

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Evaluating the effectiveness of retention strategies at the
University of KwaZulu-Natal: An empirical review of academic
staff**

By

Thulisile Ntuli

213572011

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Supervisor: Dr Muhammad Hoque

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Declaration

I, **Thulisile Ntuli**, declare that

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain any other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Abstract

This study was based on evaluating the effectiveness of academic staff retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). High employee turnover rates, where talented employees leave the institution to join other universities and colleges in both public and private sector, is being experienced by universities in the higher education sector and this dissertation evaluated the factors that influence academics to either leave or stay at UKZN. This was firstly done by reviewing literature on the concept of employee turnover. Secondly, the study evaluated possible factors that impact on employee turnover. Thirdly, the regulatory framework relating to academic staff retention at UKZN was explored. Lastly, recommendations were made on how to retain academic employees at UKZN.

The researcher used a mixed methods case study to conduct the study. A survey and unstructured interviews were conducted to obtain primary data for the study. Deductions were made by comparing the survey and interview findings and the findings from the literature review in order to gain a better understanding of factors that influence academics to leave the institution and the retention strategies that can be implemented to retain them.

This study established various reasons that impact on job satisfaction and employee turnover at UKZN. These include non-competitive salaries, ineffective recruitment and selection processes, inadequate training and a lack of career pathing amongst other factors. Many of these factors were identified previously through an employee engagement survey conducted by the university in 2013 but strategies to address the identified problems were not implemented due to the lack of a people-centered approach to talent management.

The study recommended that retention strategies should be strengthened and that the university should invest more on human resources and the development of academic talent in order to meet the strategic objectives through a fulfilled academic workforce.

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Table of contents

Description	Page
Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of figures	ix
List of tables	x
List of abbreviations	xi
 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT	
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND	2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES	4
1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	5
1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS	6
1.6.1 Employee retention	
1.6.2 Employee turnover	
1.6.3 Job satisfaction	
1.6.4 Extrinsic factors	
1.6.5 Intrinsic factors	
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS	7
1.9 CONCLUSION	8

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION	9
2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGY	
DRIVERS	10
2.2.1 Core competencies	
2.2.2 War of talent	
2.2.3 Employer of choice	
2.2.4 Aging workforce	
2.2.5 Brain drain	
2.3 DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER	12
2.3.1 Types of employee turnover	
2.3.1.1 Voluntary turnover	
2.3.1.2 Involuntary turnover	
2.3.1.3 Avoidable and unavoidable turnover	
2.3.2 Models of employee turnover	
2.3.2.1 Image theory	
2.3.2.2 The unfolding model	
2.3.2.3 Embeddedness	
2.4 FIVE TOP ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES	16
2.4.1 Working environment	
2.4.2 Employee relationship strategies	
2.4.3 Employee support strategies	
2.4.4 Employee growth strategies	
2.4.5 Employee compensation strategies	
2.5 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK	19
2.6 DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION	20
2.6.1 Turnover and job satisfaction	

2.6.1.1 The Affect Theory	
2.6.1.2 The Disposition Theory	
2.6.1.3 The Two-factor Theory	
2.6.1.4 The Job Characteristics Theory	
2.6.2 Turnover and academic growth	
2.7 TURNOVER AND RETENTION OF ACADEMICS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT	24
2.8 TURNOVER AND RETENTION OF ACADEMICS AT UKZN	25
2.8.1 UKZN retention-related policies and regulatory framework	
2.8.1.1 UKZN Academic Promotion Procedures and Guidelines	
2.8.1.2 UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy	
2.8.1.3 UKZN Policy on developing, retaining and rewarding researchers	
2.8.1.4 UKZN Remuneration Policy	
2.8.1.5 UZN Retirement Policy	
2.8.1.6 Framework for Teaching Workloads	
2.9 CONCLUSION	29
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
3.1 INTRODUCTION	30
3.2 AIM OF THE STUDY	30
3.3 PARTICIPATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY	31
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	31
3.5 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY	32
3.6 RESEARCH STRATEGY	33
3.6.1 Mixed approaches	
3.6.2 Quantitative Research	
3.6.3 Qualitative Research	
3.7 SAMPLING	34
3.7.1 Research population and sample	
3.7.2 Non-probability sampling	
3.7.3 Probability sampling	

3.8 DATA COLLECTION	35
3.9 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT	36
3.9.1 Interviews	
3.9.2 Questionnaires	
3.9.3 Consent form	
3.10 PRETESTING AND VALIDATION	39
3.11 ANALYSIS OF DATA	39
3.12 CONCLUSION	40
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
4.1 INTRODUCTION	41
4.2 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY	41
4.3 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW RESULTS: ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP	48
4.4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW RESULTS: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGERS	52
4.5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS	55
4.6 CONCLUSION	61
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 INTRODUCTION	62
5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	62
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STUDY	64
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES	65
5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	67
5.6 SELF REFLECTION	67
5.7 CONCLUSION	68

REFERENCES	69
APPENDIX 1: Gatekeepers letter	75
APPENDIX 2: Ethical clearance approval	76
APPENDIX 3: Survey Questionnaire	77
APPENDIX 4: Interview Schedule	83

List of figures

Number	Description	Page
2.1	Theoretical Framework on Academic Retention	20
4.1	Age distribution of the respondents	41
4.2	Distribution of respondents by gender	42
4.3	Distribution of respondents by citizenship	42
4.4	Distribution of respondents by College	43
4.5	Distribution of respondents by School	43
4.6	Distribution of respondents by qualification	44
4.7	Distribution of respondents by academic rank	44
4.8	Distribution of respondents by length of service	45
4.9	Analysis of responses to Section B of the survey questionnaire	46

List of Tables

Number	Description	Page
2.1	Termination rates at UKZN from 2011-2014	26
3.1	Academic staff complement at UKZN from 2011-2014	35

List of Abbreviations

University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

Department of Higher Education & Training (DHET)

Higher Education South Africa (HESA)

Britain, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS)

Universities South Africa (USAf)

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Council of Higher Education (CHE)

Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client orientation and Honesty (REACH)

New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Employees in all facet of life play a central role in ensuring that the organization delivers on its mandates, and the loss of critical talent through the various turnover categories may have a negative effect on the quality of service provided to service beneficiaries (Nzimande, 2011). It is therefore important for organisations to attract and retain good talent. Employee retention is one of the challenges facing many organisations across all sectors and business units across the globe. The intensified competition for talent and increased mobility of highly skilled employees from one organisation to another is influenced by many intrinsic and extrinsic factors which include competitive remuneration, career growth, conducive working environment and professional support and personal development all of which will be explored in the literature review. Furthermore, globalisation requires that organisations develop effective human capital retention strategies that will see them through the raging global war for talent.

Universities play a pivotal role of producing a supply of suitable and qualified work force for the labour market (Ng'ethe, Iravo, & Namusonge, 2012, p. 205). Like all other sectors, central to the realisation of the university education goals and objectives is the university workforce whose roles are crucial. The academic staff is the core talent at universities and as such academic institutions cannot ensure sustainability and quality teaching and learning without well-qualified and committed academic staff.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of talent retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) by investigating the factors that influence turnover and retention of academics as the most critical talent in higher education. Firstly a literature review was undertaken to identify the possible factors that should be considered to measure academic staff turnover and retention in South African higher education institutions. Then the policies and regulatory framework that informs retention and related practices at UKZN will also be considered. The

analysis of the results from the primary data will be presented and suggested recommendations will be made for practice and future research.

This chapter includes a short background on UKZN in relation to the study. The concepts of turnover and talent retention are defined and explained. The problem statement, study rationale, and objective of the study, together with the research design and methodology, are also discussed. Lastly, an overview of the dissertation structure and content of each chapter are also given.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The UKZN's strategic plan 2006-2016 (revised June 2012) articulates that goal six of the plan seeks to attract and retain quality support and academic staff through an enabling working environment through which employees acknowledge strategic fit and contribution towards the university success (UKZN Strategic Plan 2006-2016). As articulated on the plan and relevant to the study, the University seeks to implement an organisational culture that is underpinned by a sense of accountability, a cooperative relationship amongst employees and social integration. The UKZN also seeks to be the employer of choice by providing suitable working conditions and through employee development and recognition of performance excellence. In this regard, various policies, processes and guidelines are in place to bring the university closer to reaching goal six of the strategy.

In 2013 the University conducted an employee engagement survey to measure the university performance on various elements of a well-motivated workforce. The survey was an umbrella approach which included the various academic and professional staff categories and constituted an overall response rate of 41% (Employee Engagement Report 2013). The response rate of 41% was indicative of a disengaged staff and academic staff retention challenges at UKZN. This research study primarily focused on the problem of critical talent retention and conducted an academic staff engagement survey in order to establish factors that motivate academics to leave or stay with the organisation. The results of the study will be used to enhance academic staff retention strategies at UKZN and induce further research.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The competition for a highly qualified workforce in higher education is a global phenomenon. As such, the success and throughput rates on employee retention are largely dependent on job satisfaction and a fulfilled academic workforce. Poor retention strategies or lack thereof results in high turnover whereby universities have to deal with increased recruitment costs and replacement difficulties which affect the quality of academic and professional services at universities and compromise their reputation and corporate image. In order to remain competitive universities need to implement research-based retention strategies that will influence job satisfaction and motivate the critical talent to remain within the institution.

Previous research studies have indicated that as early as the year 2000 countries like the United States, Canada and Australia would face a serious shortage of academic talent influenced by turnover (Matthews, 2003). Organisational turnover rates are influenced by resignations, retirements, unrenewed contracts, dismissals and death. Minister Blade Nzimande considered the average years of academics and indicated that if the higher education sector is ignored the country will soon experience a dire shortage which has already started (Sapa, 2014). It is estimated that half the number of professors in higher education will retire by 2021 and there is a concern regarding the replacement of this talent given the fact that generally, there is a shortage of professors in the country (HESA 2011). This means that South Africa will experience a dire shortage whereby replacing the retired academics and meeting the increasing demand will not be achieved. There is not much that can be done at institutional level to control retirement rates since retirement is mandatory. However, conditional provision of extended employment beyond retirement is in place in most higher education institutions to retain the retired critical talent. Since the process is based on merit, it therefore becomes even more imperative that universities develop and implement effective retention strategies to moderate resignations and counter the reality of academic staff loss due to retirements.

Furthermore, the demand in the labour market influences turnover and so the higher the demand the higher the level of organisational turnover (Lee & Mitchell 1994). O'Reilly (1991) argues that organisations can use the labour market performance to

control turnover. This study aims to evaluate retention strategies at UKZN over a period of four years from 2011 to 2014 by investigating the factors that influence the turnover and retention of academics. The university is ranked 6th amongst the fourteen South African universities featured in the QS University Rankings: BRICS 2015 which showcase the best performing universities in the five BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). The HEMIS Report (2010-2013) indicate that of the top six universities UKZN is the only university which depicted increased academic staff turnover rates from 2011 to 2013 when compared to the top five (University of Cape Town, Wits University, Stellenbosch University, University of Pretoria and University of Johannesburg). According to the report UKZN lost a total of 122 academic staff between 2011 and 2013. It is worth mentioning that of the 122 academics, 71 left the university between 2011 and 2012 and 2013 and 2014 saw some improvement with 23 and 28 academics respectively. This information is clearly illustrated in Table 3.1 of the study.

Dockel, Basson, and Coetzee (cited in Mubarak, Wahab & Khan, 2013, p. 69) refer to employee development, remuneration and promotion as the best factors for retaining core talent. Like in all sectors, this can also be observed in higher education across all occupational ranks. In this regard, the prevalent academic talent competition is compelling universities to devise effective retention strategies to ensure the retention of quality academic staff.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The study aims to identify and evaluate the factors that facilitate the retention of academic staff at UKZN. For the purposes of this study, academic staff is defined as members of staff at UKZN who perform activities associated with research and innovation; teaching and learning and university administration and service to the community with masters and doctoral degrees as their highest qualifications.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To explore academic staff retention trends at UKZN over a period of four years (from 2011 to 2014);
- To identify possible factors that have an impact on academic staff retention rates at UKZN;

- To evaluate academic staff retention strategies at UKZN; and
- To make recommendations that will enhance academic staff retention at UKZN.

Based on the above objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What has been the academic staff retention trends at UKZN over the period 2011 to 2014?
- What are the factors that influence turnover and retention of academic staff at UKZN?
- Are academic staff retention strategies at UKZN effective?
- What recommendations can be put forward to enhance academic staff retention strategies at UKZN?

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using a mixed method research approach in a case study and it used a combination of qualitative and quantitative secondary and primary data whereby research from previous studies were explored to develop the literature review and to obtain an in-depth knowledge about the research problem and to establish factors that influence the retention of academic staff in higher education. The identified factors were assessed in a case study involving the academic staff as participants.

The researcher collected secondary data through a literature review and primary data by conducting a survey and interviews. In order to get insight into the possible factors that influence academics to leave or stay at UKZN, a structured survey questionnaire was distributed to UKZN permanent academic staff with masters and doctoral degrees as highest qualifications and who have been academics at UKZN for a period of not less than one year. Structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with the university academic leadership and human resources management to obtain a broader picture of turnover and retention landscape at UKZN.

The researcher analysed the collected data to identify factors that influenced academic talent retention at UKZN. The analysed data enabled the researcher to

make conclusions and provide recommendations that will assist in managing turnover and enhancing retention strategies at UKZN.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Employee retention

A strategic human resources function to manage turnover in an organisation by devising and implementing suitable strategies to retain the core talent.

1.6.2 Employee turnover

Employee turnover is when employees leave the organisation for various reasons including resignation, retirement, dismissals and death (Grobler, 2006: 125).

1.6.3 Job satisfaction

Churchill, Gilbert, Ford, Hartley & Walker (1974: 225) state that job satisfaction is the degree to which employees feel content and fulfilled about their job and the environment under which they do their work.

1.6.4 Extrinsic factors

Extrinsic factors are external and refers to employee benefits provided by the organisation which are out of the employees' control.

1.6.5 Intrinsic factors

Intrinsic factors are internal and refers to variables within the employee's control such as achievement, recognition and advancement (Armstrong, 2006: 254).

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

UKZN is rated the number one university out of 25 universities in the country in terms of the research outputs (DHET, 2015). Furthermore, the university is ranked in the top 2.1% among the world's leading institutions by the Centre for World University Rankings (<http://cwur.org>). However competition for academic talent at global level remain a reality and necessitates for the development and the monitoring and evaluation of retention strategies to measure and manage academic staff turnover. This study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of retention strategies at UKZN and how this impacted on the quality of teaching and learning. The aim

was to identify gaps and provide recommendations to enhance academic talent retention practices. This would assist management to measure the extent of academic turnover at UKZN and devise mechanisms to strengthen the retention strategies looking into the future.

