HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND RETENTION OF ACADEMICS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY

by

FAITH NTULI

submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF COMMERCE IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

in the subject of

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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2023

DECLARATION

I, Faith Ntuli (Student Number: 36482285), declare that the dissertation titled: **"Human resource practices and retention of academics: A phenomenological inquiry"** is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination or any other qualification at UNISA, or at any other HEI.

30 January 2023

Signature Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated posthumously to my late mother, Violet Bhebhe, until the resurrection morning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My most profound appreciation to The Ancient of Days, without whom this research study would not have been possible. We make plans, but it is Him who directs our steps.

I am also grateful to the following individuals whose respective contributions will forever be etched throughout my life:

- My supervisors, Dr Jeremy Mitonga-Monga and Dr Tebogo Molotsi, for their untiring guidance throughout this study.
- Mr David Mekwa, for his expertise statistical analysis.
- Dr Themba J Mkhonto, for his editorial contributions to the final draft of this research.
- All the research participants, whose anonymity did not diminish their public lived experiences to allocate a degree of relevance to this research study.

ABSTRACT

The study explored the lived work experiences of academics working at a South African higher education institution (HEI) in order to obtain a better understanding of how this organisation can draw on factors relating to human resource management practice to retain academics.

A qualitative research approach was adopted for the study. Data were collected by means of face-to-face interviews with eleven sampled academics employed by the institution. Data were analysed by means of the interpretive phenomenological analysis framework. The lived experiences of the academics included their adjustment to open distance learning; emotions such as frustration, doubt, hopelessness, stress, a sense of being unpatriotic, a sense of being overwhelmed and a sense of being unappreciated; red tape; staff satisfaction and engagement; and workload and environment. The factors that appeared to influence the retention of the academic staff were identified as the working environment; joy derived from teaching and supervising students; growth opportunities; freedom to manage one's time; and employee benefits.

The recommendations are that the university should improve its recruitment and selection processes; have deliberate and structured onboarding programmes in place; have more relevant training programmes; and motivate and train support staff. The findings may be of use to the human resource management and administrative leadership of HEIs in respect of improving employee retention strategies.

Keywords: *social exchange theory, human resource practices, fairness, recruitment and selection, training and development, promotion opportunities, compensation, job satisfaction*

ISIFINQO

Lolu cwaningo belucubungule ulwazi olwenziwa yizifundiswa ezisebenza esikhungweni semfundo ephakeme eNingizimu Afrika (ISE) ukuze kuqondwe kangcono ukuthi le nhlangano ingasebenzisa kanjani izinto eziphathelene nokuphathwa kwabasebenzi ukuze igcine izifundiswa.

Kwathathwa indlela yocwaningo lwesimo noma olusezingeni eliphezulu ocwaningweni. Idatha iqoqwe ngokusebenzisa izingxoxo zobuso nobuso nezifundiswa eziyishumi nanye eziqashwe yilesi sikhungo. Idatha yahlaziywa ngokusebenzisa uhlaka lokuhlaziya elichazyo lwefinominoloji. Okuhlangenwe nakho ngempilo yezifundiswa kufaka phakathi ukulungiswa kwabo ekufundeni okuvulelekile kokufunda ekhaya; imizwelo enjengokukhungatheka, ukungabaza, ukungabi nethemba, ukucindezeleka, umuzwa wokungabi nazwe, umuzwa wokukhungatheka nomuzwa wokungabongwa; ukuvaleleka ekutholeni noma ekwenzeni izinto ezithile; ukwaneliseka kwabasebenzi kanye nokuzibandakanya; kanye nomsebenzi kanye nemvelo. Izinto ezibonakale zinomthelela ekugcinweni kwabasebenzi bezemfundo zihlonzwe njengendawo yokusebenza; injabulo etholakala ekufundiseni nasekugadeni abafundi; amathuba okukhula; inkululeko yokuphatha isikhathi somuntu; kanye nezinzuzo zabasebenzi.

Izincomo ezithi inyuvesi kufanele ithuthukise izindlela zayo zokuqasha nokukhetha; babe nezinhlelo zokubonisa lokho okukhona nezihlelekile; babe nezinhlelo zokuqeqesha ezifanele; futhi ukhuthaze nokubuya kuqeqeshwe abasebenzi abasekelayo. Okutholakele kungase kube usizo ekuphathweni kwabasebenzi kanye nobuholi bokuphatha be-ISE maqondana nokwenza ngcono amasu okugcina abasebenzi.

Amagama abalulekile: *ithiyori yokushintshisana komphakathi, izinqubo zabasebenzi, ukulunga, ukuqasha nokukhetha, ukuqeqeshwa nokuthuthukiswa, amathuba okukhushulwa, isinxephezelo, ukwaneliseka komsebenzi*

ISISHWANKATHELO

Olu phando luhlolisise amava omsebenzi wabahlohli abasebenza kwiZiko leMfundo ePhakamileyo loMzantsi Afrika (*HEI*) ukuqonda ngcono malunga nendlela eli ziko elinokutsala ngayo kwimiba enxulumene nenkqubo yolawulo lwabasebenzi, ukugcina abahlohli.

Kolu phando kusetyenziswe indlela yophandontyilazwi. Idatha iqokelelwe ngokusebenzisa udliwanondlebe lobuso ngobuso nabasebenzi abangabahlohli abalishumi elinanye abavandlakanyiweyo nabaqeshwe kweli ziko. Idatha ihlalutywe ngokusebenzisa isikhokelo sohlalutyo lweziganeko zokuqonda amava abantu nendlela abawaqonda ngayo ngokwemeko yabo neyezentlalo neyaziwa ngokuba yi-*interpretive phenomenological analysis framework*. Amava abasebenzi abangabahlohli aquka uhlengahlengiso lwabo kwimfundo yomgama evulelekileyo; iimvakalelo ezifana nokudandatheka, ukuthandabuza, ukuphelelwa lithemba, uxinzelelo, imvakalelo yokungabi lithandazwe, imvakalelo yokoyisakala kunye nemvakalelo yokungaxatyiswa; imithetho exabileyo ebambezelayo; ulwaneliseko lwabasebenzi kunye nokuzibandakanya; umsebenzi omninzi nendawo yokusebenza. Imiba echongiweyo ebonakala iphembelela ukugcinwa kwabasebenzi abangabahlohli kweli ziko; yindawo yokusebenza; uvuyo oluvela ekufundiseni nokuba likhankatha lophando lwabafundi; amathuba okukhula; inkululeko yokulawula ixesha lomntu; kunye neenzuzo zabasebenzi.

Iingcebiso kukuba le yunivesithi kufuneka iphucule iinkqubo zayo zokuqesha nokukhetha abasebenzi; ibe neenkqubo zokwaziswa nokudityaniswa okanye ukuqheliswa kwabasebenzi abatsha kwiziko; ibeneenkqubo zoqeqesho ezifaneleke ngakumbi; ukukhuthaza nokuqeqesha abasebenzi abakwizikhundla zokuxhasa iziko. Iziphumo zinokuba luncedo kubunkokheli bolawulo lwabasebenzi kunye noququzelelo lwamaZiko eMfundo ePhakamileyo (*HEIs*) ngokubhekiselele ekuphuculeni iindlela zokugcina abasebenzi.

Amagama angundoqo: ingcingane yokutshintshiselana kwezentlalo *(social exchange theory), iinkqubo zabasebenzi, ubulungisa, ukuqesha nokukhetha abasebenzi, uqeqesho nophuhliso, amathuba okunyuselwa, imbuyekezo, ukwaneliseka ngumsebenzi*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AQIP	Academic Qualification Improvement Programme
DREC	Department of Human Resource Management Research, Ethics Innovation Committee
ERC	Ethics Review Committee
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
UNISA	University of South Africa
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEISA	Higher Education Institution of South Africa
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IPMS	Integrated Performance Management System
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
ODL	Open Distance Learning
ODeL	Open Distance e-Learning
RPSC	Research Permission Sub-Committee
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SRIPCC	Senate Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee

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CHAPTER 1
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was on the human resource (HR) practices and retention factors from a phenomenological perspective. Accordingly, this chapter provides discussions relating to the background to the study, the research problem, as well as the research purpose, objectives, and questions. In addition, the research philosophy that guided the research is explained, followed by discussions concerning the research paradigm and definitions of the study's key concepts. Furthermore, the chapter further highlights the study's contributions to the body of knowledge in the areas of HR practices and personnel retention factors, followed by a synoptic overview of the research methodology utilised in this study. Finally, the chapter is concluded with an outline or layout of the next chapters and a summary of the current chapter as a whole.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Primarily, the study's aim is to gain more insight concerning the lived experiences of academics working in higher education institution of South Africa (HEISA) and to obtain a better understanding of how organisations could use human resource management (HRM) practices factors and retain these workers.

Similar to most organisations, higher education institutions (HEIs) are striving to retain skilled, committed, and competent employees who could remain at the employing organisation (Bibi et al., 2017). However, retaining qualified employees is more crucial for the employer and the organisation (Haider et al., 2015). Higher education institutions invest considerable time and money in employing talented personnel in order to maximise future returns (Lesenyeho et al., 2018). According to Molotsi (2021), HEIs are searching for knowledgeable, skilled, and experienced employees who could contribute to their reputation and competitive advantage. Several researchers are interested in factors such as organisational culture, leadership and HR practices that may influence the retention of workers (Alajlani & Yesufu, 2022; Bibi et al., 2017; Grobler, 2015; Loomes et al., 2019; Maaitah, 2018; Rozika et al., 2018). In this regard, Khan et al., (2014) assert that there are many HRM practices used by organisations to increase the retention of their employees. The HRM practices themselves refer to a process through which an organisation manages its HR activities for the relationship of employer and employees for the short- and long-term (Wijesiri et al., 2018). Employee retention, on the other hand, refers to a situation in which employees choose to remain and add value to the organisation (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015; Patil, 2022; Senevirathna, 2017). Previous research has established that HRM practices such as the appraisal of performance, compensation, training, and development could influence employees' commitment, satisfaction, and engagement while decreasing turnover as well (Akunda et al., 2018; Claudia, 2018; Fahim, 2018; Malik et al., 2020; Noranee et al., 2021).

Despite previous research on the impact of HRM practices on employee retention being well documented (Bibi et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2021; Malik et al., 2020; Ojediran and Adebayo, 2023), there is still a scarcity of research to understand factors with the likelihood to affect the retention of academic staff in general and specifically in South Africa. In that context, this study explores and understands HRM practices and employee retention in Open Distance e-Learning (ODeL).

1.3 SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL WORK CONTEXT

HEIs could hardly function effectively and competitively without the presence and commitment of academics, their HR and lifeblood. In this regard, the professors, lecturers, and researchers in their various categories and professional rankings all embody the experience, knowledge, and skills of the HEIs (Lesenyeho et al., 2018; Rehman et al., 2019). Losing them would be a great loss that incurs costs of recruitment and training, while also affecting institutional standards and stability (Selesho & Naile, 2014; Molotsi, 2021). Therefore, practices must be put in place that attract employees and retain them as well (Kossivi et al., 2016).

With the world growing increasingly into a global village, economies crumbling, volatile political atmospheres and a toxic social environment emerging, the number of people moving from one place to another has greatly increased. The Global Human Trends Report (2014) states that retention and employee engagement constitute two of the top four areas needing urgent attention in the contemporary era of organisational functioning. As such, HEIs are no exceptions to these trends as they are also greatly affected. Besides competing for talented academic staff internationally and nationally, there is also competition in the private and public organisational environment (Bibi et al., 2017; Molotsi, 2021). However, it is the HEIs that struggle more in retaining their experienced academic staff and to attract young academics (Molotsi, 2021).

Higher education institutions of South Africa are not immune to the trends in academic staff retention, despite the country's somewhat stable and expansive economy attracting academic staff from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, which renders the retention levels of academic staff relatively low (Lesenyeho et al., 2018). The institutions must have HRM practices that appeal to the employees and foster the retention of employees with talent, skill, experience and competence to achieve the institution's goals and sustain their competitive advantage (Molotsi, 2021). It is in this regard that the current study contributes to debates on HRM practices and retention of academics at HEIs.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

HEIs, especially the universities, are struggling to acquire and retain academics in all professional categories and rankings. These academics contribute immensely to the institution's grading and student performance (Alemayehu & Woldemariam, 2020).

Numerous factors that influence retention of academics have been documented in various quantitative research studies. These factors range from compensation, access to research resources; performance appraisal, training, and development (Asad et al., 2019; Bibi et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2014; Rathakrishnan et al., 2016; Tatlah et al., 2017). Academics have been found to remain longer in environments and conditions that foster satisfaction. In Claudia's (2018) study of academics in Indonesian universities, academics who perceived fairness in organisational support and recognition by the university of all their input as employees through rewards, tended to remain in the organisation. The above-cited authors' findings further point out that comfortable working conditions contribute to the retention of academics. These findings were reiterated by Rathakrishnan et al. (2016) who added retention factors such as job autonomy, achievable key performance indicators (KPI) as some of the factors that enabled the retention of academics in a Malaysian university. An Ethiopian study by Alemayehu and Woldemariam (2020) revealed that in addition to competitive and fair compensation packages, university academics valued a place where participation is encouraged and the physical attractiveness of the area in which the university is situated. In South Africa even, academics move from one institution to another in search of a place where there are opportunities of career development and advancement; talent and performance management; autonomy; job security; work-life balance and competitive compensation (Mabaso, 2020).

However, there is a need to identify and analyse the HR practices affecting the retention of academics through their lived experiences, which will help identify critical retention factors that have influenced them to stay and contribute to their respective organisation's value and values. The identified and analysed HR practices will help organisations exploit strategies that will retain their employees as their most valuable assets.

1.5 RESEARCH PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This section addresses the research purpose, objectives, and questions.

1.5.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore lived work experiences of academics working at a HEI in order to obtain a better understanding of how this organisation could implement HRM practice factors to retain academics.

1.5.2 Research Objectives

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, the research objectives were then articulated thus:

Objective 1: To identify, explore and understand the lived experiences of academics for factors that may constrain their retention.

Objective 2: To understand the meaning attributed to being an academic at the HEI.

Objective 3: To provide recommendations on HR practices regarding retention of academic staff.

1.5.3 Research Questions

The study endeavours to answer the following questions, which logically correspond and link with the above-stated research objectives:

- What are the lived work experiences of academics working at HEI?
- What is the meaning attributed to being an academic at the HEI?
- What are the HR practices that affect and promote retention of academics at the HEI?

1.6 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

This study is guided and informed by the interpretative/constructivist philosophy, which premises on the idea one of the prevalence of multiple realities that ought to be interpreted. As such, the interpretive research philosophy or paradigm seeks to comprehend the subject's viewpoint, and attention is given to understanding concerning individual's understanding of their environment (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Interpretivism uses an in-depth analysis of an investigated phenomenon in order to obtain and interpret its meanings, magnitude, and implications in an intelligible and constructive manner (Polit & Beck, 2021). Furthermore, interpretive research does not state the dependent and independent variables; instead, it delves into the intricacy of subjective human sense-making (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study has adopted a qualitative research design approach and methodology in its exploration of the lived work experiences of academics working at the HEISA. Phenomenology was chosen as the most appropriate and suitable research design for this study. There are two types of phenomenological design, namely: descriptive and interpretative phenomenology. Interpretative phenomenology has number of variants available to the qualitative researcher. These include hermeneutic phenomenology, template analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The goal of phenomenology is to explore the lived experiences and to make sense of these experiences by focusing on how people perceive and converse about these experiences (Polit & Beck, 2021).

Consistent with its purpose, the study opted for a variant of the phenomenological research design known as IPA. This choice was inspired by the IPA's enablement of different people who have experienced comparable occurrences to share their stories honestly. In this study's context, the researcher was seized with allocating a degree of understanding the participant's sense-making of their daily experiences in relation to the phenomenon they are interpreting (Miller et al., 2018; Pietkiewicz et al., 2014; Tuffour, 2017).

Accordingly, the data collection in this research design was conducted through the semi-structured interview format that enabled participants to freely express their views within the bounds of the study aims and objectives (see Annexure D). During the interviews, the researcher consistently asked questions as sequentially reflected in the interview schedule until data saturation was reached (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim by the researcher. These transcripts were analysed thematically in accordance with the principles of IPA. The Atlas.ti software was used for coding and analysing data (Alase, 2017; Smith & Eatough, 2019). To ensure trustworthiness and confidence in the study outcomes, an external coder (co-coder) was utilised for independent corroboration or confirmation of the researcher's findings, conclusions reached, and proposed recommendations.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher received ethical clearance to conduct this study from the Department of Human Resource Management Research, Ethics Innovation Committee (DREC) and Research Permission Sub-Committee (RPS) of the Senate Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee (SRIPCC) before actual data collection could begin (see Annexure A). All the participants were provided with information sheets/leaflets (see Annexure B) and informed consent forms (Annexure C) which provided participants with information about the study's purpose, anticipated benefits, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the option to discontinue at any time.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study explored the lived experiences of academics at the selected HEI. The study is significant as the findings may influence policy and suggest best practices for HR practices. The lived experiences of the participants may assist HR practitioners and policy makers to support academic staff in areas where shortcomings were identified, which could intensify risk of retention. Furthermore, the study could help to develop strategies for retaining academic staff, which would contribute to the institution's grading and performance.

1.10 DEFINITIONS OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

The below-mentioned list of key concepts provides definitions that help in better understanding of the concepts' lexical, contextual, disciplinary, and practice-related meanings and application (Alase, 2017; Smith & Eatough, 2019).

1.10.1 Academic Staff Retention

Academic staff retention is a deliberate process in terms of which institutions apply procedures and practices that will encourage academics to stay for a longer time and add value to the institution (Alemayehu & Woldemariam, 2020).

1.10.2 Human Resources Practices

These are activities which organisations put in place to direct employees in achieving the organisational goals (Bauer et al., 2020).

1.10.3 Lived Experiences

Lived experiences relate to an understanding of the world acquired through first-hand observations and experiences in the immediate environment (Frechette et al., 2020).

1.11 LIMITATIONS

The research was undertaken at the one campuses of the selected HEI through the convenience sampling strategy to identify and enlist prospective participants. Academic staff at the study sites could be different from those at other higher learning institutions regarding their perceptions and experiences concerning academic retention and HR best practices. This campus only houses Science and Engineering staff. Thus, the possibility for bias towards the sampled individuals in these fields loomed large. For that reason, the findings could not be generalised to all South African universities as they may not be facing the similar challenges.

1.12 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters of the dissertation are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

The chapter introduces the study, discusses the background, motivation for the study, the problem statement, research purpose, objectives, and questions, as well as the study's significance. The research philosophy and research methodology and design are also discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The chapter reviews relevant literature on HR practices and employee retention. The theoretical framework that guided the study is also discussed. The chapter begins with the Social Exchange Theory (SET) that links HR practices and retention, followed by HR practices and employee retention. The relevant findings on HR practice and retention of employees are highlighted.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter presents a discussion on the overall research design of the study, including the adoption of research philosophy/paradigm and IPA as research design. The chapter further discusses the data collection method and analysis used. This chapter also includes discussions on quality issues to the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Research findings

The chapter relates to the findings and discussions of the study using the existing literature review discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Discussion, limitations and recommendations

The chapter discusses the research findings, limitations, recommendations and conclusions drawn from the findings of the study.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter started by providing some background on academic employee retention, followed by the chapter’s articulation of the problem statement and identification of the study's objectives and questions. The chapter also outlined the research design that informed the execution of this research. The chapter’s last section provided an outline/ layout of five chapters that constitute this dissertation. The following chapter presents and discusses the reviewed literature concerning the core aspects of employee retention and HR practices.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter primarily focuses on the impact on employee retention regarding HRM practices. The chapter begins HR practices and retention through the Social Exchange Theory (SET), followed by HR practices and employee retention. The relevant findings on HR practice and retention of employees are highlighted. In conclusion, the chapter will close with a summary.

2.2 SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) best explains the connection between HR practices and retention, as developed and refined by Homans (1961); Blau (1964); Emmerson (1982). The theory is built on principles of sociology, psychology and economics which posit that human behaviour revolves around maximising reward and minimising costs (Tatlah et al., 2017; Yin, 2018). The cost and benefit analysis is prevalent in various forms of relationships such as families, employee-employer and friendships (Harden et al., 2018). The exchange between the involved individuals or parties can be social or economic (Meira & Hancer, 2021; Stein & Min, 2019). In economic exchanges the reward is usually upfront and openly disclosed, unlike social exchanges (Muldoon et al., 2018; Stein & Min, 2019). The relationships are sustained provided that each party continues to feel the benefits of the relationship. However, the relationships are severed should one party feel to be benefiting substantially less from the relationship (Nunkoo, 2016).

Initially, Homan (1961) advocated for a dyadic focus on individual behaviour, but Blau, (1964) expanded on the theory to explain interactions among various groups. The nucleus of SET is to assist us into better understanding the work relations entailed in transactions amongst individuals or groups of individuals (Cross & Dundon, 2019, p.265). These relationship interactions are not always smooth, as conflicts ensue from time to time, as described by the SET explanation of human behaviour (Muldoon et al., 2018; Zoller & Muldoon, 2019). Homans (1961) expounded on the SET hypotheses as explained by Emerson (1976):

Success proposition explains that an action is repeated when one is often rewarded for it. *Stimulus proposition* states that a stimulus that was rewarded previously is likely to be acknowledged.

Deprivation- Satiation proposition states that a reward that was received in the recent past gradually loses its value. *Value proposition* states that if one finds the reward of something useful, one is likely to do the service. The r*ationality proposition* supposes that an individual is more likely to choose an activity that is likely to bring about the most desired reward.

2.2.1 Principles of SET

2.2.1.1. Reciprocity

There is an obligation to return positive/negative actions with a mutually equivalent negative/positive action (Ahmed et al., 2018). Subjectivity in terms of what is exchanged is prevalent. Cross and Dundon (2019) point out that in a relationship of employment, a feeling of distrust and tension is bound to exist when an employee feels their violation of their trust due to non-reciprocity, subsequently result in conflict in the workplace. Once an employer is seen as untrustworthy and undependable, employees cease to commit to their duties. Furthermore, organisations that develop and upskill employees; have family-friendly practices in an effort to demonstrate their commitment to employees and in return for employees to reciprocate this commitment with positive work attitudes and behaviours; trust and commitment. The following principle of SET is costs and benefits.

2.2.1.2 Costs and benefits

Individuals or parties enter into a relationship with intentions of benefiting or being rewarded for more than the cost of the exchange (Jang et al., 2016; Rathakrishnan et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). What is valuable to one are the costs expected for the reward such as money, time, effort and skills (Cross & Dundon, 2019). Rewards for the exchange may include acceptance and support. The process of exchange results in the feeling of independence and satisfaction, at times dissatisfaction whenever inequity is experienced (Stafford & Kuiper, 2022).

2.2.1.3 Equity (Fairness)

Injustice is usually experienced when the inputs and outcomes of the exchange are dissimilar (Waskito et al., 2020). Often benefits are compared amongst individuals or parties, leading evaluating the amount of effort awarded to certain tasks, qualifications that one possesses and comparing the quality of work output possibly leading to inequity/ equity issues (Wan, 2016). If unfairness is detected by the individual, an attempt to balance the outputs to outcomes will be undertaken. Fairness is subjective, and that is why there are usually underlying feelings of both contention and collaboration which are not openly expressed (Cross & Dundon, 2019). To solve the issue of subjective fairness SET has different types of justice as outlined by Laundon et al. (2019):

2.2.1.3.1 Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is undertaken with relative outcomes or resources allocation. These resources are distributed in varied forms such as pay or praise (Muraina, 2018). The employees look at their knowledge, skills, and efforts even their experience and compare it to the pay or recognition they receive so as to assess fairness within the workplace. Employees expect fairness in the allocation of economic resources from the organisation, such as, compensation, rewards, promotions, benefits, power and status. specifically, distributive justice relates to the advancement and promotion of the impartial treatment of comparable workers and partial treatment incomparable workers (David, 2021). Distributive justice is achieved through adhering to three allocation rules namely equality, equity and need (Muraina, 2018). Northouse (2019, p. 504) identified six principles of distributive justice which can be applied in varying situations. In addition to equal sharing or opportunities, justice must adhere to personal needs, and not infringe on an individual’s rights, effort, performance and contribution to society.

2.2.1.3.2 Procedural Justice

The procedural justice dimension of fairness addresses organisational policies and processes in HR. Fair procedure is attained when all decisions made are based on accurate and objective information (Laundon et al., 2019, p.300). Procedural justice focuses on the how the outcomes are distributed unlike the distributive justice which considers the distributed outcome in itself (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Therefore, procedural justice is associated with fairness of the distribution of the outcomes (David, 2021). Procedural justice is acknowledged more by employees when their voices are heard and contribute in decision-making process (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

2.2.1.3.3 Interpersonal Justice

Fair justice is expected by employees particularly when interacting with their supervisors/managers. The employees need to feel as though they are treated with dignity and respect by authority figure in the organisation. Performance appraisals, compensation and even decisions on promotions are examples of interpersonal procedural displays established in the relationship between the employee and the organisation (Diego et al., 2018). Interestingly, some managers are said to prefer aggressive communication approaches with employees rather than to treat subordinates with respect and politeness due to the fear of being perceived as soft and weak (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Employees expect to be treated with decency and compassion (David, 2021).

2.2.1.3.4 Informational Justice

This type of organisational justice addresses the degree with which procedural information determine adequate, honest and readily accessible outcomes (Diego et al., 2018) employees, evaluate the acceptability and trustworthiness of explanations from manager regarding decisions making processes. Similarly, employees seek to find justice in the decision making process by examining the provided information and analysing the timeliness of the decision and assessing the truthfulness of the given information (David, 2021). Employees prefer treatment that is detailed and open from their supervisors (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

Employees as a group or individuals compare their balance of costs and benefits with that of groups or individuals in the same circumstances. Resistance is experienced both collectively and individually when there is a sense of injustice in the company, thus, affecting trust in the relationship (Cross & Dundon, 2019). Commitment, satisfaction and low turnover are enhanced when distributive, interactional and procedural justice are applied fairly to employees (Osman et al., 2016).

2.2.1.3.5 Trust

Blau (1964) illuminates that it is nearly impossible to guarantee a suitable return for a favour rendered, the social exchange calls for trust in the belief that others will meet their obligations. Parties involved in an exchange relationship trust that the other will honour their obligations within the partnership. Relationships, especially employment relationships with high levels of trust, have workers who are committed, loyal and display positive behavioural tendencies. Relationships, where trust levels are low, have a number of issues such as power struggles, lack of co-operation, low motivation and no commitment (Cross & Dundon, 2019). Trust affects the employees' productivity as they often support organisations that foster trust (Osman et al., 2016).

2.2.2 Social Exchange Theory at Workplace

The Social Exchange Theory presents a theoretical foundation for comprehending how members in the organisation view HR practices and how these practices affect them (Fei & Aun, 2018). Employees weigh the benefit and cost of staying or leaving an organisation on whether or not they continue to benefit from the company, for if the cost outweighs the benefit, termination of the relationship is usually the selected option. (Huang et al., 2016).

The Social exchange theory has been applied in many employment relationships (Bibi et al., 2017). Osman et al. (2016) point out that SET employs equity, honesty, team spirit, and leadership to encourage a fulfilling organisational climate and harmony between management and workers.

Various HRM practices provide alternative exchange relationships the likes of employee engagement, reward systems, training and development, promotional opportunities, recruitment and selection, staff retention, and leadership areas as a few examples of areas that SET is applied (Cross & Dundon, 2019; Fei & Aun, 2018; Narwin, 2016). Employees who are satisfied with their compensation and promotional opportunities are likely to reciprocate their appreciation and appeasement to the organisation by being loyal, devoted and extending their stay in the organisation (Bibi et al., 2017; Fei & Aun, 2018; Victor & Hoole, 2017). Reciprocity also applies to employees whose work is recognised by the employer, resulting in the employee increasing work performance (Benton, 2016; Victor & Hoole, 2017). Employees who have been promised reward, respect, and justice by the company work harder and trust the organisation (Yin, 2018).

Furthermore, if employees are rewarded for their performance, they become motivated to perform better in order to receive further recognition. On the other hand, if the employer feels the performance of the employee was not worthy of a reward, the employer will attempt to balance the relationship exchange through performance training (Narwin, 2016). The purpose of training employees is to express to employees that you value them, and provide an impression that the organisation empowers and honours individuals that show loyalty, commitment, and involvement to the company (Bibi et al., 2017; Fei & Aun, 2018). The selection process is intended to encourage the employees' decision to stay in the organisation – those who favour fairness in the selection process tend to stay longer within the company.

2.3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES

Human resource management (HRM) is utilisation of people to accomplish organisational goals (Mondy & Martocchio, 2016). In addition, human resource management is the utilisation of people to accomplish organisational goals (Mondy &

Martocchio, 2016). HRM is concerned with the process in which employees are hired, managed, and developed in organisations (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Employee management benefits both the organisation and the employees (Nankervis et al., 2020). Therefore, it can be stated that HRM includes all choices and resolutions that are involved in the effective management of people in an organisation, with the view of achieving most of the organisational objectives (Bauer et al., 2020). HRM further suggest that the life cycle of employees be managed through the following activities so as to ensure the organisations goal achievements:

- Job design and analysis
- Managing multiculturalism and abiding by local, federal and global labour regulations for individual job recruitments;
- choosing people to join organisations;
- educating and upskilling individuals while they are in employment at the organisation;
- assisting in the management of employee performance; acknowledging and compensating employees for contributions made to the company while upholding positive labour relations and assisting in maintain high safety levels; and
- overseeing the departure of an employee from the organisation.

