



Critical success factors for integrating talent management strategies with wellness interventions



Authors:

Jennifer C. Nzonzo¹ 
Yvonne du Plessis¹ 

Affiliations:

¹NWU Business School,
Faculty of Economic and
Management Sciences,
North-West University,
Mafikeng Campus, Mafikeng,
South Africa

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Corresponding author:

Jennifer Nzonzo,
27003892@student.g.nwu.
ac.za

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Orientation: The current demands in organisations continue to challenge the need for creative, flexible and responsive talent to ensure customers' needs are met. This demanding environment puts more emphasis on employee wellness management to ensure talent efficiency and effectiveness.

Research purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the critical success factors that influence the adoption and integration of talent management strategies with wellness interventions.

Motivation of the study: There is limited research on a holistic and integrated approach of how talent management strategies should be effectively integrated with wellness interventions in organisations.

Research approach/design and method: A qualitative enquiry was adopted where 10 in-depth interviews with human resource professionals within South African organisations were conducted. The transcribed interviews were analysed using the thematic analysis process.

Main findings: The qualitative results showed that the organisational environment inextricably influenced the adoption and integration of talent management strategies and wellness interventions. In addition, the most critical success factor realised for this study was the establishment of a talent-wellness organisational culture.

Practical/managerial implications: Human resource professionals should have an in-depth understanding of the impact of holistic talent management and wellness strategies in their organisations.

Contribution/value addition: This study brought to the fore that talent management without aligned wellness interventions will not optimise talent. It also indicated the critical success factors essential for integrating talent management strategies with wellness interventions.

Keywords: employee wellness; competitive advantage; human resource management; talent management; management strategies.

Introduction

Orientation

Modern-day organisations are facing many managerial challenges as a result of internationalisation and globalisation, which intensify the competition for talent (Brouwer, Veldkamp, & Vroom, 2019; Perera & Karunarathne, 2019; Xing & Cheng, 2019). As such, strategies on how to attract and retain employees in an ever-changing business environment are currently the concern of every manager (Azma, Farahbakhsh, Safar zad, & Farahnaki, 2019; Morgan, 2019; Suleman & Ogbette, 2019; Van Zyl, Mathafena, & Ras, 2017). Given the practical management reality of modern-day organisations, managers face the dilemma of integrating talent management strategies with wellness interventions. On the one hand, the uncertainty of the external environment makes it difficult for organisations to predict supply and demand of talent in the external labour market. On the other hand, it is also difficult for organisations to attract and implement wellness interventions, and develop and retain talent (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2019; Dong, 2019). For instance, Hoole and Bonnema (2015) highlighted that over the past few years focus has shifted towards people-centric practices that emphasise on positive psychology. The focus has been aligned with the need to effectively manage talent by paying more attention to the intellectual skills and capabilities that contribute to health and well-being (Moloi & Adelowotan, 2019).

However, even though there is an abundance of health improvement programmes, there has been limited research on how health programmes can be effectively integrated with talent management initiatives. A common problem encountered in the wellness programmes is the overwhelming amount of information available to employees and issues that have to do with confidentiality. As a result, some health promotion programmes lack accountability and sense of community, and feedback mechanisms are more likely to fail (Blackwell et al., 2019). As a result, organisations need creative, flexible and responsive employees to create new ideas and meet customers' needs (Azma et al., 2019; Morgan, 2019; Suleman & Ogbette, 2019; Van Zyl et al., 2017; Xing & Cheng, 2019). Retention of a positive and motivated employee is very important for an organization's success. High employee turnover increases the expenses and also has a negative impact on the organization's morale (Battista, 2019; Rajenderan & Zawawi, 2019).

In this article, the literature on talent management and wellness will be explored. Thereafter, the research methodology, findings and theoretical and managerial implications are outlined. The last section provides concluding remarks and the agenda for further research.

Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the critical success factors that influence the adoption and integration of talent management strategies with wellness interventions.

The main objectives of this research are (1) to explore the extent to which organisational context influences the adoption and integration of talent management strategies with wellness interventions and (2) to identify the critical success factors that influence the integration of talent management strategies with wellness interventions.

Literature review

The literature regarding the core constructs of talent management and workplace wellness programmes in organisations will be explained along with the holistic integration of talent management and workplace wellness initiatives.

Talent management

Although there is no consistent definition of talent management, scholars generally pay attention to exclusiveness and inclusiveness of the talent system that is the performance or potential key positions, internal development and training of talent or the introduction of external labour. Xing and Cheng (2019) define:

[T]alent management as the process of recruiting, identifying, developing, managing and retaining key talents through effective technology and management means, so as to help enterprises and individuals to make the best use of their long-term advantages and provide sustainable talent supply for organisation. (p. 1)

From this definition, we can therefore deduce that employees' motivation is the driving force that energises the employees to excel physically, cognitively and behaviourally in achieving and sustaining organisational objectives with a sense of devotion and purpose. Therefore, talent management strategies provide requisite stimulus to employees to demonstrate their best in tangible and intangible abilities with a focus on improving organisational performance (Al-Hussaini, Turi, Altamimi, Khan, & Ahmad, 2019).

