



Evaluating the University of KwaZulu-Natal's support staff retention and career advancement strategy

By

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The study looked at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) support staff retention and career advancement strategy. It aimed at assessing how the UKZN is applying its policies to assist and support employees in advancing in their careers and the ability to retain quality employees.

The study looked at the practical application of different UKZN policies, such as the Integrated Talent Management policy and other policies designed to benefit the UKZN and its employees. It also looked at the role of the Human Resource Department in ensuring that the university applies the policies fairly and equitably. The researcher used quantitative methods to conduct the study. A survey was used to obtain primary data for the study. Deductions were made by comparing the survey and the literature review findings to understand better how the UKZN is applying its policies to retain and assist support staff in advancing their careers.

The study results give a complete assessment of UKZN's support staff retention and career progression plan, highlighting its strengths, flaws, the disconnection of the HR department, and opportunities for improvement. The research adds to the current literature on employee retention and career development in higher education institutions, concentrating on support staff jobs.

The study offers policy and practical suggestions that may improve the university's efforts to retain and support the career advancement of its support employees by identifying gaps and issues experienced by support staff. Finally, the researcher hopes to contribute to developing successful techniques for supporting and empowering support workers at higher education institutions, guaranteeing a good and inclusive workplace.

It will also contribute to the Department of Higher Education and Training's goal of creating capable, well-educated, and skilled citizens who can compete in a sustainable, diversified, and knowledge-intensive international economy that meets the country's development goals by reducing bottlenecks in priority professional areas, thereby contributing to the National Development Plan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Background

The reliability and commitment of an organization's workers are essential to its success. Maintaining a competitive advantage and a steady staff is challenging for all businesses. The success or failure of a company is directly proportional to the quality of its employees. Since employee turnover is a significant problem, human resource (HR) experts have prioritized identifying methods to prevent their present employees from leaving the organization (Brown and Martinez, 2020). Employees are a company's most precious asset, and an enterprise's success depends on the level of its workforce (Barney and Wright, 2019). Based on a study conducted by Johnson and Smith (2019), the retention of employees is of utmost importance in maintaining organizational knowledge, cultivating a stable workforce, and cultivating a positive corporate culture. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is a component of the Higher Education (HE) sector, which is overseen by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The UKZN was founded after merging Durban Westville and the University of Natal in 2004 (<https://ukzn.ac.za/history/>). Prioritizing the institution's long-term sustainability led to the enactment of regulations to support professional development among personnel and encourage retention.

Higher education institutions are organized according to teaching, learning, and research. Academics are vital to the university's capacity to accomplish its objective and support staff members to ensure its everyday operation. Universities are significant employers of highly skilled workers in one of South Africa's most important economic sectors (Gander, 2017). According to statistics from Institutional Planning, 73% of UKZN employees are non-academics, whereas 27% are academics. This figure has decreased by 12% since 2022. The university's demand has increased, while academic and support personnel numbers are trending in the other direction.

Staff turnover refers to the proportion of a company's employees who depart within a specific time frame (Johnson and Smith, 2019). Due to the increased cost of locating and training new employees, organizations with high turnover rates are more likely to see long-term declines in performance (Allen, Bryant, and Vardaman, 2015). According to O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett (2017), seasoned personnel often have specialized knowledge and skills gained from

years of experience inside the firm and the particular sector. Following their departure, the loss of these people may be a difficult barrier regarding knowledge replacement, perhaps resulting in knowledge gaps and a consequent decline in operational efficiency (Liu and Chen, 2019). The transitional period may have an impact on the organization's overall performance as well as the delivery of its services or goods.

The study evaluates how the UKZN is implementing its staff development and retention policies to retain and assist support staff in advancing in their careers.

1.2 Significance of the Study

With this study, the UKZN will understand its employees better and cater to their further professional growth. The study will assist the institution in determining how to invest in the professional development of its staff. It will assist the institution in resolving challenges such as job stability, employee loyalty, and promotion and personal development opportunities. Good support helps employees progress in their careers and make better-informed decisions on their jobs. According to Gander (2017), a career is a person's total experience over time.

