

The Influence of Career Development Practices on Employee Retention in The Mining Industry in Namibia

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Abstract: The mining industry in Namibia is currently experiencing a high employee turnover as a result of a lack of career development as employees are mostly attracted by career advancement opportunities. Career development is one of the key factors in an organisation to attract and retain key and talented employees. Therefore, this study is intended to determine the effect of career development practices on employee attraction and retention. This study is quantitative in nature and questionnaires were used to collect the data from participants. The researchers used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyse the data and to provide descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and graphical analyses with the use of tables and calculation of statistics for central tendency, variability, and distribution. The major findings of the study revealed that the career management plans do not align with employees' personal career goals and that the employee commitments and performance in the mining industry are constrained due to the lack of structured career planning and management. It is also evident from the findings that career development practices would increase the profitability of the mining industry as a result of satisfied and high performing employees. Although the employees have adequate resources to carry out their duties, the lack of career advancement as well as adequate training and development is a great concern. Investors in the mining industry must place a high value on human capital, and as a result, ensure that their skilled individuals are retained as they provide an advantage over competitors. A high level of support to employees are more likely for employees to emotionally commit to their organisations, resulting in a low rate of turnover and a high level of job performance.

Key words: career development, career planning, employee retention, training & development

I. INTRODUCTION

In any organisation, career support practices represent both a means of developing and retaining skills for individuals and groups. Regardless of size, sector or market, career development and employee motivation are critical factors for any organisation to consider (Mwanje, 2010). Investing in human resources through training and management

development is unavoidable in order to improve both employee and organisational capability. However, if an organisation lacks career development opportunities, the situation might lead to lowering the morale of employees, lack of motivation, low productivity and it might increase employee turnover as a result of dissatisfaction among employees. Global Talent Monitor report on workforce activities in 2Q18 shows that the lack of career development remains a key driver of employee attrition as cited by 40% of departing employees as a dissatisfying factor in their jobs. The growing body of research established that worker retention techniques increase the likelihood of long-haul representatives. An increase in employee retention leads to a decrease in recruitment, saving the organisation time and money on recruitment and training. According to Greener (2021), organisations need to invest in their workforces by pursuing career development practices and programmes that would increase employee retention. Failure to make such investments might result in the high costs of turnover.

The lack of career development has impact on retention which makes it difficult to retain highly skilled and competent employees. Lartey (2021) underpin this view by stating that the absence of career development in any organisation causes employees turnover. Increased employee turnover adds significantly to a company's operating costs and has an impact on its growth and profitability. In addition, Spain and Groyberg (2016) state that high employee turnover results in poor performance. Therefore, organisations with low turnover and high performer retention can have a significant advantage. Employee turnover has an impact on organisational performance and profitability, and businesses must understand why employees stay or leave. Therefore, companies need to concentrate on a combination of strategies and schemes to keep employees from leaving. Hence, it is vital that employers put in more efforts to create a work environment that engages employees for the longest period of time, while ensuring that the organisation retains employees with

the desired skills in order to meet business goals. Despite the fact that career planning is a shared responsibility, employees play a significant role in their own advancement.

Statement Of The Problem

Developing a career development plan is critical for any business, including mining sectors, in order to improve the skills profiles of their companies. However, the mining industry in Namibia experience a high employee turnover due to the lack of career development, which makes it difficult to retain employees seeking career advancement opportunities. According to Richard (2018) retaining the best employees remains one of the most difficult challenges that organisations face today, as the most companies have flat organisational structures that limit opportunities for advancement in certain disciplines. For instance, low-level positions (non-professional roles) such as operators in the mining industry are totally overlooked, which means that opportunities for advancement and growth are limited in some job categories. The lack of career development can have disadvantages for both individual employees and organisations such as low morale, lack of career progression, high absenteeism, and high employee turnover. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of career planning and development practices on employee attraction and retention in the mining industry.

The Research Questions

Considering the current trends in the organisations based on employee retention, this research intends to assess the effect of poor or no career planning on employee retention by soliciting answers on the following questions:

- What effects does career development have on employee retention in the mining industry in Namibia?
- How significant or essential are career planning and development practices for employee retention?
- What are the challenges in the implementation of career planning and development programmes in the mining industry in Namibia?

II. TRENDS IN THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations in today's business world are forced to operate in an environment of hyper-change and competition. These factors compel organizations to pay closer attention to their employees, focusing on keeping them satisfied and engaged. Furthermore, the scarcity of qualified and talented employees places additional pressure on organizations to work effectively on employee retention. As a result, attracting, satisfying, and retaining qualified and talented employees is becoming increasingly important. In fact, an organization's ability to satisfy and retain qualified employees is critical to its future survival, performance, and profitability. Hence, career development is crucial in an organisation as it entails providing opportunities for employees to grow personally and professionally (Joarder et al, 2015). Career development is regarded as one of the human resource practices that aid in the retention management issue. Many studies cited it as one

of the primary retention strategies (Khan, Rajasekar & Al-Asfour, 2015).

