

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**FACTORS AFFECTING ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF ACADEMIC
EMPLOYEES AT THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

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- i. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- ii. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged.
- iii. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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ABSTRACT

Employees are said to be organisations' greatest asset as they form part of organisations' competitive advantage. Consequently, organisations seek to attract and retain the best talent to gain competitive advantage; offering them support, incentives, and making them feel that they are an essential part of the organisation. Employee retention is the most essential target for organisations. Recruiting new candidates is a very labour intensive and expensive exercise that often demands that company resources be directed towards it. However, poor staff retention poses the challenge of continually having to repeat the exercise. The hiring of qualified candidates is essential for an organisation, but their retention is more important than hiring because a huge amount is spent on the orientation and training of the new employees. This research, therefore, explored the factors affecting the attraction of academic employees and assessed the factors influencing their retention at the Durban University of Technology. In addition, the researcher set out to establish factors which employees perceived as critical in attracting and retaining the academic talent. The researcher also sought to investigate whether any significant differences existed between the views of academic staff when their responses were grouped by academic ranking. This study commenced with an exhaustive review of research literature followed by a practical survey and interviews. These surveys were conducted on all campuses of the Durban University of Technology. The study found that the university was not doing enough to attract academic talent as job offers appeared to be the dominant reason for employees opting for entering the employ of the institution. The study also found training and mentorship, flexible working hours, information, equipment and resources, job satisfaction and challenging jobs, to be the factors affecting the retention of academic personnel at the Durban University of Technology. The key recommendation to management of the institution was to develop effective employee attraction and retention strategies by improving factors such as the benefit and remuneration system, culture and working environment, and to develop a performance-management system. To achieve this senior management is to be visible at all times, changing the management style from the top-down to the bottom-up approach.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Employees are an integral part of any organisation. An academic employee serves higher education institutions having services that are vital to academic institutions' existence. Studies have shown that the demand for academic employees in higher education and training institutions has been on the rise; and is likely to continue to increase. This is especially true now that the South African government has decided significantly to increase its contributions to higher education, leading to the conclusion of the plan to establish two more universities in the country (Samuel and Chipunza, 2013). Samuel and Chipunza (2013) raise concerns about the sufficiency of the prospect of the supply of academics in South Africa. This they attribute to better service attraction in public and private sectors. This view has been supported by studies conducted by Mubarak, Wahab, and Khan (2012) and Netswara, Rankhumise and Mavundla (2005).

This study, therefore, investigated the factors that are seen to be affecting the Durban University of Technology's ability to attract and retain its academic talent. This chapter outlines the importance of conducting this research, and identifies the potential beneficiaries of this research.

1.2 Motivation of the Study

Many employers recognise that the greatest asset of any organisation is a talented and committed workforce (Manpower Services Pty Ltd, 2009). The success of any organisation depends on having the right number of employees, with the right skills and abilities. Academic employees acquire specific expertise which is costly and difficult to replace. Therefore, attracting, motivating, and retaining knowledgeable employees is important in a knowledge-based and tight labour market, in which changing knowledge-management practices and global convergence of technology has redefined the nature of work (Samuel and Chipunza, 2013).

Higher education institutions are forced to look after their valued academic staff. Consequently, having an effective attraction and retention strategy is essential for their

existence, over and above its obvious desirability. In order to retain knowledgeable workers, organisations must ensure that they pay close attention to the individual development needs of each person (Bagraim, Cunnington, Portgieter and Viedge, 2007).

Attracting and retaining the necessary talent broadens into the realm of ascertaining an appropriate employment culture and environment; and making sure that there is a good fit in the employment relationship on an ongoing basis (Nel *et al.*, 2012). The workforce of institutions of higher learning is the key resource (that is, academic employees). The academic workforce therefore accounts for a large component of the budget of higher education institutions. Such employees have crucial roles to play in accomplishing the objectives of the institution. This research aimed to assess the factors affecting attraction of academic employees; and evaluating the factors affecting the retention of academic employees.

1.3 Focus of the Study

This study is centred on establishing the factors affecting attraction and retention of academic employees. The focus of this study was also on the factors which employees of Durban University of Technology perceived as critical in attracting and retaining academic personnel. During the process, the study also sought to investigate whether any significant differences existed between the views of academic staff when their responses were grouped by academic ranking. In the process, gender-specific differences were also investigated.

1.4 Problem Statement

Attraction and retention of highly skilled staff is a concern in South Africa. Skills shortage has been thought to be the root of many challenges that the country is facing, including poverty, uneven development, and unemployment. Labour experts have attributed South Africa's skills shortage to the emigration of highly-skilled workers, immigration restrictions for high-skilled foreigners, and a dysfunctional education system (Business Tech, 2014). Emigration of high-skilled employees has also posed a challenge in the education sector. These challenges are, in part, linked to organisations' ability to attract, develop, and retain their employees. There seem to be difficulties in higher education institutions of pooling the right talents that can impel these institutions to greater heights. This challenge is more pronounced in Universities of Technology (UOTs), making it

difficult for UOTs to remain as competitive as the historical or traditional universities. Highly educated academics leave the country to pursue careers elsewhere in the world. Global businesses are experiencing a shortage in supply of talent; and there has been a rapid growth in its demand. The gap is said to be a challenge to every employer in the world. Kapoor and Sherif (2012) noted that only those organisations willing to adapt their human-resources practices to the changing global labour market conditions will be able to attract and retain high-performing employees. Shortage of talent is seen to be a problem not only in developing countries, but worldwide. It has been observed in all industries, education being no exception. The imminent ageing and retirement of baby boomers poses a challenge to the global labour force. It has been reported that more workers are retiring at a rate that is faster than the time taken to replace their skills and expertise.

A study by Hom, Roberson & Ellis, (2008) cited in Muir (2014), revealed that there was lower staff retention for women than for men. This was found to be caused by various factors, such as: low association as ‘in-group’ members in male-majority work settings, domestic responsibilities / obligations that were poorly accommodated for by the firm, lower pay, sparser developmental opportunities, and more career obstacles. Bennett (2010) states that labour force started growing faster as a result of women entering the labour market in the 60’s. Women’s participation in the workforce is now at parity with men’s. At the organizational level, in order to match workforce demographics, organisations need to focus on ensuring positions dominated by one gender are open to all. Bennett (2010) further mentions that trends in outsourcing and recruiting are resulting in sources of talent to fill gaps in staffing – but demographic changes (baby-boomer, retirement, the influx of women) impact most organisations. Talent wars are already shifting scope to include global workforce pools. Staff and leadership continue to change dramatically in terms of gender, ethnicity and other diversity variables. University leaders believe rankings help maintain and build institutional position and reputation. It is for this reason that the study will also look into academic ranking of the academic staff in order to determine whether they have an impact on the university’s ability to attract and retain its academic workforce.

As the opportunities have risen globally to attract top talents from emerging countries, our South African higher-education institutions seem to be losing their highly skilled professionals to the private sector and foreign countries. This study examined the factors affecting attraction and retention of academic staff and if there are demographic (gender)

and academic ranking differences in these factors, or are they consistent across all academic employees at the Durban University of Technology.

1.4.1 Significance of the Study

This study is hoped to assist HR practitioners in dealing factors which employees feel affect their ability to attract academic talent, it will also assist Top Management in improving the current retention strategy and formulating new strategies to attract academic talent. This study will also serve as reference for future research topic.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the Problem Statement presented, the following research questions were considered important for this study:

- What are the factors influencing the attraction of academic personnel at the Durban University of Technology?
- Does academic ranking affect attraction?
- Does gender affect attraction?
- What are the factors influencing retention of academic personnel at the Durban University of Technology?
- Does academic ranking affect retention?
- Does gender affect retention?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to assess the factors affecting the attraction and retention of academic employees at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). The objectives of the study, therefore, were:

- To assess the factors influencing the attraction of academic personnel at DUT;
- To evaluate the factors influencing retention of academic personnel at DUT;
- To explore factors that employees perceived as critical to the university's attracting academic talent; and
- To explore factors that employees perceived as critical to the university's retention of academic talent.

1.7 Limitations and Scope of the Study

The study was first restricted to Universities of Technology (UOTs) in KwaZulu-Natal. Unfortunately, the only other UOT did not allow the research to be conducted at their organisation. The research was thus conducted solely at the Durban University of Technology.

The study concentrated on examining factors that affect attraction and retention of academic employees in order to propose appropriate interventions to mitigate these factors. This was in accordance with general factors identified by previous researchers said to affect the attraction and retention of talent in organisations.

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Study design

This was a mixed-method study conducted among all the academic staffs employed at DUT.

1.8.2 Population, Sample size and sampling technique

The population for the study was all the academics who were employed permanently or on contract basis. A total of 600 staff members were employed at the time of the study. The minimum sample size was required for the study was 314 for quantitative part. They were selected using the non-random sampling method called convenience sampling. For qualitative study, a total of 12 employees were purposefully selected.

1.8.3 Data collection

A questionnaire was used to gather the biographical data of each participant as well as the information required for statistical analysis. Semi – structured interviews were also used to gather data for statistical analysis.

1.8.4 Administration of Questionnaires and interviews

Curwin, Slater and Eadson (2013) observed that secondary data, although cheaper to collect, may not be adequate for a specific study. Therefore, the primary approach (such as the use of a questionnaire) was used. A more detailed discussion is entered into in chapter 3. Questionnaires were administered through QuestionPro, an online database, with

invitations sent to participants via email. Interviews were conducted on site as per interview schedule designed specifically for this purpose.

1.9 Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the study. The background to the problem, focus of the study, problem statement, research questions, objectives, and limitations of the study were discussed. In Chapter Two, literature presented by several authors is discussed. Chapter 3 provides a discussion on the methodology used in conducting the study. Chapter 4 offers data analysis and a discussion of results. Chapter 5 offers recommendations and draws the study to its conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Talent attraction and retention is a universal challenge for many organisations, with higher education institutions being no exception. Both public and private sector organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain talented and highly skilled employees (Sayers 2007, cited in Shikongo, 2011). The study acknowledges the existence of many factors that have an effect on the attraction and retention of employees in general. However, only a selected few that were perceived to significantly affect the attraction and retention of academic employees at the two Durban-based universities of technology under study were taken into consideration.

The identified factors for the purpose of this study are listed as follows:

- Remuneration and employee benefits;
- The job itself, and working conditions;
- Human-resources' development, and the organisation's reputation;
- Job satisfaction, and flexibility;
- Employee motivation;
- Discriminatory practices;
- Work environment; and
- Recognition and reward systems.

This chapter gives an overview of the existing literature regarding the aforementioned factors.

2.2 Attraction and Retention of Talented Employees

Over the years, the global economy has become increasingly knowledge-ambitious, with human intellectual capital now more than ever a resource that affords organisations a competitive advantage Takawira, Coetzee, and Schreuder (2014). According to Baldwin and Johnson (1995), as cited in Khasawneh (2010), the changing nature of work, particularly the technological, organisational, and competitive developments, has meant that both public and private sector organisations struggle from time to time to attract and retain from the labour market an adequate supply of qualified employees.

The retention of productive and qualified employees, on the other hand, is valuable to any institution for its endurance. Key qualified and productive employees on the staff are the heart of the organisation. Organisations failing to retain its quality employees normally find themselves faced with a high staff turnover. This is not only costly; it proves disadvantageous to the institution's survival, growth, and prosperity (Masango and Mpofo, 2012). Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus, and Poisat (2012) further state that “many factors play a role in staff retention, but one central aspect relates to getting the match right”; and that this goes beyond the match between the competency profile and the job requirements.

Kgomo and Swarts (2010) cited research by Ernest and Young (n.d.), which showed that attracting and retaining employees were two of the eight most important issues investors took into account when judging the value of a company. In their closing remarks, Masango and Mpofo (2012) contend that retention of staff is a significant aspect of human-resource management, which warrants the attention of management of any institution.

Talented faculties in universities are a critical driver of institutional performance. An institution's ability to attract, develop and retain talented faculty staff is a major competitive advantage. In institutions of higher education, academic employees play a major role in achieving this competitive advantage. Human capital gives existence and prominence to universities: it is upon such excellent faculty members that they thrive. Dube and Ngulube (2013) highlighted that we cannot deny the importance of the right skill levels, unique capabilities, knowledge and experience, which can only be acquired over time. Dube and Ngulube (2013) further stated that this highlights a challenge wherein experienced academics will be exiting the system without an equivalent entry rate by young researchers. This discrepancy creates a void or imbalance in scholarly and academic productivity and growth.

Furthermore, according to HESA (2011); Pienaar and Bester (2008, as cited in Theron, Barkhuizen and Du Plessis, 2013), the demand for academic staff in higher education institutions (HEIs) is increasing, and is expected to continue to increase. Concurrently, retention problems and intention to leave are exacerbating the problem. A so-called academic ‘retirement swell’ is also evident, leaving HEIs with no option but to seriously

investigate retention of academic staff. It appears that, in future, Universities of Technology will be increasingly obliged to make the retention of academic employees a strategic priority. This will assist universities to remain competitive as the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges and private universities are increasingly expanding in South Africa.

Cassim (2005) states that gender equity in higher education is increasingly becoming the subject of attention and research both globally and in South Africa, particularly since the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act. Metcalf *et al.* (2005) mentioned the under-representation of women in work places and that this also happens in higher education institutions. It is said that the probability of women undertaking more teaching and pastoral work is high, this is particularly because of career breaks during childbearing that normally occur during the most demanding period of academic's life in terms of research output.

2.3 Organisational Attractiveness and Factors that affect Talent Attraction

Higher Education Institutions play an essential role in the country's growth by ensuring that their students are equipped with high quality of education (Muhammad, Asad, Usama, and Affad ud, 2016). Muhammad *et al* (2016) further states that it is only possible when academics in these institutions are sufficiently motivated to achieve their assigned tasks. For institutions of higher learning to achieve this they have to maintain motivated academic staff. Higher Education Institutions have to attract the right people to the institutions by offering various factors such as proper compensation, a learning environment scientifically designed performance management system and training and development opportunities, etc.

While many organisations are considering ways to improve their ability to attract and retain the staff they need, employers should recognise the need to develop a strong employment value proposition. Organisations need to figure out what their company stands for and what makes it an attractive place to work for in order for them to be convinced why employees should consider employment at that certain company not somewhere else. The power of effective employment value proposition cannot be underestimated as it helps attract, motivate and retain the company's most valuable assets and that is its employees.

2.3.1 Organisational attractiveness

Employers today are aware that an organisation's employees are its most significant asset. Employees are investments that will, if effectively managed and developed, provide long-term rewards to the organisation in the form of greater productivity. Employees who have the right qualifications and adequate experience in the business can contribute greatly to the management team's smooth running of the organisation. Attraction of quality employees has become difficult for organisations nowadays. Holland (1985) is of the opinion that people are differentially attracted to organisations as a function of their own interests and personalities. Employees, he contends, are attracted to an organisation by what they perceive to be similarities in values, goals, and interests. Schneider (1987) is of the view that, over time, factors within an organisation operate to attract employees. He suggests describing organisation attractiveness in terms of reward, support, and expectations. Rynes and Barber (1990) describe attracting high-quality applicants as the most important activity in ensuring the success of organisations. Rynes (1991) further argues that applicant attraction is the immediate objective of recruitment; therefore it ought to be accorded a high priority in future research.

2.3.2 Remuneration and employee benefits

This is one of the reasons that most people work for a certain company. Some organisations offer higher remuneration than others. The higher the pay, the more likely employees will be willing to devote their time and energy into helping the company to succeed. According to Metcalf, Rolfe, Stevens, and Weale (2005), university academics' pay is comparatively low compared with equally competent employees in other sectors. They further state that starting pay is low, and remains relatively low for nearly every academic for most of his or her career; it is only when academics reach their mid-50s that their pay slightly overtakes that of similarly qualified employees. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) continue to lose academic employees through inadequate remuneration for South African academics. Remuneration packages offered to academic staff in institutions of higher learning needs to be made in accordance with the qualification, experience in the industry as well as market rates (Muhammad *et al*, 2016).

According to Cave (2002) and Fallon (2009), as cited in Robyn and Du Preez (2013), every generation wants to earn more money, although money is not always the most important part of attracting employees. It is important to note that HEIs are dependent on

external funding from government and other organisations; therefore, they need to exist as centres of excellence in order to broaden their national and international recognition, which will in turn attract financial assistance (Robyn and Du Preez, 2013). According to Netswera, Rankhumise, and Mavundla (2005), salaries and other benefits are perceived by management as the primary motive in employment seeking and in "job-hopping" behaviour. The researchers further highlighted that, although salaries and perquisites are seen as primary motivation, institutions that have high salaries and attractive benefits are not necessarily the highest employee retainers. Good pay and benefits may incidentally encourage retention, but may have been intended primarily as recruitment tools (Strothmann and Ohler, 2011). It is assumed that retention is concomitant with other conditions of service.

Many organisations offer impressive benefit packages to their employees. These benefits include bonuses, vacations, health benefits, *inter alia*. Organisations are struggling to attract talented employees with critical skills. Employees, on the other hand, yearn for benefit guarantees, including financial security; they remain anxious about their retirement prospects. Flexible benefits and rewards allow employees to tailor their packages to suit their personal motivations, work and leisure interests, career stage, and domestic circumstances (Armstrong and Brown, 2009). Thus, it is useful to provide employees with flexibility of choice regarding the various reward categories available, allowing for the design of 'different, employee-initiated remuneration profiles' (Nienaberand and Bussin, 2011). Employees can increase pay levels to meet competition and pay structures to remove inequities. This would solve any pay problems voiced by employees.

2.3.3 The job itself, and working conditions

It is then safe to agree with Dipple (1999)'s suggestion, as cited in Netswera *et al.* (2005), that attraction starts long before an employee is recruited; and that attraction occurs at the time the position to be filled is described. He further stated that job descriptions, recruitment selection, and orientation, are the essentials of attraction. It is said that if the job description does not define what institutions are looking for, then recruits will not meet the requirements. Recruits, in turn, will find it difficult to be attracted to such organisations. According to Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2008, p258), the working conditions, which include the job itself, should foster the best response by employees. Employees, the above-mentioned researchers believe, are attracted by the possible

perceived satisfaction the job can give them. Potential employees, who perceive that they will be able to use and expand their skills in a prospective job, will stop at nothing to be hired for the job, if they are really interested in it.

Armstrong (2006) further highlighted that healthy and safe working conditions should be made available to employees. This is supported by Deery (2008), who further recommended that organisations provide adequate resources for all staff so that they can perform their duties effectively. It is therefore important that organisations ensure that the jobs are appealing; and that working conditions are healthy, safe, and well-resourced, to attract the right pool of talent. Organisations should understand that employees will work twice as hard if the atmosphere is pleasurable, and appealing, and they are given the freedom to carry out any given task the way in which they decide is appropriate and beneficial to their growth, as well as that of the organisation. Employees should be given an opportunity of participating in decision-making apart from everyday procedures—this reaffirms them as people worthy of respect. This attitude is supported by Mammen's (2006) conclusion that when academics are unhappy with their conditions of service and/or job satisfaction, they may make an effort to move away from the institution. This will be the result if they cannot see efforts made to rectify the situation. Netswera *et al.* (2005) mentioned that flexible working hours, a challenging job, a sense of purpose, and minimal grievances between staff and employees provide a favourable work environment.

2.3.4 Human Resources and development; and organisation's reputation

Many organisations in the corporate world have embraced the concept that human resources' development can enhance staff employability. This is a process by which organisations provide tools and opportunities for professional growth, while allowing employees to manage their own careers. Glen (2007) stated that talent can be attracted by an impressive reputation, competitive financial rewards, and the promise of exceptional career progression. Many employees find companies to work for that have a good reputation. Businesses like these are normally long established; they know every trick and trade of the industry. It is said that an excellent corporate culture also attracts employees because employers endorse good practices that make employees successful. It should be noted that heads of department do not always have the skills needed to develop staff.

It was apparent that many heads of department did not see staff development as one of the responsibilities of their posts. Many expressed the view that training courses are available for those who are interested; but that career development is largely an academic's own affair, and a result of personal effort in research and publications (Metcalf *et al.*, 2005). In his study, Nieuwenhuizen (2009) recommended the lowering of requirements for the appointment of senior lecturers, associate professors and professors with regard to accredited publications and supervision experience required. This will attract more people to the positions. Successful applicants may then be developed in their positions by motivating them to publish. A reward may be offered per publication and per successful supervision of postgraduate students. Nieuwenhuizen (2009) further recommended increasing the salaries of academic staff, becoming more competitive with the private and public sectors, and even non-academic managers in higher education. Academic staff should be granted the opportunity of working shorter hours at universities, enabling them to supplement their salaries by involvement in the private sector. This exposure will also improve their teaching and research abilities.