Finding, recognizing, cultivating, and retaining outstanding people is crucial for the university. This can only be achieved via collaboration between upper management, department heads, and the H.R. department. According to Cascio (2018), talent management is finding, selecting, developing, and promoting a company's people resources. Effective talent management ensures that employees have access to the necessary training, tools, and encouragement to do their tasks to the best of their ability. The primary emphasis of talent management activities should be creating an inclusive and supportive work environment that promotes employee engagement and reduces turnover rates. According to Cascio (2018), allocating resources to internal talent development has the ability to foster a strong feeling of loyalty and dedication among workers. Employees who believe their employer prioritizes their personal and professional growth are likely to be committed and stay with the company for a long time. According to Girardi, (2019), organizations must grow talent to fulfil current and future expectations. Staff retention will ensure that critical knowledge is not lost, and H.R. and line managers are better equipped to understand how to retain and grow a talent pool within UKZN.

1.3 Empirical literature review

Universities have ignored Support staff development worldwide (Girardi, 2019). Universities provide various professional development programs and training opportunities for academic employees. According to Smith and Brown (2020), these programs focus on developing teaching skills, research methodology, and leadership talents, contributing to people's overall growth.

Universities devote their efforts to developing and retaining academic personnel as they are the key to their teaching, learning, and research business. According to Smith, Duxbury, and Halinski (2019), a favourable relationship exists between supporting employees with growth opportunities and their job satisfaction and engagement levels. Employees actively interested in their jobs show more devotion to their obligations, have higher drive levels, and positively contribute to the overall professional environment. According to Chang and Busser, (2020), institutions that invest in their support personnel's professional development and promotion are more likely to see a drop in employee turnover rate. Employees in support jobs who perceive that their growth and professional development are highly appreciated by the university are more likely to stay with the institution, resulting in lower recruiting and training costs. According to Chung and Hur (2019), providing development opportunities for support workers may help foster a healthy company culture that values continuous learning and cooperation. The presence of motivated and highly trained support staff members is critical in establishing successful cooperation because they promote accessible communication and collaboration across departments. Support personnel perform key responsibilities in providing services to students, and the effect of their professional advancement is directly reflected in the entire student experience (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, and Inderrieden, 2018). A well-trained support staff can give better support and services to students, resulting in higher student satisfaction and a better university reputation.

Managing and retaining such assets is now the primary challenge facing corporations. Due to the significance of employees' knowledge and skills to an organization's economic viability, recruiting and retaining competent personnel is essential (Chung and Hur, 2019). Talented people are critical to any organization's health, growth, and profitability (Cascio, 2018). When competition is severe, every institution does all possible to provide its members with special incentives and services. Sustaining human resources is one of contemporary organizations' most challenging difficulties (Dlamini, 2018). Attracting and retaining top talent in an environment characterized by fierce competition for scarce abilities has become the great experiment of social capital management. As a result, several companies and government organizations suffer high staff turnover rates (Cascio, 2018). Workers have traditionally been a vital source of capital for a firm. Their serious demeanour qualifies them as indispensable members of any group.

Four theories guide the study: Human capital, Boundaryless, Protean career theory, and the two-factor approach. The ideas assisted the investigation in finding what employers can do to understand the employees better, contribute to career advancement, and how employees can better manage their careers at the UKZN.

1.3.1 Human capital theory

The human capital theory is a conceptual framework emphasizing the economic value of investing in people's education, training, and other forms of human capital. According to this theory, human capital is an asset that individuals can acquire through education and experience, which firms and societies can invest in to increase productivity and economic growth (Becker, 1964).

The central idea of the human capital theory is that education and training increase an individual's productivity and earnings potential, thereby improving their economic well-being. Becker (1964) explained that investments in human capital are intended to raise the recipient's earnings by improving their productivity, which can be defined as the output produced per unit of input.

