



# Decent Work, Employee Empowerment and Retention: The Case of the Zimbabwean Small and Medium Scale Gold Mining Sector

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## ABSTRACT

The small and medium gold mining companies in Zimbabwe are grappling with incidences of high labour turnover and this has affected productivity leading to loss of revenue. This article sought to investigate the relationship between employee empowerment, decent work and employment retention in the Zimbabwean small and medium scale gold mining sector in the Midlands Province. Using a convenient sampling technique, quantitative data for this study was collected from 270 employees in the Zimbabwean small and medium scale gold mining sector. The findings show robust interrelationships among the variables, indicating their substantial contributions to explaining the variation in the measured constructs. The findings highlight that employee empowerment positively correlates with employee retention and decent work. On the other hand, decent work fosters high employee morale through the provision of decent salaries and other fringe benefits. Decent work is also positively associated with employee retention. This study contributes to the existing literature on employee motivation in the context of the Zimbabwean mining sector. First, the research has brought to the fore strategies for attaining top talent in the Zimbabwean mining sector. Secondly, the study informs government policy on the labour needs of the mining sector.

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## INTRODUCTION

High labour turnover has created a crisis within the mining sector as organisations are failing to meet their set targets. Despite the Zimbabwean gold mining industry in particular being regarded as the cornerstone of economic growth, it has been haemorrhaged by skills flight. Thus, the leaders of mining firms in the small and medium gold mining sector ought to come up with survival strategies in ab id to remain afloat. Employees are key assets to any organisation and hence they should be effectively motivated.<sup>1</sup> Retaining top talent is crucial for organizational success as stability and continuity is guaranteed. Therefore, by retaining employees, mining firms' organizations maintain stability and continuity in their operations. Familiarity with the organization's goals, processes, and values contributes to consistency in the workplace.

<sup>1</sup> Omar Mohammed Ali Ababneh, "Team Engagement for Boosting Team Innovative Behaviour in Small and Medium Enterprises: An Integrating Framework of Attitudinal and Trait-Related Determinants," *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 2023, 14657503231156876.

The small and medium gold mining sector looks bleak unless viable motivational strategies are not only enacted by the management but also operationalised in the sector. Ghani et al. opine that retaining key personnel is absolutely essential for the health and success of an organization as it enables the firm to reduce costs.<sup>2</sup> This in turn leads to increases revenue for the Zimbabwean government. Durra affirms that high-performing talent is significantly more productive.<sup>3</sup> Studies show that top performers can be up to eight times more productive than average employees. Prioritizing talent retention reduces turnover costs. Recruiting, onboarding, and training new employees can be expensive. Thus, retaining existing talent helps save resources.

In the past twenty years decent work has been put as a global agenda with the thrust of addressing a plethora of ills in the business arena, hence it vies for the promotion of social justice in political, social, and economic development.<sup>4</sup> Employees need to be treated with dignity and respect for them to commit themselves fully. Thus, mining organisations should strive for the promotion of decent work in the work places. The notion of decent work has been granted legitimacy as a distinctive concept for four reasons. First, decent work is proposed by the ILO as a new lens for reviewing conditions of work, which is enlisted as one of the fundamental goals to call for collective actions in a bid to promote global sustainable development.<sup>5</sup> Second, the decent work notion was developed with the Decent Work Agenda (DWA), which consisted of eleven substantive elements and aims to realize four main values underlying the ILO's actions, namely security, freedom, human dignity and equity.<sup>6</sup> Decent work is perceived as the lever for expressing these four values by means of pursuing four strategic objectives namely standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

To foster retention, the managers of mining firms ought to consider personalized development opportunities, one-on-one meetings, and creating a user-centered approach to employee growth. Fundamentally, investing in talent pays off in the long run. It is prudent for the management of firms to identify the causes of skills flight so as to find out what really engenders employee loyalty, high performance levels as well as concerted engagement.<sup>7</sup> Their significance to organizations calls for not only the need to attract the best talents but also the necessity to retain them for a long term. Employees have been important resources to any organization. It can therefore be noted that based on their critical character, employees can be termed the life-blood of an organization.

According to Awan employee empowerment can be viewed in relation to how cooperation can be used to facilitate employee decision making ability, information sharing, training, education as well as team work.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, there is a strong link between employee empowerment and improved quality output because it boosts morale and breeds personnel commitment. Paais & Pattiruhu assert that employee empowerment and its resultant motivation has also been linked to employee retention, organisational innovation, responsibility and accountability as well as the quality of decisions which ultimately leads to quality products.<sup>9</sup> Thus, empowered employees ingenuity thereby display high level of ingenuity which is spark of brilliance that ignites novel ideas and practical problem-solving which positively impacts on the quality of output. Furthermore, empowerment enhances organizational performance, promotes

<sup>2</sup> Bilqees Ghani et al., "Challenges and Strategies for Employee Retention in the Hospitality Industry: A Review," *Sustainability* 14, no. 5 (March 2, 2022): 2885, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052885>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibrahim Durra, "The Impact of Talent Management Practices on Employee Retention in Small Projects in Syria," *International Journal of Engineering, Business and Management* 7, no. 4 (2023): 14–20.