1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The chapter outline provides a summary and purpose for each chapter as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement

This chapter provides a background of UKZN in relation to the university strategic goals and objectives in so far as employee retention is concerned. It explains the rationale, the problem and the objectives of the study. It provides a discussion on the research design and the methodology. The last part of the chapter provides an explanation of the chapters that follow throughout the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter reviews literature on the concepts of employee retention and turnover. Various models on employee retention are reviewed and possible strategies on retaining employees are discussed. The chapter also reviews policies and regulatory framework and other relevant documentation with regard to turnover and retention management of academic employees at UKZN as this study was conducted at UKZN and permission to do the research was obtained from the university Registrar. The documentation used include:

- UKZN Annual Reports from 2011 to 2014
- UKZN Academic Promotion Procedures and Guidelines
- UKZN Framework for Teaching Workloads
- UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy
- UKZN Policy on developing, retaining and rewarding academics
- UKZN Remuneration Policy
- UKZN Retirement Policy

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 provides a description of the research design and how the research was to be conducted. It will define in detail the research sample, the data collection

instruments and data analysis procedures that will be implemented to complete the study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and discussion

This section will focus on analysing all the research data collected in order to report on the findings of the study for each variable of the survey and interviews conducted. Since this is a mixed research methods study, results will be presented in both narrative and tabular or graphical formats. This chapter will also focus on the interpretation of the findings of the study and how they contribute to the current practices, systems and the existing body of knowledge.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 5 will summarise the findings of the study, make conclusions and provide recommendations and possible solutions on any identified areas for improvement based on the outcomes of the study. The thesis concludes with a summary of the key issues dealt with in this research indicate whether the research objectives were met.

1.9 CONCLUSION

In summary, the purpose of Chapter one was to introduce the area of study by providing some background to employee turnover and retention concepts in general and with specific context to the academic staff in the higher education sector. Furthermore the chapter defined the problem statement and identified the research objectives and questions which the study seek to achieve. The chapter also discussed the research design that will be adopted to conduct the study and defined key concepts that will be used throughout the study. Finally, the chapter outlined each of the five research chapters, providing a brief overview of what each chapter will focus on.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Academic staff retention is a global concern which affects both developing and industrialized countries. Over the past fifteen years about 7% of the academic staff have been leaving their jobs every year to take up new jobs in the United States and only 29% of these terminated their services due to retirement, the majority exited their jobs due to various reasons (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001). Previous research also revealed as early as 2000 that universities in Canada would face serious academic recruitment and selection challenges (Carleton University, 2000; The Laurier Institution, 2000). Around the same time researchers also predicted that the Australian higher education sector would in the following decade face a lack of academic labour (Mathews, 2003, p. 313).

The South African Higher Education Sector is not immune to the general problem of academic staff turnover and retention at universities worldwide for various reasons. The neighbouring countries also consider South Africa to have the best academic talent to attract (Samuel & Chipunza 2013). Furthermore, transformation in the South African higher education landscape has resulted in increased demand and supply of universities which brought about the establishment of two additional universities in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape which has since increased the demand and intensified the competition for academic talent (DHET Annual Report 2014/15). These factors have influenced high turnover in our universities and colleges whereby academics leave their jobs to pursue higher paying jobs in other private and public institutions locally and internationally (Tettey, 2006). Such factors will continue to put a lot of pressure on academic staff retention and in order to retain workers effectively, universities and colleges must know what factors motivate their academics to stay and what factors cause them to leave.

This chapter will focus on the literature review of employee turnover and retention from previous research which will provide an in-depth understanding of how academic turnover and retention trends have evolved over the years. The theories

and models on turnover will also be explored as well as the factors contributing to employee turnover. The chapter will also discuss the impact of turnover on organisational development and retention strategies. The UKZN policies and procedures relating to academic retention will also be reviewed in relation to the objectives of the study.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGY DRIVERS

Many organisations find it challenging to identify factors that they need to consider to define and develop their retention strategies (Mohlala, Goldman & Goosen 2012). McKeown (2002) suggests that organisations must study the main trends that affect employee retention by industry. McKeown further suggests that consideration of the following factors will contribute to the development of successful retention strategies:

2.2.1 Core competencies

Organisations should define their core competencies in order to identify and work towards retaining employees that possess such skills (Mohlala *et al.*, 2012). In this way organisations will understand which employees to pay more attention to in terms of talent investment and incentives. Retaining core employees ensures performance excellence and maximum productivity thereby enhancing competitive advantage.

2.2.2 War for talent

McKeown (2002) states that the war for talent refers to the attraction, retention and performance management of the employees. He further explains that this concept was influenced by the McKinsey and Company report entitled 'The War for Talent'. The report revealed that the war for talent concept suggests that there is usually a very limited number of core employees in organisations with the required core competencies (McKinsey & Company Report 2012). This means that organisations in the same industry are competing to attract and retain the core talent. The report referred to the information technology industry whereby the BRICS countries are competing for core talent in the sector due to globalisation of information technology (Saxena, 2007). Globalisation has also brought about the outsourcing of jobs and skills outside the organisation to try and push the costs down and this intensifies the

war on talent. Furthermore, the competition for talent in the information technology sector is influenced by the shortage of qualified workforce in the developing countries (World Bank 2007). All of the above factors suggest that the recruitment and retention of core employees is of utmost importance for the growth and success of organisations (Fisher, Schoenfeldt & Shaw 2005; Robertson 2007).

2.2.3 Employer of choice

McKeown (2002) makes a clear distinction between the employer of choice and the war for talent. The employer of choice concept evaluate the retention strategies implemented by organisations to retain the core employees. It emphasises that a successful retention strategy can be achieved through employee management, development and reward systems which best define the employee value proposition (Mohlala *et al.*, 2012). The employee value proposition describe the give and take relationship between the employer and the employee and articulates the amount of contribution made by employees and the amount of value they can receive from the employer. Horwitz states that the employer of choice speaks volume about the brand of the organisation (Delpont, 2004). Furthermore he explains that organisational systems and culture do not regard the organisation as an employer of choice if the organisation's brand does not communicate its employee value proposition from an external point of view. Johnson (2002, p. 23) states that organisations can be regarded as employers of choice if they are able to implement balanced programmes for work and personal life. The employer of choice should have professional and development opportunities available to all employees and a pleasant working environment and organisational culture. Finally, Johnson (2002) states that the employer of choice concept requires that the organisation should be offering services that are needed by the community at large.

2.2.4 Aging workforce

Through the Bureau of Labour Statistics, the United States predicted that in ten years from 2004 information technology will be the leading and fastest growing profession and would have at least one million additional jobs by 2014 (Mohlala *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore the Bureau predicted a loss of knowledge from baby boomers who would retire by 2015. This indicates that organisations are already feeling the impact of skills shortages. Accenture, the leading strategy consulting

company conducted a survey which emphasise the significance of ensuring that organisations have strategies in place to enable retiring employees to transfer knowledge to the younger generation of employees for business continuity (Golden, 2006). Most organisations that participated in the survey indicated that they had no plan in place. Golden suggests that organisations should dedicate their time and efforts in preparing for the exit of the experienced employees so that they do not suffer from knowledge and skills loss upon retirement of the senior employees. This can be achieved by pairing the younger and less experienced employees with the experienced employees for mentorship and this does not only ensure skills transfer but it is another strategy to retain the younger employees (Mohlala *et al.*, 2012).

2.2.5 Brain drain

Brain drain is when the qualified citizens leave their country of origin to find better paying jobs in other countries. Research shows that quite a number of baby boomers who will retire soon would still want to continue to work after retirement (Einhorn, 2014). In this regard organisations should have strategies in place to reintegrate the retired workforce post retirement (Melymuka, 2006). Over and above the loss of knowledge and skills through retirement, the immigration of qualified workforce in the education, health and technology sectors to Europe, the United States, New Zealand and Australia present serious challenges in the recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced workforce (Mohlala *et al.*, 2012).

2.3 DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Employee turnover is when employees leave the organisation for various reasons including resignation, retirement, dismissals and death (Grobler, 2006: 125). It is also regarded as the voluntary termination of employment (Morell, Loan-Clarke & Wilkinson 2001: 4). Another definition suggest employee turnover as the movement of workers between different companies and jobs and from employment to unemployment status (Abassi, 2000: 333-342). Woods attest that for every vacant position the organisation should find a replacement and refers to this process as employee turnover (Ongori, 2007: 49). Most employee turnover is influenced by voluntary terminations. For purposes of this study it is important to understand the different types of turnover that impact on organisations and these are discussed below.

2.3.1 Types of employee turnover

2.3.1.1 Voluntary turnover

Voluntary turnover is when employees leave the organisation by choice and in their own will (Dess & Shaw 2001: 446). Shaw, Delery, Jenkins & Gupta (1998: 511) in distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary turnover describe voluntary turnover as influenced by an employee's decision to terminate an employment relationship, whereas involuntary turnover result from an employer's decision to terminate the employment relationship. Lee & Mitchell (1994: 51-89) state that the factors that affect voluntary turnover include low levels of job satisfaction, stressful working environment and alternative jobs available and these factors should be considered when assessing turnover in an organisation. The fact that voluntary turnover is predictable it also means that organisations can put strategies in place to control it.

2.3.1.2 Involuntary turnover

As earlier indicated Shaw states that involuntary turnover is influenced by an employer's decision to end the employment relationship (Shawn *et al.*, 1998:511). Ferguson & Ferguson (1986: 43-44) state that involuntary turnover includes retirement, death and dismissal. Ferguson & Ferguson, (1986: 43-44) argue that unlike voluntary turnover, involuntary turnover is brought about by circumstances beyond the employee's control. As when an employee resigns for family reasons such resignation is classified under involuntary turnover. Involuntary turnover can also be influenced by operational requirements in the form of retrenchments when organisations restructure to drive the costs down (Cappelli, 1992: 203-217).

The distinction between voluntary and involuntary turnover can sometimes be vague due to misinterpretation of reasons for turnover since some employees prefer not to disclose the actual reasons for termination of employment during exit interviews (Van den Berg & Nelson1999: 1313-1336). Employees in exit feel that the information they share with the organisation upon voluntary departure will have an impact on their future references. Such factors do not contribute to the true reflection of turnover in organisations. Even when employees disclose the actual information,

exit interviewers would not want to record negative information and would not share it with other organisations when giving reference about the employee or organisation (Campion, (1991: 199-212).

2.3.1.3 Avoidable and unavoidable turnover

A distinction between avoidable and unavoidable turnover is important so that suitable turnover redress strategies can be explored and implemented accordingly (Morrell, K, Loan-Clarke, J. & Wilkinson, A., 2001). Unavoidable turnover refers to terminations beyond the organisation's control where for instance an employee is required to relocate with spouse and family. Avoidable turnover is preventable turnover within the organisation's control whereby the organisation can implement various strategies to keep employees motivated. Organisations should evaluate their turnover to determine the extent to which it is avoidable turnover so that they can review and enhance their retention strategies (Morrell *et al.*, 2001: 4).

Moble argues that turnover is psychological, organisational and costly, as cited in (Morrell *et al.*, 2001: 15). Currently there is no model to easily classify and distinguish between the different types of employee turnover. However, organisations consider various factors to assess determinants of employee turnover some of which are at personal and/or job level and which include internal and external work environment factors.

2.3.2 Models of employee turnover

There has been numerous research work which came up with different types of models to determine elements and causes of turnover and intervention strategies. March and Simon (1958) discovered the first model of turnover and this was followed by many models defined by various aspects of turnover. The three models which will be discussed below include the Image Theory, the Unfolding Model and Embeddedness all of which are centred on the concept of decision-making (Hom & Griffeth, 1995 as cited in Ongori 2007: 49).

2.3.2.1 Image theory

Beach (1990:3-10) developed the image theory which involves the employee's perceptions in the form of images as to how they view the organisation and use those images to make their own conclusions and decision. According to this theory employees quit after assessing their reason to leave the organisation. Beach (1990) argues that employees are not able to receive and analyse the amount of information at their disposal and in this way they rely on their own experiences to make decisions.

The image theory suggests that the decision making process involves three steps. For instance when people receive new information in the form of a job offer, they start comparing the new information with their current situation in three different images. The first image compares the beliefs and values that the employee hold regarding their current job and the new offer. The second image establishes a link between the first image and the person's goals and job behaviour. The last image compares the second image to the strategic image which compares the new offer to the current job. Should the employee receive more than one offer the same process is used to analyse further options.

2.3.2.2 The unfolding model

Lee, Mitchell, Wise & Fireman (1996: 5-36) refer to the unfolding model as the process whereby new information is received by the employee in the form of shocks for instance, alternative job offers and pregnancy. The theory suggests that the situation forces the employee to leave the organisation in one of the five paths that eventually lead to turnover. According to this model the first path activates the existing feelings and perceptions about the current job situation and when these connect with the new situation the employee instantly decides to leave the organisation without considering connection with the organisation and available alternatives. The second path instantly enforces the person to leave without thinking about their current job and the organisation at all and without considering if there are any job alternatives (Lee *et al.*,1996: 5-36). The second path is perceived as opposing personal beliefs, values and goals. The third path evaluates whether the perceptions the person has about the current job exist in the new situation and the outcome of this path usually activate job searches. The remaining two paths have

no triggers. The fourth path refers to an employee who due to low levels of job satisfaction decided to leave the job with no alternative. The last path refers to a situation whereby an employee experiences low levels of job satisfaction and decides to look for alternative offers. After assessing the available alternatives and upon acceptance of a suitable offer the employee prepares for resignation which culminate into turnover. (Lee *et al.*, 1996: 5-36).

2.3.2.3. Embeddedness

According to Feldman & Ng (2007: 350-377), embeddedness refers to the various factors that cause employees to attach to the organisation and don't want to leave. Embeddedness suggests that people have a psychological and social connection with the world professionally and personally (Feldman & Ng, 2007: 350-377). This model suggests that when employees are more connected to the web they are even more connected to the organisation.

The most important factors affecting job embeddedness include the way people connect with others, how they fit in other aspects of life other than work and the degree to which they can sacrifice these in case they are required to relocate (Feldman and Ng, 2007: 350-377).

2.4 FIVE TOP ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES

2.4.1 Working environment

Retention strategies create and maintain a pleasant working environment that attract and nourishes the well-being of employees. Retention strategies are broad as they include the development of an organisational culture that promotes a conducive working environment through precise and reasonable systems and policies (Mondaq, 2011).

The environmental aspect of retention strategies seeks to take care of three essential characteristics to retain employees in the workplace. The retention strategy should identify the values of the organisation, have policies that will monitor and evaluate whether employees are living up to these values and take care of the

physical working environment the employees work under. The aim is to make employees feel motivated to come to work (Rawat, 2013). The most important part of the environmental aspect of retention that wins most employees is an organisational culture enforcing openness and sharing of information across all levels of the organisation. Employees are interested to know and understand the vision and mission of the organisation and the future prospects as well as the financial performance of the organisation and its overall market performance (Oracle White Paper 2012). Employees also want to know about their job fit in the overall organisational strategy and their expected contribution to organisational success. Research suggest that organisations can reduce turnover rates by exercising a culture of information sharing and openness across the organisation (Irwin, 2013).

