## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY TOWARDS IMPORTANT FACTORS IN A TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN AN AFRICAN MINING CORPORATION

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#### ABSTRACT:

The mining industry in Africa faces specific challenges comprising different cultures, geographical areas and labour unrest against the backdrop of a global economic and competitive environment. The motivation of this exploratory research was to identify the perceived importance of talent management (TM) factors between various biographical groups. A large scale survey was conducted in 6 African countries over 14 sites. With a response rate of 53%, the results provides insights that remuneration, recruitment and retention were perceived as important factors in a TM strategy. The research brings to the fore the importance of well-defined policies in remuneration, retention and recruitment to be incorporated in a TM strategy in the various African countries under study.

Key words: Talent management; Recruitment; Retention; Remuneration; African mining;

Vella (2014:1) is of the opinion that most mining companies in the current economy are looking at cost-cutting and streamlining operation processes. Business Risks Facing Mining and Metals 2014/15 Report (2015:38) assert that the mining industry faces skill shortages in many disciplines necessary for long-term sustainability. The factors above are even more pertinent to the mining industry in Africa as indicated by Asiedu-Appiah, Kontor and Asamoah (2014:30). Clark (2013:4) agrees with Maria and Devuyst (2011:958-962) who are particularly disturbed about the following challenges that African mining companies have to face namely: the social political context in the various African countries; environmental challenges; conflicting cultures; health and safety issues; and social challenges such as poor living conditions.

The mining industry realised that they will have to be highly creative in how they identify and retain talent and scare skills (Koketso & Rust, 2012). The only important strategy that can address these challenges in the mining industry in Africa involves a comprehensive well-developed talent management (TM) strategy. This study aims to discuss the importance to address recruitment, remuneration and retention in a TM strategy within natural resources mining company in Africa.

#### TALENT MANAGEMENT APPROACH

For the purpose of the study it is valuable to distinguish between the definitions of talent and talent management. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2015) talent 'consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance either through their immediate contribution or, in the longer-term, by demonstrating the highest levels of potential', whereas talent management is a process of systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention of employees that are particularly valuable to an organisation (Swailes & Downs, 2014:4).

The researcher focused on an inclusive approach to talent management that is based on the object approach to talent. According to Buttiens and Hondeghem (2012:5), this approach is of the opinion that every employee has talents, which have to be developed and supported within a TM approach of an organisation. The main advantage of the approach is that very employee should have the same opportunities to show their potential and therefore have access to programmes that can develop their talent (Swailes & Downs, 2014:4).

#### SCARSITY OF SKILLS

Obtaining employees with the necessary talent remains an issue globally, but is especially delicate in some staff categories in Africa (Asiedu-Appiah et al., 2014:30). Research by the International Council of Mining and Metals (2012:6) disclosed that:

..... in recent years huge investments have taken place in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia and these are likely to escalate in the next ten years, as it has been spurred by the depletion of easily accessible mineral deposits in Europe and the US; technological advances that led to the enhanced feasibility of mining previously inaccessible deposits in remote less developed regions.

Therefore the origin of the research is that demand for scarce skills and special talent in the mining industry, particularly on the African continent, is significantly greater than supply (Dickie &

Dwyer, 2011). According to the Business Risks Facing Mining and Metals 2014–2015 Report (2015:3), balancing talent needs are one of the top ten business risks identified in 2014. The report further established an extreme talent scarcity in the mining industry in some technical areas, which in turn has had an unanticipated effect on other areas. This has created a situation where employers let performance or discipline slip for fear of losing any talent, because of the noticeable difficulties of replacing this talent.

Musingwini, Cruise and Phillips (2012:937) maintain that the African mining industry remains defenceless against skills shortages with its numerous and varied consequences, such as compromising safety. The inability to develop new skills, which are the lifeblood of the future of the mining industry, leads to a decline in productivity and profitability because existing mining operations can no longer be operated and managed satisfactorily. Existing workers also experience increased workload strain, resulting in their demands for higher wage and salary increases (Southam, 2010).