<sup>4</sup> Lucy Brill, "What Is Decent Work? A Review of the Literature," *Decent Work: Opportunities and Challenges*, 2021, 11–26; Sidonie F. Costa, Eliana Costa e Silva, and Aldina Correia, "Guidelines for Creating Video Podcasts in Mathematics Higher Education," *International Journal for Technology in Mathematics Education* 28, no. 2 (June 1, 2021): 93–105, [https://doi.org/10.1564/tme\\_v28.2.03](https://doi.org/10.1564/tme_v28.2.03).

<sup>5</sup> Costa, Silva, and Correia, "Guidelines for Creating Video Podcasts in Mathematics Higher Education."

<sup>6</sup> Wei Wan and Ryan D Duffy, "Decent Work and Turnover Intentions among Chinese Millennials: A Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Career Development* 50, no. 4 (2023): 933–46.

<sup>7</sup> I. H. A., Carballo-Penelaa, A. and Ruzo-Sanmartina, E. () Alqudaha, "High-Performance Human Resource Management Practices and Readiness for Change: An Integrative Model Including Affective Commitment, Employees' Performance, and the Moderating Role of Hierarchy Culture," *European Research on Management and Business Economics* 28, no. 2022 (2022): 1–12; Ghani et al., "Challenges and Strategies for Employee Retention in the Hospitality Industry: A Review."

<sup>8</sup> Sajid Hussain Awan et al., "Effectiveness of Performance Management System for Employee Performance Through Engagement," *Sage Open* 10, no. 4 (October 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020969383>.

<sup>9</sup> Maartje Paais and Jozef R Pattiruhu, "Effect of Motivation, Leadership, and Organizational Culture on Satisfaction and Employee Performance," *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business* 7, no. 8 (2020): 577–88.

customer satisfaction and enables the firm to have a competitive edge over its rivals.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, employee empowerment engenders employee retention as it can increase employee motivation and engagement by giving the personnel more autonomy and control over their work. It is against this background that this article is aimed at investigating the relationship between employee empowerment, decent work and employment retention in the Zimbabwean small and medium scale gold mining sector in the Midlands Province. This study was prompted by incidences of high labour turnover in the mining industry in Zimbabwe. The loss of key personnel in the gold mining sector has ripple effects of revenue inflow into the country due to the fact that gold contributes significant foreign currency reserves.<sup>11</sup>

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptualised framework and research hypotheses formulation

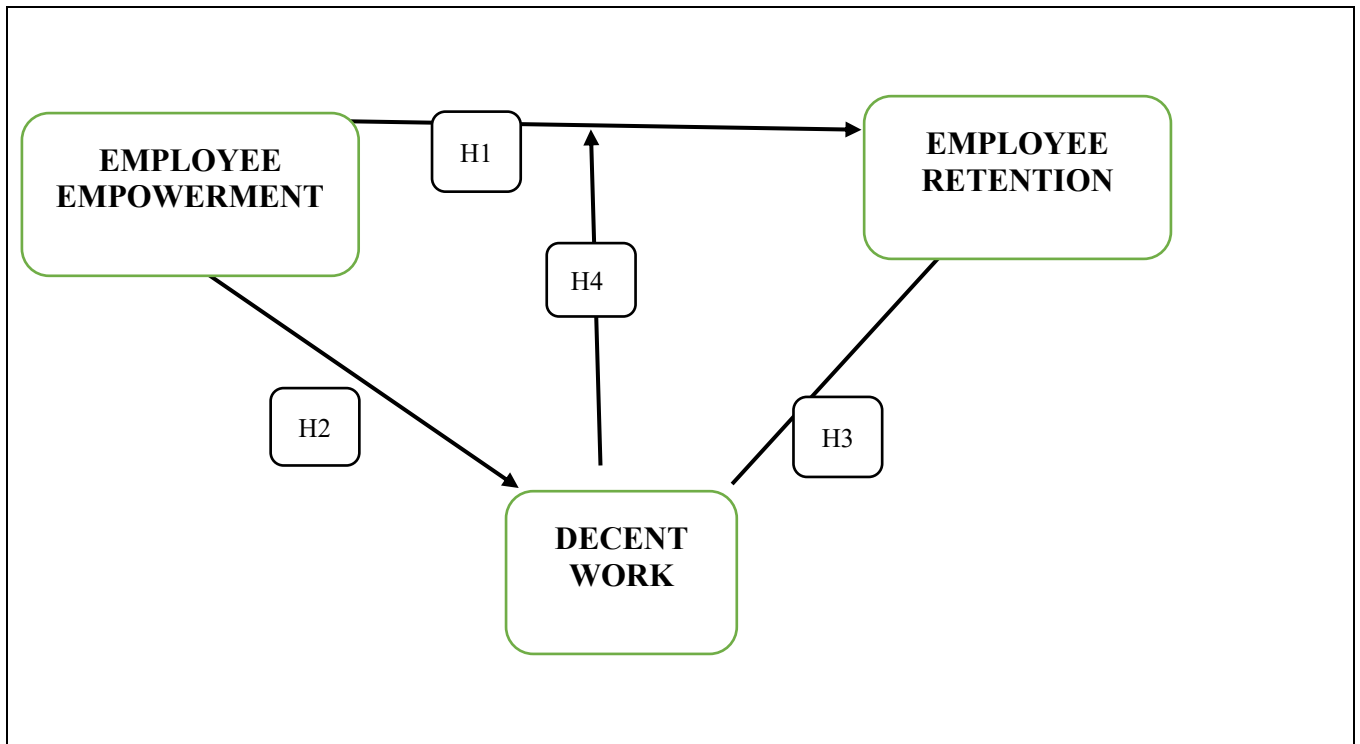


Figure 1: Hypothesis Development  
Source: Researchers (2024)