Workplace wellness

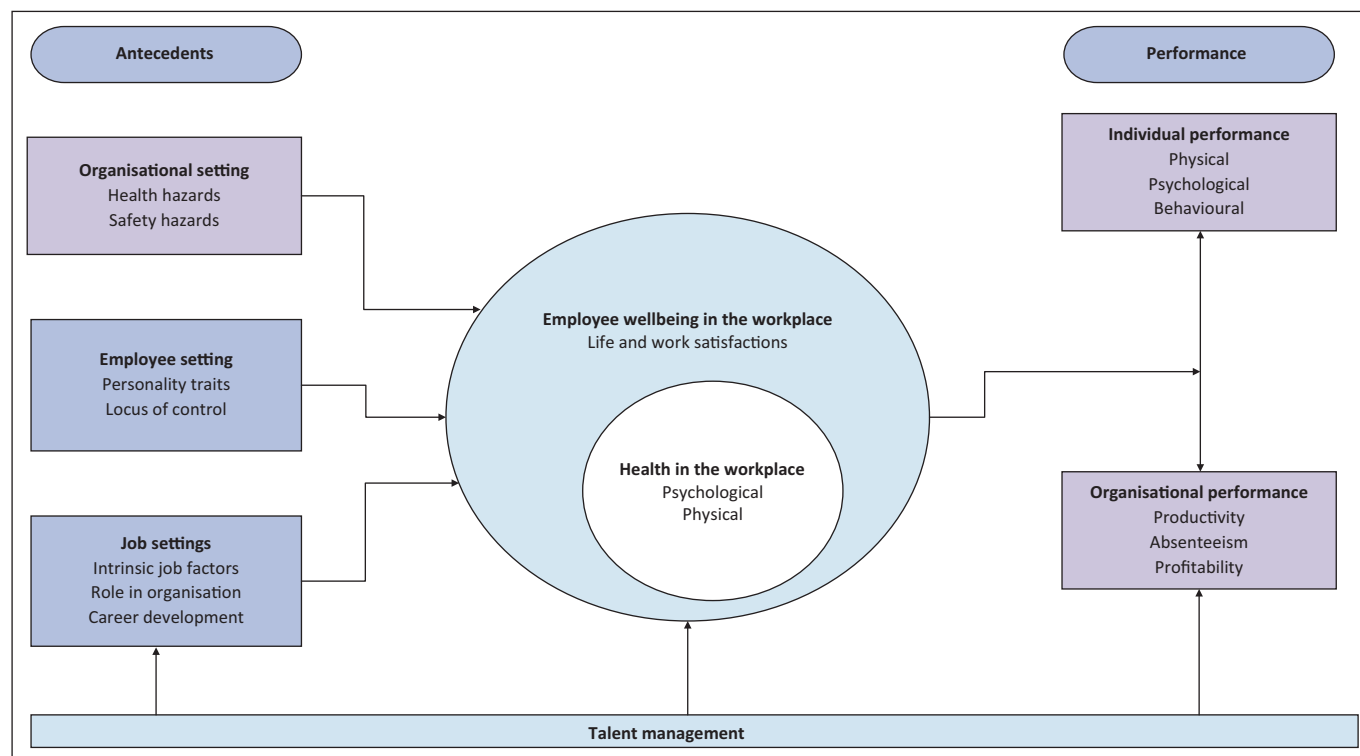
Field and Louw (2012, p. 4) define wellness as workplace health promotion activities designed to improve and support healthy behaviour of employees. In addition, Hettler (1980) posits that wellness is characterised by four constructs, physical, emotional, psychological and social wellness, which are can be further defined:

- Physical wellness refers to the lifestyle behavioural changes made by employees to ensure good health and live in a balanced state of body, mind and spirit.
- Emotional wellness refers to the ability of individuals to be aware of, understand and accept emotions and their impact on others at work.
- Psychological wellness refers to the state of positive relationships with others, which contribute to personal growth and development.
- Social wellness refers to the state of employees' relationships, social stability and social harmony.

The combined perspective of wellness and health creates a complex view of relationships that are not clearly defined by wellness and health's current theoretical models. Whilst some of the ambiguities can be resolved as terminology and definitions become more precise, other gaps in our knowledge necessitate rigorous construct development and empirical testing for research on wellness (Hartley & Young, 2019; Whitaker, 2019). Thus, wellness and well-being are used interchangeably with common constructs being physical, emotional, psychological and social wellness in this article.