Organisations adopt different models based on ideas, values, and beliefs founded on interactions between the businesses themselves, the employees, the unions, and entire activities within HR occurring within the broader social, economic, and political settings that influence them (Nankervis et al., 2020). There are two approaches found in HRM, namely, unitarist and pluralist. The unitarist approach believes that the interests of both the organisation and workers must be aligned and there should be no room for any conflict between them, as opposed to, the pluralists believe that conflict between organisation and workers is unavoidable, and that dispute must be appropriately resolved (Nankervis et al., 2020). There are many HRM models emanating from the aforementioned approaches. Organisations, through the models they adopt, reflect the organisation's attitude toward its people resources, the role played by workers in the overall success of the company, and the manner in which the employees are managed and handled and addressed. There are numerous HRM models identified by various scholars: the Harvard framework; Michigan framework or ‘matching’, Contextual, the 5-P model, the European model and the guest (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Lapiņa et al., 2014). The models assist to elaborate on previous work done on HRM including the explanation of how some practices and their benefits were established came about and their benefits. The 5-P model and the Harvard model are discussed below as they have relevance to the study.

2.3.1 The Harvard Model

The Harvard Model was The Harvard Model was developed by Beer (1984). This model describes the interaction of organisation and society as the framework that connects the organisational goals to societal demands compared to HR activities (Tyson, 2006). As depicted in Figure 2.1, the Harvard model has 5 (five) constituents:

2.3.1.1 Stakeholder interests

Stakeholders are comprised of cooperate shareholders, management, employees, government, unions. The satisfaction and contentment of stakeholders is not solely attributed to financial outcomes, reputational influences and the success of the organisation (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 4). Stakeholders are people or organisations that have a right to, interest in or ownership in an organisation, or its operations. The onus is on the organisation to ensure that the stakeholders are content in their relationship with the business, even though on occasion, the interests of different stakeholders conflict with one another. Jackson et al. (2018) point out that employees desire high compensation and benefits, long-term employability, and a good work-life balance, while shareholders and management are primarily concerned with long-term sustainability, financial benefits and a business reputation. Additionally, the concern of the government is abiding by the law, acting morally, and being socially responsible while unions insist on trustworthiness, reliability, and collaborative problem-solving.

2.3.1.2 Situational factors

Situational factors in the HRM include aspects of the workforce, direction of the organisation and environment, societal values management philosophies, labour market, labour unions, management philosophies, project technology, and regulations. These factors define the internal and external context in which the business operates. The differences of the workforce in terms of internal aspects like physical abilities, nationality, age, race, gender, sexual preference and external aspects such as religion, educational background, marital status, work experience and have a significant bearing on the organisation. The organisation will have to establish and enforce organisational policies and procedures that encourage employee diversity and promote collaboration to optimise the employee's unique contributions to the company (Erasmus et al., 2019). Business strategy establishes competitive advantages for the organisation within a particular market (Wärnich et al., 2018).

Labour unions primarily represent the interest of workers when in communication with employers, thus forming part of the bargaining process that manages conflicts in the workplace. Similarly, the power and authority of the labour organisation, often an independent organisation from outside the business, has an influence on the view of workers regarding the role and effectiveness of trade unions in negotiations (Jackson et al., 2018).

2.3.1.3 HRM policy choices

According to the model of HRM policy choices, categories are segmented into four areas, namely, employee influences, human resources flow, reward systems and work systems. Employee influence and involvement is associated with the ideas shared by workers and their motivation to participate in organisational debates and decision-making procedures (Nankervis et al., 2020). HR flow covers all HRM functions, such as HR planning, job design, recruitment and selection, performance review and termination. Rewards systems regulate how employees are extrinsically and intrinsically rewarded for their work and contribution to the business (Bauer et al., 2020). Extrinsic rewards include salary and benefits, while intrinsic rewards include incentives like attaining one’s own objectives, independence, and more demanding employment opportunities (Wärnich et al., 2018). Work systems appertains to aptness of the technology the workers use, the design of the places workers do their jobs and even the teamwork (Nankervis et al., 2020). Every organisation needs a working systems and employees that are in alignment. The design allows the organisation's work to be more productive and efficient.

2.3.1.4 HR outcomes

Human resource outcomes result from policies, strategies and processes that are aligned with the organisation. These outcomes are commitment, competence, congruence and cost- effectiveness (Lapiņa et al., 2014).

2.3.1.5 Long-term consequences

Long-term consequences have to do with individual wellbeing, organisational effectiveness and societal wellbeing that includes comprehensive examination of the organisation and its workforce. The organisation’s standing both in the market and in society is assessed along with the overall well-being of its employees.

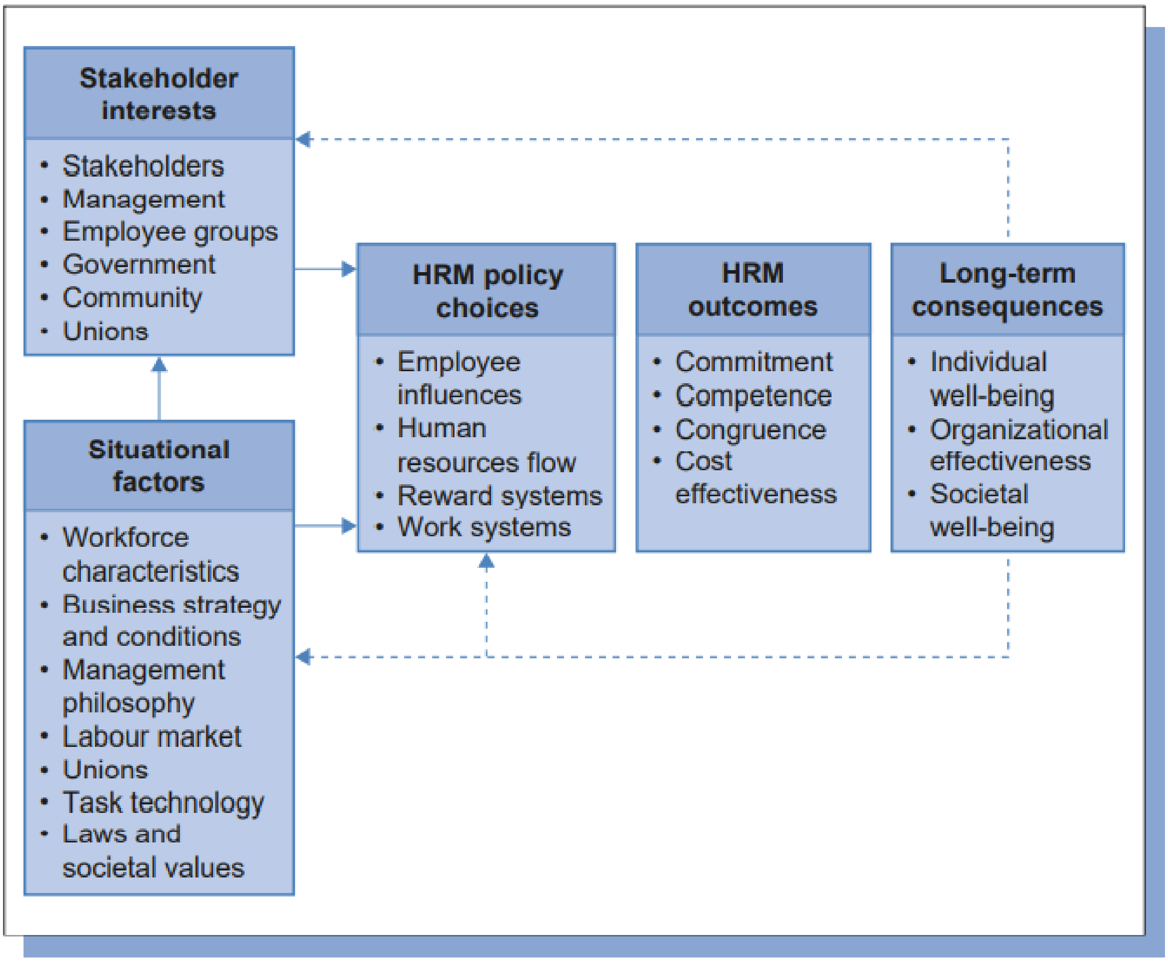


Figure 2.1: The Harvard HRM framework
(Source: Tyson, 2006: 86)

2.3.2 The 5-P Model

Schuler (1992) developed the 5P model which identified five P categories that influence HR (see Figure 2.2). This model aids scholars in the understanding of the complex impact that HR activities have on the behaviour of groups and individuals (Schuler, 1992). The 5 Ps are described below as outlined by Armstrong & Taylor (2020, p. 11).

HR philosophy – is a statement on how the organisation perceives its people resources, their significance to the business' success, and what steps should be taken to manage them.

HR policies – these offer guidance for dealing with people-related business issues as well as the creation of HR practices and programs based on strategic requirements.
HR programmes – these are made up of coordinated HR actions and are influenced by HR policies with an objective to start and manage organisational transformation projects brought about by strategic business demands.

HR practices – These are the activities involved in putting HR programs and policies into action by means of resourcing, performance and reward management, employee relations, learning and development and administration.
HR processes - these are the official plans and procedures for the implementation of HR strategic plans and directives.

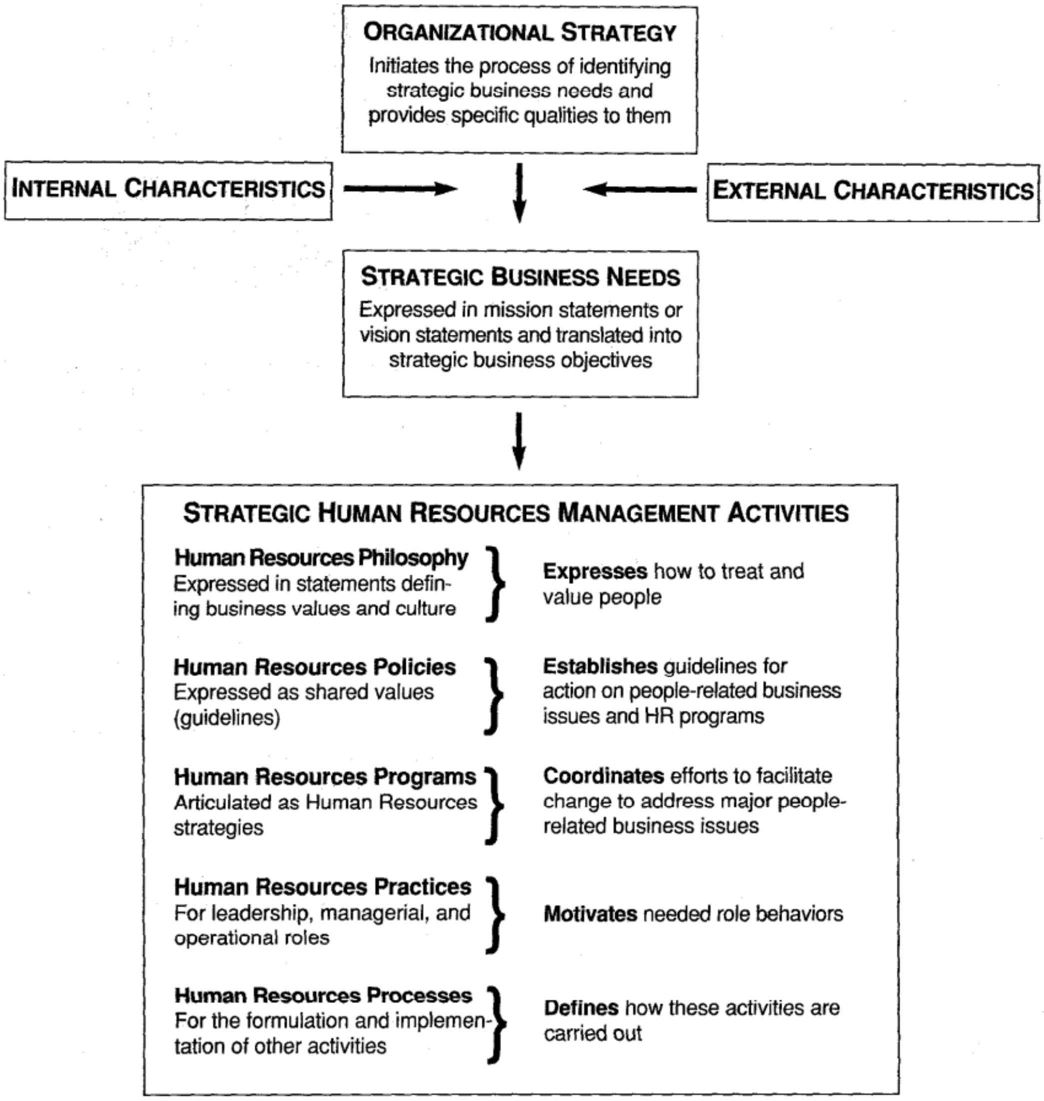


Figure 2.2: The 5P model
(Schuler, 1992, p. 20)

Human resource practices are activities which organisations institute to direct employees in achieving organisational goals (Rozika et al., 2018; Wijesiri et al., 2018). These practices are either used singly or in groups (Rozika et al., 2018; Sapegina & Weibel, 2017). Several HRM practices that positively influence retention like training and development, work environment, availability of research, career growth opportunities, job satisfaction and teaching resources and compensation have been documented (Alshibli, 2018; Chahar & Hatwal, 2018; Rathakrishnan et al., 2016;

Sapegina & Weibel, 2017). The HR practices adopted in this study are discussed as follows:

2.3.3 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection are crucial processes as the success of an organisation depends on the recruitment of suitable people with the required skills at any particular time (Tsai, 2018). The recruitment process involves finding the best possible candidate with the necessary qualification and possessing the skills and qualities required to meet the organisation's needs (Nankervis et al., 2020). The selection process entails choosing from applicants most suitable to fill the position (Klepić, 2019). Recruitment and selection that is inadequately executed results in a high turnover, unhappy employees, and the organisation not being able to achieving its goals (Asad et al., 2019). It is pivotal that the recruitment and selection processes are fair, open, and transparent for employees to feel motivated to work hard in improving their performance (Sachane et al., 2018).

The recruitment process involves identifying job openings, compiling the job requirements, deciding what recruitment sources and methods to use and obtaining the desired tool to perform daily tasks (Nankervis et al., 2020). Sourcing potential employees and encouraging people to apply for open positions in the company is part of the recruitment process by which employers identify the many talent pools that are available and accessible on the market for filling vacant positions. (Adisa et al., 2017). Organisations always strive to attract, recruit, engage and retain a workforce that contributes to their success (Erasmus et al., 2019). For that to happen, the employer must be attractive to job seekers that will be choosing from a variety of available job opportunities (Nankervis et al., 2020).

The recruitment process has steps that serve as a guideline for any organisation to follow (see Figure 2.3). The process always begins with the HR planning phase (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). During the planning process, a forecast of the future labour demand and supply is evaluated and from this process, a decision on whether more employees are required to accomplish the organisation’s goals is identified. Human resource planning ensures that plans satisfy the identified need of a business. A poor planning process where there is no consideration for organisational values and goals or the availability of resources results in the hiring incompetent individuals who may negatively cost the organisation (Adeosun & Ohiani, 2020).

Recruitment sources and places candidates with the required competencies and experiences, especially when an organisation cannot find suitable candidates internally (Calderón-Valencia et al., 2021). The groundwork for the selection process and the first stage of appointment is established through the recruitment process. (Nankervis et al., 2020).

2.3.3.1 Factors influencing recruitment process

There are many factors that impact the recruitment process such as the external and internal environment from which the organisation. The internal factors include organisational values, strategy, mission and HR planning whereas external factors include legal and political considerations, technology and competitors (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Jackson et al., 2018). Erasmus et al. (2019) and Wärnich et al. (2018) identified the following factors:

- Economy and labour market conditions – recruitment becomes more expensive when the demand of skills exceeds the supply;
- Government and legislation – it is critical that the recruiting organisation adheres to all laws that govern HR issues like the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 as amended, the Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, the Employment Services Act 4 of 2014 and Public Service Act of 1994. These laws forbid discrimination based on race, gender, cultural or social origin, colour, sexual preference, age, disability, belief, conscience, belief, political position, culture, language, marital status, or duty for a family. Unfair discrimination should not even be detected in the wording or placement of the advertisement;
- Image of the organisation –positive image appeal attracts the best prospective employees. Likewise, poorly branded images discourage talented candidates from making themselves available for recruitment. Best-choice and attractive organisations are said to have strategies and processes in place to attract, retain and motivate key talent - strategies like wide choice of benefits, salary packaging that is favourably tailored for individuals and flexible working arrangements (Nankervis et al., 2020);
- Recruitment policy – defines the process of recruitment including the legal guidelines, sources of recruitment and outlining who is responsible for all the recruitment policies; and

- Cost and budget – the process of recruitment can be a costly exercise. It is crucial that those responsible for recruitment work within the allocated budget as the method of recruitment are determined by the budget.

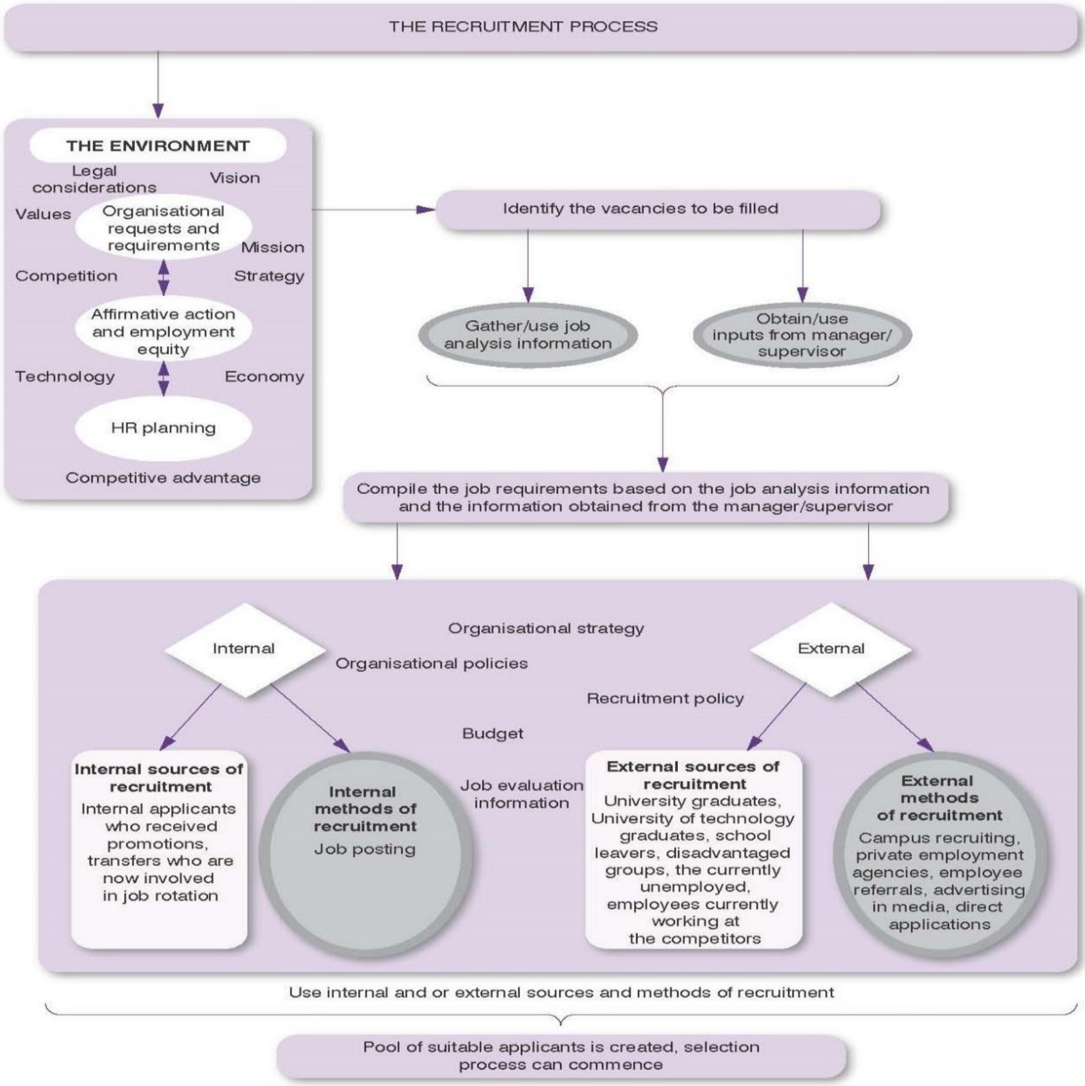


Figure 2.3: The recruitment process
(Source: Wärnich et al., 2018).

2.3.3.2 Sources of recruitment

The sources of applicants are within and outside the organisation (Farndale et al., 2018). Both sources have advantages and disadvantages as outlined in Figure 2.4. Internal sources include an internal promotion, job rotation and transfers whereas external sources are graduates, school leavers, unemployed applicants and many more (Erasmus et al., 2019; Wärnich et al., 2018). The main methods used by a company to advertise for both internal and external sources are direct applications, referrals, campus recruiting, advertisement and private employment agencies.

Table 2.1: Advantages and disadvantages of recruitment

INTERNAL TALENT ATTRACTION STRATEGIES	
Potential Advantages	**Potential Disadvantages**
May boost workers' morale.	Inbreeding's risk.
Simpler to evaluate the skills of applicants.	Angst among individuals who weren't promoted
Accomplishment is rewarded.	Political rivalry over promotions
Promotional succession becomes established.	A strong appraisal programme is needed.
Only required for hiring at the entry level.	Criticism from individuals unable to enter the organisation.
Reduces the "leak plugging" technique.	Old customs are preserved.
Less money is spent on recruiting a pool of candidates.	Cloning carried out by the selectors.
EXTERNAL TALENT ATTRACTION STRATEGIES	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
New concepts introduced to the organisation.	An outsider might not fit into the culture of the organisation.
There are no internal complaints of favouritism that fuel anger.	Those passed over experience a drop in morale.
Forces insiders to compete and maintain their knowledge and education.	Recruits need further training and growth.
More in line with the principles of affirmative action tactics.	An extended orientation period needed
May quickly change organisational culture and be very effective.	Can be a very expensive endeavour, especially when local or international recruiters are involved.
Can help to create a workforce that is more varied.	Evaluation of prior employment history is more challenging.

(Source: Nankervis et al., 2020)

Before the commencement of the selection process, the organisational goals, objectives, and policies are to be considered. Furthermore, the duties and responsibilities (job design) of the individual must be accurately detailed. The next step is to determine the criterion to be used for the selection of the successful candidate, followed by job specifications identifying the traits, skills and qualities necessary job position. Finally, the tools to be used for selection are identified, for example, interviews and tests (Dash, 2017).

2.3.3.3. Selection process

The selection process entails deciding on the level of compatibility for the applicant to the advertised job position (Wärnich et al., 2018). Applicant selection, whether externally or internally, for current and future vacancies is a critical HR process with widespread implications for corporate branding, efficiency, output, and the organisation's future existence(Nankervis et al., 2020).

Although the order varies depending on the organisation, there are numerous steps in the selection process (Dominique-Ferreira et al., 2021; Erasmus et al., 2019). The selection process begins with the screening to eliminate the applicants that do not qualify for the job before filling in and application blank acts as a personal record of the individual’s complete personal history profile detailing interests, talents, and achievements. The following step of the process is to undertake an employment test, psychological tests, knowledge test, performance test, graphic response test, aptitude test and/or medical tests. Next is the interview process where and the successful applicant undergoes background checks and/or a medical examination.

In all these processes of recruitment and selection, the organisation has an obligation to adhere to the Employment Equity Act no 55 of 1998, which reads that no candidate should be discriminated against in any form. The organisation will not fulfil its objectives and is likely to incur high employee turnover, struggle to achieve optimal productivity and experience high absenteeism rates when an unsuitable person is recruited and selected for a particular vacancy (Amin et al., 2013).

The recruitment of academic staff is a challenge, especially where there is growing competition in the global economy, declining attractiveness of academia, lack of succession planning, and ineffective recruitment strategies (Molotsi, 2021). Organisations need proper procedures and process for evaluating and selecting employees, as failure to do so, may result in the organisation encountering difficulties to accomplish objectives and goals, likely to result in high rate of staff resignations, low levels of productivity, and despondent workers (Asad et al., 2019).

Many factors affect the type of candidates HEI may recruit and eventually select. Findings from Munyoro et al.'s (2016) study of Zimbabwean academics concluded that the calibre of academics that the university recruit and select is affected by unattractive salaries and benefits. They further posited that due to the institution’s strong affiliation to the church, preferred candidates were often associated with the church, therefore limiting the pool of prospective candidates for vacancies. Furthermore, findings from a study of Australian academics by Loomes et al. (2019) indicated an increase in talent competition internationally; the workforce is ageing; academia is no longer a coveted profession and the nonexistence of career progression, thus, gravely affect the recruitment and selection of academics.

Wolniak and Szromek (2020) study revealed that HRM practices like recruitment affect university performance. Universities need to have effective recruitment policies that will ensure that suitable candidates with the required skills, knowledge, attitudes, and qualifications are selected. In addition to that, they pointed out that it is critical that the Head of Departments and registrars must actively take part in the selection processes as their input is significantly valuable.

2.3.4 Training and Development

Regardless of how impeccable the recruitment and selection processes are that are used by the organisation to hire suitable candidates for vacancies, there is still a need to continually assess, develop and manage the employees' skills and knowledge. The employees, especially new appointees, need to grow and develop within the job positions. Newly hired employees need to learn of the organisation culture, which in itself is an intricate process , usually result in high turnover if executed poorly, resulting in costly expenditure for the organisation including recruitment, selection an training of a new group of employees (Rothwell & Whiteford, 2020). The organisation may include planned training, mentoring, and online training as part of the employee induction to the business.

Training is a process where employees acquire knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences to perform their daily duties (Arbab & Abaker, 2018; Asad et al., 2019; Gupta & Gomathi, 2018). Armstrong and Taylor (2020) defined training as the use of planned and organised instruction activities to improve learning. As organisations endeavour to achieve their objectives they use training as one of the established programs to encourage skill or knowledge development among their employees (Nankervis et al., 2020). The emphasis on the definition of employee training is that the employer provides learning that is job-related and with the aim to improve capabilities and performance of employees in work related duties as per existing standards (Erasmus et al., 2019). Contrastingly, development is a deliberate and methodical process for evaluating, determining, and developing a suited career path for a worker based on their ambitions and objectives, while taking into account the requirements and environmental factors of the larger organisation (Malik, 2018, p.102). Defining the two terms, Wärnich et al. (2018, p.353) defined training and development as the procedures that are used in all the evaluations plans, designs, implementation and development of all learning programs in the work place. Training focus is usually short-term and long-term for development (Maimako & Bambale, 2016). For training and development to be effective, there must be an environment where every employee has equal opportunities for training and the career development information is accessible and freely communicated to everyone (Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

Training and development have several purposes and benefits in any organisation. Employees must receive training in order to develop new abilities and to refine existing skills in order to improve performance and remain competitive and relative. Changing technology and global competition necessitate having employees continually update their skills (Rothwell & Whiteford, 2020). Training and development also help the organisation in preparation for succession and promotions (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Training and development can be viewed as an investment in HR that will yield numerous benefits and returns to the company as employees becomes more proficient, more knowledgeable about the job, and develop a positive and attitude towards performing better optimally in their current and future positions (Wärnich et al., 2018). Some of the important functions served by training and development in organisations as outlined by Erasmus et al. (2019); Nankervis et al. (2020) and Wärnich et al. (2018) as follows:

Improving performance: employees lacking skills necessary for their job are trained in order to improve their performance. It might be that the employee has been promoted to a position that requires extra skills or they have been newly recruited.

Updating employee skills: as the organisation strategic direction changes due to environmental factors, so too should the knowledge and skills of the employees.

Promoting job competency: training and development help managers who are becoming obsolete to catch up with changing technical, legal, or social environments.

Preparing for promotion: as part of career development programs, employees especially the promising ones, are trained in skills needed for promotions for an easier transition to a position requiring greater responsibilities.

Orientating new employees: to minimise anxiety, unfavourable perception about the organisation which may eventually lead to dissatisfaction and high turnover, the organisation always trains new employees swiftly adjust in that organisation. This is the initial step in a new employee's socialisation with the employer. The employer tries to instil mindsets, norms, values, and behaviour patterns which are important to the organisation. An effective and successful induction must be well-thought-out, organised, educational, and tailored to the precise requirements of new worker.

Although there are different approaches to training like the market-driven approach that focuses on training to meet customer needs or the career planning approach, which uses individual development plans; the main objective is to develop employees that will help the organisation achieve its strategic goals (Rothwell & Whiteford, 2020). Effective training requires organisations to follow a systematic approach that includes three distinct, but related, phases: needs assessment, design, and delivery and evaluation (Nankervis et al., 2020).

Needs assessments are conducted in three levels: task analysis, organisational analysis and person analysis. The employer compares the skills needed in the formal job description to the employee's set of skills. Should there be a skills gap, the employer tries to fill the gap in order for the employee to enhance performance at work. The fore-mentioned authors describe organisational analysis to involve analysing the resources, and environment and goals of the business to assess where training may be prioritised, whereas task analysis determines how a duty is performed. Discrepancies between the organisational needs and the skills the employee is identified to presently possesses, are formulated as part of a career progression plan.

Design and delivery of training and development is determined by the outcome of the prior phase – training needs analysis. In this phase a training program is developed, appropriate training methods are established and suitable materials are identified (Erasmus et al., 2019) The final phase of evaluation establishes whether new knowledge was acquired by the participants (Erasmus et al., 2019). Return on investment (ROI) is usually used to measure the effectiveness of the training and development (Nankervis et al., 2020). The commonly used ROI strategy is the Kirkpatrick’s ROI model, reports Wärnich et al. (2018). This model comprises four separate levels of T&D evaluation assessing the impact of the organisational effectiveness programme as well as participant behavioural, learning and reactional changes.

Training and development are a critical part of any company if organisational objectives are to be achieved. It is through training and development that there is an increase in productivity, employee satisfaction, improves employee autonomy and retention (Claudia, 2018; Dhanpat et al., 2018; Mahomed & Rothmann, 2020; Mamun

& Hasan, 2017). Organisations must have programs aimed at improving the skills and productivity of employees. Workers that have clear training and development programs are usually satisfied and unlikely to leave the organisation (Maimako & Bambale, 2016). On the same point, Wärnich et al. (2018) emphasise that as the employees take responsibility for their careers and managerial talent develops, employee turnover is lowered due to increased employee satisfaction levels accredited to the perception that the organisation invests in the growth, development and wellbeing. The organisation's competitive advantage is sustained due to the employees that are continuously being developed, and trained managers can build a work environment that motivates and engages employees, contributing to their satisfaction. However, Yozi (2018) asserts that if training does not target the specific needs of the employee, it has no influence on the retention of employee.