### Employee Empowerment and Employee Retention

Employee empowerment and retention today means understanding an empowered workforce’s desire for flexibility, creativity, and purpose.<sup>12</sup> Thus, employee empowerment is critical for any given organization as it positively influence workers to produce better results and attain both personal and company goals. Thus, empowerment entails the ability of an employee to make individual decisions for the good of the organisation without having to consult their superiors. Employee empowerment refers to creating a workplace culture where team members are trusted, respected, and given autonomy.<sup>13</sup> It goes beyond task delegation as it is about unlocking hidden potential. Empowered employees take ownership of their work, contribute unique talents, and actively shape the organization’s destiny. When employees feel empowered, they become more engaged, motivated, and willing to go the extra mile. This, in turn, positively impacts

<sup>10</sup> Irwan Pancasila, Siswoyo Haryono, and Beni Agus Sulistyono, “Effects of Work Motivation and Leadership toward Work Satisfaction and Employee Performance: Evidence from Indonesia,” *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business* 7, no. 6 (2020): 387–97.

<sup>11</sup> Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe, *State of the Mining Industry Survey Report*. (Government of Zimbabwe., 2023).

<sup>12</sup> Hossein Dargahi, Mahmoud Biglar, and Mahnaz Mahdi, “Association of Talent Management on Employees’ Empowerment and Human Resource Productivity in Tehran University of Medical Sciences,” *Payesh (Health Monitor)* 21, no. 3 (2022): 255–72.

<sup>13</sup> Joan Lombardi et al., “Unfolding Opportunity: Advancing Childcare to Support Children, Families, and Societies,” *Pediatrics* 151, no. Supplement 2 (May 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-060221O>.

employee retention. Engaged employees are more likely to stay, reducing turnover costs and aligning with an organization's business goals. So, fostering empowerment can lead to a workforce committed to success.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, employee empowerment confers autonomy and hence determines the trust and accountability level of the workers. Empowered employees are at liberty to make their own decisions for the best interest of a company. Job importance perception and vivid expectations are some of strategies that can assist in the retention and empowerment of workers in the mining sector.<sup>15</sup> It is noteworthy that the nature of careers is also changing. Companies used to invest heavily in employees with the intention of keeping them for decades and seeing them grow and contribute for the foreseeable future.<sup>16</sup> Today, because employees change jobs more rapidly, employers or leaders of firms must provide development more quickly, move people more regularly, provide continuous cycles of promotion and give the personnel more tools to manage their own careers.

Based on the given reviewed literature, the following hypotheses is proffered:

*H1: Employee Empowerment is positively associated with Employee Retention.*

### **Employee Empowerment and Decent Work**

Recent efforts to consider quality of (work) life rather than mere economic subsistence in determining living wages have received increasing attention. However, it remains unclear how increased income translates into quality of life.<sup>17</sup> Empowered employees communicate openly with their managers to ensure desired rewards and recognition at work. Managers can enhance motivation by addressing these factors: Autonomy: Allowing employees some control over their work. Employee empowerment enables the provision of opportunities for skill development. It also enables the fostering of positive relationships within the workplace which is a key facet of decent work. Highly empowered employees contribute significantly to team success and overall organizational growth. A study conducted by Dawwas reveal that decent work and employee empowerment are interconnected and hence contribute immensely to the overall success of firms.<sup>18</sup> Scholars Seubert, Hopfgartner & Glaser assert that decent work enables employees to get a living wage, job and planning security.<sup>19</sup> It also gives employees the green light to integrate in social networks, engage in social-communicative discussions. Employee safety is also guaranteed by labour and social legislation. Thus, decent work is the sum of people's aspirations in their working lives. Empowered employees are more likely to be loyal, motivated and highly productive.

Based on the above statements, it can be hypothesised as follows:

*H2: Employee Empowerment is positively associated with decent work.*

### **Decent Work and Employee Retention**

Decent work refers to employment that is productive, secure, fair and empowering for workers and their families. Decent work therefore aims to create a cultural shift towards an equitable and stable workforce, and to promote social and economic stability, personal development, social integration, and freedom of expression for workers.<sup>20</sup> Decent work is closely related to employee retention as it is employment that respects the fundamental rights of the human person as well as the rights of workers in terms of conditions of work safety and remuneration. Decent work also gives a lot of weight in terms of respect for the

<sup>14</sup> Mingxing Shao et al., "The Impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on Health Outcomes: A Mediating Effect Analysis Based on Cross-national Panel Data," *Journal of Environmental and Public Health* 2022, no. 1 (2022): 2225723.

<sup>15</sup> Khayaletu Ngqeza and Nelesh Dhanpat, "Investigating the Effects of Employee Empowerment on Turnover Intention in a Mining Organisation," *SA Journal of Human Resource Management* 19 (August 31, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v19i0.1564>.

<sup>16</sup> Munyaradzi Chikove, "The Effect of Training and Development on Employee Attraction and Retention in the Gold Mining Sector in Zimbabwe," *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research* 6, no. 03 (2023): 41–59.

<sup>17</sup> Bogdan Oprea, Lucian Păduraru, and Dragoș Iliescu, "Job Crafting and Intent to Leave: The Mediating Role of Meaningful Work and Engagement," *Journal of Career Development* 49, no. 1 (2022): 188–201.

