

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**ESTABLISHING THE POTENTIAL ROLES OF  
RETIRED ACADEMICS AT UKZN**

By

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College of Law and Management Studies

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## Abstract

Universities around the world are facing a critical stage in their lifecycle in which academics are aging and many are ready to retire. These academics are being replaced by younger, more enthusiastic counterparts who are still craving for work and recognition. However, these new recruits come with their own challenges, as they often have less experience and find it difficult fitting into the shoes of their more experienced, now retired, colleagues. Universities also find it difficult to manage their high level of professional output and status once these aging academics retire and are replaced. However, getting these retired academics to perform certain roles can assist in addressing some of these concerns. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the study setting, currently faces similar challenges.

The objective of this study was: to establish the potential roles that retired academics could perform at UKZN; to identify the benefits of these retired academics being active; as well as determining the effect of engaging them. A qualitative exploratory study was conducted on a group of 12 respondents, ranging from active academics to active retired academics, and selected using snowball sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews.

Findings reveal that there are multiple roles that retired academics could perform at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which include academic, mentoring and financial roles. These roles were found to be vital for the optimum and long term survival of UKZN.

Results also show that the engagement of retired academics could help active academics with the development of the curriculum and the publication of research papers.

Through the successful achievement of the purpose of the study and the research objectives, the study provided the basis and recommendations for determining the potential roles for retired academics that would benefit the university and the retired academics involved. Regardless, a more concrete and scientifically sound solution regarding potential roles for retired academics in academia may still be explored.

**Keywords:** Academic roles, Bridge employment, Research universities, Retired academics, Retirement Age, Staff Retention, Talent Management

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen an increasing global attention on the acceptable official retirement age for academics, authors arguing that academics between the ages 65-75 are still highly competitive intellectually (Alcover, Topa, & Parry, 2014). This concern was brought to light by the fact that retired academics engage in activities post their retirement, either in academia and/or outside academia. These engagements may be similar to those they retired from and/or may pursue a new career/or adventure that they had always desired to explore (Smaliukiene & Tvaronaviciene, 2014). Due to their age, these engagements are usually part-time and less demanding, and they act as sources of income and/or social relevance. When University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) decreased its official retirement age from 65 to 60, and then increased it again back to 65 (University of KwaZulu-Natal Institutional Forum, 2017), it showed that this was not only a European concern, but it was a global one. This study investigates the potential roles for retired academics in academia, particularly in the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

This chapter provides background of the study ‘establishing the potential roles for retired academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal’, which include the motivation of the study, the focus of the study, the problem statement, an outline of research objectives and research questions, the methodology, the significance of the study, and an outline of this dissertation specifying the purpose of each chapter.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Currently, academics are forced to retire due to compulsory retirement ages as stipulated in the conditions of service of various universities across the country (University of KwaZulu-Natal Institutional Forum, 2017). It is felt that while these academics retire, they are still full of life and are still capable of providing value at this age (Kroon, et al., 2016). They are also at a point in their lives where they are both mentally and physically fit, are still able to supervise

postgraduate students and produce and publish research papers, have a wealth of knowledge and experience they leave with that can still benefit the institution, are a fountain of wisdom and institutional knowledge that has taken years to build up and not easily transferred if not done in a structured and organized manner, are experts in their respective fields and their unique expertise is often limited in the country and abroad alike, they are at the pinnacle of their careers and produce high research outputs, have knowledge and experience in managing themselves and others, they are able to publish papers regularly and often bring in generous amounts of funding to the university through the number of research papers they supervise and publish, are able to secure large amounts of research grants and funding, and able to secure donors through their various contacts (Smaliukiene & Tvaronaviciene, 2014).

These productive academics nearing their retirement age often seek other forms of employment at other institutions who have a more generous retirement age, by other sectors of the industry that are in line with their specialization or research alignment, by large companies who find value in using these staff members' knowledge and experience to manage and run their organizations, or even open up their own companies that can provide future income and employment far beyond the official retirement ages of the university.

When these staff leave the university, either due to mandatory retirement or other reasons, they are often replaced by younger, more vibrant but often less experienced junior academics (Smaliukiene & Tvaronaviciene, 2014). One often finds that at this point the research output in these institutions drops due to these newly employed staff not having the skills and ability to manage and supervise a large number of postgraduate students; the research output of these newly employed staff are often much lower than that of the now retired academics; student failure rate increases thus putting further stress on the new enrolment numbers; valuable contacts and institutional knowledge is lost when these staff leave.

By allowing these productive academics the ability to work beyond their mandatory retirement age, they would be able to fill a valuable role once the new staff are employed. They will be able to fill various gaps or caveats which the newly employed and often the currently employed staff left behind do not have. These retired academics would continue to publish papers and keep output levels at a high, and would be able to generate income for both the university as well as for themselves. Therefore the purpose of the study is to establish the potential roles of

retired academics at UKZN with the view to find alternative ways of bring such academics back into the systems provided their roles are significant.

### **1.3 Motivation of the Study**

This study may benefit the university, and the higher education environment as a whole, by exposing loopholes in the current system of recruitment and training of academics, and also provide strategies that will work towards the specific goals and aspirations of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. To be specific, the study reveals the roles of retired academics in: developing tactics to approach and manage the ever increasing number of enrolments that exceed institutional resources; fostering activities towards achieving academic excellence and research innovation desired by the university; and developing strategies to mitigate the issue of funding facing the majority of African universities.

### **1.4 Focus of the Study**

The study investigated the concept of bridge employment and focused on three roles that could be played by retired academics in academia, namely: academic roles, mentoring roles, and the financial roles. The study further investigated the effect bridge employment may have on retired academics, and the effect of bridge employment on the university. Roles outside academia were not concentrated on, yet they are highlighted.

### **1.5 Problem Statement**

Universities are faced with an aging workforce that is replaced by young, innovative yet inexperienced academics (Kroon, et al., 2016). When the aging workforce retires, the university loses specialized skills and matured institutional knowledge that cannot be taught or transferred overnight. The new, inexperienced staff thus struggling to balance teaching undergraduate

classes and research demands required from active academics. With the increased demand to balance their demographics, universities may be cornered to limit their intake.

African universities face another crucial challenge of attainment funding. Research shows that the state has decreased its funding towards higher education, thus universities are forced to source external funding. This requires academics to have time to source for funding in the private sector. The University of KwaZulu-Natal is currently ranked in third place nationally, by the Center for World University Rankings (Mahassen, 2018), which may also be affected by a lack of research output by younger academics. This study aims to develop strategies to mitigate these issues.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

- What are the academic, mentoring and financial roles retired academics could play?
- Why should retired academics choose to be active again post retirement?
- What are the benefits of engaging retired academics in academia postretirement for UKZN?

## **1.7 Research Objectives**

The Aim of the study was to determine the potential roles of retired academics at UKZN:

- to explore the academic, mentoring and financial roles that retired academics could play;
- to identify the benefits of being active in academia again for retired academics; and
- determining the effect of engaging retired academics in academia postretirement

## **1.8 Methodology**

This is an exploratory and qualitative study, approached from a phenomenological paradigm. Research participants chosen for this study are active and retired academics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which were selected using non-probability snowball sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews in order to gain new understandings and discover views and ideas on potential roles for retired academics in academia, thus descriptive qualitative data was collected.

## **1.9 Significance of the Study**

Universities across the world are currently experiencing a large enrolment of students against a slow enrolment-and-completion transition, leading to overcrowded institutions with insufficient resources to accommodate students (Sawyer, 2004). The University of KwaZulu-Natal seems to be no exception. According to the UKZN Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (2017), the University currently has over 45 000 students against 4 400 staff, while lecture halls are characterized by overcrowding and staff experiencing a detrimental load of work (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017).

The University of KwaZulu-Natal is a research university that aims to shape a better future by “Inspiring Greatness” (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017). Furthermore, the vision of the university is to become a Premier University of African Scholarship and becoming an institution of choice for staff and students. It aims to achieve these through the establishment of a value-driven organizational culture that empowers the institution and its people to achieve institutional goals, guided by Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client Orientation, Honesty, and Trust (REACH<sup>T</sup>). according to REACH<sup>T</sup>, the institution: commits to promote mutual respect, courtesy, and inclusiveness; it assumes responsibility and accountability in the behavior displayed towards all its stakeholders; it aims to consistently satisfy the needs of all its clients, stakeholders and partners; it commits to delivering with integrity and with devotion to good governance; and it underpin the above mentioned values with the principle of trust (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017).

These aspirations may be highly challenging to achieve, due to the global challenges facing universities, thus requiring the university to create a strong and competitive environment capable of adapting in the ever changing world of academia, and skilled enough to pro-actively seize on opportunities arising from the external environment. The university may be able to achieve such goals through the engagement of competitive human resources best equipped to deliver results that move the university closer to its aspirations. In the unstable and globalized environment of the 21st century, institutions require different generations with diverse strengths (young, fresh minded and innovative, and matured, highly skilled and content individuals) to form a competitive team. In most workplace today, one finds that the majority of employees are young, innovative individuals with a lot of energy and new, big ideas, missing the element of matured, content and highly skilled aging individuals. In research institutions, achieving both academic excellence and outstanding research may be challenging, due to the overwhelming workload that comes with the academic work in particular. This has resulted to some of the world's most successful research institutions to involve retired academics who are still capable to be active in academia to provide the skills, knowledge and wisdom that they possess. It was such findings which inspired and guide this study, thus investigating the matter further, with the insights of active academics as well.

### **1.10 Outline of the Study**

This research study is outlined as follows:

**Chapter 1:** Introduction provides a background and overview of the study, with the purpose of providing background to the research problem and objectives.

**Chapter 2:** Literature Review provides the review of publications including journals, theses, papers, and books reflecting the work that has already been conducted on potential roles for retired academics in academia.

**Chapter 3:** Research Methodology, provides the research approach, design and methodology used in the collection and analysis of the data in this study. This chapter also outlines limitations of the study and ethical considerations made by the researcher.

**Chapter 4:** Data Presentation, presents data collected in this study through semi-structured interviews.

**Chapter 5:** Data Analysis, provides analysis and discussion of the results, and conclusions drawn from the research results obtained with respect to the initial objectives of the study.

**Chapter 6:** Conclusions and Recommendations, outlines the conclusions and recommendations regarding the research study and a framework for determining substantial implementation of a business rescue plan is proposed.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a background of the study, followed by the motivation and focus of the study, and then the problem statement was displayed. Furthermore, the research questions and objectives were outlined, followed by a discussion of the methodology used in the study and the significance of the study, and then lastly a display of the chapter outline was shown. The next chapter discusses in detail the literature reviewed in relation to the involvement of retired academics in academia postretirement.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Retirement age has been one of the biggest interests in Higher Education Institutions since the 20th century. With retired academics continuing to be economically active citizens postretirement, it was found that academics were retiring early, still highly competitive in their fields. Higher Education institutions around the world started changing their official retirement age, as with the case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in pursuit of keeping their senior employees happy and active, and also benefiting the institution from the rich knowledge and skills of the retiring employees. Exploring the roles that could be played/adopted by retired academics in Higher Education institutions requires an objective, deep understanding of the functions of these institutions, their main objectives relating to their goals and missions, and the importance of senior employees within the institutions, who possess a lot of knowledge, skills, experience and understanding in what an institution needs to prosper and excel in its domain.

This chapter presents the literature relating to the study interest and seeks to highlight theoretical and empirical gaps in the understanding/ knowledge of the roles that could be played by retired academics in the university academia, looking at the case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. To understand the research problem, research universities will first be defined; followed by an exploration of the crucial roles a research university needs in it in order to achieve its core function, comparing the top three South African research universities; this is followed by the retirement age in these universities; Programs in Place for Retired Academics in some of the best research universities; Programs in place for retired academics in UKZN; and the roles played by retired academics in the society.

### **2.2 Defining a University**

A university can be defined as an institution intended to be sturdy and permanent, and can be a unique unit when wisely planned, governed and financed (Crow, 2014). According to Crow (2014), “universities are neutral conveners, assemblers of talent, and unmatched idea factories

where the passion, creativity, and idealism of great minds, young and old alike, can be applied to problem-solving and advancing our societal and economic well-being” (Crow, 2014, p. 1).

Boulton and Lucas (2008) further define the institution as “a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse; a place to which a thousand schools make contributions; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate; a place where inquiry is pushed forward, discoveries verified and perfected, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge” (Boulton & Lucas, 2008, p. 1). Both these definitions put emphasis on the university being a realm where different minds from different worlds come to interact and collaborate in the pursuit of gaining and enriching knowledge. There are different types of universities and colleges in the world, defined by their specialties or strengths. These are: Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Bible Colleges, Research Universities, Ecclesiastical Universities, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, etc. Since the University of KwaZulu-Natal is a research university, this paper focuses on this category.

Research universities may be defined as academic institutions “committed to the creation and dissemination of knowledge, in a range of disciplines and fields, and featuring the appropriate laboratories, libraries, and other infrastructures that permit teaching and research at the highest possible level” (Altbach, 2016, p. 172). Research universities tend to focus more on research, producing research papers and aiming to enroll more postgraduates, particularly doctorate, students (Johnson, et al., 2016). This may cause a slight neglect on the undergraduate work and students, since most graduate students who become lecturers focus more on research than teaching, in the pursuit of becoming professors as well. Some of the top research universities in the world are Princeton University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Yale University, and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Some of the top research universities in South Africa are the University of Cape Town, the University of Witwatersrand, the University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University, the University of Johannesburg, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and Rhodes University.

