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The relationship between employees' perceptions of talent management practices and levels of engagement: A Botswana organisation case study.

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A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts degree in Organisational Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Human and Community Development, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 15 May 2009.

Abstract

A recent trend in the business literature is the focus on the possible link between talent management efforts of an organisation and that organisation's effectiveness. Despite this trend the evidence supporting such a link is weak. Many books and journals advocate the implementation of certain strategies to obtain the benefits proposed. However, not all these articles have foundations within empirical research, but rather the business management literature. This research report provides an empirical based research study. The novelty of the study stems from its focus on the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices within a NGO. NGOs are underutilized research contexts within the current literature. The sample for this study is from an NGO in Botswana that focuses on the mobilization of HIV testing services and has the vision of no new HIV infections in 2016. Forty-eight participants took part in the study, the majority of this sample is female (67%), the main home language is seTswana, the mean age is 32, the mean organisational tenure is four years and most participants are employed as counsellors within the organisation. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the association between the main constructs. There was insufficient evidence to support a relationship, but the sample used in the study had high levels of employee engagement, as well as positive perceptions of the talent management practices within their organisation. Discussions of these engagement levels and perceptions of practices are present, as well as discussions of the significant relationships between the main constructs and the other measured variables. Significant relationships were found

between employee's perceptions of talent management and the overall number of years that employees had been working (p = .05), and between employee engagement and employee's tenure within the organisation (p > .01). A regression was performed on the data once job position had been stratified into two groups- counsellors (42%) and office based workers (58%). A significant relationship between the main constructs was found for office based employees (*R-square* = 29%). The study's results are discussed in light of the existing literature, and recommendations are made from the study's findings. One important recommendation is for the participating organisation to consider implementing a strategy that focuses on enhancing the organisation's counsellors' perceptions of organisational practices and their employee engagement.

Declaration

I declare that this research is my own, unaided work. This research project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts degree in Organisational Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, School of Human and Community Development, University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Katherine Roper

15 May 2009

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Chapter 1: Literature review

The majority of work conducted on employee engagement and talent management resides within the human resource (HR) literature, with its findings based on organisational practices and strategies. Given the amount of attention paid to talent management and its implied effects on employee engagement (and other outcomes) in popular discourse, there is little, if any, empirical evidence on the strength of the relationship between the two constructs. Empirical evidence is required to inform policy and practice particularly in organisations that have been traditionally overlooked (for example non-governmental organisations [NGOs]) by organisational psychology research.

The literature review chapter begins with a rationale, the examination of the existing literature follows and the importance of the study's focus on NGOs is then established. Based on this review, chapter one summarizes the gaps in the literature and presents its aims and objectives based on those gaps.

1.1) Rationale

The major justifications for studying the relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of talent management practices are, firstly, the lack or inadequate level of scientific evidence within the talent management and employee engagement literature respectively. To elicit this relationship this work focuses on perceptions of management support as an important (but not exclusive) component of the talent management cycle. Articles on talent management practices are laden with jargon and lack research evidence to

substantiate their claims. In contrast, scientific research investigating employee engagement does exist, but very little in relation to its relationship with talent management. The second justification is that NGOs have been traditionally overlooked within organisational psychology research. NGOs, like private organisations, have difficulty in attracting and retaining employees.

1.2) Talent management and employee engagement

This section provides the reader with previous research that is relevant to this study's focus. The discussion begins with the topic of talent management after which an examination of employee engagement is provided. The major approaches within each field are reviewed. This review highlights two important gaps in the literature and describes the aim and objectives in relation to those gaps.

The importance of talent management practices stems from their assumed influence on whether an organisation will be successful or not within a competitive business environment. It has been stated that increasing the company's human talents will lead to the organisation flourishing (Michaels, Hadfield-Jones & Axelrod, 2001). Organisations therefore spend a vast amount of money trying to implement successful talent management strategies.

The following sections analyse the different approaches to both talent management and employee engagement.

1.2.1) Approaches to talent management

There is much confusion concerning the meaning of talent management, its terms and the contrary assumptions made by various authors within the talent management arena (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

However, popular consensus exists that the talent and intangible capital of organisations drive the present economy (Forman, 2005; Michaels et al., 2001). In the current age of rapid economic advancement, the assumption that organisations no longer have a competitive advantage by only possessing physical resource bases has emerged. Presently, organisations believe that the most competitive advantage they can have depends on their talent resources such as employees' knowledge and skills (Bhatnagar, 2007; Forman, 2005). The basic importance of talent in organisations is thus assumed; however there has been very little advancement in developing empirical language, models and systems that are appropriate to the current reality (Forman, 2005).

Little empirical research has been done to define competitive organisational strategies in the so-called 'war for talent' (Bhatnagar, 2007). The two most popular talent management theories that became evident from the review of the talent management literature (Bhatnagar, 2008; Frank & Taylor, 2004; Glen, 2007; Weatherly, 2003; and so forth) are that of Forman (2005) and Romans and Lardner (2005). They were separated from the other papers or theories as they delved deeper into the talent management field- Forman (2005) reviewed

existing findings and Romans and Lardner (2005) described an actual case study of their intervention. However, neither of these theories has strong, rigorous empirical foundations and as such are described critically.

Forman (2005) proposes that the talent management cycle consists of the following stages or levels: workforce planning, talent acquisition, talent development, talent deployment, talent retention and the last stage of talent evaluation. To summarize the cyclical process, workforce planning entails the ability to utilize the talent resources that are present within the organisation adequately, with the aim of introducing and inspiring a talent planning process. This process will support the links between the organisational processes, culture, and strategic direction. Talent acquisition involves the inherent and essential ability of the organisation to draw, enlist and choose the best talent resources (for example, potential employees) for the organisation (Forman, 2005). Talent development is the use of formal and informal training, employee improvement and communication structures to improve talent resources throughout the different levels of the organisation (Forman, 2005). Successful talent deployment requires the employment of the correct person in the correct job, at the right time, to allow their full talent potential to be utilized within the organisation (Forman, 2005). Talent retention requires the capacity and the ability to engage the talented workers that are already employed by the organisation. The goal of the talent retention stage is to have control over who will leave the company, and when they will leave. The final phase of evaluation involves the use of diverse assessments of the organisational methods employed to improve the influence of human capital within the organisation (Forman, 2005).

Therefore, the complete and holistic view of talent management prioritizes employees of the best quality, who are committed to, engaged in and aligned with organisational goals, aims and targets. The foundation and formation of a supportive cultural environment, rather than a restrictive environment promotes this ideal. Promoting this ideal is reliant on the support provided to employees by their managers or supervisors (Forman, 2005). However, Forman's (2005) theory has no empirical evidence that supports such phase distinctions, or the positive impact such a cyclical talent approach has.

According to Romans and Lardner (2005), every organisation can benefit from a systematic approach to improving its human resources. They developed a model for managing talent throughout the employment lifecycle (called 'the human capital pipeline'). The model emerged from a talent strategy implementation that took place at Becton, Dickson and Company (BD) in Japan. BD is a medical technology company that supplies healthcare organisations. Their model follows systems thinking as it maintains that all organisational systems are interrelated. The alignment of the pipeline with organisational targets is essential and the pipeline requires full incorporation into the organisational functioning such as its management. Romans and Lardner's (2005) talent management process consists of six phases. These phases have separate aims and practices namely business analysis and profile development (phase one); identification and attraction; acquisition and orientation; assessing, coaching and developing; rewarding, retaining and motivating; and promoting and transitioning (phase six). Within phase one, a transformation effort begins and talent profiles focusing on innate abilities are developed. Phase two advocates continuous recruitment with

hiring being done according to a whole-system foundation. Extending the talent pool is the focus of phase three; once the talent is recruited, they should be orientated- through the introduction to the organisation's philosophy (which includes the organisation's culture, vision and values). Phase four ensures that the development of skills at every employment level becomes an essential practice. Finally, within phase five and six incentives become prominent- pay is awarded according to employee contribution- and annual performance reviews and employee motivation surveys are recommended (Romans & Lardner, 2005).

The implementation of Romans and Lardner's talent management strategy obtained many rewards for the relevant Japanese organisation. However, it did not work in isolation, as it required a simultaneous revamp of the entire company and therefore produced a transformation of the organisation's culture. This revamp required much employee involvement and required the organisation to have clear organisational directions and talent requirements. This undermines the supposed efficiency of Romans and Lardner's (2005) implementation and supports queries concerning the relevance of implementing Romans and Lardner's (2005) process within different organisations. The generalisability of the model, because it is only applied to one organisation, is questioned- would the model be relevant for other organisations with different managerial supportive cultures, strategies and business objectives? Finally, Romans and Lardner (2005) may have chosen a company that was more open to their suggestions and was willing to change as they were already employed within the organisation; an organisation having a more hostile climate may not react as favourably.

These two theories despite their importance with the literature have no strong empirical research. Forman (2005, p. 49) states that "It is intuitively obvious that top talent is a good and highly prized asset. Research isn't really needed to confirm this fact, but it exists". The author disagrees with this assertion and Forman contradicts this when he makes use of previous research findings to support his theory. Forman (2005) performs a review of research findings within the article while developing the theory of a cyclical talent management process. However, Forman does not empirically test the cyclical process he developed.

The McKinsey (1998) study of 6000 executives (as cited in Michaels et al., 2001) is one pertinent study upon which Forman's (2005) development of a talent management cycle hinges. Findings from the study stated that only 23% of the executives involved within the study felt that their organisation could attract the best talent. Furthermore, only 10% believed they could keep or retain the best talent and finally, only 16% of executives realized who their organisation's talent was (Michaels et al., 2001). Despite the obvious use of jargon (talent management mindset, mission critical procedures) in Michaels et al. (2001) write up of practical implications from the results they obtained, the McKinsey study forms an impressive piece of research because of its sample size, together with the practical conclusions drawn from its findings. Using such a study as a basis to support Forman's claims adds credence to his theory, but not to the same extent that research conducted by Forman would.

Romans and Lardner (2005), unlike Forman have not conducted a review of the existing research findings. They based their article on a case study centring on the implementation of their talent strategy within an organisation. They judged the effectiveness of their talent management strategy by comparing the organisational revenue from before the implementation to the revenue of the organisation after the implementation. Romans and Lardner (2005, p. 19) found that "Employee productivity, measured as 'organic' revenue per employee, (excluding the effects of acquisitions and government-imposed price reductions) rose 57 percent in the first five years of transformation" that is, the organisational revenue increased after their intervention. Further, as they were implementing the process, they noticed that not only business performance, but also the culture of the organisation, became modified. As a case study, their research has a weak foundation with their article describing the processes that they implemented instead of a critical review of the process. No comparison to other research findings, or other talent management processes is provided by Romans and Lardner (2005).

Lewis and Heckman's (2006) review of the talent management literature provides a reflection on further research done in the area, and supports the claim that very little if any empirical research studies of talent management based on scientific practices are available for review.

Thus, it is very important, and of interest to the current study, to evaluate the methods and means that an organisation may implement or follow to retain top talent. The methods used need to undergo assessment and need analysis to see if there is a relationship with employee

engagement. Employee engagement is viewed as an important construct because it is has been linked to increasing the retention of top talent as an outcome of the talent management process (e.g. Bhatnagar, 2007). Increased employee engagement has been proposed to have many valued and sought after benefits for organisations, such as NGOs, as well as for the individual employee.

1.2.2) Approaches to employee engagement

A review of the literature, particularly Melcrum's (2005) study in Britain, suggests that many differing definitions of employee engagement exist (Dalal, Brummel, Wee & Thomas, 2008; Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004; Saks, 2006). Similar to talent management, the engagement literature's foundations stem more from practice than from empirical research or coherent theory. Robinson et al. (2004) reflect on this lack of knowledge as worrying as the study of employee engagement has peaked in interest within recent times. At present, Smythe (2007) believes that employee engagement is a disjointed concept, which has inadequate empirical support. Models of employee engagement do exist, many of which stem from the practical, business orientated literatures rather than the empirical research. Some models will be discussed, from both foundations of thought, with Kahn's (1990) model representing the fundamental theory stemming from the academic literature. Saks' (2006) research will represent a more recent empirical study. Findings from the Hewitt Engagement Survey (2005) and Melcrum (2005) are considered to represent the business orientated literature.

According to Kahn (1990) personal engagement is the control over organisation members' selves that is exhibited by them within the completion of their work roles; in engagement people employ and articulate themselves through physical, emotional and cognitive means during role performance. Kahn (1990) divided engagement into three dimensions: meaningfulness, safety and availability. Although Kahn (1992) presents a comprehensive theoretical model of psychological presence, he does not offer an operationalization of the construct. With much of the engagement literature based solely on Khan's (1990) employee engagement model it can thus be said that many of the existing theories concerning employee engagement are lacking. However in contrast to Kahn (1990, 1992), Rothbard (2001) thought engagement was a psychological presence that encompassed two important components, namely attention and absorption. Respectively, these refer to the individual's cognitive ability as well as the amount of time an individual would spend thinking of a role; and the intensity of an individual's focus on a role as well as the level of fixation they experience for the role (Rothbard, 2001).

According to authors such as Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), and Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) engagement is often viewed as the inverse experience of burnout. Instead of the symptoms of burnout, for example, exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy, individuals who experience engagement exhibit energy, involvement and efficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). Defining engagement as the opposite of another construct, burnout, is not adequate because engagement is independent of burnout as it relates to other constructs not related to burnout. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002, p. 74) view engagement as "a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object,

event, individual or behaviour". They agreed with Maslach et al. (2001) and with Rothbard (2001), respectively, that engagement comprises of vigour, dedication, and absorption. This corresponds to the subsections within the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). Therefore, the above theorists, their findings and this operationalization of employee engagement- the UWES- provide more evidence for the importance of engagement than was established by Kahn's (1990, 1992) work.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that engaged employees are likely to have greater attachment to their organisations and thus a lower tendency to leave the organisation. Employee engagement is therefore of vital significance to the successful retention of talented employees (Bhatnagar, 2007). Both Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), and Bhatnagar (2007) conducted research on employee engagement, however Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) focused on engagement as it relates to burnout (its inverse) and Bhatnagar investigated employee engagement and its possible relationship to talent retention (by investigating attrition rate).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) conducted a study in the Netherlands, focusing on the measurement of engagement and burnout. The sample for the study consisted of employees from four different Dutch service organisations. The four organisations were an insurance company, a pension fund company, an Occupational Health and Safety Service, and a home-care institution. The sample sizes from each organisation were 381, 202, 507 and 608 respectively and together form a relatively large sample size. These four organisations are very different, having divergent activities and cultures. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p. 300):

> The insurance and pension fund companies are finance-related, and have a management by objectives philosophy; employees mainly work with information. In contrast, the occupational health and safety service and home care organization [*sic*] do 'people work', and can be characterized by a strong helping orientation.