<sup>18</sup> M I Dawwas, "The Relationship between Talent Management Practices, Organizational Justice, and Employee Engagement," *Specialus Ugdymas* 1, no. 43 (2022): 2084–2104.

<sup>19</sup> Christian Seubert, Lisa Hopfgartner, and Jürgen Glaser, "Living Wages, Decent Work, and Need Satisfaction: An Integrated Perspective," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 30, no. 6 (November 2, 2021): 808–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2021.1966094>.

<sup>20</sup> A Rettriszunz et al., "Analysis Function Human Resource Management: Recruitment, Training," *Career Development, Industrial Relation. East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (EAJMR)* 2, no. 3 (2023): 1261–72.

physical and mental integrity of the worker in the exercise of their employment. Namal et al. assert that the pinnacles of decent work are job creation where no one should be barred from their desired work due to lack of employment opportunities.<sup>21</sup> In addition, workers' rights which include the right to favourable working conditions, days off as prescribed in the company policy, non-discrimination and living wages for them and their families, amongst others should be respected. It also garners for social protection where all workers should have safe working conditions, adequate free time and rest, access to benefits like healthcare, pension and parental leave.

As explained on the above statements, the following alternative hypothesis is assembled:

*H3: Decent Work is positively associated with Employee Retention.*

### **The Mediation effect of decent work on the relationship between employee empowerment and employee retention**

Brill affirms that decent work, employee empowerment and retention can be fostered by social dialogue.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the managers of firms can empower their employees by according them the latitude to exercise workplace democracy through their unions and negotiate their workplace conditions as well as national and international labour and development policies. Unions play a huge role in securing decent work for workers through organizing and bargaining working conditions that are embedded in collective agreements.<sup>23</sup> Unions, representing the workers within its bargaining unit(s), are negotiators and advocates to ensure quality jobs, equity, dignity, equality, and safe working conditions, putting the voices of workers at the centre of development in the workforce. In collective agreements, unions are able to formalize policies and practices that will support economic stability, but also encourage social awareness and development for their members.<sup>24</sup> It is noteworthy that work that is productive and above all delivers a fair income enables employee commitment and hence their retention. Employees also need security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration so as to feel empowered. In addition, freedom for employees to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity will go a long way in enhancing their morale.<sup>25</sup> Thus, decent work is crucial for employee retention and goal attainment with fair wages and equal opportunities for all.

Therefore, as demonstrated on the above statements, the following alternative hypothesis is assembled:

*H4: The mediation effect of decent work on the relationship between employee empowerment and employee retention.*

### **METHODOLOGY**

The quantitative research approach was adopted for the study because it could use structured tools to generate numerical data. The quantitative research design sought to measure variables and expresses any relationships using inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation and regression analysis. In this study the researchers also used the explanatory – case study research design. Explanatory - case study research design enabled the understanding of a researcher on a certain subject and above all it led to better conclusions.<sup>26</sup> Thus, a great understanding of the subject allowed the researchers to hone subsequent research questions and can greatly increase the usefulness of study conclusions. It also proved to be exceptionally valuable in deciding the best way to deal with and accomplish a specialist goal. It also made this study determine how and why things happen. The straightforward nature of this design was one of its main strengths. It was easy to implement because the steps fall into clear, separate stages.

<sup>21</sup> Mete Kaan Namal et al., "Decent Work, Employee Satisfaction, and the Mediating Role of Social Courage in Reducing Turnover," *Sage Open* 14, no. 2 (April 16, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241242060>.

<sup>22</sup> Hala Mreiwed, Mindy R Carter, and Claudia Mitchell, *Art as an Agent for Social Change* (Brill Sense Leiden, 2021).

<sup>23</sup> Chikove, "The Effect of Training and Development on Employee Attraction and Retention in the Gold Mining Sector in Zimbabwe."

<sup>24</sup> Wei Wan and Ryan D. Duffy, "Decent Work and Turnover Intention Among New Generation Employees: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and the Moderating Role of Job Autonomy," *Sage Open* 12, no. 2 (April 26, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221094591>.

<sup>25</sup> Shao et al., "The Impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on Health Outcomes: A Mediating Effect Analysis Based on Cross-national Panel Data."

<sup>26</sup> Shaguftha Bhangu, Fabien Provost, and Carlo Caduff, "Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods – Part I," *Perspectives in Clinical Research* 14, no. 1 (January 2023): 39–42, [https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.picr\\_253\\_22](https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.picr_253_22).

In this study, the target population consisted of two thousand five hundred employees in the small and medium gold mineral sector along the Great Dyke in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. The sample of two hundred and seventy participants was conveniently selected. Convenience sampling entailed selecting participants because they are often readily and easily available. It was least expensive, least time consuming and also most convenient. The convenience sampling technique was aptly chosen for this study because it entailed selecting members of the population based on their relative ease of access.<sup>27</sup> A Structured Questionnaires was employed for gathering data in this study. In this way the researchers were able to elicit a high response rate since they were able to make a follow up on each of the participants, they had given questionnaires. Questionnaires enabled the researchers to collect data from many respondents over a relatively short period of time and above all it enabled respondents to answer questions at their convenient times. All the 270 questionnaires distributed to participants were received. The participants were given the latitude to withdraw from the interview if they so wish without any penalty. In addition the researchers ensured that the participants data was kept confidential and anonymous. Permission was sought to conduct the study the study from the Ministry of Mines which houses the small and medium scale gold mining sector.