Lindsay (2015) states that a research university aims to provide the best equipment to its students and professors in order to produce new and exciting research, benefiting students and academics in research, as they would have access to the latest technology (Lindsay, 2015). For the purpose of this study, University entails the provision of a platform for different individuals with

different philosophies, coming from different eras to engage in discussions, share and gain new knowledge. Thus such institutions have the responsibility to develop a society educationally and bring economic breakthrough.

### **2.2.1 The Role of Universities in society**

According to Cloete, Maassen and Bailey (2015), a university drives a society's economic growth and development (Cloete, et al., 2015). Castells (2009) further emphasizes that knowledge technology and technical innovation are the most crucial forces in developing a country's knowledge economy (Castells, 2009). Both these roles stress the impact that knowledge has on the development and wellbeing of a society, noting that an educated society may be better equipped to control its economy.

The core functions of these research universities focus around four areas; teaching, research, publishing and outreach. The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) stresses the importance of recruiting, training and retaining quality academic staff in order to achieve the teaching, research, publishing and outreach goals that research universities aim to achieve (NCHE, 2011). Quality academic staff is crucial in the sense that they are expected to be scholars who create knowledge, which they are expected to deliver to students, and produce research publications regularly. The quality of academic staff impacts on the designing of relevant programmes and courses, teaching, examination and supervising students' research. Therefore the scholar should be a person who studies independently and constantly seeking new knowledge in order to gain understanding on particular topics and the different views on it, and seek to contribute in knowledge generation to help the society better understand certain phenomenon and/or solve societal issues (Mushemeza, 2016).

Because the sole mission of private and state leading research universities is to produce research and harvest graduate students, top research universities such as Yale, UCLA, MIT, University of Wisconsin and the University of Texas, attract professors who excel in their fields of study (Cloete, et al., 2015). These institutions have the following characteristics: more interaction with graduate students; state-of-the-art research facilities; wide variety of majors; larger class sizes with less individual attention; distinguished faculty; and international reputation. The University

of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) expects no less from its academic staff, as they are expected to publish in research journals that have been accredited by the South African based Department of Higher Education and Training (Murray, 2014). With this being said, there are academics who have chosen to focus on teaching only, resulting to less or no publications made by these academics. Murray (2014) recommends that such academics should be encouraged to undertake a PhD degree if UKZN wants to be a research-focused institution (Murray, 2014)

Lindsay (2015) states that “research universities are focused on producing research, publishing articles and producing more postgraduate students, which makes it no surprise that they value interaction with graduate students more than undergraduates” (Lindsay, 2015, p. 1). In such instances, teaching-focused academics may be crucial in bridging the gap identified by Lindsay (2015). Undergraduate students are very important as they mature to become postgraduate students and contribute in research publications. Not providing quality services to such students may be detrimental to the university’s goals and plans.

Research universities entice eminent academics due to the assets and opportunities they offer (Altbach & Salmi, 2011). A student may get an opportunity to interact with highly significant individuals in the industry of their interest, and also be able to work together with respected researchers on research projects and become a coauthor on published research. Altbach (2011) emphasizes that “research universities have better reputations on a global scale than smaller teaching colleges. Since big discoveries and scientific breakthroughs often take place at research universities, they get more recognition abroad than other colleges that might have excellent undergraduate programs but less robust research capabilities” (Altbach, 2011, p. 14).

### **2.3 Challenges Facing Universities**

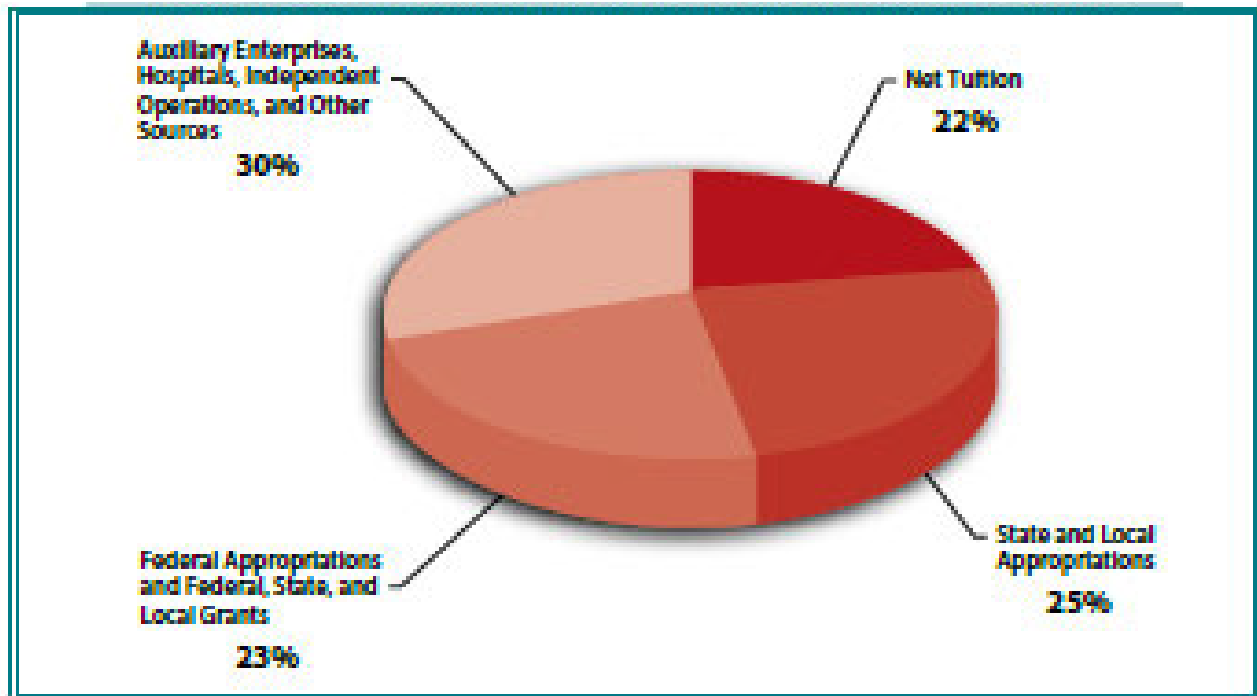
Public universities worldwide seem to be facing a number of challenges, common in all countries (Mabelebele, 2015). Universities seem to be facing financial challenges, such as, to name a few: heightened tuition fees that have resulted to a worldwide protest titled Fees Must Fall; institutions are experiencing a massive number of new students enrollment, leading to overcrowded lecture halls and frustrations to the academic staff; and with the weakening economy and high unemployment rate, graduates are failing to payback study loans such as the

National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) in South Africa, thus leading to the shortage of funds to fund new students. This section will elaborate on the challenge of massification.

The demands caused by the mass influx of undergraduate students far exceed existing institutional capacities, thus affecting the admission-graduation ratio and staff-student ratio, which may affect the quality of graduates produced as well (Mushemeza, 2016). There are also infrastructural demands and management failure resulting from this (Mushemeza, 2016). According to Sawyerr (2004), in the pursuit of coping with these challenges, universities have placed their focus on increasing institutional incomes and graduates for the labor market, which has undermined the public purpose of institutions (Sawyerr, 2004).

### **2.3.1 Revenue Sources for Public Research Universities**

Public research universities have customarily received the most share of subsidy for institutional operations from the state and local appropriations (National Science Board, 2012). Regardless of the two remaining principal source of revenue for operations, tuition fees have increased worldwide due to the declining state appropriations, but these have been shaken as well by movements such as Fees Must Fall, which then threatens the survival of some of these institutions. However, these institutions may have alternative sources of support, such as State funding, private aids, investment returns, income from endowment, and sometimes income from auxiliary enterprises (e.g., athletics, dormitories, bookstores, meal services, and hospitals), as shown in Figure 2.1 (National Science Board, 2012).



**Figure 2. 1: Average revenues at public research institutions, AY 2008-09**

(National Science Board, 2012)

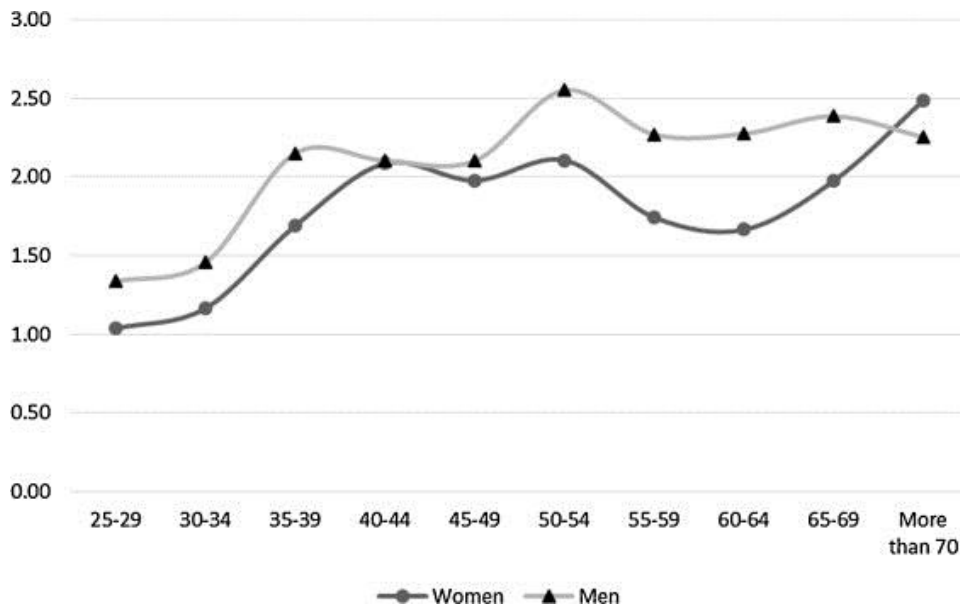
Figure 2.1 provided by the National Science Board shows that the National Government has been the main source of funding for academic research and development (R&D). However, when comparing private research universities to public research universities, private research universities receive a larger amount of their total academic R&D from the state government. The top public research universities continue to be competitive for state R&D funding regardless of these facts (National Science Board, 2012).

With the current financial challenges facing the universities, it is debated whether the government/state should finance the bulk of higher education needs in Africa (Mushemeza, 2016). And as a result, many are encouraging private-public partnerships in financing higher education, which then suggests that the private sector should dominate the bulk of Higher Education finances. This, of course, does not come without criticism, as some fear that the private sector would then dictate the proceedings of Higher Education Institutions, possibly changing the academic curriculum in response to market demands, “uncritically and across the board” (Mushemeza, 2016, p. 242). Such change would highly undermine the efforts of building

a research university to sustain intellectual thoughts. According to Mushemeza, higher education institutions have been facing financial issues since the 1990s, which led to numerous staff protests about finances. Unsatisfactory compensation/or salary resulted to several undesirable consequences, which are:

- Reduced confidence and self-esteem;
- Increased turnover to accept better offers from institutions that pay better after receiving funding for advanced degrees;
- Reduced productivity and unsatisfactory outputs particularly in research and innovations;
- Restricted time allocated to research and publication causing unproductivity of staff in posts.

There have been reports that some academics that are approaching the decade before retirement become highly anxious about the financial concerns that are often experienced postretirement. As a result, these academics choose to quit academia in good time to take up positions that offer better compensation packages and consequently allowing them to gather and collect enough funds to ensure a more comfortable retirement, regardless of whether they get a hefty pension or not (Mushemeza, 2016).



**Figure 2. 2: Publications by age**

(Rorstad & Aksnes, 2015)

Figure 2.2 shows that as academics get older, their interest in research increases and they start producing more research publications (Rorstad & Aksnes, 2015). These findings suggest that an institution with a high number of senior academics is more likely to produce more research publications than institutions with less senior academics. This may be resulting from the increased maturity and contentment, and decreased need of recognition and promotion, which could also explain the increase of publications in the 50-54 age groups, according to the graph. These are the age groups that reach the professorial position, which may be achieved through the number of publications one has produced and the reputation one has built for their name.