It is the two latter organisations, because of their practices and service orientations that are seen to be similar to a NGO. However, results from the study were presented for the whole sample and not according to the different organisations, thus a direct comparison between the results of the occupational health and safety service and the home care organisation was not possible. For Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) study, burnout levels were measured with the Dutch version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey, which contains three subscales exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy. The UWES-17 item scale assessed engagement on a 7 point likert scale (never (0) to always (6)).

The study presented findings that supported negative correlations between turnover intentions and the three hypothesized dimensions of engagement: vigour (r = -.16), dedication (r = -.39) and absorption (r = -.2). The three correlations were significant at the p <.001 level of significance. The means for each subscale were as follows, vigour (M = 3.94, SD = .91), dedication (M = 4.13, SD = 1.12), and absorption (M = 3.71, SD = .94). These are all relatively low mean scores considering that the highest achievable total on the vigour and absorption scales is 36, and for the dedication scale is 30. A negative correlation was also found to exist between turnover intentions and social support (r = -.22, p <.001). However,

the social support construct focused on support from work colleagues as opposed to support from managers. A possible critique of the study is the use of the same measures to assess intention to quit and social support (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). A direct comparison to the mean of the engagement levels from Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) study and those for this study cannot be made because Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) reported the means and standard deviations for the subscales of the UWES and not for the overall engagement scale total.

Bhatnagar (2007) conducted an exploratory study on call centre employees in India, aimed at researching the relationship between talent management strategy and employee engagement, with a specific focus on talent retention. Bhatnagar (2007) used a mixed method approach by gathering data through self-report questionnaires, focus group interviews, and organisation exit interview data. The use of three data collection methods increases the strength of their study; however the use of the Gallup Work Place Audit (Gallup q12) as a foundation for focus group interviews detracts from this strength. The Gallup q12 is a measure of engagement entrenched within the business literature and does not possess established validity and reliability. For Bhatnagar's (2007) study the Gallup q12 possessed relatively low Cronbach alphas for three of the subscales such as.50, .53 and .42, despite the scale having an overall Cronbach alpha of .80. Another limitation of the study was that it did not make it fully clear whether the Gallup q12 also formed the basis for the self-report questionnaire or if another measure was used. Further, the study was conducted on call centre employees, who are known for low engagement levels and high turnover levels because of the nature of their work.

In relation to the results section within Bhatnagar's study- certain of the results are presented in a contradictory manner. The attrition rate is said to be the highest at both tenure levels of 6 months and 12 to 16 months. In other words instead of comparing the attrition rates at the two different levels of tenure, Bhatnagar (2007) describes them to both be the highest rate contradicting the qualitative data that is presented. Bhatnagar (2007) measures the attrition rate of employees within his study. For this study, attrition rate is seen as the rate that employees leave the organisation and as such is the direct opposite of retaining employees. Bhatnagar therefore uses attrition rate as an indication of retention levels.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the data and factor 1 was described as "*internal communication, customer centricity; work culture* – This was named "Organizational [*sic*] culture". It explained 43.15 percent of the variation in participant responses and was therefore the most important cause of attrition" (Bhatnagar, 2007, p. 652). Such a finding eludes to the importance of managerial support and proper communication channels being important for employee retention. From the data from the exit interviews and focus group interviews conducted, Bhatnagar (2007) found that the present work environment and the organisational culture were the two strongest employee justifications for leaving the organisation.

Basikin (2007) conducted a study on work engagement among secondary school English teachers. The study had a sample size of 152 English teachers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (had a high response rate of 82%). The sample for the study consisted of 100 females (65.8%), with ages ranging from 23 to 57 years and the sample consisted of teachers from four

different teaching posts; part-time teachers (13.2%), civil servant (78.3%), full-time private teachers (6.6%) and other positions (1.9%). The tenure for participants was as follows, 21 teachers (13.8%) had less than five years experience, 68 teachers (44.7%) within the sample had five to fifteen years of teaching experience, and the remaining 61 participants (40.1%) participants had more than fifteen years experience as a teacher (the further 1.4% of the sample's tenure is unaccounted for). The study also used the UWES-9 to assess participant's levels of engagement. For Basikin's (2007) study the UWES was assessed on a 7-point Likert scale- Never (0) to Always (6) - therefore respondents had high engagement levels if their scores on the UWES were high. The possible range of the scores was from 0 to 42. The sample mean obtained was $M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.08$ and despite being scored in the opposite manner to the UWES in the current study this mean is relatively lower than the mean found for the study in Indonesia (it is in the lower half of possible scores). Basikin's (2007) results suggested that there were insignificant differences in engagement across variables such as gender (F [57, 152] = 0.176, $p > 0.05$), age (F [177, 139] = 0.983, $p > 0.05$) and teaching experience (defined as tenure) (F [116, 150] = 0.305, $p > 0.05$).

Saks (2006) goes beyond defining employee engagement to investigate possible constructs that relate to engagement. From the research done, Saks (2006) stipulates that there are important antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Saks (2006) provides a model of the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement, which has been adapted in figure 1 below for this study.

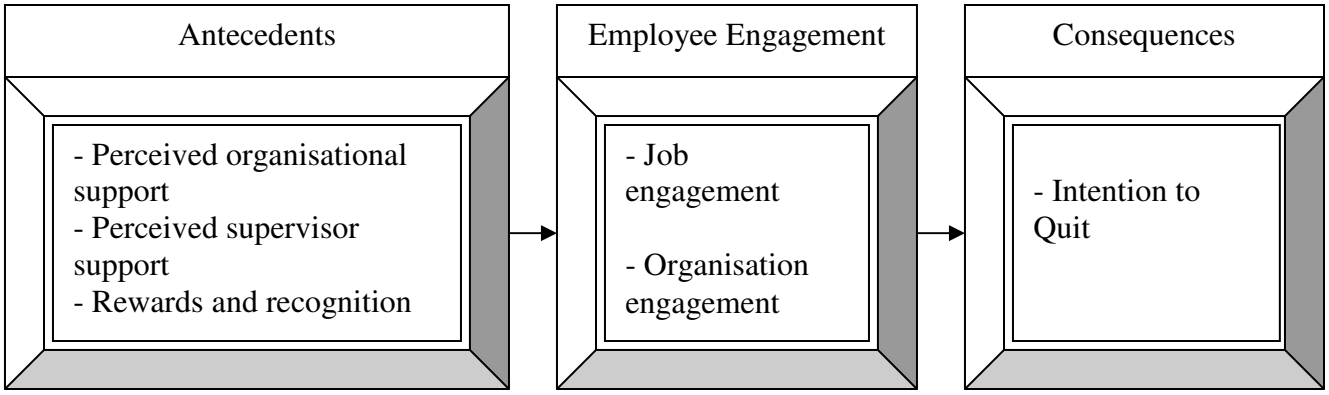


Figure 1: Adapted from Saks' (2006): A Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Engagement

The adaptation of Saks's (2006) model of the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement depicts the relevant aspects, for this study (according to the context of the NGO, its current practices and the scale used in this study). Therefore, rewards and recognition, perceived organisation and supervisor support are proposed antecedents of employee engagement, and on the other side of the model aspects such as employee intention to leave are proposed consequences of employee engagement. This model thus implies a relationship between employee's intentions to quit (seen as an attempt to try and measure employee retention) and employee engagement, and a relationship between organisational and managerial support and employee engagement (which has been supported by the talent management literature see Forman, 2005). Because the part of talent management that the current study is assessing, is managerial support for talent management, the antecedents of employee engagement within this model, explicitly associate engagement with talent management.

Saks' (2006) study of the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement included 102 participants who were employed within many different job positions from various organisations. The mean age of the sample was 34 years; the majority (60%) of the sample was female. The mean tenure (years working within the current organisation) was five years; the mean overall length of time participants had been working was 12 years. The data for this study was collected by the 24 students enrolled in a graduate course in research methods at a large Canadian University in Toronto. Each of the students distributed surveys to five currently employed individuals. The response rate for the study was 85%. For the study, scales measuring job and organisation engagement were developed and underwent a principal components factor analysis (with a promax rotation) resulting in two factors relating to job and organisation engagement. The remaining antecedent and consequence variables were measured by pre-existing scales. These scales possessed adequate reliability alphas and despite some of the scales having few items, the use of each of the scales was justified by Saks (2006).

Saks (2006) work, despite being rigorous can be criticized for its lack of concrete definitions for its two main constructs- job and organisational engagement. It defines the overarching construct of engagement by comparing and contrasting the various definitions present, however Saks (2006) fails to adequately define it further into the aspects measured for the study. The sample within Saks' study seems to be similar to the one within this study- both contain a female majority, the mean ages of the studies differ by two years and the overall length of work experience is 8 years for the current study and 12 years for Saks (2006). Unfortunately Saks (2006) does not report findings about possible relationships between the

measures of engagement and the demographic variables that were assessed (for example tenure and number of years working). It is not known whether these were analyzed, and found insignificant or if they were not considered for investigation.

Within Saks' (2006) study each of the constructs were analyzed and their importance as antecedents or consequences of employee engagement assessed. The results of this study showed that engagement is associated with employees' attitudes, intentions, and behaviours (Saks, 2006). Importantly, for the current study Saks (2006) found that employee engagement (job and organisation) related positively to organisational commitment (respectively, r =.53 and r = .69, p< .001) and negatively to employee's intentions to leave (respectively, r = -.44 and r = -.36, p< .001). Further, Saks (2006) found that job and organisation engagement were both related to organisational support (respectively, r = .44 and r = .58, p< .001) and supervisor support (respectively, r = .25, p<.01 and r = .34, p< .001).

The Hewitt Engagement Survey (2005) proposes that employee engagement is the outcome of an employee's intellectual and emotional commitment to their organisation and to their organisation's success. Engagement is further proposed to be characterised by employees' behaviours. According to the Hewitt Associate's engagement model these can be divided into three distinct classes: "say, stay, strive" (Ketter, 2008). It is proposed that engagement fosters an emotional link between the employee and their organisation; this link assists with employee retention within their organisation (Hewitt Engagement Survey, 2005). Ketter (2008) advocates a constant communication channel between employees and management-

fostering such a relationship will allow managers to be aware of employee problems before the problems lead to employees leaving the organisation. These practices are not at present adhered to, with most managers only realising the source of the problem through the 'exit interviews' conducted when employees leave organisations (Ketter, 2008).

Jargon usage is apparent within the naming of the above three classes within the Hewitt Associate's engagement model - how would one measure a construct or behaviour such as 'stay'? (Is the measurement of these classes as they are labelled and defined possible?). In academic terms 'stay' may be more appropriately labelled as retention but such an explicit link is not made, and for the other terms not such clear links to academic language can be found.

Melcrum (2005) (as cited in Cawe, 2006) conducted a large survey to investigate the existence of differing definitions of the employee engagement construct. "The research is a quantitative and qualitative study, with findings from a global survey of over 1,000 communication and HR practitioners and 30 in-depth [*sic*] interviews with IC & HR professionals at large multi-national organizations [*sic*]" (Melcrum, 2005, p.1). The results were divided into two groups. Group one consisted of individuals who believed that employee engagement was based on encouraging employees to place their maximum discretionary effort within their jobs. This group drew similarities between employee engagement and organisational culture, internal branding and individual devotion to the organisation. The second group defined employee engagement as being linked to employees' feelings about the organisation and how these employees would then implement these

feelings as they performed their job tasks (Melcrum, 2005 as cited in Cawe, 2006). However, the data set upon which the research findings are based is not freely available- it can only be purchased from Melcrum publishing. Thus an in-depth analysis of the findings from this study was not possible. A summary of the findings, (Melcrum, 2005) was found but this was insufficient to establish the empirical base of the research survey.

Despite many research findings supporting the importance of employee engagement, the construct is still defined differently across studies. As such several operationalizations (measures) of engagement exist. The validity of these measures can be queried in relation to the congruence between what the Gallup q12 questionnaire (used within Bhatnagar, 2007) measures and what the UWES or Saks' (2006) job and organisation engagement scales measure.

After a consideration of the approaches behind each separate construct it is important to consider the potential relationship between the two constructs. The overall finding of the literature was that a relationship exists between engagement and retention [alluded to by Bhatnagar (2007) by assessing attrition rate] as well as managerial support- this was researched empirically by certain studies [Saks (2006); Bhatnagar (2007); Schaufeli & Bakker (2004)]. The next section will present any associations made within the literature that suggests such a relationship.

1.2.3) Implicit/explicit link between talent management and employee engagement

The rise of employee engagement began once organisations found that 'command and control' management efforts were no longer valid. Until recently, employees were trading their compliance and allegiance to the organisation for job security and other organisational benefits (final-salary pension schemes or private health care) (Smythe, 2007). It seems organisations no longer seek employee compliance, but rather employees who engage their creativity within their work to increase the organisation's talent offering (Smythe, 2007). Advancement of an organisation supposedly occurs when a "flexible, committed and highly motivated pool of talent who have a strong sense of purpose about their work" are present (Smythe, 2007, p.12). Forman (2005, p.154) states that the most important factor in retaining talent within organisations is "a trustful and effective relationship with the employee's manager". Another important factor for retaining talent is the presence of effective communication and feedback channels that allow organisations to know the requirements and interests of their talent (Forman, 2005).

According to Forman (2005, p. 150) "research by Buckingham and Coffman and the Fortune Best Places to Work data show that managers are important to top talent. Like all of us, excellent performers have requirements and needs that should be addressed before performance suffers", he believes that effective and supportive management is pivotal in directing talent. Forman (2005, p.152) purports that "the relationship between the manager and employee is at the heart of the [retention] matter" - it is a vital retention factor. The relationship between employee and manager encompasses "trust, integrity, responsiveness

and follow-through every day on the job". Executive leadership must provide support for talent retention. After the importance of manager support, Forman sees engagement as "an essential ingredient of the complete talent picture" (Forman, 2005, p.12).

The overlap between employee engagement and talent management practices is highlighted by the following quotes: firstly, "employee engagement is first and foremost a management philosophy based on the idea of including the right people in the right decisions at the right time in the right way." (Smythe, 2007, p.11); and secondly Forman (2005, p. 18) states that the talent deployment phase hinges on "the ability to insure that the right people, with the right skills and knowledge, are used on the right jobs at the right time". These quotes emphasize how the outcomes and procedures of talent management and engagement are congruent.