Retention and career development into perspective

Career development refers to a change or series of changes in an individual's career as well as systematic and sequential changes in one's professional life that are indicative of advancement (Mule & Moguche, 2020). However, it should be noted that not all change is developmental or indicates progression. These changes are characterized by ascension up the proverbial corporate ladder, increased salary, greater freedom to pursue interests and thus advance one's career, and increased recognition and respect from one's peers. Career development in organisations is a collaborative effort involving both employees and employers. Whereas an organisation can assist individuals in their career development, the employer cannot do so without the individual's own investment – and the same is true in reverse (Nkomo, Thwala & Aigbavboa, 2020). Osborne & Hammoud (2017) defines employee retention as the policies and strategies that organisations use to keep valuable employees from leaving. Employee retention, according to Grancea (2018), involves actions taken to persuade people to stay in an organisation for an extended period of time.

The relationship between training and development and career development

The process of improving employees' performance in terms of skills, knowledge, attitude, and behavior could be attributed to training and development, which does not only improve individual and organisational superiority, but also improve employees' working skills. According to Nkomo, Thwala & Aigbavboa (2020), training and development is the process and method of improving employees' aptitude, skills, knowledge, ability, and attitude for them to perform their specific work-related job. Training programmes focus on improving specific competencies related to the employee's current job; career development encompasses both training and development (Owusu et.al. 2021). Combining specific job training, employee development, and a more comprehensive career development plan necessitates a high level of strategic thinking and planning and such an overarching plan cannot be expected from the employee. It takes strong leadership and a broad perspective to recognize what training and development experiences are required for employees to grow in their positions and fit within the organisational hierarchy while also supporting the organisational vision. While this may necessitate some investment on the part of the organisation, understanding and supporting career development has an impact on the organisation's ability to attract and retain high-performing employees, which can lead to an organisation-wide competitive advantage. As a result, training and development is a more logical and organized method of improving workers' skills, knowledge, and attributes for them to better fulfill their job tasks. Although training and development has been treated as a single entity for the sake of simplicity in this study, certain distinguishing

features are evident when delving deeper into it (Grancea, 2018).

Important aspects and ways of career planning in the mining industry

It is very important that employees should know where they want to go and achieve professionally when planning their careers, with specific focus on self-evaluation, career exploration, narrowing down a list of career options, deciding/choosing the best options, and finally setting a career goal (Grancea, 2018). Once individuals have planned their career goals, they need skills, competencies, and values to execute their career goals using appropriate career development practices. In other words, following career planning, the next step is to put the plans into action through appropriate career development practices. This development process would be an ongoing process of preparing, developing, implementing, and monitoring career plans and strategies, which can be undertaken by the individual alone or in collaboration with the organisation's career system (Hedge & Rineer, 2017). Furthermore, a fulfilling career can promote feelings of fulfilment, whereas poor career choices can have a negative impact on a person's sense of well-being. It is crucial to note that changing environments such as changes in business strategies and direction, organisational downsizing, mergers and acquisitions, and technological changes, will necessitate ongoing career development, necessitating a revisit of career options and the modification of career paths (Richard, 2018). In a nutshell, an effective career development can help individuals make informed decisions that are in line with their talents, aspirations, and values, as well as improve organisational effectiveness.

Various research findings revealed that the career development initiative is a link between organisations and individuals in which organisations try to match individual interests and capabilities with organisational opportunities through a planned programme that includes activities such as career systems, career counselling, job rotation, and other career management tools and resources (Mule & Moguche, 2020). Moreover, Richard (2018) contends that career development practices must assist individuals in developing the knowledge, skills, and behaviours necessary for success. When an individual achieves the career goals set, the integration of both individual career planning and institutional career development processes results in career development. According to Lartey (2021), career development represents the organisational perspective in the career development process. This feature is demonstrated when organisations strive to match individual interests and capabilities with organisational opportunities through a planned programme that includes activities such as the design of effective internal career systems, employee counselling, job rotation opportunities, and a blend of positional experiences with on and off the job training assignments.

An effective career development practice will aid in the

promotion of employee insight, goal and strategy development, and the gathering of appropriate feedback as well as assisting employees in using and developing skills and knowledge that will benefit the organisation and its employees' growth and self-esteem.

The essence of implementing a well-established career workplace-based career development initiative in the mining industry for employee retention

Most organisations rely on career development to retain and develop their human capital to achieve organisational goals. Therefore, implementing career development programmes aid organisations in retaining their best employees. This also applies to the mining industry in which career development could be applied as an influential approach to people development. The best strategy would be a focus on a number of interventions, such as identifying organisational broad goals that will intervene in career development, such as the intervention of employees' willingness to be trained, to have skills, to be committed, motivated, and satisfied, and to have developed their workers (Mule & Moguche, 2020).

Implementation of a well-established workplace-based career development initiative in the mining industry is likely to help employees to become more knowledgeable and would transform the internal labour market, motivate employees to acquire necessary skills and allow them to deal with change more effectively. Furthermore, such workplace-based career development initiative can include succession planning, talent management structure, leadership development programme, career management development structure, and self-evaluation aspect (Lartey, 2021). As a result, self-evaluation development will improve employee performance in the mining industry and improve skills in the workplace, which will increase employee retention. Moreover, if the mining sector develops a successful career development planning structure for career opportunities, employees will always want to advance their growth within the organisation through job rotation.

