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# Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organisation in Free State

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**A research project submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA).**

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**Protocol Number: (WBS/BA2492392/714)**

**DECLARATION**

I, **Lipuo Mofokeng**, declare that this research article is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.



Lipuo Paulinah Mofokeng

**Signed at**:…Welkom …

**On the** ……27th ……**day of** …February 2023.

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## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

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# ABSTRACT

**Orientation**: There is a relationship between inefficient HR practices and the behaviour of employees as well as the performance of the organisation in terms of production and safety.

**Research purpose**: The study aimed to explore the experience of Line Managers with HR practices towards employees and Line Managers themselves. The study also sought to assess the effectiveness of the HR practices of a mining company in the Free State.

**Motivation for the study**: To assist the HR Department with feedback on the services they provide to their customers, which are Line Managers as well as employees in general; gaining deeper awareness and understanding of the influence they have on the morale of all employees, which translates to the performance of the organisation in terms of production and safety.

**Research strategy/design, procedure and method**: The research was carried out through a qualitative approach. Data was collected through convenience, quota, purposive and inclusion criteria sample comprising four HR personnel (n = 4) and five Line Managers (n = 5). Structured, online (Microsoft teams) interviews were conducted and analysed using thematic analysis.

**Main findings**: The findings of the study indicated that Line managers find HR department processes extremely slow, HR is not aligned to the core business of the organisation, no talent management, no talent retention strategies, long recruitment processes, HR's reluctant to resolve disputes and escalates almost everything to employee relations (ER). Inefficiencies in HR practices have a negative influence on employees' behaviour. Inefficiencies in HR have an impact on production and safety and HR incentives/bonuses not linked to outputs of their functions.

**Contribution/value-add**: This study adds to the body of knowledge by furthering research on excellent service delivery to all employees, valuing human capital,

prioritising the development and well-being of employees, and recognising the important relationship between human resources service delivery and management.

**Keywords**: *Human resource department; recruitment; training and development; succession planning; diversity and inclusion, talent management, conflict management*

## LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| HR | Human Resource |
| ER | Employee Relations |
| TA | Thematic Analysis |
| P1 to P9 | Participant One to Participant Nine |

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

## 1.1. Introduction

This study focuses on how the Human Resource (HR) function manages human capital within an organisation, whether the Operations Managers are satisfied with human resource department practices, and how they manage employees. HR is a function in an organisation whose primary and main function is to manage the people in line with the company policies and systems (Rihan, 1998). It is the department in a workplace whose main function is to focus on employees' needs to ensure they are satisfied and engaged (Rihan, 1998). These employees must also be provided with all the necessary resources to perform their tasks well (Williams, 2021, p. 2).

The HR department consists of several functions within an organisation which include: talent management, recruiting, training and development, employee relations, diversity and inclusion, policy implementation, policy compliance, government regulations compliance, legal and safety compliance, as well as being responsible in resolving conflicts between employees and management. Efficient HR activities help the organisation achieve its strategic objectives in terms of structuring and bringing about order and fostering productivity for the business's success (Williams, 2021).

Human resources drive inclusion regarding equal opportunities between men and women (Zhuwao, 2019) and should coordinate individual development plans for all employees (Gobler, 2019). For positive output in an organisation, HR should ensure job satisfaction by employees who are constantly trained and developed (Gobler, 2019), management talent that seeks to execute management of the workforce by acquiring the right people for the job at the right time and the right place (Maleka, 2020) and recruitment is also one of the core functions for human resource, to

provide the organisation with the right skill needed to achieve its goals (Bazana, 2021).

## 1.2. Research purpose and objectives

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of Line Managers on how HR practices are towards employees and Line Managers. The effectiveness of HR practices of a mining company in Free State. A qualitative method was utilised in data collection by applying non-probability sampling. Questionnaires were issued to targeted individuals within an organisation to access the effectiveness of the HR functions. An inductive approach was utilised to explore the phenomena and allow themes to emerge.

The strategy used was purposive sampling. Themes emerged during interviews with the participants and were easy to analyse without using the computer-assisted tool. Such analysis enlightened the organisation about HR practices, and the HR department received feedback from Operations Managers on how they view their service.

The variables tested were the recruitment processes, training and development methods, talent management methods, handling of employee relations, how diversity and inclusion policies are driven, how organisational policies are implemented, how government regulations are driven for compliance and how conflicts are resolved. This was done to measure the degree of satisfaction of the HR department on how they execute these variables.

The degradation of Operations Managers was also measured on the same variables to test if HR is delivering on Operations Managers' expectations. This provided HR with feedback from Operations Managers on their services.

## 1.3. Problem Statement

According to Wood (2000), human resource practices should be aligned with an organisation's overall strategy. The main role of HR is to ensure efficient services in managing human capital to be productive in the interest of strategic organisational objectives (Felgate, 2020).

Inefficiencies in HR practices within an organisation affect Line Managers' wellness. This causes challenges in the management of human capital by Human Resource departments. Inefficiencies within such departments can affect employees as well as organisation’s overall performance (Makapela, 2021).

Employees are considered a valuable asset in the mining industry; since most mines are not mechanised, this sector is labour-intensive (Prinsloo, 2022). Furthermore, the mining industry contributes more than a billion (7.9%) towards South Africa's total gross domestic product and employed approximately 460 000 people in 2020 (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Due to this sizable contribution to the South African economy, mining sector employees must be treated with great care, dignity and respect to prevent huge unemployment and financial losses that could occur in their absence. This function is aligned with HR practices.

HR should have sound practices to curtail the potential for employment and financial losses. Human resources influence employee performance within an organisation; hence practices should be aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives (Scheepers, 2011). This study explores, establishes and outlines practices that contribute to increased effectiveness and efficiency of HR practices of a mining company in Free State, South Africa. Also, this study enlightens the organisation, academics and larger society about the line/operation manager's overall experience of HR practices while offering possible solutions to inefficiencies.

### 1.3.1 Research questions

- Are HR Personnel Practices aligned with organisational strategic objectives?
- Are Line Managers satisfied with the HR Personnel services?
- Can inefficient HR Practices have an impact on the behaviour of employees?
- Can inefficient HR Practices have an impact on the performance of the organisation?

## 1.4. Delimitations of the research study

Delimitations are boundaries to the research, narrowed by the researcher on what was included and excluded from the research for the study to be manageable, considering only what the study required (Theofanidis & Fountouk, 2018). The research focused on HR practices on the mining employees, participants with HR experience and knowledge of HR practices, both males and females, were included. This provided more details within the mining organisation with regard to HR practices (Nyikahadzoi, 2022).

## 1.5. Significance of the research study

Human resource is the department within an organisation that maximises employee performance, aligning with the strategic organisational objectives. The research findings could help an organisation with insights into inefficiencies of HR practice, opening an opportunity for improvement (Parameswari, 2015).

Employees are the most valuable asset in the organisation, particularly in the mining sector that is labour intense. This would also have a positive impact since the mining sector contributes R361.9 billion (7.9%) to the total gross domestic product (Prinsloo, 2022). This study will also fill a gap in academia in relation to HR practice within the mining industry (De Bruyn, 2009).

Human resource practices or functions influence the morale and performance of the employees within the workplace, which integrates into the organisation's overall performance (Parameswari, 2015).

## 1.6. Preface to the research report

The report has five chapters. The first chapter consists of the introduction that covers the research purpose and objectives, problem statement, research questions, delimitations of the research study, significance of the research study and research propositions.

Following the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a literature review covering the human resource functions, past studies and explanatory framework. Chapter 3 discusses the research strategy, design, procedures and methods, sampling, data analysis, transferability, dependability and Ethical considerations when collecting research data. Chapter 4 covers the results as well as discussions and interpretations. Chapter 5 covers the interpretation of the research questions, conclusion, recommendations and limitations of the study.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

Human resources are crucial resources within an organisation (Makapela, 2021); hence performance can either make or break the organisation. Sixpence (2021) also indicated that the performance of an organisation is influenced by the effectiveness of human resource management in relation to the quality of employees in achieving strategic goals (Sixpence, 2021). The fundamental asset of an organisation relies on the performance of human resources to execute excellent service delivery (Winarno, 2022).