In total, organisations are under the impression that implementing strategies targeted at their valuable employees, or talent, will increase their levels of engagement, and hence increase the organisation's effectiveness, for example through higher employee retention levels. Perpetuation of such beliefs occurs because of claims, such as those by Smythe (2007) that said "organizations [*sic*] that embraced employee engagement fared better in terms of company focus, performance, staff retention, morale and, crucially, profitability". Further Glen (2006) believes employee engagement is a crucial and pivotal factor to the retention of talent. As such, the central concerns of talent management programmes are supposed to ensure that the best (most talented) employees are acquired and retained in order to continue to add value to the organisation (Bhatnagar, 2007). Employee engagement is proposed to be

of high importance in increasing the retention of top talent as has been suggested in the pre-existing literature (e.g. Bhatnagar, 2007). However, there is no obvious empirical evidence behind the assertions of Glen (2006) and Smythe (2007). Therefore, it seems that organisations are implementing talent practices to achieve employee engagement without ever consulting empirical data that supports such action.

The justification behind studying the link between talent management perceptions and employee engagement is twofold. Firstly, an outcome desired by management that is possibly attained through implementing talent management practices is to engage employees within their work roles so that the organisation may acquire their employees' best work efforts (it is of interest to ascertain whether managerial support links these two constructs). Yet, very little information exists within the organisational literature on the relationship between perceptions of talent management and employee engagement. Secondly, it is of interest to see whether there are any other factors (for example, demographic variables such as age, tenure or individual's qualifications) that may have a significant association with employee engagement. Table 1 overleaf summarizes the above discussion of the different studies conducted on the variables of interest.

Table 1: Summary of studies focusing on the relationship between talent management and employee engagement

Authors	Study design	Variables	Location/type of organisation	Empirical limitations
Forman (2005)	Review of literature and findings	Phases of talent management cycle	Focus on American studies with review of others	No empirical testing of cycle thus no evidence provided for cycle proposed
Romans and Lardner (2005)	Cross-sectional case study, sample size not specified	Phases within talent management process	BD- Japanese Medical technology company	Very weak empirical base- based on lone case study
Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)	Cross-sectional, 1698 participants	Engagement, burnout, job resources and job demands	Netherlands	Relatively strong, Quantitative data
Bhatnagar (2007)	cross-sectional, 272 participants	Organisational attrition rate and employee engagement	Organisation within Indian ITES/BPO sector	Qualitative and Quantitative data
Basikin (2007)	Cross-sectional, 152 participants	Three dimensions of	Indonesia	Relatively strong. Quantitative

		engagement, as well as tenure, gender and age		data
Saks (2006)	Cross-sectional, testing model of antecedents and consequences of engagement, 102 participants	Talent management (retention) and employee engagement	Canada	Relatively strong. Quantitative data

In summary, from table 1 above it can be seen that there are very few studies that investigate the relationship between employee engagement and talent management. Authors such as Forman (2005) and Romans and Lardner (2005) focus their study on talent management practices and associated processes; whereas Bhatnagar (2007) investigates employee engagement and tries to provide a link between employee engagement and talent retention (through employee attrition rates). Basikin (2007) provides a study focused on the dimensions of employee engagement, and finally Saks's (2006) is the only study that comprehensively investigates the link between talent management and employee engagement. As such the overall quality of the evidence found within the existing research is weak.

1.3) Why NGOs?

NGOs have established themselves as significant agents in the social development and economic intervention occurring worldwide. This establishment is evidenced by a significant change in the development funding passed through NGOs, which are now favoured in some contexts over governments (Goddard & Assad, 2006). Edwards and Hulme (1995, p. 15) define non-governmental organisations as follows "[they] are intermediary organisations engaged in funding or offering other forms of support to communities and other organisations." Therefore, a NGO has divergent organisational assumptions in comparison to traditional profit-based organisations. They function within a social context, often working towards the good of the surrounding community. At present with the economic downfall NGOs are in crisis mode- having to make many employee layoffs and struggling to find funding for the organisation as other organisations worldwide are restricting their expenses (Goddard & Assad, 2006). Thus, the specific aspect of talent management that is of top priority, especially in NGOs, is talent retention and the employee support derived from managers, as organisations battle to retain their talented employees to contain unnecessary organisational costs. With NGOs often doing the fundamental and tedious work that other organisations (often the NGOs source of funding) do not want to do, they inherently have an increased retention risk Often retention difficulties are linked to the NGO's inability to provide market related pay, as it is reliant on unstable, external funding. The NGO, within this study, therefore needs to reach and engage its employees through different means. Often this involves inspiring employees with the organisation's vision, its strategies and its positive impact on the community. Therefore, strategies to retain and engage this NGO's valuable employees are crucial for its survival.

The study's current interest in employee engagement stems from the inadequate level of research concerning employee engagement, within all organisations, but particularly within NGOs. The same can be said for talent management.

1.4) Gaps in the literature

There are two major problems within the current research field:

1. Inadequate and weak research evidence foundation
2. A dominant focus on 'for profit' organisations

These gaps inform the procedure of this research and lead to the development of a proposed conceptual framework, and the aims and objectives of the study.

1.5) Conceptual framework

The consultation of the literature led to the researcher investigating the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management in an NGO setting. Figure 2 below illustrates this association graphically. To describe the proposed relationship, the assumption that high levels of employee engagement are associated with positive perceptions of talent management, stood. In contrast, low levels of employee engagement are associated with negative or counterproductive perceptions of talent management

perceptions. This research provides results that allow one to comment on the existence of this association.

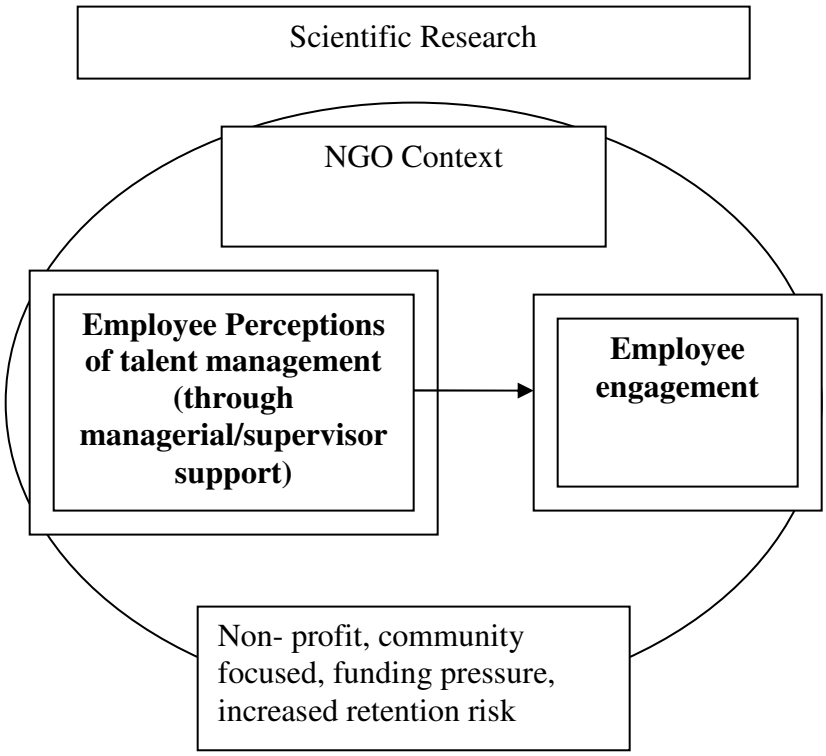


Figure 2: The conceptual framework concerning employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management within the NGO context.

The researcher only proposed a relationship between the two variables because the only concrete research findings presented supports the relationship between employee engagement and talent retention. Therefore, the current study is examining whether a relationship exists between employee engagement and the whole talent management process, not just a phase within it.

The preceding discussion delved into the pertinent areas of the existing literature, and thus highlighted the gaps within this literature. It established the relevance of conducting research

within a NGO, and the conceptual framework developed from the review of the literature is provided. The following section presents the aim and objectives of the study.

1.6) Aim and objectives

In response to the gaps highlighted above in the literature review, the study aimed to investigate the relationship between employees' perceptions of talent management and levels of engagement. To do this, the specific objectives of the study were:

- Describe employees' perceptions of talent management.
- Describe employees' levels of organisational engagement.
- Describe the relationship between perceptions of talent management and levels of engagement, taking into account any possible confounding variables.

The subsequent chapter will describe the methodology that the researcher followed in detail, covering the sample that was used to gather the data for this study, the measures used, the procedure that the researcher followed throughout the research process, and finally the analysis that was conducted.

Chapter 2 Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology that the researcher followed to fulfil the aim and objectives of the study.

2.1) Research design

This is an exploratory, cross-sectional, correlational study that is quantitative in nature. It focuses on one organisation and its practices and thus forms a case study.

2.2) Sample

2.2.1) Organisation

The Organisation that participated within this research project is based in the capital of Botswana- Gaborone. As the NGO had previously been subsidized by the government it has only recently become a non-profit organisation. The organisation has a vision of "working towards an HIV/AIDS-free Botswana by empowering individuals and couples to make positive decisions about their future". A powerful aim of the organisation is to provide immediate, confidential and high quality voluntary HIV counselling, testing, referral, care and support services throughout Botswana. This aim developed from the initial use of only permanent sites through which people could be reached and provided with testing services.

Since the initial use of the permanent sites, services have expanded through the use of mobile testing, satellite offices, increased outreach efforts and mobilization events.

While the organisation began as a project administered under the United States Embassy, the US government realised that long-term success and sustainability relied upon the project evolving into a self-sufficient and indigenous NGO in Botswana, led by and for Batswana. The US government continues to provide some financial support for the organisation; however the new NGO is vigorously working to diversify its funding base to ensure long-term sustainability (Organisation annual report, 2006).

2.2.2) Organisational strategies and plans

In 2001, the organisation developed its first monitoring and evaluation plan with the function of describing all activities conducted so that vital information was swiftly available on the scope, quality, coverage and effectiveness of voluntary counselling and testing activities in Botswana. 2006 brought a modification to this original monitoring and evaluation plan that was able to accommodate the organisation's growth, experience and new strategic directions... The revised monitoring and evaluation plan placed more emphasis on the generation of outputs and how these contribute to project outcomes.

At present the participating organisation is primarily focused on their counsellors (they are specified as the organisation's valuable employees). Not much attention has been focused on talent (as it is defined in the literature), or on higher management functioning and strategic talent management implementation. After an intense survey of the information (2006 annual

report and so forth) concerning organisational practices, the researcher was able to categorise certain practices within the organisation that linked to the general talent management literature.

The researcher is of the opinion that the organisation was involved in a workforce planning process. This was assumed because interest had been shown concerning the implementation of a strategy centring on managing valuable organisation employees. . Therefore, it seems that the organisation reviewed the organisational and employee needs to create a desirable outcome. This practice resembles a strategy that would form part of the talent evaluation phase.

Talent development is present within organisational practices as the organisation is continually trying to invent or discover new ways of providing its testing service to the Batswana population. Once new ways are discovered training development is adjusted accordingly. Furthermore, the organisation aligns its valuable employees (talent) with these new plans through employee development and learning.

Practices are in place that encourages the retention of employees, for instance the organisation inspires commitment and meaning in their employees by providing them with work opportunities that have a greater purpose, or that provide meaning to others. Through the actual work that the employees do, they feel they are able to positively impact on the country. Described in such a sense, it is obvious that the main objective of this organisation is to uplift the community; therefore the organisation's objective is different to those of other organisations such as large banks or private corporations. Support is provided to employees

through different organisation strategies namely: encouraging team work that fosters employee connectedness and support systems; Employees are rewarded for their exceptional work efforts during annual recognition ceremonies; assistance is provided to employees if they are negatively affected by the work that they do; examples of such assistance are stress counselling and therapy sessions. All these practices encourage the retention of key employees within this specific organisation.

Retention is salient to the organisation as they invest in their employees, by supplying them with in-depth training and knowledge. The organisation perpetuates a supportive culture by providing stress management to employees to assist them with coping with their work roles. The organisation also provides support and assistance to employees' families as they acknowledge the important role family members play within their employees' lives.

Thus, the participating organisation did not have a specific talent management practice in place. However, as was explained above the organisation did have elements of such a practice according to the general talent management literature. The phases that are in evidence within the organisational strategy are those of workforce planning, talent development, retention and evaluation.

2.2.3) Sampling plan

Participants were employees from the NGO in Botswana that granted the researcher access to conduct her research project. The researcher sought this specific organisation to participate in the study as being an NGO they have a unique context concerning the need

for employee engagement and talent management practices. The final sample size for the study consisted of 48 participants. Participants were recruited through the office manager who sent out an email informing participants of the study and asking them to participate; she then handed out questionnaires to employees who were interested in participating. Participants were adult males and females that were full-time employees of the participating organisation. Therefore, participants' ages all ranged from 18 years and above. Convenience sampling was used because it was the most economical and convenient way of obtaining a sample for this research study.

2.2.4) Description of sample

The majority (67%) of the sample was female. Forty-one of the participants (85%) spoke seTswana as their first language. All participants were proficient in English and therefore, no translation of the questionnaire was undertaken because it was assumed that all participants possessed a sufficient level of English to answer the questionnaire openly, honestly and to their best ability. There were no obvious signs of language problems with the questionnaire items and instructions. Table 2 overleaf summarizes the demographics of the sample.

Ages of participants ranged from 24 to 47, with the mean age being 32.75 (SD = 5.04). The tenure of participants within this specific company ranged from 2 months to 9 years with participants having an average tenure of approximately 4 years (SD = 2.55) within the organisation. With regard to the overall amount of years that employees had been working, some participants had only been in the working world for 2 months whereas others had

been working for 26 years. The mean number of years that participants had been working was 9 years (*SD* = 4.56). Most participants in the sample were counsellors (42%), with 18% of the sample being managers. Receptionist and caretakers each formed 10% of the sample, and both drivers and outreach technicians each formed 6% of the sample. The remaining occupation groups each contained one participant; these were the occupations of data clerk, network specialist, technical director and senior counsellor.

