating for them to remain in the organisation (Gani et al., 2020; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017; Uitzinger, 2018). This was identified in their study, as a major retention factor.

Some high-performing middle managers also expressed that the nature of their jobs as being more technical, so they tend to be more comfortable with issues that need to be sorted out scientifically than engage in solving personal problems that are not part of their portfolio, but

of human resources. The high-performing middle managers also expressed that even though they enjoy their work, the administrative manual aspect of it could be done more on the digital or electronic platform.

Job security

The high-performing middle managers expressed job security as a retention factor. Job security tends to be one of the major concerns in the mining industry, due to restructuring and attendant downsizing of employees (Smit et al., 2016). Compared to the other mining organisations that are continually restructuring and retrenching their employees, this organisation provides a sense of job security.

Remuneration

The high-performing middle managers indicated that they had good salary packages, bonuses, and other incentives, when compared to other organisations. Some expressed that one of the reasons that most of the employees stay with the organisation is due to the good incentives. The high-performing middle managers said that they have good medical, housing, and all extra benefits that makes them stay with the organisation. This is supported by the findings from the study conducted by Terera and Ngirande (2014), which found that remuneration and other benefits packages are one of the effective methods that organisations can utilise to keep their high performers from leaving. The remuneration packages are mostly specific according to the industries, and organisations need to always ensure that they offer competitive packages relative to their industry counterparts (Johennesse & Chou, 2017; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017).

Work conditions

The high-performing middle managers expressed a certain level of happiness about their working conditions. This might be because the mines are situated in the outskirts, and far away from the city. Most high-performing middle managers are of the opinion that the reason some of their colleagues left the organisation was because the mine is in the bushveld, and they wanted to move closer to the city and their families. The managers who chose to stay with the organisation expressed that the culture of the organisation is pleasant, when compared to their former employers. The high-performing managers are satisfied and encouraged by the good and supportive working environment and conditions in the organisation, hence they choose to stay (Alshmemri et al., 2017; Gani et al., 2020; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). They enjoy the working hours because the organisation does not expect them to work extra hours. Some managers expressed that the impact that the pandemic regulations had on business has proved that there are certain departments that can remain

productive and work from home based on their roles and responsibilities. They also expressed the need to interact more with their colleagues outside the work environment.

Company policy

The managers expressed that ever since they joined the organisation, they have seen the company transform. They mentioned that things within the organisation are starting to change. The high-performing middle managers expressed the need for open engagement at all levels, without people fearing discrimination. It is important for organisations to have written policies in place as they set can assist the organisation to set standards that can assist towards the retention of high-performing middle managers (Makgubela & Ngoepe, 2018). The managers expressed the need for the company to have coaching and mentoring programme, transparent talent, a succession pool, and enhance development interventions and opportunities.

Supervision

Most high-performing middle managers expressed that they have challenges with supervision when they have to discipline their subordinates. Uitzinger et al. (2017) found that lack of assistance from the human resource department when dealing with personal problems is likely to pose some challenges to the high-performing middle managers. The high performing middle managers felt as if the human resource department could do more to assist in instilling discipline amongst the employees.

Relationships

Most managers expressed that they had great relationships with their managers and colleagues. Schaap and Olckers (2020) found that individual differences and relationships at the workplace may affect motivational attitudes differently. The managers expressed that their own managers are supportive, and gives them regular feedback on their job performance. Research on retention strategies assert that relationships are an important retention factor (Schaap & Olckers, 2020). The managers said that they are able to accommodate different individuals so that they can work together to achieve a common goal. The managers expressed that the working relationship with their colleagues is not much of a challenge as they find ways to deal with different characters at the workplace.

The managers also expressed how happy there were with the leadership style in the organisation. For some, this was also a concern because most of the current leaders are about to retire, where this style might change.

Empirical aim 2*: To provide recommendations on retention factors that can be implemented to retain the high-performing employees within middle management level in a platinum mining company.*

The findings of the study revealed the additional retention strategies that could be implemented by management to ensure that the high-performing employees in middle management level stay with the organisation for years to come, so as to ensure and enhance the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the business.