A holistic integration of talent management and wellness interventions

The multi-perspective of talent management is valuable for the development of talent management research, but traditional academic research is rarely integrated or linked in a broader perspective (Azma et al., 2019). To strengthen the theoretical basis of talent management, it is necessary to build and integrate human resource management and organisational behaviour theory and practice (Brouwer et al., 2019). Hence, talent philosophies that capture human resource (HR) managers' inherent beliefs about the value and instrumentality of talent will influence how they perceive, interpret or adopt talent-centric practices (Dong, 2019; Meyers, Van Woerkom, Paauwe, & Dries, 2019). The interface amongst wellness, well-being, talent and performance depicted in Figure 1 identifies two interrelated



Source: Adapted from Danna, K., & Griffin, R.W. (1999). Health and well-being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Management*, 25(3), 357–384. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639902500305>

FIGURE 1: The interface between wellness, talent and performance.

sets of health and well-being effects on performance. The first effect is on the physical, psychological and behavioural consequences. The second effect is on productivity, absenteeism and profitability (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Finally, talent management interlinks antecedents, health, well-being and performance. Thus, an organisation should implement talent management strategies such as attraction, development, deployment and retention in order to improve the health and well-being of employees, which will ultimately have an impact on individual and organisational performance.

Positive organisational behaviour studies, for instance, conducted by Avey, Luthans, Smith, and Palmer (2010) and Bakker and Schaufeli (2008), highlight the view that business leaders and employee well-being experts should play the role of stressing the link between positive organisational outcomes and wellness. Some employees interpret employee well-being messages in a way that is negative. This negative reaction is attributed to employees feeling that participating in wellness programmes is tantamount to conforming to organisational practices, such as addressing the symptoms of workplace bullying and work overload. As a result, these negative reactions to wellness interventions can impact the primary, secondary and tertiary level wellness interventions as follows:

- primary level interventions influence the extent to which employees adapt to their environment (Rothmann, 2013)
- secondary level interventions influence the use of cognitive behavioural approaches in improving employee well-being (Rothmann, 2013)

- tertiary interventions influence the psychological well-being (Rothmann, 2013).

It is also evident that wellness interventions at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels mentioned before not only address negative aspects (such as workplace bullying and work overload), but also result in positive outcomes for employees and the organisation. The use of self-reporting techniques to assess the impact of wellness in organisations is often prone to bias (Sieberhagen, Pienaar, & Els, 2009), which ultimately negatively affects the efforts to integrate talent management strategies with wellness interventions in organisations. Therefore, from a critical and practical point of view, HR professionals and wellness specialists should develop an in-depth understanding of the antecedents, processes and performance outcomes that allow the integration of wellness interventions with talent management strategies, as depicted in Figure 1.

Research design

Research approach

A phenomenological approach was adopted to explore the HR professionals' perceptions about talent management and workplace wellness as well as the critical success factors towards integrating talent management strategies with wellness interventions. Phenomenology is a form of qualitative research that seeks a deeper understanding and documents common experiences of individuals on specific matters. The research process is very important as it enables researchers to construct meanings and arrive at more profound understandings (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Research method

Research participants

The population was drawn from HR professionals who are experienced in managing talent and wellness programmes within South African organisations. Table 1 sets out the demographic profile of the 10 interviewees who participated in this study. The number of participants chosen for the study is in accordance with the qualitative research guidelines of Creswell (1998), Mason (2010) and Bryman and Bell (2011), who recommend that a minimum sample size of five is adequate for phenomenological research; however, the researchers did not only select five participants as they were seeking for data saturation (Creswell, 1998). Purposive sampling was the primary sampling method utilised. With this technique, participants were grouped according to their HR professional level and sector. The snowballing technique was utilised as the secondary sampling method. This technique enabled participants with whom contact had already been established to refer other participants who met the required criteria and who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Twelve participants voluntarily made themselves available for the initial selection. However, only 10 were interviewed due to the unavailability of the other participants and 10 were sufficient as data saturation started to set in with the eighth participant. In accordance with ethical protocols and guidelines, all the participants' names were de-identified.

Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic profiles of the 10 interviewees who participated in this study. All participants interviewed had at least a postgraduate degree. Years spent working as an HR professional varied from 1 to 10 years and above. The next section sets out the data collection and analysis method and processes adopted.

Data collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. An interview protocol was developed to guide the interview process. The protocol was premised on key findings from the literature pertaining to talent management strategies and wellness interventions. The interview protocol comprised three sections. The first section focused on participants' perceptions and conceptual understanding of 'employee

wellness' interventions in their organisations. The second section focused on their conceptual understanding of 'talent management'. The third section focused on their perceptions and experiences regarding the critical success factors for the 'integration of talent management strategies and wellness interventions'.

Research procedure

Prior to the commencement of the study, ethical clearance was obtained from the university. In addition, permission to conduct research was obtained from the South African Board for People Practices. Participation in the research was voluntary. The interview process involved the following five stages and observed ethical research practices at all times:

- Stage 1: Invitation to participate in interviews (explanatory statement was included with the formal invitation letter and consent for voluntary participation).
- Stage 2: Scheduling of interviews after acceptance of invitation to participate.
- Stage 3: Confirmation of the interview time and voluntary consent to participate.
- Stage 4: Permission to record interview.
- Stage 5: Interview conducted.