Table 2: Summary of sample demographics

Nominal Variables	**Percentage of sample**	**Number of people**
Gender		
Male	33%	16
Female	67%	32
Race		
Black	88%	42
Coloured	12%	6
Home Language		
seTswana	85%	41
Afrikaans	8%	4
Ikalanga	4%	2
English	2%	1
Highest qualification		
Primary School	2%	1
High School	17%	8
Post grade 12 certificate or diploma	48%	23
Degree	27%	13
Post graduate degree	6%	3

Interval Variables	**Minimum**	**Mean**	**Maximum**	**Standard Deviation**
Age	24	32.75	47	5.04
Years in organisation	.17	4	9	2.55
Number of years working	.17	9	26	4.56

2.3) Measures

The measures section describes each of the scales that formed a section within the questionnaire that was completed by participants. Previous use of these scales, as well as

their reliability and validity values are discussed to justify each scale's use within this research study. Table 3 below provides an overview of the variables for this study, the scales that assessed the variables and the justification for why specific variables were included.

Table 3: Variables that were assessed and justification for assessment

	Variable	Scale	Justification	References
Dependent Variable	Employee engagement	UWES-9	Found to relate to employee retention .	(Bhatnagar, 2007; Saks, 2007)
Independent Variable	Talent management	Supervisor's support for career development	Encompasses processes of talent retention	(Bhatnagar, 2007; Forman, 2005 Michaels et al., 2001; Singer, 2000)
Demographic variables	Gender Race Home language Age Highest qualification Job position	Biographical Blank	Describe sample and see if any trends exist across the different groupings	Demographics
Extraneous Variables	Years in organisation (tenure) Overall years working	Biographical Blank	Previous research on engagement assessed these variables but did not report their findings	(Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004)

2.3.1) Biographical blank

The biographical blank (see appendix 3) gathered data that assisted in describing the sample and allowed for any demographic patterns to be noted. The demographic variables are participant's gender, race, home language, age and the participant's highest level of educational qualification. The participants provided information on how many years of working experience they have in total, together with their tenure within their present organisation and their current job position. Initially this was required as the effects of tenure

and the employee's job position may have had an impact on the relationship under investigation and thus these effects may have needed to be accounted for within the study. Investigation of these demographic variables with respect to their associations with the main study variables took place. These associations formed part of the demographic trends investigated by the researcher. Lastly, the researcher paid attention to the presence of any extraneous variables (such as any relationships across the different job categories, ages, races and the main constructs) that may have affected the observed results of the study.

2.3.2) Employee engagement

The UWES-9 scale (see appendix 3) assessed employee's levels of engagement. The scale has nine items and it consists of three subscales, namely vigour (3 items), dedication (3 items) and absorption (3 items). The scale is measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly agree' (0) to 'Strongly disagree' (4). Several studies using different forms of the UWES, within different contexts provide adequate reliability and validity information for each scale.

The Japanese version of the UWES (UWES-J) received validation from a study conducted by Shimazu et al. (2008), which produced internal consistency values of .92 for this version of the scale, as well as test-retest reliability values of .66 over a period of 2 months. The study further found confirmation for its hypothesized model; demonstrating that engagement is positively associated to job satisfaction and it is negatively associated to burnout (see Shimazu et al., 2008). Further versions of the UWES exist, namely the UWES-17 that was adapted from the original 24-item version (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) and the UWES-15

(see Demerouti, Bakker, Janssen & Schaufeli, 2001 for a detailed account concerning the use of the UWES-15).

The 9-item version of the scale was used within an Indonesian study on work engagement among English teachers (Basikin, 2007). The study had a sample size of 152 secondary school English teachers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Reliability for the scale was high within the Indonesian context. Overall reliability was alpha = .91, and for the subscales, namely vigour .76, dedication .83 and absorption .79. Seppala et al. (2008) found that the structure of the UWES-9 remained largely the same across the five samples within their study. Interpretation of this meant participants with different occupations understood the scale in a conceptually similar manner. Thus, the UWES-9 has good construct validity. Seppala et al. (2008) recommend the use of the 9-item version of the scale opposed to the 17-item version. The UWES-9 was chosen to assess employee engagement in this study as it has been used in various different contexts and thus the researcher believed it would be a more applicable choice for the African context. The shorter version of the scale is preferable for practical reasons. Scales with fewer items, that have proven reliability and validity, lessen the chances of attrition.

2.3.3) Perceptions of talent management strategies

Previously, no scale that measures the perceptions of talent management strategies has been developed. The researcher therefore decided to use the 'supervisor's support for career development' scale used by Singer (2002) (see appendix 3) as a proxy measure because it was the closest approximate to a measure of talent management perceptions by employees. The researcher did not construct a talent management scale as this effort would constitute a

separate research study in its own right- the researcher wanted to examine the relationship between talent management and employee engagement The scale measures the support and the assistance provided for employees by management to further themselves, through use of their talent and skills, in the organisation. The proposed relationship between perceptions of talent management practices and employee engagement becomes explicit through their links to managerial support. For Singer's (2002) study, Cronbach alphas (used to measure the content homogeneity of the developed scale) yielded values of .94. The author, through a close inspection of the scale and from an analysis of its items, believed that the scale measures the perceptions of organisational talent management practices according to the general talent management literature. The scale measures how the employee feels about the methods and practices their managers use to assist them within their application, development and retention of skills. It is thus measuring the actual perceptions of employees about the organisational strategies that are present to increase organisational talent.

An inspection of the perceptions of talent management practices measure and its items allows one to see that, for example, item 11 "My manager/supervisor provides me with a useful performance appraisal." relates to the measurement of talent evaluation. The item focuses on the employee, specifically the utilization and application of their talent being the quantity that is evaluated. A performance appraisal is an evaluation of the different process levels and makes use of diverse evaluation assessments and measurements that assess the organisational methods. Item 11 examines the employee's perceptions concerning the way in which their manager handles their performance appraisal process as well as the relevance of the outcomes of the process. Therefore, the item is measuring whether the organisation has a supportive cultural environment rather than a restrictive one concerning its performance

appraisal methods and their links to talent evaluation. Forman (2005) has advocated a supportive organisational culture for a successful talent management effort. Similarly, Item 12 “My manager/supervisor provides me with ongoing feedback” is a measure of employees’ perceptions of talent evaluation. It assesses whether the evaluation process is a constant, recurring process implemented to gain insight into employee’s performance deficits. It also gauges whether the employee perceives the aim of the process as providing suggestions for improvement that are worthwhile.

Items 2 “My manager/supervisor lets me know how I can do better in my work”, 4 “My manager/supervisor encourages me to develop my career”, 6 “My manager/supervisor gives me advice on developing my career” and item 8 “My manager gives me information on training opportunities for skills development” relate to talent development. These items focus on talented individuals and their development through the organisation, as well as their careers and skills. Talent development is the use of formal and informal training, employee development and communication structures to improve talent resources throughout the different levels of the organisation. This item assesses the employee’s perception of the organisation’s willingness to develop their employees’ talent.

Items 7 “My manager/supervisor makes me aware of the demands of future jobs in my career path” and 13 “My manager/supervisor often provides me with opportunities for growth and to do interesting work” relate to talent retention. Item 7 relates to a realistic job preview for an individual employee’s job position. This could greatly affect whether an employee wants to stay in their specific career, as well as their specific career within an organisation. Thus if a manager keeps their employee up to date with where their career is

progressing they will be encouraged to stay within the organisation, rather than trying to manage their own career by joining another organisation. Talent retention requires the capacity and the ability to engage the top talent workers that are already employed by the organisation. The goal of the talent retention stage is to have control over who will leave the company, and when they will leave. Item 13 may not seem to be a measurement of talent retention, when in fact it a measure of retention and of talent acquisition. It measures employee's perceptions of the desirable activities and opportunities that would encourage an employee to stay within an organisation, or that would attract an employee to an organisation.

Item 10 "My manager/supervisor has a style that encourages me to take responsibility and authority" relates to talent acquisition. Talent workers look for recognition concerning their work efforts, with the ability to use their discretion to decide how they complete their work tasks. This item measures whether employees' perceive the organisation as allowing them this responsibility and whether they view this attractively.

Item 1 "My manager/supervisor lets me know which areas of my performance are weak" is measuring employee's perceptions of talent deployment as it is measuring the fit between a person and their job, to see if the right person is in the right job at the right time. The item also relates to workforce planning as it queries whether the organisation has the capacity and the capability to modify its workforce i.e. its employees in certain job positions if their 'fit' is incorrect. This is implemented with the aims of utilizing the talent resources that are present within the organisation adequately, and of introducing and inspiring a talent planning process.

As explained above, the remaining items 3, 5, 9 possibly link to the phases in the cycle. Item 3 “My manager/supervisor lets me know how to handle problems in my work” relates to employee’s perceptions of workforce planning and talent deployment. Item 5 “My manager/supervisor discusses with me how to get additional training” to talent development and lastly item 9 “My manager/supervisor provides me with training programs which focus on the application of learning with respect to both professional and personal life” to talent retention.

2.4) Procedure

A NGO was approached to participate within this study. The researcher contacted a director of a NGO in Botswana. The director was interested in participating, and as the organisation had relevant practices in accordance with the topic of the research project the organisation became the research context for this study.

Initially the researcher was only in contact with the director of the organisation. He was provided with the relevant information to present to the organisation’s board members to gain access within the organisation for the research to commence. After obtaining the organisational permission letter, the researcher began the questionnaire distribution and data collection process. As the researcher comes from South Africa and the organisation is in Botswana, the researcher emailed the questionnaire through to the director for distribution. The organisation printed out the questionnaires at their own expense because they felt this

was the most appropriate method of handing the questionnaires out (for example, as opposed to emailing them to employees).

The director and office manager informed the employees of the research study before handing the questionnaires out so that the employees were aware of the study and understood that they were allowed to participate. However, it was explained to the participants that they were not being forced to participate; they may have chosen not to participate and would not have been disadvantaged by their choice. Once an electronic copy of the questionnaire was emailed to the director, the researcher was electronically in contact with the office manager in Gabarone. The office manager received the electronic copy of the questionnaire from the director. All questionnaires had participant information sheets (Appendix 2) at the front explaining what participation in the study required as well as general information about the study. The information explained what the data would be used for, together with how the participants would not be advantaged or disadvantaged by participating in the study. The office manager printed out copies of the questionnaire and distributed it to the organisational employees. The organisation has a total of 120 employees, however not all employees were available to complete the questionnaire and thus the office manager handed out 73 questionnaires. Many of the employees were unavailable to receive questionnaires due to the nature of their work. The majority of employees are counsellors who travel out into communities to perform work tasks and do not base themselves at the organisation's head office. The researcher thus obtained a very good response rate (66%) as 48 participants out of the 73 participants in the organisation that she was able to access completed questionnaires.

After questionnaires were handed out to the volunteers, they were given a week to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires would have taken each participant about 20 minutes to complete. Participants were asked to place the completed questionnaires that did not contain any identifying information in a sealed box. This prevented anyone from being able to link individual participants to their questionnaires and ensured participant confidentiality. The box was left in a secure, accessible area on the organisation's premises; specifically the corridor outside of the office manager's office. The box was situated outside the manager's office but was out of direct eyesight of the office manager, this prevented the manager from viewing who returned questionnaires. The office manager prevented any tampering with the box. As the researcher was unable to travel to the organisation to collect the questionnaires, the office manager was responsible for the collection process. Before the specified week was over the office manager emailed all employees to remind participants to hand their questionnaires back. Once the week was over and a sufficient amount of questionnaires collected, the office manager placed the questionnaires in a sealed envelope. The director, who was able to deliver the questionnaires to the researcher in Johannesburg, received the sealed envelope.

Once the researcher received the questionnaires she inputted the data onto a computer and saved it as an electronic file. The researcher received 48 questionnaires and thus had a response rate of 66% for her research study which is a high rate considering that the researcher distributed questionnaires across country borders and was not in personal contact with the organisation.

2.5) Analysis

The following subsections describe the analyses performed by the researcher, starting with how missing values within the data set were dealt with, and concluding with a set of descriptive statistics used to tell the reader more about the data gathered. The main results for this study will be presented in Chapter 3.

As missing values were present with the raw data set, the researcher decided that because the total sample size was not very large, that certain missing value techniques would need to be implemented on the data set. Across the whole data set of 1488 entries, there were 58 missing values. Missing values were not present within the demographic data. The researcher decided to implement a mean substitution when there was a missing value within the data set.

The researcher conducted inter-item reliability analyses for each of the scales once the raw data was in electronic form. The examination of the reliability for each item required calculating the item's correlations with the total item score. Concerning the employee engagement scale (UWES-9) the only item that was of concern was item 8 that had a correlation with the total of .22, which is a rather low correlation. The researcher considered removing the item from the scale; however, it seemed most beneficial to include the item. The researcher thought that the integrity of the complete scale was more valuable, because of its previous use, in comparison to removing an item from the scale in the hope of increasing the scale's reliability within the study. The decision considered the fact that

removing an item would decrease the variance of the scale, together with the amount of items within the scale. Therefore, item 8 was included in the scale for statistical analysis.

The reliability check of the employee's talent management perceptions scale produced item-total correlations above .6 for all items. Correlations above .6 are satisfactory for item reliability. However, all items, except item 1, had correlations above .7. The researcher was not concerned that item 1 had a lower correlation with the scale total, but because this scale has never been used for such purposes as it was within the current research, the researcher believes it is valuable to note the slight discrepancy to assist in future use or development of this scale. Table 4 below summarizes the overall information and reliabilities for the scales used in the current study.

Table 4: Inter-item reliabilities and Cronbach alphas for scales

Variables	**Scale**	**Number of items**	**Cronbach Alpha (standardized)**
Perceptions of Talent Management Practices	Supervisor's support for career development	13	.95
Employee Engagement	UWES-9	9	.92

In conclusion, both of the measuring instruments used in this study had adequate reliabilities, as all the Cronbach Alphas for the scales were above .6 and each of the scale items had appropriate correlations with the scale totals.

Before data analysis could commence, the researcher had to address the parametric data assumptions to decide whether a parametric statistical test can be used. Several preliminary

analyses were performed on the data. These included the analysis of each interval variable's distribution. These variables were age, years working, years working within the organisation, the total for the employee's perceptions of talent management practices scale and the total for the employee engagement scale. The data was slightly skewed, but the researcher believed that the assumptions of normality were not violated to such an extent that warranted the use of non-parametric statistical tests. Therefore, each correlation calculated for the interval variables, was a parametric Pearson correlation. For the nominal variables- gender and highest qualification point-biserial correlations were calculated. Table 5 below contains the distribution information for this research study.

Table 5: Distribution information

Variable	Kurtosis Score	Skewness Coefficient	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Age	1.39	0.95	24	32.75	47	5.04
Number of years working	3.60	1.15	.17	8.76	26	4.52
Years working in Organisation	-1.36	- .079	.17	3.90	9	2.52
Talent Management total score	- .69	- .53	2	31.65	50	13.25
Employee Engagement total score	.83	.69	2	12.50	34	6.82

A further investigation of the relationship between engagement and talent management was conducted, at the multivariate level, with different regression models. This investigation

aimed to explore which model had the best fit of perceptions of talent management for the prediction of employee engagement. For the regression, job position was stratified into two groups- counsellors and office based workers- to see if the relationship between the two main study variables was significant across different job positions.