#### **2.4 Comparing some of the Top Research Universities in South Africa**

The three top research universities in South Africa are the University of Cape Town, the University of Witwatersrand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, according to The Centre for World University Rankings (CWUR) (The Centre for World University Ranking, 2018). These are the three internationally ranked South African research universities that seem to be competing in publications. In the three, UCT seems to be the leading South African research

university in journal publications, according to the Department of Higher Education and Training report shown in Table 2.1.

| 2018 Rank | 2017 Rank | University                  | Score |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 223       | 259       | University of Cape Town     | 77.9  |
| 230       | 181       | University of Witwatersrand | 77.7  |
| 402       | 445       | University of KwaZulu-Natal | 74.9  |
| 438       | 726       | University of Pretoria      | 74.5  |
| 448       | 330       | Stellenbosch University     | 74.3  |
| 790       | 951       | University of Johannesburg  | 71.2  |

**Table 2. 1: South African University Rankings**

(The Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017)

The number one leading publishing institution in South Africa, according to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2017), is the University of Cape Town, followed by Rhodes University, and the third one being the University of Witwatersrand. Ironically, Cloete (2018) reported that UCT has the highest number of active Senior Academics than other South African research universities (Cloete, et al., 2018). Table 2.2 shows more details on the SA university rankings provided by the Department of Higher Education and Training.

| Institution  | 2014 Journal Units |                |                     |                 |                       |                 | 2015 Journal Units |                |                     |                 |                       |                 |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
|              | ISI                | IBSS           | Total international | SA journal list | Total Journal outputs | % International | ISI                | IBSS           | Total international | SA journal list | Total Journal outputs | % International |
| UKZN         | 993.27             | 203.76         | 1197.03             | 405.44          | 1602.47               | 75%             | 962.2              | 238.83         | 1201.03             | 444.54          | 1645.57               | 73%             |
| UP           | 979.08             | 135.97         | 1115.05             | 346.41          | 1461.46               | 76%             | 1025.05            | 148.5          | 1173.55             | 411.33          | 1584.88               | 74%             |
| UCT          | 1032.09            | 164.16         | 1196.25             | 176.32          | 1372.57               | 87%             | 1058               | 148.76         | 1206.76             | 182.6           | 1389.36               | 87%             |
| WITS         | 964.53             | 122.15         | 1086.68             | 185.35          | 1272.03               | 85%             | 996.88             | 102.75         | 1099.63             | 209.23          | 1308.86               | 84%             |
| SUN          | 897.51             | 96.62          | 994.13              | 340.45          | 1334.58               | 74%             | 876.6              | 87.66          | 964.26              | 291.74          | 1256                  | 77%             |
| UNISA        | 224.3              | 363.36         | 587.66              | 440.01          | 1027.67               | 57%             | 295.95             | 385.13         | 681.08              | 488             | 1169.08               | 58%             |
| NWU          | 450.69             | 174.18         | 624.87              | 355.84          | 980.71                | 64%             | 494.71             | 206.17         | 700.88              | 373.73          | 1074.61               | 65%             |
| UJ           | 427.75             | 139.96         | 567.71              | 194.21          | 761.92                | 75%             | 471.62             | 166.55         | 638.17              | 260.82          | 898.99                | 71%             |
| UFS          | 329.58             | 86.12          | 415.7               | 212.01          | 627.71                | 66%             | 330.12             | 64.06          | 394.18              | 191.64          | 585.82                | 67%             |
| UWC          | 223.14             | 56.43          | 279.57              | 165.64          | 445.21                | 63%             | 236.51             | 68.51          | 305.02              | 156.03          | 461.05                | 66%             |
| RU           | 307.8              | 42             | 349.8               | 55.2            | 405                   | 86%             | 317.99             | 26.58          | 344.57              | 59.94           | 404.51                | 85%             |
| NMMU         | 168.6              | 32.5           | 201.1               | 80.32           | 281.42                | 71%             | 199.01             | 35.8           | 234.81              | 90              | 324.81                | 72%             |
| UFH          | 118.7              | 85.18          | 203.88              | 56.2            | 260.08                | 78%             | 124.33             | 133.92         | 258.25              | 66.47           | 324.72                | 80%             |
| TUT          | 113.63             | 30.57          | 144.2               | 74.08           | 218.28                | 66%             | 129.85             | 45.7           | 175.55              | 78.86           | 254.41                | 69%             |
| UNIVEN       | 56.58              | 78.1           | 134.68              | 69.68           | 204.36                | 66%             | 57.95              | 125.7          | 183.65              | 68.1            | 251.75                | 73%             |
| UL           | 61.35              | 80.76          | 142.11              | 91.85           | 233.96                | 61%             | 67.59              | 89.81          | 157.4               | 82.41           | 239.81                | 66%             |
| DUT          | 62.95              | 45.75          | 108.7               | 27.06           | 135.76                | 80%             | 75.87              | 69.67          | 145.54              | 41.67           | 187.21                | 78%             |
| CPUT         | 74.85              | 15.09          | 89.94               | 32.82           | 122.76                | 73%             | 70.94              | 44.84          | 115.78              | 57.36           | 173.14                | 69%             |
| UNIZULU      | 39.01              | 14.66          | 53.67               | 49.54           | 103.21                | 52%             | 45.93              | 26.6           | 72.53               | 42.02           | 114.55                | 63%             |
| SMU          | 25.36              | 2.5            | 27.86               | 64.87           | 92.73                 | 30%             | 24.3               | 11.66          | 35.96               | 72.93           | 108.89                | 33%             |
| CUT          | 22.52              | 26.5           | 49.02               | 23.81           | 72.83                 | 67%             | 22.47              | 21.99          | 44.46               | 30.06           | 74.52                 | 60%             |
| VUT          | 32.62              | 15.99          | 48.61               | 31.48           | 80.09                 | 61%             | 24.82              | 17.85          | 42.67               | 20.21           | 62.88                 | 68%             |
| WSU          | 9.83               | 4.1            | 13.93               | 11.14           | 25.07                 | 56%             | 16.38              | 10.08          | 26.46               | 20.37           | 46.83                 | 57%             |
| MUT          | 6.95               | 3.53           | 10.48               | 3               | 13.48                 | 78%             | 9.81               | 2.5            | 12.31               | 5.08            | 17.39                 | 71%             |
| UMP          | 0                  | 0.5            | 0.5                 | 0               | 0.5                   | 100%            | 16.77              | 0              | 16.77               | 0               | 16.77                 | 100%            |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>7622.69</b>     | <b>2020.44</b> | <b>9643.13</b>      | <b>3492.73</b>  | <b>13135.86</b>       | <b>73%</b>      | <b>7951.65</b>     | <b>2279.62</b> | <b>10231.27</b>     | <b>3745.14</b>  | <b>13976.41</b>       | <b>73%</b>      |

**Table 2. 2: Research publications by South African universities**

(The Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017)

## 2.5 Crucial Roles a Research University Needs To Have In Order To Achieve Its Core Function

The National Tertiary Education Union has welcomed South Africa's move to increase the retirement age for university professors from 60-80 (Du, 2012). The most recent steady claims are based on the observation that regardless of the fact that the South African workforce is ageing, academics are older than the rest of the South African workforce, thus reaching an ideal retirement and exiting the university workforce have been changed by the introduction of the anti-discrimination laws which prohibit mandatory retirement age at an arbitrary age (Moodie, 2010). Due to the nature of academic work and the fact that many academics enjoy their work, one may assume that academics would choose to continue in academia, through teaching and research, for as long as they can (Moodie, 2010). However, the US academics retirement fund,

TIAA-CREF, discovered that only 41% of US academics prefer to retire at 65 or younger, 52% choose to retire after 65, and 37% expect to retire at 70 or older. In Australia, the concern about a scarcity of academics would turn out to be highly overstated if Australian academics adopt this approach (Moodie, 2010).

According to Hassan, Tymms and Ismail (2008), academic intellectuals need to engage in quality teaching and research that reflect the scientific and technological needs of the society in order for a university to be relevant (Hassan, et al., 2008). The biggest challenge experienced by universities at the moment is a high enrollment of students that exceed the institutional human resources, which then results to most academics having to teach/lecture undergraduate students, having less time to participate in research and professional development. Mushemeza (2016) reported that African universities contribute less than 1% in journals internationally referred. In addition to that, African universities contribute 1.4% to world's scientific publications, more than half of these coming from Egypt and South Africa (Mushemeza, 2016). In order to deal with the workload issue and release some energy to basic and applied research, it may be best for universities to enforce a strict level of student intake, under present conditions. Hassan (2008) further proposes that official support for mentoring programmes, institute starter funds and innovation funds for junior scholars, intensification in research and conference grants, should be provided by universities in order to create a healthy research relationships with other African institutions and those abroad, with the state and the private sector (Hassan, et al., 2008).

## **2.6 Retirement and Retired Academics**

Retirement refers to the “withdrawal from office or an official position; to give up one’s business or occupation in order to enjoy more leisure or freedom (especially after having made a competence or earned a pension)” (Denton & Spenser, 2009, p. 64). Denton and Spenser (2009) further express that this definition is limited in the sense that it fails to define the 21<sup>st</sup> century meaning of retirement (Denton & Spenser, 2009). This approach assumes that a person leaving an employment occupation permanently and not seek any other form of employment that will generate an income for the rest of their lives represents the true definition of retirement. McDaniel argues that a realistic transition from employment to retirement is not as smooth and

simple as Denton and Spenser's definition assumes. Most people retire from one employment and start another one, either related to an earlier career or doing something totally unrelated, permanent or part-time. This return to the labor force may occur years after retiring from one's career. Retirement may come in different types, such as voluntary and involuntary retirement, occurring gradually or sudden, and may be permanent or temporary. Such different forms of retirement have resulted to the difficulty in developing a functional definition of retirement that accommodates all forms, because currently when a definition functions well in one situation, it may not apply in another (Denton & Spenser, 2009). Research also shows that senior employees are more reliable and satisfied with their work, which may be the results of their reputation, experience and skills (Ruth, 2004)

Corraine T. Dorfman (2002) investigated the reasons behind decisions made by retired professors to either continue working or not, postretirement, and found that professors who continue working do so because they enjoy their work, whereas those who choose to retire do so because they wanted to do other things to keep them active (Dorfman, 2002). According to Boulton-Lewis and Buys (2014), retirees are generally motivated to learn about technology, leisure activities, and new things, postretirement (Boulton-Lewis & Buys, 2014). The younger retirees between the ages 65 and 75 are the ones who usually want to learn more, keep their minds active and stay mentally stimulated. Intention to continue working postretirement is highly affected by job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, passion for work and relationship with co-workers (Tarkar, et al., 2017). Research has shown clearly that chronological age per se cannot be seen as an overall determinant of work performance (Koopman-Boyden & Macdonald, 2003).

### **2.6.1 Activity Theory**

Activity Theory, a sub-set of role theory, suggests that the self-conceptions of individuals are influenced by the social roles they perform and their relationships with others (Diehl & Dark-Freudeman, 2006). Life satisfaction in old age is seen to be dependent on the active maintenance of social relationships and the continuing involvement in meaningful pursuits (Achenbaum, 2009). Knapp explains that the theory assumes that as individuals pass from middle to old age,

their role requirements and the demands upon themselves and society remain fairly stable. Except for unavoidable health and biological changes, older and middle aged people are the same in terms of psychological and social needs. For individuals, old age leads to the loss of roles and relationships, therefore, in order to maintain a positive image of self it is necessary for older people to keep as socially active as possible, as a way to replace old roles and relationships with new ones (Rowson, 2013).

### **2.6.2 Continuity Theory**

Continuity theory refers to an approach that assumes that development, learning and adaptation are continuous, accumulative, and progressive throughout life, arising from a succession of continuing, smooth, small steps (Lynch, et al., 2015). Lynch, Hanni, Reed and Olson (2015) further expresses that continuity theory is a concept that proposes that learning is established through practical experience (Lynch, et al., 2015). For example, an older person resolving an issue is more likely to use years of life experience to the mission. According to the continuity theory, the behavior and reasoning of older adults tend to follow and expose the patterns of the individual (both continuity of selfhood and external sense of belonging) of behavior and thought learnt throughout life, whereas plasticity adjusting to life's ongoing modifications (Ejechi, 2015). As a result, this theory joins adaptive change with experience to an effective aging progression, concentrating on continuity (stability) but also, similarly, discontinuity and the importance of flexibility toward progressive results (Lynch, et al., 2015).

### **2.6.3 Bridge Employment**

Bridge employment refers to the employment of retired employees post their employment (Beehr & Bennett, 2014). It may also be defined as the workforce participation pattern displayed by older workers between their partial retirement and their total withdrawal from the workforce. (Topa, et al., 2013). Bridge employment' is also defined as any paid labor after an individual retires or begins getting a pension. Ultimately, older workers were more likely to move into bridge employment than definite retirement. Nevertheless, bridge employment remains a

transitory stage, it is not permanent (Hebert & Luong, 2008). This concept is characterized as the model of human capital contribution revealed by older employees as they completely retire withdraws from employment (Tarkar, et al., 2017).

Many countries of the world make retirement compulsory at the ages 60 to 65 for people who hold certain jobs, and employment law compels them to leave employment at that specific age (Mohamed, 2012). Normally, these countries justify this by arguing that certain professions are either too hazardous or involve high levels of physical skills and mental work, thus every employee is forced to leave the workforce at that age. But the last two decades have shown that retirees live longer in retirement than ever before. Due to the fitness of their bodies and the long years lived after retirement, many of these retirees decided to engage in new employments which are either similar to their careers or completely new and different. This type of employment is referred to as bridge employment, and the retired employees may spend over ten years in this employment. Due to this, Mohamed (2012) stress that bridge employment should be ergonomically designed to best suit the aged worker's characteristics (physical, mental and affective) since the appropriateness extent of the current bridge employment for the aged worker is not known (Mohamed, 2012).

Pundt, Wohrmann, Deller and Shultz (2015) expressed that psychological contract satisfaction was found to be important for work and well-being predictor, which include life fulfillment, quality marital alteration, satisfaction with work, dedication, organizational residency behavior, relationships between co-workers, and the need or want to carry on working for the organization (Pundt, et al., 2015). Mazumdar, Warren, Brown and Dupre (2017) conclude that due to these findings, the perception and acceptance of bridge employment arrangements by bridge employees may be understood through the psychological contract theory (Mazumdar, et al., 2017). This theory suggests that the relationship between an employer and employee is characterized by unspoken expectations and rules, also affecting employee loyalty to the employer/or organization. This relationship thus determines whether a retiree will remain in the organization for bridge employment, or join a different organization. It is believed that postretirement activities could potentially resolve societal problems by responding to the shortage of specialists and managers, while reducing the burden on social security systems at the same time (Pundt, et al., 2015).

Multiple public and organizational modifications have affected the nature of work and accessibility of bridge jobs (Beehr & Bennett, 2014). Firstly, advancement in medicine and improved basic living standards has offered a longer, healthy life to more people, thus increasing the number of seniors approaching old age actively, ideally prolonging their working life beyond the expected retirement age (Crawford, et al., 2010). Secondly, in many developed countries, various fundamental changes to pensions systems and incentives were already insinuating the decision to work past the age of 65 (Peiro, et al., 2013).

