

## Talent Management, Burnout and Retention of employees in a selected Botswana mine

Nicolene Barkhuizen

Global Innovative Forefront Talent Research Niche Area  
North-West University, Mmabatho, South Africa, [nicolene.barkhuizen@nwu.ac.za](mailto:nicolene.barkhuizen@nwu.ac.za)

Nico Schutte; Kelebogile Kekgonegile

Global Innovative Forefront Talent Research Niche Area  
North-West University, Mmabatho, South Africa

**Abstract:** Organisations worldwide are currently experiencing a complex and dynamic changing environment in which most businesses must compete to remain sustainable. Most of these organisations realise that their competitive advantage lies within talented employees. The main objective of this research was to determine the relationship between talent management, burnout and turnover intentions of employees in a selected Botswana mine ( $N=206$ ). A Talent management measure, Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure and Intention to quit scale were administered. The results showed that talent management practices such as workforce planning, staffing and talent development were poorly applied. Management also showed low commitment towards talent management. Almost half of the respondents reported high levels of Cognitive Weariness and Emotional Exhaustion. About 40% of the respondents in the sample considered quitting their jobs. The results showed that poor talent management practices increased the burnout and turnover intentions of employees. Job burnout furthermore enhanced the employee's decision to quit their jobs. The results of the study highlight the need for management to revisit the application of talent management practices in the mining environment as it significantly influences the well-being and turnover intentions of employees.

**Keywords:** Burnout, Mining, Talent Management, Turnover, Well-being

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The exploitation of the country's mineral resources has been a key factor of the development of Botswana since independence in 1966. Botswana is best known for its diamond mines, although the Selebi-Phikwe copper nickel deposit has also been exploited since the 1970s. The Government of Botswana's main objective for the mineral sector is to continue getting the maximised economic benefits from the sector for the nation while enabling private investors to earn competitive returns (Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources 2008).

The Botswana mining industry is currently facing a shortage of critical skills such as artisans, engineers and technicians (Botswana Labour Market Survey, 2015). This problem is escalated further by the fact that a lot new mines are opening all over Botswana, therefore leading to a serious competition for skilled employees who are scarce and limited. According to Lee, Scheunemann, Hall and Payne (2012) reduced staff sizes cause longer workdays, fewer opportunities to recharge and greater responsibilities for remaining employees. A global study among the

resources sector showed that mining is one of the unhappiest industries to work in (Jamasmie, 2016). Factors contributing to low employee morale included poor management, lack of career development opportunities and career growth and continuous staff layoffs. Van der Walt (2009) found that work overload and a lack of career advancement opportunities were significant predictors of the burnout of employees in the South African mining industry. Escalating job demands without corresponding resources are likely to increase incidences of job burnout (De Beer, Pienaar & Rothmann, 2013) and subsequent turnover intentions of employees in the mining industry (Amponsah-Tawiah, Ntow & Mensah, 2016). Consequently the production and the ability of mines to grow their operations are limited (Jankome, Mangoriand & Ritacco, 2013).

According to Barkhuizen (2014a) it is important to manage talent effectively as there are positive outcomes for all those involved such as motivation, job satisfaction, work engagement, meaningfulness, happiness, improved service and organisational

performance. Unfortunately, talent management is rarely a strategic or operational priority for many organisations. Studies continue to point out the adverse effect of poor talent management on individuals and organisations (see Barkhuizen, Mogwera & Schutte, 2014; Barkhuizen, Schutte & Smit, 2015; Magolego, Barkhuizen & Lesenyeh, 2013; Mpofo & Barkhuizen, 2013). This research paper focuses on burnout and turnover intentions as possible outcomes of talent management of employees in a selected Botswana mine. No research currently exists on talent management in the Botswana mining industry.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Relating Talent Management, Burnout and Turnover

Kontoghiorges and Frangou (2009) define talent management as the process of implementing strategies to attract, development and retain employees with the required skills to meet current and future business needs. Mohan, Muthaly and Annakis (2015) maintain that organisations should develop a talent culture that will unleash the passion, commitment and performance of people required to achieve its mission, vision and business goals (McArdle & Ramerman, 2008). Organisations therefore need to create an environment where talented individuals can flourish and grow.

Burnout is a pathological ill-health syndrome that occurs as a result of various situational work factors such as role conflict, role stress, stressful events, workload, and work pressure (see Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Shirom (2003) defines job burnout as a condition consisting of physical fatigue (i.e. feelings of tiredness), emotional exhaustion (i.e. lacking energy to interact with colleagues) and cognitive weariness (i.e. reduced mental agility). Molefi (2015) found, in a sample of professional nurses, that poor talent management practices relating to talent commitment, staffing, performance management, workforce planning and talent retention practices increased the burnout levels of professional nurses. Nurses in this study also considered quitting their job as a result of high burnout levels.