Training and development are significant to the retention of academics. Academics who have opportunities to engage in challenging work resources for teaching and research are highly likely to remain in an organisation longer than those that are not challenged (Claudia, 2018; Molotsi, 2021). Lack of adequate training at for low-level workers contributes to employee turnover (Haider et al., 2015). Academics take longer to settle into a company when induction process is not properly executed or even delayed (Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021). As the academics stay longer at a HEI, they gain experience that they can impart to inexperienced academics. However, academic staff are not always able to take advantage of opportunities to research due to excessive workloads in their daily duties – big classes leaving no time for career growth (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018). HEIs with an environment conducive for employee learning, which continuously develop old and new talent, are likely to retain majority of its employees (Onah & Anikwe, 2016). In addition to retaining employees, the quality of teaching and research is perfected (Gupta & Gomathi, 2018)

2.3.5 Promotional Opportunities

Bibi et al. (2017) defined promotional opportunities as the availability of opportunities within an organisation for employees to progress and the existence of transparent organisational policies. A promotion is an upward movement within an organisation that allows additional power and accountability as well as a raise in salary, perks, and entitlements to the selected employee (Wärnich et al., 2018). This upward movement in rank and authority is usually accompanied by increased responsibilities, a significant change in status and recognition (Tsai, 2018; Chukwu, 2019). Promotion is one of the ways organisations internally recruit and reward employees, instead of recruiting externally which comes with recruiting, selecting and training costs, organisations opt for promoting employees who are already part of the succession and career planning strategies of the business (Nankervis et al., 2020). Figure 2.5 outlined the advantages and disadvantages of internal recruitment.

Table 2.2: Advantages and disadvantages of internal promotion

Advantages[18]	Disadvantages[19]
• Employees are likely to feel more secure and to identify their long-term interests with the organisation that provides them with the first choice of job opportunities. • Promotions from within enable organisations to use their employees' abilities to the greatest extent possible. For example, an effective system permits an organisation to match its continuous needs for competent personnel with the employees' desire to apply the skills they have developed. • Promotions can encourage excellent performance from employees. They may perform at high levels if they think performance leads to promotion. • There is a significant correlation between opportunities for advancement and high levels of job satisfaction. An effective system of promotion can result in greater organisational efficiency and high levels of employee morale. • Internal employees are better qualified. For example, jobs that do not seem unique require familiarity with people, procedures, policies and special characteristics of the organisation in which they are performed. • Internal promotion can be much less expensive to the organisation.	• By limiting the selection procedure to internal employees, more highly qualified personnel from other sources may be overlooked. • People can be promoted to their level of incompetence, the so-called Peter Principle.[20] • Rather than improving the workforce through promotion, the organisation may be weakening its existing status. • Promotion from within requires additional training. Thus, instead of training just one employee, two must be trained – the promoted employee for the new job and the replacement for the existing job. • Promotion from within may lead to infighting and inbreeding, and lack of varied perspectives and interests may also result. • During growth times, employees are promoted regardless of qualifications; this rapid growth of an organisation can conceal managerial deficiencies that the employees may have.

(Source: Wärnich et al., 2018, p. 277).

Promotion helps the organisation in the optimal utilisation and rewarding competencies and potentialities of those employed, as well as motivating the employees to be committed to organisational goals and objectives (Tsai, 2017). Promotions aid an organisation to utilise its employees' abilities and competencies more efficiently, and the possibility to be promoted serves as a reward for showcasing increased performance in the workplace (Nankervis et al., 2020, p. 283). Furthermore, promotion is intended to recognise the employee receiving the promotion for their exceptional performance and to encourage the worker to continue their efforts. A promotion also extends an encouraging message to other employees that comparable efforts will result in promotion, potentially improving morale within the company (Nankervis et al., 2020)

There are criteria that organisations use when promoting employees such as seniority, performance, assessment centres and unofficial promotion (Wärnich et al., 2018). With seniority, an employee is promoted based on their length of service, or the period spent in a specific job grade. Performance is also used where the performance record of an employee is used as a guide to determine their fitness to be moved to a higher position (Jackson et al., 2018). Organisations may opt to use assessment centres where the employees are assessed through a succession of tasks for their fitness to attain further responsories and duties. These exercises concentrate on the required skills and abilities a criteria to successfully carry out higher-level jobs (Wärnich et al., 2018). A description of an unofficial promotion is when an employee is rewarded with a higher position because of friendship with manager: belonging to a certain club; graduates of ‘the’ university or playing ‘the’ sport, even though promotion is often based on seniority and performance, Tsai (2018, p. 178) four principles of promotions are key for establishing the potential for the career shift (Tsai, 2018).

These are the principle of planning, the principle of impartiality, the principle of internal recruitment, and the principle of consistency. Adhering to these principles will ensure organisations achieve: the organisational goals, transparency that objectives are communicated effectively throughout the business and the employees are familiar with salary scales and job descriptions (Wärnich et al., 2018).

Similar to all other activities taking place in an organisation, promotional opportunities affect the decision for employees to stay or leave a company. It is the onus of the organisation to have in place a clear, well-communicated promotion criteria policy, as in such organisations, satisfied employees tend continue their stay until such time that they are no longer satisfied (Bibi et al., 2017; Chukwu, 2019). Promotion policies that are fair and aligned to labour laws legislation are critical and clearly states, that even though the commitment of a company is to promote from within, it is necessary at times to recruit externally to maintain a healthy organisation with an occasional injection of new talent in order to avoid stagnating (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020, p. 592). In South Africa, the labour legislation is clear when it comes to promotion decisions in organisations as outlined by Erasmus et al. (2019):

- Information on promotional opportunities should be made available to all staff.
- All employees must be informed about the requirements that will apply to promotions.

- Rejected candidates should be informed of the reasons why they were unable to move forward. Additionally, recommendations must be made on how they might close any gaps in their competency profiles.
- It is necessary to develop personnel from designated groups for promotions.
- All employees must receive career counselling in order to be eligible for advancement. routes as well as the appropriate training, experience, and abilities at each stage of their careers.
- Promotion decisions must be based on factors such as competencies, not just on paper qualifications, and must take prior learning and relevant experience into account.
- The company's affirmative action policy and goals must be taken into account when choosing a candidate for promotion from a list of applicants who meet the minimal job criteria.

Chukwu (2019) states that employees have been found to be loyal, high performing and have increased morale in organisations where there is consistent and systematic promotion policy. In addition, effective promotional initiatives boost the employee's social status, foster self-development, and pave the way for greater responsibility (Busari et al., 2017).

Academic staff in HEIs often develop feelings of loyalty and stay longer in an organisation with clear and proper promotional opportunities (Fihla & Chinyamurindi, 2018). Dissatisfaction caused by promotion policies leads to the resignation of academics in pursuit of more satisfactory working conditions (Busari et al., 2017; Claudia, 2018; Matimbwa & Ochumbo, 2019).

2.3.6 Compensation

Alshibli (2018) describes compensation as the entire value of monetary and non-monetary rewards, given to personnel by employers, in exchange for work completed. Milkovich et al. (2014) refer to compensation as all tangible and non-tangible benefits received by workers as part of an employer-employee relationship. Wärnich et al. (2018) describes compensation as extrinsic and intrinsic rewards employees receive, having a beneficial effect on work engagement and satisfaction, which can lead to improved performance on the job. From abovementioned definitions, compensation is made up of pay and variable components that are linked to the employee's performance. The employees are rewarded for their skills, time, loss, and efforts towards achieving the organisation's goals (Asad et al., 2019; Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018).

Different authors subdivide various forms rewards and identify these subdivisions with different names. Nonetheless, two broad divisions are apparent - intrinsic and extrinsic which are either monetary or non-monetary (see Figure 2.4). Bussin (2018, p. 406) described intrinsic rewards as those that emanate from the real performance of the work and are built according to the nature of the job including praise, growth opportunities, responsibility, acknowledgement, and autonomy. On the other hand, extrinsic rewards cover pays, bonuses and benefits. The author further stresses the importance of balancing the two divisions as focusing on one more than the other creates a challenge for organisations to attract workers and demonstrate their rive and determination in the industry. Erasmus et al. (2019) divided the extrinsic rewards into two categories – the financial and non-financial, further dividing financial into performance-related, membership related while non-financial is divided into status rewards and social rewards. What is intriguing are the examples cited for social and status rewards.

Examples of status rewards are office location, furniture in the office, designated parking, personal secretary, public acclaim, and accolades. Social rewards entail recognition, lots of compliments, being pleasantly welcomed, invites to dinner, pats on the back, and social functions. The different categories indicate the broadness of compensation and difference that seemingly small gestures like friendly greetings may impact someone’s stay in an organisation.

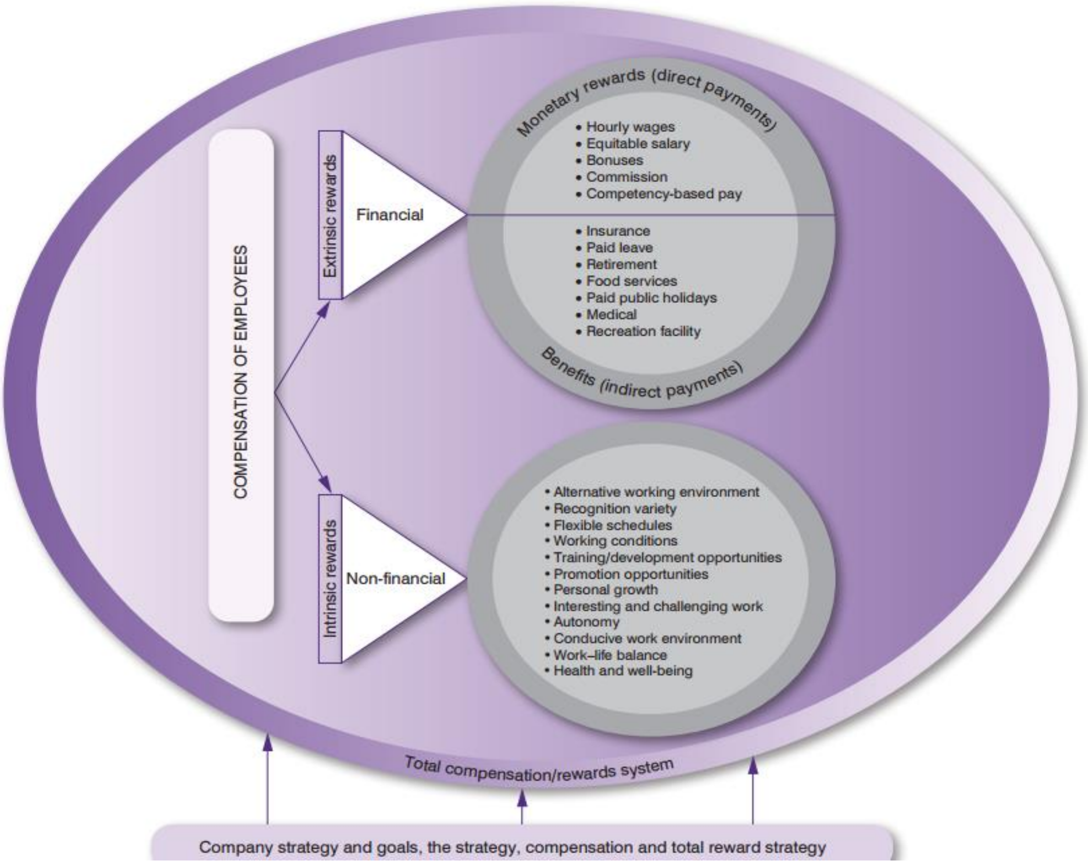


Figure 2.4: Total compensation/ reward system.
(Source: Wärnich et al., 2018, p. 425)

Organisations must have compensation and benefits to attract suitable candidates and to remain competitive in the labour market. Additionally, the successful candidates of the recruitment process need to be kept content in their new roles in order to reduce chances of them leaving the company. Moreover, compensation is used as a reward and motivation for future performances of employees. Workers who performed well or those who met expectation are rewarded and become more motivated to achieve more rewards. These compensation objectives are intended to ensure fairness, efficiency, and compliance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Some of the objectives according to Armstrong and Taylor (2020); Erasmus et al. (2019) and Wärnich et al. (2018) are outlined as follows:

2.3.6.1 Attract talented academics

The employer who offers the best compensation attracts accomplished candidates with knowledge, needed skills, and relevant. If demand for labour exceeds supply, pay levels will be higher and vice versa, therefore, to remain competitive, organisations conduct wage surveys considering market related rates when determining the salary scale for a job position. The wage surveys inform pay base rates or the amount of compensation that represents the job or person's basic rate of pay.

2.3.6.2 Retain the talented employees

After recruiting the best qualified candidate, the employer needs to make sure the new employees are content enough not to contemplate leaving for better opportunities. One way of doing that is having a remuneration system that provides adequate rewards which are comparable with personnel of other organisations performing similar occupations.

2.3.6.3 Motivate employees

To ensure that high performance is recognised and rewarded, organisations maintain a reward system that identifies and encourages optimal output. Having motivated employees contributes towards an increased company performance and accomplishing organisational goals. The relationship between performance and motivation of employees is correlational as both the employer and employee have expectations. The employer is expected to reward the work performed by employees and employees are expected to provide satisfactory services to the business (Wärnich et al., 2018). The employee evaluates performed duties as per set expectations with the employer with expectations to be rewarded accordingly. When satisfied with the reward, the employee exerts extra effort in setting higher goals and expectations in the hope of being awarded greater compensation. The mentioned objectives are achievable with the presence of fair performance rewards, accurate appraisal, equitable and complete and accurate supervisor feedback.

2.3.6.4 Comply with legal requirements

Organisations need to operate within the frameworks of the law especially those concerning pay levels, hours of work and overtime. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 75 of 1997, as well as the Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act, No. 11 of 2002, have a direct bearing on an organisation's compensation system. Also, critical to abide by are collectively bargained agreements from labour unions.

2.3.6.5 Maintaining equity in remuneration

Fairness in the distribution of rewards is important to both the organisation and personnel. The employees are rewarded for the value they contribute to the business and in accordance to achieved or surpass performance expectations. Fairness demands that all workers receive equitable treatment by recognising both their contributions and needs (Milkovich et al., 2014). Equity is perceived in three ways, namely external, internal, and individual. Comparing salaries and job grades across industries is known as external equity, whereas doing so within the same institution of employment is known as internal equity (Erasmus et al., 2019). Individual equity relates to procedural fairness - the process used to make pay decisions. The perception of inequity and unfair treatment of an employee may result in dissatisfaction and the eventual resignation of the worker.

Organisations must align their values, objectives, and goals with their compensation system (Bussin, 2018b; Wijesiri et al., 2018). Furthermore, compensation has been found to influence the decision of who to appoint, the commitment of an employee to an organisation and the decision to resign from a company. Almaaitah et al. (2017) Employees centre their decision to be part of the organisation on benefits and salaries. They were supported by Bibi et al.(2017); Alshibli (2018); Dhanpat et al. (2018); Bussin (2018) who asserted that compensation must be fair and comparable to the skills and experiences for employees to continue their stay in the organisation. Furthermore, the compensation management structure of an organisation needs to be fair and in line with international rates (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018).

The influence of compensation draw conflicting finding on the retention of academic staff. Samuel and Chipunza (2013) reported that compensation and benefits do not affect the decision to stay in an organisation which is contrary to the report of Bibi et al. (2017); Musakuro & De Klerk (2021); Rathakrishnan et al. (2016) who posit that compensation has a favourable impact on the retention of academic staff. Musakuro and De Klerk (2021) findings further revealed that the participants expressed contentment with their compensation. It is worth noting that Tatlah et al. (2017) give a possible reason why compensation has minimal effect in Pakistan. Continuing to point out, that academics in Pakistan University have little value for monetary rewards due to Pakistan society being collectivists. By description, collectivist workers do not value financial incentives, however, they do prefer non-monetary incentives such as appreciation, recognition certificates, applause and shoulder pats (Tatlah et al., 2017).

2.3.7 Job Satisfaction

Asad et al. (2019, p.84) define job satisfaction as assessments of a person's particular work or the emotional reactions to one's work experiences including attitudes personnel may have towards a particular employment. Workers with high job satisfaction often possess positive attitudes in the workplace and vice versa (Rozika et al., 2018). This fulfilling or optimistic internal feeling resulting from one's job appraisal is prevalent when an employee is given an opportunity to showcase their full potential and talents (Maimako & Bambale, 2016). It is an intangible emotional response to one's work situation that can only be perceived (Luthans et al., 2021). In other words, individuals evaluate their values, needs, and expectations against the job specification, the result of that job evaluation and their perception towards the job, thus, determining their level of satisfaction.

The contentment with a particular job is the result of numerous factors. Luthans et al. (2021) identified six influences to job satisfaction, namely: work itself, salary, promotions, supervision, workgroup and working conditions. Robbins and Judge (2019) however, identified four influences for being content at work – job condition, personality, salary and corporate social responsibility.

2.3.7.1 Satisfaction with the work itself

This involves the extent to which the job offers educational opportunities, interesting responsibilities and the chance to assume responsibility (Luthans et al., 2021). The job structure affects the way in which work is carried out consequently, affecting the manner in which an individual feel about their job, the level of authority they have over it, the amount of decision-making performed while at work, and the number of tasks required of the job (Wärnich et al., 2018). Most employees associate job satisfaction with intriguing employment, employment that provides training, variety, independence in the workplace, and autonomy. Interdependence, feedback, social support, and positive interactions with co-workers and even customers are also strongly related to job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

2.3.7.2 Satisfaction with the salary

This is the salary amount and the degree to which salary is considered fair in relation other workers in the same job position (Luthans et al., 2021). Additionally, money is essential for higher-level wants in addition to assisting people in meeting basic needs of living and higher-level wants. Employees frequently view their remuneration as a reflection of management's perception to the value the worker has to the company (Luthans et al., 2021, p119). Further arguing, that trust, morale and performance can be negatively affect when employees believe they are not being compensated.

2.3.7.3 Satisfaction with promotion opportunities

This is concerned with the chances for advancement in the organisation. The advancement is usually an upward internal move that usually entails more responsibility and authority, as well as a rise in income, benefits, and privileges

(Wärnich et al., 2018). Organisations, where promotional opportunities are available to everyone and criteria for promotion, clear and fair, have a higher chance of satisfied employees.

2.3.7.4 Satisfaction with supervision

This contributes to employees' satisfaction. Supervision has to do with the supervisor's ability to provide technical assistance as well as behavioural support. The supervisor is to check on the employee's performance, provide advice and assistance, and build a personal and professional relationship with the employee, failure to do so leads to a dissatisfied employee who eventually leaves the organisation (Luthans et al., 2021).

2.3.7.5 Satisfaction with co-workers

As a group of employees who work together on a regular basis, the nature of their teamwork affects the satisfaction they derive from their jobs. Hence, having amiable and encouraging co-workers increases job contentment (Luthans et al., 2021). Team-work is said to have benefits such as reduced duplication of effort; increased cooperation; enhanced innovation; decisions that are more accurate, wiser, and comprehensive are made; colleagues are more motivated; performance standards are raised; and there is greater flexibility to make it simpler to adjust to changing conditions. (Erasmus et al., 2019, p. 194). These benefits increase the chances of job satisfaction.

2.3.7.6 Personality

The same job satisfies people differently because of personalities. Those who trust in their worth and competency are happier in their jobs and vice versa (Robbins & Judge, 2019). In addition, DuBrin (2019) pointed out that an excessive optimist will find happiness in virtually any work, whereas an extreme pessimism will be unhappy in almost any job. Workers who have high self-esteem are more generally satisfied with their jobs because they enjoy what they do.

2.3.7.7 Cooperate social responsibility

This has been defined as an organisation's self-governed efforts to advance society or the environment outside of what is legally required (Robbins & Judge, 2019, p. 119). They further stated that when managed well cooperate social responsibility affects job satisfaction positively as workers who regard their work as serving a higher cause are more are inclined to be content with their jobs.

How long an employee stays loyal, committed, and subsequently chooses to remain at an organisation for longer is influenced by their satisfaction. Numerous factors (discussed in the previous section) affect job satisfaction like; individual work itself, promotional opportunities, supervision, pay, working conditions, and co-workers (Basak, 2014). It is therefore paramount for the organisations to have measures in place that will minimise job dissatisfaction for if employees do not voice their dissatisfaction, neglect their duties, they exit (Jordan et al., 2017). If high levels of job satisfaction are maintained in an organisation, outcomes like these are manifested: increased productivity when working with people; an inclination to build client loyalty; allegiance to the organisation; minimal absenteeism and turnover; less job emotional exhaustion; improved safety performance; and overall life satisfaction, as well as a positive mindset at home (DuBrin, 2019).

On the other hand, if employees are dissatisfied they either voice, show loyalty, neglect their job or exit (Robbins & Judge, 2019). They further describe what these four responses entail. Voice involves making strong and positive endeavours to improve working conditions, such as lobbying for changes, communicating with managers about challenges, and taking part in union activities. while neglect allows conditions to deteriorate in a passive manner, such as prolonged absenteeism or tardiness, less effort, and a higher error rate. Loyalty has to do with patiently but hopefully waiting for things to go better, which might include speaking up for the organisation in the face of external criticism and trusting the company and its management to do the responsible thing unlike exit response leads behaviour in the direction of leaving the organisation, such as looking for a new job or quitting (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

It is not easy to attain high levels of job satisfaction among academic staff at HEIs (Kiplangat et al., 2016). Dissatisfied academic staff leave the organisation and search for one with favourable conditions (Claudia, 2018; Yozi, 2018). Academics dissatisfaction affects student’s satisfaction, the institutional effectiveness and even the quality of the academic’s staff work (Jordan et al., 2017; Molotsi, 2021). A study at the University of Lesotho identified compensation; inadequate financial resources to support learning teaching and research; and poor management as key factors contributing to dissatisfied academics (Moloantoa & Darasamy, 2017). In addition to those factors, Kiplangat et al. (2016) identified management's lack of commitment in following procedures and work etiquette. Dissatisfied employees do not feel obligated, nor do they desire to achieve organisational goals (Claudia, 2018). Worth pointing out are additional factors that Osifila and Abimbola (2020) identified as leading to job satisfaction among academics: too much workload, marking of exam scripts and supervising undergraduate projects.

2.3.8 Leadership

Leadership is one of those concepts that has expansive definitions. Northouse (2018) mentions that leadership can be described as a trait, ability, skill, relationship and process. Nonetheless, he advocates for the definition which calls leadership a process. This process entails one person influencing other people to work towards a shared goal (Northouse, 2019). Armstrong and Taylor (2020) point out that leadership entails encouraging individuals to strive for the best outcome. In addition, the followers are willing to be influenced, and not only do they cater for their interests but that of the organisation. From these definitions, inference can be drawn that leadership involves a leader, followers, and organisation. In other words, for the process to be complete there has to be an interaction between the leader and group of followers as they work towards accomplishing common organisational objectives (Northouse, 2019).

A successful organisation has leaders that possess some traits that contribute to their effectiveness. Northouse (2018) identified six of these traits namely, intelligence, charisma, sociability, integrity, determination and self-confidence. Intelligence trait exudes good language, perceptual and reasoning skills. These skills help the leader to continually learn about their leadership roles. Self-confidence entails certainty and belief in what one is doing. Confidence starts with understanding, then practice and eventually excelling. DuBrin (2019, p. 240) describes self-confident leaders as those leaders who remain composed under stress. They instil confidence in others with their decisiveness and optimism. A charisma is that unique magnetic appeal and attraction that a person possesses (Northouse, 2018).

The charismatic trait is manifested in leaders who are strong role models of values; inspirational; show competence; articulate clear goals and shared values; communicate high expectations to followers. Fifthly, determination as a trait of successful leaders involves making a decision to complete a task. Determined leaders are driven and proactive (DuBrin, 2019). Lastly, sociability in leaders is usually seen in those who are friendly, outgoing and courteous. These leaders are aware of the needs of others and are concerned for their well-being. Integrity embodies honesty and trustworthiness. These attributes make leaders loyal, dependable, and transparent which makes them believable and deserving of followers' trust (Northouse, 2019).

There are several theories of leadership. These are trait, behavioural, situational and contemporary leadership (Luthans et al., 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2019). From these theories there are also several leadership styles, how the leaders lead. These are bureaucratic *laissez-faire*, charismatic, transactional, democratic, and transformational. Each style has pros and cons, most importantly no style is inherently superior to another in any circumstance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). This implies that the leaders can use any style to suit the situation. Leaders give direction to the organisation, develop a vision, mission, motivate people and teams to follow the mission, steering in the right direction (Maaitah, 2018). For successful leadership, the leaders should display determination, sociability, integrity, intelligence, and self-confidence (Northouse, 2019). He further states that a leader uses either personal or position power to influence others to act. Under personal power, there is referent and expert power, while position power entails legitimate, reward, information, and coercive power. The styles of leadership are briefly defined as follows:

2.3.8.1 Authoritarian

Leaders who are in this category believe that they are to direct followers by exerting strong influence and control. They assist others in their work by providing guidance and insight and expedite the process (Northouse, 2018). According to Erasmus et al. (2019), this type of leadership has leaders who aspire for authority and ultimate responsibility all to themselves. They also give people tasks that are clear and defined, anticipating prompt, orderly and predictable performance. The downside of this style is that hinders creativity and personal growth; submissiveness and dependence is prevalent; communication flow is downward (Ross, 2021).

2.3.8.2 Democratic

These leaders view followers as able to direct themselves – they provide all the counsel and support needed. Northouse (2018) outlines several qualities that identify this type of leadership. He states that the democratic leader works together with the followers in the decision-making process of the organisation which contributes to satisfaction, improved commitment, cohesiveness, friendliness, increased motivation, and greater creativity amongst the followers. In addition, though the leader retains ultimate responsibility, a great deal of authority is delegated to the subordinates (Erasmus et al., 2019). However, there are chances of slow and poor decision making because of encouragement of group decisions as democratic decision takes time (DuBrin, 2019).

2.3.8.4 Charismatic

Leaders with charisma are said to have strong moral values; have self-confidence and a desire to influence others (Robbins & Judge, 2019). The leader's personality just compels the followers to simply follow and obey the leader. The followers trust and feel motivated by the leader.

2.3.8.5 Transformational

According to DuBrin (2019), a charismatic leader treat followers as individuals, coaching them. The leaders are also seen as inspirational as they communicate high-performance expectations to the followers. A transformational leader communicates a clear vision that the followers find appealing and valuable. The followers are inspired to put group interests first.

2.3.8.6 Transactional

A transactional leader exchange cash, livelihoods, and safety for conformity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Furthermore, they establish goals and objectives; negotiate an exchange for rewards for work, and finally, look for deviation from standard and take measures to correct them (Erasmus et al., 2019; Ross, 2021).

2.3.8.7 Laissez- faire

Laissez–faire leaders are known for leaving the followers to own their own and only give little influence and direction. The leader does not control the followers, nor does s/he nurture and guide them. This type of leadership produces zero results, chaos and lack of direction (Ross, 2021). On the brighter side, with this leadership style, self-starters are permitted to do whatever they desire without interference from the leader (Erasmus et al., 2019).

The organisation's success or failure relies heavily on leadership (Maaitah, 2018). Leaders have the power to motivate employees towards fulfilling organisational goals and feel like part of the organisation (Rozika et al., 2018). Equally important, the leadership style chosen impacts what direction the organisation takes and the response of those being led. Those in leadership constantly look for improved ways to do things, new ways of solving problems, and putting other people first (Alshamrani et al., 2023; Grobler et al., 2015).

As leaders develop and communicate the vision or strategic direction of the organisation; inspire and motivate employees, their leadership style affects retention (Sareen & Agarwal, 2016; Wakabi, 2016). Leadership style in general and transformational leadership style, in particular, has a great influence on employees as it encourages high productivity, collectivism, and greater retention (Khalid et al., 2016; Sareen & Agarwal, 2016). Besides believing in people, transformational leaders are change agents, very courageous, lifelong learners, value-driven, and visionaries (Maaitah, 2018).

Leadership can ruin or prosper an organisation, and leaders are accountable and responsible for keeping talented individuals through their abilities to create an atmosphere conducive for retention (Khalid et al., 2016, p.609). According to Korantwi-Barimah (2017), studying academic staff in a Ghanaian university, found out that participants valued leaders who are exemplary, approachable, and are always motivating staff. If workers feel their managers care about them, let them know what is expected of them, and provide them with regular positive feedback, they are more likely to stay with the organisation. (Covella et al., 2017; Maaitah, 2018; Wakabi, 2016).

Khalid et al. (2016) in the study of employees in commercial banks of Sindh, Pakistan concluded that leadership style has a positive relationship with retention of employees. They further explain that the reasons for that positive relationship are that leaders can promote an environment that helps workers feel part of the organisation. In addition, they posited that leaders have the skills and abilities to help workers increase satisfaction with their work and to consistently give encouraging feedback (Khalid et al., 2016, p. 612). These satisfied employees are likely to be dedicated to the organisation, increase productivity and remain in the organisation for a longer period. Mwita et al. (2018) had similar findings in their study of the commercial bank of Tanzania. These studies emphasise the importance of having exemplary leadership that will steer the organisation in the right direction, with a satisfied group of employees and a productive organisation.

Employees have been found to remain for a longer time in an organisation that prioritises their needs (Rozika et al., 2018). Leadership that allows autonomy promotes fairness and accountability (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). Although some researchers like Matongolo et al. (2018); Erasmus et al. (2019) found no positive relationship between leadership and retention of academics. Ahmad et al. (2018), in their research on Australian universities, found out that leadership especially ethical leadership affects academic retention. They concluded that ethical leadership determines the academics wellbeing and their intention to stay.