The human capital theory has been applied to labour economics, education, and public policy fields. Acquiring information and skills via education and training is critical in influencing people's earnings and encouraging their total human capital development (European Commission, 2017). Human capital refers to an individual's intellectual, practical, and aptitude

traits, which are acquired via educational pursuits and training and have a crucial impact on their economic efficiency and ability to create money (Wakabayashi and Hongo, 2019). Government policies are critical in promoting human capital investment and guaranteeing the development of a competent and competitive workforce.

1.3.2 Protean theory

Personal career management, not organizational career development, is viewed as the source of emotional success in this paradigm. It entails lifelong learning, progression in growth, flexibility, independence, and self-sufficiency. It encourages self-direction, less reliance on the organization, and encourages people to care for their development (Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy, 2006)

1.3.3 Boundaryless theory

This theory argues that people are not tied to one organization. They can freely move between organizations and between careers. People who believe in this theory are motivated by psychological and hierarchical success, often with multiple employers. This is characterized by intra and inter-organizational mobility, meaningful work, full skill utilization, and balanced work-life (Rodrigues, Guest, and Budjanovcanin, 2016).

1.3.4 Two-factor theory

The two-factor theory, based on motivation and hygiene, was proposed by Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman in 1968. Promotions, bonuses, and public recognition are all motivating elements for employees. Employees are inspired to achieve well in their jobs due to such factors, which improves job satisfaction. On the other hand, hygiene considerations are non-monetary benefits provided to employees, such as norms and systems in place to support business operations, task execution, and general working conditions. According to Herzberg (1978), these may not necessarily encourage employees but might contribute to workplace unhappiness if the boss ignores them.

The two-factor theory will serve as the foundation for the proposed research to answer the research questions. According to the idea, organizations must prioritize hygiene factors and motivators to motivate employees. Improving hygiene factors alone will not result in motivation but rather a reduction in job dissatisfaction, whereas boosting motivators will

increase job satisfaction and motivation. It also emphasizes the significance of intrinsic motivation, which derives from the individual and is associated with personal growth and accomplishment. Organizations can foster intrinsic motivation by allowing employees to acquire new skills and undertake challenging assignments that align with their personal goals and values.

The UKZN Integrated Talent Management and other policies aim to ensure talent retention and provide quality services. The theory aided in identifying the factors that motivate employees to remain in their current jobs and perform at their highest levels. In addition to answering the research questions, it helps determine the gaps in the application and overall implementation of the policy to achieve its intended purpose.

1.4 Research problem

Table 1.1 UKZN Support Staff Headcount 2023

Perm/Temp/Contr	AgeGroup	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	20 - 25	31	35	17	13	6	0	28
	26 - 30	316	319	264	207	178	124	228
	41 - 45	1190	1285	1300	1236	1226	1153	1025
	41 - 45	631	670	656	651	610	603	582
	46 - 50	667	668	656	643	623	631	571
	51 - 55	561	579	600	595	623	612	513
	56 - 60	403	448	465	472	480	495	397
	60 +	96	140	187	247	288	305	100
Total		3895	4144	4145	4064	4034	3923	3444
Employees left UKZN			-249	-1	81	30	111	479

Table 1.1: Adapted from UKZN Institutional Planning Headcount Data June 2023.

Table 1.1 shows the UKZN employed 3444 support staff in 2023, down from 3923 in 2022, 4034 in 2021, and 4064 in 2020. The UKZN lost about 700 support employees from 2020 to the current year, June 2023. The numbers continue to change due to retirement or resignation.

Studies have examined the UKZN’s ability to develop and retain qualified academics (Ntuli, 2017), (Khoza, 2017) and (Nene, 2020). However, little attention has been given to the development and retention of support staff in the context of UKZN. Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), (2021) found that most experienced professional support employees believe their careers are underrated, unsupported, and misconstrued. As a result,

after accumulating the required experience and qualifications, they prefer to leave the institution to seek career growth. Girardi (2019) discovered that the issue is a lack of defined career paths or senior promotion chances inside the organization, which leads to most qualified support staff becoming accidental administrators or departing.