The main role of HR is mainly to mediate between the employees, the job and the employer by applying the organisation's policies as well as government policies related to the employer (Gobler, 2019). Recent studies indicate that the role of HR is the management of the flow of information and flow of work; this impacts the humanistic side of the business and adds value to the stakeholders (De Bruyn, 2009).

The functions include recruitment, training and development, talent management, succession planning, diversity and inclusion, employee relations and resolving disputes. Qualities for HR Personnel include leadership skills, extensive knowledge of the industry as well as effective negotiation skills (Yugandhar, 2015).

HR needs to motivate employees in different occupations to create a valuable resource to achieve the organisational goals (Parameswari, 2015). Turnover rates in relation to maintaining well-performed employees are expected to bring positive results within an organisation through effective human resource management (Winarno, 2022).

The department has to ensure opportunities are being created for training and development, which will grow the employees (B.Naga Parameswari, 2015). They are necessary to bring balance between the employer and employees to secure the effectiveness of the organisation (Yugandhar, 2015).

## 2.2 Human resource practices

The following are the main human resource functions within an organisation

### 2.2.1 Recruitment

Recruitment is one of the core functions of human resources to provide the organisation with the right skill needed to achieve its goals; this entails choosing the right person for the right position (Makapela, 2021). The recruitment process involves sourcing, screening, shortlisting, and selecting the right person for the job.

Jobs are normally advertised internally and externally to generate a pool of capable candidates (Makapela, 2021). Companies use different processes of recruitment depending on the nature of the business. Some companies are still old school, requiring applicants to send their Curriculum Vitae via post physically.

Some companies prefer applicants to submit personally (walk-ins), some utilise emails, whereas others use technology like E-recruitment (Bazana, 2021). An E-recruitment is where an applicant completes the application on the company's database and submits the references required. The use of E-recruitment seems to be recommended due to its cost-effectiveness (Bazana, 2021).

The HR department would then move to the selection (screening) process in which candidates that meet the advertisement requirements are selected. The candidates that fit the purpose would then be scheduled for interviews. Successful candidates from the interviews would then be selected in sequence in terms of who was the best (Bazana, 2021). The process is followed by shortlisting the successful candidates who would lead to a candidate being officially hired.

Organisations vary in recruitment and selection practices; however, it is estimated that the entire recruitment and selection process should be within weeks to two months (Bazana, 2021).HR should execute this process with urgency in the interest of the business (Bazana, 2021).

### 2.2.2 Talent management

Talent Management is an HR function that seeks to execute workforce management by acquiring the right people for the job at the right time and place (Maleka, 2020). The strategy is designed to enhance organisational performance to achieve its goals.HR should have a clear strategy for attracting, developing and retaining the talent required for the business's success (Filippus, 2019).HR should be an enabler of talent within an organisation instead of being a distractor of talent (Filippus, 2019).

According to Musakuro (2021), talent management is a very broad topic and cannot be defined in one sentence; it is referred to as the management of talent in the organisations anticipated human capital needs. Includes setting up processes for retaining, motivating, developing and attracting more talent to achieve strategic organisational objectives (Musakuro, 2021).

HR is the main driver of this function, as expected by the organisation to achieve a competitive advantage. This ensures the right person, in the right job, at the right time (Musakuro, 2021).

Talent management is crucial in the HR department; its main function is to observe and analyse the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of individuals who qualify to sustain the business (Shingenge, 2022). In addition, these talented individuals need talent branding, a positive mindset, development, engagement, performance, recognition, compensation and retention. (Barkhuizen, 2021).

***Talent Branding*** has to do with how top talented individuals are being natured and shaped in a particular department to represent that department's high performance to the strategic goal of an organisation (Lesenyeho, 2018). This will include retaining

and utilising benefits/incentives, recognition, remuneration, support and occupational health and safety, and job security.

***Talent mindset*** *c*onsists of an HR department that can recognise and spot the talent to allocate to suitable positions within an organisation. Talent management practices must be applied by supervisory, lower management, middle management, and top management (Barkhuizen, 2021).

***Talent engagement*** is mostly driven by the available resources for employees to perform optimally, including management support and recognition (Akter, 2022). Clear job and performance expectations. To keep employees dedicated and motivated, their work must be compensated and valued to keep them engaged (Barkhuizen, 2021).

**Talent development** seeks to continually improve the employees for better performance in the organisation, as well as better opportunities in terms of growth. A company that does not develop its employees does not grow since employees find satisfaction when their development is taken care of (Shingenge, 2022).

***Talent performance and recognition***, it is critical that an organisation has systems for performance appraisals and recognition. This will increase the morale of the employees as well as their performance aligned with the company's strategic objective (Akter, 2022).

***Talent retention*** practices include recognition, training and development, rewards and recognition, and compensation. This leads to employees' satisfaction which they will remain with the organisation due to better treatment (Akter, 2022).

***Talent compensation*** addresses that talent should be rewarded; hence the company should have systems in place for remuneration, compensation, and benefits, and there must be fairness in terms of equity in salary. This is essential to retain the talent in an organisation reference required (Lesenyeho, 2018).

### 2.2.3 Training and development

Positive output in an organisation results in satisfaction from employees who are constantly trained and developed (Gobler, 2019). Trained and developed employees enhance their skills and competencies, leading to positive employee behaviour (Maleka, 2020). HR should coordinate and have consistent systems in place for employee training and development to enhance the organisation's performance. (Maleka, 2020).

Training and development are very critical to the business as employees are "the most important assets, resources and building blocks of the organisation" (Mehale, 2021).this is related to the core success of the organisation as it enhances the performance of the workforce, advocates for the initiative, technology improvement due to engagement and skills transfer. A company that develops and trains its workforce excels (Mehale, 2021).

### 2.2.4 Succession planning

Succession planning involves the organisation's strategies for skills transfer to create flexibility within the company (Mans-Kemp, 2022). This includes structures where earmarked individuals are trained as successors in certain positions to maintain continuous organisational development (Mans-Kemp, 2022).

According to Gobler (2019), flexibility and adequate organisational skill is required. HR should coordinate individual development plans for all employees (Gobler, 2019). This would feed into the succession planning of potential individuals with adequate skills, competencies, and experience for future complex senior leadership roles (Gobler, 2019).

### 2.2.5 Diversity and inclusion

The issue of diversity and inclusion has been a drive in South Africa, especially with the South African history related to discrimination and inequalities of racial and gender reference required (Zhuwao, 2019). However, this is still a challenge in the workplace in South Africa as they view diversity and inclusion as legal compliance

instead of recognising talent as an added value to the business's success (Ramohai, 2019).

Human resources drive gender diversity regarding equal opportunities between men and women (Zhuwao, 2019). This department is responsible for driving this initiative guided by affirmative action and employment equity policies. This will assist the organisation to be in good standing with the requirements of labour law (Zhuwao, 2019).HR is legally bound to ensure diversity and inclusion in the workplace. (Zhuwao, 2019).

The compliance is to the Affirmative Action Policy and Employment Equity Act of 1998; with this in place and the failure of the government to regulate these policies, there is still a wall that exists to accept women specifically as part of the decision-makers in top management positions (Zhuwao, 2019).

### 2.2.6 Employee Relations

This involves resolving disputes between the employer and the employee so maintain positive relationships (Acuity, 2022). It is responsible for creating a culture that improves the employee's experience. It has to create trust and comfort that employees can freely address their issues through the HR department (Acuity, 2022).

Due to the legal, financial and ethical implications associated with HR practices, it is very critical that employees' perception of practices are ethical (Gobler, 2019).HR should pose the following ethical codes: Integrity, legality, proficiency, professionalism and confidentiality (Gobler, 2019).

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH STRATEGY, DESIGN, PROCEDURE AND METHODS

## 3.1. Research Strategy

The research approach was carried out by qualitative method. There are three types of research methods, quantitative, qualitative and mixed. Qualitative research explores ideas, formulating theories, and understanding concepts mainly expressed in words (Streerkerk, 2022). Nine respondents through open-ended questions to understand the context (Streerkerk, 2022).