2.3.9 Performance Management

Performance management is a strategy for improving outcomes by giving people the tools they need to excel inside a shared structure of set objectives, norms, and competency standards (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Nankervis et al. (2020, p. 295) define performance development as procedures and policies that assess, and shape worker's effort, behaviour in line with goals of the organisation. According to Bauer et al. (2020), it is the process of assessing, sharing, and overseeing employee performance at work in order to ensure that it is in line with the organisation's plan. Performance management involves organisation's plans to monitor, measure, evaluate and report its performance (Mboweni & Makhado, 2017). Explained differently, performance development entails common understanding expressed in practices and processes between employees and organisation of what must be done and how it should be done. Closely linked to performance development are performance measurement, rating, and reviewing (Nankervis et al., 2020).

Organisations have performance development for many reasons, which are influenced by three theories – Goal theory, Control theory and Social Cognitive. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), goal theory focuses on establishing and negotiating upon goals against which performance can be monitored and controlled; control theory views feedback as important, whereas social cognitive emphasises developing and nurturing self-belief. The following are performance development aims as identified by Armstrong and Taylor (2020), Govender and Bussin (2020); Nankervis et al. (2020):

- Develop and equip people who will work diligently to achieve their goals and goals of the organisation.
- Clarifies what the employees need to do to achieve the organisational goals. For the goals to be achieved they need to clarify what, how, when and why of the employees' jobs.
- Develops and uses ratings that will influence the reward system.
- serves as a motivation to workers as it provides feedback and recognition to employees who achieve the set goals.
- identifies exceptional talents and reveal areas where there is a need for training

In addition to the above purposes, Aguinis (2019) points out that performance management systems serve strategic, administrative, informational, developmental, organisational maintenance and documentation purposes, which are briefly explained as follows:

Strategic purposes – it is through performance management that top management achieve strategic organisation goals; link individual and organisation goals and most importantly assist in the onboarding process. New employees understand the values and culture of the organisation because performance management accelerates onboarding (Aguinis, 2019, p. 6).

2.3.9.1 Administrative purposes

Performance management system provides accurate and helpful information for making personnel decisions like pay adjustments, promotions, talent retention, acknowledging exceptional individual performance, identifying high-potential employees, identifying poor performers, redundancies, and merit raises.

2.3.9.2 Informational purposes

Performance management system serves as a communication tool to inform employees of what is expected of them and how they can reach those expectations.

2.3.9.3 Developmental purposes

Information gathered from the performance management system is used by managers to give feedback, and coach the employees on identified strengths and weaknesses. The feedback is helpful to employee career growth as they can work on their weaknesses and exploit their strength.

2.3.9.4 Organisational maintenance

performance management system provides information critical for workforce planning. The future training needs are assessed, organisation performance review and effectiveness of HR interventions evaluated. The information from the performance management system helps the organisation have workforce planning that is adaptive and flexible to employee needs – workforce planning responsive to increased competition for promotions, ongoing technological innovation, more competitive and sometimes scarce labour markets, company downsizing and restructuring, and the consequences for employee commitment and loyalty.

2.3.9.5 Documentation purposes

The performance management system allows for the documentation of important administrative decisions like terminations and promotions.

To ensure performance development is unambiguous and contributes to the success of the organisation, most organisations design what is called a performance management system (PMS). PMS is consolidated set of procedures and tasks for establishing, tracking, reviewing, and improving employee performance (Nankervis et al., 2020, p. 295). Through PMS, the goals to be achieved are identified, how the rating will be done, and when the review of those goals will also be indicated. Though in most organisations, the review of performance is one of those things that managers just have to do annually to tick the boxes, and if done properly, it can still be an effective tool to monitor, review and develop the employees (Nankervis et al., 2020). There are ways that can improve the effectiveness of PMS (Armstrong & Taylor (2020). Firstly, the managers need to be trained on coaching and giving constructive feedback (Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021). Secondly, the employees and managers need to be involved in designing the PMS so as to promote the feeling of ownership. Thirdly, performance management should not work in isolation, it should be integrated with other HR activities. Lastly, there should be prevalence of health employee relationships.

Though performance management has benefits to an organisation, Nankervis et al.(2020) highlight some reasons that may contribute to performance management failure following:

- Managers think that the time and effort put into the process will be ineffective or useless.
- Instead of seeing the process as a way to connect individual and business goals, managers see it as yet another HR burden.
- Managers are unwilling or unable to assess and evaluate performances without bias
- Managers find the one-on-one confrontation of evaluation interviews annoying.
- Managers do not like the face-to-face confrontation of review interviews.
- Managers lack the necessary skills to conduct review interviews.
- The review's judgmental function is at odds with its obligation to help employees grow
- Employees lack commitment or a sense of ownership.

- Performance reviews become a hollow formality, with all participants focusing on procedural and compliance issues rather than the content of conversations and actual improvement.

When observing the challenges that traditional performance management systems face especially when organisation are not reaping the results hoped for, Nankervis et al. (2020, p. 320) points out that a newer performance management system with new rules, characterised by Deloitte consulting services (see Figure 2.7), has better results.

Table 2.3: Old and new rules of performance management

OLD RULES	NEW RULES
Performance appraisals and goal-setting conducted once per year	Check-ins conducted quarterly or more frequently; regular goal-setting occurs in an open, collaborative process
Feedback collected by manager at end of year	Feedback collected continuously and easily reviewed at end of year (often through apps and mobile tools)
Goals kept confidential with focus on individual achievement	Goals made public and transparent with increased focus on team achievement
Employees evaluated by their manager	Managers also evaluated by their employees
Employees force-ranked on a quantitative scale	Employees rated on a qualitative scale; rankings considered, not forced
Compensation kept confidential and focused on equity; bands based on performance ratings	Compensation levels more transparent, more frequently discussed, and focused more on pay for performance than on equity
Managers focused on evaluating performance	Managers focused on coaching and developing people
One leader evaluates each individual in a qualitative, opinion-based process	Many contribute to an individual's performance evaluation; evaluation draws heavily on data
Process considered to be a burden and waste of time	Process is agile, faster, continuous and lighter

(Source: Nankervis et al.,2020).

Performance management has been found to negatively affect employees' retention (Chahar & Hatwal, 2018). Findings from Govender and Bussin (2020, p.15) reveal that performance management "process lacked credibility, performance appraisals were confused with performance management and there was a poor strategic focus." Adjustments in organisational goals were not always translating into changes in individual goals. They further described the inconsistencies in performance management that saw the process used to favour and even punish some. Such tendencies resulted in frustration and a lack of trust.

Academics are also impacted by performance development in their institutions. Mabaso (2016) in his study where s/he examined the influence of compensation and performance management as determinants of talent retention among academic staff in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in South Africa, found that the performance system is not clear. This lack of clarity may be the cause of poor performance as academics seem to lack motivation resulting in many of them leaving (Mabaso, 2016). On the same note, Musakuro and de Klerk (2021) in their study, aimed at establishing talent management challenges in SA public HEIs, they indicated that line managers at the HEI are not knowledgeable in performance development management. There also pointed out that homogeneity in the way those departments implement performance management procedures is non-existent. This, they concluded, has led to poor performance in that HEI.

2.3.10 Organisational Culture

There is no universally accepted definition of organisational culture. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) state that organisational or corporate culture is an unarticulated set of standards, values, views, and presumptions that affect how individuals behave and carry out tasks in organisations. Robbins and Judge (2019, p. 543) state that these beliefs and values are shared by members of an/the organisation and distinguish them from other organisations. In other words, organisational culture as Kummerow and Kirby (2014, p.5) describes, which grows over time, is founded on actual experience in adjusting to the environment, is carried by members of an organisation and has an impact on their thoughts and feelings, and is sustained by the process of socialisation. These shared values of the organisation help members to have some identity and shapes acceptable behaviours and attitudes (Madueke & Emerole, 2017; Rozika et al., 2018). Organisational culture has numerous characteristics that have been identified by Kummerow and Kirby (2014). These are briefly described as follows:

2.3.10.1 A product of group problem-solving over time

Organisational culture develops over time as the members of an organisation encounter and try to solve internal integration problems and problems by adapting to external issues. The problems encountered may be related to the task members engage in or the relationships between the members themselves. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), organisational culture is formed firstly by the organisation's leaders, particularly those who have shaped it in the past. Secondly the critical incidents – are significant situations from which lessons regarding good or undesirable behaviour can be learned. Thirdly, values and expectations are established because of the requirement to sustain effective working relationships among organisation members. Lastly, either the dynamic or static external environment of the organisation impacts the formation and maintenance of organisational culture.

2.3.10.2 Comprise consensual views

Organisational culture exists as a consensus among organisation members about their overt and indirect perspectives about the organisation and how it operates.

Acquired through socialisation.

It is acquired by new members of the organisation through experience and a process of socialisation. Socialisation is a process of learning about an organisation's principles, conventions, and customs, usually through imitation and observation, to fit in (DuBrin, 2019). The afore mentioned further describe socialisation as a strategy for integrating staff members into the organisation in a way that ensures culture is perpetuated (DuBrin, 2019). During the socialisation process, employees create their own narratives about managed to adjust and become part of the organisation - the early first days of employment, their first interactions with co-workers, and their first experiences with organisational life. (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

2.3.10.3 Multi-layered

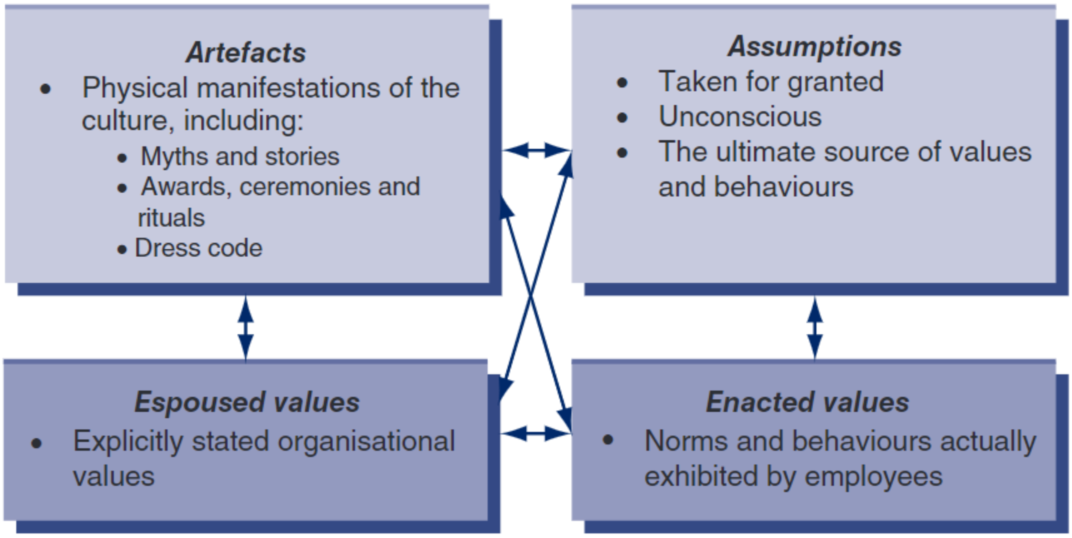
Organisational culture manifests itself at various levels, ranging from plainly visible artefacts to values to fundamental attitudes and assumptions. Griffin et al. (2019) identified four levels as shown in Figure 2.8. **Values** are what people in an organisation believe to be important when it comes to how people and organisations behave (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). These values are either espoused or implicit. On the other hand, **norms** are unwritten laws of conduct that serve as informal guides for how to conduct oneself. They dictate what people should be doing, saying, believing, and even wearing. Members of the organisation pass down norms by word of mouth and their enforcement is through people 'reaction when violated. Things like the working environment, office, space, language tone are some of the tangible aspects**, the artefacts**, of the organisation that help members understand the culture of the organisation (Schein & Schein, 2017). These physical objects symbolise values, beliefs, or assumptions integral in the organisation's culture and provide a sense of connection and arouse feelings in workers who then interpret the symbols (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

2.3.10.4 Subject to differentiation

Within an organisational culture there exist subcultures. Subculture is a section of culture where organisational culture diverges from hegemonic culture, as well as other sections of subcultures (DuBrin, 2019). These subcultures within an organisation are usually defined by geographical distance and departmental names (Robbins & Judge, 2019, p. 546). Subcultures contribute to organisational diversity.

2.3.10.5 Shaped by its history

For an understanding of an organisation's current culture, it is necessary to have a historical viewpoint that embodies knowledge of the organisation's history and the prior experiences of its members. Many organisations disseminate stories about the company's founders, rule-breaking, rags-to-riches success stories and responses to past mistakes – in so doing grounding the present in the past and legitimising current practices (Robbins & Judge, 2019). The founders of the organisation play a critical part in that organisation's early culture. Robbins and Judge (2019) stress that the founders hire and retain only workers who share their beliefs and values. They further socialise workers to their perspectives and feelings Additionally, the founder's actions serve as a role model for employees, encouraging them to identify with him or her and internalise their own beliefs, values, and presumptions in the process. Ultimately when a company succeeds, the company's culture takes on the characteristics of its founders.



Organisational culture has four levels: artefacts, assumptions, espoused values and enacted values.

Figure 2.5: Levels of organisational culture
(Griffin et al., 2019)

Organisational cultures serve a variety of purposes. Besides establishing boundaries, transmitting a sense of self, facilitating dedication to something bigger than oneself, and improving the organisational system's stability, the following are additional consequences as outlined by Robbins and Judge (2019) and DuBrin (2019):

1. Competitive advantage and organisational effectiveness – an/the organisation with healthy organisational culture have a competitive advantage.
2. Productivity, High Quality, and Employee Engagement - A culture that prioritises productivity, motivate workers to be active and engaged, which leads to competitive advantage and organisational effectiveness. Morale is boosted, work satisfaction increases, and employee engagement improves in organisations that cherishes human dignity.
3. Creativity and Innovation – The most innovative businesses are known for their accessible, creative, cooperative, vision-driven, and fast-paced cultures. Such organisations have leaders who appreciate self-direction that contribute to the development of an innovative culture, which is connected to workers' innovative behaviour (Robbins & Judge, 2019, p. 559).
4. Person–Organisation Fit - Employ people whose beliefs fit with the organisations as such people will probably stay committed and content unlike those with misaligned values who have far greater turnover rate.
5. Pointing to Direction of Leadership Activity – leaders should always recognise that employees' performance and socialisation are heavily reliant on their knowledge of the organisation's core ideals and practices. Besides modelling the expected values to the employees, they still need to be trained thoroughly and keep them up to date on any changes to their job responsibilities.
6. Emotional and Physical Safety of Workers - Employees are more likely to feel protected emotionally and physically if their workplace has a culture that discourages and punishes rudeness, incivility, and sexual harassment. A culture that tolerates or ignores these negative actions, on the other hand, makes many employees feel frightened and intimidated.

Since organisational culture benefits organisations, in some instances, organisational culture hinders the organisation’s effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2019). They identified five factors that indicate negative organisational culture - institutionalisation, obstacles to diversity, hurdles to change, toxicity and dysfunctions; and barriers to acquisitions and mergers. With institutionalisation, an organisation becomes cherished for itself rather than the services or products it delivers - takes on a life that is completely separate from its founding members (Robbins & Judge, 2019, p. 561). This is a problem as it means that some behaviours and traditions go unchecked, and that can prevent creativity while also making preserving the company's culture a primary objective. There are times when organisations are changing but the existing strong culture, which is no longer support the effectiveness of the organisations acts as a hindrance to change.

Commitment and loyalty of employees is affected by organisational culture as it plays an a central part in attracting and retaining those with needed talent (Selvanathan et al., 2019, p. 259) Organisations that have an innovative culture that promotes idea generation and risk-taking have been found to sway a worker's choice to continue with the company (Madueke & Emerole, 2017). Saurombe et al. (2017) assert that HEI with a research culture attracts and retain academics.

2.4 EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Retention of employees is a critical and indispensable exercise for every organisation as employees are the most invaluable asset that an organisation can have (Maaitah, 2018; Molotsi, 2021) Employee retention is a deliberate process where organisations put in place procedures and practices that will encourage employees to stay for a long time and add value to the organisation (Bibi et al., 2017; Johennesse & Chou, 2017; Kossivi et al., 2016; Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015; Rakhra, 2018). The practices that organisations put in place are HR practices (discussed in sections 2.3.3 to 2.3.10). These HR practices that the organisation uses to motivate talented and efficient workers to remain with the company are meant to prevent undesirable voluntary turnover among employees who the company would prefer to keep (Jackson et al., 2018).

There are numerous reasons why organisations must retain employees. Bussin (2018) identified below reasons why employee retention is important:

The cost - organisations invest time and money in recruiting new employees (Harden et al., 2018; Rakhra, 2018; Tsai, 2018). Such investment goes to the drain should an employee leave as the employees may take with them organisational expertise, acquired experience, and even clients. (Coetzee et al., 2018). The costs include the direct cost of recruiting and onboarding substitutes; cost of training substitutes in necessary skills; the potential cost of the hours spent by HR and line managers on hiring, onboarding, and training; lost productivity as a result of employees quitting before substitutes are found; lost output as a result of delays in finding replacements;

and output loss while replacements learn needed knowledge and skills (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

The competition- Employees take with them all their expertise, expertise, and competencies when they leave an organisation, applying them to the next one.

Time lost – a lot of time is spent by HR and line managers in hiring, onboarding and training of the replacement employee who will further need time to learn necessary knowledge and skills and time to fit in the organisational culture. Moreover, when less time is spent on recruiting, more time is directed to production.

Client base - organisation's reputation suffers if there is a high turnover rate (Tsai, 2018). No one desires to work in an organisation that has a lot of employees leaving, which may be an indication of something is wrong with the organisation which makes it fail to retain employees. Furthermore, the worker leaving the organisation may take customers with them causing the organisation to lose clients and income.

Effect on work culture – the longer the workers stay in an organisation, unity amongst them is slowly developed as they spend time together adapting to organisational culture (Rakhra, 2018). Co-workers can work together so seamlessly in this atmosphere that tasks can be finished more quickly and effectively (Bussin, 2018, p.10). The leaving of an employee affects this glue among the employees.

Talent is the backbone of the organisation - finding talent that can take the organisation to higher levels may not always be easy, so once such is found it is worth a while for the organisation to make sure that such are retained.

The importance of recruitment is no different in HEIs. When an academic decides to leave, the institution has to bear the expenses of recruitment; deal with the disruption of course offering and interruptions in departmental and student planning because of academic staff loss (Ochumbo & Matimbwa, 2019).

Mitchell et al. (2001) developed a model, job embeddedness model, that explicate why employees stay instead of leaving organisations. According to this model, the reason why employees do not leave is that the more connections a person has to the web, the more tied to their job and organisation they are, (Bauer et al., 2020. p.770). The employee is so connected to the work environment and the larger community that such connections greatly affect their choice to stay in an organisation. The model has three components: links, fit and sacrifice (Agrawal & Singh, 2018; Coetzee et al., 2018; Hom et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2021). Once the employer understands what makes the employees stay, they may be in a better position to develop retention strategies that will make employees stay. *Links* (relational ties) are the connections, which can be social, psychological, or financial, within the organisation or in the community that the employee have. The more connections a person has to the web, the more tied to their profession and organisation they are (Mitchell et al., 2001, p.1104)**.** The links are usually the relationship with co-workers and managers at the workplace, and in the community the memberships in clubs, spouse's work, children's school, friends and neighbours (Bauer et al., 2020). *Fit* is the state of being comfortable and compatible with the organisation and even the community (Maier et al., 2021, p. 1781). The employees' values, ambitions, and plans must be compatible with the organisation's culture and the skills needed for the position.

Mitchell et al. (2001) identified examples of community fit which include but not are limited to weather, facilities, recreation activities, political and religious environments, and amusement opportunities. They further assert that the better the fit the higher chances of the employees staying in an organisation. Sacrifices are emotional or material things an employee might have to give up should they decide to leave (Coetzee et al., 2018, p. 97). The employee all the cost of leaving and all that may be lost if one leaves the job. The employees stay should there be more to give up by leaving. The three constructs – links, sacrifice and fit, according to the embeddedness model interact with each other and the result is the decision on whether to stay in an organisation.

Numerous factors that affect employee retention. Bussin (2018) categorise them into job, culture, external and personal as shown in Figure 2.6 as follows:

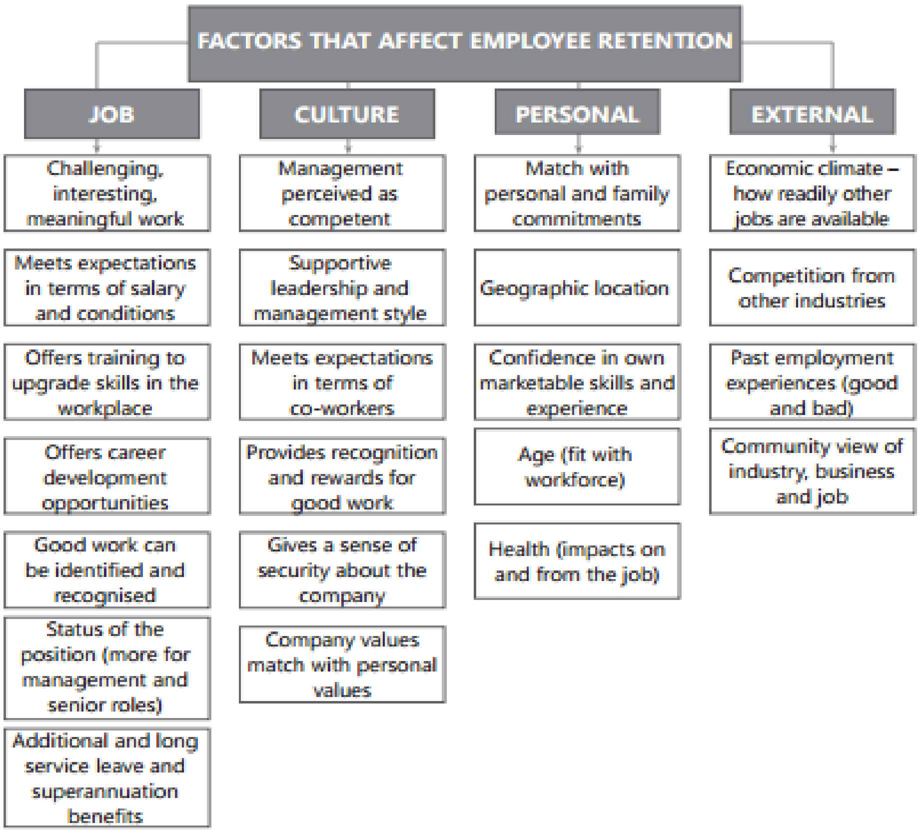


Figure 2.6: Factors affecting employee retention (Bussin, 2018, p. 20)

Korantwi-Barimah (2017) found out that the university's leadership and organisational culture; growth opportunities; institutional meaningful work and collegiality all influenced the academics not to leave their institution. Organisations always endeavour to reduce the number of employees leaving and promote retention. Such organisations exploit retention strategies like ones outlined by Armstrong and Taylor (2020); Bauer et al. (2020); Bussin (2018):

Exit interviews - these interviews are utilised to learn why employees are leaving and make changes where necessary to influence the length of stay of those who are still in the organisation. The use of information collated from exit interviews can only be effective when used with information from stay interviews. Bauer et al. (2020, p. 777) defines stay interviews as interviews where employees who are staying put are interviewed to find out what keeps them there and to spot issues that could eventually lead to turnover.

Hiring for fit - mismatched values, skills and personalities of the hired employees to what the organisation needs and provides, leads to unhappiness and low retention (Bauer et al., 2020). The more the employee fits, the higher the chances of improved retention. Selection and promotion methods that do not fit employees' abilities to the demands of the work they must perform result in high turnover (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). A mismatch resulting from over qualification and under qualification may lead to boredom for the former and stress for not coping with the latter (Bussin, 2018a). He further stresses that not only is a match crucial for knowledge, skills, abilities, it is also paramount that there is a match in expectations of work and reward.

Structured onboarding experiences - simply hiring the best candidates is not adequate. The hired candidates are to be welcomed and eased to the organisation, taught the way things are done – organisational culture (Bauer et al., 2020). Should there be no structured onboarding to set new employees to a good start, low retention is likely to happen because employees who are integrated into their workplaces and communities, they are less likely to leave (Bauer et al., 2020, p. 779). On the contrary, the newly employed who have the least embeddedness do not have much to lose should they leave the organisation. An organisation may avert this ‘induction crisis’ by making sure all new employees receive proper training and support regardless of whether they are struggling to adjust to their new job (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Investment in high commitment HR practices - these HR strategies demonstrate commitment to employees, such as internal promotion and career opportunities, employee engagement programs, and recruitment, are among the HR practices that can help retain employees (Bauer et al., 2020). Retention improves when organisations offer an improved work-life balance that has customisable schedules that takes into account workers' interests beyond work environment (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Organisations with the highest retention rates are those that provide flexibility (Bussin, 2018, p.16).

Focusing on turnover predictors – Concentrating on boosting the factors that predict turnover, such as stress, work satisfaction, organisational commitment, and work engagement, may improve retention. (Bauer et al., 2020) Employee satisfaction with many aspects of their job and their emotional attachment to their jobs especially jobs that offer autonomy, meaningful work and positive feedback. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) mentions that employees are retained if there are opportunities to improve their skills and advance careers. In such organisations jobs are designed to maximise range of skills, foster independence, cultivate responsibility over the work assigned and to guarantee that they offer room for learning and development (Bauer et al., 2020, p. 354).

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on HRM practices and their impact on the retention of employees. The Social Exchange Theory that links HR practices and retention was discussed, followed by human resource practices and employee retention. Several HRM practices that influences the retention of employees especially the academics at HEIs were discussed. The research shows that recruitment and selection; training and development; compensation; promotional opportunities, job satisfaction, leadership, performance management and organisational affect how long an employee will stay in an organisation. It is for that reason that organisations that intend to be competitive and relevant should have a look at their HR practices.

The following chapter will focus on research methodology which deals with data collection, analysis and interpretation ensuring vigour and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher principally discusses and presents the research philosophy, research design, and methods used to achieve the study's goals and objectives. The methods included the sampling, data collection and analysis approaches used to allocate a degree of quality and reliability of the study. This chapter also covers relevant ethical considerations of the study.

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Saunders et al. (2019) describe the research philosophy as systems of hypotheses and beliefs on the advancement of knowledge and understanding. Research philosophy has an impact on how the researcher views and comprehends the world (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The same philosophy affects the way the researcher interpret the research data and choose the research methods (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The concept, ‘research philosophy’ entails 4 (four) interrelated assumptions, namely: ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology (Denzin & Kincon, 2018). These assumptions influence all the aspect/s of the research from data collection to data analysis. Axiology addresses moral questions, ontology addresses what reality is, epistemology addresses how to know it, and methodology addresses how to measure reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Five (5) philosophies inform qualitative research interpretivism/constructivism, advocacy/participatory, pragmatism, critical and phenomenology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Majority of researchers were likely to use multiple philosophies that are compatible. In this study, the researcher adopts the interpretivism paradigm which premises on the idea that reality must be interpreted because there is no singular reality. The interpretivism philosophy attempts to comprehend the viewpoint of the subject and the researcher's goal is to give meaning to other people's perceptions of the world (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This philosophy emphasises the ability of humans to generate meanings from their experiences and the researcher studies these meanings, with the understanding that reality is not a static entity, but a construct made by the research participants; reality exists in a setting, and numerous interpretations are conceivable (Polit & Beck, 2021).

Furthermore, interpretivist research aims to advance new, more intricate perceptions and meanings of social lives and settings (Saunders et al., 2019). This philosophical assumption has a subjectivist epistemology, a relativist ontology, a naturalist methodology, and balanced axiology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017), which are detailed as follows:

3.2.1. Ontological Assumptions

Saunders et al. (2019) intimate that ontology is the study concerning the state of "being", which articulates the essence of reality. Interpretivism assumes relativist ontology which states that there is not just one reality but several realities that the researcher could investigate, interpret based on the interaction between the researcher and participants and amongst participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This nature of reality is understood as deep and intricate emanating from people's cultures and languages and thus subjective (Saunders et al., 2019). In this regard, the researcher is also of the view that reality is subjective as people experience reality differently. In terms of this view, the researcher understood that each academic participating in the research had their unique and rich story to tell that will help understand why they have not left the HEI.

3.2.2 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology addresses how knowledge is acquired - how people make meaning of their experiences drawing from their beliefs and values (Park et al., 2020). Interpretivists assume subjectivist epistemology, which involves the researcher's interpretation of data based on his/ her reasoning and conceptual analysis of data, which is influenced by their experiences with participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Accordingly, the acceptable truth is the result of interaction between the researcher and the respondents (Polit & Beck, 2021).

Consonant with the interpretivists' epistemological assumption, knowledge that is acceptable can be found in narratives, perceptions and interpretations, the researcher focused on participants' life experience, or their interpretations of their own memories of such experiences (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 149). The researcher was of the view that lived experiences of the participants will constitute what is knowledge/truth.

3.2.3 Axiological Assumptions

Balanced axiology proposes that the findings of the research will exhibit the principles of the researcher and tries to provide an unbiased report of the outcomes (Polit &

Beck, 2021) . The researcher's values and beliefs influence the interpretation of the data is unavoidable (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.2.4 Methodological Assumptions

The methodological assumptions of interpretivism influenced the researcher's entire study, based on Kivunja's and Kuyini's (2017) proposition that the choice of paradigm has methodological ramifications that affect the research question(s), participants chosen, data collection tools and techniques, as well as data analysis. Methods of analysis are used where the sample is usually small, the analysis is rigorous and theories are developed inductively (Saunders et al., 2019).

In addition to focusing on the non-objective and the unquantifiable, the interpretivists researchers tend to concentrate on the active, total, and personal aspects of a person's life and make an effort to fully portray those characteristics in the context of the people experiencing them. (Polit & Beck, 2021). In line with naturalist methodology, the researcher used data gathered in a natural setting, with researcher's role as that of the participating observer with the researcher acting as a detached observer of the participants' realistic interactions in their own naturalistic or ecological surroundings. Regarding the participants' lived experiences and analysis of data, the interpretivist philosophical assumption uses qualitative methods that usually employ interviews, focus groups, observation, and case studies to collect data. The researcher's choice of semi-structured interviews was to ensure that rich interpretations can be derived from the participants' experiences (Polit & Beck, 2021) .

