



Investigating HRM practice effectiveness,  
manager-employee relationships, and  
turnover intentions in the South African steel  
industry

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Mini-dissertation accepted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree *Master of Business*  
*Administration* at the North-West University

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Graduation: May 2025

## DECLARATION

I, Hubert Ateba Olinga, hereby declare that the mini dissertation titled “Investigating HRM practice effectiveness, manager-employee relationships, and turnover intention in South African steel industry” is my original work and any source used in the research has been acknowledged through references.



H. Ateba Olinga

22 November 2024

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- All Glory to God, who allowed me to embark on this journey, blessed and protected me.

I am grateful to:

- The NWU Business School for accepting me in this course and allowing me to take on this fantastic experience.
- My family for supporting me through this process, and my wife, J Mothibe, for always being kind and taking good care of our children during the last two years.
- My two boys, for being the light that directs me during the difficult time and always putting a smile on my face.
- My supervisor, Prof. Petrus Botha, has guided me through this journey and provided me with the necessary guidance to overcome any challenge. Thank you, Prof., for your patience, kindness, and availability.
- My Manager, Flip Heystek, for believing in me and giving me the opportunity to take on this MBA Journey.
- ArcelorMittal SA for the support provided.
- Laurette Strauss for facilitating my registration at the Business School and the fantastic support throughout my studies.
- All the NWU business school lecturers have given me lifetime knowledge and understanding of business principles.

## **DEDICATION**

I want to dedicate this study to the following people who had a considerable impact in my life.

- My mother, Aborang Olinga Marie, has inspired me and taught me the importance of hard work and resilience.
- My father, who early taught me the notion of discipline and respect for others.
- My sister, Bilounga Olinga Philomene, has always believed in me and never shut down my dreams.
- My wife, Mothibe Jacobeth Mothibe, for her unconditional love and support.
- My kids Kutlwano Joel and Rorissan Emile for accepting me as their role model.

## ABSTRACT

This research investigates HRM practice effectiveness, manager-employee relationships, and turnover intention in a South African steel company. The study follows a quantitative research method with a cross-sectional design. A stratified random sampling method consisting of Production, Maintenance, HR, Finance, Procurement, and IT employees was used. One hundred and seventy-one employees in the steel industry reporting to line managers completed three questionnaires through an online survey. Data was collected to assess turnover intention, people management competency, and perceived employment relation quality through an online survey. The results showed that employees were mostly dissatisfied with HRM practices by line managers and perceived them as ineffective. The level of turnover intention among employees was moderate, but they perceived the quality of their relationship with managers to be satisfactory and positive. A multiple linear regression analysis among the variables showed a significant negative relationship between supportive HR practices and turnover intentions, while people management dimensions show no significant effect.

The structural equation modelling used for causal analysis established that HR practices have a significant negative relationship with employee turnover intentions but an insignificant relationship with the employee-manager relationship. Manager-employee relationship showed a significantly negative relationship with employee's intentions to quit. However, an indirect effect analysis identified a low and insignificant mediator role of the employee-manager relationship on HRM implementation and Turnover intention relationship, suggesting a need to explore other variables affecting turnover intention. The findings highlight the importance of enhancing HR practices and strengthening manager-employee relationships to improve retention. Recommendations for managerial interventions included improving HR support, investing in line managers' development, and tailoring engagement strategies. Future research recommendations are provided to address unexplored variables for a deeper understating of turnover dynamics in the manufacturing industry in general.

**Keywords:** Human resources management practice, Manager-employee relationship, Line managers, Turnover intention

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|       |                                        |
|-------|----------------------------------------|
| TI    | Turnover intention                     |
| HR    | Human resources                        |
| HRM   | Human resources management             |
| HRP   | Human resources practices              |
| EMR   | Employee Manager relationship          |
| RQ    | Research question                      |
| LMX   | Leader Member exchange                 |
| NWU   | North-West University                  |
| SET   | Social Exchange Theory                 |
| TIS   | Turnover intension scale               |
| SIT   | Social Identity theory                 |
| JET   | Job embeddedness theory                |
| JDR   | Job demand resource                    |
| POPIA | Protection of Personal Information Act |
| SEM   | Structural equation modelling          |
| M     | Mean                                   |
| SD    | Standard deviation                     |
| MLRA  | Multiple Linear Regression Analysis    |

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

An increasing trend in HR strategy is the participation of line managers in Human Resource Management (HRM) implementation. A considerable theoretical framework reports that line managers' involvement in HR practice is now a reality in most organisations (Mahmood, *et al.*, 2017:959; Sikora & Ferris, 2014:271; Thornhill & Saunders, 1998:460). Prior studies have found that line managers' involvement in HR practice significantly affects employees' and organisational outcomes (Trullen, *et al.*, 2016:449; Yang & Arthur, 2021:3339). Line managers adopting HR practices play an important role in employees' perception of their career prospects and work environment. A critical concern is whether HR implementation by non-HR professionals is always perceived as effective. Devolving most HR responsibilities to the lines can benefit the organisation because they are empowered to respond to employees' local HR challenges (De Beeck *et al.*, 2018:144). However, delegated HR responsibilities may undermine HR practices' effectiveness if they are not implemented as per best practices.

Concerns about employee turnover have been growing, given the loss of skills and knowledge and the impact on the organisation's productivity. According to Richter (2023), manufacturing, retail, and fast-consuming moving goods are the highest permanent labour turnover industries in South Africa, accounting for 16.4%, with resignation as the main cause of turnover, accounting for 41.2%. Understanding the factors impacting turnover intention is critical for organisations to develop optimal strategies to retain their talents.

Limited research has investigated the relationship between employee turnover intention and ineffective HR practices by line managers. This study, therefore, investigated this relationship and examined the mediating role of the manager-employee relationship. This section aims to outline the background information about line managers' HR practices and present the problem statement, research objectives, methodology, and design for this study.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

HRM is essential for an organisation with a workforce as it plays a considerable role in employee recruitment, training, performance assessment, and well-being. In this context, line managers' daily interaction with employees is critical in implementing HR practices and policies. Employees' commitment, job satisfaction and intention to quit can greatly be influenced by perceived HRM implementation. LM's effective implementation of HR policies is more likely to create a positive work environment where employees might experience job security, fair treatment, and career growth opportunities. However, when HRP are ineffectively implemented by line managers, it can result in negative employee experiences such as poor communication, discrimination, favouritism, and lack of feedback. These negative outcomes can, therefore, impact employee turnover intention and work performance (Bryman, 2014:45). However, the quality of the relationship between managers and employees can shift employees' perception of HRM effectiveness and their intention to quit.

A relationship characterised by support, fairness, and recognition can mitigate ineffective HRM implementation. It can result in retention and satisfaction (Oruh *et al.*, 2020:61). It is therefore imperative for organisations to understand the relationship between employees' intention to quit and line managers' implementation of HR policies. As identified by previous research, several factors influence line managers' effectiveness in implementing HR policies (De Beeck *et al.*, 2018:144). Among these factors are the Line managers' knowledge and understanding of HR practices, the HR department level of support and resources provided to line managers, their ability to enforce HR policies, their perception of the relevance and importance of HR practices, and their adopted leadership style. The significance of the relationship between HR implementation by line management and employees' intention to quit needed further examination as the organisation might gain insight into specific factors that impact employees' turnover intentions.

This study can, therefore, assist organisations in identifying HR practices and policies that require improvement and setting up the necessary support and training for line managers' HR practice enhancement. This research investigated and understood the relationship between employees' turnover intentions, the manager-employee

relationship, and employees' perceptions of line managers' HR implementation. Organisations can benefit from this study by shifting their HR strategies towards improving their HR practices, reducing employee intention to quit, and increasing employee job satisfaction and engagement.

### **1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The literature related to this study has shown some limitations. First, the factors leading to ineffective HR practice by line managers were not fully identified and addressed to minimise the impact on employees wanting to quit. Second, the influence of the relationship between managers and employees was not examined as a determinant to counter poor HR practices.

For organisations to develop employee retention strategies, a clear identification of the factors contributing to employee turnover intention is required. Employee turnover can hurt the organisation with impacts such as talent loss, financial loss, and a decrease in productivity (Zulu *et al.*, 2017:24; Al-Suraihi *et al.*, 2021:3; Taye & Getnet, 2020:53). The key parameter on intention to quit in this research is the effectiveness of line managers' HRM implementation. Employees will remain with the organisation if they feel valued, experience career growth, and have a supportive work environment. On the contrary, employees' perception of ineffective HR practices, such as perceived lack of fairness, can result in job dissatisfaction, disengagement, and intention to quit. The nature of the manager-employee relationship can also influence the perception of HR practices' effectiveness. The impact of this research lies in the strategies organisations develop to improve employee retention. Organisations can establish specific actions to improve employee retention by identifying HR practices that can enhance employees' perception of HR implementation and promote a positive manager-employee relationship.

### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The manufacturing industry in South Africa is operating in a competitive environment. Organisations are, therefore, driven to achieve strategic objectives of sustainability and profitability. Optimal people management and HRM effectiveness are part of the strategy to achieve these objectives. According to Wright *et al.* (2003:21), there is a significant relationship between HR practices and operational performance. In this setting, HR

responsibilities are no longer restricted to HR practitioners. An essential aspect of the HRM strategy is the devolution of HR functions to line managers to achieve workforce optimisation and HRM effectiveness. In organisations, line managers play a pivotal role in implementing HRM functions effectively. According to Mahmood *et al.* (2017:962), the role of line managers is critical, and an elevated level of HR implementation enhances employees' affective commitment. While the HR department is responsible for developing HR practices, line managers implement HR practices on the shop floor (Sikora & Ferris, 2014:271).

In situations where this implementation is ineffective, there is a potential negative impact on employees' turnover intention, leading to a high attrition rate and adversely affecting organisational performance and efficiency. In this context, Woodrow and Guest (2014:54) found that, unless implemented effectively, best HR practices can be unsuccessful, resulting in lower satisfaction and higher intention to quit. However, the complexity of this relationship might be further influenced by the nature of the relationship between the manager and the employee. The quality of this relationship could mediate the effects of ineffective HRM practices on turnover intention. Understanding the dimensions and extent of these effects is crucial to helping organisations develop effective strategies for HRM implementation and employee retention.

Despite the increasing trend of involving line managers in human resource management (HRM) implementation, little research has investigated the relationship between employees' turnover intention and the perceived effectiveness of HR practices by line managers in the Steel industry. Moreover, there is a lack of understanding of the mediator role of the manager-employee relationship in this affiliation. Therefore, the problem statement of this study was to investigate the influence of employees' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation by line managers on intention to quit in the Steel industry, considering the mediator role of the manager-employee relationship.

## **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study determined the relationship between line manager HRM implementation and the employees' turnover intention with the mediating role of the manager-employee relationship. The objectives of this study were the following:

Objective 1: To assess the perceived effectiveness of HRM practices implemented by line managers in the steel industry and its influence on employees' intention to quit.

Objective 2: To examine the mediating role of the manager-employee relationship in the link between perceived HRM effectiveness and employees' intention to quit.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS**

The following questions were formulated based on the research objectives:

RQ1: How does employees' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation by line managers influence their intention to quit in the steel industry?

RQ2: What role does the manager-employee relationship play in mediating the impact of perceived HRM effectiveness on employees' intention to quit?

This study's working hypothesis was that line managers' poor HR implementation was associated with employees' turnover intention. This working hypothesis can, therefore, be formulated into the following null and alternative hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis (H1<sub>0</sub>): There is no significant relationship between employees' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation by line managers and their intention to quit in the steel industry.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1<sub>a</sub>): There is a significant relationship between employees' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation by line managers and their intention to quit in the steel industry.

Null Hypothesis (H2<sub>0</sub>): The manager-employee relationship does not mediate the relationship between line managers' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation and employee's intention to quit in the steel industry.

Alternative Hypothesis (H2<sub>a</sub>): The manager-employee relationship mediates the relationship between line managers' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation and employee's intention to quit in the steel industry.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study contributed to advancing knowledge in Strategic Human Resources Management and will provide the organisation with tools to minimise employee turnover.

### **Theoretical contribution**

This study contributed to the literature on HRM implementation by line managers in several ways. First, it provided insight into the relationship between line managers' HRM implementation and employees' intention to quit. Second, the empirical evidence of employees' turnover intention driven by poor HR practices added manager-employees as mediators in this relationship.

### **Practical contribution**

This research had a practical implication for the organisation. It provides a research tool to measure employees' intention to quit, influenced by ineffective Line managers' HR practices was available. In addition, a framework was set to maintain proper manager-employee engagement and communication to mitigate any employee intention to quit.

### **Industry contribution**

The research provided the organisation's HR professionals with a technical framework to develop Line managers' HR practices and relationship-orientated leadership behaviour in dealing with employees' intention to quit.

## **1.8 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

The preliminary literature conceptualised and defined this study's primary constructs. It reviewed recent and relevant research studies that provided insight into the relationship between line managers, HRM implementation, and turnover intentions. Figure 1 below represents the theoretical framework between the constructs.

Line Managers manage the workforce and daily operations while reporting to a senior manager. Line managers can, therefore, be identified as supervisors and middle managers. Their performance is critical for HRM implementation effectiveness (Nehles *et al.*, 2006:256). Despite hesitancy to take on some HR responsibilities, line managers execute HR practices with adequate support from co-workers, supervisors, and HR professionals (De Beeck *et al.*, 2016:192). Line managers' position between HR professionals and employees makes it vital for HRM execution. Empirical studies found that line managers who drive their organisation's success believe in employee selection, motivation, and retention (Wright *et al.*, 2001:111). They work toward delivering

outstanding managerial performance to their organisation, which includes effective HR service to their team members. These services are coaching, development, performance management, succession planning, and supporting well-being.

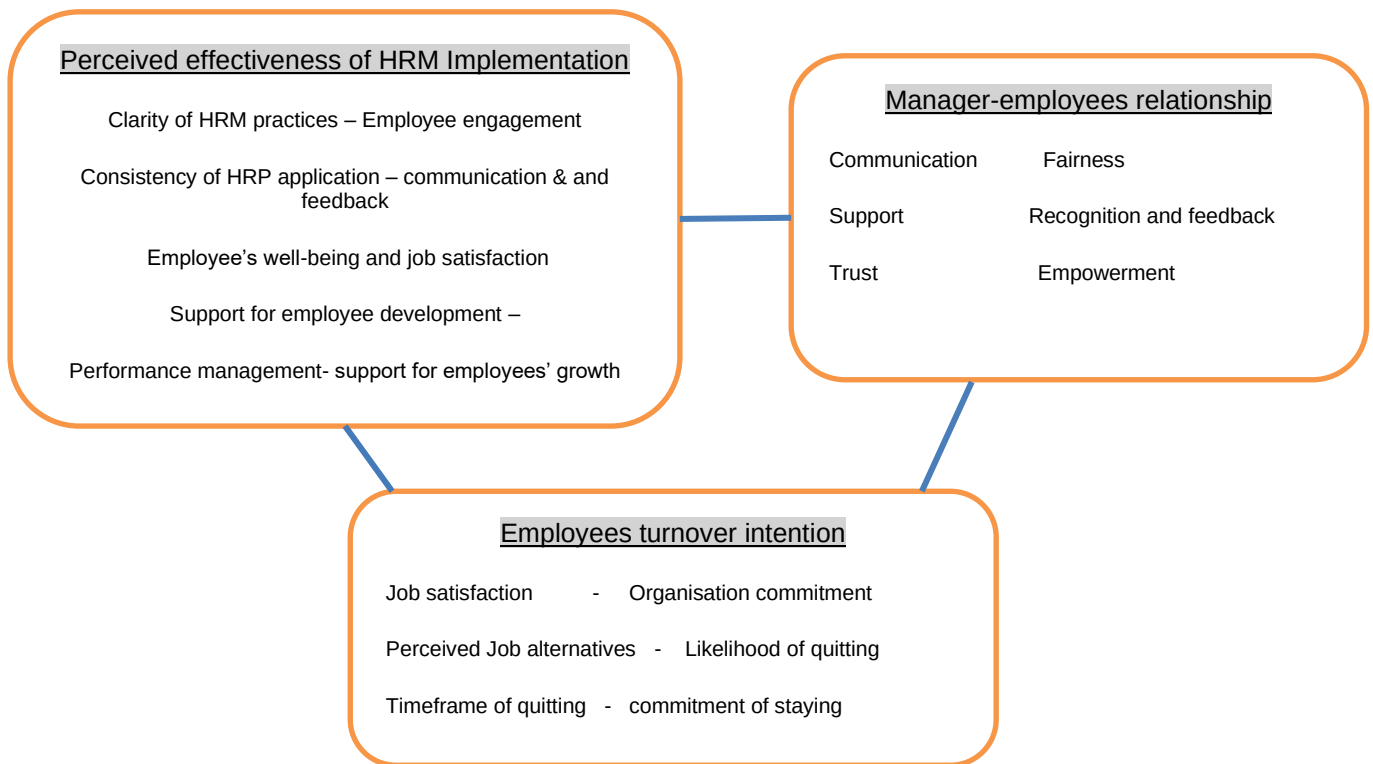


**Figure 1: Theoretical framework. Adapted from (Mudor, 2011)**

HRM implementation is HR activities put in place to achieve organisational HRM strategy. Researchers in HRM have been looking to establish the link between organisational performance and HR practices (Chand & Katou, 2007:576; Hiltrop, 1996:628). HR practice's effectiveness depends on its design and consistent alignment with the business strategy. Substantial overlap between the intended HRM (design) and implemented HRM (actual) is an indicator of successful HR practice implementation (Nehles & Bondarouk, 2017:511). HR professionals develop HR practices with the primary intention being the organisation's success. HR practice quality perception might differ depending on the stakeholders' views, such as line managers, HR practitioners, and executive managers. Line Managers tend to be the primary implementers of HR practices due to their direct supervision of the workforce. New research topics have therefore focused on their HR practice barriers and facilitators (Terhalle, 2009:37; Trullen *et al.*, 2016:449).