All interviews were recorded with consent and transcribed by the researcher for data analysis.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2014), Creswell (1998), Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015), Neuman and Robson (2012), Saldaña (2015) and Wilson (1998), was applied in this study. Firstly, the transcripts were read as primary data sources at least three times to acquire a good understanding and insight of the content. This was followed by writing notes (thoughts/ideas/initial impressions). The next stage involved open coding in order to generate initial codes (manifesting data). This was followed by labelling similar codes, for example, emotional health with emotional wellness. The next stage involved axial coding of the data, which involved relating the codes (categories and concepts) to each other. This was followed by grouping categories/chunks (e.g. impact of physical wellness, motivation for development and drivers of talent

TABLE 1: Demographic profile of human resource professionals as participants.

Participant	Gender	Educational qualifications	Managerial level	Work experience (years)	Industry
A	Female	Honour's degree	Junior	1–3	Retail
B	Male	Master's degree	Middle	4–6	Education
C	Female	Master's degree	Junior	1–3	Construction
D	Female	Honour's degree	Middle	4–6	Manufacturing
E	Male	Master's degree	Senior	7–9	Consulting
F	Male	Master's degree	Senior	10+	Various sectors: engineering, telecommunications, banking, education, consulting
G	Female	Master's degree	Senior	10+	Education
H	Female	Honour's degree	Senior	10+	Retail
I	Female	Honour's degree	Senior	10+	Engineering and consulting
J	Male	Master's degree	Senior	10+	Retail and healthcare experience

retention). The last stage involved the formulation of themes and subthemes.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained prior to the commencement of the study from North-West University (Clearance Number NWU-00228-16-A9).

Results and findings

There were three themes and related subthemes, as indicated in Figure 2, were identified as a result of the thematic analysis process.

Theme 1: Determinants of employee well-being

- Subtheme 1: Physical well-being
- Subtheme 2: Psychological well-being
- Subtheme 3: Emotional well-being
- Subtheme 4: Social well-being

Theme 2: Talent management determinants

- Subtheme 1: Talent attraction strategies
- Subtheme 2: Talent development practices
- Subtheme 3: Talent engagement and retention strategies

Theme 3: Talent–wellness critical success factors

In Table 2, each of the three themes and their related subthemes are indicated and showcased with evidence quotes from the participants.

Theme 1: Determinants of wellness

In describing the conceptualisation of wellness, most participants highlighted that wellness is the ability of a person or an employee to take care of themselves psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, physically, socially and mentally. Some of the excerpts from the interviews include the following comments:

‘Employee well-being relates to how the employee feels emotionally, physically, socially, psychologically within their workplace. More importantly, it contributes to social stability in the organisation. However, it is very difficult to determine the level of employee well-being. Sometimes employees project a certain face to avoid people around them knowing what they are going through.’ (Participant B, Male, Middle)

‘Employee well-being is a holistic process that includes general health, mental health, emotional health, spiritual health and functioning, it needs to be a holistic process that all employees feel they are part and parcel of the organisation.’ (Participant G, Female, Senior)

‘It is not really easy to tell at face value the well-being of an employee ... People can put on a mask; you can hear from the grapevine that employees are going through a traumatic experience.’ (Participant C, Female, Junior)

Subtheme 1: Physical well-being

Most of the participants alluded to the fact that poor physical well-being ultimately affects employee performance. For instance, one participant explained that:

‘Healthy and happy employees are committed to the organisation. If employees are not so fit and have health issues and they are constantly off sick because they are in pain that affects the operations of the business.’ (Participant H, Female, Senior)

Subtheme 2: Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being was considered to be of paramount importance by the participants. Most of the participants alluded to the fact that psychological well-being was linked to employees finding meaning in their jobs. Thus, Participant C (Female, Junior) highlighted that ‘there is a need for congruency between personal and organisational goals. HR professionals need to find a balance between employee goals and organisational goals.’

Subtheme 3: Emotional well-being

The majority of the participants mentioned the importance of managing emotions in the workplace. As Participant A (Female, Junior) explained, ‘When the emotional well-being is balanced, the output of the work will increase.’ Similar sentiments were voiced by highlighting the following:

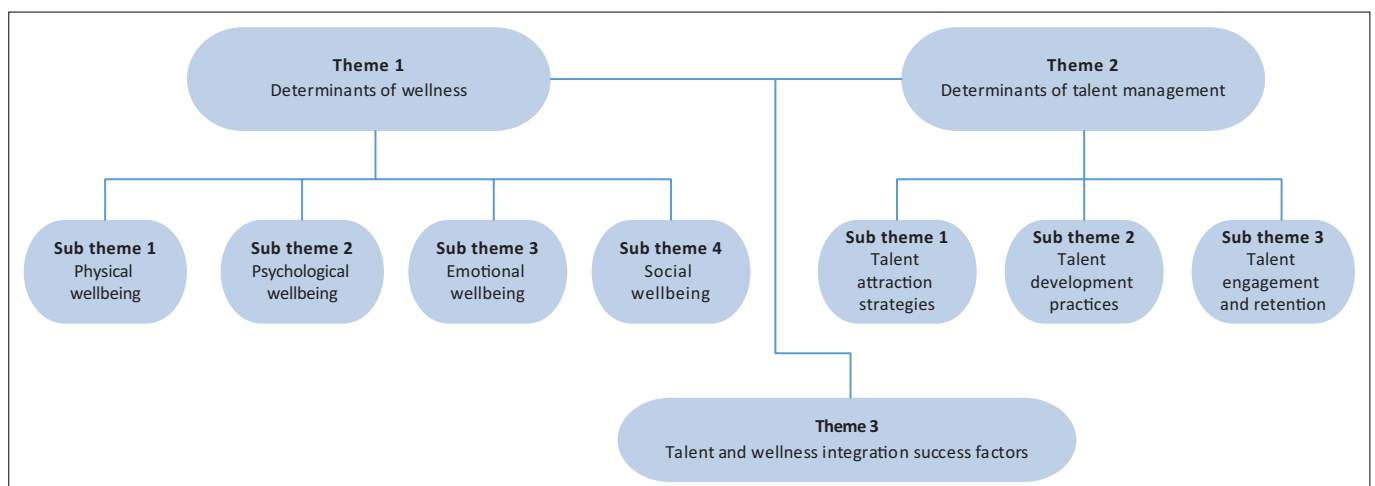


FIGURE 2: Themes and subthemes identified from data analysis.

TABLE 2: Themes and subthemes with corresponding evidence quotes from participants.

Theme	Golden quotes
Determinants of wellness	
Physical well-being	'Physical well-being is very essential, as an employee you are like the factory and it needs to be managed well for it to produce results. The factory is brought to work and becomes the production part of the organisation.' (Participant E, male, senior) 'If the state of mind and spirit are not fully integrated, then employees are likely to put in for sick leave and absent themselves from work.' (Participant A, female, junior)
Psychological well-being	'it is essential for an organisation. No one wants to remain at the same level as they started.' (Participant B, male, middle)
Emotional well-being	'Emotions drive individual behaviours; they drive how an employee interface with everyone around them. The emotional well-being needs to be taken care of as it can be impacted by personal problems and thus ultimately impacts on delivery.' (Participant F, male, senior) 'Emotions are contagious, other people may catch feelings of negative emotions and this may eventually affect production in the organisation.' (Participant D, female, middle) 'We have encountered emotional labour issues, our customers give us feedback that a certain employee was rude, disengaged or emotionally disconnected from work. When we get the feedback, we then interpret that probably that the employee is not well emotionally ... thereafter we propose measures to address the problem.' (Participant G, female, senior)
Social well-being	'We are the sum total of relationships that we live around with, you are not created in vacuum, one way or the other we communicate with one another.' (Participant E, male, senior) 'If employees are requested to work beyond their capacity and capability this may ultimately contribute to the breakdown of work relationships and this will negatively impact on the social well-being of employees.' (Participant H, female, senior)
Determinants of talent management	
Talent attraction strategies	'There is need for a clear employee value proposition; people buy into a brand.' (Participant F, male, senior)
Talent development strategies	'Development is essential to well-being as it makes the employee feel valued and happy and that they can exceed beyond their limit.' (Participant I, female, senior) 'Training is very critical because it fuels employee well-being and performance.' (Participant G, female, senior)
Talent engagement and retention	'Organisations must create a conducive work climate.' (Participant I, female, senior) 'We look at the market, we do an employee perception survey every 2 years and it gives us important data to develop important retention strategies.' (Participant J, male, senior) 'We have been retaining employees with money, we have to face the reality that money is still a motivator. If there is a skill set that we perceive they will be difficult to replace we give them a good compensation package and benefits. It is not the correct way but that is what is happening in our organisation.' (Participant H, female, senior)
Integrated talent-wellness success factors	
-	'Wellness and talent management cannot be separated, they are like two wings of an aeroplane, that plane will not go very far if one is removed. Once an organisation attracts employees, they are on boarded into the organisation; the next step is how we do motivate, excite employees and ensure they enjoy their stay in the organisation.' (Participant D, female, middle) 'Wellness has to serve talent management mainly because talent management is the bigger picture and wellness should enhance talent. Wellness should be part of talent management.' (Participant J, male, senior) 'The various stakeholders have a role to play, HR should provide the framework and the philosophy and the best practice of doing employee wellness and partner with line managers who work with employees on a daily basis.' (Participant J, male, senior) 'Organisations should develop and implement strong, robust, unique strategies to ensure the retention of highly talented and competitive employees in order to survive in today's global environment which accommodates inclusivity.' (Participant H, female, senior)