Qualitative research aims to engage with different people to get different views on their experience, as they are subject matter experts in a particular field (Yardley, 2011). The method is one in which data was collected, non-numerical, through audio and text (Bhandari, 2022). The method brought about an understanding of the concepts through engagement with different people, experiences, and opinions.

The method gives in-depth insights into the topic, which might lead to new ideas to solve the problem (Bhandari, 2022). Hence, the research approach was carried out using a qualitative method; as Strauss (2012) explained, the type of research in question informs the choice of the research method to be used.

The research required an engagement with the human resource department and with Line Managers from the shafts and Plants within the organisation, hence the proposed method. When a researcher embarks on this method, they tend to get inner experience as they are closely in contact with the participants (Strauss, 2012).

Strauss (2012) continues by saying that the method allows the researcher to form meaning from the findings rather than testing variables. The researchers in this journey enjoy serendipity and discovery; they learn more about their participants and connect with them at a human level.

Good qualitative researchers tend to possess the following characteristics "a humanistic bent, curiosity, creativity and imagination, a sense of logic, the ability to recognise diversity as well as regularity, a willingness to take risks, the ability to live with ambiguity, the ability to work through problems in the field, an acceptance of the self as a research instrument, trust in the self and the ability to see value in the work that is produced" (Strauss, 2012, p. 5). The research topic required details to understand the problem and possible solutions better.

## 3.2. Research design

### 3.2.1. Action research design

Action research can also be called a "clinical perspective", which means a thorough understating obtained by questioning and studying events, the outcome targeted at solving a problem (Shani, 2019). According to Kovalainen (2011), action research is where close collaboration with the research object and its practical problem-solving is part of the research process.

Action research elaborates on the problem and action to be taken, gives insight and describes a series of events that have been taking place over time in an organisation (Kovalainen, 2011). It emphasises a technical approach for the organisation with the appropriate solutions to solve the problem (Orland-Barak, 2012); the researcher in this type of design has to be involved in activities to some extent (Kovalainen, 2011) for a better understanding of the problem and the solutions required to solve a problem. Action research aims to solve the problem as discovered during the investigation.

For this project, the research design used is action research, intending to improve some of the currently existing systems or practices in the organisation (Twyman, 2021); this is referred to as critical action research (Twyman, 2021). This directs the questions to what would be useful, and the type of data being collected would result in an active engagement (Shani, 2019).

Action research focuses more on the technical side of things as this tends to address an immediately observed behaviour or an issue at hand (Twyman, 2021). A decision to embark on action research was informed by the need to acquire a deep understanding of processes within the human resource department to improve certain processes (Shani, 2019).

## 3.3. Research procedure and methods

### 3.3.1 Data collection

Data collection systematically is collecting information from the real world (Cynthia G.L. Clamp, 2011); observations or interviews can do this. For this research, data collection was collected utilising asking questions through interviews which is the most common way, especially when doing action research (Methods, 2014); these can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured.

The interviews were structured into two categories which were for Line Managers and Human Recourse Personnel; it is advisable that during the interviews, the participants are allowed to express themselves without being dictated to by the researcher (Yardley, 2011). The interviews were an informal conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee, where there is questioning and sharing of information on a set of issues at hand (Yardley, 2011).

It is stated that the experience might bore, sadden or shock the participants. However, valuable data will be generated on questions focused on (Methods, 2014). The participants, especially the Line Managers, were happy to share their experiences in this research. It is important to utilise a more creative way of collecting data during interviews, including open-ended questioning (Plowright, 2019). During the interviews, participants were allowed to share as much information as possible without any researcher interruptions.

For this research, the interviews were individually structured and casually conducted online (Microsoft teams) (Methods, 2014).

The choice of how interviews were conducted has been informed by the population of interest (Methods, 2014). Firstly, Line Managers are directly linked to Human Recourse Personnel since they serve these Managers. Hence the Line Managers were chosen to participate in the research to share experiences regarding the service they received. Secondly, the Human Resource Personnel had to share what their job entails. Comprehensive data was received from these categories. This data has not been collected previously in the company; hence this was primary data (Terry E. Hedrick, 2011).

Interviews were conducted on Microsoft teams, interviewees were given options to choose how they wanted interviews to be conducted, and all opted for online interviews. The interviewees were prepared beforehand before the actual interviews (Terry E. Hedrick, 2011). General questions like: "When did they start working for the company? How has it been working for the company? what are their daily activities?" were asked.

The interviewer formed a relationship with the interviewees and made them comfortable (Kaz Stuart, 2017). During the interviews, some participants made jokes and laughed while sharing their experiences. Although the main focus of the research was Line Managers, HR Personnel was interviewed to get comprehensive data on their day-to-day activities. Management with a direct link to HR was also interviewed to share their experiences regarding HR services.

The HR Personnel, Management with a direct link to HR were asked different questions as the outcome would seek to find the core problem.

Once the interviews were completed, feedback was shared with the participants and the transparency organisation to allow the participants to form part of the solution to the problem (Kovalainen, 2011).

Data analysis involves the researcher collaborating with the participants for information sharing on solving the problem; this will assist since some of the participants are experts in the human resource field (Kovalainen, 2011).

### 3.3.2. Recording of data

Interviews were held in teams, and a phone was used for recording purposes. The Recording was then transferred and saved on cloud storage (OneDrive). Interviews were transcribed, imported onto a word document, and saved on cloud storage.

| **The focus was on the following questions during the interviews with Human Resource Personnel.** |
|---|
| ***What are Human Resource Functions within an organisation?*** |
| ***Can Human Resource Systems be tracked online by Line Managers?*** |
| ***What are Reward systems for HR Department?*** |
| **The focus was on the following questions during the interviews with Line Managers** |
| ***What is your experience with Human Resource Practices (recruitment, Succession Planning, Diversity and Inclusion, Conflict Management, training and development and talent management)?*** |
| ***Can you be able to track the progress online on Human Resource Systems?*** |
| ***Do you know what HR Reward systems are?*** |

*Figure 1: Main Interview questions.*

### 3.3.3 *Sampling*

Sampling is the selection of a few participants in a population (Daniel, 2012). Sampling main categories are Probability and non-probability (Staff, 2022). According to Fink (2011), sampling is a selection of a small portion of participants representing the whole population in which evaluations of findings will be applied (Fink, 2011).

The type of sampling strategies is systematic sampling, random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, purposive sampling, typical case sampling, critical case

sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling (Staff, 2022).

For this research, the type of sampling method that was used was a non-probability, and the strategy used was purposive sampling, this is also called judgemental sample (Erin Ruel, 2018)." Qualitative research primarily employs nonprobability sampling" (Daniel, 2012, p. 4).

Participants were intentionally selected due to their specialised knowledge or expectations in the field on the topic being undertaken; this type can also be referred to as an informative interview (Erin Ruel, 2018). The choice of purposive sampling was informed by the type of data required, which would require a deep understanding of the field being investigated.

### 3.3.4. Sample size

Census is the inclusion of all the participants in the study, and this method does not have sample errors (Daniel, 2017). Due to the type of sampling method, which is a nonprobability, non-statistical method, the sample size was determined (Daniel, 2012). Software programmes can be used to establish the sample size based on the research design (Acheson, 2012). According to Daniel (2012), the number of participants required for this type of sampling can be between six and fifteen participants; for this research, the number used was nine. The sample comprised HR personnel (n=5) and Line Managers (n=4).

## 3.4. Data analysis

The data was analysed by manually following the phases of Thematic Analysis (TA) which is a qualitative method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into p [patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set (Clarke, 2012). This method was easy to use because the researcher was familiar with a company's work environment. The successive phases of thematic analysis are discussed in the following subsections.

**Phase 1: Familiarising with the data**

The researcher familiarised herself with the collected data by reading through the transcripts of each participant. The researcher also listened to the recordings to ensure all data was correctly transcribed. It is recommended to listen to the recordings at least once as well as read the transcripts (Clarke, 2012)

**Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**

In this phase, the researcher read transcripts, and initial codes were produced from the data while reading. General ideas emerging from the interviews relating to research questions were grouped. Everything related to the research questions must be coded (Clarke, 2012). The research questions were tabled on an excel sheet, and similar ideas were placed together under those questions.