Line managers have an extensive number of responsibilities. Their role spans from operational output to their team performances. As direct supervisors, they can drive organisational performance through people management and have therefore applied HR practices. According to Francis and Keegan (2006: 242), line managers might not have time, interest, or training to give HR practices the priority required, given the limited attention shown by HR professionals. In the same context, Renwick (Cited by Francis and Keegan (2006:241)) indicates that line managers may not want HR responsibilities or cannot carry them out. Line managers experience multiple challenges in their HR duties, which may hinder their HR practice performances. Several theories in the literature have been used to evaluate HRM performances. The AMO theory focuses on line managers' ability, motivation, and opportunities to measure their HR practice effectiveness. The five-factors model (Desire-capacity-competency- Support-policies and procedures) has also been used to measure features hindering HR practice implementation (Nehles *et al.*, 2006:511).

Several studies have investigated the link between HRM implementation by line managers and employees' outcomes (Gilbert *et al.*, 2011:1681; Mahmood *et al.*, 2017:959; Sikora & Ferris, 2014:271; Thornhill & Saunders, 1998:460). The consensus is in line with Sikora and Ferris's (2014:281) findings that HR implementation by line managers influences critical employee outcomes such as turnover intentions. However, little concentration has been given to the ineffectiveness of line managers' HR implementation and the consequences on employees' behaviour. Line managers' ineffective HR practices on the floor are likely to reinforce employees' turnover intention (Lam *et al.*, 2013:82). The HR implementation level by line managers has been acknowledged in empirical research. Still, there is a lack of studies examining ineffective HR implementation and turnover intention.

Turnover intention refers to the desire to stop working for an organisation. Intentions are decisive factors in determining actual employees' behaviour as they predict perception and Judgment. McCarthy *et al.* (2007:248) perceived the intention to quit as the final step in leaving employment. Understanding the predecessors of turnover intentions is therefore valuable for organisations. Many factors are causing employees to consider leaving their jobs. Both environmental and individual differences can influence quitting intention (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986:5; Zimmerman, 2008:305). One of the key situational

factors in understanding turnover intention is the concept of employees' perception of line managers' ineffective HRM implementation.

Several definitions of manager-employee relationship are available in the literature. According to Dambrin (2004:360), the manager-employee relationship is an interpersonal relationship between a manager and an employee in a hierarchy. This definition focuses on accountability in getting assigned work done through the concept of chain of command. The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory framework can also explain the manager-employee relationship. According to the LMX theory, leaders have differentiated relationships with their followers, who bring different levels of willingness, motivation, and competence towards their relationship with their leaders (Erdogan & Bauer, 2014:407). A high-quality relationship between manager and employee can lead to a positive experience at the workplace and, therefore, an intention to remain with the organisation (Dansereau Jr *et al.*, 1975:71)

Several studies have examined the impact of the manager-employee relationship on turnover intention. In their research on the leader-employee relationship and employees' turnover intention, Czesak-Woytala and Piórkowska (2021:65) found that the quality of the relationship between manager-employee can be a good predictor of employee turnover intention. Similar findings were also achieved in the study conducted by Franz (2004:66) about employee perceptions of the manager-employee relationship to understand the effect on turnover intent and manager relation satisfaction.

Empirical studies have also investigated the mediating role of the manager-employee relationship, generally in the form of leader-member exchange as a mediator. Flickinger *et al.* (2016:46) investigated job satisfaction and turnover intentions in temporary work with the leader-member exchange as a mediator. They found that a high-quality LMX relationship significantly links turnover intention and job satisfaction. LMX reinforces the relationship between these two constructs. Jyoti and Bhau (2015) in their study on the impact of transformational leadership on job performance, they also found that LMX acts as a mediator between transformational leadership and job performance relationships.

Overall, the tendency shows that the manager-employee relationship seems to act as a mediator in most of the studies reviewed, which was used as a background for the research.

## **1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **Line managers.**

In this context, line managers refer to first-line and middle managers with employees under their supervision. First-line managers are at the lowest managerial level in the organisation. They supervise and oversee the work of operating employees, while middle managers oversee front-line management work and are responsible for setting and meeting goals in their operating units (Bos-Nehles, 2010:3).

### **Effectiveness of HRM implementation.**

Effective HRM implementation means HR practices resulting in the development of competent employees, good retention, satisfaction of employees, increase in organisation profit, and higher employee job performances (Obi, 2015:24).

### **Intention to quit.**

Intention to quit or turnover intention is defined as the desire to stop working for an organisation (Treglown *et al.*, 2018:156).

### **Manager-employee relationship**

The manager-employee relationship is the quality of the collaboration between a manager and an employee that encourages value, productivity, safe expression, and openness (Career Guide, 2022).

## **1.10 DEMARCATION, DELAMINATION, AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study focused on how ineffective line manager HRM implementation and manager-employee relationships can influence employees' turnover intention. The study was conducted in the manufacturing sector and, more specifically, the steel industry in the Sedibeng district of Gauteng province. One limitation of this study was the data collected from six departments in the steel industry. To generalise the findings to all sectors, conducting a more extensive survey that includes many organisations with different HRM structures would be necessary. Another limitation of this study was the measure of line managers' HRM implementation solely based on employees' opinions. While it is obvious

that employees are experiencing daily line managers HRM implementation, two stakeholders that could provide insight into line managers HRP are senior managers and HR Professionals. Involving these two stakeholders in the survey can result in a different outcome regarding the effectiveness of HRM implementation.

### **1.11 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

A positivistic paradigm was selected for this research, given the nature of the objectives in producing practical solutions. A research paradigm guides researchers' actions and represents beliefs and thoughts about any issues they explore (Kamal, 2019:1389). In other words, the paradigm researchers adopt directs them through their investigation of data collection and the analysis procedure. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979:2), societal theory can be conceived in four paradigms based on assumptions about the nature of society and social science. A Quantitative research approach was adopted for this study and is often associated with the positivism paradigm, which believes that reality is complex, real, external, and measurable (Kamal, 2019:1390).

### **1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A quantitative research method assessed the impact of line managers' ineffective HR implementation on employees' turnover intention. The purpose of the quantitative study was to collect, analyse, and describe numerical collected data. Descriptive quantitative research was applied to establish the relationship between employees' turnover intentions and line managers' HRM implementation effectiveness. Quantitative studies are particularly adapted for research with a large group of respondents as the findings could be generalised from the sample to a broader group with similar characteristics (Holton & Burnett, 2005). The quantitative method is linked to the positivist paradigm. It focuses on data analysis from an identified population while ignoring the environmental context, respondent emotions, and feelings (Rahi, 2017:2). The study followed a deductive research approach given the adoption of the positivist research paradigm and the hypothesis generated. The deductive research approach emphasises scientific theories, explains causal relationships between variables, and applies controls to ensure the validity of data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:127). The deductive approach is recommended

for studies where the particular concept is investigated by creating assumptions that are then verified (Rahi, 2017:2).

### **1.13 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study used an online survey with a cross-sectional design to evaluate the correlation between variables. The survey was conducted to reach and gather data from the respondents. The Survey allows quantitative data collection and is linked to a deductive research approach (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:144). Surveys can be conducted either as structured interviews or self-completion questionnaires (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:237). Primary data for this study were collected through self-completion, closed-ended questionnaires completed through the Microsoft online survey forms.

This study was cross-sectional as the research of line managers' perceived effectiveness by employees was conducted over a short period at a specific point. Furthermore, there is a time constraint related to this academic project. Cross-sectional studies are also referred to as short-term studies.

### **1.14 STUDY POPULATION**

The population selected in this study was made of four hundred and twenty current employees in the Vaal Triangle steel industry reporting directly to line managers. The population was a mix of employees in six different departments (Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources, Production, Maintenance and Procurement). They can be classified as production operators, maintenance artisans, and specialists (Technicians, Engineers, and corporate officers). Respondents in the study should be employed in the Steel industry for a minimum of nine months. Given their alignment with the employees, managers did not qualify to participate in this study.

The steel industry corporate departments and plants are in Gauteng province, in Vanderbijlpark. The number of employees reporting to each line manager varies between four and ten and is distributed across three divisions (Iron, Steel, and corporate). Each division has several departments where a line manager oversees the operations.

### 1.15 SAMPLING METHOD

This study used probability sampling. It used stratified random sampling, as employees were categorised according to different departments. Rahi (2017:3) defined stratified sampling as the process in which the probability of selecting each subgroup or stratum is the same. This sampling technique was selected based on the complexity of accessing all employees and the research time constraint. The sample was representative of all the different departments where employees report to line managers in the organisation.

According to Rahi (2017:3), researchers are still experiencing some challenges in selecting the correct sample size, as it must be carefully considered, given the impact of the statistical techniques used. The survey was conducted on a proportionate stratified random sample. The distribution of the proportionate stratified sample is the same as the population in terms of stratifying criterion (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:215) The sample was representative of the population's distribution across all the departments (Strata). Therefore, the sample was proportionate across the six departments in the Steel industry. The Steel industry has six departments, meaning strata, with half of each department in each stratum, as shown in the table below.

As mentioned in Table 1, the sample size was 210 employees distributed in different departments. This sample size is reasonable for this study's structural equation modelling and all other statistical analyses.

**Table 1: Stratified sample in the Steel industry**

| Departments            | Population | Proportionate stratified sample (1in 2 = 50%) |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Information Technology | 10         | 5                                             |
| Finance                | 20         | 10                                            |
| Human Resources        | 8          | 4                                             |
| Maintenance            | 100        | 50                                            |
| Procurement            | 42         | 21                                            |
| Production             | 240        | 120                                           |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>420</b> | <b>210</b>                                    |

## 1.16 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The data required to achieve this study's research objectives were collected using a combination of three scales. These instruments measured people management competencies, turnover intention, and the manager-employee relationship. The table below summarises the authors who developed these instruments.

**Table 2: Measuring Instruments**

| Scale                                   | Source                            |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Turnover intention scale                | (Bothma & Roodt, 2013)            |
| Manager and employee relationship scale | (Potgieter <i>et al.</i> , 2015 ) |
| People management competencies          | (Knies <i>et al.</i> , 2020)      |

### **Turnover intention (TIS-6)**

Bothma and Roodt (2013) developed an instrument to measure turnover intention. It is a 6-item scale with a reliability coefficient of 0.8. It was adapted from the 15-item scale initially developed by Roodt (2004). TIS-6 is a valid and reliable scale that can predict actual turnover or assess turnover intention (Bothma & Roodt, 2013).

### **Manager-employee relationship scale**

The instrument used to measure the manager-employee relationship is the perceived employee relationship quality (PERQ) developed by Potgieter *et al.* (2015). It is a 20-item questionnaire developed around fairness, trust, good faith, and justice. According to Potgieter *et al.* (2015), only two dimensions of social and compliance factors are enough to measure PERQ. These two dimensions have Cronbach's alpha of 0.969 and 0.920, respectively, which indicates good reliability.

### **People management competencies**

Knies *et al.* (2017) developed the people management instrument to measure line managers' HRM implementation from the employees' perspective. The instrument is a 17-item questionnaire developed around four dimensions (Supportive HR practices,

implementation of tailored arrangement, support of employment commitment, and support of employees' career development). The scale is reliable, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.86.

### **1.17 DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

An online survey using Microsoft Forms was used to collect data and get feedback from respondents on a self-administered questionnaire. Respondents received the questionnaire by email. The questionnaire was primarily made of closed-ended questions and the respondents must choose answers from a predetermined list. A letter was attached to each questionnaire requesting the respondents to take part in the survey and highlighting their responsibilities and rights. Once the respondents completed the survey the data were automatically captured in the Microsoft forms for data analysis.

### **1.18 RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS**

A questionnaire is reliable if the respondent's response is almost the same each time the questionnaire is answered. The different measures used to estimate reliability are homogeneity, stability, and equivalence. Cronbach's alpha is mainly used to determine the internal consistency of an instrument with an acceptable reliable score between 0.7 and 1 (Heale & Twycross, 2015:67). Test-retest is used for stability assessment. An instrument can demonstrate stability if there is a significant correlation between the scores when the respondent completes the test. A correlation greater than 0.5 is considered strong. Construct validity refers to the extent to which the questionnaire measures the presence of the constructs you intend to evaluate (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:373). A research instrument has construct validity if it shows homogeneity, convergence, and theory of evidence. The reliability and validity of the measuring instrument of this study was determined despite using an existing scale with these variables already assessed as per the table below.

**Table 3: Reliability of the scale**

| <b>Scale</b> | <b>Cronbach's alpha</b> | <b>Internal consistency</b> |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
|              |                         |                             |

|                                         |              |           |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Turnover intention scale                | 0.8          | Good      |
| Manager and employee relationship scale | 0.969 & 0.92 | Excellent |
| People management competencies          | 0.86         | Good      |

### 1.19 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected were statistically analysed using a statistical package for social science (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics provided a demographic data analysis with measures such as variability (standard deviation, variance) and central tendency (mean, mode, median). The following additional statistical analyses were performed:

**Correlation analysis:** The Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the degree of association between perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation, intention to quit, and manager-employee relationship. This defined the relationship between these constructs.

**Regression analysis:** Multiple regression was performed to assess the unique impact of one variable in explaining another variable.

**Mediating analysis:** A series of regression analyses were conducted to establish the significance of an indirect relationship between the variables and the mediator manager-employee relationship.

**Structural equation modelling (SEM):** Hypothesis relationships were comprehensively analysed using structural equation modelling, also used to test the mediation model.

The North-West University statistical consultation services were used for this data analysis.

### 1.20 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout this study, all North-West University ethical procedures were followed. Before conducting any survey, the respondents were informed of the research purpose and were issued a consent form. The respondents were made aware that the survey was done

anonymously and that taking part in the study was not compulsory. Anonymity was maintained by not collecting personally identifying data such as names, phone numbers or addresses. Confidentiality was maintained by storing the data securely in password-protected files, and data were encrypted when sent to the NWU statistical service. Furthermore, the data was reported so that individuals were not identified, and these data were permanently destroyed when no longer needed. Respondents in the survey were informed of the academic nature of the research with no further usage of their data. Respondents were informed that they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time and had the right to request clarification before giving their consent. The organisation's permission was required to access the respondents, who are all Steel industry employees. The four levels of HR management that must grant permission for this study include the HR Iron Making and Core Support Service Manager, the HR Operation Manager, the Senior Manager of Compliance and Analytics and the Chief HR Officer.

Respondents were not deemed vulnerable and were able to provide informed consent. The data were gathered only after the respondents agreed to participate in the survey by signing a consent form. The consent forms provided to the respondents clearly stated the conditions of anonymity, confidentiality, and protection of personal information. All respondents were treated with dignity. Data were collected using Microsoft Forms, which encrypt all data within the forms, meaning that data captured were secured whether they were transferred electronically or stored.

The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) was used as a framework for the code of conduct regarding the collection, processing, and storage of respondents' data. Respondents were informed of their rights as per Section 5 of the Act, which states that respondents have the right to have their personal information processed as per reference in Chapter 3 of the Act about lawful processing of personal information.

The researcher is a manager in one operating unit in the Steel industry; the following measures were in place to mitigate conflict of interest:

- Establish independence by separating the researcher and manager roles within the company. The Human Resources department carried out all communication and interaction with respondents to ensure that the research activities were independent

of the manager's responsibilities and to prevent professional biases from influencing data collection.

- Disclosure and transparency: The steel industry employees reporting to the manager (Researcher) in the Blast furnace section were excluded from the study. This was communicated to the Human Resources department.
- Maintained ethical guidelines and standards: NWU guidelines and standards were adhered to, and the steel industry's code of business conduct was followed to prevent conflicts of interest and protect data.