'If I am not emotionally connected or passionate about my job, I will not be able to perform to the maximum, hence organisational goals will not be achieved. It is not only evident in facial expression, but it is also evident in tasks that have to be completed.' (Participant C, Female, Junior)

Subtheme 4: Social well-being

The results also revealed that social well-being influences work relationships. Participants A, B, D, E, F and I expressed that social well-being also affects relationships outside the workplace. Social well-being includes satisfaction with peers as well as satisfaction and exchange relationships with leaders. The analysis also revealed that giving and receiving social support is a predictor of well-being, as one of the participants said:

'Most employees leave jobs because of bad managers. Managers should be open and provide constructive feedback. Employees need to be properly communicated to as they are the cornerstone of the organisation.' (Participant F, Male, Senior)

Likewise, Participant H revealed that:

... if employees are requested to work beyond their capacity and capability, this may ultimately contribute to the breakdown of work relationships and may impact negatively on the organisation.'

Theme 2: Determinants of talent and talent management

Participants revealed that talent is the capability that an employee or a job seeker has that can improve organisational

performance. Some of the conceptualisations of talent are included in the following excerpts:

'It is the unique capability that makes one stand out exceptionally from others.' (Participant C, Female, Junior)

'It is a natural God-given skill that one has. It is not something that is taught but something that comes easily without being taught.' (Participant D, Female, Middle)

'Talent is a term that confuses me. It is a term that has always been there as a general term; it is supposed to mean that people are talented. Because not everyone is talented, but they can be a risk to the organisation.' (Participant I, Male, Senior)

The subthemes refer to talent management and how it is perceived by the participants.

Subtheme 1: Talent attraction strategies

In describing the talent attraction strategies their organisations have adopted, most of the participants indicated that the image portrayed by an organisation to the outside world is very important, as a good compensation package alone may not attract employees effectively. There are certain push and pull factors involved, including looking for work as a push factor and pull factors such as the organisation's reputation and remuneration. Participants A, B, C, D, E, J and I mentioned certain push and pull factors. Participant G (Female, Senior) puts it nicely:

'... an organisation should be an employer of choice; culture should be talent centric as employees need to be treated as customers ... that will definitely attract talent ...'

Subtheme 2: Talent development strategies

In explaining talent development practices, the participants described a variety of practices and perspectives, which were mostly to do with strategic alignment issues. These included the organisational climate, training needs, type of job or occupation, motive for development, compulsory or voluntary nature of training, relevance of training, needs analysis and resources. Most of the perspectives were based on practical experiences, which are highlighted in some of the interview extracts below:

‘When you train employees, you are giving them more skills or you are empowering them or exposing them to more talent.’
(Participant A, Female, Junior)

Participant B (Male, Middle) affirmed Participant A’s opinion, that ‘it depends on how you make it compulsory. Rather make it voluntary or make it compulsory but, make sure that the employees see the value of the training.’

Subtheme 3: Talent engagement and retention strategies

Most of the participants highlighted the importance of engaging and retaining talent and the need for customised retention strategies. The findings reveal that most organisations have financial and non-financial retention strategies in place to deal with this issue. For example, a participant mentioned that:

‘Even when employees are well skilled or well trained, the possibility of them leaving an organisation is there. So, in terms of an organisation retaining the talent they have trained, they have to introduce incentives, so that employees are retained.’
(Participant A, Female, Junior)

With regard to the notion of whether the same retention strategies should be adopted across the different generations, she explained that it would not be ideal as ‘one needle does not work for everybody to avoid infection’, which implies a customised approach to engaging and retaining staff. In support of engaging and retaining talent, a participant provided an example of an employee who resigned mainly because she did not find meaning in her job. Her views were as follows:

‘A young lady in my company actually resigned because she wanted her input to be considered more than having instructions to be handed down. She did not want to be confined in structures and processes; she wanted a flexible workplace.’ (Participant H, Female, Senior)

Given the important insights brought to the fore by the participants, the results show a special relationship between the workplace wellness subthemes and the talent retention and development subthemes. The results indicate that talent retention and development, and workplace wellness influence each other. Employees who are financially satisfied and able to grow and develop in a conducive work environment are bound to be happy and productive and will not necessarily show the intention to quit.

Theme 3: Integrated talent–wellness success factors

All participants were aware of the need to optimise the integration of talent and wellness in the organisation. The majority of the participants indicated that wellness was not effectively integrated in the talent management process in their organisations, with only one participant indicating that integration only existed at the higher level in their organisation. However, despite efforts made by their organisations to introduce and manage wellness programmes, most participants stressed that they face challenges regarding the management and implementation of wellness programmes. Some of the interview excerpts in this regard are shown below:

‘There are issues of perception on the importance of the wellness programmes, some employees may not be comfortable to do an HIV test in the workplace mainly because of disclosure issues. Although the legislation clearly stipulates that privacy has to be respected, some employees may fear that their information may be divulged; this ultimately impacts their commitment to the whole process and how we manage talent.’ (Participant E, Male, Senior)

‘There is a disconnect between talent management practice and employee well-being practice; there is a need for HR and wellness professionals to be actively involved in the talent management process.’ (Participant B, Male, Middle)

Hence, the integration should not be a major challenge as it is the responsibility of HR professionals to ensure that the integration is optimised.