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

To understand and explore the lived experiences of academic staff at the HEI, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach after carefully weighing the merits of both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative research uses a variety of data collection methods and analysis tools to establish a conceptual structure and theoretical contribution by studying participants' experiences and relations between them (Saunders et al., 2019). The approach mainly essentialises the understanding of people's sense-making of their experiences in life.

Numerous attributes of qualitative research were useful in answering the research questions of the study. Drawing from the work of Braun and Clarke (2013); Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the following qualitative research characteristics were deemed valuable for the study:

- Focus on meaning and understanding: Qualitative research tries to understand people's sense-making of their lives, describe the meaning-making process, and narrate their interpretation of their experience.
- Researcher as a/ the primary instrument: As opposed to quantitative research, the researcher in qualitative studies is the principal tool for collecting and analysing data. This allows him/ her the opportunity to both augment meaning through non-verbal dialogues, and to seek clarification when the communication is unclear.
- An inductive process: means that hypotheses are not tested rather hypotheses, concepts are built on data gathered;
- Rich description and meaning, not numbers: Words and pictures that give a richer description are used to describe outcomes instead of numbers. In this context, the participants are described. The excerpts of the data collected are usually included to authenticate the findings;
- Does not provide a single answer: There are several ways of interpreting the meaning of the data that we analyse. A qualitative data analysis describes one narrative out of several that could be said about the data; and
- Treats context as important: In qualitative research the where, who and what is important. The data analysed and interpretation produced is recognised not as a bias to be removed but as subjectivity to be incorporated.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

There different kinds of qualitative research designs available for researchers to choose from when engaging in qualitative research studies, for example: ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative research, and case study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Research design is a strategy that guides the researcher in collecting, measuring and analysing data (Grønmo, 2020). This plan helps the researcher in responding to the research questions.

Congruent with the particularities of this study, a phenomenology design was chosen as the most appropriate and suitable research design. Phenomenology was pioneered by Husserl and refined by Heidegger (1962). It has its roots in philosophy and is concerned with trying to understand people's daily experiences (Polit & Beck, 2021). Heidegger (1962) was of the view that the experiences not only need to be described, but they also need to be interpreted and understood as well (Polit & Beck, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019). The goal of phenomenology is to explore the lived experiences and make sense of these experiences by focusing on how people perceive and communicate these experiences (Creswell & Báez, 2021).

There are two phenomenological design types: descriptive and interpretative phenomenology. Interpretative phenomenology has a number of variants by means of which the qualitative researcher could exegetically approach his/ her study. These include hermeneutic phenomenology, template analysis and Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). To explore the lived experiences of academic staff in relation to the HR practices and retention strategies at the HEI, the researcher opted for the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and used it both as a research design and as a tool of analysis (Howitt, 2019). The IPA was developed by Smith (1996), and its main goal is to investigate people and the means by which they make meaning of their environment and experiences (Noon, 2018).

Furthermore, the IPA requires deep analysis and involvement with data collected, (Polit & Beck, 2021). The key conceptual touchstone of IPA are idiography, hermeneutics and phenomenology (Miller et al., 2018; Tuffour, 2017). As the participant endeavours to construct some ineligibility of their experience, the researcher is equally also attempting to understand how the subject is making sense of their experience (Smith, 2019). IPA employs a double hermeneutic approach. The double hermeneutic fits in well with this study since the researcher explored and analysed the experiences of participants influenced their decision to stay in the organisation. Furthermore, the double hermeneutic approach is part of the qualitative mode of inquiry that serves as an inspiration to utilise IPA in this study.

3.5 RESEARCH METHOD

Research methods are tools used to collect and analyse data (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). This section involves study setting, population, sampling, data collection, ensuring rigour and data analysis that were used in this study.

3.5.1 Study Setting

Study setting refers to a natural, partially controlled or highly controlled place in which the researcher conducts the study (Gray et al., 2017). Similar to other qualitative studies, the current research was conducted in a natural setting conducive to the dynamic understanding of the sampled participants. In this regard, the researcher did not alter or manipulate the setting, but rather studied and observed phenomena in as occurring in its naturalistic environment, and attempted to understand or interpret such phenomena in terms of the interpretations that the sampled academics make of them (Denzin & Kincon, 2018). The study was conducted at one of the campuses of the selected HEI. This campus has two (2) colleges – the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, and College of Science, Engineering and Technology.

3.5.2 Study Population

To realise the objectives of the study considering the time available, the cost and the need to acquire valuable data, the researcher had to determine the accessible population from the general and target population. Asiamah et al. (2017) identify (3) three types of the population from which researchers conduct their studies: the general population, target and accessible population. Salkind (2022) defines a population as the group of people or individuals that the researcher has considered appropriate to his/ her research study. A target population, on the other hand, is described as a collection of people or participants sharing a number of relevant attributes and characteristics (Asiamah et al., 2017).

These remain after the researcher has eliminated all those people from the general public who might not be able to express their experiences and ideas with enough clarity and depth (Asiamah et al., 2017). Within the target population, there are those prospective participants who are unavailable or just not interested in participating, which prompts the researcher to remove them and remain with the accessible population with whom the researcher will continue to conduct the research.

3.5.2.1 Population and participants characteristics

For this study, the general population comprised of all academic staff employed at the selected campus. The academic staff at this campus consists of the following ranks: College Executive Deans and their deputies, School Directors, Chairs of Departments, Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Junior lecturers, Research Fellows and Research Professors for different departments.

3.5.3 Eligibility Criteria

The researcher pre-determined the following criteria that specified those who were eligible to participate in the study:

3.5.3.1 Inclusion criteria

To ensure homogeneity of the sample, the inclusion criteria included male and female permanent academics with at least 5 (five) years of professional experience and worked at a HEI. These academics were between the ages of 18 and 65 years.

3.5.3.2 Exclusion criteria

The exclusion criteria encompassed non-academic staff with working experience of less than 5 (five) years at campuses other than the selected campus. Part time academics and those below 18 and above 65 years were excluded as well.

3.5.4 Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling involves choosing a population to participate in a research study (Yozi, 2018). Qualitative sampling has characteristics that are distinguishable from its quantitative variant (Polit & Beck, 2021). Firstly, the participants need to be people who are well informed, able to express themselves and ruminative. Secondly, the sample is usually small to make it possible to uncover various truths and meanings (Polit & Beck, 2021). Lastly, the participants need to have experienced the phenomena being studied.

The researcher opted for the non-probability purposive sampling technique to choose and recruit study participants. Purposive sampling, sometimes known as judgemental/ purposeful/ selective sampling, enables the researcher to select people who have undergone the experiences the researcher is trying to understand (Creswell & Báez, 2021). The participants are purposively selected because only those who can provide information about the study's main phenomenon are needed. Accordingly, the researcher applied purposive sampling for its assumption that the researcher desires to observe, comprehend, and gain insight, and for that reason, the sample ought to most, if not all of the researcher's desired qualities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In order to explore the lived experiences of the academics, the chosen sampling type was the most appropriate for the researcher. The participants needed to be knowledgeable and have been at the institution long enough to have experienced most of the retention practices that affect academics. The researcher approached the participants utilising the following criterion: the supervisors approached the Department of Human Resource Information System (HRIS) for a list containing permanent academic staff at the HEI selected campus who met the inclusion criteria of the study. The list of two hundred and thirty-three (233) academic staff that met the study's inclusion criteria was provided and the researcher sent emails to the selected academic staff of this campus.

The email had two (2) attachments, (1) an information sheet and (2) a letter of invitation for participants to express willingness to participate in the study. The letter contained detailed information of the study such as the purpose, objectives, benefits of the study and participant's rights of participation and researcher's contact details. When participant clearly expressed their willingness to participate, individual interviews were scheduled. To ensure the research project's adherence to the relevant COVID-19 guidelines set out by the University of South Africa (2020) that prohibited research that requires physical human participant interactions, all interviews were online through Microsoft Teams. A follow-up email was also sent to each of the participants eligible for participation to confirm the date and time of the interview.

A sample is a small selected group of cases that the researcher chooses from a wide pool and then generalises to the population (Neuman, 2014). Small samples were used guided by the IPA, consistent with other qualitative methods that have small samples (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021) and the study was guided by the principle of data saturation (Flick, 2018). Data saturation is the point at which categories of the emergent data become monotonous and redundant such that no new information relevant to the study's aims and objectives can be gathered by further data collection (Polit & Beck, 2021). The main reason being that IPA involves intense analysis of each case, the researcher tried to understand what the participants make of the meaning of their experiences. The sample size could be between 1 and 15 (Padilla-Díaz, 2015; Smith & Fieldsend, 2021).

Smaller samples allow researchers to examine similarities and the amount of data is not too diverse to overwhelm the researcher. The researcher interviewed academics who responded to the invitation email, which was emblematic of their willingness to be involved in the study until data saturation point was reached during the 11th interview. To ensure homogeneity of the sample the inclusion criteria was used. This means that sample size for individual interviews consisted of 11 (n=11, 100%) permanent academic staff from the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, and College of Science, Engineering and Technology at the selected campus. This included female and male academics; between 18-65 years; and they are full- time employees.

The researcher chose to involve academics who are permanent employees and have been at the HEI for more than five (5) years because five (5) years is long enough for them to have had a chance to engage in the core duties - teaching, researching and academic citizenship, and community engagement and outreach. In those years the academics would have been exposed or even affected by human resources practises strategies the institution employs. Non -academics; below 18 and above 65 years; part-time academics; academics working in other HEI’s campuses other than the selected campus.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

In this study, a semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data from the participants with a list of interview questions. The questions were intended to help answer the research questions. (Grønmo, 2020). The researcher was flexible in terms of the order of the questions asked, using the interview guide as a guide. One of the methods most frequently employed in qualitative research is interviewing since it allows for observation of people’s behaviour, feelings, and interpretation of their experiences (Howitt, 2019).

Semi-structured interview questions are free-form and provide the researcher and participants some leeway to explore any unexpected material that emerges from the interview that isn't included in the guide but is still pertinent to the study. For this study, the researcher designed the interview guide that the supervisors checked and approved (see Annexure D). Drawing from the research study questions, the researcher compiled the list of questions to be asked. These questions formed what is known as an interview guide. The participants describe their experiences responding to questions that were intentionally and skilfully connected to the research topic (Galletta, 2013).

Though the researcher used a research guide containing questions to be posed to all participants, a suggested set of questions and probing to encourage and further the conversation, along with some closing remarks, were used (Saunders et al., 2019), there was fluidity and flexibility in the way the questions were asked - the order of the questions was not followed at times. The interview guide helps the researcher check that all pertinent topics are covered (Patton, 2015).

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

An interview is one of the most commonly preferred data gathering instruments in qualitative research. Patton (2015) fittingly refers to this tool as an interaction or relationship according to which questions are asked, and participants reciprocally share their experiences. This study utilised semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to freely express themselves within the boundaries of the study aims and objectives.

This interview type enables the researcher for a list of questions to which s/he is not rigidly tied as s/he may choose to probe on unexpected subjects and pose unplanned, impromptu questions (Saunders et al., 2019). For IPA semi structured interviews are recommended (Howitt, 2019). The interviews were conducted through Microsoft Teams in adherence to the relevant COVID-19 guidelines determined by the University of South Africa's (2020) position statement on research ethics, which prohibit researchers from direct or physical contact with their human participants.

A total of 11 interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams from the 22nd of September 2020 until the 22nd of October 2020. Every interview session was of 45 minutes' duration. The IPA framework was as guide for all the semi-structured individual interviews (Howitt, 2019). The semi-structured interview mode is advantageous for allowing the researcher and participants to communicate face-to-face, which permits the participant to freely express themselves (Smith, 2019). Most of the semi-structured interviews use an interview guide; have questions used in a not so rigid manner; have specific data needed from all participants, and have a list of questions guiding the interview (Tracy, 2020).

Notwithstanding that the researcher is not a seasoned researcher, she had the necessary interviewing skills to enable her to elicit the needed participant lived experiences for responding to the research questions. The researcher was able to display most of the skills as identified by Gray et al. (2017): asking open-ended questions, being clear; attentive listening; probing appropriately; being prepared for the unexpected and present throughout the interview. Howitt (2019) asserts that probing allows the researcher to acquire more information and ask for clarifications.

The researcher preferred semi-structured interviews than the structured interviews, because they are flexible and open. All the interviews were recorded, and the recordings were stored in a password-protected folder in the researcher's laptop, ready for transcription. All the participants were made aware that the interviews would be recorded.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the summary of the collected data which involves the interpretation of data gathered through the use of analytical and logical reasoning to determine patterns, relationships or trends. Furthermore it is the act of making meaning of the data by combining, condensing, and analysing people's utterances or pronouncements, as well as what the researcher has observed and studied (Creswell & Báez, 2021). The researcher used the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) framework of analysis proposed by Smith (1996). The audio recordings of the individual interviews conducted were transcribed word for word. The transcripts were analysed using ATLAS.ti. The analytical process stages are illustrated in Table 3.1 below (Alase, 2017; Howitt, 2019; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The transcripts were analysed individually through these stages. The researcher further used an external coder (co-coder) to analyse a sample of individual interviews data. The researcher also analysed the sample of the transcripts that were given to the external coder. The outcome of the data analysis is included in this study.

Table 3.1: From transcript to master table of themes

Stages of Analysis	Related Activities
Stage 1.	Reading and re-reading of data. The researcher read the verbatim transcripts numerous times while listening to the audio recording. This made it possible for the researcher to understand the central phenomenon of the study better. Listening to the audio recording helped the researcher to vividly remember the interviews' tone and the setting in which they took place (Smith & Eatough, 2019). This immersion in the data made way for the next step of the analysis.
Stage 2.	Initial note-taking produces thorough and in-depth collection of notes and comments (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). Comments can be descriptive, linguistic and conceptual (Miller et al., 2018). While immersed in the data, on the margins, the researcher made notes and comments of the participant's narratives. The researcher not only focused on what was said but how it was said – the language used to describe the experiences.
Stage 3.	Developing emergent themes. Notes are transformed into themes and emergent themes are developed within one data item. The researcher transformed the detailed and extensive notes from stage two into emergent themes. This was achieved through looking for codes that are similar and overlapping; combining these into themes that make sense individually and fit well with other themes to make a comprehensive analysis (Peart et al., 2020).
Stage 4.	Searching for connections across emergent themes. This stage involves grouping themes according to how they fit together using abstraction,

Stages of Analysis	Related Activities
	polarisation, contextualisation, numeration and functionality (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). The researcher grouped themes according to their similarity and gave each cluster an umbrella name. Some themes were dropped as they did not appear that frequently. Keywords, phrases and page numbers where the themes are in the transcript were included. A table with the clustered themes was made (Howitt, 2019).
Stage 5.	Moving to the next case. Process 1 to 4 is repeated with all cases. The researcher tries to 'bracket' all prior themes (Peart et al., 2020). The researcher repeated the process from stage 1 to 4 with all the verbatim transcripts. The transcripts were 11 from 11 participants.
Stage 6.	Looking for cross-case patterns. The researcher finds connections across cases (Jeong & Othman, 2016). The researcher at this stage had to compare tables from all 11 cases for similar themes. A final master table with superordinate and subordinate themes from all 11 participants was developed.
Stage 7.	Taking interpretations to deeper levels. The researcher, in a narrative form, reported the findings of the study, discussing each superordinate and subordinate theme identified in stage 6.

It is always advisable for the researcher to personally perform the transcription of the data for familiarisation and writing analytic memos in the process. However, it saved time for this study to use an external transcriber. The researcher listened to the audios and compared with each and every transcript to ensure that every recorded interview has been included (Noon, 2018).

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS: ENSURING RIGOUR OF THE STUDY

Rigour is the trustworthiness of the study, achievable by making sure that strategies like triangulation, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, thick and rich description, audit trail and member checks are used to maintain credibility, transferability, dependability, authenticity and conformability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Lincoln et al. (1985) introduced the trustworthiness framework for qualitative studies to match those commonly used in quantitative studies.

3.8.1 Credibility

It is important that the research and the resultant findings should be credible. Credibility itself refers to the study findings' practical relevance and connection to reality (Saunders et al., 2019). Credibility ensures that the interpretation of participants' experiences reflects their precise meanings (Saunders et al., 2019). There are a number of strategies that are used to ensure credibility, such as triangulation, member checks, peer review and persistent observation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher mainly used persistent, observation, prolonged engagement, and investigator triangulation in this regard.

Investigator triangulation involved the utilisation of more than one person to code, analyse and interpret data (Polit & Beck, 2021). To ensure credibility, member checking, validity checking, reflective engagement after each interview, interview schedule, audio recording and verbatim transcriptions were also used. The prolonged engagement was employed by the researcher through asking questions that required detailed responses and related to participants' knowledge and experiences. Probing questions were used to follow-up valuable information and to obtain clarity on the experience being described. The researcher established persistent observation when codes and themes were developed (Polit & Beck, 2021) .

3.8.2 Dependability

Dependability is the possibility of having the same results if the same research is conducted again (Saunders et al., 2019). However, authors argued that in qualitative research dependability has to do with compatibility of data gathered by the researcher as well as the results not with the likelihood that the results can be replicated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To ensure the study's dependability, the researcher used audit trails as a detailed account of the procedures, methods, and decisions that influenced the undertaking of the study (Howitt, 2019). The audit trail detailed how data was collected, every step was taken through the study was incorporated. The researcher documented sampling decisions, data management information, coding decisions and all the theories used throughout the study (Conelley, 2016). In addition to audit trails, an interview guide, member checking, co-coder, audio recording of the interviews and verbatim transcription were utilised.

3.8.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent of the findings' confirmation or corroboration by others in the same research field (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). As suggested by Conelley (2016) the researcher kept meticulous records of all conclusions and assessments as it developed. Keeping the audit trail establishes conformability to dispel concerns that the data might have been created by the researcher and not what participants said (Polit & Beck, 2021) .

3.8.4 Transferability

Polit and Beck (2017) posit that transferability relates to the possibility or the degree with which the study results could be applied in other settings with other groups. On that note, transferability is premised on how much of the research's findings can be applied to situations other than the one that it was originally designed to address (Howitt, 2019). Therefore, transferability highlights the researcher's efforts to make sure that adequate background information about the research is provided to those who read the findings and be able to compare conclusions to their own situations (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher used rich and thick descriptions of the research questions, design, context, findings and interpretations (Saunders et al., 2019). Such descriptions brings readers into the scene and add a sense of mutual experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This process is utilised to allow the reader’s determination, interpretation, and comprehension regarding the possibility of the findings applying in their situation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The descriptions of the participants, their experiences and processes and some verbatim quotes are included.

3.8.5 Authenticity

Polit and Beck (2021) describe authenticity as the degree to which experiences in collecting, analysing and interpretating data are depicted in a variety of ways. The researcher selected participants who have worked long enough at the HEI (i.e., for more than five years) to provide rich, detailed experiences, which the researcher audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, richly describe and analysed. Polit and Beck (2021) aver further that text used to describe experiences can help the reader identify with the mood that prevailed then, language used, and even the feelings.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher ensured that the study was conducted in compliance with research ethics. In this regard, the researcher made sure that the participants were not hurt in any way, be it physically, mentally or spiritually. There was no violation of the rights of the researcher or the participants. Research from the outset to the collection, analysis, managing and reporting of data poses ethical issues. These concerns arise mainly because research involves humans, animals and even organisations that have rights that need not be violated (Salkind, 2022). Furthermore, the researcher adhered to the code of conduct and ethics in order to minimise any right infringement and cause pain to participants. These guidelines are principles that direct the researcher on how not to infringe on the rights of participants when conducting the research (Saunders et al., 2019). The key ethical principles to which the researcher adhered, are discussed below:

3.9.1 Protecting the Rights of the Institutions Involved

The research was conducted at a HEI and involved the institution's academics. The researcher obtained permission and consent to carry out this research from the institution's Ethics Review Committee (ERC), (see Annexure A) and the Research Permission Sub-Committee (RPSC) (see Annexure A). These committees are tasked with reviewing all higher education institutional research involving personal information and/ or human subjects as participants. In addition, it is the responsibility of these committees to examine research-related ethical aspects such as quality, particularly as it relates to protecting the dignity, rights, integrity and welfare of the sampled research participants (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 256). Both committees were satisfied with researcher assurance to follow all guidelines as stipulated on the institution's Policy on Research Ethics. The researcher informed the participants of their rights and further elaborated that they could freely express themselves as that would not have any negative impact on them.

3.9.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality is upheld when all the information obtained about the respondent is treated with the utmost privacy (Salkind, 2022). All private data identifying the participants are not published unless there is explicit agreement from the participant to do so (Denzin & Kincon, 2018). To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher informed participants that the data collected will remain unknown to the public and will also not be shared with external parties not directly involved in the study. Collected information was safely kept in a password-protected computer.

Equally critical is the maintenance of anonymity. This means that the findings and the participants cannot be linked (Salkind, 2022). The researcher anonymised all the participants by giving them pseudonyms. All direct and indirect identifiers like ages, locations, real names, job positions were generalised, substituted or removed. The original transcriptions and anonymised data were stored in a secure password protected as proposed by (Denzin & Kincon, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

3.9.3 Autonomy

The researcher ascertained that participants were not in any way coerced into being involved in the study. Informed consent requires that the participants make an informed, deliberate and voluntary decision to be involved in the research after the researcher provided them with enough information about the research and implications of participating (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 258).

The personal and social information collected during interviews were not sensitive. The information gathered focused on the Human Resource Practices of academics and how academics can be retained at the participating HEI. Such information is less likely to cause psychological distress in participants. The researcher also explained to the participants that they are not compelled to participate in the study, they could withdraw even during the interview in the event that the questions rendered them uncomfortable. Consent or willingness for participation was sought. The researcher explained the study to participants before the interviews. To alleviate the possibility of distress, all participants were given an information sheet about the study. The information sheet contained details about the nature of the study; requirements of taking part; implications of taking part and the rights of those taking part; the use of data collected and the way it will be reported; whom to contact to raise any concerns and questions about the research (Saunders et al., 2019). Participants were encouraged to read the sheet provided. Those who expressed willingness to participate were asked to provide written informed consent and reassured of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were interviewed after reading and signing a consent form.

Participants received concise, precise explanations and descriptions that helped them comprehend the purpose of the study. It was written in a language they were familiar with. Participants are free to discontinue their involvement in the research at any time without being penalised (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher explained the voluntary nature of the study to the participants, that they did not have to respond to any part or all the questions. Written permission was requested from the participants (Alase, 2017). The researcher informed the participants before the interview sessions that the interviews were audio-recorded, and they were completely at liberty to withdraw at any time (Denzin & Kincon, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

3.9.4 The Scientific Integrity of the Researcher

The study's quality is determined by the researcher's knowledge, experience, honesty and fairness, which sums up integrity (Denzin & Kincon, 2018). The researcher followed all of the ethical guidelines in this study which were clearly and correctly referenced and acknowledged. The results were reported accurately and no data was misrepresented. Saunders et al. (2019) allude that integrity should be upheld throughout at all stages of the study; that is, during the formulation and clarification of the research topic stage; design and gain access stage; as well as during collection, processing, storage, analysis, and reporting of the findings.

Throughout the study, the researcher adhered to ethical requirements by avoiding any harm that might be caused to the participants; not forcing any participant for their involvement; ensuring anonymity and confidentiality; analysis and reporting accountability; as well as data management compliant (Denzin & Kincon, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). In every step, they were consulted.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter addressed the research design and methodology of the study, including the procedures for gathering and analysing data. Guided by the interpretivism paradigm, the researcher used a qualitative IPA framework to sample the participants, conduct semi-structured interviews and analyse the interview-based data.

The next chapter provides details concerning the outcomes of the collected and analysed data as guided by the principles of IPA.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to present the qualitative analysis of data collected and discussion of the findings, as obtained from the individual interviews with the selected participants. Firstly, the profile of the participants is summarised. Thereafter, four superordinate themes were revealed from the data analysis of the transcripts of individual interviews. Each of the superordinate themes consists of the sub-themes. Sub-themes identified from the transcripts are discussed and the chapter concludes with the discussion on research findings.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICAL PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

The researcher recruited participants through sending out invitation emails to academics whose work experience was more than five (5) years at their workplace. Interviews were conducted to those participants who responded positively the emails until data saturation was reached. For that reason, the researcher had no control over selecting the sex and race of the participants. Without violating the confidentiality agreement, detailed demographic descriptions of the participants are not possible due to the fact that it will be easy for colleagues and management to recognise them.

The researcher's participants were (n=11, 100%) academics who took part in the study as depicted in Table 4.1 overleaf. The majority of participants (n=7, 64%) were females followed by male participants (n=4, 36%) male participants. Based on the participant’s years of experience, the majority of participants whose work experience ranged between 5-10 years were (n=6, 55%), followed by (n=4, 36%) whose work experience ranged between 11-20 years. There’s only one participant (n=1, 9%) whose work experience was between 21 and above. Furthermore, (n=6, 55%) participants had PhD’s, followed by (n=3, 27%) who had Masters’ degree, only (n=1, 9%) participant with Bachelor’s degree as well as another (n=1, 9%) with Honours degree

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of respondents

Participant/ Pseudonym	**Years of Experience**	**Educational Qualification**	**Gender**
Participant 1 (**P1**)	26	PhD	Female
Participant 2 (**P2**)	6	PhD	Male
Participant 3 (**P3**)	16	Honours	Female
Participant 4 (**P4**)	14	PhD	Male
Participant 5 (**P5**)	9	MSc	Male
Participant 6 (**P6**)	15	MTech	Female
Participant 7 (**P7**)	7	MPhil	Female
Participant 8 (**P8**)	12	PhD	Male
Participant 9 (**P9**)	10	Bachelors	Female
Participant 10 (**P10**)	6	PhD	Female
Participant 11 (**P11**)	8	PhD	Female

(Source: Researcher’s own compilation)

4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews, explained in detail in sub-section 3.7.1. From the data collected four (4) superordinate themes emerged: appointments; employee benefits; lived experiences and staff retention. Each superordinate theme has sub-themes as depicted in Table 4.2 overleaf. The researcher used pseudonyms to identify participants to safeguard participants' confidentiality, all identifying information was erased or modified, and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant.

All direct and indirect identifiers like ages, locations, real names, job positions were generalised, substituted, or removed. The researcher presented the themes as they developed in the research findings, followed by the presentation of the sub-themes. Thereafter the conclusions reached by the participants, supported by direct excerpts from the transcriptions.

Table 4.2: Superordinate and sub-themes

Superordinate Themes	Sub-Themes
Theme 1: Appointments	○ Recruitment ○ Selection ○ Induction
Theme 2: Employee benefits	○ Training and development ○ Research and development ○ Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS) ○ Career progression and promotional opportunities ○ Remuneration
Theme 3: Lived experiences	○ Adjusting to open distance learning ○ Feelings (frustration, doubt, hopelessness, stress, unpatriotic, overwhelmed, unappreciated) ○ Red tape ○ Staff satisfaction and engagement ○ Workload and environment
Theme 4: Staff retention	○ Working environment ○ Joy that comes from teaching and supervising students ○ Growth opportunities ○ Freedom to manage one's time

4.3.1 Theme 1: Appointments

Organisations always strive to attract a group of qualified and skilled people wherefrom the best applicant(s) can be selected to fill a vacant position(s). The aim is to ensure that suitable candidates who can advance the objectives and values of the organisation are appointed and smoothly oriented within the organisation, their job and other employees. This is, however, not the case with most tertiary institutions such as the participating HEI, supported by the participants' responses in the study.

The participants shared their thoughts and feelings on the recruitment and selection process, and induction at the HEI under study. Their shared experiences hinged on the application process at the institution, the time it took from the application process to the interview and eventually receiving a job offer. They further detailed their experiences of how they were received at the institution, the induction programmes and their relevance. The participants from face-to-face universities further described how much it took them to adjust to the institution's processes. During the data analysis, the following sub-themes emanated from this theme:

1.1. Recruitment;

1.2. Selection; and

1.3. Induction.

Below are the findings relating to each sub-themes as described by participants of their experiences as academics at the HEI.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme: Recruitment

The findings showed that of the eleven (n=11, 100%) research participants, (n=7, 64%) intimated that they were recruited externally and (n=4, 36%) were already working at the institution on part time bases. They cited the fact that they received information of the advertised positions through word of mouth, referrals and advertisements. Those participants who were already part time workers had different experiences from those who were recruited externally. Participant **P4,** was on a fixed term contract, assisting with marking and setting exams, knew about the job opening and the departmental plans to expand. When the job was advertised, he applied. On the other hand, participant **P9** was also working part time, assisting in the department with some modules. When a permanent position post was advertised, she also applied for the vacancy. They narrated their experiences as follows:

"…because I was working as a fixed-term contract already knew. The other thing is that at that time, the department where I was or the section where I was attached to, was very small with only two of us…" ***P4**.*

"…I was working at X and then also at this university part-time, you know one of my colleagues from this university asked me if I can assist with some module. Then there was an advert for a permanent position so then I was advised you know to apply for the position, so I applied, ***P9**.*

In that regard, Participant 6 was recruited through a recruitment agency before the merger with Technikon South Africa. Other participants such as **P1** and **P11** responded to the advertisement which appeared on the local newspaper. Below are the participants' experiences:

"I actually started as part of Technikon SA before the merger, ... And I was recruited through a recruitment agency" ***P6**.*

"I was looking for a job because I had been at another university for a while, but it was a temporary position. So, and that one actually, was a postdoctoral position. So, it was never meant to be long term. So, I was looking for jobs in academia. And I saw this advertisement for a fixed term lecturer at this university." ***P1**.*

"I saw an advert for a position at this university. And a friend of mine worked at this university. And he recommended that I apply, which I did, and then yeah, that was, the sort of the start of it. So that's when I applied. And I think I applied in March, and then I started the next January. So, it took quite a long time." ***P11**.*

P2 and **P5**, intimated that their recruitment was through referrals. Participant **P1** was working at a private institution and was notified of the post by one his former colleagues. Similarly, participant **P5** got to know of the vacancy through his supervisor. Following are the participants' statements.