2.4.2 Employee relationship strategies

Employee relationship strategies reflect how the employer treat employees and how employees treat each other. Employers can develop effective employee relationship strategies by using available methods of evaluating employee behaviour which help employees to understand their own behaviour and their colleagues to enhance communication and teamwork in the workplace (Meszaros, 2015). Employers can also empower employees to develop achievable personal goals and to understand how their goals fit in with the organisational goals. This can be another way of motivating and retaining talent whereby employees would prefer to stay with the organisation that align employee goals with organisational objectives and success (Gallo, 2011). Employers can also implement mentorship programmes to promote excellence, teamwork and a sense of belonging amongst employees (Bussin & Smit 2013). The employee relationship strategies seek to establish a pleasant 'family' environment in the workplace whereby a culture of cooperation, teamwork, respect and togetherness is cultivated and employees will find it hard to leave such a working environment (Bhalla, 2013).

2.4.3 Employee support strategies

One of the reasons that cause people to leave is the frustration and low job satisfaction from a lack of support and resources to do the job. Employee support strategies seek to ensure that employees have sufficient resources to execute their tasks. These resources include technical support, effective channels of

communication and moral support from managers. Employees need the tools and equipment to do what is expected of them. They rely on managers to keep them up to date with organisational current and future plans especially those which affect their jobs directly. Employees also need enthusiastic and supportive managers who lead by example and set a tone for performance excellence. Employees who have all the resources are usually productive and have high levels of job satisfaction (Sullivan, 2011).

2.4.4 Employee growth strategies

According to Bussin & Smit (2013), employee growth strategies focus on employee personal and professional growth in the workplace. Enthusiastic employees are keen to cultivate their skills, knowledge and abilities to enhance their competencies and self-worth. It is important that employers explore and apply the best possible strategies to support staff developmental needs. These may include:

- skills training and development
- mentoring programmes, seminars and workshops
- encourage employees to join professional and trade bodies
- establish a learning culture and subsidising and incentivise further learning
- encouraging staff to present at workshops in their areas of expertise
- expert-facilitated personal life development workshops
- Take advantage of internet learning.

2.4.5 Employee compensation strategies

Effective employee compensation strategies consider the fact that employees are not only motivated by money. Most organisations are enhancing their retention strategies by adopting performance based pay over and above the basic pay that employees receive for their time and skill. However, an efficient employee compensation strategy uses monetary and non-monetary incentives to strengthen retention practices (Adeoye, 2014). The monetary incentives include total cost to company packages which include basic salary, fringe benefits and bonuses. Organisations can also supplement the monetary incentives with non-monetary incentives to promote employee engagement and performance excellence and to strengthen their retention strategies. Non-monetary incentives include things like implementing effective employee assistance programmes, giving employees time

off and granting them sabbatical leave to enable them to pursue and complete their studies. Other organisations even make child care provision and fitness clubs for use by employees on site. This provides for convenience and efficiencies between the employer and employees in managing employee working hours.

All of the above strategies are equally important and form part of a good retention strategy. Organisations should therefore focus on all of them in developing effective retention strategies. Organisations which only focus on compensation strategies fail to retain talent because no matter how much you pay employees, money will not make them stay if the overall working environment is not conducive.

2.5 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The demand for academic talent is increasing both locally and internationally. This is amongst other factors caused by retention challenges in higher education as academics leave their institutions for various reasons to take better offers elsewhere. The retiring academic workforce is also contributing to the increasing shortage of talent (HESA 2011; Pienaar & Bester 2008). Universities South Africa (USAf) formerly known as Higher Education South Africa (HESA) and previous research by various authors attest that the higher education sector in the country is facing challenges of retaining academic talent (HESA 2011; Mokoditsoa 2011 & Robyn 2012). Amongst many reasons influencing the increase of academic staff turnover rates, the literature has identified that issues relating to remuneration, career growth, workload and lack of support commonly influence job satisfaction. (Bitzer 2008; De Villiers & Steyn 2009; HESA 2011; Netswera, Rankhumise & Mavundla 2005; Ntshoe, Higgs, Higgs & Wolhuter 2008; Pienaar & Bester 2008).

The retention of academic staff in higher education is strategically important as the cornerstone through which the higher education mandate and academic excellence is achieved (Ng'ethe, Iravo & Namusonge 2012). As with many other public and private businesses, the South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are charged with the responsibility to produce and supply the job market with qualified graduates that contribute to the advancement of the South African socio-economic status (CHE 2008 & HESA 2011). Some of the challenges facing the higher education sector reflect on the low rankings of the South African labour market

efficiency and innovation caused by low enrolment rates in HEIs (World Economic Forum, 2011).

In order to contribute to social and economic development HEIs must be able to attract and retain quality academic talent (Netswera *et al.*, 2005 & Pienaar & Bester 2008). Organisations often experience difficulties when they lose competent employees and also find it hard to replace them (Robison 2008). It is estimated that recruitment costs can equal a position's annual salary and more (Somaya & Williamson 2008). Employee resignations affect departments and organisations in many forms including loss of skills, knowledge and experience, and reduced morale and productivity amongst other things (Pienaar & Bester 2008; Pinkowitz, Moskal & Green 2009; Smither 2003; Whitt 2006).

It is acknowledged that employee retention challenges are increasing from one sector to another but there has not been enough research to explore this concept and find ways of identifying unacceptable turnover and solutions to academic staff retention (Ng'ethe *et al.*, 2012). Harman, Lee, Mitchell, Felps and Owens (2007) state that previous research studies only attempted to establish the reasoning behind employees' decision to exit or remain with the organisation.

2.6 DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Hong *et al.*, (2012, p. 61) suggest that there are many retention strategies and practices that organisations could employ to retain their core talent. Figure 2.1 below illustrate the most important factors influencing academic staff retention and it will give direction in relation to the study.



Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework on Academic Retention (Bushe, 2012)

2.6.1 Turnover and job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is influenced by extrinsic and intrinsic factors which include competitive remuneration, career growth, conducive working environment and professional support and personal development. Churchill, Gilbert, Ford, Hartley & Walker (1974: 225) define job satisfaction as a combination of the actual job and the level at which the employees find the working environment either fulfilling or frustrating. A lot of research has been conducted on employee turnover which shows that low job satisfaction influence employees to leave their jobs. Spector (1997: 62) argues on the connection between job satisfaction and employee turnover and states that a low level of job satisfaction pushes the turnover level up. This implies that organisations should monitor and evaluate their turnover levels as these reflect on the effectiveness of organisational retention strategies (Spector, 1997: 62).

Job satisfaction theories seek to explain what makes people go to work and what makes them find their jobs fulfilling and rewarding. People do not work only to make money but they also have aspirations for personal advancement. People with high levels of job satisfaction are likely to be more productive and achieve more. The section below discuss the four theories of job satisfaction:

2.6.1.1 The Affect Theory

The Affect Theory is the most popular amongst the theories of job satisfaction. This theory is driven by employee expectations about the job and the actual experience which means that the smaller the difference between the two the higher the job satisfaction level (Singh and Sinha, 2013). The theory also indicates that an employee may find one aspect of the job more important than others and if the employee is happy with the priority aspect the level of job satisfaction increases.

2.6.1.2 The Disposition Theory

This is another popular theory in job satisfaction which is more focused on the employee personality. The Disposition Theory bases the employee's level of job satisfaction on personality traits. For instance, an employee with a low self-esteem is likely to have a very low level of job satisfaction and an employee with a high

degree of internal locus of control is likely to experience job satisfaction at work (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014).

2.6.1.3 The Two-factor Theory

The Two-factor Theory is based on the principle of motivation and hygiene factors put forward by Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman (1967). The motivational factors include rewarding employees through promotions, bonuses and public recognition. Such factors motivate employees to do well in their job and this positively influence their level of job satisfaction. On the other hand hygiene factors refer to non-monetary benefits offered to employees, policies and systems in place to support business operations and job execution and the overall working environment. These may not necessarily motivate employees but they may contribute to job dissatisfaction if the employer neglects them according to Herzberg (1967).

2.6.1.4 The Job Characteristics Theory

The Job Characteristics Theory is focused on the job itself and outlines the elements of a job which influence the employee's perception on the meaningfulness of the job (Lawler & Hall, 1970). Firstly the theory deals with the importance of the job to the overall objectives of the organisation. It also looks at how challenging the job is and the level at which the employee can work independently and be able to control their work by following the correct policies and procedures without relying on supervision. Lastly the theory refers to the level of support and guidance the employee receive from the supervisor. There is a great chance for a high level of job satisfaction when all these features are found in a job.

The theory emphasises good working relations between employees and managers. According to Borstorff & Marker (2007: 14-27) the nature of the relationship between employees and management have a significant influence on the employees' decision to stay with the organisation or leave the job. Previous research studies reveal that management is responsible for the voluntary turnover in an organisation and argue that the employees' duration of employment in a particular organisation is usually determined by the working relationship they have with supervisors (Dobbs 2001: 1).

There are some factors that employees consider important for effective managers. Taylor (2002: 26-31) states that employees prefer to work with managers who are keen to know and understand them and treat them with respect. They want to work with managers who trust them, who allow them to do the job independently and whom they can also trust on a personal and professional level. If managers are supportive and look after the interest of their employees, their level of job satisfaction increases and their chance of leaving the organisation decreases (Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004: 279-301).

Another important element highlighted by this theory is that employees want to be involved in decision-making. Chieffo (1991: 15-15) states that employees are unlikely to leave the organisation when managers involve them on decisions that affect their job directly. Research shows that there is a strong link between employee participation in decision making and the level of job satisfaction (Bishop & Scott, as cited in Aamodt, 2004: 107-111).

2.6.2 Turnover and academic growth

Academic growth can be achieved through staff development and career progression in the form of academic promotion. An effective staff development strategy is made up of the employee development plan and the development process in an organisation. The staff development process is beneficial to both the employee and the organisation. The employee's skills, knowledge and experience are all enhanced by the development process and this boost the employee's job performance. When the employee's performance improves so will productivity. Organisations which invest in staff development are likely to have a motivated workforce with a high level of job satisfaction and are less likely to experience high turnover. HEIs should put more attention and resources on academic staff development as part of their retention strategy and this will improve the level of job satisfaction amongst the academic staff and will ensure organisational success.

Bajpai & Srivastava (2004: 89-99) state that promotion has a personal attachment with the employee's aspirations for growth and career advancement. Employees want organisations to implement promotion policies that are achievable, fair and unequivocal (Robbins, 1989: 152 (a)). Friday & Friday (2003: 426-442) argue that

when employees are satisfied with their level of promotion it implies that they are also satisfied with the promotion policies and procedures implemented by the organisation. Bajpai & Srivastava (2004: 89-99) suggest that promotion presents an opportunity for personal and professional growth which increases level of responsibility and a change of personal status. Previous research suggest that employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs if promotion decisions are fair (Pergamit & Veum 1999: 21).

2.7 TURNOVER AND RETENTION OF ACADEMICS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

It is argued that the performance of labour markets has an impact on employee turnover and many research studies have tried to define voluntary turnover in relation to external factors (Morrell *et al.*, 2001). Labour markets and other external factors work against the retention strategies at organisational level because these avenues present alternative jobs to employees (Lee & Mitchell 1994, p. 51). The more the available jobs on the market the easier it is for employees to move around jobs and this influence employees to consider changing jobs (Lee *et al.*, 2008, p. 651).

It is argued that turnover and retention can also be affected by socio-economic changes (Hinkin & Schriesheim 2009; Williamson & Zeng 2009). The assumption is that an economy which is not doing well has a direct effect on job satisfaction as organisations fail to apply suitable salary increases (Taylor, Murphy & Price 2006). CHE (2008) and HESA (2011) acknowledge that most academics are leaving the higher education sector due to uncompetitive remuneration and recommend that the academic salary structures should be reviewed to retain talent. USAf attests to the significant difference between private sector remuneration and remuneration in public higher education and indicate that the uncompetitive remuneration pushes academics to the private sector.

Another factor influencing turnover in higher education is the fact that most universities in the sub-Saharan Africa are not fully resourced and this affects the quality of teaching and learning and decreases job satisfaction (HESA 2011; Mouton 2010). Furthermore, universities have been receiving reduced state and research

funding for the past two decades (De Villiers & Steyn 2009; Mouton 2010). This situation has forced academics to source funds elsewhere to bridge the income gap and for the universities to continue operating (Ntshoe *et. al.*, 2008). This has a negative effect on the level of job satisfaction amongst academics and influences turnover (Bitzer 2008).

Most HEIs are struggling to transform staff development in line with the national requirements complicated by conflicts of interest (Botha & Potgieter 2009). HESA (2011) reported that state funding is not enough to cover student and staff developmental initiatives. Lack of career opportunities and insufficient development of academic staff have negative effects on academia as a profession (Bitzer 2008; Buddeberg-Fischer, Stamm & Buddeberg 2009). In this regard higher education stakeholders should review the competencies and personal attributes required to strengthen the integrity of academia as a profession (Chickering & Stewart, in Netswera *et al.*, 2005). Higher education leadership should understand the effects of turnover in higher education and should focus on investing their efforts and adequate resources on effective strategic plans to attract, develop and sustain academic talent. (Salopek, in Netswera *et al.*, 2005)". Phillips and Connell (in Pienaar & Bester, 2008) suggest that those in leadership positions undermine the importance of talent retention and fail to identify and deal with turnover.

2.8 TURNOVER AND RETENTION OF ACADEMICS AT UKZN

Retention differs from one organisation to the other but the best overall measure of the effectiveness of retention strategies is turnover. The turnover rate is commonly categorised to include resignation, retirement, non-renewal of contracts, dismissals and death. Generally, retirement and resignations are the two primary factors influencing academic staff loss in higher education.

In accordance with People Performance Index (Performance Matrix for People Strategy), the University aims to retain 92% of its critical talent and 93% for key talent while reducing 'potential contributors' to less than 5% by 2016 (UKZN Annual Report 2011). Table 2.1 below depicts a general overview of staff loss at UKZN over the past four years with retirement and resignations as primary contributors. The other factors contributing to employee terminations at UKZN and collectively

referred to as “Other” on the table below include the non-renewal of contract positions, dismissals and death. This research will evaluate these statistics in relevance to the study to establish factors influencing academic staff turnover at UKZN and implications thereof.