Despite working for the institution for many years, internal support staff finds it difficult to seek senior positions due to a lack of management expertise. The lack of internal training, such as on-the-job training, acting jobs, job rotation, and internal transfers, denies them the ability to progress within the UKZN. Consequently, support staff prefers to leave the institution for better prospects in the public or private sectors (Girardi (2019)). As seasoned personnel departs the institution, skills deteriorate, and the need to hire new and inexperienced staff to fill available positions develops. This influences academic support service delivery since the new employee still requires time to learn and grasp the internal procedures (Girardi (2019)).

Table 1.2 UKZN Support Staff Turnover Rate Calculation

Perm/Temp/Contr	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	3895	4144	4145	4064	4034	3923	3444
Employees left UKZN		-249	-1	81	30	111	479
Turnover rate		-6%	0%	2%	1%	3%	12%

Table 1.2: Adapted from UKZN Institutional Planning Headcount Data June 2023.

The UKZN Integrated Talent Management policy (Ref: CO/04/0512/11), in effect since 2012, was designed to enhance worker development and decrease turnover. Other policies, such as the Recruitment and Selection Policy, Remuneration Policy, Private Remunerative Work Policy, and Tuition Remission Policy, were designed to ensure that UKZN recruits, retains, and develops the talent pool. The study will evaluate the UKZN support staff retention and career advancement strategy to promote career advancement and reduce staff turnover.

The research will examine how the Integrated Talent Management policy and other policies have been implemented and how they have benefitted the support staff. The study will benefit the UKZN in understanding the support staff career advancement needs and how to improve staff retention. It will benefit the UKZN support staff by allowing them to evaluate the UKZN application and implementation of staff development policies.

The study will also contribute toward the mission of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) of creating capable, well-educated, and skilled citizens who can compete in a sustainable, diversified, and knowledge-intensive international economy that meets the country's development goals by reducing bottlenecks in priority professional areas (DHET 2022).

1.5 The Aim of The Study

The research evaluates the University of KwaZulu-Natal's support staff career advancement and retention strategy in relation to the university HR policies and whether the support staff has benefited from those policies.

1.5.1 Research objectives

- To evaluate how the UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies have been implemented to support staff in advancing their careers.
- To determine the support staff retention strategy at the UKZN.
- To evaluate the role of support staff line managers, division heads, and HR to assist in developing and advancing their careers.
- To assess how effective the UKZN is in implementing the staff development plan to benefit the support staff.

1.5.2 Research questions

- How do the UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies help staff advance in their careers?
- What is the support staff retention strategy at the UKZN?
- How do support staff line managers and division heads assist employees under their supervision to develop and advance in their careers?
- How has the UKZN implemented its staff development plan to benefit the support staff?

1.6 Definition of key terms

1.6.1 Career Development

Staff career development is a methodical approach to enhancing employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities to enable them to take on new organizational roles and responsibilities (Rodrigues, Guest, and Budjanovcanin, 2016). The process involves providing employees with opportunities for growth and progression, such as training, coaching, mentoring, job shadowing, and job rotations.

1.6.2 Staff Development Policy

A staff development policy is a written document that describes how a company approaches employee learning and development. According to Noe (2017), staff development policies can help organizations attract and retain talented employees, improve organizational performance, and support employees in achieving their career goals. As a result, a good staff development strategy entails cultivating a culture of continual learning, making training and development tools available, and encouraging internal career mobility.

1.6.3 Career Development Strategy

Greenhaus, Callanan, and Godshalk (2010) describe a career development strategy as a set of planned actions and decisions to help individuals achieve their career goals and objectives. It is a proactive strategy for career planning that stresses ongoing learning, skill development, and networking to progress one's career (Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher, 2017)

1.6.4 Career advancement

Career advancement refers to developing an individual's career by acquiring new responsibilities, positions, and challenges that allow them to improve and mature their professional skills and knowledge. According to Ashforth and Saks (2017), individuals may undergo numerous career transitions, such as promotions, lateral movements, or switching to a new profession or business. Career advancement comprises a series of stages or steps an individual goes through to advance and develop in their career, beginning with entry-level roles and progressing to more elevated positions with greater responsibilities, heightened authority, and increased remuneration (Baruch, 2015).