**Phase 3: Searching for Themes**

In this phase, the researcher analysed the data from the coding and shifted to themes. This process includes shaping the data by shifting from codes to themes (Clarke, 2012). The data was matched to the research questions to search for themes. The phase includes reviewing codes from the data to identify similarities (Clarke, 2012).

**Phase 4: Defining and Naming Themes**

The data was manageable enough and repetitive from codes; hence it was easy for the researcher to start defining and naming themes. "This phase involves selecting extracts to present and analyse and then setting out the story of each theme with or around these extracts" ((Clarke, 2012, p. 67). The researcher then allocated names to the themes, which reflected the true content of the data.

**Phase 5: Producing the Report**

A separate table containing pertinent themes and traits was given for each description. In the end, the researcher examined concepts from the data, examined the data using various methods, and adhered to the instructions for commenting on

these themes, regarding the application and influence of HR inefficiencies. The data produced a clear structure of meaning from the participants' lived experiences. To make a cogent story about the facts, themes should be connected logically and meaningfully and, if applicable, build on earlier themes (Clarke, 2012).

## 3.5 Transferability and dependability

**Transferability (external validity**) refers to the extent to which measurement can be verifiable (Howitt, 2011). There are various kinds of validity which are: concurrent validity, construct validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity, ecological validity, external validity, face validity, factorial validity, internal validity, and predictive validity (Howitt, 2011). This tests whether information can be transferred between individuals and yield the same findings. All employees employed by the mining company may use the data from this study; transferability was made possible by the data's thorough descriptions.

## 3.6 Dependability (reliability)

This refers to the extent to which data is reliable and the consistency in terms of the findings of the research (Neuendorf, 2019). This is about the confidence that, should the data be collected more than once, it would yield the same results (Payne, 2011). "Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that rather than seeking 'reliability', a better term would be 'dependability', indicating the more general question of whether the results of one study are likely to occur again" (Payne, 2011, p. 2). The researcher organised and logically described the study procedure in the documentation to attain reliability.

## 3.7. Ethical considerations when collecting research data

Research ethics are standards during data collection that must be maintained to ensure participants' fairness and integrity the researcher (Hodges, 2013). Dealing has to be maintained with colleagues and sponsors to ensure the proceedings are conducted safely (Hodges, 2013).

Permission from human resource management has been granted to give the participants the comfort to freely give the information required without fear of being victimised afterwards.

The participants were not forced to engage in interviews if they felt uncomfortable and were assured confidentiality throughout the interview. The participants gave consent to carry out the interviews and record their views. The participant's identities were kept confidential by the researcher as well as the data received.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the collected data is analysed, discussed and interpreted. Although HR Personnel formed part of the interviews, the main focus was on Line Managers regarding HR services. Line Managers and employees, in general, are HR customers and are at the receiving end. HR Personnel participants were mainly part of sharing light concerning their day-to-day activities.

Line Managers were to share their experiences regarding services provided by HR. The main focus was on HR Personnel's day-to-day activities, not systems the organisation had designed. However, some information emerged during the interactions regarding how systems are designed. Participants were named from P1 to P9. The company is highly centralised; engaging one participant on some issues can cover about five or more operations.

## 4.2 Results

The research findings for this study included a variety of categories, themes, and replies, along with actual quotes to bolster the conclusions. The research was separated into two categories. Category 1: Questions designed specifically for Human Resource Personnel. Category 2: Questions design for Line Managers (Operations Managers).

### 4.2.1 Category 1: How Human Resources Personnel interprets their functions/practices

The interviews were done with Human Resource Officers, Human Resource Managers, Human Resource Leaders, Talent Managers, and Employee Relation Managers at both Plants and Shafts. Category 1 gives six main themes in Human

Resource Department. The following are subsections on themes as well as interpretations.

***The recruitment process timeframe unclear***

The participants indicated that the recruitment process goes through many stages before being finalised. However, they had different views on how long the process takes.

**P4 "***Depending on the skill we will be recruiting, if we are looking for a senior person. Let's say we're giving ourselves a maximum of 30 days to ensure we've got that person on board. Sometimes it takes less than that. It depends on how fast the approvals are. We also do the vetting, screening and background checks. So it depends sometimes the process flows, within 30 days, Sometimes it can be longer".*

**P1** *"The whole process can take three to six months".*

**P2** *"It takes two to three months."*

***The long qualifications verification process***

Participants indicated that verifying applicants' qualifications/certificates is a long process.

**P4***: "It depends on certain elements like verifying a certificate, and then there is a hiccup, or they pick up something, and then we have to resend the certificates."*

**P1***: "For some occupations like artisans, we need to verify their qualifications which the process takes a long. It's mostly external issues because you might find that some of the employees don't have legit qualifications."*

**P2***: "The process is long, especially because we also have to verify the certificates, the process of verifying the certificates takes longer".*

***HR Systems are not online***

Participants gave different views on whether the Line Managers can track what they have requested from HR online. They mentioned one system called Vision that

sends a signal in emails to Line Managers for approvals, and they could also access the system to check labour.

**P4** *"Yeah, as I said, the departments are interlinked; as line managers, they can have excess to the systems, like approving the labour or the transfers or anything, and if they want the information to look at how labour composition is in their sections and their departments, they've got an opportunity to look at it, they can be able to track the progress on the system called Vision."*

**P1** *"There is a system called Vision, which sends a notification on an email for Line Managers to approve. On the system itself, when Managers open, there is a message that will notify them should there be anything that needs their approval."*

**P2** *"There is no online access for line Managers to track the progress on things that they have requested; Human Resources can only send them the progress report."*

***Functions not clear***

When asked about functions within the talent management department and whether there are talent retention strategies.

**P4** *"What we know recently is that we have picked up certain things that were not done in a correct manner, so people were not aware. It was not communicated well enough because now, specifically where I am, the succession plan is not in line. Your individual development programs were not done".*

**P3*:"*** *Look, I mean strategically, there is talent, talent pool strategy or talent management strategy, but implementation part of it, I do not think we are there yet; that is caused by a number of issues; it is caused by lack of understanding by some of the HOD's because I cannot say it is an issue of attitude. I don't think we're doing enough in educating our HODs on how to deal with talent management because sometimes we can have good policies, but if we're not popularising those policies, if we are not educating the right people on those policies, implementation maybe an issue but generally we are not doing good in terms of talent management".*

**P9***: "There is not much focus on talent management; there is just an administration work of regrouping disciplines, discipline analysis, age profiles, education profile, testing competencies, structure role development, training matrix, gap analysis to develop*

*individual development plans, humanistic training, looking at training that is discipline-specific, being involved on development panels as well as succession planning. There are no systems that have been developed yet for the department. The department also assists HR with Psychometric tests when people are being hired and when being promoted at their departments. The department also assists HR with role profiles during recruitments".*

***No Talent retention strategies***

**P9*:*** *"There are no talent retention strategies within the company, no tools in place to identify who should be retained."*

**P1: "***I have no idea if there are."*

***ER handling basic conflict issues***

One participant indicated that some of the cases being elevated to ER by HR are basic conflict management issues.

**P3** *"Most of the things that HR needs to deal with, they tend to elevate them to ER, they tend to avoid dealing with them, and in some cases, it's because they don't want to get their hands banned, or in some cases, they are not sure whether they're doing the right thing or not. So they tend to deal with minor issues that they can deal with, and by right they have a responsibility to deal with those issues, but they tend to avoid dealing with them they always referring them to ER."*

**P3** *"Remember Human Recourse and Employee Relations are the same department, and some of the specialities of HR practitioners that you need to have a basic ER understanding like minor issues of discipline, minor issues of relationship at work and misunderstandings. I mean, HR personnel can deal with those, right, but ER goes farther and deals more with legal issues and advice on how to manage them"***.**

**P3 "***Issues of, I mean a misunderstanding, some grievances at the workplace, HR can be in a position to call the two parties, engage with two parties, advise the two parties on some procedural issues and stuff like that. However, when it comes to the issues that are deeper on legislative matters, then ER gets into the picture because it goes deeper now on legal issues."*

***Mining Employees not difficult***

One of the participants has indicated that the mining employees are not difficult,

**P3*: "****I think generally mine employees are not difficult. We are not educating them enough, and some of the things that tend to be ER issues are a result of a lack of understanding. It is my view that if we can educate our employees properly, I mean there will be no issues, they are not difficult; I can promise you our employees are not difficult".*

### 4.2.2 Category: Experience of Line Managers with Human Resources Personnel Practices

***HR is not aligned with the core business***

Participants have indicated that the HR department is not aligned with the organisation's core business.