Table 2.1 Termination rates at UKZN from 2011-2014

Year	Total terminations	Resignations	Retirements	Other
2011	295	39%	22%	39%
2012	302	42%	29%	29%
2013	342	46%	29%	25%
2014	294	50%	26%	24%

Source: UKZN Annual Reports 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

2.8.1 UKZN Retention-Related Policies and regulatory framework

It is important for purposes of this study to also look at some of the policies and regulatory framework governing the University academic staff as they have a significant impact on retaining critical talent:

2.8.1.1 UKZN Academic Promotion Procedures and Guidelines (UKZN, 2013)

Generally, every employee aspire to get promotion for personal and career advancement. The UKZN promotions policy regulates the promotion of academic staff at UKZN to lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor and professor levels and it provides the terms, objectives and main areas of evaluation, principles and criteria. The provision of this policy is to reward and retain academic staff of outstanding quality that perform in ways that contribute to the University reputation nationally and internationally through various mechanisms including promotion and performance incentive awards.

According to this policy, over and above the prescribed criteria for eligibility, academic staff should be performing beyond expectation in terms of the university performance management system. The main areas of evaluation for academic staff promotion include “teaching, scholarship and research, community service and

development and university service. The criteria for promotion to one of the four academic levels is clearly defined in the policy.

2.8.1.2 UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy (UKZN, 2011)

The overall purpose of the policy is to facilitate and promote the achievement of institutional objectives through a process of identifying, attracting, nurturing and retaining talent across University. This policy sets out a comprehensive talent management approach for UKZN and defines the criteria for identification of talent; the performance management system; potential and levels of work; the talent review process; and talent development process with respect to induction and continuing professional development, training governance and development strategies aimed at nurturing talent.

The talent review process determines the talent strength of the institution and propose plans to ensure that talent competitiveness is retained. According to the policy, talent management forums are constituted to manage the process as follows:
Talent identification: measured by conducting performance, personality and emotional assessments.

Talent mapping: measured by the outcome levels of talent identification process.

Talent development: encompasses a combination of development strategies to enable development including induction programmes, coaching and mentoring, need-based training courses, on-the-job experiential learning and deployment.

2.8.1.3 UKZN Policy on developing, retaining and rewarding researchers (UKZN, 2014)

This policy seeks to reiterate the university's goal of being a research-focused institution of higher learning with a solid base of competent researchers and the commitment by the university to identify and implement effective measures of attracting and retaining a high calibre of researchers.

The university has a research support system which supports its research undertakings and these include an effective research administrative system and an enabling set of human resources and financial policies, processes and procedures. The university commits to employ suitable and dedicated support staff to manage

the research administrative system. This policy supports all disciplines in the university.

2.8.1.4 UKZN Remuneration Policy (UKZN, 2012)

Goal six of the University Strategic Plan is to be the institution of choice for staff and the UKZN Remuneration Policy enables the university to reward employees who contribute to the implementation of the university strategic objectives in a fair and equitable manner to keep them motivated. Through this policy the university seeks to reward high performing employees in line with the performance management system. The policy enables the university to strive for competitiveness in order to attract and retain quality staff.

2.8.1.5 UKZN Retirement Policy (UKZN, 2011)

The university acknowledges the value of its core talent and the need to retain employees who are exceptionally productive beyond retirement. This policy enables the university to retain retired employees in line with the rules of the retirement scheme. According to this policy employees have to meet the minimum requirements set out in the policy to qualify for extension of employment beyond retirement. Eligible employees should have a record of continued level of high performance and in addition to this the academic staff should have amongst other things professional qualifications and a proven record of excellence in research productivity, teaching, academic leadership and must have specialised skills.

Retaining retired academic staff assist the University in coaching and mentoring the young academic talent to ensure that the university has future supply of academic talent.

2.8.1.6 UKZN Framework for Teaching Workloads (UKZN, 2011)

It is perceived that work overload and unfair work allocation are prevalent in higher education and considered amongst the leading contributing factors to job dissatisfaction and subsequent job exit. The purpose of the teaching workload framework is to provide objective quantifiable measures of the teaching related activities of individual academics that have application across the University. These are based on clearly stated principles to create a transparent teaching workload

accounting system and foster greater equity in academic work. The framework also serves as a teaching workload planning tool in which the unit of analysis is the individual academic rather than the modules.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This section looked at the determinants of employee turnover and retention in the higher education sector and discussed the turnover and retention issues in the South African context and in particular the complexity of the environment within which Universities have to manage employee turnover and retention. The chapter also reflected on some of the UKZN policies and academic regulatory framework which have a direct impact on turnover and retention of academic staff.

The next chapter will outline the design and methodology that was applied in conducting the research study at UKZN.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The retention of academic talent plays a pivotal role in sustaining UKZN's competitiveness and the importance of having effective retention strategies cannot be overemphasized. The previous chapter presented the existing body of knowledge on the area of employee retention in general and in particular on academic staff retention in higher education sector as explored in previous studies. The data sources used by the researcher consisted of secondary data in the form of documentation review from books, journals and articles from the internet and research databases. The researcher further consulted some relevant documentation in place at UKZN in the form of policies and processes relating to academic retention.

This chapter focused on the research approach and research methods adopted by the researcher in conducting the study. The chapter revisited the aims of the study and described the participation and location of the research project. The discussion covered an overview of the research methodology and design and also focused on sampling techniques. The researcher explained the sample selection process implemented in relation to the study to ensure that the participants were suitable to provide the relevant information in order to answer the research question. Furthermore, the chapter describes the procedure used in designing the data collection instruments. Finally the researcher provided an explanation on the data analysis methods applied to the findings of the study.

3.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at evaluating the retention strategies of academic talent at UKZN over the past four years in order to identify existing gaps and recommendations. This is important for the university in order to for it to maintain the institutional research profile and to continue offering the highest standards of quality education thus countering the intensive increase of academic talent competition globally. The university cannot achieve this objective without attracting and retaining a high

calibre of academic staff. The study sought to explore current processes and practices in place to attract and retain academic talent at UKZN. It also sought to identify possible factors that impact on academic staff retention rates at UKZN for the past four years by establishing some of the key issues that cause academics to stay with the university or to voluntarily leave the university. Ultimately, the study sought to evaluate the impact of academic retention strategies at UKZN and concluded with recommendations based on the overall findings of the research.

3.3 PARTICIPATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the research was conducted on three of the five campuses for their convenient location and within reach by the researcher. The researcher distributed questionnaires to permanent academic staff at the Westville, Howard College and Medical School campuses. The academic staff was considered the critical talent of the university and a key component of this study. While the university may have policies, processes and practices in place to attract and retain this talent, the effectiveness of these strategies had to be evaluated by primarily involving the participation of academics in the study.

The researcher further sought to interview the academic leadership and human resources management in the four colleges of the University namely the colleges of Humanities, Law and Management Studies, Health Sciences and Agriculture, Engineering and Science. For academic leadership, the school academic leaders were considered the most knowledgeable as they themselves are academics and part of their responsibility is to provide a leadership role by working closely with academic staff in the various disciplines to enhance a conducive and resourceful working environment. The college human resources managers were considered appropriate because they deal with matters concerning academic talent turnover and retention almost on a daily basis.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Biggam, J (2011: 114) explained research methodology as the researcher's plan on how they proposed to go about collecting their own data in implementing their own empirical research. According to Polit and Hungler (2004:233), methodology

referred to ways of obtaining, organising and analysing data. In this study, methodology referred to how the research was conducted and its logical sequence based on the nature of the research question.

The research was conducted through a literature review on academic talent retention and by collecting empirical data. The secondary data was obtained from books, journal articles, news articles and speeches, internet, annual reports and other institutional documents relevant to construct the theoretical and contextual frameworks for the study. In order to answer the research questions and meet the objectives of the study, the researcher collected primary data by distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with the research participants. The researcher compared the findings from the secondary data and primary data in order to generate recommendations and draw conclusions on the impact of current retention strategies at UKZN based on factors influencing academic staff to stay with or leave the university.

3.5 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The two common research paradigms are known as the ontological assumptions and epistemological assumptions. Ontology is based on the relationship between social realities, how they are and under what circumstances do they occur. (Babbie, 2010). Epistemology focuses on the manner in which people get to know what is happening around them (Babbie, 2010). They both reflect unique opinions of individual people and influences their perceptions and contribution to (Rubin and Babbie, 2012).

The study was influenced by the ontological philosophy which as described above seeks to understand the human behavior or experience on a particular observation. It was important for the researcher to understand this concept in order to evaluate the effectiveness of academic staff retention strategies at UKZN and the factors that influence academic turnover. This required the researcher to identify the experiences and opinions of academics on the existing retention policies, processes and practices to retain the academic talent at UKZN.

3.6 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research approach for the study was determined by the research strategy, the individual research objectives and the data collection techniques. According to Coldwell and Herbst (2004: 15) quantitative research refers to the collection of data with the intention of projecting the results to a wider population. It is commonly applied to a research methodology designed to collect data from a specific population, or a sample from that population, and typically utilises a questionnaire as a data collection instrument which is easier to administer.

Qualitative research helps the researcher to generate an in-depth account that will present a holistic perspective of the research participant's opinions (Holloway, 2005). Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005: 193) state that qualitative research methods include case studies which, according to Leedy & Omrod (2005: 135), often comprise records, documents, interviews and observations. The mixed methods approach incorporate both qualitative and quantitative research allowing the researcher to broaden understanding or to use one approach to better understand, explain, and build on the results from the other approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Muijs (2004: 9) further states that a mixed-methods research is a flexible approach, where the research design is determined by what we want to find out rather than by any predetermined epistemological position.

This study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research (mixed-methods design) to collect the empirical data.

3.6.1 Mixed approaches

A mixed research approach uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. It is argued that the answers to the research problem are not always accurate and this method is deemed more accurate as more than one method and strategy is used to provide an in depth understanding of the research problem (Henning et al., 2013).

3.6.2 Quantitative Research

The quantitative method sought to extract the statistical trends, measuring of values and variables of the study. The researcher distributed questionnaires to academic

staff in order to establish factors that motivate them to consider staying with or leaving the university. The questionnaire provided answers to questions about the academic staff attitudes towards current university retention practices and processes. The questions formulated in the questionnaire were based on the theoretical and contextual factors influencing the retention of academic talent.

3.6.3 Qualitative Research

The qualitative approach sought to extract opinions, suggestions, and perceptions of the university leadership in the study. The researcher conducted structured interviews with university academic leadership and human resources management to gather data about the impact of retention strategies employed by the university to nurture and retain academic talent.

3.7 SAMPLING

According to Coldwell and Herbst (2004: 76) sampling refers to the selection of a small group to determine the characteristics of a larger group. The next section discusses the research population and sample as well the non-probability sampling and probability sampling techniques which the researcher used to determine the research sample.

3.7.1 Research population and sample

The population includes all elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study (Burns & Gove 2003: 43). In this study the population consisted of academic staff across all colleges, academic leaders across all schools and college human resource managers. Table 3.1 below suggest an average annual academic staff complement of 1398 at UKZN from the period 2011 to 2013 and according to the UKZN Annual Report 2014, the university had a total academic staff complement of 1348. In this regard the sample size for the survey comprised 300 academic staff. The criterion for inclusion required participants to be permanently employed and it included representation of all academic ranks by gender, race and age. The researcher also interviewed ten school academic leaders from ten schools out of 19 and three college human resource managers out of four.

Table 3.1 Academic staff complement at UKZN from 2011-2014

Year	Total employees	Academic staff	Turnover rate
2011	4452	1470 (33%)	
2012	3845	1399 (36%)	71
2013	3706	1376 (37%)	23
2014	2940	1348 (46%)	28

Source: Hemis 2010-2013 and UKZN Annual Report 2014

3.7.2 Non-probability sampling

The researcher used a purposive sampling to select interview participants to the study. In purposive sampling the researcher chose participants based on their knowledge, experience and professional judgement. Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005: 204) state that purposive sampling is used to select interview participants to obtain valuable data. Academic Leaders and Human Resource Managers are regarded as officials with valuable information regarding academic recruitment, turnover and retention and they provided useful information in evaluating the impact of retention strategies of academic talent at UKZN. Preference was given to these informants due to their position, experience and expertise in the university.

3.7.3 Probability sampling

Simple random sampling is the most popular type of probability sampling technique which give all units in samples an equal chance to be selected. Simple random sampling was used to select participants for the survey in order to gather valuable data from the academic staff on possible factors that influence their desire to leave or continue to work for the university.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

Toni (2007) defined data collection as the gathering of information needed to address a research problem. According to Burns & Grove (2003: 373) data collection is a systematic way of obtaining relevant data using data collection instruments like questionnaires and interviews. The collection of primary data is followed by the analysis and interpretation of data (Polit & Hungler, 2004: 51). Data

collection begins when the researcher decides on the research method to use and the research participants (Talbot, 1995: 472).

The study collected data by conducting a survey and interviews. Questionnaires are a methodical way of collecting data which uses the same questions to obtain data (Nyasha, 2011). In this study the researcher handed hard copies of questionnaires to academic staff. Other staff members requested to complete the survey electronically and the questionnaires were sent to them by email. The participants were given two weeks to complete and return the questionnaires taking into consideration that the survey was conducted during the examination period. Arrangements were made with academic support staff to receive completed questionnaires from academic staff on behalf of the researcher.

The study also collected data by interviewing research participants. In this study, the researcher made appointments with each of the participants at convenient times in their offices. Interviews were conducted individually for 30 to 40 minutes and before the researcher conducted the interview, she thanked the participant for the time and willingness to be part of the study. The researcher further reminded the participant that participation was voluntary and asked the participant to sign the consent form. The participant was also informed that the interview was to be structured and that follow up questions would be determined by the responses from the participant

3.9 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTRUMENTS

In this study the researcher used structured interviews and a survey questionnaire to generate primary data. Both the structured interview guide and questionnaire were approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the UKZN. The following section will discuss the construction of each of the data collection instruments.

3.9.1 Interviews

The researcher formulated an interview schedule that would guide the interview to determine the opinion of university academic leadership and human resources management with regards to the impact of existing academic retention strategies at UKZN. The interview schedule consisted of two sections. The first section dealt with

respondent details in relation to their current position and the length of service at UKZN. The second section of the interview schedule consisted of 7 questions in evaluating the impact of academic retention strategies at UKZN. The interview covered the following questions:

Question 1: Why do you consider academic employees to be important to the success of UKZN?

Question 2: What are the consequences to UKZN of losing one or more academic staff?

Question 3: Are you able to put a rand value?

Question 4: How difficult would it be to find a replacement academic?

Question 5: What would you consider to be the attractive aspects of working at UKZN?

Question 6: What are some of the factors that may influence one or more academic staff to voluntarily leave UKZN?

Question 7: Over time, some academic staff have left UKZN. What do you think influenced their decision to leave?

Question 8: How do you go about retaining academic staff? Do you have any specific retention strategies in place or do you deal with retention on a case by case basis?

