

**THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF JOB SATISFACTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN HRM PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION WITHIN A
SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT**

by

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ABSTRACT

Employee retention is crucial for organisational efficiency, but South Africa's government departments face challenges as skilled employees often seek more lucrative private sector opportunities. This study explores the relationship between human resources management practices, job satisfaction (JS) and employee retention, within the context of South African immigration services. It further investigates whether JS statistically mediates the human resources management practices and employee retention relationship and examines demographic influences the research variables. This quantitative study targeted a probability sample of 212 government officials, collecting primary data utilising three validated scales.

The study's findings reveal significant correlations between human resource management practices and employee retention, with JS acting as a mediator. Dissatisfaction is evident in pay, promotion and operating procedures. While most demographic variables yield no significant differences, job levels emerged as an exception. The study provides insights and recommendations for enhancing employee retention in South African government departments, offering guidance for implementing measures across the public service.

Key words:

Demographic variables, Employee Retention, Human Resources Management Practices, Job satisfaction; Mediation; Public Service Employment, South African government departments; Workplace satisfaction

TSHOBOKANYO

Go boloka badiri ke karolo nngwe e e botlhokwa ya tsamaiso bonolo ya setlamo efela mafapha a puso ya Aforika Borwa a lebagane le dikgwetlho ka badiri ba ba nang le bokgoni, bao ba tsamayang go kwa ya ditshonong tse di kgatlhisang tsa kwa maphateng a poraefete. Patlisiso e e batlisisa kamano magareng ga ditiragatso tsa Botsamaisi jwa Badiri, go kgotsofalela tiro (JS) le go boloka badiri, ka fa molebong wa ditirelo tsa bofaladi tsa Aforika Borwa. E batlisisa gape le gore a fa JS, ka mokgwa wa tiriso ya thutadipalo, e tsereganya kamano magareng ga ditiragatso tsa botsamaisi jwa badiri le go boloka badiri, mme e tlhatlhobe mokgwa oo palobatho e tlhotlheletsang dipharologanyo tsa patlisiso. Patlisiso e ya khwaletheithifi e ne e labile sampole ya badiredi ba puso ba le 212, mme gape e kokoanya tshedimosetso ka go dirisa dikale tse di tlhomamisitsweng di le tharo.

Diphitlhelelo tsa patlisiso di senola dikamano tse di botlhokwa magareng ga ditiragatso tsa botsamaisi jwa badiri le go boloka badiri, mme gape le gore JS e dira jaaka motsereganyi. Bosupi jwa go se kgotsofale bo bonagala mo go duelweng, go tlhatlhosiwa mo tirong le mo mekgweng ya go dira. Le fa bontsi jwa dipharologanyo tsa palobatho di sa tlhagise pharologanyo e e kalo, maemo a tiro a tsweletse a tthaolegile. Patlisiso e neelana ka temogo le dikatlanegiso tsa go tokafatsa go boloka badiri mo mafapheng a puso ya Aforika Borwa, mme gape di neelana ka kaelo ya go tsenyatirisong dikgato mo tirelong tsa setšhaba ka bophara.

Mafoko a a botlhokwa:

Dipharologanyo tsa palobatho, Go boloka Badiri, Ditiragatso tsa Botsamaisi jwa Badiri, Go kgotsofalela tiro; Botsereganyi; Tiro ya Tirelo ya Setšhaba; Mafapha a puso ya Aforika Borwa; Go kgotsofalela lefelo la tiro

KAKARETŠO

Go swara bašomi go bohlokwa go bokgoni bja mokgatlo, eupša dikgoro tša mmušo wa Afrika Borwa di lebane le ditlhohlo ka ge bašomi ba bokgoni gantši ba nyaka dibaka tše dikaone lekaleng la praebete. Nyakišišo ye e nyakišiša kamano gare ga mekgwa ya taolo ya methopo ya batho, go kgotsofala mošomong (JS) le go swara bašomi, ka maemo a ditirelo tša bofaladi ka Afrika Borwa. E nyakišiša gape ge e le gore JS ka dipalopalo e rarolla mekgwa ya taolo ya methopo ya batho le kamano ya go swara bašomi le go lekola khuetšo ya temokrafi ya phetogo ya nyakišišo. Nyakišišo ya bontši yeo e lebantšego dišupo tša kgonagalo tša bašomi ba mmušo ba 212, ya kgoboketša data ye kgolo go šomiša dikala tše di kgonthišetšwego tše tharo

Dikutollo tša nyakišišo di tšweletša kamano ye kgolo gare ga mekgwa ya taolo ya methopo ya batho le go swara bašomi, le JS e šoma bjalo ka morarolli. Go se kgotsofale go bontšhitšwe tabeng ya mogolo, tlhahlošo le ditshepedišo tša go šoma. Mola diphetogo tše dintši tša temokrafi di sa tšweletše diphapano tše bohlokwa, magato a mošomo a tšwelela bjalo ka ao a sa akaretšwego. Nyakišišo e fa dipono le maele a go kaonafatša go swara bašomi mo dikgorong tša mmušo wa Afrika Borwa, ba aba tlhahlo ya go phethagatša ditekanyetšo go phatlalala le tirelo ya setšhaba.

Mantšu a motheo:

Diphetogo tše dintši tša temokrafi, Go swara bašomi, Mekgwa ya taolo ya methopo ya batho, go kgotsofala mošomong, Tharollo, Thwalo ya Bašomi ba Mmušo, Dikgoro tša mmušo wa Afrika Borwa, Kgotsofalo mošomong

DECLARATION

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The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship between HRM Practices and Employee Retention within a South African National Government Department

I declare that the above dissertation 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 at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



Caroline Selane

Date: 21 February 2024

3732-257-5

DEDICATION

Without my family's love and support, I could not have completed this dissertation. To my husband Solly, son Lethabo and daughter Rethabile Selane, who have continued to support my career and professional aspirations, I dedicate my dissertation.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AC	Affective Commitment
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CC	Continuance Commitment
CJRS	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
ER	Employee Retention
HRM practices	Human Resources Management Practices
HRPS	Human Resources Practices Scale
JS	Job Satisfaction
JSS	Job Satisfaction Survey
NC	Normative Commitment
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union
PoE	Port of Entry
PSA	Public Servants Association
RFS	Retention Factor Scale
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers Union
SAPS	South African Police Services
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
T & D	Training and Development
UNISA	University of South Africa
WFH	Work-From-Home
WLB	Work Life Balance

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This chapter serves as an introduction to the research focus, delving on Job Satisfaction (JS), human resource management (HRM) practices and Employee Retention (ER), within a South African national government department. As highlighted by Nkomo and Thwala (2009), the high employee turnover in government departments has prompted this research to explore the reasons behind employee dissatisfaction and propose potential strategies for employee retention. Previous studies on HRM practices and employee retention have yielded conflicting results, necessitating further investigation (Bibi, Pangil & Johari, 2016). In addition, the use of the JS theory can aid in understanding the relationship between HRM practices and ER, highlighting the need for both employers and HR practitioners to address this issue and implement relevant retention strategies.

This chapter discusses the research background, motivation, problem statement, aims, objectives, research design, and methodology. Additionally, it outlines the structure of the study.

1.1 STUDY BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

In many countries, public sector organisations, being the largest employer, heavily rely on employee performance for effective service delivery (Knies, Boselie, Gould-Williams & Vandenabeele, 2018:2). However, determining excellent service delivery necessitates the recruitment and retention of the best candidates (Moshela, 2013). To ascertain excellent service delivery in the public sector, technical governance mechanisms such as accountability, administrative capacity and internal operations must be well-structured (Kanyane, 2010:1). Administrative capacity involves recruiting a capable and competent workforce (Kanyane, 2010).

Hlatywayo and Mpofo (2015) assert that employee training and development is vital in government, given the intangible services it renders to the public. South Africa faces a skills crisis (Tshilongamulenzhe, 2012; Kock & Burke 2008; Allais 2012), with inappropriate skills being encountered in almost every sector, but more so in government (Dullah Omar Institute, 2020; Nekhavhambe, 2012:30). The reality is that retaining employees is crucial and vital for long-term organisational growth and

success (Heathfield, 2018). Government departments, like the private sector, face challenges in retaining skilled and competent employees (Chipunza & Samuel, 2009; Nkhumise, 2021).

Employee retention is of paramount importance, as human resources constitute the most important asset of an organisation (Gallow, 2021; Nasir & Mahmood, 2016: 96). In addition, the organisation's success relies heavily on its employees (Zailani, Amindin & Wee 2016:137). Moreover, employees tend to stay with organisations for prolonged periods when they feel valued (Yabut, 2016). Sharmaa (2015) asserts that a happy employee is a productive employee. Satisfied employees reflect their gratitude in their work performance, and when an organisation recognises and appreciates these employees and their performance, it fosters a relationship based on personal happiness (Rupareliya, 2018). This, in turn, impacts productivity, profitability and retention rates.

Furthermore, effective public service delivery hinges not only on employee retention but also on the implementation of robust HRM practices and policies. Without these, the primary function of government, namely quality service delivery, will be compromised (Dejene & Getnet, 2020; Moshela, 2013: ii). As a result, attention should be paid to HR recruitment and selection practices as important success factors. Furthermore, in today's competitive market, organisational success emanates not only from their organisational human resources, but also from the involvement of HRM practices (Lamba & Choudhary 2013:408; Hamadamin & Atan, 2019). Effective HRM practices enable employees to become more involved in the organisation's pursuit of its main objective. Furthermore, HRM practices that are effectively implemented are likely to positively influence employee's behaviour, ultimately contributing to organisational performance and the bottom line. When HRM practices are implemented effectively, they can transform employees' behaviour and attitude, leading them to view the organisation differently and become highly engaged in achieving the organisation's goals and objectives (Nasurdin, Hemdi & Guat, 2008:16).

HRM practices are crucial for an organisation's efficient functioning, as they positively impact employee behaviour, enhancing performance and contributing to

the organisation's bottom line (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Delery & Doty, 1996; Nasurdin et al. 2008:16).

However, if HRM practices are implemented ineffectively, they negatively impact employee performance, attitude and behaviour, ultimately harming organisational performance (Wright & Scott, 1998). Even though an organisation can implement various HRM practices to manage its HR system, Lamba and Choudary (2013:408) suggest implementing a “Number of Best HRM practices” for an organisation’s survival and sustainability. According to Kock and Burke (2008:4) and Knies et al. (2018:2), HRM practices are critical for enhancing public service performance. However, the approach to HRM practices in the public sector differs from that of private sector organisations.

Empirical evidence, as noted by Knies et al. (2018:3), suggests that some of the HRM practices are not suitable for government institutions owing to the unique nature of work, employee characteristics and the accountability of government institutions for fund utilisation (see for example Kalleberg, Marsden, Reynolds & Knoke, 2006). Public service organisations adopt, what Knies et al. (2018:3) refer to as “bundles of ability- and opportunity-enhancing HRM practices”. These type of HRM practices align with the humanistic goals of public organisations, aiming to strengthen employees’ abilities and opportunities to participate in decision-making, which is more prominent in government departments.

In addition, HRM practices in government departments are exposed to a high degree of various stakeholders (such as politicians or unions) who have more influence on public sector HRM practices compared to the private sector. For example, remuneration and employee benefits policies are subject to collective bargaining. By itself, this study suggests that the implementation of HRM practices needs to be contextualised when studying public organisations (Knies et al., 2018:3). HR practitioners within public sector organisations should ensure they possess knowledge about HRM practices and that the most appropriate HRM practices are employed for employee retention.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

South Africa faces socioeconomic development challenges that require the implementation of specialised HRM practices in public organisations (Kock & Burke, 2008:1). Various researchers such as Price (1977), Staw (1980), Mobley (1982), Nkomo and Thwala (2009:116) as well as Barkhuizen and Gumede (2021) argue that staff retention in public organisations is problematic owing to knowledge gap in adopting and implementing HRM practices. This study aims to bridge these knowledge gaps.

In a study conducted by Rasmeni (2013), it was revealed that the Department operates far below what is acceptable required for efficient service delivery. This issue was further demonstrated in the Department's 2021/22 Annual Report, which indicated that the department is functioning at only around 41.6% of its approved capacity (Department of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2021/22). In addition, despite resource constraints, public service organisations are under increasing pressure to demonstrate accountability, and to improve service quality to meet the expectations of service users (Knies et al, 2018:2). The department's inability to attract and retain employees is a significant factor contributing to poor service delivery (Department of Home Affairs, 2020/21).

An audit conducted by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in 2007 revealed that five out of nine provinces failed to comply with the national norms and standards. Additionally, these provinces did not apply best practice in the final selection stage of the recruitment process as specified in the PSC's recruitment and selection toolkit. The result of this non-compliance is reflected in the quality of services provided to citizens (Okeke-Uzodike, Okeke-Usodike, Chitakunye & Phiri, 2014:92). Furthermore, a study by the National Department of Tourism (NDT) in conjunction with the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) in 2009, identified several factors that negatively impacted the consistent delivery of excellent customer service in South Africa. These factors included inadequate job training, deficient general education and poor recruitment and selection processes. In fact, participants in the NDT study mentioned various barriers within public organisations, such as the recruitment of unsuitable candidates and insufficient training. Many of

these issues are rooted in the implementation of HRM practices and their impact on JS within the Department.

A critical issue exacerbating the challenges is the high turnover rates witnessed in South African government departments, primarily owing to inter alia, inadequate knowledge, resources and unfavourable work environments (Langbein & Stazyk, 2018). This adversely affects employee performance and organisational effectiveness (Mabindisa, 2014:2). Furthermore, Mabindisa (2014) identified remuneration is the main issue that causes high turnover rates within the Department. Various factors, including a lack of career advancement, lack of promotion, unsatisfactory working conditions as well as work stress, contribute to employee turnover. The Department's Annual Report for 2021/2022 indicated a turnover rate of 3.92%, which could be attributed to various factors including death, resignations, contract expirations, transfers, ill-health discharges, misconduct, dismissals, and retirement. High employee turnover rate entails significant costs associated with recruitment, selection and training of new employees. In addition, when employees leave the organisation, the workload of employees staying behind tend to increase until another employee is hired (Ogony & Majola, 2018; Mabindisa, 2014). High employee turnover may jeopardise efforts to achieve organisational objectives (Maloba & Pillay-Naidoo, 2022). As postulated by Mabindisa (2014), high staff turnover within the department not only increases workload to remaining employees, but also negatively impact innovation, which in turn jeopardises service delivery to clients and reflects poorly on the department's image. Unhealthy working relationships and working conditions may also contribute to employee turnover in the department (Mabindisa, 2014), further affecting productivity, especially during high peak seasons with increased traveller traffic.

Hollenbeck and Willem (1986) attribute voluntary employee turnover to HRM practices that are ill-suited for specific organisations. Furthermore, Luthans and Sommers (2005) suggest that organisations must develop strategies to enhance employee retention for success. This will allow the organisation to condense turnover costs and enhance quality and productivity process of the organisation.

Despite extensive research on HRM practices, JS, ER, gaps persist:

- Theoretical models have not adequately addressed the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER.
- HR practitioners lack comprehensive knowledge of these relationships in South African government departments.
- Empirical investigation is required to comprehend the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER, bearing in mind the demographic variables' implications.

Give these challenges and gaps, it is imperative to conduct research on HRM practices, JS and ER in government departments within the South African setting. Specifically, there is a gap in understanding factors that influences ER and the effect of HRM practices on ER within South African government departments. Another gap exists in understanding whether JS mediate the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention of government officials. This research study, therefore, aims to address the issue of ER by ensuring that managers can recognise employee's talents and their contributions towards the organisation. It seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge by providing an understanding of the dynamics of HRM practices, JS and ER in the unique context of South African government departments.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This section defines the study aims for literature review and empirical study.

1.3.1 General research objectives

The primary aim of this research was to determine if JS significantly mediates the relationship between employees' experiences of HRM practices and ER. A second aim is to establish and investigate if a relationship exists between HRM practices, JS (as mediating variable) and ER within a South African national government department. Lastly, the research sought to explore the potential significant differences in HRM practices, JS and ER based on employees' biographical factors such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry.

1.3.2 Specific research objectives

This section outlines the research study's objectives related to the literature review, empirical study and integration of findings. In respect of the literature review, the objectives are as follows:

Research objective 1:

To critically examine and conceptualise HRM practices, JS, ER in the context of the 21st century workplace.

Research objective 2:

To analyse the theoretical foundations and models underpinning the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER.

Sub-aim 2.1: To explore the theoretical relationship between HRM practices and JS.

Sub-aim 2.2: To explore the theoretical relationship between JS and ER.

Sub-aim 2.3: To explore the theoretical relationship between HRM practices and ER.

In respect of the empirical study, the objectives are:

Research objective 1:

To explore the statistical interrelationship among HRM practices, JS and ER within a sample of government department officials. *This research objective aligns with the testing of hypothesis H_1 .*

Sub-aim 1.1: To investigate the significant relationship between HRM practices and JS.

Sub-aim 1.2: To investigate the significant relationship between JS and ER.

Sub-aim 1.3: To investigate the significant relationship between HRM practices and ER.

Research objective 2:

To investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER among officials within a government department. *This research objective aligns with the testing of hypothesis H_2 .*

Research objective 3:

To investigate if differences exist in HRM practices, JS and ER in terms of the demographical variables (gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry). *This research aim aligns with the testing of hypothesis H₃.*

Regarding the integration of the research findings, the specific objective was to synthesise the research findings and formulate evidence-based recommendations tailored for HR Practitioners, Industrial and Organisational Psychologists and future research initiatives in the field of employee retention practices in public service organisations. Table 1.1 furnishes a concise synopsis of the research objectives and the corresponding statistical methodologies employed in the study.

Table 1. 1: Overview of research aims and statistical procedures

Empirical research objectives	Statistical procedures
Research objective 1: To investigate the significant relationship between HRM practices and JS	Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient
Sub-objective 1.1: To investigate the significant relationship between JS and ER.	
Sub-objective 1.2: To investigate the significant relationship between HRM practices and ER.	
Sub-objective 1.3: To explore the significant connection between HRM practices and ER.	
Research objective 2: To investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER among officials within a government department. Within a government department.	Multiple regression analyses
Research objective 3: To investigate if differences exist in HRM practices, JS and ER in terms of the demographical variables (gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry).	T-tests and ANOVA’s

Source: Researchers own

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature review will explore research questions related to the following:

Research question 1:

How are HRM practices, JS and ER conceptualised and explained by theoretical models in literature?

Research question 2:

Is there a theoretical relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER?

Sub-question 2.1: What is the theoretical relationship between HRM practices and JS?

Sub-question 2.2: What is the theoretical relationship between HRM practices and ER?

Sub-question 2.3: What is the theoretical relationship between JS and ER?

Research question 3:

How do biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, job level and port of entry) influence individual experiences and perceptions of HRM practices, JS and ER?

In relation to the empirical study, research questions are stipulated below:

Research question 1:

What is the statistical relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER in a sample of participants in a government department within the South African context?

Sub-question 2.1: What is the relationship between HRM practices and JS of employees in a government department within the South African context?

Sub-question 2.2: What is the relationship between JS and ER of employees in a government department within the South African context?

Sub-question 2.3: What is the relationship between HRM practices and ER of employees in a government department within the South African context?

Research question 2:

What is the mediating effect of JS on the relationship between HRM practices and ER of government officials?

Research question 3:

What are the differences that exist in terms of HRM practices, JS and ER and the demographics (age, gender, marital status, job level and port of entry)?

Based on the empirical results, what recommendations can be made for the development of JS, HRM practices and ER for future research in the field of HRM practice and forthcoming research of the research constructs?

1.5 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study is primarily centred on establishing the relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER within a national government department within the South African context (hereafter referred to as “the Department”). The department is responsible for overseeing citizenship and civic status, international migration, refugee protection, and the population register. Furthermore, it provides a wide range of services to foreign nationals, seeking to visit, work, or reside in South Africa. The department's mandate execution enables it to play a crucial role in national security, citizen empowerment, efficient administration, and socio-economic development. Notable, the Department collaborates with various state entities, including the South African Police Service (SAPS), the South African Revenue Services (SARS) and the Department of Health (Magwedze, 2019).

The department serves multiple important roles in South Africa. Firstly, it acts as the guardian of citizens' and residents' identities and statuses, enabling them to access various rights and opportunities in both public and private spheres. This inclusiveness extends to marginalised communities, reinforcing democratic principles and social justice.

Secondly, the department holds authority over immigration matters, overseeing the transit of individuals at entry points. It extends civic and immigration services through foreign embassies, assesses the status of asylum seekers and refugees in compliance with international obligations, and thereby assumes a pivotal role in safeguarding national security, promoting economic development, and nurturing favourable international relations (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). It is important

to emphasise that this study primarily focused on the POE, and included participants stationed at different POE locations as will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its targeted contribution to addressing specific gaps in the existing literature and its practical implications for HRM practitioners, employers and government departments. Theoretically, this study is valuable in pointing out the relationship found between JS, HRM practices and ER. While employee retention has been a focus of extensive research (Yamamoto, 2011), this study delves deeper into understanding the mechanisms by which HRM practices significantly enhance ER. This insight can be invaluable for HR practitioners and employers seeking effective strategies to mitigate turnover. In addition, this study will also clarify the theoretical part of JS in mediating the connection between HRM practices and ER. This study intends to contribute to the current literature and knowledge for HRM practitioners and employers alike.

Research conducted by Ng'ethe, Iravo and Namusonge (2012) and Kalia, Singla and Kaushal (2023) highlight a gap in the literature concerning the impact of variables, including HRM practices, with the mediating variable of JS on employee retention. This study aimed to address this gap by exploring the mediating role of JS in the relationship between HRM practices and ER. Moreover, the research is situated in the unique context of a South African government department, recognising a diverse workforce in terms of age, gender, marital status, and job levels. This context-specific investigation is crucial for tailoring employee retention strategies to meet the specific needs and characteristics of South African public sector employees.

Practically, the study's findings have the potential to empower HRM practitioners with actionable knowledge, enabling them to develop and implement more effective retention strategies within government departments. By focusing on JS as a mediating variable, the study sheds light on a critical aspect of ER that is often overlooked.

This research may have policy implications for government departments, providing insights into HRM practices that yield the best results in terms of employee retention. Ultimately, the study aimed to contribute to the enhancement of employee retention strategies, leading to increased JS and commitment among government employees. This, in turn, can positively impact the overall effectiveness and service quality of public sector organisations.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

This section will provide definitions of various key terms used throughout the dissertation.

1.7.1 Human Resource Management Practices

Schuler and Jackson (1987) define HRM practices as strategies aimed at enhancing, motivating, influencing, and sustaining employee satisfaction to ensure the success and survival of the organisation. These strategies are carefully developed to achieve the organisation's objectives (Delery & Doty, 1996). According to Mondy and Noe (2005), HRM practices are plans implemented by an organisation to ensure that employees perform effectively in pursuit of these goals. For this study's purpose, the definition of Mondy and Noe (2005) is adopted as it explains the adaptable nature of HRM practices that can be applied across diverse organisational contexts.

1.7.2 Job Satisfaction

The definition of JS varies among researchers, reflecting different aspects and perspectives. Locke (1969) defines JS as the process where employees find satisfaction in perceiving that their hard work contributes to achieving organisational goals. Cranny, Smith and Stone (1992:1) offer a slightly different view, defining JS as how employees perceive job satisfaction, including both desired and actual outcomes. Furthermore, Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) describe JS as employees' emotional response towards their jobs. It involves individual feelings and satisfaction related to employees' needs (Mudor & Tooksoon 2011). In contrast, Yao, Lee, Mitchell, Burton and Sablynski (2004) perceive JS as safeguarding job security by ensuring employee satisfaction. On the other hand, Ali and Anwar (2021)

define JS as an individual's attitude related to their degree of liking or disliking their current job.

In essence, JS can be seen as an emotional reaction when employees compare their actual job outcome with the desired outcome (Mafini & Dlodlo 2014; Thompson & Phua 2012). For this research study, the definition of Mudor and Tookson (2011:41) was adopted as it offers a straightforward explanation to facilitate understanding for readers and researchers.

1.7.3 Employee Retention

Employee retention (ER) refers to the practice of retaining skilled and experienced employees for prolonged periods to achieve organisational goals (Azeez 2017:2). Gin (2008) characterises ER as the strategies employed by organisations to encourage their workforce to remain with the organisation for prolonged durations. Johnson (2000) defines ER as the ability to retain experienced employees for longer durations compared to competitors. Johnson's (2000) definition was adopted for this research as it emphasises the organisation's ability to retain competent employees.

1.7.4 Employee turnover

According to March and Simon (1958), employee turnover is influenced by their perceptions of their job and work environment. When these perceptions become unfavourable, they can ultimately lead to employee turnover. According to Holtom, Mitchell, Lee and Eberly (2008), employee turnover occurs when an employee departs from an organisation. It can be categorised as voluntary when the employee ends the working relationship or involuntary when the employer makes that decision (Lazzari, Alvarez & Ruggieri, 2022). According to Anwar (2017), employee turnover is the percentage of individuals an organisation needs to replace within a specific period compared to the average number of individuals within the organisation. For this research study, the definition of Holtom et al. (2008) was adopted as it offers a straightforward explanation to facilitate understanding for both readers and researchers.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical frameworks play a crucial role in guiding research endeavours, providing a lens through which phenomena are interpreted and understood (Crotty, 1998; Flick, 2011). They establish the foundational principles and assumptions that underpin the research methodology, helping to frame research questions and interpret findings within a broader theoretical context (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

By explicitly outlining the theoretical underpinnings, this study is anchored in four pivotal theoretical frameworks, namely the Job Embeddedness Theory (JET) by Mitchell et al., (2001b), Human Capital Theory (HCT) by Becker (1964), Social Exchange Theory (SET) developed by inter alia Homans (1958) and Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation by Vroom (1964).

JET and HCT theories provide a comprehensive understanding of how HRM practices influences JS and ER. JET focuses on the the multifaceted nature of job embeddedness, emphasising the role of connections and fit within the workplace, while the HCT highlights the significance of investing in human capital to enhance employee performance and satisfaction. These theories collectively explain how strategic HRM practices can foster a more committed and satisfied workforce.

SET has been effectively used to explore the impact of specific HRM practices on ER, particularly through the mediating role of JS. According to Kalia, Singla, and Kaushal (2023), as well as Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005), SET posits that the relationship between employers and employees is based on reciprocal exchanges. When employees perceive fair treatment and support from their organisation, their JS and commitment to the organisation increase, thereby enhancing retention.

Kiran, Mubashir, Shaikh, Naseem and Shaikh (2023) utilised Vroom's theory to explore how remuneration, training and development, and working conditions influence ER. This theory posits that employees are motivated when they believe their efforts will lead to desired performance and rewards. The study by Kiran et al. (2023) highlights JS as a critical intermediary, demonstrating how HRM practices can be strategically aligned to motivate employees and improve retention.

1.8.1 Job Embeddedness Theory

Job Embeddedness Theory (JET) focuses on understanding the multifaceted reasons why employees remain connected to their organisations, extending beyond JS alone. This theory asserts that various environmental and perceptual factors significantly contribute to an individual's level of job embeddedness, thereby influencing their decision to stay with the organisation (Lyu & Zhu, 2019).

Yao et al., (2001) define job embeddedness as a combination of factors that prevent individuals from leaving their employment. According to Mitchell et al. (2001), JET is structured around three primary dimensions:

- **Fit:** This dimension refers to how well employees perceive they fit with the organisation and its community. Adams, Webster and Buyarski (2010) define organisational fit as the congruence between an employee's knowledge, skills, work styles, and organisational culture. Non-work or external fit pertains to the alignment with community values or lifestyle choices (Fuchs, 2021).
- **Links:** This dimension considers the extent and strength of an employee's connections with people and activities both within and outside the workplace. Colleagues and clients represent organisational links, whereas family and friends in the community represents non-work links (Adams et al., 2010).
- **Sacrifice:** This dimension includes the perceived cost associated with leaving the job, including the employee potential loss of benefits, relationships, and investments. Internal organisational factors such as status, prestige, and financial rewards are examples of sacrifices that employees may consider (Adams et al., 2010). External factors could include adjustments in community involvement, hobbies, a changes in educaoitnal institutions, among others (Fuchs, 2021).

These dimensions collectively create a complex network of influences that embed employees within their jobs and organisations, thereby reducing the likelihood of turnover.

Several studies have employed JET as theoretical framework to explore different constructs. For example, Wheeler et al. (2010) explored how HRM effectiveness enhances the psychological connections between employees and organisations,

focusing on job embeddedness (JE) as a critical factor. Dechawatanapaisal (2018) investigated HR practices as predictors of organisational JE and its mediating role between HR practices and turnover intentions. Altalhi (2021) reviewed how HR practices affect employee performance through JE and organisational commitment. These studies highlight the importance of JE in HRM practices and its significance in enhancing employee retention and performance. JET can be applied to this study's research objectives as follows:

Research objective 1: Explore the statistical interrelationship among HRM practices, JS and ER. According to JET, HRM practices that enhance an employee's fit with the organisational values and culture, strengthen their connections with colleagues and the community, and highlight the costs associated with leaving (loss of benefits, relationships, and career progress) contribute to higher JS and retention (Wheeler, Harris & Harvey, 2010). By aligning HRM practices with JET's dimensions, organisations can create an environment that promotes greater employee commitment and reduces turnover rates.

Research objective 2: Investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER. Dechawatanapaisal (2018) asserted that within JET, JS can be seen as part of the "fit" dimension. Effective HRM practices improve JS, which in turn strengthens the fit between the employee and the organisation, which in turn boosts job embeddedness and reduces turnover. The mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship highlights the importance of implementing HRM practices that not only meet the basic needs of employees but also align with their values and career aspirations, thereby enhancing their overall JS and commitment to the organisation.

Research objective 3: Investigating potential differences in HRM practices, JS and ER in terms of the demographical variables (gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry). Bibi (2016) suggested that JET can explain demographic disparities by illustrating how various groups may prioritise aspects of fit, connections, and sacrifices differently. For instance, younger employees might prioritise career advancement and connections, while older employees may value job security and benefits more (sacrifice). Understanding these demographic

differences allows HRM practices to be tailored to meet the specific needs and priorities of various employee groups, thereby enhancing their JS and ER.

JET proves particularly valuable for understanding the multifaceted factors influencing an employee's decision to remain with an organisation. Its comprehensive framework makes it well-suited for examining the intricate interaction between HRM practices, JS, and ER.

1.8.2 Human Capital Theory

Ross (2023) explains that the Human Capital Theory (HCT) was first introduced by Schultz around the early 1960s and later expanded by Becker in 1962. Both scholars focus on the role of education in developing human capital, with Schultz emphasising its role in enhancing work performance, while Becker advocates for its return on investment. Both perceptions suggest that investing in education can improve employee performance.

In Becker's (1964) opinion, HCT views employees as assets whose value can be enhanced through investment in education, training, and development. This theory suggests that organisations benefit from such investments, leading to improved performance and retention. Lawler (2008) indicated that effective management of human capital is crucial for long-term competitiveness in organisations, serving as a source of innovation and strategic change (Obeidat, Tarhini, Masadeh, & Aqqad, 2017; ul Rehman, Rehman, & Ilyas, 2015) and reflecting organisational performance (Obeidat et al., 2017). High-quality human capital can enhance an organisation's productivity, performance, and competitiveness, thereby bringing economic value to the organisation (Falmholtz & Lacey, 1981).

Tovstiga and Tulugurova (2007) highlight several dimensions of the Human Capital model:

- **Competence:** It is the combination of skills, knowledge, abilities, and attributes that individuals acquire and develop through education, training, and experience. It directly influences individual and organisational productivity, economic value, and adaptability to change.

- **Attitude:** It is an individual's disposition, mindset, and approach towards their work and learning. Attitude is an essential aspect of human capital because it influences how individuals apply their skills and knowledge, interact with others, and respond to challenges and opportunities in the workplace.
- **Intellectual agility:** This dimension is a crucial component of human capital, enhancing an individual's ability to continuously learn, to think critically, adapt to new information, innovate, and solve complex problems, thereby increasing their value to employers and the broader economy.

The relevance of HCT in terms of the research objectives is as follows:

Research objective 1: Explore the statistical interrelationship among HRM practices, JS and ER. HCT posits that HRM practices that invest in employees (e.g., training, and development programmes) increase their skills and competencies, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention. Employees who feel that the organisation invests in their growth are more likely to stay (Bontis & Serenko, 2007).

Research objective 2: Investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER. According to HCT, job satisfaction mediates the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention because employees who receive training and development opportunities feel valued and satisfied, which in turn increases their commitment to the organisation (Dhiman & Mohanty, 2010). Furthermore, HCT emphasises that employees with higher levels of skills tend to be more productive and satisfied with their jobs (Wuttaphan, 2017).

Research objective 3: Investigating potential differences in HRM practices, JS and ER in terms of the demographical variables (gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry). HCT can address demographic differences by showing how various groups perceive and benefit from HRM practices. For instance, younger employees may value career development opportunities more, while older employees might prioritise stability and benefits. Understanding these preferences can help tailor HRM practices to meet diverse needs, enhancing JS and retention (Martin, 1981).

HCT emphasises the value of investing in employees and how such investments can lead to higher JS and retention, providing a solid framework for understanding the impact of HRM practices. This combined approach can provide a comprehensive understanding of how HRM practices influence job satisfaction and retention, considering both the multifaceted nature of job embeddedness and the investment in human capital.

1.8.3 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a framework for understanding employer-employee relationships within HRM practices and ER contexts. SET posits that social interactions between individuals and organisations are based on reciprocal exchanges (Cook et al., 2013). Effective HRM practices that foster shared relationships with employees are critical for fostering these exchanges, ultimately leading to improved ER (Kalia et al., 2023). Piasecki (2019) highlights SET's efficacy in explaining HRM dimensions, facilitating employee development and long-term retention. SET has a well-documented applicability in HRM research, with foundational work by Blau(1964) and Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) reinforcing its explanatory power in employee-organisation dynamics. Recent studies continue to support the mediating role of JS through the reciprocity principle central to SET. For instance, research by Xuecheng, Iqbal, and Saina (2022) integrates SET with Situational Leadership Theory to explore how training and development, work environment, and JS influence ER. Their findings emphasise that effective HRM practices foster a sense of obligation and reciprocity among employees, leading to higher JS and, consequently, enhanced retention. Similarly, Tirta and Enrika (2022) highlight that fair exchanges and reciprocal benefits between rewards, organisational practices, staffing, and diversity, enhance JS and retention (Tirta & Enrika, 2022). The relevance of SET to the research objectives is as follows:

- **Research objective 1:** To explore the statistical relationships among HRM practices, JS, and ER within government department officials. SET can explain these relationships by focusing on reciprocal benefits between the organisation and its employees.
- **Research objective 2:** To investigate whether JS statistically mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER among government department

officials. SET helps understand how JS mediates this relationship, suggesting that positive HRM practices enhance JS, subsequently improving ER. This mediating effect of JS is supported by the reciprocity principle central to SET (Xuecheng et al., 2022).

- **Research objective 3:** To examine potential differences in HRM practices, JS, and ER across demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, job level, and entry point). SET can explain these differences by exploring how diverse groups perceive and respond to HRM practices, influencing their JS and ER.

1.8.4 Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation

Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation posits that employee motivation hinges on the expectation that increased effort will lead to better performance and desirable rewards (Vroom, 1964). The theory identifies three key components: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. It provides a valuable lens for examining how HRM practices influence ER intentions, particularly through their impact on JS (Vroom, 1964).

Vroom's theory has been extensively utilised to study motivation, JS, and retention (Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968). In HRM contexts such as remuneration and benefits, Vroom's theory suggests that employees' perception of fair remuneration enhances motivation and the likelihood of retention. Furthermore, Vroom's instrumentality component emphasises that effective performance links to desirable rewards, particularly through T&D initiatives. Employees are more engaged when they perceive these programmes as opportunities for career advancement and personal success (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 2017). Additionally, the theory's valence component, which concerns the importance employees place on performance outcomes, is influenced by the quality of working conditions. Supportive work environments contribute significantly to employee satisfaction and intentions to stay with the organisation (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 2018). The relevance of Vroom's theory to the research objectives is as follows:

- **Research objective 1:** To explore the statistical relationships among HRM practices, JS, and ER within government department officials. The theory

explains how HRM practices influence JS and retention by shaping employees' performance expectations and reward perceptions.

- **Research objective 2:** To investigate whether JS statistically mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER among government department officials. Vroom's theory aids in understanding the mediation role of JS by linking employees' performance expectations (driven by HRM practices) to their satisfaction and retention intentions.
- **Research objective 3:** To examine potential differences in HRM practices, JS, and ER across demographic variables. Vroom's theory helps analyse how different demographic groups perceive the expectancy, instrumentality, and valence of HRM practices, impacting their JS and retention.

By explicitly delineating the theoretical frameworks of SET and Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation, this study provides a robust foundation for examining the interplay among HRM practices, JS, and ER. This integrated approach not only supports the research objectives but also aligns with existing literature, offering a comprehensive understanding of dynamics within government departments.

1.9 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

The section focuses on the three constructs, namely HRM practices, JS and ER. It offers a preliminary review of the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER. Finally, this section briefly addresses the interplay of these three concepts.

1.9.1 Human Resource Management Practices

HRM practices are viewed as a strategy to boost employee satisfaction with their jobs (Mohammed, Yap & Chan, 2019). They are crucial for an organisation's success, focusing on managing its people, fostering satisfaction, productivity, engagement, and achieving strategic objectives. They are aimed at assisting organisations to attract and retain the best top talent employees and to ensure that these employees are able to achieve organisational goals, contribute to organisational excellence and sustainable growth (Cai, Muhammad, Basil & Majid, 2019; Mygrowth, 2023; Rees & Smith 2014). They include strategies to attract, motivate, reward, and retain employees (Guest, 1997; Noe 2008). In addition, HRM

practices contribute to enhancing organisational efficiency (Dessler, 1999), enabling successful goal attainment (Mondy & Noe, 2005; Byrne, Miller & Pritts, 2010) and improving overall productivity and flexibility (Lee & Lee, 2007). Additionally, they can foster a positive work environment, fostering employee commitment and a strong commitment to the organisation's goals (Devananda & Onahring, 2019). A positive work environment is important as a toxic environment has a negative impact on employee engagement (Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed & Iqbal, 2021). Interestingly, Steyn, Bezuidenhout and Grobler (2017) found a potential link between HRM practices and service delivery within an organisation. HRM practices significantly and positively impact employee job performance (Faiza, Wei, Bányai, Nurunnabi & Subhan, 2019). Additionally, Ana, Gisela & Tatiane (2019) verified a positive, strong relationship between HRM practices and employee satisfaction.

HRM practices include a range of initiatives, such as employee training, the development of incentives systems as part of a reward strategy, employee recognition, and involvement in decision-making (Koch & McGrath 1996). Huselid (1995) found that work practices that focus on employee skill development significantly contribute to employee retention. Effective HRM practices create an environment where employees perceive the organisation as supportive in enhancing their skills, providing regular feedback and rewarding good performance of employees (Wright, Gardner & Moynihan 2003). Consequently, when employees' feel satisfied with both the organisation and the job, they are more likely to improve their connection and commitment to the organisation (Cia et al., 2019; Cohen 2003).

Well-implemented HRM practices have the power to shape employees' behaviour and attitude, leading to a more positive view of the organisation and increased dedication to achieving its goals (Nasurdin et al., 2008:16; Cai et al., 2019). Additionally, they aim to enhance employees' attitudes and commitment, which in turn improves their performance (Cai, Shumaila, Muhammad, Basil & Majid, 2019). According to Lee and Kim (2010), effective HRM practices convey care for employee happiness and trustworthiness, fostering high levels of employee commitment. Furthermore, employees tend to be more satisfied and content when they perceive that HRM practices are favourable, decisions are transparent, performance evaluations are fair and job security is maintained (Elrehail et al., 2019; Guest, 1997). By providing developmental opportunities, employees develop a

different perception of the organisations, ultimately leading to JS and improved employee retention. HRM practices also influence employee behaviour, impacting the overall workforce's effectiveness (Becker, Huselid, Pinckus & Spratt, 1997). For example, when employees display positive attitudes and behaviours towards the organisations, it is often attributed to the organisation's effective HRM practices (Bowen & Ostroff, 2014).

This study focused on specific HRM practices, including training and development (training of potential employees to undertake high-level tasks), compensation and rewards (rewarding employees for outstanding performance). It will also involve performance management (to determine the employees' strengths and weaknesses), supervisor support (providing employees with the necessary support both physically and emotionally), staffing (following the fair process of selection and recruitment), diversity management (to effectively know and understand diversity exist), lastly communication and information sharing (communication of organisational practices). These practices are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.9.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction (JS) is a crucial motivator that significantly impacts employee behaviour and, in the end, contributes to organisational effectiveness (Spector 1997). JS is basically an employee's overall well-being, happiness, and accomplishments in the workplace, incorporating their positive emotional connection with their job and their satisfaction with job expectations. On the other hand, motivation is the drive and determination of an employee to excel in their role and achieve their goals, which can significantly enhance their long-term loyalty to the organisation (Stephanie, 2021).

Various factors can negatively influence JS, such as inadequate pay, unhealthy supervisor-employee relationships, and poor working conditions can (Mudor & Tooksoon 2011). The remuneration package, which includes salary, benefits, and career progression opportunities, is a significant determinant of JS. Employees who perceive fair remuneration and career progression opportunities are more likely to be content with their jobs (Watkins & Fusch, 2022).

Dissatisfaction with one's job, work environment or organisational culture can lead to employee turnover (Mobley, 1982). A positive work environment characterised by supportive collaborative relationships, a healthy, safe workplace, and a culture that promotes work-life balance, can boost JS and retention (Aviola, Fahmy & Lukito, 2022; Deloitte, 2021; Sunarno, Susita & Wolor, 2022). However, Kartika and Rezeki (2024) present a contrasting view, showing that the work environment does not significantly affect employee turnover intentions, suggesting that the work environment does not significantly influence employees' turnover intentions.

Furthermore, employees who experience continuous learning and developmental opportunities feel valued and more likely to remain committed to their organisation (Nguyen and Duong, 2020). When employees' contributions are appreciated, acknowledged and recognised it boosts their motivation and JS (Millacci, 2023; Conlin, 2024). Reward systems also positively impact employees' motivation and JS (Sospeter, 2021; Hastwell, 2023). Employees with positive attitudes are more expectedly to exhibit positive job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Robbins & Judge 2013).

The importance of JS and motivation significantly influence ER, as they significantly influences employees' decision to remain with an organisation or seek other opportunities elsewhere. Employees who are content with their jobs and motivated to excel tend exhibit higher committed their employer over extended periods (Conway, 2021). This contentment and commitment translate to higher retention rates and fulfilment of organisational expectations through exceptional performance (Cherif, 2020; Ribeiro & Semedo, 2014:7). Ultimately, this contribute to higher productivity levels (Bin & Hussin, 2011). Blau (1986) suggests that highly dedicated employees are more engaged in their jobs and exhibit lower absenteeism, highlighting the impact of JS on employee turnover (Cherif, 2020; Mobley, 1982).

Mitchell, Holton, Lee, Sablynski and Erez (2001b) introduce a new perspective on JS, focusing on ER rather than turnover. They argue that employees satisfied with their jobs are less likely to consider leaving, challenging earlier studies that treated JS as a single, global measure (Giel & Breuer, 2021). The perception of employees towards their jobs and the employer's appreciation for their contributions and well-being significantly impacts their retention decisions. JS is influenced by meaningful

work, T&D, and relationships with colleagues. The absence of these can negatively impact employees' decision to stay or leave the organisation (Alli, 2023). Furthermore, El-Ghalayini (2017) found a positive association between T&D and JS, indicating that T&D positively effects on employee's JS levels.

Scholars advocate for a more comprehensive approach by examining various facets of JS (Haarhaus, 2017; Spector, 1997, 2012), which provides an understanding into how different aspects of work contribute to overall satisfaction. Akinwale and George (2020) affirmed that JS predicted retention, and a study by De Sousa Sabbagha, Ledimo & Martins (2018) reached a similar conclusion. Studies have confirmed a positive relationship between JS and ER (Biaison, 2020; Shafiuddin & Al Nassibi, 2022). In contrast, Alli (2023) revealed a negative relationship between JS and ER, implying that while employees might experience or perceive positive JS (e.g., being paid well, receiving training by the organisation, and having good working relationships), they still seek opportunities elsewhere due to the allure of potentially better conditions (“greener pastures”).

Spector's (1997) nine facets of JS, which are depicted in Table 1.2, and discussed in detail in Chapter 3, section 3.4, illustrate this complexity. Understanding these multiple facets helps to elucidate how HRM practices influence employee retention and organisational outcomes (Rubel & Kee, 2015). Aligning HRM practices with high JS, characterised by fair evaluations and job security, is crucial for fostering employee satisfaction and reducing turnover rates.

Table 1. 2: Nine Facets of JS with descriptions

FACET	DESCRIPTION
Pay	Happiness with salary and salary increases
Promotion	Happiness with promotions
Supervision	Happiness with employee's direct supervisor
Fringe benefits	Happiness with cash and non-cash fringe benefits
Contingent rewards	Happiness with thankfulness, acknowledgement and payments for excellent job
Operating procedures	Happiness with operational policies and procedures
Co-workers	Happiness with colleagues
Nature of work	Happiness with work type
Communication	Happiness with communiqué in the organisation

Source: Adapted from Spector (1997: 8)

The nine facets of JS include various aspects of the work environment and organisational dynamics, each contributing to employees' overall JS. These facets collectively shape the JS of employees, highlighting the multifaceted nature of their experiences in the workplace.

In summary, JS and motivation are important factors influencing ER. The literature indicates that a multifaceted approach to understanding and enhancing JS is essential for improving retention rates. Organisations should focus on comprehensive HRM practices that address various aspects of JS to reduce turnover and enhance organisational performance effectively.

1.9.3 Employee Retention

The notion of employee retention (ER) gained prominence in the 1970s and mid 1980s when organisations and employees were relatively unaware of its importance (Mckeown, 2004). By the 1990s, theoretical disagreements surrounding ER began to wane as researchers and psychologists identified various factors impacting employees' JS and their interest in promising opportunities (Rowland & Ferris, 1982). ER has since evolved into a vital aspect for organisations due to its recurring benefits (Dessler, Griffith & Lloyd-Walker, 2007) and is no longer considered an extraordinary concern (Bibi et al., 2016).

Organisations face challenges in retaining skilled employees owing to knowledge gap in effective HRM practices that can assist them to achieve their objectives (Yamamoto, 2011). ER strategies and HRM practices vary across organisations

(Bibi et al, 2016), but prioritising ER over recruiting new employees is essential (Mittar, Saini, & Agarwal, 2014:10). Employees who perceive their contributions to the organisation as valuable are more likely to remain with the organisation (Taylor 2002). Mitchell et al. (2001b) affirm that organisational retention is highly reliant on employees' sense of belonging to the organisation.

Organisations that do not prioritise ER as part of their corporate strategy face high costs in recruitment and training, while those that invest in ER benefit from increased revenue, productivity, work quality, and employee morale. Highly motivated employees are loyal to organisations with a robust employee retention programme (Alli, 2023). Conversely, poor ER leads to high employee turnover, negatively affecting the organisation's performance and productivity (Azeez, 2017:3). High employee turnover directly and indirectly affects the status, appearance, efficiency, and sustainability (Hong et al, 2012). Implementing HRM practices and creating conducive work environment are crucial for retaining employees (Azees, 2017:3; Yamamoto 2011) as employee retention and HRM practices have a close relationship (Arthur, 1994).

ER is a crucial HRM issue that involves an organisation's systematic efforts to create a conducive work environment, thereby enhancing its ability to retain talent (Shrestha, 2019). Therefore, organisations should prioritise effective HRM practices as crucial strategies for retaining talented employees (Shrestha & Prajapati, 2023). Research by Alajlani and Yesufu (2022); Lwin (2022) and Shrestha and Prajapati (2024) concluded that HRM practices such as staffing, and remuneration significantly influence ER. Positive HRM practices in an organisation lead to long-term ER.

According to Asiedu-Appiah, Kantor, and Asamoah (2013), providing opportunities for growth through training is an effective strategy for retaining employees. Alajlani and Yesufu (2022) and Lwin (2022) posit a strong correlation between an employee's decision to remain with an organisation and their participation in T&D initiatives. Several studies affirm a positive relationship between T&D and ER (Aragon-Sanchez et al, 2003; Hussain & Rehman, 2013). Further support comes from Zhang, Yang and Huang (2019); Yadav (2020); Shah , Durrani and Ishtiaq (2021) and Kiran et al. (2023) who emphasise the significant impact of T&D on ER.

Furthermore, El-Ghalayini (2017) asserted that T&D positively affects employee commitment. In contrast, other research findings indicate that T&D that does not impact ER (Noranee, Som, Adam, Aziz & Shahrudin, 2021; Shrestha & Prajapati, 2024). T Chris-Madu (2020) claims that investing in employee T&D without a good remuneration package is insufficient for achieving higher retention. Furthermore, Shrestha and Prajapati (2024) indicated that T&D and performance appraisal practices have a negative impact on ER.

Döckel (2003) identified six factors that contribute to ER within the South African context. This research adopts these factors listed, as listed in Table 1.3, for further discussion in Chapter 4.

Table 1. 3: Retention factors

Retention factors	Frequency of factors in high-technology literature	Rank order of frequency
Training and development opportunities	32	1
Supervisor support	25	2
Career opportunities	23	3
Job characteristics	52	4
Work-life balance	19	5
Remuneration	14	6

Source: Döckel (2003: 16)

The literature highlights the complexity of ER and the multifaceted approaches needed to address it. Effective HRM practices, supportive work environments, and continuous opportunities for employee development are crucial for retaining talent and enhancing organisational performance.

1.9.4 Integration of the three research constructs

The integration of HRM practices, JS and ER is crucial for comprehending their interrelation and impact on organisational outcomes. Challenges in retaining knowledgeable employees persist, making ER a problematic issue for organisations (Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Irshad, 2011:327-328). Well-managed HRM practices, addressing both employee and organisational needs, lead to JS, fostering commitment and reducing turnover (Berry and Morris, 2008:3).

Several studies highlight the positive impact of HRM practices on reducing turnover and absenteeism while promoting retention (Arthur, 1994; Delaney & Huselid, 1996). These practices signal organisational value, thereby reducing turnover costs (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Guest et al., 2003; Lam, Chen & Takeuchi, 2009). Mabindisa's (2014) study in the Eastern Cape Province Department emphasise salary as a primary cause of turnover, leading to increased workload for remaining employees. Unhealthy relationships and poor working conditions further contributed to employee turnover. Recommendations from this study included offering competitive salaries, goal rewards, career opportunities, and employee involvement in decision-making. Additionally, research by Priartini and Christy (2019) and Yikilmaz, Sürücü and Güteryüz (2023) highlighted that increased workload and stress can increase employee turnover intentions.

Employee satisfaction directly impacts organisational performance and productivity (Azeez, 2017). Retaining employees requires ensuring JS through fair remuneration, development and performance incentives (Azeez, 2017). Dissatisfied employees are more likely to consider leaving, while satisfied employees exhibit better retention rates and performance (Mitchell et al., 2001b; Mudor & Tooksoon, 2011:41).

Organisations employ retention strategies recognising the disruptive impact of skilled employees' departure on service delivery (Chiboiwa, 2009:83; Mckeown, 2004:297-298). HRM practices are positively correlated with JS and negatively with ER (Mudor & Toosoon, 2011:41). JS is expected to mediate the HRM practices and ER relationship. The literature review suggests a complex interplay where JS plays a crucial mediating role. Figure 1.1 illustrates the proposed research framework.

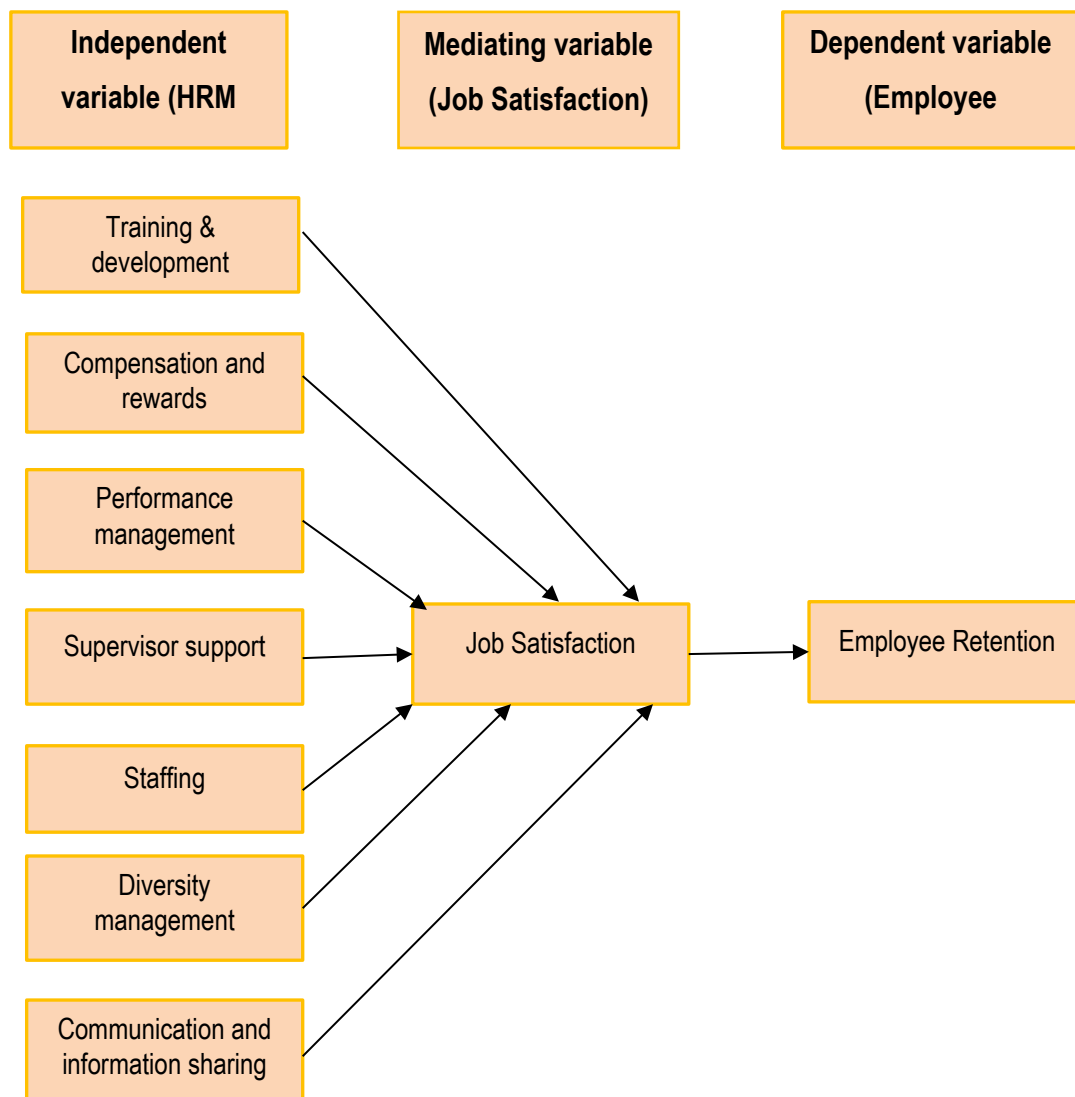


Figure 1. 1: Proposed research framework (Own compilation)

Figure 1.1 illustrates the mediating effect of JS on the relationship between HRM practices (training and development, remuneration and rewards, performance management, supervisor support, staffing, diversity management, communication, and information sharing) and ER.

In explaining the mediating role of JS on the connection between HRM practices and ER, this study proposes that, with the effective implementation of HRM practices, employees would be more satisfied in their jobs. This in turn will enhance employees' retention and reduces employee turnover costs (Azees, 2017 & Bibi et al. 2016).

Existing research consistently demonstrates a strong association between HRM practices and employee retention (ER), highlighting that satisfied employees tend to exhibit higher retention rates and lower turnover (Mitchell, et al., 2001b). Bibi et al. (2016) further supports the idea that JS provides an empirical support for the mediating role of JS on the relationship between HRM practices and ER. Moreover, it is proposed that JS itself serves as a mediator between HRM practices and JS.