Descriptive statistics were completed and reported within the results section. The researcher ran simple bivariate correlations between both of the main variables, with each other (Pearson correlations for the interval variables) and the demographic variables (point-biserial correlations were calculated for the nominal variables). In order to calculate a point-biserial correlation the nominal variables were dichotomised. Gender was dichotomised into male and female, and highest qualification into secondary education level and tertiary education level. The mean totals for each scale and the ranges of these totals will be reported and discussed as an investigation of the first two research aims stated above. The correlations that were calculated will be commented on and explored and the regression performed will be described. The majority of the analyses were done through SAS (version 3 Enterprise guide), and the regression was calculated on Stata 9. Two statistical packages were used to analyse the data as each of the packages had better functionality for certain statistics. The results of all the analyses are in the following chapter.

2.6) Ethical procedures

The University's ethics approval was required. Following this, the approval from the relevant participating organisation was obtained. The ethics approval number for this research project is MORG/09/001 IH (Appendix 4).

The participants in the study were informed of the questionnaires they were expected to complete as well as what the researcher planned to do with the information they provided. This ensured that the participants would be giving the researcher their informed consent when they handed their completed questionnaires in. The participants were also told that there were no known or obvious threats involved with participating in the study.

Once participants placed their completed questionnaire into the sealed box, the researcher was unable to identify which questionnaire belonged to which participant and thus could not withdraw a single participant's questionnaire. The handing in of a completed questionnaire was taken as informed consent to participate in the study.

The ethical consideration of confidentiality was guaranteed through the procedure of the participants placing their completed questionnaires into the sealed box provided by the researcher. The office manager within the company was asked to watch over this sealed box. As the office manager was trusted with many organisational tasks and was thus viewed as trustworthy the researcher believed that they would not interfere with the collection of the questionnaires, or the integrity of the collection process. The organisation involved in the research has been kept anonymous. The raw data from the completed questionnaires was

inputted onto a computer for analysis and after the completion of the researcher's degree it will be destroyed. No one else besides the researcher and her supervisor has seen the original questionnaires. The raw data was kept as an electronic data set in the supervisor's secure office. The electronic data set does not contain any identifying information of the individual participants.

The researcher explained that because confidentiality was guaranteed individual results could not be established for the study. Summarised results of the research will be made available to participants after completion of the researcher's degree. These will be of general results and findings and not of individual results. The participating organisation will be given the results to post on an organisational notice board.

Chapter 3: Results

The previous chapter described the methodology of the study, examining the measures used and the procedure that was followed. Chapter 3 reports the findings of the current study. These include the results for the study's aims and objectives as well as a look into any possible confounding variables (for example demographic variables, employee tenure and number of years working).

3.1) Employee perceptions of talent management practices

If an individual obtained a high score on the supervisor's support for career development scale, it means that they had positive perceptions of the organisational talent management practices. In contrast a low score means that the individual does not view these practices positively or as effective. The scores for the supervisor's support for talent management ranged from 2 to 50 (out of a possible range of 0 to 52) with a mean score of 31.65 (*SD* = 13.25) and a median of 34. The highest achievable total is 52 for the scale; 62.5% of participants had scores above the mean score and thus the mean talent management score for this study was viewed to be relatively high.

3.2) Employee levels of engagement

A low individual total score on the UWES-9 represents an employee who exhibits higher levels of employee engagement, in comparison to an individual who scores highly on the scale who thus exhibits lower levels of employee engagement. The scores for employee engagement ranged from 2 to 34 (out of a possible range of 0 to 36) with a mean score of 12.50 (SD = 6.82) and a median of 12). As the highest achievable total is 36, compared to previous research (discussed in chapter 4) the mean employee engagement score for this study was relatively low (56.3% of participants had scores below the mean score) and thus the average level of employee engagement was viewed as relatively high.

3.3) The relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices

The aim of the current research study was to investigate and calculate the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices. A negative correlation between the total scores of employee engagement and the other variables implies a positive relationship. For all other variables, a positive correlation implies a positive relationship. Table 6 overleaf summarizes the correlations between the interval study variables, and the point-biserial correlations between the nominal variables and the two main variables in this study. There was insufficient evidence to support the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices (r = -.09, p = .52*)*. Further investigations concerning possible relationships with the

demographic variables were calculated. Employee perceptions of talent management were positively correlated with the length of time that employees had been working (r = .28, p = .05). A significant correlation between employee engagement and employees' tenure within the organisation was found (r = .38, p = .008). All these correlations were significant at the .05 level of significance.

With the exception of race and job position, the nominal variables were correlated with perceptions of talent management and employee engagement using point-biserial correlations. The variables that point-biserial correlations were calculated for are represented in table 6 below. All the variables had small effect sizes.

Table 6: Correlation matrix of key variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Employee Engagement	1				
2. Talent management	-0.09 0.52	1			
3. Age	0.11 0.47	0.24 0.10	1		
4. Years in organisation	0.38 * 0.0083	0.15 0.32	0.53 * 0.0001	1	
5. Overall years working	-0.27 0.06	0.28 * 0.05	0.71 * <.0001	0.31 * 0.03	1
6. Gender †	.037 ‡	.042 ‡	N/A	N/A	N/A
7. Highest Qualification †	.029 ‡	.004 ‡‡	N/A	N/A	N/A

* significant at $p \leq .05$ level, † = point-biserial correlations
‡ = small effect size, ‡‡ = very small effect size
N/A = point-biserial correlations not calculated as findings not related to study's aims

In addition, the researcher conducted further analyses, investigating whether any items of the talent management and employee engagement scales were correlated with each other or with the demographic variables. There were no correlations between scale items and the demographic variables. However, significant correlations existed between item 7 on the employee engagement scale "I am immersed in my work" and the following items of the talent management scale: item 1 "My manager/supervisor lets me know which areas of my performance are weak" (r = -.30, p = .04), item 8 "My manager/supervisor gives me information on training opportunities for skills development" (r = -.3, p= .04), item 10 "My manager/supervisor has a style that encourages me to take responsibility and authority" (r = -.36, p = .01), item 11 "My manager/supervisor provides me with a useful performance appraisal" (r = -.31, p = .04).

The relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management was found to be insignificant despite the presence of correlations between some of their items. The researcher conducted further analyses to investigate this finding and to potentially account for any unobserved variable interactions.

To further investigate the relationship between the main study variables, and to ensure no potential relationships were overlooked, the researcher conducted linear regression analyses which determined the predictive validity of a proposed model. The variables that were included in the first model were perceptions of talent management practices, number of years working within the organisation, number of years working and participant's age. These variables were chosen for inclusion in the model because firstly, the researcher wanted to

investigate the relationship between talent management perceptions and employee engagement further, to see if it strengthened or weaken at the multivariate level of analysis. Secondly, number of years working within the organisation and number of years working were included because of their correlations with the independent variable (talent management) and the dependent variable (engagement) respectively. Lastly, participant's age was included because it was correlated with number of years working in the organisation and with number of years working. Table 7 below contains the regression statistics.

Table 7: Regression Statistics

Statistic variable	Value
F(4, 43)	6.23
p value	.0005
R-Squared	.37
Adjusted R-squared	.31

Employee engagement total	Coefficient	Standard error	t	P value	[95% Confidence Interval]	
Talent management total	-.03	.07	- .49	.62	- .16	.10
Tenure	1.06	.39	2.69	.01	.26	1.85
Number of years working	- .98	.27	- 3.64	.001	- 1.53	- .44
age	.51	.27	1.92	.06	- .02	1.05

From the adjusted R-squared value in the table 7 above it can be seen that only 31% of the variance in employee engagement is explained by the variance in talent management, tenure, overall length of working and age. This is a very low proportion of variance to be explained by the model (as 69% of variance in engagement is explained by other unmeasured aspects).

There is sufficient evidence to support that the number of years in the organisation (tenure) and the number of years working significantly contribute to the overall level of employee

engagement, whereas there is insufficient evidence to support contributions from talent management and age to the prediction.

The sign and value of the coefficient for each significant variable (within the coefficient column) were investigated to gauge the nature of their prediction of the dependent variable-engagement. Tenure has a positive coefficient and the number of years working has a negative coefficient. That is, low values of tenure and larger numbers of years working are related to high levels of engagement. Despite the insignificance of talent management's ability to predict engagement (p = .62) the nature of its coefficient is discussed. As was found previously, talent management has a negative correlation with engagement- thus a positive relationship. However its p-value is less significant within the regression (p = .62) than in the previous Pearson correlation with engagement (p = .52) and thus the strength of its relationship with engagement has weakened.

The next section reports the statistics of a significant relationship that the researcher discovered through further analyses. The finding was very interesting and may have explained why an overall insignificant relationship between the main variables was found.

3.4) The influence of job type on the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices

The relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of talent management was investigated when job position was stratified into two groups, group one being participants

who were counsellors and group two being office based workers. The reason for such a stratification of the data stems from the organisation considering its counsellors to be their most valuable employees.

The regression analysis was conducted on the data once it had been stratified by job position- divided into two groups (group one = counsellors, group two = office based workers). The regression was run three times, each time the model was adjusted by either adding or removing variables.

The first run of the regression model included only one variable, that of talent management. For group one (counsellors) insufficient evidence was present to support talent management's contribution to the prediction of employee engagement (p = .12). From the adjusted R-squared value it can be inferred that only 13% of the variance in employee engagement is explained by the variance in talent management. For group two (office based workers) the adjusted R-squared was 12% (very low amount of variance in engagement explained) but there was sufficient evidence to say that talent management contributed to the prediction of employee engagement (p = .04). Therefore a second run of the regression was conducted with the inclusion of the variable tenure.

On the second run of the regression, for group one, the adjusted R-squared increased to 38%, which meant there was an increase in the amount of variance in engagement explained. However, talent management still had an insignificant role within the predictive model whereas sufficient evidence was found to support the contribution of tenure to the prediction of employee engagement (p = .006). For group two the adjusted R-squared increased to

24%, while both talent management (p = .02) and tenure (p = .03) were found to be significant, with the significance of talent management's contribution increasing from the first run.

A third regression was run, for both groups, and included the number of years working in the model. For group one the adjusted R-squared increased to 43%. However, talent management (p = .08) and total number of years working (p = .13) now had insignificance contributions for the prediction model, while there was sufficient evidence to support tenure's role (p = .003) in the prediction of engagement. Therefore 43% of the variance in engagement was explained by the variance in tenure. For group two, the adjusted R-squared increased to 40% with tenure (p = .003) and number of years working (p = .01) having significant contributions to the prediction. There was insufficient evidence to support the contribution of talent management in the model (p = .10). A last regression was run with a substitution of age for years working, for both groups the adjusted R-squared decreased to 35% and 23% respectively.

The important information gathered from the regression models, is that for group one the contribution of talent management to the prediction of engagement was not significant for any of the models. Whereas, for group two talent management had a significant contribution to the prediction of employee engagement from the first run of the model- where it was the only variable included within the model (p = .04, adjusted R-squared = 12%). Talent management continued to be significant with the inclusion of tenure (p = .02) in the model and its significance increased twice. Its value in the first Pearson correlation with engagement (p = .52) increased when it was added into the first regression model (p = .04)

and it increased again in the second run of the regression model (p = .02). Therefore, it was decided that run two was the best fit for the model because 24% of the variance in engagement was explained by both talent management and tenure. The regression statistics for the second run are summarized in table 8 below.

Table 8: Regression Statistics for group two (N = 28 office based workers)

Statistic variable	Value
F(2, 25)	5.17
p value	.013
R-Squared	.29
Adjusted R-squared	.24

Employee engagement total	Coefficient	Standard error	t	P value	[95% Confidence Interval]	
Talent management total	-.23	.09	-2.54	.02	-.42	-.04
Years in organisation	.98	.44	2.24	.03	.08	1.88

As both variables have significant contributions to the prediction of employee engagement, their coefficients will be investigated. Talent management is negatively related to engagement, and tenure is positively correlated with levels of engagement for all participants in the organisation who did not work as counsellors- all office based workers. Therefore positive perceptions of talent management practices and smaller values of tenure are associated with higher levels of employee engagement for office based employees.

As the relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of talent management was found to be significant for group 2- office based workers, and not significant for group 1- counsellors the levels of the two main constructs within the two job position groups were also investigated.

For group one, the counsellors, the scores for perceptions of talent management practices ranged from 6 to 50 (out of a possible range of 0 to 52) with a mean score of 28.6 (*SD* = 14.14) and a median of 31. For group two, the office based workers, the scores for perceptions of talent management practices ranged from 2 to 50 (out of a possible range of 0 to 52) with a mean score of 33.82 (*SD* = 12.63) and a median of 36.5. These scores for both groups are depicted in Figure 3 below, where it is observed that office based workers in general have higher scores for perceptions of talent management practices (the mean for group two is higher than that for group one).

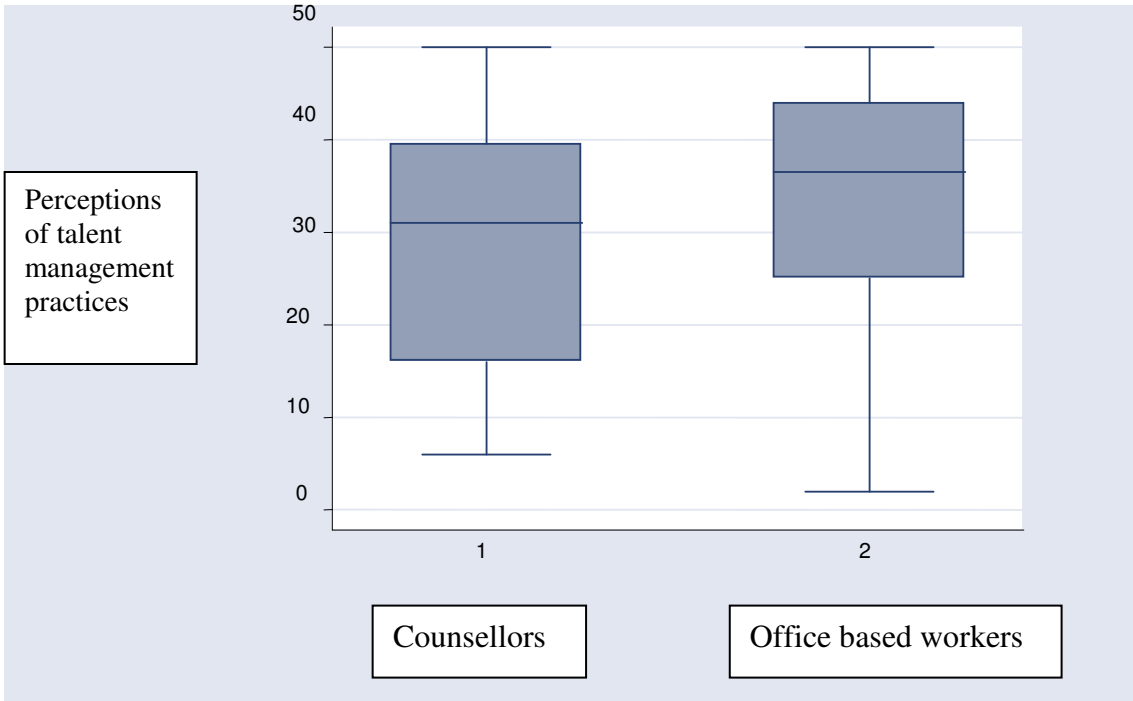


Figure 3: Box plot depicting the scores for perceptions of talent management practices for counsellors versus office based workers.