3.9.2 Questionnaires

A survey questionnaire was used to determine the opinions of academic staff currently employed by UKZN with regards to their job satisfaction. The questionnaires consisted of two sections. Section A included the biographical data which dealt with age, gender, citizenship, college and school details, highest qualification, academic rank and years of service at UKZN. Section B contained 14 statements related to job satisfaction which in turn have an influence on academic

talent retention. These statements were developed from deductions made from literature reviews and from UKZN retention policies and processes. The researcher used a Likert scale to obtain the results. Respondents had to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, not sure, disagreed or strongly disagreed. The following statements were included in the questionnaire:

Statement 1: I find my work meaningful

Statement 2: I find my job challenging

Statement 3: I have enough resources to execute my duties

Statement 4: I am happy with my salary

Statement 5: The available training and development initiatives enhance my career

Statement 6: I am satisfied that my career progression to date, matches my contribution and effort

Statement 7: I understand the university policies and procedures for professional Development.

Statement 8: I have a good working relationship with my supervisor

Statement 9: The task assigned to me by my supervisor helps me grow professionally.

Statement 10: There are opportunities for me to get promoted

Statement 11: I am satisfied with my employee benefits

Statement 12: I am satisfied with my job

Statement 13: I am proud to work for UKZN

Statement 14: I am likely to look for another job outside UKZN

3.9.3 Consent form

The researcher developed a consent form which formed part of the questionnaire and interview schedule. The purpose of the consent form was to obtain consent from participants to voluntarily participate in the study. The form provided accurate and sufficient details on the background, nature, purpose and output of the research. The researcher pledged to endeavour that the research work undertaken would protect the rights and dignity of participants and would also conform to highest standards of confidentiality. The form also informed participants about their right to withdraw from the research at any time. As part of the consent form, respondents were further given assurance that the researcher would comply with all legal and

institutional requirements regarding the collection, storage, handling, processing and analysis of data.

3.10 PRETESTING AND VALIDATION

Conducting a pilot study before the main survey allows researchers to identify potential problems with data collection tools and remedies prior to fielding a study (Nyasha, 2011). Basically, a pre-test involves collecting data from a relatively small number of respondents using the data collection sampling. During pre-test, the questionnaire was distributed to ten academics and interviews were conducted with two members of academic leadership and one college human resource manager. The reliability, validity, and practicality of the data collection tools in relation to the objectives of the study were all confirmed during pretesting.

3.11 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyse quantitative data. Descriptive statistics is more popular and it uses frequency distribution tables and percentages and it forms the basis for more advanced techniques such as inferential statistical tools. (Coldwell and Herbst, 2004: 92). Frequency distribution tables provide basic information and they are simple and easy to understand (Hair, *et al.*, 2000: 525). Responses for each item were grouped under each scale to indicate different levels of responses. Graphs, pie charts and tables were used to provide a systematic view of responses. Percentages and numbers were used in different categories.

The analysis of data collected by interviews followed the data management system prescribed by Miles and Huberman (1984). This comprised data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification (Miles and Huberman, 1984). During data reduction, the recorded information was summarised and colour coded to present the information according to themes identified during data reduction. (Neuendorf, 2002). Any specific differences and inconsistencies were highlighted at this stage. A descriptive content analysis method was applied to extract themes and contradictions within the data (Neuendorf, 2002). The reduced set of data was displayed using text-based matrices to assist in interpretation (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Conclusion and drawing meaning from the data involved comparative analysis as well as the noting of patterns and trends. The researcher sought verification of these conclusions by recontacting a selection of respondents to deal with areas of significant disparities. Triangulation with alternative data sources (further interviews, press articles, internal documents) also provided verification of key findings in the study (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter articulated the research methodology and design adopted, elaborated on the location of the study, the characteristics of the participants to the study and sampling strategies employed to determine the sampling frame. The chapter further discussed the data collection methods and the formulation of the data collection instruments used to gather data. Furthermore, the chapter focused on the data analysis techniques used by the researcher to analyse the data collected from the survey and interviews. The next chapter will focus on the presentation and interpretation of the research findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reveals the results of the case study as described in Chapter 3. The research adopted a mixed method strategy and concentrated on two groups of stakeholders. The first group consisted of permanent academic staff at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) who shared their views on the factors that influence them to consider staying with or leaving the university. The second group consisted of academic leaders and human resource managers who have an influence on the implementation of academic staff retention strategies at UKZN and who shared their opinions and perspectives on the effectiveness of these strategies.

The first section of the chapter will provide the description of the academic staff results from the survey as well as the description of results from the interviews with the academic leaders and human resource managers. The researcher analysed and interpreted the results from the two groups in comparison to each other and in contrast against the findings deduced from the literature review. This chapter assisted the researcher to evaluate and conclude whether the study met the specific research objectives.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY

In 2015 a survey questionnaire was used to determine factors that motivate UKZN academics to consider staying with or leaving the university. The survey questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A covered the demographic information of the respondents and section B covered statements relating to job satisfaction. The survey questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

The survey questionnaires were distributed to 300 academic staff from various disciplines across the Westville, Howard College and Medical School campuses in hard copy. The researcher received a total of 160 responses which makes a 53% response rate.

The following section provides a basic description of results from the survey statement by statement from Section A of the questionnaire.

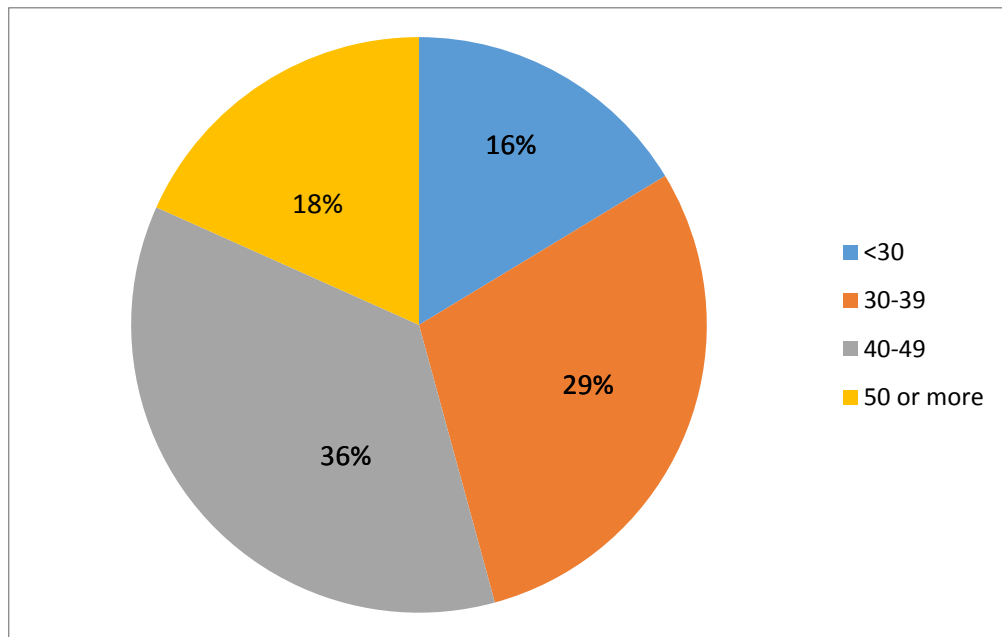


Figure 4.1: Age distribution of the respondents

Figure 4.1 was included to ascertain whether the respondents in different age categories respond differently to questions in Section B of the questionnaire. Figure 4.1 indicates that 16% of the respondents are less than 30 years old, 29% are between the ages 30 to 39, 36% are between 40 and 49 years old and 18% are 50 years and above.

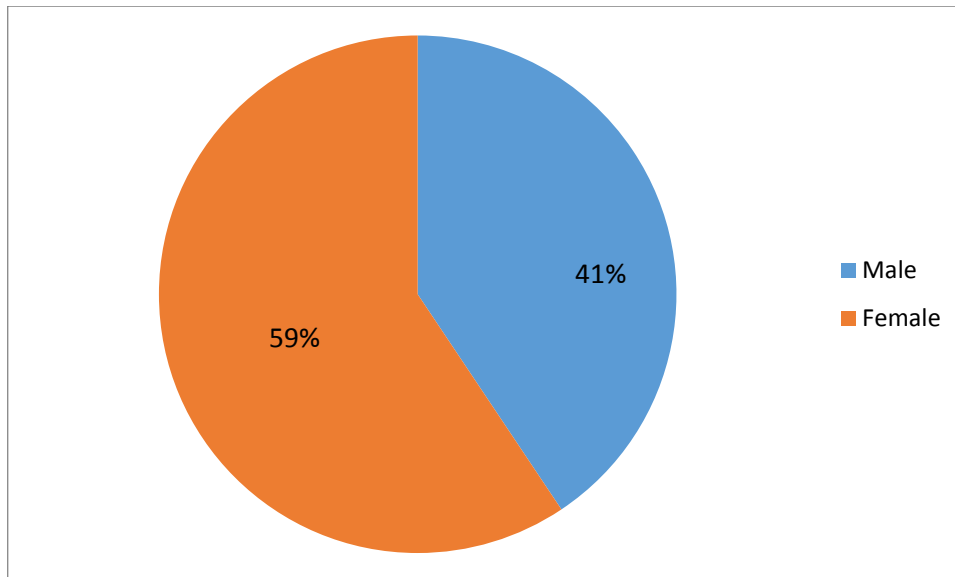


Figure 4.2: Gender distribution of the respondents

Figure 4.2 above indicates that 41% of the respondents are male and 59% are females.

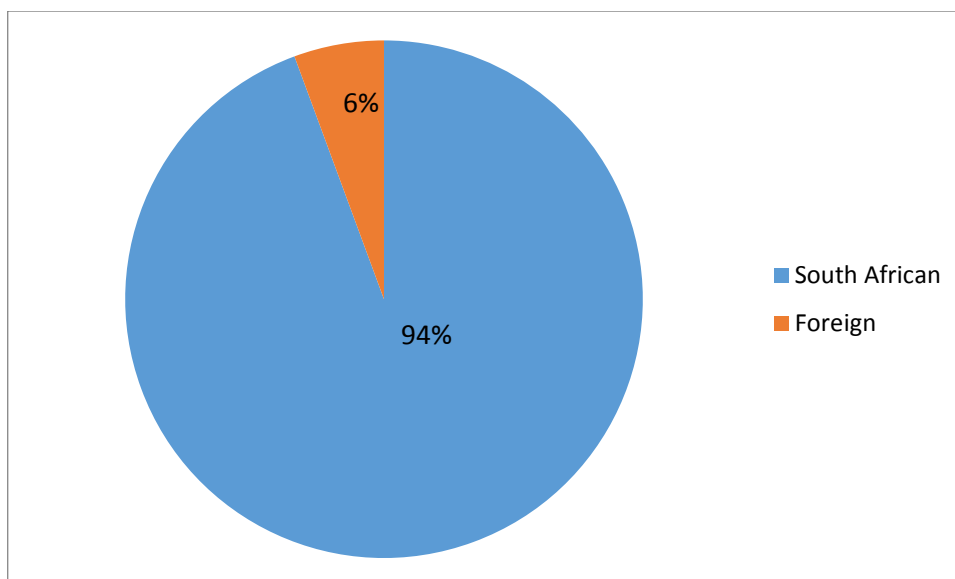


Figure 4.3: Distribution of the respondents in terms of citizenship

Figure 4.3 above indicates that 94% of the respondents are South Africans and 6% are foreign nationals.

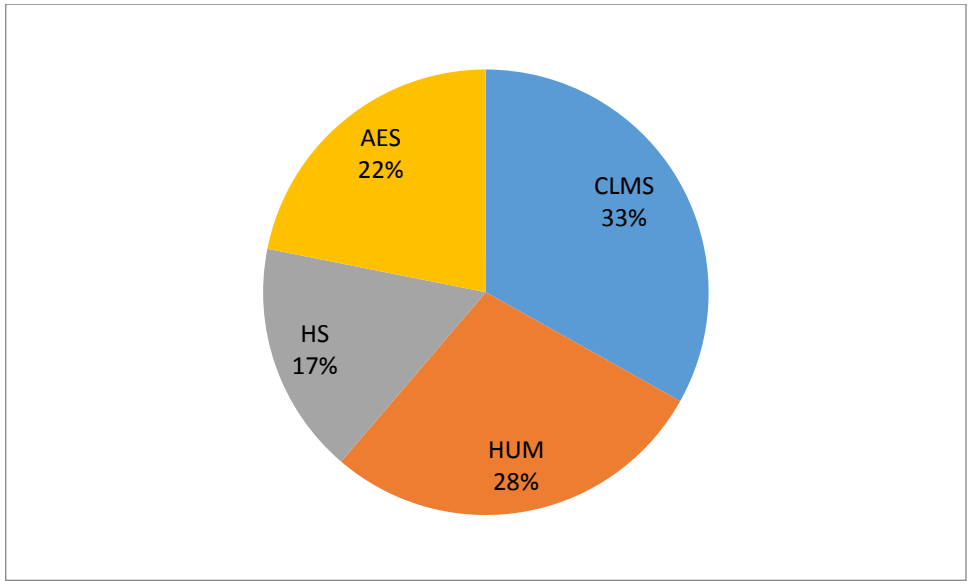


Figure 4.4: Distribution of the respondents by College

Figure 4.4 above indicates that 33% of the respondents are from the College of Law and Management Studies, 28% from the College of Humanities, 17% from College of Health Sciences and 22% from College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science.

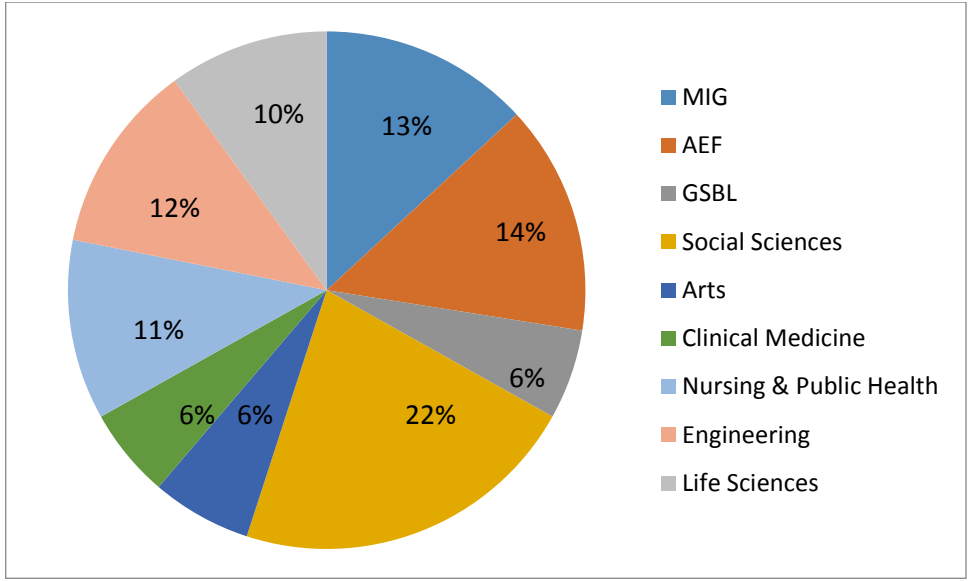


Figure 4.5: Distribution of the respondents by School

Figure 4.5 above indicates that 13% of the respondents were from the School of Management, IT and Governance, 14% from the School of Accounting, Economics and Finance, 6% from the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, 22% from the School of Social Sciences, 6% from the School of Arts, 6% from the School of

Clinical Medicine, 11% from the School of Nursing and Public Health, 12% from the School of Engineering and 10% from the School of Life Sciences.