#### RECRUITMENT

Recruitment plays a critical role in the mining industry owing to the variety of specialised jobs. Mills (2012) is resolute that at least 40% of the mining industry's employees are 50 years old and it is estimated that at least 15% of them will retire by 2022. With such predictions it is evident that the mining skills requirements will not be met, and this can be attributed to the failure of the mining industry to procure employees during threatening economic times in the 1990s.

Job seeking is a constant activity among highly skilled employees. Employers need to create a proactive attitude towards recruitment. In practice, this implies investing less in short-term fixes and once-off searches, and more in long-term assets and pipelines of talent (Cruz, 2014). According to Stewart (2014) with competition to attract top talent increasing, it is critical for organisations to adopt a more strategic and innovative approach that goes beyond their current recruitment processes when implementing recruitment policies. In Heraty and Morley's (2008:663) research, the following three

shortcomings in recruitment and selection processes were established: "No link with the HR strategy, resourcing strategy and broader business and organisational goals; lack of widespread monitoring and of remedial actions; increasing use of invalid prediction methods."

Guillot-Soulez & Soulez (2014:323) belief a key factor that has often been neglected in the past few years is the specific attraction of "Generation Y". These are people born through the 1980s and early 1990s. They have required employers to modernise their hiring strategies in order to incorporate updated forms of technology. Companies need to constantly recognise and identify the needs of the different generations (Adecco, 2010; Anantatmula & Shrivastav, 2012:14; Vaiman, Scullion & Collings, 2012:926).

#### **REMUNERATION AND RETENTION**

Smit, Stanz and Bussin (2015:16), Scullion and Collings (ed. 2011:29) are in agreement that with the dynamic and competitive economic circumstances world-wide, organisations have realised that high-performing individuals have moved to their competitors because of increased remuneration. As long as talented employees are in demand, organisations will have to offer higher salaries in order to retain high-performing individuals. Schlechter, Hung and Bussin (2014:21) as well as Berger and Berger (2011:265 & 269-270) add that high-performing individuals who contribute to the achievements of an organisation should be remunerated accordingly. Talented employees ought to be remunerated at higher levels; promoted frequently; receive above-target bonuses; be recognised in various ways for their contributions and have a clear understanding of the influence of their performance on the organisation's performance, their personalised rewards and what the company receives in return.

According to Richer (2013) it is essential to have various remuneration approaches for international assignees or expatriates, as these are often neglected in compensation policies. Fast economic growth and higher inflation in developing countries may result in local salaries increasing

(Clark, 2013). The Hay Group (2013) agrees and adds that during 2013 up to 40% of mining companies participating in their study adjusted the remuneration of employees to the location in which they are based.

Gberevbie (2010:64) found that rewards offered by organisations have a direct impact on retention. Rewards contribute to motivating and retaining competent staff. For organisations to retain talented employees, rewards must be linked to what they value most (Taylor, 2010:353 & Houlding, 2014). Offering valued employees remuneration packages at least equal to or more than the prevailing industry average can encourage them to stay with the organisation. With a pay-for-talent model, organisations identify who and what are most valuable to the organisation — both today and into the future — and then reward employees appropriately to retain top talent and drive progress towards short- and long-term business goals (ADP Africa, 2012:9-10 & Asiedu-Appiah et al., 2014:29).

According to the 2013 survey in the mining and industrial sector (Hay Group, 2013) a key challenge regarding extremely talented employees is to keep their interest and motivation levels high, to encourage them to perform and to generate new ways of working that will have a powerful impact on the bottom line of the business. According to Lawler (2008:94) and Sullivan (2009) it is ".... particularly important that organisations retain their high-performance and critical talented employees". The best retention plans identify the things that excite and frustrate one's key workers and then provide a plan for increasing their level of excitement, challenge, learning, and opportunity within the firm

Armstrong (2012:245), Bairi, Manchar and Kundu (2011:154), Berger and Berger (2011:536) Gberevbie (2010:63-64) and Snelgar, Renard and Venter (2013:21), indicate various factors that have an influence on retention but focus on the most important as the role of the employee's immediate manager, engagement, remuneration, succession planning as well as developmental opportunities and the need for challenging and meaningful work. Organisations should furthermore not underestimate the value of health care, paid vacation and retirement plans as retention factors (Palmer and Gignac, 2012:10),

Nelson and Quick (2013:235) found that meaningfulness, safety and availability are three key psychological conditions that affected employee engagement in their jobs and work roles. According to engagement also includes the "will" of a worker to support and drive business outcomes.