Succession Planning

The managers indicated that they are happy with the current leadership style in the organisation. Leadership in the organisation plays an important role, as it is a relationship through which one person in leadership influences the behaviour of other individuals reporting to them (Wakabi, 2014). The managers expressed that their concern is that most of the leaders who are currently assisting and supporting them to achieve the desired goals and results as set by the organisation will soon be due to retire, prompting a change in leadership style. Musakuro and De Klerk (2021) found that lack of long-term planning appears to affect the retention of these managers in most departments within the organisation. In addition, if there are no effective and relevant programmes in place to track the development, then they are likely to leave the organisation (Ngoepe & Jiyane, 2015). It is recommended that a succession plan should be in place two years' prior to retirement age, in which managers identify their successors who meet the minimum requirements for their roles and are identified as high-performers. This should also be introduced within the talent management department, which will identify successors in each department who will be trained and development for higher roles (Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021). Succession planning will assist the organisation to proactively identify and develop individuals who are capable of filling higher post, should they become vacant. The successors ought to be identified through assessments of leadership potential and aptitude assessments to assess if they also meet the technical and behavioural competencies for the role to fast-track and prepare them to be ready and fit for the role in the required years. Once identified, the successors will enter into a written agreement to be coached and mentored by the current leaders so that they could understand the importance of leadership role in the organisation. This process will assist the organisation in ensuring that the successors who have been identified as future leaders are equipped and ready for the role to enhance the sustainability, success, and competitiveness of the business going forward, by retaining the high-performing employees at middle management level.

Career paths

The managers expressed the need for open engagement at all levels without employees in lower levels fearing discrimination. The company policies include guidelines and factors that directly affects the employee (Alshmemri et al., 2017). The managers expressed the need for the organisation to have structured systems in place, especially when it comes to the career path. It is recommended that the organisation can have develop career paths for each discipline with the minimum requirements for employees to be able to know the opportunities available in the organisation in their departments. The organisation can also develop a succession pool for each discipline to encourage the employees to stay in the organisation and also indicate that they are recognised for their competencies and are in line for future promotions. This kind of administration is essential to the clarification of the career path available within the organisation.

Disciplinary processes and procedures

Putri and Wardi (2020) assert that discipline is one of the key factors that contributes towards the sustainability, success, and competitiveness of the organisation. The managers expressed that they do experience challenges when it comes to disciplinary measures, which in most cases lead to the dismissal of employees. A study conducted by Korobkov et al. (2018) states that the employee level of disciplinary issues should be categorised into various levels, according to the nature of their deviation, and assigned to the relevant departments. The human resource department should support the line managers on how to handle the various disciplinary cases. Most managers indicated that their work is technical environments, and they are not trained to handle some of the human resource matters that take place in their department. The managers revealed that the organisation can assist them in their departments when it comes to disciplinary processes and procedures. The middle managers also indicated that they find it difficult at time to attend a grievance and disciplinary cases, due to their busy schedule and running of departments. The middle managers have to allocate time to attend to such human resource related matters, which they sometimes do not get to do, because of other departmental matters that need their urgent technical and expertise. It is recommended that the human resource and the employment relations department assist managers conduct a training programme to equip the managers with tools needed when handling a grievance and disciplinary case. Due to the busy nature of the mining industry, the human resource and the employee relations department could do most of the work required when it came to grievance and disciplinary cases, gathering all the information needed and allocating a specific day and time during the week where the managers in different sections will sit in and attend to the cases as required. If there is a specific day in the calendar where managers are

allocated time to review and attend to grievances and disciplinary cases, this will enable them to plan and allocate time accordingly.