"And I knew, I was actually co-supervising one of the master students with one of the lecturers in the department. And he mentioned to me that there was a position opening up" ***P2****.*

"So, my supervisor contacted me and said, my department is looking for staff. Would I consider applying and I applied and after three months heard nothing, okay, nothing's happening." ***P5****.*

Participant **P3** was one of those people who were neither applied nor recruited. When the university merged with Vista University she was simply carried over:

"So, I became part of the merger. So can you see I was never, never recruited, never went through the procedures or the processes. It was almost like by default, and they just decided, no, they didn't advertise the position or anything" ***P3****.*

On the other hand, **P7** was not actively looking for employment in academia though she had an interest in research. Her recruitment was more of being 'headhunted'. It was after a seminar she attended that her much-needed qualifications got the attention of one of the departmental heads.

"I attended a colloquium at the science campus. And then there was lunch [whereby the head of the department approached me and asked me if I am interested in a vacancy. This was after he read my CV during the seminar, I accepted the offer and was employed without applying for the job. I was representing my boss at that time]" ***P7****.*

The participants were concerned and even outraged at the lack of communication from the HEI during the recruitment process. They expected to at least have an acknowledgement of receipt of application. **Participant 5** explains that it was not proper for applicants to wait forever for a response. Adding to that, **P2** intimated that, it took a long time for the institution to respond whether he qualified for the job or not. This is how they commented:

"This university struggles with responding to emails. And so, you know, just an acknowledgement of having received my application would have been nice. That is our university wide problem. Certainly not just HR. So that would have been asked, you know, yes, we've received your application. You know, we were looking at it, we expect to ***get*** *back to you in the next few weeks with some idea of the process because I sent it in and just heard nothing."* ***P5****.*

“I just assumed that I hadn't met the criteria. And, you know, because I didn't hear anything and that I hadn't been selected for an interview or anything. So, I just forgot about it. And then suddenly, an email popped in my, in my inbox, and I was invited to, to attend, attend an interview” ***P2****.*

*“What I found also quite strange, is that you don't hear anything from the university for months. So, you kind of think, okay, nothing is happening. And I know that quite a few people have told me that they applied to this university and never heard anything. And so actually took other jobs at other institutions****” P10****.*

The application process as described by **P10** was not user friendly and it was extremely tedious:

“So, I responded to an advert. I found applying to this university difficult, the university wants a lot of stuff want from you, and you've got to upload an all online, I really struggled with the online system didn't work. So, I ended up emailing the documents to one of the HR people” ***P10.***

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme: Selection

Poor communication and taking forever to obtain feedback seemed not only a challenge for recruitment as well as in the selection process. The participants were disappointed and unhappy about the way they had to wait to obtain more feedback on the outcome of the interviews. Some, participants such as **P10** were not amused at all about the inconsistency of what is required for interviews. Even after a job offer, there seem not to be any clear and precise communication. Furthermore, one participant revealed the disappointment of poor communication and the wrong spelling mistakes such as his surname and incorrect salary that had two digits switched. Below are statements by the participants:

“I mean to take from putting in an application to being offered the job for nearly eight months. That’s to me is too long. I don't know if you agree or not, but seriously. That's I think this university is losing a lot of keys and probably quite good, experienced staff members that are coming for interviews because they're not prepared to wait that long” ***P2****.*

*“The HR process was bad. My, my contract had my salary incorrect on it to the digits to switch places. Okay, my surname was spelt incorrectly in two different places. Both misspelt in two different places or two different spellings in two different places. So, in that left a bit of a bad taste in my mouth****” P5****.*

“And once again, about three or four months later, I haven't heard anything. This was another three of four months… by then I assumed, obviously, once again, that kind of a, you know, hired someone else. An email popped into my email again, once more,

*and I had an offer of employment. So, you'll be honest, it wasn't a very smooth process, it was very slow. But anyway, here I am sitting so I suppose at the end of the day, I'm glad I took the job and, I am enjoying it. But the recruitment process itself was terrible. Very, very slow" **P2**.*

P10 and **P2** described the actual interviews, however, **P10** details how she prepared herself to the dot. She had to present her five-year research plan and teaching portfolio, something that seem not to have been requested from other people who were later appointed in a similar position as hers. She questioned the inconsistency as she was of the view that she was treated unfairly during job interview:

"*I had to go for an interview and present a five-year research plan and my teaching portfolio, which I thought is pretty good. But yeah, I think that this university is not necessarily applying the criteria around teaching as much as it should. So, for example, at contact universities, you actually have to give a class, you know, to see if they can stand up in front of, of students and teach, Whereas at this university, as I said, when I applied, and I had to have my teaching portfolio, which I did, and then subsequently met other people who've been appointed after me with no teaching experience. And I wonder, then, okay. They just decide to waive that teaching. And that is a problem. And I'll tell you why it's a problem*" ***P10**.*

Adding to the interview experience, **P2** states:

"*I went to the interview, I had to do a presentation and it was about to, it was quite long…was about an hour and a half interview*" ***P2**.*

P10 also mentioned that she received the job offer after an exceptionally long wait. As if that was not enough, she further mentioned that after accepting the offer, she had to undergo another chain of feelings – a feeling of uncertainty and anxiety. She expected to obtain a response of the way forward, but there no response she even decided to contact the university in order to obtain feedback pertaining to her application, this is what was reported:

"*But then the funny thing is after I accepted the job, I heard nothing from this university. Obviously, to accept the job, you must resign from the job that you're in, and you start telling people you are leaving. And then you know, at the same time, you're not hearing anything from this university and then you've got to kind of worry... was serious? and I mean, the head of the department never phoned me, never contacted, never emailed me. Eventually, I phoned up and I said, I want to come, you know, and visit you and they were like, kind of, why do you want to do that? **P10***.

The selection process was somewhat smoother for **P3** as she carried over from their previous institutions during the merger with the HEI. She was never interviewed as she just eased in because of the merger:

"*I was never interviewed. I was never interviewed, I was never recruited, I was never inducted"* **P3**.

4.3.1.3 Sub-theme: Induction

The participants experienced the induction process differently. The experiences included how they were received at the HEI; their perception of induction processes and programmes and how those from face-to-face universities adjusted to the HEI. Two participants (n=2, 18%) were not inducted. On the other hand, only 1 (one) participant (n=1, 9%) who opined that the induction was useful, while other participants (n=8, 73%) were inducted, but viewed the induction as not fit for purpose, just general and broad. Induction provides the new employee with skills and knowledge of the organisation and how to blend into the organisational culture. New employees are usually anxious, and induction is meant to reduce such feelings.

If not taken seriously, just done haphazardly, the new employee might have difficulty in adjusting to the new, unfamiliar environment and have negative attitudes about the organisation before he/she has already started with the new job. Participant **P1** was never inducted. It was assumed that she knows what she was supposed to do especially at a distance education institution. She was from a contact university and was not familiar with how things are done at the HEI. She had to find out things herself, which she expressed as follows:

"And *I had to go from person to person to ask, so what the what is tutorial letter 101. Maybe it was because I arrived in the middle of the year. It was in June. So, if there was an induction at the time, I can't even remember if there was, but it wasn't inducted. The next year, either. I think they only started with the induction process is like 10 years later, or something like that. So, at the time, we just figured things out, you know?" **P1**.*

P7 also did not have any induction but was expected to commence with the marking of student's assignments, which was an unfair treatment.

"*It was in March. So, it wasn't like at the beginning of the academic year, there were already assignments that came in, and they brought them to me, and there wasn't a memo. So, I had to develop a memo and mark the assignments. And I had to develop the tutorial. They do have the assignments. But I mean, I yeah, so there wasn't really induction or told me how to do it. But I did manage fine. And I think what was good was, I think in the first month I attended an assessors training*" ***P7**.*

The participants who were inducted reported that the induction was not specific to their department let alone their subject areas. The information they received appeared to be irrelevant the jobs they appointed for, as well as what the employer expected from them. Following is what the participant stated about his experience:

"*I think it was, I had to go to the main Campus in Pretoria. And they had a basic sort of induction for all the new staff members that had started at the beginning of that month. It was basic HR procedures and registering us on the system and getting staff cards and choosing your medical aid and you know, all the usual stuff you do. But it wasn't very specific for the job I was doing. It was very general and broad" **P2**.*

Participants like **P10** strongly describes the induction as extremely weak and not good enough to motivate and assist new recruits. She further noted that it was merely content overload:

"I*nduction at this university is very weak, very, very weak, very limited, and it's not fit for purpose… You need a lot of induction into how you're going to teach how the admin system works. it was content overload. And as I said, there was no academic induction…So there's no education induction, there's no, this is how exams are done. This is how assignments are done. This is how you upload an assignment. This is how I'm sure there's like none of that, which is yaaaah very scary" **P10**.*

Participant 8 also reported that the induction did not help him with his in practical day-to-day. This might be due to the fact that the induction was facilitated by people who are not academics and clueless about what is expected of academics. **P2** agrees with **P8**, that the induction must be tailored for position one is in:

"*So should more be tailored to the position that the person is going to work in, you can't give a manager the same induction that you are a very junior staff member, you're both going to be doing completely different jobs. So yes, we focus more on what that person is, is going to be doing when working at this university" **P2**.*

"*It was very welcoming, but from a practical day to day doing my job. It didn't help it. Didn't, So the reason why is because a lot of the people who were involved weren't academics*" **P8**.

For **P4**, though there was no formal induction, he relied on a knowledgeable colleague who was willing to assist him when he needed help:

"*So, I was just working closely with the person I found that that was the sort of induction there was no formal induction then the one that they have at the moment" **P4**.*

The induction was not that relevant for **P9** because she was familiar with almost every process in the university as she was a part-time worker at the HEI before:

"*Because I was working with this university already for, like a part-time only once a week I used to go... it was not that much relevant because myself I knew. Some of the* *things were not relevant for me because I was very familiar with the system already"* ***P9**.*

Not everyone found the induction programmes not so useful. **P11** benefited from the induction to the extent that she even planned to learn more. She enrolled for an e-learning course:

"*I enrolled in a course on E-learning and, and distance learning, which was very, very helpful. So yeah, that was my that was how I sort of started off with the induction. So yes, the induction that this university gave me was very helpful, but then I also enrolled in a course so that I could find out more about e-learning and, and how to teach that way"* ***P11**.*

The lack of adequate and comprehensive induction programmes resulted in participants from face-to-face universities being overwhelmed by the adjustment needed. The participants were to have an induction that will introduce them to the organisation and workplace. They too needed departmental and on the job induction:

"*They're thrown in the deep end. So, there isn't anything in place to help someone You know, integrate into the institution more smoothly"* ***P7**.*

"*So, you just told the guy, here's your, here's your office. And here's the two study guides of the courses, you have to start teaching. And it was quite pathetic, actually"* ***P1**.*

"T*he problem was that I found that because I lectured at a contact University before. It was it, you know, coming to this university is very different. There are so many different processes and things you have to learn, you know, about teaching and all of those sorts of things"* ***P8**.*

It appears that most of the induction programmes took place in the Pretoria campus, which was not the campus that was going to be accessed by some participants:

"*The induction to me was way too broad. Yes, no good people who are going to work at a different campus going to sit in Pretoria and get a general induction... they should... they should, in my opinion, yes. You know, you can get a staff card at the science campus, you can get all of those things, there's an HR department there, you should be sent to the campus that you're going to work at, and get in more specific induction for that particular campus, you know, are very rarely our go-to Pretoria once a year, why? Why was I being inducted at that campus and explained to me how everything works at that campus? It's of no benefit to me*" ***P2**.*

P5 found the reception on the first day pleasant though he had to spend some time trying to find his way to different places:

"*The onboarding itself was okay, but wasn't told where to report, I sort of floated around on main campus, which is a big place. And wasn't quite sure where I was supposed to go and eventually found my way where I was meant to be"* ***P5****.*

The participants succeeded very well their first phase of their employment at HEI as academics. Despite all the hurdles they kept their part of the contract and continued with their expected academic roles. Failure to provide proper and well-planned induction programmes may cost the organisations to forfeit the benefits of induction as averred by Nankervis et al., (2020). They pointed out that induction increases employee retention; enhances productivity; boosts positive employee morale; lowers recruiting and training costs; lays the foundation for the facilitation of subsequent learning and reduces new employees' anxiety.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Employee benefits

The participating HEI has a variety of programmes, activities and incentives that are meant to benefit the employees. The prominent ones drawn from participants' experiences as academics at the HEI for more than five (5) years include training and development; research and development; IPMS, promotions and remunerations.

The majority of (n=10, 91%) participants intimated that these activities, programmes and incentives are varied and many enough, only that sometimes they are not consistently and properly implemented and managed. Although some participants commented that development and training were not that relevant and even too much, most indicated some form of contentment with variety and quantity. Not only does the institution offer training, but it also cultivates the research culture through incentives like payment and points for each paper published; research development leave which is relevant for academics to take time off and solely focus on their research without any distraction from other academic duties.

The challenges that the participants identified, were the fact that as much as the incentives appealed and welcoming, they can push some academics to publish in predatory journals. The HEI prides itself in acknowledging efforts the academics put in research: "The hard work of our researchers is recognised and rewarded through a number of awards, prizes, and membership to notable research academies" (University of South Africa, 2021, p.1). The HEI uses an integrated performance management system (IPMS) to evaluate academics' performance. The participants expressed not so much contentment with the system even though it has been slightly improved. Besides being outdated, it does not measure all that is important.

The majority of participants pointed out that the HEI is biased towards teaching, neglecting other core focus areas like community engagement. Furthermore, they mentioned that the system is subjective. The participants revealed that every academic has a chance to progress from being a lecturer to senior lecturer, and then associate professor to full professor. Most of the participants said the promotional criteria and guidelines are clear and transparent though some were unhappy with unbalanced key performance areas which are heavily leaning towards research at the expense of teaching and learning. Abuse of black economic empowerment (BEE) related promotions that seem to ‘discriminate’ whites and foreigners seem to be another concern from participants.

Fascinating was that the majority of the participants (n=10, 91%) expressed that they were content with the compensation and benefits as they were of the view that they are remunerated fairly. The academics are also handsomely rewarded, in addition to their salaries, for publications and supervision to completion of masters and doctorate students. However, some reported that the junior lecturers are overpaid relative to what they may be paid if employed in the private sector.

4.3.2.1 Sub-theme: Training and development

Organisations usually identify the learning needs of the employees as this assist in choosing the appropriate training approaches to utilise like workplace learning, mentoring, e-learning (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). The participants acknowledged that the HEI offers expansive internal and external training programmes that endeavour to cater for all levels and fields. All the workshops, seminars and other different training programmes are communicated to all staff members through email. Some are compulsory to attend and for some, it is up to the academic to decide whether the training addresses his/ her needs. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that every academic has access to yearly funds set aside for training and development. However, the participants expressed frustration on how difficult it is to access those funds, partly because of the long process of filling out unending forms. Following are the statements from participants on the numerous trainings that the university offers:

“I think this university does more training than any other university and that's a really big thing that you need should be very, very proud of” ***P10****.*

“*You can choose which the ones you want to I mean, if it is on your level, I am not going to do something that is not on my level, or that I am not interested in*” ***P6****.*

"*I think there's a lot on offer. Its quality varies. Again, on some of it, I went on the assessor course*" ***P3**.*

"*They are training all the time, I remember that first year, I immediately had j router training with the onscreen marking tools. And I'm in a training all the time, you can choose which to attend. It's, you know, to develop where you feel you need more skill. So, there's more than enough training available*" ***P7**.*

"*In fact, yesterday I did, I attended two workshops, one in the morning and then one in the afternoon as well, which was very useful. And I didn't attend anything today, but I think I'm attending a seminar tomorrow, and so on. So, it's at least once a week. Sometimes twice a week, sometimes I think, you know, I need to stop doing these because, it's too much"* ***P11**.*

Some training programmes offered by the university, were identified by participants as those involving the usage of some portal, how to be an effective assessor, how to manage online examination and many other teaching and education related training programmes. These are not the only focus areas of the training; it could be that those are the ones that had impressible experiences on the participants. Below are the excepts from their experiences:

"Where they teach you how to use this university portal...they teach you how to use, it teaches you how to write they teach you... It is quite relevant. And they are quite many, if anyone's interested, like this assessor training" ***P4**.*

"I went for a lot of the workshops, you know, continuous assessment, all the online examination training. So those are, these are a lot of internal training that was offered for teaching and learning" ***P3**.*

"*I just knew that I needed those skills. If you talk about compulsory training that I think is as fundamental as that assessor's training that I did in my first two months, that one I would say is compulsory. I think that one should be compulsory"* ***P7**.*

Interesting to note that with such availability of training opportunities not everyone has time to attend, mainly because of the university calendar that does not have breathing space:

"*There's no break between the academic years, and there's no proper holiday, other than December, where, you know, the University closes for the two weeks and stuff like that. So unlike contact universities, where, you know, okay, I've got two weeks in July, I can sign up for courses in July and stuff like that. Because at this university, your academic year flows one into the other, it's very, very difficult to find time to attend a lot of the training*" ***P10**.*

According to the participants, these many training programmes offered seem be irrelevant to some participants. Those who had teaching experiences like **Participant 5** and **Participant 3** were of the view that it was a waste of time attending seminars on teaching:

"*I came from a teaching background. So, I didn't really need anybody to help train me in how to teach… I did do it on the assessor course that was run a few years, several years ago. But again, having come from an education background, and it wasn't that useful"* ***P5****.*

"I didn't attend external training on teaching" ***P3****.*

Other participants were of the view that internal training is extremely basic. Even though the topics are usually great, it seems the programmes are not adequately planned and the worst scenario was that the presenters were not usually well versed with the content they presented, which was a huge disappointment to most academics. The academics expected the presenters to be adept to instil some confidence.

"I must confess that I find some of the in-house training that this university offers, while the topics are very, very good. And some of the presenters have terrible and how they recruit the presenters" ***P10****.*

"I *refuse. If it does not apply to me, or if I feel I have more experience than the people presenting so they know the few"* ***P6****.*

"*They are an internal sort of training and internal workshops held by the HRD, which is the Human Resources Development Division. The problem is, a lot of them are very basic"* ***P2****.*

"I'm not learning anything. So, and that is especially true for the training around online teaching, that this university offers. It's truly awful. There was one module that I did. And the only thing that I could tell you about that module, and that I would advise people to do the module is because it's a very good example of how not to teach online, it was awful. You know, I had to beg these people to say, please send me the assignment. The due date was coming even closer, and I was panicking. I started to have to email the online manager to say, you know, the deadline is coming. I don't even have the task. I'm really stressed. I mean, it was terrible. And then I can get my marks back. And then it was, you know, it was confusion. Yes, it was, it was awful. So, the university's department that does the training on that, really, really are an embarrassment as far as I know. And if they treated students the way they treated us there would be an outcry" ***P10****.*

Could it be that the training programmes are not what Armstrong & Taylor (2020) call systematic training? They described systematic training as systematic in the sense that it is specifically designed, created, and put into action to suit the identified needs. It is delivered by experts in providing training, and the results of that training are thoroughly assessed.

During 2019, the entire world was faced with an unprecedented and devastating virus that threatened to wipe off the earth of many human beings. This compelled organisations to do things differently, and where possible, switch to virtual systems. The HEI also had to do things differently, one of which was the online exams for which examiners had to be trained. This resulted in so much frustration and confusion, as stated below:

"*a lot of stuff that has been done by the exams department, now the lecturer, which was never the case, they had to handle all the exam, you just got your scripts, your marking, etc. Now, suddenly, you have got to manage the exam process as well. And we were not trained for that. there was not enough. They did get some training, but it was not sufficient. So, people made mistake"* ***P6****.*

There seems to have been improvement in training programmes over the years. In that regard, **P1** is passionate about training that she encourages everyone joining their department to train, publish and she even mentors some. Mentoring is important as it provides direction, practical counsel, and ongoing support to assist people assigned to them in learning and growing (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Following is how **P1** describes her efforts:

"*Now, you see, it's different now. And it's not just in my department. I mean, when, when young people come to the University now in my entire college, actually, department, I immediately on them, you know, saying, Okay, how you are doing it, where's your research, because they are more responsible for reporting on research now. But also, now, there's, there are inductions for new staff members, and there's training and everybody's trained much more effectively. One part of the training is talking about research, training and research, mentoring and encouraging you to publish"* ***P1****.*

There is a need that the institution invests in training academics and especially managers. Nankervis et al. (2020) emphasise the importance when they mentioned that those in positions of responsibility and those in charge of directing the performance of others must ensure they have the necessary knowledge, expertise, and capabilities to do so in today's highly competitive global economy. They further reported that there is a tendency for leaders to relax and think they do not need any form of training. **P2** also expressed his frustration as he did not receive any form of training to help him carry out his leadership duties:

"The managers should be given proper training and because these things change every year, proper training on that. I mean, I was just appointed, and it was just like, get on with your job. You know, here's your budget for the year...get on with it there was very little training as to how to do these things, you know which systems to use, then you just almost work it out as you go along" ***P2**.*

4.3.2.2 The sub-theme: Research and development

Research is one of the core businesses of academics at HEIs. Although it is expected of academics to always engage in research, some academics need an environment that fosters research culture; some even need a carrot to be dragged in front of them to engage in some form of research. The participants echoed sentiment of how noble it is for the institution to have the research incentives. The incentives are in the form of payment that academics receive for each paper published.

The payment even doubles if the paper is published in an accredited journal. Furthermore, the academic acquires points that will contribute towards with promotion, such as number of students graduated successfully and convincingly. Even better, the departments have research funds that can also be used to pay any fees related to paper publishing. If the departmental funds are not adequate there are other external funds like National Research Foundation (NRF) that the academics can access. Below are the excerpts from the participants experience:

"You actually get double the incentive R20,000.00 up to R40,000.00 if you publish in an ISI journal, which is the most prestigious journals" ***P1**.*

"*I do apply for external funding as well*" ***P11**.*

"*And we apply for NRF, FWC, KIC, so we had we applied for quite a lot of funding, so we got... you know, when you apply for funding, they turned down five and then you get one, but you get it's still good enough*" ***P3**.*

"*So, in a certain way, that means you kind of publish if you publish in journals, which are not accredited. those points don't count for promotion"* ***P4**.*

According to participants, the HEI has a research culture that is conducive for any academic to be involved in. Besides being supported through payment of research paper, registration related fees, being paid for each paper published, the participants are always encouraged to publish in accredited journals and academics have an option of taking 9 months development leave after every 6 years. This leave is meant to give the academic time to focus on research. This might be a good opportunity for participants like **P7** and **P11** who pointed out that there is not enough time to engage in research activities as they are always swamped by other duties:

"Obviously, people are encouraged to write as many academic papers as possible. But most of us are so overwhelmed with marking, that it's very, very difficult. And so, we have an enormous number of students, we have an enormous amount of marking, we have very tight deadlines, to get the marking done. So sometimes we have assignment one still coming in when assignment two is due. So, the teaching load and the management of the teaching load is not conducive to research" ***P11****.*

"We did an accreditation visit last year from a professional body. And they say, they advised they said that we are the only university where the lecturers don't have a research day. So, the other universities apparently then it will be like Friday's or your research day. So, the students know they can't contact you. They can't focus on it and, you know, undisturbed, they don't have to answer student queries, because everyone knows it's a research day. I recommend that we get that" ***P7****.*

The'Covid-19 global pandemic had an impact on the research outputs as well. The university encourages the publishing of papers in accredited journals. Seemingly, conference proceedings are not considered as publishing, but one becomes incentivised for the conference proceedings. This blanket approach to research output made some participants feel treated unfairly especially for those in sciences like computer science where developments are constantly changing and it is not possible to publish several journals per year, but one can prepare several papers for different conferences in one year. In that regard they might avoid the situation of having outdated articles or papers. Following are the statements by the participants:

"It is also very difficult because in, in our field for most of the new research, which was presented at conferences, it just changes so quickly in our fields that you cannot wait for a journal article, or, by the time that is published, it is old. So, we were used to presenting at conferences, now suddenly, that has changed in our college specifically, that prefer that we only do journal. And that is putting quite a lot of stress on the researchers, because it's difficult, and we do not have that many highly rated journal articles, like for instance, in the pure sciences, in computer science, there aren't that many. So, we struggle to find theory or to be accepted in this very high end this kind of journal. Obviously, we must strive for that. We're getting there, but it's taking longer than we thought" ***P6****.*

P11 explained why the conference proceedings were not treated as other journal publications. She pointed out that it seems easier with conference publication as there is no strong peer review policy:

"*The problem with conference proceedings is that somehow, it seems almost easier to publish in conference proceedings. But conference proceedings, also, you'll get only half of, or the university gets half of the subsidy that a journal article will get. So, but for me, I mean, the main thing for me is, is a reputation that if I published in a journal that's a bit dodgy, or that it's, it's not as good a journal, or if it has a very loose peer review policy"* ***P11****.*

The expectations to publish a journal and the payment associated with it has their downside. **P2** said professors are expected to publish about 3 papers yearly. That can be burdensome, especially if they are to publish in journals that strive in high standards, yet the money associated with publishing can be alluring. On the other hand, one experiences a situation where the academics are now chasing after publishing as many papers as possible and pocketing as much money as they can. The easier route will be to publish in predatory journals. Quality is compromised for quantity:

"*So, professors I think, is, I think it's two or three research papers a year, you're expected to produce. The problem is this year is being scientists. The only way we produce a researcher is to work in the laboratory. But now the laboratory is being closed for months and months because obviously, we weren't even allowed to access the campus"* ***P2****.*

"*You start chasing the points, you start producing just in your research, just to get the paper. So, you're not going to do something that has value, or something that's going to take time and thought, because there isn't time to do that, you know, you just have to get the stuff out and you just do I"* ***P5****.*

4.3.2.3 The sub-theme: Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS)

As employees contribute to institutions mainly through their performance, institutions put in place a "*set of practices and activities for defining, monitoring, reviewing and developing employee performance*" known as IPMS (Nankervis et al., 2020, p. 295). The participating HEI uses the same system which is meant to define what is expected of the employees; assess performance; identify promotions potentials; identify those with exceptional talent and may be retained; and help develop career and succession plans (Nankervis et al., 2020).

The academics are assessed on the core areas of teaching, research, community, engagement and outreach. Previously, point system was allocated for each area and participants indicated that there was no balance in the way those points were allocated as there was too much bias on teaching at the cost of other areas. The rating scale ranged between 1 to 5. The improved IPMS, as P1 intimates that it is no longer a prepopulated template but rather a blank slate where academics decide what key performance areas to add and how much points to allocate to each:

"*there's a big change now that up to last year, there was a performance management system, which was pretty much like, you know, pre-populated template, which was very weak and very kind of strange, that it had four pieces in it, there was the performance management for teaching-learning. And then there was the research of academic citizenship and community engagement, right. Thirdly, there's Okay, there's community engagement, but those are less important" **P1**.*

"*You get the five awarded, you get a bonus" **P4**.*

Improvements on the system saw the tool responding to individual departmental needs and not a blanket approach as it was in the past. Some departments were expected to supervise honours students when their department did not even offer honours but diplomas. The system has three (3) sessions in the year. The first one is setting the goals. Secondly there is a midyear review and final review in November:

"*And then I'll be sending the documents and then we have the secretary send these meeting schedules a meeting with all employees and HOD and normally it is half an hour when you go and sit down and then discuss based of your whatever you document you submitted…and then is a mid-year review…and then you discuss how far you and then if you need to improve on any issues and something you know**" P9**.*

"*There are a few things that are, for instance, that was the decided-on department level, which does not apply to our specific programme, which is kind of unfair. So, for instance, I think it was like as a lecture you must supervise four honours students, and we don't have on this programme in our diploma*" ***P7**.*

Those who excel receive bonuses and points towards promotion. Those who score below the 'average' score are to sit with the managers, discuss the challenges and come up with an improvement plan. The participants expressed frustration as scoring can be extremely subjective. On the subjectivity of the system, **P2** questioned how an individual would reach a score of 3.8, not 3.9 or 4:

"*I'm sure you're aware, there's like a scoring system, which goes from zero to five. So, three, three, a score of three they consider as doing your job, you know, anything above that you are doing more than you're expected. And anything below three, you're not meeting the requirements. properly. It's very subjective. So, if I sat with you, and we went through your performance agreement and all your tasks, you might tell me how you think you deserve a 3.8 or four. But what it's extremely subjective in that what is a three or a three-point, what is a 3.5? or 3.6 or 3.7, whatever? What does that even mean? You know, what is the difference between 3.5 and 3.7? How do you measure that? Yes, that was my major issue*" ***P2.***

"*It is so subjective* {long breath in}*. It is so subjective* {pause} *…is difficult Really* {long sigh} *to say that it's a reflection of one's performance…As I'm saying, it's quite subjective. And it also depends on who is assessing you. It's not a clear process"* ***P4.***

"But, you know, he was sort of like, No, no, no, you must give me 3.7. And I'm just saying, No, no, no, but look, it's a 3.4. Because if, if you don't have precise definitions of what is a three, then when you feel like that, people feel like" ***P1.***

The IPMS system, besides its being subjective it also has other challenges. The participants expressed that it is up to the manager to decide on the score. If one is the favourite, one is awarded more points. **P10** outlined that because managers must sit with the academic and come up with an improvement plan, the managers fall prey to what is known as central tendency errors. Central tendency error is when the rater purposefully scores all performers in the middle of the range with a view to minimising confrontation, whether for personal or political reasons (Nankervis et al., 2020).