Discussion

This discussion of results and findings will be based on the two objectives stated earlier. The first part of the discussion will be based on the extent to which organisational context influences the adoption and integration of talent management strategies with wellness interventions, followed by the critical success factors found to influence talent–wellness integration.

Organisations most probably will influence the overall well-being of employees – which is physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being, and ultimately affect talent management, organisational productivity and performance. Some of the participants mentioned that managers must show interest in employees and develop their ability to acknowledge and support employees’ wellness in order to ensure talent is used optimally. Although employees and managers may come from different backgrounds, managers must put in effort to build good relationships with employees, which will make it easier to detect if employees are well or not. This supports the theoretical findings by Bakker and Schaufeli (2008), Danna and Griffin (1999), Field and Louw (2012), Hettler (1980) and Pereira and Karunarathne (2019) on the determinants of well-being.

It was also affirmed that if employees feel valued, are appreciated and not taken for granted, they will put in more

psychological and emotional effort into their work. Therefore, psychological safety is harnessed as employees are able to commit themselves fully and freely to their role without fearing negative consequences when they experience their organisations to be supportive and trusting (Blackwell et al., 2019; Hartley & Young, 2019; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019; Whitaker, 2019). Clear communication of goals is very important as this ensures that the goals are accommodated by the employees and the employees feel valued and part of the goals (Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2006; Painter-Morland, Kirk, Deslandes, & Tansley, 2019).

Positive psychology was also found to play a role in talent management as the positive emotions improve emotional well-being (De Simone, 2014). Majority of the participants expressed the importance of emotional well-being (under Theme 1, Subtheme 3) to be a pivotal part of a healthy organisational life. This means that negative emotions should be effectively managed not to depress talent. The emotional climate within the organisation should promote positive emotions to flourish, which will outweigh deviant behaviours and contribute to positive emotional well-being. We can, therefore, infer from these qualitative findings that positive relationships and social networks improve well-being (Levi, 1994).

The findings also revealed that the relationship between line managers and employees is very important for well-being and talent management. Ultimately good talent managers work diligently to preserve positive relationships among all members of an organization. Establishing good relationships with employees, thus helping to create a positive work environment (Mahajan, 2019). With this in mind, once employees perceive that the organisations value them as a result of managerial behaviour, they will reciprocate these 'good deeds' with positive job attitudes and behaviours. Hence, line managers and employees orient themselves towards a general norm of reciprocity where trust is a critical factor (Renee-Baptiste, 2008). Employees are more engaged at work when their managers care about them, thus enhancing their well-being (De Simone, 2014). Thus, when assessing the factors affecting well-being, it must be recognised that a given factor may be good for some individuals but may be bad for others, or good in some situations but bad in others (Levi, 1994). Line managers should play a crucial role in managing the workforce towards the achievement of organisational performance. The promotion of social relationships by line managers is positively associated with promoting social well-being (Renee-Baptiste, 2008). Employees are more engaged at work when their managers care about them, thus enhancing their well-being (De Simone, 2014).

The results of this analysis further support findings by Botha, Bussin, and De Swardt (2011) that an organisation's people strategy delivers on the employer brand promise where the value proposition that the organisation articulates is reflected by the attention paid to people management

strategies. Thus, the need for an integrated approach to the management of talent in an effort to attract and retain talent has been recognised by many authors (Azma et al., 2019; Dhanpat, Manakana, Mbacaza, Mokone, & Mtongana, 2019; Ncube, 2018; Schutte, Barkhuizen, & Van der Sluis, 2015). Furthermore, Crowley-Henry, Benson and Al Ariss (2019) emphasised that, in order to attract, develop and retain key employees in organisations, it is important to understand the nature and context of their careers. Thus, Williams, Chen-Bowers, Lankford and Wolff (2019) highlighted the role HR professional play in ensuring that training and development practices are aligned with the organisational strategy. As such, training and development practices should also consider the group or network influence over career decisions and orientations. The integration of the talent management process with wellness interventions is seen to improve employees' healthy behaviours, reduce healthcare costs, improve productivity, ensure job satisfaction, minimise job burnout and reduce absenteeism (Alexander & Fry, 2019; Coyle, Abel, Sedani, Holes, & Dinkel, 2019; Einav, Lee, & Levin, 2019; Hartley & Young, 2019; Ncube, 2018; Warehime et al., 2019).