For group one, the counsellors, the scores for employee engagement ranged from 3 to 34 (out of a possible range of 0 to 36) with a mean score of 13.95 (*SD* = 6.81) and a median of 12.5. For group two, office based workers, the scores for employee engagement ranged from

2 to 26 (out of a possible range of 0 to 36) with a mean score of 11.46 (*SD* = 6.89) and a median of 11. These scores for both groups are depicted in Figure 4 overleaf, where it is observed that there is no obvious difference between office based workers and counsellors mean levels of employee engagement.

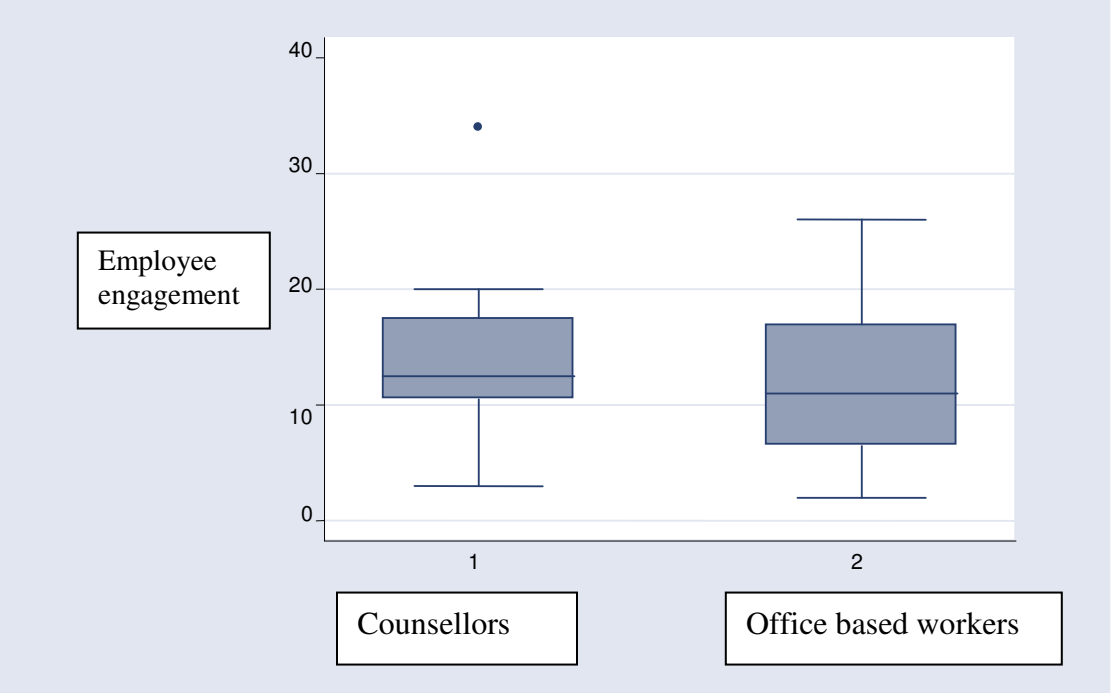


Figure 4: Box plot depicting the scores for employee engagement for counsellors versus office based workers.

Looking at the scatter plots overleaf, figures 5 and 6 respectively, it can be observed that the relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of talent management practices is stronger for office based employees than it is for counsellors. This is because the scatter plot for office workers has a more condensed scatter than that of the scatter plot for counsellors.

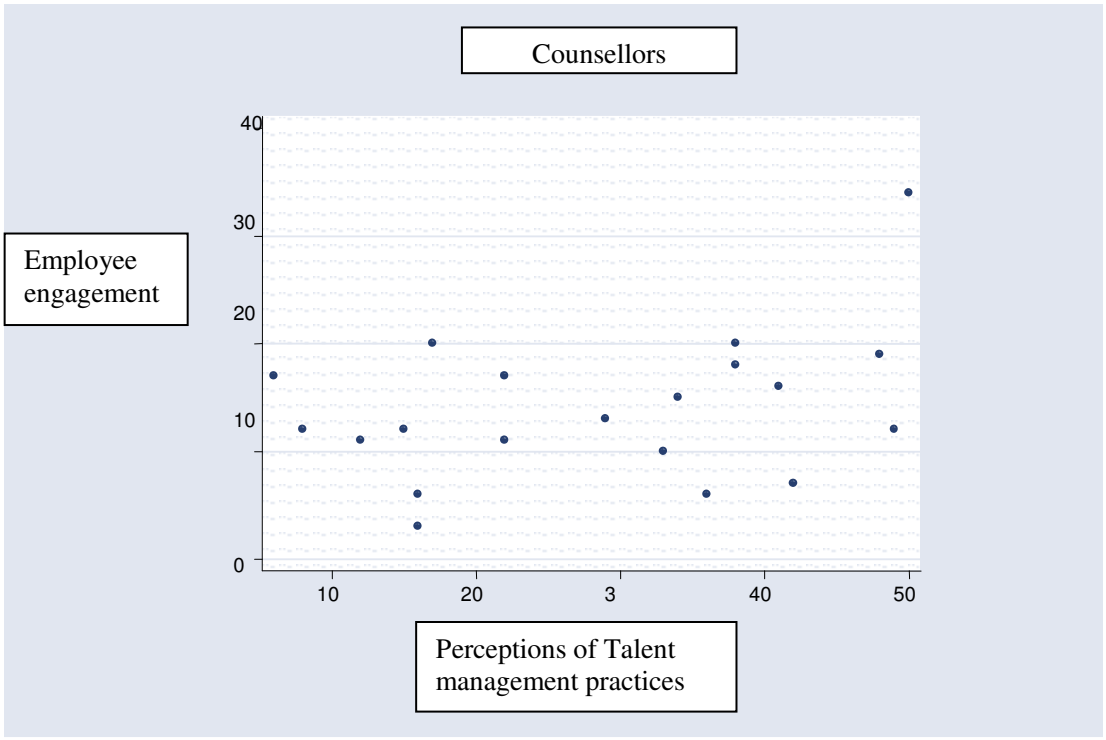


Figure 5: Scatter plot depicting relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of talent management practices for counsellors

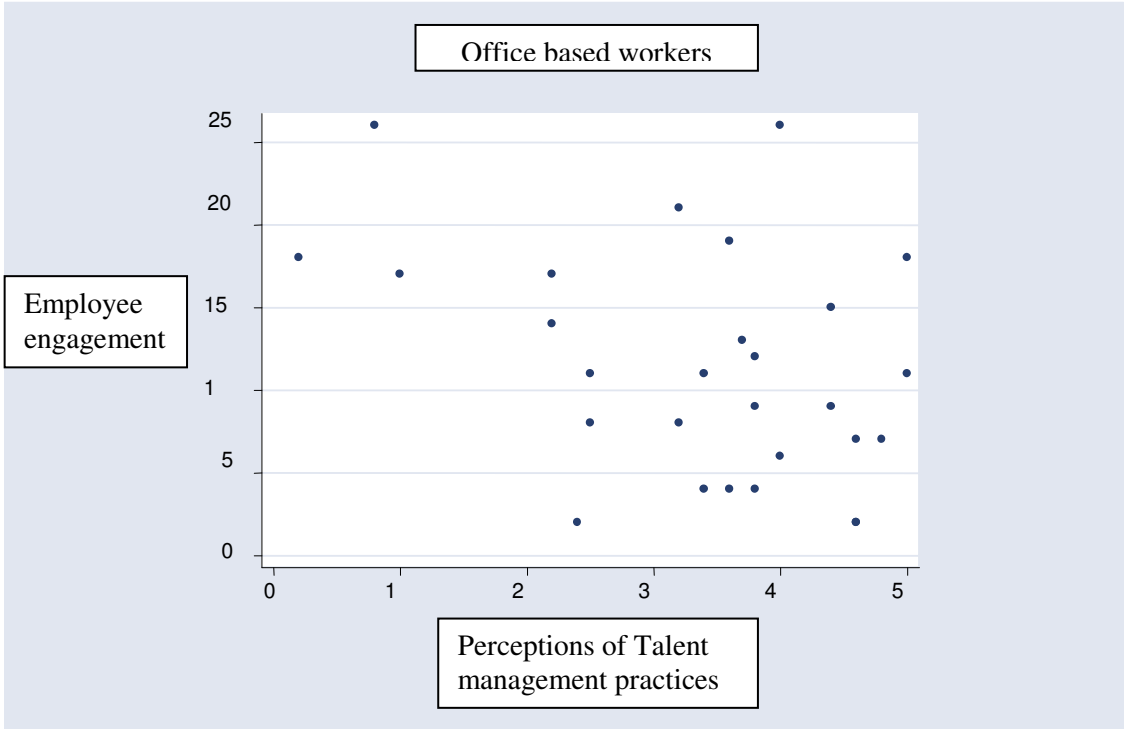


Figure 6: Scatter plot depicting relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of talent management practices for office based workers

3.5) Conclusion

In terms of the overall sample, the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices was in the proposed direction but statistically insignificant. However, the participants in this study exhibited high levels of employee engagement and positive perceptions of talent management practices. A significant relationship was found between employee's perceptions of talent management practices and the number of years that employees had been working. The relationship between employee engagement and employee's tenure within the organisation was significant. There was sufficient evidence to support that the number of years in the organisation (tenure) and the number of years working significantly contribute to the overall level of employee engagement, whereas there was insufficient evidence to say that talent management and age contribute to the prediction.

When stratified by job type, there was a statistically significant relationship between talent management perceptions and employee engagement. The following chapter contains the discussion of all the findings mentioned within the results chapter, as well as the interpretation of these findings.

Chapter 4: Discussion

Present within this chapter is the discussion of the results presented in chapter 3. The author's assumptions (relating to previous research) of why certain findings became evident are also presented. The chapter concludes with the discussion of the limitations of the research study.

The focus on talent management has recently intensified with more people, ranging from organisational CEOs and directors to managers, wanting to implement a talent strategy to gain the supposed benefits. Therefore, research is required that probes talent management's development and application. The novelty of the talent management area and the lack of empirical research surrounding it explained the lack of an established scale to measure the construct. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices.

4.1) Perceptions of talent management relationships

For this specific organisation, the participants had high scores overall on the perceptions of talent management practices scale (62.5% of participants had scores above $M = 31.65$). This was interpreted to mean that the majority of participants had favourable perceptions of the organisation's talent management practices. The number of years that participants had been working was significantly related to their perceptions of talent management, that is the longer participants had worked for the more positively they perceived the organisation's

talent management practices. Lastly, a small effect size was calculated for the point biserial correlation between perceptions of talent management practices and participant's highest qualification. Thus an association between these two variables was not strongly supported.

There is no previous research to compare the means obtained on the talent management scale to as it has not been used to measure employee perceptions of talent management practices before. However, the author believes that the overall mean obtained for this sample (M = 31.65, SD = 13.25) was high because it fell within the upper half (the score was above 26) of the possible range (0 to 52) of scores for the scale. Therefore it was decided that the average perceptions of talent management for the sample were favourable (62.5% of participants had scores above the mean).

The significant relationship found between perceptions of talent management and number of years working was interesting as it was not an expected result and initially its interpretation was not obvious. This finding highlighted the fact that, in relation to the findings from the 'war for talent' surveys, the results of this study have found associations between variables that have not been examined previously. Most of the previous research focuses on implementing a talent strategy and examining its effectiveness by examining the change in organisational revenue (as done in Romans & Lardner, 2005) as opposed to examining its impact on employees. As the current study was a cross-sectional study, such a comparison was impossible to make. The researcher can only compare what has been found previously in the literature, to what was found within this study. However, very little comparable information exists.

The insignificant finding between employee's highest qualification and perceptions of talent management practices can be related to the premise of talent management. The premise is that employee talent does not depend on the skills and knowledge that are quantified through the qualifications that employees have. Talent is seen as inherent, and it can be developed through any experiences that the individual has (Forman, 2005). Thus, the small effect size found between talent management and participant's qualifications supports a broader definition of talent than it just being related to what qualifications employees have.

Statistics cited within Michaels, et al. (2001) from the McKinsey (1998) 'war for talent survey' allude to the fact that management is not always aware of the current position of talent within the organisation (results suggest that only 16% of executives realized who constituted the organisation's talent). In the case of this study's specific organisation, managers and directors seemed to be more aware of who their talent was- they specified that their counsellors are their most valuable employees. The 'war for talent survey' highlighted the inconsistencies present between acknowledging problems about talent, and reacting to these problems appropriately. Such a finding will relate to the approaches that the organisation will decide to take in reaction to the findings from this study- that the organisation's valuable employees do not perceive the organisation's talent management practices positively. Therefore, as the literature proposes, the gap between the actual and the ideal state of talent in organisations is present within this organisation, and therefore attention must be paid to decreasing this gap. However, this effort may not involve implementing a talent management strategy but rather a different strategy focused on the organisation's counsellors which aim to increase elements such as their engagement.

Even though the research did not find a correlation between the two main variables, according to the mean scores assessed, the organisation's employees on average exhibited high levels of each construct. Thus, employees viewed the organisation's talent management efforts favourably and they were engaged while working at the organisation. Although the organisation does not have practices that are specifically labelled as a talent management strategy, the organisation does follow practices that according to Saks (2006) are associated with engagement. This may thus explain the higher levels of employee engagement present for the organisation's employees as opposed to any potential talent management strategies present within the organisation.