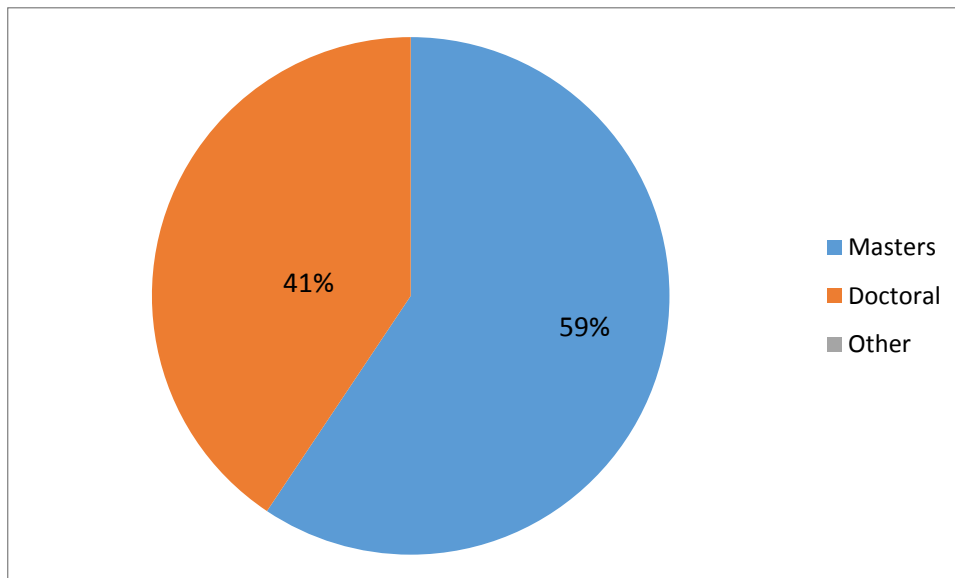


Figure 4.6: Distribution of respondents by qualification

Figure 4.6 above indicate that 59% of the respondents have a masters degree while 41% have a doctoral degree as their highest qualification.

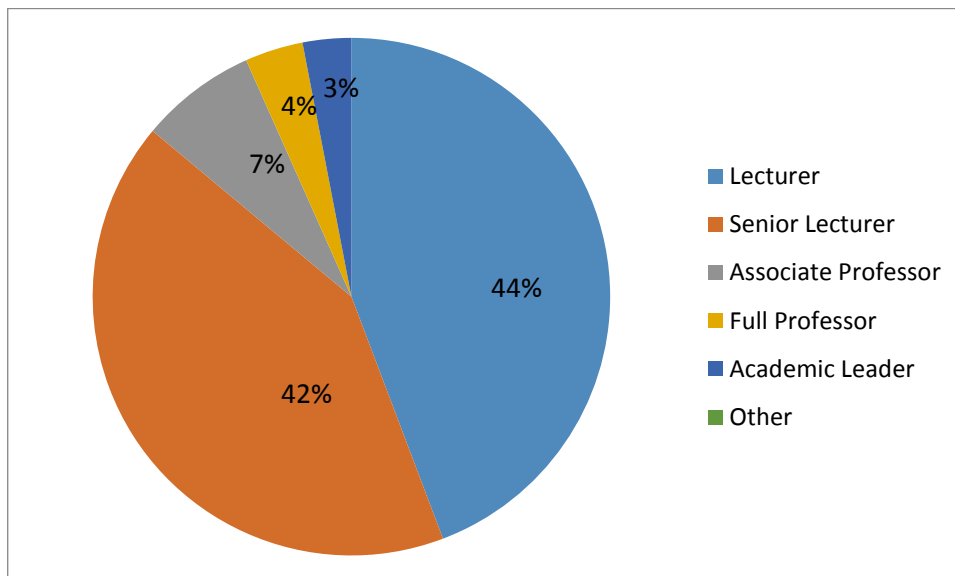


Figure 4.7: Distribution of respondents by occupational rank

Figure 4.7 above indicates that 44% of the respondents are lectures, 42% are senior lecturers, 7% are associate professors, 4% are full professors and 3% are academic leaders.

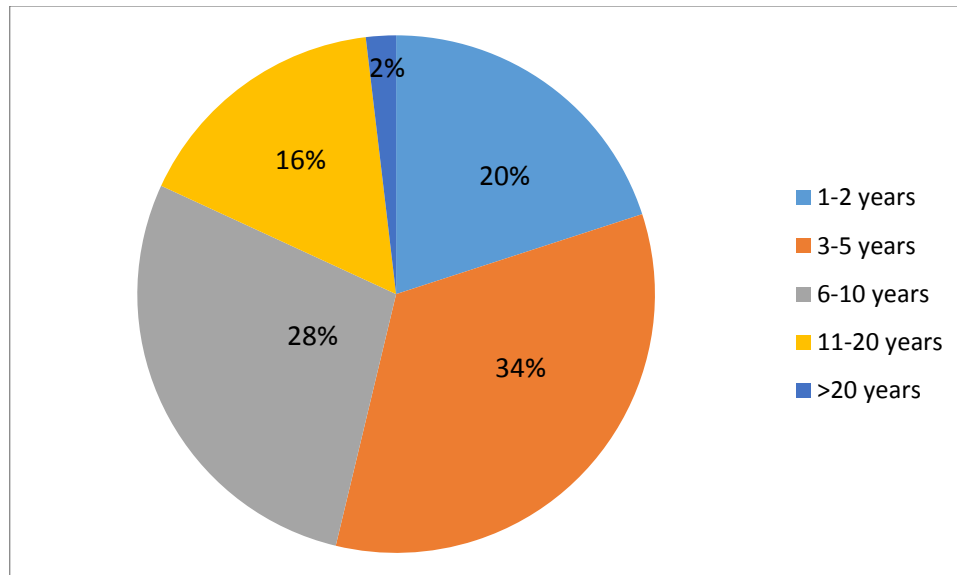


Figure 4.8: Distribution of respondents by length of service

Figure 4.8 above indicates that 20% of the respondents have been employed at UKZN for 1 to 2 years, 34% for 3 to 5 years, 28% for 6 to 10 years, 16% for 11 to 20 years and 2% for more than 20 years.

The following section provides a basic description of results from the survey statement by statement from Section B of the questionnaire respectively.

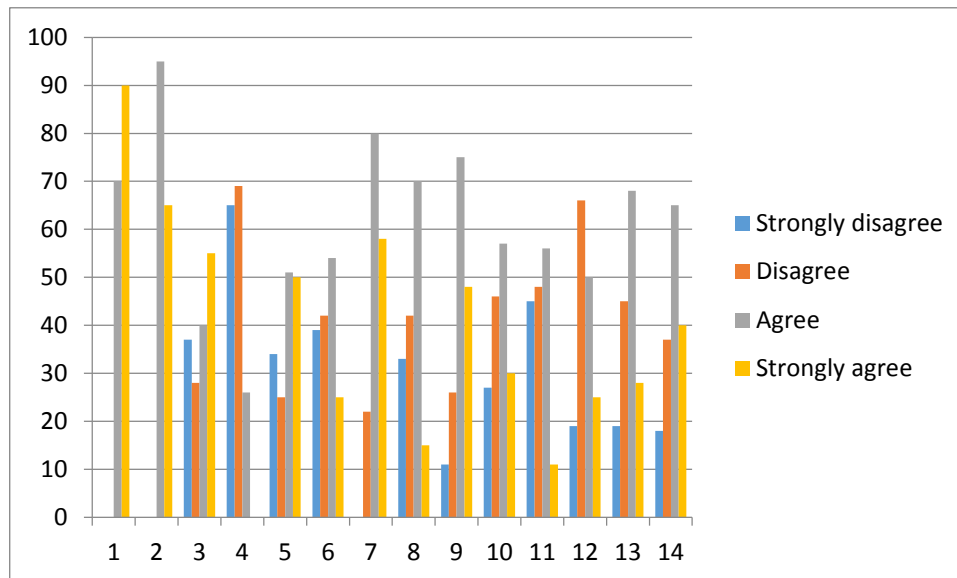


Figure 4.9: Analysis of responses to section B of the survey questionnaire

Figure 4.9 above indicates the responses by respondents to statements on the questionnaire with regards to their opinion on academic work attributes. In analysing each of the statement, the researcher combined the strongly agree and agree options into one agree category. The researcher also combined the strongly disagree and disagree options into one disagree category.

Statement 1: I find my work meaningful – 100% of the respondents agreed

Statement 2: I find my job challenging – 100% of the respondents agreed

Statement 3: I have enough resources to execute my duties – 59% of the respondents agreed and 41% disagreed

Statement 4: I am happy with my salary – 16% agreed and 84% disagreed

Statement 5: The available training and development initiatives enhance my career – 63% agreed and 37% disagreed

Statement 6: I am satisfied that my career progression to date, matches my contribution and effort – 49% agreed and 51% disagreed

Statement 7: I understand the university policies and procedures for professional development – 76% agreed ad 14% disagreed

Statement 8: I have a good working relationship with my supervisor – 53% agreed and 47% disagreed

Statement 9: The task assigned to me by my supervisor helps me grow professionally – 77% agreed and 23% disagreed

Statement 10: There are opportunities for me to get promoted – 54% agreed and 46% disagreed

Statement 11: I am satisfied with my employee benefits – 42% agreed and 58% disagreed

Statement 12: I am satisfied with my job – 47% agreed and 53% disagreed

Statement 13: I am proud to work for UKZN – 60% agreed and 40% disagreed

Statement 14: I am likely to look for another job outside UKZN – 66% agreed and 34% disagreed

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW RESULTS: ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

The researcher managed to interview four academic leaders. The respondents will be referred to as Respondent A, Respondent B, Respondent C and Respondent D to protect their interests and integrity. Respondent A was the academic leader in the School of Arts and had been in this position since 2012. The school had about 21 academics at the time of the interview. The researcher then interviewed two academic leaders in the School of Accounting, Economics & Finance (SAEF) herein referred to as Respondent B and C. Respondent B had been the academic leader since 2013 and had about 11 academics under the discipline at the time of the interview. Respondent C had two years' experience as the academic leader for the school. The school had a total of about 70 academics at the time of the interview. The last academic leader interviewed, Responded D had been acting as the school academic leader in the College of Health Sciences. The school had very few full time academics at the time of the interview and the respondent mentioned that the majority of staff were on the joint health establishment between the university and the provincial Department of Health.

The following section will present the results of the structured interviews following the schedule of questions in Appendix B. In some cases, the researcher received more or less similar responses to more than one question and these have been collapsed to one single question.

4.3.1 Why do you consider academic employees to be important to the success of UKZN?

All four respondents regarded the University as an institution of higher learning whose core business was to create knowledge through teaching and learning and research which heavily rely on the university's ability to attract and retain a qualified and experienced academic workforce.

4.3.2 What are the consequences to UKZN of losing one or more academic staff? Are you able to put a rand value? How difficult would it be to find a replacement academic?

All four respondents shared the same concerns about the effects of losing members of the academic staff which is in most cases through resignation and retirement. They all cited difficulty in replacements as the biggest challenge whereby the recruitment process either takes very long and/or even fail to attract suitable candidates. Respondent B and D indicated that the recruitment processes for academic leadership and professorship positions takes much longer especially in the scarce disciplines. Respondent D made reference to one professor who was the only professor in the discipline and who left the university on retirement in 2012. Four years later the discipline had not been able to find a replacement and added that this also affected the research output. According to all four respondents the inability to retain academics and find suitable replacements affect the overall quality of teaching and learning whereby the remaining staff is unable to cope with increased teaching and supervision demands. Respondent C mentioned that this has a negative impact on throughput rates especially in doctoral degrees whereby in 2016 the school only produced one PhD graduate out of 43 PhD graduates in the entire college. Respondent B stated that the discipline is generally understaffed compared to student enrolments both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and that the loss of staff increases teaching workloads tremendously. Respondent C indicated that the use of contract staff to fill the gap is also not useful as there is never enough time to mentor them. Respondent D commented that the transformation agenda and employment equity plans were making it difficult to recruit and appoint suitable candidates.

4.3.3 What would you consider to be the attractive aspects of working at UKZN?

All respondents mentioned the university research status both locally and internationally as the most attractive aspect of working at UKZN and this was based on the internationally recognised university standards and rankings. Respondent A also highlighted that the university had a good reputation for throughput rates. Respondent B commended the management of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's strategic research funds which sought to promote staff academic excellence by rendering support to academic staff presenting academic papers at international conferences.

4.3.4 Over time, some academic staff have left UKZN. What do you think influenced their decision to leave? What are of the some factors that may influence one or more academic staff to voluntarily leave UKZN?

Respondent A was of the view that the university was not concerned about the well-being of staff. He mentioned that the university failed even on small things like providing staff with tea and coffee to make the working environment more welcoming and comfortable. He also mentioned that in the past staff members were granted staff loans through payroll and indicated that this was no longer the case. He also mentioned that the university restricted the fee remission for staff dependants with unfavourable conditions.

Respondent A referred to local and international competitive grants which were previously available to academic staff and were later discontinued. Also the reduced conference attendance support for academics whereby the university restricted the level of support to cover only those academics presenting papers at conferences was of great concern. Respondent C complained that the management of research funds and incentives and the allocation of research grants from the government was not inspiring academics to maximise their research efforts. Respondent A mentioned that the current teaching environment does not inspire the young and upcoming generation to join academia.

Respondent B commended the working environment as free and easy-going. He mentioned that it was up to the individual to take advantage of existing

developmental opportunities and to stay away from university politics. He indicated that there was no balance in terms of the distribution of work to effectively manage heavy teaching and supervision workloads.

Respondent B reported that the university remuneration was not competitive which make it difficult to attract new academics and replace academics who leave the University for better pay elsewhere. Adeoye (2014) asserted that the uncompetitive remuneration influenced academics to pay attention to additional sources of income like conducting remunerated private work.

Three out of the four academic leaders made reference to the academic promotions process and believed that the qualifying criteria was stringent and had many demands in terms of teaching and research portfolios. They believed that it was a barrier for academic growth and career advancement. Respondent A mentioned that some academics were leaving because they had applied and received offers for higher academic positions elsewhere.