Thirdly, Beehr and Bennett (2014) stress that “differences between generational groups have left organizations concerned about losing much of their most skilled and experienced workforce, because the baby boomers were far more numerous than the Generation X group, which does not have enough people to fill critical talent gaps in key jobs and leadership positions” (Beehr & Bennett, 2014, p. 115). In addition, the changes of the nature of work itself resulting from advancement in technology, such as moving office-bound jobs to computer-generated jobs or tele-working (Beehr & Bennett, 2014). This new arrangement further accommodates the older staff, persons with disabilities, or those only keen on taking flexible work schedules (Alcover, 2016). Lastly, the value of bridge employment has upgraded in modern years, making them more appealing to older workers and those who have retired already but choose to re-enter the labor market (Topa, et al., 2014). For all the reasons mentioned, bridge employment has become progressively the breakthrough of research into the mid and late career stages and final retirement (Alcover, 2016).

## **2.7 Possible Roles to be played by Retired Academics**

The most popular role found best suitable for retirees, and most recurring in literature, is the mentoring role (Haines & Popovich, 2014). This role is perceived to be most influential in developing new academics, assisting organizations with recruiting, retaining, and allowing a long term maturation of future mentors. The relationships formed during mentorship benefit the mentee, the mentor, and the organization. Benefits of mentoring that feed to the organization include the increased staff productivity, stability in the organization, socialization, improved communication, retention of competitive employees, support of cultural diversity, and improved

succession planning. Haines and Popovich (2014) stress that an ideal mentoring program should connect to other individual practices, such as providing access to professional development training programs, mandatory performance appraisals, and the development of reward and recognition systems (Haines & Popovich, 2014). Research has shown that academics who receive mentoring tend to show more confidence than their peers, and display improved teaching effectiveness, productive research, and career satisfaction. The mentoring program should aim to develop an academic, strengthen their teaching skills; motivate and inspire faculty members to plan, learn, collaborate and grow; guide faculty members towards personal goal setting; and increase faculty retention (Haines & Popovich, 2014). “The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own” (Haines & Popovich, 2014, p. 2). Experts advise that a good syllabus is the organizational backbone of a course and a lecturer's first line of defense in disputes over policy, grading and procedures.

When Thody (2011) did a study on the satisfaction of active retired academics enjoyed and were excited about being active in teaching and doing research, but some of them were not recognized nor remunerated in their universities (Thody, 2011). Thody also found that there were few emeritus centers or associations that active retired academics could join. When these retirees were specifically asked about their activities, one quarter of them reported to be disinterested in continuing with teaching, research or professional activities. Active retirees reported writing of various kinds as the most notable professional activity, even though some of these retirees were not recorded in their university's research output (Thody, 2011).

Some academics publish more in their post retirement employment than they did before retirement, and they enjoy research enough to source funding for it (Tizard & Owen, 2001). Retired academics tend to engage less in teaching activities in postretirement employments, perceiving retirement as having the liberty to choose activities they participate in. Thody (2001) found that as much as postretirement employees may have access to the institution's library and internet, they tend to not use them and about a quarter of the participants made use of an office (Thody, 2011).

Robyn and Preez (2013) stress that organizations that need to be successful and competitive in their fields need to attract, train, and retain strong employees who possess crucial scarce skills

(Robyn & Du Preez, 2012). This emphasizes the need to retain retired academics within academia, in order to retain the knowledge and skills they possess. Through mentorship these employees are able to transfer their knowledge to the mentored employees. Mentors are ideally senior employees who possess special skills and knowledge acquired during their years in the field. Bratianu and Leon (2015) highlight the different characteristics of senior and junior employees in the table below:

**Older Employees**

**Younger Employees**

Are more experienced and have low rates of absenteeism

Are less experienced and have high rates of absenteeism

Are found to be reliable and to have better social skills

Some of them do not fulfill employers expectations and requirements

Some of them lack the ability to continue learning

Have the ability to continue learning

Are motivated for reasons more related to self-actualization than money

Are motivated to improve current skills or gain new skills to move up the career ladder

Focus on traditional work arrangements, based on loyalty and job security

Focus on high compensation, extremely flexible work arrangements and a healthy mix of independence and interdependence

**Table 2. 3: Characteristics of older and younger employees**

(Bratianu & Leon, 2015)

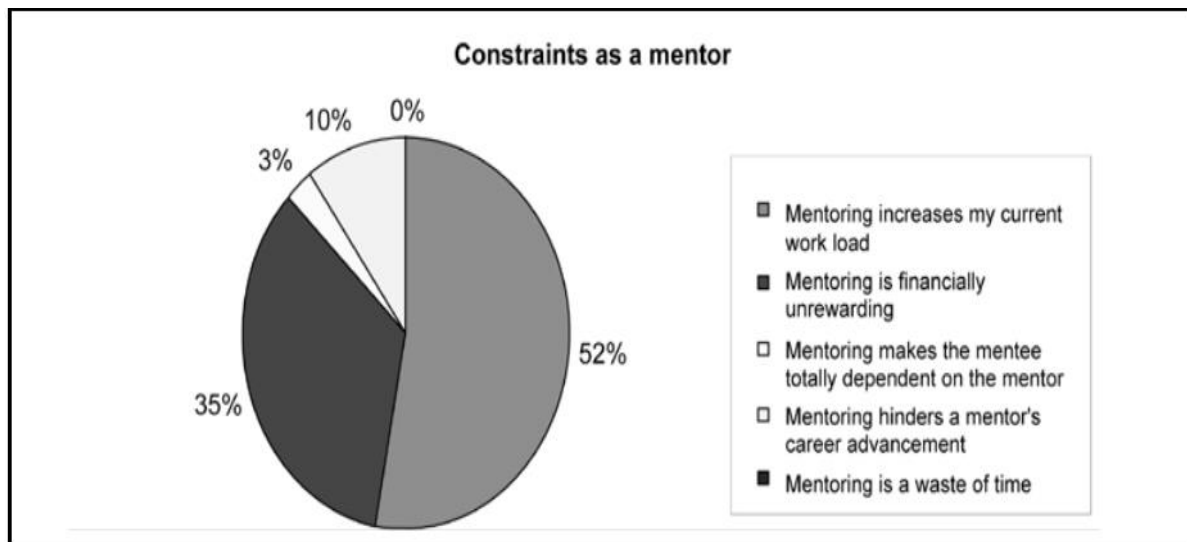
Bratianu and Leon (2015) further revealed the characteristics of different mentoring settings, as shown in Table 2.4 below.

| Characteristic              | Informal mentoring        | Formal mentoring                             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Initiator                   | One employee              | The organization                             |
| Organization support        | Absent                    | Present                                      |
| Driving force               | Similarity and attraction | Organizational agenda                        |
| Mentor and mentee selection | Self-selection            | Third-part intervention                      |
| Initial emotions            | Positive                  | Apprehension and awkwardness                 |
| Meetings                    | Unstructured              | Structured by program facilitator            |
| Goals                       | Inexplicitly expressed    | Explicitly included in organizational agenda |
| Duration                    | Long term                 | Short term                                   |

**Table 2. 4: Characteristics of formal and informal mentoring**

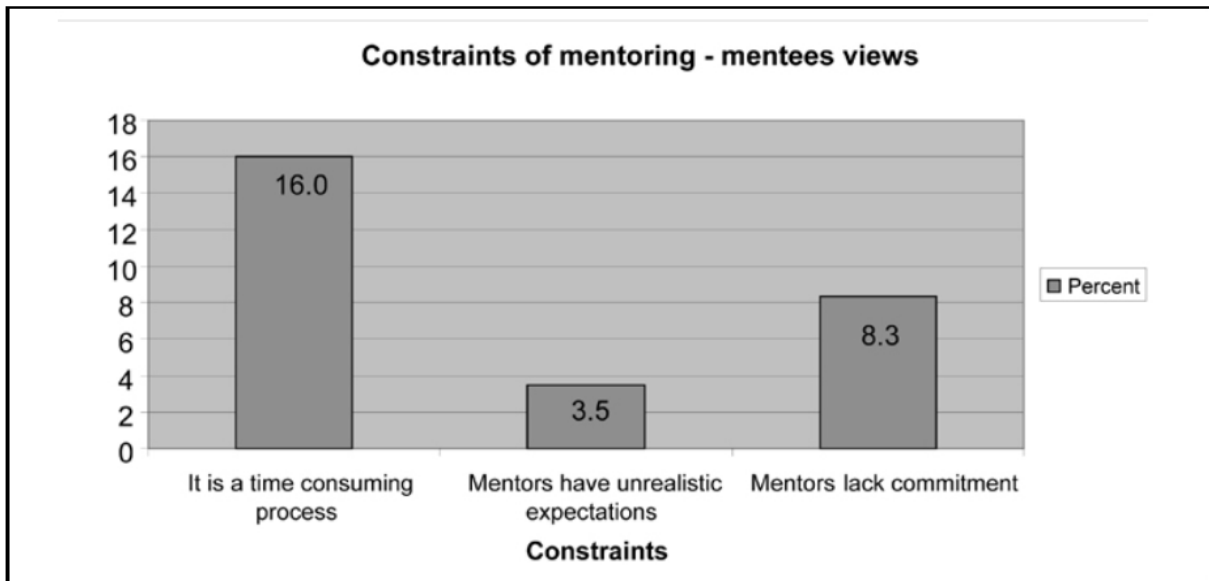
(Bratianu & Leon, 2015)

In most institutions, active senior academics are given the task of mentoring younger/or new academics, which presents more workload and constraints to the mentors and mentees, as displayed in the figures below.



**Figure 2. 3: Constraints as a mentor**

(Nundulall, 2010)



**Figure 2.4: Constraints as a mentee**

(Nundulall, 2010)

Figure 2.4 shows that mentees experience neglect and unrealistic expectations from mentors, which are issues that could be addressed when involving retired academics. The biggest complaint, however, was that mentoring was a time consuming process, which expose an undesirable characteristic of young employees of not having enough patient to be groomed until they possess the necessary skills they need.

## **2.8 Programs in Place for Retired Academics in some of the best Research Universities**

Research universities throughout the world have roles in place for retired academics. The most common ones are: emeritus professor, visiting professor, etc. these roles allow retired academics to apply their vast knowledge and expertise post-retirement, allowing to remain active in what they know and love, and earn an extra income with relaxed hours worked. As appetizing these roles may be, only a few individuals can get a chance to acquire these roles due to the long list of requirements: individuals considered for such roles must be professors, they need to have excelled in their field in order to be nominated, they need to have published a certain amount of

research papers a year for a specific number of years towards their retirement. These requirements seem to be consistent in universities across the globe, including South Africa's major research universities such as the University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu-Natal, and University of Pretoria, to name a few. Emeritus Professor refers to a retired professor who possesses an honorific title recognizing the many years of employment to a profession or an institution, or a senior professor who has moved to a new chapter of their career in academia, transitioning from full-time participation in academic roles to adjust or lessen the participation (Baldwin & Zeig, 2012)

Post-retirement appointments are currently uncommon and exceptional, and in rare cases where a post-retirement appointment is made, especially where it is crucial to escape or reduce the loss of skilled academics with years of generated expertise, permission from the Vice-Chancellor's selection for academic staff or the EDHR for PASS staff is needed on the following grounds: The official retirement age at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has been increased from 60 to 65. With this in mind, extension beyond normal retirement age will be considered for academic staff that demonstrates a sustained high level of performance, based on the previous three-year performance evaluation (UKZN Human Resources, 2017). UKZN further stipulates that "the staff member will be expected to demonstrate excellence in Scholarship, against the criteria for their academic level, as used for Academic appointment or promotion. The staff member will follow the same process as for promotion to the level at which they are appointed. A staff member may apply for extension beyond retirement at any time from age 55, and if extension beyond normal retirement age is granted, the extension will be valid for a period of 5 years beyond normal retirement age contingent on ongoing sustained performance as evaluated in the performance management system" (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017, p. 13).

The University of Cape Town allows any academic who retiring as a professor or an associate professor after at least years of service to be elected by Senate to a lifelong status of emeritus rank. Academic officers at executive level are also eligible for election to emeritus rank. Exceptions may be made where, for example, where the university employs a senior academic above the age of 55, from another institution. With all exceptional appointments, SEC determines whether a case brought forward is deserving to be presented to the senate for election. Additionally to the rights and advantages of retirees, emeritus staff has supplementary

benefits and roles, which may also be applied in accessing University amenities as may be necessary. Election to emeritus status may be applied with retrospective effect after nomination by a Dean.

As a general rule the retired academics are expected to retire at, or close to normal retirement age, i.e. a person retiring at the end of the year in which he or she turns 65 or close to this date would be eligible, as would a person retiring for health reasons, whereas a person who has decided to retire early, before reaching the age 60, would normally not be allowed (UCT Human Resources, 2013). The University of Cape Town may have exceptional appointments where an academic from another university is appointed to a chair or professorship, disregarding the ten-year rule. For an appointment/or nomination of a retired academic who did not work at the university to be considered/ or successful, the Head of Department is required to submit a proposal to the SEC contending for the nominee and presenting reasons for the uniqueness of the case. The SEC shall put the name of the nominee to Senate if they accept the nomination (UCT Human Resources, 2013).