### **1.21 POWER RELATIONSHIP AND GATEKEEPER INTERVENTION**

The study involves human employees reporting to line managers in the steel industry. The power imbalance in this research setting is authority power. The following steps were taken to minimise the impact of the power relationship:

Informed consent: Before they could participate in the research, all respondents were sent written consent explaining the voluntary nature of the study.

Autonomy and confidentiality: The respondents were provided with all relevant information about the study to decide whether to enrol. Respondents' data was collected anonymously to guarantee confidentiality, and the steel industry data protection policy and procedures were adhered to.

Gatekeeper intervention: The steel industry gatekeeper is the Chief Officer of Human Resources (COHR), who has granted permission to conduct this research and the respondents required for this study. The agreement includes sharing the research's outcome with the COHR.

### **1.22 DISSEMINATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

The report of this study was formally communicated to the senior management of the Steel Industry and the HR department. The report included key findings, conclusions, and practical recommendations on improving HRM implementation and manager-employee relationships in the steel industry. The report presented to the organisation differed from the academic report and focused on adding value. Ethical considerations, as well as the confidentiality and privacy of respondents, were maintained in this report.

## **1.23 CHAPTERS OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION**

### **Chapter One: Background to the study**

Chapter One outlines the context and background of the study. The sections developed in this chapter include the introduction and background, the study's rationale, the research problem, the significance of the study, the research objectives, and questions. The preliminary literature review, the research methodology and design, and ethical considerations are also discussed.

### **Chapter two: Literature review**

In chapter two, the literature relevant to the study's primary constructs was reviewed. Previous research and theories were analysed and summarised, and then a critical evaluation and discussion of this content were outlined.

### **Chapter three: Research methodology and design**

This section included the general approach to the research, including the identification of the research question, the selection of the research method, the collection of the data, and the data analysis technique.

### **Chapter four: Data analysis and interpretation of results**

The findings in chapter three were presented in this chapter. The meaning of the results was objectively interpreted and put into context. All research questions were answered, and this chapter addressed the objectives.

### **Chapter five: Discussion of results, Conclusion, and recommendations**

The conclusion is based on the study's objectives and research questions. It was derived from the research findings. The recommendations and implications of the findings are also explained in this chapter. Areas of potential future research were also highlighted.

## **1.24 SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the background to the study and introduced the problem investigated. The research investigated HRM practice effectiveness, manager-employee

relationships, and turnover intention in the South African steel industry. The research objectives were presented, and the preliminary literature reviewed the concepts of line managers' HR practices and their impact on employees' intention to leave. The mediating effect of managers-employees was also examined.

It was established that HR implementation by line managers influences critical employee outcomes such as turnover intention, and the manager-employee relationship tends to mediate this relationship.

The last section of this chapter introduced the research methodology. The research used a positivist paradigm, and the quantitative method was selected. An online survey with a cross-sectional design was set up to evaluate the correlation between variables. The chosen probability sampling was a stratified random sampling, and a sample size was defined. The three measuring instruments used in this study were also described: Turnover intention (TIS-6), Manager-employee relationship scale, and people management competencies. The data analysis to be carried out was reviewed, and the ethical process to follow by the researcher was presented. NWU ethical procedures and the POPI were also reviewed.

## **CHAPTER 2      LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1    INTRODUCTION**

The literature review of this research will focus on conceptualising the three main variables associated with the study. These variables are people management competencies, turnover intention, and manager-employee relationship. The theories around these variables will be reviewed, existing literature examined, and empirical research findings highlighted. All this information will provide a theoretical framework for the study. This section will highlight the theoretical review of the constructs, providing the foundation to interpret the research findings.

### **2.2    THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES**

HRM implementation is the process that integrates all activities required to put HRM practices into the organisation's daily operation (Bos-Nehles & Bondarouk, 2017; Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). People management, a subcategory of HRM, is defined as the implementation of HR practices by line managers and the support they provide employees they supervise through their leadership behaviour (Knies *et al.*, 2017: 712). The literature shows that HRM practices are not uniformly implemented across organisations, and several factors impact their effectiveness. In this context, Wright and Nishii (2007:11) have differentiated between intended HRM developed by HR professionals, implemented HRM applied by line managers, and perceived HRM experienced by employees. This distinction is critical for people management studies as perceived HRM has employees as respondents, and implemented HRM has line managers as respondents.

Several theories serve as theoretical foundations for employees' perceived HRM implementation by line managers. These theories include the social exchange theory, social identity theory, resource-based view, and organisational justice theory. All these theories will be reviewed, including exchange theory as the theoretical foundation to explain employees' perceived HRM implementation by line managers. The concept of social exchange theory (SET) was pioneered by Georges Homans in 1958 through his work on behavioural sociology. This theory was further developed by the sociologist Peter

Blau in 1964, who referred to social exchanges as the treatment of organisations towards their employees, resulting in their reciprocal voluntary actions. SET supports those reciprocal responses from individuals as a result of positive exchange and individual trust (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005:18). Social exchange theory refers to the exchange among individuals resulting in their interactions and social behaviour (Wan & Antonucci, 2016:1). According to the SET, individuals evaluate the risks and rewards of their social relationships. Depending on whether the risk outweighs the rewards, these individuals will decide to pursue or terminate the relationship, with the aim being to minimise cost and maximise profit (Cherry, 2023). This perspective implies that relationships among individuals are generated on the quest for benefits and rewards and the prevention of punishment and cost. Individuals tend to repeat behaviour that has been previously rewarded. SET, therefore, suggests that the extent to which a social association will continue is determined by the value attached to the benefit and cost of the relationship.

SET is also known as a theory of interaction and is used in diverse fields such as economy, sociology, and psychology. The relationship between employees and managers, for instance, can be viewed as an economic and social exchange (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005:3). While a reciprocal transfer of financial resources depicts an economic exchange, social exchange is characterised by emotional interactions that are difficult to evaluate as it depends on the type and nature of the social relationship (Wan & Antonucci, 2016:2). Given the psychological nature of social relationships, which is not always obvious to evaluate, certain forms of emotional support might be required and worth considering. According to Blau (1964), social exchanges are generally open, longer-term, with stronger interpersonal relations, while economic exchanges are short-term and based on a deal. Given this distinction and the type of interchange, more extended exchange relations move from economic to social exchange, leading to loyalty, trust, and commitment among the individuals involved.

Several studies have reviewed the importance of interpersonal relationships in social exchange. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005; Mitchell, Cropanzano & Quisenberry, 2012). According to Mitchell *et al.* (2012:114), there are three perspectives on the role of interpersonal relationships in the social exchange model. The first perspective is the relation formation resulting from a closed relationship. The second phase is the relationship attribute focused on the quality of the exchange. The last is the

relationship context, which focuses on how goods are exchanged and the individual's response to these transactions. These perspectives help to understand why some relationships grow into trusting and committed exchanges while others focus on economic and negotiated interactions. In the same context of interpersonal relationships, Gould-Williams and Davies (2005:18) identified employees' trust towards management as a crucial component, with mistrust resulting in low motivation and commitment. Positive exchange induces a reciprocal individual response and, therefore, predicts employee motivation and intention to stay with the organisation (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005:18). Furthermore, stronger social exchange relationships in the workplace produce positive employee attitudes and effective work behaviour (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005:882). In summary, SET can be a framework for people management competencies. Managers who apply the SET principles can create a positive social exchange with employees, leading to a rewarding and supportive environment.

The early studies on the leader-member exchange theory known as vertical dyad linkage emphasise the nature of the leader's vertical relationship with their followers. Researchers who pioneer the leader-member exchange (LMX) theories include Graen, Dansereau, and Haga (Northouse, 2019:231). LMX theories have been revised several times and continue to evolve through leadership studies. Dansereau *et al.* (1975) found that personal characteristics and personality relate to how followers work well with leaders. Therefore, followers were categorised as in-group or out-group based on how well their working relationship with the leader was established. Northouse (2019:231) defines in-group followers as those interested in doing activities beyond their formal scope of work, prompting the leader to go the extra mile for these followers. In this group, followers are more involved, get more information, and are more compatible with the leader. On the contrary, out-group members are just at work to carry out their duties without any special relationship with their leader (Northouse, 2019:233)

Later studies on LMX theories shifted into its impact on the organisation's effectiveness (Martin *et al.*, 2015; Lo *et al.* (2015). These studies focused on organisational positive outcomes based on the quality of the leader-member interaction. A positive leader-member interaction produces better organisational performance (Lo *et al.*, 2015) through reduced employee turnover, positive work attitude, improvement in performance evaluation, and more leadership support.

For example, in a meta-analytic review of LMX and performance, Martin *et al.* (2016) found a positive relationship between task performance, citizenship performance, and LMX. A negative relationship was found between counterproductive performance and LMX. In addition, the relationship between citizenship and task performance with LMX was found to have job satisfaction, empowerment, trust, and motivation as mediators. Trust in the leader was the mediator with the most significant effect. Similarly, Power (2013) advocates for leadership that establish many high-quality relationships with their subordinates increasing their sense of job satisfaction, productivity, and organisational citizenship. Organisations prosper when leaders have good exchanges with their followers as they accomplish more through positive interactions (Northouse, 2019:233). Overall, these findings demonstrate that organisations stand to benefit from leaders who have set up good working relationships with their team members. LMX theory also points out the importance of effective communication between parties. The high-quality exchange highlighted in the theory is directly linked to effective communication created, developed, and maintained meaningful exchanges between leaders and followers. Communication characterised by trust, commitment, and respect between leaders and followers results in effective leadership (Northouse, 2019:241).

However, LMX theory subdivides work units in an organisation into those who contribute more and those who contribute less. Despite being an unfair situation, it is a reality within an organisation that LMX theory describes and therefore validates the relation of the employees with each other and their leader. Some criticism of the theory points out that fairness issues are not being addressed. The division of the work unit into two groups in the theory's initial formulation, with subsequent special attention given to the in-group, appears to discriminate against the out-group members. The theory is criticised for failing to account for group dynamics, the potential to alienate some followers, and undermining social identity (Power, 2013:282). The theory also does not clearly define a strategy for the out-group member to switch sides if a member decides to do so (Northouse, 2019:242). Another criticism of the LMX theory is its inability to explain the creation of high-quality leader-follower exchanges. However, early research implies that interpersonal skills, personality, and job competencies facilitate the leader-member exchange. Still, there is no formal description of how the process works.

LMX theory applies to any organisation and draws the leader's attention to how they relate to their subordinates. Leaders must know that their followers receive special attention and others do not. Followers should be fairly treated to get them to participate in the work unit (Northouse, 2019:244). LMX, therefore, advocates for respectful leaders building relationships with their subordinates based on trust and understanding that each subordinate is unique and wants to relate to the leader in a particular way.

John Turner and Henri Tajfel developed the social identity theory (SIT) in the 1970s in their work to differentiate between social and personal identity. They established a relationship between individual membership in a social environment and their self-concept. The theory seeks to clarify the social conditions and the cognitive process underlying behaviour in a group. Social identity is therefore presented as individual identification based on the group to which they belong. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that identification with a social group can provide a sense of belonging, self-worth, and purpose. Being associated with a group can generate unity and connection, giving group members a sense of not being alone in their perspectives.

SIT presents social categorisation as the tendency to classify people into various social groups based on nationality, race, profession, and gender. According to Ellemers and Haslam (2012:381), social categorisation refers to categorising individuals into groups. It predicts and understands behaviour when dealing with complex social issues. It can, therefore, assist in defining adequate behaviour as the individual can refer to the norms, values, and behaviours of the group they belong to (McLeod, 2023). The outcome of such a classification is that individuals in the same category are seen as interchangeable with common characteristics. At the same time, the differences of those belonging to different groups are accentuated. While categorising people may lead to understanding the social environment, it can also result in stereotyping and prejudice due to the emphasis on the dissimilarities among members of different groups. The next stage after social categorisation is social identification and comparison, whereby individuals adopt the group identity and compare their groups to others. The social identification process defines the difference between object category and social category. Realising that some social categories exclude individuals while including others is fundamental to social identification. Identifying with the group has an emotional significance, with individual self-esteem linked to the group membership. The last stage of the SIT process is social

comparison, which refers to interpreting and valuing the features that characterise a group. (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012:381). This implies that comparing a group with others can be used to evaluate the features of a specific group. Social comparison, therefore, defines how a group is distinguished from another similar group. However, in-group favouritism may result from biased comparisons from one's group. Hence, the virality between groups serves to understand prejudice because individuals' self-esteem is maintained by competing for resources and competing identities.

Furthermore, the implications of SIT extend well beyond the theories of social psychology. Understanding group behaviour can be used to develop strategies to promote group cohesion, moderate social discrimination, and drive social challenges according to Ellemers and Haslam (2012:393). Given the theory's consideration of people's cognitive processes and social contextual parameters, SIT is relevant for many social challenges and organisational behaviour issues. Its practical application is, therefore, notable in social justice and relations among groups. Out-group discrimination and in-group bias can be better understood, leading to strategies that challenge these biases and encourage fair social structures. Therefore, SIT facilitates understanding social bias and guides towards an inclusive and fair society.

## **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF TURNOVER INTENTION**

Turnover intention, intention to quit, or intention to leave are different terms used in the literature to describe an employee's readiness to leave their job soon (Ngo-Henha, 2018:2760). Despite being an intention, it reflects the mindset and attitude of an employee wanting to leave an organisation. According to Bester (2012), turnover intention is the employees' predisposition toward the intent to leave their current job. Several studies have presented the concept as the final stage in the decision-making process before an employee leaves the organisation (Arshad & Puteh, 2015; Bothma & Roodt, 2013). While behaviour can be observed, intention cannot and still needs to be expressed in the form of action. However, actual behaviour can reliably be determined by behaviour intention with stronger intention giving a better behaviour prediction and reducing the intention-behaviour gap (Conner & Norman, 2022). Empirical studies have also established that turnover intention is positively related to actual turnover and can be used to predict it.

According to Al-Suraihi *et al.* (2021), the organisation must understand employees' needs and adopt strategies to reduce employee turnover. Research studies showed that the reasons for employees to leave include job security, wages, work environment, job satisfaction, and rewards. In the same context Rony (2017) in his study on the causes of employee turnover intention, he identified internal factors such as work-life balance, salary, career path, and political office as causing turnover intentions.

However, various control variables affect the employees' behaviour and attitude when they intend to leave their job. Ngo-Henha (2018:2760) argues that underlying psychological, social, and economic factors must be considered to fully understand individuals' intention to leave. People generally decide to quit their employment after careful reflection. Therefore, gauging employees' intent to quit could help determine their inclination to leave their jobs. According to Ngo-Henha (2018:2760) employees who intend to leave assess the situation, balance the different options and search for opportunities before considering their feelings.

Different theories that provide insight into the factors influencing turnover intention include the Job embeddedness theory, the expectancy theory, Herzberg's two factors theory, and the resource-based view. This study focuses on the first three theories. Job embeddedness theory (JET) was first proposed by Mitchell *et al.* (2001) to gain insight into the turnover process and improve the model that predicts turnover poorly. Mitchell *et al.* (2001) define Job embeddedness as the influence on employee retention from a broad set of social, psychological, and financial factors. As a result, employees feel fully integrated in their social and professional environment and do not want to disconnect from these links for a new job or an unfamiliar environment. JET argues that employees will remain in their job if they still feel some sense of embeddedness in their social and professional environment, or they will be more inclined towards turnover intention. According to Ngo-Henha (2018:2763) organisational retention strategies for talented employees must ensure they feel embedded in the social and professional environment. Similarly, Holtom *et al.* (2006:119) refer to job embeddedness as influencing an employee's decision to remain with the company. These factors include the connection with co-workers, family, and personal commitment. According to Holtom *et al.* (2006:119), job embeddedness strongly predicts employee retention, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. Three crucial aspects of the theory are the extent of the

connection between people or people and their jobs, the extent of the similarity between their work and other aspects of their lives, and what must be given up if they must leave their work. These critical dimensions highlighted in the JET are the link, fit, and sacrifice. Links are the connection between a person and other people or between a person and an institution. The JET suggests that employees and their families are connected psychologically, financially, and socially in the environment where they live. This web of connections also includes their communities, friends, and the physical environment where they live. An employee will feel tied to his job and the organisation if the number of links between the person and the web is high (Holtom *et al.*, 2006:119). Fit, is presented as the perceived match between an employee and his organisation. According to the JET, an employee's plan, career goals, and personal values must fit with the organisation's corporate culture and the employee's job requirements (skills, job knowledge, and abilities). The higher the fit where an employee feels personally and professionally linked to a company, the higher the likelihood that the employee will remain with the organisation (Holtom *et al.*, 2006:119). Sacrifice represents the apparent cost of materials and psychological benefits that can be lost when leaving a company. An employee is less likely to leave an organisation if there is a lot to give up on during this process (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). Examples of benefits to potentially give up are stock options, pension benefits, job stability, a safe community, and advancement opportunities.