Respondent A also mentioned that the university was operating under two sets of conditions of service which only favoured staff under the new conditions as they were the only ones eligible to receive performance based incentives. More than half the staff are still on old conditions as they do not support some of the changes introduced in the new conditions including forfeiting of accumulated leave and discontinuation of medical aid cover beyond retirement. Respondent A also raised the retirement age as another contributing factor to senior academics leaving the university. He mentioned that some universities had 65 years as their retirement age compared to 60 years at the UKZN.

4.3.5 How do you go about retaining academic staff? Do you have any specific retention strategies in place or do you deal with retention on a case by case basis?

Respondent A and C indicated that the university had no retention strategies in place and that it has instead policies that are punitive to staff like the academic promotion policy which they believe is meant to frustrate academic staff. Respondent C mentioned that the academic promotion process is flawed. He

argued that he simultaneously applied for senior lecturership through the academic promotions process and also through the normal recruitment process for a vacant senior lecturer position which was advertised after submitting the application for promotion. He argues that the promotions committee declined his application based on the insufficient strength of the teaching portfolio. However, the respondent was offered the position through the recruitment process. Respondent D believed that the academic promotions criteria for the teaching portfolio discriminated against academics whose disciplines are mainly involved more in practicals than teaching.

Respondent B mentioned that the freezing of posts due to austerity budget has negative effects on teaching workload and compromises on quality. He mentioned that the university relaxed the minimum criteria for entry into specific programmes which meant more student intake with no additional teaching staff. This put a strain on teaching staff who have to deal with heavy workload with no remunerative recognition except for teaching relief which is practically impossible. Respondent B mentioned that the post retirement employment was not guaranteed and in some cases the retired academics are not replaced. Respondent A mentioned that the recruitment process to replace retiring academics should be initiated at least three months before an academic retires.

4.4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW RESULTS: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS

The researcher managed to interview three out of four college human resource managers. The managers would be referred to as HRM 1, HRM 2 and HRM 3 to maintain their anonymity and protect them against possible victimisation. HRM 1 had been in this position for a period of four years and confirmed that the college employed about 260 permanent academic staff at the time of the interview. HRM 2 had been in the college human resources management for 18 years and confirmed that the college had about 200 permanent academic staff employed by the university and about 100 jointly employed by the university and the Department of Health. HRM 3 had ten years' experience as a human resource manager and confirmed that the college had about 500 permanent academic staff.

The results of the interviews with the human resource managers are summarised below. The researcher used the same interview questions from Appendix B to get opinions from the employer perspective.

4.4.1 Why do you consider academic employees to be important to the success of UKZN?

The Human Resource Managers confirmed that the academic staff at UKZN were the most critical talent for the continuity of teaching and learning which they regarded as the greater part of the university's primary business. They also indicated that the university cannot develop and produce a qualified work force for the society without a stable academic staff complement.

4.4.2 What are the consequences to UKZN of losing one or more academic staff? Are you able to put a rand value? How difficult would it be to find a replacement academic?

All managers indicated that the university attrition rate was not very high. However, they all agreed that replacement of academics is a big challenge they face particularly for senior positions, Deans and Head of Departments and more especially in specialised disciplines. They mentioned that the high number of acting positions in the university attest to this.

4.4.3 What would you consider to be the attractive aspects of working at UKZN?

All Managers regarded the university status as the top research institution in the country as a selling point. HRM 3 added that the university's broader scope for research included support for academic staff and referred to the university-wide PhD project introduced by the university Vice-Chancellor and Principal in 2012 which sought to encourage academics to pursue and obtain PhDs in view of the shortage of professors in the country. HRM 3 also mentioned that the university supported collaborative research which allowed academics to work together on research projects under transformational recruitment strategies. HRM 2 indicated that the university is already implementing the developmental lecturer initiative which is the recruitment and support of graduates pursuing a PhD qualification and a career in academia. The university support these lecturers by enabling them to dedicate

most of their time towards the completion of their PhDs while developing their teaching capacity through mentorship programmes. All Managers also mentioned that the university was also implementing the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP), a government funded initiative aimed at revitalising and transforming the academic profession to attract and develop the qualified young generation into academia.

4.4.4 Over time, some academic staff have left UKZN. What do you think influenced their decision to leave? What are some of the factors that may influence one or more academic staff to voluntarily leave UKZN?

All managers indicated that the salaries are not as competitive as they should be and most academics were leaving the university to take up jobs with higher remuneration elsewhere. HRM2 added that some academics are frustrated by the Senate approved academic promotions criteria and end up accepting higher level offers from other universities which is sometimes linked to higher remuneration. HRM 3 mentioned that there seem to be a challenge for senior academics to balance mentorship and their own research output due to heavy teaching and supervision workloads. HRM 2 also mentioned that some academics in specific disciplines believed that the academic promotions criteria needed to consider a clinical portfolio instead of a teaching portfolio. All managers mentioned that some academics left the university due to poor working relationship with line managers.

4.4.5 How do you go about retaining academic staff? Do you have any specific retention strategies in place or do you deal with retention on a case by case basis?

All managers cited the Integrated Talent Management Programme as the university strategy to manage performance, develop talent and recognise excellence. HRM 3 added that even though talent forums were not fully established, the performance management system was up and running and the programme was a step in the right direction to grow and retain competent staff.

HRM 2 also mentioned that the college introduced an accelerated promotion strategy for academics who already have PHDs but have not yet attained the professorship status. This process identifies and facilitate mentorship of academics

who through their teaching and research work have the potential to get promoted. HRM 2 and 3 mentioned the out-of-cycle promotion process as another retention strategy which enables qualifying academics to be considered for promotion outside the annual promotions process. This process follows the same criteria as the normal academic promotions process except that a special panel is constituted to consider the application/s anytime during the course of the year.

HRM 3 mentioned that the university made reasonable counter offers on merit in an effort to retain highly qualified and experienced academics in view of the shortage of professors. All managers mentioned that the university also considered extension of employment beyond retirement up to the age of 70 for academics with proven research record as part of the qualifying criteria.

4.5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As clearly articulated in Chapter 1, the study sought to identify and evaluate factors that facilitate the retention of academics at UKZN. The objectives of the study were to identify factors that caused academics to leave or stay with the university and to evaluate academic staff retention strategies. The discussion of the results was based on these objectives. The data collected in this study indicated various reasons that could influence academics to leave or stay with the university. The researcher found that there is a positive correlation between the literature review and findings from the survey and interviews conducted in answering the main research question.

This section discusses the various factors that influence academics to leave or stay at UKZN based on the findings of the study. The researcher observed that the opinions of the survey respondents and interviews with the academic leaders were more or less the same since the academic leaders are also academics. However, the opinions of the human resources managers tended to sometimes differ on several occasions and this is highlighted in the following discussion. The following section will first discuss the survey findings followed by the discussion on the results from the interviews.

4.5.1 Discussion of the survey results

The statements used in the survey to collect responses for the academics reflected the employee retention strategies discussed in the literature review and the results of the survey measures the level of job satisfaction amongst the academic staff at UKZN. All 14 statements represented one or more of the five strategies below and the results are discussed in relevance to the strategies.

4.5.1.1 Working environment

60% of the respondents indicated that they are proud to work for UKZN and all respondents found their job meaningful and challenging. The Job Characteristics Theory of job satisfaction discussed under the literature review suggest that the more meaningful the job is to employees the higher the chance for a high level of job satisfaction. However 66% indicated that they are likely to look for another job elsewhere. This suggest that even though the university has policies in place that are meant to ensure a conducive working environment the implementation may not be as fulfilling. The responses from the Academic Leaders revealed that the university restricted staff with the provision of basic things like tea and stationery which make the working environment more favourable. Such little things usually do not make a significant difference on the budget unless there is an element of abuse which may be caused by the lack of control measures.

4.5.1.2 Employment relationship strategies

53% of the respondents indicated that they have a good working relationship with their line managers. Furthermore, 77% of the respondents agreed that their supervisors assign them tasks that are meant to empower them. However, 53% of the respondents indicated that they are not satisfied with their job. The results of the academic leaders revealed extreme teaching workloads as a barrier to the fulfilment of their own academic and professional development initiatives. This has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the situation will aggravate with ongoing resignations and retirements. The survey results also revealed that the majority of the respondents had a masters degree as their highest qualification and this means that they cannot completely commit to their own research work and it also staggers progress for those pursuing their doctoral degrees. The impact of the

shortage of professors and difficulty in replacements thereof will reflect on the university's competitiveness and throughput rates.

4.5.1.3 Employee support strategies

Sullivan (2011) in the literature review argue that employees who have all the resources are usually productive and have high levels of job satisfaction. 59% of the respondents indicated that they do not have sufficient resources to perform their duties. The findings from the academic leadership interviews indicated that the university previously provided support for participation in local and international conferences in the form of competitive grants which was later discontinued. This can be attributed to the unstable economy and the reduction of state grants from universities and additional funding from external funders whereby universities are compelled to make budgetary cut provisions based on the available financial resources. Previous research studies on job satisfaction including the research by De Villiers & Steyn and Mouton conducted in 2009 and 2010 respectively further attest that the universities have been receiving reduced state and research funding for the past two decades. Again this scenario has a negative effect on the quality of teaching and learning and poses a challenge for universities to freeze posts and/or fail to attract the high calibre of academic talent due to affordability. This also has a negative effect on the quality of teaching and learning whereby the research support for the academic staff is limited and highly competitive.

4.5.1.4 Employee growth strategies

The research conducted by Bussin & Smit from the literature review suggest that employee growth strategies focus on employee personal and professional growth in the workplace which could be in the form of training and development and mentorship programmes amongst other things. 76% of the respondents indicated that they understand the university policies and procedures for professional development. 63% agreed that the available training and development initiatives enhance their academic career. The human resource management revealed that the university recognise the important of performance management and development through the implementation of the Integrated Talent Management Programme which seek to manage, develop talent and recognise excellence. If

implemented correctly, this programme can be one of the best retention strategies to retain the critical talent and sustain the university's competitiveness.

4.5.1.5 Employee compensation strategies

The research conducted by Adeoye (2014) in the literature review section revealed that the efficient employee compensation strategy uses monetary and non-monetary incentives to strengthen retention practices. The Herzberg's Two Factor Theory which bases employee job satisfaction on motivation and hygiene factors which include promotion, bonuses and public recognition. 84% of the respondents indicated that they are not happy with their remuneration and 54% were not satisfied with the employment benefits. 51% indicated that they were not satisfied with their career progression and 54% felt that there were no opportunities for them to get promoted to the next academic rank. The findings from the academic leadership interviews indicated that the remuneration of academics is not competitive. Also, the results from the interviews with human resources management indicated that the university sometimes has difficulty to attract the senior academic talent due to the increasing demand and competition. In some instances some academic leadership positions are not filled for a period longer than a year which frustrate the smooth continuity of teaching and research activities.

4.5.2 Discussion of the interview results

4.5.2.1 The research profile and throughput rates as a university strength

All respondents in this study indicated the institution's research profile as one of the university strength from both employees and employer perspectives. UKZN is considered the top research institution in the country and is ranked amongst the top research universities by various international higher education ranking agencies. The interviews with academic leadership and human resources management also revealed that the university had pleasing throughput rates which enhances its reputation from an internal and external stakeholder point of view. Related to this were similar opinions from the academic leadership and human resources management about the efficient and effective management of Deputy Vice-Chancellors' strategic research funds which seek to support the academic staff to realise completion of their PhDs and other related research initiatives. All these

findings have a positive influence on academics who regard associating themselves with a reputable organisation as important and 60% of the survey respondents indicated that they were proud to work for the university.

4.5.2.2 The retention strategies

The results from the interviews showed some disparities between the opinions of academic leadership and human resources management. The academic leadership felt that there were no suitable strategies in place to retain academics. They regard the policies that the university implements as retention strategies not favourable and achievable. While human resources managers agree that the academic promotions process has a stringent qualifying criteria, they did not believe that this was not achievable given the fact that academics do get promoted when they meet the qualifying standards. One college had started an accelerated promotions programme which seeks to provide mentorship for academics to develop their teaching portfolios thus preparing them towards meeting the promotions requirements. Furthermore the results of the interviews with human resources managers highlighted that the promotions process was conducted annually and indicated that the out-of-cycle promotions process seeks to consider academics who were ready to be considered for promotion anytime without having to wait for the process to start again in the following year.

The human resources management highlighted a few important strategies that the university is implementing to retain academic talent. The university introduced an Integrated Talent Management Programme aimed at supporting staff career advancement through performance management and talent management systems. The university was already implementing the performance management system and the talent management system was not yet fully implemented. The academic leadership felt very strong about the link of performance rewards to the new set of conditions of employment. This raises a concern on how far the academics on old conditions of service can go in co-operating and supporting the university performance management initiatives.

The results also revealed that the university had a process in place to consider extension of employment beyond retirement for academics who excelled in

research. This process does not only guarantee employment for the deserving senior academics but that it also ensures continuation of mentorship and the passing of skill and experience to the young academics.

4.5.2.3 The existing gaps

The literature review in chapter 2 of this research referred to a study conducted by Dockel, Basson, and Coetzee in 2013 who argued that compensation, training and development, and promotion are the most important retention factors for skilled employees. The results from the survey and interviews revealed that while all respondents indicated that they found their job challenging and meaningful, 53% were not satisfied with their job. The academic leaders who are also academics identified poor remuneration and lack of developmental support as sources of dissatisfaction. The general findings including opinions of human resource managers suggested that the university remuneration rates were not competitive and this was considered amongst the factors that influence academics to consider alternative employment opportunities from other universities and to even exit academia and join private sector. This has severe implications on the number of academics which increases the teaching and supervision workload and end up affecting the quality of teaching and learning. The increased teaching workload also has a negative effect on the developmental programmes to equip the academic capabilities of young academics since the senior academics can find it practically impossible to teach, supervise, research and mentor. This kind of environment is not favourable to academics as it does not enable them to take advantage of the developmental programmes offered by the university due to time constraints.

The literature review revealed that South Africa like most countries is experiencing a shortage of academics especially professors. The findings of the study also revealed that while the attrition rate was not high at UKZN, the university was finding it difficult to replace academics who leave the university on either resignation, retirement, dismissal or death. Some academic leaders and human resource managers mentioned that the university previously implemented and later discontinued some worthwhile transformational developmental programmes like the Leadership and Equity Advancement Program (LEAP) which was a lectureship program whereby the university invited suitable candidates from previously

disadvantaged and particularly women and nurtured them to become qualified and experienced lecturers.