Appointments of retired academics are quite rare at UCT, and in the case where the university is avoiding the loss of highly skilled, matured academics, permission from the Vice Chancellor is required, particularly when the candidate is appointed to mentor postgraduate students, or needed for the completion of a specific project. Candidates are expected to submit a full motivation and relevant plans where an individual is being appointed for mentoring junior academics or researchers, and their contracts need to specify the end date of the appointment.

Appointments of retired academics, particularly those who took an early retirement, are guided by normal recruitment and selection criteria and the individuals are not expected to serve beyond the year they turn 65. And when these academics finally retire, they receive medical aid subsidy as the time they had initially retired. These academics have to follow the conditions of services affecting their contract.

Retired professors from UCT and who possess an outstanding academic and teaching record may be appointed for up to 3 years as mentors and/or supervisor, whose nominations are done by the Dean and permitted by the DVC. Appointments of Emeritus Professors, Associate Professors, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers, normally referred to as Senior Scholars, are normally paid and include lecturing, research, mentoring, and/or other duties which would be

specified on the contract. This type of appointment may be applied to appoint academics without obligations and without pay, recognizing that they independently continue to be active in academia and have association with the university status and similar advantages of those in honorary positions.

## **2.9 Challenges of Keeping Retired Academics**

Policies for early retirement may serve as cost management strategies for employers, permitting departments to be closed or combined, and commercial approaches, such as engaging advisors for precise responsibilities, to be arranged. However, a distress about their price to the society has risen, which includes the price of losing retirees with scarce skills and rich experience. This is particularly the case since early retirement has corresponded with a rise in the life span, leading to the retirees spending equivalent amount of time in retirement as they did in employment. Nevertheless, very little is known about the degree to which professional skills remain to be utilized after retirement (Tizard & Owen, 2001).

A concern has developed from the higher education groups who preferred an exemption from ADEA regarding the choices made by tenured academics to work well into their eighth decade if allowed to do so. Their biggest worry was that delaying retirement may result to decreased staff turnover, as expressed by one of the administrators who stated: "While no institution wishes to lose talented faculty, turnover through retirement does allow for the infusion of new ideas and energy into an institution" (Hammond & Morgan, 1991, p. 21). They further maintained that academics rarely switch fields, thus not opening up opportunities for colleges and universities to distribute positions across departments (Hammond & Morgan, 1991).

## **2.10 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the literature review firstly defined research universities, then looked at the functions of universities in the society and the crucial roles within research universities. The chapter further presented the top research universities in South Africa, comparing the number of publications each university produces a year and the opportunities they offer to academics

post-retirement. Retirement was then defined, discussing reasons for retiring and activities retirees engage in postretirement. Active retirement was defined and theories explaining the phenomenon were engaged. Finally the chapter looked at the challenges of keeping aging staff or retired academics active post-retirement. The following chapter discusses the methodology used in the study.

## **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter outlined and discussed international and national debates regarding the appointment of retired academics, this section discusses the research design, research approaches, study site, target population, sampling method, sampling and sample size are discussed. The research methodology implemented in this study intended to gain heightened understanding of the potential roles for retired academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, through addressing the research questions defined in Chapter 1, reinforced by the literature review discussed in Chapter 2, and influencing the results presented and analyzed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. This chapter further outlines information on the collection of data and the data analysis that was applied on this research.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is defined as the art and science preparing techniques of conducting a research study in order to get the most valid data, and this result to a layout for conducting the intended research. This layout is thus used to guide data collection and analysis. Essentially, the research design emphasizes on the typology of the study being planned, the results desired or aimed at, and the necessary evidence to effectively address the research questions. The following section explores the exploratory and qualitative nature of the study approached from a phenomenological paradigm, with the purpose of identifying and recommending potential roles for retired academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal by understanding the views of active and retired academics about the involvement of retired academics in academia.

### **3.2.1 Research Approach**

The ideal research design is chosen according to the fundamental objective or purpose of the study, including the intended application of the research findings and recommendations. There are three main categories of research designs, namely: Exploratory, descriptive and causal. Exploratory research focuses on discovering ideas and obtaining understanding, rather than collecting statistical, replicable data. In short, exploratory research proposes new theories. Descriptive research, unlike exploratory research, further explores a problem by ascertaining and describing the characteristics of the issue of interest; ultimately, descriptive research tests theories. And causal research, on the other hand, is mainly done in quantitative research with the purpose of exposing cause and effect between dependent and independent variables. In essence, causal research reinforces theories. Because the study was conducted to gain new insights and increased understanding of the retired academics' role in academia, the study adopted the exploratory research approach.

### **3.2.2 Research Philosophy**

The world of research is underpinned by two main research paradigms which relate to philosophies and assumptions about what represents valid research and the appropriate research methods for the development of knowledge. The two research paradigms, positivism and phenomenology, represent opposing assumptions about reality and view of the world. The positivistic paradigm assumes that reality exists outside of the researcher, thus only investigated and understood through observations, which Grey (2013) identifies as a rigorous process of scientific enquiry. The phenomenological paradigm, on the other hand, assumes that reality results from the interaction between the subject/human and the world, ultimately focusing on human behavior from the subject's own frame of reference/or perception.

This study was conducted from the phenomenological paradigm, as it aims to explore and understand the views of active and retired academics on the involvement of retired academia postretirement. Phenomenological approaches are characterized by personal knowledge and subjectivity, and stress the significance of personal perspective and interpretations of reality.

This requires the researcher to interact with the subjects/or participants to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the essence of participants' experiences, which is the basis of a phenomenological study.

### **3.2.3 Research Method**

The aim of this study is to identify and understand academics' perception of reengaging retired academics into academia and the roles these participants identify as best suitable for the retirees, and due to the nature of the study, qualitative research method was chosen for the study. The researcher collected views on the employment of retired academics from both active and retired academics, through semi-structured interviews. The nature of qualitative research studies is to discover and understand the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of the participants (Harwell, 2011). Therefore, qualitative research discovers meaning, purpose, and/or reality (Harwell, 2011).

## **3.3 Population and Sampling**

### **3.3.1 Target Population**

A target population refers to a group of study units from which data will be collected and analyzed for the study, and for the purpose of this study, the population consisted of active and retired academics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This included retired academics who are still active in the UKZN academia (through mentoring, doing research and supervising postgraduate students) retired academics that are active in other fields, within and outside of Higher Education Institutions. The number for the retired academics is unknown and could be a very high figure taking into account that the university has been in existence several decades ago with some scanty record of academics that worked for the university. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), in qualitative studies, the issue of the numerical size of

the population is not so important, however what remains critical is the composition of the population (Saunders, et al., 2016). For this study, the population consisted of active and retired academics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

### **3.3.2 Sampling Method**

Sampling may be defined as the method of abstracting a portion of population in order to represent that population in a study, and the results generated from that study would be used to generalize information about that population (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). A sampling method used for this study was the non-probability sampling, which may be described as a less expensive and quick sampling method. This design acknowledges that not every element in a population has the probability of being selected for the sample, but it is a purposeful sample. From the non-probability sampling, purposeful and snowball sampling strategies were used to collect the desired sample (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

Purposive sampling, according to Creswell (2003), refers to the purposeful selection of subjects that will best assist the researcher to comprehend the problem and answer the research question (Creswell, 2003). These subjects/ participants have to be willing and prepared to share this knowledge. Selection for the study relies on the researchers judgement as they select participants with a purpose in mind to understand the phenomenon and gain the most reliable and generalizable knowledge. Another method that was used was the snowball sampling. This method was highly useful in reaching retired academics, as it was challenging to find the sample desired (Creswell, 2003). Participants who were initially selected through purposive sampling method provided appointments with other potential subjects with the characteristics crucial for the study, leading to an easy facilitation of the study, as the researcher used the contact details provided by participants to make appointments with the potential respondents. The sampling method used made the data collection process slightly easier and effective than any other method that could have been used. This method is not without disadvantages, as one of them was the fact that the research ended up getting hold of academics from the same campuses, which are Howard College and the Pietermaritzburg campus.

### 3.3.3 Sample Size

A purposive sample size is usually dependent on the theoretical saturation, which refers to the point reached during the data collection process where enough information has been collected and new data is no longer bringing additional insights to the research questions. For this study, theoretical overload was reached after the participation of 12 respondents. The sample consisted retired, active senior academics, and early career academics. Details of the sample are shown in the table below:

| Occupation Area         | Number of Participants |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Retired Academics       | 4                      |
| Active Senior Academics | 6                      |
| Early Career Academics  | 2                      |

**Table 3. 1: Sample of the study**

### 3.4 Research Instrument

Qualitative research involves rich, in-depth, quality data, thus a research instrument used in qualitative research has to achieve this requirement (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). In this study the researcher chose a semi-structured approach of interviewing, guided by an interview guide as a chosen research instrument for the study. The interview guide used contained a set of open-ended questions and standard themes to be included in the interviews, but also allowing flexibility for the interviewer to probe further views and themes that emerge during the interview.

### **3.5 Data Collection Techniques**

The most popular data collection methods in academic research are interviews, which are divided into two types: structured and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are identified by their quantitative nature of ensuring that interview questions are asked in a specific order, not allowing the interviewer to deviate from the interview schedule (Kumar, 2011). These interviews are easily replicable and are quick to conduct. Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, are characterized by open-ended questions, a flexible interview schedule and the conversational nature of the interview (Qu & Dumay, 2011). These are used to collect qualitative data and present increased validity in data collected. Although time consuming and may require a trained qualitative researcher to administer them, semi-structured interviews allow respondents to shape their responses using their own words, giving more in-depth qualitative data to the study (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were used for this study.

There were 12 respondents who participated in the study, which include 8 active academics and 4 retired academics. The aim of the interviews was to gain more insight into the current positions of an academic and where they see a gap for retired academics to fill, and a view from the retired academics themselves to share their experience and their willingness to be active again. These interviews were conducted between July and October 2018.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to the practice in which raw data is ordered and structured in order to be able to abstract useful information from it (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Sekaran and Bougie (2010) emphasize that the process of structuring and thinking about data is highly essential to understanding what is and is not contained by the data, thus data analysis is very crucial in making any research study make sense (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

In order to analyze qualitative social research, Babbie (2004) expressed that it is important to code data by sorting out individual pieces of data and connecting it to a retrieval system (Babbie, 2004). This technique was administered in this study and the responses were classified in terms

of different dimensions in order to provide sense and meaning to the collected information in harmony with the objectives of the study.

The method found to be suitable to analyze the qualitative data collected in this study is thematic or content analysis. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2012), refers to a strategy of categorizing qualitative data, in which the researcher assesses data collected, they make notes and then begin to arranging data into classifications (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This method allows the researcher to transform the analysis from a wide interpretation of data towards identifying patterns and developing themes. In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyze data collected through interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Content analysis, on the other hand, refers to a strategy of identifying categories and then counting the number of occurrences in a text or image (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Due to the determination of the occurrence frequencies of particular categories, content analysis is classified as partially a quantitative method. This study used thematic analyses where six thematic analysis phases were applied, which were: the researcher becoming familiar with the data; the researcher created an initial list of items from the data set that have a reoccurring pattern; searching for themes within the data; reviewing themes, which required the researcher to look for data that reinforces or disproves the theory presented; defining and naming themes; and finally producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This study applied the thematic analysis method to analyze data collected. Thematic analysis refers to the process of using themes that emerge from the data collect to analyze the data (Marshall & G., 2014). This method is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It does so by categorizing and using rich detail to describe the data set, and may go as far as analyzing and deducing some facets of the research study. When this method was used in this study, three themes were identified and formed which were the basis of the analysis.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

Research studies need validity and reliability in order to attain credibility, and in qualitative research, this is achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Leung, 2015). Anssi Perakyla (2016) defines validity as the degree to which the research findings reveal actual meaning of the concept being studied accurately and adequately (Perakyla, 2016). Reliability, on the other hand, refers to “the ability to obtain the same results if the research were to be repeated or undertaken by any researcher” (Mohajan, 2017, p. 59).

Credibility may be defined as the extent to which the findings of the study signify the connotations of the research participants. In this study, credibility was achieved through ensuring that the participants’ own insights, experiences and evidence in academia is reflected on the data collected and findings of the study. The extent to which research findings apply or are relevant to other environments, settings or respondents is referred to as transferability (Noble & Smith, 2015). This study has generated findings and recommendations that focus on the realistic involvement of retired academics in academia, which could be applied to any other environment seeking the relevant proceedings and outcomes. Dependability refers to the ability for a study to produce the same results when repeated in the same context, methods and participants. In this study, the researcher provided a full description of participant, regarding their experience, position and age group, and data collection and analysis methods, in order to ensure that dependability may be achieved. Lastly, confirmability may be defined as the degree to which the outcomes of the study are not the preferences and characteristics of the researcher, but are the consequences of the experiences, insights and ideas of the participants. In this research, confirmability was ensured by keeping raw data of interview transcripts and research themes that were used, and linking numerous groups of data on which the findings are based.