In summary, job embeddedness measures the off- and on-the-job variables that contribute the most to an employee's staying in his or her current job. Empirical studies have demonstrated that organisations use JET to build a framework for developing a retention strategy based on employees' needs and corporate strengths.

Frederick Herzberg introduced the two-factor theory in 1959 in his book *Work and the Nature of Man*. It is also known as the motivation-hygiene theory and was primarily influenced by Maslow's work on the hierarchy of needs. Herzberg's theory provides an adequate framework for understanding turnover intention. (Zeng & Paphawasit, 2024:508). The theory presents two sets of factors contributing to either Job dissatisfaction, known as hygiene factors, and those contributing to satisfaction, known as motivators (Ngo-Henha, 2018). According to Herzberg (1968), motivation factors in the workplace include recognition, achievement, increasing responsibility, interesting work, learning, and advancement. On the other hand, hygiene factors are unpleasant

working conditions, unfair policies, and job insecurity. This theory claims that hygiene and motivation factors are not the opposite, which implies that an employee who is satisfied because of his pleasant working conditions will not automatically be dissatisfied if the conditions become unpleasant. When factors contributing to an employee's job satisfaction start to be negatively impacted, the employee will start responding to his/her turnover intention appeal.

Several empirical studies have reviewed factors influencing turnover intention using the Herzberg two-factor theory (Chiat & Panatik, 2019; Holston-Okae & Mushi, 2018; Nanayakkara & Dayarathna, 2016; Zeng & Paphawasit, 2024). Holston-Okae and Mushi (2018:235) underlined the importance of job satisfaction in reducing turnover intention by recommending strategies implementation that enhance employees' positive perception of job satisfaction. In this context, leaders must understand the concept of Job satisfaction which can be efficiently implemented by reconciling what employees experience as a satisfying job and extending it to what leaders require. Similarly, Zeng and Paphawasit (2024) argued that putting the right strategy in place to improve employees' job satisfaction and meeting their incentive needs are keys to reducing turnover rates.

Although Herzberg's two-factor theory presents satisfaction as the result of hygiene and motivation factors, Evans and Olumide-Aluko (2010) had their reservation about the theory's application in the African context by drawing tangible distinctions between the professional reality in Africa and the Western world. The contention that employees' remuneration is not a motivator, as per Herzberg, for instance, might be ignoring the socio-economic realities in the African context. The theoretical perspectives in occupational psychology developed in Europe might not fully apply to developing countries, mainly regarding the link between pay and job satisfaction.

In summary, Herzberg's Two-factor theory represents a psychological framework that differentiates between two factors influencing job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Employees experiencing negative hygiene factors might be dissatisfied and consider leaving their jobs for better conditions. Employees experiencing positive motivators might find their jobs fulfilling, which will counter any intention of leaving. Therefore, Herzberg's Two-factor theory argues that organisations aiming to manage turnover intention must address hygiene and motivation factors.

Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti pioneered the job demand resources model in 2001. Their study explained why individuals may leave a company because of burnout. The JD-R model argues that working conditions are divided into job resources and demand. According to Demerouti *et al.* (2001), job demands are primarily linked to exhaustion in the context of burnout, and the lack of job resources is mainly linked to disengagement. Job demand is defined as some characteristics of the job that need mental or physical effort and are related to psychological or physiological costs. This includes negative aspects such as job insecurity, conflict with others, and job overload. On the contrary, job resources are positive aspects that can stimulate employee growth and achieve professional goals. Job resources include performance feedback, participation in decision-making, job security, and other employee support.

In most empirical studies that use the JD-R model, the source of turnover intention is job demand, which leads to burnout. Empirical studies have identified an indirect relationship between turnover and job demand. According to Schaufeli (2017) Organisations use the JD-R model to prevent employee burnout by increasing work engagement. The model is suited for this purpose because it incorporates both an HR and a health approach, which increase motivation and reduce job stress. Schaufeli (2017) suggests that a lack of job resources and excess job demands, known as the stress process, can result in negative outcomes such as poor performance, turnover intention, and sickness absence. In contrast, an excess of job resources, known as the motivational process, can result in positive outcomes such as the intention to stay, employee safety, and organisational commitment.

However, the JD-R model has some limitations, focusing primarily on organisational and contextual demands and resources but less on personal resources. The psychological factors such as optimism, self-esteem may act as a buffer between turnover intention and contextual demands (Bothma & Roodt, 2013:2). The JD-R can be applied to different organisations to prevent or limit burnout. By redesigning or reducing specific job demands, employee exhaustion can be avoided. Furthermore, employee engagement may be enhanced if job resources are increased. According to Demerouti *et al.* (2001:510), the specific job resources and demands might differ depending on the organisation. When dealing with burnout, the most critical job demands and resources must be prioritised and addressed in specific work environments within an organisation.

In summary, empirical studies in human resources and organisational psychology have highlighted the usage of the Job Resources Demand Model to explain turnover intention. The model applies to organisations that want to create an environment where employees thrive, thus improving employees' overall satisfaction and reducing turnover intention.

## **2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MANAGER EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP**

Most organisations' daily operation, particularly the manufacturing industry, depends on the quality of the manager-employee relationship. This relationship's quality impacts the work environment and can foster a culture of trust and improve productivity and work quality. Potgieter *et al.* (2015:167) define the quality of employment relationship (QER) as the degree to which the individuals involved in the relationship exchange experience the interactions and the different mediators of a positive or negative work relationship. According to Ehlers and Jordaan (2016) ERQ is the perception of subordinates' compliance level with their supervisors' behaviour regarding trust, good faith, and fairness during or after employment-related exchanges. These definitions highlight the influence of the behaviours that occur in different types of employment exchange on the standard of the employment relationship. While some desirable behaviours facilitate the quality of the employment relationship, other behaviours inhibit it.

Several empirical studies have found that the outcomes of negative behaviour or abuse by supervisors include employee deviant behaviour that could be decremental for the organisation, with outcomes such as turnover, workplace conflict, employee grievance, and poor work performance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Haar *et al.* 2016). On the other hand, positive organisation outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisation trust, and employment relation satisfaction are experienced when positive supervisor behaviour is felt (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Chughtai, 2013). However, there are no universal guidelines for supervisor' positive behaviour towards their subordinates because the exchange between the two parties is situation-specific. Supervisor leadership roles and managerial responsibilities in the organisation ensure that subordinates complete their work optimally and that a certain number of subordinates' psychological expectations are met (Ehlers & Jordaan, 2016). However, the supervisors and employees are responsible for establishing, maintaining, and promoting a good employment relationship to ensure a satisfactory employment relationship exchange.

The quality of employment relationships experienced by employees is influenced by the employees' perceived equal treatment and organisational fairness, which are characterised by equal distribution of work and fair application of organisational policies. The quality of this relationship is further improved by the support provided by the supervisors and the organisation. In this context, Ehlers (2013:48) completed a comprehensive study on the condition of desirable employment relationships and identified good faith, trust, fairness, and justice as categories in a typology for desired supervisory relationships. These four employment conditions are interrelated and significantly linked to desirable supervisory relationships (Ehlers, 2013:169).

There are several definitions of trust in the literature. According to Krot and Lewicka (2012:225), trust is the vulnerability that one party is willing to undertake on the actions of another party. Trust refers to the faith and expectation that two parties will act to secure common benefits. In the business environment, trust is the assessment of the company's trustworthiness perceived by the trustors, who are employees. Sparrow and Cooper (2012) also define trust as the trustor's willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of the trustee based on the expected actions that the trustee will carry out without the need to monitor and control the truster action. The level of trust among all stakeholders can affect the different role players in the employment relationship. Employees who trust their supervisors and their organisation will go the extra mile to fulfil their roles and duties compared to those who do not trust the organisation (Ehlers, 2013:170). In their story about manager-employee relationships and the importance of trust, Krot and Lewicka (2012) have identified competence, integrity, and benevolence as three dimensions of trust, with benevolence being the most prominent dimension in the relationship.

Good faith is presented as the sincere and honest intention to create a common benefit for all respondents in an employment relationship by displaying constructive, considerate, and sincere behaviours in a relationship exchange (Ehlers & Jordaan, 2016). However, bad faith in a relationship exchange can be perceived through obstructive, insincere, disinterested, and disrespectful behaviours. Employees' positive perception of good faith from their supervisors is linked to trust and, therefore, positive behaviour. According to Ehlers (2013), acting in good faith doesn't necessarily mean being charitable to each other but being open-minded to reach an agreement when entering into a deal. Good faith also means that both parties must cooperate to receive the benefits of the

relationship as per agreement. It also implies that the parties involved in the employment relationship must have a less rigid approach when negotiating. In the manager-employee relationship, good faith suggests that both parties should be fair, sincere, honest, and cooperative during performance management, dispute settlement, collective bargaining, contracting, and negotiating in the employment relationship (Ehlers, 2013).

Although fairness can be perceived differently by the parties involved in an employment relationship, there are, however, basic standards of fairness that are accepted by all (Ehlers, 2013). Positive perceptions of fairness exist in an employment relationship where the parties involved exchange objectively, equitably, informed, and in a consistent manner (Ehlers, 2013). Unfairness occurs when none of these characteristics is present during employment relationships. Hazeen Fathima and Umarani (2023) predicted an intention to stay for employees who are satisfied with the level of fairness in the employment relationship. It was also found that perceptions of distributive and procedural fairness positively influence employees' job involvement and negatively affect their turnover intention, with organisation identification as a mediator (Hassan, 2013)

Empirical studies indicate the importance of fair treatment in the workplace. The perception of unfairness can impact commitment, morale, and productivity. While fairness can be established through conciliation or legally, its perception by both parties is also dependent on good faith and mutual commitment. Organisational justice is defined as the level of employees' perception of workplace procedures, outcomes, and interactions to be fair. These perceptions can influence behaviour and attitudes, which can, in turn, affect employees' performance (Baldwin, 2006). Organisation justice relevance is generally noticed when the violation of justice happens with examples such as arbitrary dismissal, unequal remuneration for the people doing the same job, and performance reviews carried out by supervisors with no previous contact with employees. According to Kivimäki *et al.* (2004) the extent of justice in the workplace predicts employees' health independently of known stressors. Organisation positive perception, therefore, requires behaviour that complies with labour law, employment policies, and contracts (Ehlers, 2013).

## **2.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF HRM IMPLEMENTATION BY LINE MANAGERS AND INTENTION TO QUIT**

An organisation like the Steel industry that depends on a highly skilled workforce relies on a retention strategy to reduce employee turnover. HR practices, such as recruitment, training, reward, and performance appraisal, are perceived as effective by employees if their needs are met while achieving the organisation's goals. Employees leave their jobs because of wages, job security, job satisfaction, job stress, and work environment. According to Al-Suraihi *et al.* (2021), organisations must understand employees' needs and adopt the right strategy to reduce employee turnover and improve performance.

Furthermore, the devolution of HR functions to line managers and their daily interactions with employees has highlighted their importance in implementing HR functions. In this context, several empirical studies have examined the relationship between line managers' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation and intention to quit (Aray, 2008; Mahmood *et al.*, 2017; Martin, 2011; Sikora & Ferris, 2014). In the study on the influence of HR practices on intention to quit, a significant relationship was identified between intention to quit and perception of HR practices with job satisfaction as a mediator (Martin, 2011). Similarly, Mahmood *et al.* (2017) examined the relationship between performance and the level of HR implementation by line managers. They found that a high level of HR implementation improves job satisfaction and affective commitment and reduces turnover intention. According to Aray (2008), a reduction in turnover intention is achieved when a high level of HRM practices is perceived. Studies have demonstrated that employees are satisfied and committed to their organisation when they perceive HR practices as transparent, supportive, and fair. However, ineffective HRM implementation may have a harmful influence on employee well-being, such as emotional exhaustion, stress, and intention to leave the organisation (Turek, 2019:39). Studies that have reviewed the complex relationship between HR practices and turnover intentions suggest that other variables are required to understand this relationship fully.

## **2.6 MEDIATOR ROLE OF MANAGER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED HRM EFFECTIVENESS AND EMPLOYEES' INTENTION TO QUIT**

The organisation's performance in the manufacturing sector is generally linked to employee productivity and job performance. One factor influencing employee productivity and job performance is employees' working relationship with their managers. While regarded as an essential relationship, it is sometimes the cause of tension in the workplace with mistrust between both parties. For instance, the bureaucratic approach adopted by managers in dealing with their subordinates is linked to a high level of employee dissatisfaction (Suknunan & Bhana, 2022). However, studies have shown the importance and benefits of positive relationships between employees and managers. According to Suknunan and Bhana (2022), a positive manager-employee relationship is linked to an increase in performance and motivation with job performance being significantly predicted by the perception of employees relationship with managers. This implies that a positive manager-employee relationship is promoted to achieve employee performance through different programs such as managers' skills development programs, team-building activities, employee rewards, and recognition.

Employees who feel supported and valued by their managers are likely to positively view HR practices that counter their intention to leave the organisation. The study conducted by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986) support this view that perceived support from the organisation increases employees' affective attachment, and the extent to which these factors increase their work output depends on the level of the employees' exchange ideologies. In a similar study, Acquah (2015) evaluated the relationship between HR practices and turnover intention with job embeddedness as a mediator and found that organisations using good HRM practices to improve their job embeddedness achieve a reduction in turnover intention. Employees who feel valued by managers can perceive an amplified level of positive HR practices that enhance organisational commitment.

However, if the relationship between the manager and the employee is poor, even a well-designed HRM may not reduce the intention to quit (Manthi *et al.*, 2018:211). In this situation, employees may not value or fully trust the manager's opinion, undermining HRM's effectiveness and weakening the employees' connection to the organisation. The

nature of the manager-employee relationship can either weaken or enhance the effect of HR practice on employee retention.

## **2.7 GAPS IN THE CURRENT LITERATURE**

While considerable studies have been conducted on HRM implementation and employee outcomes, there is limited research on the effectiveness of HRM implementation by line managers on employees' intention to quit. The existing literature focuses primarily on general HRM strategies with limited focus on the role of line managers in this context. Furthermore, few studies have analysed the manager-employee relationship mediating effect on the relation between turnover intention and line managers' HRM effectiveness. However, most studies focus on the impact of the manager-employee relationship on job satisfaction and organisational commitment. More focus research is therefore required on this aspect.

## **2.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter investigated and elaborated upon the three variables related to this research. To frame the research variables, various theoretical frameworks were reviewed. Social exchange theory was the theoretical foundation used in the study to explain and understand people management competencies. Managers who apply these principles can create a positive social exchange with employees, leading to a rewarding and supportive environment. Job embeddedness theory was chosen for turnover intention because it measures the off- and on-the-job variables that contribute the most to an employee's staying in his current job. Trust was selected as the most critical employment condition for developing a positive manager-employee relationship. Employees who trust their supervisors and their organisation will go the extra mile to fulfil their roles and duties. The literature review identified a significant relationship between perceived HRM implementation and intention to quit. Despite limited literature, studies reviewed showed that employees who are supported and feel valued by their managers are likely to positively view HR practices that counter their intention to leave the organisation.

Chapter Three will discuss the research philosophy, including the research methodology, the research design, the measuring instrument to be used, the sampling technique, the data collection, and the processing method.

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research aimed to determine the relationship between line managers' HRM implementation and the employees' turnover intention with the mediating role of the manager-employee relationship. The literature reviewed the theoretical framework of the variables, and their relationships were discussed. This chapter will present the methodology implemented. This implies elaborating on the research philosophy with the different assumptions made about the nature of knowledge and how it can be developed. The next step is the research approach, in which either quantitative or qualitative methods will be selected for the study. After that, the study population will be defined with sample units from that population and the instrument used to measure the different variables and relationships. The measuring instrument's reliability and validity will be demonstrated, and a detailed review of how the collected data will be analysed will be conducted to answer the research questions. The last section of the chapter will highlight all ethical considerations, such as ethical approval, respondents' informed consent, confidentiality, and the POPI Act.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The research philosophy is the basic beliefs guiding the researcher in the design and implementation of research studies (Poucher *et al.*, 2018). It provides different ways of understanding research studies. The adopted research philosophy is primarily influenced by the researcher's view of the link between knowledge and how knowledge is developed (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:108). The research philosophy is classified into three main areas: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontology focuses on the existence and the nature of human beings. In this study, the ontological assumption is that people are best understood through relationships and groups. Epistemology focuses on knowledge. The assumption made is the existence of an objective reality and the knowledge related to this research. Axiology is concerned about the moral values that guide the research.