Managers are not willing to have extra work of preparing performance management improvement plan file so they would rather give safe scores. They also suffer from harshness error where an individual is rated lowly mainly because the rater hates the ratee:

"If a staff member got below three, then together with a line manager, you'd have to sit in, you'd have to develop an improvement plan" ***P2****.*

"I think the biggest problem with university's IPMS is that if a line manager wants to give a staff member, a poor grading, that line manager has an entire file together with evidence for why that staff member is underperforming. So, what happens is no line manager is going to give somebody a bad performance unless they were really catastrophically bad? Because do you really want to sit and try and put a whole file of evidence together? For somebody that's marginally bad? No, it's a huge amount of time for the line manager" ***P10****.*

Interesting to note as well is that participants indicated that managers are not competent in the use of IPMS and most of the time they seem to be doing it as one of the tick the box exercise:

"I *think it would be more useful if our managers knew what we were doing. But I don't think they do. …We had our meetings twice a year and our managers, and they are as pointless as anything they're not about building us up. They're about to let's get this exercise done because we must do it. So, we just allocate scores and on we go. So, it's not about the Particularly positive experience"* ***P5****.*

P3 was so adamant to the point of infuriation when she spoke about IPMS - that IPMS does not measure what is important. She said measuring the number of assignments given not the quality of the assignment does not help much:

"*And frankly, the IPMS is cannot possibly measure what is important. So, unfortunately, in the world we live in, everything that is important cannot necessarily be measured …I am irritated by the IPMS because it cannot, it cannot measure me helping a student that was on the verge of committing suicide… I decided that I'm not going to work for the IPMS so I don't care what they put in the I don't work for it, they can give me a two I don' t care. Because I work for what is it? I made up my mind about what is important"* ***P3****.*

Participants reported that IPMS was prone to abuse by those in power and it is biased towards research at the expense of teaching and other core business of the university:

"The IPMS process that everyone has. And it's, it's a checkbox, check box exercise, I do not believe we are all assessed in the same way. And I certainly do not believe we are evenly assessed across the university, never mind within the department, or the school. So, I certainly do not think we are fairly assessed. I do not think we are evenly assessed. And I dislike the idea that we are reduced to a score" ***P5****.*

"The IPMS, I think, is too heavily loaded towards teaching. Whereas they should be definitely. So, some staff members can get the IPMS loaded, almost like 80% teaching and stuff. And that should not be the case. Because if you're at a university, you should not be spending 80% of your time just on teaching it, you know, it's not a school is what I'm trying to say. So, I don't think anybody who's employed at an academic institution, whether it's this university or any other one, so any other one should be not publishing at all, they should be processes in place to assist them" ***P10****.*

"You need to be good at teaching in a distance environment. And then you also need to have participated in community engagement. And certainly, for at a professor level, you need to have shown leadership in all of these things. And then also academic citizenship, which is very important as well, which is all the things that you do for the good of your university and your country. And internationally as well, from the point of view of your academia, so when you review journal articles, if you are if you participate in any committees, and all that sort of thing. That's all part of community engagement, academic citizenship equity. So, you need to have done all of these things and balanced it out" ***P11****.*

"The same is with if we're going to be judged on our tuition work, how do you judge tuition at this university to be judged on pass rates. And that's a terrible way of doing it. Because we all we talk about, oh, we must have this quality teaching" ***P5****.*

P11 suggested that the evaluation may be improved, besides equipping managers, if peers are also allowed to evaluate each other. This method is called peer review:

"*We neglect that which won't get us performance points. And we become points based. And I think it's a very bad thing. I also think it is outdated… Companies have long since dropped the whole performance management thing with scores. I don't think it achieves what it's meant to achieve"* ***P11****.*

There is a need to train managers and supervisors in how to assess sub-themes. This will help in reducing tensions and frustrations that may arise from performance reviews sessions. It is even better to involve managers and employees in designing performance systems as this develops a feeling of ownership among the workers (Nankervis et al., 2020)

4.3.2.4 The sub-theme 2.4. Career progression and promotional opportunities

Promotion criteria and guidelines at the HEI, according to participants are clear and transparent. The opportunities to be promoted are open to every academic. It is up to the individuals to work hard to qualify for the promotion, "*if you do X, you know from the beginning that if I do X, Y, Z, I am going to be promoted*" **P1**. Lecturers are promoted to senior lecturer, associate professor and a full professor. The clarity of the criteria makes it easier for academics to know what to exactly focus on in order to be promoted. One does not have to wait for an opening or for someone to die to be promoted. The academics apply for promotion - ad hominem promotions - and if all requirements are met, they are promoted. There seems to be flexibility on the policies as provisions are made for different colleges:

"…very clear guidelines on how to apply, when, what is the criteria for four different positions. So, everything is very clear" ***P9****.*

"You know, it's pretty clear in the academic departments if you obtain certain measures, and if you obtain your certain number of publications and whatever, you can apply for promotion" ***P2****.*

"We have these ad hominem promotions, right, where it used to be every year, but I think they skipped last year, that people can apply to be promoted. Because in many other universities, it's you know, dead man's boots, you can only be promoted to a professor when one of your professors die or move or exits or whatever. Now, so this university is really wonderful in that respect, and its ad hominem. So, it's up to you, when you get promoted, you don't have to wait even for your department to have the staff points" ***P1****.*

"Far better at other universities. This university is really good in that respect. Because again, the promotion guidelines are pretty clear. In terms of how units you need, etc.

And you can focus on that. And it's units, which I think is a good thing. It's not just the number of publications, it's how many units, and you know how those units work" ***P10**.*

"It has different promotion criteria to other departments, such as, but such as maths for example, or English. So, I could get to senior lecturer without having a PhD. And although I can be registered for one, so in that way, it counts in my favour, yet there are...Some people were senior lecturers who applied for Associate Professor posts. And they were turned down purely on the fact that they don't have the right outputs" ***P5**.*

P10 had concerns with how easy it is to move from junior to senior lecturer as one only needs a PhD. She commented that being a senior lecturer, who is going to supervise Master's students, it is important that criteria is somewhat tightened to reduce the number of lecturers who struggle to supervise students, mainly because of lack of know how.

"*One is it's too easy to get promoted from a lecturer to a senior lecturer at this university. Okay, the publication criteria from being promoted from a lecturer to a senior lecturer, is almost non-existent, as long as you have a PhD, they're going to promote you to a senior lecturer. That is not okay. Because really a senior lecturer means senior, and it can't just be a PhD, there must be other stuff. But then once you're a senior lecturer, it's much more difficult to get promoted to associate professor. So, the leap from lecturer to the senior lecturer is, is too short, you know, it's not a big enough leap. Whereas the leap from a senior lecturer and associate professor is much more difficult"* ***P10**.*

"The more senior you are as an academic, the better you should, as a supervisor, of course, it's not. But you know, our, our master students, our PhD students, we should really be giving them the best possible supervision with the best possible supervisors. And because we are allowing people to get promoted to senior lecturer very easily and to full professor very easily. How good are they at really supervising M&D students?" ***P10**.*

The criteria for promotion seem to favour research more than teaching, citizenship and other core university businesses. Those who focus too much on teaching and do not engage in research are not promoted. This is how **P1** puts it:

"And, you know, so that is supposed to be what you are doing. And the way you do it is you get very little benefits from doing yours. You're teaching Well, yes, sometimes, but not really. But the only way you can progress is by doing research and publishing articles" ***P1**.*

"So, in terms of promotional criteria, you have to have certain qualifications, you have to have so many papers published, you have to have this research, and they don't care about the teaching, which should be the single most important thing" ***P6**.*

"If someone has lots of experience, let's say happen, for instance, they've mainly focused on tuition, then they won't be promoted" ***P7****.*

There seem to be inconsistence in the application of the promotion policy. Some academics – to have the required number of publications, they just have their names added by friends as co-supervisors, which **P10** quizzed. She thought that one must be the main supervisor to meet the requirement that one needs to have supervised two PhD students to completion. Furthermore, concerns were raised about the way transformation is addressed as it is not accommodating whites and excludes foreigners.

These inconsistencies result in the promotion of people who are not worth the title. **Participant 3** remarked that one must deserve the title and have the confidence and knowledge expected of people with such titles. She further bemoaned the embarrassment that the-no-so-deserving-the-title brings about in representing the institution in a bad light. Below are the excerpts from the participants' experiences detailing the inconsistencies and the concerns:

"We do have different criteria now, for, you know, for the BEE top, it's for the transformational criteria. So now a colleague who hasn't finished their PhD, but if they are African, then they may be promoted… to simply promote someone but they haven't achieved what they're supposed to that I don't think that helps you to transform the university. So, we do have that different criterion, which I think leaves a bitter taste, in every white lecturer's mouth" ***P7****.*

"And then you promote from lecture to senior lecturer. So, it seems like there is no consistency in the way stuff is done. With the ad hominem promotions, they would say, and this doesn't apply to me, it applies to a colleague who's in a situation where you either have a certain number of publications or improvement in your NRF rating. And you got the improvement in his NRF rating. But he was turned down because he didn't have the right number of outputs. And so, these, it's inconsistent the policies is one thing. And the way it's applied is different" ***P5****.*

"And we all feel that because that is the university's name is depending on that and we have people going around you know, if you go to a conference, Professor so and so and then you know, there is a certain expectancy from a professor" ***P6****.*
"I don't think that fills the gap, it just gives someone now a title, which doesn't have the qualifications, or the experience, to hold that quality or to hold that title because if you now compare that lecturer, if they're now professor, but they don't have the number of publications that they're supposed to, and you compare that Professor now as a professor from Canada, they going to be below standard. So that brings the whole university down because now they will question everyone's title" ***P7****.*

4.3.2.5 The sub-theme: Remuneration

Remuneration is usually a source of conflict between the employees and their employers. The employees are not always content with their remuneration, which is contrary to what the participants expressed. The majority of participants (n=10, 91%), expressed contentment with their remuneration and thought that it is fair:

*“I think the salaries are quite good” **P1**.*

*“I'm satisfied. I think the salary I'm getting is fair, I think the benefits that the university give us, are fair, you know, obviously, in the package is your medical aid, Well, my wife and son on that medical aid. It's obviously cost the company but still, we get a contribution to pension fund the university pension fund, that as I say, I'm satisfied with my salary. I think the leave that university gives is extremely generous” **P2**.*

*“The salary is sufficient … that is more than enough, because it's not something that I value much” **P3**.*

*“Now I'm personally happy as an associate professor I'm happy You know what, what you earn in the industry I don't think it will be so different from what I am earning” **P4**.*

*“I think I'm fairly compensated I must be quite honest” **P5**.*

*“I think this university is actually, in that regard an excellent employer. Yeah. No, I think we cannot complain about the benefits and opportunities” **P7**.*

*“I think we cannot complain about the benefits and opportunities” **P6.***

*“University pays more than any other university in South Africa. Why should we compare? Why should we be complaining?” **P8.***

*“I think I think the university has very good remuneration. Particularly junior staff. So, I think junior staff, quite frankly, at this university are overpaid. Okay, so our junior staff, Junior lecturers, and lecturers are overpaid compared to other universities” **P10**.*

*“For remuneration is fair. I think it's on par with other universities. It used, it used to be more they used to pay more than other universities. And now I think that they are almost on par with other universities” **P11**.*

The academics are rewarded for the papers they publish. For a paper one gets about R20, 000.00, and it doubles if the paper was published in prestigious journals:

*“Actually, get double the incentive R20,000.00 up to R40,000.00 if you publish in an ISI journal, which is the most prestigious journals” **P1**.*

*It seems one can make a lot of money by merely publishing as much as one can. This is how **P8** narrated how some academics make millions through publishing papers:*

*"There were two academics last year, between the two of them, they earned 1.9 million Rand. Just on publication subsidies, 1.9 million Rand that's two people one person in the million, and the other person R900,000.00. That's basically more, that's more than I earn in a year. They ended with publication subsidies" **P8**.*

Remunerations become elevated for those academics who manage to supervise master's and PhD students to completion:

"*Good because this compensation you get numerous cash in your pocket. So, if you're supervising the students and masters and doctoral degree at the completion you getting your whatever I think R25,000.00 and get for a master's degree" **P9**.*

There is, however, overlapping of roles, for which Participant 6 felt that they needed to be compensated. It seems some academics who are not professors have workload as that of full professors but because they do not have professor qualifications, they are not compensated:

*"But we kept on doing that work, although we do not have a PhD or we are not professors, we expect you to do the work of a full professor, although we are not. And that is a bit of a problem. Because how do you now compensate somebody for that? You cannot. Because on your KPA, you still just lay on it on a senior lecturer or the lecturer's level, and there is no space in there for doing that kind of work. You are not even supposed to be on that level" **P6.***

The HEI endeavours to look after its employees, in this case, academics, by providing different forms of training and development programmes, remunerating them handsomely and providing career progression opportunities. However, there should be a room for improvement as intimated by participants who voiced numerous concerns about the way how these benefits are implemented.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Lived experiences

The lived experiences of participants came to the fore in the following sub-themes.

4.3.3.1. Sub-theme: Adjusting to open distance learning

There seem to be a need to develop a system to induct new academic employees in order to adjust to the ODL environment. Some employees came from face-to-face universities with an expectation that adjusting to open distance learning may form part of the induction process. Open distance learning seems to be different to face to face in teaching activities and the number of students one is assigned to. This is how **P6** and **P1** described their adjustment experience:

“Because I remember one week later, I was told by one of the secretaries saying that Oh, have you started working on your tutorial letter 101. And I'm just like, what? Because, you know, I didn't know what they were talking about. So, the induction at the time was pretty much non-existent…I had to go from person to person to ask, so what is the tutorial letter 101“P1.

*“They just assumed, you know, this, we know what we were doing. Which was not always the case” **P6**.*

4.3.3.2. The Sub-theme: Feelings

What is it like to be an academic at this HEI? The participants’ experiences tell it all. Besides the stress from their jobs, some experienced discrimination because they are non-South Africans, some must deal with racism every day. A look into participants’ choice of expressions and words, and even nonverbal expression reveals a plethora of feelings. They were concerned, angry, stressed, hopeless, anxious, frustrated, guilty, overwhelmed and some were of the view that they were unappreciated and considered unpatriotic.

4.3.3.2.1 Frustration

Recruitment and selection process brought about frustration. The portal where prospective employees apply seems to be unfriendly and very long. Once one applies there is usually no communication from the HEI, the same thing happens even after a job offer. It seems the participants waited for so long that some even forgot about the application. Further frustration is from the ICT department which seem not being able to deal with computer issues auspiciously. Even the workload, which seems to be too much aggravates the frustration of the academics.

”*I mean, the head of the department never phoned me, never contacted, never emailed me. Eventually, I phoned up and I said, I want to come, you know, and visit you and they were like, kind of, why do you want to do that? I'm gonna knock Well, I'm about to come and start working for you, you know?”. **P10**.*

*“I think they sometimes there is a bit of like, for instance with ICT department, So, you have to struggle with an old laptop and it doesn't get replaced. And your laptop crashes and then it doesn't want to log in and. so making sure that lecturers actually have the equipment to do their job properly” **P7**.*

“Once again, about three or four months later, I haven't heard anything. This was another three of four months… by then I assumed, obviously, once again, that kind of

a, you know, hired someone else. An email popped into my email again, once more, and I had an offer of employment. So, you'll be honest, it wasn't a very smooth process, it was very slow … recruitment process was terrible. Very, very slow" ***P2**.*

4.3.3.2.2 Doubt

The manner of the senior management's organisational conduct renders academics uncertain of the correctness of their decision to be employed at the particular institution and wonder about the end.

"I don't doubt that. That is exactly the reasons academic staff have become money generators for the university. And that is all that they are interested in" ***P5**.*

4.3.3.2.3 Hopelessness

"I think my chances of promotion are very slim" ***P5**.*

"I don't see myself remember that I'm what they call for a foreign national although citizen. I really don't I'm not looked at as this as a citizen. So, when it comes to issues of management … I don't stand higher... I don't stand a good chance. So, I really don't have much hope there" ***P4**.*

A feeling of hopelessness in being promoted to a professorship was expressed by P5. His chances are slim because of his age. Unlike **P4**, **P5'**s hopelessness stems from him not being viewed as a South African. So, he has no chance in a management position. This feeling was punctuated by long sighs and long pauses in his narration.

4.3.3.2.4 Stress

A lot of stress for the participants came from trying to juggle workload from inside and outside work. Managing time so there is adequate for student needs, marking, research, attending meetings and personal life.

"I think the academic stuff has a lot of pressure a lot of the time, and it can be quite stressful" ***P2**.*

4.3.3.2.5 Unpatriotic

No one desires to be associated with an organisation that fails to perform and achieve its organisational goals accordingly. This is amplified in the extract below.

"*I'm embarrassed to say I work for this university. And I made a mistake once we're going to go and donate blood wearing a university t-shirt, a golf shirt. And the sisters at this thing had a go at about how they can't get this university to respond to emails and I was embarrassed, and I thought I'd never again. Am I really not wearing a university cap in a place like that? I feel the university has lost its way"* ***P5**.*

4.3.3.2.6 Overwhelmed

There seem to be an expectation when new academic staff are employed. One of the raised expectations is that newly employed academics have experience in teaching methods in ODL, developing tutorial letters and study guides. These cause frustrations when certain goals are not delivered. Some participants indicated that there is also a lack of support from administrative staff members in guiding them on how to go about addressing such. This adjustment to a new job if there is no proper intentional on boarding can be overwhelming. Participants were also overwhelmed by the introduction of online exams. Students were not prepared for the new way of doing things neither the academic staff. The training the academic staff received on online exam was not adequate. Changes in online exams and limited time for training compromise quality

"*And then exam online and everything is overwhelming at this point … So, this is giving us a big headache and yeah … this year is the first year when are we writing exams online. And then the biggest problem is the invigilation. Because now we are buying some system or software where the students are going to be invigilated, that thing is going to install on the laptop. And then they're going to record all the activities of the student for the specific exam. So now everyone is panicking because we never get a chance to test the system, and then no one knows how it's going to be. So, everyone is panicking, you say so... because they didn't acquire it in time, this invigilation system which we supposed to start the exam this week, but now we postpone another weekend, then the student they are so upset …and all this frustration is coming to us as a lecturer"* ***P6****.*

4.3.3.2.7 Unappreciated, not valued

Employees' decision to stay longer in any organisation is influenced by the extent to which they are made to feel as part of the very organisation. They require to be valued, feel like they are irreplaceable. Unfortunately, it seems that is not always the case with the participating HEI academics. The top management seems not to care.

"It sorts of struck me as being you know, we're replaceable, like a gum will get someone else, you know, if you don't like, if you're not doing your job, leave, we will get someone else to get someone else to replace" ***P5****.*

4.3.3.3. Sub-theme: Red tape

Every institution has rules. These rules are meant to serve as a guide of what is expected and bring about order. However, at times there is excessive adherence to the rules to a point that progress is hindered, and frustration thrives. Participants had a feel of red tape, especially when dealing with ICT, maintenance, procurement, and

HR departments. It seems too many procedures must be followed even for simple issues such as changing assignment marks.

The application process – from recruitment to selection- is a long, laborious exercise with not-so-friendly portals and not so eager to communicate with HR people, who struggle to acknowledge receipt of application. The participants had challenges with having their computers fixed timeously, which seems to be the case for the maintenance department. Apart from those, there seems to be red tape when it comes to the two campuses, one in Pretoria and The Florida one. The participants expressed unhappiness with the centralisation of all activities, systems and processes in Pretoria and for that, they spend a lot of that on the road between the two campuses.

"*You've got to really want to apply to this university. If, you know, because if your kind of just thinking oh, I'm going to apply for another job, and you see you need a job, the process of applying is, is so complicated that you will just give up, so you must really want to apply, then what I found also quite strange, is that you don't hear anything from the university four months. So, you kind of think, okay, is nothing happening. And I know that quite a few people have told me that they applied to this university and never heard anything. And so actually took other jobs at other institutions…Obviously, to accept the job, you must resign from the job that you're in, and you start telling people you are leaving. And then you know, at the same time, you're not hearing anything from the university and then you've got to kind of worry" **P10**.*

*"I think the whole recruitment process is very cumbersome and slow …I mean to take from putting in an application to being actually offered the job for nearly eight months. That to me is too long. I don't know if you agree or not, but seriously. I think our university is losing a lot of keys and probably quite good experience staff members that are coming for interviews because they're not prepared to wait that long" **P2**.*

*"We are thinking about now virtual labs, and we do get the support from the university it always gets stuck at finance, usually or procurement, but from the university side, they do give a little bit of support" **P6**.*
*"Now I must set up a memo, type the memo, send it to my COD to get it signed, get it back and then send that memo to assignments. I mean, that takes extra hours of work, because my COD doesn't send anything back. So, I need to resend" **P5**.*

*"I think that after the merger, there are two campuses became much more defined on their own. And that is often a problem because a lot of the functionality and functions the admin is only dealt with on the tutorial campus Muckleneuk, which makes it very difficult in on the Florida side, and they just assume that you can get to Pretoria or you know, you're there, but you're not and it sometimes feels that they do not recognise the science campus as a campus on its own and, and give the necessary administrative support on the Florida side" **P6**.*

4.3.3.4. Sub-theme: Staff satisfaction and engagement

Participants expressed how satisfied and engaged they are in their jobs. They conversed about their life experiences when it comes to career progression such as compensation; training and development; employee benefits and IPMS. The training and development initiatives are there to assist academic staff to improve in their careers. Most participants are happy with the development policies and initiatives in place.

"I think this university does more training than any other university and that's a really big thing that you need to be very, very proud of" ***P10****.*

Employee benefits extend to attending conferences and seminars. The university pays for all the costs attached to those. Other benefits include medical aids and research and development leave.

"And that's another benefit from the university is the fact that we do have, you know, when I was in private practice, we didn't have paid maternity leave. So that's definitely an incentive for me to stay with the university" ***P7****.*

"Some people qualify to come to work by shuttle, so that they go to the Pretoria, and they live in Pretoria. They go to the Pretoria campus, and then they come to the Florida campus via the shuttle" ***P10****.*

"The package is your medical aid. Well, my wife and son are on that medical aid. It's obviously cost the company but still, we get a contribution to pension fund the university pension fund… we get allocated while each staff member at the university gets allocated a training budget for each year, you can use that money to obtain the training that you would like to attend" ***P2****.*

There seem to be policies in place regarding performance management and when one is not performing according to standard, there are measures in place to try and assist them to perform accordingly. The improvement plan is one of the measures that the academic employees engage with their line manager. This did not come out strongly since most respondents are not on management positions but always strive to perform according to standards.

"*I think the biggest problem with this university's IPMS is that if a line manager wants to give a staff member, a poor grading, that line manager has an entire file together with evidence for why that staff member is underperforming. So, what actually happens is no line manager is going to give somebody a bad performance unless they were really catastrophically bad? Because do you really want to sit and try and put a whole file of evidence together? For somebody that's marginally bad? No, it's a huge amount of time for the line manager"* ***P10****.*

Compensation is related to salaries and other monetary incentives that academic employees receive at the university. Such compensation also extends to how the university rewards for extra work necessitated by the requirement for publishing. There seem to be a system of compensation at the university and most respondents, ten out of eleven, are happy with the policies in place.

"Good, because this compensation you get numerous cash in your pocket. So, if you're supervising the students and masters and doctoral degree at the completion you are getting your whatever I think 25,000 and get for a master's degree" ***P9****.*

Career progression seems to be clear in the policies in that for one to progress, there are steps listed that one needs to satisfy. For example, acquiring academic qualifications and publications. Some who were from other institutions indicated these measures were not in place in the institutions that they were in.

"So, it's totally up to you that, you know, you can progress, or you have you and you know what you have to do" ***P1****.*

"So, promotion is very clear at this university, every year there is a call for promotion and then they are also you know, forward together with that even which is coming What is the criteria, you know, and then if, you know, you meet the criteria, you can apply for promotion… if you don't meet the criteria, that it's clear, you know, is not a point for you" ***P9****.*

Many respondents indicated that they are expected to publish and excel in the research KPA however, there are no mentoring programmes in place in assisting them to excel in this area. There are measures in place to measure the performance where it is assessed during the year to support employees. Furthermore, there are incentives for those who perform above average, and the systems and tools have acceptable metrics in place to address this.

4.3.3.5. Sub-theme: Workload and environment

The administrative work is intertwined in the academic's daily workload and takes up time intended for teaching and learning as well as responding to students. Balancing workload as an academic staff seems to be huge. Participants need to balance the roles of teaching and learning which involves developing tutorial letters and study guides, marking assignments and exams, and responding to students to support them.

They also need to deal with research workload which involves supporting and promoting post graduate students as well as writing publications to be published accredited journals. Thirdly, they are to engage in community engagement which entails research projects aligned with the communities. In addition, they are to be involved in academic citizenship which involves committee meetings and attending to issues of professional affiliations. Covid-19 and lockdowns did not really affect most of the participants' workload since they are used to working away from the campuses unlike other institutions:

"A *whole lot of admin … to have an assignment mark changed, requires the signature of a whole bunch of people. And I mean, that's ridiculous. In the past, we could just email the person in an assignment to say, this person submitted an assignment, and he just update the mark, but I can't do it anymore… the impression I get is that the senior positions focused on the research and don't do any of the other jobs. And then those jobs get pushed down onto the lower ranks of them. So, they end up carrying a lot of the load. And I just also have issues with stuff like remarks of exams, because HR can't get the contracts sorted out, or even when there is a contract, finance simply doesn't pay the people"* ***P5****.*

"Marking ... the deadlines for marking are just crazy. The j router will crash, you'll get I mean, I got a virus on the J router that wasn't you know, it wasn't on my computer, I ended up with a virus worm on my computer from the J router. And the assignments got scrambled. So, then you've got to write back to students saying, sorry, we can't read your assignment, please send me an assignment. And then any assignment. It's a whole manual process to capture the marks. Oh, my god, no, seriously, seriously" ***P10****.*

"You know, some of these modules I have, I have close to 100 students, which doesn't sound a lot, but that when one assignment is, you know, 20-25 pages, it takes quite a bit of time to mark that assignment. Yes, we times that by 100, and then you finished one module for the first assignment, then you must do the second assignment" ***P2****.*

"I had so many meetings today. So, it started this morning. So, there was the student meeting, which started at nine. And then before that ended, it was a continuous assessment, and it was a bit of a fight. So, and before it ended, it was my collaboration meeting. And I couldn't postpone that because it's people from the UK it's people from China" ***P3****.*

"I start work at seven in the morning. And I only finished after seven o'clock at night, which would never happen if I was in my office. People phone me on my office line, which comes through to my cell phone. But they'll find me at six o'clock at night. If I was if we were in the office, and it was before Corona. I'm not in my office at six o'clock at night. So, you know, it's a very different working environment now that people see that they'll expect you to be online all the time" ***P11****.*

4.3.4 Theme 4: Staff Retention

Several reasons why the academic staff decided to stay at the HEI and not leave for other institutions came to the fore when the participants were asked what they would miss should they leave the HEI. The reasons range from the working environment; satisfaction that comes from teaching and supervising students; growth opportunities to freedom to manage one's time.

4.3.4.1. Sub-theme: Working environment.

An environment with "nice" colleagues and productive teamwork is what the participants described as what they would miss about the HEI. It appears that the participants, value the working relationship they have with each other, and that is worth staying for. The offices and labs which some have been part of making sure they are completed, makes the participant feel part of the institution and be valuable for such contributions.

"…really good colleagues were a really nice team. And my programme group, especially, we've got a really vibrant and diverse team. And we work really well. You know, people help each other it's really a team approach. So, I would miss that" ***P7****.*

"I really, I love my colleagues… I know. I know them and know their lives and I will miss them. I will miss my colleagues…" ***P3****.*

"Well, I think I'll miss definitely my colleagues in, my department… they are a bunch of nice of people. And what I've found is very refreshing is that everyone's willing to, to help, you know…" ***P2****.*

"And the people that I work with the staff that I work with are wonderful and kind and, and are, just for me a joy to work with, I'll miss them terribly" ***P11****.*

"My colleagues you know they are very nice and then our great labs are one of the best in the world we work so hard to get these labs up and running so now to leave... and we've got beautiful offices and then the colleagues you know, and I'm getting along with all my colleagues you know" ***P9****.*

4.3.4.2. Sub-theme: The joy that comes from teaching and supervising students

Four (n=4, 36%) participants expressed how much joy they derive from supervising and teaching students. They described the type of students at the HEI as somewhat different from other institutions. Most of the students are said to be mature and a joy to work with, they said. **P3** even mentioned how seriously she takes the lecturer – student relationship. She makes it a point that she does perform her roles and encourages the student to do likewise.

“*Oh, my word, the students, that's the first thing I will miss.… being at this university, almost allows me to have one on one relationship with every student because if they send me an email, it's one person and I answered that one person, I get to know them one by one” **P3**.*

*“And I'd miss the post-grad students. I enjoy reading the work and helping build them and helping them focus their work and decide where they're going and helping to get this stuff into shape” **P5**.*

*“Ohhh in my department, a lot of new initiatives are coming up. And I'm always like to be part of so I will surely miss that because you cannot really get that experience outside a university…I do love to work with the students” **P6**.*

*“: My post-grad students, because this university attracts, in my opinion, very, very interesting postgraduates. And what I mean by that is, people who are usually mature and know why they want the degree, they often have a topic that's close to their heart, are they passionate about it? The problem solvers. They stick to their guns; they don't give up easily. And I enjoy them. And I enjoy working with them” **P10**.*

4.3.4.3. Sub-theme: Growth opportunities

There is no doubt that the HEI offers a lot of opportunities for academics to develop themselves. Growth opportunities help employees to see their future in the organisation and make them secure and stable. All participants (n=11, 100%) conversed about the availability of opportunities where academics can upskill, like Academic Qualification Improvement Programme (AQIP). A plethora of workshops, and opportunities to attend conferences are available to all academics.

Furthermore, research opportunities are available to everyone and have incentives tied to the research outputs. Though one participant pointed out that it is nearly impossible, laborious, and nightmarish to access research funds to buy equipment, fund field trips, it appears that most participants would rather remain at the HEI because of these opportunities. In addition, the promotion criteria seem to be clear except in situations where the criteria are said to be lowered for Black Africans. With clear promotion criteria, availability of growth opportunities participants seems to be convinced of staying at the HEI regardless of other turnoffs like lack of support and competence from support staff.