Appointments of staff from the designated groups should focus on the levels of lecturer and senior lecturer with the aim of developing and promoting them to associate professors and professors. Academic staff should be able to supplement their salaries by other teaching. They could be taken up by executive programmes and extra-curricular or non-formal programmes at their universities. To reduce shortages of labour, the management team can improve recruitment, selection, and training for the people required. Also, by introducing better methods of planning and scheduling work, management can help employees strengthen their commitment towards tasks and responsibilities. Management should also take more care to avoid recruiting unstable individuals by analysing the characteristics of applicants and properly screening them. Pienaar and Bester (2007) further recommended that the departmental heads be equipped with thorough knowledge and skills concerning the various facets of management, human-resources' management in particular. Also, the management team should undergo education and training in order to improve their relationship with other employees.

2.4 Employee Retention and Factors Affecting Retention of Academic Employees

Nel *et al.* (2012) define retention as the efforts of an organisation to retain the services of an employee by various means, such as better-than-average remuneration, support for

quality of work / life programmes, benefits that may be extended to family, and positions linked to recognition and status. Browell (2003, cited in Mohlaba, Geoff, Goldman and Goosen, 2012), defined employee retention as "keeping those members of staff that one wants to keep and not losing them from the organisation for whatever reason, especially to the competitors". Masango and Mpofu (2013) defined employee retention as a deliberate action undertaken by an employer to retain current employees in an institution. They further postulate that it is a systematic attempt by employers to construct and promote an environment that encourages current employees to continue being in employment.

Policies and practices should be in place which addresses the diverse needs of employees (Masango and Mpofu, 2013). This is supported by Simmons (2002), as cited in Robyn and Du Preez (2013), who posits that retention refers to the methods/strategies employed by management to convince employees to remain with the organisation for a longer period of time. Netswera *et al.* (2005) concludes by citing the concept of a value chain. In the case of the higher education, its product is a quality learning experience presented as the core business of the institution. This presents an astute idea of where retention efforts must be targeted.

2.4.1 Job satisfaction and job flexibility

According to Ku sku (2003) as cited in Toker (2011), employee satisfaction measures the extent to which the individual's needs and desires are met, as well as the degree to which this is apparent to other employees. Job satisfaction is said to be a very an important element to which employees aspire and which organisations and institutions of higher learning should not ignore. Job satisfaction is particularly important to its academic employees, teaching and learning being their core business.

Fulfilling the job satisfaction of academic employees at large is important considering the contributions they make both to society and to the students they educate, together with the institution they work for. A person with no job satisfaction may complain of many factors, such as actual working conditions, tools used in work, insufficient benefits offered by the employer, lack of appreciation and social prestige (Colakog̃lu and Atabay, 2012). Job satisfaction may be linked to performance, organisational productivity, and other issues, including labour turnover (Toker, 2011). Ku sku, (2003) as cited in Toker (2011), stated that, although most research in the employee-satisfaction field has been undertaken in

profit-making industrial and service organisations, there has been a growing interest in satisfaction of employees in higher education. The reason for this increasing interest is the reality that higher education institutions are labour intensive. HEI budgets are predominantly devoted to personnel, and the effectiveness of the institution is largely dependent on their staff. Consequently, satisfaction of the employees in higher education institutions is a very important issue.

Schulze (2006) pointed out that, although academics have often researched the job satisfaction of others, electronic data bases reveal that their own job satisfaction has less often been investigated, especially in South Africa. Staff from various faculties or institutions may differ significantly in what they consider important for job satisfaction. According to Oshagbemi, (1999) as cited in Schulze (2006), research-related items that were found to cause job dissatisfaction in higher education included: inadequate time for research, pressure to publish, erosion of time for research and personal development in specialist area, increasing difficulty with and time spent on obtaining research grants, lack of funds for research, difficulty attracting able PhD students, necessity of applying for grant support, the undue importance attached to 'research', little time for writing and research assessment exercises, and lack of research facilities.

Job flexibility is of the essence in retaining quality employees of every age (Boomer Authority (2009). Researchers describe the importance of employment flexibility, such as scheduling variations that better accommodate individual work times, workloads, responsibilities, and family commitments (Pleffer, 2007). Studies show that flexibility empowers individuals to facilitate a healthier balance between work and personal obligations, something that appeals to all ages of employees (Scheef and Thielfodt, 2004). Differences observed across generations suggest that the current generation of professional workers demand flexible work schedules which allow for success in their personal as well as their professional life (e.g. Ellenbecker, 2003 cited in George, 2015, p405). Rafiq and Ahmed, (2000: p450) as cited in Paramasur (2010), highlighted that the focus on employee satisfaction can largely be attributed to the fact that, in the marketing of services, much of what customers buy is labour, or human acts of performance. Consequently, attraction of the best personnel, their retention, development, and motivation, become of critical importance.

2.4.2 Training and development

A serious challenge that universities face is the ageing of its academic workforce. This factor contributes significantly to the academic and research output of universities. Another deciding factor in relation to retention is the extent to which the employing organisation provides opportunities for personal and professional growth (Horwitz *et al.*, 2003 cited in George, 2015). Training is a key retention factor that affects employees of any age. Staff development is part of an overall plan to develop skills in the country, not only the organisation (Lockhart and Majal, 2012). According to Boomer Authority, (2009) the access of all employees to training and development programmes is critical in facilitating organisational growth, particularly in performance and technological improvements. Professional training and development of academics has been shown to be instrumental in the university's effectiveness and growth; however, several hindrances obtain.

A number of studies in African higher education on hindrances to professional development pointed to lack of resources, lack of strategic plans, and programmes implemented on an ad hoc basis, without proper planning. Also factored in are structure and decision-making processes, staff loss, lack of incentives, and the concept that attainment of higher degrees is the only legitimate form of career advancement. Another aspect is the lack of staff-development policies (Lang, 2004) cited in Makhunye and Pelser (2012). In today's vibrant environment academic employees training is vital to improve their knowledge, skills and to provide them confidence to compete in the industry. Furthermore academics in higher education should be given maximum opportunities of career development so that they could enhance their qualifications and abilities to remain effective for the institution (Muhammad *et al.*, 2016).

The Higher Education Act of 1997 clearly states that the issue of quality assurance in higher education institutions is related to capacity development of staff. This is in the sense that, should academic staff be capacitated, the quality of education will be ensured (RSA Government, 1997). According to the Human Resources Development Reviews (2003), the higher-education system is still faced with a number of challenges of new policies and transformational demands. The ineffective, inequitable, and inefficient system inherited from the apartheid era hampers its effective contribution to human resources' development.

The current higher-education system is still characterised by, among other things, a lack of production of the required quality, quantity, and diversity of graduates in relevant fields and levels, especially in scarce-skills areas, coupled with inequity of access, outcomes, and staff composition. Opportunities for development, training, and promotion are amongst the most essential motives for employees remaining in organisations. Most employees are said to leave their organisations on completion of their development objectives mainly because, by the time they complete their development objectives, they are already at top of their pay scales: there is then no further progression.

2.4.3 Employee motivation

Managers, over the years, have tried to enlist commitment from staff to carry out their strategic plan by motivating people and rewarding them for good performance. While financial incentives are the core component of most company's reward systems, especially in the private sector, this is not easily attainable in the public service. Therefore, managers in the public service are tasked with ensuring that employees are kept motivated and are able to deliver a quality service, despite the often disenchanting work environments. This research aims to provide insight into public-sector managers on strategies for motivating staff, using the principles of internal marketing (Paramasur, 2010). Muhammad *et al* (2016) states that academic employee's job needs to be properly designed. The workload on academics should not be higher as that may lead to de-motivation. There should be a learning environment for all academics in HEIs and administration should try maximum to treat their academic employees with respect and without any discrimination.

According to McNeese-Smith (1999:244), cited in Paramasur (2010), motivation of employees has been traditionally the realm of human-resources' management. Motivation is a psychological process that incites and sustains action, coupled with an inner drive that urges one to act. According to Crumpton (2013), human motivation is intricately tied to emotions. Employee motivation directly impacts social achievement goals (including those on the personal side), and is correlated with emotional intelligence. This is supported by Ankli and Palliam, (2012), who further stated that underlying assumptions of motivation include people's having the capacity for responsible actions, a natural aspiration to learning and understanding things, and the desire to do well at work and play.

2.4.4 Factor 4: Discriminatory practices

Coming from the era of apartheid, it is evident that South African institutions are to some extent still characterised by racial intolerance Netswera *et al.* (2005). According to Froneman (2003), the restructuring of South African higher education, in accordance to the NCHE (1995), needs to address the inequalities and inefficiencies inherited from the apartheid era, and to respond to the new social, cultural, and economic demands. A further concern contributing to the movement of talent is gender inequity. This will remain a reality in South Africa as long as highly competent women are treated differently from their male counterparts in behaviour and compensation.

In terms of Section 6 of the Employment Equity Act, No. of 55 of 1998, employees must be treated well. No person may be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, through any employment policy, on grounds that include race, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, conscience, ethnicity, marital status, political opinion, and social origin Netswera *et al.* (2005). Employees should be seen through new eyes as assets to the organisation: as the fragrant spices that give flavour to the institution; and as the competitive advantage that gives organisations the edge. Organisations must also remember that they should not only view their employees in this light, but should also manage the organisation so as to bring out the best in their diverse workforce. For an organisation to remain competitive, it must employ a good number of talented individuals, regardless of colour, gender, and age group.

Harris, Venter, and Rousseau (2007), in their study, note that tertiary institutions in and around South Africa must heed the call to celebrate the multitude of differences among people. In conclusion, Netswera *et al.* (2005) are of the view that retaining academic employees in South African higher education should not only be limited to addressing core business activities and required competencies, but should also include a responsiveness to the national imperatives for redress, such as employment equity and skills' development initiatives.

2.4.5 The institutions' track record and growth potential

Ways of combating employees' leaving to pursue another career include extending opportunities for training; adopting and implementing promotional policies; and selecting employees who are likely to want to move much higher than their initial jobs. According to

Michaels, Handsfield – Jones and Axelrod (2001), winning the war for talent requires more than winning the recruitment battle. There is a need for development to be part of the company in order to increase people's capabilities. Development is vital when it comes to attracting and retaining people; talented people being inclined to leave if they are not growing. This is further supported by Netswera *et al.* (2005), who point out that the institutional track record, which includes the quality and employability of graduates, strengthens the reputation that an institution builds over time.

2.4.6 Work environment

Frank, Finnegan and Taylor (2004) cited in Masibigiri and Nienabar (2011) further state that retaining talent refers to employers' efforts to create an environment that engages employees for the long term, and ensures that they retain desirable workers, in order to meet business objectives. According to Netswera *et al.* (2005), flexible working hours, a sense of purpose, a challenging job and minimal grievances between management and employees provide a favourable work environment. Nel *et al.* (2012) further state that the key to retaining the best employees very often lies in the relationship employees have with their immediate supervisors or managers; and that time and resources should be spent on training managers in enhancing their relationships with their subordinates. Advancing supervisor/employee relationships should be viewed as a constant process rather than a once-off event. According to George, (2015) an environment conducive to employee retention is one where the working experience is a pleasant one, the resources are adequate and there is some degree of flexibility. Consequently, the key features of a conducive environment would appear to be the availability of sufficient resources to perform the job, flexibility and a pleasant or fun place to work.

Employee assistance programmes are said to be one factor that influences organisations' working environment and employees' intention to remain in an organisation. These include flexible work hours and special leave such as maternity leave, adoption leave, extended leave, and personal leave (Kuye, 2001). In conclusion, Du Plooy and Snyman (2003) believe that retention is as important as recruitment. Retention may be accomplished by promoting universities of technology (UT)'s environment through consistently reinforcing scholarship and welcoming all members of the community (Du Plooy and Snyman, 2003).

2.4.7 Recognition and reward systems

The academic profession is said to be the imperative function of any higher education institution. It is therefore important that academic personnel are given the recognition they deserve and are rewarded for the effort they put into ensuring the smooth operation of the institution. Adapting traditional reward systems to focus on employee preferences has become a necessity, as companies strive to attract, motivate, and retain a skilled and high-performing workforce. Employee rewards have thus become an important topic in today's economy. Companies strive to find a balance between reward components, as well as identifying those components that provide for employees' personal needs Costello, (2010) cited in Snelgar *et al.* (2013). According to Salopek, (2000); IRS, (2000) cited in Netswera *et al.* (2005) retention leaders need to manage people and not retention in order to avoid talent drain; have a culture of caring, balanced with a tradition of excellence, and keep an eye on employees who are outstanding performers, ensuring that leaders reward outstanding performance. Snelgar *et al.* (2013) cite Herman and Gioia (2000) who pointed out that as competition in the workplace increases, employees tend to become more demanding when it comes to rewards, expecting organisations to make exceptions based on their individual performances. Managers must introduce procedures for relating rewards more explicitly to effort or performance: appreciation must be shown by recognising employees' performance.

Tetty (2006:p61), in his study, recommends that African universities should take the initiative in addressing some of the problems identified, which are within their ability to be solved. These include decentralising authority, promoting communication among different groups, fostering transparency in decision-making and rewarding excellence. Tetty (2006:p1) further stated that universities also have the responsibility of ensuring that their academic integrity is not compromised by pressures to increase enrolments for political reasons or co modifying knowledge solely for pecuniary gain.

2.5 Summary

A fundamental reasoning that has a long history is that individuals are attracted to teaching because of their personal philosophy about education). The matter of employee attraction to organisations has become a challenge to most, if not all organisations. As a result, businesses are finding it difficult to attract suitable talent into their employment, this for various reasons. The aim of this study was to assess the factors affecting the attraction and

retention of academic employees at DUT. In assessing these factors, relevant research questions considered important to the study were asked. The first question that the study considered was finding what were the factors influencing the attraction of academic personnel at DUT. Literature found that the remuneration and employee benefits; the job itself and working conditions; human resource development and the organisation's reputation were factors that affected the attraction of talent.

Career choices are influenced by demand and supply in the labour market. Academic employees tend to seek better pay and better working conditions outside the teaching profession. Individual motives to leave the teaching profession are complex and they are many so understanding the motivational reasons is necessary before any changes can be advocated. Literature suggests that there are a number of factors that affect retention of employees; the study found the five factors to be important in retention of academic talent. Literature further highlighted that employees are likely to stay in organisations where there is pleasant working experience, adequate resources, degree of flexibility and where there are opportunities to learn and to obtain promotion.

This chapter critically examined all the above factors in relation to the effect they have on the attraction and retention of academic staff at the two institutions under scrutiny. Universities of technologies should establish attraction strategies in order to attract valuable academic employees, so as to remain competitive in today's world. Indubitably, the retention of academics should be a strategic priority, since it is difficult to replace the knowledge, skills, and experience of academic staff. It is, therefore also of the utmost importance to pay attention to factors affecting the retention of academic staff.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a description of the research design, highlighting ways in which the research problem was explored. Specific reference has been made to the way the participants were chosen, how the data was gathered and analysed, and the steps taken to ensure the quality of the research. Furthermore, it is also explained how the ethical considerations and confidentiality aspects of this research were addressed. The chapter concludes with the methods used for the analysis of the data collected.

3.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to assess the factors that affected the attraction and retention of academic employees at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). The objectives of the study therefore were:

- To assess the factors influencing the attraction of academic personnel at DUT;
- To evaluate the factors influencing retention of academic personnel at DUT;

3.3 Participants and Location of the Study

The study was conducted at the Durban University of Technology. Because the study focused on the attraction and retention of academic staff at DUT, participation was restricted to members of the academic staff at this institution. Participation ranged from junior lecturers to professors.

Table 3.1: Categories of study participants

Occupational	Administered	Realised Sample Size
Professors	10	4
Associate Professors	10	5
Senior Lecturers	100	34
Lecturers	150	88
Junior Lecturers	14	10
Tutors	30	16

3.4 Data-Collection Strategies

A sample is described as a selected and chosen group upon which one carries out the study (Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell, 2006). Sampling, as put forward by Govender, Mabuza, Ogunbayo and Mash (2014), entails selecting a group from a much larger study population that is similar in its traits distribution to the larger population. Convenience sampling is one of the most common sampling strategies. Non-probability sampling (Convenience sampling) technique was used in the study, because the researcher wished to collect information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it. This meant that only those employees who happened to have e-mail address and who chose to complete the questionnaire stood a chance of being selected as subjects of the study.

The initial proposed sample of the quantitative aspect of the study was eighty (80) responses, which represented 25% of the 314 academic personnel selected to participate in the study. However, at the end of the survey, a total of 159 responses (i.e. 51% of the population) were obtained.

In addition to the quantitative aspects of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted, with a conveniently selected sample whose employment status as academic personnel made them eligible and sufficiently knowledgeable to be the study participants. The initial proposed sample of the qualitative aspect of the study was twelve (12) responses, which represented 4% of the 314 academic personnel selected to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted on a sample of 12 academic personnel.

3.5 Research Design

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) assert that a research design is the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The research design is based on the research question of the study. This study used both a qualitative and quantitative

approach to attain the required information, both methodologies being deemed appropriate in light of the research problem under investigation. Although a contrast is usually made between both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, it has been argued that the two actually go hand in hand, and are supplementary to each other. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), a mixed-methods triangulation has become ever more a preferred method in social research, enabling researchers to improve the authenticity of research findings and outcomes. In addition, Denscombe (2008) posits that the two methodologies have no overlapping shortcomings, but only complementary strengths. The quantitative and qualitative research instruments used in the study were self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. These two data-collection instruments made it possible for the research questions to be adequately addressed, and the objectives of the study to be met.

Quantitative research is defined as a formal, objective, systematic process that tests relationships, and examines cause-and-effect interactions among numerous variables. Quantitative research involves information or data in the form of numbers, the word “quantitative” related to the word “quantity”. Qualitative research, according to Lofland and Lofland (1995), may be generally defined as a study conducted in a natural setting, in which the researcher, an instrument of data collection, gathers data, analyses it inductively, focuses on the participants' meanings, and describes a process that is both expressive and persuasive. Qualitative research, as also noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), generates comprehensive explanations of phenomena that are grounded in reality. Qualitative research involves collecting, analysing and interpreting data by observing what people do or say. It is much more subjective, using various methods of collecting information, such as individual, in-depth interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

The main objective of this study was to identify factors affecting the attraction and retention of academic employees. In attempting to gain understanding of such factors, two main questions and four sub questions were identified for this study, the first being: “What are the factors influencing the attraction of academic personnel at the Durban University of Technology”; the two sub-questions that accompanied this question were “Does academic ranking affect attraction?” and “Does gender affect attraction?”. The second question identified being “What are the factors influencing the retention of academic personnel at the Durban University of Technology” this question further had two sub-questions, namely

“Does academic ranking affect retention?” and “Does gender affect retention?” Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in exploring these questions because the aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of what academic employees perceived as critical factors. Using only the quantitative method would have limited the information and responses. The interviews, on the other hand, were conducted in such a way that participants felt comfortable to express their views on the subject.

Quantitative methodology was chosen because both the exploratory nature of the study, as well as the objectives of the study, indicated a need for a design that was able to reach out to a wider population. The goal was to obtain descriptive information on numerous factors, possibly finding a link between those factors. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, was chosen, on the basis that qualitative research seeks to understand human behaviour and the reasons that influence such behaviour. This endeavour, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) note, usually means going beyond numbers and statistics obtained from quantitative research. With that in mind, and for the purposes of this study, this kind of research methodology was used to ascertain how certain factors (such as an institution's reputation, employee motivation, remuneration, and work environment) influenced or impacted on the choices academic personnel made with regard to choosing to work for DUT and/or remaining in the employ of DUT once initially employed there. Furthermore, a qualitative research methodology also involves the analysis of materials such as journals and other articles that relate to the subject matter under investigation, thereby providing complementary secondary data.

To ground this research within a context, triangulation was used in understanding challenges faced by this particular institution. Purdon (2001) describes case studies as a method of generally looking at individuals and/or organisations from the multiple perspectives of key actors in which a detailed understanding of these multiple perspectives on an intervention is sought within a particular location or setting. These perspectives help to build a comprehensive delineation of the experiences and outcomes within a specific context (Purdon, 2001). Babbie (2007) points out that the qualitative research method, like the case-study approach, seeks to study social phenomena in their natural settings by presenting an understanding of social actions in terms of specific contexts. This is because in human life various individuals or groups have different perspectives and contexts even though they live in the same place or environment (Babbie, 2007). In this case the Durban

University of Technology (DUT) was the institution under study, therefore, the triangulation approach to understanding the problem in this particular institution was deemed appropriate.