### **Structure of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of a list of preset questions. The Likert scale was used in designing the questionnaire. The researcher made use of the Likert scale to measure the attitude of respondents. The odd numbered scale was used for this research and the rating scale was: 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3 Neutral; 4 Agree & 5: Strongly agree. The Likert scale was employed for its benefits to the study. First and foremost, they do not expect a simple yes or no answer from the respondents but rather allow for degrees of opinion and even no opinion at all. Secondly, each item is of equal value so that responses are scored rather than itemised. Finally, data can be analysed with relative ease as quantitative data is obtained hence are easy to read and complete.

**Section A: Demographic Data:** This section focused on the standard demographic data that sought to understand the characteristics of each respondent. The section asked respondents to state their age range, gender, and marital status, highest level of education and duration of employment with their current employer.

**Section B: Employee Retention:** The section measured employee retention using the using the Indian version of the employee retention scale originally developed by Yamamoto.<sup>28</sup> The scale has 40 items that were developed and validated to measure employee retention. For reliability and validity cause, the scale has been tested in 10 countries and regions including Europe, America, Japan and China. It has passed the consistency test under different cultural backgrounds and has high applicability. However, in this research study 10 items were used as it was seen fit to be in the questionnaire. The items generally focus of the ways that can be used to enhance employee retention in the work environment and their feelings towards their work and financial and non-financial motivators. Putra & Ali used this scale and reported adequate test-retest reliability for factors that enhance employee retention and the Cronbach's Alpha test was performed for the reliability of the data, and results indicated that the collected data were 87%.<sup>29</sup> In their study, internal consistency estimates was 874.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> C. Marshal, G.B. Rossman, and G. L. Blanco, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 7th Kindle Edition (New York: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2021).

<sup>28</sup> Hiroshi Yamamoto, "The Relationship between Employee Benefit Management and Employee Retention," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 22, no. 17 (2011): 3550–64.

<sup>29</sup> Rio Putra and Hapzi Ali, "Organizational Behavior Determination and Decision Making: Analysis of Skills, Motivation and Communication (Literature Review of Human Resource Management)," *Dinasti International Journal of Digital Business Management* 3, no. 3 (2022): 420–31.

<sup>30</sup> Putra and Ali, "Organizational Behavior Determination and Decision Making: Analysis of Skills, Motivation and Communication (Literature Review of Human Resource Management)."

**Section C: Employee Empowerment:** This section measured employee empowerment using the measurement Scale developed by Menon. The instrument consists of 9 items with three subscales; perceived control, perceived competence and goal internalization.<sup>31</sup> This scale focused on perceived control, perceived competence and goal internalization. Perceived Control assessed the extent to which employees feel they can influence the way work is done in their department, influence decisions taken in their department, and have the authority to take decisions at work. Perceived Competence evaluated employees' beliefs about their capabilities and skills required to perform their job well. Finally, goal internalization measured the extent to which employees are inspired by what their organization is trying to achieve, the goals of the organization, and enthusiastic about working toward the organization's objectives. This study considered these reviews enough to guarantee high validity of the scale have been used in some similar research by Menon as cited above. In one study, the following Cronbach alphas were obtained for the employee empowerment scale were 0.86, 0.85, 0.84, and 0.93, respectively.<sup>32</sup> The internal consistency was 0.90.

**Section D: Decent work:** This section measured decent work using the Measurement Scale developed by Duffy et al.<sup>33</sup> The scale had 15-item scale with 5 factors / subscales corresponding to the 5 components of decent work. One of the items were dropped as they seemed identical with four other variables. This scale focused on rights at work, social protection, social dialogue & employment creation. In this research, the researcher consider the reviews enough to guarantee high validity of the scale have been used in some similar research by Duffy et al. as cited above.<sup>34</sup> High reliability, stability, and construct validity of the decent work scale were confirmed in other studies.<sup>35</sup> The scale was found to be configurable equivalent across 13 nations. In one study, the following Cronbach alphas were obtained for the decent work scale: .94, .87, .90, .88, .90 and .91.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results section discusses the descriptive statistics of respondents, the measures for scale accuracy and the results of the hypothesis tests.

### Reliability analysis of the study variables

Table 1 exhibits the results of tests conducted to evaluate the Cronbach's alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the constructs utilized in the study. These assessments are crucial in determining the internal consistency of the research instruments, thereby ensuring the reliability and validity of the collected data. The outcomes of these tests offer valuable insights that aid researchers in drawing valid conclusions from the study results.

**Table 1: Reliability Results**

Items	CA	CR	AVE
ABS	0.935	0.950	0.825
CT	0.945	0.952	0.832
DED	0.880	0.924	0.753
DEV	0.962	0.966	0.875
EC	0.939	0.956	0.812
ER	0.969	0.965	0.774
GI	0.935	0.964	0.842

<sup>31</sup> Sanjay Menon, "Employee Empowerment: An Integrative Psychological Approach," *Applied Psychology* 50, no.1(2001):153–80.

<sup>32</sup> Menon, "Employee Empowerment: An Integrative Psychological Approach."

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth K King et al., "Preschool Teachers' Financial Well-Being and Work Time Supports: Associations with Children's Emotional Expressions and Behaviors in Classrooms," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 44 (2016): 545–53.

<sup>34</sup> King et al., "Preschool Teachers' Financial Well-Being and Work Time Supports: Associations with Children's Emotional Expressions and Behaviors in Classrooms."