According to Mule & Moguche (2020), training is a critical component of employee development as the employees are more motivated to share their knowledge during training when their organisation supports training. Hence, training is also very important and must become compulsory in the mining industry in Namibia, where technological changes occur at a rapid pace, for the mining sector to remain competitive in the global market. The researchers believe that it is only through training and education that employees will develop and explore their capabilities and skills, ways of thinking, and improve their attitudes as required and create an enabling working environment.

Succession planning as part of career planning and advancement in the mining industry

Succession planning is very important for the encouragement of individual advancement and to ensure continuity of key positions

in leadership and to retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future (Mule & Moguche, 2020). Lartey (2018) affirmed that providing opportunities for advancement can greatly aid in succession planning. Hence, managing competent individuals in the organisation is an important aspect of succession planning. On a different continuum, succession planning enables an organisation to plan for future needs to replace employees due to retirement and employee departure. Succession planning cannot be ignored in the mining sector as it involves the development of talent, and thus its processes have an impact on the organisation, both financially and operationally (Khan, Rajasekar & Al-Asfour, 2015).

Succession planning in the mining sectors would enable the establishment of standards for the qualifications and competencies required of future leaders, and would also provides senior management with a structured method for reviewing and guiding potential leadership talent within the company (Arham, 2021). The employees benefit greatly by increasing their understanding of the various career paths available and the training required to advance along those paths. As a result, the workforce's retention, morale, and commitment improve (Atwood, 2020). It is evident that developing talent to meet current and future workforce needs necessitates intentional development of leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities in order to add stability.

The most contemporary challenges of career planning in the mining industry

In the mining industry, organisations face difficulties in retaining high-performing employees in today's global and competitive business environment. In order to remain competitive, organisations have to incorporate career planning into their strategic plans in order to improve employee growth and workforce stability (Richard, 2018). Hedge and Rineer (2017) made a significant contribution to this point by stating that careers are patterns of work experiences that evolve over time; people typically advance through each successive career stop along this evolutionary path. It means that employees must see long-term plans for future opportunities because careers do not remain static.

The nature of careers is changing, with job and career hopping becoming the new normal and the half-life of skills estimated to be around 5 years (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). This will have an effect on lower-skilled workers who need to be retrained. A key challenge in the mining sector will be assisting operators and Artisan employees to become "protean" workers, where they shift to self-directed careers and embrace up skilling, and where companies may be challenged to find a balance between managing their resources internally and closing skills shortages through outsourcing. As a result, a major issue confronting many organisations, is the lack of career development (Mwanje, 2010).

Career development has negative impact to the wellbeing of

both employees and the organisation. Most employers are focused on hiring the right people to help them achieve their business goals; however, they may lack an effective career development or retention strategies to sustain the employees. The majority of people are unaware of the true costs of high attrition rates or the factors that contribute to them. While the financial cost of a new hire and the loss of productivity can be calculated, the long-term impact on team morale, employee engagement, and knowledge loss from the organisation is difficult to quantify.

Some organisations in the mining industry have unclear policies, which can affect career advancement, especially if there are instances of nepotism, ethnicity, corruption, and so on. Managers also create situations that prevent some employees from advancing in their careers. Some organisations, on the other hand, may need to be conceptualized in the context of national politics. Without a doubt, organizational politics can lead to a variety of issues such as victimization, disregard for ethics, talent, and manipulation by supervisors. According to Lartey (2018), structures that managers can manipulate in order to reward and recognize "favourite" employees to demoralise the rest of the staff.

Workers, particularly the millennials, have different perspectives than those from previous generations and it is unlikely for them to remain with the same company or industry for their whole careers (Solnet, Kralj & Kandampully, 2012). With globalization issues, competition is becoming stronger and stronger in most organisations. Dynamic markets and competition have emerged as a result of globalization and with that it is not difficult to picture that organisations are expected to concentrate and should be concentrating on long-term plans and a bigger focus on attracting, developing and retaining its employees. Companies around the world are really apprehensive about the staff attrition which costs significantly to almost all of the organisations today (Richard, 2018). Attrition signifies the shifting of the workplace in and out of an enterprise, which is the basis of and outcome of instability of employment, separately from being a measure of effectiveness of workers (Hedge & Rineer, 2017). According to Joarder et al. (2015), some of the factors influencing employee retention include career opportunities, organisational culture, work context, work-life balance, compensation, and leadership styles.