Digital working platform

It was revealed during the interviews that some of the work in some departments could be conducted online to illuminate the manual paper-based work. With the changing world of work and new systems introduced in the industry, the organisation may implement the latest systems to align with other organisations in the industry. Poisat et al. (2018) posit that flexible and mobile working practices are becoming a norm in today's working environment. Pandemic regulations have also proved that some of the work can be done on-line to reduce the employees being in the office, where tasks are done on paper and later captured electronically on the various (Buheji & Buheji, 2020). Research indicates that how the work is done contributes towards the retention of key employees at the workplace (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

Empirical Aim 3: *To provide recommendations and areas for future research based on the research findings, for the field of Industrial and organisational psychology with regard to the retention of high-performing employees at middle management level.*

Based on the findings of this study, there are retention strategies that are important to the high-performing middle managers and are identified as reasons why they choose to stay with the organisation and are not actively looking for opportunities at other platinum mining companies. These factors include the intrinsic motivational and external job satisfaction retention factors. Focusing on retention strategies not only increases the motivation and satisfaction of these managers but also assists the organisation to retain them long-term (Alshmemri, 2017; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017; Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021).

Intrinsic factors

Intrinsic work motivation refers to what the high performing employees feel towards the work itself (Gani et al., 2020; Mgedezi et al., 2014). The high-performing employees expressed that there are certain factors motivating them to stay with the organisation, which include the internal career advancement opportunities available to them and the responsibilities given to implement new processes and systems that contributes towards the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the organisation. The high performing employees are also motivated to stay because they feel recognised for the value that they add in the organisation and feel appreciated when being told thank you for the job well done. To them, words of appreciation and small gestures such as being taken out for lunch means a great deal, as they feel

recognised and appreciated by management. The high performing employees also indicated that they are happy with the actual work itself, as it includes varied work assignments that are meaningful and important to the organisation (Gani et al., 2020; Khanna, 2017).

Extrinsic job factors

The extrinsic job factors are those tangible rewards that the managers get from the job itself (Mgedezi et al., 2014). The high performing employees expressed that they are happy with the salary and other financial benefits that they receive from the organisation. The organisation appears to offer competitive financial benefits, which is a retention strategy to keep these managers satisfied at the workplace (Gani et al., 2020; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). The high performing employees also noted a sense of job security.

The high performing employees expressed that they are happy with the current leadership style in the organisation. The high performing employees also expressed that they have good relationships with their colleagues and managers. Research indicates that work relations could influence the high performing employee's decisions to either stay or leave the organisation (Motlou et al., 2016). Even though at times they did experience some differences with others due to individual characteristics and preferences, they can handle the differences and work together to get the job done. The high performing employees also revealed that they are happy with the physical work environment, and some expressed that they love being in the bushveld, and would also enjoy extra mural activities with their colleagues in a social setting outside the work environment.

4.2.3   Limitations of the empirical study

Accessibility of high-performing employees at middle management level

Not all of the participants in the study were available for the telephonic interview. Several attempts were made through email to reschedule the interviews on more than one occasion, without any success. As a result, only those employees who could allocate time in their busy schedule were interviewed for the research. In some instances, telephonic interviews were scheduled for after the working hours in order to accommodate the participants.

Covid 19 regulations and restrictions

The regulations and restrictions around the Covid-19 pandemic has caused delay with the data collection phase of the study. The researcher had to apply for a change in research methodology, with the research ethics committee before commencing with the telephonic interviews. This delayed the data collection phase from the initially planned face-to-face

interview to the telephonic interviews, which adhered to the pandemic regulations as set by the University.

Change of data collection approach

The research methodology that was initially selected as a data collection method had to be changed, due to the restrictions and regulation around the Covid 19 pandemic. The research method for the research study was amended from face-to-face interviews to telephonic interviews. This caused some limitations for the research study, because the face-to-face interviews could have presented the opportunity for a more in-depth data collection.

In addition, another limitation was the qualitative approach adopted to collect in-depth rich data. The data collected cannot be generalised to a larger population across the mining industry. The results are restricted to the study sample within the specific departments in the mining entity under study.

Change of organisation

The research study was delayed, due to a change of organisation. The researcher had to get permission and approval from another platinum mine for data collection. After that, permission was also obtained from the IOP research ethics committee. This process delayed the interview process, as the participants could not be contacted without permission.