According to Rahi (2017), paradigm refers to a set of beliefs shared by scientists, a collective of agreement on how to understand problems and how the world is viewed, and

thus conducting research based on these perspectives. Research inquiries are then guided by a set of assumptions and beliefs contained in the paradigm. Researchers must, therefore, define valid research by following a paradigm. A research paradigm guides researchers' actions and represents beliefs and thoughts about any issues they explore (Kamal, 2019:1389). In other words, the paradigm researchers adopt directs them through their investigation of data collection and the analysis procedure. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979:2), Societal theory can be conceived in four paradigms based on assumptions about the nature of society and social science. Quantitative research approaches are often associated with the positivism paradigm, which believes that reality is complex, real, external, and measurable (Kamal, 2019:1390).

This research paradigm is presented as positivist. Researchers who support the positivist paradigm believe that true knowledge can be achieved through experiment and observation. (Rahi, 2017). Research that adopts positivism focuses on discovering regularities and acts that can be measured and observed. Researchers in this paradigm strive to find a causal relationship between the data collected from the variables. A positivistic paradigm was selected for this research given the nature of the objectives to come up with practical solutions and to establish the causal link between HRM implementation by line managers and turnover intention.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology refers to the overall research strategy outlining how the research will be carried out with the methods identified to match the strategy (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:40). The research methods are linked to collecting and analysing data to generate and develop knowledge. The research methods to be adopted are either qualitative or quantitative, but a mixed method is sometimes used. Quantitative research relates to the measure of quantity applied to a specific phenomenon, while qualitative research provides an understanding of a phenomenon based on the view of those who experienced it with limited generalisation (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

A positivistic viewpoint was used to approach this research. The quantitative method is linked to the positivist paradigm and data analysis from an identified population while ignoring the environmental context, respondent emotions, and feelings (Rahi, 2017:2). A

quantitative research method was used to assess the impact of line managers' HR implementation on employees' turnover intention and the mediator role of the manager-employee relationship. Quantitative studies are particularly adapted for research with a large group of respondents, as the findings could be generalised from the sample to a broader group with similar characteristics (Holton & Burnett, 2005).

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design provides an adequate framework for collecting and analysing data (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:99). The research design choice depends on the criteria for evaluating the research findings. The cross-sectional research design was used in this study because of the academic nature of the project and time constraints. According to Bryman *et al.* (2014:107), cross-sectional research designs are conducted at a single point in time, relationships between variables are examined, and standardised methods are used to measure variation and investigate relationships between variables. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation by line managers and their influence on employees' intention to quit, with the mediator role of the manager-employee relationship. As per the cross-sectional design requirement, quantitative data were collected in connection with three variables, namely people management, turnover intention, and manager-employee relationship. As per patterns of association in cross-sectional design, the relationship between variables will be examined.

### **3.5 PARTICIPANTS**

According to Satishprakash (2020), the research population refers to the set of units from which the research findings are applied. Depending on the research objectives, anything such as people, places, objects, and institutions can be classified as a unit of study or population. The population in this study comprises permanent employees in the steel industry in Vanderbijlpark, South Africa, who report to line managers. Respondents should be employed in the steel industry for at least nine months. Employees reporting to senior and executive managers will not qualify for this study. Furthermore, trainees and contractors will also not qualify as respondents. Respondents of this study are not deemed vulnerable and will be able to provide informed consent. Respondents will be

informed of their rights as per the POPI Act. This population is selected to ensure that the research objectives are met.

### **3.6 SAMPLING STRATEGY**

According to Satishprakash (2020), a sample is defined as a population sub-set representing all elements and characteristics of the population. Sampling is the process of selecting specific population segments to investigate (Rahi, 2017). The sampling method chosen is dependent on the research objectives and the nature of the research. The sampling approach, in which each unit of the population has an equal chance to be chosen, is called probability sampling (Rahi, 2017). One category of probability sampling is stratified random sampling, in which each subgroup of the population has the same chance of being selected randomly.

Probability sampling was selected for this study, meaning all employees reporting to line managers have an equal chance of being selected. The population of this study was heterogeneous because employees reporting to line managers are classified according to their different roles and departments. Data collection using a stratified sampling method is suitable for heterogeneous populations and was used for this study.

The sample size is an essential characteristic of any study used to infer the study population. The sample size must be carefully set to draw general and valid conclusions. In stratified random sampling, the sample size in each stratum is a function of the importance of the stratum in the population (Singh & Masuku, 2014). The sample size was a fraction of the population of each subgroup or department. Using a 50 % proportionate stratified sampling in a population of 420 employees, the total sample size for this study was 210 employees from different departments. This sample size is adequate for the statistical analysis to be completed. The sample comprised employees reporting to line managers in the steel industry, aged between 20 and 70 years old, with a minimum working experience of nine months, respectively, from production, maintenance, HR, information technology, and finance departments.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

Data collection is “the process of systematically measuring and gathering information on variables of interest that allows one to test hypotheses, answer research questions, and evaluate outcomes” (Anon., 2024). Before data collection, the Steel industry executive management and the NWU ethics committees had to approve the research proposal. The three measuring scales identified for this research were set on Microsoft Forms, where an online survey was developed. A consent form was attached to the questionnaire, and respondents were emailed the link to the self-administered closed-ended questionnaire survey. The questionnaire consisted of five and seven-point Likert-scale questions. Feedback from respondents was automatically captured in the forms for data analysis.

### **3.8 RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS**

Reliability and validity are essential parameters in evaluating the research measuring instrument. According to Sullivan (2011), a questionnaire is reliable if the measuring instrument gives identical results each time it is used in the same context with the same subjects. Meanwhile, validity refers to how accurately the study questions are answered in research or the measurement accuracy in a survey. Reliability is sometimes called internal validity, with Cronbach alpha as the measuring instrument's internal consistency test. High reliability measuring instruments have a Cronbach alpha close to 1 according to Sullivan (2011). Cronbach's alpha is mainly used to determine the internal consistency of an instrument with an acceptable, reliable score between 0.7 and 1 as asserted by Heale and Twycross (2015:67). The test/retest is a conservative measure of reliability and is often measured as a Pearson correlation  $r$  with a 0.5 value considered strong.

To measure people management competencies, the measuring instrument used was developed by Knies *et al.* (2020), and the four subscales showed sufficient reliability with Cronbach's alphas above 0.7. To measure turnover intention, the reliable measuring instrument developed by Bothma and Roodt (2013) was used with Cronbach's alphas above 0.8. An instrument to measure the employment relationship developed by Potgieter *et al.* (2015) has five dimensions, with Cronbach's alphas greater than 0.8 for each dimension, indicating a high internal consistency. The reliability and validity of the above-

mentioned measuring instruments of this study will be determined despite using an existing scale with these variables already assessed.

**Table 4: Reliability of the scales and factors**

| Scale                                      | Factors                                    | Cronbach's Alphas | Number of items | Sources                            |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| People Management Competencies             | Supportive HR Practices                    | 0.90-0.91         | 7               | Knies et al. (2020)                |
| People Management Competencies             | Implementation of Tailor-Made Arrangements | 0.60-0.85         | 2               |                                    |
| People Management Competencies             | Support of Employees' Commitment           | 0.62-0.92         | 4               |                                    |
| People Management Competencies             | Support of Employees' Career Development   | 0.70-0.90         | 4               |                                    |
| Manager-Employee Relationship Scale (PERQ) | Social Conditions                          | 0.97              | 15              | Potgieter, Olckers & Ehlers (2015) |
| Manager-Employee Relationship Scale (PERQ) | Compliance Factors                         | 0.92              | 5               |                                    |
| Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6)           | Overall Scale                              | 0.80              | 6               | Bothma & Roodt (2013)              |

### **3.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

The process of analysing data to conclude about the captured information is referred to as data analysis (Bhatia, 2017). Data analysis, therefore, aims to convert the cluttered data into a layout that is easier to understand, conclusive, and facilitates decision-making. The quantitative research approach was used for this study. The measuring instrument distributed to respondents consisted of four sections. The demography was a 5-item question, the turnover intention was a 6-item question, people management was a 17-item question, and perceived employment relation quality was a 19-item question. The collected data will be statistically analysed using a statistical software package for social science (SPSS). The generated data points were used to answer the research questions. The following statistical techniques met the study objectives and answered the research questions.

#### **Descriptive statistics**

The purpose of this analysis is to summarise numerical data and describe key features of data such as central tendency, the shape of data distribution, and their variability (Green *et al.*, 2023). Descriptive data were used in this study and presented in tables and graphs with respondents' demographic information such as age group, gender, grading, operating department, and years of experience. Standard deviation, median, response categories, and mean scores were determined to measure the levels of people management competencies, manager-employee relationship, and turnover intention. Given the increasing number of variables, descriptive statistics was used to present data in a format that is easier to comprehend and make predictions and inferences beyond the data (Green *et al.*, 2023). To answer the research questions, the following analysis was conducted:

**RQ1: How does employees' perceived effectiveness of HRM implementation by line managers influence their intention to quit in the steel industry?**

#### **Multiple Regression Analysis:**

A multiple regression analysis is a statistical technique that predicts the outcome of a response variable by using several explanatory variables (Hayes, 2024). The objective

when using multiple regression analysis was to model the linear relationship between the response (dependent) variables and explanatory (independent) variables. In this study, the technique helped to determine the strength and nature of the relationship between perceived HRM effectiveness and employees' intention to quit. It allows for the examination of how one or more independent variables (perceived HRM effectiveness) predict a dependent variable (intention to quit) while controlling other demographic variables such as age, tenure, and job level.

In a research study, a dependent variable is the response that is measured and depends on other variables (Intention to quit), whereas independent variables are those that are manipulated or varied and affected by the researcher (perceived HRM effectiveness).

- Test for assumptions of multiple regression: when using the multiple regression method, the classic assumption test must be carried out as a prerequisite to ensure that the data is usually distributed (Alita *et al.*, 2021:297). The classic assumption test comprises the normality test, multicollinearity test, autocorrelation test, and heteroscedasticity test.
- The linearity test is used to establish whether two or more variables' linear relationship is significant or not. Sig. linearity in the table ANOVA can be used for linearity testing. The linear regression can be used to explain the influence of variables if the value of Sig. linearity is less than the significance level (Ainiyah *et al.*, 2016).
- The normality test is used to evaluate whether the data is distributed normally or not. According to Ainiyah *et al.* (2016), good research data must have a normal distribution. Shapiro Wilk test can be used to evaluate the normality test. The data are considered normally distributed if the p-value is greater than five per cent.
- The multicollinearity test is used in a regression model to determine the presence of a high correlation between variables. The variable inflation factors (VIF) can be calculated and if higher than 10 then there is multicollinearity (Ainiyah *et al.*, 2016)

**RQ2: What role does the manager-employee relationship play in mediating the impact of perceived HRM effectiveness on employees' intention to quit?**

“A variable which is in a causal sequence between two other variables is referred to as a mediator” (Fritz *et al.*, 2007). The study follows a single mediation model structure. This technique helps to test whether the manager-employee relationship mediates the relationship between perceived HRM effectiveness and employees' intention to quit. Mediation analysis is ideal for testing whether the effect of an independent variable (perceived HRM effectiveness) on a dependent variable (intention to quit) is transmitted through a mediator (manager-employee relationship).

**Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)** was used to test the mediator role of the manager-employee relationship. according to Thakkar and Thakkar (2020), the SEM is a multivariable quantitative method used to describe the relationship between observed variables. SEM framework presents many advantages when used in the context of mediation analysis. SEM makes testing the mediation hypothesis simpler because, in a single analysis, it is designed to test difficult mediation models (Gunzler *et al.*, 2013).

**Bootstrapping** was also used to test for the significance of the indirect effect or the mediation effect. This method was chosen to overcome the challenge posed by the deviation from normality assumption. Bootstrapping is the technique that derives a more accurate estimate by resampling from the original sample (Lockwood & MacKinnon, 1998). Bootstrapping does not rely on the assumption of normality of the sample distribution. The mediation effect is significant if the bootstrap confidence interval is high and does not contain zero.

### **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Georges (2023) defines ethical considerations in research as “the code of conduct to be followed during the planning, conducting, and reporting phase of the study”. The North-West University's ethical standards guided this section of the study. The process started with an ethical application that was later approved by the Economics and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2024 with an ethical number NWU-00604-24-A4. The Steel industry permission was required to access the respondents, who were all employees. The four levels of HR management that granted permission for this study included: the Iron Making HR Manager and Core

Support Service Manager, the HR Operation Manager, the Senior Manager of Compliance and Analytics, and the Chief HR Officer.

The data were gathered only after the respondents had agreed to take part in the survey by signing a consent form that indicated the conditions of confidentiality, anonymity, and protection of personal information. Data were collected using Microsoft Forms which encrypted all data within the forms.

The POPI Act was used as a framework for the code of conduct regarding the collection, processing, and storage of respondents' data. Respondents were informed of their rights as per Section 5 of the Act which states that respondents have the right to have their personal information processed as per reference in Chapter 3 of the Act about the lawful processing of personal information. To mitigate conflict of interest, measures were taken to maintain ethical standards, transparency, and establish independence.

### **3.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter reviewed the methodology and design used to conduct this study. The research was viewed from a positivist paradigm and subsequently followed a quantitative approach. The focus of the study was on the steel industry employees reporting to line managers. Since the respondents in the study belong to different departments in the steel industry, a stratified random sample technique was used. Instruments measuring turnover intention, perceived employee relationship quality, and people management competencies were also presented with a review of their reliabilities. Microsoft Forms was used as the online platform to administer the questionnaire. The planned statistical analysis to be used was reviewed as well as the ethical considerations.

In Chapter 4, the results of the statistical analysis in line with the research objectives will be presented and discussed.

## **CHAPTER 4      DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section details the findings, analysis, and interpretation of the survey sent out to employees reporting to line managers of the steel industry in South Africa. The study's instrument addressed the research questions in this section by investigating the relationship between line manager HRM implementation and employees' turnover intentions, as well as the mediating role of the manager-employee relationship. Additionally, this study explores the descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic data before delving into the reliability and validity of the construct's scales. Finally, we evaluated the hypotheses using the correct test statistic.

### **4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

This segment includes the result of socio-economic features of the respondents with respect to manager and employees in the South Africa steel industry. The data collection procedure was conducted with two hundred and ten (210) surveys, focusing exclusively on employees and managers of steel industry in South Africa. Meanwhile, one hundred and seventy-one (171) valid responses were obtained, resulting in a response rate of 81.4%, indicating acceptable data for the study.

#### **4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

The respondents provided a summary of the demographic profile in this section. Men made up 86.5% of the sample, while women accounted for 13.5%, as shown in Table 4.1. As a result, many employees surveyed were male, implying gender sensitivity in the steel industry. Most of the respondents (33.3%) who filled out the survey are in the 51-60 age bracket, closely followed by 28.7% falling into the 31-40 age bracket. The age group of 61-70 years had the least respondents at 4.1%. This clearly shows that old people make up a disproportionate share of the steel industry. Furthermore, statistics revealed that majority of respondents (46.2%) surveyed work in the maintenance department, closely followed by 45% being at the production department, while the least (1.2%) accounted

for finance and human resources. The grading system revealed by the respondents shows that majority are on the grade referred to S4 and S3, followed by M4 and H2, and the least (9.4%) were for J4/I1 and I4/H3. Finally, the detailed responses revealed that the majority (43.9%) of respondents had experience of 21 years and above, followed by 19.9% with 11-15 years of experience, and the least number of respondents opined on 16-20 years. Hence, this implies that the respondents surveyed were knowledgeable with the operations of the steel industry.

**Table 5: Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

| <b>Demographic characteristics</b> | <b>Categories</b>       | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Gender                             | Male                    | 148              | 86.5%             |
|                                    | Female                  | 23               | 13.5%             |
|                                    | Total                   | 171              | 100%              |
| Age group                          | 20 – 30 years           | 15               | 8.8%              |
|                                    | 31 – 40 years           | 49               | 28.7%             |
|                                    | 41 – 50 years           | 43               | 25.1%             |
|                                    | 51 – 60 years           | 57               | 33.3%             |
|                                    | 61 – 70 years           | 7                | 4.1%              |
|                                    | Total                   | 171              | 100%              |
| Department                         | Production              | 77               | 45.0%             |
|                                    | Procurement & Logistics | 5                | 2.9%              |
|                                    | Maintenance             | 79               | 46.2%             |
|                                    | Finance                 | 2                | 1.2%              |

|                 |                        |     |        |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----|--------|
|                 | Information Technology | 6   | 3.5%   |
|                 | Human Resources        | 2   | 1.2%   |
|                 | Total                  | 171 | 100.0% |
| Work Experience | 1-5 years              | 21  | 12.3%  |
|                 | 6-10 years             | 23  | 13.5%  |
|                 | 11-15 years            | 34  | 19.9%  |
|                 | 16-20 years            | 18  | 10.5%  |
|                 | 21 years & above       | 75  | 43.9%  |
|                 | Total                  | 171 | 100%   |

*Source; field survey, 2024*

#### **4.2.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND NORMALITY TEST**

Skewness and kurtosis statistics are useful when data does not follow a normal distribution. The numbers show a wide range of values. The previous common errors are irrelevant to the current conversation, as they are only relevant when testing for normalcy. After removing any outlier data points, the researcher checked the remaining numbers to ensure they were within the predicted range. Hair Jr. *et al.* (2010) state that the normal distribution is a fundamental statistical assumption. In their discussion of statistical methods, Hair Jr. *et al.* (2010) define "normality" as the extent to which data distribution for each metric variable follows the standard normal distribution.