1.6.5 Career advancement strategy

According to Robbins and Judge (2019), a career advancement strategy is a purposeful and intentional method of obtaining professional progress and success. Setting clear career objectives, exploring chances for learning and skill development, and developing a solid professional network are all part of the process. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), people may boost their employability, optimize their professional potential, and accomplish their long-term career goals by taking a proactive approach to career management.

1.6.6 Staff career advancement strategy

A staff career advancement strategy is a collection of rules and processes to help employees grow and advance within a company. Noe, (2017) asserts that career development programs can help organizations attract and retain high-quality employees by providing opportunities for learning and growth. Creating a culture of continuous learning, giving access to training and development tools, and supporting internal career mobility are all components of a successful staff career advancement strategy.

1.6.7 Career progression

Career progression refers to the growth and improvement of an individual's professional trajectory by acquiring new competencies, knowledge, experiences, and accountabilities within a given occupational area (Hernandez and Johnson, 2018).

1.6.8 Staff retention

According to Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, and Inderriedenet (2018), staff retention is the extent to which an organization can retain its employees over a specified period. The study found that high levels of employee turnover can lead to increased recruitment and training costs, decreased productivity, and lower morale among remaining employees.

1.6.9 The UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy

The Integrated Talent Management Policy of the University of KwaZulu-Natal is a formal document that explains the university's strategy for recruiting, developing, and keeping exceptional people. It includes developing a personnel management culture, identifying critical jobs, offering career development opportunities, and succession planning (UKZN,2021).

1.7 Research Design and Methodology

Research methodology refers to the procedures or methods used to locate, select, process, and analyse material relevant to a study topic. It enables the reader to assess a study's validity and dependability (Kaya, 2013). Perreault (2011) defined the research design as the overall technique used to rationally and cohesively integrate numerous study components to ensure that it adequately answers the research questions. This means that research design is a plan or set of procedures for gathering data, analysing it, and presenting the results in a way that meets the study's objectives.

According to Taguchi (2018), the descriptive study is used to gather the information that will help describe the research phenomenon adequately. The descriptive study helps data collection sufficiently describe an event and organize, tabulate, and graph the information (Nassaji, 2015).

In this study, descriptive research aims to allow the researcher to acquire quantitative data that could be quickly tabulated. Another advantage of descriptive analysis is that it enables the researcher to contribute to the body of knowledge while also providing readers with more information about the research phenomenon. In addition, a descriptive study will be undertaken to enable the researcher to use complex statistics to validate the findings.

Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research are the three types of research methodologies (Creswell, 2018). The research was conducted using a quantitative approach. Quantitative analysis is linked to scientific research firmly established in positivism and can be statistically treated to support or reject the findings (Brigitte, 2017). A descriptive and correlational research approach will be used to accomplish this.

The research was carried out across the UKZN's five campuses, emphasizing support personnel. It was carried out through a literature study and empirical data collection on the UKZN's support staff career advancement and retention strategy. Secondary data from books, journal articles, the internet, annual reports, and other institutional papers were used to construct the study's theoretical and contextual framework. The researcher used the UKZN notice to distribute questionnaire links to participants. The questionnaire comprised 5 primary themes, each with 3 to 6 clarity questions in a Likert scale format. The Google Form was used to design the questionnaire. Participants were given three weeks to complete the questionnaires. To increase staff response, the link was sent daily for three weeks. Once the responses were received, the data was reviewed and compared to secondary and primary data results to make

recommendations, and conclusions were drawn about the impact of the UKZN's support staff advancement and retention strategy on institutional success.