The importance of the organisational context in facilitating the holistic integration of talent management and wellness interventions was also found in this study. With any talent management approach, it is critical to be aligned with the broader organisational strategy. The environment surrounding the organisation is also taken into account when assessing the organisational strategy. Prior to developing the workforce plan, an evaluation of previous initiatives, an assessment of the workforce profile and talent performance and the behaviours to date, are carried out (Obeidat, Al-Khateeb, Abdallah, & Masa'deh, 2019). The HR professionals were identified as the most important stakeholder in facilitating this integration. Other important stakeholders were CEOs, line managers, supervisors, heads of departments and employees. This, therefore, affirms our findings on the important stakeholders in talent management and wellness (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Lowensteyn et al., 2019; Nthebe, Barkhuizen, & Schutte, 2016; Warehime et al., 2019; Rothmans, 2013). Thus, to effectively manage talent in organisations, workplace wellness must focus on three levels, as proposed by Rothman (2013), Setiawati (2019) and Sabharwal, Kiel and Hijal-Moghrabi (2019):

1. Primary level interventions should focus on adjusting or eliminating the dysfunctional effects of the workplace that affect the management of talent.
2. Secondary level interventions should focus on increasing awareness amongst employees with the use of cognitive approaches that enhance the talent and wellness integration process.
3. Tertiary level interventions should focus on improving overall employee well-being.

Thus, the most critical success factor realised by this study for integrating talent management strategies with wellness

interventions is the establishment of a talent–wellness organisational culture. This should be enabled by the following subcritical factors:

- top management support
- clear strategic communication and directions for talent–wellness strategies
- stakeholder involvement (senior management, human resources and wellness specialists, senior management, line managers and employees)
- manager–employee relationship
- organisational wellness interventions that address physical, psychological, emotional and social well-being
- effective talent management processes (attraction, deployments, development and engagement)
- inclusive and fair organisational people practices.

Practical implications

The implications of the study outcomes are of paramount importance to managers, HR professionals, wellness specialists, policy makers and academics. Firstly, the findings call for an understanding of the determinants of holistic employee well-being (physical, psychological, emotional and social) and talent management (attraction, deployment, development and retention). Furthermore, a comprehension of the profound impact of wellness on talent and thus on overall employee (talent) functioning and the extent to which talent contributes to organisational goals and outcomes is outlined. The management of employee well-being is very important as it is inextricably linked to the extent to which talent is effectively managed. This ultimately contributes to the creation of psychologically healthy workplace, which focuses on improving employee involvement, health and safety, employee growth and development, work–life balance and employee recognition (Einav et al., 2019; Meyers et al., 2019; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019; Painter-Morland et al., 2019).

Secondly, HR professionals should have an in-depth understanding of the impact of the talent management and wellness strategies on their organisations. Thus, HR professionals should effectively optimise the integration of employee well-being in the talent management process by committing resources and time. In the event that an organisation has been plagued by the COVID-19 pandemic and possible future challenges fails to establish a talent–wellness organisational culture that promotes positive flourishing, it is likely not to perform as efficiently and effectively as it could as talent might be lost irrespective of talent management strategies employed. It is likely not to perform as efficiently and effectively as it could as talent might be lost irrespective of talent management strategies employed.

Limitations and recommendations

This study has a few limitations that need to be acknowledged. Findings cannot be generalised as a limited sample size based on qualitative methodology was used in this study. The complexity of both talent management and workplace wellness makes it difficult to capture the extent of possible data through one qualitative study.

More research on talent–wellness is proposed to be qualitative or quantitative. Future research also needs to test our research findings with a quantitative study and pay more attention to the development of wellness and talent management integrated frameworks or models in different contexts. The integrated frameworks or models should explore the extent to which these models and definitions are applied in practice and whether they differ in different areas, scales and countries. Thus, when comprehensive measurements of well-being are contemplated, including subjective, eudemonic and social aspects, this stable level is probably the most appropriate (De Simone, 2014; Hofmann et al., 2014; Warehime et al., 2019). Finally, there is also much scope for other researchers to extend the discussions in this paper to a multi-level domain, exploring the spillover effects of exclusive wellness and talent management interventions across the individual employee, organisational and societal levels.

Conclusion

This study provided qualitative evidence that organisational context influences the adoption and integration of talent management strategies with wellness interventions. Wellness interventions must be viewed to be positive and integrated into talent management. The critical success factors that are perceived to influence the integration of talent management strategies with wellness interventions were identified and discussed. A talent–wellness organisational culture was found to be the main critical success factor with related subcritical factors. Findings also suggest that there is a need to understand the determinants of workplace wellness interventions and how they can positively impact talent management. Based on findings from the current study, future research efforts may focus on engaging employees at all levels of the organisation in talent management, establishing a talent–wellness culture and having a talent–wellness coordinator or committee to facilitate implementation.

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Authors' contributions

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Data availability statement

Data will be available for 10 years as per requirements of North-West University.

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