**P5**: ***"****The service that they provide lacks, if I may put it like that, because I mean they will actually take time to provide any service that you require. It's like in that department; there's no sense of agency. They take it as like tomorrow is another day to do stuff. So it is like there is a disconnect between them and us in terms of understanding if they need to give you a service or assistance you require. I mean, if you need labour, it is as if it does not click that if you do not have that labour, the equipment will not operate. So there is a bit of a disconnect between the service they provide to us and what we are supposed to do as Line Managers. It is like they lack some knowledge of some sort. I don't know if what I'm saying is making sense."*

**P6*:*** *"We just failed to retain the two colleagues, we lost them to competition, and we have asked HR to escalate the matter to cooperate because this is a scarce skill; they refused an offer that was put on the table in terms of remuneration. However, that has not yielded any results, and it seems like the HR department or the leadership of HR at the operation does not know how to handle such a complex issue. This has led to this frustration, I'm frustrated, my subordinates are frustrated, The HODs are frustrated, and it seems we don't have a solution to the problem. I don't think HR at the operation can solve problems; hence we need certain skills.HR takes everything to corporate".*

**P7:** *"Their services are slow, especially in an environment where production is key, from several aspects when one needs labour replacement that takes long, there's a lot of red*

*tapes that takes place, and it takes quite a while. Some individuals within the department, you find that they are not as aligned in terms of the process. So actually, I would give them about a four out of a 10?"*

**P8:** *"They managed to get the job done, yes. However, there is room for improvement".*

**Researcher:** *One of the Human Recourse Leaders under Surface Operations declined the interview request by the researcher, saying that she does not fall under Mining Operations and hence cannot participate in the research. This is just to elaborate that some of the human resource personnel don't know that they are working for a mining organisation; although they might fall under surface Operations, they must know that the business is mining.*

***Recruitment process inefficient***

Participants indicated that the recruitment process takes too long, which puts the business at risk, as they do not have the resources (people) to run operations, and some required skills may have legal implications if not there.

**P5**: "*The recruitment process itself is a disaster because it doesn't take less than three months for you to get somebody to fill a position if it has to start from advertising, a short listing, conducting interviews and then making out an offer. Getting a person in it's a total disaster."*

**P6***: "OK, there's basically no written turnaround time on recruitments officially, so. So my personal experience is that there's no priority in getting the resources available on time and ensuring that we can, I can be able to deliver on my mandate. So it's always a drag and a drag and a drag, and it never ends before you know it; you went months and months on months without the necessary legal required skills, and that becomes a problem not only for me as the head of the department but for the Managers, and our role is to ensure that they are always legally protected".*

**P7:** *"Recruitment process is a very slow process; I mean, it can take them up to sometimes even six months just to replace, and unfortunately, by then, you know the person is already gone to the competition. You will need a resource to continue running a business; the fact that it can take up to six months just brings negativity; it puts operations under pressure".*

**P8**: *"Recruitment process is too long, to be honest. However, I cannot pinpoint if it is our organisation's policies that make it too long or simply the inefficiency of our HR department at our business unit that I cannot pinpoint. However, the process takes too long. It can definitely be shortened".*

***HR Systems are not online***

Participants indicated that there are no online HR Systems for line Managers to track progress on everything that they have requested from HR.

**P5:** "*No, you cannot be able to track the progress online. The only thing you can do is if they have posted an advert for recruitment, you can only go into that advert, and the only thing it tells you is the closing date, and then you won't see the progress".*

**P6**: *"There's no formalised platform where you can track the progress of HR systems. You can only get feedback on request or during our weekly meetings and interactions with the whole staff. Otherwise, the company doesn't have a formalised tracking system."*

**P7**: *"At this stage, there isn't any system to track the recruiting progress online. To know how far the process is, you basically have to rely on feedback from the human resource department".*

**P8**: *"No, we do not have any form of electronic checking. If you require information, you will have to inquire with the HR personnel themselves, whether it be the HR leader, HR manager, Senior HR officer and the likes".*

***Line Managers begging for HR assistance***

Participants indicated that if they don't follow up on what they have requested from HR Department, the department does not see a need to update its customers.

**P5: "**when *a request has been made, it is up until you actually pick up your phone and call them and ask them. Even the feedback that you get is not something you can work with".*

**P6:** *"You need to follow up and follow up every week on week. Make follow-ups, and there will be making excuses about corporate. As I said previously, it seems corporate holds more powers, and that leaves the Operational Managers incapacitated because HR cannot make final decisions on their own without consulting to cooperate".*

**P7:** *"So if you don't phone often, you won't know the progress, remember at the same time, it should not necessarily be your responsibility to follow-up, you know, I expect some feedback without having to prompt for one".*

**P6:** *"Honestly, I don't think it's being done. In a year and six months, I've been with the company, I've personally instructed the Skills development facilitator to conduct a screening process for my section so that we can manage our own talent, but that has not even hit the ground. In more than a year, that instruction was issued, so every day, its excuse will not do it. And it never gets done".*

***No clear functions under the talent management department***

Tasks under the talent management department are unclear to Line Managers; participants do not know what the talent management department does.

**P5**: *"Talent management department. Do we even have that?"*

**P6***: "I'm not really sure about the talent management department, but within the operation, there is a function called Skills Development facilitator, and one of the rules of that individual is to ensure that we know where talent is. We have formalised our engagement with it, and individual development plans to get drawn up at certain intervals, monitoring through the human resource leader and all that. On talent management, however, the execution implementation somehow needs more attention; I think that part needs to be driven from the Operational Management point of view to ensure that the policy is being implemented".*

**P7***: "Talent management needs a bit of attention. I mean, I don't know about shafts. However, from the Metallurgy Department, there's still a lot of work to be done, and I'm not only speaking about professional metallurgists; talking about even your operators. There's a lot of work that needs to be done, you know, the person who has economics or home cooking would be at the processing plant."*

**P8***: "Well, I think they are managing talent, whether they're doing it efficiently, I wouldn't know well, my opinion is that, again, there's room for improvement. The talent management in our organisation is more admin based. I haven't seen any initiatives from the talent management department to try and increase the skills within the business to upskill the current one. I feel that in terms of the requirements, it is not up to its standard, the objectives of the department are not set by the Talent Manager, but this is more driven and monitored by the Executive."*

**P8:** *"Currently, the organisation employs people with Matric Certificates, but we still have individuals who have been with the company without the Matric Certificate before the law was passed. I do not see any initiative from talent management to upskill these individuals to meet the requirements. They seem to be comfortable with having to develop those with Matric certificates. Maybe it's me who doesn't understand the role of talent management. Maybe my interpretation is a bit off".*

***No talent retention strategies***

**P5:***" We definitely don't have talent retention strategies; talent is busy leaving".*

***P7:*** *I believe the department has the talent retention strategies, but I don't want to get into it."*

**P8***:" Regarding the retention strategies, I'm not seeing it so far. Suppose I can give a subjective opinion on that, as I mentioned. In that case, I'm currently acting as Manager, an individual who was holding this role permanently was my boss. My personal opinion of him is that he was one of the individuals that we should have tried harder to retain. We now lost him to a competition. So if I use that example alone, I'm not seeing the talent retention in my business unit alone. We have had three resignations in the past quarter alone, and all of them were simply due to a lack of desire to retain these individuals irrespective of whatever challenges we have, and this was not a how can I put this? Voluntary separation package releases. They were all resignations".*

***Conflict Management***

Participants have indicated that there are conflict management policies and procedures in place. However, sometimes, HR deviates from them and does not want to solve actual problems concerning employees.