There is a very little that a company can do to improve employee retention unless it understands why its employees leave. Career opportunities are one of the value propositions that can be offered to improve employee retention.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were ensured complete voluntary participation in the study. No one was coerced to participate in the study unless informed consent had been obtained in advance. Over and above voluntary participation, participants were informed of their right to discontinue/exit the study at any point

without fear if they wished to do so. Ethical consideration such as trustworthiness, openness, fairness, and the disclosure of methods were maintained. Confidentiality was upheld by protecting data collected from any unauthorised access. The researchers briefly explained the study to participants prior to getting the consent from the participants to participate in the study.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design and approaches

This study is quantitative in nature, which is an approach of measurements and numbers. Quantitative research emphasizes on the gathering of numerical data and generalizing it across the whole population in order to explicate a certain phenomenon (Mark, Lewisa & Thornhill, 2019). Quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables as well as generalizing results from a larger sample population. Quantitative research utilizes measurable data to formulate facts and discover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than qualitative data collection methods. Likert scale questionnaire and document analysis were applied, which rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This study dealt with the impact of career planning and development programmes on employee retention in the mining industry in Namibia with specific reference to the mining operations, processing operations, organisation services, and processing asset management, mining asset management, engineering and projects, management finance and administration departments. Online questionnaires were administered and sent to ninety-five (95) employees of Rossing Uranium Mine Limited in Namibia, but only sixty one (61) participants completed and returned the questionnaires. Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) justify 10% of the target population to represent an adequate sample for the study.

Out of 95 targeted sample populations, 61 employees responded to the questionnaire representing 64% response rate. The internal consistency of the measurement scales was a determined using Cronbach's alpha (α) for all career development practices and the employee retention variables (Table 4.1). All variables were found to be within the acceptable range of > 0.700 (Albdour & Altaraweh, 2014), with the training and mentoring variable scoring the highest Cronbach's alpha ($= 0.92$, $N = 10$). Employee retention variable had the lowest reliability scores ($\alpha = 0.747$, $N = 5$).

An open-ended structured questionnaire that allowed respondents to express themselves and a Likert Scale where respondents indicate their level of agreement with a statement, typically in five points ranging from strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree was used to get a holistic view of people's opinions and gather reliable data. The Likert Scale is

a rating scale that assists the researcher to measure the attitudes or opinions of the participants thus affording the researcher to enhance the understanding of the participants. Instead of a simple yes/no answer; the researchers gave participants a wider range of answers. In addition, a questionnaire was used because this tool is user friendly, quicker, and flexible.

Data collection procedure

Data collection was done in accordance with the research ethics and information storage policies, which means the original information was collected, safeguarded, obtained, utilized or disposed of during the research term and was used for final reports and to make research findings valid and reliable. The raw data was analysed according to the framework analysis which sifts, charts and sorts data according to key issues. For this study, sixty-one (61) semi-structured questionnaires were conducted with the employees from various departments at Rossing Uranium Mine Limited in Namibia. The participants included operators, artisans, first line managers, superintendents and middle managers across the departments to get a representative sample. The use of open-ended questionnaire was likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and, therefore, provided better access to perceptions, interpretation of events, understanding, experiences, and opinions.

Validity and Reliability

According to Struwig and Stead (2013), validity refers to the extent to which a research design is scientifically sound or appropriately conducted. Validity can be enhanced by means of triangulation; which implies that there must be various data sources or various research methods. Hence the researchers used different approaches of data collection, that is, from primary sources through questionnaire (different functional categories of employees), and analysis of documents for secondary data. The use of these methods assisted the researchers to triangulate data which improved the validity of the collected data. To this end, the researchers ensured that data collected was corroborated by two different sources, questionnaire and secondary data (documentary evidence) which provided validity to the research in terms of triangulation. In order to ensure reliability, credibility was assessed by noting whether the written records and questionnaire led to similar conclusions drawn. The data collected was tested for reliability using Chronbach alpha coefficient and all variables were found to be within the acceptable limits as proposed by Struwig and Stead (2013). However, the results depicted variation in responses to variable statements when descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings from this study were also compared to findings from previous authors where variations were also observed in findings of previous authors.

Data analysis

Data analysis usually involves two key steps, namely, (a)

reducing the collected data to manageable proportions and (b) identifying patterns and themes in the data. The first step in the analysis of data is a critical examination of the collected data. Hence, data analysis followed general procedures for quantitative research including preparing and organising data, reducing data into themes through a process of coding, and representing data into Figures, Tables and discussions. In this study, analysis was based on data collected through web questionnaires. The researchers used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyse the data and to provide descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and graphical analyses with the use of tables and calculation of statistics for central tendency, variability, and distribution. Results were presented graphically, including tables, and pie charts. Since there were qualitative aspects in the open-ended questionnaire, the researcher also used thematic analysis to analyse the data collected, which is a form of pattern recognition in data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis. Coding of open-ended questions and categories creation was performed, depending on the data's characteristics, to discover themes appropriate to a phenomenon. Correlation analysis was used for the effect of employee retention on career planning and opportunities, training and mentoring, career path development, and supervisory support.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics results for the effect of career planning and opportunities on the employee retention is presented in Table 1. The results indicates that employees at Rossing Uranium Limited (RUL) mine scored highest on the statement that said; I have control of my career and I have set my goals (mean = 4.03, standard deviation = 0.98). The second highest scored statement was; I'm satisfied that I have an opportunity to apply my talents and expertise (mean = 3.90, standard deviation = 0.99). Furthermore, employees at RUL mine scored lowest on the statement; management assists to match my personal goals and opportunities (mean = 2.78, standard deviation = 1.18) followed by the statement; I'm pleased with the career advancement opportunity available (mean = 2.95, standard deviation = 1.21).