<sup>35</sup> David L Blustein, Evgenia I Lysova, and Ryan D Duffy, "Understanding Decent Work and Meaningful Work," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 10, no. 1 (2023): 289–314.

ICP	0.928	0.937	0.789
PC	0.950	0.954	0.806
PCO	0.967	0.964	0.844
RM	0.965	0.972	0.852
RW	0.954	0.956	0.812
SD	0.959	0.960	0.799
SP	0.978	0.973	0.839
VIG	0.926	0.938	0.790

Table 1 suggests that the study's constructs exhibit internal consistency, surpassing the recommended thresholds for both Cronbach's alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) values, which exceed 0.70. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, surpassing 0.5, indicate the reliability of the measurement constructs. To bolster the model's reliability, items with factor loadings below 0.70 were eliminated. Employing the Fornell-Larcker criterion ensured the constructs' discriminant validity, with the outcomes detailed in Table 2.



**Table 2: Fronell-Larcker criterion results**

	ABS	CT	DED	DEV	EC	ER	GI	ICP	PC	PCO	RM	RW	SD	SP	VIG
ABS	<b>0.908</b>														
CT	0.535	<b>0.912</b>													
DED	0.803	0.642	<b>0.868</b>												
DEV	0.498	0.842	0.612	<b>0.936</b>											
EC	0.564	0.820	0.626	0.807	<b>0.901</b>										
ER	0.595	0.815	0.629	0.823	0.863	<b>0.880</b>									
GI	0.512	0.813	0.606	0.835	0.818	0.814	<b>0.918</b>								
ICP	0.584	0.819	0.670	0.856	0.823	0.838	0.823	<b>0.889</b>							
PC	0.466	0.831	0.548	0.807	0.859	0.822	0.824	0.856	<b>0.898</b>						
PCO	0.505	0.854	0.614	0.842	0.848	0.886	0.830	0.807	0.809	<b>0.919</b>					
RM	0.505	0.817	0.602	0.848	0.815	0.810	0.848	0.835	0.821	0.843	<b>0.923</b>				
RW	0.504	0.859	0.606	0.820	0.841	0.804	0.807	0.818	0.837	0.816	0.817	<b>0.901</b>			
SD	0.494	0.862	0.597	0.847	0.825	0.819	0.843	0.815	0.806	0.845	0.850	0.853	<b>0.894</b>		
SP	0.501	0.846	0.602	0.848	0.801	0.831	0.841	0.844	0.818	0.841	0.842	0.828	0.861	<b>0.916</b>	
VIG	0.558	0.827	0.599	0.825	0.821	0.847	0.858	0.842	0.837	0.829	0.857	0.851	0.837	0.843	<b>0.889</b>

Note: The number in bold is the square root of AVE.

Table 2 furnishes evidence endorsing the discriminant validity of the measurement model utilized in the study. The presented data illustrates that the square root of the AVE for each factor exceeds the correlation coefficients between factors. This substantiates the distinct nature of the measurement constructs, indicating they do not measure the same underlying construct. Furthermore, the study reinforced the evidence for discriminant validity by employing the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) technique, the results of which are outlined in Table 3.

### Goodness of fit

Prior to hypothesis testing, the study evaluated the model's adequacy using diverse model fit indices. Among these measures,  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  are valuable in assessing the model's quality, as suggested by Briones-Penalver et al., where values greater than zero are recommended. Table 3 provides an overview of several goodness-of-fit results obtained in the study, encompassing various model fit indices such as the Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).<sup>36</sup>

**Table 3: Goodness of fit results**

Latent variable	$R^2$	$Q^2$	SRMR	NFI
DW	0.998	0.875	0.077	0.953
ER	0.915	0.696		
EEMP	0.976	0.764		

Table 3 presents the goodness-of-fit results, affirming the predictive relevance of the proposed path model for each dependent construct. With  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  values surpassing zero, meeting Briones-Penalver et al.'s recommendation, the model demonstrates good quality.<sup>37</sup> The model's robustness is further supported by the SRMR value of 0.077, below the recommended threshold of 0.08, signifying a favorable fit. Furthermore, the NFI value of 0.953, exceeding the 0.90 threshold, indicates a strong model fit to the data. These outcomes collectively suggest that the proposed model effectively captures the interrelationships among the study's variables.

<sup>36</sup> A J Briones Peñalver et al., "Innovation Management and Strategy," *Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research* 77, no.8(2018):437–41.

<sup>37</sup> Peñalver et al., "Innovation Management and Strategy."

**Table 4 : Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) discriminant validity**

	ABS	CT	DED	DEV	EC	ER	GI	ICP	PC	PCO	RM	RW	SD	SP	VIG
ABS															
CT	0.574														
DED	0.883	0.703													
DEV	0.527	0.892	0.664												
EC	0.600	0.783	0.683	0.855											
ER	0.628	0.868	0.680	0.822	0.794										
GI	0.543	0.826	0.657	0.782	0.868	0.856									
ICP	0.632	0.795	0.741	0.817	0.785	0.835	0.858								
PC	0.498	0.687	0.598	0.718	0.812	0.695	0.844	0.824							
PCO	0.534	0.805	0.666	0.783	0.747	0.747	0.876	0.831	0.838						
RM	0.530	0.824	0.648	0.868	0.858	0.743	0.883	0.852	0.735	0.783					
RW	0.538	0.826	0.661	0.871	0.844	0.749	0.856	0.857	0.832	0.765	0.761				
SD	0.525	0.837	0.649	0.784	0.778	0.749	0.881	0.886	0.758	0.772	0.772	0.812			
SP	0.527	0.789	0.648	0.827	0.843	0.744	0.880	0.828	0.830	0.777	0.775	0.792	0.811		
VIG	0.604	0.753	0.659	0.878	0.867	0.791	0.817	0.792	0.803	0.883	0.707	0.814	0.853	0.893	