4.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for future studies in the field of industrial and organisational psychology. Furthermore, recommendations are also provided for the respective mining entities.

Recommendations for future studies

Future research should explore the strategies used to retain high-performing middle managers from different departments in the mining entity that are critical for the daily operations of the organisation, and contribute towards the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the business. The mining industry is characterised by its own work dynamics, therefore future research should focus on retention strategies for high-performing middle managers within the industry.

Future research should look into a larger sample that consists of high-performing middle managers in different employee age groups to obtain a comprehensive overview of factors

that motivates the high-performing middle managers to stay with the mining entities as they are key towards the sustainability, success, and competitiveness of the industry. Possible quantitative study to ascertain statistical relationships between variables should be conducted that will assist with to formulate the retention strategies that will keep the high-performers from leaving.

Recommendations for the organisation

The study findings indicated that the high-performing middle managers are motivated to remain with the organisation by intrinsic factors related to actual the work itself, which includes the recognition received from their leaders, the level of responsibility given to them, sense of achievement, and the career advancement opportunities available in the organisation. The high-performing middle managers are also happy to remain with the organisation due to some external job factors, which includes job security, salary, and other financial incentives, and the relationships they have with their managers and colleagues. To enhance the employee retention in the organisation the recommended programmes can be implemented so as to improve their performance in the current role, and prepare them for future senior roles.

Succession Planning

The high-performing middle managers expressed the need for a structured and transparent succession plan within their departments. For this reason, the talent management department should track the development of the identified high-performing middle managers in various departments that are identified for future promotions. The talent management should establish a clear indication of future leaders in the organisation. The succession management will ensure that there is a continuous pool of competent managerial employees to fill vacant posts and retain critical skills that will assist towards the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the business. One of the manners to identify the succession pool is to implement a performance management system that ensures that performance is managed within the company on an individual and collective basis for the identification of high-performing middle managers.

Individual development plans

The high-performing middle managers are to draw up an individual development plan that will identify areas in which they need assistance to effectively develop as future leaders. The individual development plan may include, but are not limited to the generic training already offered in the organisation, human resource and employment relations related courses for management, as well as management and leadership intervention courses. The talent management department will closely monitor the process to ensure that the employees and

managers have an agreement on the development plan. It is suggested that the development plan be formally updated and reviewed twice a year so as to ensure that the employees get the required exposure and support that they require. The aim of the development plan is to contribute to higher levels of performance in these organisations.

Talent management

It is recommended that the talent management department draw up a database of the career paths for each discipline and clearly communicate this to the various departments. The career path should include the qualifications needed for the role, as well as experience and the behavioural competencies. This will assist the high-performing middle managers to know which career paths are available to them within the organisation, and the requirements thereof. This will also assist with the individual development plan, where they will know, which coursed and exposure is needed for the senior roles.

4.4   PERSONAL REFLECTION

Having some exposure in the talent management department from the mining industry, conducting this study has provided in-depth understanding from the perspective of high-performing middle managers as to what motivates them to stay with the organisation. The insight that I had was from the exit interviews that we did in the talent management department when the management employees left the organisation. At the time of the exit interviews, most of the employees had already secured employment with other competing mining entities, which made it impossible to retain them in the organisation.

During the study, I realised that the organisation can implement the retention strategies in time to keep their high-performing middle managers from leaving. In my experience, when the high-performing middle managers leave the organisation unexpectedly, there are interruptions in the business for several months thereafter, especially when there is no internal suitable candidate to take over their role and responsibilities. Furthermore, there are costs associated with the recruitment and selection of the new candidate, and the training that follows. These can cause interruption with the day-to-day productivity of the job, which may impact the job performance of the department and business as a whole.

I have also learned that the organisation cannot make use of the salary and other financial incentives as the only retention strategy to attract and retain high-performing middle managers in the organisation. However, there are other factors that we might overlook in the human resource department as a whole that are key towards the retention of high-performing

managers in middle management department as they are key to the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the business.