Table 1: The scores on career planning and opportunities

S/N	Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I have control of my career and I have set my goals	61	2	5	4.03	0.98
2	I have an individual development plan in place	61	1	5	3.40	1.1
3	RUL enables me to manage my career effectively	61	1	5	2.96	1.16
4	Management assists to match my personal goals and opportunities	61	1	5	2.78	1.18
5	I am aware of the opportunities for advancement in my career	61	1	5	3.39	1.20

6	I'm pleased with the career advancement opportunity available	61	1	5	2.95	1.21
7	I believe that the most capable employees are promoted within the organisation	61	1	5	3.16	1.28
8	The company maintains its policy of internal promotion	61	1	5	3.34	1.23
9	I'm satisfied that I have an opportunity to apply my talents and expertise	61	1	5	3.90	0.99
10	I'm satisfied with my opportunity for professional growth RUL offers	61	1	5	3.29	1.08

The descriptive statistics results for the effect of training and mentoring on the employee retention at RUL mine is presented in Table 2. The results indicated that employees scored highest the statement that said; I have the authority to perform well in my job (mean = 4.36, standard deviation = 0.79). Furthermore, the statement; I have all of the necessary equipment, tools, and resources to do my job well was scored the second highest (mean = 3.91, standard deviation = 1.02). In addition, the lowest scored statement on effect of training and mentoring on employee's retention was; RUL mine offers relevant training to all employees to prepare them for upward mobility (mean = 2.18, standard deviation = 1.21). The second lowest scored statement was; my most recent coaching/mentoring programme assisted me in improving my performance (mean = 2.76, standard deviation = 1.33).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics results for employee scores on training and mentoring

S/N	Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	RUL mine has a well-designed training policy	61	1	5	2.85	1.32
2	RUL mine has allocated enough money and time for training	61	1	5	2.86	1.27
3	RUL offers training programmes that are relevant to my career growth	60	1	5	2.85	1.24
4	I understand that the training programmes can speed up my career progress in the direction I desire	61	1	5	3.50	1.25
5	I have the authority to perform well in my job.	61	2	5	4.36	0.79
6	I have all of the necessary equipment, tools, and resources to do my job well	61	1	5	3.91	1.02
7	I am satisfied with the investment RUL makes in Training and Development	59	1	5	3.06	1.20
8	I am satisfied with the job-related training RUL mine offers	61	1	5	2.85	1.27
9	I have the opportunity to receive training to improve my skills	61	1	5	3.31	1.21
10	The training and development provided are applicable to my profession	60	1	5	3.28	1.22
11	RUL mine offers relevant training to all employees to	60	1	5	2.18	1.21

	prepare them for upward mobility					
12	Employee coaching and mentoring is an important part of the company's human resource policy	61	1	5	3.27	1.37
13	My most recent coaching and mentoring programme assisted me in improving my performance	60	1	5	2.76	1.33
14	Coaching and mentoring are used in the company to help employees grow and develop	61	1	5	3.16	1.36
15	I have been well mentored and am ready to take on more responsibilities.	60	1	5	2.98	1.40
16	Coaching and mentoring in the company help employees take ownership and responsibility for their careers	61	1	5	3.55	1.32

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics results for the effect of career path development on employee retention at RUL. Employees scored highest on the statement; Job rotation allows me to learn through new experiences (mean = 3.55, standard deviation = 1.45). Furthermore, the statement; I will be considered for advancement if I meet the promotion criteria, received the highest scores (mean = 3.27, standard deviation = 1.34). In addition, the lowest scored statement on the effect of career path development on employee retention was; the company has a clear job rotation policy (mean = 1.98, standard deviation = 1.13) followed by; we all have equal opportunity for job rotation (mean = 2.14, standard deviation = 1.20).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics results for employees' scores on career path development

S/N	Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The company has a clear job rotation policy	59	1	5	1.98	1.13
2	We all have equal opportunity for job rotation	61	1	5	2.14	1.20
3	Job rotation provides me with a chance for advancement	61	1	5	3.25	1.40
4	Job rotation allows me to learn through new experiences	58	1	5	3.55	1.45
5	The company has a policy that governs all employees' career advancement	60	1	5	2.73	1.10
6	I have access to the skills required for advancement	61	1	5	2.95	1.11
7	I am aware of the company's promotion criteria	61	1	5	2.91	1.39
8	I will be considered for advancement if I meet the promotion criteria.	61	1	5	3.27	1.34
9	Career path is clearly defined	61	1	5	2.65	1.18
10	RUL is dedicated to my professional development	61	1	5	2.75	1.241