The study conducted by Kalia et al. (2023), highlights that JS significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices, such as compensation and performance appraisal, and ER. This underscores the critical role of JS in explaining how HRM initiatives influence ER within organisational settings.

This section provides robust empirical evidence supporting the important role of HRM practices in shaping JS and ER outcomes. It emphasises the importance of adopting integrated HRM strategies that foster a positive work environment, promote employee satisfaction, and ultimately reduce turnover, thereby enhancing organisational effectiveness.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design plays an important role in studying the research problem and addressing the pertinent questions within a research study (Christensen 2001; Spector, 2012). It serves as a foundational element in research (Spector, 2012), guiding the approach taken to investigate the research problem. The choice of the research design depends on whether the study is exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory in nature (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

For this study, a quantitative, cross-sectional survey, with a descriptive research design was adopted. This design allows for an examination of the relationship between HRM practices, and ER, with JS as mediating variable. A cross-sectional survey, a non-experimental research design, involves the measurement of specific variables in a sample of individuals at a single point in time. It is generally faster and less expensive to conduct since they require only one round of data collection (Unisa Study Guide, 101/2009). However, this approach contrasts with longitudinal studies, which collect data at multiple time intervals. Additionally, the study aimed

to explore whether the influence of demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry on HRM practices, JS and ER.

Descriptive research, as defined by Nardi (2014), is concerned with the collection of data to accurately depict conditions and events (Babbie & Benaquisto 2010). In this study, descriptive research serves to conceptualise HRM practices, JS and ER. The empirical phase of the study of employees adopted descriptive research methods, utilising statistical measures such as means, standard deviations, and Cronbach alpha to scrutinise HRM practices, JS and ER.

Explanatory research, according to Babbie and Beaquisto (2010), explores the relationship between the research variables to answers questions related to the research study. Its primary aim is to provide insights into the causal relationship among the variables related to the research problem (Terre Blanche et al., 2006; Van Wyk, 2012). In the context of this study, explanatory research aims to establish a conclusive understanding of the relationship between HRM practices and ER, with JS serving as a mediating variable. It seeks to clarify cause-and-effect relationships between the variables.

The study effectively addresses its research objectives by adopting a quantitative, cross-sectional survey with a descriptive and explanatory research design. This method allows for measuring and analysing HRM practices, ER, and JS, providing a detailed description and an explanatory understanding of their relationships. The chosen approach ensures that the findings are robust and generalisable and can offer valuable knowledge to human resource management.

1.10.1 Research Variables

When defining a research design, it is beneficial to differentiate between the various research constructs, including the independent variable (IV), dependent variable (DV) and mediating variable (MV) (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The independent variable impacts other variables, leading to changes, whereas a mediating variable intervenes in the relationship between the IV and the DV (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The IV influences and responds to the DV (Terre Blanche et al. 2006).

Figure 1.2 represents the study's theoretical model, examining the relationship between HRM practices, JS ER and the potential impact on these demographic research constructs.

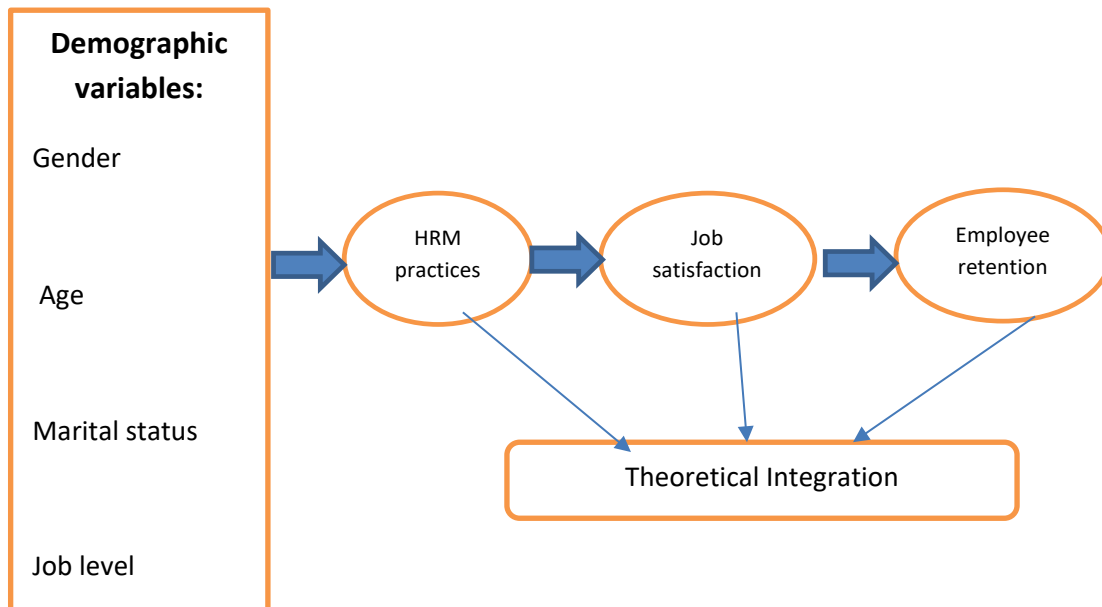


Figure 1. 2: Theoretical model for the study (Own compilation)

1.10.2 Validity and reliability

The researcher should address the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument to improve the research study (Terre Blanche et al. 2006).

- **Validity**

Validity is the process by which the findings precisely denote the actual situation. A test is claimed to be valid if it measures what it is intended to measure. The relevant and suitable interpretation of the data produced from the measuring instrument as a result of the analysis determines the validity (Sūrűcű & Maslakci, 2020). Research errors, like poor samples and inaccurate or misleading measurements, can undermine validity (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). To ensure validity, standardised measuring instruments, suitable data analysis methods, models and theories related to the research were utilised. Researchers use internal and external validity when interpreting the validity of their research results.

Internal validity defines the extent to which changes in the dependent variable are due to the independent variable. Therefore, internal validity concerns sampling and design (Welman et al., 2005). This research study confirmed internal validity by ensuring consistency in the measuring instrument adopted.

Conversely, external validity defines the degree to which it is possible to generalise from the data collected and the research study context to the broader populations and settings. In addition, external is about generalisability (i.e., how representative the sample is) (Terre Blanche et al., 2006: 90). In this research study, external validity was confirmed by choosing a representative sample for improved generalisation.

To ensure the validity of this study, specific steps were meticulously taken: (1) comprehensive planning and structuring of the research design to safeguard the validity of the findings; (2) incorporation of models and theories relevant to the research topic, aims, and problem statement; (3) verification of the validity, appropriateness, and applicability of the chosen constructs; (4) careful selection of accurate, appropriate, and applicable measuring instruments; and (5) the meticulous selection of a representative sample (Oosthuizen, Mayer & Zwane, 2021).

- **Reliability**

In terms of measurement, reliability is the stability of the research tool across time. Reliability, therefore, refers to a measurement instrument's capacity to produce consistent results when used at various points in time (Súrúćú & Maslakci, 2020). According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:154), reliability is when the measuring instrument yields equivalent outcomes on the same occurrences.

Internal reliability determines the accuracy with which each item measures the same underlying construct (Salkind, 2017). This study established internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, a widely used measure for ensuring internal consistency (Kipkebut, 2010). These coefficients were employed to ascertain the stability and consistency of the instrument used for data collection. Cronbach's alpha ranges between 0 and 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability of the

scales (Kipkebut, 2010). According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 is acceptable for basic research purposes.

When a technique is consistent from one situation to the next, it is said to be **externally reliable**. For instance, an experiment conducted on two distinct days by two different researchers ought to yield comparable results (e.g. two researchers using the same interview format, equipment, behaviour schedule, or test should obtain the same results) (Psychology Hub, 2021). In other words, when a test or measure is externally reliable, it can be applied to purposes other than those for which it was originally designed (Glen, n.d.).

To ensure the reliability of this study, all the research instruments used were standardised. The data were collected only from employees within a South African national department (across various provinces). SPSS 28 (IBM, 2021) was adopted to interpret and analyse the data collected. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (reliability analysis) was also calculated to guarantee the measure's dependability. Concerning the research procedure, the following control mechanisms were implemented to ensure reliability: (1) the three data collection instruments met rigorous validity and reliability standards; (2) participation was restricted to employees from the national department; (3) the researcher stored all collected data electronically, and access to this information was restricted to the researcher, statistician and supervisor; and (4) only the researchers were allowed to access this information.

1.10.3 Unit of analysis

Kumar (2018) explains the unit of analysis as the individual from which the researcher gathers information. It explains the "what" and "who" of research. Research is being done on the population as a whole, like humans, groups or organisations (Welman et al., 2005). For this research study, the unit of analysis was full-time employees of a South African national government department across different provinces, namely Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga, and Gauteng.

1.10.4 Delimitations

The study was confined to a government department, limiting the generalisability of findings. The research specifically explored the impact of HRM practices, mediated by JS, on ER. Moreover, the study targeted full-time employees aged 26-65 in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, and Mpumalanga.

1.10.5 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are an important part of research studies. Ethics protect participants' rights because they should not be mistreated; they should be well taken care of for the entire research process (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

The privacy and secrecy were confirmed and guaranteed through a well-informed consent letter accompanying the questionnaire (Attached as Annexure A). In addition, no participants' names were included in the questionnaire. In the letter, the research purpose was thoroughly explained.

Participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity through a well-informed consent letter (see Annexure B) accompanying the questionnaire. However, participants were not expected to indicate their names on the questionnaire. The rationale for the research was clarified in the well-informed consent letter.

All the data collected in the research study will be kept safe and secured for five years after completion. Furthermore, completed questionnaires are secured; only the researcher can access them. Only the researcher, supervisor and statistician have access to collected data and signed confidentiality agreements.

The University of South Africa's (Unisa) research ethics policy was adopted as a guide and formed part of this study (Unisa 2014). The following ethics were followed:

- Essentiality and relevance – considering existing literature based on HRM practices, JS and ER.
- Expansion of the community – human resources practitioners and organisations (both public and private) will benefit from this research study.
- Skill, capability, and pledge to do research – the researcher has the skill and capability and is devoted to doing the study.

- Respect and safeguard the rights and dignity of participants – participants were assured that the information provided would be confidential and anonymous and that their privacy is protected. The matter of anonymity was clarified, and all participants indicated that they should not indicate any form of identification as this could compromise their privacy. Furthermore, it was explained to research participants that all data collected will be safeguarded. It will never be used to disrepute the organisation and participants.
- Informed and non-coerced consent – The department employs the researcher. To mitigate conflict of interest, it was explained to all participants that their participation was voluntary. Informed consent and permission were acquired by the researcher from management to administer the research tool to employees.
- Respect for cultural differences – The researcher managed diversity and treated all participants with respect, as well as respected their cultural differences.
- Honesty, transparency and accountability – Other researchers' contributions have been referenced throughout the study.

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from Unisa to conduct the study – reference number 2020_HRM_012 (Attached as Annexure C).

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was comprised of two phases: (1) a literature review and (2) an empirical study. Figure 1.3 illustrates the research methodology and outlines the steps taken throughout the research process to ensure a systematic approach.

Phase 1: Literature review

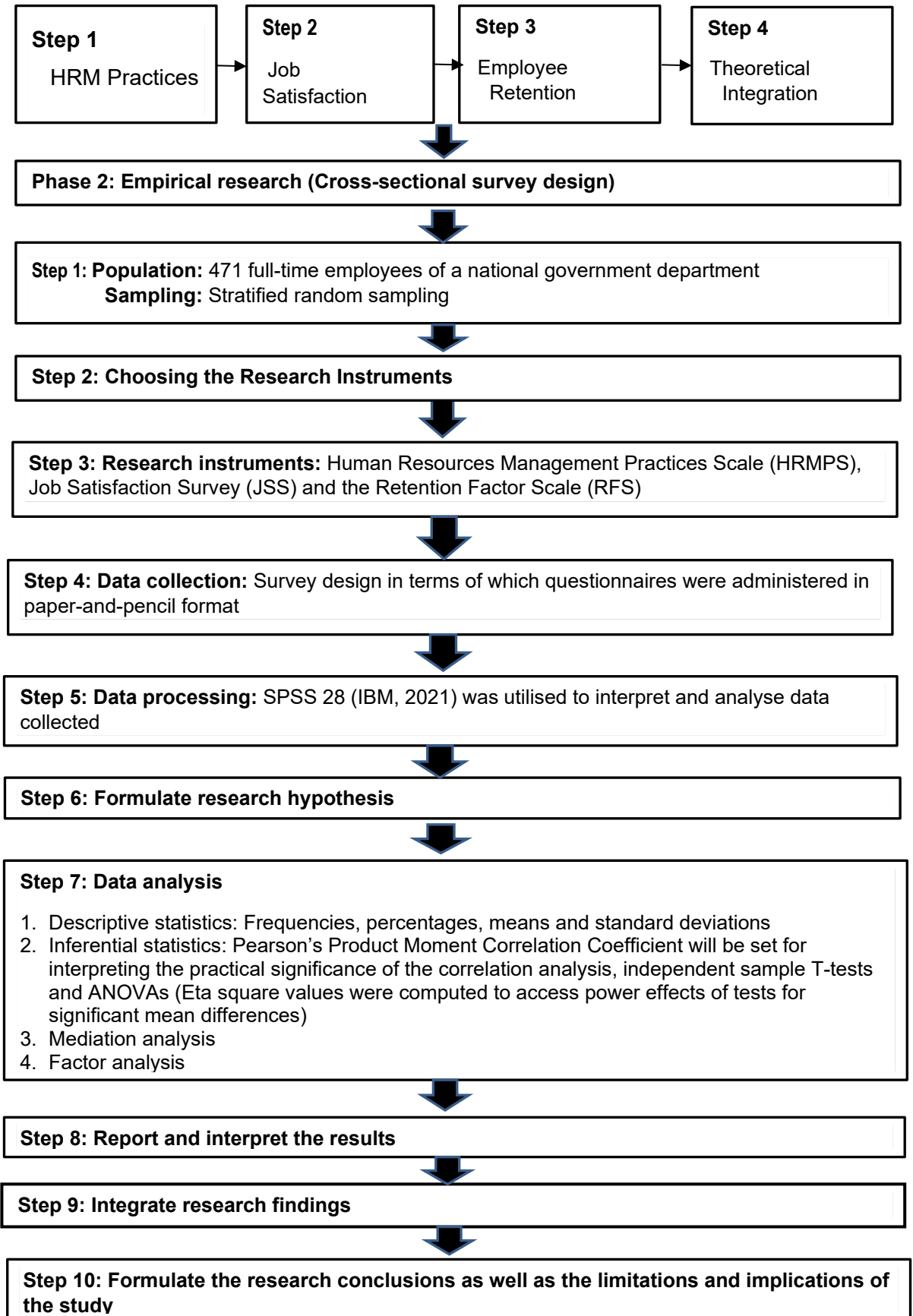


Figure 1. 3: Research process for the study (Adapted from Babbie, 2017: 115)

Phase 1: The literature review

The literature review analysed three key constructs, JS, ER, and HRM practices, as well as their theoretical integration and the theoretical relationship between them. *This will be discussed in Chapters 2 to 4.*

The steps that were followed at this stage are:

Step 1: HRM practices were conceptualised from the theoretical perspective.

Step 2: Conceptualised JS from a theoretical perspective.

Step 3: ER was conceptualised from a theoretical perspective.

Step 4: The conceptualised theoretical relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER.

Phase 2: The empirical study

The empirical section is presented in *Chapter 5*, where the chapter presents the central focus of the research and the research design discussion. *Chapter 6* presents the research findings and limitations, whereas *Chapter 7* presents the conclusions and recommendations for further research.

This phase involved examining the following steps.

Step 1: Population and termination of the sample

The target population refers to the total number of employees participating in the study. This study's population comprised 471 full-time employees (N = 471) in the government department.

Sampling involves selecting individuals from a larger group, constituting the sample from which data are collected (Casteel & Bridier, 2021; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:129). For the empirical study, probability sampling was adopted to select participants to partake in the study. *A comprehensive discussion of the population and sample is presented in Chapter 5.*

Step 2: Choosing the research instruments

The research has adopted questionnaires to address HRM practices, JS and ER questions. *A detailed discussion of the research instruments is presented in Chapter 5.*

Step 3: Research instruments

The tool adopted to collate quantitative data was a self-administered questionnaire split into four sections. The first section consisted of participants' biographical details, such as age, gender, job level and port of entry. The second section consisted of HRM practice questions. The last section consisted of ER questions, while part four consisted of the mediating variable, JS. This study tested HRM practices using the Human Resources Practices Scale (HRPS) originally established by Nyawose (2009). Employee retention as the DV of the research study was tested using the Retention Factor Scale (RFS) established by Döckel (2003). The RFS comprises 39 items measuring satisfaction with retention factors. As the mediator, job satisfaction was tested using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) established by Spector (1997). *Detailed discussions are presented in Chapter 5.*

Step 4: Data collection

The following data collection procedure was followed:

- Selected participants were telephonically contacted by Ports HR Officers (who were the appointed gatekeepers) to collect questionnaires in sealed envelopes from a box within the office;
- The participants completed a paper and pencil questionnaire;
- The questionnaires were distributed with an endorsement letter from the university, which accompanied the questionnaire. The questionnaire was further accompanied by a detailed cover letter outlining the research objectives and
- Ethical approval was obtained from Unisa for conducting the research.

The data collection process is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Step 5: Data processing

The participant's responses to the questionnaire were captured into an Excel spreadsheet and analysed using the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS). *Data processing is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.*

Step 6: Formulate the research hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative and testable statement that suggests a relationship between two or more variables (Elmes, Kantowitz & Roediger, 2012; McCombes, 2022). The following research hypotheses were formulated to achieve the objectives of the proposed study:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a national government department within the South African context.

H_{a1}: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a national government department within the South African context.

H₀₂: JS does not statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices (independent variable) and ER (dependent variable).

H_{a2}: JS statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices (independent variable) and ER (dependent variable).

H₀₃: Differences do not exist in terms of HRM practices and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry.

H_{a3}: Differences exist in HRM practices and demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry.

H₀₄: Differences do not exist in terms of JS and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry.

H_{a4}: Differences do exist in terms of JS and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry.

H₀₅: Differences do not exist in terms of ER and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry.

H_{a5}: Differences exist in ER and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and port of entry.

Step 7: Data analysis

The data analysis technique relies highly on the research study purpose and the information collated (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were included in the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics arrange statistical information in an organised and understandable way, whereas inferential statistics test the hypotheses to see a connection between variables (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Additionally, Hayes Process Analysis (model 4) was used to test the mediating effect of JS on the relationship between HRM practices and ER. *Data analysis is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.*

Step 8: Report and interpret the results

This research effectively presented the results through tables, figures and diagrams. The findings were systematically organised and discussed, facilitating a clear and enhanced interpretation of the research outcomes. *This is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.*

Step 9: Integration of the research findings

The outcomes of the literature review were integrated with the findings from the empirical investigation to formulate the comprehensive conclusions of the research study. *This is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.*

Step 10: Formulation of conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

In the concluding step of the research, the study's conclusions were primarily derived from synthesising the research findings and existing theories. *The research limitations were addressed in Chapter 7, recommendations concerning JS's mediating role in the relationship between employees' experiences of HRM practices and ER.*

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study is divided into seven chapters and is illustrated in Figure 1.4.

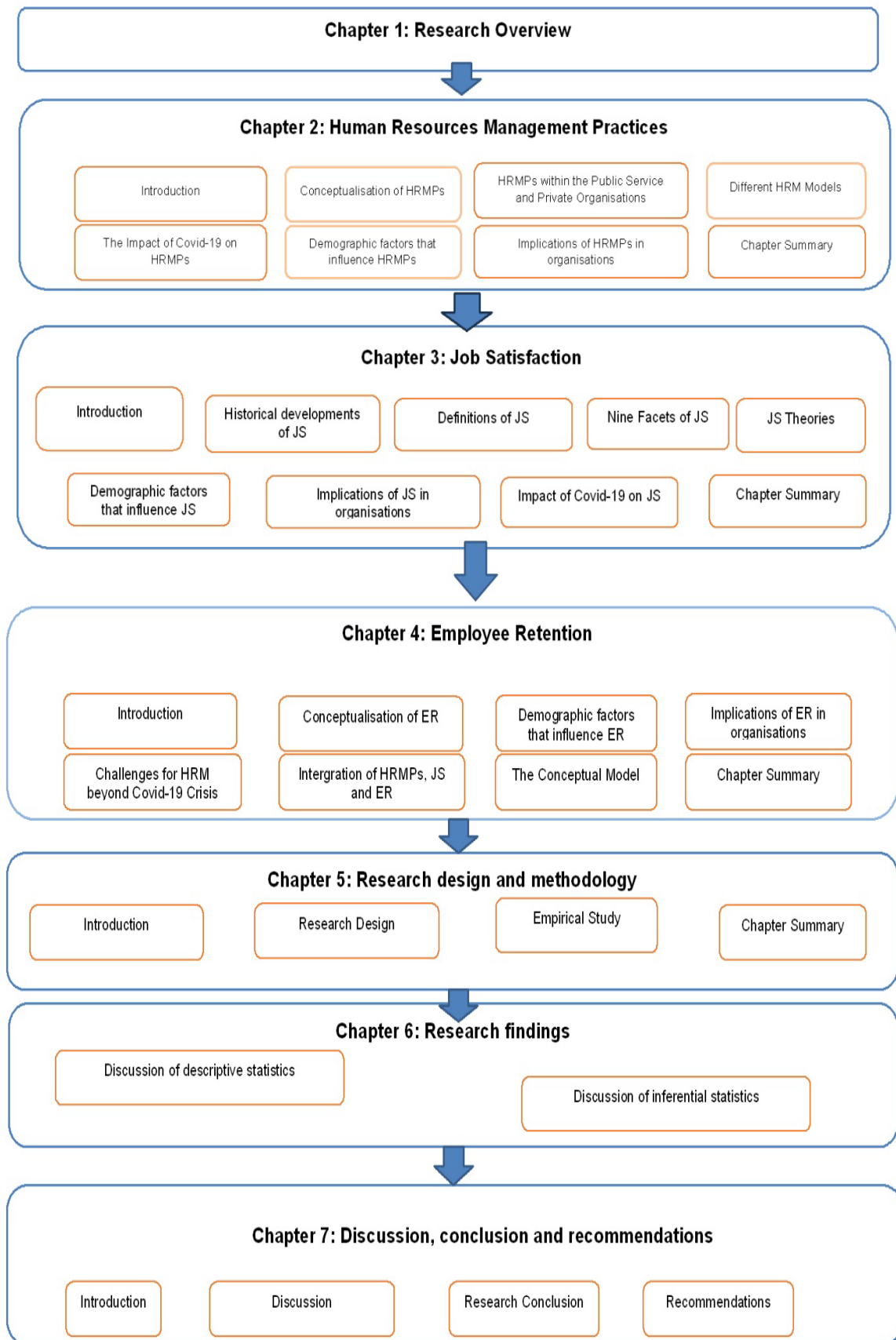


Figure 1. 4: Structure of the study (Own compilation)

The chapters are presented in the following manner:

Chapter 1: Research Overview

Chapter 1 focuses on the research background, motivation, problem statement, aim, objectives, research design, and methodology.

Chapter 2: HRM models and Human resources management practices

This chapter will start with an exploration of various HRM models, with a particular focus on the system-based view of HR. It explores the literature review, highlighting the nature of HRM practices and their definitions. Additionally, it focuses on HRM practices theory and examines research conducted by other scholars in the field. The discussion is then extended to include the demographic factors influencing HRM practices, including age, gender, marital status, job level, and port of entry. The chapter concludes by exploring the implications of HRM practices within organisations, offering a comprehensive understanding of their multifaceted roles and impacts.

Chapter 3: Job satisfaction

In this chapter, a literature review concerning JS will be presented. The chapter will start with an exploration of the historical development of JS, after which descriptions and JS theories will also be studied. Furthermore, the chapter examines the important role of JS as a mediating variable in the relationship between HRM practices and ER, explaining how it contributes to attaining the study's goals. To provide a comprehensive perspective, discussion is provided on JS's roles as a mediator within the study's context. Finally, a discussion on the demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, job level, and port of entry) influencing JS is provided.

Chapter 4: Employee Retention

This chapter will explain ER strategies within organisational contexts and conduct a rigorous analysis of prevailing ER theories and their theoretical characteristics. Furthermore, the impact of demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, job level, and port of entry on ER will be examined. The final objective of this chapter is to synthesise and explain the relationship between the three constructs: JS, HRM practices and ER. This synthesis will be drawn from existing literature to provide a

nanced understanding of their interconnectedness. Finally, the chapter will further examine the mediating role of JS in the relationship between HRM practices and ER, focusing on explaining the underlying mechanisms.

Chapter 5: Research design and methodology

This chapter emphasises the research design's purpose, type, analysis, variables, validity, reliability, unit of analysis, limitations, delimitations, and ethical considerations. It also discusses the population, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter 6: Research findings

This chapter presents the research findings, the sample demographic factors, descriptive and inferential statistics, and hypothesis testing, focusing on explaining the relationship between the various constructs under investigation.

Chapter 7: Discussion, conclusion, and recommendation

Chapter 7 summarises the research findings, discusses the interpretation, addresses the study's limitations, provides valuable recommendations, and concludes with a concise summary conclusion.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the historical context and rationale for conducting this research. The chapter commenced with an exploration of the problem statement, followed by a detailed presentation of the research objectives. The research design and research approach were then explicated. The driving force behind this study was investigating whether JS significantly mediates the relationship between employees' experiences of HRM practices and ER within a South African national government department.

Chapter 2 discusses the different HRM models, focusing on the system-based view of HR. It will then provide a discussion on a literature review highlighting the nature of HRM practices.

CHAPTER 2: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

HRM practices play an important role in assisting organisations to attract, retain and effectively utilise their human capital to achieve strategic goals and be competitive (Rees & Smith 2014; Sedudu, Kocabacak & Güven, 2013:819; Bal, Bozkurt & Ertemsir 2014:1026). In addition, HRM practices have a role to play in building a workable mutual relationship between organisations and their employees. This relationship follows the “social exchange theory,” in which employees offer their services to the organisations in exchange for perks and other benefits they receive (Mehwish, Abeera, Aideed & Tania, 2019). In the modern business landscape, the significance of HRM practices in influencing employee performance, JS, commitment, and retention is widely acknowledged (Momemi, Marjani & Saadat, 2012:217; Bal et al., 2014:1028).

This chapter serves as a conceptual exploration of HRM practices. It begins by defining HRM practices and explaining the various models underpinning them. Additionally, this chapter explores the effect of COVID-19 on an organisation’s HRM practices, followed by a discussion of the demographic factors that can influence the implementation and impact of HRM practices, including age, gender, marital status, job level and PoE. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of the broader implications of HRM practices within organisational contexts.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Several definitions of HRM practices exist in the literature. As highlighted in Chapter 1, Schuler and Jackson (1987) define HRM practices as strategies to attract, improve, influence, and retain employees to ensure organisational success and survival. HRM practices are a collection of internally cohesive strategies designed to foster and boost employee skills and motivation (Elrehail et al., 2019). These practices include a cohesive set of strategies to enhance employee performance by retaining skilled, dedicated and motivated staff (Hassan, 2021).

The HRM practices selected for this research align with their significance within the chosen industry and are derived from the study conducted by Nyawose (2009) and Steyn (2012). These authors identified specific HRM practices that have proven effective in South Africa. They include training and development, compensation and rewards, performance management, supervisor support, staffing, diversity management, and communication and information sharing.

2.2.1 Training and Development

Training and development (T&D) refers to the extent of career development opportunities available in the workplace and how this training applies to employees' present and upcoming roles (Deloitte & Touché, 2009). T&D as defined by Rodriguez and Walters (2017), T&D serves as a critical HR management function aimed at bridging existing performance gaps with future expectations. It is primarily aimed at enhancing employees' competencies necessary for their job roles, empowering and cultivating skills across various management levels (Bangura, 2017:30). Additionally, it empowers employees to enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities in daily operations, contributing to organisational success (Tan & Nasurdin 2011). It further leads to employee productivity and contributes to employee self-esteem, JS, and motivation, all of which are outcomes of effective training (ALDamoe 2011:78). Today, with the profound influence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the global repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of T&D in the business landscape has never been more pronounced (GetSmarter, 2021).

Although T&D are two different concepts, both seek to improve employees' skill sets to help them achieve performance-related objectives (Sharma & Taneja, 2018). Training aims to improve workforce competencies to accomplish organisational tasks, whereas development aims to enhance competencies related to the job (Dowling & Welch, 2004).

A learner-based training improves employee performance capacities (Al Barwani, 2019; Sharma & Taneja, 2018). According to Barton and Delbridge (2001), training involves acquiring the skills necessary for employees to perform their jobs. Noe (2012:23) posits that training primarily targets job-related competencies to

enhance employee efficiency, productivity, effectiveness, and knowledge, leading to improved morale, JS, and reduced turnover (Swanepoel, 2016:32; Pheiffer, 2017: 98).

Development is a continuous process beyond the specific work role (Katou, 2017). It includes a methodical process that involves several steps, including examining the existing situation, formulating goals, creating an action plan, and carrying out the plan (Senge, 2017). Development not only includes those activities that increase job performance but also those that protrude employees' character (Noe, 2021:23). Undoubtedly, highly knowledgeable and skilled employees are better equipped to meet organisational expectations, therefore contributing to organisational success (ALDamoe, 2011:75). Montgomery (2006) suggests that emphasising developmental opportunities can result in improved ER by fostering satisfaction.

According to Mabe et al. (2018: 721), T&D benefit both employers and employees and is an effective tool for management, contributing to organisational success (Bangura, 2017:36-37). Moreover, these opportunities secure employees' jobs, reducing labour turnover and absenteeism in the workplace (Nassazi, 2013:23). Moreover, Erasmus et al. (2015:56) suggest that T&D opportunities received by employees enable recognition and open doors for promotion opportunities and increased responsibilities.

A company's ability to remain competitive depends on its workforce, and employee performance is key to that success. Consequently, senior management should dedicate substantial time and effort to training and developing employees to enhance their performance (Bangura, 2017:30). According to Asiedu-Appiah, Kantor, and Asamoah (2013), providing opportunities for growth through training is an effective strategy for retaining employees. Alajlani and Yesufu (2022) and Lwin (2022) posit a strong correlation between employees' decision to remain with the organisation and their participation in T&D initiatives. Additionally, several studies affirm a positive relationship between T&D and ER (Aragon-Sanchez et al., 2003; Hussain & Rehman, 2013). Further support comes from Zhang, Yang and Huang (2019), Yadav (2020), Shah et al. (2021) and Kiran et al. (2023), who emphasise the significant impact of T&D on ER. Furthermore, El-Ghalayini (2017) asserted that T&D positively affects employee commitment. However, this view is contested by findings from Noranee et al. (2021) and Shrestha and Prajapati (2024), who reported that T&D does not

significantly impact ER (Noranee et al., 2021; Shrestha & Prajapati, 2024). Interestingly, Shrestha and Prajapati (2024) further suggested that T&D might negatively impact ER, a perspective echoed by Chris-Madu (2020), who claims that investing in employee T&D without a good remuneration package is insufficient to achieve higher retention rates.

Furthermore, El-Ghalayini (2017) highlighted a positive association between T&D and JS, indicating that T&D can enhance employees' JS levels. This underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of T&D's impact on organisational outcomes, suggesting that while T&D can boost JS, its effect on ER may depend on other factors, such as remuneration packages. The advantages of training and development, benefiting both employees and employers, are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2. 1: Benefits of training and development for employers and employees

Benefits for an employer	Benefits for an employee
To increase the skill competency of an employee to execute a job	Employees are assisted to concentrate on the training provided as the main concern is for them to be empowered
Improve employee performance and productivity.	Employees are informed on improved competencies to align them with business goals and objectives.
Reduce staff turnover and increase motivation.	Employees are engaged and informed on recent information related to the job, ultimately enhancing customer service.
Reduce the need to dismiss workers because of incapacity.	Organisations encountering problems are given an unbiased professional opinion or critique.
The right attitude fosters a low probability of industrial accidents.	Employees will be satisfied with their jobs and motivated, and their morale will increase, ultimately reducing employee turnover.
Less supervision is required, and costs are reduced because of less wastage.	Employees are given technical and managerial skills to handle increased work assignments.
Trained employees can perform better with few errors, do not need supervision, and tend to develop positive attitudes towards the organisation.	Employee confidence is improved, and employees will contribute to the team and increase their morale.

Source: Adapted from Alan, Haccoun, Belcourt (2010:6-7); Aswathapa (2005:200); Reddick, Cogburn (2008:321); Sommerville (2007:209) and Amos, Ristow, Ristow and Pearse (2008:333).

The significance of T&D becomes even more pronounced in times of crisis, such as pandemics. During such periods, training is crucial for supporting employees in the transition to remote work (Devyania, Jewanc, Bansal, & Denge, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Devyania, Jewanc, Bansal, & Denge, 2020; Hamouche, 2020). Not all

employees possess the digital skills necessary to adapt to the ICT-driven changes. Consequently, organisations have increasingly prioritised providing training initiatives to enhance employees' ICT competencies. This training equips employees with the skills to effectively collaborate and communicate with colleagues and managers in remote work settings (Greer & Payne, 2014).

While the literature presents conflicting views on the direct impact of T&D on ER, the positive effects of T&D on JS are well-documented. This suggests that a holistic approach, integrating T&D with adequate remuneration and other HRM practices, is essential for optimising ER and overall organisational performance. The necessity of T&D is particularly evident in crises, where equipping employees with relevant skills can significantly enhance their ability to adapt and perform in evolving work environments.

2.2.1.1 Impact of COVID-19 on training and development

COVID-19 has posed significant obstacles to professional advancement inside organisations in addition to training (Hamouche, 2021). Baert et al. (2020) and Akkermans, Richardson and Kraimer (2020) have reported a significant career shock caused by COVID-19. Baert et al. (2020) found that 3, 821 employees feared jobs and anticipated missed promotions due to the crisis.

Traditionally, organisations regularly conducted face-to-face training sessions to enhance employee performance (Walters, 2018). However, the pandemic necessitated a shift from face-to-face to online training methods to mitigate virus transmission risks, which proved costly for many organisations. Studies by Rana, Rajiv and Lal (2014) and Mwita (2020) suggest that online training programmes may be less effective than face-to-face sessions. Organisations unwilling or unable to adapt online formats may reduce training frequency or cease training altogether (Mwita, 2020). Furthermore, Mwita (2020) and Johar, Rosli, Khairi, Shahrudin and Nor (2022) note disparities in course allowances, where participants in face-to-face sessions receive benefits not extended to those in online training, thereby reducing motivation for the latter.

2.2.2 Compensation and Rewards

The term 'compensation' is interchangeably used with terms such as pay, remuneration and employee reward. The term "remuneration" is mostly used in South Africa (Coetzee, Bezuidenhout, Hyra & Lee, 2020). As defined by Kgoedi and Pillay (2018:136), remuneration includes wages and salaries provided to the employees. According to Erasmus, Schenk, Mulaudzi, and Grobler (2019:466), remuneration refers to the monetary and non-monetary extrinsic benefits that an employer offers in exchange for an employee's time, abilities and effort in fulfilling job responsibilities that are aimed for achieving organisational goals.

Effective remuneration and rewards strategies play an important role in motivating, retaining and engaging employees (Aktar, Sachu & Ali, 2012; Lwin, 2022; Hamukwaya & Yazdanifard, 2014; Ram & Prabhaker, 2011; Igomu, 2023). Yadav (2020) emphasises that remuneration is particularly significant in ER, supported by Kiran et al. (2023). In contrast, Shah, Durrani and Ishtiaq (2021) argue that rewards and remuneration do not necessarily correlate with ER, suggesting a more complex relationship.

Providing enticing incentives and recognising employee contributions can foster a sense of loyalty and commitment, increase employees' engagement level, and enhance JS (Bussin & Toerien, 2015; WorldatWork, 2006; Oriarewo, Agbim & Owutuamor, 2013). This perspective is supported by Kalia et al. (2023) and Kartika and Rezeki (2024), who assert that remuneration and rewards significantly impact JS. Similarly, El-Ghalayini (2017) highlights that remuneration and rewards positively affect JS. In contrast, studies by Thokoa, Naidoo and Herbst (2021) and Kartika and Rezeki (2024) suggest that remuneration does not significantly impact JS, indicating diverse viewpoints within the literature.

Shrestha and Prajapati (2024) further indicate that remuneration and rewards significantly and positively impact ER. This is supported by Chen and Choi (2020), who reveal that competitive remuneration positively influences ER rates. Additionally, research by Alajlani & Yesufu (2022), Lwin (2022) and Shrestha and Prajapati (2024)

concludes that remuneration does influence ER, implying that positive HRM practices in an organisation lead to long-term ER.

Research consistently emphasises that fair and competitive remuneration enhances JS and contributes significantly to ER (Ahmad, 2013; Francis, 2014: 1746; Zaitouni, Sarahi & Sharif, 2011: 110). Salary increments, performance bonuses and promotions are identified as key factors in fostering employee loyalty (Zaitouni et al., 2011:110). Positive perceptions of the organisation's remuneration are important in maintaining employee commitment (Hong et al., 2012:65).

Remuneration and rewards are integral HRM practices that not only motivate employees but also align their interests with organisational objectives, thereby promoting organisational success (Ayite & Mutambara, 2016:16; Irshad & Afridi, 2011; Johanim & Yhava, 2012: 2340; Mathis & Jackson, 2004; Hussain & Rehman, 2013:3629).

Equity theory, as explained by Noe et al. (2010), provides a framework for understanding the effects of remuneration. Employees compare their pay, benefits, and working conditions to those of their peers in terms of effort, ability, and experience. Perceived inequity, whether over- or under-remuneration, can significantly affect employees and influence their work behaviour and attitudes (Ayite & Mutambara 2016:16). The theory distinguishes between external equity (comparing remuneration packages with those of similar positions in other organisations) and internal equity (comparing remuneration within the organisation across different roles and levels) Ayite and Mutambara (2016:16).

2.2.2.1 Factors influencing the remuneration system

An organisation's remuneration system may be impacted by both internal and external factors (Snell & Bohlander, 2007:384-388). According to Coetzee et al. (2020), external factors are those factors beyond the control of the organisation, while internal factors are those that the organisation can control, for example, the ability to pay. Remuneration decisions are made within the context of these external and internal factors as organisations strive to align their remuneration strategies with industry

standards and internal equity (Coetzee et al., 2020:8). Figure 2.1, presented below, illustrates the internal and external factors that can influence an organisation's remuneration system.

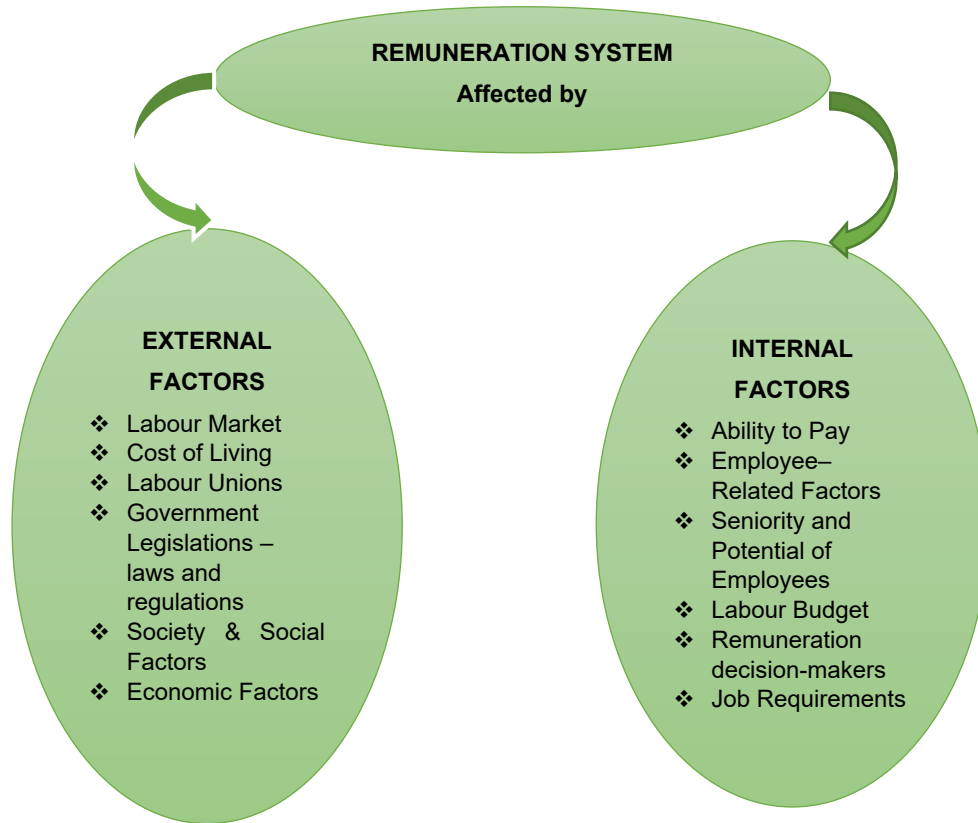


Figure 2. 1: Internal and External Factors Influencing Remuneration (Adapted from Snell and Bohlander, 2007: 384-388)

External Environmental Factors

The external factors, as per Snell and Bohlander (2007: 384-388) and Coetzee et al. (2020:9-13) are as follows:

Labour market. The labour market, often known as the job market, concerns the supply and demand for labour. Employees constitute the supply, while employers represent the demand in this dynamic. The delicate balance between the supply and demand for labour significantly shapes remuneration levels within the labour market. Excess skilled labour tends to drive down pay levels, while a scarcity of skills prompts increased demands for higher pay. For instance, professions like data science and specialised medical fields command higher salaries owing to their limited pool of

qualified professionals. This complex relationship highlights the direct impact of labour dynamics on the remuneration landscape.

Economic factors. These factors are internal and external factors in the market that impact the economy as a whole, as well as individual businesses. These factors include tax rates, exchange rates, inflation, labour supply and demand, wages, laws and policies, government activities, and recessions (Srivastav, no date). The economic landscape significantly influences remuneration levels. In robust economies with high demand for goods and services, employees typically enjoy higher wages. Conversely, organisations may face challenges during economic downturns in offering competitive remuneration packages. Mohr and Fourie (2013: 32-33) emphasise that market factors, including supply and demand of the organisation's products, play an important role in shaping economic conditions and, subsequently, employee remuneration.

According to Bussin (2023), the country's economic instability makes it unlikely for South African workers to receive an increase that matches inflation unless the government intervenes quickly. Furthermore, he added that the current financial state of South African organisations is dire, directly affecting their ability to provide substantial increases to employees.

Society and Social factors. Society and social factors play a significant role in influencing remuneration. Society influences remuneration, as it influences the prices of goods and services. The consuming public is interested in remuneration decisions, and wages' fairness depends on the recipients' perceptions. A worker's perception of wage equity influences their behaviour in an organisation (Admin, 2021). According to Srivastav (n.d.), the relationship between society, social factors, and remuneration is complex and multifaceted, as societal levels of income inequality can impact how remuneration is structured. In societies with high income inequality, there may be more pressure to address wage gaps and ensure fair compensation across different employment levels. Social class and status can impact how individuals are compensated. Expectations and norms may be associated with certain professions or industries, influencing the perceived value of the work and the corresponding remuneration. Additionally, the economic conditions of a society, including factors like

inflation, unemployment rates, and the overall job market, as well as gender and diversity, can affect compensation practices.

Government influences. In South Africa, labour-related legislation, including the Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (75 of 1997), the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998), and the Skills Development Act (97 of 1998), plays a crucial role in shaping pay policies and ensuring workplace equity (Coetzee et al., 2020:9). The Public Service Regulations (2001) state that the government regulates departmental finances through legislation, with the Minister annually distributing salary scales for public service. These government policies, laws and regulations impact internal pay structures, ensuring fair remuneration, minimum wages, social welfare objectives, and non-discriminatory practices across all government agencies. These laws oversee pay levels, hours, overtime, holidays, and pay practices (Francis, 2023).

The National Treasury has reduced current expenditure, mostly by reducing the public sector wage bill (National Treasury, 2021: 5). Historically, South Africa has maintained sustainable public debt levels (Burger, Stuart, Jooste & Cuevas, 2012: 222). However, public sector remuneration remains one of the government's largest expenditure items, consuming 41% of government revenue in 2019/20 and over 47% in 2020/21 (National Treasury, 2021: 6). Recognising this, National Treasury (2023) issued guidelines on cost containment measures to reduce the spending.

To stabilise public debt, National Treasury plans to narrow the main budget deficit from 7.5% in 2020/21 to 0.8% in 2023/24 (National Treasury, 2021: 2). To achieve this, the National Treasury proposed remuneration reductions of R160.2 billion for 2020/21 to 2022/23 (National Treasury, 2021: 53), and an additional R143.2 billion for 2021/22 to 2023/24 (National Treasury, 2021: 31). These reductions can be accomplished by limiting salary increases, encouraging early retirement, natural attrition, and the elimination of non-critical positions (National Treasury, 2021: 31). Also, halting public sector wage increases for the next three years is projected to significantly reduce spending (National Treasury, 2021: 31).

Union Influences. Unions have a significant influence over employees' remuneration. They often negotiate with employers, including the government, to secure favourable wage agreements for their members (Van Zyl, 2021). Both parties must seek resolution mechanisms (Mohr & Fourie, 2013: 288). Regarding remuneration, labour unions typically negotiate aspects such as minimum wage levels, various allowances, leave policies, employee benefits and annual salary increases based on inflation. This highlights the importance of unions in shaping the remuneration landscape (Mohr & Fourie, 2013: 288).

The internal environmental factors, as portrayed in Figure 2.1, impacting remuneration systems are as follows:

Organisational strategy and goals. Mytty, Pedak and Sun (2016) assert that the correlation and interaction between organisation and remuneration/pay strategies play a critical role in shaping the performance and economic success of the organisation.

The alignment of organisational strategy and goals with remuneration is important. For remuneration practices to be effective, they must be congruent with the organisation's overarching strategy. For instance, if an organisation aims to increase market share, its remuneration structure should incentivise behaviours that drive this objective (Snell & Bohlander, 2007:384). Furthermore, an organisation with a client-focused business strategy will emphasise pleasing clients, and employees will be remunerated according to how well they do their jobs. The remuneration strategy will, therefore, include client satisfaction incentives. For organisations to perform better than their competitors, they must come up with techniques that will be valuable by matching their business and pay strategies. Matching remuneration policies to business strategy leads to greater organisational performance. Pay systems must also change when business strategies change (Francis, 2023).

Labour budget. The labour budget determines the financial resources allocated to employee remuneration. It is an important component of financial planning and influences the organisation's cash flow, impacting employee remuneration (Snell & Bohlander, 2007:384). Zlatić and Labović (2013: 359) emphasise the impact of

remuneration costs in shaping the organisation's cost structure and cash flow. Simultaneously, remuneration plays a crucial role in influencing employees' satisfaction, motivation, and work performance, ultimately leading to employee retention.

Remuneration decision-makers. Organisational leadership is responsible for making decisions regarding employee remuneration. These decisions consider factors such as employees' skills and expertise required for specific roles. People within an organisation can significantly impact remuneration systems and decisions. The impact of these individuals on remuneration systems can vary based on their role and level of influence within the organisation. For example, top executives and leadership, HR professionals, line managers and supervisors, employee representatives and labour unions, and so forth. These individuals play various roles in designing, implementing and influencing the remuneration practices within the organisation. Effective collaboration and communication among these stakeholders are essential to designing and implementing remuneration practices that align with the organisation's goals and values while addressing the needs and expectations of the workforce (Snell & Bohlander, 2007: 384).

People. Organisations comprise employees with diverse needs, necessitating tailored reward packages that consider these individual requirements. The outdated "one-size-fits-all" approach no longer applies in contemporary workforce management (Coetzee et al., 2020). Boyne et al. (1999) emphasise that private organisations place more emphasis on creating flexibility, incorporating performance-related pay, fringe benefits, and individual bonus schemes as part of their rewards. However, in the public service, employees performing similar tasks are remunerated equally, prioritising equal pay for equal work, job security and lifetime employment (Farnham & Horton, 1996).

Ability of an organisation to pay. An organisation's ability to remunerate its employees is intricately linked to its financial resources, playing an important role in shaping its remuneration strategy and its ability to offer competitive pay rates (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). The financial health of an organisation is contingent on factors like earned profits and the overall productivity of its workforce. According to

Coetzee et al., 2020: 12), as employees excel in their roles, the organisation's profitability increases, thereby enhancing its potential to provide salaries that surpass prevailing market standards.

However, the financial health and remuneration relationship is complex and influenced by various financial and non-financial factors. While profitability can lead to higher pay rates, this simplistic view overlooks the potential impact of external conditions, market volatility, and internal cost management practices (Coetzee et al., 2020). Effective financial management and strategic planning are essential for ensuring an organisation's ability to meet its remuneration obligations while remaining competitive in the job market (Francis, 2023).

Moreover, adherence to legal requirements and industry standards is essential. Organisations must balance their remuneration practices with their financial capacity, navigating between offering attractive remuneration packages and maintaining fiscal responsibility. This balancing act is critical for attracting and retaining talent for organisational success (Francis, 2023).

Work Environment. The work environment and remuneration are interconnected elements that collectively shape employee satisfaction, engagement and well-being. Research indicates that organisations prioritising creating a positive, supportive work environment and offering fair, competitive remuneration packages are more likely to attract, retain and motivate employees, leading to improved JS and performance (Francis, 2023).

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that remuneration and rewards are among the key leading HRM practices significantly influenced by the work environment. Irshad and Afridi (2011) emphasise that remuneration and rewards are critical in shaping employee retention (ER). A positive work environment can enhance the impact of remuneration by making employees feel valued and recognised, thus increasing their commitment to the organisation (Francis, 2014:1746; Johanim & Yhava, 2012:2340; Mathis & Jackson, 2004).

2.2.2.2 Impact of COVID-19 on remuneration practices

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, a few countries have implemented legislative measures to offer employees and organisations financial support (Hamouche, 2021). These measures assist the economy while preserving jobs and encouraging adherence to stay-at-home directives and compliance. One such policy is adopting short-term pay, generally known as part-time work. Employees can temporarily cut back on their work hours with this strategy. In addition to helping companies retain employees in the face of declining demand, it also helps to avoid layoffs (Giupponi & Landais, 2020). As a result of these initiatives, companies' remuneration strategies and policies change, which presents a complex and difficult environment for managers and HRM professionals.

The pandemic-induced changes in remuneration strategies present a multifaceted challenge for managers and HR professionals. Research by Elsafty and Ragheb (2020) demonstrates a notable relationship between financial benefits, like bonuses during COVID-19 and ER.

Managing a crisis can incur significant costs (Warner & Lee, 2005; Mwita, 2020). Unforeseen crises disrupt an organisation's financial obligations, impacting employee benefits. For example, during the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak, cash flow disruptions led to voluntary and involuntary pay cuts and, in some cases, unpaid leave (Warner & Lee, 2005; Mwita, 2020). These examples emphasise the vulnerability of employee benefits during crises and highlight the need for resilient remuneration strategies.

Despite crisis-induced reductions in benefits, organisations can still use rewards as a motivational tool. Wu, Lee, and Lin (2012) illustrated that Taiwanese hospitals implemented financial and non-financial rewards during the 2003 SARS epidemic to motivate staff to care for patients. This finding illustrates the potential of combining different rewards to maintain employee morale and motivation during crises.

The pandemic has forced organisations to reassess their remuneration policies. Incentives were either reduced or suspended to prioritise other financial obligations,

with some organisations struggling to pay salaries (Mwita, 2020). Public service employees, however, experienced less impact on their salaries than their private sector counterparts, highlighting sectoral differences in crisis resilience (Mwita, 2020).

2.2.3 Performance Management and Appraisal

Performance management (PM) involves continuously measuring employee performance and contributing to organisational commitment (Coetzee et al., 2014:4; Lin, Lin & Lin, 2012:6579). Aguinis (2019:8) describes PM as an ongoing process involving identifying, measuring and enhancing individual and workgroup performance while ensuring alignment with the organisation's strategic objectives. It aligns employee goals with organisational strategies to enhance results and is executed through performance appraisal, which identifies, measures and develops individual and group performance (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011). It is, therefore, important to ensure that employee performance is aligned with the company's strategic goals (Ismail & Gali, 2017).

Performance appraisal (PA), a core component of PM, entails assessing individual performance and developing personal development plans to address knowledge gaps (Swanepoel, Botha & Mangonyane, 2014). It is a fundamental HRM function to evaluate employee performance (Raihan, 2012) regularly. Although there are many definitions of PA in the literature, academics generally agree on the basic premise that it is concerned with evaluating an employee's performance and competencies by examining both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the employee's performance (Ismail & Gali, 2017). Furthermore, Grubb (2017:2) describes PA as a process aimed at assessing the performance of individual employees and identifying opportunities for enhancing their contributions to overall organisational performance. A more comprehensive definition by Sudin (2011:67) describes PA as a managerial process that creates links between organisational goals, performance standards and assessments. This process is often conducted during performance reviews.

The impact of PAs on ER is well-documented. Studies by Brown and Heywood (2005), Hussain and Rehman (2013), Francis (2014), and Bibi et al. (2016), affirm the positive correlation between PA and ER. Karan (2024) emphasises that effective PAs can

significantly contribute to ER by fostering an environment of recognition, growth, alignment, and fairness. This, in turn, leads to increased JS and loyalty among employees. However, contrasting views exist. Shrestha and Prajapati (2024) indicated that PA practices have a negative impact on ER. Similarly, Shrestha and Prajapati (2024) indicate that PA practices could negatively impact ER, suggesting that not all PA systems are effective.

In contrast, El-Ghalayini (2017) found that PA positively affects employee commitment and influences ER. El-Ghalayini's (2017) study also demonstrated a strong association between PA and JS, indicating that PA positively affects employee JS.

In conjunction with training, PA promotes the development of competence, reducing turnover and improving retention (Brown & Heywood, 2005). Sanders and Yang (2016) stress the critical function of appraisals in assisting various HRM processes like employee development, training, rewards management, and selection. However, some organisations have failed to reap the benefits of appraisals because they failed to incorporate the valuable feedback they received during the process into their human resource planning (Adler et al., 2016).

Gulzar and Advani (2019) highlight that there are conflicting opinions among researchers regarding the effectiveness of PA. Some argue that PAs have validity and dependability problems, which could restrict their capacity to improve employee engagement and retention. This dichotomy in research indicates that while PAs have the potential to significantly impact ER positively, their effectiveness largely depends on how they are implemented and integrated into broader HR strategies.

2.2.3.1 Impact of COVID-19 on Performance Management and Appraisal

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reshaped PM practices in organisations, introducing complexities in evaluating employee performance amidst adjustments to working conditions (Hamouche, 2021). Numerous factors stemming from the pandemic, such as job isolation, communication issues, caregiving responsibilities, increased workload, and occupational stressors like role ambiguity and conflict, have been identified as crucial determinants affecting employee performance (Prasad & Vaidya,

2020). Particularly for remote workers, these challenges have become key predictors of success, emphasising the importance of managers understanding the unique demands of remote work (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020; Aitken-Fox et al., 2020).

While the pandemic prompted some individuals to avoid performance evaluations, recognising the stress it induced (Mwita, 2020), the lack of key business performance data during the crisis led to challenging decisions and increased turnover rates (Wilken, 2020). The heightened stress caused by the crisis can significantly impact employee performance (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010). To navigate these challenges, PM, during the pandemic, should prioritise strategic and humane approaches to enhance both individual and organisational performance (Mwita, 2020).

Achieving pre-established goals became challenging during the pandemic, which is evident in scenarios like school closures affecting teachers' targets. Many employees experienced negative impacts on performance, making achieving individual goals unattainable. The shift to remote work as the new normal posed challenges in monitoring performance and coordinating activities among employees, further contributing to the decline in performance. It can, therefore, be inferred that the new normal of working from home has led to challenges in monitoring performance and coordination of activities among employees (Mwita, 2020).