Hair Jr. *et al.* (2010), Kline (2011), and Tabachnick & Fidell (2013) used skewness and kurtosis statistical methods to ensure that the data was normal. Extraordinary skewness and kurtosis do not typically impact results when the sample size exceeds 200 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Kline (2011) states that kurtosis and absolute skewness ratings greater than 3 may indicate potential issues. Since normality is not always required for structural equation modelling data, the researcher in our study checked for skewness and kurtosis to identify any outliers. Kline (2011) states that skewness values

of +3 or 3 are suitable and that kurtosis values ideally should likewise be within this range. The residual errors exhibit an excess kurtosis ranging from -1.143 to 1.027 and a positive skewness from -0.562 to 0.507. Referring to Table 4.2, all the data points in this inquiry fulfilled the requirements for acceptable distributions, which include absolute skewness and kurtosis values below 3.

**Table 6: Measurement model and normality test**

| Variables                                         | Indicators | Loadings | Mean  | Standard deviation | Excess kurtosis | Skewness |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|-------|--------------------|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Turnover Intentions</b>                        | TIS1       | 0.816*** | 2.994 | 1.182              | -0.729          | -0.139   |
|                                                   | TIS2       | -        | 3.187 | 1.076              | -0.842          | 0.188    |
|                                                   | TIS3       | 0.713*** | 3.275 | 1.092              | -0.606          | -0.293   |
|                                                   | TIS4       | 0.824*** | 3.567 | 1.275              | -0.76           | -0.562   |
|                                                   | TIS5       | 0.772*** | 3.363 | 1.397              | -1.132          | -0.37    |
|                                                   | TIS6       | -        | 3.041 | 1.146              | -0.702          | 0.107    |
| <b>HRM PRACTICE EFFECTIVENESS</b>                 |            |          |       |                    |                 |          |
| <b>Supportive HR Practices</b>                    | SP1        | 0.635*** | 2.509 | 0.945              | -0.893          | -0.13    |
|                                                   | SP2        | 0.673*** | 2.035 | 0.936              | -0.823          | 0.448    |
|                                                   | SP3        | 0.672*** | 2.433 | 0.949              | -0.917          | 0.029    |
|                                                   | SP4        | 0.602*** | 2.31  | 0.881              | -0.903          | -0.081   |
|                                                   | SP5        | 0.736*** | 2.275 | 0.937              | -0.91           | 0.156    |
|                                                   | SP6        | 0.654*** | 2.678 | 0.959              | 0.34            | -0.318   |
|                                                   | SP7        | 0.549*** | 2.637 | 0.996              | -0.948          | -0.296   |
| <b>Implementation of Tailor-made Arrangements</b> | ITA1       | 0.948*** | 2.585 | 1.047              | -1.143          | -0.212   |
|                                                   | ITA2       | 0.954*** | 2.614 | 1.039              | -1.116          | -0.213   |
| <b>Support of Employees Commitment</b>            | SEC1       | 0.893*** | 3.257 | 1.126              | -0.67           | -0.299   |
|                                                   | SEC2       | 0.872*** | 3.064 | 1.16               | -0.908          | -0.013   |
|                                                   | SEC3       | 0.856*** | 3.17  | 1.17               | -0.778          | -0.291   |
|                                                   | SEC4       | 0.802*** | 2.86  | 1.249              | -0.992          | 0.033    |
| <b>Support of Employees 'career development</b>   | SED1       | 0.922*** | 2.497 | 1.268              | -0.832          | 0.441    |
|                                                   | SED2       | 0.918*** | 2.719 | 1.253              | -0.951          | 0.222    |
|                                                   | SED3       | 0.942*** | 2.602 | 1.259              | -0.968          | 0.254    |
|                                                   | SED4       | 0.908*** | 2.368 | 1.256              | -0.791          | 0.507    |
| <b>MANAGERS-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP</b>             |            |          |       |                    |                 |          |
| <b>Social Factor</b>                              | SF1        | -        | 3.789 | 1.415              | 0.44            | 0.216    |
|                                                   | SF2        | 0.762*** | 3.76  | 1.493              | 0.011           | 0.247    |
|                                                   | SF3        | 0.802*** | 3.655 | 1.411              | -0.095          | -0.112   |
|                                                   | SF4        | 0.780*** | 3.708 | 1.555              | -0.119          | -0.058   |

|                          |      |          |       |       |        |        |
|--------------------------|------|----------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
|                          | SF5  | 0.829*** | 3.871 | 1.353 | 0.53   | -0.078 |
|                          | SF6  | 0.811*** | 3.825 | 1.546 | 0.152  | 0.144  |
|                          | SF7  | 0.748*** | 4.392 | 1.484 | 0.222  | 0.267  |
|                          | SF8  | 0.823*** | 4.117 | 1.426 | 0.738  | 0.048  |
|                          | SF9  | 0.800*** | 4.105 | 1.455 | 0.521  | 0.194  |
|                          | SF10 | 0.820*** | 4.07  | 1.323 | 0.807  | 0.191  |
|                          | SF11 | 0.804*** | 3.959 | 1.352 | 0.769  | 0.189  |
|                          | SF12 | 0.795*** | 4.047 | 1.31  | 1.027  | 0.117  |
|                          | SF13 | 0.809*** | 3.971 | 1.408 | 0.857  | 0.078  |
|                          | SF14 | 0.789*** | 3.93  | 1.331 | 0.897  | 0.025  |
| <b>Compliance Factor</b> | CF1  | 0.878*** | 4.345 | 1.511 | -0.088 | 0.351  |
|                          | CF2  | 0.912*** | 4.404 | 1.501 | 0.092  | 0.219  |
|                          | CF3  | 0.915*** | 4.468 | 1.484 | 0.156  | 0.188  |
|                          | CF4  | 0.870*** | 4.339 | 1.487 | 0.256  | 0.112  |
|                          | CF5  | 0.909*** | 4.45  | 1.476 | 0.14   | 0.258  |

(Source: Field survey & computation, 2024)

NB: SF1, TIS2, TIS6 were deleted due to poor loadings.

### 4.3 RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The researcher used the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess each scale's reliability. The findings displayed in Table 4.3 indicate that all Cronbach's alpha values for intentions to quit (0.788), HR practice effectiveness (0.922), and employee-manager relations (0.962), all exceeding the threshold of 0.7. This indicates that the scales for these constructs are exemplary and reliable. The designated scales exhibit significant sample reliability. Furthermore, it was evidenced that sister indicators such as rho-A and composite reliability are also in support of being within the acceptance region.

The researcher conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the PLS algorithm after removing surveys with missing data or incomplete responses to ensure the measuring tools were accurate. Before proceeding to the structural model and hypothesis testing, we ensured that each construct's items were one-dimensional and estimated the measurement model using a CFA. Table 4.2 shows that the researcher was successful, ensuring that all measurement components had factor loadings greater than 0.5.

To ensure that the variables were convergently valid, the researcher used a confirmatory factor analysis together with the "Average Variance Extracted" (AVE). For this study, we

relied on composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. If the item's factor loading is greater than 0.5, it is considered legitimate, according to Wallace *et al.* (2022). According to Awang (2015), for an item to be considered for inclusion, its AVE must be at least 0.50. All values had an AVE greater than 0.5, except for the effectiveness of HR practices, which had an AVE of 0.460. It was generally asserted that if AVE is below 0.5 but sisters' indicators (CR, rho\_A) are above the threshold 0.7, there is still the presence of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017; Olaleye et al., 2024; Vetbuje & Olaleye, 2022).

**Table 7: Results of the reliability test**

| Factors and scales         | Items | Cronbach's Alphas | rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|----------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Employee-Manager Relations | 19    | 0.962             | 0.962 | 0.965                 | 0.608                            |
| HR Practice Effectiveness  | 17    | 0.922             | 0.935 | 0.933                 | 0.460                            |
| Intentions to quit         | 6     | 0.788             | 0.794 | 0.863                 | 0.612                            |

#### 4.3.1 DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Discriminant validity guarantees the dependability of capturing occurrences that are indeterminately measured by the other variables in the model (Ab Hamid *et al.*, 2017). The discriminant or convergent validity can be determined by comparing the AVE and CR values. When the square root of the AVE (values in bold style and diagonal) was greater than the correlation values of the constructs, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) were able to attain discriminant validity. Therefore, all constructs agreed with the assumption, establishing discriminant validity according to the Fornell and Larcker criterion.

**Table 8: Discriminant Validity of Variables (Fornell-Larcker criterion)**

| Constructs                       | EMR          | HRP          | TIS          |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employee-Manager Relations (EMR) | <b>0.780</b> |              |              |
| HR Practice Effectiveness (HRP)  | 0.584*       | <b>0.678</b> |              |
| Intentions to Quit (TIS)         | -0.494       | -0.475*      | <b>0.782</b> |

#### 4.3.2 QUALITY CRITERIA: GOODNESS OF FIT

SRMR converts both the sample covariance matrix and the anticipated covariance matrix into correlation matrices. Henseler *et al.* (2016) indicated that a value of less than 0.08 indicates a satisfactory fit. Henseler *et al.* (2014) introduced the SRMR as a goodness-of-fit metric for PLS-SEM to reduce the likelihood of model misspecification. Table 4.5 shows that the SRMR is 0.049, which is less than 0.08. Furthermore, NFI gives a value of 0.740, which is close to one, indicating the data matches the study model closely. Therefore, the model's correlation coefficient is sufficiently accurate to validate the hypothesis.

**Table 9: Model fit summary**

| Indicators | Saturated model |
|------------|-----------------|
| SRMR       | 0.049           |
| D_ULS      | 23.363          |
| d_G        | 6.112           |
| Chi-square | 12023.484       |
| NFI        | 0.740           |

#### 4.4 DIMENSION OF LINE MANAGER HRM IMPLEMENTATION AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION

**Table 10: Distribution based on perceived effectiveness of line manager HRM implementation**

| Component                                 | N   | Mean    | Std. Deviation | Rank            |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Supportive HR Practices                   | 171 | 16.8772 | 4.27745        | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Implementation of Tailor-made Arrangement | 171 | 5.1988  | 1.99003        | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| Support of Employees commitment           | 171 | 12.3509 | 4.03291        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Support of Employees career development   | 171 | 10.1871 | 4.65896        | 1 <sup>st</sup> |

Table 4.6 explicitly depict the line manager human resource management implementation practices using in measuring people management competency. Based on the average response from surveyed respondents, it was evidenced that the line manager greatly supports employees career development as HR implementation practice, followed by support for HR practices was ranked as the second choice, while support was provided

for employee's commitment as the third option and the implementation for tailor-made arrangement remains the last option for HMR practices.

Table 4.7 presents the distribution of the respondents' responses related to the employee turnover intentions. The results revealed that the majority (35.7%) has sometimes considered leaving their job and only few (14.6%) never consider this option. The highest portion (33.3%) has sometimes scanned for alternative job opportunities and only few (2.9%) never consider this. 33% of the respondents are satisfied with their job fulfilling their personal needs. The third of respondents (29.3%) feels frustrated when not achieving the personal goals, despite their often response to the fact that they are satisfied with job in fulfilling their personal needs, even though they often feel frustrated when unable to achieve goals, and it was reported that they sometimes considered leaving their job, sometimes dream of a job better suited to their needs.

**Table 11: Distribution is based on a statement regarding intentions to quit.**

| Statements                                                    | Never |      | Ever |      | Sometimes |      | Often |      | Always |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|--------|------|
|                                                               | Freq  | %    | Freq | %    | Freq      | %    | Freq  | %    | Freq   | %    |
| How often have you considered leaving your job?               | 25    | 14.6 | 27   | 15.8 | 61        | 35.7 | 40    | 23.4 | 18     | 10.5 |
| How frequently do you scan for alternative job opportunities? | 5     | 2.9  | 46   | 26.9 | 57        | 33.3 | 38    | 22.2 | 25     | 14.6 |
| How satisfying is your job in fulfilling personal needs?      | 11    | 6.4  | 31   | 18.1 | 50        | 29.2 | 58    | 33.9 | 21     | 12.3 |
| How often do you feel frustrated when                         | 15    | 8.8  | 23   | 13.5 | 33        | 19.3 | 50    | 29.2 | 50     | 29.2 |

|                                                              |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
| unable to achieve goals?                                     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |
| How often are your personal values compromised at work?      | 25 | 14.6 | 24 | 14.0 | 34 | 19.9 | 40 | 23.4 | 48 | 28.1 |
| How often do you dream of a job better suited to your needs? | 15 | 8.8  | 41 | 24.0 | 60 | 35.1 | 32 | 18.7 | 23 | 13.5 |

(Source: Field Study, 2024)

#### **4.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF LINE MANAGERS' HRM IMPLEMENTATION AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTIONS**

The Multiple linear regression analysis was used to achieve the second objective, which emphasises assessing the link between the dimensions of HR practices: supportive HR practices, implementation of tailor-made arrangements, support of employee commitment, and support of employee career development, and employee turnover intentions among steel industry employees in South Africa. Table 4.8 displays the regression analysis results on the perceived effective HR implementation practices and employee turnover intentions.

The relationship proves that out of the perceived effectiveness of line managers' HR implementation in line with the people management competencies scale, only supportive HR practices remain significant and negatively related to employee intentions to quit their jobs. Supportive HR practices showed a strong negative correlation with employee turnover intentions with a quantified value of -0.250 and a significance level of 5%. This indicates that a unit increase in support for HR practices reduced employee intentions to quit. Meanwhile, other constructs of the dimension, ITA, SEC, and SED, remain insignificant. The R-squared value quantifies the correlation of this variable at 0.134, while the adjusted R-square revealed value of 0.113, indicating that significant HR practice

implementation satisfies turnover intentions, leading to an estimated 11.3 percent decrease in employee turnover intentions, showing 88.7 percent accrued to other variables not accounted for, that is, due to unmeasured variables.

**Table 12: regression analysis between HR practices and turnover intention**

| Model                                                           | Unstandardised Coefficients |            | Standardised Coefficients | t      | Sig.  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
|                                                                 | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |       |
| (Constant)                                                      | 24.075                      | 0.970      |                           | 24.822 | 0.000 |
| Supportive HR practices                                         | -0.185                      | 0.070      | -0.250                    | -2.631 | 0.009 |
| ITA                                                             | -0.157                      | 0.162      | -0.099                    | -0.966 | 0.336 |
| SEC                                                             | -0.116                      | 0.093      | -0.148                    | -1.249 | 0.213 |
| SED                                                             | 0.071                       | 0.072      | 0.105                     | 0.985  | 0.326 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Turnover intentions (Intentions to quit) |                             |            |                           |        |       |

Note: SP- supportive HR practices; ITA - Implementation of tailor-made arrangements; SEC - support of employee's career development; SED - support of employee's commitment

**Table 13: model summary of regression analysis between HRM practices and employees' intention to quit.**

| Model                                        | R                 | R-Square | Adjusted R-Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1                                            | .366 <sup>a</sup> | .134     | .113              | 2.97746                    |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), SP, ITA, SEC, SED |                   |          |                   |                            |

**Table 14: ANOVA result of regression analysis between HRM practices and employees' intention to quit**

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup> |
|--------------------|
|--------------------|

| Model                                        |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.               |
|----------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|--------------------|
| 1                                            | Regression | 228.206        | 4   | 57.052      | 6.435 | <.001 <sup>b</sup> |
|                                              | Residual   | 1471.630       | 166 | 8.865       |       |                    |
|                                              | Total      | 1699.836       | 170 |             |       |                    |
| a. Dependent Variable: turnover intentions   |            |                |     |             |       |                    |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), SP, ITA, SEC, SED |            |                |     |             |       |                    |

#### 4.6 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Researchers utilised underlying models to assess the instrument's causal constructs and analysed the measurement models in the study. We obtained estimates of the path coefficient, R-squared, t statistic, p-value, and  $f^2$  by employing 5000 bootstrapping resampling procedures. The researcher has examined how HR practices and employees-managers relation affect the employees' turnover intentions in the steel industry, both directly and indirectly.