### **3.8 Limitations of the Study**

The first and major limitation of the study was the limited literature/or research work done on the topic, leaving a major gap in literature. The second limitation was the accessibility of the required sample for the study, which led to the snowball sampling technique being used in order to actually find willing participants. Due to the qualitative nature of the study and the use of

snowball sampling, the sample size was small, which raised validity and generalizability concerns. In order to ensure the quality and the reliability of the data collected, the researcher interviewed: active academics who have been in the UKZN academia for over ten years; early career academics who are still trying to find their feet in academia, who are still fresh from being students (2-5 years in their positions); and retired academics who worked at UKZN. This was done to gain a complete insight on the gaps within the UKZN academia that could be filled by retired academics, and the realistic potential of retired academics to be active in the academia.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were a high priority for this study, thus the researcher ensured that ethical approval was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee prior to the data collection. Further ethical measures that were taken included: receiving informed consent from the respondents; ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participant; dissemination of results; and informing participants about their right to withdraw from the study. Respondents were approached to participate in the study and well briefed about the aims and objectives of it in order for respondents to be well aware of how the data collected from them would be used, before they offered their consent to participate. The researcher ensured that respondents remained anonymous and ensured that data collected would be used strictly for this study only. To prevent researcher bias, respondents were asked open-ended questions, which allowed them to express themselves as much as they could and not feel directed, manipulated/or influenced to any responses. The researcher ensured that they did not try to influence the participants' responses, and respondents were not interrupted during their responses.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the most appropriate research design for this study. The study is exploratory and qualitative in nature, thus requiring in-depth semi-structured interviews for data collection, which were used. The target population was the UKZN academic staff, both active and retired. These participants were selected using snowball sampling due to the unavailability

of individuals of such caliber. The chapter further addressed the validity and reliability issues, including the limitations of the study. The following chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

## **Chapter Four: Data Presentation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the methodology used to investigate the potential roles of retired academics at UKZN. This section presents and discusses the data collected in this study. Participants consisted of active early career academics, active senior academics, and retired academics. The presentation and discussion is intended to answer the following questions:

- What roles can retired academics play in UKZN?
- How would retired academics benefit from playing these roles?
- How can these roles benefit UKZN?

The chapter is divided into four sections: the potential roles for retired academics at UKZN; the benefits of having retired academics active in UKZN academia; benefits of being active in academia again for retired academics; followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

### **4.2 The Potential Roles for Retired Academics at UKZN**

This section presents the identification of potential roles that could be played by retired academics at UKZN. The first role is an academic role, which involve lecturing and tutoring undergraduate and postgraduate students; followed by a mentoring role, involving mentoring early career academics and post graduate students; and lastly the financial role, which involves any role that significantly benefits the institution financially.

#### **4.2.1 Academic Role**

When participants were asked if retired academics could play an active academic role in the UKZN academia, respondents were supportive of the idea, as Respondent 1 stated:

*“We do this already, I mean in our discipline we do this in multiple times, we employ them part-time basis because the post is gone and we’ve got nobody else to do it. But then the problem with that is it’s part-time, they come in just to do their teaching, they don’t help with administration they’re not really in the department, they’re just helping out. So many of them carry on doing teaching replacement, so that already does happen quite a lot”*

This is complemented by Respondent 2 stating:

*“In the first instance I do not think that a good academic should retire. What do I mean that a good academic shouldn’t retire? They could retire from the system in terms of the pay roll and the emoluments from the university. If you literally wanted good undergraduates, the better the experience, the better the teaching, literally. If I ran a university, my 1st year lectures most of them would be run by senior, seasoned, experienced academics. They have the approach, they have the background, they have the diagnostic acumen, and they should be there at the first years in order to generate good 1st and 2nd years. By the time people reach post graduate degrees, they would be learning on their own and be needing senior academics for consultation.”*

Some respondents, however, had concerns about the idea, as Respondent 3 expressed:

*“Classroom work does have a tendency of being cumbersome or overwhelming... But I... I think they can still teach but if they can work together when teaching, maybe they could teach a quarter, and the others can teach as well.”*

Respondent 7 further supported this statement by stating:

*“They’re quite thankful to stop lecturing first years, and all the admin that goes with it. But in terms of posts graduates, especially if you’ve got a research project, where they can contribute, then obviously that’s the ideal situation.”*

Respondents seemed to have different opinions regarding the involvement of retired academics in academic roles, such as lecturing. Although some supported the idea of retired academics teaching undergraduate classes, some expressed concerns regarding the amount of work and the pressure that comes with involvement with undergraduate students, thus suggesting that these academics only teach postgraduate students. Temple Grandin (2016) maintains this concern by

stating that most aging individuals experience more anxiety as they grow older, making it hard for such individuals to take on a workload that they would have easily carried out at their early age (Grandin, 2016).

#### **4.2.2 Mentoring Role**

The study found that 90% of the respondents perceive that the best and most important role that could be played by retired academics at UKZN is the mentoring role, as Respondent 4 explains:

*“I’d say the role that retired academics should play is to mentor young career academics, since they have walked this journey and they know exactly what to expect; the pitfalls, to assist early career academics but also let them go through pitfalls that will make them understand the environment and the terrain they’re operating in. So if I want to become a professor at the age of, let’s say, 40, so which means I need a space of 5 years, they know the mistakes you might make as an early career academic, that may prolong your journey to 10 years.”*

Respondent 7 further stated:

*“The more they publish, the more they have mentors around them, the more they assist to groom early career academics, and create the shortcut of actually mastering this art of publishing, then we’d have more publishers, we’d have more papers that are submitted to reputable journals, and that would be more money coming in to the university. So we need a good collaboration.”*

Respondent 5 shared the same view by stating:

*“I think they could be more assisting with supervision and mentoring those young ones.”*

When retired academics were asked if they would recommend mentoring as one of the roles that could be played by retired academics, they responded positively and expressed the advantages that would result from this role being played specifically by retired academics, as expressed by Respondent 3:

*“There could be a mentoring role possibly for students. But at the same time it depends on the department, it depends on the staff because some departments maybe better staffed to do that than others. It depends on the discipline obviously, because you can only really work within disciplines that you’ve had experience with.”*

Respondent 12 further supported this by saying:

*“Well if you’ve got a research project and you can get high quality students to do part of that research, then they obviously benefiting, you know, and especially... like for the water research commission, capacity building of students is a major requirement. So if you can get students through their PhD or masters or even honors and in fact even... like in my work, community development, there is starting to see capacity building of community members is quite an important thing. So then, if you’ve got funding for a project, you know, that academic would benefit that way.”*

Although respondents showed support for this role, some raised a concern that active young academics could potentially suffer from such support if it is not implemented adequately, as Respondent 1 explained:

*“But then if you do that, they need to sort out the KPAs because what happens if your younger staff starts co-supervising or they start co-teaching, they lose KPA points. So soon as you co-supervise a student, you only get half the number of points. So it’s detrimental for a younger staff member who requires the points for promotion, to actually co-supervise. So the two systems need to talk to each other, which doesn’t happen at UKZN right now. So if you want them to mentor, that’s fine, but then it mustn’t be detrimental to the younger staff. In other words they mustn’t lose points as a result of getting help.”*

The results reveal that mentorship is a highly influential method used to effectively develop new academics, gaining the benefits of recruitment, retention, and long-term maturation of future mentors (Dunham-Taylor, et al., 2008). Mentors, mentees, and organizations benefit from mentoring relationships and result to long lasting, productive relationships (Dunham-Taylor, et al., 2008).

### 4.2.3 Financial Role

According to the data, retired academics have a vital role of bringing funding to the university, as retired Respondent 2 stated:

*“They could raise funds to remain in the university and carry on some very vital tasks for which they are eminently qualified, and I am one of those. I retired officially in 2001; I am still at the university in 2018. The university doesn’t pay me, I pay myself but the funds are administered by the university. You have to use your reputation, you have to be acknowledged in the outside world that you can perform specific tasks for which there are shortages and they use your skills, and they pay for your skills. You keep them in the University, attract the (slight disturbance by a colleague)... attract funding from outside, make students, employ students or get students to be trained on the skills that you have for which you have attracted the funding. You hone them in, train them and they are generally academic skills, academic and research skills, and that’s what I’m doing. I even get Masters and Doctoral students to come and serve internships in this research unit. They get, they are fully funded by us.”*

Respondent 3 echoes this by affirming:

*“...When you retire, you kind of do research stuff. I mean I was a researcher in the school of law until the end of last year. And you write and then the university gets the money if you publish. But with regards to teaching, I haven’t really thought about it.”*

This is supplementary supported by Respondent 9:

*“I think in the university it’s a big thing to have students graduating. So the more you can send through, obviously the more funding they get. So it is a big benefit.”*

Findings show that the involvement of retired academics in the UKZN academia would attract a lot of funding through research publications, research projects, and postgraduate enrolment. This emphasizes the financial benefits of retired academics who mostly engage in research publications and have developed relations with the industry over the years (Perkmann, et al., 2013).

### **4.3 The Benefits of Being Active in Academia again for Retired Academics**

This section presents the benefits of being active in academia again for retired academics. The first benefits mentioned by the respondents were health benefits, which involve the psychological and physical benefits; followed by social benefits, involving interaction with fellow academics, authors, and recognition amongst scholars; and lastly the financial benefits, which involve the ability to not only depend on pension, but also generate an extra income through part-time and relaxed work involvement postretirement.

#### **4.3.1 Health Benefits**

According to the findings, retired academics may gain health benefits from postretirement employment, as Respondent 3 expressed:

*“So yes, perhaps give them a chance and it’s going to help them to be active health wise and even going to keep on thinking because you know somebody somewhere is waiting for you to learn from you and those kinds of things.”*

Respondent 12 supported this by stating:

*“Well obviously it will obviously depend on the retired person, and their strengths and weaknesses, you know, and also whether they have had enough of lecturing, and just want to pursue the postgraduate side, which a lot of academics do*

Dingemans and Henkens (2013) emphasize that retired academics who return to employment voluntarily and not for financial gains seem to get life satisfaction from the employment (Dingemans & Henkens, 2013). According to Beehr and Bennett (2014), work satisfies both financial and psychological wellbeing of an employee, thus bridge employment tends to provide the same satisfaction to retired academics (Beehr & Bennett, 2014).

### 4.3.2 Social Benefits

The study also found that retired academics may feel the need to interact with fellow colleagues and publishers in order to maintain relevance in the society, as stated by Respondent 3:

*“They shouldn’t just chill at home because some of them... when people retire, I’ve talked with a few of them, when people retire they have this thing that they do not have a plan in place as to what they’re going to do when they are out there... So most of the people when they leave UKZN, let’s say at 60, some of them are still fresh by then but they just do not have a plan in place as to what else they can do. I think coming back to the university and working as Emeritus or, yes, in that whatever position that they are working in, it’s going to keep them alive and it’s also going to give them some money.”*

Respondent 4 further expressed:

*“most of the people when they leave i-UKZN, let’s say at 60, some of them are still fresh by then but they just do not have a plan in place as to what else they can do. I think coming back to the university and working as Emeritus or, jah, in that whatever position that they are working in, it’s going to keep them alive and it’s also going to give them some money”*

These results reveal that one of the most common motives for bridge employment amongst academics is to remain relevant in what they do best, feeding to their self-worth and self-esteem (Alcover, et al., 2014). Mentoring other academics also encourages the feeling of significance and having a role to play in academia, which sort of celebrates their seniority and years of acquired crucial skills (Mazumdar, et al., 2018).

### 4.3.3 Financial Benefits

The study further found that retired academics always benefit financially when they participate in postretirement employment, as expressed by Respondent 3:

*“Some of them go out there, whatever money that the university has given them in some sort of a pension package, they use it within a short space of time and if it is not*

*sustainable, whatever money they have, no matter how many millions, if it is not sustained one way or the other, it's going to get finished.”*

Respondent 1 further supports this by stating:

*“It could work to your advantage as the university and to the retired guy as well. So if you're a really good retired academic and you're still producing 4 or 5 papers a year, you would be earning a decent salary. And it's an incentive for you to produce papers and to supervise, because you're getting a salary.”*

Respondent 12 identified an issue that may cause uncertainty to retired academics' involvement with the University by stating:

*...the university finance system is not conducive to that type of thing. It's got more and more difficult to access your own funds, let alone other funds. So I think they would have to work on that in making it more user-friendly.*

Retired academics who return to employment mostly receive an extra income for their services, in addition to their pension. Some retired academics participate in bridge employment for financial gains due to unsatisfactory pension or mismanagement of pension funds (Zhan, et al., 2015).

#### **4.4 The Need to Engage Retired Academics in UKZN academia**

This section presents the perceived need to engage retired academics in UKZN academia, which basically outlines the benefits of having retired academics in academia. The first benefit that respondents mentioned was the relations retired academics had developed with the industry, which involve the relationships developed by retired academics with private companies and organizations throughout their years of working in the industry, thus connecting students with relevant organizations in the field; followed by forming partnerships with private funders, concerning the involvement of retired academics in research projects with organizations outside academia; and lastly retaining institutional knowledge, which involves retired academics sharing their matured institutional knowledge with new academics, ensuring that the institution does not lose its culture and the quality of knowledge provided.

#### **4.4.1 Relations with the Industry**

According to the study, the university may need retired academics in order to form relations with the industry, as Respondent 7 expressed:

*“Some of the lecturers have got so much to give back to students, so certainly giving lectures is a possibility, and then interacting with students’ field trips. You know, since I’ve retired I have also assisted incoming lecturers with ,you know, because you know all the field trips, u know all the contact numbers, especially at my work, in Community Development. It’s not just a case of, you know, going to a far more something, it’s working with people who you’ve built a relationship with over the years.”*

Respondent 2 further stated:

*“You have to use your reputation, you have to be acknowledged in the outside world that you can perform specific tasks for which there are shortages and they use your skills, and they pay for your skills. You keep them in the University.”*

The study found that retired academics can use their reputations and connections to link the institution with the industry. Balconi, Breschi and Lissoni (2004) revealed the power of social networking in academia by stating that University-industry relations are crucial in the creation of the academic curriculum and the production of competitive graduates (Balconi, et al., 2004).