2.2.4 Staffing

Ployhart (2006: 868) defines staffing as attracting, selecting and retaining qualified individuals to fulfil organisational objectives. According to Ployhart (2006), the current twenty-first-century workplace presents several personnel challenges. Fairly executing the staffing process is crucial for workforce planning and can significantly impact employee retention (Janjua & Gulzar, 2014).

Recent literature highlights the multifaceted nature of staffing and its impact on ER. According to Alajlani & Yesufu (2022), effective staffing practices positively impact ER by ensuring a good fit between employees and their roles, offering adequate support and development opportunities, managing workloads, providing competitive remuneration, and fostering a positive and engaging work environment. Shrestha and

Prajapati (2024) reinforce this perspective, highlighting the positive correlation between well-executed staffing practices and improved ER. The consensus among Alajlani & Yesufu (2022), Lwin (2022), and Shrestha & Prajapati (2024) is that effective HRM practices, particularly staffing, contribute significantly to long-term ER, which in turn contribute to higher JS, increased loyalty, and reduced turnover rates. This relationship is further supported by El-Ghalayini (2017), who identified a moderate association between staffing and JS.

Conversely, the negative ramifications of unfair staffing practices are well-documented. Perceptions of unfair staffing can lead to employee dissatisfaction and elevated turnover rates (Großler & Zock, 2010; Knight, Becan & Flynn, 2013). Negative perceptions of the staffing process can extend to negative perceptions of the organisation, potentially damaging its reputation (Begum, Zehour & Sarker, 2014). Maintaining fairness in staffing is essential to attract individuals with the desired competencies and align with the organisational culture (Ahmed, 2016; Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016). Both Ahmed (2016:966) and Sutanto and Kurniawan (2016:376) argue that the staffing/recruitment process significantly influences ER.

While effective staffing can significantly enhance ER and reduce turnover by aligning employees with their roles and fostering a supportive work environment, unfair practices can harm employee satisfaction and retention. Ensuring fairness and alignment with organisational culture remains pivotal in leveraging staffing as a strategic tool for organisational success.

2.2.4.1 Impact of COVID-19 on staffing

During crises, organisations face challenges in retaining key employees, leading to a decline in performance owing to the loss of talent (Vardarlier, 2016; Mwita, 2020). Employee recruitment during the pandemic presented challenges, including the inability to recruit new staff and the need to control unnecessary spending as daily operations slowed down (Vasa, 2010; Mwita, 2020). On the contrary, organisations benefited from a larger pool of experienced job candidates in the labour market, allowing for salary negotiations owing to higher labour supply (Mwita, 2020).

Recruitment and selection activities were temporarily halted to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through physical interactions and movements (Mwita, 2020).

The impact of COVID-19 on staffing dynamics varied across organisations, significantly affecting employee retention and recruitment (Campello, Kankanhalli & Muthukrishnan, 2020; Hamouche, 2021). The challenges introduced by the pandemic, marked by abrupt changes, have led to lower employee morale and increased turnover (Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020; Ngoc Su et al., 2021). Talented employees seeking opportunities in industries less impacted by the pandemic present additional difficulties for businesses during COVID-19.

2.2.5 Diversity Management

Diversity, a concept debated extensively (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017), is defined by Farnsworth et al. (2020) as recognising, comprehending, embracing, esteeming, and commemorating distinctions among individuals. Coetzee et al. (2014) define diversity management as the equal treatment of employees from different cultural backgrounds, sexual characteristics and age groups. Gilbert et al. (1999) describe it as changing organisational culture to foster appreciation for demographic, ethnic and individual differences, ensuring inclusivity among all employees.

The intersection of ER and workforce diversity is critical for organisational productivity (Onyango, 2015). Well-managed diversity contributes to organisational survival and growth, enhancing production levels and competitive advantage (Mahlaba, 2016). Effectively managing diversity reduces turnover and absenteeism and enhances creativity, innovation, and problem-solving (Cox & Blake, 1991). Diverse organisations offer higher-quality services, improve performance and respond effectively to changing target population needs (Pitts, 2009). Furthermore, diversity positively impacts ER by fostering an inclusive culture, enhancing engagement, providing opportunities for advancement, and creating a supportive and fair work environment. These factors collectively lead to higher retention rates, higher JS, loyalty, and reduced turnover rates (Tiffany-Patrick, 2022).

Conversely, poorly managed workforce diversity can lead to dissatisfaction and low productivity, while effective diversity management creates a productive and sustainable organisation (Mercy & Rachel, 2013). Workforce diversity and employee retention are noticeable elements that measure an organisation's advancement and productivity (Onyango, 2015).

Anderson (2013) and Onyango (2014) emphasise that diversity should be part of the organisation's culture, advocating for a complete workforce diversity programme to attract and retain employees for competitive advantage. Oguegbulam et al. (2017) assert that organisational culture is vital for managing diversity and employee retention, shaping how employees behave in organisations. A comprehensive approach to diversity and inclusion should not only incorporate gender, race and ethnicity but also consider disability and other aspects of diversity. Different aspects of diversity are briefly discussed next:

Gender diversity: Gender diversity refers to the fair and equal representation of people with various gender identities within an organisation. It incorporates the inclusivity and sense of belonging these people feel after employment and goes beyond simply having a diversity of genders (Khatri, 2022). Historically, male-dominated industries are evolving, with more women taking leadership roles. However, in some cases, gender favouritism still exists, which negatively affects the path of highly talented individuals (Tucker, 2017:128). Gender diversity initiatives promote equal opportunities (Fernandez & Lee, 2016). Prioritising gender diversity can retain talent, enhance performance and reduce turnover (Sharma, 2016).

Cultural diversity: Ethnic diversity includes various aspects such as religion, language, race, and culture, as outlined by Maingi (2015). Darby (2023) extends this definition to emphasise the representation of diverse ethnic and cultural groups in society. The impact of workplace diversity initiatives, including affirmative action, on ethnic diversity is a subject of study, as highlighted by Zhuwao, Ngirande, Ndlovu and Stata (2019: 3).

However, it is important to recognise that cultural diversity among employees can lead to certain dynamics within the workplace. Tajfel and Turner (1986) observed that employees from different cultural backgrounds can result in in-group liking, in-group attraction, and, in its extreme, in-group favouritism. This phenomenon entails employees showing a preference for colleagues who share their cultural grouping, potentially leading to adverse outcomes.

The consequences of such in-group dynamics can be detrimental to organisational performance. They may manifest as poor communication, reduced cooperation and decreased cohesiveness among team members, as pointed out by Ekot (2017). Moreover, these dynamics can escalate into unnecessary conflicts, heightened intentions to leave the organisation and lower levels of JS and overall performance, as evidenced by the research of Oerlemans, Peeters, and Schaufeli (2001).

Disability diversity: "Disability" describes various issues that may impact a person's physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental health. Employers need to be aware of the various kinds of people with disabilities they employ and offer adjustments to ensure their full involvement and contribution (LedgeHR, 2023).

Diversity management should be a central responsibility and concern for organisations aiming to remain competitive and retain highly skilled employees. The relationship between diversity and employee retention is closely intertwined, as employees are unlikely to remain in organisations where they perceive they are being ill-treated. Consequently, effective diversity management can enhance employee morale, motivation, commitment, positive attitudes toward work, and JS, ultimately leading to heightened productivity (Gilgulim et al., 2017: 130). De Cieri, Costa, Pettit, and Buttigieg (2008) emphasise that diversity management focuses on attracting, managing and retaining talent within an organisation, a perspective reinforced by Oguegbulam et al. (2017: 121), who highlight the positive influence of diversity management on employee retention.

2.2.5.1 Impact of COVID-19 on diversity

Diversity management promotes a diverse workforce and creates a sense of belonging and acceptance for all employees regardless of their social identities (Gilbert, Stead, & Ivancevich, 1999). According to Dhanani, Johnson and Pueschel (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed diversity management from a luxury to a necessity within organisations. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted long-standing societal inequities, with unequal harmful effects on minority populations. Asian Americans experienced violent attacks, verbal assaults and intentional spitting at or coughing on (Ruiz, Horowitz & Tamir, 2020; Tavernise & Opper, 2020). Black Americans have suffered higher mortality rates because of the virus (Eligon, Burch, Searcey & Opper, 2020).

Furthermore, black patients were denied COVID-19 testing (Farmer, 2020). Also, Kalev (2020) indicates that the virus has led to increased economic distress and layoffs, particularly affecting women and people of colour. Furthermore, Dhanani et al. (2021) assert that in workplaces, a minority of employees faced performance, engagement and well-being barriers as they attempted to work in the middle of the pandemic.

2.2.6 Communication and Information Sharing

Communication involves the exchanging of words, emotions, ideas, intent and messages among individuals, either verbally or non-verbally (Alshenqeeti, 2016:58; Lamichhane, 2016:91). According to Hartman and McCambridge (2011:28), communication involves interactions aimed at mutual understanding. Developing effective communication skills is important and should be cultivated as a valuable competency (Lamichhane 2016:91). Without effective communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, challenges may arise (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011:28). In the organisational context, communication includes various aspects, including the quality and frequency of communication, employer-employee relations and the extent to which employees are engaged in decisions that affect them (Coetzee et al., 2014:3). It can be direct (discussions among team members) or indirect (communication via intermediaries) (Hansen, 2002:234). Indirect communication can negatively impact information sharing (Du Preez, 2018:61).

The term "information sharing" is commonly used in library and information science. However, researchers from disciplines such as management science, strategic management and human-computer interaction often prefer to use "knowledge sharing" (Savolainen, 2017). Information sharing includes group members' explicit and tacit information exchanges (Talja & Hansen 2006: 114). Moreover, Kim and Park (2017) assert that knowledge sharing is important for generating new insights, addressing issues and achieving common goals. Tacit information is shared through interpersonal interactions and plays a vital role in organisations (Alyoubi et al., 2018:15).

Sharing information within an organisation is crucial for building trust and transparency (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003). This practice is directly related to JS and has been shown to reduce turnover (Alias et al., 2018:257). Furthermore, information sharing and effective communication positively influence ER (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003). Ramakrishnan (2024) asserted that effective communication and information sharing positively impact ER because when employees feel informed, valued, and involved, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and remain with the organisation for longer. Furthermore, communication significantly predicts JS (Thokoa, Naidoo & Herbst, 2021).

2.2.6.1 Impact of COVID-19 on communication and information sharing

Effective communication is the cornerstone of all healthy relationships (Rohan, 2020). It is an integral part of life; we would not survive without it. The pandemic significantly impacted interpersonal communication as we transitioned from active lifestyles to digital-online communication, causing a significant shift from face-to-face meetings. On the other hand, new words emerged. The work-from-home era has emerged as a new and significant shift in the workplace. The adoption of new communication channels also changes interpersonal relationships. The discussions and meetings were conducted in a virtual format. Interpersonal communication offers unique benefits, while digital communication differs, but there was no other option during a certain period. During the pandemic, the primary issue observed was the absence of direct communication and physical contact among individuals. The limited use of "living words" and replacing traditional expressions with new, unfamiliar words has led to a significant shift in communication (Ziberi & Bakiu, 2023).

Ziberi and Bakiu (2023) indicate that face-to-face communication fosters engagement and participation in meetings, fostering a culture of trust in the workplace. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the way people communicate across all societies. Face-to-face communication took a heavy hit. The Internet provided the only light in the darkness, enabling communication through online platforms. Technology has enabled the breaking down of barriers and the creation new social structures and connections despite the challenges of isolation. As Olser and Zahavi (2022), technology played a crucial role in interpersonal communication during the pandemic but also influenced social worlds, with online platforms becoming dominant.

2.3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS

The discourse on HRM practices within public and private organisations reveals a fundamental difference in their operational objectives, management models, and employee motivation. While HRM practices in both sectors aim to optimise organisational effectiveness, the methods and priorities differ significantly.

Government departments' HRM practices are designed to meet the special requirements and constraints of the public sector. These practices seek to efficiently offer public services, establish accountability and manage the workforce effectively. According to a White Paper developed by the Department of Public Service and Administration (no date), HRM practices within the public service should support an effective and efficient public service tailored for economic and social transformation. HRM is, therefore, regarded as one of the strategic instruments of the transformation agenda for the public service.

The public sector has some distinctive characteristics that make it different from the private sector. Public service and private organisations differ in HRM owing to different models of managing work and people, with public service (soft model) focusing on employee well-being leading to giving more attention and priority to health, safety, and welfare issues and also has mission that clearly outlines the organisations' mandate that needed to be achieved (Moore, 2000 & Boyne, Jenkins & Poole, 1999), while

private organisations (hard model) on organisational performance (Boyne et al, 1999) and maximizing profit (Moore, 2000). Furthermore, public service applies some HRM practices that differ from private organisations (Kalleberg, Marsden, Reynolds, & Knoke, 2006). The relationship between HRM and performance in the public sector is crucial owing to the unique organisational context and employee attributes (Knies & Leisink, 2018; Rainey, 2009).

Public service employees performing similar tasks are paid the same wage rather than pay being based on individual performance. The public service prioritises equal pay for equal work, job security and lifetime employment (Farnham & Horton, 1996). Boyne et al. (1999) indicate that trade unions play a vital role in determining employees' pay scales and working hours. Furthermore, Farnham and Horton (1996) assert that public service aimed to set the standard for private organisations in terms of training opportunities and workforce participation. In contrast, Boyne et al. (1999) highlight that private organisations place more emphasis on creating flexibility, and have implemented performance-related pay, fringe benefits and individual bonus schemes as part of their rewards.

Understanding the distinct yet interconnected nature of HRM practices within the public service and private organisations is crucial for developing effective HRM strategies. While the public sector focuses on equity, job security, and collective bargaining, the private sector emphasises flexibility and performance-based rewards. Both sectors can learn from each other to enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and overall organisational performance.

2.3.1 Public Service Characteristics Affecting the Impact of HRM Practices

The effectiveness and impact of HRM practices within the public service are intricately influenced by distinct characteristics inherent to the public sector.

Organisational goal ambiguity: Organisational goal ambiguity poses a distinctive challenge within the public service, characterised by less tangible, diverse and conflicting goals in comparison to the private sector (Rainey & Jung, 2010). This complexity hinders the design of effective training programmes and incentive

schemes, complicating the reward process, especially considering the difficulty in linking extrinsic rewards to concrete organisational goals in the public sector (Perry, Mesch & Paarlberg, 2006; Blom, Kruyen, Van der Heijden & Van Thiel, 2020). The elevated level of organisational goal ambiguity in public service amplifies the impact of HRM practices, distinguishing its effects from those in the private sector (Verhoest, Van Thiel, Bouckaert, & Laegreid, 2012).

Personnel constraints: Personnel constraints are also dominant in the public service and are expected to reduce the effects of HRM practices (Rainey & Chun, 2007). Political accountability often involves external governmental control through formal personnel constraints, as markets are not effective in providing incentives. Therefore, within public service, manager's discretion is limited in hiring and firing employees and this ultimately impacts the adoption of HRM practices like non-financial incentives, promotion opportunities, and employee exit management (Brewer & Walker, 2013; Weibel, Rost, & Osterloh, 2010). In other words, public sector managers do not have authority to manage their subordinates as compared to their private sector counterparts (Rainey, 2009). Similarly, public managers experience difficulties in implementing HRM practices to empower employees (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2010) owing to higher levels of formalisation happening in public service. Furthermore, Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2010) point out that HRM practices such as participative decision-making and employee involvement are less effective in the public sector.

Employee motivation: Public service employees possess unique values, motives and attitudes that can significantly impact the effectiveness of HRM practices (Perry et al., 2006). Generally, public service employees are expected to exhibit higher levels of intrinsic and altruistic motivation as compared to those in the private sector (Rainey & Chun, 2007). In other words, employees' motivations to work in the public service are typically driven by personal values or a desire to serve the public, rather than extrinsic reasons. HRM practices such as pay-for-performance rely on monetary incentives to motivate employees and mostly focusing on extrinsic motivation. However, according to Weibel et al. (2010), this is not a suitable motivation for intrinsically driven employees. As a result, HRM practices aimed at extrinsic rewards are effective in the private sector than the public sector (Blom et al, 2020).

This section emphasises the diverse yet interrelated nature of HRM practices in the public and private sectors. While both sectors seek to improve organisational effectiveness, their approaches reflect varying operational realities and personnel motivations. Understanding these variations is critical for development.

2.4 DIFFERENT HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODELS

Human Resource Management (HRM) is often examined through various models that provide a structured framework for understanding HRM practices and their impact on organisations. These models serve as analytical tools and offer unique perspectives on HRM and fulfil several purposes:

- HRM models provide a structured framework for analysing HRM, considering situational factors, stakeholders, strategic decision levels, and competencies.
- They endorse specific HRM practices, contributing to the development of HRM uniqueness.
- HRM models define HRM practices and their interrelationships, facilitating research and understanding.
- They help clarify the significance of key HRM practices and their impact on organisations.

In essence, these models play a significant role in comprehending and evaluating HRM practices, making them valuable tools in the field of HRM. Furthermore, they indicate the framework for studying HRM and exploring the variables and relationship associated with it (Tiwara, Srivastava & Kumar, 2019:60). When discussing HRM models for public service or government departments, it is important to choose models that are relevant and adaptable to the unique characteristics and challenges of the public sector. To this end, the following HRM models will be discussed: The Matching model, the Harvard Model, the Guest Model, and the, Warwick Model.

2.4.1 The Matching model

Fombrun, Itchy and Devanna introduced the Matching Model at the Michigan Business School in 1984, with a focus on strategic HRM to achieve corporate objectives, particularly emphasising organisational strategy (Fombrun et al., 1984; Romford, 2021). Often associated with a hard HRM approach, this model adopts a less humanistic perspective and highlights the need for a 'tight fit' between HR strategy and organisational strategy, advocating for congruence between HR systems and the strategic plan (Morris, 2021; Gadon, 2018). Emphasising strategic control, organisational structure and people management systems, it prioritises employee motivation and reward, with a primary goal of managing human assets to meet strategic objectives.

Organisations implementing the hard HRM style view employees methodically, treating them to achieve business goals (Morris, 2021; Gado, 2018; Romford, 2021; Anyangwe, 2017). The model (illustrated in Figure 2.2) emphasises the human resource cycle, where performance hinges on selection, appraisal, rewards, and development. HR's focus is on enhancing performance through selecting suitable individuals, providing fair rewards, motivating staff with incentives, and offering training for increased productivity (Morris, 2021; Gado, 2018).

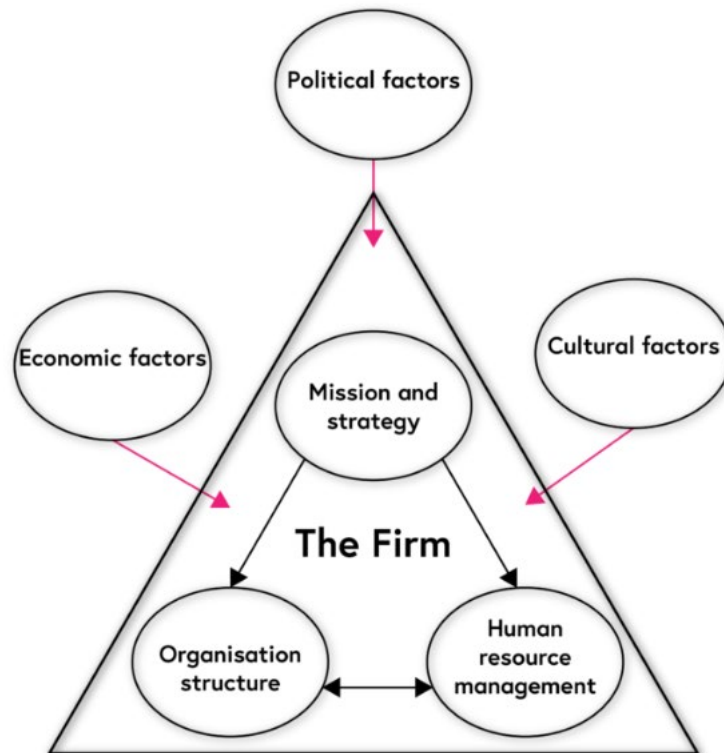


Figure 2. 2: The Matching Model of HRM (Adapted from Sadalla, Gado and Ulgen, 2018)

The Matching Model's primary objective is aligning organisational strategy with HR practices, making it crucial for public service departments to ensure that their HR practices align with their mission and strategic goals. This model provides guidance for achieving this alignment, recognising the fundamental responsibilities of HRM (Boxall, Guthrie & Paauwe, 2016). It highlights the significance of thoughtful employee selection and individualised remuneration based on unique contributions (Sharma & Taneja, 2018). The Matching Model also shares similarities with McGregor's Theory X, as it views humans as resources requiring management akin to other organisational assets, aligning with Theory X's perspective on people's work tendencies and need for control (Guest, 2017; Armstrong, 2014; Ryazanova, McNamara & Aguinis, 2017).

2.4.2 The Harvard Model

The Harvard Framework of Human Resource Management, initially proposed by Boxall and Beer in 1992 (Beer, Boselie, & Brewster, 2015), offers a holistic approach to HR that considers several levels of outcomes (Ansari, 2023). This model integrates three key perspectives: the bureaucratic, market-oriented and clan-oriented

approaches. It considers various aspects, including the global expansion of businesses, the influence of diverse stakeholders such as government bodies and labour unions, and the alignment of corporate strategies with HR practices (Poole, 2015). Consequently, in today's dynamic global landscape, characterised by fluctuating economies, rapid technological advancements and evolving customer expectations, organisations must implement the Harvard model as a practical framework for effective HR management (Chetty, 2019).

The Harvard model recognises the existence of several stakeholders within an organization, as seen in Figure 2.3. Because of their critical importance, it emphasises the role that employees and other stakeholders play in influencing organisational results (Thierry 2018: 77). Stakeholder interests, situational factors, HRM policy decisions, HR outcomes, long-term consequences, and a feedback loop through which the output directly impacts the organisation, and its stakeholders are the six essential components of HRM (Preeti, 2017). The model's emphasis on striking a balance between the interests of various stakeholders is in line with the public service's responsibility to the public, its employees and policymakers.

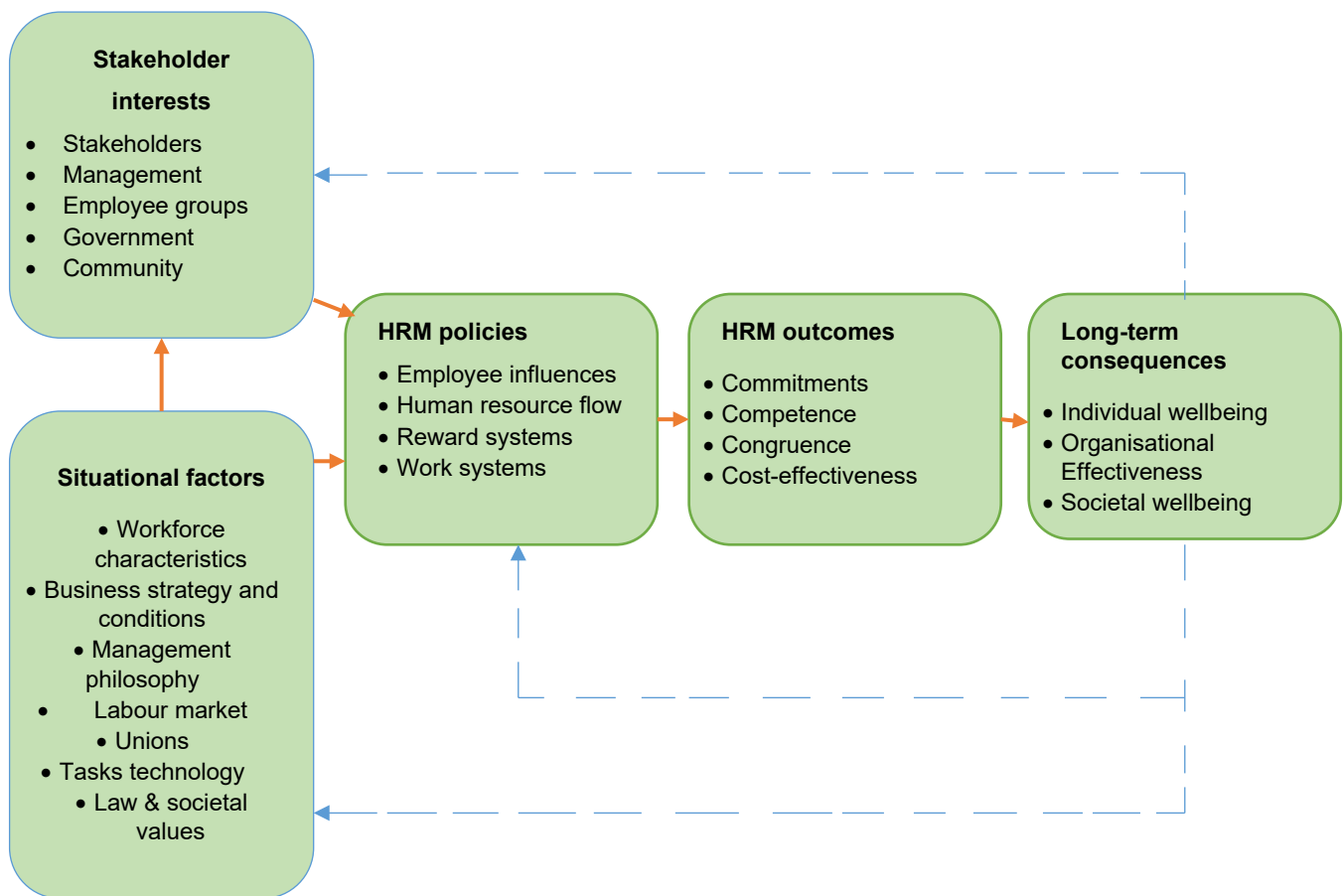


Figure 2. 3: The Harvard Model (Adapted from Thierry, 2018: 78 & Van Vulpen, 2023)

The Harvard model comprises five components Thierry (2018: 78) and Van Vulpen (2023), which will be briefly discussed.

Stakeholders interest. Shareholders, management, employee groups, the government, and the community are some stakeholders. This interest governs HRM policies.

Situational factors. Situational factors influence stakeholder interests. Situational factors include workforce characteristics, management philosophy, labour market, tasks, technology and laws and social values.

HRM policies. Situational factors and stakeholder interests influence HRM policies. These are the core HR practices, such as recruitment, training, and remuneration plans.

The factors mentioned above, such as retention, cost-effectiveness, commitment, and competence, are all characteristics of good HRM outcomes that emerge when HRM policies are executed successfully. Organisational commitment, employee commitment, congruence, and cost-effectiveness create HRM outcomes. These positive HRM outcomes have long-term societal, organisational and individual consequences. Since employee satisfaction affects an organisation's ability to succeed and an organisation's effectiveness affects society's well-being, these three factors are intertwined.

The feedback loop. As already indicated, situational factors influence HRM policies and are influenced by long-term consequences. Similarly, stakeholder interest influences HRM policy choices, which are affected by long-term outcomes. These connections show the complex interrelationships between different HRM components and underscore the demand for a thorough comprehension of these dynamics.

2.4.3 The Guest Model

The Guest model, developed by David Guest, a professor at King's Business School in the UK, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, emphasises the strategic role of HR. It sets strategic HRM apart from traditional personnel management practices (Van Vulpen, 2023). This model emphasises that HR managers employ specific strategies that, when effectively implemented, yield positive results. These results include behavioural performance and financial rewards (Preeti, 2017). Guest's Model, as illustrated in Figure 2.4, focuses more on individual needs rather than the collective interests of employees, allowing organisations to foster authority and flexibility (Thierry 2018: 78). The model follows a systematic sequence of six components, including HR strategy, HR practices, HR outcomes, behavioural outcomes, performance results, and financial consequences (Preeti, 2017).



Figure 2. 4: The Guest Model (Adapted from Thierry, 2018: 78; Van Vulpen, 2023)

According to the Guest model, the foundation of HRM lies in strategic alignment with business objectives (1), guiding HRM practices and policies (2), which yield specific HRM outcomes (3). These outcomes encourage desired employee behaviours, such as commitment and motivation (4), which jointly improve performance outcomes, which then result in financial results (6) (Van Vulpen, 2023). On the other hand, financial performance is shaped by individual and organisational behaviour. These actions result from specific HR outcomes brought about by specialised HR practices and rules that align with a specific HR strategy (Van Vulpen, 2023).

2.4.4 The Warwick Model

The Warwick model (depicted in Figure 2.5) was established by Hendry and Pettigrew of the University of Warwick (hence the name Warwick model) in the early 1990s (Preeti, 2017). This model, while sharing similarities with the Guest and Harvard models, offers an additional viewpoint on aligning HRM practices with external and internal contexts. It presents a framework for understanding how external environmental forces impact the internal dynamics of an organisation, shaping HRM strategies accordingly (Van Vulpe, 2023).

This model is powerful as it categorises the effects of the vital environment on HRM. It enables a clear connection between external and environmental factors and discovers how HRM adjust to environmental changes. Organisations that effectively align their external and internal environments are more expected to achieve performance improvements and growth (Thierry 2018: 79). The model acknowledges

the interplay between the business processes, HRM practices employed, the external and internal environment in which these activities take place and the mechanisms through which changes unfold, including interactions between changes in both external content and internal content (Preeti 2017). Public service organisations operate within a dynamic external environment determined by government rules and regulations, public expectations and budgetary constraints. Effective HRM in the public sector depends on an understanding of how these factors interact.

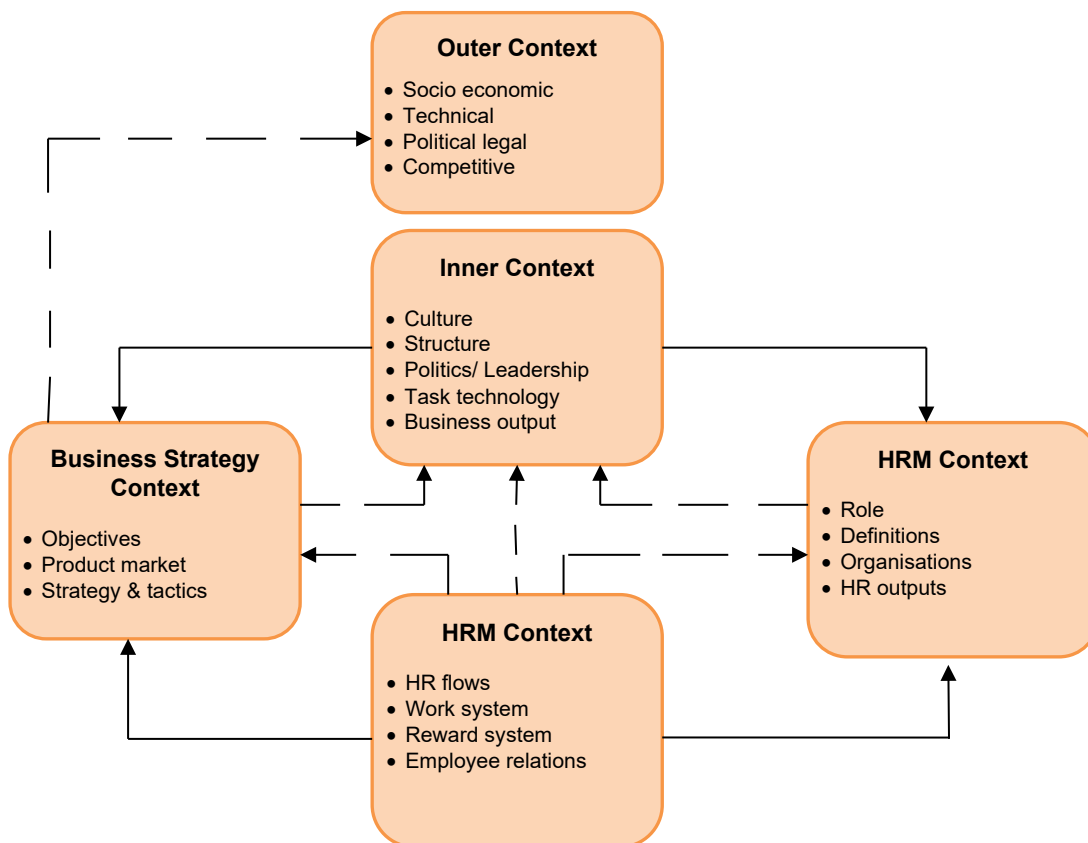


Figure 2. 5: The Warwick Model (Adapted from Thierry, 2018: 79)

The Warwick model focuses on five elements (Van Vulpen, 2023):

- **Outer context.** Macro environmental forces, such as political, economic, societal, technological, legal, and environmental, influence HR policies.
- **Inner context.** The outer context will influence the internal factors that affect HR policy and practice, such as organisational culture, technology, and leadership.
- **Business strategy context.** As expressed in its aims and objectives, the business' strategic intent is influenced by the organisation's internal and external contexts, which in turn impact the HRM context.

- **HRM content.** The internal factors that affect HR policy and practice, such as organisational culture, technology and leadership, will be influenced by the HRM context.
- **HRM context.** The business strategy impacts the flow of HR work and factors like reward systems, employee relations and work processes.

The Warwick model highlights the significance of strategic HRM. In other words, HR needs to understand and foresee these factors and be able to adjust and change in response to their impacts with efficient company strategies (Van Vulpen, 2023).

2.5 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Kalogiannidis (2020) argues that the outbreak of the Coronavirus has presented a continuous and significant challenge for several organisations, necessitating substantial changes. According to Barro and Weng (2020), many organisations have implemented various technical, physical and socio-psychological strategies to reduce their workforce to survive during the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated HR managers to introduce innovative approaches to cope with unprecedented challenges. Wunderlich and Løkke (2020) assert that organisations worldwide have had to reconfigure where and how work is performed. For example, employees spent extensive hours at their workplace but were compelled to transition to remote working arrangements due to the pandemic swiftly (Baldwin & Weder, 2020).

Therefore, remote work emerged as a prominent solution that most organisations have adopted to maintain operational continuity and provide high-quality services to internal and external stakeholders (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). However, remote work is not challenging, particularly for employees who cannot find workspaces, especially when their homes are not conducive to efficient work (Baert, 2020). This issue was exacerbated by the closure of public spaces such as internet cafes and libraries, which limits opportunities for small business meetings and management seminars (Kalogiannidis & Chatzitheodoridis, 2021).

Other notable changes include reductions in work hours, cuts in training and development activities or restrictions on recruitment, employee layoffs and disruptions in the normal working practices. These changes have also affected communication methods within an organisation. Moreover, the pandemic has reduced employees' salaries and diminished commitment to organisational activities while operating from home (Wunderlich & Løkke, 2020; Kalogiannidis, 2021).

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected HRM practices across organisations. HR departments have had to adjust to new work arrangements quickly, prioritise employee well-being and maintain efficient communication channels because of these changes. The pandemic has highlighted the need for HRM practices in assisting organisations through times of crisis and ambiguity (Kalogiannidis, 2021). HRM practices will continue to be important to organisational goals and daily operations as they adapt to the ongoing problems brought on by the pandemic.

The above discussion highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of HRM practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis has necessitated a shift in focus towards innovative, flexible, and resilient HRM strategies to support employees and sustain organisational performance in an unpredictable environment.

2.6 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

This section aims to clarify the relationship between HRMPs and ER, with the mediating role of JS. It explores how organisations use HRM practices to retain skilful employees by generating JS. According to Govindaraju (2018:10), demographic factors strongly influence employee retention and turnover intention.

Job embeddedness theory supports the connection between demographics and employee retention (Mitchell et al., 2001). This theory is also referred to as the theory of employee retention. Realistic results increase employee satisfaction, leading to higher productivity, performance, and retention (Bibi, Pangil & Johanim, 2016).

2.6.1 Age

Age influences employees' decisions to remain with or leave an organisation (De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen & Makikangas, 2011). Additionally, an employee's age can influence their JS, commitment to the organisation, and likelihood of staying with the company (Lambert et al., 2012).

Older employees tend to perceive their jobs differently than their younger counterparts (Okun et al., 2013). Gibson and Sodeman (2014) note that older employees often exhibit steadiness, dedication, and devotion to their organisations. In contrast, younger employees are more inclined to engage in job hopping than their older colleagues (Okun et al., 2013). A study by Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy and Baert (2011) revealed that younger employees are more prone to leave their current jobs, particularly when they do not find their work challenging or when they experience job dissatisfaction. This trend is less prevalent among older employees, as age significantly influences their decisions regarding job retention.

According to the literature, younger employees are more expected to voluntarily leave their jobs than older employees (Lopina et al., 2012; Wren, Berkowitz, & Grant, 2014; Bjelland et al., 2011; Lambert et al., 2012; Monks, 2012). Younger employees have higher turnover rates than their older counterparts, particularly those who have not been with the company for a long time. Younger employees frequently seek opportunities elsewhere because they want more difficult jobs, career advancement, and attractive remuneration (Okun et al., 2013).

During organisational restructuring, employees must adapt to new roles and develop new skills to meet the organisation's evolving needs (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan & Plamondon, 2000). Ageing often leads older employees to believe their abilities are deteriorating, making them less motivated to pursue self-empowerment through training and development (Maurer, Barbeite, Weiss, & Lippstreu, 2008). They may also perceive themselves as less capable of acquiring new skills, reducing their motivation for training activities (Touron & Hertzog, 2004). Consequently, this reduces self-empowerment opportunities (Van Vianen et al., 2011: 228). The extent to which older

workers embrace self-empowerment can vary, with some being more proactive owing to the support they receive from their work environment (Nauta et al., 2009).

The readiness of older employees to engage in self-development is influenced not only by internal factors but also by external factors, including supervisors' beliefs. Supervisors play a crucial role in shaping the learning attitudes of their employees, offering support across various age groups, and encouraging participation in training and development activities. They can allocate resources for on-the-job or off-the-job training and inspire subordinates to pursue self-development opportunities. When older employees perceive support from their supervisors, they are more likely to take the initiative to enhance their skills (Van Vianen et al., 2011: 230). Consequently, a positive correlation exists between employee age and retention (Govindaraju, 2018:12).

2.6.2 Gender

In the contemporary workforce, gender-related challenges, work-life balance, and their impact on employee retention are interlinked. Women often struggle to balance their careers and family demands, making it difficult to sustain their jobs (Hofferth, 2000). Furthermore, women face discrimination in HRM practices as their employers believe they prioritise their home responsibilities above their employment (Azra & Gull, 2019). Gender inequality within organisations can influence employee retention decisions, highlighting the importance of promoting gender equality (Jepsen and Rodwell, 2012). This inequality may affect opportunities for career advancement and personality traits (Speck, Ernst, Braun, Koch & Miller, 2000). Female employees prioritise self-development, job stimulation and freedom. However, they may encounter career difficulties in male-dominated work environments, hindering their career growth (Wood, 2000).

The relationship between employees and their supervisors, particularly regarding gender dynamics, is crucial in ER. Employees tend to be more content when supervised by someone of the same gender (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012). Gender differences can affect employees' emotions and increase turnover rates (Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013).

Organisations can address these challenges by implementing policies that support work-life balance. These policies, which involve flexible schedules and generous leave options, help reduce turnover rates (Thompson, Andreassi & Prottas, 2005). Creating an environment that promotes work-life balance is essential for long-term employee retention (Batt & Valcour, 2003).

The influence of gender on employee retention is well-documented (Govindaraju, 2018:13). Gender differences can affect turnover possibilities and are intertwined with the dynamics between male and female workers (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012). Research supports the connection between gender and retention, indicating a positive relationship between employee gender and retention (Agyeman & Ponnaiah, 2014).

2.6.3 Job Levels

Job levels within organisations play a crucial role in shaping HRM practices (Cappelli, 2009). These levels often determine how employees are treated regarding remuneration and career development opportunities. For instance, as McDonnell (2011) notes, when lower-level employees perceive that their superiors receive preferential treatment, it can lead to dissatisfaction and concerns among the workforce. Consequently, organisations should be vigilant in ensuring they do not inadvertently mistreat employees based on their job levels, as this can adversely affect turnover rates.

Kinnie, Hutchinson, Purcell, Rayton and Swart (2005) postulate that job levels within an organisation present unique challenges, responsibilities and demands, with higher-level roles requiring more substantial decisions and HR practices to support these roles. At lower organisational levels, roles may offer limited challenge or discretion, allowing HR practices to influence outcomes. Different job demands and constraints at different organisational levels necessitate distinct HR practices, which may affect their application differently.

Execustaff HR (2020) asserts that employers can legally divide employees into groups based on job levels within an organisation, such as a law firm, where each group

receives different benefits without violating laws. Organisations offer various benefits based on milestones, such as 10-year or 15-year contracts or different hire times, allowing each group to become a unique class with varying benefits as long as these are widespread. Walker (2022) points out that employers can offer varying benefits to different employees based on legitimate business reasons, such as part-time, full-time, location, service length, job level, and occupation.

Organisations need to ensure that benefit packages are free from prejudice to prevent unintended discrimination or adverse effects on protected groups. Employers cannot provide lower-level benefits based on prohibited factors (colour, race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or genetic information), as per the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Compliance Manual (Execustaff HR, 2020; Walker, 2022).

The Western Cape Government offers various salaries and benefits based on job levels. Level 1-10 employees receive basic salaries, 13th cheques and all-inclusive packages. Middle management and higher-level employees receive basic salaries and CTE remuneration packages. In contrast, Senior Management and Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) employees receive basic salaries and flexible packages (Western Cape Government Article, 2023).

For various reasons, inconsistency in HRM experiences may be expected across hierarchical job levels. First, Becker and Huselid (2011) suggest that organisations often invest in higher-level jobs, recognising them as strategically valuable, per upper echelon theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). This theory suggests that the knowledge and characteristics of senior employees significantly impact an organisation's strategy and performance. Human capital and knowledge can be distributed throughout an organisation's hierarchy, not just at higher levels (Lepak, Takeuchi & Swart, 2011). For example, newly graduated software analysts or nanotechnologists possess valuable skills but often hold low-level positions, showcasing the importance of their skills in the field. However, practitioners and researchers postulate that highly valued human capital is typically concentrated at the top of organisations (Becker & Huselid, 2011). As stated earlier, the human capital theory postulates that groups with more human capital will receive more HR investment (Clinton & Guest, 2012).

Second, employees may experience fewer HR practices at lower job levels due to the increased expense and time required for their application. Traditional organisational hierarchies often have more employees at lower job levels. The resources needed to apply the same HR practices at lower levels as at higher levels increase exponentially. For example, performance appraisals with senior managers may use limited resources. However, extending performance appraisals to middle management may require a modest resource increase but potentially significant extra investment for the entire workforce (Bhattacharya & Wright, 2005).

Third, organisations often operate multiple internal labour markets, each with varying HR policies and practices (Osterman, 1987). In pluralist systems with a history of union-based employment relations, potential conflicts may arise between employer and worker/union interests (Fox, 1974; Kelly, 1998). Management hesitates to invest in long-term HR practices for lower-level employees owing to the implied exchange (Blau, 1964).

Job level may be linked to investment in HRM, which can vary in content and scale, affecting the number of HR practices applied. Organisations often use job level to discriminate among their employees regarding formal employment terms, which may not be contentious (e.g., pay and benefits are often variable across job levels) (Wright Gardner, Moynihan & Allen, 2005). Hence, Clinton and Guest (2012) point out that employees at higher levels of an organisation experience more HR practices than those at lower levels.

2.6.4 Marital Status

Marital status can potentially influence HRM practices and employee retention in diverse ways. However, organisations need to approach this factor with sensitivity and avoid discriminatory practices (Khan et al., 2013:44). HRM should recognise and accommodate individual employees' varied needs and circumstances. While marital status can contribute to factors affecting employee retention, it should not be the sole determinant. HR practices need to be fair, inclusive and crafted to enhance the well-

being and JS of all employees, irrespective of their marital status (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007).

In examining specific aspects of marital status, Mali's (2010) research argues that unmarried men may face more challenges than their married counterparts. On the other hand, Monet and Sana (2012) found that independent married females tend to exhibit higher retention rates and remain with organisations for extended periods. As indicated by Mating, Kelli and Angara (2012), single men may be more vulnerable to turnover risks than their married counterparts. Furthermore, research by Janse van Rensburg, Claassen and Fourie (2019) emphasises the impact of marital status on recruitment, with women facing lower employment probabilities and men being more likely to secure employment.

Akintayo (2010) contends that single individuals tend to switch jobs more frequently than their married counterparts. The family commitments and responsibilities associated with marriage make it challenging for married individuals to change jobs as frequently. However, it is noteworthy that even among younger employees, job changes may occur when spouses relocate for career opportunities (Ahuja et al., 2007). Despite these dynamics, Chughtai and Zafar (2006) argue that a significant and universal relationship between marital status and employee turnover possibilities is not undoubtedly established.

2.6.5 Ports of Entry

Coll (2020) asserts that HRM practices at ports of entry are crucial for the efficient and secure movement of people and goods while ensuring employee safety and well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced significant uncertainty for airport employees, making their needs and HRM practices paramount. Airport employees must be equipped with the necessary tools and guidance to perform their duties safely during a crisis, ensuring travellers' satisfaction. Training and development are crucial for port personnel to comprehend security protocols, identify potential threats and respond to emergencies. Additionally, ports are frequently the initial point of contact for travellers, requiring employees to be trained in providing high-quality customer service. Business Airport International (2019) also indicates that the quality of life,

opportunities for continuous training and development and the empowerment of employees are equally important factors that can enhance the appeal of a job. Effective communication is also crucial for maintaining engagement with airport and stakeholder employees, fostering trust, addressing basic needs like security and health, and ensuring job stability.

Staffing is also crucial in PoE as it involves recruiting individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to perform their duties effectively. Most importantly, in PoE, background checks and security clearances are vital in ensuring employee trust and preventing potential security threats owing to a criminal history. Diversity management is crucial for promoting fair employment practices and better service to a diverse range of travellers. Effective human resources practices at ports of entry are crucial for maintaining security, efficiency and the well-being of employees and travellers. These practices help to ensure that the movement of people and goods across borders is safe and compliant with applicable laws and regulations (Coll, 2020).

Furthermore, the anxiety stemming from job security and income stability is a prevalent concern among airport employees during these challenging times (Coll, 2020). The anxiety about jobs and income can significantly impact employee happiness and well-being. It is intricately connected to compensation and other factors affecting employee happiness. Addressing financial concerns, providing fair remuneration, and creating a supportive work environment can improve employee well-being and JS and reduce anxiety related to job and income. Employers should prioritise these aspects to create a more positive and productive employee work environment. It is important to note that financial stability and JS are closely interlinked (Sule & Amuni, 2014).

The impact of demographic factors on HRM practices is important for developing effective strategies to enhance ER. Age, gender, job levels, marital status, and the specific needs of employees at POE all play important roles in shaping HRM practices. Organisations can improve ER and overall organisational performance by addressing these factors and promoting JS.

2.7 IMPLICATIONS OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONS

Various HRM domains, including training and development, remuneration and rewards, performance management, supervisor support, staffing, diversity management, and communication, have consistently demonstrated strong associations with favourable organisational outcomes (Melton & Meier, 2017).

HRM practices can significantly impact individual employee performance by influencing competencies, motivation, and organisational structures, enabling employees to enhance job implementation. An organisation's HRM practices should be related to at least two dimensions of its performance. First, if HRM practices increase employees' discretionary effort, this will influence intermediate outcomes such as turnover and productivity, over which employees have direct control. Second, investing in HRM practices can reduce employee turnover and boost productivity, thus enhancing a company's financial performance (Huselid 1995: 637).

Organisations ought to prioritise improving employee skills and competencies, either by enhancing the capabilities of existing staff or by selecting top-tier candidates through effective screening techniques. Studies have consistently shown a positive correlation between the selectivity in staffing practices and organisational performance. Furthermore, investing in the training and development of employees not only improves the quality of the existing workforce but also plays a crucial role in contributing to the organisation's overall success (Delaney & Huselid, 1996: 951).

The effectiveness of competent employees will be restricted if they are demotivated to perform their jobs. Employee motivation is a critical driver of organisational outcomes. Motivated employees are more engaged, productive and committed, which leads to improved job performance, customer satisfaction, financial results, and long-term growth for the organisation. It is, therefore, in the best interest of organisations to invest in practices that foster and sustain employee motivation (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1992). Research has shown that remuneration and performance management systems can positively impact organisational performance (Siraj & Hågen, 2023). Remuneration, which includes compensation and rewards, significantly impacts organisational

outcomes, including talent attraction and retention, motivation, productivity, JS, innovation, and competitiveness. How organisations structure and administer remuneration packages can influence various aspects of their performance and success. Organisations should carefully design and administer their compensation and rewards programmes to align with their strategic goals and foster positive organisational outcomes (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1992).

Performance management is a strategic process influencing diverse organisational outcomes such as productivity, engagement, goal achievement, work quality, and financial performance. The efficacy of performance management goes beyond individual assessments and extends to fostering improved communication, collaboration, and problem-solving within the organisation. This holistic impact contributes significantly to the organisation's overall success and competitive edge (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1992).

The organisational structure significantly impacts performance, as experienced and dedicated employees directly influence the performance and accomplishment of tasks (Delaney & Huselid, 1996: 951). Employee participation systems (Wagner, 1994) allow employees to progress within an organisation (Levine, 1995). In addition, if employees are provided with job security, they will be encouraged to work harder (Levine, 1995: 55–58).

In summary, HRM practices are pivotal in determining an organisation's success. These practices influence diverse organisational outcomes, including employee performance, satisfaction, cost management, innovation, and overall growth. How an organisation handles its human capital holds substantial over its performance and ultimate success. A thoughtfully crafted HRM strategy can effectively align the workforce with the organisation's objectives, enhancing performance and bolstering competitiveness. Hence, there is a positive correlation between HRM practices and organisational performance (Delaney & Huselid, 1996: 952; Konadu et al., 2024).

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on HRM practices that will support organisations in keeping their skilled employees. HRM comprises guidelines, practices, and systems influencing employee behaviour and performance. Research has indicated that HRM practices positively affect the organisation's performance.

There are four top HRM models: the Matching Model of HRM, the Harvard Model of HRM, the Guest Model of HRM, and the Warwick Model of HRM. The study selected HRM practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and remuneration, which were incorporated into the Fombrun, Tichy, and Devana Model of HRM. The model assumed that these four key HRM practices significantly impact the organisation's performance.

The next chapter will shift its focus to Job satisfaction, exploring its impact on employees and organisations.

CHAPTER 3: JOB SATISFACTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided an in-depth evaluation of HRM practices, setting the stage for this chapter, which examines the important topic of JS. JS can be impacted by multiple factors, such as, for example, compensation and rewards, fair promotional opportunities within the organisation, favourable working conditions, leadership style and relationships with colleagues and the intrinsic characteristics of the job itself (Panigrahi, 2016:2).

This chapter will look at the literature regarding JS. Firstly, it begins by tracing JS's historical development and examining JS theories and the demographic variables contributing to its understanding. Additionally, this chapter examines the implication of JS on HRM practices, specifically within the context of a government institution, to create a model of the facets that influence employee JS.

3.2 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOB SATISFACTION

Throughout history, JS has attracted the attention of numerous scholars, making it a widely researched topic in management studies and organisational theory and practice (Man, Modrak, Dima, & Pachura, 2011; Beekan, 2012). In the subsequent sections, the historical development of JS will be discussed, tracing its development from the 1800s to the present day.

3.2.1 Early Development of the Concept of JS (1800 – 1900)

The emergence of JS studies was fuelled by the critique of the classical management approach (Man et al., 2011). This classical approach, which incorporated elements from Fayol's administrative management theory (1841 – 1925), Taylor's scientific management approach (1856–1915) and Weber's bureaucratic management approach (1864–1920), viewed employees as mere instruments of production and primarily motivated by economic considerations (Adam, 2016; Man et al., 2011). Criticism was directed at the classical management approach for its focus on work

methods and techniques, prioritising employee productivity over satisfaction (Grobler et al., 2006).

Classical management strongly emphasised optimising job tasks, reducing the workforce required for specific roles, and introducing routine and simplified tasks, all of which had a detrimental impact on JS (Colquitt, Lepine & Wesson, 2013). However, despite the initial criticism and resistance, modern management principles began to take shape, building on the foundations of classical management (Syed & Kramar, 2012). It is worth noting that organisational and management theories have significantly influenced the development of JS studies (Man et al., 2011).

3.2.2 The development of JS in the 20th century (1901 – 2000)

Compared to classical theory, the neoclassical management approach indicates that employee communication, the desire of employees to join management and effective communication are important elements of JS (Man et al., 2011). The human relations theory of management was developed in the early 1920s and explains the importance of human interactions and a sense of belonging in relation to the economic behaviour of workers (Perry, 2017). This theory indicates that human behaviour is triggered in reaction to other human beings' behaviour, also called social behaviour (Man et al., 2011). Employees are not just economic beings; they have respect for others and seek to realise their ambitions and desire to advance at work (Perry, 2017). Accordingly, JS studies were inspired by human relations theory (Man et al., 2011).

The motivation provided by the famous Hawthorne studies shifted management's attention from the classical approach to the human relations approach (Grobler et al., 2006). These studies were conducted by Elton Mayo, FJ Roethlisberger and William J Dickson (1927 - 1932) at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago in the United States (Kramar & Syed, 2012). These researchers established that an employee's emotions are highly influenced by their work, relationships, manager's style, and support, which could influence productivity (Grobler et al., 2006). The research findings ultimately indicated that respecting employees and securing their emotional and physical well-being would enhance JS and increase productivity (Grobler et al., 2006).

Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg's (1959-1974) two-factor theory and Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model (JCM) have been significant theories of JS and will be conversed in the conceptualisation of JS (Hassard, Teoh, & Cox, 2017).

3.2.3 Contemporary Development of Job Satisfaction (2001 to Current)

Throughout history, achieving high JS has been a key goal for organisations (Grobler et al., 2006). However, although once significant, the human relations approach has waned in importance as the primary leadership style. When considered in isolation, this shift occurred because the human relations theory proved insufficient to enhance JS or productivity, primarily owing to its failure to account for individual differences that significantly impact JS (Grobler et al., 2006, 2016).

In the 20th century, extensive research was conducted on JS. However, more recent studies, especially post-2001, have focused on specific individual factors influencing JS. These studies have explored the relationship between JS and various aspects such as achievement motivation (Beekan, 2012), job performance (Buitendach & De Witte, 2005; Price, 2001), life satisfaction (Burke, 2001; Carson, 2002; Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002; Van Praag, Frijter, & Ferrer-Carbonell, 2003), organisational commitment (Agarwal & Ferratt, 2001; Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane & Ferreira, 2011), organisational culture (Sempene et al., 2002), and organisational effectiveness (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2002).

3.3 DEFINITIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION

Although JS is a well-researched construct with numerous interpretations (Ramlutchman, 2017), scholars have not reached a consensus on the precise definition thereof (Holm, 2022). Spector (2022) defines it as the overall satisfaction individuals derive from their jobs, irrespective of whether they like or dislike their roles. In contrast, Locke (1969) characterises JS as the process wherein employees find satisfaction in recognising that their effort and commitment contribute to the organisation's goals. Cranny, Smith and Stone (1992:1) offer another perspective,

describing JS as how workers perceive JS, including both desired and actual outcomes. According to Cranny et al. (1992), individuals with low expectations may feel content and fulfilled when they are met, while those with high expectations might experience dissatisfaction.

JS is an employee's emotional response to work tasks (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010), comparing actual and expected outcomes (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014; Thompson & Phua, 2012). This process incorporates individual feelings and the satisfaction of employees' needs (Mudor & Tooksoon, 2011). Additionally, Yao et al. (2004) propose that JS serves as a mechanism to prevent job loss by ensuring employee satisfaction. Furthermore, Robbins and Judge (2009: 65) define JS as the positive sentiment employees experience regarding their jobs, emphasising accomplishing tasks (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2010: 477). Furthermore, Chan, Chan, Khoo, Loh, and Wong (2012: 2) describe JS as the satisfaction employees derive from achieving organisational objectives.

Contemporary perspectives on JS are presented by Bogicevic-Milikic and Cuckovic (2019) and Čulibrk, Delić, Mitrović, and Čulibrk (2018). Bogicevic-Milikic and Cuckovic (2019) define JS as how employees perceive their work or specific aspects of it, shaped by their job-related experiences. On the other hand, Čulibrk et al. (2018) describe JS as contentment resulting from one's work. For this study, the definition by Spector (2022) was adopted for its straightforward explanation, ensuring clarity for both the reader and the researcher.