The relationships between talent management and turnover intentions are well documented. Carmeli and Weisberg (cited in Rahman & Nas, 2013) define turnover intentions as a withdrawal cognition process

that includes thoughts of quitting jobs, the intention to search for a different job and then intention to quit. A study by Barkhuizen, Diseko and Schutte (2015) showed that poor workforce planning, talent acquisition practices, talent commitment, talent development, performance management and talent retention practices were significant contributors to teachers' intentions to quit their jobs in Botswana schools. Other studies highlighted the role of management commitment towards talent management in the turnover intentions of employees (Du Plessis, Barkhuizen, Stanz & Schutte, 2015; Theron, Barkhuizen & Du Plessis, 2014). The latter studies showed that a lack of management commitment towards talent management practices increased employees' intentions to quit their jobs.

In the light of the preceding, the following hypotheses are set:

H 1: Talent management would be significantly negatively related to the burnout of employees in the Botswana mining industry

H 2: Talent management would be significantly negatively related to the turnover intentions of employees in the Botswana mining industry

H 3: Burnout would be significantly positively related to the turnover intentions of employees in the Botswana mining industry

## 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative research approach was followed using surveys to gather the data. A cross-sectional research design was used whereby data was collected at one point in time. Cross-sectional research is ideally suited to test cause and affect relationships between variables (Field, 2009).

### 3.1 Sampling

The sample for this study included employees from a selected Botswana mine. Two hundred and Forty (240) questionnaires were distributed with 206 questionnaires returned. This represents a 85,33% response rate. The participants in this study were primarily male (94,7%), Setwana speaking (94,7%) and aged between 30-39 years (60,2%). The majority of the participants were in possession of a certificate (45,1%). Most of the participants had 0-10 years of work experience (52,4%) and were employed between 0 to 5 years in their current jobs (53,4%). More than half of the participants (55,8%) indicated

that they did not had any opportunities for promotion during the past five years.

### 3.2 Measuring Instruments

**Talent Management:** A Talent Management measure (Barkhuizen, 2014b) was used to measure the current application of talent management practices in the organisation. The measure consists of 28 items and measures six talent management practices: Management Commitment, Talent Review Process, Workforce Planning, Staffing, Talent Acquisition and Talent Development. Respondents were required to rate the current talent management practices in the organisation on a five-point scale ranging from “Poor (1)” to “Excellent (5).” The scale obtained acceptable reliabilities of  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  for the six factors in this study (see Field, 2009).

**Burnout:** The Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure was used to measure burnout in this study. The scale measures three dimensions, Physical Fatigue, Cognitive Weariness and Emotional Exhaustion on a 7 point likert scale ranging from never or almost never to always or almost always (Shirom & Melamed, 2006). The scale obtained acceptable reliabilities of  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  for the three factors in this study (see Field, 2009).

**Turnover intentions:** The intention to quit scale (Cohen, 1993) was used to measure the participant’s turnover intentions in this study. Responses are measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The scale obtained acceptable internal consistencies of above  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  in this study (see Field, 2009).

### 3.3 Statistical analyses

Data analyses were carried out with the aid of SPSS software (SPSS, 2016). Cronbach Alphas were used to determine the reliability of the scale and its items. A cut-off point of 0.7 was used as a guideline for acceptable reliabilities (Field, 2009). Pearson correlation analyses were performed to test for the significance of relationships between the variables.

## 4 RESULTS

The descriptive statistics of the measurements are reported in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the measurements

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Talent Management				
Management Commitment	2.9961	.94471	.950	-.335

Talent Review Process	2.6000	.77673	-.272	-.290
Workforce Planning	2.2650	.66717	.982	-.417
Staffing	2.5619	.70891	-.482	-.652
Talent Acquisition	4.0615	.53445	-.233	.216
Talent Development	2.5379	.69956	1.624	2.729
<b>Burnout</b>				
Physical Fatigue	4.2524	.80962	-.441	-.347
Cognitive Weariness	3.2951	.84685	-.925	-.720
Emotional Exhaustion	3.0485	1.04470	.301	-.092
<b>Turnover Intentions</b>	3.5663	1.48330	-1.088	.145

The results in Table 1 show that all talent management practices are poorly applied except for talent acquisition. Almost half of the sample indicated their dissatisfaction with talent management practices such as workforce planning, staffing and talent development. Almost 50% of the sample indicated high levels of cognitive weariness and emotional exhaustion. About 40% of the sample considered quitting their jobs.

The results of the hypotheses are reported next.