3.5.1 Description of the questionnaire

The quantitative component of the study utilised the survey method, in which a cross-sectional questionnaire was administered to a sample of the target population comprising current permanent and contracted academic personnel at the institution under study.

Section A was aimed at obtaining biographical information of respondents. A Likert-style scale was used to answer section B of the questionnaire, which consisted of seven questions on attraction factors and nine questions on retention factors. The respondents were asked to state their level(s) of agreement or disagreement with the statements and questions on a 5-point rating scale, on which 1 stood for strongly agree; 2 for agree; 3 for neutral; 4 for disagree; and 5 for strongly disagree. Participants were then asked to state the factors which they felt were contributors to their willingness either to remain or leave the institution.

Open-ended questions were asked on Section C of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to state the principal factors that had influenced their decision to remain with this organisation; the main factors they thought would influence their decision to leave the institution; as well as other factors they thought the institution should consider scrutinising in an attempt to retain employees for an indefinite period.

The qualitative approach was used to answer 15 interview questions as per the interview schedule in Appendix A. The questions were developed using the literature at hand. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using 15 predetermined questions.

The Interview

Semi-structured interviews, as Benard (1995) contends, allow for greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participant. Participants, as he elaborates further, have the opportunity of responding more richly and in greater detail in semi-structured interviews. The researcher, he notes, also has the opportunity of

responding immediately to what the participants say, by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participant has provided (Benard, 1995).

3.5.1.1 Recruitment of Study Participants

The study began with a research proposal being submitted to the KwaZulu-Natal Research Ethics for approval to conduct the research. An application was also submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of Durban University of Technology (DUT) obtaining authorisation to carry out research at the institution, and to make certain that no ethical issues were being flouted. Any questions for further clarification were to be directed to the researcher or the supervisor of the study. Telephone numbers and email addresses were provided for this purpose.

In both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study participants were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix 1 and 2) which assured them of confidentiality if they agreed to participate. Informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study, allowing them to decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they wish to participate. The participants were also informed that their participation would not have either positive or negative consequences for them. The aim was to ensure that participants did not feel compelled to participate in the study. These efforts were made in order to respect the autonomy of all the participants. The information regarding the study and the intended use, storage and disposal of the data was also outlined in the informed consent.

The information was provided in a written format so that it was clear and transparent; and the participants were asked to sign the informed consent form. In addition, contact details for the researcher and supervisor of the study were provided to address any further queries.

3.5.2 Pretesting and Validation

The questionnaire was first pilot-tested before it was disseminated to participants. Questionnaires were first distributed to ten (10) participants as a pilot test; two interviews were conducted as pilot tests. Amendments were made to the original documents using the information obtained from those responses.

The constructs used to assess the reliability of study's objectives (as per the questionnaire) were conducted per Cronbach's alpha. The combined alpha coefficient for the test statements comprising the constructs is 0.881. As a minimum, an alpha coefficient of 0.7 is generally considered reliable. The questionnaire may, therefore, be considered reliable overall. In other words, the questions addressing the study's objectives, taken jointly, may be considered reliable for serving their intended purpose. Applying Cronbach's alpha analysis to each of the individual constructs reveals that the internal consistency of each construct was reliable for assessing its particular objective.

3.5.3 Administration of Questionnaire and Interviews

The self-administered anonymous questionnaire (Appendix 3) was accompanied by information and participants' informed consent forms disclosing the intention of the questionnaire and assuring the participants' privacy and confidentiality of their answers. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents through the web-based engine QuestionPro and the participants were asked to complete questionnaires at their own convenience. They were given two weeks time to complete the questionnaire. After a week a reminder was sent to those who did not complete the questionnaire.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted by face to face (Appendix 4) and were offered in a conversational manner to make them as natural as possible. This was intended to put respondents at ease as they talked about their own perceptions, and experiences, expressing their views. The interview was recorded using a tape recorder. The scheduling of the interview was done based on the participants' choice so it did not hamper their normal duties. The interview took about 40 min.

An interview guide that was prepared included a list of questions or issues that were to be explored beforehand. The guide helped the interviewer pace the interviews and to make the interviews more systematic and comprehensive. Participants who participated in the semi-structured interviews signed a consent form and information sheet, which was provided to them for ensuring confidentiality.

These two data-collection instruments were perceived by the researcher to be the most appropriate in capturing the opinions of all respondents. The questions were fashioned after due consideration, acknowledging that there are various factors that contribute to the attraction and retention of academic personnel. The questions, furthermore, aimed to

provide an opportunity of exploring significant areas of concern. The qualitative interviews were arranged such that the participants were engaged when most convenient for them. A provision was made at the beginning of the interview for clarification of any questions, ensuring also that the participants were comfortable.

3.6 Analysis of Data

The size of the academic personnel population at DUT made it impractical and uneconomical to involve all members of the population in the study, hence data that was obtained from a sample of the population was relied upon. Several qualitative and quantitative data-analysis techniques were employed in analysing the primary and secondary data collected. Detecting whether any statistical differences existed between genders and academic levels the Wilcoxon rank sum W test and the Kruskal - Wallis test were used.

The qualitative data analysis (interviews and qualitative component of the questionnaire) consisted of thematic analyses, while the quantitative-data analysis involved using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software and Microsoft Excel. Results were presented as tables, bar graphs, histograms and pie charts. Invaluable information was obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. This information formed the basis from which the recommendation of impartial interventions to curb problems experienced by universities of technology of attracting and retaining academic staff was derived.

The first part of the analysis involved quantitative analysis techniques. After the quantitative data had been collected, Cronbach alpha was tested, the data was checked for internal consistency. Findings were presented in the form of tables, pie charts, bar graphs and histograms. The second part of the research used the qualitative method for gathering more depth and understanding of staff sentiments in relation to their place of employment. The data analysis of the qualitative semi-structured interviews was thematic. It identified current and emergent negative factors and possible positive factors affecting the attraction and retention of academic personnel at the institution. Participants' responses to the interview questions were grouped into themes, where appropriate, to enable ease of analysis, while keeping intact the integrity of responses. Each theme was then accompanied by direct quotations of what academic staff had to say in response to the question(s) posed to them. In order to protect participants' identities, pseudonyms were

used in the analysis, for the sole reason of personalising responses. These were used to form the foundation and background of the study and to complement primary data gathered from the interviews.

3.6.1 Method of Analysis

3.6.1.1 Nominal Scales

In nominal scales, the researcher is allowed to assign subjects or participants to certain categories (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The researcher used this type of scaling at the beginning of the research tool for collecting categorised data. The data collected included the participants' demographics, educational levels, and levels of experience in the field, as well as the current status of participants. This data was collected for descriptive statistics purposes.

3.6.1.2 Ordinal Scales

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), ordinal scales provide more information than do nominal scales, also rank-ordering the categories in some meaningful way. For the purpose of this study, the responses were elicited from respondents through the use of 5-point Likert scales. The scales ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", with "strongly agree" being coded with the number "1" and "strongly disagree" being coded with the number "5". The other responses fell within this range, with "agree", for instance, coded with the number "2". As Likert scales were used, the received data was treated as ordinal.

This implies that the appropriate measures of central tendency were "medians" and "modes". The median refers to the positioning of the middle-most response(s) after all the responses had been ranked in increasing order. The median, therefore, was that point at which 50% of the responses fell either above or below the middle-most response. The mode, on the other hand, refers to the most frequently occurring response(s). These are illustrated in the bar charts to follow.

3.6.1.3 Wilcoxon Rank Sum W test

The Wilcoxon rank sum W test, also known as the Mann-Whitney U Test, or Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test, is a non-parametric test (i.e. the underlying population cannot be

assumed to be normally distributed), used to examine significant differences between two related samples or repeated measurements on a single sample (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The Wilcoxon rank sum W test is also recommended for analysing ordinal data. It is for this reason that this test was used for the Likert-scale data in section B of the questionnaire. Modes and Medians are used as measures of central tendency or dispersion.

3.6.1.4 Kruskal - Wallis test

In terms of commonly used tests for parametric data, this test is the non-parametric analogue of the one-way between-groups analysis of variance, i.e., the ANOVA (McDonald, 2009; Coakes and Ong, 2011). This means that this test allows for the examining of any possible differences that might exist between two or more groups (Coakes and Ong, 2011). In the present study, this test was used for detecting any significant differences in the median responses across current employment status, with respect to the two objectives of this study: employee attraction and employee retention at the University of Technology.

The proposed hypothesis would therefore read,

H_0 : The distribution of responses to statement X_n is the same across categories of current employment status.

H_1 : The distribution of responses to statement X_n is not the same across categories of current employment status.

The null hypothesis will be rejected if the p-value is less than 0.05 (i.e. $p < 0.05$), resulting in the alternative hypothesis being accepted. In the event that the null hypothesis is rejected, further tests would then need to be conducted to identify which groups actually differed.

3.7 Summary

This chapter explored the research methodology and research design that was used in the study. A mixed-methods approach was selected for this study; purposive sampling was selected to obtain the desired sample from the population. Interviews were selected to gather a more in-depth understanding of staff sentiments in relation to their place of employment. Data-collection procedures as well as data analysis were detailed. The results collected by these methods, therefore, will be discussed in the chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the factors affecting the attraction and retention of academic employees at DUT. This chapter, therefore, presents an analysis of the data obtained from the study. It begins by evaluating participants' demographic data. Thereafter, the objectives of the research are presented

Response rate:

A total of 314 questionnaires were distributed and only 159 completed questionnaires were received. Therefore the response rate for the study was 51%. For qualitative study, all 12 participants took part in the study.

4.2 Demographics

The following section contains the demographic information of the 159 study participants in order to gain a deeper insight into their backgrounds. Included in this section are participant's genders, age profiles, academic level/status, years of experience, and educational backgrounds. These will each be discussed in the sections that follow.

4.2.1 Gender

This section aimed to assess the gender profiles of the participants. The intention was also to investigate whether there were any gender-specific differences in selected responses. The findings are presented in the pie chart of Figure 4.1.

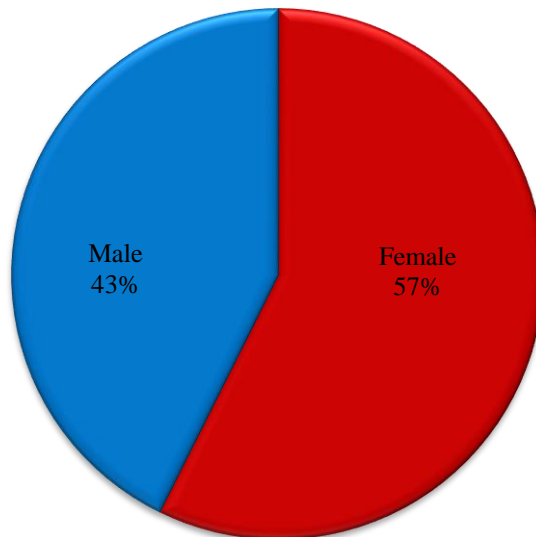


Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of respondents

Based on the gender distribution illustrated in Figure 4.1, the majority of the respondents were female. Of the 159 participants that indicated their gender, 57% were female and 43% were male.

4.2.2 Academic Level

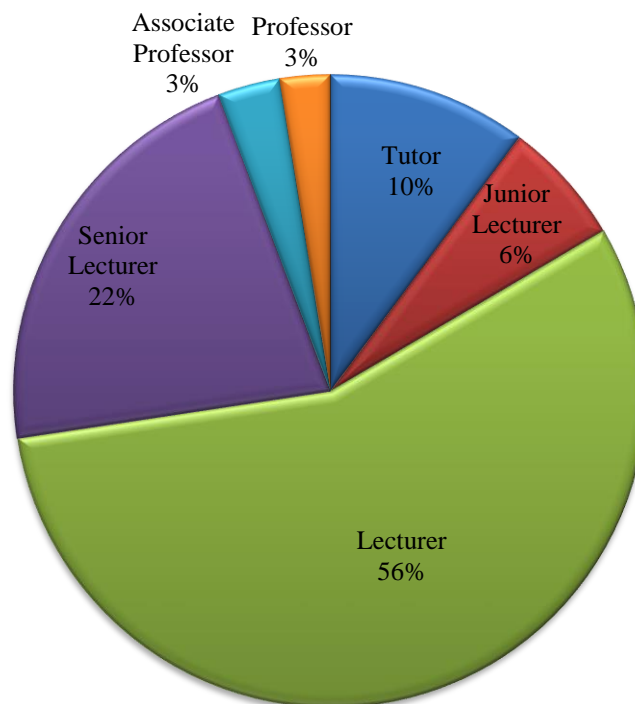


Figure 4.2: Academic level of lecturers

As depicted in Figure 4.2, the majority of respondents were lecturers. This group represented 56% of the 159 participants who indicated their lecturing status/level. This was followed by senior lecturers (comprising 22% of the respondents), tutors (comprising 10%) and junior lecturers forming 6%. The remaining 6% of the staff complement were either professors (3%) or associate professors (3%). To gain deeper insight into the gender splits between the various academic levels, a cross tabulation between academic level and gender was performed (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Cross tabulation of academic level with gender

Academic level	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Tutor	7	9	16
Junior lecturer	5	4	9
Lecturer	54	31	85
Senior lecturer	17	13	30
Associate professor	1	4	5
Professor	2	2	4
Total	86	63	149

Table 4.1 shows that 9 of the 16 tutors that participated in the study were male; 5 of the 9 junior lecturers were female; 63.5% of the lecturers were female; 80% of the associate professors were male; and 50% of the professors were female.

4.2.3 Age Distribution

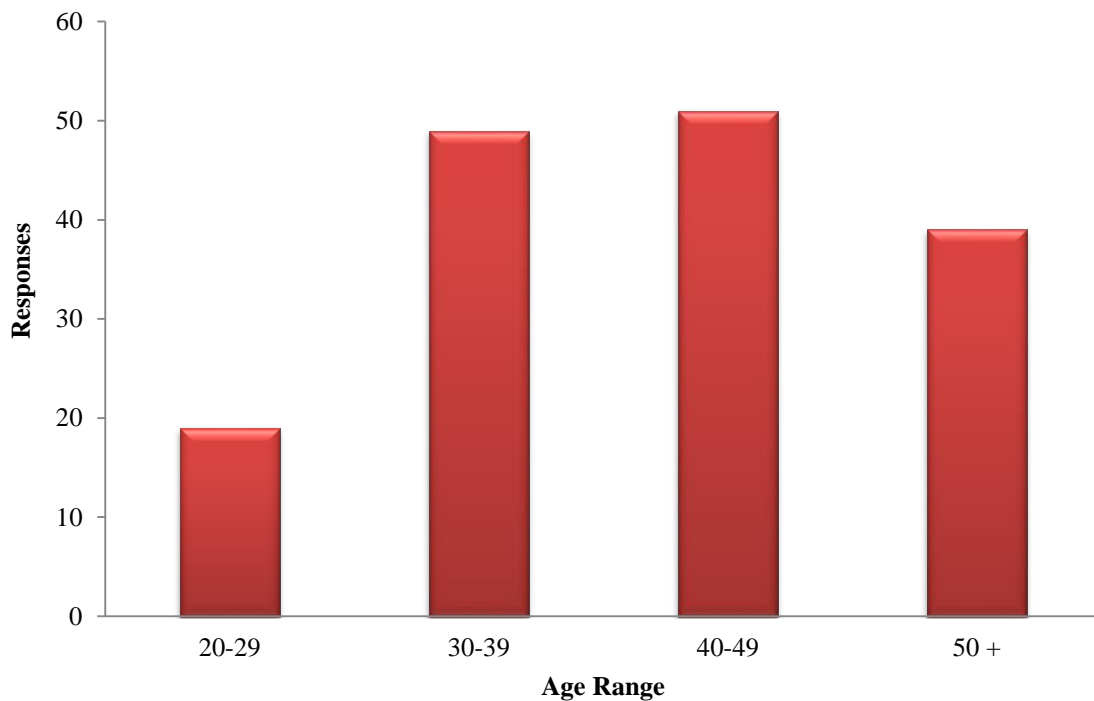


Figure 4.3: Age distribution of respondents

Figure 4.3 shows the age distribution of 158 of the 159 respondents. Of these, approximately 12% of the respondents fell within the 20-29-year age range. The majority of respondents were aged 40-49 years, with 51 (32.3%) participants coming from this

group. This was followed closely by the age range 30-39, having 49 (31%) participants. Participants aged 50 and above represented 24.7% of the respondents. To gain further insight into the age demographics, age ranges were further stratified by academic level (Table 4.2) and gender (Table 4.3) using cross tabulations.

Table 4.2: Cross tabulation of age group by academic level

Academic level	Age group (in years)				Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 +	
Tutor	13	1	0	2	16
Junior lecturer	2	7	0	1	10
Lecturer	4	35	32	17	88
Senior lecturer	0	5	15	14	34
Associate professor	0	0	3	2	5
Professor	0	1	0	3	4
Total	19	49	50	39	157

As seen in Table 4.2, the majority of participants were “ordinary” lecturers aged between 30-39 years. These lecturers also comprised the majority of participants aged between 40-49 years. The youngest age category consisted of 13 tutors, 2 junior lecturers and 4 “ordinary” lecturers. Of the 5 associate professors, 3 were aged 40-49 years and 2 were 50 years or older. The 3 professors that participated were all 50 years or older.

Table 4.3: Cross tabulation of age with gender

Gender	Age group (in years)				Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 +	
Female	8	24	35	19	86
Male	11	22	16	15	64
Total	19	46	51	34	150

As shown in Table 4.3, males were a majority in only the youngest age category i.e. 20-29 year range. The age category 40-49 years had more than twice as many females than males.

4.2.4 Years of Academic Experience

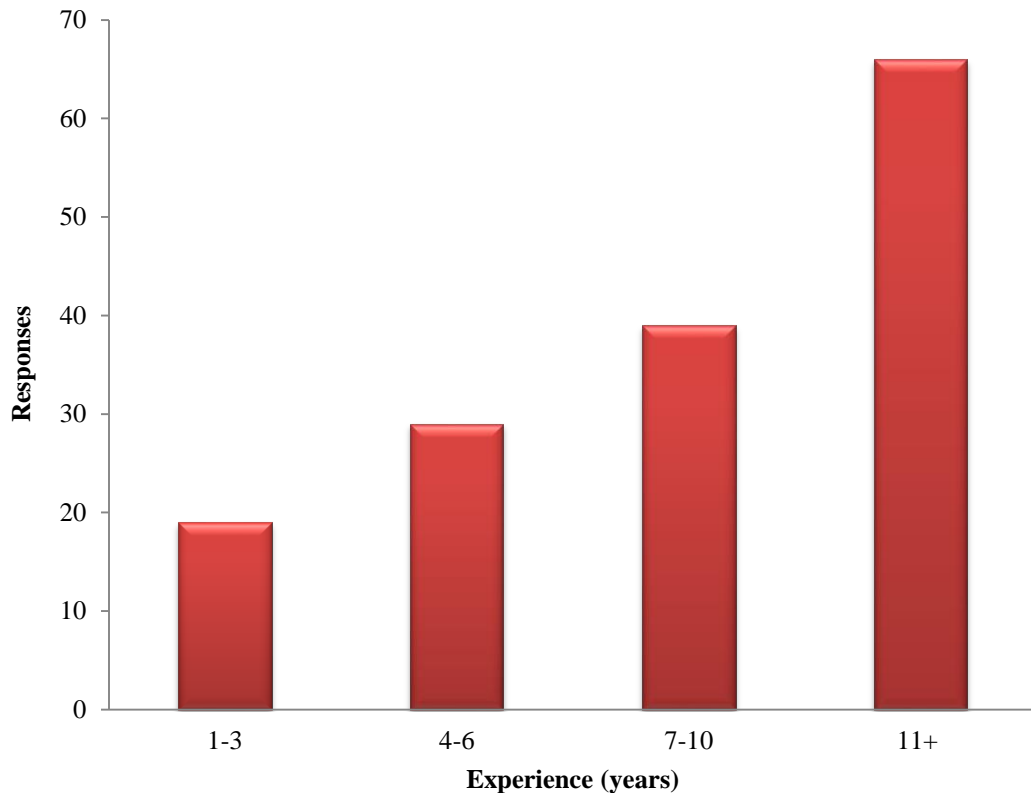


Figure 4.4: Years of academic experience

The majority of the participants had 11 or more years of academic/lecturing experience. This group represented almost 43% of the respondents. This was followed by 39 (25.5%) academics having 7-10 years' experience. Taken jointly, these two categories (7 – 10 and 11+) indicate that 68.5% of the participants were seasoned academics having at least 7 years of experience each. This may also suggest that these academics were very knowledgeable of the DUT's operations and hence could offer valuable insights about the institution. Only 19 (12.4%) participants were fairly inexperienced having 1-3 years' experience.