Table 4.11 displays the results of all tests pertaining to the structural model and the hypothesis relationship. H1 is accepted because, as shown in Table 4.11, HR practice has a significant and negative relationship with employee turnover intentions ( $\beta = -0.283$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3.317$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and insignificantly impacted employee-manager relation ( $\beta = 0.002$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 1.403$ ,  $p > .05$ ), negating the support for the acceptance of H2. In addition, H3 is approved because the results show that employee-manager relation significantly disimprove employee's intentions to quit ( $\beta = -0.328$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3.885$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Both HRP and EMR can explain a total of 29.7% of the variation in employees' turnover intentions, while 70.3% remains unexplained due to factors unaccounted for in this study. Thus, it implies that the variables had a low explanatory predictive power (see figure 1).

Meanwhile, employee-manager relation is said to have a low and insignificant mediating effect on the link HR practice and employee turnover intentions (H4:  $\beta = -0.001$ ,  $t = 1.404$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Finally, since the substantive significance ( $f^2$ ) lies within the range of 0.02-0.15,

all the reported direct pathways exhibit a low impact size. Thus, the evaluation of the model fit revealed that it was correct.

**Table 15: Results of the path analysis**

| Relationship                           | Std. Beta | Std. Error | T-statistic | p-value  | F <sup>2</sup> | R <sup>2</sup> | Decision |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| H1: HRP→ TIS                           | -0.283    | 0.085      | 3.317       | 0.001*** | 0.075          | 0.297          | S        |
| H2: HRP→ EMR                           | 0.002     | 0.001      | 1.403       | 0.161    | 0.059          | 0.311          | NS       |
| H3: EMR→ TIS                           | -0.328    | 0.085      | 3.885       | 0.000*** | 0.101          | 0.297          | S        |
| Indirect effect (mediational analysis) |           |            |             |          |                |                |          |
| H4: HRP →<br>EMR → TIS                 | -0.001    | 0.002      | 1.404       | 0.160    |                |                | NS       |

(Source: Field survey and researcher computations)

S- supported; NS- Not supported.

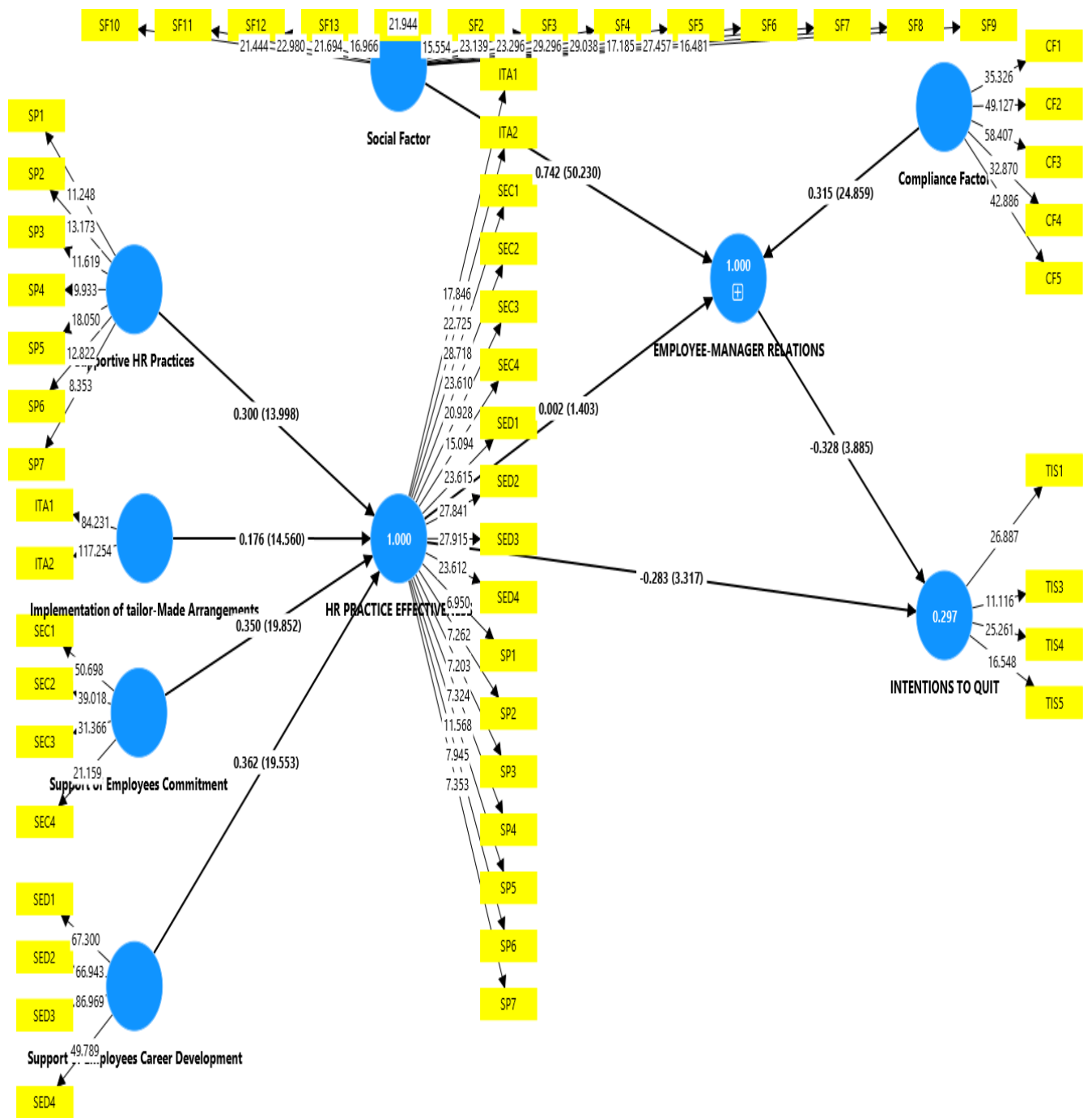


**Figure 2: Path analysis and T-statistics (Source: Statistic service computations)**

#### 4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presents the empirical data-based research findings. The data analysis aimed to address the issues (objectives and research questions) discussed and presented in the first chapter. After running the raw data via SPSS and SMARTPLS, a

statistical tool for the social sciences, the researcher updated the tables with the results. After this chapter, you will find the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5      SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims to review the findings from the data analysis and highlight the recommendations for the steel industry. The individual research questions are, therefore, considered based on the results obtained. The theories around the different constructs and their contribution to the study are also contextualised. The managerial implications for the steel industry and study limitations are also discussed. Positive results are highlighted, as well as areas of potential improvement. A conclusion will be drawn based on all available information, and the areas of future research will be proposed.

### **5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Out of the 171 employees reporting to line managers, 86 % were men and 13% women which is line the steel industry gender ratios. The age category with the highest representation was 51 to 60 followed by 31 to 40. The oldest and youngest age categories had the weakest representation. Most respondents belong to either production or maintenance (90% combined) operating units with the lowest representation from human resources and finance. The respondents are highly experienced, with the majority (44%) having 21 and higher years of service and falling into the Engineers/Technicians grading (61%).

### **5.3 RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS**

The reliability of each measuring scale was evaluated by using Cronbach's alpha. The 6-item turnover intention scale measured a Cronbach's alpha of 0.788, which is aligned with the literature value of 0.8 proposed by Bothma and Roodt (2013). The 17-item people management scale measured a Cronbach's alpha of 0.922, slightly higher than the literature value of 0.86 Knies et al. (2020) proposed. The manager-employee relationship scale measured a Cronbach's alpha of 0.962, which is close to the value of 0.969 proposed by Potgieter *et al.* (2015 ). Overall, the scales used in this study exhibit high internal consistency, as illustrated by Cronbach's alpha well above 0.7. Therefore, the

instruments used to measure turnover intention, people management, and manager-employee relationships are valid and reliable in the context of the steel industry.

#### **5.4 DISCUSSION OF TURNOVER INTENTION, PEOPLE MANAGEMENT, AND MANAGER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP LEVELS IN THE STEEL INDUSTRY**

The three measuring instruments used a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate respondents' opinions, behaviour, or attitudes. The response can indicate a frequency of behaviour, a likelihood, or how important something is. The response ranges from 1 for "strongly disagree" or "Never" to 5 for "strongly agree" or "always". A median score of 3 is considered a neutral opinion or undecided.

The turnover intention scale (TIS) consisted of 6-item questions. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4.2. TIS1(M=2.994, SD =1.182) was slightly below the midpoint, suggesting that while employees moderately consider leaving their jobs, it is not a predominant sentiment. TS2 (M=3.817, SD =1.076) was above the midpoint, highlighting that employees find their job to moderately to high satisfaction their personal needs. TIS3 (M=3.275, SD =1.092) indicates that employees occasionally feel frustrated about not achieving personal goals. TIS4 (M = 3.567, SD = 1.275) indicates a noticeable tendency for employees to dream about another job and the higher standard deviation implies a significant variability. TIS5 (M = 3.363, SD = 1.397) indicates a moderate likelihood that employees might accept another job at the same pay. Still, the higher standard deviation indicates that some employees might accept the offer right away whereas others might be less inclined. TIS6 (M = 3.041, SD = 1.146), slightly above the midpoint, indicates that the enthusiasm for work is not very high. Overall, the turnover intention risk is moderate in the steel industry, with employees often thinking about alternative jobs and expressing some interest if another opportunity arises.

The people management scale is made of four dimensions, as presented in Table 2, with means value and standard deviations. The supportive HR practices (M=2.411, SD= 0.943) are below the midpoint, indicating that employees perceived HR practices as inadequately supportive and were mostly dissatisfied with HR practices implementation. The Implementation of tailor-made arrangements (M =2.599, SD= 1.043) show that the employees perceived their supervisors as less inclined to adapt the working conditions to their personal situation. The support of employees' commitment illustrates the

supervisor's support and interest in employees' performance (M=3.257) and acknowledgement of good work (M=3.17). However, there is limited attention in workload management (M=2.86). The last dimension of people management is the Support of employees' career development which is poorly executed by supervisors not committed to employees' career growth.

The manager-employee relationship scale comprises 14 social factors and 5 compliance factors. The results of mean and standard deviation in Table 14.2 show that, on average, social factors (M=3.943, SD= 1.419) are significantly above the midpoint, which implies that employees perceived the quality of their relationship with managers as satisfactory and positive. The higher standard deviation reflects the shift in this view among employees. Compliance factors (M=4.401, SD= 1.492) indicate the employees' perception of the organisation as well as compliant with policies and legal requirements, which improves the employment relationship.

## **5.5 DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF LINE MANAGERS' HRM IMPLEMENTATION AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTIONS**

Several studies have investigated this subject, and the consensus is in line with Sikora and Ferris (2014:281) findings that HR implementation by line managers influences critical employee outcomes such as turnover intentions. According to Aray (2008), a reduction in turnover intention is achieved when a high level of HRM practices is perceived. The social exchange theory and the Job embeddedness theory are the primary theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between turnover intention and people management effectiveness.

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted between the dimensions of people management competency and turnover intention. The dimensions of people management competency are made of supportive HR practices (SP), Implementation of tailor-made arrangements (ITA), support of employee's career development (SEC), and support of employee's commitment (SEC). Out of these four dimensions, only Supporting HR practices was found to be related to turnover intention. A negative correlation was established between turnover intention and Supporting HR practices ( $\beta = -0.250$ ,  $p < .05$ ). therefore, increased supporting HR practices reduces the employee's intention to quit.

The R-squared suggests an 11.3% decrease in turnover intention is due to the implementation of HR practices. This finding indicates that while supporting HR practices is somewhat linked to turnover intention, other factors might be more crucial in reducing turnover intention. This insight is vital for organisations focusing on supporting HR practices, as it implies the need to explore other variables. In contrast, the relationship is insignificant with different dimensions of people management as illustrated by the  $\beta$ -value of ITA ( $\beta = -0.099$ ), SEC ( $\beta = -0.148$ ), and SED ( $\beta = -0.072$ ). These findings also provide insight into the variable to be accounted for to understand the employee's turnover intention.

## **5.6 DISCUSSION OF THE MODERATOR ROLE OF MANAGER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTIONS**

The quality of the relationship between managers and employees can either weaken or improve the effect of HR practice on employee retention. According to Suknunan and Bhana (2022), a positive manager-employee relationship is linked to an increase in performance and motivation, with job performance significantly predicted by the perception of employee relationships with managers. Furthermore, a comprehensive study on the desirable employment relationship condition has identified good faith, trust, fairness, and justice as essential variables for desired supervisory relationship (Ehlers, 2013:48). The significance of the manager-employee relationship as a mediator in the relationship between turnover intention and the effectiveness of HRM implementation by LM is critical for the organisation's strategy to focus on the manager-employee engagement to mitigate any employee intention to quit.

Causal analysis was conducted using models to examine how HR practices and the employee-manager relationship affect employees' turnover intentions in the steel industry, both directly and indirectly. The structural model equation was used to test for the hypothesis relationship, and the 5000 bootstrapping resampling procedure was used to estimate the path coefficients.

HR practice has a significant and negative relationship with employee turnover intentions ( $\beta = -0.283$ ,  $t$ -value = 3.317,  $p < .05$ ) but HR practice has an insignificant relationship with

employee-manager relation ( $\beta = 0.002$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 1.403$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Furthermore, employee-manager relation has a significantly negative relationship with employee's intentions to quit ( $\beta = -0.328$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3.885$ ,  $p < .05$ ). These results implies that an increase in line manager HRM implementation reduces the employee's turnover intention and an increase in employee-manager relationship (EMR) also decreases the employee's turnover intention. However, it is vital to note that HRP in this context and EMR do not fully explain the variation in turnover intention. These findings are essential for the steel industry as they provide a set of information needed to develop a retention strategy that addresses a broader range of employee needs and concerns.

The indirect effect analysis showed that the mediating effect of the employee-manager relationship was low and insignificant (H4:  $\beta = -0.001$ ,  $t = 1.404$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded in this context that the mediator role in this study was not established. This can be attributed to several factors influencing the workplace dynamic, such as organisational culture, the direct effect of HRM practices, and external factors affecting employees' decisions.

## **5.7 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results and findings discussed in this chapter, several managerial implications and recommendations are available for the steel industry to consider.

The turnover intention measured indicates a concern for employee retention. The steel industry must focus on retention strategies, including mentorship, incentives, and implementation of HR practices from both specialists and managers. The findings also highlight a shortfall in terms of employees' motivation and engagement. The variability in responses reflects the difference in experience between roles and teams. Additionally, growth opportunities should be enhanced by providing clear career progression paths, and managers should focus on employee engagement, such as recognition programs, opportunities for professional development and team-building activities.

The steel industry must address the low level of people management practices measured. Employee expectations are not met in terms of HR practices and supervisory efforts. Supervisors do not address workload and career growth needs adequately, which may fuel frustration. Therefore, focus groups should be conducted to discuss and address HR

practices that employees find inadequate. Line managers should be provided training to equip them with skills to balance personnel functioning, interest in work performance, and workload management.

The significant relationship between supportive HR practice and turnover intention means that improving this practice can lower employees' turnover intentions. However, other factors contribute to turnover intention. The steel industry should strengthen supportive HR practices by enhancing employees' benefits and improving policy implementation.

The absence of mediating effects implies that EMR and HR practice independently reduce turnover intention. The steel industry must foster a strong EMR, improve HR practices, and include these two dimensions in a retention framework that provides for manager support, growth opportunities, and competitive benefits.

By implementing these recommendations, the steel industry can effectively retain talents and reduce turnover intention, ultimately improving performance and favourable outcomes in a competitive market.

## **5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study used a cross-sectional design and a quantitative research method. A limitation of the study was the data reliability, which depended on the respondents' honesty and objectivity. 44% of the respondents have 21 years and more of experience. The respondents could have subjective perceptions about TI, EMR, and PM. The respondents indicated a moderate level of TI, which does not correlate with the high level of actual turnover in the steel industry. Another limitation was the data collected from six departments in the steel industry. To generalise the findings to all sectors, it would be necessary to conduct a more extensive survey including many organizations with different HRM structures. The last limitation was that line managers' HRM implementation was solely based on employees' opinions. While it is obvious that employees are experiencing daily line managers HRM implementation, two stakeholders that could provide insight into line managers HRP are senior managers and HR Professionals. Involving these two parties in the survey can lead to different outcomes regarding the effectiveness of HRM implementation.

## **5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The research highlighted key relationships between TI, EMR, and HRP but indicated gaps in fully explaining TI. Based on the discussion of the results, future research could investigate other factors that influence TI because only a portion of TI is explained by EMR and HR practice. Adding other factors influencing turnover intention, such as work-life balance, job satisfaction, and external job market conditions, could provide a more comprehensive understanding. This study did not include compensation and rewards, which are key drivers of turnover intention. A recommendation for future research would be to explore the mediating effects of financial rewards on the relationship between HR practice and TI.