*“The university has got a lot of opportunities I'll miss that too” **P11**.*

*“The university do provide staff with a lot of opportunities” **P8**.*

“We got such great support for research at the moment right here ...I think this university is the best place to be if you want to research because we have things like the Academic Qualification Improvement Programme” ***P1****.*

“The university has opportunities. So, for instance, whether it's your training opportunities… And then for me to be one that you know that I will be forever grateful towards this university, was the Academic Qualification Improvement Programme” ***P7****.*

Although the participants identified what they would miss should they leave the HEI, they were never going to miss the service rendered by support staff. It was such a recurring concern that **P10**) even used such strong words as ‘these people”, “very weak”, “no work ethics” to describe the situation. The support staff, who are meant to enable the academics to do their jobs, are said to be incompetent and have no desire to improve. It seems when the participants seek for help, they seldom receive it. It is a perennially frustrating and anger-provoking experience for participants whenever they need the services of support staff.

The frustration or is it anger also stems from the fact that the academics, most of whom have the highest qualifications in the country but do not receive the respect they think they deserve from the administration staff whom they think are less educated! What is worth noting is that the participants reported that this dysfunctionality runs through to the top management and administration. The top management is said to be indifferent to the needs of the employees. One of the senior leaders was even quoted as stating that he never went to the streets to drag anyone to come and work at participating HEI. Therefore, those who wished to leave should do so as no one was going to coax them to stay. Such insensitive to the value of employees is detrimental to retention. Employees need to feel valued and indispensable for them to positively contribute to the organisation.

“This support we get from the support departments… to get these things you need to go through procurement… everything is too slow. You know, it can take months and months just to get one order. So, the procurement system is frustrating… Often things in the building go wrong, the lights are not working and who knows the roofs fallen you can't get someone to come to assist us is very difficult… I probably should mention IT, too. If you ever have a problem with your computer, it's not, it's the most stressful thing because to try and get help from, from the IT department is very difficult. You know, they tell *you to log a task, which is fine, and you do that, but then you set for, for, I don't know, sometimes weeks not being able to, and I can't afford to be able to mark assignments or send emails or get internet or something for three weeks. I can't. So that's frustrating”* ***P2****.*

"…he didn't walk out onto the pavement and drag us into university, if you don't like it, you must leave. And that sort of struck me as being you know, we're replaceable, like gum will get someone else, you know, we have employees of the admin, and you don't like you're not doing your job, leave, or go get someone else to replace you" ***P5****.*

"the university is great at giving staff members money, for research and things, but you can't spend it. So, you know, you can get this all this money from the institution but trying to spend that money is a nightmare… the university doesn't enable you to facilitate the process to pay for research, field trips to pay for equipment, it's such an administrative burden to just spend your own money. …. just using that money to pay for research to pay for samples to be processed to buy equipment is such it's so laborious… And it takes weeks to get all these signatures" ***P8****.*

"And we have admin staff that are very weak. And I mean that they're, they're very weak, and no, academically, they're weak. They don't have much drive, you know, they don't have much of a work ethic. And many of them are not particularly well educated either. So, they really can't support you in the way that you need that support. And they often don't respond to emails often don't answer the phone. So, you as an academic, end up caring so much of the academic work admin load… As far as they're concerned admin people really don't give academics any respect" ***P10****.*

4.3.4.4 Sub-theme: Freedom to manage one's time

Participants seem to have flexibility in how they use their working hours. This flexibility gives them time to do other personal things and even better engage in research and publish many papers.

"I think, also maybe a bit more flexibility in terms of you know, giving lectures than other universities you know that they don't hold on to you as much but give you the freedom…" ***P7****.*

"I like the freedom … at this university, there are few little things you have to do on a daily or weekly basis. I mean, you can spend an entire day working on a paper or, or you can, if you are disciplined enough, you can write your study material or over the Christmas break, and take the rest of the year off… So, there is the freedom of being able to manage your time by yourself. But it comes with, of course, you can only benefit from it. If you're disciplined enough to do it…" ***P1****.*

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research findings accruing from interviews with the sampled 11 academic participants at the HEI. From the overall findings, 4 (four) major themes and seventeen attendant sub-themes that emerged. Amongst others, the findings noted that academics at the HEI are frustrated with the delays in recruiting and selecting potential employees. It was noted that the responsible departments appeared to experience communication breakdown in this regard.

These delays are also manifested through inadequate onboarding exercises intended for new employees. However, academics were found to be content with the variety of prevalent employee benefits. Several red tapes were identified as a hindrance to the growth of the organisation and individuals. Notwithstanding the prevalence of hindrance factors such as frustration, doubt, hopelessness, and stress, the participants derived solace from factors such as: satisfaction from supervising students; the mutual value and respect from colleagues; the availability of growth opportunities and the freedom to manage one's time.

The next and final chapter focuses on the conclusions drawn from this study, and recommendations; both of which emanate from the main findings that were presented and discussed in the current chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the study's findings and their description of the HEI academics' experiences regarding staff retention. The current chapter, on the other hand, presents the main study findings and study objectives in respect of existing literature that was reviewed on the subject matter of academic staff retention. The chapter further presents the study limitations and proposes appropriate recommendations and corresponding conclusions drawn from the findings that emerged in the study and presented in the preceding chapter comprehensively.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study purpose was to explore the lived work experiences of the HEI academics in order to obtain a better understanding of how this academic organisation can use HRM practice factors to retain its academics. The following objectives were articulated in order to realise the aim as appearing in Section 1.5:

Objective 1: To identify, explore and understand lived experiences of academics for factors that may constrain their retention.

Objective 2: To understand the meaning attributed to being an academic at the HEI.

Objective 3: To provide recommendations on HR practices regarding retention of academic staff.

Four main/ superordinate themes emerged in this, all of which addressed the objectives of the study. These themes relate to appointments, employee benefits, lived experiences and employee retention.

5.2.1 Appointments

Appointments processes marked the onset of participants' lived experiences at the HEI. Appointments include recruitment, selection and onboarding (induction). Institutions periodically appoint new academics to fill-in positions that have been left vacant or have been created to cater for a need that has developed or emerged. The recruitment, selection and onboarding processes are critical for any institution's success (Tsai, 2018) (see Section 2.3.3). The participants were recruited through internal and external sources. In doing so, the institution ensured that the advantages of both external and internal sources are exploited (Farndale et al., 2018) (see Section 2.3.3.2). The experiences of participants indicate that flaws exist in the way the institution conducts selection and how the induction programmes are being implemented. It would seem that the institution does not capitalise on what Bauer et al. (2020) (Section 2.4) and Nankervis et al. (2020) (Section 4.3.1) intimated about the benefits of planned onboarding. They pointed out that organisations lose out on rewards of well-planned onboarding programmes. These benefits include increased production, reduced anxiety on new employees and increase in employee morale. Anxiety and unhappiness were apparent amongst the participants as some had to roam around trying to locate places where they are expected to be. Even worse for those from face-to-face institutions, the institution did not have any programme meant to enable their transitioning into distance learning mode. This overwhelmed the participants and caused anxiety, which could have been managed timeously.

It is evident that the institution needs to improve communication with applicants, to whom an acknowledgement of receipt of application is encouraging. There is also the issue of not contacting successful applicants timeously. Even more critical, there is a need to improve the not so well-planned induction programmes, which are more generalistic than specific.

5.2.2 Employee Benefits

Academics at the HEI have varied and numerous benefits in the form of training and development, research opportunities, promotional opportunities and renumeration. Overall, the participants were found to be content with these benefits, save for some areas in which they commented that there was need for improvement.

Availability of training and development programmes to all academics is a welcome gesture to all participants. However, instead of being part of onboarding, it seems the training programmes were instituted rather late. Training, as part of onboarding, is beneficial to the new employees and the organisation. Employees are afforded a chance to understand the organisation. If poorly applied, training can lead to high turnover (Rothwell & Whiteford, 2020) (see Section 2.3.4). These findings are consistent with those of Musakuro and De Klerk (2021) (see Section 2.3.4), which concluded that delaying inductions denies institutions of the benefits of induction and allows staff to rapidly settle-in and adjust, allowing them to reach full operational capacity.

If communicated and accessible to everyone, training programmes could be very effective (Mamun & Hasan, 2017) (see Section 2.3.4). For training to be effective, needs assessment has to be conducted intentionally. The outcome of the needs assessment help identify specific training needs of employees, reducing the occurrence of general open training (Nankervis et al., 2020) (section 2.3.4). It appears that needs assessment is not conducted appropriately at the HEI, as expressed by some participants. They even bemoaned the lack of trained managers and competent trainers to conduct trainings. Yozi (2018) (Section 2.3.4) concurs with these findings, that training is not helpful unless targeted at specific needs.

The participants seem to treasure research opportunities which are available to them. They are satisfied with these opportunities, and it is one of the reasons that encourage them to continue working at the institution. These findings are also in consonance with previous research by Claudia (2018), who found that academics who have opportunities for research and training stay longer (see Section 2.3.4). The research opportunities are rendered even more enticing due to the pecuniary incentives linked to their number of publications. Additionally, the academics are rewarded with points that could be a boost to their individual chances of promotion.

Academics often look forward to employment benefits, such as promotion opportunities. At any rate, who aspires to stay stagnant in one position forever and not growing at all? The findings, as expressed by most of the participants, revealed that promotion criteria and guidelines are clear. This coheres with the findings by Bibi et al. (2017); Chukwu (2019) (see Section 2.3.5), who found out that clear and well communicated promotion criteria contribute to the satisfaction of employees. The absence of clear and proper promotional opportunities could further contribute to academics leaving the institution (Busari et al., 2017; Claudia, 2018) (see Section 2.3.5). The academics tend to develop feelings of loyalty and stay longer in an organisation where there are clear and proper promotional opportunities (Bibi et al., 2017; Fihla & Chinyamurindi, 2018) (see Section 2.3.5). However, some participants were of the view that there are inconsistencies in the manner transformation is addressed. It appears that Whites and expatriates are not accommodated in a variety of positions, giving way to promotion of undeserving black South Africans. The unanimous view was that such actions may even bring the institution’s name into disrepute because those promoted are not even conversant with the roles and responsibilities attendant to the professorship; neither are they comparable to professors in other institutions.

The academics at the HEI are remunerated very well. The participants expressed their contentment with renumeration as it is comparable with other institutions’, if not better.

This contentment was also identified by researchers such as Musakuro and De Klerk (2021) (see Section 2.3.6). One of the compensation objectives is to retain talented employees (see Section 2.3.6). There is, however, conflicting findings from literature concerning the impact of compensation on retention of academics. For instance, Samuel and Chipunza (2013) (see Section 2.3.6) reported that compensation and benefits do not affect the decision to stay in an organisation, which is contrary to the proposition by Bibi et al. (2017), Musakuro and De Klerk (2021) and Rathakrishnan et al. (2016) (see Section 2.3.6) reported; all of whom reported that compensation has a positive effect on the retention of academic staff.

For the employees to receive all the above benefits, the HEI uses the Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS) to define, monitor review and develop employee performance. The participants were not particularly content with the system, despite that it has been slightly improved. They opined that the system put emphasis on rating quantity rather than on quality, and is biased towards teaching - neglecting other core focus areas such as community engagement. Govender and Bussin (2020) (see Section 2.3.9) concur with the study findings on subjectivity and inconsistencies of the system. As expressed by participants and supported by Musakuro and De Klerk (2021) (see Section 2.3.9), part of the reason for the IPMS's afore-cited deficiency is attributable to the lack of trained and motivated line managers. These line managers regard the process as burdensome, and renders them unable to evaluate objectively since they have no skills to perform review interviews (Nankervis et al., 2020) (see Section 2.3.9). The lack of uniformity (Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021) is induced by the fact that line manager also use performance as a retributive tool against others (Govender & Bussin, 2020) (see Section 2.3.9).

5.2.3 Lived Experiences

Different kinds of feelings and viewpoints emerged as participants provided insights concerning their lives and experiences as HEI academics. These lived experiences developed as they adjusted to developments such as open distance learning and balancing their workload and manoeuvred through their daily work activities. However, anxiety and frustration resulted from the inadequate onboarding exercises and the face-to-face institution employee's expectations that that they will be inducted into the open distance teaching mode. This added to the already existing frustration experienced during the recruitment and selection processes. Nonetheless, these overwhelming feelings of hopelessness, doubt, stress, and being unappreciated (see Section 4.3.3.2) did not in any way attenuate the satisfaction level which the participants derived from their work. In his research, Korantwi-Barimah (2017) (see Section 2.3.8) concluded that academics were generally committed, loyal, engaged and eager to remain at the institution of their employment because of the meaningfulness they derived from their work.

At times, the participants could have been subjected to excessive adherence to the rules to a point that progress is affected. However, they are imbued with the desire to continue working. They may be unhappy with the way centralisation of processes and systems in Pretoria, such that they spend more of their time on the road between the two campuses, but that seems to be part of their lived experience to which they are very used. Notwithstanding such impediments, the participants expressed how satisfied and engaged they are in their job. They are happy with training and development; career progression policies and initiatives; and even content with compensation packages. Though not so easy, academics strive to have a balance in juggling administrative work entangled with daily workload of teaching and learning as well as responding to students' concerns. They further need to research, publish and even engage in academic citizenship. Performing these tasks is not made easier by leaders who seem not to care. The participants expressed that the leaders often do not seem to value them as they should. The success of organisations and their retention of employees is also incumbent on how leaders treat the employees. Valued and respected employees were likely to reciprocate such respect by staying longer at their respective institutions (Covella et al., 2017; Maaitah, 2018; Wakabi, 2016) (see Section 2.3.8).

5.2.4 Employee Retention

The working environment, growth, working hours flexibility, joy from teaching and supervising students are the major reasons for most participants who are still working at the HEI. The value that the participants place on their working relations and the productivity that results from that teamwork is supported by the conclusions reached by Korantwi-Barimah (2017) (see Section 2.3.10) in his research on collegiality and retention of academics. The participants in the current study seem to respect their work-related interpersonal relationships, which is sufficient motivation to stay on their job. The offices and laboratories, which some have helped to construct, make participants feel that they are a part of the university and are valued for their contributions. The findings by Korantwi-Barimah (2017) (see Section 2.3.10) confirm that growth opportunities in the form of all training and promotional opportunities that the institution offers, constitutes one of the leading retention factors for academics.

The HEI has numerous opportunities for academics to advance their careers. Such opportunities for advancement enable employees to visualise their future in the organisation. All academics have access to a plethora of workshops and conference opportunities. Furthermore, research opportunities are open to all, and encompass incentives related to research outcomes. One of the participants stated that accessing research grants to buy equipment and pay field trips is practically impossible, difficult, and nightmarish. Notwithstanding, it appears that most participants would prefer to remain at the HEI because of the available job prospects.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

The study findings revealed that being an academic at an institution of higher learning has both its challenges and benefits. If not handled circumspectly, the challenges may lead to academic staff retention. The findings further established that academics’ lived experiences were characterised by red tape; heavy workload; recruitment and selection processes in shambles; and adjusting to open distance learning. The academics also had to cope with numerous feelings, such as frustration, doubt, hopelessness, stress, unpatriotic, overwhelmed, unappreciated. Additionally, the findings reveal also that the academics choose not to leave if there is mutual value and respect from colleagues; comparable compensation and benefits; the availability of growth opportunities and the freedom to manage one’s time. These critical findings could be of use to the HEI human resource management and administrative leadership in particular and generally, to other institutions of higher learning that aspire to improve their employee retention strategies. Future studies could use these results as a touchstone.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several potential limitations were identified as indicated below:

- A qualitative method was used, and different results may be attained should quantitative methods be employed. Due to the sample size of eleven (11), which is a reasonable number for the IPA adopted in this type of study, the results may not be generalisable to all academics. In addition, only interviews were used for the study, implying that the information gained was solely relied on the participants' subjective opinions.
- The lived experiences and perceptions of academics at the study sites may be different from those in other HEIs in the context of academic retention and HR best practices.

- The selected campus only houses Science and Engineering staff. Thus, they may be biased against individuals in these fields. For that reason, the findings cannot be generalised to all South African universities as they may not be facing similar challenges.
- The present study offers significant insights; nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise its inherent limitations. This research concentrates exclusively on a particular educational institution, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. To enhance the external validity of the study, future investigations should strive to encompass broader samples drawn from multiple institutions. Additionally, since the research is solely focused on academics, the inclusion of other pertinent stakeholders such as administrative staff and students in future studies would facilitate a more holistic exploration of the subject matter, thereby providing a broader perspective.
- During the individual interviews' discussions, the participants' experiences and emotions were evoked by some of the researcher's questions.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section focuses on recommendations that emerged from both the pertinent research findings and literature review.

5.5.1 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection should not take forever, leaving applicants uncertain of the fate of their applications and interviews. Accordingly, the HEI needs to review the whole process of recruitment and selection. For an applicant to wait for months for the outcome of the interviews does not even give the institution a reputable name as a prospective workplace. It causes unnecessary frustration for an applicant to be offered a position but thereafter experience long periods of silence from the institution. Applicants whose applications have been accepted need to plan accordingly, such as resigning timeously at their current positions elsewhere. Therefore, the lack of communication with applicants needs to be improved.

5.5.2 Deliberate and Structured Onboarding Programmes

Onboarding exercises are critical for institutions because, simply employing the best candidates is not adequate. Newly employed personnel are to be welcomed and made to feel as part of the institution from the very initial stages of their employment. They also need to be inducted into the culture of the institution. In this regard, the HEI needs to expend considerable improvement efforts. The existing induction programmes seem inadequate. Furthermore, there is a need for structured deliberate induction programmes that will help ease employees’ entry into the HEI organisational system and culture. For academics who will be deployed in campuses other than the main campus, it would be helpful for their induction to take place at the very campuses of their deployment; instead of being centralised at the main campus. Moreover, the programmes should not premise on the assumption that all recruited academics are adequately conversant with teaching in the open distance mode merely on account of possessing postgraduate qualifications. Therefore, the onboarding programmes need to specifically address all those areas that are unique to open distance learning.

5.5.3 Relevant Training Programmes

From the viewpoint of the researcher, it is rather astounding that the participating HEI has so many training programmes and workshops. However, there is a compelling need to match quantity with quality, because these many workshops and training programmes that may not be necessarily addressing the needs of the trainees could ultimately translate into wasteful expenditure and valuable time and other pertinent resources. It becomes even worse in the event of trainees losing confidence in the trainers’ competence and capabilities. Another critical aspect of training relates to the mentoring of younger and newer academics, which seems weak in comparison with other reputable institutions.

5.5.4 Motivate Support Staff

Every employee of an institution has apart to play for the success of their organisation. Any weakness in any part or level renders the whole organisational superstructure ineffective. The support staff at the HEI seems to be lacking in performing their duties, which causes a lot of frustration, anger and even delays in the execution of teaching as the foundational mandate of the university. This is exacerbated by the university’s red tapes.

Given the above, it is recommended that the university should continuously train the support staff and motivate them to enjoy their work environment. Therefore, academics should not be placed in a situation where the duties meant for support staff are now construed as their very own additional work and made to feel less respected. In that regard, the management has to inculcate the value of every employee as important, and that all employees (academic and support staff alike) have a critical role to play. That may not be an easy task the academics are treated as easily replaceable employees by senior management, one of whom was quoted as mentioning that s/he never dragged anyone from the street to come to work at the HEI.

5.5.5. Policy Development

Good policies must be developed, explained, and effectively implemented. The responsibility to develop such policies lies mainly with the HR department. Accordingly, it is recommended that the HEI should ensure that everyone affected clearly understands the implemented policies. Such an orientation would eventually eliminate the undesirable practices according to which certain individuals are promoted to positions for which they do not qualify. By extension, such practice diminishes the university’s credibility as a corruption-free employment organisation. The policies should be revised and updated regularly, and inclusive of equitable and fair succession plans in order to avoid unnecessary external recruitment. Furthermore, academic staff should be placed in proper positions to ensure a culture of equity and fairness.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter concludes the research study in its entirety. The chapter further integrated the empirical (primary) findings of the study in relation to dominant perspectives obtained through a concerted literature review (secondary data). It is on the basis of the integrated main findings that both the study’s limitations and recommendations were presented. These recommendations are the researcher’s propositions that may help HEIs to retain academics. Academics' lived experiences included: transitioning to open distance learning, feelings (frustration, doubt, hopelessness, stress, unpatriotic, overwhelmed, unappreciated); red tape; staff satisfaction and engagement, and workload and environment. Working environment, joy from teaching and supervising students, growth opportunities, flexibility to manage time and employee benefits were all factors identified as having a major impact on academic staff retention.

The institution should strengthen its recruitment and selection processes, implement intentional and structured onboarding programmes, implement more appropriate training programmes, and encourage and train staff. These findings could be utilised by institutions of higher learning to improve, and even establish retention approaches that encourage academic staff dedication and assist the self-same institutions in retaining their employees.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL APPROVAL CERTIFICATES

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UNISA IOP ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

28 July 2020

Dear Mrs. Faith Ntuli

Decision: Ethics Approval from 28 July 2020 to 28 July 2023

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference : ***2020_CEMS_IOP_020***
Name : Mrs. Faith Ntuli
Student #: 36482285
Staff #: NA

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs. Faith Ntuli
Address: 33 Van Reenens View, Webber Avenue, Horizon View, 1724
E-mail address, telephone: 36482285@mylife.unisa.ac.za, 0824933508

Supervisor (s): Name: Dr. Jeremy Mitonga-Monga
E-mail address, telephone: jeremym@uj.ac.za, 0115593140

Human resource practices and retention of academics: A phenomenological inquiry

Qualification: Masters (MCom) – Postgraduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance to the Unisa IOP Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for a period of **Three (3) years.**

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on 28th July 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The Ethics Application was approved on 28th July 2020.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 Position Statement on research ethics dated 26 June 2020 which is attached.

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2. ***All data-gathering must adhere to and be aligned with restrictions applicable to the Government's current Lockdown Alert Levels.***

3. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

4. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.

5. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

6. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

7. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

8. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

9. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **(28 July 2023)**. Submission of a complete research ethics progress report will constitute an application for the renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **NtuliF_2020_CEMS_IOP_020** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

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Yours sincerely,

Signature	Signature
Acting Chair of IOP ERC	Executive Dean : CEMS
E-mail: olivibh@unisa.ac.za	**E-mail:** mogalmt@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-8801	**Tel: (012) 429-4805**

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RESEARCH PERMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE (RPSC) OF THE SENATE RESEARCH, INNOVATION, POSTGRADUATE DEGREES AND COMMERCIALISATION COMMITTEE (SRIPCC)

28 August 2020

Decision: Research Permission Approval from 28 August 2020 until 27 August 2023.

Ref #: 2020_RPSC_034 Ms. Faith Ntuli Student #: 36482285 Staff #: N/A

Principal Investigator:
Ms. Faith Ntuli
Department of Human Resource Management
School of Management Sciences
College of Economic and Management Sciences
36482285@mylife.unisa.ac.za; 0824933508

Supervisors: Ms. Tebogo Molotsi, molottk@unisa.ac.za
Dr. Jeremy Mitonga-Monga, jeremym@uj.ac.za

Human Resource Practices and Retention of academics: A phenomenological inquiry.

Your application regarding permission to conduct research involving UNISA employees, students and data in respect of the above study has been received and was considered by the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC) of the UNISA Senate, Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee (SRIPCC) on 21 August 2020.

It is my pleasure to inform you that permission has been granted for the study. You may:

1. Obtain a list of the academics from Florida campus; the names, email addresses, qualifications and the academics' years of experience; through the gatekeeping assistance of the internal supervisor.
2. The supervisor and the student researcher may together draw out a sample of interviewees according to the researcher's sampling criteria.

3. Contact the sampled academics and request their consent to participate in interviews, using an online platform.

You are requested to submit a report of the study to the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC@unisa.ac.za) within 3 months of completion of the study.

The personal information made available to the researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) will only be used for the advancement of this research project as indicated and for the purpose as described in this permission letter. The researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) must take all appropriate precautionary measures to protect the personal information given to him/her/them in good faith and it must not be passed on to third parties. The dissemination of research instruments through the use of electronic mail should strictly be through blind copying, so as to protect the participants' right of privacy. The researcher hereby indemnifies UNISA from any claim or action arising from or due to the researcher's breach of his/her information protection obligations.

Note:
*The reference number **2020_RPSC_034** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants and the Research Permission Subcommittee.*

We would like to wish you well in your research undertaking.

Kind regards,

RVisagie

Dr Retha Visagie – Deputy Chairperson
Email: visagrg@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-2478

Prof Lessing Labuschagne – Chairperson
Email: llabus@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-6368

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ANNEXURE B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: **Human Resource Practices and Retention of academics: A phenomenological inquiry**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Faith Ntuli and I am doing research with Dr J Mitonga-Monga and Mrs TK Molotsi senior lecturers in the Department of Human Resource Management towards a Master of Commerce in Business Management (HRM) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Human Resource Practices and Retention of academics: A phenomenological inquiry.**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to gain an insight into the lived work experiences of academic staff members working in a South African higher education institution and to obtain a better understanding of how organisations can use HRM practice factors to retain academic staff members.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited to participate in the research as you are academic who has been working at UNISA for at least five years and I believe you could provide me with valuable information. Approximately ten participants will be invited to participate in the study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves semi-structured interview of not more than 60 minutes. The interviews will through Microsoft Teams and will be recorded after written consent to do this had been obtained from you.

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CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The outcome of this research could be used to establish how HRM practices affect retention of academics and recommend effective HR practices to management and HR at HEIs. The research findings might be of great help to institutions of higher learning in general and UNISA specifically. The lived experiences of UNISA academic staff will be explored, the results will help the institution management to understand their employees better.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorder anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research . Your answers will be given a code number, or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings .
Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity, e.g. when focus groups are used as a data collection method.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme after 5-year period has expired.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No payment or reward offered, financial or otherwise.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Economic and Management Sciences at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Faith Ntuli on faithntuli@yahoo.com. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact faithntuli@yahoo.com.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact molottk@unisa.ac.za. Contact the research ethics chairperson of the Dr Marianne Engelbrecht on engelm1@unisa.ac.za if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Faith Ntuli

ANNEXURE C: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Title: Human Resource Practices and Retention of academics: A phenomenological Inquiry

I, ___________________ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi structured interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname…………………………………… (please print)

Participant Signature……………………………………………….Date…………………

Researcher's Name & Surname…………………………………….Faith Ntuli

Researcher's signature…………………………………………….Date…………………

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ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Thank you so much for agreeing to have an interview with me today. My name is Faith Ntuli. Our interview will mainly focus on gaining insight into your work experiences as an academic staff member working in a South African higher education institution. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis purposes.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Take me through your experience from the time you applied for the job, the interviews to the time you were inducted.
   - Are there things you feel might have been done better – recruitment process wise?

2. Training and development. How often do you attended seminars; workshops, conference aimed at developing you academically?
   - Of the various learning, development and growth opportunities the organisation provides which have been most beneficial to you?

3. How would you describe performance management in your department – how are you assessed?

4. Let us talk about promotional opportunities. How do you feel about the promotion requirements and criteria – the fairness and consistence between colleges?

5. Workload. Tell me about your typical working week as you go through your administrative tasks, researching, teaching and personal time?
   - how would you prefer your work to be structured?

6. Compensation system. Are you content with remuneration, employee benefits, research incentives, recognition opportunities?

7. What are your career progression expectations?
   - Where would you like to be in the organisation in 5 years' time?

8. What would you miss if you were to leave the organisation?

9. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences in general?

ANNEXURE E: TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREMENT

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TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I **David Mekwa** hereby agree to the following regarding the transcription of the digital recordings:

• The contents of the digital recordings, as well as the identities of the participants, their organisations and any other individuals or organisations mentioned in the recordings will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

• The digital recordings, the transcriptions or the content thereof will not be discussed with or made available to any person other than the researcher.

• All digital recordings and transcriptions, whether in electronic or hard copy format, will be kept securely for the entire period since it received and until it is returned/given to the researcher.

• All hard copies of the transcriptions will be shredded once the transcription thereof is complete.

• All copies of the digital recordings will be returned to the researcher and all electronic copies of the transcriptions will be destroyed after copies thereof have been given to the researcher.

Signature of the transcriber	Date	Printed name
	16th July 2020	David Mekwa

Signature of the researcher	Date	Printed name
	16 July 2020	Faith Ntuli

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ANNEXURE F: CO-CODER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

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CO-CODER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Title of Research Project: Human Resource Practices and Retention of academics: A phenomenological inquiry

Researcher: Faith Ntuli

As a ***Co-coder*** for this research project, I understand that I may have access to confidential information about study sites and participants. By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.
- I understand that all information about study sites or participants obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons any of the study information, including participants, unless specifically authorized to do so by approved protocol.
- I agree to notify the local principal investigator immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation which could potentially result in a breach, whether this is on my part or on the part of another person.

Signature of the co-coder	Date	Printed name
	16th July 2020	**David Mekwa**

Signature of the researcher	Date	Printed name
FNtuli	16 July 2020	Faith Ntuli

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ANNEXURE G: EDITOR'S LETTER

I, the undersigned, hereby confirm my involvement in respect of language and academic editing, technical compliance, and research methodology compatibility for the research manuscript of **Ms Faith Ntuli (Student Number: 36482285)** in fulfilment of the requirements for her Master of Commerce (MComm) in Business Management degree registered with the University of South Africa (UNISA), and entitled:

Human resources practices and retention of academics: A phenomenological inquiry

As an independent academic editor, I attest that all possible means have been expended to ensure the final draft of **Ms Faith Ntuli's** research manuscript reflects the acceptable research methodology practices and language control standards expected of postgraduate research studies at her academic level.

In compliance with expected ethical requirements in research, I have further undertaken to keep all aspects of **Ms Faith Ntuli's** study confidential, and as her own individual initiative.

Sincerely.

T.J. Mkhonto
BA Ed: North-West University, Mahikeng (1985)
MEd: School Administration; University of Massachusetts-at-Boston, USA, Harbor Campus (1987)
DTech: Higher Education Curriculum Policy Reform, Design and Management; University of Johannesburg (2008)

All enquiries:

Email: mkhonto9039@gmail.com
Cell: +27(0)60 401 8279

Signed: ____________________ **Date:** 30 January 2023

Dr T.J. Mkhonto dd/mm/yyyy
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ANNEXURE H: TURNITIN SUMMARY REPORT

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Turnitin Originality Report

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Final Dissertation for Submission By Faith Ntuli

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