3.4 NINE FACETS OF JOB SATISFACTION

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Spector (1997) identified nine facets of JS that are important in improving employees' JS. Spector (1997:3) defines JS facets as a job's specific elements that stimulate feelings of happiness and unhappiness (Spector, 1997:3).

In this study, the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), developed by Spector (1994), was used to assess participants' JS. The JSS evaluates nine facets of JS: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers,

nature of work and communication, and overall JS (Spector, 1994). Maini (2014) supports that these facets significantly influence employees' JS.

Spector (1997) further explains that JS measures how content or discontent individuals are with these facets of their jobs. Consequently, satisfied individuals tend to exhibit more positive attitudes toward their work than those who are dissatisfied. Employees who find contentment in their jobs and are motivated to excel are more likely to remain committed to their employer for an extended period (Conway, 2021). To understand these positive and negative attitudes comprehensively, one must fully comprehend the various facets of JS (Colquitt et al., 2013).

Shabbir and Wei (2015) distinguish between internal and external JS factors. Internal factors emotionally influence employees' feelings of happiness and are related to their jobs, whereas external entities control external JS factors and exist external to the job itself. These facets will subsequently be discussed as outlined in Table 1.2 and portrayed in Figure 3.1.

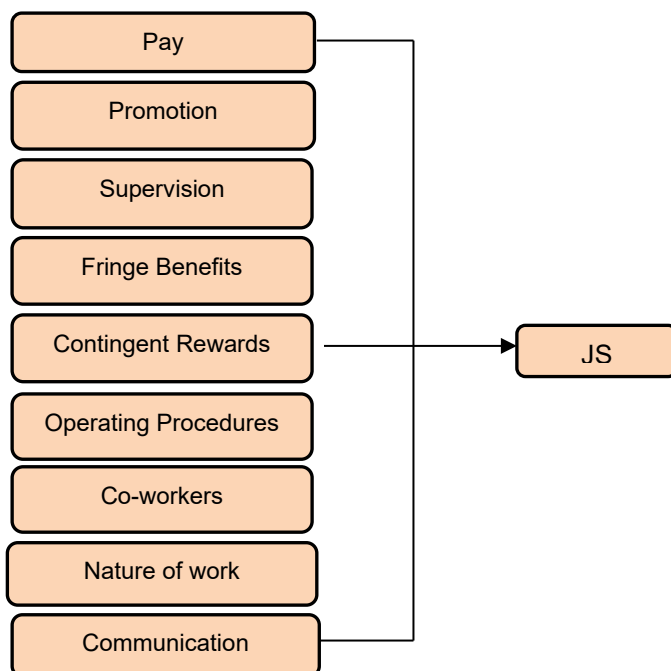


Figure 3. 1: Nine facets of JS (Adapted from Spector, 1997)

3.4.1 Pay

Pay is consistently recognised as a powerful driver of JS. Miah (2018: 271) and Tornikoski (2011) emphasise the crucial role of pay in motivating employees and

influencing their career choices. In a competitive labour market, pay is important in attracting and retaining competent workers, as highlighted by Lievens, Decaesteker, Coetsier, and Geirnaert (2001:34).

Financial stability and the ability to meet one's economic needs are key factors driving JS (Gloria, Belias & Koustelios, 2014). However, it is important to recognise that pay levels alone do not exclusively determine JS (Spector, 1997). Research indicates that pay levels influence work-related attitudes, including organisational commitment, intention to stay (Chew & Chan, 2008), and pay satisfaction (Heneman, Porter, Greenberger, & Strasser, 1997). Serreqi (2020) emphasises the critical role of pay satisfaction, demonstrating a significant relationship between pay levels and JS, while other factors such as pay raises, benefits, and administrative structure show no such association. In contrast, a study by Thokoa, Naidoo and Herbst (2021) indicated that pay is not a significant predictor of JS.

As highlighted by Serreqi (2020), pay satisfaction deserves separate consideration due to its direct impact on organisational costs and financial planning. By independently assessing pay satisfaction, organisations gain insights into how remuneration influences employee attitudes and behaviours, facilitating targeted interventions to enhance retention and performance.

Furthermore, aligning pay structures with organisational talent strategies is important for attracting and retaining competent employees. A well-structured pay system not only serves as a competitive advantage in retaining top talent but also stimulates JS (SHRM 2012: 24). This positive connection between pay and JS is reinforced by Miah (2018: 271) and further supported by a study by Simran, Maninder, Harizon and Asma (2022); Watkins and Fusch (2022), which indicates that employees perceiving fair and competitive pay, tend to exhibit higher employee JS and retention.

3.4.2 Promotion

As defined by Miah (2018: 272), promotion involves elevating an employee to a higher-ranked position within the organisation. When promotion opportunities are fair within the organisation, JS levels increase (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Spector, 1997). Several

researchers support the notion that JS strongly correlates with promotion opportunities, suggesting a direct and positive association between the two (Garba & Idris, 2021). These authors found that promotion has a significant impact on the JS.

Fair and equitable organisational promotional opportunities contribute to employee happiness and contentment (Miah, 2018: 272). Ghaffari, Shah, and Burgoyne (2017) highlight the importance of promotion, particularly when it leads to salary increments. Furthermore, Yousef (2017) posits that increased promotional opportunities are linked to greater organisational commitment and retention. Garba and Idris (2021) and Watkins and Fusch (2022) further demonstrate that promotions positively impact JS because employees who receive promotions generally experience higher JS levels, ultimately leading to higher retention rates. Similarly, promotional opportunities are significant predictors of JS (Thokoa, Naidoo & Herbst, 2021).

3.4.3 Supervision

Supervisors play a crucial role in influencing employees' JS. Noe et al. (2010) and Miah (2018: 272) define supervisors as individuals with significant power, influence and responsibilities that can directly impact employees' JS. When employees receive full support from their supervisors in achieving their personal goals and the organisation's objectives, it contributes to their JS (Sumedho, 2015: 22).

According to Scarpello and Vandenberg (1987), satisfaction with the supervisor refers to the level of contentment employees have with their immediate supervisor. This facet of satisfaction differs from overall satisfaction with the work environment and the job itself. The authors highlighted a weakness in existing JS questionnaires, stating that many fail to capture the complexities of satisfaction with supervisors fully. These instruments often seek to assess satisfaction across various employment aspects, with supervision being only one of them.

Vannucci, Whiteside, Saigal, Nichols, and Hileman (2017: 117) describe supervision as employees' personal relationships with their superiors. The conduct of supervisors within an organisation can either create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for employees or a cold and unwelcoming one, significantly affecting employees' JS levels

(Jia, Cheng, & Hale, 2017; Vannucci et al., 2017). This emphasises supervisors' critical role in shaping the organisational climate and its impact on employee morale.

Supervision and employee commitment are intertwined factors that significantly influence JS. Hakanen, Peeters and Schaufeli (2017: 291 - 292) emphasise that highly committed employees exhibit traits such as being energetic, fully engaged, motivated and deeply fascinated by their work. Satisfied employees are content and do not feel overwhelmed. However, according to Wang, Demerouti and Blanc (2017), supervisors who display rude and aggressive behaviour can lower JS levels among workers, potentially leading to employee mental health issues.

Winarto and Chalidyanto (2020) support the notion that there is a positive correlation between supervision and JS. Effective supervision can significantly enhance an employee's overall JS, leading to a more satisfied, motivated, and engaged workforce. This demonstrates the multifaceted impact of supervisory practices on employee well-being and organisational success.

3.4.4 Fringe benefits and contingent rewards

Fringe benefits include monetary and non-monetary remuneration that employees receive for their services (Mondy & Noe, 2005; Spector, 1997). Monetary benefits involve direct payments, while non-monetary benefits are related to aspects of the job, work environment and workplace flexibility, representing indirect remuneration. Colquitt et al. (2013) found that when employees perceive both emotional and tangible benefits as greater, their job performance is positively influenced. Contingent rewards are payments provided to employees in recognition of exceptional service rendered (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Moreover, Spector (1997) notes that these rewards motivate employees to exceed expectations.

Recognising the importance of employees as valuable assets to organisations, Zeb, Rehman, Saeed, and Ullah (2015) emphasise the need to motivate employees. This motivation can be achieved by implementing effective reward systems and acknowledging exceptional service delivery. Reward and recognition systems play a crucial role in organisations, as evidenced by various theories, including Maslow's

Theory (1943, 1954), Herzberg's Theory (1959), Alderfer's Theory (1972), and Vroom's ERG Theory (1964) as noted by Haider et al. (2016: 343). These theories establish a strong connection between rewards, recognition and employee JS.

Empirical evidence suggests that a positive correlation exists between fringe benefits and contingent rewards. Lima and Allida (2023) assert that as the quality and availability of fringe benefits and contingent rewards increase, so does the overall JS of employees. This highlights the importance of a well-structured reward system in enhancing employee motivation and performance.

3.4.5 Operating Procedures

Operating procedures, or operating conditions, according to Spector (1997), are the amount of work to be done and relate to employee satisfaction with an organisation's policies and procedures. The Brampton Small Business Enterprise Centre (n.d.) describe it as the step-by-step guidelines compiled by organisations to assist employees in completing tasks.

Rajan (2018) highlights that the quantity of work assigned to employees significantly influences their productivity levels and turnover intentions. Silva and Gustav (2015), Buzza, James and Alex (2017), Purbaningrat and Surya (2017) and Amanda and Agus (2019) confirmed that an employee's workload can affect employee loyalty as the more workload given to employees, the lower the loyalty to all aspects related to the employee's job or the organisation. Basem, Norawati, Kamal, Munika and Hastuti (2022) asserted that workload significantly impacts employee loyalty. If the workload is insufficient, employees may engage in unproductive activities, leading to boredom (Rajani, 2018). Conversely, an excessive workload beyond expectations can induce stress and fatigue, elevating the likelihood of employees resigning from their positions (Inegbedion, Inegbedion, Peter & Harry, 2020:2). Spector (1997) further asserts that organisations with favourable operating policies and procedures contribute to employee satisfaction and contentment.

Well-defined and efficient procedures positively affect employees' satisfaction by providing clarity, consistency, efficiency, fairness, safety, and support. These

procedures help create a predictable and stable work environment, empower employees, reduce stress and conflicts, and promote continuous improvement. Consequently, effective operating procedures are associated with increased JS (Kosec, Sekulic, Wilson-Gahan, Rostohar, Tusak & Bon, 2022).

In conclusion, implementing effective operating procedures streamlines organisational processes and plays a critical role in promoting employee satisfaction and enhancing overall organisational performance.

3.4.6 Co-workers

Colleagues or co-workers majorly shape employees' JS (Noe et al., 2010). Their impact extends to the emotional state of employees regarding their peers in the workplace, contributing either positively or negatively to their overall JS (Colquitt et al., 2013). The presence of approachable and supportive colleagues directly affects employee JS, with the quality of interpersonal relationships among colleagues as a key factor that can either enhance JS or lead to dissatisfaction (Veldman et al., 2013: 562).

Within JS, co-workers' impact is significant and multi-faceted, including various factors contributing to an individual's overall work experience. HRM practices can facilitate the creation of a supportive work environment where individuals feel valued and understood. Instrumental support demonstrated through co-workers' willingness to assist each other with tasks, share information and collaborate plays a crucial role in enhancing JS by making the workload more manageable (Kurtessis, 2017). Watkins (2023) emphasises the importance of prioritising teamwork and collaboration as a positive and collaborative team environment fosters a sense of companionship and accomplishment, ultimately contributing to overall JS. Co-workers also influence learning and development opportunities by sharing knowledge and experiences, and a workplace that encourages continuous learning contributes positively to JS. Effective communication among co-workers is also crucial, as clear communication channels and open dialogue contribute to a healthy work environment and positively impact JS (Watkins, 2023). Sumedho (2015) further emphasises that employee satisfaction is strengthened when colleagues support achieving personal objectives.

Supportive and harmonious co-worker interactions enhance employees' overall JS through various mechanisms, including fostering social interaction, building mutual respect and trust, facilitating effective communication and feedback, aligning goals and values, enabling healthy conflict resolution, offering emotional support, increasing motivation and engagement, providing peer recognition, and supporting work-life balance. These factors collectively contribute to a cohesive and satisfying work experience (Abun & Basilio, 2023).

Research supports a positive relationship between workplace relationships and JS (Abun & Basilio, 2023; Bella, 2023). Positive co-worker relationships are associated with higher levels of JS, highlighting the importance of cultivating supportive interpersonal dynamics in the workplace.

3.4.7 Nature of work and communication

The nature of work, referring to the job assigned to employees, significantly impacts their attitudes, beliefs and performance (Lewis, 2014; Lawler & Hall, 1970:305). Jobs that lack challenge and involve the same routine daily can lead to employee dissatisfaction, absenteeism and increased turnover intentions (Hackman & Lawler, 1971:259; Locke, 1976:1320). Conversely, overly demanding jobs that exceed an employee's capacity may result in frustration and, ultimately, higher absenteeism and turnover intentions (Locke, 1976:1320). However, Omar, Aluwi, Fauzi, and Hairpuddin (2020) indicated that work-related stress does not impact employees' intention to leave the organisation.

The nature of work is closely linked to communication. It is vital in influencing JS (SHRM, 2012:33). Job design factors such as autonomy, task variety and skill development impact JS. Challenging roles that allow for skill growth and contribute to the organisation or society tend to enhance JS. Moreover, autonomy and control over work processes also contribute positively to JS, as employees find reward in decision-making empowerment (Blanz, 2017). Jobs that support a healthy work-life balance further contribute to positive JS, with flexibility and work-life balance policies gaining increasing importance (Gagnano, Simbula & Miglioretti, 2020).

Effective communication within an organisation is crucial for JS, involving day-to-day conversations and guiding employees in achieving organisational goals (Noe et al., 2010). Frequent feedback resulting from effective communication systems fascinates employees, contributing to increased satisfaction, reduced absenteeism and lowered turnover intentions (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Lehman, 2014:8).

Transparent and open communication is particularly essential for JS. Regular updates on company goals, changes and decisions positively impact employee satisfaction. Providing feedback on performance and recognising achievements contributes significantly to JS. Employees value communication that acknowledges their contributions and offers constructive feedback. Effective team communication fosters collaboration and creates a positive work environment, enabling teams to handle challenges more effectively and enhancing overall JS. The leadership communication style also influences employee satisfaction, with approachable, transparent leaders communicating a clear vision, contributing to a positive work culture (Coetzee et al., 2014).

In conclusion, organisations that prioritise designing meaningful, challenging jobs and foster effective communication practices will likely create a work environment that enhances overall employee satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, the nature of work and effective communication are critical determinants of JS in organisational settings (Inayat & Khan, 2021).

3.5 JOB SATISFACTION THEORIES

Models and theories related to JS play a crucial role in providing a comprehensive understanding of JS as it is a critical aspect of the workplace. They serve to categorise the various factors influencing employees' levels of JS and offer valuable guidance to organisations aiming to enhance employee satisfaction. Additionally, these theories shed light on human behaviour and the motivating factors that drive it (Singh & Onahrng, 2019:17).

JS is essentially an intangible but practically significant emotional state when employees find contentment in their job responsibilities and deliver their best performance (Venkatesh & Sinha, n.d.). Several influential models and theories contribute to our understanding of JS, among which are Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959-1974), Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943; 1954), and the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) (Ramlutchman, 2017:54). The following discussion will elaborate on these models and theories, providing a deeper understanding into their contributions to understanding and managing JS in the workplace.

3.5.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a fundamental framework for understanding human motivation (Maslow, 1995). This five-tier hierarchy is visually represented as a pyramid, wherein the fulfilment of basic needs is a prerequisite for addressing higher-order needs (Maslow, 1995). The hierarchy includes physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation needs (McLeod, 2018), as illustrated in Figure 3.2. This model delineates the progressive nature of human needs, highlighting the sequential satisfaction required for optimal motivation and personal development.

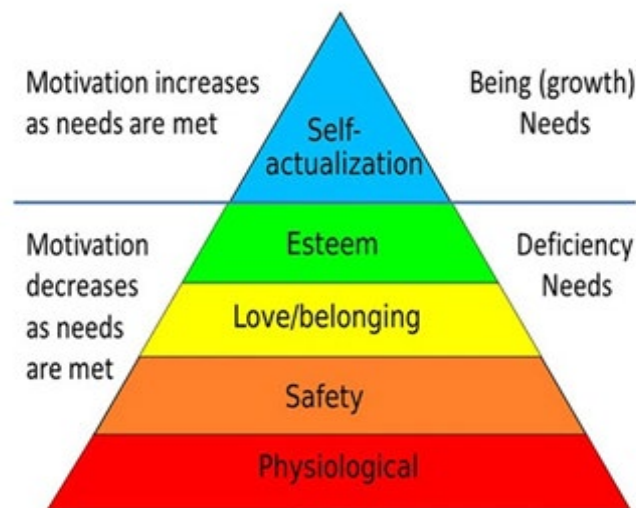


Figure 3. 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Adapted from Maslow, 1943,1954)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943; 1954) outlines a framework where certain fundamental needs take precedence and serve as primary motivators for human

behaviour. People are naturally inclined to prioritise these basic needs, and once they are fulfilled, motivation drives them to progress up the hierarchy.

- **Physiological Needs:** These are the most fundamental and critical needs for human survival, including air, food, water, shelter, clothing, warmth, sexual fulfilment, and sleep. These needs are of utmost importance, as one cannot function without them. They take top priority, and other needs come into focus once these essentials are met.
- **Safety Needs:** Safety needs involve seeking protection and security from potential harm or danger. Everyone requires a sense of safety and protection.
- **Love and Belonging Needs:** This category includes the need for positive interpersonal relationships. It includes factors like companionship, care, trust, and the expression of love.
- **Esteem Needs:** Esteem needs are crucial for achieving happiness and include aspects related to self-worth and respect from others.
- **Self-Actualisation Needs:** At the apex of the hierarchy, self-actualisation needs represent an individual's aspiration to realise their full potential, pursue ambitious goals and seek personal growth (Maslow, 1987: 64).

This hierarchy provides valuable insights into human motivation and the prioritisation of needs in different individuals' lives. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can also be used to explain JS theory related to the work environment. Monetary rewards help employees to meet their basic physiological needs. Furthermore, security needs come into the picture when employees feel secure in their workplace and when their jobs are secured. Employees feel they belong in the workplace when they are happy and secure. Protection feelings appear to be good interactive relationships with counterparts and superiors in the workplace. Employees tend to be happy when they feel appreciated and valued by their counterparts and the organisation. The final step in the pyramid is where the employee desires to grow and advance in life (Spector, 1997). As a result, organisations seeking to improve the JS level of employees should meet the basic needs of employees before addressing other needs in the pyramid (Spector, 1997).

Maslow's model underwent significant evolution in the 1960s and 1970s, creating both a seven-stage and an eight-stage model. These developments reflect his continuous exploration and fine-tuning of human needs and motivations. In 1970, Maslow expanded his theory to include cognitive and aesthetic needs (Maslow, 1970a), and he introduced transcendence needs as an additional crucial component of human motivation (Maslow, 1970b). These adaptations highlight the dynamic nature of his work and its enduring relevance in comprehending human behaviour and satisfaction, as depicted in Figure 3.3.

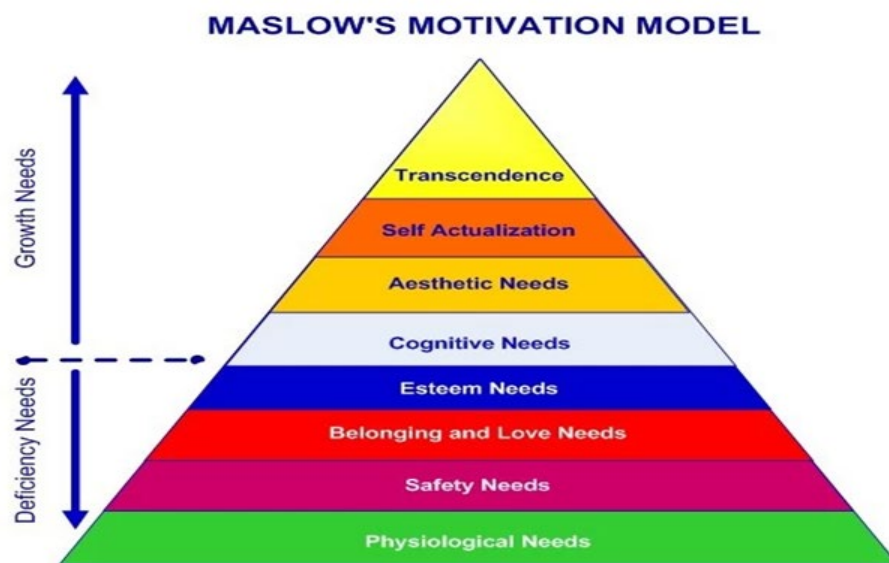


Figure 3.3: Maslow's Motivational Extended Model (Adapted from Maslow, 1970a,1970b)

In the extended version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, three additional levels are introduced (Llanos & Verduzco, 2022):

- **Cognitive Needs:** These needs follow esteem needs and include the human desire for knowledge, understanding, curiosity, exploration, and the need for meaning and predictability in their lives. Cognitive needs drive individuals to explore their identity and acquire knowledge, a crucial step towards self-actualisation.
- **Aesthetic Needs:** Aesthetic needs come after cognitive needs and precede self-actualisation in the extended hierarchy. They involve appreciating and pursuing beauty, balance, and harmony in various aspects of life.

- **Transcendence Needs:** These needs are positioned above self-actualisation and are considered the ultimate motivator for humans. They go beyond individual desires and self-interest, focusing on spiritual needs. Maslow's theory postulates that people can only achieve their full potential by dedicating themselves to something greater than themselves, whether through acts of altruism or spiritual experiences.

3.5.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Based on Frederick Herzberg's 1959 research, specific job-related factors influence employee JS and job dissatisfaction. Herzberg identified two distinct sets of factors: satisfying factors, which are crucial for fostering satisfaction and dissatisfying factors, which are external and can lead to dissatisfaction.

Herzberg's Motivation Theory, as explained by the Expert Programme Management (2018), seeks to understand what motivates employees in the workplace. This theory introduces two factors organisations can embrace to motivate their employees in the workplace. These two factors are motivators and hygiene factors. Notably, job dissatisfaction arises when these factors are not adequately addressed. However, while these factors can prevent employee unhappiness when managed effectively, they cannot be a source of satisfaction. The interaction between these motivators and hygiene factors is illustrated in Figure 3.4.

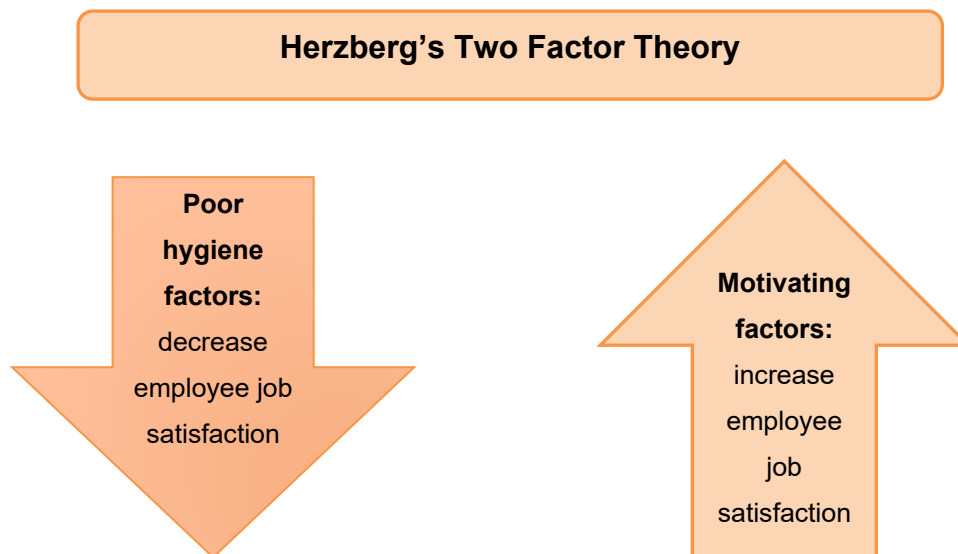


Figure 3. 4: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Adapted from Denis, 2018)

To ensure employee satisfaction, organisations must prioritise meeting motivating factors, as identified by Herzberg (1966). These motivating factors include:

- **Achievement:** Employees feel a sense of accomplishment when they successfully complete challenging tasks.
- **Recognition:** Acknowledging an employee's work by peers and superiors contributes to satisfaction.
- **The work itself:** Providing employees with exciting and thought-provoking job tasks leads to satisfaction.
- **Responsibility:** Allowing employees to own their actions and decisions increases satisfaction.
- **Advancement:** Career growth and promotion opportunities within the workplace are important for employee satisfaction.
- **Growth:** Encouraging employees to develop themselves through on-the-job training or formal training programmes.

Conversely, if hygiene factors are absent in organisations, they can cause employee dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors include:

- **Company policies:** Clear and equitable company policies are essential for employee well-being.
- **Supervision:** Fair and non-authoritarian supervision is important to maintain a positive work environment.
- **Relationships:** Fostering positive interpersonal relationships among employees contributes to a healthy workplace.
- **Work conditions:** Adequate and well-maintained working equipment and a conducive work environment are important for employee satisfaction.
- **Salary:** Organisations should ensure competitive and reasonable pay structures distinct from competitors in the same industry.
- **Status:** Preserving employees' status within the organisation by assigning them significant responsibilities can make them feel valued.
- **Security:** Employees must be told that their jobs are safe and secure.

Herzberg's research underscores the significance of motivating and hygiene factors (Figure 3.5) in shaping employee commitment and satisfaction in the workplace. Organisations should pay equal attention to these elements to create a conducive and fulfilling work environment.

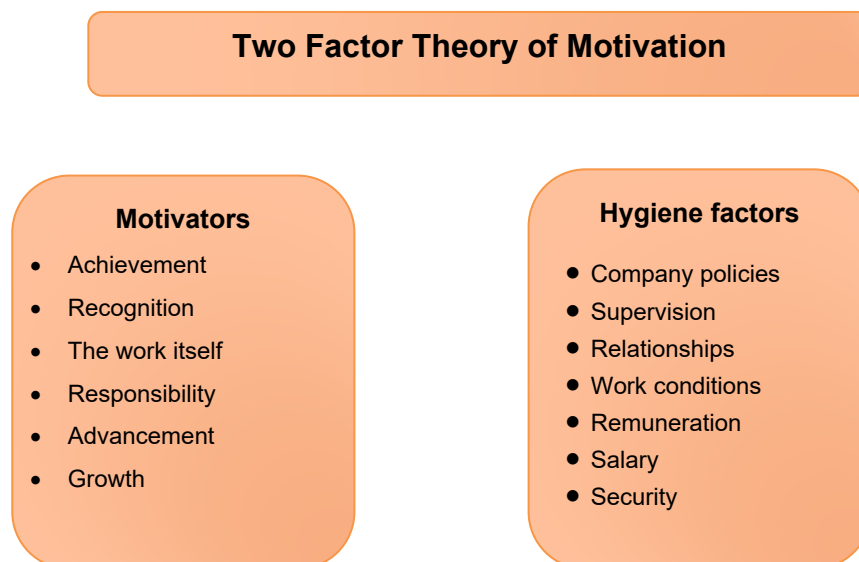


Figure 3. 5: Motivating and hygiene factors (Adapted from Denis, 2018)

Herzberg (1966) emphasises that employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not mutually exclusive; individuals can experience both emotions simultaneously. Satisfiers and dissatisfiers are independent of each other in the workplace. Figure 3.6 visually represents Herzberg's description of satisfiers and dissatisfiers, emphasising the critical distinction between motivating and hygiene factors in the workplace. This graphical representation emphasises the significance of addressing both categories to foster a positive work environment and enhance employee JS (Herzberg, 1966).

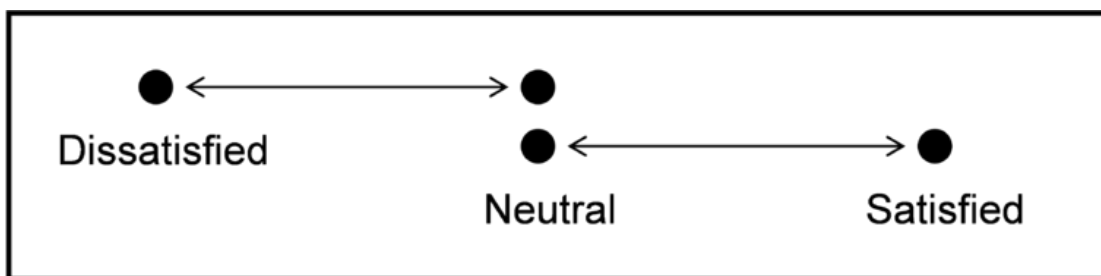


Figure 3. 6: Herzberg's Description of Satisfiers and Dissatisfiers (Adapted from Collins (2002:237))

Herzberg (1966) indicates that inadequate hygiene factors can result in employee dissatisfaction. Conversely, when motivators are fulfilled, employees experience satisfaction and contentment. This distinction highlights the nuanced nature of employee well-being, emphasising the importance of addressing hygiene factors and motivators to create a truly fulfilling work environment.

3.5.3 Job Characteristics Model

The Job Characteristics Model (JCM), proposed by Hackman and Oldham, is a framework that highlights how specific job characteristics influence JS. Hackman and Oldham (1975:161) state that the JCM describes JS as achieved when organisations effectively incorporate motivating factors. The model suggests that five key job characteristics, namely skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, impact three psychological states, as illustrated in Figure 3.7. These psychological states, in turn, influence employees' JS.

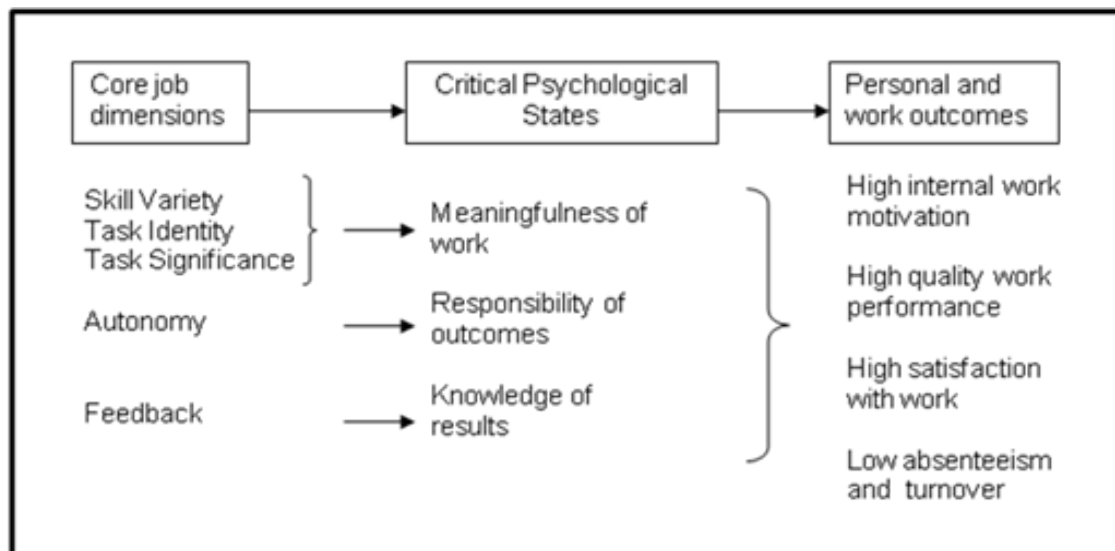


Figure 3. 7: Job Characteristics Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1975:161)

Research aligned with the job characteristics approach indicates that JS is determined by the nature of an individual's job and the organisation for which they work (Muindi & K'Obonyo, 2015). Based on the work by Turner and Lawrence (1965), the JCM predicts that work-related outcomes, such as JS and work performance, are influenced by the five job characteristics mentioned earlier through the mediation of three psychological states. The model's components are further detailed in Figure 3.7 and are described in more detail below. The components illustrated in Figure 3.7 are briefly outlined (Blanz, 2017:2-3):

- **Skill Variety** is present when a job demands various competencies to be effectively carried out. Employees perceive their roles as important and stimulating when they encounter diverse tasks. They seek challenging and engaging tasks.
- **Task Identity** occurs when the job scope is transparent, and employees know what to accomplish and how to accomplish it. Employees feel valued and fully committed to the organisation when engaged and informed during the task identity process.
- **Task significance** occurs when the job has an influence inside or outside the organisation. Employees feel important when their jobs affect others and when they can make a difference in their lives, whether internally or externally.

- **Autonomy** occurs when the organisation trusts the employee and believes that the employee can perform without being micro-managed. For autonomy, the employee decides how to perform the duties and schedules their timetable for task accomplishment. Employees are independent and are willing to take accountability.
- **Feedback** involves providing comments and feedback to employees, ensuring they remain engaged and well-informed. Employees should receive clear and constructive feedback, whether positive or negative, to help them improve their performance. This feedback loop is essential for continuous development and JS.

3.6 DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES ON JOB SATISFACTION

Numerous studies have investigated the connection between demographic factors and employee JS, resulting in varied findings (Bull, 2020). Some research has identified significant positive relationships between these variables, such as Ho Kim, Ra, Park, and Kwon (2017) and Carvajal and Popovici (2019). Conversely, other studies have found significant negative relationships (Bull, 2020), while some reported no correlation at all, such as Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw and Rich (2010), Kolo (2018), as well as Osarumwense (2020). This section discussed the demographic factors influencing JS: age, gender, job level, marital status, and ports of entry (PoE).

3.6.1 Age

Age plays an important role in employee JS. Research suggests that older employees are happier than millennials (Kaya, 1995; Burks, 2015 & Boumans, Jong and Janssen, 2011). According to Riza, Ganzach and Liu (2016), JS generally improves as people age, but it may deteriorate when they become stagnant in their organisation. JS can also improve when employees receive adequate benefits as they age (Riza et al., (2016). According to Burks (2015) and Riza et al. (2016), older employees report higher JS levels of extensive experience and long-term commitment to their organisations. However, not all studies find a consistent relationship between age and JS (Ramlutchman, 2018).

3.6.2 Gender

Gender differences notably impact JS (Huang & Gamble, 2015). Some studies, like Aydin, Uysala and Sarier (2012), suggest that men tend to be more satisfied than women. Conversely, Sandra, Fernand and Carlos (2010) found that women's JS levels can surpass those of men. Additionally, a study by Osarumwense (2020) highlighted that male and female employees have similar JS levels.

Government policies, such as the Employment Equity Act, have been introduced to address gender-related inequalities and discrimination in the workplace (Horwitz & Jain, 2011). This legislation aims to provide equal opportunities for previously underprivileged employees and eliminate factors that can adversely affect JS (Gina, 2018).

Although some studies suggest gender-related differences in JS (Rashed, 2006; Hossain Md, 2014; Agbor, Ebeh, Nwankwo, & Agu, 2014; Jung, Moon & Hahm, 2013; Moyes, Williams & Koch, 2006), some studies find no significant impact of gender on JS (Ramlutchman, 2018).

3.6.3 Job level

Happier individuals demonstrate a stronger commitment to achieving the organisation's objectives. Indeed, elevated levels of happiness correspond to enhanced performance (Joo, Yoon, & Jeung, 2012; McNeese-Smith, 1999). The works of Joo and Lim (2013), Chernik and Phelan (1974), and Joo et al. (2012) collectively buttress that individuals occupying higher job levels experience heightened satisfaction and performance, thereby exerting a substantial and positive influence on JS. A study conducted by Ho Kim et al. (2017: 633) further affirms a positive and significant relationship between job levels and JS.

3.6.4 Marital status

Marital status is a powerful demographic factor that can impact JS. Married employees often report higher JS owing to the added responsibilities and sense of stability that come with marriage (Azim, Haque & Chowdhury, 2013). Several researchers (Fitzmaurice, 2012; Gazioglu & Tansel, 2006; Eyüpoğlu & Saner, 2013; Olatunjis &

Mokuolu, 2014; Anyango, Ojera, & Ochieng, 2013; Kibkebut, 2013) have found that the satisfaction levels of married employees are higher than those of their unmarried counterparts. In contrast, Osarumwense (2020) indicated that married and single employees share similar JS levels.

3.6.5 Ports of Entry

Working at ports of entry, characterised by substantial workloads and diverse travellers, can be demanding. It requires full employee engagement to provide services to a wide range of travellers from various backgrounds. Negligence can lead to dissatisfied travellers (Cheng-Hua & Hsin-Li, 2012).

Creating a pleasant working environment is essential to ensure employee satisfaction and commitment (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). The nature of work at PoE and the working environment are likely related, as committed employees are essential in such settings (Bakhsh, 2020). However, it is worth noting that no literature is available investigating the impact of the PoE as a biographical factor on JS.

A review of existing literature has not reached a definitive conclusion on the impact of demographic variables on employee JS. Therefore, these diverse studies show that various demographic factors influence employee perceptions of JS differently depending on the context (Bull, 2020).

3.7 IMPLICATIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS

According to Mafini (2014) and Cote and Morgan (2002), five underlying factors can contribute to JS in public organisations and are briefly described next:

Teamwork. HRM in public organisations can leverage teamwork to enhance JS among employees in several ways. Most importantly, teamwork fosters a collaborative and supportive work environment, increasing JS and overall organisational effectiveness. Some strategies HRM can employ to leverage teamwork are team building activities, clear communication channels, team empowerment, recognition

and rewards, training and development, flexible work arrangements, promoting inclusivity, performance evaluation, conflict resolution strategies and employee feedback. By incorporating these strategies, HRM in public organisations can create a collaborative and supportive work environment that contributes to higher JS among employees. This, in turn, can positively impact employee engagement, retention and overall organisational success (Mafini, 2014; Cote & Morgan, 2002). Additionally, a culture prioritising teamwork rather than solo efforts throughout the organisation and providing adequate support structures can effectively stimulate teamwork (Delarue, Van Hootegeem, Procter & Burr ridge 2008).

Working conditions. Mafini (2014) and Cote and Morgan (2002) assert that creating positive working conditions is crucial for enhancing JS among employees in public organisations. The work environment significantly influences the overall well-being and performance of individuals. HRM in public organisations can adopt ergonomic workspaces, health and safety measures, work-life balance, technology and tools, training and skill development, recognition and rewards, and many more strategies to improve working conditions and, consequently, boost JS. Additionally, by focusing on these working conditions, public organisations' HRM can contribute to a workplace culture that prioritises employee well-being, satisfaction and overall productivity. Moreover, regularly assessing and adapting these strategies based on employee feedback is essential for continuous improvement. Furthermore, HRM in public organisations can improve working conditions by adjusting employees' employment contracts, work schedules, and compensation systems and addressing employee well-being issues (Mariwo, 2008)

Ability utilisation. Mafini (2014) and Cote and Morgan (2002) indicate that optimising ability utilisation is crucial for enhancing JS among employees in public organisations. When employees feel their skills and abilities are recognised, valued and utilised effectively, it can contribute to higher JS. Amongst others, HRM in public organisations can conduct regular skills assessments to identify employees' strengths and abilities, offer training and development programmes, implement job rotation and cross-training programmes to allow employees to diversify their skills and experience that align with the identified skills and abilities, foster a culture of knowledge-sharing and

collaboration, provide regular performance feedback that highlights employees' strengths and contributions of employees to enhance ability utilisation. Therefore, by putting more emphasis on ability utilisation, HRM in public organisations will be able to create an environment where employees feel valued, challenged and motivated, ultimately leading to increased JS and overall organisational success.

Creativity. According to Mafini (2014) and Cote and Morgan (2002), leveraging creativity in HRM can significantly enhance JS among employees in public organisations. Fostering a creative work environment encourages innovation, engagement and a sense of fulfilment. To mention a few, HRM in public organisations can foster a culture that values and encourages innovation, create diverse and inclusive teams that bring together individuals with different perspectives and experiences, establish open communication channels that allow employees to share their creative ideas and suggestions and provide constructive and timely feedback on employees' creative contributions. By integrating these strategies, public organisations' HRM can cultivate a creative and dynamic work environment, ultimately enhancing JS among employees. Additionally, a culture of creativity should be encouraged by attracting and promoting creative employees, promoting diversity and rewarding their efforts (Vlachos, 2008).

Autonomy. It is a key factor in enhancing JS among employees in public organisations. When employees can make decisions and control their work, it can increase JS, motivation and fulfilment. HRM can allow employees to determine how they execute their tasks, foster a culture of innovation where employees are encouraged to explore new ideas and approaches and recognise and appreciate employees for their expertise to promote autonomy in public organisations. These strategies can create an environment that values and promotes autonomy, increasing JS, motivation and overall employee well-being (Mafini, 2014; Cote & Morgan, 2002). In addition, HRM in public organisations should promote autonomy by ensuring that employees are allowed to use their discretion in their duties and discard micro-managing of employees (Federici, 2013). The work assigned to public employees should be aligned with their skills (Zheng, Morrison & O'Neill, 2006). In line with this,

public organisations should provide training opportunities to their managers to improve their work allocation skills (Pfeffer, 2005).

Addressing factors negatively affecting service delivery and employee performance in public organisations, such as poor communication, unfair recruitment, promotion, and training processes, is vital. Organisations should establish clear communication channels, update internal communication policies, encourage open communication, and implement regular feedback mechanisms to combat poor communication. Leaders should model effective communication behaviours and foster team building to create a positive work environment (Mbhele, 2019).

Communication is a significant predictor of JS in the context of HRM practices. Effective communication fosters a positive work environment, enhances employee engagement, fosters employee motivation and positive relationships and contributes to JS. Regular and transparent communication builds trust, fosters a positive organisational culture, and demonstrates a commitment to the well-being and development of employees (Asuelimen & Omohimi, 2019; Thokoa, Naidoo & Herbst, 2021).

Access to promotional opportunities is a significant predictor of job satisfaction. HRM practices emphasising career development, transparent promotion processes, and clear pathways for advancement contribute to a positive work environment and employee satisfaction (Thokoa, Naidoo & Herbst, 2021). Additionally, clear communication of promotion policies, merit-based promotions, and awareness of promotion opportunities within the organisation is essential for job satisfaction, service quality, and employee performance. HRM can create a positive and motivating environment by addressing promotion issues, positively impacting overall organizational success (Mbhele, 2019). Research studies by Garba and Idris (2021), Ellafi and Noor (2021), Otto, Dekker, Dekker, Richter, and Zabel (2022) asserted that promotional opportunities significantly enhance job satisfaction and organisational goal attainment. Promotion opportunities should be objectively conducted and provided to competent staff at the right time to enhance job satisfaction in the workplace.

Mbhele (2019) asserted that addressing unfair recruitment and selection processes is crucial for promoting JS, service quality, and employee performance in public organisations. Unfair practices in hiring can lead to dissatisfaction among employees, negatively impacting their motivation and commitment. Amongst others, organisations should clearly define and communicate recruitment and selection policies that emphasise fairness and transparency, implement initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process, and ensure that hiring panels are diverse and representative of different backgrounds. A more inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplace can be created by addressing unfair recruitment and selection processes. This, in turn, contributes to higher job satisfaction, improved service quality, and enhanced overall employee performance. In addition, Koech, Chepkilot and Waiganjo (2020) indicated that recruitment and selection practices significantly impact employee job satisfaction.

Addressing training and development in public organisations is crucial for JS, service quality, and employee performance. Collaborative efforts with employees to create individualised development plans, regular needs assessments, and a culture of continuous learning enhance training and development initiatives, positively impacting overall performance (Mbhele, 2019). The training environment significantly influences employee satisfaction, increasing job satisfaction (Tabassum, 2021). Additionally, Chaudhary & Bhaskar (2016); Mampuru, Mokoena and Isabirye (2024) indicated that training and development are positively related to employee job satisfaction, leading to job satisfaction. It implies that the more training an employee receives, the higher their job satisfaction will be.

Oyewobi (2013) and Shaughnessy (2023) indicated that employees experience more job satisfaction, especially when recognised and opportunities for advancement are encouraged. Additionally, employees feel their contributions are noticed and valued. Therefore, effectively addressing recognition in public organisations is crucial for improving job satisfaction, service quality, and employee performance. Recognition is a powerful tool that boosts morale and contributes to a culture of appreciation and excellence (Mbhele, 2019).

According to Andrew and Kent (2007), the commitment of all employees is primarily based on rewards and recognition. Deeproose (1994) argued that Effective recognition can boost employee motivation and productivity, improving organisational performance. An organisation's success relies on its ability to motivate its employees and assess their performance for job compensation.

Freedman (1978) and Flynn (1998) believe that implementing effective rewards and recognition within an organisation fosters a favourable working environment, motivating employees to excel in their performance. Furthermore, Flynn (1998) indicated that recognition and reward programmes aim to establish a system to pay and communicate it to employees, enabling them to link rewards to performance, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction. Mbhele (2019) asserted that by having these in place, HRM can create a positive and motivating work environment through effective recognition, ultimately improving job satisfaction, service quality, and employee performance. Therefore, a Danish (2010) study showed that reward and recognition greatly impact employee motivation and increase job satisfaction (Sabeng & Mensah, 2023).

These strategies aim to enhance JS among South African public sector employees, reducing high labour turnover and absenteeism and promoting an amicable labour relations environment (Mafini, 2014). Cultivating a positive organisational culture enables employees to perform at their best, leading to higher retention levels (Mallikarjuna, 2012).

3.8 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON JOB SATISFACTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted organisations to transition to Work-From-Home (WFH) setups, presenting challenges such as the absence of organisational culture, family disruptions, work-life conflicts, and an imbalanced work-life. Inadequate equipment and tools contribute to heightened stress and JS among employees uncertain about job security and salary. Organisational responsibility in ensuring employee well-being and engagement is crucial for sustaining commitment and

satisfaction. Leaders should deliver motivational talks, boost morale, ensure job security, and create an open environment for addressing employee concerns. Therefore, effective multimedia communication and transparent policies are essential to mitigate job stress during challenging times (Chanana, 2021).

Economic crises negatively impact employee work-related outcomes such as JS and commitment (Markovitz, Boer & Van Dick, 2014). Heath, Sommerfield and Von-Unger-Sternberg (2020) indicate that healthcare workers are more susceptible to burnout syndrome and experience lower JS than those not directly involved in their profession. Additionally, Rastogi and Dhingra (2020) point out that doctors and nurses expressed satisfaction despite pandemic risks owing to global dependencies and recognition for their work, despite the risk of infection. However, their satisfaction was influenced by factors such as lack of sleep, excessive workload, WFH and inadequate training for junior staff. Addressing these factors and providing appropriate salaries can enhance their JS.

Some employees found satisfaction in working from home, enjoying feelings of safety, spending time with family and contributing to household chores. However, job security concerns posed significant threats to their satisfaction, leading to anxiety, depression, mood swings, and dissatisfaction. Various factors, including poor working conditions, lack of communication with co-workers, excessive distractions, and increased workload at home and the office, contribute to dissatisfaction among this category of employees (Rastogi & Dhingra, 2020). While the specifics of the context may differ, the underlying principles regarding the impact of economic crises, the challenges faced by healthcare workers and potential strategies for improving JS can provide valuable insights for the current study, even if it was conducted in a different setting.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on employees, impacting them physically and mentally and resulting in emotional depression, discomfort and dissatisfaction with their work outcomes (Jennifer, 2020; Torales, Higgins, Castaldelli-maia & Ventriglio, 2020). These studies highlight the importance of taking proactive actions to improve EWB and JS during and after crises, emphasising the importance of understanding and managing these dynamics in organisational contexts.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a comprehensive exploration of JS, covering its historical development and definition, and detailed discussions on associated theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, and JCM. Demographic factors influencing JS, including gender, age, job level, marital status, and PoE, were also examined. The implications of JS for HRM are deliberated upon, emphasising its significance for both employees and employers.

Furthermore, the chapter highlights the negligence of some organisations towards the importance of JS, cautioning that this oversight can result in the loss of skilled employees to competitors. The pivotal role of JS in employee productivity is emphasised, asserting that contented employees contribute significantly to organisational success.

JS is portrayed as a dynamic response to the work environment, influenced by the alignment of outcomes with expectations. The chapter concludes by highlighting the critical role of JS in employee retention, setting the stage for the subsequent exploration of this theme in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: EMPLOYEE RETENTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the exploration of JS in Chapter 3, this chapter shifts its focus to Employee Retention (ER), an area extensively studied in the literature (Bibi et al., 2016:42). The primary objective is to define ER and establish a theoretical framework for its understanding.

The importance of employee retention cannot be overstated, as it directly influences organisational quality, productivity and profitability (Noor, Zainuddin, Panigrahi, & Rahim, 2020; Rombaut & Guerry, 2020). The challenges associated with retaining employees highlight the need for organisations to carefully select and retain skilled personnel to gain a competitive advantage. Not only is ER desirable, but it also proves economically prudent, considering the financial costs associated with recruitment. An employee's departure entails the loss of acquired knowledge and, in some instances, valuable clients (Haider et al., 2015: 63). Understanding the causes of talent attrition is imperative for developing effective retention strategies (Mabaso et al., 2021).

In response to global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations worldwide have implemented job retention schemes to safeguard their workforce. Initiatives like the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) have played a vital role in ensuring job security and remunerating employees when layoffs are unavoidable (Stuart et al., 2021).

This chapter provides a good understanding of employee ER, exploring ER factors relevant to the South African work environment. Subsequently, it explores demographic factors influencing ER and the implications of ER for HRM. The chapter concludes by examining the integration of HRM practices on both JS and ER.

4.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Employee retention (ER) is a multifaceted concept that is defined in various ways. However, it fundamentally refers to the actions taken by organisations to convince

their employees to remain with the company (Singh, 2019). Various scholars have contributed to defining ER:

- Azeez (2017:2), Kakar et al. (2017:5) and Narang (2013) explain ER as the process of retaining skilled employees for longer periods to ensure the organisation's success.
- Onyango, Nzulwa and Kwena (2017:637) describe ER as the collective efforts of organisations to motivate employees to stay with the company for extended periods.
- Building on this, Onyango et al. (2017: 638) define ER as a strategic approach employers adopt to create an environment that inspires employees to remain within the organisation.

For this research, the definitions of ER provided by Kakar et al. (2017:5) and Onyango et al. (2017:638) are adopted, highlighting the organisation's ability to retain employees effectively. This perspective is crucial as it underscores the importance of retention strategies in building and maintaining a productive and committed workforce (Aamir, Hamid, Haider & Akhtar, 2016).

ER is a crucial HRM issue involving an organisation's systematic efforts to create a conducive work environment, enhancing its ability to retain talent (Shrestha, 2019). Therefore, organisations should prioritise effective HRM practices as crucial strategies for retaining talented employees (Shrestha & Prajapati, 2023).

Ensuring ER is paramount for organisations seeking sustainability (Onyango et al., 2017: 637) as organisations that do not prioritise ER as part of their corporate strategy face high costs in recruitment and training, while those that invest in it benefit from increased revenue, productivity, work quality, and employee morale, as motivated employees are loyal. This is because highly motivated employees are highly loyal to companies with robust ER programmes (Alli, 2023). Retention strategies play a vital role in reinforcing an organisation's capacity to attract and retain competent employees, developing a productive, dedicated, and resilient workforce (Onyango et al., 2017: 637). As asserted by Kibui et al. (2014: 422), the focus of ER is to avoid

losing competent employees, as their departure can severely affect productivity and service delivery.

Organisations should ensure they have the right talent to remain competitive (Oladapo 2014). Lawler (2017) asserts that developing talent is crucial for retaining it. As identified by Sparrow and Makram (2015: 250), talent retention is the process whereby organisations protect their talented resources from being lost to their competitors. Talent retention strategies are critical to an organisation's mission (Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill & Pemberton-Jones, 2015). Losing talented employees comes at a high cost, making it difficult for organisations to gain and maintain a competitive advantage without retaining their talented employees (Ott, Tolentino & Michailova, 2018:16). Kibui, Gachunga and Namusonge (2014: 421) indicate that employee engagement and employer-employee relationship should be resilient, continuous and link the employee to the organisation's core values and responsiveness to employee needs.

In the South African working environment, various factors contribute to retaining employees. Döckel (2003:16) identified six factors for ER in the South African context: training and development (T&D) opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, job characteristics, work-life balance, and remuneration.

A recent study by Mabaso et al. (2021) in the South African consulting industry recognised several retention strategies: rewards, work-life balance, performance management system, improved training and development, employee recognition and career progression opportunities. The retention factors from the Döckel (2003) study were considered for this study. The factors will now be briefly discussed.

4.2.1 Training and Development Opportunities

Bushe (2012) defines training and development (T&D) as changing people's mindset, behaviour and actions, ultimately transforming knowledge, skills and competencies. Döckel (2003) emphasises the crucial role of T&D in both retaining and developing employees. Bashir and Long (2015: 1228) describe T&D as a process through which organisations provide learning opportunities to employees to enhance their

competencies, aligning them with the organisation's strategic objectives and mandates.

T&D is important in enhancing JS and influencing an employee's choice to stay or leave an organisation (Akhter et al., 2016). Employee involvement in T&D expands their horizons and provides opportunities for career advancement, motivating them to take on new job responsibilities. When organisations invest in empowering their employees through T&D, it fosters employee loyalty and commitment (Tan et al., 2014). In addition, it fosters a culture of continuous learning and provides clear career pathways. These factors contribute to lower turnover rates and a more stable, productive workforce (Bharadwaj, 2023; Elsafty & Oraby, 2022; Patil & Patel, 2022). Gharib, Kahwaji and Elrasheed (2017) underline the significant impact of T&D on talent retention. This finding aligns with Dresner, De Rivera, Fuccillo, and Heejun's (2014) results, which revealed that employees are expected to stay with an organisation for extended periods when T&D opportunities are readily available. Therefore, T&D can significantly impact talent retention, making it essential for organisational management to prioritise providing T&D opportunities.

Du Plooy et al. (2018: 4) highlight that training can emotionally impact employees, increasing their commitment to the organisation when they perceive more developmental opportunities. Conversely, without developmental opportunities, employees might become disengaged or bored and consider leaving the organisation to seek employment elsewhere (Dhanpat et al. 2018: 4).

In conclusion, T&D significantly impact ER by enhancing JS, engagement, morale, adaptability, and performance. Therefore, a positive relationship exists between T&D initiatives and ER (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022; Patil & Patel, 2022; Bharadwaj, 2023). Therefore, organisations that prioritise comprehensive T&D programmes are likely to benefit from a more committed and enduring workforce. In contrast, other researchers stated that T&D does not impact employee retention (Noranee, Som, Adam, Aziz & Shahrudin, 2021; Shrestha & Prajapati, 2024). This is supported by Chris-Madu (2020), who claims that investing in employee T&D without a good remuneration package is insufficient for higher retention rates.

4.2.2 Supervisor support

Supervisors are line managers responsible for leading organisational employees (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Noe, 2008). Additionally, supervisor support can be defined as an employee's perception of their supervisor's concern for their well-being (De Clercq, Dimov & Belausteguigoitia, 2016). Khan (2020: 59) emphasises that the relationship between employees and their supervisors is critical in influencing ER, with supervisors often regarded as the "human face" of an organisation.

The responsibility of the immediate supervisor is extremely important. They directly communicate the organisation's objectives to employees (Dawley, Andrews & Bucklew, 2007). Employees expect their supervisors to be their line managers and to give them all the needed support and guidance to carry on with their job activities (Swanberg, Mckechnie, Ojha & James, 2011). Munn, Barber and Fritz (2007) found that supervisor support is the best predictor of employees' JS and intention to quit the organisation. In addition, Khan (2021) asserts that supervisor support decreases employees' intentions to quit the job and enhances JS. Employees' perception of their supervisor's behaviour can easily affect their intentions to quit the job. Employees need friendly, honest supervisors who treat them with respect.