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics results for the effect of supervisory support on employee retention at RUL. Employees scored highest on the statement; my boss establishes high but attainable goals (mean = 3.80, standard

deviation = 1.04). The second highest scored statement was; my boss genuinely cares about my well-being (mean = 3.60, standard deviation = 1.17). In addition, the lowest scored statement on the effect of supervisory support on employee retention was; my manager gives me constructive feedback on a regular basis (mean = 3.11, standard deviation = 1.26) followed by; my manager works with me to remove roadblocks so that I can do my job well (mean = 3.30, standard deviation = 1.23).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics results of employee scores on supervisory support

S/N	Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	My manager gives me constructive feedback on a regular basis	60	1	5	3.11	1.26
2	My manager works with me to remove roadblocks so that I can do my job well	60	1	5	3.3	1.23
3	My boss genuinely cares about my well-being	61	1	5	3.60	1.17
4	My boss establishes high but attainable goals	61	1	5	3.80	1.04

Descriptive statistics results for responses on the dependent variable; the employee retention is presented in Table 5. The results indicated that employees at RUL scored highest the statement that said; people are leaving the organisation due to lack of overall career development (mean = 3.14, standard deviation = 1.40). The second highest scored statement was; my reason for leaving would be a lack of career development. (mean = 2.98, standard deviation = 1.47). Furthermore, employees at RUL mine scored lowest the statement that said; my supervisor would be the reason for my departure (mean = 2.78, standard deviation = 1.18) followed by the statement that said; my reason for leaving would be a lack of training and mentoring (mean = 2.50, standard deviation = 1.29).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics results on career development practices and employee retention

S/ N	Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I'm looking for a new job right now	60	1	5	2.58	1.47
2	My reason for leaving would be a lack of career development	60	1	5	2.98	1.47
3	My supervisor would be the reason for my departure	60	1	5	1.85	1.14
4	My reason for leaving would be a lack of training and mentoring	61	1	5	2.50	1.29
5	People are leaving the organisation due to lack of overall career development	61	1	5	3.14	1.40

Table 6 shows the results of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis for the effect of employee retention on career planning and opportunities, training and mentoring, career path development, and supervisory support.

Table 6: Results for correlation relationship between career development practices and employee retention

Career development practice	Correlation test	Employee' retention
Career planning and opportunities	Pearson Correlation	-.287*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025
	N	61
	Mean	3.32
	Std. Dev.	0.78
Training and mentoring	Pearson Correlation	-.416**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	61
	Mean	3.17
	Std. Dev.	0.85
Career path development	Pearson Correlation	-.233
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.070
	N	61
	Mean	2.81
	Std. Dev.	0.88
Supervisory support	Pearson Correlation	-.224
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083
	N	61
	Mean	3.46
	Std. Dev.	1.01
Employees Retention	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	61
	Mean	2.62
	Std. Dev.	0.99
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)		
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)		

The level of response was determined using a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) based on the Albdour and Altaraweh cut off points (2014). As a result, the mean scores of all variables were further classified into three equal mean range categories: low (mean = 1 – 1.67), moderate (mean = 1.68 – 3.34) and high (mean = 3.35 - 5.00). The results showed that career planning and opportunities had a moderate effect on employee retention at the Rössing Uranium Limited mine (mean = 3.32, standard deviation = 0.78). Training and mentoring had a moderate effect (mean = 3.17, standard deviation = 0.85). The impact of career path development was also moderate (mean = 2.81, standard deviation = 0.88). Furthermore, the impact of supervisory support was found to be high (mean = 3.46, standard deviation = 1.01). In terms of the correlation results between the effect of employees retention with career planning and opportunities, the correlation coefficient (r = -0.287, p =

0.025) indicated a significant negative correlation. The effect of training and mentoring was also found to have a significant negative relationship with employee retention (r = -0.287, p = 0.001). However, the effect of career path development was found to have an insignificant negative correlation with employees retention (r = 0.233, p = 0.070). In addition, the effect of supervisory support was also found to have an insignificant negative correlation with employees retention (r = 0.224, p = 0.088).

The employees at the RUL mine were asked to list challenges faced by the organisation in implementing career development practices. The responses were analyzed using a thematic data analysis approach where responses were coded based on their similarity. Therefore, similar responses were given same coded response and their frequency was determined (Table 7). The results indicated that lack of implementation of full-time study leave in certain roles was the leading challenges with a frequency of seven occurrences. The second most leading challenge was identified to deal with employee underpaid in certain roles, for example, (Condition Monitoring Technicians) and lack of artisan support in terms of training and career development. Individual development plan was found to be the least challenge in terms of frequency responses.