Using the information given to the researcher by the organisation, it is proposed that the organisational practices that may be leading to the high levels of employee engagement are the support provided to employees by the organisation and the methods through which the organisation rewards and recognizes its valuable employees. This can be proposed because firstly, the perceived support that employees receive, from both their organisation and their supervisor is what the scale used to assess employee's perceptions of talent management practices was initially designed for (see Singer, 2000). As the mean score on this scale was high, it is assumed that participants perceived the support given to them positively. Thus, the findings from the current research provide support for Singer's (2000) use of the scale, because employees who participated in this study exhibited high levels of engagement as well as positive perceptions of supervisor support and according to Saks' (2006) model these two constructs should be positively related (high levels in the one variable are associated with high levels in the other variable).

In summary, the high levels in engagement for this organisation, according to Saks' (2006) model could be attributed to the effective support given to employees from their supervisors and the organisation, as well as the appropriate rewards and recognition awarded to employees by the organisation. Therefore for this organisation it is rather this perceived support that is driving employee levels of engagement and not necessarily any talent management strategies. If this can be proven such a fact undermines the claims made in the literature that talent management is a necessary strategy to increase organisation effectiveness.

4.2) Employee engagement relationships

A significant relationship was found to exist between employee engagement and employee's tenure (number of years working in organisation).

Participants had overall low mean scores (M = 12.50, SD = 6.82) on the scale used to assess employee engagement. This was assumed to mean that overall, the participants were engaged- low scores on the scale are associated with high levels of engagement (56.3% of participants had scores below the mean score). This assumption was made in comparison to the engagement levels obtained within Basikin's (2007) study which were viewed as lower than the levels within the current study. The possible range of the scores on the UWES in Basikin's (2007) study was 0 to 42. For the Indonesian sample the mean obtained was M = 5.04, SD = 1.08 and despite being scored in the opposite manner to the UWES in the current study this mean is relatively lower than the mean found for this study (it is in the lower half

of possible scores). Despite this Basikin's (2007) results were supported by the findings within this research, that gender, age, teaching experience (equivalent to number of years working or employee tenure) all possessed insignificant relationships to engagement.

Employee engagement was found to have a positive, moderate correlation with organisational tenure (years working within the organisation). Finding a relationship between engagement and employee's tenure within the organisation supports the assumption in the literature that the more engaged employees are, the longer they should stay with their organisation- that is be retained by the organisation. For this study (because of the method used to score the UWES-9) a positive relationship between engagement and organisational tenure means that the longer an employee has been in the specific organisation, the less engaged the employee will be. Basikin (2007) examined the variable of tenure when investigating engagement levels for teachers in Indonesia. It was found that tenure had an insignificant association with engagement (F [116, 150] =0.305, p >0.05). Therefore Basikin's (2007) results support the findings of this research.

There is a possible explanation for the divergent or seemingly illogical finding between engagement and retention within this research. With the current state of the economy- its present downfall- employees may no longer seek engagement to the same extent within their job or organisation as previously thought. Employees may be more concerned with job security, stable income and pension benefits because their environment is no longer stable. The majority of people- individuals and organisations worldwide- have been affected by the recession and should thus act accordingly (have fewer intentions to quit) that are also independent of their levels of engagement. Specifically, for this study engagement and

organisational tenure were negatively related. The employees may be staying within the organisation, not because they are engaged within their job but rather because of the income that they derive from working for the organisation. This reality could have greatly affected this study's findings.

In Saks' (2006) and Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) studies, employee intentions to quit and employee turnover intentions were respectively assessed. Despite the fact that these results cannot be directly compared to those of this study, because employee intentions to quit or turnover are not directly equivalent to any variables within the current study (such as tenure or retention), their results are provided because of the significant findings found with engagement. Saks (2006) calculated correlations of job and organisation engagement with individual's intention to quit. The correlations were significant at the $p < .0001$ level of significance and were, respectively $r = -.41$, and $r = -.44$; these are negative, moderate correlations. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) presented findings that supported negative correlations between turnover intentions and the three hypothesized dimensions of engagement: vigour ($r = -.16$), dedication ($r = -.39$) and absorption ($r = -.2$) all three correlations were significant at the $p < .001$ level of significance. Therefore the findings of Saks (2006) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) support the negative relationship between engagement and employee turnover intentions (similarly defined as employee intentions to quit). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also found that a negative correlation exists between turnover intentions and social support ($r = -.22$, $p < .001$) this is in agreement with Saks' (2006) model that proposes that perceived support from supervisors and the organisation are antecedents of engagement. This is in contradiction to the insignificant finding in this study between the total on Singer's (2000) perceptions of manager support scale and employee

engagement scores. The incongruence in findings may be explained by the scales used in each study measuring different aspects of support. Singer's (2000) scale measures managerial or supervisor support whereas the other scales measured a broader social support.

4.3) Relationship between perceptions of talent management practices and employee engagement

There was insufficient evidence to support the relationship between perceptions of talent management and employee engagement; however, the direction of the calculated correlation was as proposed by the researcher- that high levels of employee engagement would be associated with favourable perceptions of talent management practices if the relationship was significant. Further the relationship was found to be insignificant even though the overall sample was exhibiting high levels of engagement (M = 12.50, SD = 6.82) and had positive perceptions of talent management (M = 31.65, SD = 13.25). This can be interpreted to mean that another factor within the organisation was contributing to the high levels of each construct, referring to Romans and Lardner's (2005) study this may have been the organisational culture which was not examined in this study.

There are many possible reasons why the relationship between perceptions of talent management practices and employee engagement was found to be insignificant in this study. One reason that no relationship was found between the key variables could be because no relationship actually exists between the variables in reality. Thus this research study's

findings may undermine any previous findings. However there are other explanations for previous studies fining a significant relationship between the two key variables. Explaining why previous studies may have found significant relationships and this study did not is threefold. It depends on the relevance of the constructs when assessed within a NGO, the context validity of scales used to assess the constructs, the unempirical nature of talent management literature as well as the divergence concerning the definition of employee engagement.

Firstly, the constructs as defined for this study may be irrelevant for the context of this research because the organisation was an NGO as opposed to a private, profit-orientated organisation (as was used in other studies see Bhatnagar, 2007; Michaels et al., 2001). The literature consulted had a predominant international base, with research conducted within the African context lacking, and with no relevant research conducted within NGOs. As such the NGO within this study may not require a talent focus within its operation as it deems other employee aspects as more salient.

Secondly, as the scales were developed in other contexts, despite having adequate reliability for this study, they may have a decreased validity as a construct measure within a NGO. This assertion depends on the scale's context validity, which requires further investigation (within different studies).

Thirdly, the current state of the literature concerning employee engagement and talent management may have influenced this research's findings. Employee engagement has established itself as an important organisational construct to a greater extent than that of

talent management as it has some empirical research foundation. It established itself as a salient organisational construct through prior research- providing evidence for its positive relationship with employee job satisfaction (Saks, 2006), as well as its negative relationship with employee burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This said, engagement still has no solid, universal definition (Bhatnagar, 2007; Saks, 2006) and hence has many different operationalizations in the form of pre-established scales. These scales are used to assess engagement within different contexts. Different versions of the UWES have been used in Indonesia (see Basikin, 2007) and Japan (see Shimazu et al., 2008) whereas engagement in organisations is often assessed through the Gallup q12 (see Bhatnagar, 2007). The practice of using different scales to assess engagement undermines the ability to compare various studies' findings as the issue of what exactly each scale assesses becomes apparent. However no engagement research exists within the context of an NGO and thus there is no information about engagement within such a context.

In comparison to engagement with its weak empirical foundation, talent management has a weaker empirical basis. Talent management does not have a definitive definition or an established scale through which it can be assessed. Therefore, despite the researcher's use of a scale, that was proposed to be a relevant, reliable and valid scale that linked to talent management practices as defined in the literature, if the literature available on talent management is irrelevant to the context within which this study took place, a lack of significant findings is understandable.

The fact that no relationship was found between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices stimulates much debate about previous findings.

It undermines the assertion that there is a relationship between the two constructs. This justifies the intense investigation of the relationship with stratification of certain variables.

4.4) The influence of job type (position) on the relationship between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices

Despite the insignificance of the proposed relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of talent management practices, the researcher investigated the relationship further, and decided to investigate how the relationship was affected when the job positions of participants was stratified into two groups. Group one contained all participants who were counsellors and group two contained all participants who were not counsellors, but rather office based workers. The regression performed on this data with the job position stratified found support for a significant contribution from perceptions of talent management practices to the prediction of employee engagement for office based workers (group two). Therefore, it was found that variance in talent management perceptions accounted for 12% of the variance in employee engagement for participants that were not counsellors; while there was no significant contribution of talent management perceptions to the prediction of engagement for participants who were counsellors (group one). The regression further investigated the interactions of tenure and talent management contributions and found both variables had significant contributions and explained 24% of the variance in engagement. In sum there was a relationship between the main constructs (talent management and engagement), for office based employees because talent management contribute significantly

to the prediction of the overall levels of employee engagement. This was an interesting result, because the organisation claimed that its main focus was on its employees who were counsellors. The researcher would therefore recommend implementing a strategy that specifically focuses on the organisation's counsellors according to their specific needs.

The researcher was aware that counsellors were often situated within the field and were often not in the office. This became apparent when the researcher handed out questionnaires as not all employees were available to participate in the research. This fact may explain the insignificance of the organisation's talent management practices for the counsellors. As counsellors are working within the field for the majority of the time, it seems that they are often unable to be involved in organisational interventions. If the counsellors do not attend the interventions, they are not eligible to gain any of the intervention's proposed benefits. In comparison, the office based workers are available to a greater extent and are thus able to attend such programs. This could explain why office based workers perceptions of the interventions are better. In other words, they perceive talent management interventions favourably because they have the opportunity to gain benefits from attending the interventions.

This finding also relates to the practices made available to employees, specifically counsellors. The organisation supplies stress management programs as well as counselling initiatives for employees who require assistance. These initiatives were found to be adequate (when viewed as support supplied to employees from the organisation) for the employees who had positive perceptions of managerial support (that is 62.5% of the participants) - but obviously these practices do not possess a specific focus of employee talent and thus are not

perceived as talent management practices. This means, when participant's perceptions of talent management practices were assessed counsellors may not rate these specific practices but rather rated other practices that they perceived to have a talent focus, which were interventions that they were often unable to attend.

Further this finding, because of the positive perceptions exhibited by office based workers and their high engagement levels suggest that participants who are able to attend the interventions do perceive the interventions as effective or to have positive outcomes. This somewhat supports the claims in the literature, that talent management has positive outcomes- as the employees who are attending the intervention perceive it positively. However, the finding does not support the fact that such management should only be focused on talented employees because the participants who viewed the practices most favourably were not classified as the most valuable employees of the specific organisation.

4.5) Limitations of the study

This section aims to delve into the critical shortcomings of this research project and to use these to provide support for the following recommendation in chapter 5.

4.5.1) Sample

As the researcher resides in South Africa, conducting research in Botswana may raise some methodological issues. However, the researcher was able to access a NGO within Botswana and as such the novelty of the research study was increased because there was no research of

this study's nature within a NGO. The uniqueness of conducting a study within an NGO was apparent because of its context which differs from the contexts of profit organisations (within which most talent management and engagement research has been conducted). Therefore the researcher decided that the benefits from researching a NGO outweighed any possible issues. The specific NGO context was described by the researcher, and research from different contexts was presented. This allows the reader to draw conclusions about the findings of this research, and their comparability to other research findings.

A small sample size affects the power of the statistical analyses and the effect sizes of the results. The statistics for this research study were performed as the minimum sample size needed to run the statistics was 30, however, in comparison to previous research studies this study had a relatively small sample size [for example Saks (2006) had 102 participants, Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) had 1698 participants] . However as the company only has 120 employees and only 73 employees were available to participate in the study, the sample size of 48, because of the high response rate of 66%, was deemed feasible to base this research on. The small size may have influenced the results of the statistical analyses and thus may account for the insignificant main relationship under investigation. Despite the small sample size other relevant and novel relationships were found in this study.

Despite the insignificance of the correlation between the main constructs of interest it was negative, thus supporting a relationship in the proposed direction between the constructs. Therefore if the sample size had been bigger, a significant relationship between variables might have been found. However, the fact that an insignificant relationship was found for the study was interpreted to mean that for the context of an NGO talent management may not be

relevant, or the scales used to assess the key variables were not applicable for such a context. Therefore this study informs future theory, research and practice. The use of correlations and regressions to statistically analyze the data allows one to investigate whether relationships exist between variables but do not provide enough evidence for causality within the relationships. Thus the researcher is unable to conclude that one of the variables influences the other. However, because significant correlations were found it is advised that future studies investigate the causality of the relationships to determine the direction of these relationships.

4.5.2) Measures

The talent management scale used to assess the construct for this study has never been used for such a purpose before and therefore may possess inadequate validity. However, as no other scale has been developed the questionnaire forms as good a basis as any other because its use in this study was justified by the researcher (refer to chapter 2). Potential issues may have arisen from the way items were phrased ("My manager/supervisor…"). One such issue may be that the scale is measuring extraneous factors such as participants' particular feelings for their manager/supervisor, or even their current relationship with their manager, because of the way items have been phrased and therefore the scale may not be assessing the perceptions of the support provided by the manager specifically. This issue was considered before the scale was used but because there were no other relevant or appropriate pre-established scales, the researcher decided to use this scale and to bring the reader's attention to any possible issues its use may present.

Another problem concerning the use of the questionnaire developed by Singer (2000) for use in South Africa, and for English speakers may be its use within a different country (such as Botswana) where, as was ascertained from the questionnaires, the most common home language is seTswana. The researcher accounted from this possible limitation by querying employees' English proficiency, and was assured that all employees would be able to understand the questionnaire.

Due to the amount of missing values, the researcher had to use a technique to substitute the missing values. The mean was substituted for any missing values. This may have affected the results of the data analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1995). However, only a small percentage of entries were missing (58 out of a total of 1488). Therefore the researcher decided to substitute the missing entries instead of excluding participant's responses. It was believed that reducing the sample size because of missing values would have had more adverse effects on the study as a whole, than substituting the missing entries with the mean did. Therefore this limitation was considered by the researcher and was addressed accordingly.

The researcher noticed, during data capturing, that some participants followed a response pattern by answering the items contained within the employee engagement scale in a neutral manner. As the sample size was small, these response patterns of the participants may have had an impact on the results of this research. This may explain why certain findings were insignificant. However, most survey research studies have this problem, which may decrease the variance within the data because responses tend to be more neutral than definitive. Therefore, this study is no more susceptible to this response pattern compared to other

studies, but in conjunction with the small sample size of this study, the study's findings may have been affected.