Table 4.4: Cross tabulation of academic level with years of experience

Academic level	Years of experience				Total
	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+	
Tutor	9	3	0	2	14
Junior lecturer	3	3	3	1	10
Lecturer	7	22	24	32	85
Senior lecturer	0	1	10	23	34
Associate professor	0	0	0	5	5
Professor	0	0	2	2	4
Total	19	29	39	65	152

Cross tabulating participants' experience by their academic level (Table 4.4) reveals that the majority of tutors had between 1-3 years' experience. Of the junior lecturers, there were only 10% that had 11 or more years of experience. The associate professors all had 11 or more years of experience. Only 1 senior lecturer had less than 7 years of experience.

Table 4.5: Cross tabulation of gender with years of experience

Gender	Years of experience				Total
	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+	
Female	10	16	23	35	84
Male	9	11	15	26	61
Total	19	27	38	61	145

As tabulated in Table 4.5, females had collectively more years of experience across all categories than males.

4.2.5 Highest qualification

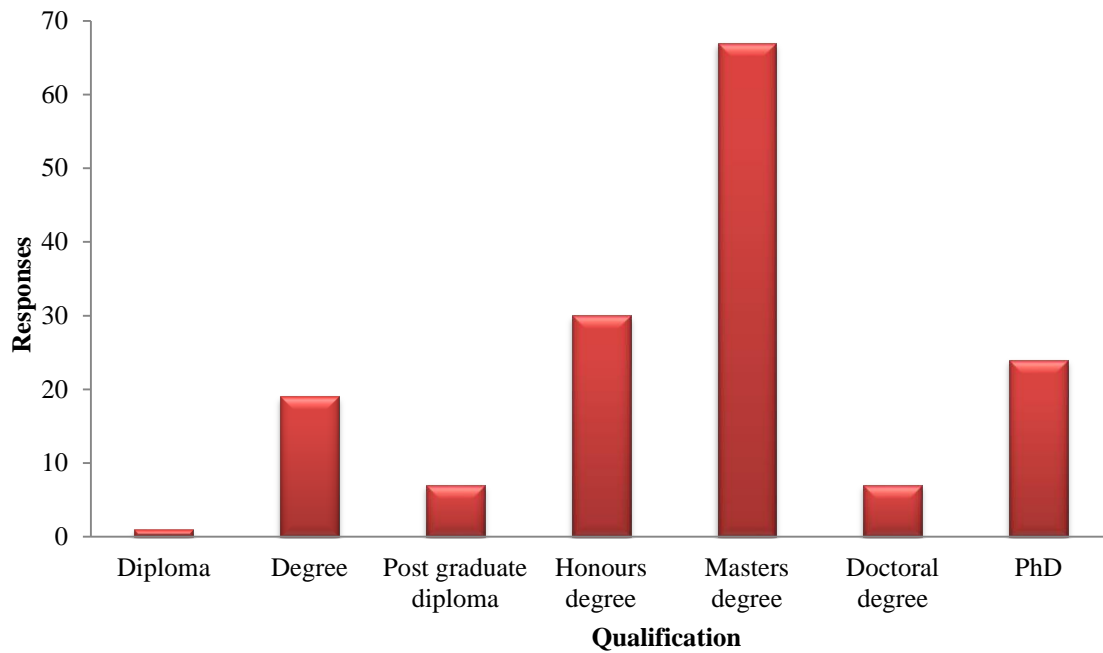


Figure 4.5: Participant Highest Qualifications

As can be seen from Figure 4.5 the majority of the 155 participants, that indicated their highest level of education, had Masters Degrees. This group represented 43.3% of the respondents. The second-most-frequently selected highest level of education was the Honours degree, with 30 (19.4%) of the academic staff having attained this level of education. A little more than 15% of the academic staff had obtained PhDs. Doctoral degrees were had by 7 staff members, as were postgraduate diplomas. Nineteen (12.3%) academic staff had achieved at most their undergraduate degrees, with only one member of staff having only a diploma.

Table 4.6: Cross tabulation of academic level with highest level of education

Academic level	Highest Education Qualification							Total
	Diploma	Degree	Post Graduate Diploma	Honours Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	PhD	
Tutor	1	12	2	0	1	0	0	16
Junior lecturer	0	2	0	6	2	0	0	10
Lecturer	0	5	5	21	51	1	4	87
Senior lecturer	0	0	0	3	11	6	13	33
Associate professor	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Professor	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4
Total	1	19	7	30	66	7	24	154

As shown in Table 4.6, 77% lecturers held Master's degrees. This was also the highest degree held by the majority of these lecturers. All of the associate professors had their PhDs, with 1 of the 4 professors having attained a Master's degree as their highest qualification.

Table 4.7: Cross tabulation between gender and highest qualification

Gender	Highest Education Qualification							Total
	Diploma	Degree	Post graduate diploma	Honours degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree	PhD	
Female	0	9	4	20	37	4	11	85
Male	1	9	3	9	28	2	10	62
Total	1	18	7	29	65	6	21	147

With reference to Table 4.7, it is only in Honours and Master's degrees that any noticeable difference existed between the genders in the collective number of highest qualifications held. Females held 11 more Honours degrees, and 9 more Master's degrees than males.

4.3 Objectives

In the sections that follow, the 4 objectives of the study are presented and discussed. These are employee attraction, employee retention, employee perceptions of what DUT could do to attract academics and what the institution could do to retain their academic staff members. For each objective, the quantitative data from the survey are first presented and

discussed. This is followed by the presentation and discussion of the relevant qualitative data obtained from the interviews with academic members of the DUT staff. The presentation of objectives 3 and 4 will be slightly different from objectives 1 and 2 in that they are grouped together. This was done because these 2 objectives were intertwined in terms of staff perceptions or views of the measures that the institution could put in place to improve the attraction and retention of academics. These objectives were primarily addressed by means of the interviews conducted and therefore were analysed using themes as opposed to having a true quantitative dimension. The layout of analysis is shown in Tables 4.8 through to 4.10.

Table 4.8: Objective 1 - Factors influencing the attraction of academic employees to DUT

Data Type	Attraction Factors
Quantitative	1. Great pay, creative benefits and rewards caused or influenced the perceived attractiveness of your current position.
	2. The institution has a good reputation of being a great place to work
	3. Is higher remuneration the primary motive that attracted you in your current position?
	4. I would recommend employment at the institution to a friend
	5. Does a healthy and safe working environment have influence on how you perceive potential employers?
	6. Does this institution's reputation influence your perceived organisational attractiveness?
	7. My physical working conditions are good and I feel safe all the times.
Qualitative	8. What made you want to come and work for this institution?
	9. What do you like best about the institute?

Table 4.9: Objective 2 - Factors influencing retention of academic personnel at DUT

Data Type	Retention Factors
Quantitative	1. Current training and mentorship is likely to influence my decision to stay
	2. Flexible working hours will affect my decision whether to leave or remain in the employ of this organisation
	3. I am motivated by current rewards that are in place
	4. The institution provides enough information, equipment and resources I need to do my job well
	5. I find my job to be challenging and satisfying
	6. My supervisor treats me fairly, with respect and handles my work-related issues satisfactory
	7. Overall, I am satisfied with this organisation's incentives and benefits package
	8. I receive the right amount of recognition for my work
Qualitative	9. What makes you want to stay at the institution?
	10. What are the top factors making you want to leave the institution?

Table 4.10: Objective 3 and 4 - Factors employees perceived critical to the university's attracting and retaining academic talent

Factors that employees perceived as critical to the university's attracting and retaining academic talent
1. Compared to other institutions of a similar nature how would you rate your institution in terms of remuneration and employee benefits?
2. How would you describe the culture and working environment currently present at the institution?
3. In your own understanding are employees welfare treated as a priority at the University?
4. In your experience are employees treated fairly regardless of race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation?
5. What career development programs and incentives are in place and how effective do you think they are?
6. What do you think of the staff promotion criteria being currently employed?
7. What are your views with regard to decision making in as far as promotions are concerned?
8. Can you briefly describe the mechanisms that are in place to measure your progress?
9. What aspects of your work strongly affect your job satisfaction?
10. What could the institute do differently to help you in your job?

The reliability of study's questions (i.e. quantitative aspects as per the questionnaire) was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Outcomes are reflected in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Cronbach's alpha for constructs grouped together by relevant questions

Objective	Questions	Cronbach's alpha	Combined alpha
1. Employee Attraction	1 - 7	0,7863	0,881
2. Employee Retention	1 - 8	0,8094	

Table 4.11 shows the outcome of the reliability test. The overall reliability of the constructs was adequate as the alpha value was 0.881. As a minimum alpha coefficient of 0.7 is generally considered reliable, the questionnaire may, therefore, be considered reliable overall. In other words, the questions addressing the study's objectives, taken jointly, may be considered reliable for serving their intended purpose. Applying Cronbach's alpha analysis to each of the individual constructs reveals that the internal consistency of each construct was reliable for assessing its particular question.

As discussed in the research methodology, the findings of this study are initially presented in the form of central-tendency statistics, as tabulated in Table 4.12. Thereafter, the responses to each question are presented in frequency distributions illustrated by means of bar graphs for the quantitative findings and when necessary for the qualitative findings as well. Responses were elicited from respondents through the use of 5-point Likert scales. The scales ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", with "strongly agree" being coded with the number "1", and "strongly disagree" being coded with the number "5". The other responses fell within this range, with "agree", for instance, coded with the number "2". As Likert scales were used, the received data was treated as ordinal. This implies that the appropriate measures of central tendency were "medians" and "modes". The median refers to the positioning of the middle-most response(s) after all the responses had been ranked in increasing order. The median, therefore, was that point at which 50% of the responses fell either above or below the middle-most response. The mode, on the other hand, refers to the most frequently occurring response(s). These are presented in bar charts.

In the next section the research questions used to address the study objectives are presented. The research questions are grouped under their respective objectives as tabulated in Tables 4.8 to 4.10.

4.3.1 Objective 1: Factors influencing the attraction of academic personnel at DUT

4.3.1.1 Employee Attraction: Quantitative Analysis

Table 4.12: Central tendency statistics and significance tests for responses to statements pertaining to factors affecting employee attraction to DUT

Attraction Construct	N	Median [†]	Mode ^{††}	p-value* (Current Status)	p-value# (Gender)
1. Great pay, creative benefits and rewards caused or influenced the perceived attractiveness of your current position.	157	3	4	0.266	0.871
2. The institution has a good reputation of being a great place to work	156	3	2	0.254	0.286
3. Is higher remuneration the primary motive that attracted you in your current position?	159	4	4	0.965	0.529
4. I would recommend employment at the institution to a friend	154	3	2	0.172	0.990
5. Does a healthy and safe working environment have influence on how you perceive potential employers?	154	2	2	0.053	0.945
6. Does this institution's reputation influence your perceived organisational attractiveness?	153	2	2	0.479	0.035
7. My physical working conditions are good and I feel safe all the times.	155	3	2	0.777	0.016

*Kruskal Wallis Test; #Mann-Whitney U Test

† & ††: Note: 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree; and 5 = strongly disagree

Here the term “statement” will be used loosely, as a few questions were also used to form the retention construct. Henceforth, the term “statement” will refer to all 7 individual items comprising this construct. Based on Table 4.12, it is evident from the medians that 50% or more of the respondents were either neutral, or they agreed or strongly agreed with 4 of the 7 statements. These statements concerned remuneration and rewards: (Statement 1) the institution’s reputation for being a good place to work in (Statement 2); the willingness to recommend the institution to friends as a good place to work (Statement 4); and physical working conditions and safety (Statement 7). Statement 5 (Does a healthy and safe working environment influence the way in which you perceive potential employers?) and Statement 6 (Does this institution's reputation influence your perception of organisational

attractiveness?) had 50% or more participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing with them. Statement 3 (Is higher remuneration the primary motive that attracted you to your current position?) is the only statement with which 50% or more respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

It may thus be deduced from these findings that respondents tended to view Statements 5 and 6 most favourably; with 50% or more indicating that health, safety and the institution's reputation had a strong influence on their working environment and their perceptions of potential employers. Based on responses to Statement 3, it may be deduced that remuneration was not the primary motivation for applying for their present positions at the institution.

In terms of the modes, it may be seen from Table 4.12 that for Statements 1 and 3, the most frequently selected response was "disagree". Respondents frequently selected to agree with the remaining statements. This, however, did not indicate that the majority of respondents disagreed with Statements 1 and 3; nor did it indicate that the majority agreed with the other 5 statements. It merely gave an indication of which response was selected most per statement. These statements will be discussed in greater detail in the paragraphs that follow.

4.3.1.1.1 Statement 1: Impressive pay, creative benefits and rewards caused or influenced the perceived attractiveness of your current position.

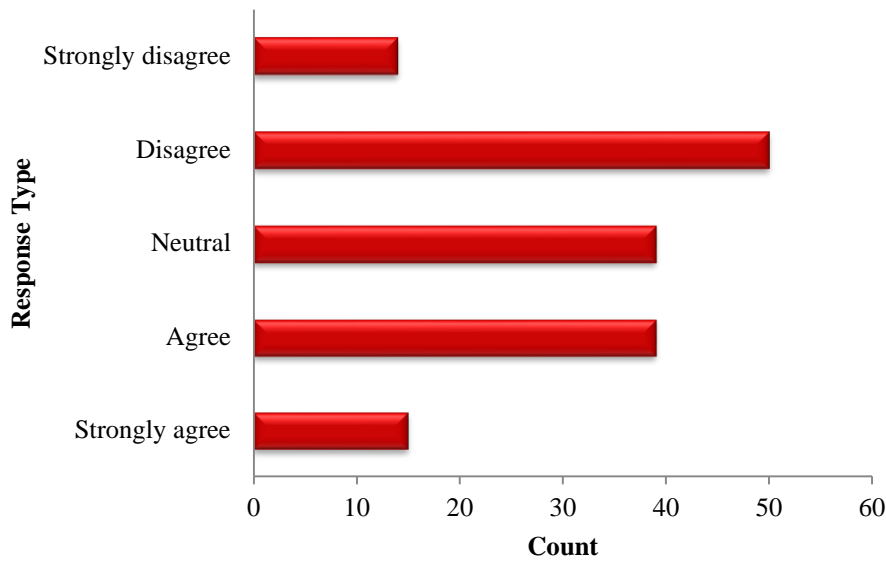


Figure 4.6: Great pay, creative benefits and rewards caused or influenced the perceived attractiveness of your current position.

As seen in Figure 4.6, slightly over 40% of the 157 respondents who indicated their stance on this statement, either disagreed (31.9%) or strongly disagreed (8.9%) with it. Thirty-four per cent of the respondents either agreed (24.8%) or strongly agreed (9.5%). The remaining 39 participants (24.8%) opted to remain neutral. If respondents who remained neutral are ignored, while concentrating on those who took a stance, the majority (54% of the remaining 118 participants) did not agree that remuneration, benefits and rewards caused or influenced their attraction to their current positions. A significant number of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed that focusing more on financial rewards is becoming a thing of the past. More employees (54%) disagreed that the remuneration, benefits and rewards caused or influenced the perceived attractiveness of their current positions. This is in contrast with Nieuwenhuizen's (2009) recommendation of increasing the salaries of academic staff as a tool to attracting more academics. It can therefore be concluded from the above findings that remuneration was not viewed by participants as a very important factor in attracting them to the institution.

4.3.1.1.2 Statement 2: The institution has a reputation for being a good place to work

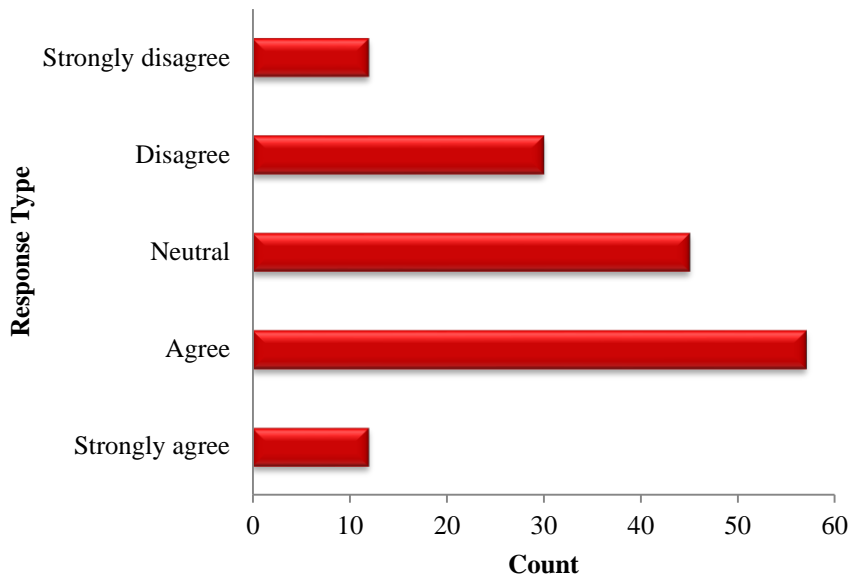


Figure 4.7: The institution has a good reputation of being a great place to work

Figure 4.7 illustrates the responses to the statement, “The institution has the reputation of being a good place to work”. Forty-four per cent of the 156 responses received either agreed (36.5%) or strongly agreed (7.7%) with this statement. Almost 27% of the respondents either disagreed (19.2%) or strongly disagreed (7.7%) that the institution had the reputation of being a good working place. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents opted to remain neutral. Although most frequently respondents felt that the institution had a good reputation as a place to work in, they, however, constituted less than 50% of the participating staff compliment. Moreover, more participants were unsure of their attitudes towards this statement than those who disagreed with it. Based on this, the majority of the members of staff did not convincingly project the institution as a great place to work in. The institution’s reputation as a great place to work in, therefore, did not appear to be a talent attracting drawcard.

4.3.1.1.3 Statement 3: Is higher remuneration the primary motive that attracted you to your current position?

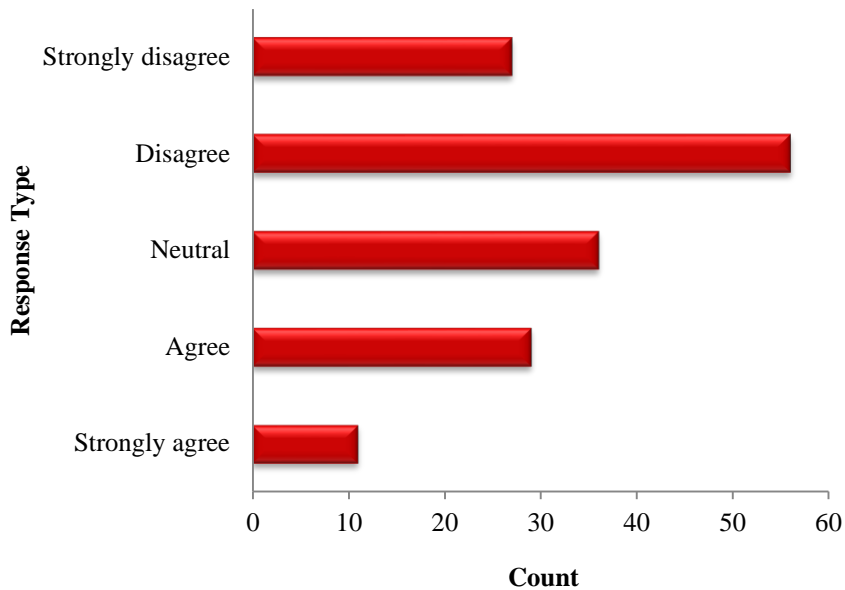


Figure 4.8: Is higher remuneration the primary motive that attracted you in your current position?

As may be seen in Figure 4.8, the majority of the respondents tended to disagree that higher remuneration was the primary reason that attracted them to their present positions. This is evidenced by 56 (35.2%) and 27 (17%) of respondents disagreeing and strongly disagreeing, respectively, with this statement. The remaining 47.8% of the respondents strongly agreed (7%), agreed (18.24%), or remained neutral (22.6%). In this instance, more than half of the participating staff members felt that higher remuneration was not the main reason for them working at (or holding) their present positions. This supports the findings of statement 1 and contrasts with those of Nieuwenhuizen (2009). The findings of the present study suggest that most of the participating employees had other motives that attracted them to be in the employ of the university other than remuneration. This factor, therefore, was not a very important employee attracting tool.