**P5:** *"We have a disciplinary procedure that actually guides them because what happens is if there is a quarrel between an employee and the employer and it is coming from the employee side, they actually apply something that is called grievance, there is a policy that actually governs that".*

**P6***: "OK, So conflict management is a playing field for organised labour where there's a complaint loss. If the complainant and the alleged offender are coming from the same union, then conflict management gets kick-started in the Unions office. If it's not from the*

*same unions, then only HR interactions start taking place. However, there is a process for conflict management for employee, employer or manager and employee's relations manager".*

**P7: "***There is a there is a company policy that everybody should abide by, and often if a person is disgruntled or feels discriminated. There's a protocol to follow, and then it's normally facilitated by HR, and so far, it works. Often you always have to bring in an independent party, there's a formal sitting, and so on and so forth and to me, the process is fair. There is a system in place to address conflict within the company".*

**P8***: "There is a policy in place for some conflict management. However, I must say within our business unit, that route is not followed as rigidly as it should be. In my opinion, I feel that there is interference either from an organised labour point of view or from an HR point of view, trying to mitigate and avoid the formal documentation of such conflict management. I feel that it fails supervisors to a certain degree and sometimes fails subordinates to a certain degree. This is because conversations, if they happen and are sorted in the boardrooms, they were not documented, meaning they did not happen, so if it's not documented, it leaves the door open for a repeat of offences".*

***Training and development***

Two participants felt that training and development are comprehensive. However, two were of the view that it needs to be improved.

**P5***: "Training and development are not that bad, that one I can actually say because what I know is it requires an individual who pushes themselves".*

**P6**: *"I think the training and resourcing is the first problem to all the other problems. In the centre of skills and human resource development, you have officials who themselves are not trained, skilled and capacitated to deal with humans and the complex mechanisms of that human capital as a resource. So the training it's a serious problem. I don't think we have the right people at the right jobs with the right skill and capacity to carry the task at hand".*

**P7:** *"Yeah, look, learning and development systems are comprehensive, right, and often that's probably part of why it takes a bit longer to replace people during the recruitment process. The person has to undergo this vigorous process of training, verifying*

*qualifications, and ensuring the person has the skill that matches. So I think that is also one of the reasons why the processes are very lengthy".*

**P8***: "Well, as I said, they get the job done. However, the system does have a few loopholes that can be improved. I feel that the system is quite manual at the moment. Everything is excel based, which becomes a bit difficult for efficient tracking. An individual has to come to update the spreadsheet manually, and then they have to send it out to everyone. It has no automatic triggering if an individual's training expires. Noncompliance in some training can have legal ramifications on it, so there is room for improvement".*

***Diversity and inclusion***

Some participants feel that although there is diversity and inclusion within the company, there is no strategy behind it; a compliance issue drives it, and HR is not driving these function Line Managers.

**P5:** *"I would say yes, there is diversity and inclusion within the company."*

**P6***: "Not really; however, there are guiding principles on the Employment Equity act, the mining charter. However, there are no drive and action plans to make sure that the required outcomes get reached at what period. There's no plan, we just have the numbers, and we are managing them, but you never get to hear how we will get to a point where we address skills and diversity. It is a national agenda, it's been driven by the state but from the management on the human capital point of view, and there is no plan on how we'll get to our employment equity goals".*

**P7***: "Yeah, I know there is. I mean, it's tracked even on our monthly review, and where there's noncompliance, we need to know an action is required. So it is; it is tracked from my level all the way up to the CEO's office. So yeah, it is getting the attention it requires".*

**P8***: "Yes, you can say that. I mean most cases, it's driven by a matrix that we have to maintain, and we have legislative requirements in terms of diversity and inclusion. So that one becomes easy to maintain because it's a number you report on. It's legal compliance. Seeing that our organisation is a public entity."*

***Succession planning not driven by HR***

Participants have indicated that succession planning is not getting attention from HR; Line Managers mostly drive this function.

**P5: "***They have maybe succession planning in place, but not everywhere."*

**P6:** *"Yeah, this one, it's a very sensitive one. However, just recently, the operation received a section 54 instruction from the DMRE. We were required to present the Mines organogram, which was when people were acting and relieving. We then found that most of them didn't even have the qualification that is when DMRE discovered that we did not have a succession plan. There was an instruction to the General Managers that a Succession Plan must be in place".*

**P7***: "Yes, there are succession plans; the only challenge is they are not driven from the human resources department. It falls under the training department, which is a discussion for another day. I won't say it works because, at this stage, again, it depends on the Managers' Office to see to it that it's implemented. If that does not happen, I tend to find that HR sort of distance themselves from that".*

**P8***: "I am not aware of their succession protocol".*

***HR influence on employee behaviour***

Participants have indicated that HR practices influence employees' positive or negative behaviour.

**P5**: "*Yes, it does, both negative and positive because what happens is, when the HR department does not do what they supposed to do, for example, the department is actually responsible for capturing the overtime of the employees, so at times they tend to slip up and not capture that overtime, then end up not paying those employees, then that actually brings lots of negativity. You find that the employees are not in the correct mindset because anybody who has worked and not getting paid obviously that person is not going to be in the correct mindset. In terms of the positive side, there are employees that tend to abuse sick notes and unpaid leaves, layoffs and stuff like that, so HR would actually call those people, and they would parade them and get them in line."*

**P6:** "*Yes, in a very significant way, so recently, we were embarking on a humanistic interventions processes that aim to change the culture of safety and health at the workplace during interactions with the employees with different mining teams. One of the common complaints that came forth it's about the morale of employees. We got complaints about our human resource development processes that do not take place; there is favouritism, nepotism and corruption, so employees suggest that we need to relook at our whole HR*

*functions and the way it's structured. I remember one of the People that were interviewed said if the company can take time and reshuffle the whole HR department from one operation to the other, maybe then we will eliminate biases in the workplace and improve the morale of the people".*

**P7:** "*They do a lot, and I've experienced this thing throughout my career, so HR plays a big role in terms of employee morale and more so in that, you know, its simple things such as when a person is on leave, somebody else relieves in that position, they normally get an incentive, acting advice. Now there is an expectation from someone believing that at the end of the month, I'm going to get X amount of extra money, and when it does not happen, it can affect a person's morale. The person will start being negative; I mean, why do I need to do this job if I know I'm not going to get paid and you start getting negative behaviour or negative performance from several employees? Even when salary queries are not dealt with, they can affect the employees' morale. Things such as bonuses that are not paid in time for someone who forgot to pay the right shift, HR forgot to include the right shift, and so on. So it's mainly monitoring, not so much how HR treats people but resolving monetary issues".*

**P8:** *Yes, negatively and positively.*

***HR practises' influence on production and safety***

Participants have indicated that inefficient HR towards employees can impact on production and safety of the organisation. If employees are not happy with HR services, this will impact production and safety within the organisation.

**P5:** "*Most definitely, if people are not happy that they were not paid, they will not perform and might even get injured because they are not in the right mindset".*

**P6***: "Definitely, HR practices are at the heart of influence at the operation. Frontline workers' behaviour is influenced by how they feel at work, the sense of being welcomed, the sense of having knowledge and the sense of need to grow, and recognition for the work they put in. So HR practices can influence behaviour in a negative or positive way. For example, if you don't staff our teams effectively, what do you expect them to do? If there are not enough or adequate skills available at any given point, it influences production. If you don't have adequate skills available at any given time, then your risk for incident injuries at the workplace increases. If you don't have well-structured discipline processes in place, then*

*the behaviour of the culture at the operation dictates you will have more people not reporting to work. So HR practices are at the heart of how we see ourselves at work, how we behave at work, and how we measure. The state of being welcomed and being recognised for the work that we do, and knowing that there's a possibility to move further in one's career in that particular company".*

**P7***: "Yes, definitely, that's why if you have a very strong HR that knows how to deal with people's queries or dissatisfaction, the outcome will be positive, and obviously, that behaviour is going to translate either into positive production or positive performance or safety, so I would actually say to you that if you have that you sorted. Believe it or not, HR is probably the most critical department within an organisation".*

**P8***: Yes, negatively and positively.*

***HR Incentives/bonuses***

All participants indicated that there is no bonus structure designed specifically for HR; they get the bonus based on their Operations Performance. The bonus structure is not linked to HR function output.