In most cases, employees leave their jobs because they do not get appropriate supervisor support (Khan, 2021). Employees with good working relationships with supervisors hardly consider quitting their jobs (Crane, 2019). Moreover, employee's T&D are strongly affected by the support of the supervisor as they are the ones who should encourage employees to empower themselves (Khan, 2021). Supervisors should display supportive behaviour supervisors to manage subordinates' emotions easily (Dawley et al., 2007). Unnecessary tension between supervisors and employees can lead to conflict, resulting in the intention to quit the job (West, 2007).

Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) and Khan (2021) assert that supervisory support significantly influences ER levels. These findings align with the results of Halim, Waqas, Edwin, and Shah (2020), who concluded that supervisor support positively impacts ER levels. Employees are more likely to stay in an organisation when effective communication and support from supervisors are present (Halim et al., 2020). In

today's diverse workforce, the quality of the supervisor-employee relationship is more critical than ever for ER (Khan, 2020: 59). Furthermore, there is a positive linear relationship between supervisor support and JS (Norris & Niebuhr, 1984).

In conclusion, supervisors who demonstrate supportive behaviours contribute significantly to creating a positive workplace culture that promotes ER. Their role in fostering open communication, providing support, and nurturing employee development highlights their importance in organisational effectiveness and employee satisfaction (Astawa, Armoni & Suardani, 2023; Rajani, 2023).

4.2.3 Career/Career Progression Opportunities

Career opportunities include the developmental paths available to employees, categorised into internal growth within the same organisation through promotions and external growth where employees seek better positions outside the current organisation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Döckel, Basson and Coetzee (2006) suggest that organisational growth correlates with increased employee commitment, JS and retention rates. Harry and Coetzee (2013) also point out that a lack of adequate career development opportunities may lead to job dissatisfaction, prompting employees to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

Organisations must offer committed employees opportunities to contribute to the organisation's success by suggesting strategies (Van Dyk, 2011). Inadequate opportunities for employees to propose strategies for organisational success may lead them to leave for organisations offering more stimulating roles (Bhati & Kumar, 2013).

Empirical evidence supports the notion that career opportunities are crucial in ER. Organisations prioritising career development tend to retain top talent and maintain a stable, motivated, skilled workforce. For instance, Ferdiana, Khan and Ray (2023), as well as Thwin, Janarthanan and Bhaumik (2023), found that career opportunities significantly impact ER. These studies emphasise the strategic importance of career development in sustaining organisational competitiveness and employee satisfaction.

In summary, career opportunities play a pivotal role in ER. Organisations that invest in the career development of their employees are more likely to retain their workforce, reduce turnover rates, and cultivate a more engaged and productive organisational culture. This analysis emphasises the need for comprehensive career development programmes that provide promotional paths and foster an environment of participation and innovation.

4.2.4 Job Characteristics

Job characteristics refer to the attributes that influence employee JS and behaviour (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). These characteristics, such as knowledge and skills, mental and physical demands and working conditions, are specific to a job and play a crucial role in employee health (Matilu & K'Obonyo, 2018).

Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Model (JCM) outlines five fundamental job characteristics:

- **Skills Variety:** Refers to the range of competencies expected from employees.
- **Task Identity:** Involves completing the entire task rather than just a portion.
- **Task Significance:** Focuses on the impact of the job on other people's lives.
- **Autonomy:** Indicates how much an employee can decide how to perform job activities.
- **Feedback:** Involves information provided about job performance.

While task autonomy and task identity are flexible, the job characteristics of skills variety and task significance are fixed (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014: 623). These characteristics influence the following psychological states: meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of results. This, in turn, impacts various personal and work outcomes. These results include motivation, JS, growth satisfaction, lower absenteeism, lower turnover, and improved work effectiveness (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Job characteristics significantly impact ER, influencing various aspects of the employee experience and their decision to stay with an organisation. These characteristics enhance JS, engagement, and motivation, creating a positive and

supportive work environment that encourages employees to stay with the organisation (Vui-Yee & Paggy, 2020; Raja & Chinnadurai, 2023).

The three psychological states, according to Hackman and Oldham (1976), that impact personal and work outcomes are briefly discussed next:

Meaningfulness plays a pivotal role in shaping both personal and work outcomes, profoundly influencing well-being, motivation, and overall satisfaction. Individuals who find meaning in their personal lives and professional pursuits are more likely to experience a sense of fulfilment and motivation. Organisations that foster a culture of meaningful work stand to gain higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, and overall success (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Moreover, meaningful work yields attitudinal and motivational benefits. These benefits include, for example, psychological well-being (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992), increased commitment, satisfaction, and involvement (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003), enhanced motivation, and reduced absenteeism (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin & Schwartz, 1997).

According to Albrecht (2013), employees who understand their work's significance and purpose are more likely to be energised, motivated and engaged. Meaningfulness is a psychological link connecting an employee's work experience to their engagement level (Steger & Dik, 2010). Furthermore, Kahn (1990) avers that psychological meaningfulness arises from challenging jobs that require diverse skills, enabling employees to feel they make a valuable contribution. Employees experiencing meaningful work are empowered to contribute effectively to their organisation, receiving the necessary support and resources to engage more deeply with their tasks. Overall, findings by Albrecht, Green and Marty (2021) emphasise the significant role of meaningful work in increasing employee engagement, with skill and task variety being crucial factors in achieving this goal.

Responsibility. It has a crucial role in shaping both personal and work outcomes. The level of responsibility an individual takes for their actions, decisions, and commitments significantly influences various aspects of their life, including personal development and professional success. The impact of responsibility on personal and work outcomes

is profound. Embracing responsibility leads to accountability, personal growth, self-empowerment, and positive relationships in personal life, while in the workplace, it contributes to professional success, teamwork and a culture of accountability. Individuals who consistently demonstrate responsibility are often more expected to accomplish their goals and contribute positively to their personal and professional environments (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Knowledge of results. It is the awareness and understanding of the outcomes or consequences of one's actions or efforts. This awareness can have a significant impact on both personal and work outcomes. In both personal and work contexts, knowledge of results provides individuals with the information they need to make informed decisions, adapt to changing circumstances and continually improve. It plays a crucial role in shaping behaviour, influencing motivation and contributing to overall success and satisfaction. Regular and constructive feedback, coupled with understanding outcomes, creates a dynamic environment that supports continuous improvement and achievement (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Hackman and Oldham's (1976) JCM is an important framework for evaluating how job characteristics influence employee behaviour and satisfaction. However, assessing the model's applicability across various organisational contexts and demographic groups is important.

Empirical studies suggest that the impact of job characteristics on JS may vary based on individual differences and organisational culture (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014; Vui-Yee & Paggy, 2020). For instance, while autonomy and task significance are universally valued, their importance may differ depending on cultural contexts and the nature of the work. Moreover, the flexibility of task autonomy and identity versus the fixed nature of skills variety and task significance indicates that some job characteristics can be more easily modified to enhance employee satisfaction.

In conclusion, while Hackman and Oldham's JCM provides a robust framework for understanding job characteristics and their impact on employee outcomes, it is crucial to consider contextual and individual factors that may influence these relationships.

Future research should explore these dynamics to develop more tailored and effective HRM practices that enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

4.2.5 Work-life Balance

Work-life balance (WLB) includes allocating time to family, friends and personal pursuits, aiming to strike a harmonious equilibrium between the demands of one's professional and personal life (Kar & Misra, 2013). Defined by Jyothi and Jyothi (2012), WLB is the attainment of balance amid work and family life pressures, developing a sense of comfort regarding work commitments and family responsibilities (Agha, Azmi, & Ifran, 2017). Pandiangan (2018) emphasises WLB as an extensive concept that prioritises one's career aspirations alongside personal happiness, leisure, family, and personal development.

Lestari and Margaretha (2021) characterise WLB as providing employees with opportunities to balance their career and personal lives, mitigating job stress and fatigue. Several researchers, including Mafini and Dlodlo (2014), Döckel (2003), and Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012), describe WLB as the process through which employees achieve a balanced life between work and family. According to Abdirahman, Najeemdeen, Abidemi, and Ahmad (2020), one of the most critical challenges that human resource management should address in organisations is WLB.

In the contemporary landscape, organisations deal with the challenge of retaining competent employees, particularly in the context of heightened concerns about health, family well-being, and job security, as observed in the case of airport employees (Coll, 2020). Organisations are increasingly implementing WLB programmes to address these challenges (Silaban & Margaretha, 2021). The imperative for organisations to maintain the WLB of their employees is highlighted by WLB's impact on employee commitment, JS and organisational productivity (Tavassoli & Sunyer, 2020; Lestari dan & Margaretha, 2021; Azdanal, Zamzam & Rostiati, 2021; Rony & Yulisyahyant, 2022). Prioritising WLB creates a supportive environment that attracts and retains top talent, ensuring long-term stability and success (Tirta & Enrika, 2022).

Kim (2014) and Rodríguez-Sánchez, González-Torres, Montero-Navarro and Gallego-Losada (2020) affirm the dual potential of WLB to impact organisations positively or negatively, emphasising the necessity of satisfying both work and personal aspects of employees' lives (Belwal & Belwal, 2014). Organisations that neglect to encourage WLB may face consequences such as employee health issues (Lunau et al., 2014). Moreover, Mazerolle and Goodman (2013) stress the importance of flexible work schedules, including locations and hours, to achieve WLB among employees. Both Paramita and Supartha (2022) and Maharani and Tamara (2024) found that an imbalance in work-life can lead to increased stress and, ultimately, turnover intentions. Therefore, failure to provide WLB can adversely affect ER (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020).

Deery and Jago (2013) identify WLB as a successful turnover management practice and a key variable in employee retention. Its impact on employee productivity is crucial for the sustainability of organisations (Deery & Jago, 2013). Chimote and Srivastava (2013) explore the benefits of WLB from both the employer and employee perspectives. From an employer standpoint, WLB policies prove effective in reducing employee turnover rates, attracting job applicants, reducing absenteeism, improving productivity and image, and ensuring loyalty and retention. From an employee standpoint, WLB policies effectively increase JS, job security, autonomy, stress reduction, and health.

Additionally, WLB policies contribute to a positive organisational culture. Employees are expected to feel valued, supported and connected to the organisation, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment. It also increases employee morale because it positively impacts morale when employees perceive that their organisation cares about their well-being. High morale subsequently contributes to a more positive and productive work environment. Similarly, it increases productivity as employees with a better work-life balance are often more productive. By preventing burnout and fatigue, WLB policies contribute to sustained energy levels, focus, and overall job performance (Chimote & Srivastava, 2013).

Empirical studies affirm the positive correlations between WLB and ER. Too and Kwasira (2017), as well as Garg and Yajurvedi (2016), assert that WLB contributes positively to ER. Further research by Hashim, Azman, Ghani and Sabri (2016); Sailatha and Rama Swathi (2022); Tirta and Enrika (2022); Zumrah, Nizah and Jalil (2022) and Knowlton (2023) and Raghuwanshi (2023) all confirm that WLB significantly impacts ER because organisations that provide flexible work arrangements, such as flexible scheduling or remote work, have been found to have higher ER rates.

The literature emphasises the complex significance of WLB in ER. Organisations that properly implement WLB strategies can improve employee satisfaction and reduce stress and absenteeism while creating a positive work environment. These results help increase ER, emphasising the importance of paying close attention to WLB policies and procedures to maintain a productive and committed workforce.

4.2.6 Remuneration

Remuneration plays a pivotal role in organisations, including both monetary and non-monetary rewards provided by employers to recognise employees' time, skills and efforts toward achieving organisational objectives (Erasmus et al., 2019:466). Hafanti (2015) further delineates various forms of remuneration, including salary, job bonuses, holiday/pension allowances, and other elements intricately linked to fundamental aspects of employees' needs.

A well-managed remuneration system is a powerful tool for increasing employee morale (Yensy, 2010). This positive impact is reinforced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where meeting basic needs satisfies employees and encourages them to stay for the fulfilment of higher-level needs (Syahreza et al., 2017). Additionally, MacDuffie (1995) and Elrehail (2020:130) highlight the broader concept of an organisational reward system, emphasising its significant influence on employee performance and retention.

Sufficient remuneration not only attracts employees but also enhances commitment levels, ensuring higher rates of employee retention (Dhanpat et al., 2018:4) and

fostering strong organisational loyalty among employees (Malik & Astu, 2019; Purnamasari & Sintaasih, 2019). The continued presence of satisfied employees within an organisation is a tangible display of their contentment (Hong et al., 2012; Astuti & Panggabean, 2014). Numerous research studies by Aman-Ullah et al. (2022), Rombaut and Guerry (2020), Warner (1981), Terera and Ngirande (2014), Hong et al. (2012), Astuti (2014), Thalassinou et al. (2012), and Kossova et al. (2014) confirm the positive correlation between remuneration and ER.

While attractive remuneration packages are crucial for satisfying the monetary needs of employees and are recognised as retention factors (Khan, 2020:60), organisations must acknowledge that sustaining employee commitment goes beyond mere monetary remuneration. Khan (ibid) points out that other retention factors influence and motivate employees' decisions to remain within an organisation. This comprehensive view ensures a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of employee retention beyond financial considerations. Organisations should adopt a holistic approach, recognising the interconnectedness of remuneration with other factors to foster a work environment conducive to long-term employee commitment.

In summation, Pertiwi and Supartha (2021) asserted that remuneration significantly impacts ER by influencing various aspects of the employee experience and overall job satisfaction. Competitive salaries, performance incentives, comprehensive benefits, and fair remuneration practices contribute to a positive work environment and reduce turnover. Organisations investing in competitive and equitable remuneration strategies are more likely to retain top talent and maintain a stable, committed workforce (Maervoet, 2022; Sorn, Fienena, Ali, Rafay & Fu, 2023). Conversely, Ki, Heng and Lau (2022) found no significant relationship between remuneration and ER, suggesting the need to explore this complex issue further.

4.2.7 Organisational Commitment

In contemporary times, organisations aspire to enhance performance and reduce absenteeism and turnover rates. The notion of organisational commitment is central to achieving this objective (Herrera & Heras-Rosas, 2021).

Porter and Lawler (1974) describe organisational commitment as the intention of persons to stay with the organisation for extended periods, identifying with the organisational values and goals, and exhibiting a willingness to exert additional effort on behalf of the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1991:67) define organisational commitment (OC) as the emotional connection, identification and active participation an individual has within the organisation. Furthermore, Herrera and Heras-Rosas (2021) emphasise the significance of organisational commitment in determining whether an employee will stay with the organisation over extended periods and contribute passionately to achieving the organisation's goals. Organisational commitment is a predictive factor for employee satisfaction, engagement, job insecurity, and more. From a management perspective, understanding the commitment levels of employees is necessary to determine their dedication to the daily tasks assigned to them. This insight is invaluable for effective management and fostering a work environment conducive to sustained commitment and achieving organisational objectives.

Theory of Organisational Commitment

The theory of organisational commitment posits that individuals are inclined to maintain their commitment to the organisation if they retain their positions, irrespective of the stress they may face. However, introducing alternative benefits may prompt individuals to consider leaving the organisation. Herrera and Heras-Rosas (2021) highlight a prominent theory within organisational commitment, known as the Three-Component Model (TCM), developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). This model delineates three distinct components of organisational commitment:

- **Affective Commitment (AC)** refers to an employee's emotional connection to the organisation. When an employee exhibits a high level of affective commitment, the likelihood of their sustained presence within the organisation for extended periods is significantly elevated.
- **Continuance Commitment (CC):** This component comes into play when an employee perceives that leaving the organisation would incur significant costs. Employees in this category desire to stay with the organisation for an extended

duration, driven by a sense of having invested substantial energy and forming emotional and mental attachments.

- **Normative Commitment (NC)** arises when an employee feels obliged to remain in the organisation, viewing it as the morally right course of action.

The TCM provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of organisational commitment, including emotional, investment-driven and normative dimensions. These components collectively shape employees' commitment levels and decisions to stay within the organisation.

Organisational commitment significantly impacts ER by fostering a strong bond between employees and the organisation, encouraging them to stay longer. The three components mentioned above are crucial in ER (Pertwi & Supartha, 2021; Soenanta, Akbar & Sariwulan, 2021). However, it is worth noting that not all studies align with this perspective. Moshabi, Schultz and Du Plessis (2024) found no positive relationship between organisational commitment and ER. This suggests that the relationship between OC and retention may vary across contexts and populations.

While organisational commitment is widely regarded as an important factor in improving ER, the complexity of its components and variations in its impact highlight the need for in-depth knowledge of how commitment operates in diverse organisational environments. This understanding is critical for establishing efficient strategies that build employee commitment and, as a result, increase retention rates.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EMPLOYEE RETENTION

In their research, Snyman and Ferreira (2023) discuss employees' varying levels of appreciation for organisational retention practices, such as remuneration, WLB, and career development opportunities, across different demographic groups. They highlight that employees from diverse backgrounds may prioritise different factors when deciding to stay with or leave an organisation. This section examines the

demographic factors that impact ER, including gender, age, job level, marital status, and PoE.

4.3.1 Gender

Govindaraju (2018:12) postulates that employees' gender influences employee retention. Both Agbator and Olori (2020) and Katekaye and Dhone (2023) discovered that female employees tend to have higher intentions to stay than men. Muir and Li (2014) report lower retention rates among women than men. Additionally, Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty and Keiser (2012) emphasise that the gender of supervisors and their leadership style are essential factors for turnover intentions.

Achieving a WLB is significant for male and female employees, and its perception positively correlates with ER, as highlighted by Ahsan, Hossain and Akter (2016). This correlation is well-documented, suggesting that when employees perceive a good WLB, they are more likely to remain with their organisation. This is a critical consideration for HR policies aiming to improve retention rates across genders.

Studies by, for example, Katekhaye and Dhone (2023) found that females tend to have higher retention rates compared to their male counterparts. This trend is supported by Alli (2023), who reported that female workers generally exhibit higher intentions to stay with the organisation than male workers. This indicates that women may place a higher value on factors that contribute to JS and WLB or experience different workplace dynamics that influence their retention decisions.

Govindaraju (2018:13) notes a positive association between the gender of employees and retention rates. Marufu, Collins, Vargas, Gillespie and Almghairbi (2021) further elaborate that gender influences ER rates, indicating that gender predicts turnover intentions. Additionally, Alli (2023) found a significant positive relationship between gender and ER. This highlights the importance of considering gender in turnover and ER.

4.3.2 Age

Ahsan et al. (2016) examined the relationship between WLB, age and employee retention in organisations, highlighting the challenge of retaining competent employees. They determined that WLB is needed to ensure employee retention. In addition, there is a greater impact for young employees (below 35) than older employees (above 35).

Bang (2015) asserts that depending on different age groups, in most cases, employees were satisfied but still chose to change their jobs, whereas some were not satisfied but chose to stay. Millennials' intention to quit is higher than that of older employees. It is not easier for older employees to find new jobs due to their age (Posthuma & Campion, 2009) than for millennials.

Okun, Yeung and Brown (2013) highlight distinct perceptions among employees aged 35 to 55 compared to millennials and older employees. Additionally, Gibson and Sodeman (2014) assert millennials' steadfast dedication and trustworthiness to their organisations. Furthermore, Okun et al. (2013) note that younger employees exhibit higher job mobility than their older counterparts, as confirmed by findings from Lambert et al. (2012) and Monks (2012), indicating greater retention among older employees. This propensity is attributed to fewer job opportunities for older individuals, influencing their commitment to the organisation (Wren, Berkowitz & Grant, 2014).

Okun et al. (2013) contend that workers over 55 perceive their extensive experience as valuable in task execution. This perception contributes to older age groups being characterized by their knowledge, experience, and skillfulness in task performance (Wolfson, Cavanagh, & Kraiger, 2014). This expertise enables older workers to possess internal knowledge, facilitating skills transfer to younger employees and aiding organisational leaders in retaining institutional knowledge (Eastman et al., 2014; Wolfson et al., 2014).

The relationship between age and ER has been extensively studied, albeit with mixed results. Agyeman and Ponniah (2014) found a positive and statistically insignificant relationship between age and ER, suggesting that while older employees may be more

likely to stay, the relationship is not strong enough to be conclusive. These findings are contrasted by Agbator and Olori (2020), who observed that employees aged 21 – 30 have a lower intention to stay. The aforementioned indicates that younger employees might be less committed to long-term employment with a single organisation, possibly due to career mobility and other external opportunities.

Further complexity is added by studies by Fredrick (2018) and Kumar, Ahlawat, Sushma and Singh (2023), which revealed that employees aged 31 – 40 had a lower retention propensity than employees above 40. These findings show a potential mid-career phase where employees might seek new challenges or feel less attached to their current roles. Marufu et al. (2021) highlighted that age influences ER rates, acknowledging the nuanced differences across various age groups.

Emiroglu et al. (2015) indicated that age predicted employees' turnover intentions, with older employees showing a lower likelihood of leaving their jobs than younger counterparts. This finding aligns with findings by Alli (2023), who demonstrated a significant positive relationship between age and ER, indicating that age significantly predicts ER. This positive correlation suggests that as employees age, their likelihood of remaining with their employer increases, potentially due to job security, pension benefits, and organisational loyalty.

4.3.3 Job level

Muir and Li (2014) highlight that retention factors for each job level should be analysed as each level values the organisation differently and is emotionally attached to the organisation. Different job levels within an organisation often present distinct challenges, expectations and factors persuading an employee's choice to stay or leave. A holistic approach that considers career development, remuneration, work-life balance, and leadership support is essential for fostering ER across all levels.

Job levels play a significant role in influencing ER within an organisation. Different levels of employment, such as entry-level, mid-level, and executive positions, often come with distinct challenges, expectations and motivations. The competitiveness of remuneration packages and benefits at different job levels can influence ER.

Moreover, executives may expect more robust remuneration, while entry-level employees may value healthcare, retirement plans and work-life balance benefits. Higher job levels often come with increased responsibilities and stress. Therefore, organisations must carefully manage workloads and provide adequate support to prevent burnout and increase employee retention rates. Understanding the unique needs and expectations of different job levels allows organisations to tailor their retention strategies effectively. By addressing all the mentioned issues, organisations can create a supportive and engaging workplace that fosters long-term employee commitment and loyalty (Vivian, 2022; Kyprianou, 2023; Hall & Threadgould, 2023). The study by McDonnell (2011) indicates that discrepancies in treatment between employees of different levels can affect JS and potentially lead to higher turnover rates.

4.3.4 Marital status

A study by Monet and Sana (2012) reveals that married qualified women in a permanent position with satisfying pay are more expected to stay with the organisation for prolonged periods. Contrary perspectives exist in the literature on the relationship between marital status and ER. Crawly (2005) accentuates that married employees may have a higher intention to leave the organisation due to family commitments than unmarried employees. In contrast, Agbator and Olori (2020) found that divorced employees exhibit a lower intention to stay. Kong (2009:65) further posits that unmarried people demonstrate more dedication than married employees.

On the other hand, Karatepe and Ngeche (2012) reveal that married employees intend to stay with the organisation as long as it accommodates family dynamics. Married individuals, especially those with children, may prioritise work-life balance to fulfil family responsibilities. Employers offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote options or flexible hours, may appeal to individuals seeking a better balance. Moreover, married employees with children may value employers that provide childcare support, contributing to their overall JS and influencing retention decisions.

Organisations should recognise and support diverse family structures, including different marital statuses, to foster an inclusive work environment to enhance

employee satisfaction and retention. Instead of singling out marital status, employers should create inclusive policies and benefits that address a broad spectrum of family-related needs. Employees should feel that their personal lives are respected and supported irrespective of marital status. By understanding and accommodating family-related considerations, organisations can contribute to a positive work environment, JS, and ER. Karatepe and Ngeche (2012) explored the relationship between marital status and ER, indicating that marital status can influence retention outcomes.

Similarly, Emiroglu et al. (2015) reported that marital status determines employee turnover intention. The relationship between marital status and ER is further supported by Alli (2023), who found a significant positive relationship between marital status and ER. This finding aligns with Chivandire's (2017) and Agbator and Olori's (2020) research, which established a significant relationship between marital status and ER. These studies emphasise the predictive power of marital status in ER but also point to the need for a broader understanding of how various family-related factors influence retention.

4.3.5 Ports of Entry

Business Airport International (2019) notes that organisations operating 24/7 require employees to adapt to scheduled times, especially in fluctuating workflows. Accommodating personal needs, especially in high-stress environments, is crucial for such organisations to motivate their employees. Flexibility on the job can be a significant motivator, as exemplified by officials not being required to be in their cubicles when there are no landed flights or passengers to process.

Employee retention in border regions presents challenges owing to unique circumstances. Organisations can enhance retention by offering competitive salaries, additional allowances specific to the location, housing assistance, and prioritising health and safety. Recognising the importance of work-life balance, providing flexible schedules and promoting policies supporting a healthy balance contribute to employee satisfaction. Tailoring retention strategies to the challenges of border regions encourages long-term commitment and satisfaction, fostering employee retention (Coll, 2020).

Despite limited studies on the impact of PoE on ER, organisations are urged to consider PoE-specific factors. Business Airport International (2019) maintains that organisations review scheduling, training and benefits programmes to improve employee morale and retention. Some organisations recruit additional personnel to enhance WLB while establishing a culture of independence that positively impacts retention.

Young employees value WLB; hence, job offers should include benefits packages with flexible allowances for lifestyle services. Since WLB is crucial for attracting and retaining employees, a positive relationship between the PoE and ER is indicated (Business Airport International, 2019).

4.4 IMPLICATIONS OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Boselie, Van Harten and Veld (2021) highlight that HRM's planning process, which is essential to developing organisations, illustrates the strategic significance of HRM. According to Hamadamin and Atan (2019), a company's ability to integrate HRM practices effectively improves operational efficiency and provides a significant competitive advantage. ER is key as employees are valuable, and the organisation's success is highly reliant on them for success (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2012; Kakar, Raziq & Khan, 2017: 5). For the organisation to be competitive, employers have to employ the most competent people within the market and be able to retain them (Castellano, 2013; Kakar et al., 2017:5). It is so important to recruit competent employees; however, it is more thought-provoking to keep those competent employees (Kakar et al., 2017:5; Narang, 2013). As recruitment and selection costs are too high, it is, therefore, essential to embrace and implement effective strategies for employee attraction and retention (Lochhead & Stephens, 2004) as Francis (2014: 1742) indicates that the main reasons employees quit their jobs are owing to lack of effective HRM practices. According to Cascio (2006), turnover can be managed by adopting effective retention strategies. Organisations should ensure that their retention

strategies meet employee needs and expectations and ensure satisfaction and retention (Roy, 2015). Suppose organisations can adopt good retention strategies aligned with relevant HRM practices. In that case, they are expected to retain competent employees (Embuhira, 2011: 2), as organisations offering efficient HRM practices can increase their competitiveness (Mbugua, 2015:26). Therefore, employee satisfaction increases commitment and retention within the organisation (Kakar et al. 2017:5).

The private sector and public sector face challenges in retaining their competent employees (Haider, Rasli, Akhtar, et al., 2015:64; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009), with employee turnover posing a challenge for organisations (Mbugua, 2015:26). Organisations are aware that retention is key and provides a sustainable competitive advantage (Embuhira, 2011: 2),

The main concern in HRM is the policies that can manage personnel and are connected with employee retention (Allui & Sahni, 2016:362-365). Organisations should further develop HRM policies and strategies that will uphold a satisfactory relationship between the organisation and its employees (Fahim, 2018: 26). Moreover, employee retention policies are important as they will assist in enhancing employees' JS, inspiring, motivating and retaining them (Kakar et al. 2017:5; Narang, 2013).

Therefore, knowledge of the correlation between HRM practices and ER will help organisations take corrective actions to reach their mandate (Embuhira, 2011: 2). The discussion emphasises the critical role of HRM in ER. Effective HRM practices not only address the immediate needs of employees but also contribute to long-term organisational success. By understanding and implementing effective retention strategies, organisations can create a competitive advantage, reduce turnover costs, and foster a committed and satisfied workforce.

4.5 CHALLENGES FOR HRM BEYOND THE COVID-19 CRISIS: AN AGENDA FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been deemed successful (NIESR, 2020), playing a crucial role in mitigating the rise in unemployment during the COVID-19 crisis and introducing the concept of job retention as a fundamental practice in HRM. Its success has broader implications for HRM, extending beyond the pandemic. The CJRS was implemented to aid businesses facing financial challenges by allowing them to lay off employees, with the government covering a percentage of their wages. While the scheme provided temporary relief during the crisis, its phased-out nature posed challenges for businesses in maintaining long-term job security. The combined success of the CJRS and ongoing ER efforts during and after the COVID-19 crisis can significantly contribute to HRM's ability to address the broader challenge of job security. This involves preserving jobs during economic downturns, strategically managing the workforce, adapting to new work paradigms, and fostering a culture that promotes loyalty and continuous development.

According to NIESR (2020), the success of the CJRS and ER efforts can influence the broader challenge of promoting "good work" for HRM, extending beyond short-term job security to creating an environment fostering long-term engagement, employee well-being, continuous learning, and ethical leadership. By prioritising these aspects, HRM can contribute to establishing a positive work culture that transcends crisis management and supports sustained employee satisfaction and productivity.

The success of the CJRS and ongoing ER efforts can also impact the challenge of employee voice in HRM beyond the COVID-19 crisis. By fostering a positive work environment, building trust and actively involving employees in decision-making processes, HRM can empower them to express their opinions. Expressing their opinions contributes to a workplace where employees' voices are heard and valued, fostering a more engaged and motivated workforce (NIESR, 2020). However, it is essential to recognise that ER as a practice of HRM faces challenges that need to be addressed (Stuart et al., 2021:910). The three key challenges are briefly discussed next.

4.5.1 The Challenge of Job Security

Stuart et al. (2021:911) assert that employees returning from furlough are uncertain about their job security. In addition, Adams-Prassl, Boneva, Golin, and Rauh (2020) buttress that furloughed employees fear losing their jobs compared to non-furloughed employees. A study by YouGov, a survey of employers, found that some furloughed employees are expected to be laid off after the conclusion of CJRS (Smith, 2020).

In most cases, mothers openly requested furlough, raising concerns about their longer-term job security without the organisation providing childcare facilities (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). Some employees demonstrated a willingness to perform work while on furlough, suggesting a commitment to their roles (Stuart et al., 2021:912). However, it remains ambiguous whether these employees were safeguarding their positions or if employers expected them to continue working during furlough (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020: 21). Additionally, there was scepticism among employees about the longevity of their jobs, with employers utilising furlough as a strategy to replace positions with technology (Gilbert, Thomas & Weinberg, 2020).

The COVID-19 crisis significantly impacted job security, leading to widespread consequences for individuals, businesses and the economy. Business closures, lockdowns and disruptions across various industries resulted in financial challenges for many companies, leading to extensive layoffs and job losses. This sudden income reduction inevitably created financial instability, causing heightened stress and anxiety for individuals and their families (Obrenovic et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2020). Industries such as travel, hospitality and entertainment faced severe job cuts, while technology and e-commerce sectors experienced growth and increased demand (Zopiatis, Pericleous & Theofanous, 2021; Allan et al., 2023; Ghani et al., 2022). The uncertainty surrounding job security contributed to elevated stress levels, accentuated by the shift to remote work, which posed challenges for certain roles requiring physical presence. Overall, the challenges in job security during the COVID-19 crisis underscored the importance of agility, support mechanisms and a focus on well-being in workforce management. The experiences during the crisis are expected to influence how businesses and HRM approach the workforce and show resilience in the post-pandemic era (OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19), 2020).

4.5.2 The Challenge of Good Work

Findlay and Thompson (2017) assert that work-life balance and flexible working are progressively seen as the main HRM concerns and fit well with the good work agenda. However, Taylor, Marsh, Nicole and Broadbent (2017) argue that practically speaking, a 'one-sided flexibility' serving employers' interests tends to dominate. Employees encounter workplace inequality regarding furlough, with younger and lower-paid employees being more likely to be furloughed. Conversely, higher-paid employees on furlough are more likely to receive substantial salaries from their employers (Cominetti, Gardiner and Slaughter, 2020).

According to Gilbert et al. (2020), the furlough experience is linked to employers valuing and providing good work. The ability of furlough to generate good work depends on the operational context. If HRM reverts to cost-cutting and labour-shedding, the potential for good work will diminish.

PwC Malta (2023) highlights that maintaining good work during the COVID-19 crisis had significant consequences for organisations and employees. Successful adaptation to remote work, effective leadership, investment in employee well-being, and a commitment to continuous learning were pivotal in mitigating negative impacts on work quality. Organisations prioritising these elements were better equipped to navigate challenges and sustain positive employee work experiences.

4.5.3 The Challenge of Voice

Managers typically make organisational decisions (Van Wanroo, Bewley, Bryson et al., 2013). HRM tends to uphold the value of engaging employees in unionised settings, positively impacting JS and overall well-being. Without authentic voice mechanisms, employees may perceive employee engagement as a management-driven initiative, offering minimal reciprocity. In this regard, engaging furloughed individuals is crucial for reaping the benefits of labour hoarding, but it necessitates meaningful voice mechanisms. Although furlough decisions were intended to involve employer-employee discussions, some instances occurred where employees volunteered for furlough (Gardiner & Slaughter, 2020: 5).

James (2021) highlights the significant repercussions of the employee voice challenge during the COVID-19 crisis on organisational dynamics, employee well-being and workplace culture. The crisis underscored the importance of open communication, adaptive leadership and inclusive practices to address employee concerns and maintain a positive and engaged workforce. Organisations adept at navigating these challenges were better positioned to cultivate trust, resilience and a shared sense of purpose among employees.

The challenges of job security, good work and employee voice are interconnected facets of the employment experience. Effectively addressing these challenges demands a holistic approach that acknowledges their interactive dynamics. It emphasises creating a work environment conducive to security, employee engagement and open communication (NIESR, 2020).

4.6 INTEGRATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, JOB SATISFACTION AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION

This section discusses the theoretical integration of HRM practices, JS, and ER, outlining the conceptual model for the research study. Recognising the intrinsic link between HRM practices, JS, and ER is vital for fostering a positive and flourishing workplace. Such understanding empowers organisations to implement strategies that amplify JS, retain top talent and contribute to long-term success and sustainability. Effective HRM practices can heighten employee JS, enhancing retention and mitigating turnover costs (Azees, 2017; Bibi et al., 2016; Mule, Rintari (PhD) & Moguche, 2020). The connection between HRM practices and ER is evident, as contented employees tend to exhibit higher retention rates and lower turnover rates (Mitchell et al., 2001b). Additionally, JS is identified as a mediator in the relationship between HRM practices and ER (Bibi et al., 2016; Kalia et al., 2023; Kiran et al., 2023; Konadu et al., 2024).

4.6.1 Relationship between HRM Practices, JS and ER

Research has extensively examined the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER, revealing a close association among these constructs. HRM practices provide employee satisfaction across various work domains (Bekru, Cherie, & Anjulo, 2017). Sound HRM practices are consistently linked to improved JS, leading to enhanced organisational performance and increased retention rates (Islam, Sarker & Islam, 2018; Mira, Choong & Thim, 2019; Alsafadi & Altahat, 2021; Rayhan, 2022; Alkhamis, 2024). Organisations must prioritise providing effective HRM practices, including training and development, remuneration and rewards, performance management, supervisor support, staffing, diversity management, and communication. Successfully implementing these practices positions organisations to retain core and competent employees (Kakar et al., 2017).

Positive HRM practices, signalling organisational care for employees, have reduced turnover and increased JS (Allen et al., 2003). Employee turnover poses challenges for individuals and organisations, incurring costs and straining employees who must adjust, as well as organisations that invested in employee training and development (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001).

Research studies by Tej, Vagaš, Taha, Škerháková and Harničárová (2021), as well as Ali, Li and Qiu (2024), have demonstrated that HRM practices significantly impact ER. These studies highlight the importance of well-designed HRM strategies in maintaining a stable workforce. Similarly, Goyal and Shrivastava (2012) emphasised that effective HRM practices can elevate employee JS and strengthen organisational commitment, ultimately enhancing retention.

In contrast, Alkhamis (2024) reported that HRM practices have an insignificant direct effect on ER. This discrepancy points to the complexity of HRM outcomes and suggests that other variables may mediate the relationship between HRM practices and retention.

Acknowledging HRM practices as a method to improve working conditions and organisational outcomes is crucial for managers (Absar et al., 2010). The positive

impact of HRM practices on JS has been well-documented in empirical studies by Alsafadi and Altahat (2021), Islam et al. (2018); Mira et al. (2019) and Mondejar and Asio (2022). These studies consistently demonstrate the positive impact of HRM practices on JS.

Alkhamis (2024) and Rayhan (2022) also found a significant direct effect of HRM practices on employee JS, further supporting the notion that HRM practices are important in enhancing employee morale and satisfaction. Mampuru, Mokoena and Isabirye (2024) identified a positive significant relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER, reinforcing the interconnectedness of these variables.

Interestingly, Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) revealed a negative and significant correlation between HRM practices, JS and ER, asserting their role as strong predictors of ER (Kakar et al., 2017).

The empirical research objective of this study was to statistically investigate the interrelationship between HRM practices, JS and ER, aligning with hypothesis H1, which posits a positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER. This relationship is pivotal in contributing explicitly to the research objectives and H1.

4.6.2 Relationship between JS and ER

Studies by Spector (1997) and Biason (2020: 413) emphasise the key role of JS in influencing employee behaviour and attitudes, positively impacting employee retention rates. Content and committed employees are likelier to exhibit long-term loyalty to organisations (Bin Hussin, 2011). Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) affirm that job dissatisfaction increases the intention to quit (Rohim & Sandy, 2024). Furthermore, Gan, Lin and Wang (2020) emphasise that job dissatisfaction increases the likelihood of employees contemplating leaving, reinforcing the importance of JS in retention.

Biason (2020) highlighted the connection between JS and ER, indicating that JS increases when employees feel their skills are utilised and acknowledged by the organisation. High levels of JS increase ER, signifying a relationship between JS and ER (Biason, 2020: 413). Similarly, a study by Maharani and Tamara (2024) identified

a significant relationship between retention factors and employees' intention to leave, noting that dissatisfied employees are likelier to leave the organisation.

Organisations face significant challenges in retaining competent workers due to diverse characteristics, beliefs, expectations, and demands, and they find it challenging to satisfy every employee. However, increased employee satisfaction is linked to heightened organisational commitment and retention, aligning with Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Empirical studies by Aman-Ullah et al. (2022) and Tanwar and Prasad (2016) further affirm the positive relationship between JS and ER, reinforcing that satisfied employees are likelier to remain with their employers. Yang, Saad and AlQershi (2021) and Moshabi et al. (2024) corroborate this positive linkage. Similarly, Akinwale and George (2020) found that JS predicts retention, a conclusion supported by De Sousa Sabbagha, Ledimo, and Martins (2018). Biason (2020) and Shafiuddin and Al Nassibi (2022) have also confirmed a positive relationship between JS and ER.

However, contrasting findings by Alli (2023) reveal a negative relationship between JS and ER, which implies that the perception of JS has been found to decrease ER among employees. Alli (2023) suggests that even when employees are well-remunerated, well-trained, and have good working relationships with colleagues and supervisors, they still may seek opportunities elsewhere, driven by the desire for better prospects ("greener pastures"). Therefore, Alli's (2023) findings highlight a complex dynamic where even satisfied employees might leave for reasons beyond the immediate work environment.

4.6.3 Mediating Role of JS on HRM Practices and Employee Retention

This study explores the mediating role of JS in the relationship between HRM practices and ER. Effective HRM practices are posited to enhance employee satisfaction, subsequently fostering retention and reducing turnover costs (Azeez, 2017; Bibi et al., 2016). Recognising employees as important to organisational success, the study contends that high turnover negatively impacts organisational performance and productivity (Azeez, 2017).

Positive JS is a catalyst for improved employee behaviour, dedication, commitment, and performance, leading to decreased turnover rates, complaints and absenteeism (Rothenberg, Hull & Tang, 2017). Similarly, Xing, Aigbogun and Prabhakaran (2023) and Hanifa, Widagdo and Rumijati (2024) stated that JS significantly impacts employees wanting to leave the organisation. In contrast, according to Kartika and Rezeki (2024), JS has no significant effect on employee turnover intention. JS, functioning as a mediator, contributes positively to ER (Khan et al., 2016). While organisations offer various HRM practices to enhance retention, the study emphasises that employee satisfaction is pivotal, as dissatisfied employees are more likely to leave (Koedel et al., 2017). Therefore, the effective provision of HRM practices by managers is crucial for achieving high levels of satisfaction (Khan et al., 2016; Nabi, Ahmed, & Rahman, 2017).

The study proposes that JS provides empirical support for its mediating role in the relationship between HRM practices and ER. Bibi et al. (2016) highlight that JS mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER, suggesting that employees' JS plays a crucial role in retaining them within the organisation. This mediating effect of JS is also supported by Mira et al. (2019) and Rajorshi (2023), reinforcing its significance in the HRM-ER nexus.

In contrast, Permarupan et al. (2024) present findings that JS significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and employee intention to leave the organisation. These findings highlight the dual role of JS as both a retention factor and a potential predictor of turnover, depending on the effectiveness of HRM practices.

Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) identified a negative and significant correlation between HRM practices, JS, and ER, suggesting that these factors are strong predictors of ER. This finding is supported by Kakar et al. (2017), who also emphasise the predictive power of these variables in determining ER. However, the negative correlation observed by Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) underscores the complexity of these relationships and the potential for HRM practices to have adverse effects if not implemented effectively.

Studies by Aman-Ullah et al. (2022) and Tanwar and Prasad (2016) further support the positive relationship between JS and ER, reinforcing the role of JS as a mediator. The central role of JS as a mediator between HRM practices and ER is supported by Bibi et al. (2016), Mira et al. (2019), Kalia et al. (2023), Kiran et al. (2023) and Konadu et al. (2024). These studies collectively affirm that effective HRM practices enhance JS, leading to improved ER.

4.7 CONCEPTUAL MODEL (PROPOSED RESEARCH FRAMEWORK)

The proposed research framework, depicted in Figure 1.1 after the literature review, succinctly illustrates the interrelationship between various HRM practices and JS, ultimately leading to ER. By emphasising the retention of competent employees, the framework acknowledges that content employees exhibit higher retention rates (Azeez, 2017).

The theoretical framework introduces JS as a crucial mediator in the connection between employees' encounters with HRM practices and ER. Built on the premise that JS moderates the impact of HRM practices on ER, this framework aligns with Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation (1964). It posits that employees are motivated to remain with an organisation when positive HRM practices contribute to JS fostering retention. Additionally, the framework draws on Cook, Cheshire, Rice and Nakagawa's Social Exchange Theory (2013), highlighting how positive HRM practices establish a beneficial exchange relationship between employer and employee, cultivating JS, loyalty, and increased retention likelihood.

The practical implications of this research suggest that organisations investing in positive HRM practices are likely to enhance JS and, consequently, increase ER. The framework highlights that HRM strategies tailored to elevate JS can substantially influence retention outcomes.

The theoretical framework articulates that positive HRM practices shape ER by influencing JS. This perspective provides a nuanced understanding of how HRM

practices influence organisational outcomes, offering insights for practitioners aiming to enhance employee retention in the workplace.

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter studied the concept of ER and its retention factors: training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, job characteristics, work-life balance, and remuneration. The demographics (such as gender, age, job level, marital status, and port of entry) that impact ER were also studied. The implications of ER for HRM were also discussed. ER has been broadly studied and is important for employees and employers for various reasons. It provides individuals with stability, career growth and a positive work environment. At the same time, organisations benefit from cost savings, a stable and experienced workforce, and a stronger competitive position in the marketplace. It is a win-win situation for employees and employers, benefiting individuals and the organisation. Then, the chapter concluded by discussing the integration of the HRM practices, JS and ER and providing the conceptual model for this research study. The next chapter provides a discussion of the research methodology.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 describes the research process used to attain the empirical aims of the study. Firstly, the research design is explored, followed by deliberation on the research methodology. The research design accordingly focuses on the research approach, type of analysis, reliability, validity, research variables, the unit of analysis, limitations, delimitations, and ethical considerations. The discussion on the research methodology examines the population and sampling, the research instruments, data collection, data processing, data analysis and the research hypotheses. This chapter will then conclude with a summary.

Phase 2 of this research, as outlined in Figure 1.3, consisted of ten steps. Steps 1 to 6 are addressed in this chapter, while steps 7 to 9 are addressed in Chapters 6 and 7.

This chapter describes the empirical investigation of the research study.

5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design serves as the methodological framework for exploring the research problem and addressing research questions, constituting a crucial element of the overall research study (Christensen, 2001; Spector, 2012). Its primary objective is to ensure that the gathered information facilitates a clear response to the research topic (Sacred Heart University Library, 2020). This research used a survey design, utilising questionnaires as the data collection tool. The aim was to generalise findings from a sample to a larger population. The advantages of using questionnaires include their broad coverage and ease of planning and execution (Prasanna, 2022).

However, questionnaires also have several disadvantages. The absence of face-to-face administration may lead to a lower response rate, as participants might choose not to engage. There is also the potential for participants to abstain owing to a lack of

necessary tools. Additionally, without face-to-face interaction, participants may encounter difficulties understanding questions, lacking the opportunity to immediately clarify uncertainties (Prasanna, 2022). Despite these limitations, questionnaires are deemed effective, feasible and conducive to generalisation, making them suitable for this research study.

5.2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The design of a study depends on the study type (whether it is exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory research); hence, the research questions are to be responded to (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey and a descriptive research design to establish the connection between HRM practices and ER while using JS as a mediating variable. Each of these concepts will briefly be discussed.

5.2.1.1 Cross-sectional survey

Cross-sectional research compares data at a particular time, examining and inferring from existing differences between individuals, groups or phenomena (Terre Blanche et al., 2006; Hall, 2008). According to Aggarwal and Ranganathan (2019), a cross-sectional survey involves collecting information on one or more variables of interest as they exist in a defined population at one time. The researcher assesses the relationship between the IV and DV in a cross-sectional study. Cross-sectional surveys are efficient and cost-effective, allowing researchers to gather data quickly without needing long-term follow-up (Sedgwick, 2014). This study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of the current state of HRM practices, ER, and JS within the studied population (Lavrakas, 2008).

5.2.1.2 Descriptive research

In descriptive research, the distribution of one or more variables is described without consideration of any cause and effect or other hypotheses (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019). Descriptive research is used to characterise "what exists" in terms of variables or conditions in a situation and to learn more about the status of the phenomenon (Sacred Heart University Library, 2020). According to Vijayamohan (2022), descriptive

research describes the traits of the problem, phenomenon, circumstances, or group under investigation. Normally, the researcher starts with an idea or has observed something and seeks a better understanding of that phenomenon. For this research, descriptive research helped provide a detailed description of HRM practices, ER, and JS, offering insights into the current scenario within the organisation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In empirical studies, descriptive research is instrumental in analysing means, standard deviations, and Cronbach alphas, specifically HRM practices, JS, and ER. Descriptive research is a foundation for further explanatory analysis by identifying patterns and trends (Babbie, 2021).

5.2.1.3 Explanatory research

Explanatory research, as described by Babbie and Beaquisto (2010), examines the relationships among various study concepts to answer the "why" and clarify the reasons behind observed phenomena. Unlike mere reporting, explanatory research seeks to provide understanding and uncover the underlying reasons for observed patterns (Given, 2008). Van Wyk (2012) characterises the primary objective of explanatory research as identifying and explaining causal relationships between variables related to the research problem and establishing cause-and-effect connections.

The current research adopted an explanatory approach to understand the relationships between variables and to determine whether changes in one variable cause changes in another (Neuman, 2014). By investigating these relationships, the study seeks to provide a conclusive understanding of how HRM practices influence ER through the mediating effect of JS (Babbie, 2021). Statistical techniques associated with explanatory research, such as correlations (Dane, 2011), were employed to explore these relationships.

5.2.2 Type of analysis

This study adopts a positivist philosophy, employing a quantitative research method. Positivism, rooted in the belief in an external reality supporting human understanding (Usher, 1996), utilises valid and reliable tools for empirical assessment and validation of theories and hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2007). This approach seeks

generalisation and establishing laws and facts through empirical testing. The positivist paradigm, characterised by traits such as generalisation, validity, reliability, and practical application, aligns with the goals of the current study (Shirazi, 2014).

Following Babbie (2016), the deductive approach involves formulating hypotheses based on established theory and designing a research plan to test these assumptions. Hypotheses were developed initially by adopting a deductive approach, and a research plan was crafted to assess and validate them.

Quantitative research, highlighted by Abbott and McKinney (2013), focuses on measuring numerical data and analysing it using statistical programmes. This methodology was chosen to test hypotheses related to the relationship between HRM practices (IV), JS (mediating variable) and employee retention (DV).

While quantitative research provides precise measures, incorporating qualitative methodology, as noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), is advantageous for exploring questions not easily quantified, offering a deeper understanding of human experiences.

Considering the study's objectives, a quantitative research design was deemed appropriate for measuring HRM practices (HRMPs), JS, and ER. A quantitative research approach facilitates the measurement and analysis of variables numerically. This approach allows for statistical analysis, essential for testing hypotheses and establishing relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014). This design also facilitates examining how demographic variables (gender, age, job level, marital status, and port of entry) may relate to these concepts.

The choice of a quantitative methodology aligns with existing literature that often employs similar methods to study HRM practices, JS, and ER. Studies by researchers such as Adams-Prassl, Boneva, Golin and Rauh (2020) have utilised quantitative approaches to explore these relationships, demonstrating the suitability and effectiveness of this methodology in similar contexts.

5.2.3 Approaches used to ensure validity and reliability

The researcher should address the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument to improve the research study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

5.2.3.1 Validity

Validity is the process by which the findings precisely denote the actual situation. A test is claimed to be valid if it measures what it is intended to measure. The relevant and suitable interpretation of the data is produced from the measuring instrument because the analysis determines the validity (Súrúccú & Maslakci, 2020). However, research errors like poor samples and inaccurate or misleading measurements can undermine validity (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). To ensure validity, standardised measuring instruments, suitable data analysis methods, models and theories related to the research were utilised. In interpreting the validity of research results, researchers adopt internal and external validity.

Internal validity refers to the degree to which changes in the dependent variable can be unequivocally attributed to the independent variable. Consequently, internal validity includes aspects related to both sampling and design (Welman et al., 2005). In the present research, internal validity was upheld through the meticulous choice of a consistent measuring instrument and the deliberate avoidance of participant selection based on extreme scores.

Conversely, **external validity** defines the degree to which it is possible to generalise from the data collected and the research study context to the broader populations and settings. External is about generalisability (i.e., how representative the sample is) (Terre Blanche et al., 2006: 90). In this research study, external validity was ensured by selecting a representative sample, enhancing the potential for broader generalisation of the findings.

To ensure the validity of this study, steps included: (1) meticulous planning and structuring of the research design; (2) utilisation of relevant models and theories aligned with the research topic, aims, and problem statement; (3) verification of the validity, appropriateness, and applicability of chosen constructs; (4) selection of

accurate and appropriate measuring instruments; and (5) choosing a representative sample (Oosthuizen, Mayer & Zwane, 2021).

5.2.3.2 Reliability

In terms of measurement, reliability is the stability of the research tool across time. Reliability, therefore, refers to a measurement instrument's capacity to produce consistent results when used at various points in time (Súrúćú & Maslakci, 2020). According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006: 154), reliability is when the measuring instrument yields equivalent outcomes on the same occurrences.

Internal reliability assessing the consistency of items in measuring an underlying construct (Salkind, 2017) was ensured in this study through Cronbach's alpha coefficients. These coefficients assessed the stability and uniformity of the data collection instrument. Cronbach's alpha, a widely used measure for internal consistency (Kipkebut, 2010), yields values between 0 and 1; higher values denote more reliable scales (Kipkebut, 2010). Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) deem a Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 acceptable for basic research purposes.

Externally reliable, indicating consistency across different situations, ensures that a method produces similar results under varied conditions (Psychology Hub, 2021). For instance, if an experiment using the same tools and procedures is conducted by different researchers on different days, comparable outcomes should be obtained. In other words, an externally reliable test can be applied beyond its original design (Glen, n.d.).

Standardised instruments were utilised to ensure the reliability of this study. Furthermore, data were collected from South African National Department employees across different provinces. SPSS 28 (IBM, 2021) facilitated the interpretation and analysis of the data. Cronbach's alpha coefficient, employed in reliability analysis, was calculated to ensure the measure's dependability. The research procedure incorporated several measures to ensure reliability: (1) the three data collection instruments adhered to rigorous validity and reliability standards; (2) participation was confined to employees from the National department; (3) all collected data were

electronically stored with restricted access to the researcher, statistician, and supervisor.

5.2.4 Research variables

When delineating a research design, it is crucial to distinguish between variables, specifically the Independent Variable (IV), Dependent Variable (DV), and Mediating Variable (MV) (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The independent variable instigates change in other variables, while a mediating variable affects the relationship between the IV and the DV (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The IV influences the DV and subsequently responds (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

This study explores the mediating influence of JS within a South African national government department. In this context, HRM practices serve as the Independent Variable (IV), and ER is the Dependent Variable (DV). Figure 5.1 visually represents the research variables, delving into the relationships among HRM practices, JS, ER and the potential impact of biographic factors (as control variables) on these research constructs.

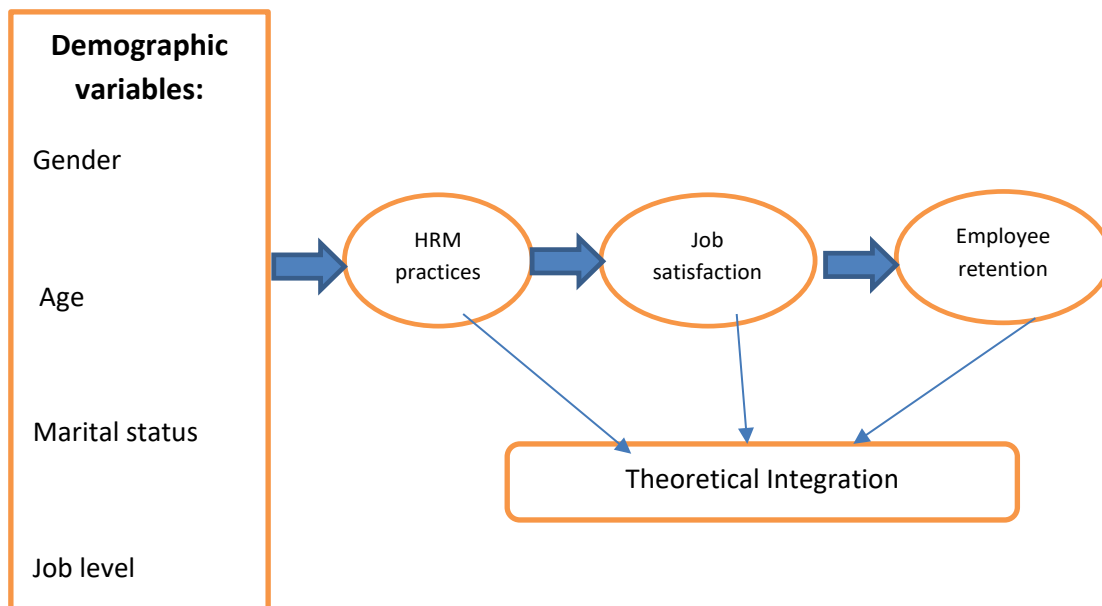


Figure 5. 1: Research variables (Researchers own)

5.2.4.1 Human Resources Management Practices

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices were considered the IV as they influence other variables that could ultimately cause change (Terre Blanche et al. 2006: 42); for example, the effects of HRM practices on ER. HRM practices were considered an IV because, if properly managed, they could cause a change in employee behaviours and attitudes. This, in turn, could reduce employee turnover, leading to employee retention. Other studies that have viewed HRM practices as an IV were, for example, Becker and Huselid (1998), Rizov and Croucher (2008), Sorasak (2014), Elrehail et al. (2020), Phiri and Phiri (2022) and Alam, Shariat, Islam & Chowdhury (2024). The HRM practices employed in this study, as discussed in section 1.9.1, Chapter 1, were training and development, remuneration and rewards, performance management, supervisor support, staffing, diversity management, communication, and information sharing.