#### **4.4.2 Sourcing funds for the University**

Findings also revealed that the university needs retired academics in order to attract private funders, as expressed by Respondent 12:

*“So from the financial point of view, if you’ve got funding for a student, it’s a huge help, and I know certainly other people in the department. I’ve had lots of requests from students to supervise, but they need funding. So if I had access to that funding, that would*

*be a huge thing for them to continue studying. Look I've had other funding avenues to pay for, like consulting or whatever, so that's one way, yes."*

Respondent 8 also stated:

*"...funding is a big issue, so if you've got an academic who is still active, still applying for funding, that's gonna be a huge benefit. Because then the university doesn't have to pay, so they benefit all around. So they don't have to pay out financially, the students are paid for in terms of registration. Yes, so it is a benefit if the academic is keen on pursuing projects that get them funding, yes."*

Respondent 2 further supported this by saying:

*"...attract funding from outside, make students, employ students or get students to be trained on the skills that you have for which you have attracted the funding. You hone them in, train them and their academic skills, academic and research skills, and that's what I'm doing."*

According to the findings, retired academics are able to source funding through research projects and research publications. These funds are used to pay the retired academics, and may be used to fund students registration and/or studies, and students/or graduates may be employed in these research projects as well. Galbrandsen and Smeby (2005) emphasize that university research is funded by industry, thus institutions are benefiting from having publishing academics (Galbrandsen & Smeby, 2005).

#### **4.4.3 Retaining Institutional/ Academic Knowledge**

The study also found that retired academics have crucial knowledge that the university may need to retain for the improvement of the academic curriculum content, as expressed by Respondent 7:

*"It's not going to cost us a lot of money. It's going to cost us probably an office and a lab, that's it. And what are we getting in return? We're getting mentorship, co-*

*supervision, specialized skills, and papers, which takes pressure off your academic staff. And those are, to me, this would be nice to be able to go and have a cup of coffee in the morning with a guy in his 70s or 80s, who is just down of your size or down of your human... those are type of people you want, and I mean any culture surely reveres knowledge, wisdom, old guys.”*

Respondent 5 also stated:

*“...Just for retired staff to come in. often they just put an office aside and the guys share an office space, that’s fine. You give them an office, and there’s two or three desks, and two or three computers. Often all these guys want is a computer setup and an internet connection, and a laboratory so they can carry on working. There’s guys at Rhodes in their mid-80s that are still coming in. Every morning they come in for 2 or 3 hours, they’re producing 2, 3, 4 papers a year, that’s where your money is. So yes, we should be looking after those guys, not kicking them out.”*

These results show that the skills possessed by retired academics may be used to better equip incoming and active academics, which would then inform the quality of curriculum they develop. Academic/or staff development is crucial to the accomplishment of colleges and schools, as it can hold an important role in encouraging academic excellence and innovation in an environment of decreased funding, increased student enrollment, and faculty flexibility (Haines & Popovich, 2014).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented and deliberated findings around the possible roles for retired academics in the UKZN academia. Findings revealed that there are multiple roles that could be played by retired academics, based on their skills and their expertise. These roles included: lecturing undergraduate and/or postgraduate classes; mentoring young career academics who are still finding their way into academia, and/ or research candidates who are not too knowledgeable about research and those who need research to progress in their employment positions; and lastly, sourcing funds for the institution, where retired academics attract funding through

research publications, research projects, and other ways they may see fit. Retired academics could benefit from being active in academia again by being active, keeping their minds active, still having an income flowing, and still doing what they love in their own pace. The institution needs such academics retained within the institution, as they would continue benefiting from the retired academics' vast knowledge and sometimes specialized skills. The following chapter discusses and analyses the data that was collected in the study.

## **Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented data collected in the study, this section discusses and analyses the data presented in Chapter 4. This chapter is divided into three sections guided by the objectives of the study, namely: exploring the academic, mentoring and financial roles that retired academics could play at UKZN; identifying the benefits of being active in academia again for retired academics; and determining the effect of engaging retired academics in academia postretirement. The chapter is then completed with the conclusion of the chapter.

### **5.2 Exploring the Academic, Mentoring and Financial Roles that Retired Academics could play at UKZN**

The first objective of the study was to explore the academic, mentoring and financial roles that retired academics could play at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Findings showed that there are multiple roles perceived to be best suitable for retired academics that include: academic roles, including teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students, and holding seminars; mentoring roles, which include mentoring and supervising postgraduate students, and mentoring active academics; and financial roles, which include producing research publications and sourcing industrial funding for research projects. These findings are further discussed below.

#### **5.2.1 Academic Role**

The study found that both active and retired academics felt that retired academics would be highly beneficial to the institution if they played an academic role. As much as all the respondents felt that retired academics, with their rich experience in lecturing and interacting with students, would be more effective in teaching undergraduate classes than any other lecturers, 90% of the respondents recommended seminars for post graduate students as the best

teaching environment for retired academics, considering the relaxed nature of the environment and the amount of workload. These respondents argued that retired academics that are keen to remain active aim to take on responsibilities that are not too demanding, physically and emotionally. The main distress was that retired academics would not be fit enough, physically and psychologically, to take on the bulk of workload that accompanies teaching undergraduate studies.

Some of the intriguing findings of the study were that the respondents who are early career academics recommended that retired academics become involve in teaching undergraduate classes because of their experience in teaching, which may include developing the best techniques for lecturing undergraduates, and the patience they may have acquired for students over the years. These academics further expressed their frustrations with the workload that they have, involving lecturing undergraduates and publishing research papers, thus trusting that the involvement of retired academics would take some of the workload off their shoulders so that they could focus on publishing, since it is a requirement for progressing in their career and displaying competitiveness in their work.

Senior active and retired academics, on the other hand, felt that teaching undergraduate classes would be too strenuous on retired academics, thus guest lecturing and teaching postgraduate students seemed to be the most favorable options for retired academics. Senior active lecturers were more against the idea of retired academics teaching undergraduate students than retired academics themselves. Some active academics went as far as confessing that they are looking forward to retiring due to the amount of work that accompanies teaching undergraduate classes. Retired academics, on the other hand, were more open to the idea, although they also did raise the above mentioned concerns. Their openness to teaching undergraduate students displayed a gap they may be seeing in the work of active academics, especially the young ones, and may see themselves performing a better job or assisting in producing better results. Some of these academics even started reminiscing about their active years, where academic performance, from the years taken by students to complete their undergraduate qualifications to the quality of graduates produced, was better than the current work. Regardless of this perception, the concern of the workload that comes with teaching undergraduate academics still remained.

This concern was further expressed by Fitzgerald (2018) who stressed that senior academics may still have active minds, still hungry for new knowledge and eager to share long acquired knowledge with the younger generations who join academia, but physically and health wise, these academics cannot handle as much work as they did in their early or younger ages, thus requiring lighter work to engage in (Fitzgerald, 2018). This suggested that teaching undergraduate classes would be highly overwhelming for these academics, due to the number of students taught in undergraduate classes and the amount of work that accompanies that. Temple Grandin (2016) further maintains this concern by stating that most aging individuals experience more anxiety as they grow older, making it harder for such individuals to take on a workload that they would have easily carried out at their early ages (Grandin, 2016).

### **5.2.2 Mentoring Role**

The biggest role that all the respondents seemed to be in favor of was the mentoring role. The study found that the mentoring role is divided into two forms, which are: mentoring postgraduate students and mentoring early career academics. Respondents expressed that postgraduate students could highly benefit from being mentored by retired academics who would have time for them and their work, and invest their rich knowledge in the students. This is based on the assumption that when retired academics reenter the world of academia post-retirement, they are expected to be part-time, working at their own pace. With such relaxed work environment, there academics would have more time to go through the work of the students they mentor/ supervise, and not be distracted with other work demands such as lecturing and the pressure to publish research papers rapidly, which seems to be the case with active academics. This would provide postgraduate students the opportunity to get distinctions in their postgraduate studies and research papers.

Other respondents mentioned that retired academics often participate in research projects outside academia/or the institution, and most of them engage students that they are mentoring in these projects. This would further expose postgraduate students to research and strengthen their research skills, which would be an additional benefit to the university. Retired academics would, in turn, benefit by producing skilled researchers and producing research papers with

these students, thus accumulating funds from these publications. Such involvement of retired academics would assist the university to achieve its goal of academic excellence.

Further results showed that retired academics could mentor early career academics, and in providing such services, they would better equip academics who have entered the field to better understand and master the world of academia. Retired academics would assist in developing and structuring the curriculum, and developing lecturing skills that retired academics have acquired in their years of experience. Some of the respondents pointed out that most senior/or retired academics gained experience in their field of work first before they came into academia, whereas young academics move from being students to being academics without gaining any experience in their field and knowing how to balance theory with reality. This becomes dangerous as it affects the quality of graduates produced by these academics, thus impacting on the institution's image. Retired academics would then bring balance by mentoring and grooming these academics to become academics that are capable of producing competitive graduates in the workplace, with the understanding of the real world.

Haines and Popovich (2014) emphasize that the power of mentorship is not only to show the mentee how things are/or should be done, but it is to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the mentee in order for them to develop strategies and/or techniques that would work for them better (Haines & Popovich, 2014). In this case, retired academics mentoring active academics and/or students should not only teach them what works and what does not work in academia, but it should also allow them to develop personal strategies to gain knowledge and produce the required results, and/or develop new ways of lecturing/or learning that will adapt with the ever-changing academic environment but still address the fundamentals of academia and produce the desired results. Due to the bond expected to develop between the mentor and the mentee, Lewis (2017) highlights that the relationship may last years beyond the mentorship period, indicating a positive/or correct mentorship relationship (Lewis, 2017).

### **5.2.3 Financial Role**

The third role explored in the study is the financial role. Findings showed that the involvement of retired academics in academia is more about financial benefits for the institution than anything else. The different ways that retired academics play a financial role in academia are: producing a number of postgraduate students through mentoring and/or supervision, thus attracting bursaries/or funding for such students; attracting funding/or financial rewards for publishing research papers through mentoring early career academics which would lead to an increased number of research publications by the mentees, and retired academics producing research papers themselves in collaboration with postgraduate students or other academics (national and international ones); and attracting external sponsors by participating in research projects sponsored externally.

The latter attracts external organizations through research projects, and these organizations pay for the projects to the university, which then abstracts a certain percentage from the funds and then pay the retired academic from these funds. Most respondents felt that the university enjoys having retired academics active again due to the fact that these academics pay themselves with the funding they attract into the institution. An interesting difference in the responses given by the respondents was that early career academics only mentioned the financial benefit gain through publishing research papers, whereas most retired academics emphasized the role of attracting external funding through the involvement in research projects. Some of the respondents pointed out that UKZN finance department make the process of accessing funding so hard that it discourages retired academics who perceive this as a sign of not being valued or acknowledged by the University for bringing such valuable resources.

Gulbrandsen and Smeby (2005) emphasize that university research is funded by industry, thus institutions benefiting from having publishing academics (Galbrandsen & Smeby, 2005). This emphasizes the financial benefits of retired academics, who mostly engage in research publications and have developed relations with the industry over the years (Perkmann, et al., 2013).

### **5.3 Identifying the Benefits of Being Active in Academia Again for Retired Academics**

The second objective of the study was to identify the benefits of being active in academia again for retired academics. This objective essentially aims to answer the question, ‘why should retired academics choose to be active again post retirement?’ Findings showed that there are three main benefits to being active again in academia post retirement, which are: social benefits, health benefits, and financial benefits.

#### **5.3.1 Health Benefits**

The study found that some academics retire because of age, while they still feel highly competitive physically, psychologically and intellectually. As a result, most retired academics engage in other income generating activities, and sports, postretirement, if they do not return to their previous employment. One of the retired respondents even claimed to be more intellectually competitive than most active academics at UKZN. Koopman-Boyden and Macdonald confirm this by stating that other retired academics feel that their chronological age fail them, as they still feel young and capable of continuing to be active in their fields of employment (Koopman-Boyden & Macdonald, 2003). The study further revealed that bridge employment may have health benefits for the retired academics. Some of these benefits included the improved sense of self-worth and self-esteem, resulting from the feeling of being relevant and needed in academia. Dingemans and Henkens (2013) added that retired academics who return to employment voluntarily and not for financial gains seem to get life satisfaction from the employment (Dingemans & Henkens, 2013). Work fulfills both manifest (financial) and latent (psychological) functions for employees, thus protecting retired academics from the feeling of loneliness and irrelevant (Beehr & Bennett, 2014).

### **5.3.2 Social Benefits**

Based on the results of the study, retired academics have numerous relationships that they've built throughout their years in academia, provincially, nationally and internationally, that they would like to maintain. Being inactive in academia may be scary to retiring academics as it may present detachment from academic friends and family, leading to the sense of irrelevance and loneliness. Thus, retired academics return to employment to maintain these relations formed throughout the years, to interact intellectually with fellow colleagues, and to mainly share the rich acquired knowledge possessed by these academics, and to also gain new and fresh knowledge. This is further supported by Rowson (2013) who stressed that retired persons intend to remain socially active due to the fear of losing roles and relationships that have been developed over the years and have become one's identity (Rowson, 2013). Alcover, Topa and Parry (2014) also revealed that one of the most common motives for bridge employment amongst academics is to remain relevant in what they do best and interact with fellow academics (Alcover, et al., 2014). Mentoring other academics boosts the feeling of significance and having a role to play in academia, which sort of celebrates the retired academics' seniority and years of acquired crucial skills (Mazumdar, et al., 2018).