Table 7: Illustrates challenges faced at RUL mine in the implementation of career development practices at RUL mine

Coded responses	frequency
Lack of artisan support in terms of training and development	6
Stagnation or lack of growth opportunity in certain roles	5
Lack of implementation of full-time study leave in certain roles	7
Underpaid in certain roles, for example, (Condition Monitoring Technicians)	6
Lack of career path for internal candidates to fill promotional roles	4
Ineffective individual development plan	2
Lack of exposure in the field of studies	5
Lack of recognition of prior learning	4
Lack of clearly defined guidance on career progression	5

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data collected revealed that the vast majority of respondents have control over their careers and have set clear goals for their career development. However, the company's career management plans do not align with employees' personal career goals. In this context, Silva et al., (2019) that organisations find challenges in aligning their goals to the growing demand of a balanced organisational climate due to employees' personal career fulfilment. The findings also revealed that career planning and opportunities had a moderate effect on employee retention. This effect was found to have a significant negative correlation. This finding

indicated a high likelihood of career planning and opportunities to influence employee retention. As a result, this finding implies that RUL's career planning and opportunities practice could have a significant impact on employee retention. It is evident from the findings that the relationship between career planning and employees retention is important because most of the employees leave their jobs when they realize that there are no organisational career planning strategies in place to improve their career opportunities. Tej et al., (2021) underpin this view and cited that organisations must make a significant effort to retain talent and secure their commitment due to the scarcity of talents and the comparatively high number of options for these bright individuals to find work.

The findings indicate that although the RUL mine employees had adequate resources to perform well in their respective roles, they did not receive adequate and relevant training to perform above their expected level of performance. It implies that RUL mine workers do not acquire additional skills that would qualify them for higher-level positions or advancement in their desired career paths. The implication of this finding is that employees' career advancement will stagnate, resulting in dissatisfied employees and negative impact on their performance and retention. Despite the fact that employees make the decision to stay with their current employer based on the benefits they receive from the employer (Nkomo, 2020), it should be noted that dissatisfied employees do not always result in low employee retention because some employees choose to stay due to a lack of opportunities outside of their workplace (Jaradat, 2020).

Based on the mean scores on the effect of training and mentoring on employee retention at RUL mine, it is evident that training and mentorship of employees had a moderate effect on employee retention. Similar to career planning and opportunities, this effect was also found to have a significant negative correlation with employee retention. This finding also indicated that there was a high likelihood of training and mentoring to influence employee retention at RUL mine. As a result, this finding implies that training and mentoring practice at RUL mine can have a significant impact on employee retention. The present findings are consistent with the notion of Kiguru, (2018) who observed significance effect of mentorship on employee retention in elevator installation firms in Kenya due to the enhanced knowledge and skills acquired by the employees.

Furthermore, Mule (2020) has also observed significant relationship between employees training and employee retention. It is evident from the findings that a well-designed training programme in the mining sector would result in improved employee retention due to the significant correlation relation between the two variables. This view is also supported by Tanoli (2016), who noted that in-service training and mentoring encourage employees to commit to their work and they continue to apply the same practices to their subordinates.

These findings indicated that while employees acknowledge that there are opportunities for job rotation and advancement at RUL mine, the employees felt that there are no clear job policies and equal opportunities in place for all employees. The implication of this finding is that employees' motivation to perform and meet their personal career goals will be minimal because the employees need to be motivated in order to perform optimally. Furthermore, according to social theory based on the principle of reciprocity, people respond to situations in the same way that they were treated. As a result, employee dissatisfaction with organisational policies on job rotation and their implementation might result in poor employee retention at the company. The career path development has a moderate effect on staff retention at RUL mine, according to the mean scores for the effect of training and mentoring on employee retention. This effect was found to have an insignificant negative correlation with employee retention. The present findings revealed that RUL mine's career path development practices were unlikely to have a significant impact on employee retention.

The findings indicated that, employees at the RUL mine were not satisfied with the level of supervisory support even though they were happy with their relationship with their supervisors. The implication of this finding is that employees' performance and commitment to their work will be minimal due to lack of motivation. This evidence can have a negative impact on the employee retention as employees will seek to leave for better working environment. The correlation between employee retention and supervisory support was found to be insignificant in the present study implying that present supervisory support practice at RUL mine was unlikely to have a significant impact on employee retention. One of the primary reasons that talented, high-performing employees leave their employers is that their career growth and development needs are not met. A career planning policy demonstrates that the employer is committed to long-term employee investment.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that a career development policy will assist the mining sector to have a structured approach to career progression within the organization especially for professional employees. Career paths and career ladders are two traditional ways for employees to grow and advance within an organization. Career ladders are the progression of jobs in an organization's specific occupational fields that are ranked from highest to lowest in terms of responsibility and pay. Career paths include traditional vertical career ladders, dual career ladders, horizontal career lattices, career progression outside the organization, and encore careers, among other forms of career progression (Kiguru 2018). Job rotation is a lateral move to create cross-functional experience in the company from one job to another in order to achieve various human resource objectives such as orienting new employees, training employees, enhancing career development, and preventing job boredom or burnout.

From the findings of the study and through content analysis, it was observed that RUL mine does not have a committee that oversees the career development programme at the organization. Therefore, a proposed career development committee is needed to run the career development strategies at the organization. According to Shaito, (2019), employees and organizations share responsibility for career development. Hence, organizational career development can be addressed through two distinctive approaches, namely: individual and organizational approaches. The career development committee should therefore consist of both human resource employees and representation of employees from all other departments. This is a crucial approach since individuals have their personal career goals that need to be aligned to the organisational goals. The committee should report directly to the management for all activities to be approved.