4.3.1.1.4 Statement 4: I would recommend employment at the institution to a friend

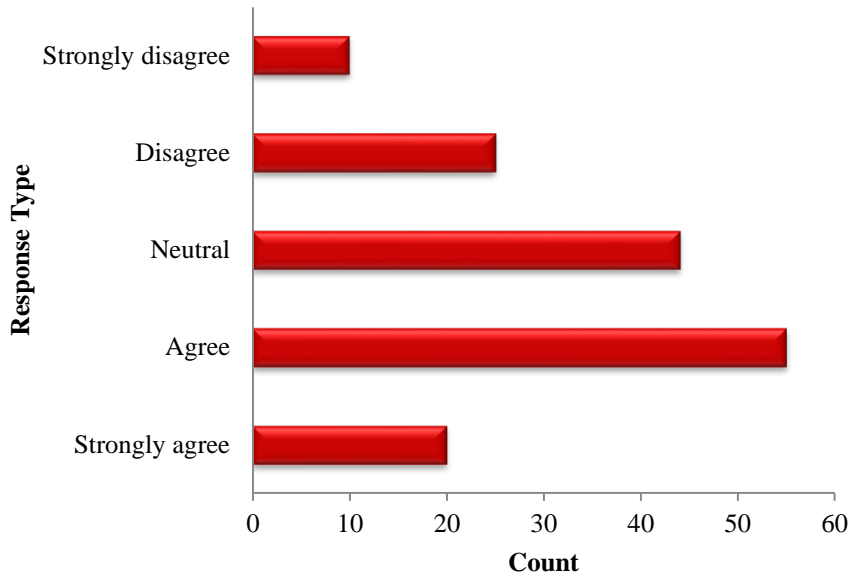


Figure 4.9: I would recommend employment at the institution to a friend

In terms of recommending DUT as employer of choice, almost 50% of the respondents indicated that they would recommend the institution to a friend (see Figure 4.9). Of these, 20 (13%) participants strongly agreed, and (35.7%) participants agreed with this statement. Thirty-five participants felt that they would not recommend DUT to their friends as a place of employment. This is evidenced by 16.2% and 6.5% of the 154 respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement respectively. The remaining 28.6% of the participants opted to remain neutral. There is therefore no overwhelming evidence to suggest that respondents held the institution in very high regard, so much so as to recommend it to their friends as a potential employer of choice. This is evidenced by more than 50% of the participants either stating that they would not or being unsure whether they would recommend DUT to their friends. This implies that the institution is not very well positioned as the employer of choice in the minds of their present employees. However, this presents a growth opportunity for the institution, especially if the investigate the cause(s) and take proactive steps towards repositioning themselves to their employees.

4.3.1.1.5 Statement 5: Does a healthy and safe working environment influence your perception of potential employers?

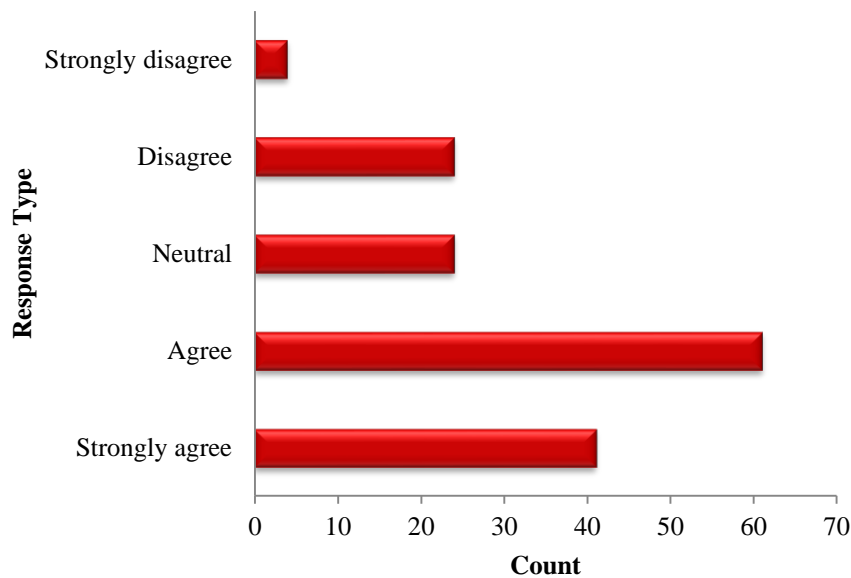


Figure 4.10: Does a healthy and safe working environment have influence on how you perceive potential employers?

As illustrated in Figure 4.10, participants most often agreed with this statement, only a few participants strongly disagreeing with it. Of all the statements comprising this construct, this statement received the most positive response. It was responded to by 154 participants. Of these, 102 (66.23%) felt that a healthy and safe environment influenced their perception of potential employers. Of the 102 participants, 41 (40% of the 102) strongly agreed with this variable. Twenty-eight (18.2%) participants disagreed, 4 of which did so strongly. Based on these findings it is evident that a healthy and safe working environment is an important factor to academic employees at DUT. This supports Armstrong (2006) who found that a healthy and safe working environment is important for staff attraction and retention; and should be available to all employees. It is therefore, undeniable that the workplace has a sizeable influence on the health of its personnel. Productivity is greatly affected by how a person feels, as well as how satisfied they are with the conditions under which they are working; this influences their health, both physically and psychologically.

4.3.1.1.6 Statement 6: Does this institution's reputation influence your perception of organisational attractiveness?

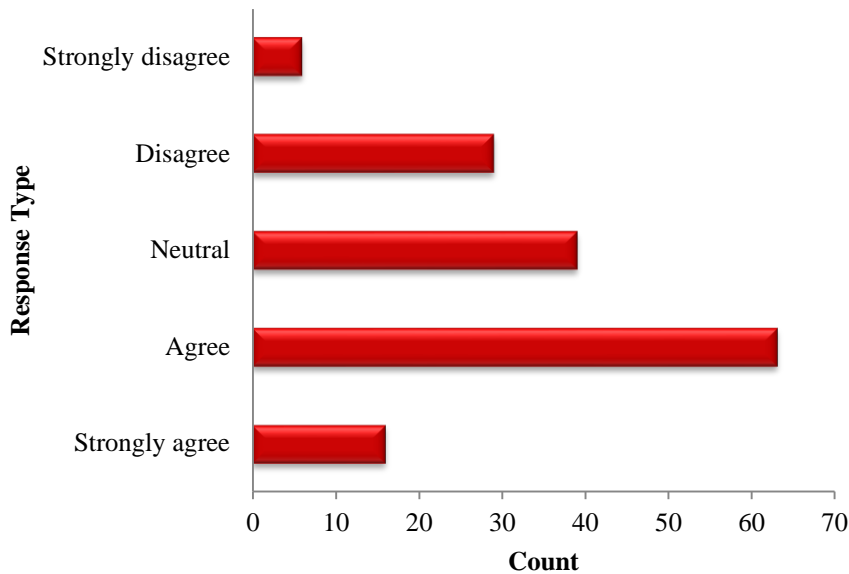


Figure 4.11 Does this institution's reputation influence your perceived organisational attractiveness?

In response to whether participants' perception of organisational attractiveness was influenced by DUT's reputation (see Figure 4.11), 63 (41.2%), participants agreed that it was; 16 (10.5%) felt that it strongly influenced their perceptions; 29 (19%) felt that it did not really impact on their perceptions; while 6 (4%) felt that it had no impact whatsoever. Thirty-nine participants chose to remain neutral; while a further 6 participants did not respond at all. Based on the above, the institution's reputation was an important factor in how participants perceived organisational attractiveness. This is in keeping with Glen (2007) who stated that talent can be attracted by an impressive reputation and that many employees found companies to work for that had a good reputation. However, the responses to this statement could either be interpreted as participants perceiving the attractiveness to other organisations or their attractiveness to DUT based on their experiences at DUT. The question itself was intentionally broad and aimed to elicit participants' general outlook. As such, it cannot be ascertained whether their views were specific to DUT nor can it be ascertained whether DUT's reputation affected their perceptions positively or negatively.

4.3.1.1.7 Statement 7: My physical working conditions are good; and I feel safe at all times.

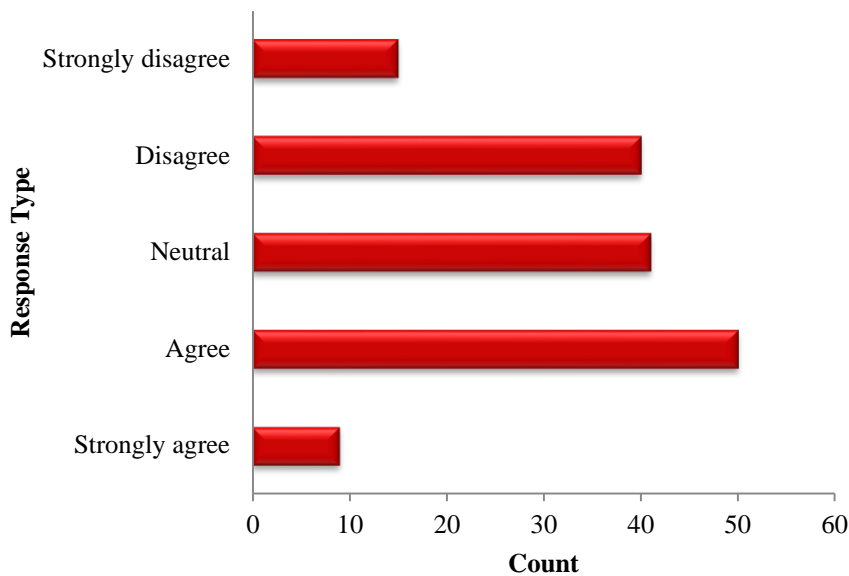


Figure 4.12: My physical working conditions are good and I feel safe all the times.

As illustrated in Figure 4.12, the most frequently selected response was “agree”, with 50 (32.3%) of respondents choosing this option. Forty (25.8%) participants disagreed that their physical working conditions and environment made them feel safe at work at all times. Nine participants strongly agreed that they felt that they were in a suitable and safe working environment, while 15 participants strongly disagreed. The remaining 41 respondents opted to remain neutral. This is cause for concern because the number of respondents who either disagreed or strongly agreed amounted to somewhat the same number as those who agreed and strongly agreed. Due to this factor not being a very clear-cut one, it is perhaps prudent to take the view that academic staff had concerns about their safety and the physical conditions of their work environment. It can therefore be considered to be an important factor in the attraction of academics to DUT.

As can be seen in Table 4.12 earlier, no statistically significant differences were observed between the academic levels’ responses to all 7 variables comprising the attraction construct at the 95% confidence level. This indicates that there is no statistical evidence to suggest that the views expressed by respondents were impacted on by the academic level that the employees held. Rather, it indicates that responses were independent of the academic level that participants held.

In order to assess whether gender had anything to do with responses to the statements comprising this construct, the Mann Whitney test was used. Based on the results tabulated in Table 4.12, it can thus be concluded that statistically significant differences existed between gender responses to the statements “Does this institution's reputation influence your perceived organisational attractiveness?” ($p=0.035$) and “My physical working conditions are good and I feel safe all the times” ($p=0.016$). This indicates that males and females had differing views with regards to the institution’s reputation and their safety. To assess where potential significant differences existed, cross tabulations between these two statements with their respective genders were performed (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13: Cross tabulation between the institution's reputation influence on perceived organisational attractiveness and gender

Response	Female		Male		Total
	n	%	n	%	
Agree	38	46.34	39	61.90	61
Neutral	23	28.05	13	20.63	36
Disagree	21	25.61	11	17.46	26
Total	82	100.00	63	100.00	145

As can be seen in Table 4.13, the majority of males felt that the institution’s reputation did have an impact on their perceptions of its attractiveness. Less than 50% of females shared the same sentiment. Most often females chose to either remain neutral (28% of them) or to disagree (26%) with it.

Table 4.14: Cross tabulation between physical working and personal safety with gender

Response	Female		Male		Total
	n	%	n	%	
Agree	28	33.73	30	47.62	49
Neutral	19	22.89	19	30.16	38
Disagree	36	43.37	14	22.22	38
Total	83	100.00	63	100.00	146

As seen in Table 4.14, physical working conditions were more of a concern to females than to males. In terms of proportions of each gender, almost twice as many females (43.47%) than males (22.22%) were concerned about physical working conditions and their safety.

This highlights the need for the institution to add measures that will ensure better and safer working conditions, especially to alleviate the concerns of their female employees.

In assessing the factors influencing the attraction of academic personnel at the Durban University of Technology, the quantitative study found that the institution's reputation of being a great place to work strongly affected the institution's ability to attract the academic employees. The study further found that a healthy and safe working environment; with good physical working conditions was one of the factors affecting the attraction of the academic talent. These findings are supported by literature in Armstrong (2006:149) where it was highlighted that healthy and safe working conditions should be made available to employees. The majority of participants indicated that currently the institution was seen to be a great place to work in and the recommendation of employment to other people was probable. The qualitative data also supported these findings and further found "culture" to have an effect on attraction of academic personnel at DUT as well.

4.3.1.2 Employee Attraction: Qualitative Analysis

This section reports the analysis of the qualitative interviews which was used to gather a more in-depth understanding of staff sentiments in relation to their attraction to their place of employment. This entailed conducting interviews with 11 members of the academic staff. Each staff member was asked 2 questions pertaining to their attraction towards the institution. The contents of which will be discussed in the coming sections.

4.3.1.2.1 What made you want to come and work for this institution?

The first question that interviewees were asked was what influenced their decisions to become a member of staff at the institution. This question was asked primarily to assess interviewees' true intentions for pursuing a career in academia at DUT.

Four themes emerged from interviewees' responses. Staff indicated that they had joined the institution because they were either offered a position at the institution, were at the institution by default as a result of the merger between the former Technikon Natal and ML Sultan Technikon; because of the benefits offered by the institution; or for the love of academia. Job offer was the main theme with 8 of the 11 respondents highlighting it as the reason for working at the institution.

As visualised in the above figure, the majority (73%) of participants were members of staff at DUT primarily because they were offered employment by the institution, specifically full-time employment. Among the motivations given by interviewees for joining DUT's academic family was that, prior to being employed by the institution, they were either unemployed or were employed on contract at a different institution, or their employment contract had expired at such an institution. *Participant A, for instance said "I was working at [another academic institution] before I came here and my contract had expired. So, I had never thought that I would come here to this institute until I got the job description and decided to apply for it."*

Closely linked to this was the attraction to the institution because of the benefits that it offered. This was mentioned by one of the interviewees as their sole reason for joining the institution. As an institution that strives to attract academics and to become a competitive rival within the higher education fraternity, it is quite surprising to discover that only 1 interviewee of the 11 joined the institution primarily because of their passion for academia. This interviewee, Participant B, described her progression and motivation for joining the academic staff of DUT as:

"I was a student in the course I am working in. I was interested in starting a career as either a teacher or a lecturer. I pursued the academic route, did [my] honours, and found that there was an opening and applied. My main interest in working here was because of the balance between the theory and the practice."

However, it cannot be concluded that the other interviewees had no passion for academia at all. Instead, it is plausible that the passion for academia was a given, hence they concentrated on responding as to how the DUT became their employer of choice.

4.3.1.2.2 What do you like best about the institution?

Interviewee responses were collectively grouped under two themes. Only two respondents felt indifferent about their views on the institution. One of these interviewees, Participant C, put it as follows: *"I don't think there is a preference. It's just an institution like any other. There is nothing that puts it out there and makes it stand alone."*

It also emerged from the responses of the other 9 participants that what they really liked about the institution was that it was progressive and focused on staff and students. More than 80% of responses fell within this broad theme. Employees found the institution to be evolving. This encouraged them as this self-discovery created room for creativity and innovativeness. The university was also implementing projects to enhance student learning. Participant D encapsulates this best in saying *“I think that it is an exciting time, and because we are continually evolving there is a lot of creative space. There is a lot of opportunity to bring in new ideas, and I am speaking of my faculty and my department, like with e-learning. Sometimes you hear of institutions that are very rigid in how they do stuff and they are not willing to think about innovative ways. In our institution, I like that academics are given that ability or that space to think out of the box.”*

Interviewees felt that the institution was sincerely concerned about staff and student well-being and had taken measures to ensure that these stakeholders were prioritised. Academic staff also found the institution to be supportive of their professional development by constantly encouraging them to further their studies.

The qualitative component of the study found that the institution was not doing enough in ensuring that it attracted the academic talent it requires as the majority of respondents when asked what attracted them to the institution responded with job offers. This shows that these employees are to leave the institution at any time if they were to get job offers anywhere else. The institution was also acknowledged by employees to giving recognition of work done by employees. Academic staff also mentioned benefits and remuneration; recognition and appreciation; staff support; staff development; career progression opportunities; better resources and facilities as factors they perceived as critical in attracting academic talent in their responses. These findings support Glen (2007:4) who stated that talent can be attracted by an impressive reputation, competitive financial rewards and the promise of exceptional career progression.

The qualitative findings also uncovered that female employees felt that they were treated differently compared to their male counter parts and their needs differed from those of male counter parts. This is supported by literature where Cassim, (2005) noted that gender equity in higher education is increasingly becoming the subject of attention and research

both globally and in South Africa, particularly since the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act

4.3.2 Objective 2: Factors influencing retention of academic personnel at DUT

4.3.2.1 Employee Retention: Quantitative Analysis

The findings of this section are firstly presented in the form of central tendency statistics, as tabulated in Table 4.15. Thereafter, the responses to each question are presented in frequency distributions graphically presented using bar graphs. This has been done for both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the survey as well as for the qualitative findings of the interviews.

Table 4.15: Central tendency statistics and significance tests for responses to statements pertaining to factors affecting employee retention at DUT

Statement	N	Median [†]	Mode ^{††}	p-value [*] (Academic level)	p-value [#] (Gender)
1. Current training and mentorship is likely to influence my decision to stay	156	2	2	0,248	0,383
2. Flexible working hours will affect my decision whether to leave or remain in the employ of this organisation	155	2	1	0,187	0,477
3. I am motivated by current rewards that are in place	154	3	2	0,433	0,304
4. The institution provides enough information, equipment and resources I need to do my job well	153	3	2	0,211	0,369
5. I find my job to be challenging and satisfying	152	2	2	0,152	0,767
6. My supervisor treats me fairly, with respect and handles my work-related issues satisfactory	155	2	2	0,717	0,380
7. Overall, I am satisfied with this organisation's incentives and benefits package	154	3	2	0,071	0,443
8. I receive the right amount of recognition for my work	155	3	4	0,487	0,093

*Kruskal Wallis Test; #Mann-Whitney U Test

† & ††: Note: 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree; and 5 = strongly disagree

Based on Table 4.15, it is evident from the medians that 50% or more of the respondents were either neutral, agreed with, or strongly agreed with 4 of the 8 statements. These statements are “I am motivated by current rewards that are in place” (Statement 3), “The institution provides adequate information, equipment, and resources which I need to do my job well” (Statement 4), “Overall, I am satisfied with this organisation's incentives and benefits package” (Statement 7), and “I receive the proper amount of recognition for my work” (Statement 8). The remaining 4 statements had 50% or more participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing with them. Therefore, the conditions that most employees felt were important to motivate them to stay at their institution were current training and mentorship; flexible working hours; challenging and satisfying work; and treatment of them by their superiors.

With regard to the most frequently selected responses, respondents most often agreed with 6 of the 8 statements. These are statements 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Participants mostly disagreed with statement 8, “I receive the right amount of recognition for my work”; and strongly agreed with statement 2, “Flexible working hours will affect my decision whether to leave or to remain in the employ of this organisation”.

Testing for any significant differences in responses to the “employee retention” construct by academic level and gender revealed that no statistically significant differences existed between responses by gender and nor by academic level. This indicates that responses received were not influenced by the participants’ genders nor did their academic level at the institution hold any significant bearing on their responses. A more detailed account of responses to each of the statements comprising the “employee retention” construct will be entered into in the forthcoming sections.