Based on the literature study one can accept that that recruitment, remuneration and retention should be factors in a talent management strategy.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study is twofold - one to determine the perceived importance of recruitment, remuneration and retention of a talent management strategy in an African Natural Resources Mining Company, and the second objective is to determine how different demographic groups perceive recruitment, remuneration and retention as part of a TM strategy.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this study, a quantitative research approach was applied by making use of a questionnaire to gather data. Due to the unique African circumstances that this mining company operates in, as well as the fact that only an international TM strategy existed and was applied to the mine under study it was decided that remarkable constructs be used in the design of a cross-sectional questionnaire in conjunction with a thorough literature review, the international organisational strategy and the business plan of the mining group under study. It was decided to make use of a 4-point forced Likert-type scale, subsequently, the researcher was able to draw scientific meaning from the data as there were no neutral responses (Filipowich, 2011). For the purpose of this research, factors with a loading of <0.30 were investigated. The Cronbach's alpha was utilised to measure the reliability of the questionnaire.

The population for this study included employees in Malawi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa. A census (non-probability) sample (n=784) 14 mining sites in Africa was selected. Questionnaires and letters of consent were distributed via the SurveyMonkey<sup>™</sup> website. The results were derived from a 51% response rate.

#### Data analysis

A principal axis factor analysis was utilised to reduce the large number of variables to a smaller number of factors. The pattern matrix was used to investigate the factors for the study; thus, only unique contributions of coefficients were identified. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether differences exist between two or more population means (Keller, 2012:93). Mann-Whitney's post hoc procedure was used to explore the data to determine whether there are any differences between means. Post hoc tests consist of pairwise comparisons designed to compare all different combinations of groups (Field, 2012). A t-test was done in the cases where only one independent variable was available.

#### RESULTS

The descriptive and inferential statistics are discussed in the sections below.

#### **Biographical information**

Regarding gender distribution, the majority of respondents were males (77.3%), while 22.7% females responded to the questionnaire. A total of 18.7% had a Grade 12 or equivalent qualification, 54.1% had a post Grade 12 qualification and 27.3% a post-graduate qualification. South Africans formed the largest group (46%). A total of 36.4% were citizens from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), 7.3% from Zimbabwe, 3% from Zambia, 5.3% from Mozambique and 0.5% from Malawi. It is interesting to note that 75.1% of respondents had two years or less service within this mining company.

#### Factorial structure of the questionnaire

A principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation was performed on the 25 closedquestion items to investigate the grouping of items and their correspondence to the original theoretical scales. As per Table 1, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.919. The KMO should be 0.60 or higher in order to proceed with factor analysis (Fernandez, 2003). Bartlett's test of sphericity with 0.000 was significant (p<0.05) and indicated sampling adequacy.

#### [Insert Table 1 here]

The three significant factors were identified by the principal factor analysis as: recruitment, remuneration and retention (Table 2). Laher (2010) reports that once the factor analyses are conducted, it is usual to regard factor loadings as high if greater than 0.60 and moderately high if above 0.30. Other loadings can be ignored. Therefore, all items with a factor loading of less than 0.30 were discarded of, as well as loadings that occurred in more than two factors. For this reason factor 4, indicating performance management was not taken in consideration for the purpose of this study (Table 2).

#### [Insert Table 2 here]

All individual items contributed well to the overall reliability of the instrument. In Table 3, the Cronbach's alpha for the three identified factors (all alpha's < 0.70) indicates high reliability.

#### [Insert Table 3 here]

The importance of the three talent management factors as per the mean score were calculated by the mean scores, the lower the score the more respondents agreed with the importance of a factor. The most important factors in a talent management strategy in the African mining corporation are remuneration (1.05) as most important, followed by retention (2.05) and lastly recruitment (2.2).

#### Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess whether there were differences between subgroups on the different factors. The subgroups were formed by the different demographic variables.