The HTMT analysis indicates that the HTMT ratios fall below the recommended threshold of 0.9, affirming good discriminant validity. These outcomes signify the reliability of the measurement model employed in the study. Furthermore, Table 5 showcases the results of the variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis conducted to explore the potential presence of multicollinearity.

**Table 5: Full collinearity statistics (VIF) results**

<b>Item</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>CT</b>	<b>DED</b>	<b>DEV</b>	<b>EC</b>	<b>ER</b>	<b>GI</b>	<b>ICP</b>
<b>VIF</b>	4.261	4.195	4.647	3.937	4.408	2.456	3.315	4.384
<b>Item</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>PCO</b>	<b>RM</b>	<b>RW</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>SP</b>	<b>VIG</b>	
<b>VIF</b>	3.515	4.354	4.631	4.096	4.781	3.765	4.853	

The table presents the VIF values for all latent variables within the model. Elevated VIF values signal the existence of multicollinearity, potentially causing biased estimates and unreliable outcomes. However, the findings reveal that all VIF values remain comfortably below the suggested threshold of 3.3, as proposed by Hair et al.<sup>38</sup> This observation indicates that multicollinearity is not a prominent issue in the study's data, reinforcing the model's reliability and augmenting the validity of the research findings.

### SEM path coefficients.

The study employed the SmartPLS software to conduct data analysis and implemented the partial least squares (PLS) approach to investigate the study's hypotheses.

Table 6 showcases the PLS outcomes for the structural model, encompassing the results of the mediation hypotheses. The study scrutinized the significance of both direct and indirect effects, employing a 95% confidence interval (CI) alongside 5000 bootstrapping samples for analysis.

**Table 6: SEM path coefficients**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>T statistic</b>	<b>P-values</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<i>Direct effect</i>					
H1	EEMP -> ER	0.369	2.982	0.005	Supported
H2	EEMP -> DW	0.246	3.754	0.001	Supported
H3	DW->ER	0.407	2.266	0.024	Supported
<i>Mediating effect</i>					
H4	DW -> EEMP -> ER	0.004	2.532	0.019	Supported

The results presented in Table 6 indicate several significant impacts within the study's structural model. Specifically, EEMP demonstrated a significant positive effect on ER ( $\beta = 0.369$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ), EEMP also demonstrated a positive and significant relationship with DW ( $\beta = 0.246$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Notably, DW exhibited significant positive impacts on ER ( $\beta = 0.407$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ). Regarding mediation, the findings suggest that decent work significantly mediates on the relationship between employee engagement and talent management' has been accepted ( $\beta = 0.004$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### Employee Empowerment vs Employee Retention

The hypothesis (H1) which states that employee empowerment is positively related to employee empowerment was **accepted, ( $\beta = 0.369$ ,  $p = 0.005$ )**. Employee empowerment enables employees to make autonomous decisions on work related issues. The results are consistent with preceding studies which

<sup>38</sup> Joe F. Hair et al., "An Assessment of the Use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling in Marketing Research," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 40, no. 3 (May 7, 2012): 414–33, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-011-0261-6>.

established that there is a strong and positive correlation between employee empowerment and employee retention which ultimately leads to job satisfaction.<sup>39</sup> It is noteworthy that employee empowerment has a multiplicity of benefits that can accrue to an organisation such as higher employee retention, higher productivity, better business results and efficient decision-making. It is of essence to note that empowering employees through greater autonomy has been directly linked to increased employee motivation. Furthermore, leaders who empower their employees are more likely to be trusted by their subordinates compared to those who do not empower their employees.<sup>40</sup> When employees feel empowered, they bring fresh perspectives, solve problems creatively and above all contribute to a positive work culture. Employee empowerment can lead to better business results, including improved performance and productivity as employees are easily retained.

### Employee Empowerment vs Decent Work

The hypothesis (H2) which states that employee empowerment is positively associated with decent work is **accepted** ( $\beta = 0.246, p < 0.001$ ). The results corroborate with the views of Blustein et al. who assert that decent work contributes strongly to increased productivity.<sup>41</sup> When employees are treated fairly, receive fair wages, and have job security, they are more motivated and engaged. This leads to better performance and growth for the organization. The freedom to make independent decisions by employees promotes decent work which ultimately leads to increased revenue generation and growth for the mining firms. Wan & Duffy aver that decent work puts money in the pockets of individuals and families, which they can spend in the local economy.<sup>42</sup> Employee empowerment and decent work are inseparably linked as organizations that prioritize decent work build a positive reputation. Ethical practices attract customers, investors, and partners who value social responsibility.