4.3.2.1.1 Statement 1: Current training and mentorship is likely to influence my decision to stay

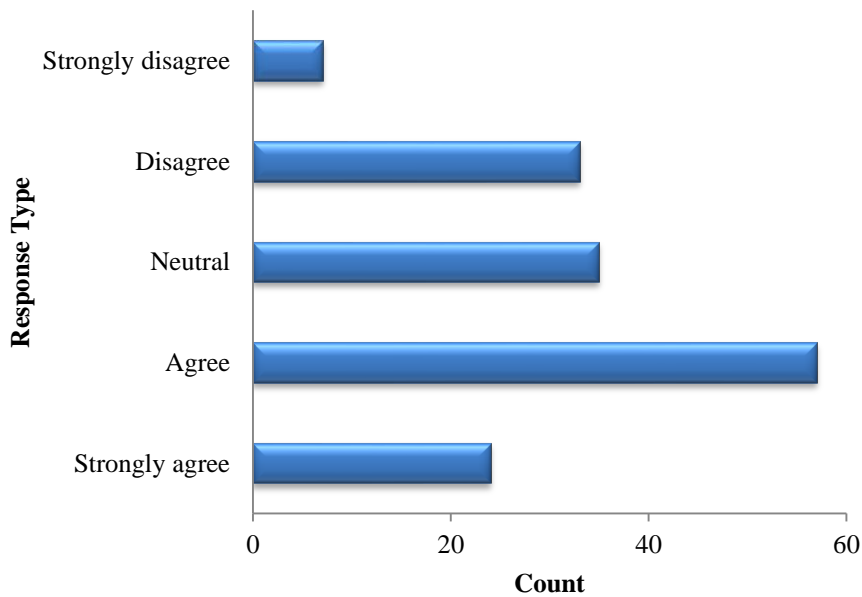


Figure 4.13: Current training and mentorship is likely to influence my decision to stay

As illustrated in Figure 4.13, “agree” was the most often selected response. Extracting from the above figure, it emerges that 52% of the 156 respondents either agreed (36.54%) or strongly agreed (15.38%) that current training and mentorship was likely to influence their decision to remain in the institution. Some 21% felt that these factors would not really influence their decision to stay; while 4.5% felt very strongly that current training and mentorship had no impact at all on their decision to remain within the organisation. Twenty-two per cent of the participants remained neutral on this point. Training and mentorship, therefore, appeared to be an important factor in the retention of academic staff at the institution. This supports the findings of Horwitz *et al.* (2003) and Lockhart and Majal (2012) who found that training and development was a key retention factor affecting employees of all ages.

4.3.2.1.2 Statement 2: Flexible working hours will affect my decision whether to leave or remain in the employ of this organisation

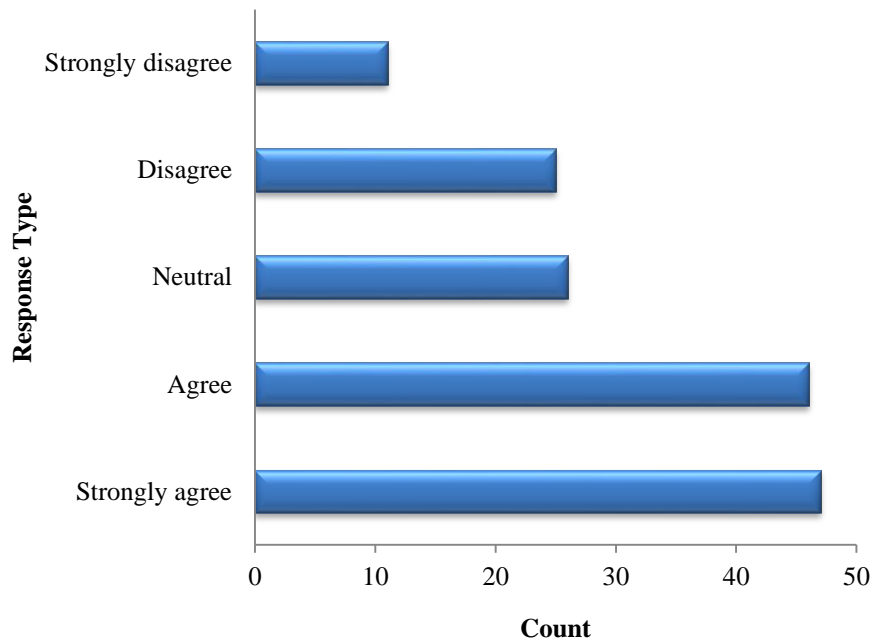


Figure 4.14: Flexible working hours will affect my decision whether to leave or remain in the employ of this organisation

As evident in Figure 4.14 the majority of the respondents (60%) either agreed (29.7%) or strongly agreed (30.3%) that “flexible working hours” had an impact on their decisions to remain with the organisation. Twenty-five (16.1%) respondents disagreed, 11 (7.1%) strongly disagreed, and 26 (16.8%) remained neutral. The vast majority of respondents showed that flexible working hours was very important to keeping them at the institution. This supports the findings of Kuye (2001) and Netswera *et al.* (2005) and indicates that management should examine and closely monitor this factor. This is particularly so because the work environment should be evolving in tandem with the ever changing world.

4.3.2.1.3 Statement 3: I am motivated by current rewards that are in place

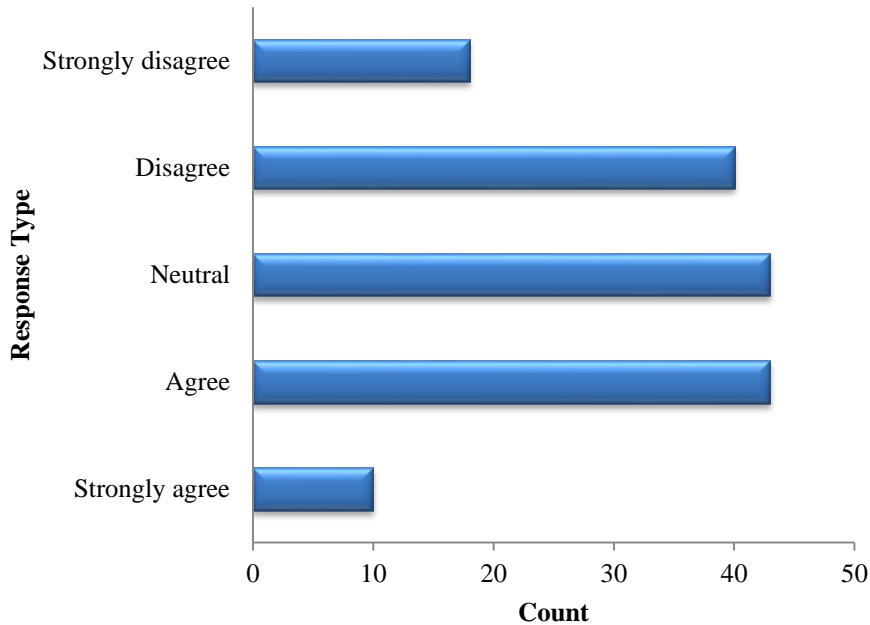


Figure 4.15: I am motivated by current rewards that are in place

As may be seen in Figure 4.15, respondents seemed quite divided in terms of current rewards being a motivator. This was particularly so with the relative stickiness of responses around neutrality. In this instance, 43 (27.9%) of the 154 respondents agreed; 43 (27.9%) remained neutral; and 40 (26%) disagreed. If “neutral” is taken out of the equation, 47.7% of the remaining 111 participants responded positively to this statement; while 52.3% did not. This indicates that, apart from the respondents who did not take a stance, the majority of respondents felt that current rewards were not enough to influence their decision to remain in the organisation. This suggests that employees felt that current reward were not enough to warrant their loyalty to their present employer.

4.3.2.1.4 Statement 4: The institution provides adequate information, equipment and resources that I need to do my job well

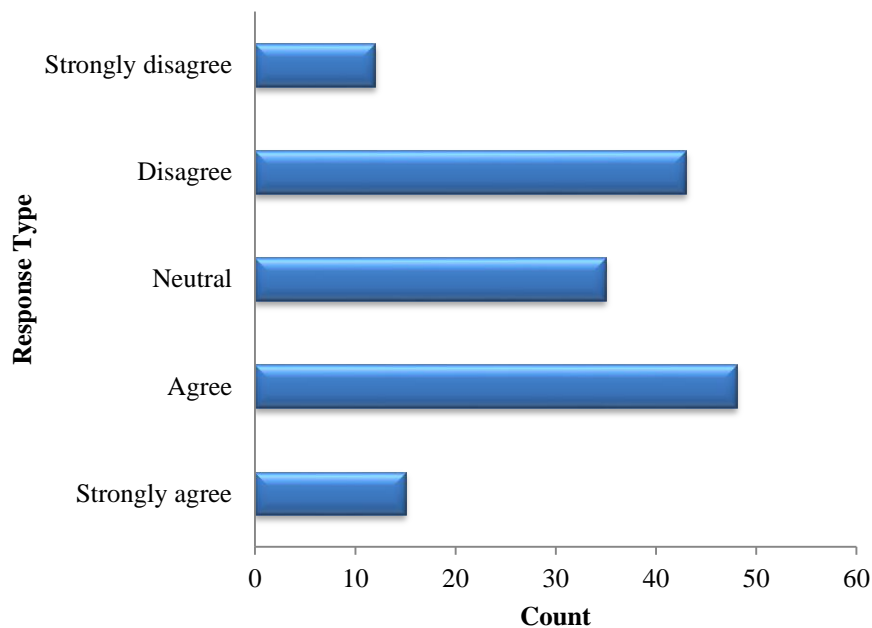


Figure 4.16: The institution provides enough information, equipment and resources I need to do my job well

Figure 4.16 shows that an almost equal amount of respondents either agreed or disagreed with this statement. In fact, only 5 more participants agreed that the institution provided them with enough “information, equipment, and resources” necessary to execute their duties well, than those who disagreed. Of the 153 responses, 31.4% agreed; 9.8% strongly agreed; 28.1% disagreed; 7.8% strongly disagreed; and the remaining 22.9% opted for neutrality. Employees held differing views regarding this statement, with almost the same number of respondents agreeing and disagreeing. This may suggest that the institution should take further steps in ensuring that information is circulated to employees. It should also provide employees with all the equipment and resources necessary to perform their duties.

4.3.2.1.5 Statement 5: I find my job to be challenging and satisfying

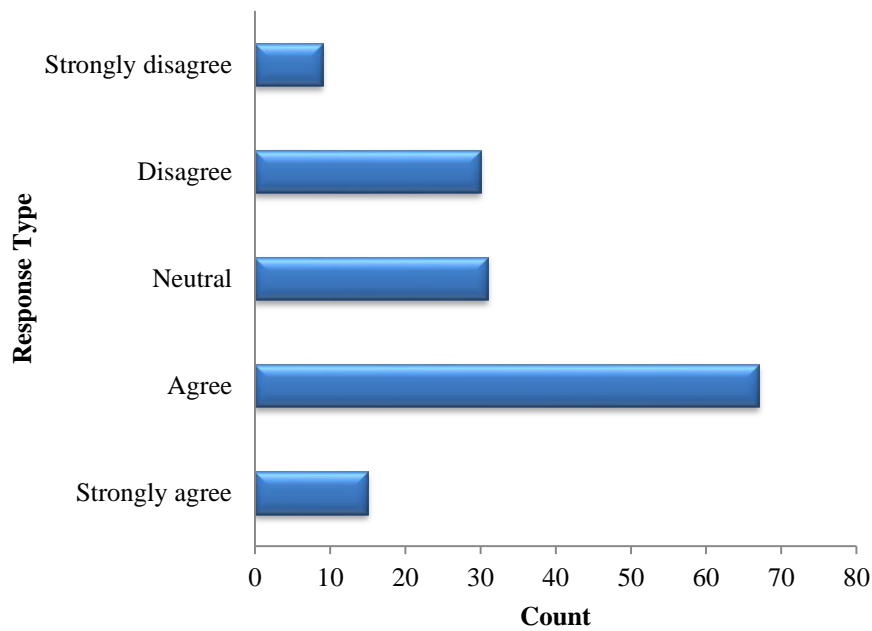


Figure 4.17: I find my job to be challenging and satisfying

With respect to finding their jobs challenging and satisfying, 54% of the 152 respondents either agreed (44.1%) or strongly agreed (9.9%) that they found their jobs both challenging and satisfying (see Figure 4.17). Almost 20% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed. The remaining 20.1% remained neutral. It is evident from the responses that employees were finding their jobs both challenging and satisfying. It is important that the university management provide its employees with adequate support to ensure that they overcome all the challenges concomitant with their jobs.

4.3.2.1.6 Statement 6: My supervisor treats me fairly, with respect and handles my work-related issues satisfactorily

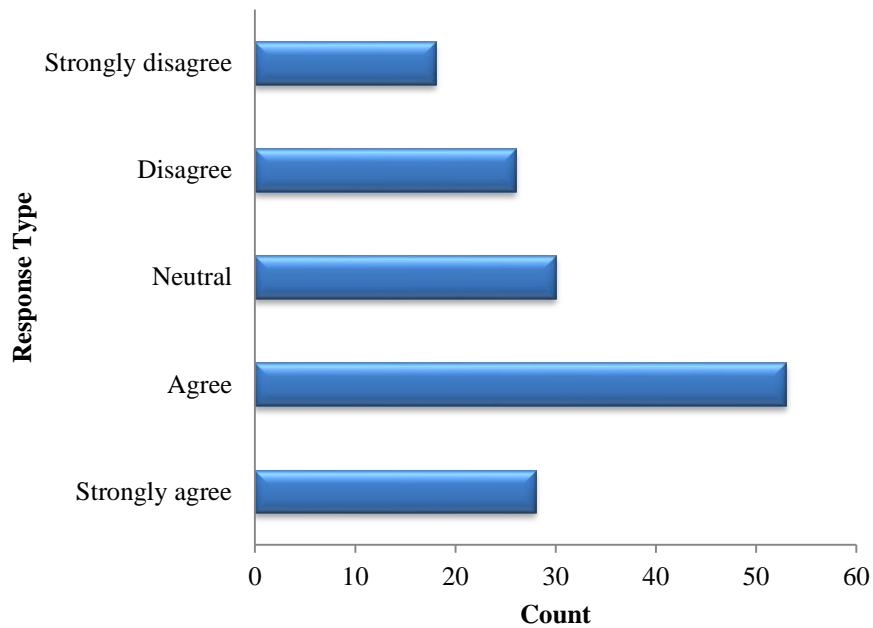


Figure 4.18: My supervisor treats me fairly, with respect and handles my work-related issues satisfactory

As shown in Figure 4.18, participants frequently agreed that their supervisors treated them fairly and with respect when it came to work-related issues. Fifty-three (34.2%) respondents agreed with this statement with 18.1% strongly agreeing with it. Although the majority of employees felt that their supervisors treated them fairly and handled their work-related issues satisfactorily, they did not feel that the amount of work they processed was being recognised. A total of 45.2% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “I receive the proper amount of recognition for my work”. It is commonly said that employees actually leave managers, rather than companies. Companies only become victims because of the way managers treat their employees.

4.3.2.1.7 Statement 7: Overall, I am satisfied with this organisation's incentives and benefits package

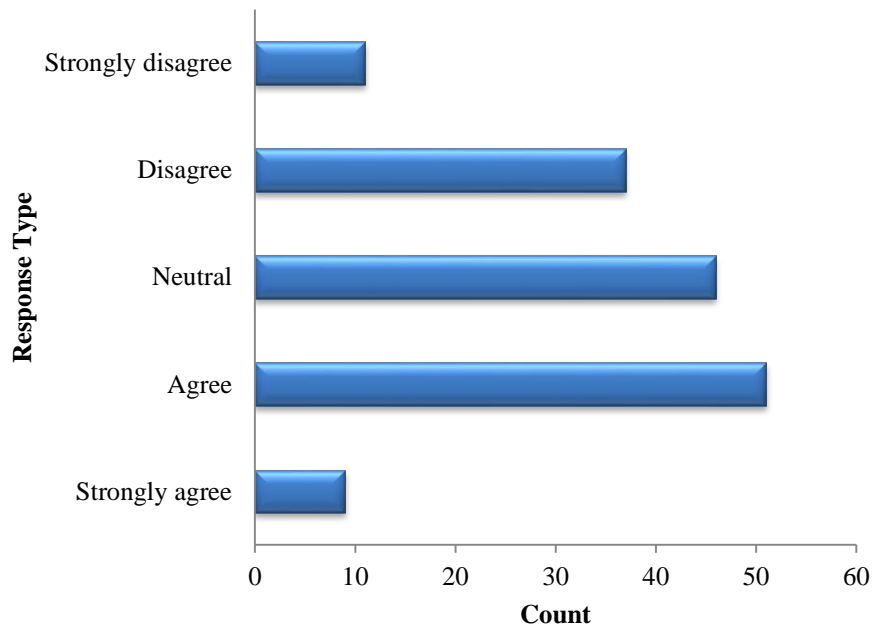


Figure 4.19: Overall, I am satisfied with this organisation's incentives and benefits package

In terms of participants' satisfaction with the organisation's incentives and benefits package, 33% of the 154 respondents agreed that they were satisfied; 5.8% strongly agreed; 24% disagreed; 7.1% strongly disagreed; and the remaining 30% remained neutral (see Figure 4.19). This indicates that less than 39% of the participants were satisfied with their incentives and benefits packages from the institution. Conversely, a little over 61% were either dissatisfied with the incentives and benefits that they received or were unsure whether they were at a level that was ideal or acceptable to them.

4.3.2.1.8 Statement 8: I receive the proper amount of recognition for my work

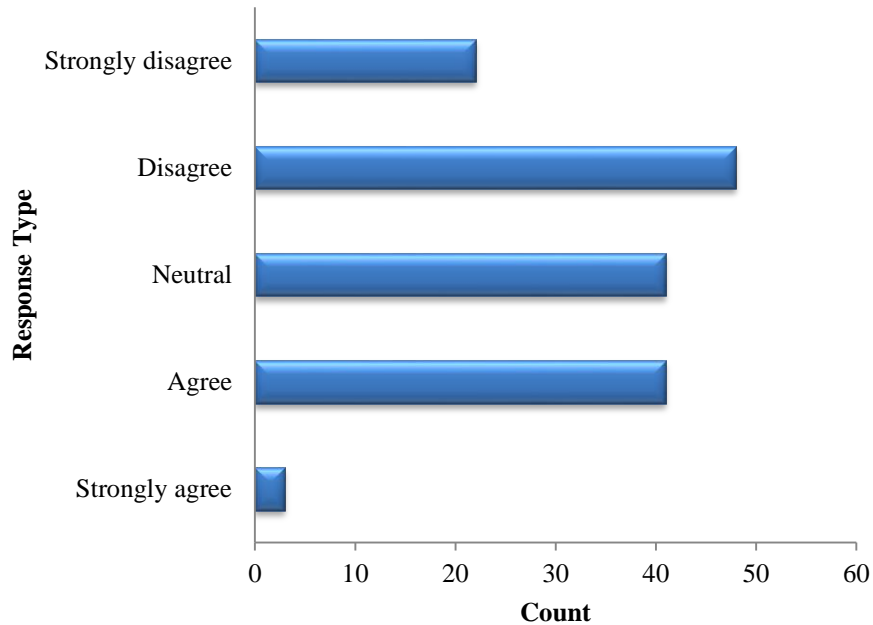


Figure 4.20: I receive the right amount of recognition for my work

As illustrated in Figure 4.20, participants most frequently disagreed that they received the proper amount of recognition for their work. In total, 45.2% either disagreed (31%) or strongly disagreed (14.2%) with this statement. Some 28% either agreed (26.4%) or strongly agreed (1.9%) that they received adequate recognition for their work. The remaining 26.4% opted to remain neutral. Although not a majority, it is somewhat discouraging to find that a large number of employees disagreed with this statement. This suggests that quite a substantial amount of employees felt undervalued by the institution. This could potentially lead to their feeling despondent, which could have negative consequences on their performance and motivation to stay at the institution. Managers, or heads of departments, are therefore encouraged to notice and recognise the continued hard work that their staff members put into achieving set objectives to strengthen employee retention efforts.

4.3.2.2 Employee Retention: Qualitative Analysis

This section forms the second part of the research tool. It was used to gather a more in-depth understanding of staff sentiments in relation to their place of employment. This entailed conducting interviews with 11 members of the academic staff. Each staff member was asked 2 questions, the content of which will be discussed in the coming sections. Participant responses were grouped into themes, where appropriate, to enable the ease of analysis while keeping the integrity of their responses intact.

4.3.2.2.1 What makes you want to stay at the institution?

Table 4.16: Responses to "What makes you want to stay at the institution?"