#### Country groups

According to Figure 1, the respondents from the Democratic Republic of Congo indicated that remuneration is unimportant (mean=3.5) to them, whereas the South African group and to a lesser extent the Mozambique and other language groups agreed that remuneration is important to them. All country groups indicated that recruitment is an unimportant factor to include in a talent management strategy of which the DRC disagreed the most. Both the respondents of the DRC and South Africa were of the opinion that retention is an important factor to include in a talent management strategy.

#### [Insert Figure 1 here]

Table 4 indicates the significance of the difference between country groups, measured by the ANOVA. For a significant difference the value should be < 0.05. The only significant difference detected between groups was for remuneration (p > 0.04).

#### [Insert Table 4 here]

A post hoc test comprising pair-wise comparisons (Table 5) was performed to compare all different combinations of the country groups. The only significant difference that could be detected was between South Africa and the DRC with significance of 0.004, in relation to remuneration. There were no statistical differences between all the other country groups on the three identified factors.

#### [Insert Table 5 here]

#### Gender groups

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the differences between males and females regarding the identified factors. Although males and females had slightly different views on remuneration, both groups agreed that remuneration was most important to them. Both groups were of the opinion that retention and recruitment factors did not receive the attention they should in the organisation (Figure 2).

#### [Insert Figure 2 here]

The independent samples t-test (Table 6) below indicates a slight difference between genders on the remuneration factor (0.05). It can be assumed that the males, compared with the females, felt that remuneration was slightly more important to them (p = 0.05). However, there were no significant

differences between the males and females regarding retention (p = 0.880), and recruitment (p = 0.835).

#### [Insert Table 6 here]

#### Age groups

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine whether there were relationships between age and the TM factors. According to the Pearson correlation (r) in table 7, none of the TM factors correlated with the age of the respondents. All the r-values were less than 0.1 and therefore insubstantial.

#### [Insert Table 7 here]

#### Qualification groups

The mean score in table 8 below indicates how the different qualification groups experienced the importance of the three factors. It is of importance to note the difference between the following results. The grade 12 group indicated that both the remuneration and (1.26) and retention (1.93) factors are exceptionally important to them. On the other hand the post graduate group felt that retention (3.58) and remuneration (3.34) are of less importance to them.

#### [Insert table 8 here]

According to table 9, there were no significant differences between the different qualification groups with regard to the three factors (p > 0.05), although remuneration had the smallest p-score. In relation to the other scores, the differences were not sufficiently significant (p = 0.67) to perform a post hoc test.

#### [Insert Table 9 here]

From the results obtained, it is clear that remuneration and retention should be included in the talent management strategy. Employees believed that recruitment was not that important to include in a talent management strategy for the mining group.

#### UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

Various authors such as Iwowo (2015: 349), Kamoche, Siebers, Mamman and Newenham-Kahindi (2015:332-333) and Newenhan-Kahindi (2015:392) has indicated that developing countries on the African continent have various challenges, which does not correlate with research done internationally. One of the major "gaps" identified in literature is that very little research was done regarding remuneration and retention, specifically in the overall mining industry in Africa (Schlechter, Hung & Bussin, 2014:20). This could be due to unstable labour practises, labour unrests, political challenges, diverse cultures and the varying economic encounters.

With the above in mind, the unique contribution of this research study was to identify unique constructs related to talent management and the different viewpoints of employees in the African mining industry in relation to that of the rest of the world.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The employees of the natural resources mining company in Africa identified and stressed the need that remuneration followed by retention as the most important factors to be included in a talent management (TM) strategy.

The senior management cadre of the human resources department in the mining group should lead an investigation into current remuneration and retention policies and processes. Top management and HR representatives in the different African countries have to evaluate their current remuneration policy and investigate the application of different total rewards options for different countries and language groups. The company will have to decide either to pay superior salaries or offer fewer career development or career opportunities, or to offer lower salaries and improved career opportunities to retain scares skills. It is suggested that the corporation must be aggressive with their compensation strategy, mainly to attract talented employees and those with scares skills. Another critical decision the company should make, involves whether it should allow the same pay system for the same level for all job positions. Will there be huge differences across all levels of the organisation or will there be different pay levels for young talent, top management and experts? This corporation has further challenges because it has only been operating as a whole in Africa for the past five to six years. A large number of workers are not older than 28, therefore a specific needs analysis should be conducted to determine the needs and expectations of its young talent, as this talent pool is the future of the organisation.