### Decent Work vs Employee Retention

The hypothesis (H3) which states that decent work is positively related to employee retention has been **accepted**, ( $\beta = 0.407, p=0.024$ ). Decent work is often measured alongside employee retention, as they are both dimensions of organisational citizenship and employee wellbeing. The results are consistent with Kaliannan et al. who opine that employees need to be motivated with financial and non-financial rewards so that they can commit themselves fully towards organisational goals and objectives.<sup>43</sup> Fundamentally, the survival and prosperity of firms hinges on fair treatment of personnel and above all create a conducive working environment. The provision of decent salaries and wages will enable employee retention, especially, in the Zimbabwean context where there is galloping inflation. Decent work advocates for personnel development, social integration, freedom for workers to air their views, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.<sup>44</sup> Decent work leads to employee retention and organisational success ultimately.

### The mediation effect of decent work on the relationship between employee empowerment and employee retention

The hypothesis (H4) which states the mediation effect of decent work on the relationship between employee empowerment and employee retention has been **accepted**. ( $\beta = 0.004, p = 0.019$ ). The results are consistent with Namal et al. who view decent work as the panacea to the creation of a conducive working environment in which employee dignity, safety, security and fairness is fostered.<sup>45</sup> In this modern

<sup>39</sup> Meng Kheang Sorn et al., "The Effectiveness of Compensation in Maintaining Employee Retention," *OALib* 10, no. 07 (2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1110394>; S Kusuma, H Hamidah, and I Pahala, "Analysis of Leadership, Talent Management and Motivation towards Employee Turnover Intention: A Study in Pt. Srirejeki Makmur Abadi," *Int. J. Soc. Sci. Res. Rev* 6, no. 2 (2023): 238–57.

<sup>40</sup> Chikove, "The Effect of Training and Development on Employee Attraction and Retention in the Gold Mining Sector in Zimbabwe."

<sup>41</sup> Blustein, Lysova, and Duffy, "Understanding Decent Work and Meaningful Work."

<sup>42</sup> Wan and Duffy, "Decent Work and Turnover Intention Among New Generation Employees: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and the Moderating Role of Job Autonomy."

<sup>43</sup> Maniam Kaliannan et al., "Inclusive Talent Development as a Key Talent Management Approach: A Systematic Literature Review," *Human Resource Management Review* 33, no. 1 (2023): 100926.

<sup>44</sup> Wan and Duffy, "Decent Work and Turnover Intentions among Chinese Millennials: A Longitudinal Study."

<sup>45</sup> Kaan Namal et al., "Decent Work, Employee Satisfaction, and the Mediating Role of Social Courage in Reducing Turnover."

business environment, there is cutthroat competition hence it is not easy to easily attract top talent. Talented and empowered employees contribute a lot towards the success of the company. Empowered employees are easily retained as they see themselves as vital assets of an organization.<sup>46</sup> Social and economic changes fundamentally have continuously altered the nature of work worldwide and this has resulted with secure jobs decreasing and precarious forms of work becoming more common.<sup>47</sup> The prosperity of mining organisations hinges on their ability to view employees as key resources. Thus, employees can only commit themselves fully towards organisational goals if they feel valued.<sup>48</sup> Blustein et al. assert that the decent work concept is premised on the notion that the employee fundamental such as working conditions, health and safety as well as decent remuneration for should be institutionalised at an organisation. Thus, decent work involves equal treatment of all employees regardless of gender as well as proffering opportunities for personal development, social integration and freedom of expression to all employees.

## CONCLUSION

This article was aimed at investigating the relationship between employee empowerment, decent work and employment retention in the Zimbabwean small and medium scale gold mining sector in the Midlands Province. The findings show that employee empowerment positively correlates with employee retention and decent work. Thus, empowered employees are intrinsically motivated hence they find work appealing. Decent work on the other hand fosters high employee morale through the provision of decent salaries and other fringe benefits. In addition, decent work is also positively associated with employee retention. Furthermore, the study also established that decent work strongly mediates on the relationship between employee empowerment and employee retention. This decent work which firms rooted in equity equips employee with knowledge pertaining to their rights and in the long employees are job enriched hence making their retention a realisable dream.

The study recommends management of small and medium gold mining firms to embrace the tenet of decent work. It can also be noted that, this will enhance employee morale and organisational citizenship. The managers of mining firms should also provide a conducive environment in which there is fairness, gender equity and human dignity. Employee should be given room to be innovative so that the organisation can tap the best of them. It is imperative for the management to guard against the scenario of thinking on behalf of employees as giving them room to maneuver motivates them. The managers should be inclined towards democratic leadership so as to hear the views of employees. Talent management plays a vital role while formulating business strategies, simply because it manages the company's most important assets, the personnel. Therefore, it is important for management in the small and medium gold mining sector to be aware of indicators that lead to positive results and build up organisational citizenship behaviour. The results inform government policy on the labour needs of the mining sector. Zimbabwe is a unique country with its socio-economic challenges hence the results of this research may be difficult to generalise to other nations. This study also focused on a single sector which is the mining sector hence future studies may consider may also focus on other sectors of the economy such as tourism and agriculture.

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<sup>46</sup> Majed Alshamrani et al., "Determinants of Employee Retention in Pharmaceutical Companies: Case of Saudi Arabia," *Journal of Business and Management Studies* 5, no. 2 (2023): 8.

<sup>47</sup> ILO., "Measurement of Decent Work Based on Guidance Received at the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the Measurement of Decent Work (September 2008) (18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, p. 2) [Tripartite Meeting of Experts (TME) on the Measurement of Decent Work].," *International Labour Organization.*, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Blustein, Lysova, and Duffy, "Understanding Decent Work and Meaningful Work."

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