Response	n	Valid %
Recognition and Appreciation	2	20
Employment	2	20
Work environment, flexibility and students	6	60
Total	10	100

As seen in Table 4.16, three broad themes emerged as motivators that kept employees at the institution. Employees valued the need to be recognised and appreciated for their accomplishments. The work environment, which included growth opportunities and creative freedom, was also among the motivators for remaining in the employ of the institution.

i. Recognition and appreciation

Here interviewees indicated that they valued being appreciated and recognised for their contributions and accomplishments. In one instance this was attributed to great leadership from their superiors. *Participant B for example said "In my department we have an HOD or manager that really appreciates who we are, our ideas. And while we are planning to expand our course, in terms of our qualifications, we [are] wanting to introduce an advanced diploma, a postgraduate diploma, and then a masters. In doing that we are really being asked for our input where developing the modules for that. The one thing that I would love to see is that eventually these modules being realised and then teaching them."*

ii. Employment

The two interviewees here felt that there was no concrete reason for remaining at the institution. Employment at the institution was primarily needs based. In the words of Participant E *“I am not too sure whether I want to stay with it. The sole purpose of me being here is to work and provide. If I get something else somewhere else, I'm gone. It's not the passion because that does not pay the bills. If I get an offer somewhere else which is far better than I will most probably leave.”*

iii. Work environment, flexibility and students

The work environment at the institution was cited as being a very pleasant and conducive one that provided career advancement opportunities for staff members who had the ambition to pursue such advancement. Participant F mentioned this in her response saying *“There are a lot of opportunities to move up in the institution. It is also a very pleasant environment to work in.”* The environment was also described as not a very restrictive one. It allowed for academics to work at their own pace, provided that they met desired outcomes on time. The flexible working hours also made it convenient for staff members to tend to their family responsibilities, for example, fetching their children from school. Consequently, staff members felt that the institution was very supportive in this regard and that this support was not gender specific. Participant J, for instance, highlighted this in her response saying *“The flexibility of working hours. I have kids and when I have to fetch them, I am allowed to work from home, so long as my work is done. I think that the flexibility is very important. I see that support for males and females who have kids and similar responsibilities as well.”*

The work environment also gave academics the freedom to be creative in the methods that they used to teach students. The passion to help students and mould young minds was also given by one of the interviewees as the main motivator for remaining at the institution.

The findings presented in the above table are in keeping with the free text question posed to participants in the survey aspect of data gathering. Here responses from the 159 participants revealed that most often academics mentioned that flexible working hours and the work environment was critical to their retention in the organisation (results not shown).

4.3.2.3 What are the top factors making you want to leave the institution?

Table 4.17: Responses to "What are the top factors making you want to leave the institution?"

Response	n	Valid %
None	2	20
Better job offer	2	20
Academic mobility	1	10
Compulsory retirement age and environment	1	10
Career development and career advancement	1	10
Politics (including racism and sexism)	3	30
Total	10	100

There was a wide spectrum of responses towards this question. As may be seen in Table 4.17, motivation to leave the institution included racism, better job offers, career development, *inter alia*. These were not necessarily an indication that employees were currently dissatisfied with conditions at the institution and were thus preparing to leave. Rather, the responses were in the “worst-case scenario” context. In other words, should the above-mentioned “events” be realised, then academic staff would feel motivated to leave the institution.

The interviewees that indicated that DUT was their employer of choice said that they could not think of any possible reason that would make them leave the institution. A better job offer was also tabled by an interviewee as possible motivation for leaving the institution. Deteriorating health and safety concerns were also raised as motivators for leaving the institution. One interviewee, Participant B, felt that academic mobility was paramount to their remaining at the institution. They felt that, presently, sabbatical leave was non-existent at the institution and they also expressed their desire to experience work cultures in other institutions. In Participant B’s words, *“I feel like that at UOTs we don't have sabbaticals and we often teaching long hours and you are provided a nice amount of leave, which is not necessarily the same as a sabbatical. I feel like if we do not have more mobility, even the option of teaching overseas for 3 months, like an exchange program. I personally feel that if I do not have more mobility and I am not able to find a balance between being an academic here and doing personal projects that relate to my field, what kind of lecturer am I going to become, if all I am doing is working from books and not my*

own experiences. If that does not happen for me, it might affect my chances of staying here.”

An unstable work environment was considered a significant reason for leaving by 3 interviewees. This extended to internal conflict between departments, sexism, and racism. Discriminatory practices were raised by Participant D as a possible reason for her to leave the institution. In her words, *“I have been hearing instances of discrimination and unfair work practices. I think that if more of these crop up and as I am also growing as an academic it may result in my leaving if I feel that there is no growth opportunity for me based on my gender or my race etc. That would be the only reason why I would leave.”* Participant I also echoed similar sentiment in saying *“Racism is at the top of my list. I also feel that as women we are not taken seriously whenever we say anything... We are always creeping behind the men.”*

In addition to the above, free text responses received from the survey participants revealed that most often employees felt that if they received a better job offer they would leave the institution (results not shown). They also mentioned that the lack of professional growth and unrealistic workloads would be sufficient grounds for them to accept a more lucrative job offer.

4.3.3 Objective 3 and 4: Factors employees perceived as critical to the university’s attracting and retaining academic talent

4.3.3.1 Compared with other institutions of a similar nature, how would you rate your institution in terms of remuneration and employee benefits?

In response to comparisons between DUT’s and similar institutions’ employee remuneration and benefits, interviewees’ responses were grouped according to whether they believed their rating remuneration and benefits were good, or whether they were unsure/unaware. Participants whose ratings of DUT’s employee remuneration and benefits were grouped as “good”, generally felt that the institution was competitively positioned compared with similar institutions. Participant D, for instance, said that *“I think that we are competitive and the benefits are in keeping with the higher education institutions.”* In similar fashion, Participant I expressed her sentiment about remuneration at DUT saying *“I*

am actually very happy with the remuneration. When I compare this to my previous employer, it is better.”

Those who were unaware or unsure raised that they were either unaware of what similar institutions offered in terms of employee packages or were unaware of what colleagues’ packages were. Consequently, they felt that they were not in a good position to give fair comment. This is what Participant G and Participant H had to say on the subject:

Participant G: “I have only been here since February, so I don't know too much about employee remuneration, the benefits and that sort of thing.”

Participant H: “I don't even know what a person earns, so I am totally in the dark when it comes to that.”

4.3.3.2 How would you describe the culture and working environment currently present at the institution?

This question asked for participants to describe the working culture at DUT. Their responses were initially broadly grouped as either positive or negative. This gave an overview of employee sentiment of the working environment at the institution. Based on this grouping it was found that 80% of the responses received tended to be favourable towards the working environment at the institution. Only 20% of the participants had overall negative sentiments around the environment in which they worked. Negative sentiment included adjectives such as “tense”, “horrible”, and “hostile”. Pessimistic sentiment revolved around the merger and cultural background. Participant G and Participant I expressed their dissatisfaction in the following responses:

Participant G: “It was a case of us versus them [In reference to the ML Sultan – Technikon Natal merger]. There is still a little bit of scratchiness in there. Most of Technikon Natal people have left.”

Participant I: “The culture is horrible. People and colleagues are hostile. It is not easy. I think that because we are coming from different cultural backgrounds. So it becomes very difficult for us to gel easily.”

The overall positive sentiment expressed by 80% of the respondents was further grouped into two themes in order to evaluate interviewees' responses. The themes that emerged, together with a brief description of each, are tabulated in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Positive themes around work environment and culture at DUT

Theme	Description
Evolving / Progressive	Refers to constructive measures that the institution has set in place to support learning and lecturer development. It includes lecturer outlook and proactive attitude towards enhancing student learning.
Good working culture / environment	Pertains to the working environment, especially the way in which employees interact with one another. It includes the support that they get from each other, and the resultant productivity.

i. Evolving / Progressive

Responses under this theme centred on the institution's drive towards becoming more research orientated. To this end there was a recruitment drive to attract more academics that were more research focused. This was viewed as exciting by some respondents and was indicative of the institution's growing and becoming more competitive in the academic sphere. In Participant D's words, *"It's changing because we are on a drive right now to recruit more academics that are more focussed and more inclined towards research. The culture, I would say, is very fluid right now because we are still trying to define ourselves; we are still trying to find our niche and figure out what it means to be a university of technology and not an institute of technology. So we are trying to work out that balance."* In addition, the institution was praised for its innovativeness in finding new teaching methods. Employees were also viewed as embracing this innovative culture through adopting more innovative and appropriate methods of teaching students. The changes taking place at the institution served as a source of excitement among employees because they felt that they were a part of the mechanism through which change was taking place at the institution in its quest to define itself.

ii. Good working culture / environment

Here respondents generally found the working environment and culture at the institution to be a good one. The focus of responses typically centred on the relationship that existed between the interviewees and their work colleagues. Work colleagues were

described as being supportive, helpful, easy to get along with, friendly and professional. Some of what the interviewees had to say is presented below.

Participant A: “The working environment is very relaxed, but I think that everybody does what they are required to do. It is a very productive working environment because we have one another to talk to, to ask questions, so you are never left in the dark. I also feel that the lecturing environment is nice as well because you've got smaller classes so you can focus more on what you need to teach the learners and its very nice here. I am enjoying it here so far.”

Participant H: “All the people that I have met with, I have had good working relationships with, starting from the people that I met at induction to people that I come across in workshops, especially the colleagues that I have. We seem to generally get along very well. It has really helped me because it was a very different experience when I came in. The ones that have been in the system longer have been able to help me here and there.”

4.3.3.3 In your own understanding is employees' welfare treated as a priority at the university?

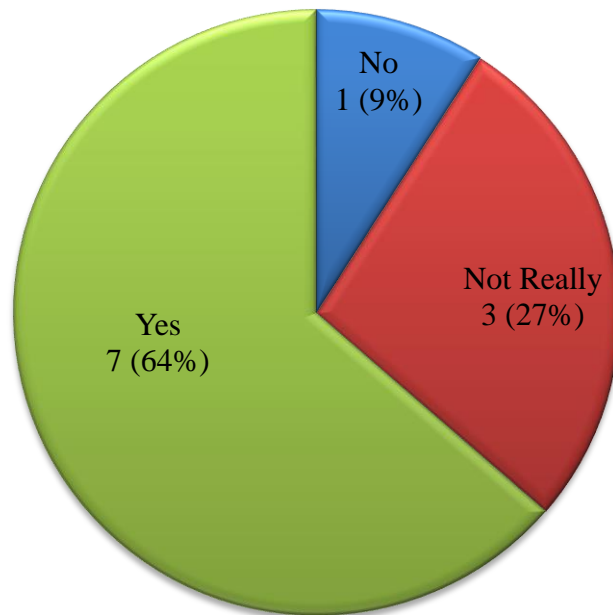


Figure 4.21: Responses to "In your own understanding, is employees' welfare treated as a priority at the university?"

Illustrated in Figure 4.21 are interviewee responses to whether the institution prioritised employee well-being. Seven of the 11 respondents felt that the institution did prioritise their well-being; 3 (27%) felt that it fell a bit short of the mark, while 1 participant felt that the institution did not prioritise employee welfare at all.

Respondents who indicated that the institution did prioritise employee welfare felt that the institution took very positive measures to ensure that staff well-being was prioritised. These measures included wellness centres (catering for employees' physical, psychological, and emotional well-being), supportive leadership, stress-management workshops, and financial-management workshops. The institution also ensured that it diligently communicated with employees on matters pertaining to their overall well-being. This was often communicated via emails, which sometimes asked for employee input on help/assistance initiatives proposed by the institution. Participant J, for example, said, "Yes, I think it is. There is this big move towards employee wellness and that sort of thing. And we get these emails now and then talking about looking at different aspects that affect

us, like whether we need to go for a wellness day...in terms of health or stress management or debt management etc. I think that is available and visible at DUT”

The three respondents felt that the institution did not really prioritise staff well-being to the level that they would consider ideal. One participant acknowledged that the institution did have measures in place, e.g. such as workshops, but found that it was impossible to attend these because they often coincided with lecturing time. This caused a stressful situation because staff are encouraged to attend workshops that are meant to be of benefit to them, but with the trade-off of students losing lecture room time. Participant I captures this in her response saying *“Fifty-fifty. I wouldn't say yes completely. I would say yes when you need to attend workshops, there are certain criteria that you need to fulfil before you are allowed to go those workshops. Sometimes you cannot go because of certain things. Overall, it's like any other business, where you need to be accountable for your absence. But I am not happy because they are always bombarding us with workshops and conferences to go to, but when it comes to time for us to go, it becomes a problem.”* Another employee felt that student welfare took higher priority over staff well-being.

4.3.3.4 In your experience are employees treated fairly regardless of race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation?

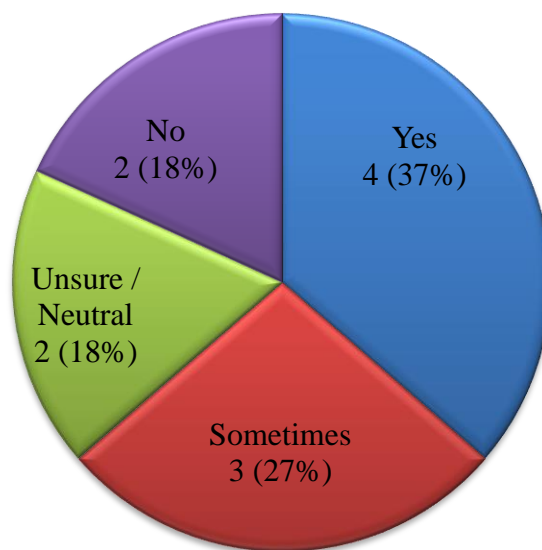


Figure 4.22: Responses to whether employees were treated fairly regardless of race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation

As illustrated in Figure 4.22, only four of the 11 interviewees felt that employees were not discriminated against in any way. The reasons that they gave were based on their observations when interacting with fellow colleagues at meetings. The institution's policies towards equal representation and being given a voice irrespective of background also featured as evidence of fair treatment. The institution was seen as very strict about any form of discrimination to the extent that it always looked at ratios (with regards to race, gender, etc.) in ensuring that different race groups held lecturing, management and other positions. This is perhaps best reflected in Participant F's response *"Yes, I think so. The institution is very strict about that and we look at ratios with regards to race and that sort of thing...We try to have it across the board where you have different race groups holding management positions, lecturing positions...and as we have a large number of black students so we also look in terms of that."*

Three participants said that they felt that the institution did not always treat employees fairly with respect to race gender, age, religion, and sexual orientation. It was felt that the institution was not consistent in implementing its equality principles. Instead, implementation was dependent on the departments and the relevant position held. This was mentioned by Participant J who said, *"I think that it will depend on the context in which we are talking about. I think that DUT would like to affirm that they do consider equity in terms of race, gender, colour etc. But how and when it is practised is a different issue. It varies from department to department and from appointment to appointment."* Gender discrimination was also cited, especially towards females. An example given was when male representation was sought after in order to produce the correct employee-gender balance. Although this was considered a negative, it did not necessarily indicate that the institution was discriminatory towards females. Rather, this could be seen as the institution striving towards equal gender representation. Lastly, junior academics felt that senior lecturers received greater support from the institution, especially in conflict situations. This, they suggested, was probably due to seasoned academics' reputation. As said by Participant B, *"Sometimes I have had concerns, as a younger academic, whether seniors are sometimes treated differently or that conflicts might be handled differently with them because their reputation is considered. So in terms of all other factors I would say it is very fair. It's just as a junior I have sometimes been a bit concerned about whether seniors have*

been dealt with sometimes differently, perhaps because of their reputation and what they have done for the university.”

Of the two respondents that bordered on neutrality, one seemed very apathetic on this topic, stating that its relevance was not apparent. However, it was not possible to extract from the respondent why they felt this way, or from which frame of reference they spoke. The second interviewee mentioned that racial tension still existed at the institution and questioned whether employment was based on merit or on affirmative action. This interviewee gave the strong impression that affirmative action overshadowed his worth; something that he felt did him a disservice. In his words, *“I think that there is that element, particularly in this institution which is a merger between Technikon Natal (which was predominantly White) and ML Sultan (which was predominantly Indian). So us coming here we could see that there is still that element. So you would never know whether it was affirmative action that forced the institution to hire us or whether it was based on credentials.”*

Racial tension seemed to dominate one of the two interviewee’s responses who felt that the institution used discriminatory practices. They felt very strongly that Indians, in particular, were given preferential treatments over Blacks. The second participant merely laughed at the question posed to them and responded *“Of course not.”*

4.3.3.5 Question 5: What career development programmes and incentives are in place, and how effective do you think they are?

Mentorship programmes were identified as being set in place at the institution. These were meant to assist and to groom younger academics. However, they were viewed as ineffective, mainly owing to the workload that mentors had, which limited their ability to effectively mentor. Skills and career development opportunities were also mentioned as being in place. However, interviewees had many mixed emotions about its relevance and effectiveness. There were some instances where skills development was viewed as inappropriate and of no value in career development. Participant D, for example, said *“Career development comes from HR and it’s filtered down to each faculty. It’s a skills development. I find it, as an academic, not very effective because basically it’s like improving your work skills or like if it’s not related to my job it will be like maintenance-related etc. So I think that we could be stronger in terms of academic development in*

having more courses about teaching and learning, like a higher degree or diploma in education and stuff like that.” Other staff members, however, found them very helpful, contributing positively towards their career progression plans. Participant B was one such interviewee, saying “So what I like is that there are small courses that have been offered...which help to strengthen your CV and your skills [which] is really good. Especially for lecturers who want to progress further up into leadership positions or senior levels you need to have that. So I'm quite happy with the opportunities that are out there. I just feel that it's a matter of each department working out a way to ensure that everybody gets a chance, whether it's through a rotation system, everyone gets a chance to pursue those courses.” Skills development opportunities were seen as abundant, but sometimes impossible to attend. Study opportunities were also available to staff, although funding was sometimes a challenge. In Participant I's words, “Like I said, there are lots of workshops that they always ask us to attend. But then there is always that problem of making time to attend because workshops are normally held during the week and often always clash with lecturer times. We cannot cancel our classes to go to attend them.”

4.3.3.6 What do you think of the staff promotion criteria being currently employed?

There was a widespread of responses obtained from interviewees towards this question. Only 3 of the 11 participants felt with certainty that the institution's staff promotion criteria were fair and/or transparent. They felt that employees' qualifications and contributions towards academia played a pivotal role in employee promotion. They also felt that the institution had checks and balances in place to ensure that all candidates were treated fairly. This included the entire promotion process being a very transparent one. This made unsuccessful employees aware of the reason(s) for not getting promoted. One of the interviewees who felt positively about the promotion criteria said, *“I think that it is fair. I know that those criteria are regularly looked at and that all staff are able to see that. We have our faculty board meetings where we go through a number of documents and we approve them, we are able to comment on them. So, that process makes it very fair and aware well in advance of what the requirements are. ...So I think that the entire process is fair, transparent and that there are measures in place, provided that the department allows it to happen there are measures in place to allow you to work towards promotion.”*

This view, however, was contradicted by the view held by the remaining participants. They found the criteria to be confusing, open to interpretation and unclear. An example given by one interviewee was that some senior lecturers had Masters Degrees as their highest qualification and yet some lecturers with PhDs still did not hold senior lecturer positions.

4.3.3.7 What are your views with regard to decision-making as far as promotions are concerned?

Responses to the above question were grouped into 4 themes. These themes encapsulated the overall view that interviewees had with regard to decision-making and promotion. Respondents either found the process to be fair; inflexible and inconsistent (especially in terms of policy implementation); to be based on racial lines; or were either unaware, not concerned or in no position to answer. These responses are tabulated in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Responses to "What are your views with regard to decision-making as far as promotions are concerned?"

Thematic Response	n	%
Fair	3	30
Inflexible and inconsistent	3	30
Racial	1	10
Unaware/in no position to answer/not concerned	3	30
Total	10	100

As may be seen from Table 4.19, one participant felt that decisions apropos promotion were possibly based on race. The other 9 respondents to this question were split equally on the 3 remaining themes. Their responses are summarised in the paragraphs that follow, as per the relevant theme.

i. Fair

The three participants who comprised this theme found that the decision-making process was above board and transparent. There was always adequate representation of staff members and union members on interview panels. This ensured that the process was fair and transparent. Candidates were also given clear criteria of what was expected of them; and the opportunity to demonstrate their skills beyond (or complementing) their qualifications. This was encapsulated in Participant B's response *"I have been a part of panels which interview for posts and I can say that it is completely fair. The manner in which it is set up were very cautious and careful and*

we make sure that if there is anything to declare that that is open because the process must be transparent. I can say that in terms of interviewing for posts, we have always had senior officials...and union members present as well, members of that department present in the decision-making process. In the case of applying for a post, we allow the applicants to demonstrate their skills, so it's not just what we see on paper. Thereafter a discussion is always made so that everyone is satisfied. So I can say that our processes are very thorough and that we invite all members who are relating to that process so that it is thorough, fair and done properly."

ii. Inflexible and inconsistent

Respondents in this theme found that decision-makers were inconsistent in taking their decisions. Interviewees generally felt that the institution's promotion policy was acceptable. However, decision-makers were found to be wanting. *Participant D, for instance, said "Thus far I think that the policy has been adhered to. For me, that's not a problem if the policy is adhered to and people are being hired based on the criteria. Where the problem arises is if they keep shifting the goal posts e.g. for today to become a senior lecturer you need a doctorate and whatever articles and 5 years you may need a doctorate and 50 articles etc. In terms of consistency and ensuring that you are not holding people back but you are allowing them the opportunity to progress."*

iii. Unaware/no position to answer/not concerned

Here interviewees were unclear of the composition or workings of the promotion decision-making machine. One participant found this to be irrelevant at this juncture of their career progression. However, they felt that when the right time came, they would put the institution's promotions decision-makers to the test.

iv. Racial

One interviewee who hinted that promotion decisions might be based on race did not elaborate on their view.