**P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9:** *There is no bonus designed specifically for Human Resource Management Personnel, the same parameters used for Line Managers are used for HR, so even if HR is inefficient, they still get rewarded and gets the bonus.*

## 4.3 Discussions

### 4.3.1 Outline of the findings

The findings showed that Line Managers are not satisfied with the human resource slow recruitment processes as this puts a lot of pressure on operations having to operate with the labour shortage. HR should execute this process with urgency in the interest of the business (Bazana, 2021).

One participant reported that this causes frustration in Managers as they have production targets to achieve and ensure that they look after the well-being of employees who are overworked due to labour shortage. According to the literature, recruitment is one of the core functions of human resources to provide the organisation with the right skill needed to achieve its goals. This entails choosing the right person for the position (Makapela, 2021).

Most participants have indicated that during this extremely slow process, HR does not update the Managers on the progress, and Managers have to follow up with HR on the availability of labour consistently. Literature states that human resources are crucial resources within an organisation (Makapela, 2021); hence its performance can either make or break the organisation.

The HR Personnel participants, however, argue that verifying qualifications takes longer as they depend on external assistance. On the issue of training and development, some participants feel that it needs improvement and that this can be improved. According to the literature, positive output in an organisation results in satisfaction from employees who are constantly trained and developed (Gobler, 2019). It continues by saying HR should coordinate and have consistent systems in place for the training and development of the employees to enhance the performance of the organisation (Maleka, 2020).

Three participants indicated that succession planning is not driven by the HR department, mostly by Line Managers, and some operations don't have it in place. According to Gobler (2019), flexibility and adequate organisational skill is required. HR should coordinate employee development plans (Gobler, 2019).

Most participants have indicated diversity and inclusion within the company; however, there is no strategic plan behind it; it is a matter of compliance as these numbers must be reported monthly. The literature agrees that this is still a challenge in the workplace in South Africa as they view diversity and inclusion as legal compliance instead of recognising talent as an additional value to the business's success (Ramohai, 2019).

One participant has indicated that this is driven by Line Managers rather than HR at different operations. According to the literature, human resources drive gender diversity regarding equal opportunities between men and women (Zhuwao, 2019). This department is responsible for driving this initiative guided by policies such as affirmative action and employment equity.

One of the participants indicated that there are policies that govern conflict management. However, HR escalates even basic issues to Employee Relations Department. This is due to a lack of knowledge on dealing with them and not wanting to be seen as bad guys should the problems be controversial.HR does not want to get their hands banned even though they will follow company policies. According to the literature, dispute resolutions create trust and comfort that employees can freely address their issues through the HR department (Acuity, 2022).

Line managers need to beg HR Personnel for assistance with an update on outstanding issues that have been requested. This does not make things easy for them as HR systems are not online for them to track the progress. Literature states that recent studies indicate that the role of HR is the management of the flow of information and flow of work; this impacts the humanistic side of the business and adds value to the stakeholders (De Bruyn, 2009).

Most Participants don't know what the talent management department does. However, the literature states that talent management is an HR function that seeks to execute workforce management by acquiring the right people for the job at the right time and place (Maleka, 2020).

The talent management department within the company is mostly administration work that includes: regrouping disciplines, doing discipline analysis, doing age and education profiles, testing competencies, structuring role development for individuals, training matrix, gap analysis to create individual development plans, looking at humanistic training, looks at discipline-specific training, they also form part of development panels.

However, according to Musakuro (2021), talent management is a very broad topic and cannot be defined in one sentence; it is refed to as the management of talent in anticipated needs of human capital by the organisation. Includes setting up processes for retaining, motivating, developing and attracting more talent to achieve strategic organisational objectives (Musakuro, 2021). One participant indicated that no systems had been developed yet for the talent management department.

Literature states that talent management is crucial in the HR department; its main function is to observe and analyse the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of individuals that will qualify to sustain the business (Shingenge, 2022). In addition, these talented individuals need talent branding, a positive mindset, development, engagement, performance, recognition, compensation and retention (Barkhuizen, 2021).

HR is the main driver of this function, as expected by the organisation to achieve a competitive advantage. This ensures the right person, in the right job, at the right time (Musakuro, 2021).

Seven Participants indicated that the department does not have talent retention strategies. The literature states that HR should have a clear strategy for attracting, developing and retaining the talent required for the business's success. HR should be an enabler of talent within an organisation instead of being a distractor of talent (Filippus, 2019).

Most participants indicated that the HR Personnel works in silos; they are not aligned with the organisation's core business, which relates to their extremely slow processes. A production company needs quick responses to matters to make decisions. They cannot analyse which matters are more urgent than others.

However, according to the literature, the fundamental asset of an organisation relies on the performance of human resources to execute an excellent service delivery (Winarno, 2022).

Seven Participants have indicated that HR practices or services have a negative influence on the behaviour of employees, the biggest contributors being employees not paid their overtime worked, some employees' salaries not being paid properly on time, employees not paid on time when they have relieved, HR not managing conflict and employees disgruntled due to not being developed. According to Sixpence (2021), the performance of an organisation is influenced by the effectiveness of human resource management in relation to the quality of employees in achieving strategic goals (Sixpence, 2021).

Seven Participants Indicated that HR inefficiencies towards Line Managers, as well as employees, impact the production and safety of the organisation; this relates to employees not being in the right mindset as they have some issues not being resolved by HR as they should. Literature states that turnover rates in relation to maintaining well-performed employees are expected to bring positive results within an organisation through effective human resources (Winarno, 2022). "HR success is about driving workforce success and that HR success should therefore be measured by the impact of HR on workforce success through effective HR practices" (De Bruyn, 2009), p. 2).

# CHAPTER FIVE

# EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

## 5.1. Evaluation of research questions

**Research Question 1: Are Line Managers satisfied with the service provided by HR Department?**

The evidence indicates that most Line Managers are unsatisfied with HR services. The highlights are HR slow processes, the recruitment process too long, No feedback provided on requested issues, HR not aligned with the organisation's core business, No talent retention strategies, talent management not up to standard, training needs improvement and procedures not followed by HR on conflict management.

**Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between inefficiencies in HR practices and the employee's negative behaviour?**

The answer is yes; the findings indicated that inefficiencies in HR have negative behaviour on employees. The main issues that would lead to negative behaviour are employees not paid their overtime as expected; employees are not paid their relieving and acting advice on time; employees disgruntled due to lack of development, Line Managers frustrated due to labour shortage and employees overworked due to labour shortage.

**Research question 3: Is there a relationship between inefficiencies in HR practices and the decline in organisational performance in relation to production and safety?**

The answer is yes; the findings indicated that HR is critical and that inefficiencies can lead to accidents and declining production. The main factors again are,

employees were not paid their overtime as expected, employees were not paid their relieving and acting advice on time, employees were disgruntled due to lack of development, Line Managers frustrated due to labour shortage, and employees overworked due to labour shortage

## 5.2. Conclusions

The study aimed to assess, in a qualitative manner, the effectiveness of HR Practices within a mining organisation by engaging with HR customers who are Line Managers. The HR Personnel also gave context on their day-to-day activities. The research employed a case study to address the problem statement and answer the research questions.

The study indicated that the HR Department is inefficient. HR inefficiencies are causing employees to be negative; HR inefficiencies impact the production and safety of the organisation; HR is not aligned with the organisation's core business. To elaborate more on this point; should HR be required to recruit three people; one for blasting underground, one for smelting the gold in the smelt house, and one for polishing the shoes of the Executive, HR would most likely speed up the process for one polishing the shoes of the Executive. HR leaders should ensure they have a solid understanding of the company, including its products, marketing tactics, and customer service policies.

The mining organisation is labour-intense; hence its existence relies highly on performing employees.HR Department is critical in taking care of the needs and well-being of all employees to sustain the business. Currently, HR is rewarded with bonuses with outputs not linked to their functions. Whether HR is performing or not, they get rewarded; hence this will not comprehend a need to improve their services.

## 5.3. Recommendations

Given the research outcomes, further study can be extended to the Executive level to share their experience with HR Department, such an expanded study will have comprehensive information leading to an action plan.