### 4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlation analyses. The results of the correlation analyses between Talent Management and Burnout are reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Correlation analyses between Talent Management and Burnout

	Physical Fatigue	Cognitive Weariness	Emotional Exhaustion
MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT	-.117	-.323**	-.238**
	.094	.000	.001
TALENT REVIEW PROCESS	-.134	-.448**	-.355**
	.055	.000	.000
WORKFORCE PLANNING	-.202**	-.391**	-.419**
	.004	.000	.000
STAFFING	-.194**	-.493**	-.139*
	.005	.000	.046
TALENT ACQUISITION	-.194**	-.493**	-.139*
	.005	.000	.046
TALENT DEVELOPMENT	-.018	-.419**	-.146*
	.802	.000	.037

\* Statistically significant:  $p \leq 0.01$

+ Practically significant correlation (medium effect):  $r \geq 0.30$

++ Practically significant correlation (large effect):  $r \geq 0.50$

- **Management Commitment:** A practically significant negative relationship with cognitive weariness (medium effect); a significant negative relationship between management commitment and emotional exhaustion;
- **Talent Review Process:** A practically significant negative relationship with cognitive weariness and emotional exhaustion (both medium effects);
- **Workforce Planning:** A significant negative relationship with physical fatigue; a practically significant negative relationship with cognitive weariness and emotional exhaustion (both medium effects) ;
- **Staffing:** A significant negative relationship with physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion and a

practically significant negative relationship with cognitive weariness (medium effects);

- **Talent Acquisition:** A significant negative relationship with physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion; a practically significant negative relationship with cognitive weariness (medium effect)
- **Talent Development:** A practically significant negative relationship with cognitive weariness (medium effect) and statistically significant relationship with emotional exhaustion.

The above results confirm hypothesis 1, that a significant negative relationship exist between talent management and burnout of employees in the Botswana mining industry. The results of the correlation analyses between talent management and turnover intentions are reported in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Correlation analyses between Talent Management and Turnover Intentions

		Talent Commitment	Talent Review Process	Workforce Planning	Staffing	Acquisition	Talent Development
Turnover Intentions	Pearson Correlation	-.132	.079	-.206**	-.014	-.076	-.196**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.058	.261	.003	.844	.280	.005
	N	206	206	206	206	206	206

\* Statistically significant:  $p \leq 0,01$   
 + Practically significant correlation (medium effect):  $r \geq 0,30$   
 ++ Practically significant correlation (large effect):  $r \geq 0,50$

The results in Table 3 show that significant negative relationships exist between the talent management dimensions of workforce planning, talent development and turnover intentions.

The above results partially confirm hypothesis 2, that a significant negative relationship exist between talent management and turnover intentions. The results of the correlation analyses between burnout and turnover intentions are reported in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Correlation analyses between Burnout and Turnover intentions

		Physical Fatigue	Cognitive weariness	Emotional Exhaustion
Turnover Intentions	Pearson Correlation	.312**	.239**	.229**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.001
	N	206	206	206

\* Statistically significant:  $p \leq 0,01$   
 + Practically significant correlation (medium effect):  $r \geq 0,30$   
 ++ Practically significant correlation (large effect):  $r \geq 0,50$

The results showed a practically significant relationship between physical fatigue and turnover intentions (medium effect) and statistically

significant relationships between cognitive weariness, emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions.

The above results confirm hypothesis 3, namely that a significant positive relationship exist between burnout and turnover intentions.

**DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The main objective of this research was to determine the relationship between talent management, burnout and turnover intentions of employees in a selected Botswana mine. As with previous studies, talent management practices also appeared to be poorly applied in Botswana government institutions such as mining (see Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Barkhuizen et al., 2015; Magolego et al., 2013; Mpofu & Barkhuizen, 2013). More than half of the participants indicated their dissatisfaction with talent management practices such as workforce planning, staffing and talent development. Poor talent management in this study resulted in higher levels of burnout relating to cognitive weariness and emotional exhaustion. In particular a lack of management commitment towards talent management are also emphasised in this study (see Du Plessis et al., 2015; Theron et al., 2014).

The results showed that poor workforce planning and lack of career development were main contributors to employee’s decisions to leave the mining industry (see Jamasmie, 2016). Clearly a lack of talent management practices can result in a demanding work environment for mining employees which in turn affects the well-being (De Beer et al., 2013). In line with previous studies (see Molefi, 2015; Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2016) employees considered quitting their jobs as a result of burnout.

This research makes important theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical point of view, this research adds to the limited body of research on talent management, burnout and retention of mining employees in Botswana. From a practical point of view, this research confirmed that talent management practices are critical for the well-being and retention of employees in the Botswana mining industry. The results furthermore emphasised the need for management to improve the workforce planning by identifying and grooming a future pool of talent. This in turn can prevent future shortages of skilled workers in Botswana mines.

This research had some limitations. First a cross-sectional design was used which limited the research in terms of making cause and effect inferences over the long-term. Second the research only focused on

white collar workers in a selected mine. The results can therefore not be generalised to other mines or blue collar mining employees.

For future research it is recommended that the sample be excluded to include mines from the broader Botswana mining industry. This will enable the researchers to do comparisons and detect the talent needs in the different mining segments. For future research it is also recommended to follow a mixed method approach and gather qualitative data to gain a deeper understanding of the talent culture of mines and the impact thereof on individuals.

In conclusion this research highlighted the importance of effective talent management in a country and industry such as Botswana that are characterised by a shortage of skilled and competent workers. Managers are therefore advised to revisit talent management practices and build a supportive working environment that will retain mine workers.

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