The mediator role of EMR was found to be insignificant. Therefore, a moderator such as demography could be considered in future studies. In this study, the variability in response characterised by a higher standard deviation implies different perceptions among employees. Future research could, therefore, explore the effects of demographic variables such as education and roles on HRP and ERM. Future research could also consider using a qualitative method to capture the distinctive reasons for TI through interviews.

## **5.10 CONCLUSION**

The respondents' demographic characteristics were evaluated to understand the study context. The measuring instruments (TI, MER, HR practice) exhibited high internal indicating reliability and validity for the steel industry. The turnover intention level was moderate, with employees often thinking about alternative jobs. A low level of people management practices was measured, and employee expectations regarding HR practices and supervisory efforts were not met. The level of manager and employee relationship was satisfactory and positive. A significant negative relationship between supportive HR practice and turnover intention was found, but the mediating effect of the employee-manager relationship was low and insignificant. Based on these findings, a set of recommendations for the steel industry was established.

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## ANNEXURES A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete all the questions in the four sections. The first section is about demographic information, and the other sections respectively measure turnover intention, people management, and the perceived employment relationship quality. The process is completely anonymous, and you can withdraw yourself from the study at any time. Please answer the following questions truthfully by marking the most applicable response by marking “X”

### Section 1- Demography

|               |      |        |               |  |  |
|---------------|------|--------|---------------|--|--|
| <b>Gender</b> | Male | Female | Not specified |  |  |
|               |      |        |               |  |  |

|                          |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Your age Category</b> | 20-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 |
|                          |       |       |       |       |       |

|                       |            |                          |    |    |         |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------|----|----|---------|
| <b>Operation unit</b> | production | maintenance              | IT | HR | Finance |
|                       | HR         | Procurement and logistic |    |    |         |

|                |       |       |       |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Grading</b> | K4/I3 | J4/I2 | I4/H3 | H4/H2 | M4/H1 |
|                |       |       |       |       |       |

|                |       |  |  |  |  |
|----------------|-------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Grading</b> | S3/S4 |  |  |  |  |
|                |       |  |  |  |  |

|                            |     |      |       |       |            |
|----------------------------|-----|------|-------|-------|------------|
| <b>Years of experience</b> | 1-5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 15-20 | 21- higher |
|                            |     |      |       |       |            |

### Section -2 Turnover intention

On a scale from 1 to 5, tick with a “X” the extent to which the statement is applicable to you.

#### Turnover intention scale (TIS)

For the past 9 months

|                                                               |               |   |   |   |   |   |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
|                                                               |               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |            |
| How often have you considered leaving your job                | Never         |   |   |   |   |   | Always     |
| How satisfying is your job in fulfilling your personal needs? | Dissatisfying |   |   |   |   |   | Satisfying |

|                                                                                                                  |                 |  |  |  |  |  |               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|---------------|
| How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals? | Never           |  |  |  |  |  | Always        |
| How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?                      | Never           |  |  |  |  |  | Always        |
| How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?             | Highly unlikely |  |  |  |  |  | Highly likely |
| How often do you look forward to another day at work?                                                            |                 |  |  |  |  |  |               |

### Section 3- People Management

| People Management (Effectiveness of HRM Implementation by Line Managers Scale) |                                                                                              |       |   |   |        |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---|---|--------|--------|
| <b>Supportive HR practices</b>                                                 |                                                                                              |       |   |   |        |        |
|                                                                                | I experience the following HR practices as being implemented to support me                   | Never |   |   |        | Always |
|                                                                                | (1) training and development                                                                 | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | (2) transition to another job                                                                | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | (3) appraisal                                                                                | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | (4) compensation and benefits                                                                | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | (5) changes in job design (e.g. changes in tasks, career advice)                             | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | (6) vitality (e.g. prevention and health)                                                    | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | (7) work-life balance (e.g. flexible hours, leave, working from home)                        | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
| <b>Implementation of tailor-made arrangements</b>                              |                                                                                              |       |   |   |        |        |
|                                                                                |                                                                                              | Never |   |   | Always |        |
|                                                                                | My supervisor tailor's employment conditions to my personal situation                        | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | My supervisor tailor's employment conditions to my individual needs so I can do a better job | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
| <b>Support of employees' commitment</b>                                        |                                                                                              |       |   |   |        |        |
|                                                                                |                                                                                              | Never |   |   | Always |        |
|                                                                                | My supervisor shows an interest in how I do my job                                           | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | My supervisor shows an interest in my personal functioning                                   | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | if my supervisor appreciates the job done by me, he/she does not let this pass unnoticed     | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
|                                                                                | My supervisor asks me if I can manage my job                                                 | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |
| <b>Support of employees' career development</b>                                |                                                                                              |       |   |   |        |        |
|                                                                                |                                                                                              | Never |   |   | Always |        |
|                                                                                | My supervisor informs me about opportunities for training and development                    | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4      | 5      |

|  |                                                                              |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | My supervisor offers me opportunities to participate in training             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | My supervisor supports me in utilizing opportunities for vertical mobility   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | My supervisor supports me in utilizing opportunities for horizontal mobility | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

#### Section 4- Perceived employment relationship quality

| Measure for Perceived Employment Relationship Quality (PERQ)                |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|-------|----------------|
|                                                                             | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Disagree slightly | Undecided | Agree slightly | Agree | Strongly agree |
|                                                                             | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4         | 5              | 6     | 7              |
| My supervisor shows good faith by acting in my best interests               |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| I trust my supervisor to make decision in my best interests.                |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| I trust my supervisor to make decisions on my behalf.                       |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor will stand by me when I am in trouble.                        |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor deals with differences in a constructive manner               |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor gives equal treatment to me and my co-workers.                |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor treats me with respect                                        |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor is honest with me                                             |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor does not show prejudice when we interact.                     |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor gives good reasons to justify his work decisions and actions. |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor's actions and decisions in the workplace are consistent       |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor really tries to reach reasonable agreements with me           |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor is fair.                                                      |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor makes informed decisions with regard to my work               |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor adheres to the labour laws that apply to our workplace        |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor applies workplace rules and codes correctly                   |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor follows workplace policies, codes, rules, and procedures      |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor adheres to the conditions in my employment contract           |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |
| My supervisor complies with employment laws                                 |                   |          |                   |           |                |       |                |

## ANNEXURES B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222  
Fax: 018 299-4910  
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Senate Committee for Research Ethics**  
Tel: 018 299-484  
Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

20 June 2024

### ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)** on, 20/06/2024 the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

**Study title:** management implementation by line managers on intention to quit in the Steel industry. The mediator role of the manager-employee relationship.

**Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher:** Prof Petrus Botha

**Student:** H. Ateba-Olinga (35195258)

|             |   |   |              |   |   |   |   |   |      |   |        |   |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|--------|---|---|---|
| N           | W | U | -            | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 4 | -    | 2 | 4      | - | A | 4 |
| Institution |   |   | Study Number |   |   |   |   |   | Year |   | Status |   |   |   |

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

**Application Type:**

**Commencement date:** 20/06/2024

**Risk:**

Minimal

**Expiry date:** 20/06/2025

**Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.**

**Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):**

•

#### General conditions:

*While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:*

- The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:
  - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
  - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.  
*n the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:*

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

*AL Bevan-Dye*

**Prof Ayesha L. Bevan-Dye**  
**Deputy Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics**  
**Committee**

## 6. ANNEXURE C: Permission to conduct research.



Date: 3 May 2024

Attention: General Manager Human Resources

Email: [Ateba.hubert@arcelormittal.com](mailto:Ateba.hubert@arcelormittal.com)

### LETTER OF AUTHORITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING

This letter serves to confirm that **Ateba Olinga Hubert**, an employee of ArcelorMittal South Africa Limited ("**Disclosing Party**"), with Identity Number: 8112115976180 and employee number: 10011530 ("**Receiving Party**"), and whose further details are set out in Annexure A, has been granted the permission by the Disclosing Party to collect, share and disclose information relating to employees ("**AMSA Data**") for purposes of conducting a study or research and to complete assessments for Master of Business Administration (the "**Project**") to North West University Business School, including professors, mentors, or lecturers responsible for overseeing the Project and who have signed the confidentiality undertaking set out in Annexure B ("**Permitted Recipients**").

For purposes of this Undertaking, "**Confidential Information**" means without limiting the generality of the term the AMSA Data, any technical, security, commercial, financial, scientific, marketing or business information and know-how, including without limitation, the trade secrets, software, marketing strategies, information relating to shareholders or subsidiary companies, clients and/or supplier lists, processes, machinery, designs, drawings, technical specifications and data in whatever form, which information is communicated to the Receiving Party, or otherwise acquired by the Receiving Party from AMSA, during the course of the Parties' relationship and during the Parties' commercial interactions, discussions and negotiations with one another, whether such information is formally designated as confidential or not.

The authority granted in terms of this letter is made subject to the undertaking by the Receiving Party that the Receiving Party:

1. ensure that no personal information of employees of the Disclosing Party is used or published in connection with the Project, and in this regard the Receiving Party represent to AMSA that he/she is aware of AMSA data privacy policies, the data protection laws as well as the online training on data protection available to employees and undertake to comply with all policies and laws in relation to any personal information provided to the Receiving Party or to which the Receiving party will receive or have access to pursuant to this Agreement;
2. undertakes to use all reasonable steps to keep the Confidential Information which is in physical form (including in electronic media) secure;

shall be treated as confidential in accordance with the terms of this undertaking;

27. agree that no waiver or modification of this undertaking will be binding upon either party unless made in writing and signed by a duly authorized representative of each party and no failure or delay in enforcing any right will be deemed a waiver. In the event that any of the provisions of this undertaking shall be held by a court or other tribunal of competent jurisdiction to be unenforceable, the remaining portions hereof shall remain in full force and effect;
28. agree that if any provision of this undertaking is found by a competent tribunal in a non-appealable decision to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions of this undertaking shall be unaffected;
29. agree that this undertaking shall be governed, interpreted and implemented in accordance with the substantive laws of South Africa (and if the prescription laws of South Africa are not considered to be substantive laws thereof, by the prescription laws as well but excluding its conflict of law principles);
30. agree that any dispute arising from or in connection with this undertaking (other than where an interdict is sought or urgent relief may be obtained from a Court of competent jurisdiction) shall be finally resolved in accordance with the rules of the Arbitration Foundation of Southern Africa by an arbitrator or arbitrators appointed thereby. The arbitrator's award shall be final and binding upon us.

#### EXECUTION

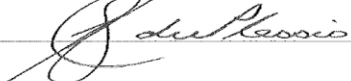
By or for and on behalf of: ATEBA OLINGA HUBERT

Signature:   
who warrants that he is duly authorised thereto

Name: Ateba Olinga Hubert

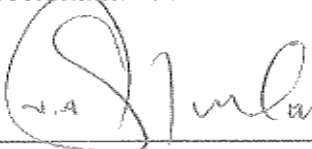
Date: 2024-05-03

Place: Vanderbijlpark

Witness: 

#### SIGNED AND ACCEPTED THE BENEFITS HEREOF

For and behalf of ArcelorMittal South Africa Limited

Signature:   
who warrants that he / she is duly authorised thereto

Name: Vusi Sampula

Date: 08/05/2024

Place:

Witness: 

## **7. ANNEXURE D: Consent form**

### **Consent Form for Participation in Research Study**

**Title of Study:** Investigate the Influence of Employees' Perceived Effectiveness of Human Resources Management Implementation by Line Managers on Intention to Quit in the Steel Industry: The Mediator Role of the Manager-Employee Relationship

**Researcher:** Ateba Olinga Hubert

**Institution:** North-West University, South Africa

**Program:** Master's in Business Administration

Dear Participant,

My name is Ateba Olinga Hubert, and I am conducting a research study titled "Investigate the Influence of Employees' Perceived Effectiveness of Human Resources Management Implementation by Line Managers on Intention to Quit in the Steel Industry: The Mediator Role of the Manager-Employee Relationship" as part of my master's in business administration at North-West University in South Africa. The purpose of this document is to inform you about the study and what your participation would involve. Please read this form carefully before deciding whether to participate.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to explore how the implementation of human resources management (HRM) by line managers affects employees' intention to quit their jobs in the steel industry, considering the mediating role of the quality of the manager-employee relationship.

#### **Participant Involvement**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about people management, your intention to leave your job, and your perceptions of the quality of your relationship with your manager. Completing the questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes.

#### **Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, any data collected from you will be discarded.

#### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Following the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act), your data's privacy and confidentiality will be protected. Your responses will be anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be collected. Data will be stored securely and accessed only by the research team for the purpose of this study. Measures will be taken to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of your personal information.

### **Ethics Approval**

This study has been reviewed and approved by the North-West University Ethics Committee, approval no. [NWU-00604-24-A4].

### **Access to Data and Publications**

The results of this study may be published in academic journals or presented at conferences. However, all published data will be aggregated, and no individual participant will be identifiable.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact me at 35195258@mynwu.ac.za or on my cell phone at 076 866 6051.

### **Consent**

By completing the questionnaire, you indicate that you have read this consent form, understand the information provided, and agree to participate in this research study under the terms described.

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

Best regards,

Ateba Olinga Hubert

## 8. ANNEXURES E: Language Editor



### CERTIFICATE: LANGUAGE EDITING

Herein, confirmation that the following document was edited:

---

#### MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

##### Title

Investigating HRM practice effectiveness, manager-employee relationships, and turnover intention in South African steel industry

**H ATEBA-OLINGA**

**Student number: 35195258**

---

The following was edited according to requirements, subject to NWU Harvard Guidelines:

*Clarity and coherence, grammar, punctuation, consistency of style, citations and references, formatting and layout, word choice and clarity, consistency of terminology, and readability*

( Academic integrity of the document was upheld and final changes and suggestions must be made by the student.  
Editing check sheet annexed as page 2 of this certificate)

*W. Smith*

Registered Psychometrist  
HPCSA: PMT0097012

*R du Plessis*

Ethical Editing Advisor

## EDITING CHECK SHEET

| Clarity and coherence                                                                 | EDITOR REMARKS                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Paper was presented clearly and in a coherent manner<br>Logical flow of information   | Checked                                                         |
| Grammar and punctuation                                                               |                                                                 |
| Grammatical errors, subject-verb agreements, grammar consistency and punctuation      | Checked                                                         |
| Consistent Style                                                                      |                                                                 |
| Writing style, consistency in tone, voice and formatting                              | Checked                                                         |
| Citations and References                                                              |                                                                 |
| Harvard Referencing style applied                                                     | Checked with suggestions                                        |
| Formatting and Layout                                                                 |                                                                 |
| According to specific formatting guidelines (Arial 12pt, Line Spacing 1.5, Justified) | Checked with amendments.<br>Assisted checking with template TOC |
| Word choice and clarity                                                               |                                                                 |
| Precise and appropriate use of words                                                  | Checked                                                         |
| Consistency in Terminology                                                            | Checked                                                         |
| Objective and Tone                                                                    | Checked                                                         |
| Review Figures and tables                                                             |                                                                 |
| Check the accuracy of placement and alignment<br>Ensure properly labelled             | Checked                                                         |
| Abstract and Conclusion                                                               |                                                                 |
| Grammar, spelling, flow and layout                                                    | Checked                                                         |
| Readability                                                                           |                                                                 |
| Overall readability<br>Headings, subheadings and bullet points<br>Use of paragraphs   | Checked                                                         |

## 9. ANNEXURES F: Turnitin Summary Report

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |              |                |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 35195258:Tur.docx  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |              |                |
| ORIGINALITY REPORT |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |              |                |
| 10%                | 5%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 7%           | 3%             |
| SIMILARITY INDEX   | INTERNET SOURCES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | PUBLICATIONS | STUDENT PAPERS |
| PRIMARY SOURCES    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |              |                |
| 1                  | www.mdpi.com<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <1 %         |                |
| 2                  | fms.rjt.ac.lk<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <1 %         |                |
| 3                  | Willem Potgieter, Chantal Olckers, Lukas Ehlers. "Development of a measure for perceived employment relationship quality (PERQ)", African Journal of Employee Relations (Formerly South African Journal of Labour Relations), 2019<br>Publication | <1 %         |                |
| 4                  | Submitted to Trinity College Dublin<br>Student Paper                                                                                                                                                                                              | <1 %         |                |
| 5                  | Submitted to Girne American University<br>Student Paper                                                                                                                                                                                           | <1 %         |                |
| 6                  | repository.uin-suska.ac.id<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <1 %         |                |
| 7                  | Pinzon, Enrique Alfredo. "Relationship Between Organizational Learning Culture and                                                                                                                                                                | <1 %         |                |