5.2.4.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction (JS), the MV in this study, measures employees' contentment with their jobs and working conditions (Dash & Pradhan, 2014). An MV explains the link between the DV and the IV (Statistics Solutions, 2018). Studies by Ölçer (2015), Bayarcelik (2016), Uzun (2017), Al-Abdullat (2018), Mashi (2018), Vandenaabeele (2019), Terefe and Tadese (2019) and Sasmita, Utami & Ruhana (2023) used JS as a MV. Furthermore, JS has been identified as a variable connected with ER (Van Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek, Frings-Dresen, 2002; Moshabi et al., 2024)). Therefore, for organisations to maintain their effectiveness, they must ensure that they fully satisfy their employees (Likert, 1961; McGregor, 1960).

5.2.4.3 Employee Retention

Employee retention (ER) served as the DV in this research study. Collins and Porras (1994) emphasise that employees constitute the backbone of every organisation; no organisation can thrive without dedicated employees. Organisations must attract and retain individuals with the right skills and competencies, and understanding how to satisfy employees is crucial for ensuring their prolonged tenure within an organisation (Sorasak, 2014). Without effective HRM practices, employees are less likely to stay with an organisation for an extended period. Several studies, including those by

Ahmad (2013), Alias (2014), Raz (2017), Nasir and Mahmood (2018), Halim, Waqas, Edwin, and Shah (2020), as well as Mangal, Lalwani, Dadhich, and Chouhan (2021), have utilised employee retention as a DV.

5.2.4.4 Control variables

Several studies have investigated the connection between demographic factors, HRM practices, JS and ER, yielding varied findings (Bull, 2020). Some research has identified significant positive relationships between these variables, as demonstrated by Ho Kim, Ra, Park, and Kwon (2017) and Carvajal and Popovici (2019). Conversely, other studies have found significant negative relationships (Bull, 2020). Additionally, some research reported no correlation at all, such as the studies by Judge, Piccolo, and Podsakoff (2010), Kolo (2018), and Osarumwense (2020).

The demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, job level and PoE) were *control variables*. A control variable is not the primary focus of the research, but it is very important as it can easily influence research findings (Helmenstine, 2018). The following demographic factors were included in this study because they may impact ER factors and JS.

- **Age** can negatively or positively impact workers' choice to stay with or leave an organisation (De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen & Makikangas, 2011). Marufu et al. (2021) highlighted that age influences ER rates. This finding is supported by Alli (2023), who found a significant positive relationship between age and ER, meaning that age significantly predicts ER. A study by Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy and Baert (2011) indicates that younger employees may be more expected to leave if they do not find their work challenging or experience job dissatisfaction. In contrast, other employees may consider age a critical factor in their career decisions.
- **Gender** plays a role in employees' career aspirations and JS. It can influence career growth, stimulating work and freedom. Gender-related dynamics can impact employee attitudes and work environment interpretation (Saner & Eyüpoğlu, 2013: 2820; Suki & Suki, 2011). Osarumwense (2020) highlighted that male and female employees have similar JS levels. The finding by Osarumwense

2020) contradicts the findings by Katekhaye and Dhone (2023), who highlighted that women have higher retention rates than men. Alli (2023) supports Katekhaye and Dhone's finding, reporting that female workers have higher intentions to stay with the organisation than their male counterparts.

- **Job levels:** Different job levels within organisations can lead to variations in how employees are treated (Cappelli, 2009). Discrepancies in treatment between employees of different levels can affect JS and potentially lead to higher turnover rates (McDonnel, 2011).
- **Marital status** is a significant factor that can impact employees' JS. A study by Azim, Haque and Chowdhury (2013: 488) found that employees experience reasonable satisfaction and happiness regardless of marital status. Additionally, Saner and Eyüpoğlu (2013: 2820) indicate that the JS levels among married employees tend to be higher than those not married. In contrast, Osarumwense (2020) indicated that married and single employees share similar JS levels. Therefore, JS issues of married and non-married employees should be well taken care of, ensuring a thorough understanding of their individual needs and concerns related to JS.
- **Port of entry:** In the context of this study, a port of entry (POE) refers to the location where individuals legally enter or leave a country, such as an airport, harbour or border. It has border security employees and immigration services to check passports and visas and customs to inspect luggage to ensure that smuggled goods are not smuggled into the country. The airport is an initial POE for foreign visitors arriving and departing the country (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). Customer experience has taken on a new element in the devastating challenge of Coronavirus. Getting used to the airport experience in COVID-19 stormy times also means focusing on employee experience.

In most cases, experienced employees create a good customer experience, so employees without good employee experience will not be able to provide an exceptional experience for customers. One cannot be achieved without the other. A port of entry is the sum of its employees and travellers (Coll, 2020).

The demographic factors mentioned earlier were adopted for this research study and focus on studying the relationship of HRM practices with ER, with the mediating role of JS, by identifying how the organisation use HRM practices to retain skilful employees by generating JS in government departments within the South African context.

5.2.5 Unit of analysis

Kumar (2018) explains the unit of analysis as the individual from which the researcher gathers information. It explains the "what" and "who" of research. Research is being done on the population as a whole, like humans, groups or organisations (Welman et al., 2005). For this research study, the unit of analysis was full-time employees of a South African national government department across different provinces, namely Western Cape, Kwa Zulu Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga, and Gauteng.

5.2.6 Delimitations of the study

The study was conducted within a national government department, examining the influence of HRM practices passing through JS and ER. The study focused on full-time employees aged 26-65 from different geographical locations of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, and Mpumalanga.

5.2.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are an important part of research studies. Ethics protect participants' rights because they should not be mistreated; they should be well taken care of for the entire research process (Terre Blanche et al. 2006).

The privacy and secrecy were confirmed and guaranteed through a well-informed consent letter accompanying the questionnaire (Appendix A). In addition, no participants' names were included in the questionnaire. In the letter, the purpose of the research was thoroughly explained. Permission was obtained from the Deputy-Director General of the Research Management Directorate of the department to conduct the study.

Participants in the study were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, as outlined in the informed consent letter provided (see Annexure B), along with the questionnaire. Participants were explicitly told not to disclose their names on the questionnaire. The informed consent letter also clearly articulated the purpose and rationale of the research.

All the information collated in the research study is kept safe and secured for five years after the completion. Furthermore, completed questionnaires are securely stored, and only the researcher can access them. Confidentiality agreements have been signed by the researcher, supervisor and statistician, ensuring they are the only individuals with authorised access to the compiled data.

The research ethics policy of the University of South Africa (Unisa, 2014) was employed as a guiding framework for this study. The ensuing ethical principles were adhered to:

- Essentiality and relevance – considering existing literature based on HRM practices, JS and ER.
- Expansion of the community – human resources practitioners and organisations (both public and private) will benefit from this research study.
- Skill, capability, and pledge to do research – the researcher has the skill and capability and is devoted to doing the study.
- Respect and safeguard the rights and dignity of participants – participants were assured that the information provided would be confidential and anonymous and that their privacy is protected. The matter of anonymity was clarified, and all participants indicated that they should not indicate any form of identification as this could compromise their privacy. Furthermore, it was explained to research participants that all data collated will be safeguarded. It will never be used to damage the reputation of the organisation and its participants.
- Informed and non-coerced consent – The department employs the researcher. To mitigate conflict of interest, it was explained to all participants that their participation was voluntary. Informed consent and permission were acquired by the researcher from management to administer the research tool to employees.

- Respect for cultural differences – The researcher managed diversity and treated all participants with respect, as well as respected their cultural differences.
- Honesty, transparency and accountability – Other researchers' contributions have been referenced throughout the study.

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of South Africa (Unisa) to conduct the study – reference number 2020_HRM_012 (Attached as Annexure C).

5.3 THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical study comprised an empirical investigation with the specific aim of examining the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER among officials within a national government department. Additionally, the research aimed to assess whether JS serves as a statistically significant mediator in the relationship between HRM practices and ER for these officials. Lastly, the study explored potential differences in HRM practices, JS, and ER in terms of demographic factors, including gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE. The detailed description of steps 1 to 6 of the empirical study (as discussed in section 5.1 and depicted in Figure 1.3) is discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

5.3.1 Step 1: Population and sampling

The population for the empirical study consisted of 471 full-time employees (N = 471) in a South African national government department. The participants aged between 26 and 65 were drawn from various geographic locations, including Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Mpumalanga, and Free State. Exclusion criteria were applied to employees aged 18-25 owing to their limited knowledge about the organisation and lack of experience in the immigration field. Additionally, Durban Harbour was excluded from the study owing to a delayed response rate from the gatekeeper despite timely communication. Primary data were collected from full-time employees in the department.

In the empirical study, participants were selected through probability sampling, specifically employing stratified random sampling. This method ensures that every

individual within the target population has an equal chance of being selected for inclusion in the sample and participating in the study (Kothari, 2000). The population was categorised into different subgroups or strata based on various PoE, and the sample was subsequently drawn from each subgroup or stratum, respectively.

The population, categorised into subgroups, was received from the Directorate of Human Resources Management, and a list of participants in alphabetical order was extracted from the HR department's payroll system. Using a Random Number Generator, a computerised program, participants were chosen to guarantee a fair and unbiased selection process. The random numbers were generated using an Excel spreadsheet (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

A sample size calculator was adopted to determine the appropriate sample size for the research study. The Sample Size Calculator considered the following criteria for accurate results:

- *Population Size* represents the total number of participants included in the study, 471 employees.
- *Confidence Level (%)* indicates the confidence level in the accuracy of the results. A confidence level of 95% was chosen.
- *The margin of error (%)* reflects the range of error expected with the entire population. The study adopted a 5% margin of error.

By using the sample size calculator, it was determined that a sample size of 212 (n = 212) employees from the government department within the South African context would yield accurate responses (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html/2004>).

Under the adopted stratified random sampling method, 471 questionnaires were distributed to full-time employees. 205 respondents completed the questionnaires, representing a response of 43.3% of the total population. According to Fincham (2008), the approximate survey response rate is between 25% and 30%. The response rate of 43.3% was, therefore, deemed to be acceptable.

5.3.2 Step 2: Research instruments

As previously mentioned, the empirical study used a quantitative, deductive strategy. A self-administered questionnaire was divided into four parts (Attached as Annexure A).

- Part 1 contained a biographical questionnaire to collect personal data on gender, marital status, age, job level and PoE.
- Part 2 contained The Human Resources Management Practices Scale (HRMPS) developed by Nyawose (2009). This instrument was used to measure HRMPs.
- Part three contained the Retention Factor Scale developed by Döckel (2003) to measure employee retention.
- Part four contained the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Paul Spector (1994), which was used to measure JS.

The researcher describes the psychological components of the HRMPS, RFS and JS in the following section.

5.3.2.1 Biographical questionnaire

A self-developed questionnaire was utilised to gather demographic data from research participants. The demographics included data regarding gender, marital status, age, job level and POE.

5.3.2.2 Human Resources Practices Scale Questionnaire

The HRPS was initially developed by Nyawose (2009), comprising 27 items to measure nine HRM practices, with three questions per practice. The items were developed following an extensive review of the HRM literature (Nyawose, 2009). The HRPS consists of seven hierarchically organised components.

Seven HRM practices were evaluated in this study: training and development, remuneration and rewards, performance management, supervisor support, staffing, diversity management, and communication and information sharing. An example question from the training and development section is: *'My company is committed to the training and development needs of its employees.'* Participants rated their opinions on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 signified 'strongly disagree' and 5 indicated 'strongly

agree.' The minimum score was three (3), and the maximum was 15. A higher score suggested effective HRM practices and participant satisfaction, while a lower score indicated ineffective HRM practices and dissatisfaction.

Nyawose (2009) reported internal consistencies ranging from 0.74 to 0.93 for these scales. Furthermore, Steyn (2012), employing a shorter version, found internal consistencies ranging from 0.74 to 0.88. Regarding instrument validity, Steyn (2012), using only five HRPS scales, reported Cronbach's alphas of 0.88 for training and development, 0.87 for compensation and rewards, 0.81 for performance management, 0.74 for staffing, and 0.75 for diversity management. Steyn (2012) also identified positive correlations between HR practices and JS and negative correlations with the intention to leave. Additionally, Steyn and De Bruin (2018) confirm the construct validity of the HRPS, demonstrating consistent scores and accuracy for both men and women, indicating its use without gender bias. Overall, these findings affirm the reliability and validity of the HRPS for research purposes. In this study, the abbreviated version of the HRPS, as employed by Steyn (2012), was utilised.

5.3.2.3 The Job Satisfaction Survey

Job satisfaction, serving as the mediator, was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1997). Intrinsic JS pertains to the employee's feelings about the nature of the job, while extrinsic JS relates to how the employee perceives the job in terms of receiving something in return (Spector, 1997). The survey comprises 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Cook, Hepworth, Wall and Warr (1981) report test-retest reliability between 0.70 and 0.80 with an alpha coefficient of 0.96 (Rothmann, Scholtz, Fourie & Rothmann, 2000). Lumley et al. (2011) also confirm the reliability and validity of JSS in a South African setting. South African research studies also validated the Cronbach alpha Coefficient for JSS sub-dimensions, ranging from 0.54 to 0.85 (Thokoa, Naidoo, Herbst, 2021) and 0.57 to 0.81 (Ramlutchman, 2018). JSS was, therefore, considered appropriate, reliable, and valid in South Africa.

5.3.2.4 Retention Factor Scale

The Retention Factor Scale (RFS), developed by Döckel (2003), served as the tool to assess ER, the DV in this research study. Comprising 39 items, the RFS measures satisfaction with retention factors, including remuneration (13 items), job characteristics (four items), training and development opportunities (six items), supervisor support (six items), career opportunities (six items), and work-life balance (four items). Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Döckel, 2003:16; Döckel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006:23). According to Van Dyk, Coetzee and Takawira (2013:65), internal consistency reliability ranges from 0.67 to 0.95 for the specified retention factors. The selection of the RFS for this research was based on its confirmation as a valid and reliable instrument in the South African context, aligning with the study's objectives. Additionally, the examined constructs were deemed relevant to the study's goals.

5.3.3 Step 3: Data collection

According to Kabir (2016:202), data collection is a systematic way of collating information on research variables in a planned manner that permits the researcher to respond to specified research questions, test hypotheses and assess the results. Data collection is common, and it is important to ensure that correct and authentic data collection is the same. Therefore, precise data collection is necessary to uphold research integrity.

Preceding the data collection phase, it was clarified to the Human Resource Management and Development Directorate and participants that participation is voluntary. Questionnaires were adopted to collect data, and a pool of written questions was utilised to collate information from sampled research participants. Usually, questionnaires comprise several close-ended and open-ended questions that need participants' responses (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). However, for the study's purpose, close-ended questions were adopted. Additionally, paper-and-pencil-based questionnaires were employed owing to the absence of tools like laptops, computers, or Internet access among participants.

While using paper-and-pencil questionnaires, participants were given a consent letter and an information sheet explaining the study's rationale. These documents accompanied the questionnaire, and the various sections of the questionnaire and the reasons for participant selection were clearly elucidated.

Selected participants were contacted by Ports HR Officers, who served as the designated gatekeepers to facilitate the distribution and collection of questionnaires. Selected participants were telephonically contacted by Ports HR Officers (appointed gatekeepers) to collect questionnaires in sealed envelopes from a box within the office. Participants received sealed envelopes containing the questionnaires, and upon completion, they placed the questionnaires in a designated box in front of the HR officer's office. Accordingly, a courier service was engaged to collect the completed questionnaires from the HR Officer's office (gatekeepers) and deliver them to the researcher. Throughout this process, participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. They were informed that research results would be treated with strict confidentiality and accessible only to the researcher, supervisor, and statistician.

All data collection methods have their inherent strengths and weaknesses. When selecting a method, researchers must ensure it aligns with the research problem or question. The following table (Table 5.1) outlines the advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaires (Prasanna, 2022). It provides a comparative analysis to aid in understanding the utility of questionnaires in research.

Table 5. 1 Advantages and Disadvantages of a questionnaire

Advantages	Disadvantages
It is economical	Validity and reliability are low.
It has good potential.	Poor and late responses
It has greater coverage up to the international level	Not helpful in finding information of the complex emotional person.
It is easy to plan and execute	It allows respondents to change their previous answers if they contradict post answers.
Respondents can select their language and version	It cannot be used for illiterate and small children

Source: Prasanna (2022)

5.3.4 Step 4: Data processing

Data processing is the way of handling data, including storage and communicating, while data analysis removes information using methods like data mining or data analytics (Kaspavec, 2016). The paper-and-pencil-based questionnaires were manually captured on a spreadsheet and were double-checked by the researcher. The Excel spreadsheet with the information was then sent to the statistician to import into Scientific Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

5.3.5 Step 5: Data analysis

SPSS 28 (IBM, 2021) was used to interpret and analyse the collected data. Data analysis for the study involved descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, mediation analysis, factor analysis and reliability. Each of these is discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

5.3.5.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are vital in summarising data for specific groups, involving the organisation and presentation of data through tables and graphs (Abbott & McKinney, 2013). Categorical data is addressed through frequencies and percentages, while continuous data utilises measures like means and standard deviations.

This study applied descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage statistics, to personal information variables. Frequency statistics were particularly relevant for variables with discrete classifications, such as marital status, which included options like single, married, widowed, divorced/separated.

Mean and standard deviation reporting for all variables is crucial. The mean provides an average value across all participants, while the standard deviation indicates the extent of each participant's deviation from that mean, offering insights into data variability (Korb, 2013).

5.3.5.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics, as outlined by Terre Blanche et al. (2006), estimate population parameters and test hypothesis relationships, allowing researchers to conclude populations based on sample data. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient is generally used to measure linear correlation, ranging numerically between -1 and 1 to assess the strength and direction of the connection between two variables (Turney, 2022; Chao, n.d.). The analysis for research aim one and hypothesis one employed this coefficient to investigate the statistical interrelationship between HRMPs (measured by HRPS), JS (measured by JSS), and ER (measured by RFS) in a government department sample (Tokunaga, 2016). The significance was determined through a two-tailed 5% or 1% test.

When more than two groups exist, ANOVA tests the null hypothesis that several populations are equal (Babbie, 2016). One-way ANOVA was employed in this study to establish statistically significant differences between biographical factors. Post hoc tests, specifically the Tukey HSD test, were used to compare groups pairwise if overall differences were significant. Most importantly, post hoc tests are crucial for exploring differences between multiple groups means while controlling the experiment-wise error rate (Frost, 2022).

Additionally, the independent sample t-test, as Babbie (2017) suggested, was conducted to determine differences between the biographical factors of the two groups

in this research study. The t-test is a statistical technique that compares differences between two groups.

5.3.5.3 Mediation Analysis

Multiple regression analyses were used to explore the mediating effect of JS on the connection between HRM practices and ER. To that effect, Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis was conducted to assess if JS mediates the connection between HRM practices and ER (Statistics Solutions 2013). The mediation test examines the indirect effect of predictor (X) on the outcome (Y) variable through the mediator variable (X).

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), for mediation to be met, four conditions must be met. First, HRM practices must be related to ER (regression 1). Second, ER must be related to JS (regression 2). Third, in the final regression, JS should remain a significant predictor of ER. Fourth, HRM practices should no longer significantly predict ER in the final regression. If all four conditions are met, full mediation is supported. If only the first three conditions are met, partial mediation is supported.

A mediation analysis determines if the mediator (M), who in turn impacts the dependent variable (Y), is affected by the independent variable (X). According to Hayes (2013: 7), "Mediator" (M) is a third variable, or a mediating variable is a method by which X [an independent variable] affects Y [a dependent variable]. It clarifies how or why a relationship between an IV (X) and DV (Y) occurs. Hayes (2018) asserts that for testing the presence of a mediator in a model, the terminology used, such as direct effect, indirect effect, and total effects, should be well understood.

- **A direct effect** (c') is observed when the relationship between X and Y remains unaffected by any third or fourth variable.
- **An indirect effect** ($a*b$) emerges when one or more variables intervene in the relationship between X and Y. This mediating effect is alternatively termed surrogate, intermediate, or intervening effect.

- **The total effect** ($c = c' + a*b$) represents the overall influence, including both the direct effect between two constructs and the indirect effect mediated through the intervening variable.

In this study, the objective was to investigate whether HRM practices indirectly affect ER through JS. The initial model to analyse is the fundamental relationship described by the regression equation:

$$Y = i^1 + cX + e^1$$

Where:

- **c** denotes the coefficient illustrating the relationship between the IV and the DV.
- **e¹** signifies the unexplained variance in Y not accounted for by X (the residual).
- **The i¹** term represents the intercept, which is not the focus of the current discussion but is depicted in the conceptual diagram in Figure 5.2.

The initial steps in the unmediated model presented in Figure 5.2 involve verifying a significant correlation between X and Y.

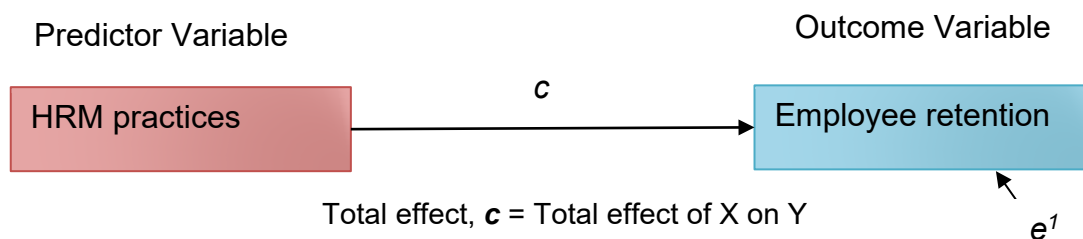


Figure 5. 2: Unmediated Model (Adapted from Abiesu, 2023: 216)

The subsequent step introduces the third variable, creating the mediational triangle. This model's two corresponding regression equations are indicated next and depicted in Figure 5.3.

$$Y = i^2 + C'X + bM + e^2$$

[Employee retention = c' (HRM practices) + b (Job satisfaction)]

$$M = i^3 + aX + e^3$$

[Job satisfaction = a (HRM practices)]

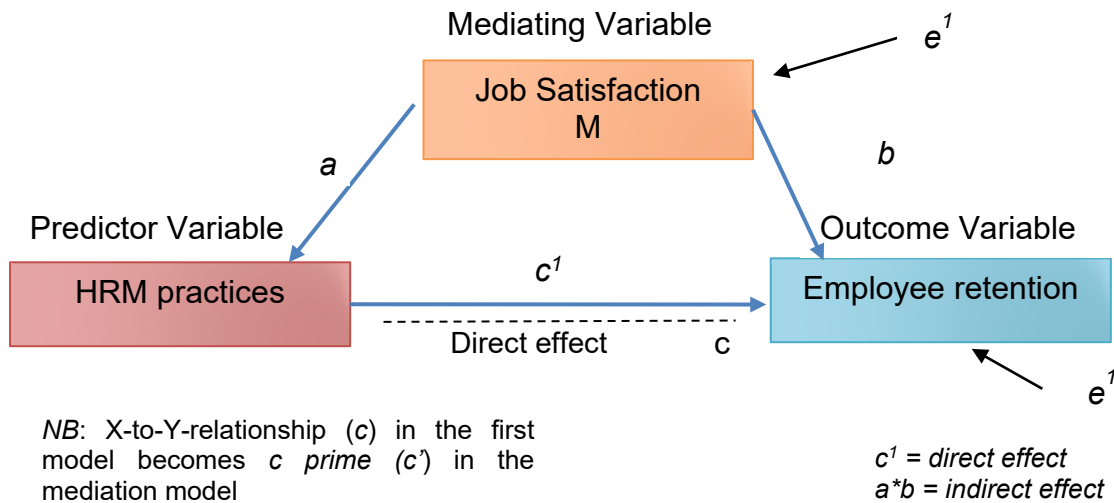


Figure 5. 3: Mediated Model (Asiedu, 2023: 217)

In the theoretical model (Figure 5.3), JS functions as a moderator variable (M), influencing the relationship between ER (Y) and HRM practices (X). The extent of mediation is assessed by the significance of the indirect effect, represented by the coefficient of the "a" path multiplied by the coefficient of the "b" path.

The first step is to establish Path "c," which signifies the total effect – the impact of X on Y without the mediator involved. It is noteworthy that mediation can still occur even if the original path (c) is not statistically significant.

As advocated by Fairchild and MacKinnon (2009) and Hayes and Rockwood (2017), mediation analysis is a statistical technique examining how the relationship between two variables changes when a third variable is introduced. While Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal steps approach is traditionally employed, it has faced criticism for its rigidity and low statistical power. Modern techniques, particularly bootstrapping, are considered more valid and reliable (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007; Gürbüz, 2021; Hayes, 2018; Hayes & Rockwood, 2017; Preacher & Selig, 2012). The widely adopted bootstrapping approach, notably Andrew Hayes' PROCESS Macro in SPSS, involves resampling a single data set to generate multiple simulated samples for more robust confidence intervals and hypothesis testing (Asiedu, 2023). This approach offers a clear and direct methodology and effectively addresses challenges inherent in traditional methods (Cline, 2019). The utilisation of a bootstrapping approach, as

outlined by Asiedu (2023: 220), brings several advantages to the forefront: The approach adeptly manages scenarios involving non-normal distribution, acknowledging the complexities associated with such data patterns. The traditional notions of "full mediation" and "partial mediation" are deemed inappropriate in favour of a more relevant quantification of the indirect effect. This shift provides a more accurate description of the nature of the mediation models.

An intriguing revelation is the possibility of an indirect effect (mediation) even in the absence of paths a, b and c (Hayes, 2022). This revelation challenges conventional assumptions about the prerequisites for mediation to occur. Determining the significance of the indirect effect ($a*b$) through bootstrapping is crucial. If the result indicates significance, denoted by the upper and lower Confidence Intervals (CI), not including zero, it supports the mediation model. Importantly, this implies that mediation can occur even when the original path (c) is not statistically significant.

In the context of the research study, the Hayes Process Analysis (model 4) was employed to rigorously examine the mediating effect of JS on the relationship between HRM practices and ER. This methodological choice adds depth and precision to the study, aligning with contemporary advancements in mediation analysis.

5.3.5.4 Factor analysis

A factor analysis was conducted on the various scales to assess the grouping of items and their alignment with the original theoretical constructs. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test (Kaiser, 1970). According to Kaiser, a KMO value below 0.60 indicates inadequate sampling, while a value of 0.60 or higher suggests that the sampling is adequate for factor analysis.

5.3.5.5 Internal consistency reliability

According to Glen (n.d.) Cronbach's alpha, α (or coefficient alpha), measures reliability or internal consistency. It tests to see if multiple-question Likert scale surveys are reliable. For Cronbach's alpha to be accepted, it should be above 0,70. Therefore, the

reliability coefficient for this research study is satisfactory (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

5.3.6 Step 6: Formulate the research hypothesis

Hypotheses confirm relationships between variables (Elmes et al., 2012). In the context of this research study, hypotheses were meticulously formulated to establish and empirically test the connections between HRM practices, JS and ER. The development of these hypotheses was grounded in an extensive literature review to fulfil the research study's overarching goals and objectives. The formulation of hypotheses was guided by a synthesis of existing knowledge, aligning with research's requisite standards for hypothesis construction.

The ensuing research hypotheses, emerging from the comprehensive literature review, were crafted to systematically guide the empirical investigation of the interrelationships among HRM practices, JS and ER, thereby contributing to the achievement of the study's research objectives.

Research aim 1: To investigate the statistical interrelationship between HRM practices, JS and ER in a sample of officials in a government department.

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a national government department in the South African context.

H_{a1}: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a national government department in the South African context.

Person product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test hypothesis 1.

Research aim 2: To investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices and ER of officials within a government department.

H₀₂: JS does not statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices and ER.

H_{a2}: JS statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices and ER.

Hayes' PROCESS analysis (model 4) was used to test hypothesis 2.

Research aim 3: To investigate whether differences exist in HRM practices, JS and ER regarding the demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, job level and POE).

H₀₃: Differences do not exist in terms of HRM practices and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and POE.

H_{a3}: Differences do not exist in terms of HRM practices and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and POE.

H₀₄: Differences do not exist in terms of JS and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and POE.

H_{a4}: Differences do exist in terms of JS and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and POE.

H₀₅: Differences do not exist in terms of ER and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and POE.

H_{a5}: Differences do exist in terms of ER and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level and POE.

The analysis employed an independent sample t-test to determine differences in biographical variables between the two groups. Additionally, ANOVA was utilised to investigate whether statistically significant differences were present among biographical variables involving more than two groups. In instances where overall differences achieved statistical significance, post hoc tests, specifically the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test, were conducted to make pairwise comparisons between groups and further clarify the nature of the differences.

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology covering the sample population, sampling technique and research instruments (including the biographical data, HRMPs, JS and ER). The data collection and data analysis were also reviewed. Chapter 6 will present the research results of this study using the research methodology and design discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, the research design and methodology were described. This chapter focuses on the results and interpretation to integrate the research findings. Several statistical analyses were performed to examine the hypotheses stated in this research. The outcomes of this empirical investigation are shown in tables and figures. The demographic profile of the sample is presented. In addition, descriptive statistics, validity, reliability, mediation, and inferential statistics were used to accomplish the research's goals.

This chapter will focus on steps 7 and 8 of Phase 2 of the research process, as shown in Figure 1.3. These steps involved reporting and interpreting results (Step 7) and integrating the research findings (Step 8).

6.2 DISCUSSION OF THE SAMPLE

This section presents the statistical findings related to the sample's demographic characteristics.

6.2.1 Biographical characteristics

In this section, tables containing frequencies and percentages and charts will be used to discuss the sample's biographical information, including gender, age, race, job level and port of entry (PoE).

6.2.1.1 Gender

Table 6.1 illustrates the gender distribution within the sample. As shown, 50.2% of the respondents were female, while 49.8% were male. Gender distribution in the sample is, therefore, more or less equal.

Table 6. 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Male	102	49.8	49.8	49.8
Female	103	50.2	50.2	100.0
Total	205	100.0	100.0	

Source: Calculated from survey results

6.2.1.2 Marital Status

Table 6.2 depicts the marital status of the respondents. Evident from Table 6.2 is that 49.5% of the sample were married, followed by 93 (46.5%) being single. From the total sample, eight (4%) were divorced.

Table 6. 2: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Single	93	45.4	46.5	46.5
Married	99	48.3	49.5	96.0
Separated/Divorced	8	3.9	4.0	100.0
Total	200	97.6	100.0	
Other	5	2.4		
Total	205	100.0		

Source: Calculated from survey results

6.2.1.3 Age Group

The respondents were asked to provide their age, and the study categorised participants into age groups ranging from 26-35 to 56 and older. As outlined in section 5.3.1, chapter 5, individuals aged 18-25 were deliberately excluded from the study. This decision was based on their limited knowledge about the organisation and their lack of experience in the immigration field. As indicated in Table 6.3, 41.5% (85) of the respondents fell within the 36-45 age group, 30.7% (63) in the 26-35 age group, 25,4% (52) in the age group 46-55, and 2,4% (5) were aged 56 and older. The normal retirement age within the national department is 65 years.

Table 6. 3: Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
26-35	63	30.7	30.7	30.7
36-45	85	41.5	41.5	72.2
46-55	52	25.4	25.4	97.6
56+	5	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	205	100.0	100.0	

Source: Calculated from survey result

6.2.1.4 Job Level

As previously discussed, the job level was classified into three categories: management, supervisory and junior management. As illustrated in Table 6.4, a predominant 73.7% (151) of the respondents held positions at the junior level, while 16.6% (34) were in supervisory roles and 9.8% (20) occupied management positions.

Table 6. 4: Job Level

Job Level	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Management Level	20	9.8	9.8	9.8
Supervisory Level	34	16.6	16.6	26.3
Junior Level	151	73.7	73.7	100.0
Total	205	100.0	100.0	

Source: Calculated from survey results

6.2.1.5 Port of Entry

A total of six PoEs were considered in the study. As can be seen from Table 6.5 and Figure 6.5, the distribution of respondents across these entry points varied. Notably, 42% (86) of the respondents were based at OR Tambo International Airport, with 22% (45) at Lebombom Land Port, 15,6% (32) employed at Cape Town International Airport, 8,3% (17) at Cape Town Harbour, 6,3% (13) at Maseru Land Port and 5,9% (12) at King Shaka International Airport. The prevalence of respondents at OR Tambo International Airport, the largest and busiest airport in South Africa, aligns with its

substantial passenger traffic of over 21 million annually and a workforce exceeding 3,000 employees (Airports Company, South Africa, n.d.)

Table 6. 5: Ports of Entry

Port of Entry	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
OR Tambo International Airport	86	42.0	42.0	42.0
Cape Town International Airport	32	15.6	15.6	57.6
Cape Town Harbour	17	8.3	8.3	65.9
King Shaka International Airport	12	5.9	5.9	71.7
Lebombo Land Port	45	22.0	22.0	93.7
Maseru Land Port	13	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	205	100.0	100.0	

Source: Calculated from survey results

The sample comprised full-time employees from diverse geographic regions, including Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, and Free State provinces within a national government department. The descriptive statistics reveal a balanced representation of both genders in the sample, with the majority being married individuals aged between 36 and 45 years, predominantly employed at a junior level at OR Tambo International Airport.

6.3 VALIDITY

This section discusses the instrument's construct validity, as determined by factor analysis.

6.3.1 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to find a relatively small number of factors that explain the relationships among a set of variables and is useful for summarising a large correlation matrix (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:248). The suitability

of the data for exploratory factor analysis was established by conducting the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity.

KMO is a test used to evaluate how well the components explain one another in terms of partial correlation between the variables. KMO values around 1.0 are excellent, whereas those below 0.50 are unacceptable. While Kaiser (1970) suggested 0.60 or higher to proceed with factor analysis, recently, academics contended that factory analysis should begin with a KMO of at least 0.80 (Analysis INN, 2020). Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity should be significant ($p < 0.001$) to indicate sampling adequacy. In this research study, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was found to be significant ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, KMO and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity indicated that a factor analysis was appropriate.

In subsequent paragraphs, the number of factors to be extracted, the pattern matrix, and the names of factors are discussed. The analysis used a principal axis extraction and direct noblemen varimax rotation. The subsequent paragraphs will describe the KMO, Bartlett’s test, eigenvalues, and pattern matrix for the research instruments utilised in this study.

6.3.2 Human Resources Management Practices Scale

Table 6.6 shows that Bartlett’s test produced a chi-square value (X^2) of 3901.469 ($p < 0.001$), and a KMO value of 0.93. These findings confirm the appropriateness of the data set for factor analysis.

Table 6. 6: KMO and Bartlett’s Test for the Human Resources Management Practices

KMO and Bartlett’s Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.927
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3901.469
	Df	210
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Calculated from survey results

While the Kaiser criterion suggested that three factors can be extracted, Horne's parallel, which is the method of deciding how many factors to retain, and the analysis suggested that two factors of the eigenvalues in the EFA were larger than those generated by a Monte Carlo simulation. The scree plot presented (see Appendix 2) also suggested that factors could be meaningful.

The requirement for item inclusion in factor analysis, according to Du Preez, Visser and Van Noordwyk (2008), is that the eigenvalues should be greater than one (1) (and could be retained for further investigation). In this case, the factor analysis identified three factors with eigenvalues greater than one (1), as shown in Table 6.7. Both a two and three-factor solution were explored, and the three-factor solution made the most theoretical and intuitive sense. These factors are positive organisational practices (factor 1), staffing and diversity management (factor 2) and supervisor support and communication (factor 3).

Table 6. 7: Eigenvalues for the Human Resources Management Practices Scale

HRMP Scale Factor	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Positive organisational practices	12.104	57.636	57.636
Staffing and diversity management	1.710	8.144	65.780
Supervisor support and communication	1.118	5.325	71.105

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Extraction

Source: Calculated from survey results

Table 6. 8: Factor loadings: Human Resources Management Practices

Factor: Positive organisational practices	
Question	Loading
HRMQ6: The organisation's compensation and reward system encourages team and individual contributions.	0.93
HRMQ5: I am satisfied with my company's reward system to compensate for good performance.	0.89
HRMQ7: My organisation's performance management system is fair and based on clear objectives at the beginning of term/year.	0.73
HRMQ4: My salary and benefits have been an adequate return for the time and energy demanded of me.	0.73
HRMQ8: The organisation has provided enough information regarding specific methods of the performance evaluation system.	0.67
HRMQ1: My organisation is committed to the training and development needs of its employees	0.66
HRMQ3: This organisation has provided me with training opportunities, enabling me to extend my range of skills and abilities.	0.59
HRMQ2: Employees are encouraged to accept education and training within the organisation	0.56
Factor: Staffing and diversity management	
Question	Loading
HRMQ15: All appointments in this organisation are based on merit (i.e. the best person for the job is selected, regardless of their personal characteristics).	0.84
HRMQ17: Management is supportive of cultural differences in this organisation.	0.79
HRMQ14: Interview panels are used during the staffing process in this organisation.	0.75
HRMQ13: Proper organisational procedures and processes are always followed when staffing/recruitment decisions are made.	0.67
HRMQ16: The organisation spends enough time and effort on diversity awareness related to race, gender and religion.	0.62
HRMQ18: People living with disabilities have employment opportunities in this organisation.	0.55
Factor: Supervisor support and communication	
Question	Loading
HRMQ11: My supervisor always gives credit and encourages an employee for a job well done.	-0.84
HRMQ12: My supervisor often lets me know how well he/she thinks I am performing the job.	-0.83

HRMQ20: Continuously improved communications between management and staff are stated as an important company objective and are being practiced.	-0.74
HRMQ21: My organisation's communication channels are open and effective in dealing with matters relevant to employees.	-0.73
HRMQ19: My organisation regularly provides information-sharing sessions to all employees.	-0.65
HRMQ10: My supervisor would personally use his/her power to help me solve my work problems.	-0.62
HRMQ9: Employees are allowed to formally communicate with supervisors/managers regarding the appraisal results.	-0.58
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.	

Source: Calculated from survey results

6.3.3 Job Satisfaction Survey

Examining the KMO measure, Bartlett's test, eigenvalues and the pattern matrix of the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) aids in determining the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Table 6.9 displays the KMO and Bartlett's test results specifically for the JSS.

Table 6. 9: KMO and Bartlett's Test for the Job Satisfaction Survey

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.84
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3211.250
	Df	630
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Calculated from survey results

As indicated in Table 6.9, the KMO value stands at 0.84, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.60. Furthermore, Bartlett's test of Sphericity yields a significant result ($p < 0.001$) with a chi-square value (χ^2) of 3211.250. Both these tests strongly suggest the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

While the Kaiser criterion suggested that nine factors can be extracted, Horn's parallel, an alternative method of deciding how many factors to retain, suggested that five of the eigenvalues in the EFA were larger than those generated by a Monte Carlo simulation. The scree plot (See Appendix 2) also suggested that five and six factors could be meaningful. The factors were rotated using principal axis extraction and direct oblimin varimax rotation.

Various qualitative solutions were systematically examined and assessed to ensure meaningful interpretation. Consistent with the Kaiser criterion, only factors exhibiting an eigenvalue of 1.0 or higher were retained for in-depth exploration. In the case of the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS), the factor analysis revealed the identification of five factors. These factors, namely work challenges, positive work environment, workload, remuneration, and work-related stress, collectively account for 50.47% of the variance, as delineated in Table 6.10. Factor loadings below 0.40 have been omitted to facilitate the distribution and collection of questionnaires.

Table 6. 10: Eigenvalues for the Job Satisfaction Survey

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Work challenges	9.05	25.15	25.15
Positive work environment	3.40	9.45	34.60
Workload	2.26	6.27	40.88
Remuneration	1.82	5.05	45.93
Work-related stress	1.63	4.54	50.47

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Extraction
 Source: Calculated from survey results

As can be seen from Table 6.11, it is evident that all factor loadings exceed 0.30, meeting the acceptability criterion established by Hair et al. (2010). The discernible factor structure and the extraction of meaningful factors, as revealed by the factor analysis, provide credible evidence supporting the construct validity of the JSS.

Table 6. 11: Factor loadings: Job Satisfaction Survey

Factor: Work challenges	
Question	Loading
JSQ4: I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	0.68
JSQ18: The goals of this organisation are not clear to me.	0.61
JSQ5: When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	-0.60
JSQ1: I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do	-0.58
JSQ14: I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	0.56
JSQ6: Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	0.56
JSQ19: I feel unappreciated by the organisation when I think about what they pay me.	0.55
JSQ2: There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	0.55
JSQ15: My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	0.50
JSQ9: Communications seem good within this organisation.	-0.48
JSQ10: Raises are too few and far between.	-0.45
JSQ8: I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	0.43
Factor: Positive work environment	
Question	Loading
JSQ25: I enjoy my co-workers.	0.70
JSQ17: I like doing the things I do at work.	0.62
JSQ35: My job is enjoyable.	0.60
JSQ30: I like my supervisor.	0.58
JSQ7: I like the people I work with.	0.54
JSQ27: I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	0.51
JSQ3: My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	0.40
Factor: Workload	
Question	Loading
JSQ16: I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	-0.70
JSQ24: I have too much to do at work.	-0.60
JSQ20: People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	-0.55
JSQ21: My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	-0.54
JSQ31: I have too much paperwork.	-0.44
Factor: Remuneration	
Question	Loading
JSQ11: Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	0.60
JSQ28: I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	0.46
Factor: Work-related stress	
Question	Loading
JSQ34: There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	0.56
JSQ23: There are few rewards for those who work here.	0.54
JSQ36: Work assignments are not fully explained.	0.48
JSQ29: There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	0.46
JSQ32: I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	0.45
"Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization."	

Source: Calculated from survey results

6.3.4 Retention Factor Scale

Reviewing the KMO, Bartlett's test, eigenvalues and pattern matrix of the RFS aids in determining the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. As disclosed in Table 6.12, the KMO value 0.88 surpasses the recommended threshold of 0.60. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity yields a significant result ($p < 0.001$) with a chi-square value (χ^2) of 7391.154. It can, therefore, be said that the data set is well-suited for factor analysis.

Table 6. 12: KMO and Bartlett's Test for the Retention Factor Scale

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.88
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7391.154
	Df	1378
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Calculated from survey results

The Kaiser criterion suggested that eight factors can be extracted. The scree plot (see Appendix 2) also suggested that retention factors could be meaningful. The factors were extracted using principal axis extraction and direct oblimin varimax rotation.

As can be seen from Table 6.13, three factors, namely (1) rewards and recognition and (2) work-life balance and loyalty, had an eigenvalue of greater than one (Du Preez et al., 2008).

Table 6.13: Eigenvalues for the Retention Factor Scale

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Rewards and recognition	12.104	57.64	57.64
Work-life balance	1.710	8.14	65.78
Loyalty	1.118	5.33	71.11
Intention to quit	0.838	3.99	75.10

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Extraction

Source: Calculated from survey results

As seen in Table 6.14, several solutions were explored qualitatively and evaluated for meaningful interpretation. Solutions with more than nine factors were not deemed viable, as quite a few factors only consisted of one (1) item. A seven-, eight- and nine-factor solution was considered, and an eight-factor solution made the most theoretical sense. However, the factor structure was still unclear, with two unclear factors. Exploring more or fewer factors, however, did not improve the situation. Several items were deleted as they did not show meaningful loadings (>0.40) on any factors. Considering this, the findings offer plausible proof of the construct validity of the RFS.

Table 6. 14: Factor loadings: Retention Factor Scale

Factor: Rewards and recognition	
Question	Loading
ERQ23: There is consistency in the application of the organisation's pay policies.	0.82
ERQ20: My most recent raise	0.82
ERQ22: The organisation's pay structure is competitive.	0.80
ERQ21: The information about pay issues provided by the organisations	0.63
ERQ24: The organisation administers pay in a fair and transparent manner.	0.60
ERQ19: My benefits package	0.52
ERQ32: There are enough development opportunities for me in this organisation.	0.42
Factor: Work-life balance	
Question	Loading
ERQ48: My work schedule is often in conflict with my personal life.	0.70
ERQ49: My job affects my role as a spouse and/or parent.	0.68
ERQ50: My job has negative effects on my personal life.	0.51

Factor: Rewards and recognition	
Question	Loading
Factor: Loyalty	
Question	Loading
ERQ12: I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organisation.	-0.74
ERQ14: I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.	-0.67
ERQ13: Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.	0.64
ERQ11: I would not leave my organisation right now because I have sense of obligation to its people.	0.58
ERQ15: This organisation deserves my loyalty.	0.56
ERQ10: I do not feel like part of the family at my organisation.	-0.46
ERQ6: I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation.	-0.45
Factor: Intention to quit	
Question	Loading
ERQ51: My chances of still working at this organisation a year from now are high.	0.59
ERQ53: I plan to stay with this organisation.	0.58
ERQ16: Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.	0.54
ERQ17: I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.	0.49
ERQ4: It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.	0.47
Factor: Supervisor feedback	
Question	Loading
ERQ37: The supervisor almost never gives me "feedback" about how well I complete my work.	0.51
ERQ39: My supervisor seldom recognises an employee for work well done.	0.48
Factor: Sense of value	
Question	Loading
ERQ36: I feel undervalued by my supervisor.	-0.56
ERQ26: The job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgment in carrying out the work.	-0.53
"Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization."	

Source: Calculated from survey results

The fifth and eighth factors did not seem to form a coherent whole and, in addition, did not reach an acceptable level of reliability. However, an attempt to extract fewer factors left some factors with only one item or no items at all. As a result, the six meaningful factors with an acceptable reliability were labelled as: rewards and recognition, WLB, loyalty, intention to quit, supervisor feedback, and sense of value. The empirical evidence collected through the factor analysis shows reasonable evidence of the construct validity related to the RFS.

To conclude, the KMO, Bartlett’s test, eigenvalues, and pattern matrix of the HRPS, JSS and RFS were investigated to determine the validity of the instruments. The empirical data gathered through factor analysis reasonably supports construct validity for all three instruments.

6.4 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

This section provides the internal consistency reliability, expressed through Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, for each study instrument and their respective factors. As Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggested, Cronbach’s alpha values falling between 0.50 and 0.60 are deemed suitable for basic research, whereas coefficients of 0.70 and higher have increased significance. The Cronbach alpha coefficient (α), as Clayson (2020) outlined, serves as a standard measure for assessing internal consistency.

6.4.1 Human Resources Management Practices Scale

Table 6.15 displays the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient values for each of the sub-dimensions of the HRMPs.

Table 6. 15: Reliability results of the HRMPs

Factor	Cronbach’s alpha	Reliability
Positive organisational practices	0.94	High
Staffing and diversity management	0.91	High
Supervisor support and communication	0.94	High

Source: Calculated from survey results

As presented in Table 6.15, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the identified HRMPS factors ranged from 0.91 to 0.94, indicating a high level of reliability of the HRMPS. These values align with the satisfactory reliability coefficients reported in previous studies, ranging between 0.74 and 0.88 (Steyn, 2012) and 0.74 and 0.93

(Nyawose, 2009), as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.2. The reliability of the HRPS for this study is considered robust.

6.4.2 Job Satisfaction Survey

Table 6.16 displays the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the five factors of the JSS. While conducting the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, two items in factor 1 (work challenges) proved problematic, showing negative item-total correlations despite being appropriately reversed (or not) as per the scoring instructions. In terms of item 10 (*"Raises are too few and far between"*), it is possible that the respondents did not understand what is meant by "few and far between" and that they reacted to the "red tape" reference in item 15 (*"My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape"*), failing to recognise the "seldom". For this reason, items 10 and 15 were omitted from factor 1, increasing reliability from 0.77 to 0.88. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as shown in Table 6.15 for positive work environment (0.80), workload (0.72), and work-related stress (0.72) were all acceptable (within the cut-off point of 0.70) with acceptable internal consistency (reliability). However, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for remuneration was not acceptable, with a low item-total correlation of 0.43. The low-term correlation could partially be attributed to the fact that there were only two items. This factor was, therefore, removed from further analysis. The four factors, namely work challenges, positive work environment, workload and work-related stress, were, therefore, used in subsequent analyses as they reached acceptable levels of reliability.

Table 6. 16: Reliability results of the JSS

Factor	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability
Work challenges	0.88	High
Positive work environment	0.80	High
Workload	0.72	High
Remuneration	0.43	Moderate
Work-related stress	0.72	High

Source: Calculated from survey results

As demonstrated in Table 6.16, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient scores for each of the sub-dimensions of the JSS, with coefficient scores ranging from moderate (0.43) to high (0.88). Spector (1997) reported that the internal consistency reliability coefficients for the JSS ranged between 0.60 and 0.91. Research studies conducted in South Africa confirmed the Cronbach alpha coefficients for sub-dimensions of the JSS range from 0.54 to 0.85 (Thokoa, Naidoo & Herbst, 2021) and 0.57 to 0.81 (Ramlutchman, 2018). These Cronbach alpha values are comparable to the current study, in which coefficients ranging from 0.43 to 0.88 were obtained. The reliability coefficients of these scales are, therefore, satisfactory.

6.4.3 Retention Factor Scale

Table 6.17 displays the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for each of the sub-dimensions of the RFS. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranged from 0.56 (moderated) to 0.90 (high) for specified RFS factors, showing a high level of reliability of the RFS.

Table 6.17: Reliability results of the RFS

Factor	Cronbach’s alpha	Reliability
Rewards and recognition	0.90	High
Work-life balance	0.88	High
Loyalty	0.84	High
Intention to quit	0.83	High
Supervisor feedback	0.56	Moderate
Sense of value	0.59	Moderate

Source: Calculated from survey results

The six factors in the RFS were subjected to reliability analysis, and four were found to have acceptable reliability. The factors, *supervisor feedback and sense of value*, did not achieve acceptable reliability (below 0.60), while the factors which could not be meaningfully named also did not achieve acceptable reliability. These factors were, therefore, removed from further analysis. The remaining factors of the RFS, namely rewards and recognition, WLB, loyalty, and intention to quit, were retained for further analysis. Van Dyk, Coetzee and Takawira (2013) observed internal consistency

reliability ranging from 0.67 to 0.95 for the specified retention factors, indicating satisfactory reliability coefficients for this scale.

This section presented the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the instruments (HRPS, JSS and RFS). The obtained values, ranging from 0.72 to 0.94, signify a high level of reliability, establishing adequacies for all constructs in this study.

6.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics present a concise summary of data, whether derived from a sample or the entire population, in an organised manner. These statistics illustrate the relationships between variables. This study calculated measures of central tendency and variability, following the guidelines of Amrhein, Trafimow and Greenland (2019) and Mishra et al. (2019). Descriptive statistics are justified as they provide a clear and comprehensible depiction of the data (Kaur, Stoltzfus & Yellapu, 2018). Means and standard deviations were computed, and the subsequent section will provide an interpretation and discussion of the presented statistics in tables.

6.5.1 Reporting on the mean and the standard deviations

Following establishing internal consistency reliability for the three constructs, a descriptive analysis was conducted to scrutinise the distribution of scores. The subsequent section presents the results and succinct explanations for each scale's means (M) and standard deviations (SD). Mean scores, also known as averages (Dahlan, 2021), indicate the data's central tendency. As elucidated by Salkind (2018), the standard deviation offers insights into the dispersion of values around the mean. A high standard deviation signifies values are widely spread from the mean, while a low standard deviation signals values are closer to the mean.

6.5.1.1 Human Resources Management Practices Scale

Table 6.18 summarises the means and standard deviations of the HRMPS across all items in each factor. In this research study, the mean scores for HRMP factors ranged from 3.28 to 3.57.

Table 6. 18: Mean and Standard Deviation of the HRMPS (n = 205)

Factors of HRMPS	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive organisational practices	1.00	5.00	3.28	1.08
Staffing and diversity management	1.00	5.00	3.39	1.01
Supervisor support and communication	1.00	5.00	3.57	1.07
Valid N (listwise)				

Source: Calculated from survey results

Table 6.18 shows that the highest scores were attributed to supervisor support and communication ($M = 3.57$; $SD = 1.07$), while the lowest mean was observed for the HRMP factor “positive organisational practices” ($M = 3.28$; $SD = 1.07$). The HRMPS mean scores suggest that supervisor support and communication can influence the retention of employees. This finding aligns with existing research confirming that sound HRM practices contribute to improved JS, which ultimately enhances employee retention (Islam et al., 2018: 24; Mira, Choong & Thim, 2019: 773; Rayhan, 2022; Alsafadi & Altahat 2021; Alkhamis, 2024). The standard deviations ranged from 1.01 to 1.08, indicating a close relationship of the data to the average and high reliability (Gunner, 2017).

6.5.1.2 Job Satisfaction Survey

Table 6.19 summarises the means and SD of the JSS across all items in each factor of JS. In this research study, mean scores for the sub-dimensions of the JSS ranged from 3.58 to 4.14.

Table 6. 19: Mean and Standard Deviation of the JSS (n = 205)

Factors of JSS	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work challenges	1.70	5.60	3.95	1.02040
Positive work environment	1.00	5.00	3.76	0.83201
Workload	2.20	5.00	3.58	0.63633
Work related stress	2.00	5.80	4.14	0.94866
Valid N (listwise)				

Source: Calculated from survey results

Table 6.19 reveals the highest mean score ($M = 4.14$; $SD = 0.95$) for the JSS sub-dimension "work-related stress," while the lowest mean score ($M = 3.58$; $SD = 0.64$) was observed for the JSS sub-dimension "workload." The JSS mean scores suggest that work-related stress can influence the retention of employees. This finding aligns with the existing study by Spector (1997) and Biason (2020: 413), which confirms that JS is a key factor influencing employees' behaviour and attitudes, increasing employee retention rates. The SD ranged from 0.63 to 1.02, signifying a relatively small spread and indicating a close relationship of the data to the average, ensuring high reliability (Gunner, 2017).

6.5.1.3 Retention Factor Scale

Table 6.20 summarises the means and SD across all items in each factor of the RFS. The RFS factors mean ranged from 2.59 to 3.36 for this research study.

Table 6. 20: Mean and Standard Deviation of the RFS (n = 205)

Factors of RFS	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rewards and recognition	1.00	4.86	3.2035	1.10901
Work-life balance	1.00	5.00	2.5984	1.38884
Loyalty	1.43	4.86	2.9902	0.50240
Intention to quit	1.00	5.00	3.3688	1.09177
Valid N (listwise)				

Source: Calculated from survey results

As shown in Table 6.20, the RFS factor "intention to quit" obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.36$; $SD = 1.09$), while the lowest mean score was observed for the RFS factor "work-life balance" ($M = 2.59$; $SD = 1.38$). The RFS mean scores suggest that intention to quit can influence the retention of employees. This finding aligns with Mudor and Tooksoon's (2011:41) study that affirmed that when employees' jobs are not satisfying, their intention to quit will increase. On the contrary, happy employees may decide to stay in the organisation; such employees have less intention to quit the job (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski & Erez, 2001b). All RFS factors demonstrated mean scores between 2 and 3. This finding aligns with Too and Kwasira's (2017) research, indicating a positive relationship between WLB and employee retention.

Garg and Yajurvedi (2016) also affirm the positive effect of WLB on employee retention, as an imbalance in work-life often leads to an increased likelihood of job quitting. The *SD* for RFS factors ranged from 0.50 to 1.38, suggesting close data association with the average and high reliability (Gunner, 2017).

6.6 INFERENCE STATISTICS

As detailed in Chapter 5, the assessment of relationships between variables employed inferential statistics, aiming to estimate population parameters and test hypotheses. This section provides an overview of the inferential statistical analysis conducted in this study.

6.6.1 Correlation analysis

The statistical link between two entities is termed correlation, assessing the degree of linear association between variables (Gupta, 2023). Correlation coefficients gauge the strength of this relationship. According to Morling (2012), correlation explains the connection between two variables. The outcomes are presented in a correlation matrix, and significance is determined through a two-tailed test, assessing significance levels at 5% or 1% (Tokunaga, 2016). Cohen's (1988) interpretation of statistical significance, utilised in this study, is as follows:

$r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect)

$r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect)

$r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect)

6.6.1.1 Results of Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis was to determine the statistical interrelationship between HRMPS (as measured by the HRPS), JS (as measured by the JSS) and ER (as measured by the RFS) in a sample of officials in a government department within the South African context. Accordingly, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to explore hypothesis 1 (H_1). Initial analyses were conducted to confirm the absence of violations regarding the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. As mentioned in Chapter 5, hypothesis 1 states:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a national government department within the South African context.

H_{a1}: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a national government department within the South African context.

Table 6.21 on the next page reveals significant positive and negative correlations among the various scales, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (**H₀₁**). In subsequent paragraphs, the relationships between different research constructs will be discussed.