It is recommended that the company introduces "lean synchronisation "in the HR Department, which means moving towards eliminating all waste to develop an operation that is faster, more dependable, produces higher quality services and, above all, operates at low cost.

It is recommended that the company design a bonus system for HR Department. The bonus parameters must be linked to the outputs in relation to HR functions. There must be three main parameters as follows:

Operations must be staffed by effective human capital to carry out the organisation's work and accomplish business strategy at all times. If an operation has a complement of 100 employees, there must be about 98 employees at that operation for HR to qualify for a bonus.

There must not be any queries outstanding on employees that have not been paid their salaries, bonuses, relieving or acting advice. This report is to be sent to Line Managers for verification.

All Line Managers will complete a survey biannually with all HR functions measured (talent management, succession planning, training and development and conflicts resolutions).

A survey is to be completed by Line Managers monthly to measure the service in general.

**Other factors to improve service are as follows:**

HR Personnel should be reshuffled every two years between shaft and plant operations; this will assist in knowing that they don't belong to any operation and theirs is to provide a service.

HR Personnel spends time in the operations to align with the organisation's core business. This way, they can analyse what issues require more attention than others.

It is recommended that HR Personnel take various courses on all HR Functions. This will help in the development of the department.

As mentioned previously, the research's objective was not to criticise organisational HR systems but rather focus on HR Personnel. There were some findings during the interviews that triggered that there might be some flaws in systems and are as follows:

It is worth mentioning that the HR Department has been broken down into HR Department, Employee Relations Department, Training Department and Talent Management Department. Although these departments are interlinked, the flow of information moving from one department to the other causes delays; perhaps this was to improve efficiency.

Due to these departments being broken down, there might be confusion about who needs to do what. Issues are passed from one department to the other and not resolved in time. An example would be HR not solving simple dispute cases and passing them to ER Department, which should only be dealing with cases with potential legal implications to the organisation.

There might be confusion regarding which department is fully responsible and accountable for certain functions. It is also worth mentioning that the organisation is highly centralised, with decisions being made at the highest level, which causes delays.

It is recommended that the company relook at how HR Department should be structured to eliminate confusion between functions.

It is also recommended that there should be an online system where Line Managers can track progress on all issues concerning them and their employees. The system should be so that it would show whether the matter is in the office of the HR Officer,

HR Manager, HR Leader or above. This will give transparency to Line Managers to call the right office for an update. This will even potentially eliminate inefficiencies, as this will show in whose offices are delays being encountered. Online systems are good. However, people are behind those systems; hence it is critical to know who forgot to click the button. This should also form a part of one of the bonus parameters to be included on the survey filled in by Line Managers.

## 5.4. Limitations

Limitations of the research are potential weaknesses that are out of the researcher's control related to the chosen research design (Theofanidis & Fountouk, 2018). The permission by the company on the research had indicated employees not to be included as part of the participants as they might have subjective opinions. Most Human Recourse Leaders at the Shafts and Plants had refused to participate in the research. Future studies could thus focus on several mining firms to enhance the chances of improved data collection.

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## APPENDICES A - Ethical Clearance Certificate

**Graduate School of Business Administration**
**University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg**

**Wits Business School Ethics Committee**
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

### Ethics Clearance Certificate

**Ethics protocol number:** WBS/BA2492392/714
*This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below).*

This certificate is only valid if accompanied by formal permission from the relevant stakeholder(s).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project title** | Human resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organisation in the Free State |
| **Investigator / Researcher** | Ms Lipuo Mofokeng |
| **Nature of Project** | MBA (Research Article) |
| **Decision of the Committee** | Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed confidentialty. |
| **Issue Date of Certificate** | 2022-11-28 |
| **Expiry date** | Date of submission of the project / research report |
| **Chairperson** | Prof Anthony Stacey<br>☎ +27 11 717 3587<br>+27 82 880 4531<br>anthony.stacey@wits.ac.za |

**Declaration by Researcher**

*One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Ethics Committee.*

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature

29 November 2022
Date:

## APPENDICES B – Participation Information Sheet






Wits Business School

*Sculpting global leaders*

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Lipuo Mofokeng and I am a Master's in Business Administration student at Wits Business School in Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating "Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State". Under the supervision of Dr Asabea Ahwireng-Obeng, the aim of this research project is to assess the effectiveness of Human Resource practices within a mining sector in South Africa. The variables that will be tested are all functions under HR department.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview in answering a questionnaire taking part in individual interview. This activity will involve answering of questions and will take around 30 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview using a digital device. This recording will be stored in a password-protected device and only the researcher will have access to this recording. It will be deleted after 5 years.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, You will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume another time.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. The data collected from this research project will be stored in  and will be kept password protected device and in a locked cabinet for 5 years. With your permission the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Lipuo Paulinah Mofokeng
2492392@Students.wits.ac.za
073 161 7250

Supervisor: Dr Asabea Ahwireng-Obeng
Asabea.Ahwireng-Obeng@wits.c.za

## APPENDICES C – Research Instrument Guide (Interview Schedule)

| |
|---|
| The focus was on the following questions during the interviews with Human Resource Personnel. |
| What are Human Resource Functions within an organization? |
| Can Human Resource Systems be tracked online by Line Managers? |
| What are Reward systems for HR Department? |
| The focus was on the following questions during the interviews with Line Managers |
| What is your experience with Human Resource Practices *(recruitment, Succession Planning, Diversity and Inclusion, Conflict Management,traning an development and talent management)?.* |
| Can you be able to track the progress online on Human Resource Systems? |
| Do you know what HR Reward systems are? |
| Is there a relationship between inefficiencies in HR practices and the employee's negative behavior? |
| Is there a relationship between inefficiencies in HR practices and the decline in organizational performance in relation to production and safety? |

## APPENDICES D – Consent Forms







**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State.**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Edwin Notsi**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



..... (Signature)
Edwin Notsi (name of participant
17 January 2023(Date)

**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State.**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Aldi Van Der Westhuizen**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



..... (Signature)
Aldi Van Der Westhuizen (name of participant
11 January 2023(Date)

Wits Business School

*Sculpting global leaders*

**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State.**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Anathi Sonandi**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



..... (Signature)
Anathi Sonandi (name of participant
05 January 2023(Date)



... (Signature)
Lipuo Mofokeng (name of person seeking consent)
05 January 2023 (date)




Wits Business School

*Sculpting global leaders*

**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State.**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Elizabeth Seroebele**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



..... (Signature)

Elizabeth Seroebele (name of participant

29 December 2022(Date)

Wits Business School

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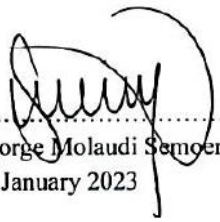
**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State.**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

**I, George Molaudi Semoeng**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



..... (Signature)

George Molaudi Semoeng

19 January 2023

**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Montsheng Mohlatsane**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explain to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



…… (Signature)
Montsheng Mohlatsane (name of participant

**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Ntombi Lemena**., agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explaine and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |




…… (Signature)
Ntombi Lemena (name of participant
21 December 2022(Date)

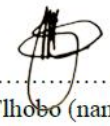
**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State.**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Teboho Tlhobo**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



…… (Signature)
Teboho Tlhobo (name of participant
30 December 2022(Date)

**Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free Stat**

**Lipuo Mofokeng**

I, **Zolisa Mbokodwa**, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES | NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES | NO |
| I agree that the interview may be audio recorded | YES | NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES | NO |



…… (Signature)
Zolisa Mbokodwa (name of participant
04 January 2023(Date)

## APPENDICES E – Permission Letter

17 October 2022

Dear Ms. Lipuo Mofokeng

We refer to your letter dated 18 July 2022 and a further correspondence via e-mail dated 17 October 2022 regarding your request to conduct a research study with the following research topic:

**"Human Resource challenges in managing human capital at a mining organization in Free State".**

We are pleased to inform you that we approve of your request to conduct research and are happy to support you on your educational journey.

The following is required to be undertaken;

1. Kindly ensure that there is a Non Discourse Agreement is entered into.
2. Kindly also ensure that the Company is not mentioned in your report to maintain confidentiality.

Yours sincerely



.....

**MP Malaza**
**Head of Learning, Development and Transformation**