Recommendations in accordance with the above limitations of the study are provided in chapter 5.

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Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter begins with a discussion of the recommendations from this research, for theory research and practice. The chapter then provides a conclusion to the overall research report.

5.1) Implications for theory

This research report has criticized the current state of the literature within the talent management and employee engagement fields, especially in terms of a lack of empirical research for each of the constructs. It is recommended that the definitions of talent management and engagement be made more definitive and established across contexts (in different countries and varied organisations) through empirical research. Further, the links between talent management and organisational effectiveness need to be evaluated to provide evidence to support the assumed link. Therefore the most important implication for theory from this research is to establish a stronger empirical base for both employee engagement and talent management. This research has provided findings that could be compared to the results of Saks (2006) (association between perceived support and engagement) and Basikin (2007) (insignificant relationship between age, gender, working experience or tenure and employee engagement). However, these comparisons were made tentatively as some of the studies used different scales to measure engagement. The next recommendation relates to an association between the two constructs and organisational culture.

From Romans and Lardner's (2005) study within a Japanese organisation, it was proposed that the organisation's culture, in conjunction with their talent management program, had had a positive influence on the organisation's outcomes such as revenue and effectiveness. However, this assumption was not examined to determine the definition or direction of the link between organisational culture and talent management practices and its impact on organisation effectiveness. If a successful talent management practice was associated with a modification of organisational culture, then possibly talent management's relationship with employee engagement, alluded to in this study and others, is moderated or mediated by the culture of an organisation. If this is the case, the lack of a relationship found in this study between the two main constructs could be due to the study's narrower scope, which excluded organisational culture as a variable of interest. The possibility that organisational culture is a mediator needs to be investigated in relation to the key variables of this study. Such an investigation needs to examine the existing literature to see if any research findings have supported organisational culture being a mediator, or if the findings suggest any other associations between organisational culture, engagement and talent management practices.

Finally, in relation to the significant relationship found between talent management and engagement across different job positions, theory needs to expand this finding to gauge what it means. If talent management is proven to have a positive association with engagement, future research is required to investigate the mediating or moderating affect of job position on this association. As the job categories used within this study were very broad, being counsellors versus office based worker, future theory should focus on whether certain job categories are more relevant in terms of engagement and talent management, or if this was a once-off finding that is only applicable for this specific NGO.

5.2) Implications for research

Each research study conducted provides further information on good and bad practice within the research realm. This research report went to great lengths to provide an accurate description of its procedure and methodology. This aimed to assist with any studies that wanted to replicate this research study. It is important that this be achieved as the study aimed to form a strong basis for other research to be developed from. Specific recommendations stemming from this study's choice of research design and analysis methods are apparent. Such recommendations involve the use of longitudinal research designs in future studies. Such designs provide more meaningful findings than cross-sectional studies as they are able to compare and contrast findings from different time intervals.

The main result for this study, the correlation between employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices, was in the proposed direction- high levels of engagement are associated with favourable perceptions of talent practices- however the correlation was found to be insignificant. There are several methods that could enhance the probability of finding a significant relationship.. Firstly, as suggested above research following a longitudinal research design can be undertaken which should allow an analysis of the variables over time. Secondly a qualitative research study will provide more detail if variables are assessed through qualitative means such as interviews or focus groups. Such procedures should increase the richness of information given by participants and it would

allow a researcher to clarify his or her understanding of the context surrounding the key variables (examining any confounding variables). Finally, if possible a larger research sample should be sought, as this would increase the power of the statistics used to analyse the data. Further research within NGOs is recommended as they are underutilized research contexts which greatly differ from other profit driven organisations.

The development of a talent management scale that has adequate reliability and validity and that can be used across contexts is a very important research endeavour. For a construct to be universal, it must be applicable to all organisations, within all contexts. This supports a recommendation for a further, deeper and more academic focused effort into the construct itself, after which a development effort of a scale to measure the construct can be accomplished. To support the development of such a scale it is recommended that such a scale be piloted on a sample to determine its ability to assess perceptions of talent management. Unfortunately such an effort was not possible within this research study and hence the researcher chose to use Singer's (2000) scale.

Suggestions concerning the re-use of the study's talent management scale are important. The scale was developed and used by Singer (2000), as a measure of managerial. Supervisor support. Interested parties should examine Singer's (2000) results when considering using this scale in future studies. Further, before another researcher uses the talent management scale they should pilot the scale to establish its assessment capabilities beyond what was established within this research study. This will increase the detail and worth concerning the scale's reliability, validity and relevance as a talent management measure.

In summary, the recommendations from this study for future research are: to conduct a thorough and empirical review of the literature and definitions of both talent management and employee engagement as both are not definitive at this stage, to be aware that most of the literature in this field of research is not empirical and most existing evidence is weak, to conduct more research with NGOs and to research the development of a talent management scale while considering the benefits and limitations of using Singer's (2000) scale.

5.3) Implications for practice

The significant results of this study have important implications for future human resource practices together with specific talent management strategies. If talent management is to be viewed as essential to organisational success, more empirical evidence supporting its positive outcomes needs to be provided than that which is presently supplied.

Bhatnagar (2007) stipulates that employee engagement is a salient outcome of a successful talent management process- specifically he proposes that talent retention is a sought outcome from a talent management process, as do many other studies (see Bhatnagar, 2008; Forman, 2005; Saks, 2006). Bhatnagar (2007) recommends implementing a talent management intervention within the organisation he studied claiming that the intervention may have positive organisational results. However, as there were problems with Bhatnagar's study: contradictory findings were reported, and low reliability for subscales of the Gallup q12 (used to assess engagement levels) were found. This undermined the research's ability to relate the assessed engagement levels of employees to the organisation's attrition rate.

Therefore Bhatnagar's (2007) assertion that talent management practices may assist organisations with their employee engagement and retention is not strongly supported. Further the findings that attrition rates differed according to tenure are questionable, such a study required a superior method of assessing engagement before such claims can be supported.

The organisation that participated in this study, due to its aims and its projects as well as its context, is not similar to those that have been the focus within the business literature (often revenue driven, large, private organisations). Thus the weaknesses inherent within the popular literature are highlighted. The organisation in this study is a non-profit entity that focuses on the well-being of a country and its communities by providing easy and assessable HIV testing. A talent management strategy in this context must cater to these specific organisational characteristics. It is necessary to pay attention to NGOs and their efficient functioning, as well as the well-being of their employees. The organisation's focus on motivating its employees as a strategy to drive its effectiveness is not contingent on profits, but rather on the overall functioning of the organisation's surrounding society. Thus for organisational interventions, often termed talent management practices, the fact that extrinsic, monetary motivators are less relevant in these instances must be accepted and understood. Only then will interventions to assist NGOs and their employees be relevant and provide desired results.

It is interesting that a negative relationship between employee's levels of engagement and their tenure within the organisation was found. This may have far-reaching consequences if these results could be replicated. Previous studies have found that employee engagement is

related to many desirable organisational outcomes, but according to the results of this research an individual will be less likely to be engaged, the longer they stay within this organisation. This needs further investigation within this specific organisation to see if long-term employees are receiving any treatment that could lead to them being less engaged, or if simply working for the same organisation for a long period of time leads to an employee becoming disengaged. In this specific organisation, as with other organisations, a lack of employee engagement can be associated with many organisational problems, such as employees' intentions to quit (Saks, 2006). In this current state of economic decline, an organisation- particularly an NGO- seeks to prevent valuable employees leaving their organisation. Thus, for the organisation that participated within this research, it is recommended that an analysis of employee requirements be conducted. This will allow the organisation to tailor its retention strategies to meet employees' needs and requirements.

5.4) Conclusion

The current state of talent management and employee engagement literature is explored within this research report. An apparent lack and an inadequate level of empirical evidence were apparent for each of the fields respectively. A conceptual framework for this study was developed and formed the basis of the research conducted highlighting the proposed relationship between the constructs as well as the importance of the NGO context. In accordance with the aims and objectives of the study, the researcher investigated the overall levels of participant's employee engagement and employee perceptions of talent management practices at the organisation.

According to the highest achievable scores of these scales, the participants were viewed to have high levels of employee engagement and positive perceptions of employee engagement. Despite these findings, the relationship between the two main constructs of this research was not found to be significant. The researcher thus investigated the relationship further and discovered that when job position was stratified into two groups, that of counsellors and office based workers, the relationship became significant for office based workers but not for counsellors. This was an interesting finding as the NGO that was researched specified that their counsellors were viewed as their valuable employees. Further significant findings were found between employee engagement and employee tenure, as well as between employee perceptions of talent management and the number of years participants had been working for.

The significant and insignificant findings of this research were discussed, in relation to whether they supported or disputed previous findings. The overall finding was that the talent management literature as it stands is only somewhat supported by this study's findings (specifically the basic premise of talent management is supported by the insignificant finding between perceptions of talent management and participant's highest qualification).

In conclusion this research supports the need for more empirical research within both the fields of employee engagement and talent management (specifically qualitative studies). It also establishes that the NGO context is a relevant and important context for organisational psychology research. This research provided significant and insignificant findings that are

important to compare to previous research findings and as such provides a strong foundation for theory, research and practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Permission for Organisational Access

Psychology. School of Human & Community Development. Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Date:

To whom it may concern,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANISATION

My name is Katherine Roper and I am currently studying Masters in Organisational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. As a prerequisite for fulfilling this degree, I am required to present a research dissertation to the psychology department at the university.

The study is interested in employees' experiences of organisational strategies and their feelings about their current work.This research will benefit the organisation as it is aimed at providing insight into how employees feel about organisational interventions. This insight will assist with future development and implementation of such strategies.

Participation in this research will involve completing the attached questionnaire, which should take about 20 minutes. Anyone over the age of 18 and working full-time in this organisation will be invited to participate. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete or not complete this questionnaire. No risks are anticipated and no identifying information such as name or ID number will be asked. In this way, the questionnaires are anonymous and responses cannot be identified as belonging to a particular participant. In addition, the completed questionnaire will not be seen by anyone but me. Responses will also be looked at only in relation to all other responses to establish trends. Summarised results of the research will be made available to participants after completion of my degree. This information will be of general results and findings and not of individual results. In order to ensure confidentiality, all questionnaires will be stored safely and destroyed upon the completion of my degree.

I would greatly appreciate you allowing me to access your employees to ask them to complete questionnaires. I will do my best not to disrupt the daily functioning of the organisation.

Please contact me on 072 124 2742 or through email at KatherineRoper@gmail.com as soon as possible if you have any further questions. Should you grant me access, kindly sign the attached consent form.

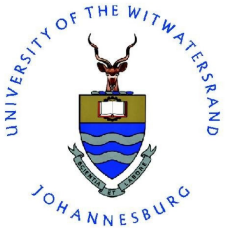
Yours sincerely

_____
Katherine Roper
Organisational Masters Student
katherineroper@gmail.com
072 124 2742

_____
Dr Brendon Barnes (Supervisor)
Senior Lecturer
Brendon.Barnes@wits.ac.za
(011) 717 8333

Appendix 2 Participant information sheet





Psychology. School of Human & Community Development. Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Good day.

My name is Katherine Roper and I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that I am currently conducting for the purposes of obtaining my Masters degree in Organisational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The study is interested in your experiences of organisational strategies and your feelings about your current work. I will be very grateful if you could fill in a questionnaire which should take about 20 minutes to complete

Participation in this research will involve completing the attached questionnaire, which should take about 20 minutes. Anyone over the age of 18 and working full-time in this organisation is invited to participate. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete or not complete this questionnaire. No risks are anticipated and no identifying information such as your name or ID number will be asked. In this way, the questionnaires are anonymous and responses cannot be identified as belonging to a particular person. In addition, the completed questionnaire will not be seen by anyone but me. Responses will also be looked at only in relation to all other responses to establish trends. Summarised results of the research will be made available to you after completion of my degree. This information will be of general results and findings and not of individual results. In order to ensure confidentiality, all questionnaires will be stored safely and destroyed upon the completion of my degree.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please fill in the attached questionnaire and place it in the sealed box provided - this will be taken as consent to participate in the research. Your participation in the study will be greatly appreciated. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor, Dr Brendon Barnes.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Roper
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Dr. Brendon Barnes (Supervisor)
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Appendix 3

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you once again for agreeing to fill out the questionnaire. Please answer all of the following questions to your best ability. There are three sections in the questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers and your answers will remain confidential, as no one will be able to link your completed questionnaire to you. Please complete the questionnaire and place it in the sealed box that I have left in the office.

A. Biographical Information

Please tick the appropriate box or fill in the spaces provided.

Gender:

Male	Female

Race:

White	Black	Indian	Coloured	Asian	Other

Home Language: _____

Age: _____

Highest level of qualification: _____

Job Position: _____

Number of years you have worked at this organisation: _____

Number of years that you have been working since leaving school: _____

B. Perceptions of Talent Management

The following thirteen statements focus on how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, place a cross under the zero column (Never) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by placing a cross in the column ranging from Rarely to Always (1 to 4) that best describes how frequently you feel that way. Please answer all the questions.

	Never 0	Rarely 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Always 4
1. My manager/supervisor lets me know which areas of my performance are weak					
2.My manager/supervisor lets me know how I can do better in my work					
3.My manager/supervisor lets me know how to handle problems in my work					
4. My manager/supervisor encourages me to develop my career					
5. My manager/supervisor discusses with me how to get additional training					
6. My manager/supervisor gives me advice on developing my career					
7. My manager/supervisor makes me aware of the demands of future jobs in my career path					
8. My manager/supervisor gives me information on training opportunities for skills development					
9. My manager/supervisor provides me with training programmes which focus on the application of learning with respect to both professional and personal life					
10. My manager/supervisor has a style that encourages me to take responsibility and authority					
11. My manager/supervisor provides me with a useful performance appraisal					
12. My manager/supervisor provides me with ongoing feedback					
13. My manager/supervisor often provides me with opportunities for growth and to do interesting work					

C. Employee Engagement

Please place a cross in the column that best describes how you feel about each of the following statements. Please answer all questions overleaf.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy					
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous					
3. I am enthusiastic about my job					
4. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work					
5. I am proud on the work that I do					
6. My job inspires me					
7. I am immersed in my work					
8. I get carried away when I'm working					
9. I feel happy when I am working intensely					

Thank you once again for completing the questionnaire. Please place your completed questionnaire in the box provided.