4.5   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I discussed the conclusion from the literature review and empirical study. The retention strategies used to retain high-performing employees at middle management level in a mining entity were explored to gain in-depth understanding, as these employees are key to the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of the industry.

The limitations of the study were also outline and recommendations for future studies provided.

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APPENDIX A: UNISA GATEKEEPER PERMISSION LETTER

UNISA | university of south africa

GATEKEEPER PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Executive Human Resource,

My name is Patience Hadebe and I am currently enrolled for Industrial and Organisational Psychology Master's program in the College of Economic & Management Sciences Department (Student number: 49056921) at the University of South Africa.

The topic for my research study is Retention of high performing employees at middle management level – an exploratory study and entails collecting and analyzing data to understand the experience of the individuals. The purpose of the study is to explore and understand perception that that could assist the organisation to successfully secure and retain high performing employees in middle management level as their skills are central to the organisations ability to be economically competitive.

I would like to request permission to conduct research within Northam Zondereinde Mining Operations. This study will focus on high performing middle management employees who have been identified by the organization due to the consistent high level of work performance. The study involves in-depth interview and questions asked during the interviews will be about the retention strategies that are considered important to stay with the organization. By agreeing to grant permission to conduct interviews with the identified high performers in the organisation, you agree that the information provided may be used for research purposes.

Data will be obtained from the human resource manager as the main custodian to track progress and maintain records of the career progression of the identified employees. This is a voluntarily study and participants are by no means forced to participate, but have to give consent. The sample size will consist of individuals who consistently exceed minimum performance expectations set by the organization.

It is anticipated that the information gained from the interviews will help collect important information that could assist the organisation in securing and retaining high performing employees in middle management level as their skills are central to the organisations ability to be economically competitive.
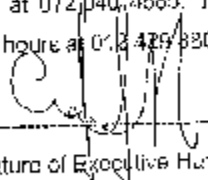
We do not foresee that you and/or the organisation will be prejudiced by participating in the interviews. The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential and safe. We will report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

We would like to request the following information from the organisation:

- Email addresses of the high performing employees at the Zondereinde Mining Operations who may consent to participate in the research study

The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed (hard copies will be shredded and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer). Individuals will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for participating in the research study.

The research will be reviewed and approved by the CEMS/IOP Ethics Review Committee. The primary researcher, Patience Hadebe can be contacted during office hours at 072 040 4565. The study leader, Gebile Mensele, can be contacted during office hours at 012 429 8300.

18 September 2020

_____
Signature of Executive Human Resource

Date

_____
Signature of the Researcher

Date

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Patience Hadebe

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA IOP ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

25 July 2020

Dear Ms Patience Hadebe

NHREC Registration #: (if applicable)
ERC Reference: **2019_CEMS_IOP_018**
Name: Mrs Patience Hadebe
Student #: 49056921
Staff #: NA

Decision: Ethics Amendment Approval from 25 July 2020 to 25 July 2025

Researcher(s): Name: Patience Hadebe
Address: 35 Highlands, Mooikloof Ridge Estates, Pretoria East, 0081
E-mail address, telephone: patiencemakwela@yahoo.com, 0720404585

Supervisor (s): Name: Ms Cebile Tebele
E-mail address, telephone: tebelc@unisa.ac.za, +27124298809

> Retention of high performing employees at middle management level within a platinum mining entity – an exploratory study

Qualification: Doctorate (PhD) – Postgraduate degree

Thank you for the application **for an amendment to your research ethics clearance** to the Unisa IOP Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. The amendment to your original ethics approval is granted for a period of **Five (5) years**.

> The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on 28th July 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The amendment to your original Ethics Application was approved on 25 July 2020. That is, your original data collection method has changed from face-to-face interviews to telephonic interviews.

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n Rubric

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You are reminded of the following:

1. **The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 Position Statement on research ethics dated 26 June 2020 <u>which is attached</u>.**

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.