Table 6. 21: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient: Human Resources Management Practices, Job Satisfaction and Employee Retention

Intercorrelations between the HRMPs, JS and ER											
	WC	PWE	WKL	WRS	PO	SD	SSC	RC	WLB	L	IQ
WC											
PWE	0.42** 0.00										
WKL	0.16* 0.02	0.08 0.23									
WRS	0.60** 0.00	0.36** 0.00	0.25** 0.00								
PO	0.64** 0.00	0.36** 0.00	0.06 0.00	0.38** 0.00							
SD	0.56** 0.00	0.47** 0.00	0.14* 0.00	0.27** 0.00	0.66** 0.00						
SSC	0.66** 0.00	0.48** 0.00	0.08 0.000	0.39** 0.00	0.77** 0.00	0.74** 0.00					
RC	0.68** 0.00	0.35** 0.00	-0.04 0.00	0.39** 0.00	0.68** 0.00	0.53** 0.00	0.65** 0.00				
WLB	-0.56** 0.00	-0.22** 0.00	-0.28** 0.00	-0.44** 0.00	-0.45** 0.00	-0.36** 0.00	-0.40** 0.00	-0.42** 0.00			
L	-0.09 0.19	0.13 0.071	-0.34** 0.00	-0.22** 0.00	0.20** 0.00	0.15* 0.04	0.09 0.20	0.18* 0.011	0.26** 0.00		
IQ	0.60** 0.00	0.43** 0.00	0.186** 0.00	0.28** 0.00	0.63** 0.00	0.57** 0.00	0.57** 0.00	0.59** 0.00	-0.49** 0.00	0.16* 0.03	
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).											

Source: Researchers own

KEY: WC: Work Challenges

SSC: Supervisor Support & Communication

SD: Staffing and Diversity Management

WLB: Work-Life Balance

WKL: Workload

WRS: Work Related Stress

PWE: Positive Work Environment

PO: Positive Organisational Practices

L: Loyalty

IQ: Intention to Quit

RC: Rewards & Recognition

Relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Job Satisfaction

Table 6.21 shows that the staffing and diversity management factor of HRMPs correlates positively with the work challenges factor of JS ($r = 0.56$; $p < 0.001$; large practical effect) and the positive work environment factor of JS ($r = 0.47$; $p < 0.001$). Similarly, the organisational practices factor of HRMPs shows a positive correlation with the work challenges factor of JS ($r = 0.64$; $p < 0.001$; large practical effect). A positive correlation also exists ($r = 0.66$; $p < 0.001$; large practical effect) between the factor of supervisor support and communication of HRMPs and the work challenges factor of JS.

These findings suggest that organisational decisions regarding staffing/recruitment and diversity, communication levels, supervisor support and work environment can potentially improve employees' JS commitment. Therefore, this observation aligns with the existing research discussed in the literature review. For instance, Islam et al., 2018: 24; Mira, Choong & Thim, 2019: 773; Rayhan, 2022; Alsafadi & Altahat 2021; Alkhamis, 2024) have consistently highlighted the positive impact of effective HRM practices on both JS and organisational performance.

However, it is important to note contrasting findings as well. For instance, Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) present a different perspective, revealing a negative and significant correlation between HRM practices, JS and employee retention. They argue these factors can strongly predict ER (Kakar et al., 2017). This discrepancy highlights the complexity and context-specific nature of HRM practices and their outcomes, emphasising the need for diverse approaches in organisational management and HRM strategy.

There is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.36$; $p < 0.001$; medium practical effect) between the positive organisational practices factor of HRMPs and JS's positive work environment factor. Another correlation exists between the positive organisational practices factor of HRMPs and the work-related stress of JS ($r = 0.38$; $p < 0.001$; medium practical effect). Additionally, a significant positive correlation is found ($r = 0.48$; $p < 0.001$; medium practical effect) between the supervisor support and communication

factor of HRM practices and JS's positive work environment factor. Another correlation exists between the supervisor support and communication factor of HRM practices and the work-related stress factor of JS ($r = 0.39$; $p < 0.001$; medium practical effect). These correlations suggest that employees who perceive positive organisational practices are likelier to experience higher JS.

There is a small but significant positive correlation between the staffing and diversity management factor of HRMPs and the workload factor of JS ($r = 0.14$; $p < 0.001$). Similarly, a small positive correlation is observed between the staffing and diversity management factor of HRMPs and the work-related stress factor of JS ($r = 0.27$; $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that when employees perceive effective staffing and diversity management, they are more expected to be satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, perceiving supervisor support and effective communication correlates positively with a positive work environment.

Overall, the results reveal a positive correlation between HRM practices and JS, supporting the findings of previous research (Islam et al., 2018; Mira et al., 2019; Rayhan, 2022; Alsafadi & Altahat 2021; Alkhamis, 2024). This alignment with prior studies emphasises the consistency of HRM practices as crucial determinants of employee satisfaction. These studies collectively highlight the role of effective HRM practices in fostering a supportive work environment, enhancing employee morale, and increasing JS.

However, the findings contradict those of Mudor and Tooksoon (2011), who identified a negative and significant correlation between HRM practices, JS, and ER. Their research suggests that certain HRM practices may inadvertently lead to decreased JS and retention. This contradiction underscores the complexity of HRM practices and their varying impacts across different contexts.

Furthermore, Kakar et al. (2017) assert that HRM practices are strong predictors of ER, indicating that while HRM practices generally enhance JS, they also have significant implications for retention. The mixed results suggest that the effectiveness of HRM practices in promoting JS and ER may depend on specific organizational

contexts, the implementation of these practices, and the individual differences among employees.

The workload is the only JS factor lacking significant correlations with the HRM practices scale. This anomaly may be attributed to the unique nature of the workload, whereby external factors, such as the inherent job characteristics or external demands, could play a more significant role in determining workload within the study's context. These external factors might vary among individuals, contingent on their PoE. The diversified nature of these external influences could contribute to the absence of a direct correlation between workload and HRM practices.

This finding suggests a nuanced relationship, indicating that while certain HRM practices might strongly influence overall JS, they may not significantly impact specific aspects like workload.

Relationship between Employee Retention and Job Satisfaction

Table 6.21 illustrates significant correlation values, both positive and negative, among the scales, indicating a complex relationship between ER and JS. A large, significant positive correlation ($r = 0.68$; $p < 0.001$) is observed between RFS's rewards and recognition factor and JS's work challenges factor. This finding suggests that as employees perceive more rewards and recognition, their experience of work challenges increases. This positive relationship supports the idea that adequate rewards and recognition can enhance employees' engagement with challenging work, ultimately leading to higher JS.

Furthermore, the intention to quit factor of RFS correlates positively with the work challenges factor of JS ($r = 0.60$; $p < 0.001$; large practical effect). This finding implies that when employees experience challenges at work, they are more likely to consider resigning. Similarly, a positive correlation exists between the intention to quit factor of RFS and JS's positive work environment factor ($r = 0.43$; $p < 0.001$; medium practical effect). The positive correlations suggest that if one variable increases, the other increases. It indicates that when the work environment is conducive, the JS level of employees will increase, which can improve ER.

These findings are consistent with research by Aviola, Fahmy and Lukito (2022) and Sunarno, Susita and Wolor (2022), who found that a positive work environment significantly enhances JS. Additionally, Biason (2020) found that high levels of JS contribute to increased ER, further signifying a relationship between JS and ER. However, the study by Kartika and Rezeki (2024) presents a contrasting view, showing that the work environment does not significantly affect employee turnover intentions, suggesting that the work environment does not significantly influence employee turnover intentions, suggesting that other factors might mediate this relationship.

Conversely, a large negative correlation is found between the WLB factor of RFS, and the work challenges factor JS ($r = -0.56$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, a medium negative correlation exists between the work-life balance of RFS and the work-related stress of JS ($r = -0.44$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, these negative correlations imply that increased work challenges and work-related stress are associated with decreased WLB, suggesting that an imbalance in work-life leads to heightened challenges and stress. This finding is aligned with the study by Khan, Shah, Khan and Gul (2012), who indicate that workplace stress harms the WLB.

Furthermore, supporting this, Kong, Yang, Zhang, Wang, and Feng (2020) demonstrate that life quality plays a crucial role in influencing work stress and JS, suggesting that improving one's quality of life can enhance JS and decrease workplace stress. Paramita and Supartha (2022) also found a negative relationship between WLB and work-related stress, which implies that an imbalance in WLB can lead to increased stress and, ultimately, turnover intentions (Maharani & Tamara, 2024).

However, it is important to note contrasting findings, such as the study by Aviola, Fahmy and Lukito (2022), which found that WLB does not significantly affect work-related stress. This finding implies that WLB does not affect work-related stress. Overall, while most studies highlight the negative impact of poor WLB on work-related stress and job challenges, it is crucial to consider the context and individual differences when interpreting these findings.

A medium significant positive correlation is observed between the rewards and recognition factor of RFS and JS's positive work environment factor ($r = 0.35$; $p < 0.001$). Similarly, a medium significant positive correlation exists between RFS's rewards and recognition factor and the work-related stress factor ($r = 0.39$; $p < 0.001$). Lastly, a significant positive correlation is found between RFS's loyalty factor and JS's workload factor ($r = -0.34$; $p < 0.001$; medium practical effect). These findings suggest that recognition, rewards and a positive work environment contribute to employee loyalty and may ultimately lead individuals to stay for prolonged periods. Accordingly, this finding is in line with the research study conducted by Satish (2023) that explicitly revealed that adopting effective recognition and rewards can significantly enhance employee engagement, leading to increased productivity, improved job performance, and increased employee loyalty (Prashanth & Veena, 2022). However, these results contradict Sospeter (2021), who reported a statistically insignificant relationship between reward systems and employee satisfaction. Similarly, Lima and Allida (2023) found that direct rewards had an insignificant effect on employee behaviour and engagement, while recognition positively and significantly impacted engagement, subsequently influencing employee behaviour.

Furthermore, effective recognition and rewards can significantly reduce employee turnover (Igomu, 2023), as employees are expected to remain loyal to employers who value their contributions (Millacci, 2023). Additionally, a positive work environment also positively and significantly impacts employee loyalty, confirming that the more conducive the work environment is for employees, the more employee loyalty can increase at work (Prasetya, 2017; Aljayi, Fjer, Guennioui, & Tameket, 2016; Jackson, Jennifer, Alberti & Snipes, 2016; Sukawati & Suwandana, 2021). In contrast, Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed and Iqbal (2021) indicated that a toxic workplace environment has a negative impact on employee engagement. This notion reinforces the necessity of a positive work environment.

Conversely, a medium significant negative correlation is identified between RFS's loyalty factor and JS's workload factor ($r = -0.34$; $p < 0.001$). This negative correlation implies that employee loyalty is not associated with workload (as a factor of JS). This finding aligns with the study by Basem et al. (2022) that showed no relationship

between workload and loyalty. This finding is supported by Buzza, James and Alex (2017) and Purbaningrat and Surya (2017), who indicated that workload has a negative effect on employee loyalty. In other words, employee loyalty will decrease when workload increases and vice versa. This finding is also in line with the research studies conducted by Silva and Gustav (2015) and Amanda and Agus (2019) that confirm that an employee's workload can affect employee loyalty as the more workload given to employees or not following the current job description, the lower the loyalty to all aspects related to the employee's job or the organisation. Basem et al. (2022) additionally assert that workload significantly impacts employee loyalty.

On the contrary, remuneration can potentially foster strong organisational loyalty among employees (Malik & Astu, 2019; Purnamasari & Sintaasih, 2019). The positive correlation between remuneration and employee loyalty is emphasised in various studies, with higher remuneration linked to increased organisational loyalty (Baporikar, 2017). Accordingly, this aligns with the findings of Aityan and Gupta (2011) and Basem et al. (2022), who also reported a positive and significant impact of remuneration on employee loyalty (Suhartati, Mauludin & Liana (2022). Thus, better remuneration correlates with higher employee loyalty to the organisation, a pattern echoed in research by Sukawati and Suwandana (2021) and Basem et al. (2022). However, Masakure (2016) reports a negative link between loyalty and remuneration, while Muhammad (2016) highlights the positive influence of remuneration on employee performance, subsequently leading to increased JS and organisational loyalty.

These contrasting findings may be attributed to individual differences in employees' perceptions of workload, where diverse viewpoints on what constitutes a heavy workload could influence the observed correlation. Additionally, individual coping mechanisms may play a role in shaping the relationship with loyalty. Another plausible explanation lies in the potential mitigating effects of working conditions, support systems or organisational culture within the national department. These factors could counterbalance the impact of workload on employee loyalty. However, a comprehensive understanding of this correlation necessitates further exploration through qualitative research or contextual analysis.

There is a small but significant positive correlation between the intention to quit factor of RFS and the workload factor of JS ($r = 0.19$; $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with Omar, Aluwi, Fauzi and Hairpuddin's (2020) research, which also reported a positive relationship between workload and intention to leave. Also, a significant positive correlation exists between the intention to quit factor of RFS and work-related stress of JS ($r = 0.28$; $p < 0.001$; small practical effect). In addition, a significant positive correlation exists between the loyalty factor of RFS and the work-related stress factor of JS ($r = -0.22$; $p < 0.001$; small practical effect). These correlations suggest that high workload and stress are associated with a higher likelihood of employees contemplating resigning.

Moreover, work stress significantly affects employee turnover intention, with a higher stress level correlating with higher turnover intentions. This finding is consistent with Dahlan and Hayuletra's (2022) findings, which highlighted that job stress significantly affects employee intentions to quit. The finding is also in line with previous empirical studies from Lu and Yong (2017), Hakim and Sudarmiatin (2018), and Zahra, Khan, Imran, Aman and Ali (2018).

Conversely, Omar et al. (2020) found that work stress did not significantly impact the intention to leave. On the other hand, the results of the research by Wibowo, Setiawan and Yuniarinto (2021) revealed that workload did not significantly influence turnover intention, while Yikilmaz, Sürücü & Gülerüz (2023) reported a positive effect of workload on turnover intention. However, when work stress is used as an intermediary between the two relationships, the workload significantly influences turnover intention, which means an increased workload can increase employee turnover intention. These results support the empirical study of Pradana and Salehudin (2015), which asserts that workload does not significantly influence the intention to leave, and work stress mediates the effect of workload on turnover intention. This mediation role of work stress is further supported by Glazer and Beehr (2005), who argue that work stress can act as an arbitrator between workload and turnover intention. The consistency of these findings with research findings from Pradana and Salehudin (2015) and Christy and Priartini (2019) highlights the intricate connection between intention to leave, workload, and work stress.

Additionally, Wibowo, Setiawan and Yuniarinto (2021) indicated that workload significantly affects work stress, reinforcing theories from Caplan (1987) regarding Person-Environment Fit Theory. According to this theory, stress arises from individuals recognising discrepancies in their perception of the reality of their work environment. For instance, a hot, noisy and dusty work environment can lead to employee stress due to the mental and physical workload demands.

Therefore, organisations must devise effective strategies to mitigate the negative effects of work stress on employees. Another factor in organisations is that core business (operations) employees experience more workloads without being provided with adequate additional time off work. This additional workload triggers physical and mental stress because workers must complete production deadlines in normal working hours and minimise the time allowed for personal life.

Finally, there is a small but significant negative correlation between the WLB factor of RFS and JS's positive work environment factor ($r = -0.22$; $p < 0.001$). This finding is in line with the research findings by Aviola, Fahmy and Lukito (2022), Paramita and Supartha (2022) and Jessica, Afifah, Daud, Sulistiowati and Pebrianti (2023), which indicated that while the work environment and WLB negatively and significantly impact on work stress, they positively and significantly impact on JS (Yang, Saad & AlQershi, 2021), specifically, the better the work environment, the lower the stress level of employees. Similarly, improved WLB is associated with reduced work stress, highlighting the importance of balancing work and personal life to mitigate stress.

WLB positively influences JS, as supported by research (Azdanal, Zamzam & Rostiati, 2021). Maintaining this balance is crucial for a significant positive impact on JS. Similar findings were reported by Tavassoli and Sunyer (2020) and Rony and Yulisyahyanti (2022), emphasising the substantial positive effect of WLB on JS. Consequently, an enhanced work environment increases employees' JS (Aviola, Fahmy & Lukito, 2022). This notion aligns with Sunarno, Susita and Wolor's (2022) research, indicating a positive relationship between the work environment and JS. Furthermore, the positive and significant impact of the work environment on employee JS was partially affirmed

by Suprapti, Astuti, Sa'adah, et al. (2020), as well as Ong, Hendry, Winata and Monika (2021).

Conversely, WLB does not significantly impact work stress in all contexts. These findings suggest that employees' working conditions do not substantially influence the stress levels arising from their work. The results indicate that the maintenance of WLB is not associated with an effect on work stress, implying that employees have effectively managed their work-life equilibrium. Furthermore, the work environment does not significantly contribute to work-related stress, as it aligns with employees' expectations (Aviola et al., 2022). However, Paramita and Supartha (2022) reported a negative relationship between WLB and work-related stress, indicating that work-life imbalance in a person's life leads to work-related and personal stress, ultimately leading to turnover intentions (Maharani & Tamara, 2024). As WLB decreases, employees' intention to leave will increase, necessitating organisational effort to provide opportunities for their employees to have a balanced lifestyle. Hence, a negative correlation exists between WLB and turnover intentions (Maharani & Tamara, 2024).

Additionally, a small but significant negative correlation exists between the WLB factor of RFS and the workload factor of JS ($r = -0.28$; $p < 0.001$). These results imply that employees' WLB, as measured by the RFS, does not strongly correlate with positive work environments and workloads, highlighting the nuanced nature of these relationships. This finding resonates with Omar, Mohd and Ariffin (2015) and Pathirana, Khatibi and Tham (2023) studies, which indicated that workload is the main factor affecting work-life balance. It showed that workload is significantly and negatively correlated with employees' WLB. It simply means that the more workload employees have, the less they enjoy a good work-life balance.

Consequently, enhancing employees' WLB entails a thoughtful consideration of the workload assigned. Conversely, no significant relationship exists between workload and WLB, indicating that workload does not directly impact employees' work-life equilibrium, suggesting effective workload management (Hashim, Jamaludin & Zaini, 2022). In contrast, Shah, Jaffari, Aziz, et al. (2011) found a significant positive effect

of workload on WLB, suggesting that employees with sufficient work experience have a sense of vitality and energy. Therefore, moderate workload pressure can positively influence productivity and WLB. However, when workload pressure becomes excessive, it may have a detrimental impact (Shah et al., 2011).

The observed outcomes, indicating a constrained correlation between employees' WLB and positive work environments and workloads, may be shaped by the distinctive attributes of the national department or the broader cultural context in South Africa. Additionally, the nature of work at the national department, which involves complex tasks related to immigration, customs and security, may introduce external factors that play a more substantial role in shaping employees' perceptions of their WLB. High-demand work situations or job characteristics specific to the nature of their duties may overshadow the typical associations found in other work settings. Further exploration and qualitative investigation into the cultural and organisational aspects of the national department could provide valuable insights into the observed findings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the nuanced relationships between WLB work environments and workloads in this specific context.

In summary, the results reveal a complex relationship of positive and negative correlations between various factors measured by the RFS and JS. These findings align with previous research suggesting a relationship between JS and ER (Biaison, 2020).

Relationship between Employee Retention and Human Resource Management Practices

It is clear from Table 6.21 that there are several significant correlation values between the different scales. A large, significant positive correlation (Cohen, 1988) was found between the rewards and recognition factor of RFS and the positive organisational practices factor of HRMPs ($r = 0.68$; $p < 0.001$). In addition, a significant positive correlation exists between the rewards and recognition factor of RFS and the staffing and diversity management factor of HRMPs ($r = 0.53$; $p < 0.001$). A significant positive correlation exists between the rewards and recognition factor of RFS and the supervisor support and communication factor of HRMPs ($r = 0.65$; $p < 0.001$).

Moreover, a significant positive correlation exists between the intention to quit the RFS and the positive organisational practices factor of HRMPs ($r = 0.63$; $p < 0.001$). Also, a large, significant positive correlation exists between the intention to quit factor of the RFS and the staffing and diversity management factor of the HRMPs ($r = 0.57$; $p < 0.001$). Lastly, a large, significant positive correlation exists between the intention to quit factor of the RFS and the supervisor support and communication factor of the HRMPs ($r = 0.57$; $p < 0.001$).

The findings demonstrate a positive correlation between rewards and recognition as measured by the RFS and positive organisational practices, staffing and diversity, and staffing and diversity management as factors measured by the HRMPs. It further demonstrates a positive correlation between the factor intention measured by the RFS and the factors of positive organisational practices and supervisor support and communication as measured by the HRMPs. These findings suggest that when employees perceive fair recognition and rewards and positive organisational practices, including transparent staffing processes and effective diversity management, they are more likely to have a positive intention to stay. This notion is consistent with the research by Tirta and Enrika (2022), which found that reward and recognition have a significant positive effect on ER.

In contrast, studies by Hanifa et al. (2024), Kartika and Rezeki, (2024) suggest that organisational practices significantly influence employees' intention to leave the organisation. The positive correlation between supervisor support and communication indicates that supportive leadership and effective communication further contribute to employees' intentions to remain with the organisation.

The findings suggest that the organisation's positive organisational practices, such as effective staffing, diversity management, and supportive communication, contribute to employees' positive perceptions and intentions to stay within the national department. These findings align with Li, Rees, and Branine's (2019) study, positing that employees' perceptions of HRM practices predict employee commitment. Comprehensive HRM practices can reduce turnover intentions. Maharani and Tamara (2024) also found a significant relationship between retention factors and intention to

leave. However, a negative direct relationship was observed between employees' perceptions of HRM practices and turnover intentions (Li, Rees & Branine, 2019). Similarly, Permarupan et al. (2024) revealed that HRM practices were negatively related to employees' intention to leave. This finding implies that well-implemented HRM practices can mitigate turnover.

The study's findings further reveal a medium negative correlation between the WLB factor of the RFS and the positive organisational practices factor of the retention factor scale ($r = -0.45$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, a medium negative correlation exists between the WLB of the RFS and the supervisor support and communication factor of HRM practices ($r = -0.40$; $p < 0.001$). It, therefore, seems as if employees within the national departments' WLB are not associated with positive organisational practices and supervisor support and communication.

Furthermore, there is a medium but significant negative correlation between the WLB factor of the RFS and the staffing and diversity management factor of HRM practices ($r = -0.36$; $p < 0.001$). This finding implies that employees' WLB (as a factor of RFS) is not associated with staffing and diversity management (as factors of HRM practices). Conversely, a small but significant positive correlation is observed between the loyalty factor of the RFS and the positive organisational practices factor of HRM practices ($r = 0.20$; $p < 0.001$), as well as the loyalty factor of the RFS and the staffing and diversity management factor of HRM practices ($r = 0.15$; $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that when organisational practices are positive, the staffing process is fair, and diversity is well managed; employees are inclined to demonstrate loyalty to the organisation.

In summary, the results of hypothesis 1 show a positive correlation between HRM practices and JS. It further demonstrates positive and negative correlations between RFS and JS and between the RFS and HRM practices. These results emphasise the intricate relationships between HRM practices, JS, and retention factors. They also highlight the significance of HRM practices that are comprehensive and valuable in promoting positive employee outcomes and reducing turnover intentions.

6.6.2 T-tests and ANOVA

This section addresses hypotheses 3, 4 and 5, stating that differences do not exist in HRMPs, JS and ER, and demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE. In this study, the independent sample t-test and Levene's test, as discussed in Chapter 5, were used to determine the differences between the two biographical groups. Levene's test of equality of variance was employed to assess the assumption of equal variance in the t-test (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002). The test determines whether the variance of the groups is equal, guiding the choice between "equal variances assumed" or "equal variances not assumed" in the subsequent t-test analysis (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002). A p-value larger than 0.05 suggests equal variances, justifying "equal variances assumed."

In interpreting the t-test results, a significant difference in mean scores between the two groups is indicated if the sig (2-tailed) column is equal to or less than 0.05. Conversely, if the values exceed 0.05, it suggests that the mean scores of the two groups do not differ significantly (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002). This approach ensures the appropriate application of the t-test based on the equality of variances and significance levels.

One-way ANOVA was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between more than two biographical groups. Following a significant overall difference, post hoc tests (Tukey HSD test) were used for pairwise comparison between groups. ANOVA is suitable when examining differences across more than two groups, testing the null hypothesis that the means of multiple populations are equal (Babbie, 2016). Significance is determined by comparing the sig column in the ANOVA table to the threshold of 0.05: values smaller than 0.05 indicate significant differences, while values larger than 0.05 suggest no significant differences. The post hoc test is exclusively applied when an overall significant difference is established, facilitating detailed pairwise group comparisons.

6.6.2.1 Results of hypothesis 3 concerning Human Resources Management Practices

As mentioned in Chapter 5, hypothesis 3 states:

H₀₃: Differences do not exist in terms of HRMPs and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE.

H_{a3}: Differences do exist in terms of HRMPs and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE.

- **Age**

The results of the independent sample t-test are demonstrated in Table 6.22. As seen in Table 6.22, scores relating to the support and communication factor were significantly higher for participants in the age group 36 – 45 years ($M = 3.64$; $SD = 0.99$) than for the age group 26 – 35 years ($M = 3.5$; $SD = 1.08$).

Table 6. 22: Group Statistics of Age and HRMPs factors

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of HRMPs	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive organisational practices	26-35	63	3.28	1.07
	36-45	85	3.51	0.99
	46+	57	3.24	1.22
	Total	205	3.28	1.07
Staffing and diversity management	26-35	63	3.48	1.05
	36-45	85	3.42	0.96
	46+	57	3.24	1.06
	Total	205	3.40	1.01
Supervisor support and communication	26-35	63	3.50	1.08
	36-45	85	3.64	0.99
	46+	57	3.55	1.17
	Total	205	3.58	1.07

Source: Researchers own statistics

Table 6.22 shows that support and communication factor scores were notably higher among participants aged 36–45 years ($M = 3.64$; $SD = 0.99$) than those in the 26–35 age group ($M = 3.5$; $SD = 1.08$). Additionally, in the positive organisational practices factor, the 36–45 age group scored significantly higher ($M = 3.51$; $SD = 0.99$) than the

26–35 age group ($M = 3.26$; $SD = 1.07$). Conversely, for the staffing and diversity management factor, the 26–35 age group had significantly higher scores ($M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.05$) than the 46-year-old and older age group ($M = 3.24$; $SD = 1.06$).

Table 6.23 illustrates the ANOVA statistics calculated to determine the relationship between age and the factors related to HRMPs. The results show no significant differences between age groups and the factors related to HRMPs ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. 23: ANOVA for Age and HRMPs

ANOVA						
Factors of HRMPs		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Positive organisational practices	Between Groups	0.133	2	0.07	0.06	0.95
	Within Groups	236,684	202	1.17		
	Total	236,817	204			
Staffing and diversity management	Between Groups	1,891	2	0.95	0.92	0.40
	Within Groups	208,001	202	1.03		
	Total	209,892	204			
Supervisor support and communication	Between Groups	0,793	2	0.40	0.35	0.71
	Within Groups	232,390	202	1.15		
	Total	233,183	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

- **Gender**

The results of the independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the support and communication factor were significantly higher for male participants ($M = 3.63$; $SD = 1.10$) than for female participants ($M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.04$), as demonstrated in Table 6.24.

Table 6. 24: Descriptive Statistics for Gender and HRMPs

Descriptive statistics					
Factors of HRMPs	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Positive organisational practices	Male	102	3.4069	1.06759	0.10571
	Female	103	3.1566	1.07781	0.10620
Staffing and diversity management	Male	102	3.4330	0.95707	0.09476
	Female	103	3.3479	1.07104	0.10553
Supervisor support and communication	Male	102	3.63	1.10228	0.10914
	Female	103	3.5118	1.03703	0.10218

Source: Researchers own statistics

Additionally, an independent sample t-test was employed to ascertain if there was a statistically significant difference between gender levels. As shown in Table 6.25, the findings reveal that none of the HRMP-related factors exhibit significant differences concerning gender levels ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. 25: Independent Sample T-Test for Gender and HRM Practices

Independent Samples Test							
Factors of HRMPs		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Positive organisational practices	Equal variances assumed.	0.001	0.972	1.670	203	0.048	0.096
	Equal variances not assumed.			1.670	203.000	0.048	0.096
Staffing and diversity management	Equal variances assumed.	3.204	0.075	0.600	203	0.275	0.549
	Equal variances not assumed.			0.600	200.898	0.275	0.549
Supervisor support and communication	Equal variances assumed	0.616	0.433	0.821	203	0.206	0.413
	Equal variances not assumed.			0.820	201.990	0.206	0.413

Source: Researchers own statistics

- **Marital Status**

The results of the independent sample t-test revealed that participants in the single/separated/divorced group ($M = 3.65$; $SD = 1.07$) significantly scored higher on the support and communication factor compared to participants in the married group ($M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.06$), as illustrated in Table 6.26.

Table 6. 26: Descriptive Statistics for Marital Status and HRM Practices

Descriptive Statistics					
Factors of HRMPs	Marital recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Positive organisational practices	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.3886	1.05976	0.10545
	Married	99	3.1957	1.09704	0.11026
Staffing and diversity management	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.4554	1.03867	0.10335
	Married	99	3.3182	0.99804	0.10031
Supervisor support and communication	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.6492	1.07258	0.10673
	Married	99	3.5051	1.06148	0.10668

Source: Researchers own statistics

The independent sample t-test examined potential significant differences between HRMP factors and employees' marital status. The results, as presented in Table 6.27, show that none of the HRM practice factors exhibit statistically significant differences based on employees' marital status ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. 27: Independent Sample T-Test for Marital Status and HRM Practices

Independent Samples Test						
Factors of HRMPs		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance Two-Sided p
Positive organizational practices	Equal variances assumed	0.228	0.633	1.265	198	0.207
	Equal variances not assumed			1.264	197.410	0.208
Staffing and diversity management	Equal variances assumed	0.011	0.917	0.953	198	0.342
	Equal variances not assumed			0.953	197.922	0.342
Supervisor support and communication	Equal variances assumed	0.118	0.731	0.955	198	0.341
	Equal variances not assumed			0.955	197.981	0.341

Source: Researchers own statistics

- Job Level**

The results of the independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the support and communication factor were significantly higher for employees on a management level ($M = 3.61$; $SD = 1.073$) than for employees on a supervisory level ($M = 3.57$; $SD = 1.22$) as well as employees on a junior level ($M = 3.57$; $SD = 1.05$), as demonstrated in Table 6.28.

Table 6. 28: Descriptive Statistics for Job Level and HRM Practices

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of HRMPs	Job Levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive organisational practices	Management	20	3.3813	1.00531
	Supervisory	34	3.2610	1.14827
	Junior	151	3.2724	1.07665
	Total	205	3.2811	1.07744
Staffing and diversity management	Management	20	3.4250	1.11013
	Supervisory	34	3.3284	1.15578
	Junior	151	3.3996	0.97374
	Total	205	3.3902	1.01434
Supervisor support and communication	Management	20	3.6143	1.02922
	Supervisory	34	3.5714	1.22083
	Junior	151	3.5676	1.04510
	Total	205	3.5728	1.06914

Source: Researchers own statistics

Table 6.29 presents the ANOVA statistics used to assess the relationship between HRMP factors and job levels. The table demonstrates no significant differences exist between job levels ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. 29: ANOVA for Job Level and HRM Practices

ANOVA						
Factors of HRMPs		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Positive organisational practices	Between Groups	0.226	2	0.11	0.10	0.91
	Within Groups	236.592	202	1.17		
	Total	236.817	204			
Staffing and diversity management	Between Groups	0.167	2	0.08	0.08	0.92
	Within Groups	209.724	202	1.04		
	Total	209.892	204			
Supervisor support and communication	Between Groups	0.038	2	0.02	0.02	0.98
	Within Groups	233.145	202	1.15		
	Total	233.183	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

- **Port of Entry**

The independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the support and communication factor were significantly higher for employees at the OR Tambo International Airport ($M = 3.70$; $SD = 0.96$) than those at the other PoE, as demonstrated in Table 6.30.

Table 6. 30: Descriptive Statistics for POE and HRM Practices

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of HRMPs	Port of Entry	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive organisational practices	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.3794	0.98788
	Cape Town International Airport	32	2.9844	1.09053
	Cape Town Harbour	17	2.7132	0.90222
	King Shaka International Airport	12	3.4583	1.34980

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of HRMPs	Port of Entry	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Lebombo Land Port	45	3.5167	1.13587
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.1250	1.11220
	Total	205	3.2811	1.07744
Staffing and diversity management	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.4748	0.98668
	Cape Town International Airport	32	3.0990	1.14289
	Cape Town Harbour	17	3.3529	0.62049
	King Shaka International Airport	12	3.6250	1.33546
	Lebombo Land Port	45	3.4481	1.01493
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.1795	0.94883
	Total	205	3.3902	1.01434
Supervisor support and communication	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.7010	0.95985
	Cape Town International Airport	32	3.4196	1.15029
	Cape Town Harbour	17	3.0168	0.81579
	King Shaka International Airport	12	3.6786	1.53152
	Lebombo Land Port	45	3.6952	1.14877
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.3077	0.92186
	Total	205	3.5728	1.06914

Source: Researchers own statistics

Table 6.31 displays the ANOVA statistics utilised to examine the relationship between HRMP factors and PoE. The table indicates that no significant differences exist in PoE on HRMPs ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. 31: ANOVA for POE and HRM Practices

ANOVA						
Factors of HRMPs		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Positive organisational practices	Between Groups	12.321	5	2.464	2.184	0.06
	Within Groups	224.497	199	1.128		
	Total	236.817	204			
Staffing and diversity management	Between Groups	4.743	5	0.949	0.920	0.47
	Within Groups	205.148	199	1.031		
	Total	209.892	204			
Supervisor support and communication	Between Groups	9.142	5	1.828	1.624	0.17
	Within Groups	224.042	199	1.126		
	Total	233.183	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

In conclusion, no significant differences were observed in HRMPs concerning demographic variables, including age, gender, marital status, job level, and PoE. This finding leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. A possible explanation for the lack of variation could suggest the existence of a specific organisational culture that promotes uniform perceptions.

6.6.2.2 Results of Demographic Variables On JS

As mentioned in Chapter 5, hypothesis 4 states:

H₀₄: Differences do not exist in terms of JS and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE.

H_{a4}: Differences exist in terms of JS and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE.

- **Age**

Results from the independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the “work-related stress” factor were significantly higher for participants in the age group 46 years and older ($M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.03$) than for the age group 36 - 45 years ($M = 4.11$;

$SD = 0.89$), as demonstrated in Table 6.32. Employees in the age group 36 – 45 ($M = 4.04$; $SD = 0.87$) year obtained significantly higher means scores than employees in the age group 26 – 35 years ($M = 3.86$; $SD = 1.11$) on the JS factor “work challenges”.

From Table 6.32, it is further noted that employees in the age group 46 years and older obtained significantly higher mean scores ($M = 3.85$; $SD = 0.75$) than employees in the 26 – 35 years age group ($M = 3.70$; $SD = 0.90$) on the “positive work environment” factor. In terms of the factor “workload”, employees in the age group 36 – 45 years scored significantly higher ($M = 3.61$; $SD = 0.68$) than employees in the 26 – 35 years age group ($M = 3.53$; $SD = 0.67$).

Table 6. 32: Descriptive statistics for Age and JS

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of JS	Age Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work challenges	26-35	63	3.8556	1.10596
	36-45	85	4.0435	0.87198
	46+	57	3.9316	1.12903
	Total	205	3.9546	1.02040
Positive work environment	26-35	63	3.6961	0.90186
	36-45	85	3.7630	0.83577
	46+	57	3.8496	0.74887
	Total	205	3.7666	0.83201
Workload	26-35	63	3.5270	0.67423
	36-45	85	3.6165	0.58081
	46+	57	3.6070	0.67820
	Total	205	3.5863	0.63633
Work-related stress	26-35	63	4.1524	0.95358
	36-45	85	4.1059	0.89634
	46+	57	4.2035	1.02990
	Total	205	4.1473	0.94866

Source: Researchers own statistics

Table 6.33 represents the ANOVA for the dimensions of JS as measured by the JSS and age. The table indicates no significant differences between the age groups ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. 33: ANOVA for Age

ANOVA						
Factors of JS		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work challenges	Between Groups	1.320	2	0.660	0.63	0.53
	Within Groups	211.088	202	1.045		
	Total	212.408	204			
Positive work environment	Between Groups	0.707	2	0.353	0.51	0.60
	Within Groups	140.509	202	0.696		
	Total	141.216	204			
Workload	Between Groups	0.323	2	0.162	0.40	0.67
	Within Groups	82.278	202	0.407		
	Total	82.602	204			
Work-related stress	Between Groups	0.328	2	0.164	0.18	0.84
	Within Groups	183.263	202	0.907		
	Total	183.591	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

- **Gender**

Table 6.34 illustrates the descriptive statistics of males and females on JS factors. The scores relating to the “work-related stress” factor were significantly higher for females ($M = 4.21$; $SD = 0.94$) than for males ($M = 4.08$; $SD = 0.96$).

Table 6.33: Descriptive Statistics for Gender and Job Satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics					
Factors of JS	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Work challenges	Male	102	4.0196	0.98000	0.09703
	Female	103	3.8903	1.05974	0.10442
Positive work environment	Male	102	3.7717	0.84102	0.08327
	Female	103	3.7614	0.82706	0.08149
Workload	Male	102	3.5412	0.64091	0.06346
	Female	103	3.6311	0.63168	0.06224
Work-related stress	Male	102	4.0824	0.95745	0.09480
	Female	103	4.2117	0.94010	0.09263

Source: Researchers own statistics

An independent sample t-test was also used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between the genders of employees. Table 6.35 shows the results of the independent t-test for gender.

Table 6. 34: Independent Sample T-Test for Gender and JS

Independent Samples Test						
Factors of JS		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance Two-Sided p
Work challenges	Equal variances assumed	0.422	0.517	0.907	203	0.37
	Equal variances not assumed			0.907	202.058	0.37
Positive work environment	Equal variances assumed	0.002	0.967	0.088	203	0.93
	Equal variances not assumed			0.088	202.857	0.93
Workload	Equal variances assumed	0.752	0.387	-1.011	203	0.31
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.011	202.880	0.31
Work-related stress	Equal variances assumed	0.027	0.871	-0.976	203	0.33
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.976	202.840	0.33

Source: Researchers own statistics

As outlined in Table 6.35, no statistically significant differences were observed between the gender groups ($p > 0.05$). These findings aligns with the findings of several academic studies, including Rashed (2006), Hossain Md (2014), Agbor, Ebeh, Nwankwo, Agu (2014), and Ramlutchman (2018), which suggest that gender does not significantly influence employees' JS. However, it is worth noting that studies by other researchers, such as Jung et al. (2013), and Moyes et al. (2006), contradict these findings. They indicate that gender can significantly impact JS, particularly when employees are supervised by individuals of the same gender (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012).

- **Marital Status**

The results of the independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the “work-related stress” factor were significantly higher for single/separate/divorce employees

($M = 4.15$; $SD = 0.99$) than for married employees ($M = 4.12$; $SD = 0.93$), as demonstrated in Table 6.36. This finding contradicts a study by Kumar and Biswas (2021), which observed that married employees tended to experience higher levels of occupational stress than their unmarried counterparts. Conversely, a study by Yazdi, Chaboksavar, Malekzadeh, et al. (2023) found that unmarried individuals experienced the highest levels of workplace stress. The authors suggested that single people, lacking social support and network resources, were more prone to stress. Separated and divorced individuals also exhibited elevated stress levels attributed to the challenges of losing a loved one through death or divorce (Ofosuhene & Boohene, 2018). In contrast, Nagra and Arora (2013) reported a higher mean score for job stress among married individuals than their unmarried counterparts.

Table 6. 35: Descriptive Statistics for Marital Status and Job Satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics					
Factors of JS	Marital recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Work challenges	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.9931	1.11600	0.11105
	Married	99	3.9212	0.92232	0.09270
Positive work environment	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.7426	0.89876	0.08943
	Married	99	3.7691	0.77811	0.07820
Workload	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.5545	0.62346	0.06204
	Married	99	3.6081	0.66266	0.06660
Work-related stress	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	4.1584	0.98967	0.09848
	Married	99	4.1232	0.92789	0.09326

Source: Researchers own statistics

An independent sample t-test was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between JS and employees' marital status. Table 6.37 shows the results of this independent t-test for employees' marital status on JS, indicating no significant differences between marital status groups ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. 36: Independent Sample T-Test for Marital Status and Job Satisfaction

Independent Samples Test						
Factors of JS		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance Two-Sided p
Work challenges	Equal variances assumed	5.784	0.017	0.496	198	0.62
	Equal variances not assumed			0.497	192.528	0.62
Positive work environment	Equal variances assumed	3.963	0.048	-0.223	198	0.82
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.223	195.037	0.82
Workload	Equal variances assumed	0.576	0.449	-0.590	198	0.56
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.589	196.711	0.56
Work-related stress	Equal variances assumed	0.740	0.391	0.259	198	0.80
	Equal variances not assumed			0.259	197.612	0.80

Source: Researchers own statistics

- **Job Level**

Results from the independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the factor “work-related stress” were significantly higher for management employees ($M = 4.11$, $SD=1.05$) than for employees in a supervisory role ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.04$), as demonstrated in Table 6.38.

Table 6. 37: Descriptive Statistics for Job Level and JS

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of JS	Job Levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work challenges	Management	20	4.0700	1.03827
	Supervisory	34	3.9588	1.02665
	Junior	151	3.9384	1.02254
	Total	205	3.9546	1.02040
Positive work environment	Management	20	4.0000	0.67326
	Supervisory	34	3.7773	0.94184
	Junior	151	3.7332	0.82490
	Total	205	3.7666	0.83201
Workload	Management	20	3.7200	0.67247
	Supervisory	34	3.7118	0.67184
	Junior	151	3.5404	0.62131
	Total	205	3.5863	0.63633
Work-related stress	Management	20	4.2100	1.05126
	Supervisory	34	4.0059	1.03805
	Junior	151	4.1709	0.91721
	Total	205	4.1473	0.94866

Source: Researchers own statistics

ANOVA was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between JS and the job level of employees. Table 6.39 shows the results of ANOVA for the job levels of employees on JS. As can be seen from Table 6.39, no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were recorded for JSS factors. This finding contradicts a study by Ho Kim, Ra, Park, and Kwon (2017: 633), which suggested significant and positive relationships between job levels and JS.

Table 6. 38: ANOVA for Job Levels and JS

ANOVA						
Factors of JS		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work challenges	Between Groups	0.307	2	0.153	0.146	0.86
	Within Groups	212.102	202	1.050		
	Total	212.408	204			
Positive work environment	Between Groups	1.262	2	0.631	0.911	0.40
	Within Groups	139.954	202	0.693		
	Total	141.216	204			
Workload	Between Groups	1.211	2	0.605	1.503	0.23
	Within Groups	81.391	202	0.403		
	Total	82.602	204			
Work-related stress	Between Groups	0.842	2	0.421	0.466	0.63
	Within Groups	182.749	202	0.905		
	Total	183.591	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

- **Port of Entry**

The independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the factor “work-related stress” were significantly higher for employees at the Lebombo Land Port ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.77$) than for employees at the Maseru Land Port ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.58$), as demonstrated in Table 6.40.

Table 6. 39: Descriptive Statistics for POE and JS

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of JS	Port of entries	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work challenges	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.8186	0.87401
	Cape Town International Airport	32	3.8719	1.17864
	Cape Town Harbour	17	3.6529	0.77308
	King Shaka International Airport	12	4.3917	1.46688
	Lebombo Land Port	45	4.4200	1.02837
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.4385	0.69467
	Total	205	3.9546	1.02040

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of JS	Port of entries	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive work environment	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.7409	0.87007
	Cape Town International Airport	32	3.5223	0.89075
	Cape Town Harbour	17	3.7059	0.67095
	King Shaka International Airport	12	4.1071	0.66763
	Lebombo Land Port	45	3.8794	0.86359
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.9121	0.50689
	Total	205	3.7666	0.83201
Workload	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.4558	0.62696
	Cape Town International Airport	32	3.7250	0.69607
	Cape Town Harbour	17	3.9294	0.68535
	King Shaka International Airport	12	3.4167	0.73588
	Lebombo Land Port	45	3.6711	0.54798
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.5231	0.47285
	Total	205	3.5863	0.63633
Work-related stress	OR Tambo International Airport	86	4.1256	0.94759
	Cape Town International Airport	32	4.1250	1.12077
	Cape Town Harbour	17	3.7882	0.71579
	King Shaka International Airport	12	4.0833	1.12317
	Lebombo Land Port	45	4.5600	0.76705
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.4462	0.57824
	Total	205	4.1473	0.94866

Source: Researchers own statistics

ANOVA was used to determine whether a statistical difference exists between JS and the PoE, as reflected in Table 6.41. The results in Table 6.40 indicate significant differences for the factors "work challenges," "workload", and "work-related stress" ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant differences were observed for the factor "positive work environment" ($p > 0.05$) concerning the PoE in relation to JS. Various organisational and contextual factors could influence these differences. For example, variations in job responsibilities at different PoEs may contribute to differences in workload perceptions. Even though individuals work within the same government department, the different PoEs might face unique challenges that impact employee satisfaction.

Table 6.40: ANOVA for Port of Entry and Job Satisfaction

ANOVA						
Factors of JS		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work challenges	Between Groups	18.859	5	3.772	3.878	0.00
	Within Groups	193.549	199	0.973		
	Total	212.408	204			
Positive environment work	Between Groups	4.268	5	0.854	1.240	0.29
	Within Groups	136.947	199	0.688		
	Total	141.216	204			
Workload	Between Groups	4.802	5	0.960	2.457	0.04
	Within Groups	77.800	199	0.391		
	Total	82.602	204			
Work-related stress	Between Groups	16.353	5	3.271	3.892	0.00
	Within Groups	167.238	199	0.840		
	Total	183.591	204			

Source: Researcher's statistics

Table 6.42 illustrates the results of the post hoc tests for JS and PoE.

Table 6. 41: Post Hoc Tests for Port of Entry and Job Satisfaction

Tukey HSD					
Dependent Variable	(I) Port of Entry	(J) Port of Entry	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Work Challenges	OR Tambo International Airport	Lebombo Land Port	-0.60*	0.18	0.01
	Lebombo Land Port	OR Tambo International Airport	0.60*	0.18	0.01
		Maseru Land Port	0.98*	0.31	0.02
	Maseru Land Port	Lebombo Land Port	-0.98*	0.31	0.02
Work-related stress	Cape Town Harbour	Lebombo Land Port	-0.77*	0.26	0.04
	Lebombo Land Port	Cape Town Harbour	0.77*	0.26	0.04
		Maseru Land Port	1.11*	0.29	0.02
	Maseru Land Port	Lebombo Land Port	-1.11*	0.29	0.02

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Researchers own statistics

Table 6.40 demonstrates notable distinctions in JS factor regarding *work challenges* among PoE. Specifically, the mean score for employees at OR Tambo PoE ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.87$) significantly differs from those at Lebombo PoE ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.03$), $p=0.01$. This finding suggests that employees at OR Tambo PoE perceive lower work challenges than their Lebombo counterparts. Furthermore, the mean score for Lebombo PoE ($M=4.42$, $SD = 1.03$) significantly differs from Maseru PoE ($M=3.44$, $SD = 0.69$), $p= 0.02$, implying that employees at Maseru PoE perceive lower work challenges than those at Lebombo PoE.

Table 6.40 indicated notable distinctions in terms of JS dimension work-related stress. Specifically, the mean score for Cape Town Harbour ($M=3.79$, $SD = 0.72$) significantly differed from Lebombo ($M=4.56$, $SD = 0.77$), $p = 0.04$. The mean score for Lebombo ($M=4.56$, $SD = 0.77$) was significantly different from Maseru ($M=3.45$, $SD = 0.58$), $p = 0.00$.

The findings indicate that in terms of JS, employees at OR Tambo and Maseru PoE report fewer work challenges than those at Lebombo PoE. A plausible explanation for employees at OR Tambo perceiving lower work challenges compared to their counterparts at Lebombo could be attributed to the scale of operations at a major airport like OR Tambo may provide employees with more specialised roles and responsibilities, reducing the complexity and perceived challenges in their daily tasks. The availability of advanced technology, efficient logistics and a larger workforce can also contribute to streamlined operations. On the other hand, Lebombo, being potentially smaller or less equipped, might require employees to handle a broader range of tasks, leading to a perception of higher work challenges. This perception of higher work challenges could be due to limited resources, a smaller team, or less sophisticated systems.

Additionally, employees at Cape Town Harbour and Maseru PoE do not experience job-related stress to the same extent as their counterparts at Lebombo PoE, suggesting that employees at Lebombo PoE may be encountering higher levels of job-related stress in comparison to their colleagues at Cape Town and Maseru PoE. From an HRM perspective, the variation in job-related stress levels among employees at

different PoEs can be attributed to several factors. For example, variances in job roles and responsibilities might influence stress levels. The inherent stress of certain roles at Lebombo PoE could differ from those at other locations. In addition, external elements, such as the unique characteristics of border activities or regional socioeconomic conditions, may also contribute to differences in stress levels.

6.6.2.3 Results of demographic variables pertaining to employee retention

The relationship between employee retention and the demographic variables of gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE were determined using t-tests and ANOVA. As mentioned in Chapter 5, hypothesis 3 concerning ER states:

H₀₅: Differences do not exist in terms of ER and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE.

H_{a5}: Differences exist in terms of ER and demographical variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE.

- **Age**

The independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the factor “intention to quit” were significantly higher for employees aged 46 and older ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 1.13$) and for employees 36 – 45 years ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 1.02$) than for employees 26 – 35 years ($M = 3.13$; $SD = 1.13$) as presented in Table 6.43.

Table 6. 42: Descriptive Statistics for Age and Employee Retention

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of ER	Age Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rewards and recognition	26-35	63	3.0590	1.16585
	36-45	85	3.3445	1.03775
	46+	57	3.1529	1.14186
	Total	205	3.2035	1.10901
Work-life balance	26-35	63	2.8889	1.44926
	36-45	85	2.4118	1.22868
	46+	57	2.5556	1.51230
	Total	205	2.5984	1.38884
Loyalty	26-35	63	3.0499	0.50681
	36-45	85	2.9714	0.58188
	46+	57	2.9524	0.34819
	Total	205	2.9902	0.50240
Intention to quit	26-35	63	3.1333	1.13080
	36-45	85	3.4729	1.01599
	46+	57	3.4737	1.13492
	Total	205	3.3688	1.09177

Source: Researchers own statistics

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore age's impact on ER; Table 6.44 shows the results. As explained in section 6.2.1.3, participants were divided into age groups, namely 26 – 35, 36 – 45 and 45 and older. From Table 6.44, it is clear that there are no significant differences between age groups ($p > 0.05$) for any of the ER factors. This finding contradicts Agyeman and Ponniah's (2014) research who pointed out a positive and statistically insignificant relationship between age and employee retention.

Table 6. 43: One-Way ANOVA for Age and Employee Retention

ANOVA						
Factors of ER		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rewards recognition and	Between Groups	3.153	2	1.577	1.285	0.28
	Within Groups	247.746	202	1.226		
	Total	250.900	204			
Work-life balance	Between Groups	8.382	2	4.191	2.198	0.11
	Within Groups	385.107	202	1.906		
	Total	393.488	204			
Loyalty	Between Groups	0.336	2	0.168	0.663	0.52
	Within Groups	51.155	202	0.253		
	Total	51.491	204			
Intention to quit	Between Groups	5.042	2	2.521	2.139	0.12
	Within Groups	238.118	202	1.179		
	Total	243.160	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

- Gender**

The independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the “intention to quit” factor were significantly higher for males ($M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.08$) than for females ($M = 3.23$; $SD = 1.09$), as illustrated in Table 6.45.

Table 6. 44: Descriptive Statistics for Gender and Employee Retention

Descriptive Statistics					
Factors of ER	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Rewards and recognition	Male	102	3.2465	1.10184	0.10910
	Female	103	3.1609	1.11981	0.11034
Work-life balance	Male	102	2.5163	1.40769	0.13938
	Female	103	2.6796	1.37193	0.13518
Loyalty	Male	102	3.0406	0.53730	0.05320
	Female	103	2.9404	0.46249	0.04557
Intention to quit	Male	102	3.5059	1.07931	0.10687
	Female	103	3.2330	1.09225	0.10762

Source: Researchers own statistics

An independent sample t-test assessed potential differences between genders concerning ER. As depicted in Table 6.45, no statistically significant difference was observed ($p > 0.05$) between males and females for employee retention factors. No additional analysis was conducted. Notably, this result contradicts the findings of Govindaraju (2018:13), who suggested a positive relationship between employee gender and ER.

Table 6. 45: Independent Sample T-Test for Gender and Employee Retention

Independent Samples Test						
RFS Factor		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance Two-Sided p
Rewards and recognition	Equal variances assumed	0.024	0.876	0.552	203	0.58
	Equal variances not assumed			0.552	202.992	0.58
Work-life balance	Equal variances assumed	0.060	0.807	-0.841	203	0.40
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.841	202.744	0.40
Loyalty	Equal variances assumed	1.131	0.289	1.432	203	0.15
	Equal variances not assumed			1.431	198.024	0.15
Intention to quit	Equal variances assumed	0.437	0.509	1.799	203	0.07
	Equal variances not assumed			1.799	202.999	0.07

Source: Researchers own statistics

- **Marital Status**

The independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the “intention to quit” factor are significantly higher for single/separated/divorced employees ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.12$) than for married employees ($M = 3.35$; $SD = 1.09$) as illustrated in Table 6.47.

Table 6. 46: Descriptive Statistics for Marital Status and Employee Retention

Descriptive Statistics					
Factors of ER	Marital recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Rewards and recognition	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.3338	1.17548	0.11696
	Married	99	3.0837	1.03319	0.10384
Work-life balance	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	2.5776	1.38073	0.13739
	Married	99	2.6465	1.41327	0.14204
Loyalty	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	2.9901	0.41466	0.04126
	Married	99	2.9942	0.58899	0.05920
Intention to quit	Single/Separated/Divorced	101	3.3822	1.11932	0.11138
	Married	99	3.3515	1.09361	0.10991

Source: Researchers own statistics

An independent sample t-test was also used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between employees' marital status for any of the employee retention factors as measured by the RFS. Table 6.48 shows the results.

Table 6. 47: Independent Sample T-Test for Marital Status and Employee Retention

Independent Samples Test						
Factors of ER		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance Two-Sided p
Rewards and recognition	Equal variances assumed	3.479	0.064	1.597	198	0.11
	Equal variances not assumed			1.599	195.702	0.11
Work-life balance	Equal variances assumed	0.329	0.567	-0.349	198	0.73
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.349	197.628	0.73
Loyalty	Equal variances assumed	13.901	0.000	-0.057	198	0.95
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.057	175.710	0.95
Intention to quit	Equal variances assumed	0.019	0.891	0.196	198	0.85
	Equal variances not assumed			0.196	197.998	0.85

Source: Researchers own

From the results of the independent sample t-test (Table 6.48 above), there are no significant differences between marital status for any of the employee retention dimensions ($p > 0.05$). No further analysis was conducted.

- **Job level**

The independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the “intention to quit” factor for employees on the management level were significantly higher ($M = 3.78$; $SD = 0.79$) than for employees on a junior level ($M = 3.30$; $SD = 1.11$) as illustrated in Table 6.49.

Table 6. 48: Descriptive Statistics for Job Level and Employee Retention

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of ER	Job Levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rewards and recognition	Management	20	3.5786	1.01384
	Supervisory	34	3.1261	1.16736
	Junior	151	3.1712	1.10522
	Total	205	3.2035	1.10901
Work-life balance	Management	20	2.4333	1.25237
	Supervisory	34	2.7451	1.35104
	Junior	151	2.5872	1.41929
	Total	205	2.5984	1.38884
Loyalty	Management	20	3.0071	0.43101
	Supervisory	34	2.8445	0.59618
	Junior	151	3.0208	0.48555
	Total	205	2.9902	0.50240
Intention to quit	Management	20	3.7800	0.78646
	Supervisory	34	3.4235	1.10510
	Junior	151	3.3020	1.11639
	Total	205	3.3688	1.09177

Source: Researchers own statistics

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between employees’ job levels for any of the ER factors as measured by the RFS and is illustrated in Table 6.50.