### **5.3.3 Financial Benefits**

Results revealed that retired academics would benefit financially from returning to academia postretirement, without having a heavy load of work on them. According to these results, retired academics engage heavily in research postretirement and publish more research papers than they ever did when they were still active. The publications generate an income for authors, from which the university receives a percentage and pays the retired academic. Zhan, Wang and Shi (2015) further confirm this by stating that retired academics who return to employment mostly receive an extra income for their services, in addition to their pension (Zhan, et al., 2015). This supports the findings that revealed that some retired academics participate in bridge employment for financial gains, due to unsatisfactory pension or mismanagement of pension funds.

## **5.4 Determining the Effect of Engaging Retired Academics in Academia Postretirement**

The third objective of the study was to identify the need to engage retired academics in UKZN academia. This objective basically aimed to answer the question, ‘why should the UKZN prioritize offering roles in academia to retired academics post their retirement?’ Based on the results found, retaining retired academics would be highly beneficial to UKZN, considering the institution’s mission and goals. Findings revealed that the University of KwaZulu-Natal would benefit in three domains, namely: forming and maintaining relations with the industry; sourcing funds for the university; and retaining institutional/academic knowledge.

### **5.4.1 Relations with the Industry**

With a past industrial experience, retired academics use their relations with the industry to create employment opportunities for graduates. These associations are also used to keep the institution up to date with the industry through research projects and other interactions that ensure the relevance of the curriculum. Balconi, Breschi and Lissoni (2004) supported this claim by stating that social networking in academia, where University-industry relations are formed, are crucial in the creation of a competitive academic curriculum and the production of competitive graduates (Balconi, et al., 2004).

### **5.4.2 Sourcing funds for the University**

The study found that retired academics are able to source funding through research publications where the industry funds research publications and retired academics seem to focus more on research publications, thus attracting more funding. Retired academics also engage in research projects that are funded by private and public funders, which may offer funding towards students registration and/or studies, and employment opportunities to students/or graduates. Gulbrandsen and Smeby (2005) supports this by emphasizing that university research is funded by industry,

thus institutions are benefiting from having publishing academics (Galbrandsen & Smeby, 2005).

#### **5.4.3 Retaining Institutional/ Academic Knowledge**

The study further revealed that the biggest concern shared by senior respondents was that the university does not teach academics or postgraduate students how to teach or how to lecture, thus posing a threat in the development of undergraduates, which then shows an urgent need to involve retired academics in mentoring early career academics. This role may be highly crucial to the university because it affects the quality of graduates produced and the undergraduate pass rate, which would then have an impact on the overcrowded undergraduate classes due to an increased number of graduates not graduating on record time. Retired academics would share their knowledge and skills with early career academics (and matured active academics who still need guidance) in order to equip them for a development of an updated, competitive curriculum and production competitive graduates.

Retaining retired academics would ensure that the institution does not lose its culture and the content of academic curriculum. The interaction of retired academics and active academics would also lead to the development of skilled, knowledgeable and competitive academics, who will in turn ensure that academic excellence is achieved. Haines and Persky (2014) confirms this by stating that the grooming of early career academics promotes academic excellence, thus highly fundamental in the success of colleges and schools (Haines & Persky, 2014). This argument proposes that the engagement of retired academics in such roles may be highly beneficial to the university, ensuring that the institution possess quality academics who are competitive in their fields and capable of contributing to the academic excellence of the university. The engagement of retired academics in academia also ensures that institutional knowledge is not lost with the retirees, which is beneficial to the university as it maintains its employees who have developed crucial skills over years of practical experience and intense trainings (Beehr & Bennett, 2014). This further serves the purpose of a university by allowing the interaction of different great minds of different generations to share innovative “fresh and matured” knowledge, and allowing these individuals to learn from each other (Crow, 2014).

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The research findings revealed that there are multiple roles that could be played by retired academics in higher education institutions, particularly at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These roles included academic, mentoring and financial roles. When it came to the opinions on which role was best suitable for retired academics, respondents seemed to differ according to their academic experience, with regards to the academic roles (particularly teaching) that could be played by retired academics.

With regards to mentoring roles, respondents revealed the importance of the involvement of retired academics, resulting to a highly beneficial contribution towards UKZN's goal of academic excellence. Both these roles seemed to bring financial benefits to the institution, giving the implication that retired academics are highly beneficial in terms of finances to the institution, thus the university should prioritize accommodating such academics. The study also revealed that academics may attract big research projects that may offer employment opportunities to students and alumni, and also offer funding students' registration and tuition fees. These findings further highlighted the health, social and financial effects that the engagement in academia has on retired academics, thus supporting the return of such academics in academia. Lastly, the study revealed that the university benefits from the involvement of retired academics, with private funding paid towards research publications and retaining the vast institutional knowledge possessed by retired academics. The following chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The study contained three objectives, which were to explore the academic, mentoring and financial roles that retired academics could play at UKZN, to identify the benefits of being active in academia again for retired academics and to determine the effect of engaging retired academics in academia post-retirement. In this chapter, the major findings corresponding to the research objectives are outlined and conclusions based on the discussion in the previous chapter are drawn. Recommendations are then made, based on these major findings and conclusions are detailed in this chapter, followed by limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

### **6.2 Conclusions Aligned to the Research Objectives**

#### **6.2.1 Conclusions aligned to objective 1: Exploring the Academic, Mentoring and Financial Roles That Retired Academics Could Play at UKZN**

##### ***6.2.1.1 Academic Role***

The study concludes that retired academics are not being effectively utilized and yet they have played a critical academic role at UKZN through the years of teaching/or lecturing and involvement in the development of the curriculum. These skills acquired throughout the years of practical experience may be needed to bring academic excellence.

##### ***6.2.1.2 Mentoring Role***

The study further determined that the involvement of retired academics in mentoring roles may be the missing ingredient in facing and alleviating the student enrolments and academic performance issues faced by research universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With the deteriorating

quality of university education and undergraduate students not finishing their programmes on time, primitive knowledge and specialized skills possessed by retired academics may be needed to resolve such issues. Young innovative academics, who have reported being overwhelmed with such issues, expressed a need to desperately be mentored and guided by matured, retired academics.

### ***6.2.1.3 Financial Role***

Financially, the study found that any role played by retired academics would generate some kind of income for the organization. With the literature showing that retired academics become more involved in research publications and mentoring young academics and postgraduate students on such activities, the university would then produce more research publications, thus bringing in more research funding.

## **6.2.2 Conclusions aligned to objective 2: Identifying the Benefits of Being Active in Academia again for Retired Academics**

### ***6.2.2.1 Health Benefit***

The study revealed that the involvement of retired academics in academia would be beneficial to both the institution and the retired academic. One of the crucial benefits for the retired academic is the health benefits. Research has shown that an active rest/or retirement with relaxed involvement in employment activities may reduce the levels of stress and other diseases related to inactive rest for older persons.

### ***6.2.2.2 Social Benefit***

Retired academics reported a need to remain relevant in their environment and be able to use their skills postretirement, in their own pace. Such involvement would reduce the feelings of irrelevance and uselessness while possessing unique skills that may still be useful and highly needed in academia.

### ***6.2.2.3 Financial Benefit***

Involvement in academia postretirement may also be driven by financial needs. In such involvement, retired academics receive an extra income, whether they need it or not, from relaxed employment activities carried out in one's own pace.

## **6.2.3 Conclusions aligned to objective 3: Determining the Effect of Engaging Retired Academics in Academia Postretirement**

### ***6.2.3.1 Relations with the Industry***

The study revealed that universities need relations with the industry, be it for curriculum relevance purposes or for the progression of its graduates. Retired academics who usually engage in more than one employment commitment from different fields afford these relationships for universities. Thus creating space for retired academics is equivalent to creating space for new relations with the industry

### ***6.2.3.2 Sourcing funds for the University***

Through the relations mentioned above, retired academics are able to attract or source funding for the university, either through projects with the private or public sector. With the global financial crisis in academia/or universities, such funding would be highly useful, as the university also receives a share. These projects may also fund students' tuition fees, which would be highly beneficial to any 21<sup>st</sup> century university.

### ***6.2.3.3 Retaining Institutional/ Academic Knowledge***

Furthermore, the study found that the knowledge and specialized skills possessed by retired academics may be used in developing an effective and relevant curriculum, thus leading to academic excellence desired by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

### **6.3 Recommendations to Solve the Research Problem**

Taking into account that retired academics are currently not fully utilized academically, the study recommends that the engagement of retired academics in academia may be the best move towards the alleviation of problems facing universities in the 21st century. In the case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, such a move may help achieve the goals and aspirations of the university.

Mindful of the fact that retired academics could be used as mentors, the study recommends that the involvement of retired academics through mentoring may guide academics in the development of a relevant curriculum and effective teaching skills, sharing their experience of learning to manage undergraduate classes and one's own research work. The improvement of active academics in engaging undergraduate students may lead to the academic excellence desired by the university, also making the university the ideal institution to staff and students. With the improvement in the curriculum developed by the mentored staff would lead to recognition of the quality of the university's graduates in the industry, opening opportunities of partnership with the private sector, thus creating opportunities of internships and employment for graduates. Most retired academics had been active/or employed in the industry prior to their involvement in academia, thus possessing theoretical and practical knowledge that is needed by early career academics who move straight from being students to being academics without practical experience.

Noting that the study found that academics could source funding for the university, the study recommends that by engaging retired academics, the university gets to explore multiple ways to source funding. The first one is that retired academics work part-time at their own pace, having more time to produce research publications, individually or in collaboration with postgraduate students and other colleagues. Research publications are funded by the industry and the university receives a percentage of these funds and pay retired academics from these funds. Furthermore, retired academics attract research projects into the institution where the institution manages the funds on behalf of the retired academic involved and pays employees participating in the project from the project funds. The university further extracts a percentage from the funds,

further gaining financial benefits from the engagement of retired academics. Relationships formed with private companies/ organizations through these projects may offer internships and job opportunities to graduates, increasing the employment rate of the UKZN graduates.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for Future Studies**

Although the purpose and objectives of this study was achieved, it merely provided a basis for the observations and recommendations for the potential roles retired academics could perform at UKZN. It would be interesting to see if the anticipated outcomes are achieved if the researcher's recommendations are implemented and followed through. Qualitative research methods may be used for future studies on this topic, as they produce reliable, in-depth information. Due to the unavailability of retired academics, purposive and snowball sampling is recommended, in order to be able to access the population of interest.

As various universities and institutions in South Africa face similar challenges as those experienced by UKZN, the researcher would like to recommend that a similar study be conducted at other universities and Technicon's in South Africa, particularly at those in KZN like at DUT – Durban University of Technology, to see if similar results are achieved and the benefits of this study making a much larger impact.

#### **6.5 Limitations of the Study**

This study may have achieved its purpose and objectives, but it merely provided data based on the views and perceptions of active and retired academics on potential roles for retired academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore a call still stands for a more detailed, factual and departmental study that will reveal the unique needs of different colleges and/or schools within the university and the relevance of engaging retired academics in these different departments.

The study investigated the views and perceptions of the respondents based on their experiences, thus respondents from different academic levels were selected. The study did not, however, investigate the unique goals and aspirations of different departments, which could have exposed the opportunities they have for retired academics and the relevance of such academics in these departments. This could be an area that could be further explored to deeply explore potential roles for retired academics at UKZN.

Some of the limitations encountered during the execution of the study are as follows:

- The unavailability of the respondents, using snowball sampling may have led to the recruitment of participants from similar departments, mostly being Humanities staff, which then threatens the generalizability of the study. The researcher approached individuals from different departments in order to prevent this issue, and requested referrals from these participants.
- Most of the respondents did not have enough time to participate in the study due to prior commitments, thus researcher tried to arrange flexible appointments that accommodated the busy schedules of the respondents. Interviews were also recorded using a voice recorder, in order to keep the interviews short, but not leaving out any information.
- Respondents felt uncomfortable being asked about their age, leading to certain personal details being left out of the study. The researcher then chose to leave those details out, as the study focuses more on one's experience than their age.
- Rank, race and gender had to be removed from the biographical information due to the fact that the limited number of retired and active academics of certain positions who participated in the study could've been identifiable due to their rank, gender or race. The exclusion of such information made respondents more comfortable to participate in the study and share their unfiltered opinion regarding the investigation of the study.
- The researcher moved from quantitative to qualitative due to the shortage of available participants willing to complete a questionnaire, and an issue of not being able to access a database of retired academics.

## **6.6 Conclusion of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to identify and explore potential roles for retired academics in academia, particularly at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in order to mitigate the issue of increasing influx of students enrolling in the university, leading to overcrowded lecture halls and overwhelmed academics. Results also showed that the engagement of retired academics could guide active academics with the development of curriculum and the publication of research papers. The researcher believes that the purpose and the research objectives have been achieved through interviewing active and retired academics regarding the roles that could be played by retired academics in academia.

Through the successful achievement of the purpose of the study and the research objectives, the study provided the basis and recommendations for determining the potential roles for retired academics that would benefit the university and the retired academics involved. Regardless, a more concrete and scientifically sound regarding potential roles for retired academics in academia may still be explored.

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## Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Letter



02 November 2017

Mr Clyde Blessie (215081474)  
Graduate School of Business & Leadership  
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Blessie,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1914/017M  
Project title: Establishing the potential roles of retired academics at UKZN

### Approval Notification – Expedited Approval

In response to your application received on 10 October 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....  
(Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Emmanuel Mutambara  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Muhammad Hoque  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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