4.3.3.8 Can you briefly describe the mechanisms that are in place to measure your progress?

Table 4.20: Mechanisms in place to measure employee progress

Theme	Brief description
Subject and Lecturer evaluations	Student assessment of lecturer and subjects
Key Performance Areas	Staff assessed by superiors in terms of performance and areas for staff personal development identified
Monitoring	Mainly applicable to keeping track of non-permanent staff

Table 4.20 tabulates the mechanisms that are in place at the institution that are used to measure performance. Subject and lecturer evaluations, as well as key performance areas (KPA) were mentioned by almost all the interviewees. Normally, each course would have an academic coordinator who would send out various documents asking what employees had done in terms of staff development, research outputs, community research or work; and any other projects that related to employees' fields. These forms of assessment were normally conducted once or twice a year. In addition, meetings were held on a more frequent basis to monitor each course and to address any challenges that staff members might be experiencing. These meetings and key performance documentation were among the main measures that were in place to monitor employee progress and development.

However, some employees felt that the above was not enough to truly monitor or track their progress. They felt that there was a strong focus on student feedback regarding courses and lecturers. Monitoring of staff by supervisors or HODs was seen as relatively subjective. A desire was also expressed to have a proper performance-management system in place.

Non-permanent staff mentioned that they had a list of key performance areas (KPA), mainly based on the duties and responsibilities laid out in their contracts, to which they had to adhere. These KPAs served as measures by which line managers were able to keep track of their performance.

4.3.3.9 What aspects of your work strongly affect your job satisfaction?

Figure 4.23 depicts the frequency with which respondents mentioned aspects that strongly affected their job satisfaction. In some instances, interviewees mentioned more than one aspect. The figure below, therefore, represents how often a particular aspect was raised.

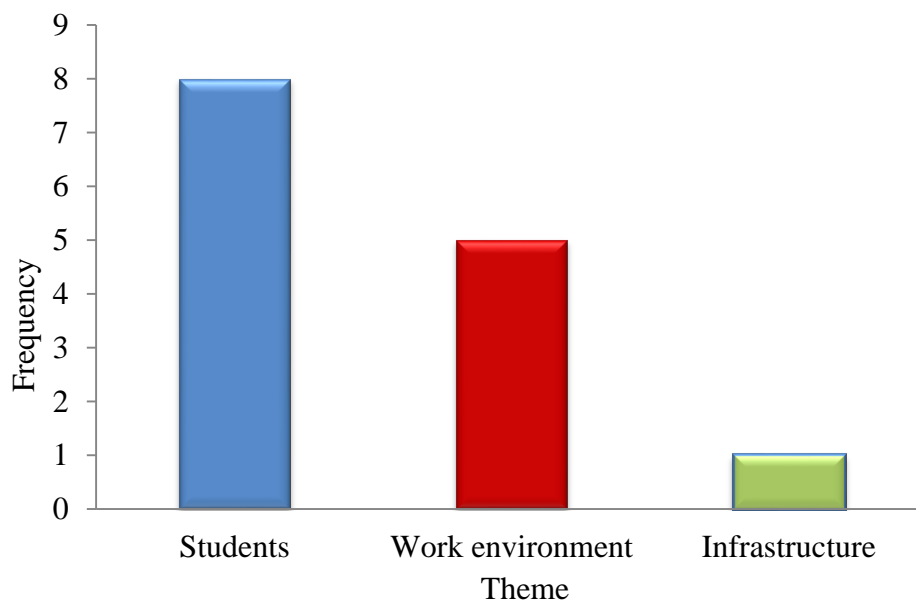


Figure 4.23: Aspects of your work strongly affecting job satisfaction

As illustrated in Figure 4.23, interviewees’ responses were grouped into 3 main themes or categories. Of these, students were mentioned most frequently as the main aspect that strongly affected job satisfaction. This was mentioned by 8 respondents as the main cause for their satisfaction. Work environment featured the second highest, being raised 5 times by respondents. Finally, one interviewee felt that infrastructure was also a vital part of their job satisfaction.

Employees generally felt that sometimes students were very difficult to work with. This held especially true with first year students. However, academic staff adopted a very professional and mature approach to this. They constantly reminded themselves that students came from varying backgrounds (e.g. schooling, socio-economic backgrounds, etc.). This they incorporated into their lecturing approaches. This is partially captured in Participant B’s response in which she says *“Sometimes working with difficult students... where you really have to sit down and remember that secondary school education can improve in many ways and I believe that that is something that is generally experienced in UOTs and universities. It becomes quite frustrating trying to figure out ways to reach students that is relevant to them...and it can be very tiring if it is not a give-and-take situation. There are days where that affects how focussed I feel.”* Academic employees also suggested that students participate more so that their learning experience can be more

beneficial to them. The most rewarding part of their interaction with students is when the spark comes on in students' minds (the "Aha" moment). This translated directly into students' academic performance.

Academics also expressed the need to constantly know that they are part of an institution that was fair, that did not discriminate, that allowed people to grow and that was transparent. Participant D, for example, said *"I think that I need to know that I am at an institution that is fair, that does not discriminate, that allows people to grow, [and] that is transparent. So for me, factors that restrict that kind of freedom and thinking would not make it a very nice place to work."* The institution was also seen as not being very supportive in helping academics strike the workload-academic development balance. Employees felt overloaded with work making it difficult for them to find time to focus on their academic development as well. Infrastructure, it was thought, could be improved to enhance job satisfaction.

4.3.3.10 What could the institute do differently to help you in your job?

Table 4.21 tabulates the 2 dominant themes that emerged from employee feedback on what the institution could do differently to assist interviewees to better execute their work commitments. The two major themes that emerged were related to leadership and staff support.

Table 4.21: Emerging themes to "What could the institute do differently to help you in your job?"

Dominant themes
Senior management visibility and management style
Staff support

i. Senior management visibility and management style

Interviewees felt that senior management was not very visible. It was hinted that they were not very transparent regarding what was expected from employees. This suggested that employees wished to be kept informed of leadership plans concerning them and their work environment. Participant B, for instance, said:

"If senior management could make themselves more visible in terms of how departments can function in a way that makes things go smoothly because often you feel really alone in your problems or issues, and when you go out to meetings then you see

people in other departments and it is nice to see that the same thing is maybe happening with them, and then you feel not so alone because you are speaking to other people. So, more visibility from senior management, more ways of getting together to resolve issues... [to] find out how other people are resolving these issues. [If] it feels more like a community then you don't feel alone, and you might find other trends or interesting ways that other people are using to resolve any issues."

Leadership were also seen to be very autocratic; no room was given to staff to discuss or influence strategic decisions. The top-down management approach used by leadership was often met with resistance from staff because they felt excluded from the decision-making process. A suggestion made by one of the interviewees was that leadership should use a bottom-up management approach. This would ensure that resolutions made were adopted by employees as they were the ones who actually formulated them. In Participant E's words, *"There is this top-down approach culture that in most cases doesn't work. Had it been that they take a bottom-up approach, whatever decision that management take being informed by lower level employees, that normally works because whatever decision that are taken, if they are taken by lower level employees, they then adapt to those. But we normally fight decisions that are taken by top management that are pushed down on us. So if the approach can change basically, or maybe engagement - be more involved in decision- making rather than being told what to do."*

ii. Staff support

It was felt by interviewees that institutional demands of them were quite significant. Trying to juggle commitments and employer expectations often resulted in staff feeling stressed and unable to manage. Participant J suggested that the institution should offer support whenever members of staff felt distressed. In her words, *"To know and understand that each individual is different and needs and wants of each individual is different. We need to take that into consideration, whether it's setting up meetings or forums. There is quite a demand in research, and on the academic. Besides teaching, there is research and different pillars of the university. Trying to juggle all of that can become very demanding. So, when the need arises and we are screaming for help, we expect help."*

A comprehensive programme in pedagogy was also recommended to develop academics on becoming better facilitators. This was the view held by Participant H in saying *“I think we need lengthy programs in pedagogy to help us become better facilitators of learning and teaching. Most of us are specialists in our fields ...I have seen lecturers trying to emulate more experienced lecturers that they admired, but this does not come through as effective. So I do think that we need that kind of program that is lengthy and has assessment criteria that is explicit on what you going to be assessed on and what the outcomes are.”*

Over and above the suggestions made above, respondents from the qualitative aspect of the questionnaire felt that the organisation could make their employ more pleasurable by firstly, offering better benefits and remuneration, recognising and showing appreciation for their efforts; and by giving them more support.

Literature states that job flexibility is of the essence for retaining quality employees of every age (Boomer Authority, 2009). This supports the findings of the study that job satisfaction and job flexibility affected the retention of academic talent. Employees at DUT felt that they did not enjoy much support from the institution especially their line managers. Researchers such as Nel *et al* (2012) acknowledge that the key to retaining the best employees very often lies in the relationship employees have with their immediate supervisors or managers and that time and resources should be spent on training managers in enhancing their relationships with their subordinates. Deery (2008:804) supported this statement and further recommended that employees be provided with adequate resources. In addition, these findings are in line with the findings of Boomer Authority (2009) [as cited in Decker (2012)] in which they mentioned that employees having access to training and development programs is critical in facilitating organizational growth particularly with performance and technological improvements.

Some respondents in the qualitative findings voiced that having HOD's and senior lecturers with educational level below theirs sometimes affects their intentions to leave the institution because they feel they get more benefits than them. Academic level of employees was also found to be a factor in retaining academic talent, because employees with educational level higher than those of those their HOD's felt the need to leave the institution which affects the institution's ability to retain quality academic personnel. This

is supported by Selesho, (2014) where he mentioned that universities are unable to retain quality academic personnel with the right skills and there is shortage of academic staff which is becoming more crucial to the changing prospects, learning and knowledge formation. He further mentioned that universities need adequate academic personnel that are suitable qualified and motivated to work effectively.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the results of the study. It did so by evaluating both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study. In assessing the factors that affected staff attraction, the study found that employee personal health and safety was a paramount factor influencing their attractiveness to DUT. Female participants felt that the institution presently did not create an environment in which they felt safe. Safe working conditions were also highlighted as important to them. The organisation's reputation seemed to have an impact on the way that employees viewed the attractiveness of organisations. This view was held more strongly by males than females. The institution was also not reputed as a great place to work in. Consequently, participant responses were not very convincing that they would recommend DUT as a potential employer to their friends. Remuneration and benefits were not seen as primary factors influencing participants' attraction to the institution. Responses from interviewees revealed that the majority of them were attracted to the institution primarily because of the job offer that they received from it and what they liked most about the institution was that it was progressive and focused on staff and students.

Flexible working hours featured as one of the most important retention factors by participants. Training and mentoring were also identified as important factors affecting staff retention at the institution. The current rewards, incentives and benefits that the institution offered to employees did not appear to be sufficient to motivate employees to remain at the institution. Respondents also felt that they did not receive sufficient recognition for their efforts by the institution. In addition, employees said that the main reasons why they remained with the institution was because they liked the work environment and because of the flexible working hours.

An overwhelming majority of the interviewees were very optimistic about the culture and working environment at the institution, often describing it as progressive. In addition, employees mentioned that relationships with their colleagues made the institution a great place to work at. Most interviewees felt that DUT treated their welfare as top priority. Students were mentioned as the main contributing factor affecting employee job satisfaction. They also felt that senior management visibility, management style and staff support would contribute significantly towards helping them execute their duties effectively.

In the next chapter main findings will be discussed, recommendations to address factors identified by the study will be outlined. The final conclusion based on the findings will be provided.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the results were analysed in the form of tables and graphs and then discussed. This chapter seeks to translate the findings of the study into workable recommendations and conclusions on factors affecting attraction and retention of academic employees at the Durban University of Technology.

5.2 Conclusion

This study set out to identify the factors that affected the attraction and retention of academic staff at the Durban University of Technology. The study participants were mostly female, lecturers (cf. Junior and Senior, etc.) and had at least 7 years of lecturing experience. The highest degree held by most academics was a Masters Degree.

In assessing the factors that affected staff attraction, the study found that employee personal health and safety was a paramount factor influencing their attractiveness to DUT. Female participants felt that the institution presently did not create a safe working environment in which they felt safe in. The organisation's reputation seemed to have a stronger impact on the way that male academics viewed the attractiveness of the organisation. The institution was also not reputed as a great place to work in. Consequently, participant responses were not very convincing that they would recommend DUT to their friends as an employer of choice. Remuneration and benefits were not seen as primary factors influencing participants' attraction to the institution. Responses from interviewees revealed that the majority of them were attracted to the institution primarily because of the job offer that they received from it and what they liked most about the institution was that it was progressive and focused on staff and students.

The most important reasons that employees mentioned for remaining with the institution was that they liked the work environment and that they enjoyed the flexible working hours. Training and mentoring were also identified as important factors affecting staff retention at the institution. The current rewards, incentives and benefits that the institution offered to

employees appeared to be insufficient in motivating them to remain at the institution. Respondents also felt that they did not receive sufficient recognition for their efforts by the institution. There were no statistically significant differences between employees' responses by gender or by academic standing to any of the factors under investigation for the retention of employees at DUT.

An overwhelming majority of the interviewees were very optimistic about the culture and working environment at the institution, often describing it as progressive. In addition, employees mentioned that relationships with their colleagues made the institution a great place to work at. Most interviewees felt that DUT treated their welfare as top priority. Students were mentioned as the main contributing factor affecting employee job satisfaction. They also felt that senior management visibility, management style and staff support would contribute significantly towards helping them execute their duties effectively. These factors were directed to the institution by academics to both encourage the institution and to highlight gaps that could be exploited to attract and retain academic employees.

In summary, employees felt that their health and safety were very important attraction drawcards. Remuneration on its own was insufficient to attract employees to the institution. The reputation of the institution mattered more to male academics than to females. The institution, however, was seen as progressive with a strong employee and student focus. Employees most often stayed at the institution because they liked the flexible working hours and the work environment, especially the camaraderie that existed among fellow academics. However, they felt that the institution did not really recognise their efforts.

5.3 Implications of this study

Attraction and retention is a common concern in all organisations across the country and higher education institutions are no exception to this problem. Power has shifted from management to employees due to globalisation as people have the power to decide which organisations they want to work for and what it is that they looking for from their employers. It is therefore important for organisations to treat talent as the most valuable assets for the business, because companies can have the best processes in the world but

without the right talent to put them into practices those processes will not produce the expected results.

The findings of this study, it is hoped, will assist Human Resource practitioners at DUT to deal amiably with attraction and retention factors that their employees felt affected them. In this way they could attract and retain the right academic talent. The findings also have implications for DUT's Top Management as the factors mentioned by employees could be used to improve on current retention strategies and may even result in the formulation of new strategies. Finally, this study may also serve as reference for future research on this or similar topic(s).

5.4 Recommendations

The study sought to identify factors that academic employees at DUT felt were important in attracting and retaining academic employees. Identified factors were intended to be of benefit to academic employees, Human Resources and Top Management at DUT. The following recommendations are thus proposed:

- Improving benefits and remuneration system

Benefits, rewards and remuneration, as the study found, is something that the university should consider looking at. Although employees mentioned that it was not a primary factor of concern, especially in regards to attraction. It however, was important as employees mentioned that they would leave if they had a better job offer elsewhere..

For the university to be able to attract and retain the academic talent it should offer benefits, rewards and remuneration that are sure to make them the employer of choice. Research should be conducted by the university to determine what others in the industry are offering and adjustments should be made accordingly.

- Improve the culture and working environment

Employees feel the culture is not favourable and some interviewees described it as "hostile", "horrible" and "tense." University management should build a healthy culture that does not discriminate, a culture that accepts and appreciates diversity

and a culture that provides fair treatment to every employee, recognises and respects each employee's contribution to the attainment of university goals.

A healthy culture does not only extract the best in employees, but serves as a good retention tool as it makes them stay with the organisation for a longer period. The university should consider conducting team building activities to improve the relationship between the employees and work on bridging the gap that still exist between the former ML Sultan employees and the former Natal Technikon.

Managers should encourage employees to discuss issues among themselves, it is also important that they frequently interact with subordinates and build lasting relationships by being transparent all the time. All employees should be treated equally and be praised for good work and underperformers encouraged to "pulling up their socks."

The university should proactively improve the academic employee's working environment by organising work in ways that promote health and decrease all adverse health-related issues. This will help improve the productivity and performance of the employees, improve employee morale and staff retention, thus reducing absenteeism and costs related to ill health. Improving academic employees' working environment will enhance the university's reputation and reduce the costs of having to recruit and train new people.

The university should consult with its employees on what concerns their health and safety in the workplace. The organisation must ensure that it engages employees when developing any initiative aiming to improve employees' health and safety.

- Develop a performance management system

Employees felt that the above was not enough to truly monitor or track their progress. They felt that there was a strong focus on student feedback about courses and lecturers. Monitoring of staff by supervisors or HODs was seen as relatively subjective. There is a need to have a proper performance management system in place. The system aims to promote and improve employee effectiveness.

- Senior management visibility and management style

Most participants expressed their concerns over senior management visibility. They felt that although their visibility would not solve the problem on its own, it was important that they kept contact with employees on the ground, to know their challenges and what is it that they are doing and support them.

Employees should be involved in all the decision making that concerns their jobs and in development of policies and procedures because they are the ones to carry out the duties at the end of the day, so their contribution is vital in development and enforcement of sound policies.

- Improve institution's reputation

The majority of respondents indicated that the university's reputation influenced their perception of organisational attractiveness. This then suggests that management should continue building the institution's reputation, promoting pride and vibrancy within the institution. Cheerful employees (assets) and students (customers) become positive ambassadors to the outside communities.

Satisfaction of both employees and students will benefit the university in the long run. Students may prefer to enrol at DUT rather than at other UOTs. These students will influence by word of mouth other students to enrol at DUT.

Having a good name or reputation is considered the greatest asset especially in knowledge-based organisations such as universities. Management must work tirelessly to build the good name of the university.

5.5 Recommendations for future studies

This study was limited to Durban University of Technology; a study of more university of higher learning could highlight trends within this sector, and enable a comparative analysis especially on race since old staff structures were based on racial grounds. Further research can also be conducted across all sectors to determine whether generational differences have an impact on attraction and retention of employees.

There are several focus areas that this study was able to examine. However, future studies could consider the following topics that arise from this study:

- The existence of performance management systems in Universities of Technology and their effectiveness.
- Strategies to improve academic employee motivation.
- Talent attraction, management and retention in institutions of higher learning

5.6 Summary

Every organisation exists to serve a purpose, achieve goals and objectives; but organisations have been met with the challenge of attracting and retaining employees as the power in the labour market has shifted from employers to employees. Organisations that are able to attract the best talent in the market and are committed to retain that talent have proven to have a stronger competitive advantage over their competitors.

Organisations' ability to attract and retain employees is often affected or influenced by certain factors as discussed in the literature. The study looked at the existing literature on factors affecting attraction and retention of employees, but its emphasis was on academic employees. This study's main purpose was to assess the factors that affected the attraction and retention of academic employees at the Durban University of Technology. The objectives were to assess the factors influencing the attraction of academic employees at DUT; to evaluate the factors influencing retention of academic personnel at DUT; to explore factors that employees perceived as critical to the university's attracting academic talent and to explore factors that employees perceived as critical to the university's retention of academic talent.

For the purpose of this study a mixed-method research approach was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 members of academics and questionnaires that were randomly selected were also distributed to all employees using question pro. The study found a number of factors that employees at DUT felt were affecting the attraction of academic talent. The study also found that affect employee's willingness to stay with the institution for a longer period. Most interviewed employees indicated that nothing specific attracted them to the institution except that they were looking for jobs and that, at the time, there were vacant positions at the institution, others felt that they would definitely leave the institution if they were to get better offers somewhere else. It is therefore evident that the institution should pay attention on the factors that were found to be affecting attraction and retention of academic employees.

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