Table 6. 49: ANOVA for Job Level and Employee Retention

ANOVA						
Factors of ER		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rewards and recognition	Between Groups	3.175	2	1.587	1.294	0.28
	Within Groups	247.725	202	1.226		
	Total	250.900	204			
Work-life balance	Between Groups	1.296	2	0.648	0.334	0.72
	Within Groups	392.193	202	1.942		
	Total	393.488	204			
Loyalty	Between Groups	0.869	2	0.434	1.733	0.18
	Within Groups	50.622	202	0.251		
	Total	51.491	204			
Intention to quit	Between Groups	4.158	2	2.079	1.757	0.18
	Within Groups	239.003	202	1.183		
	Total	243.160	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

From Table 6.50, it is clear that no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) exist between job levels for any of the ER factors. No further analysis was, therefore, conducted. This result is contrary to the findings of Van Dyk (2011), who indicated that there are significant differences ($P < 0.05$) between job levels and retention factors, as senior management had significantly higher satisfaction levels on retention factors as compared to other job level groups.

- **Port of Entry**

The independent sample t-test indicated that scores relating to the “intention to quit” factor were significantly higher for employees at the Lebombo Land Port ($M = 3.68$; $SD = 1.03$) than employees at the Cape Town Harbour ($M = 2.91$; $SD = 1.05$) as illustrated in Table 6.51 on the next page.

Table 6. 50: Descriptive Statistics for POE and Employee Retention

Descriptive Statistics				
Factors of ER	Port of Entry	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rewards and recognition	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.3206	1.04816
	Cape Town International Airport	32	3.0982	1.15343
	Cape Town Harbour	17	2.6387	0.76117
	King Shaka International Airport	12	3.4405	1.26968
	Lebombo Land Port	45	3.4730	1.13300
	Maseru Land Port	13	2.2747	0.94304
	Total	205	3.2035	1.10901
Work-life balance	OR Tambo International Airport	86	2.9690	1.35341
	Cape Town International Airport	32	2.8958	1.56676
	Cape Town Harbour	17	2.0784	0.85415
	King Shaka International Airport	12	2.5278	1.57927
	Lebombo Land Port	45	1.8889	1.25328
	Maseru Land Port	13	2.6154	0.97985
	Total	205	2.5984	1.38884
Loyalty	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.1213	0.59591
	Cape Town International Airport	32	2.8750	0.46575
	Cape Town Harbour	17	2.9412	0.31566
	King Shaka International Airport	12	3.0119	0.19699
	Lebombo Land Port	45	2.8508	0.41645
	Maseru Land Port	13	2.9341	0.41492
	Total	205	2.9902	0.50240
Intention to quit	OR Tambo International Airport	86	3.2767	1.03409
	Cape Town International Airport	32	3.4250	1.31860
	Cape Town Harbour	17	2.9059	1.04909
	King Shaka International Airport	12	3.5833	1.25758
	Lebombo Land Port	45	3.6756	1.02893
	Maseru Land Port	13	3.1846	0.76795
	Total	205	3.3688	1.09177

Source: Researchers own statistics

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between ER and PoE which is illustrated in Table 6.52.

Table 6. 51: ANOVA for Port of Entry and Employee Retention

ANOVA						
Factors of ER		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rewards and recognition	Between Groups	22.115	5	4.423	3.847	0.002
	Within Groups	228.785	199	1.150		
	Total	250.900	204			
Work-life balance	Between Groups	41.955	5	8.391	4.750	0.000
	Within Groups	351.533	199	1.766		
	Total	393.488	204			
Loyalty	Between Groups	2.864	5	0.573	2.344	0.043
	Within Groups	48.627	199	0.244		
	Total	51.491	204			
Intention to quit	Between Groups	9.701	5	1.940	1.654	0.148
	Within Groups	233.460	199	1.173		
	Total	243.160	204			

Source: Researchers own statistics

From Table 6.51, it is clear that significant differences were recorded for the following employee retention factors: rewards and recognition [$F(5,229) = 3.84, p = 0.002$], work-life balance [$F(5, 352) = 4.75, p = 0$] and loyalty [$F(5, 48.6) = 2,24 p = 0.04$]. However, no significant differences were recorded for the factor intention to quit ($p > 0.05$). A Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) test was subsequently conducted to assess the significance of differences in employee retention factors such as rewards and recognition, work-life balance, and loyalty. Table 6.53 illustrates the results of the post hoc tests.

Table 6. 52: Post hoc Tests for Port of Entry on Employee Retention

Tukey HSD					
Dependent Variable	(I) Port of Entry	(J) Port of Entry	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Rewards and recognition	OR Tambo International Airport	Maseru Land Port	1.04587*	0.31907	0.02
	Lebombo Land Port	Maseru Land Port	1.19829*	0.33762	0.01
	Maseru Land Port	OR Tambo International Airport	-1.04587*	0.31907	0.02
		Lebombo Land Port	-1.19829*	0.33762	0.01
Work-life balance	OR Tambo International Airport	Lebombo Land Port	1.08010*	0.24453	0.00
	Cape Town International Airport	Lebombo Land Port	1.00694*	0.30734	0.02
	Lebombo Land Port	OR Tambo International Airport	-1.08010*	0.24453	0.00
		Cape Town International Airport	-1.00694*	0.30734	0.02
Loyalty	OR Tambo International Airport	Lebombo Land Port	0.27047*	0.09095	0.04
	Lebombo Land Port	OR Tambo International Airport	-0.27047*	0.09095	0.038

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Researchers own statistics

Table 6.51 reveals distinctions in the employee retention factor of reward and recognition. Specifically, the mean score for the OR Tambo PoE ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.05$) significantly differs from the Maseru Land Port ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.94$), $p = 0.02$. This finding suggests that employees at the Maseru PoE perceive lower rewards and recognition levels than their counterparts at OR Tambo International Airport. Similarly, the mean score for the Lebombo PoE ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.13$) is statistically different from the Maseru PoE ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.94$), $p = 0.00$. This difference implies that employees at the Maseru PoE have a significantly lower perception of rewards and recognition than those at the Lebombo PoE.

Table 6.51 (descriptive statistics table) indicates that in terms of the employee retention dimension, *work-life balance*: The OR Tambo International Airport ($M = 2.97$,

$SD = 1.35$) was statistically different from the Lebombo PoE ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.25$), $p=0.00$, suggesting that employees at the Lebombo PoE have a significantly lower perception of work-life balance than employees at OR Tambo. The mean score for Cape Town International Airport ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.57$) was statistically different from the Lebombo PoE ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.25$), $p=0.01$. Therefore, it can be inferred that employees at the Lebombo PoE have a significantly lower perception of work-life balance than those at Cape Town International Airport. This observation aligns with the findings of the study by Akinlade and Nwaodike (2021), which suggested that an imbalance in one's work-life can notably impact employees in PoEs.

Table 6.51 indicates that in terms of the employee retention dimension, **loyalty**: the mean score for OR Tambo International Airport as PoE ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.60$) was statistically different from the Lebombo PoE ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.42$), $p=0.03$. Thus, it can be inferred that employees at the Lebombo PoE have a significantly lower perception of loyalty than those at the OR Tambo International Airport.

Regarding the RFS, employees at the Maseru PoE exhibit lower perceptions of rewards and recognition than those at OR Tambo. A similar trend is observed between employees at Lebombo and Maseru, with lower employee perceptions at Lebombo. Moreover, Lebombo officials' perception of work-life balance is lower than that of OR Tambo, indicating that Lebombo officials may not consider WLB as a crucial retention factor. Conversely, employees at OR Tambo perceive the implementation of WLB as an essential retention factor. This pattern also extends to employees at Lebombo and Cape Town International Airport, where Lebombo employees have a low perception of WLB, while employees at Cape Town International Airport value implementing WLB as a significant retention factor.

6.6.1.3 Mediation Analysis

The second hypothesis was to determine whether JS statistically significantly mediate the relationship between HRMPs and ER of officials within a government department. As mentioned in Chapter 5, hypothesis 2 states:

H02: JS does not statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRMPs (independent variable) and ER (dependent variable).

Ha2: JS statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRMPs (independent variable) and ER (dependent variable).

A sequence of multiple regression analyses was employed to discover the mediating effect of JS on the relationship between HRM practices and ER. The assumption of the normal distribution of residuals was checked for each model. Models were run using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018), applying model 4 (Simple mediation as reflected in Figure 6.1) with bias-corrected bootstrap samples. A p-value of 0.05 was set as the critical level of significance.

Figure 6.6 illustrates the theoretical model where JS functions as a moderator variable (M), influencing the relationship between ER (Y) and HRM (X). The magnitude of mediation is evaluated through the significance of the indirect effect, represented by the coefficient of the "a" path multiplied by the coefficient of the "b" path. While not explicitly shown in the mediation model above, this is indicated in the output as the indirect effect.

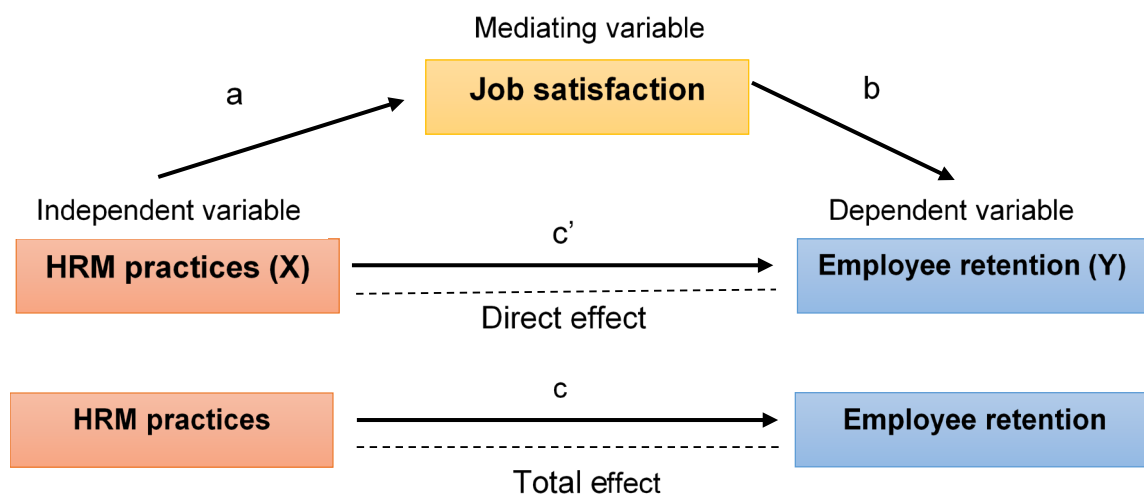


Figure 6. 1: Simple Mediation Model (Researcher's own)

The estimated regression coefficients and their standard errors, the p values, the R² and model summary information for the simple mediation model are displayed in Table 6.54.

The first step was to establish Path “c” in the model, representing the total effect, i.e., the effect of X on Y without the mediator involved. Table 6.54 illustrates that HRM practices do not significantly impact ER ($b = 0.06$, $p = 0.10$, LLCI = 0.10, ULCL = 0.13). HRMPs do not significantly predict ER. The finding aligns with the study by Alwaheeb (2020), who asserts that other HRM practices have no significant influence on ER, implying that even if implemented accurately, they will not enhance nor change ER rates. On the contrary, the results by Lwin (2022), Alajlani and Yesufu (2022), Yang and Alves (2021) and Hassan (2022) show that HRM practices have a significant direct impact on employees’ retention. Furthermore, a study by Alwaheeb (2020) found a significant relationship between HRM practice rewards and retention, as reward programmes are proven highly effective in boosting ER. This indicates that implementing effective HRM practices can significantly enhance ER.

The second step was to establish whether HRMPs correlated with the JS and involved treating the mediator as an outcome variable and representing the “a” path, as depicted in Figure 6.1. From Table 6.54, results showed that HRMPs significantly impact JS ($b = 0.40$, $p = 0.000$, LLCI_{Boot} = 0.32, ULCL_{Boot} = 0.41). This finding aligns with the studies conducted by Absar, Azim, Balasundaram and Akhter (2010), Cherif (2020), Chughtai, Yusrini and Khanum (2020) and Kurdi, Elrehail, Alzoubi and Alshurideh (2021) that indicate that HRMPs has a significant impact on JS. Desa, Asaari and Yim (2020) found that communication positively relates to JS, suggesting that effective HRMPs in an organisation lead to improved employee JS levels. However, Desa et al. (2020) found no significant relationship between T&D and compensation and rewards, suggesting that employees will still not be satisfied even with sufficient training opportunities and remuneration benefits.

The third step was determining whether JS impacts employee retention (estimate and test path b). JS was also found to have a significant negative impact on employee retention ($b = -0.31$, $p = 0.000$, LLCI_{Boot} = -0.49, ULCL_{Boot} = -0.13). This finding means

that when employees are dissatisfied, the employee turnover rate increases. Higher job dissatisfaction leads to lower levels of employee retention. The studies by Biason (2020), Soenanta, Akbar and Sariwulan (2020) and Htun and Bhaumik (2022) contradict the results as they found that there was a positive correlation between JS and employee retention. It means that when employees are satisfied, they are less likely to leave the organisation. Higher JS leads to higher levels of employee retention.

The fourth step was to establish path c' (direct effect), namely what the effect of X on Y is when the mediator is in the model. Path c' 's results are significant ($b = 0.19$, $p = 0.001$, $LLCI_{Boot} = 0.06$, $ULCL_{Boot} = 0.31$). So, while path c' is significant, path c (total effect) is not, suggesting that mediation took place and was confirmed by the bootstrapped estimates of the indirect effect $LLCU_{Boot} = -0.19$ $ULCI_{Boot} = -0.06$). The fact that zero does not fall in the 95% confidence interval confirms that JS significantly mediates the relationship between HRMPs and ER. This research finding resonates with the studies by Asad Khan, Md Yusoff, Hussain and Ismail (2019), Kalia et al. (2023), Aman-Ullah, Aziz, Ibrahim, Mehmood and Aman-Ullah (2022) that reported that JS statistically mediate HRMPs and ER.

Table 6. 53: Model Summary for the Simple Mediation Model

Predictor	Outcomes											
	Job satisfaction (M)						Employee Retention (Y)					
	Path and Constant	Coefficient	Standard error (boot)	LLCI (boot)	ULCI (boot)	<i>p</i>	Path and Constant	Coefficient	Standard error (boot)	LLCI (boot)	ULCI (boot)	<i>p</i>
X	a	0.4026	0.0397	0.3245	0.4085	0.0000	c'	0.1877	0.0632	0.057	0.3064	0.0001
Job satisfaction (M)	-	-	-	-	-	-	b	-0.3134	0.0885	-0.4778	-0.1346	0.0000
Constant	i	2.4888	0.1428	2.2098	2.7696	0.0000	i	3.5557	0.1973	3.1679	3.9374	0.0000
	R ² = 0.39, F(1.203) = 127.1237, p <0.001						R ² = 0.10, F(2.202) = 11.0695, p <0.001					
a, b and c' represent paths in the model, and i represent the constant.												

Source: Researcher's own statistics results

The table describing the bootstrapped results for regression model parameters is attached as Annexure B. It shows that HRMPs significantly impact JS, representing path *a* of the mediation model. HRMPs significantly impact ER ($b = 0.1877$, $t = 4.0522$, $p < 0.001$). Here, this is a direct effect (c'). JS was also found to negatively impact ER ($b = -0.3134$, $t = -4.3898$, $p < 0.001$), path *b*.

The total effect table is presented in Annexure C. The indirect effect is calculated by multiplying *a* and *b*. Indirect effect = $a (0.40) * b (-0.31) = -0.13$. Direct effect = 0.19 ; this is the effect of HRMPs on ER in the presence of the mediator (c'). The total effect is the sum of the direct and indirect effects, which is $= 0.06$.

A mediation analysis was conducted to examine the mediating effect of JS on HRMPs and ER. The total effect mode was significant ($b = 0.06$, $t = 1.622$ $p=0.106$). It was found that there was a statistically significant direct effect of HRMPS on JS ($b = 0.19$; $t = 4.052$; $p < 0.001$). A statistically significant indirect effect of HRMP on ER ($b = -0.13$; Bootstrapped CI – $0.19, -0.55$). These results suggest that JS positively influences the relationship between HRM practices and government department officials' ER, consistent with findings by Kalia et al. (2023), thereby confirming a significant mediating role for JS between HRM practices and ER with its dimension compensation and performance appraisal. It is further in line with findings by Aman-Ullah, Aziz, Ibrahim, Mehmood and Aman-Ullah (2022), indicating that JS significantly mediated the relationship between remuneration and employee retention. Similarly, a study conducted by Asad Khan et al. (2019) observed that JS significantly mediated the relationship between HR practices and employee job performance.

6.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results and provided interpretations of the empirical findings from the literature review. Correlations coefficients, t-tests and ANOVAs were conducted to test the hypothesis of this research. In addition, to achieve the objectives of the research, both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. Accordingly, this chapter addressed the following research aims:

Research aim 1: To investigate the statistical interrelationship between HRM practices, JS and ER in a sample of officials within a government department.

Research aim 2: To investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices and ER of officials within a government department.

Research aim 3: To investigate whether differences exist in HRM practices, JS and ER in terms of the demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, job level and POE).

Chapter 7 will discuss the study's conclusions, recommendations, and limitations.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters presented an overview of the research and provided a literature review on Human Resources Management Practices (HRMPs), Job Satisfaction (JS) and Employee Retention (ER). The research design and methodology were also discussed, and the study's findings were explored. Chapter 7 reiterates the study's rationale and examines the research methodology employed. Furthermore, it presents a concise summary of the main conclusions drawn from the research. The chapter also provides recommendations for key stakeholders based on the study's findings. In addition, it identifies potential areas for future research that warrant further investigation. Lastly, the researcher offers insightful inferences from the study's findings, contributing to the overall understanding of the subject matter.

It is worth noting that this chapter plays a crucial role in tying together the various components of the research, reinforcing the significance of the study and highlighting its contributions to the field.

7.2 REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING THE RESEARCH

The primary objective of this study was to examine the potential mediating role of JS in the relationship between employees' experiences of HRM practices ER. Additionally, the research aimed to investigate a relationship between HRM practices, JS (as a mediating variable), and ER, specifically within a South African national government department. Lastly, the study sought to explore potential significant differences among individuals from various biographical groups (such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and POE) concerning these variables.

Given the social and economic development challenges in South Africa, normal HRM practices may not be sufficient to address the transformation challenges within public organisations (Kock & Burke, 2008:1). South African public organisations have high employee turnover rates due to insufficient knowledge and resources. Leading to poor employee performance, resulting in organisational ineffectiveness (Mabindisa, 2014:2). Various researchers like Nkomo and Thwala (2009:116); Mobley (1982); Price (1977) and Staw (1980) as well as Barkhuizen and Gumede (2021) indicated that staff retention in public organisations is problematic due to knowledge gap that exist in adopting and implementing HRM practices. This research study intends to address this knowledge gap.

7.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The researcher employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey and a descriptive research design to examine the relationship between HRM practices and ER, using JS as a mediating variable. The study involved 205 full-time employees at a national government department. The researcher used HRMPS, JSS, and the Retention Factor Scale (RFS) to collect data. Paper-and-pencil-based questionnaires were administered to participants, and the data were subsequently processed using SPSS 28 (IBM, 2021). The data analysis included descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, factor analysis, mediation analysis and reliability.

7.4 HYPOTHESIS SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

In terms of the empirical study, an overview of the findings for the study's hypothesis is presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7. 1: Summary of the Hypothesis Findings of this Study

Empirical Research Aim	Research Hypothesis	Hypothesis rejected or failed to reject
<p>Research aim 1: To investigate the statistical interrelationship between HRM practices, JS and ER in a sample of officials within a government department.</p>	<p>H₀₁: There is no statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a government department within the South African context.</p> <p>H_{a1}: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER in a government department within the South African context.</p>	<p>The null hypothesis was rejected, signifying compelling statistical evidence of a relationship between JS, HRM practices and ER.</p>
<p>Research aim 2: To investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices and ER of officials within a government department.</p>	<p>H₀₂: JS does not statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices (independent variable) and ER (dependent variable).</p> <p>H_{a2}: JS statistically and significantly mediate the relationship between HRM practices (independent variable) and ER (dependent variable).</p>	<p>The null hypothesis was rejected, as the evidence revealed that JS significantly mediates the relationship between HRM and ER.</p>
<p>Research aim 3: To investigate whether differences exist in HRM practices, JS and ER in terms of the demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, job level and POE).</p>	<p>H₀₃: Individuals from various biographical groups do not differ statistically significantly with regard to JS, HRM practices and ER.</p> <p>H_{a3}: Individuals from various biographical groups differ statistically significantly with regard to JS, HRM practices and ER.</p>	<p>The null hypothesis was rejected, signifying statistically significant differences among individuals from various biographical groups regarding JS, HRM practices and ER.</p> <p>The null hypothesis was not rejected, suggesting that no significant differences exist between age, gender, marital status, job level and ER.</p> <p>The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that differences do exist between ER and PoE.</p>

7.5 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

This section provides a comprehensive discussion of the research findings in relation to the specific objectives outlined in Chapter 1 of the dissertation. It considers the insights gained from the literature review, the empirical investigation conducted, and the hypotheses formulated for the study. By examining the research findings through this lens, a deeper understanding of the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER is achieved, shedding light on the research questions posed at the study's outset.

7.5.1 Conclusions relating to the literature review

This section presents a discussion and draws conclusions based on the literature review.

7.5.1.1 Research aim 1

To critically examine and conceptualise HRM practices, JS, and ER in the context of the 21st-century workplace.

This objective was achieved in Chapter 2 (HRM practices), Chapter 3 (JS), and Chapter 4 (ER). Chapter 4 additionally synthesised the literature on HRM practices, JS and ER.

Chapter 2 explored HRM practices, providing an understanding of how organisations implement plans to ensure effective employee performance in line with organisational goals (Mondy & Noe, 2005). The Matching Model, Harvard Model, Guest Model and Warwick Model (Preeti, 2017) were discussed to establish systematic approaches to managing people within an organisation, contributing to attaining organisational goals while ensuring employees' well-being and satisfaction. These models indicate the framework for studying HRM and exploring the variables and relationships associated with it. The successful completion of HRM activities leads to an engaged workforce committed to achieving organisational objectives (Tiwara et al., 2019:60).

Chapter 3 explored JS, defined as an individual's feelings and attitudes toward their work role and various aspects of their job (Spector, 1997:2). JS models identify factors

influencing JS, providing insights into fostering high levels of JS within organisations. Notable theories include Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959-1974), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943; 1954), and the Job Characteristics Model (Ramlutchman, 2017:54). These theories significantly contribute to our understanding of JS (Hassar et al., 2017) and its impact on employee behaviour and motivation (Singh & Onahring, 2019:17).

Chapter 4 scrutinised ER as the process of retaining competent and talented employees to fulfil the organisation's business goals (Kakar et al., 2017:5). Employee retention involves creating an environment that encourages employees to stay with the organisation (Onyango et al., 2017: 638). In the context of this research, the factors identified by Döckel (2003:16) were adopted to examine employee retention, including training and development (T&D) opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, job characteristics, work-life balance, and remuneration. These factors are discussed in detail in Chapter 4, complemented by additional insights from Mabaso et al. (2021).

Reviewing the relevant literature in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 establishes a solid foundation for understanding the interplay between HRM practices, JS and ER. These chapters have provided valuable insights and theoretical frameworks that inform this study's empirical investigation and subsequent analysis.

7.5.1.2 Research aim 2

To analyse the theoretical foundations and models underpinning the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER.

Sub-aim 2.1: To explore the theoretical relationship between HRM practices and JS.

Numerous studies have provided evidence of a significant relationship between HRM practices and JS. For example, Islam et al. (2018: 24), Mira, Choong and Thim (2019: 773), Rayhan (2022) as well as Alkhamis (2024) have confirmed that sound HRM practices contribute to improved JS, which ultimately enhances organisational performance. Alsafadi and Altahat's study (2021:519) also support the positive impact of HRM practices on JS. Furthermore, Islam et al. (2018: 25) and Mira et al. (2019:

773) highlight a relationship between HRM practices and JS. In South Africa, Amah and Oyetunde's (2019) research found a positive relationship between HRM practices and JS.

Sub-aim 2.2: To explore the theoretical relationship between JS and ER.

Numerous studies, including Spector (1997), BIASON (2020), and Alajlani and Yesufu (2022), consistently established a significant relationship between JS and ER. BIASON (2020: 413) highlights JS as a crucial motivator and reliable predictor influencing employee behaviour and attitudes, contributing to higher retention levels. Alajlani and Yesufu (2022) emphasise the positive impact of HRM practices on retention, particularly in the context of higher education institutions in the UAE. Adopting practices fostering good working relationships and acknowledging employee contributions is suggested by BIASON (2020: 413) as a strategy to enhance JS and, consequently, increase retention. Gan, Lin and Wang (2020) emphasise that job dissatisfaction increases the likelihood of employees contemplating leaving, reinforcing the importance of JS in retention. BIASON (2020: 413) supports this relationship between JS and ER. Mohajane (2017) affirms this relationship in South Africa.

Sub-aim 2.3: To explore the theoretical relationship between HRM practices and ER.

Researchers have indicated that good HRM practices showing employees that the organisation cares about them will reduce turnover (Allen et al., 2003). Furthermore, Oguny and Majola (2018) identified work stress as one of the reasons for employee turnover in a South African public service department. Mudor and Tooksoon (2011:41) found a negative and significant relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER, emphasising their strong predictive power in employee retention. In another study conducted within the South African context, Monyaki, Chpunza and Mashavira (2022) discovered a strong relationship between HRM practices and JS. It can, therefore, be concluded that a relationship exists between HRM practices and ER (Kakar et al., 2017: 10).

7.5.2 Conclusions Relating to the Empirical Study

In this section, the research aims of the empirical study will be discussed.

7.5.2.1 Research aim 1

The first research aim was to investigate the statistical interrelationship between HRM practices, JS and ER in a sample of officials within a government department. To achieve this aim, research hypotheses **H₀₁** and **H_{a1}** were empirically tested. The results of hypothesis 1 indicate a positive correlation between HRM practices and JS. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates positive and negative correlations between ER (as measured by the Retention Factor Scale) and JS. A significant positive and negative correlation between the ER and HRMPs was also observed. These findings provide support for **H_{a1}**.

7.5.2.2 Research aim 2

The second research aim was to investigate whether JS statistically significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER among officials within a government department. This aim was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses **H₀₂** and **H_{a2}**. The results of hypothesis 2 show that JS significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and ER. Therefore, **H_{a2}** is supported.

7.5.2.3 Research aim 3

The third research aim was to investigate whether differences exist in HRM practices, JS and ER based on demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, job level, and PoE. To accomplish this aim, research hypotheses **H₀₃** and **H_{a3}** were empirically tested. The findings can be classified as mixed, supporting parts of both **H₀₃** and **H_{a3}**. The results of hypothesis 3 indicated no significant differences in any demographic variables regarding the research study's three constructs (HRM practices, JS, and ER), suggesting no differences between the groups. This supports **H_{a3}**. However, significant differences were found between PoE, ER, and JS, while HRM practices did not show any significant differences in PoE. This supports **H₀₃**.

The conclusions for **H₀₃** and **H_{a3}** regarding ER and PoE are as follows:

Employees at Maseru PoE had lower perceptions of rewards and recognition than those at OR Tambo. A similar pattern was observed between Lebombo PoE

employees, with lower perceptions. Lebombo PoE employees also had a lower perception of Work-Life Balance (WLB) than OR Tambo PoE, suggesting that Lebombo officials may not view WLB as a crucial retention factor. Conversely, employees at OR Tambo PoE, Lebombo, and Cape Town International Airport valued the implementation of WLB as an important retention factor. Notably, Cape Town International Airport employees rated the implementation of WLB higher than those at Lebombo PoE.

The conclusions for H_{o3} and H_{a3} regarding JR and PoE are as follows:

Employees at the OR Tambo PoE and Maseru PoE reported no work-related challenges, whereas employees at the Lebombo PoE experienced work-related challenges. In addition, employees at the Cape Town Harbour PoE and Maseru PoE perceived their jobs as less stressful than employees at the Lebombo PoE. This finding suggests that employees at the Lebombo PoE experience higher job-related stress than their counterparts in Cape Town Harbour PoE and Maseru PoE.

Regarding synthesising research findings, the primary objective was to develop recommendations tailored for HR practitioners, Industrial and Organisational Psychologists, and prospective researchers concentrating on employee retention practices within public service organisations.

This research study's findings highlight the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER, which have significant implications for both employees and employers. Recommendations based on these findings are presented in section 7.8, guiding managers in effectively managing teams and achieving optimal results.

7.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study makes significant contributions to human resource management, business management, and industrial and organisational psychology, as well as to HRM

practices and JS and ER practices in the public sector. This research's contribution to theory, methodology, and practice is examined in the next sub-sections.

7.6.1 Theoretical contribution

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its advancement of knowledge regarding the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER within a national government department. While there is research on these constructs individually, this study uniquely demonstrates the interrelationship between all three constructs within the specific context of a South African national government department. By empirically investigating these relationships and considering the influence of demographic variables, this study provides valuable insight that can aid public organisations in South Africa and globally in understanding and managing these constructs. Moreover, this study adds value to the existing body of knowledge within the South African public sector literature, benefitting future scholars in the field.

7.6.2 Methodological Contribution

Methodologically, this study employed rigorous research methods to collect and analyse data from officials within a government department. The key methodological contribution of this research study lies in the combination and application of the constructs HRM practices, JS and ER. Another methodological contribution is the experience gained from adopting a survey design technique for data collection and calculating validity scores in this context. This experience can be valuable for future studies on HRM practices, JS and ER in provincial public organisations in South Africa.

7.6.3 Practical Contribution

The practical contributions of this study are threefold. Firstly, it underscores the significance of HRM practices and ER through JS in the literature on the South African public sector, emphasising the importance of effective HRM practices for employee retention. Secondly, it offers a new understanding of the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER, and how demographic variables such as gender, age, job level, marital status, and PoE relate to these constructs. Thirdly, it provides empirical

evidence of the relationship between the HRM practices, JS and ER within a South African national government department.

Lastly, the study enhances the understanding of how employees in a national government department perceive the relationship between ER and HRM practices, with JS acting as a mediator. This knowledge is valuable for public organisations seeking to retain employees with scarce skills and provides useful indicators for designing effective retention strategies. The study identifies HRM practices significantly correlated with ER and JS, providing valuable insights for public organisations in understanding and managing HRM practices, JS and ER, as well as informing retention strategies and providing valuable empirical evidence.

From a theoretical perspective, this study offers a comprehensive assessment of the literature on the relationship between HRM practices as the independent variable, JS as the mediator and ER as a DV. It also addresses the integration of these three constructs, contributing to the theoretical understanding of their interplay.

7.7 LIMITATIONS

Firstly, the research concentrated on a governmental workplace, specifically within the Department of Home Affairs. Secondly, the study scrutinised factors affecting employee retention within the department. Thirdly, all results were founded on participants' information. The study results may not apply to other government departments/public entities or private institutions. Furthermore, the study acknowledges certain limitations in the literature review and the empirical study. These limitations are important to consider when interpreting the results and should be addressed in future research. The limitations are as follows:

7.7.1 Limitations of the Literature Review

The following limitations were noted in the literature review:

- In South Africa, no research study has been conducted on the interrelationship between HRM practices, ER and JS within a national government department.

Consequently, this lack of compatible studies limits the ability to make direct comparisons and draw conclusive findings.

- The study focuses on factors influencing HRM practices, JS and ER within a government entity. Therefore, these findings may not fully capture the broader range of factors that impact HRM practices, JS and ER in other organisational contexts.

7.7.2 Limitations of the Empirical Study

In the empirical study, the following limitations were noted:

- The findings of the empirical study are solely based on the information provided by the research participants. The accuracy and reliability of the results rely on the participants' responses, which may be subject to biases or inaccuracies.
- The findings of the empirical study may have limited generalisability to other government departments, public entities, or private institutions. The study was conducted within a specific national government department, and the context, organisational culture, and practices within that department may differ from other organisations, potentially impacting the transferability of the results.

Despite these limitations, the research study has yielded valuable insights into the relationship between HRM practices, JS and ER and the differences observed among demographic variables. It can be a foundation for understanding these relationships and differences within the studied context. However, additional research is needed to address the limitations and further explore these relationships and differences in other contexts or organisations to enhance the generalisability and robustness of the findings.

7.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study introduces new knowledge to the literature on national government departments and human resource professionals. The subsequent subsections provide recommendations to national government departments and HR practitioners.

7.8.1 Recommendations to a national government department

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made to the national government department:

- **Introduce effective HRM practices:** The national government department should consider implementing new HRM practices that are crucial in retaining employees. Identifying and implementing practices that positively impact employees' JS is important, as higher JS leads to increased retention rates.
- **Address work-related stress:** Since a small positive correlation was found between intention to quit and work-related stress, it is recommended that the national government department develop strategies to reduce stress levels among employees. This can be achieved through stress reduction programmes, training and development opportunities, and a supportive work environment where employees can voice their concerns.
- **Enhance WLB:** The national government department should prioritise employees' WLB by introducing flexible working schedules, which can help to alleviate work-related stress and improve employee retention, especially considering that some employees perceive WLB as a retention factor.
- **Improve the working environment:** Creating a pleasant environment improves efficiency and productivity. The national government department should consider providing comfortable and well-equipped workstations, ensuring accessible resources, and promoting a positive working atmosphere. Safety measures and appropriate equipment should also be in place.
- **Support and effective communication:** The national government department should support employees and communicate important information effectively. The department can minimise work-related challenges and enhance JS and ER by addressing employees' concerns and ensuring they have the resources and information needed to perform their work.
- **Address workloads and vacancies:** It is recommended that the national government department address heavy workloads by recruiting new employees to fill vacancies promptly. Reducing excessive workloads can contribute to higher JS and lower intention to quit among current employees.

7.8.2 Recommendations to HR Practitioners

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made to HR practitioners in terms of HRM practices, JS and ER:

- Identify and address training needs: HR practitioners should encourage employees to indicate their training needs on their Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and ensure that scheduled training programmes are provided. HR practitioners can alleviate work-related challenges and improve JS by addressing employees' training needs and providing necessary development opportunities.
- Establish clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): HR practitioners should ensure that SOPs are in place and well-communicated to employees. Clear guidelines and procedures can help employees understand their roles and responsibilities, reducing work-related stress and improving JS.
- Implement fair performance management systems: HR practitioners should ensure that performance management systems are fair and transparent. Recognising and rewarding employees who exceed expectations can enhance JS and motivate employees to stay with the organisation for longer.
- Embrace HRM practices for employee retention: HR practitioners in the public sector should adopt and embrace HRM practices that have been found effective in improving employee retention. The findings of this study can serve as a guide for HR practitioners in developing retention strategies tailored to their departments' specific needs and challenges.

By implementing these recommendations, the national government department and HR practitioners can contribute to improving HRM practices, enhancing JS and promoting ER within their organisations.

7.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this research study open up possibilities for future research on the HRM practices, JS and ER in national government departments in the South African context. The following suggestions for future research are made:

- Further exploration of current findings: Future research could build upon the findings of this study by conducting further investigations into the relationships between the HRM practices, JS and ER. This could involve exploring specific HRM practices and their impact on JS and ER and examining potential mediating or moderating variables that influence these relationships.
- Inclusion of national and government departments: Extend the research scope by including national and provisional government departments. This broader perspective would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the HRM practices, JS and ER within the public sector in South Africa, considering the potential variations between different levels of government.
- Conduct cross-country comparative studies: Expand the research beyond South Africa and conduct comparative studies on HRM practices, JS and ER in national government departments across multiple countries. This would allow for cross-cultural analysis and provide insights into how these constructs vary in different contexts and cultures.
- Increase sample size: Future researchers could aim to gather data from a larger sample size to increase the generalisability of the findings. A larger sample would provide a more representative picture of national government departments and enhance the validity of the results.
- Explore qualitative research designs: Consider incorporating qualitative research designs, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and underlying mechanisms related to HRM practices, JS and ER. Qualitative research can provide rich insights and capture nuanced aspects that may not be captured by quantitative measures alone.
- Expand to multiple departments: To improve the generalisability of the results, future research could include multiple government departments. This would allow for a more comprehensive examination of HRM practices, JS and ER across

various departments, considering potential variations in organisational structures, roles and responsibilities.

By addressing these suggestions for future research, scholars can further advance the knowledge and understanding of HRM practices, JS and ER in national government departments, contributing to the development of effective strategies for employee management and retention in the public sector.

7.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Finally, this research study explains the relationship between human resource management practices, JS, and ER in a national government agency in South Africa. Furthermore, the role of JS as a mediator between HRM practices and ER was clarified. The data revealed a significant correlation between these constructs, highlighting the necessity of effective HRM practices in promoting JS and improving ER.

The study also revealed no significant differences among demographic variables in relation to HRM practices, JS and ER, suggesting that these constructs are influential regardless of gender, age, job level, marital status, or place of employment.

The implications of this study are significant for public service organisations facing challenges of high employee turnover. The results highlight the need for strategic attention to HRM practices, JS and ER, with active involvement from HRM. By implementing initiatives that address these areas, organisations can work towards improving and maintaining sustainable HRM practices and fostering JS and ER.

Overall, this research study has made valuable contributions to the field of HRM, specifically in the context of HRM practices, JS and ER within a national government department. By providing insights into the relationship between these constructs, this study offered a foundation for future research.

While this study has made important contributions, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, both in terms of the literature review and the empirical study. These limitations present opportunities for further research and refinement of the findings. Additionally, future research should build upon these findings and explore the relationships between HRM practices, JS and ER in a broader range of government departments, both at the national and provincial levels. Additionally, qualitative research designs and comparative studies across different countries can provide a deeper understanding of these constructs and their variations in diverse contexts.

In summary, this research study has brought us closer to understanding the complex relationship between HRM practices, JS, and ER in the context of a national government department. By addressing the research objectives, drawing conclusions from the findings, and offering recommendations for practice and future research, this research project ends, leaving room for future endeavours in their important area of study. It is hoped that this work would serve as a steppingstone for continued exploration and improvement in the realm of HRM and employee well-being in public organisations.

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ANNEXURE A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The statements in the questionnaire relate to human resources management practices, job satisfaction and employee retention.

On the following pages, you will find several kinds of questions. Different instructions will precede the various statements. Please follow the instructions carefully. It should not take you more than **30 minutes** to complete the entire questionnaire and your responses are seen as completely anonymous. The data will be used for research purposes only. Please ensure that you respond to every question.

You will note that the questionnaire consists of four sections. Section 1 contains your personal information, Section 2 asks you to consider statements relating to human resources management practices, Section 3 comprises questions relating to job satisfaction, and Section 4 comprises questions relating to retention.

There is no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am only interested in your personal opinions and honest response. The "right" answer to any question is your frank and truthful response. Please answer all the questions in all the sections.

We truly appreciate your willingness to participate in this important research project and the valuable time you are willing to commit to complete the research questionnaire.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selane', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Caroline Selane

Section 1: Biographical information

(This information statistical purposes ONLY)

Please select the appropriate response

1. Gender:

Male	1
Female	2
Do not wish to disclose	3

2. Marital status:

Single	1
Married	2
Widowed	3
Separated/Divorced	4
Other	5

3. Age group:

26 – 35 years	1
36 – 45 years	2
46 – 55 years	3
56 years and older	4

4. Organisational hierarchy/Job level

Middle Management (SL 9-12)	1
Supervisory Employees (SL 7-8)	2
Junior Employees (SL 1-6)	3

5. Port of Entry

Please indicate the port of entry where you are working:

OR Tambo International Airport	1
Cape Town International Airport	2
Cape Town Harbour	3
King Shaka International Airport	4
Lebombo Land Port	5
Maseru Land Port	6

Section 2: Human resources management practices (HRMPs)

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This section consists of several questions relating to HRMPs in your organisation. You will be required to select the option which you consider to be the most attractive to you.

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following items related to different HRMPs issues based on the scale below. Please mark the "1" if you strongly disagree with the statement, "2" if you disagree, "3" if you are neutral, "4" if you agree, "5" if you strongly agree with the statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	My organisation is committed to the training and development needs of its employees.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Employees are encouraged to accept education and training within the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
3	This organisation has provided me with training opportunities enabling me to extend my range of skills and abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My salary and benefits have been an adequate return for the time and energy demanded of me.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am satisfied with my company reward system to compensate good performance.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The organisation's compensation and reward system encourages team and individual contributions.	1	2	3	4	5
7	My organisation's performance management system is fair and based on clear objectives at the beginning of term/year.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The organisation has provided enough information regarding specific methods of the performance evaluation system.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
9	Employees are allowed to formally communicate with supervisors/managers regarding the appraisal results.	1	2	3	4	5
10	My supervisor would personally use his/her power to help me solve my work problems.	1	2	3	4	5
11	My supervisor always gives credit and encourages an employee for a job well done.	1	2	3	4	5
12	My supervisor often lets me know how well he/she thinks I am performing the job.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Proper organisational procedures and processes are always followed when staffing/recruitment decisions are made.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Interview panels are used during the staffing process in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
15	All appointments in this organisation are based on merit (i.e. the best person for the job is selected, regardless of their personal characteristics).	1	2	3	4	5
16	The organisation spends enough time and effort on diversity awareness related to race, gender and religion.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Management is supportive of cultural difference in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
18	People living with disabilities have employment opportunities in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
19	My organisation regularly provides information sharing sessions to all employees.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Continuous improved communications between management and staff is stated as an important company objective and is being practiced.	1	2	3	4	5
21	My organisation's communication channels are open and effective in dealing with matters that are relevant to employees.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3: Job Satisfaction

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This section will consist of several questions relating to job satisfaction. The purpose of this section is to determine your job satisfaction with your current employer. Please choose one option for each question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it.

Please mark the "1" if you strongly disagree with the statement, "2" if you disagree, "3" if you are neutral, "4" if you agree, "5" if you strongly agree with the statement.

As you will see, many of the statements are worded very strongly. This is to help you decide the extent to which you agree or disagree. Please read all the statements carefully. Do not spend too much time on any statement. Try to answer the questions as honestly as you can and work quickly. Avoid extreme ratings except in situations in which you clearly have strong feelings in one direction or the other. There is no right or wrong answers. Please give your response to all statements based on the way you feel now.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
2 There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	1	2	3	4	5
3 My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	1	2	3	4	5
4 I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1	2	3	4	5
5 When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	1	2	3	4	5
6 Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
7 I like the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5
8 I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1	2	3	4	5
9 Communications seem good within this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	Raises are too few and far between.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1	2	3	4	5
12	My supervisor is unfair to me.	1	2	3	4	5
13	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organisations offer.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5
15	My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I like doing the things I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5
18	The goals of this organisation are not clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I feel unappreciated by the organisation when I think about what they pay me.	1	2	3	4	5
20	People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	1	2	3	4	5
21	My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5
22	The benefit package we have is equitable.	1	2	3	4	5
23	There are few rewards for those who work here.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I have too much to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I enjoy my co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1	2	3	4	5
29	There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I like my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
31	I have too much paperwork.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5
34	There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1	2	3	4	5
35	My job is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Work assignments are not fully explained.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4: Retention

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This section consists of several questions relating to employee retention. The purpose of this section is to determine employees view on certain retention constructs. Refer to the table below for guidance; decide how you feel about your organisation and current workplace as described in each statement.

Please respond to the following questions on your commitment to the organisation by using the scales provided below:

Please mark the "1" if you strongly disagree, "2" if you disagree, "3" if you are neutral, "4" if you agree, "5" if you strongly agree with the statements.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 The organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1	2	3	4	5
2 Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity.	1	2	3	4	5
3 I owe a great deal to my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
4 It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5
5 I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
6 I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
7 I would feel guilty if I leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5
8 I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5
9 One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of other job opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
10 I do not feel like part of the family at my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
11 I would not leave my organisation right now because I have sense of obligation to its people.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
12	I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.	1	2	3	4	5
15	This ThThis organisation deserves my loyalty.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
18	If I had not already put so much of myself into this organisation, I might consider working elsewhere.	1	2	3	4	5

The statements below describe various aspects of your compensation (pay, benefits, etc.). For each statement, decide how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel about your compensation. Use the scale provided next to each statement to reflect your view.

Statement		Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
19	My benefits package	1	2	3	4	5
20	My most recent raise	1	2	3	4	5
21	The information about pay issues provided by the organisations	1	2	3	4	5
22	The organisation's pay structure is competitive.	1	2	3	4	5
23	There is consistency in the application of the organisation's pay policies.	1	2	3	4	5
24	The organisation administers pay in a fair and transparent manner.	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following questions related to the characteristics of your job. Use the scale provided next to each statement to reflect your view.

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
25	The job requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.	1	2	3	4	5
26	The job <i>denies me</i> any chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work.	1	2	3	4	5
27	The job is quite simple and repetitive.	1	2	3	4	5
28	The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work.	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following training questions. Use the scale provided next to each statement to reflect your view.

	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
29	This organisation is providing me with job-specific training.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Sufficient time is allocated for product and solution training.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I can apply the training I receive, in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
32	There are enough development opportunities for me in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
33	Sufficient money is allocated for product and solution training.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I have the opportunity to be involved in activities that promote my professional development.	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following questions on your supervisor. Use the scale provided next to each statement to reflect your view.

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
35	My supervisor looks for opportunities to praise positive employee performance, both privately and in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I feel undervalued by my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
37	The supervisor almost <i>never</i> gives me "feedback" about how well I complete my work.	1	2	3	4	5
38	My supervisor rewards a good idea by implementing it and giving the responsible employee(s) credit.	1	2	3	4	5
39	My supervisor seldom recognises an employee for work well done.	1	2	3	4	5
40	My supervisor often lets me know how well he thinks I am performing on the job.	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following career development questions. Use the scale provided next to each statement to reflect your view.

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
41	My chances for being promoted are good.	1	2	3	4	5
42	There are enough career opportunities for me in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
43	Job vacancies at this organisations are usually filled by people from outside this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
44	It would be easy to find a job in another department.	1	2	3	4	5
45	An employee who applies for another job at this organisation has a better chance of getting that job than someone from outside this organisation who applies for the job.	1	2	3	4	5
46	An employee's career development is important to this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following questions on your balance between work and life. Use the scale provided next to each statement to reflect your view.

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
47	I often feel like there is too much work to do.	1	2	3	4	5
48	My work schedule is often in conflict with my personal life.	1	2	3	4	5
49	My job affects my role as a spouse and/or parent.	1	2	3	4	5
50	My job has negative effects on my personal life.	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following questions on your commitment to the organisation. Use the scale provided next to each statement to reflect your view.

Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
51	My chances of still working at this organisation a year from now are high.	1	2	3	4	5
52	I intend to leave this organisation voluntarily in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
53	I plan to stay with this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank You for taking the time to complete the questionnaire

ANNEXURE B: RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Random number

--	--	--	--

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

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 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 in this study is voluntary.
- Once I have signed this consent form, that a random 4-digit number will be assigned to the consent form that will only be used for data collection and analysis and to ensure my anonymity and protect confidentiality.
- My personal details will be kept confidential and stored securely by the researcher.
- I am still free to withdraw at any time (if applicable) and without giving a reason after I have signed the consent form.
- Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship I have, if any, with the researcher.
- If I withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, that the data will be returned to me or destroyed.

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 questionnaire.

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

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

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

Researcher's Name & Surname.....(please print)

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

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



UNISA HRM ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 20 November 2020

Dear Mrs Caroline Masepase Selane

Decision: Ethics approval from November 2020 to December 2023

NHREC Registration #: (if applicable)

ERC Reference #: 2020_HRM_012

Name: Mrs Caroline Masepase Selane

Student: #37322575

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs Caroline Masepase Selane
E-mail address, telephone # 37322575@mylife.unisa.ac.za, 073 158 1634

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr Magda Bezuidenhout
E-mail address, telephone # bezuiml@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 4535

Working title of research:

The mediating effects of job satisfaction on the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention in a government department within the South African context

Qualification: MCom

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa HRM Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for CM Selane for a period of **three (3) years**.

The low risk application was reviewed by a Sub-committee of URERC on 10 September 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 20 November 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 attached.**
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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3. 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 HRM Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 require additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **December 2023**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2020_HRM_012** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of DREC: Prof I Potgieter

E-mail: visseil@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-3723



Signature

Executive Dean: Prof MT Mogale

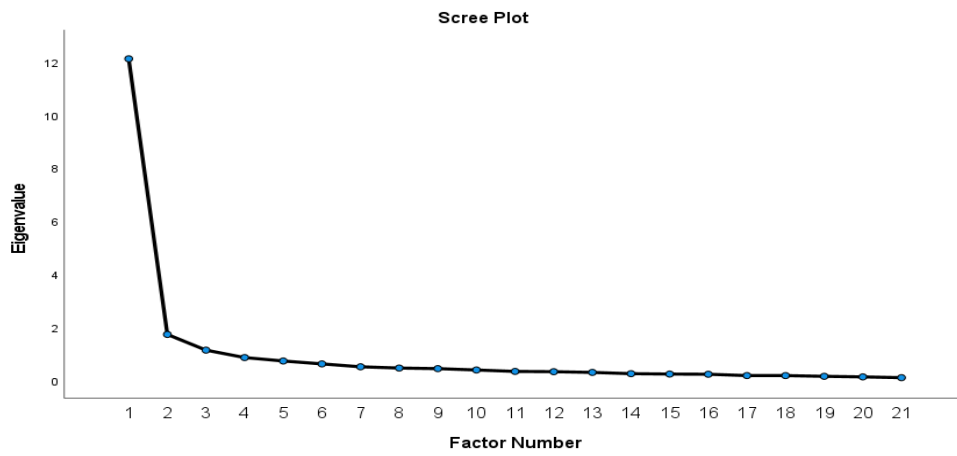
E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-4805

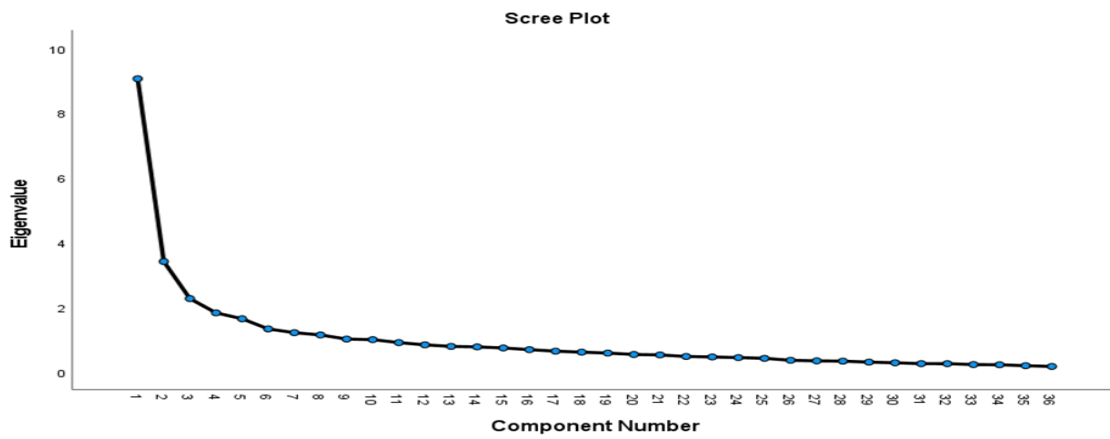


ANNEXURE D: SCREE PLOTS DEMONSTRATING EIGENVALUES

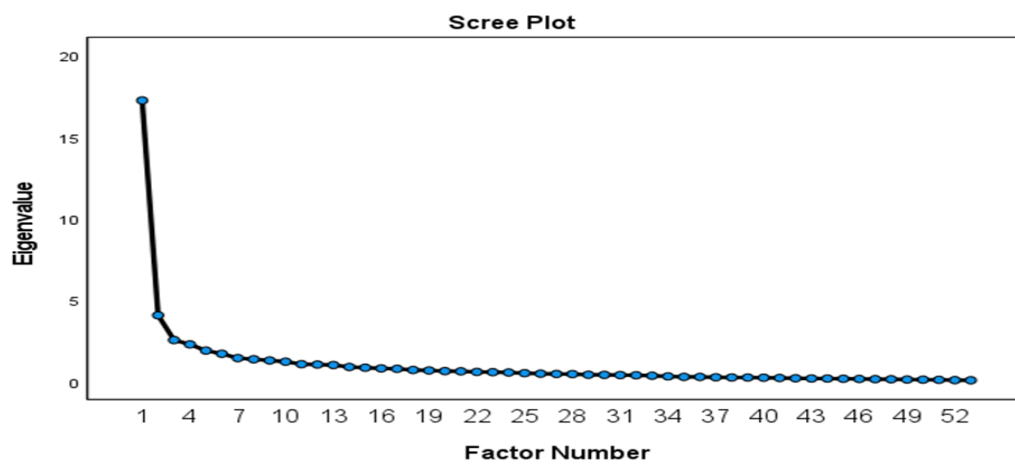
Scree plot demonstrating the eigenvalues of the HRMPs



Scree plot demonstrating the eigenvalues of the JSS



Scree plot demonstrating the eigenvalues of the RFS



ANNEXURE E: HAYES PROCESS MODEL 4 (MEDIATION ANALYSIS)

Model	:	4				
Y	:	RFS_tota				
X	:	HRM_tota				
M	:	JS_total				
Sample						
Size:		205				

OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
JS_total						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6205	.3851	.2353	127.1237	1.0000	203.0000	.0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.4888	.1266	19.6654	.0000	2.2393	2.7384
HRM_tota	.4026	.0357	11.2749	.0000	.3322	.4730
Standardized coefficients						
coeff						
HRM_tota	.6205					

OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
RFS_tota						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.3143	.0988	.2434	11.0695	2.0000	202.0000	.0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	3.5557	.2194	16.2070	.0000	3.1231	3.9882
HRM_tota	.1877	.0463	4.0522	.0001	.0964	.2790
JS_total	-.3134	.0714	-4.3898	.0000	-.4541	-.1726
Standardized coefficients						
coeff						
HRM_tota	.3452					
JS_total	-.3739					

ANNEXURE F: TOTAL EFFECT MODEL (MEDIATION ANALYSIS)

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****						
OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
RFS_tota						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.1131	.0128	.2653	2.6317	1.0000	203.0000	.1063
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.7758	.1344	20.6551	.0000	2.5108	3.0407
HRM_tota	.0615	.0379	1.6222	.1063	-.0133	.1363
Standardized coefficients						
coeff						
HRM_tota	.1131					

**ANNEXURE G: TOTAL, DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y
(MEDIATION ANALYSIS)**

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****							
Total effect of X on Y							
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps	c'_cs
.0615	.0379	1.6222	.1063	-.0133	.1363	.1189	.1131
Direct effect of X on Y							
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps	c'_cs
.1877	.0463	4.0522	.0001	.0964	.2790	.3629	.3452
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:							
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
JS_total	-.1262	.0352	-.1919	-.0553			

ANNEXURE H: MEDIATION ANALYSIS MODEL SUMMARY

Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.1131	.0128	.2653	2.6317	1.0000	203.0000	.1063
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.7758	.1344	20.6551	.0000	2.5108	3.0407
HRM_tota	.0615	.0379	1.6222	.1063	-.0133	.1363

Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.3143	.0988	.2434	11.0695	2.0000	202.0000	.0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	3.5557	.2194	16.2070	.0000	3.1231	3.9882
HRM_tota	.1877	.0463	4.0522	.0001	.0964	.2790
JS_total	-.3134	.0714	-4.3898	.0000	-.4541	-.1726

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:				
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
JS_total	-.1262	.0352	-.1919	-.0553

ANNEXURE I: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

22 Osche Street

The Reeds

Centurion

0157

18 February 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate serves to confirm that I have edited CM Selane's dissertation entitled, **"THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF JOB SATISFACTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HRM PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION WITHIN A SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT."**

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my contact details:



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Professional
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