The execution of the administration of the compensation system is a critical. The roles and responsibilities of HR, executives and top managers should be clarified and communicated. The company can decide if it wishes to make use of a decentralised compensation model which involves that the manager makes decisions on remuneration issues and salary increases (unfortunately, here HR will be in danger of not having the total personnel expenses budget) or whether to follow a centralised compensation strategy, where the HR managers are the main decision makers in remuneration.

In the African context, certain country-specific dilemmas such as political, economic and labour unrest can influence the compensation and retention policies. High labour turnover rates are the order of the day. This is mainly blamed on poor working conditions that talented employees have to endure, this might possibly be the reason why the DRC do not value remuneration as that important but rather safer working conditions as it endangers the lives of workers and their families. A further issue is the lack of adequate resources, which inhibits talented employees from performing to the best of their abilities. Although these are external factors that management cannot change, they should be taken into consideration when a compensation strategy is designed or adapted.

The research questions were answered. From the four initial factors, the results indicated that both remuneration and retention were important to employees and need to be addressed. The results further mentioned various differences between different biographical groups. This research only focused on African countries in a natural resources mining company, although the company forms part of an international company. Future research could focus on the international recruitment, remuneration and retention policies and procedures. It could be compared to that of other countries and suggestion made to accommodate and integrate the international and the African systems. Additional research studies can focus on the reasons for the employees in the DRC not perceiving remuneration as important as that of other countries.

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TABLE 1: RESULTS OF THE KAISER-MEYER-OLKIN MEASURE OF SAMPLING ADEQUACY AND BARLETT'S TEST OF SPHERICITY (SOURCE: CALCULATED FROM SURVEY RESULTS)

KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO measure of sampling adequacy	0.919	
	Approx. chi-square	4278.804
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Df	465
	Sig.	.000

# TABLE 2: THREE-DIMENSION IDENTIFICATION OF A TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTOR ANALYSIS

	Factor 1 (Recrui tment)	Factor 2 (Remune -ration)	Factor 3 (Reten- tion)	Factor 4 (Performanc e Managemen t)
Sufficient promotional opportunities are available in the organisation that points to a salary increase		.640		
Employees in the organisation are motivated by their remuneration packages		.408		
I am satisfied with the financial rewards that I receive for good performance.		.417		
I am satisfied with the way in which the organisation's remuneration system is applied.		.565		
Career development receives financial support in the organisation.		.511		
I am aware of career paths to follow for promotional opportunities and the remuneration package accompanying it		.473		
The organisation follows fair selection procedures.	.516			
I was attracted by the compensation package offered by the organisation.	.697			
The requirement for critical skills in the recruitment advertisement played a role in my job application.	.423			
I was attracted to the organisation by its competitive reputation in the industry.	.595			
The organisation provided feedback during the entire selection process.	.406			

Recruitment policies in the organisation is	.512		
comprehensible.			
I am satisfied that my basic living conditions		.401	
needs (e.g. accommodation) are met.			
The benefits provided by the organisation		.559	
motivates me to stay with the organisation.			
Training and developmental opportunities are		406	
one of the reasons why I continue to stay with			
the organisation.			
I continue to stay with the organisation because I		.400	
have a satisfying job.			
Acknowledgement for work done is a motivating		.395	
factor to remain with the company.			
A satisfactory relationship with management		.416	
increases my motivation to remain with the			
organisation.			
I have a clear personal development plan.			.233
The performance management system effectively			.322
identifies areas for my development.			
The organisation has a positive culture		 	.271
I have an assigned coach/mentor to assist me		 	.266
with work-related matters			
I have the necessary skills required to perform			.421
my job			
My manager demonstrates that he/she values my			.331
contributions			
I receive relevant feedback on my performance.			.308

## TABLE 3: CHRONBACH ALPHA PER IDENTIFIED FACTOR

Cronbach alpha per factor
0.851
0.733
0.771

FIGURE 1: MEAN SCORE PER FACTOR (SOURCE: CALCULATED FROM SURVEY RESULTS)