Career planning and development are the key components in human resource management practices, particularly in employee retention. Hence, employees want opportunities to advance in their careers in order to stay engaged in their jobs; thus, career development programmes will motivate employees who want to grow their skills within the company and consequently allowing the organisation to improve performance. It is important to note that the process of investing in human resources is not the same as the process of investing in equipment. Following that, the employer should conduct a needs assessment to identify employees' most recent training and development needs in order to maximize training and development effectiveness. Using this process, the organisation will categorically identify various employees with varying needs. Not that some needs must be changed slowly while others must be changed quickly.

VI. SUMMARY

Career exploration involves conducting research on career development identify opportunities and providing informed recommendation on latest strategies and models. When conducted internally, they create awareness amongst employees who then set their own career goals. It is also important to formulate clear policies that will guide career planning. It has been established in this study that RUL does not have clear policies on career development; therefore it is proposed that the organization formulate policies. When policies are in place, career planning can then take place. It was also established that RUL mine did not have in place any succession plans and clear training programmes. Therefore, the key activities for career planning include setting clear and attainable goals, budgeting, and mentorship of employees, development of succession plan and training programmes as well as setting indicators for achieving career plan goals. The developed career plans and budget need to be approved by the committee and managers before they are executed.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On determining the effect of career development practices and their significance for the employee retention in the mining sector in Namibia, the effect of career planning was found to be moderate and significantly negatively correlated to employee retention. The effect of training and mentoring was also found to be moderate and significantly negatively correlated to employee retention. The effect of career path development was also found to be moderate but insignificantly negatively correlated to employee retention and, finally, the effect of supervisory support was found to be high but insignificantly and negatively correlated to employee retention. It was also observed that there are major challenges of lack of implementation of full-time study leave in certain roles; employees underpaid in certain roles such as Condition Monitoring Technicians; and the lack of artisan support in terms of training and career development practices to improve employee retention. In a nutshell, career planning and opportunities, as well as training and mentorship, have a considerable significant impact on employee retention in the mining industry.

Based on the findings and literature review, the recommendations were made to improve the present career development practices in the mining industry in Namibia with the purpose of improving employee retention. Hence, the following recommendations are made.

- The organizational career development can be addressed through two distinctive approaches, namely: individual and organizational approaches as suggested by Lartey (2018). This is important to make sure that career development goals for employees and the organization are aligned; making it easier for employees and the management to work together for better and effective career development programme within the mining industry. It is firmly believed that employees will try to repay the organisation through performance and dedication based on how satisfied they are with the organisation's commitment to them. As a result, when employees are satisfied with the organisation's commitment to them, they are more likely to stay with the organisation.
- Career planning practices must be enhanced in order to improve employee retention in the mining industry. This will ensure that career planning is implemented and practiced as a conscious process of discovery in which an individual gradually develops his/her own occupational concept as a result of his/her own skills or abilities, needs, motivation, and aspirations.
- Employee coaching, mentorship and training programmes must be improved in order to increase work satisfaction amongst employees, which will create a sense of belonging to employees and in return they will perform better and retain their jobs longer. Coaching will facilitates learning and development and, as a result, improves performance. This strategy

must also include clarifying expectations, identifying problems, and providing feedback. Coaching and mentoring are intended to be positive methods of encouraging and developing employees to maximize their own performance by unlocking their potential. Coaching and mentoring are highly effective development methods for assisting individuals in reflecting on, identifying, and achieving their goals, as well as facilitating the transfer of learning in the workplace.

- Job rotation and career counseling policies must be developed in order to assist employees in making the best career choices. Employees will be able to make more informed decisions about their career and education if they understand themselves as well as the work trends. Job rotation policy will create cross-functional experience in the company. Rotation from one job to another in order to achieve various human resource objectives such as orienting new employees, training employees, enhancing career development, and preventing job boredom or burnout would be productive. Career path and dual ladder practices or aspects must be added to provide a structured approach to career progression within the organization especially for professional employees. Career paths and career ladders are two traditional ways for employees to grow and advance in the mining sector. Career ladders are the progression of jobs in an organization's specific occupational fields that are ranked from highest to lowest in terms of responsibility and pay.
- A career development model must be developed to guide career development strategies in the mining sector in terms of career exploration, which involves conducting research on career development, identifying opportunities, and providing informed recommendation on latest strategies and models. When conducted internally, it creates awareness amongst employees who then set their own career goals. Career development strategies should incorporate the five-step process, which includes self-evaluation, career exploration, narrowing down a list of career options, choosing the best options, and finally setting a career goal in order to improve the career development practices within the mining industry.

Career planning and development can only be guided and successfully implemented if there is comprehensive policy in place to guide career planning as a strategy to improve career development and employee retention. One of the primary reasons that drive talented, high-performing employees to leave their employers is that their career growth and development needs are not met. A career planning policy gives the employees a stage to work toward achieving their career advancement goals. Such policy can mainly focus on setting clear and attainable goals, budgeting, development of succession plans and, mentorship and training programmes as

well as setting indicators for achieving career plan goals.

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