4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

Note:

*The reference number **HadebeP_2019_CEMS_IOP_018** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature
Acting Chair of IOP ERC
E-mail: olivibh@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-8801

Signature
Executive Dean : CEMS
 E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-4805

URERC 16.04.29 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

RETENTION OF HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES AT MIDDLE MANAGEMENT LEVEL – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Consent to take part in the research study

Please tick box if you agree with the statement

I _____ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind. ☐

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted. ☐

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. ☐

I understand that participation involves being interviewed by the research. ☐

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research. ☐

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded. ☐

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially. ☐

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about. ☐

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation article. ☐

I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the locked cupboard and only the researcher will have access to the data. ☐

I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a period of five years. ☐

I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above. ☐

I understand that I am free to contact any of the researchers to seek further clarification and information.
☐

Signature of research participant:

_____   _____

Signature of participant: Date

_____   _____

Signature of researcher   Date

_____   _____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE TEMPLATE

QUESTIONNAIRE

1.   What factors attracted you to join this organisation?

_____

_____

_____

2.   What factors cause you to enjoy your roles and responsibilities?

_____

_____

_____

3.   How much have these factors contributed to you staying with the organisation?

_____

_____

_____

4.   Do you feel you are recognised for your achievements and your input to the success of your department?

_____

_____

_____

5.   What in your opinion do you think are the top benefits an organization and "Employer of Choice" should have to attract and retain high-performing employees.

_____

_____

_____

6.   What are the Top 3 reasons that would make you stay at with this organisation?

_____
_____
_____

7.   What elements of your job would you miss most if you were to leave the organisation?

_____
_____
_____

8.   What are the less-desirable elements in your current role that you would like to do less of?

_____
_____
_____

9.   What in your opinion is the reason other people are leaving the organisation?

_____
_____
_____

10.   Do you believe that the company is doing enough to motivate you to stay, please elaborate?

_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX E: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

UNISA | university of south africa

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, _Patience Hadebe_ the undersigned

of _Industrial and Org Psychology_ department/institute/bureau agree to assist the

College of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (CREC) in the assessment of research proposals and projects as part of the ethical clearance process.

I will, in the course of my duties as aforementioned, come into possession of certain confidential information.

This will certify that, in the review of all applications/proposals submitted to the CREC:

1. In so far as there is a moral case for doing so, I will treat all information contained in the applications/proposals, research projects, electronic communication and committee discussions in the strictest of confidence and will not reveal that information to any third party (with the exception of members of the CREC, or SENRIC if and as required) without prior written consent of the CREC.

2. In so far as there is a moral case for not doing so, I will not use the information contained in those applications/proposals for any reason other than for the purpose of providing review with a view to obtaining an ethical clearance.

3. In so far as it is reasonable, I will store all documentation relating to the work of the CREC securely that it does not become available to unauthorised individuals.

THIS DONE AND SIGNED AT _Mankweng_

on this _19_ day of _June_ 2019

_____
SIGNATURE
CEMS RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBER

PLEASE TURN OVER

123

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AGREEMENT

I, (name) __Patience Hodebe__ the undersigned

of __Industrial and Org Psychology__ department/institution/bureau agree to assist the CEMS Research Ethics Committee (REC) in reviewing research proposals/projects with a view to obtain ethical clearance. I will in the course of my duties as aforementioned, be in a position to identify conflicts of interest as defined by the King Report on Good Governance procedures.

THEREFORE I hereby:

1. Undertake not to participate in a review process where a conflict of interest exists. Should there be doubt about an apparent conflict of interest, I will advise the CEMS Research Ethics Committee (CREC), who will then indicate whether participation in the review process is permissible or not

2. Agree that I will notify the members of the CREC on which I serve of all POSSIBLE conflicts of interest, no matter how remote they may be, timeously so that they can be appropriately managed.

3. Undertake not to use my membership of this committee for the benefit of myself, my family and my colleagues at my place of work or any other beneficiary who does not meet the requirements of the intended grant funding.

THIS DONE AND SIGNED at __Markona__

on this __11__ day of __June__ ... 2017

_____
CEMS RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBER

_____
SIGNATURE