The literature review from a research conducted by Rashmi Rawat in 2013 pointed out that working environment is one of the top elements in a retention strategy. The academic leaders indicated that previously the university used to provide for the basic needs of staff including provision for tea and coffee to make the working environment more conducive. They also indicated that the University discontinued offering staff loans which were flexible and more affordable compared to borrowing money elsewhere. The academic leaders also complained about changes in the fee remission policy with regards to the support of staff dependants whereby the staff dependants not studying at UKZN are no longer eligible to receive full remission.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented and discussed the results of the academic staff survey and interviews with the academic leadership and human resource management. The survey sought to evaluate factors that influenced academics to either stay with the university or seek alternative employment elsewhere. The interviews sought to identify the existing retention strategies and their effectiveness on academic talent. During the interpretation of data the researcher brought in supplementary information from the literature review and from her own observation and experience.

This investigation revealed in summary and among the most important findings that:

- The attrition rate is low at UKZN even though the turnover rate at UKZN increased year on year from 2011-2014.
- The replacement of academics who leave the university is a challenge.
- The academics are happy to work for the university but they are not satisfied with the conditions of service and some of the retention policies and practices in place.

The next chapter will summarise and conclude on the findings of the study and outline recommendations in line with the literature review and the empirical investigation.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this research was to evaluate the retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, particularly in relation to academic staff. The specific research objectives were to:

- To explore academic staff retention trends at UKZN for the past four years (2011-2014);
- To identify possible factors that impact on academic staff retention rates at UKZN for the past four years;
- To evaluate academic staff retention strategies at UKZN; and
- To make recommendations that will enhance academic staff retention at UKZN.

The researcher was able to meet the objectives of the study and this chapter will revisit the research objectives above, summarise the findings of this research work and offer conclusions based on the findings. The previous chapter on the research results was detailed and requires to be summarised, hence the summary in this chapter. Recommendations for future research will be discussed in terms of how to progress beyond this research study. By adopting this structure it is intended that the research work will be concluded so as to reflect on whether or not the objectives stated at the start of this research have been met, including consideration of the value of this study. Guidance will be offered on how this research work can be progressed forward.

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 Research Objective 1: To explore academic staff retention trends at UKZN over the period 2011-2014.

The literature review revealed that from the period between 2011 and 2014 the university had on average 300 terminations per year out of a total of 3500

employees. About 110 of these were resignations and 40 on retirement and on average a majority of whom were support staff. Furthermore the study found that the university was experiencing academic staff loss from 2011 to 2014 but it is acknowledge that the turnover rates improved in 2013 and 2014 with reduced loss. The results of the interviews with the human resource managers also revealed that the academic staff attrition rate was low at UKZN. The only concern was the inability to replace the academics who left the university in good time. The study revealed that some academic leadership positions had been vacant for many years. The study conclude that the university turnover rates were under control between 2011 and 2014 and that the inability to find replacements for academics leaving the university or profession has serious implications on the teaching workload and the quality of teaching and learning at the university.

5.2.2 Research Objective 2: To identify possible factors that impact on academic staff retention rates at UKZN

The study revealed that the majority of the academic staff were happy to be associated with the university but factors such as non-competitive remuneration packages, teaching workloads, lack of developmental support and promotion opportunities, conditions of service and unpleasant working environment influence them to consider leaving the university. The study conclude that while the university has a good reputation for academic and research excellence, it faces an increasing competition for talent from other universities and sectors.

5.2.3 Research Objective 3: To evaluate academic staff retention strategies at UKZN

The finding of the study revealed that the university has quite a number of retention strategies in place including Integrated Talent Management, Academic Promotions, extension of employment beyond retirement, research incentives and counter offers. The study also revealed that each of the strategies had its own requirements and qualifying criteria approved by the university governance structures, some of which the academics are not in favour of.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STUDY

5.3.1 Firstly, it is recommended that the university create and/or maintain a platform for a continuous dialogue between the academic leadership and human resources management at executive and operational level. This will allow for collaboration on a balanced approach to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the academic staff professional and personal developmental needs and implement suitable university human resource strategies.

5.3.2 The academic workforce is the backbone of higher education at global, national and institutional level without whom there would be no continuous supply of graduates to meet talent demands from across all sectors. The university should revisit its remuneration strategy with the aim of reviewing the remuneration of academics. This will not only motivate the academic staff to stay in the university and excel in their teaching and research commitments but it will also assist the university to afford a high calibre of talent on the market and fill vacant positions. In this way, the university will also be able to attract specialists from government and corporate sectors to join specific disciplines in academia. Lastly, the university should prioritise resources accordingly such that there is no freezing of academic vacancies in order to manage teaching workloads effectively and efficiently. The management of teaching workloads will in turn allow enough time for academics to pursue career development and their research work and complete their PhDs.

5.3.3 The university should have a comprehensive mentorship framework with sufficient resources to support and create an enabling environment for the young academics especially developmental lecturers. The working environment is important so that these young academics do not decide to leave the university or exit the profession after completing their PhDs. In this regard the mentorship framework should incorporate and entrench the university's REACH values which advocate for respect, excellence, accountability, client orientation and honesty amongst staff.

5.3.4 The university should fast track the full implementation of the Integrated Talent Management programme to maximise the effects of performance management and to support the staff career development and progression process. However, the

university needs to review its performance management policy such that it is applied fairly and consistently to all members of staff regardless of whether they are on the old or new conditions of service while working towards a single set of conditions of service for all staff. This will eliminate the culture of us and them; it will promote team work amongst staff and will contribute to the successful implementation of the Integrated Talent Management programme.

5.3.5 Despite concerns around the academic promotions criteria and the shortage of professors in the country, it is recommended that the university uphold its academic promotions criteria in order to continue to produce quality academics and professors and to continue to be amongst the leading research institutions both locally and internationally. However the university academic leadership should identify potential academic staff and strengthen research and teaching developmental support programmes to equip them for promotional opportunities.

5.3.6 The university should put more resources on research incentives to recognise research excellence and to motivate the less active academics to publish.

5.3.7 The university should prioritise the well-being of staff by making the working environment welcoming and conducive. Basic provisions like tea and coffee should be made available to staff as these have very little impact on budget savings if managed appropriately. However, the provision of staff loans is not recommended as it may have severe implications on the staff financial well-being in a long term.

5.3.8 Lastly, it is recommended that the university conduct annual staff engagement surveys for academic staff to identify and support their needs aimed at enhancing teaching and learning initiatives wherever possible.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of talent retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) by investigating the factors that influence turnover and retention of academics as the most critical talent in higher education. The findings of the study revealed that the opinions and needs of academics were sometimes unique due to the different university academic offerings and

specialisation. The researcher recommends as further research, a comprehensive qualitative study is conducted per college. Such a study will assist the university to evaluate and implement specific retention strategies that will bear desired outcomes.

The outcome of the study also revealed a concern over the lack of promotional opportunities whereby the academics feel that the academic promotions criteria is too stringent to enable them to qualify for promotions. A benchmarking study investigating a correlation between the academic promotions criteria and teaching and research performance and standards at South African universities will assist the universities to evaluate and uphold successful promotions policies.

The study also revealed that a new generation of young academics is employed as developmental lecturers to sustain the quality and quantity of the academic staff profile at UKZN. In view of the prevailing mobility from one job to the other between universities and across sectors, a study on job satisfaction investigating compensation, the level of academic support and working environment at UKZN is necessary and will assist to obtain the views and experiences from which the university can gauge the likelihood of the new talent to continue working for the university after completing their PHDs and the return on investment and to mitigate turnover.

The study also revealed that the state grants that universities receive from government was not sufficient to sustain the university operations. Universities have had to deal with the increased implications over the past three years with the outbreak of the fees must fall campaign by students which amongst other challenges forces the university to restrict other areas of administration expenditure including salaries to accommodate the new demands in the South African higher education sector. A thorough study evaluating the feasibility of higher education state grants and its impact on productivity in the South African universities is recommended exploring the various mutual funding models.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher acknowledges that a successful research project is dependent on the availability of a combination of resources including access to participants and time. The researcher was not able to involve academics and academic leadership and human resource management in the Pietermaritzburg campus due to time constraints and distant location and therefore the research did not include the entire College of Engineering, Engineering and Science for participation in the study and some of the various schools and disciplines in the other three colleges. In this regard the results of the study cannot be generalised and should be further investigated in other contexts.

The researcher started the survey in 2015 towards the end of the year during the examination period and struggled to get timeous responses from academics who were busy with pre and post examination work. As a result the researcher did not receive back all the questionnaires distributed.

The researcher also noticed that some participants were uncomfortable to express their views freely and tended to generalise on some of the questions during the interviews. The researcher concluded that the respondents feared for a possible mismanagement of information and victimisation since the researcher previously worked in an executive office at UKZN.

5.6 SELF REFLECTION

The researcher started this research by developing a research proposal which was exciting and laid the foundation work for the study and how the entire research would unfold. This was followed by sourcing of secondary data to put together the research literature review. The researcher found this part of the research exciting but mostly challenging and overwhelming as it required a thorough search for the relevant theoretical information including books, journal articles and relevant legislation. At the time of writing the chapter on the literature review the researcher had learned various skills on how to identify, read and understand the correct information that will enrich the study and had an in-depth background of the academic concept. Also, the interviews with the academic leadership and human resource management

provided the researcher with a broader insight on the landscape of the academic profession in so far as the retention of talent is concerned.

Lastly the researcher learned the importance of commitment, discipline, hard work and time management throughout the study and found the entire project fulfilling.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The study found that the academics at UKZN are generally motivated and passionate about their job. In the many aspects which measured their level of job satisfaction, the academic staff found their job meaningful and were proud to work for the university. They found the working environment fairly acceptable which includes the knowledge and understanding of university policies, the good working relationship and support from line managers as well as personal and career development initiatives. However the majority indicated that they would consider looking for alternative jobs elsewhere and this can be attributed to the job satisfaction factors that caused dissatisfaction amongst the academics which included uncompetitive salaries and employee benefits, stringent promotion criteria, excessive teaching workloads and lack of time to do research and lack of funding for research and to attend conferences. These issues should be addressed through benchmarking with other institutions to improve the job satisfaction of academics and retain the university critical talent.

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APPENDIX 1: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER



11 June 2015

Ms Thulisile Ntuli
Graduate School of Business
College of Law & Management Studies
Westville Campus
UKZN
Email: ntulit@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Ms Ntuli

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Evaluation of retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: An empirical review of academic staff".

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by handing out questionnaires as well as conducting interviews with UKZN staff (as per sampling frame) on all campuses.

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire/attached to your notice:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book.

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely


MR B POO
REGISTRAR (ACTING)






Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za


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APPENDIX 2: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM



16 March 2017

Ms Thulisile Ntuli (213572011)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Ntuli,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0774/015M

Project title: Evaluation of retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: An empirical review of academic staff

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 13 March 2017 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in Supervisor from Mr Dhanesh Rampersad to Dr Muhammad Hoque

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

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

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

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

PP

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

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

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear valued participant

My name is Thulisile Ntuli and I am a registered MBA student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal conducting a research study to fulfil my qualification.

My project title is **“Evaluation of retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: An empirical review of academic staff”**. In this study I would like to evaluate factors that causes academics to stay or leave the University and to identify gaps and make recommendations.

You are kindly requested to complete the consent form and answer section A and section B of the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 6 pages including this cover letter and consent form and it will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Please note that your responses will be kept strictly confidential. The outcome of the survey can be made available to you at your request.

Please also note that the study is purely for academic purposes and participation is voluntary. You can withdraw from this study at any time if you wish to do so for any reason whatsoever and there will be no adverse consequences to you if you choose to withdraw.

Kindly send your enquiries relating to any aspect of the questionnaire to Ntulit@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Ms Thulisile Ntuli

Student number: 213572011

Supervisor: Mr Dhanesh Rampersad (dhaneshr1212@gmail.com)

CONSENT

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project.

I consent to participating in the research project and I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SECTION A – BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Please put an X next to the appropriate answer.

1. Age

<30		30-39		40-49		50 or more	
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2. Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

3. Citizenship

South African		Other (please specify)	
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4. College

CLMS		CAES		HUM		HS	
------	--	------	--	-----	--	----	--

5. School: _____

6. Highest qualification

Masters		Doctoral		Other (please specify)	
---------	--	----------	--	------------------------	--

7. Occupational rank

Lecturer		Senior lecturer		Associate Professor		Full Professor		Academic Leader		Other (please specify)
----------	--	-----------------	--	---------------------	--	----------------	--	-----------------	--	------------------------

8. How long have you been in the employ of UKZN as an academic?

1-2 years		3-5 years		6-10 years		11-20 years		>20 years	
-----------	--	-----------	--	------------	--	-------------	--	-----------	--

SECTION A – WORK ATTRIBUTES (Please select one appropriate answer)

1. I find my work meaningful

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

2. I find my job challenging

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

3. I have enough resources to execute my duties

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

4. I am happy with my salary?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

5. The available training and development initiatives enhance my career

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

6. I am satisfied that my career progression to date, matches my contribution and effort

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

7. I understand the university policies and procedures for professional development

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

8. I have a good working relationship with my supervisor?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

9. The tasks assigned to me by my supervisor helps me grow professionally

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

10. There are opportunities for me to get promoted

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

11. I am satisfied with my employee benefits

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

12. I am satisfied with my job

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

13. I am proud to work for UKZN

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

14. I am likely to look for another job outside UKZN

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Dear valued participant

My name is Thulisile Ntuli and I am a registered MBA student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal conducting a research study to fulfil my qualification.

I would like to interview you as one of my research participants. My project title is "Evaluation of retention strategies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: An empirical review of academic staff". In this study I would like to evaluate factors that facilitate the retention of academic staff at UKZN and to identify gaps and recommendations.

Please note that the study is purely for academic purposes and participation is voluntary. You can withdraw from this study at any time if you wish to do so for any reason whatsoever and there will be no adverse consequences to you if you choose to withdraw.

Kindly declare your consent to participate by completing the form below.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Ms Thulisile Ntuli

Student number: 2135742011 (Ntulit@ukzn.ac.za)

Supervisor: Mr Dhanesh Rampersad (dhaneshr1212@gmail.com)

HSSREC Research Office Contact Details:

Mr Prem Mohun

Research Office: Ethics

Govan Mbeki Centre

Tel: 031-260 4557

E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project.

I consent to participating in the research project and I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent /do not consent to have this interview recorded.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Interview Questions: University academic leadership and human resources management

Demographic Questions

1. Name of interviewee and position
2. How long have you been in your position?
3. Approximately how many academic employees do you have?
5. Does the university have any formal strategies for retaining employees? If yes, what are they?

Interview Questions

1. Why do you consider academic employees to be important to the success of UKZN?
2. What are the consequences to UKZN of losing one or more academic staff?
 - a. Are you able to put a rand value to that?
 - b. How difficult would it be to find a replacement academic?
3. What would you consider to be the attractive aspects of working at UKZN?
4. What are some factors that may influence one or more academic staff to voluntarily leave UKZN?
 - a. Over time, some academic staff have left UKZN. What do you think influenced their decision to leave?
5. How do you go about retaining academic staff?
 - a. Do you have any specific retention strategies? Or do you deal with retention on a case by case basis?

.....The end.....