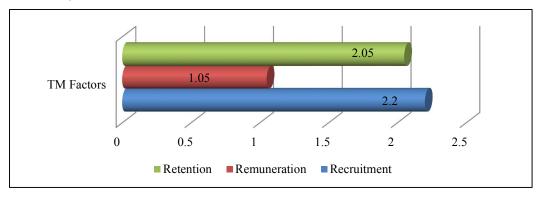
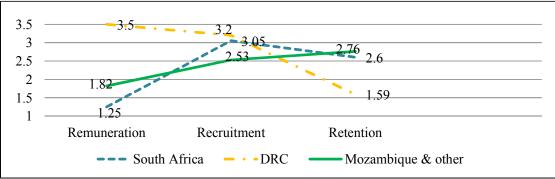


FIGURE 2: MEANS PLOT FOR THREE FACTORS AMONG THE DIFFERENT COUNTRY GROUPS



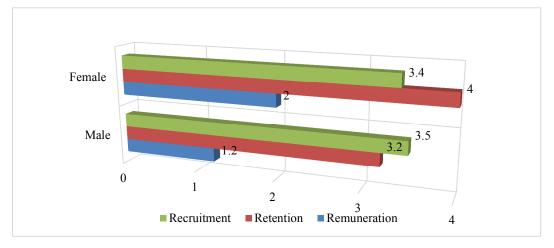
		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Remuneration	Between groups	4.662	3	1.554	4.546	0.004	0.034
	Within groups	132.958	389	.342			
	Total	137.620	392				

TABLE	5.	MULTIPLE	COMPARISONS	BETWEEN	DIFFERENT	COUNTRY	GROUPS
RELATIN	IG '	TO REMUNE	RATION (POST HO	DC)			

Multiple comparisons: post hoc test									
						95% co	nfidence		
	Mean			inte	rval				
						Lower	Upper		
Dep	endent varia	ble	e (I-J)	error	Sig.	bound	bound		
Remuneration	South	SA	20806	.08311	.101	4414	.0253		
	Africa	DRC	32527*	.08860	.004	5740	0765		
		Mozambique	25027	.12641	.272	6052	.1047		

	and other					
French	SA	.32527*	.08860	.004	.0765	.5740
	SA	.11721	.06964	.419	0783	.3127
	Mozambique and other	.07500	.11799	.939	2563	.4063
Mozambiq	SA	.25027	.12641	.272	1047	.6052
ue and other	Mozambique and other	.04221	.11392	.987	2777	.3621
	DRC	07500	.11799	.939	4063	.2563

### FIGURE 3: BAR CHART OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE



# TABLE 6: INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST: SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCES FOR GENDER GROUPS

			for ity of						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Partial eta squared
Retention	Equal variances assumed	.878	.349	158	394	.875	008	.0564	0.001
	Equal variances not assumed			151	137.3	.880	008	.058	
Recruitment	Equal variances assumed	.765	.382	214	394	.831	015	.0712	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			209	140.3	.835	015	.073	

Remuneration	Equal variances assumed	.073	.788	2.84	394	.005	.163	.057	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			2.76	139.2	.007	.16301	.05904	

### TABLE 7: Correlation analysis for age groups

C	Age	
	Pearson correlation	061
Remuneration	Sig. (2-tailed)	.250
	N	357
	Pearson correlation	.024
Retention	Sig. (2-tailed)	.651
	N	357
	Pearson correlation	055
Recruitment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.298
	N	357

Descriptive								
	Grade 12	National Diploma	Degree	Post-graduate degree				
Recruitment	3.18	3.27	2.32	2.31				
Remuneration	1.26	1.38	2.50	3.34				
Retention	1.93	2.03	3.07	3.58				

TABLE 9: Significant differences between different qualification groups

ANOVA								
		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.		
PM word recruitment	Between groups	.951	3	.317	1.434	.232		
	Within groups	86.410	391	.221				
	Total	87.361	394					

	Between groups	2.514	3	.838	2.402	.067
Remuneration	Within groups	136.395	391	.349		
	Total	138.910	394			
Manager- employee relationships word retention	Between groups	1.094	3	.365	1.376	.250
	Within groups	103.595	391	.265		
	Total	104.689	394			