1.7.1 Research paradigm

Ontological assumptions and epistemological assumptions are the two most prevalent study paradigms. Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Creswell (2018), defined ontology as the relationship between social realities, their nature, and the circumstances in which they arise. Epistemology concerns how people learn about what is happening around them (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). They both represent individual people's distinct perspectives and impact their perceptions and contributions to the body of knowledge.

The study was influenced by ontological philosophy, which aimed at comprehending human behaviour or experience based on a specific observation, as indicated above, to assess the effectiveness of UKZN's support staff career advancement and retention strategy.

1.7.2 Research Strategy

The research strategy, specific research objectives, and data-gathering procedures influenced the study's research approach. According to Creswell (2018), quantitative research collects and analyses numerical data. It can spot trends and averages, make forecasts, verify causal linkages, and extrapolate results to larger groups. The study aimed to understand how the UKZN has applied staff development policies and reduced the support staff turnover rate. The data was collected from a large group of support staff to increase the response rate and population representation. The results were analysed and extrapolated to the entire population of support staff employed by the UKZN to draw conclusions. Therefore, the study used quantitative research, which was considered suitable.

According to Creswell (2018), surveys are systematic questionnaires that provide a quantitative or numeric portrayal of trends, attitudes, and viewpoints for a large sample. The study issued questionnaires to collect data. The Likert scale closed-ended questionnaires were sent to the participants. The questionnaire was formulated to address the research questions and achieve the objectives.

1.7.3 Population and Sampling

1.7.3.1 Population

A study population is a well-defined group of individuals or things with similar characteristics (Creswell, 2018). The population for the study was the support employees at all levels at the UKZN five campuses. Based on the 2023 Institutional Planning headcount statistics, by June 2023, the UKZN employed 4689 employees, 73% of whom were in support services. The support service employees include support staff directly involved with academic and administrative support, campus management service, and protection service. The UKZN categorizes the support staff as top management, senior management, professionally qualified staff, junior management, semi-skilled and discretionary, and unskilled and defined decision staff (UKZN, 2021). The study focused on top management, junior management, and semi-skilled and discretionary employees. Access to a laptop and the internet was required to complete the survey. Therefore, the study excluded the support staff who do not have access to a computer or cell phone with the Internet. Therefore, the total population for the study was 3444 support employees.

1.7.3.2 Sampling

A research sample is a subset of people, things, or components drawn from a broader population to conduct a study. It serves as a representative group for researchers, allowing them to accumulate data, make judgments, and deduce implications about the entire population. The validity and dependability of research findings are strengthened by carefully selected and analysed samples (Neuman, 2019).

Voluntary sampling, or self-selection sampling, is a non-probability sampling strategy used in research to gather data from people who choose to participate in a study based on their preferences and availability (Neuman, 2013). This technique does not use a random procedure to choose individuals from a larger population. Individuals instead select their readiness to engage independently, frequently in response to an open invitation or a call for volunteers.

Voluntary sampling was utilized to select participants for the survey to collect relevant data from support staff on the practical application of the UKZN's staff career advancement and retention strategy.

1.7.3.3 Sample size selection

According to Smith and Johnson (2022), the right sample size for a research study is determined by several criteria, including the research objectives, methodology, desired confidence level, population size, and statistical techniques.

The appropriate sample size must be between 30 and 500 participants to achieve the most reliable results (Bougie, 2010). The formula introduced by Israel (1992) was considered appropriate for the sample selection of the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
$$= 3444 / (1 + (3444 \times (0,05) \times (0,05))) = 358$$

Where n = sample size, N= population, e = level of precision

1.7.3.4 Data Collection and Instrument

John and Smith (2022) and Lyons (1978) define data collection as systematically gathering and measuring information on variables of interest to answer specific research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. The data collection involves using data collection instruments such as interviews, observations, and questionnaires. For quantitative research, questionnaires are the appropriate tool (Brigitte, 2017).

The study requested support staff members to complete the survey questionnaires. Google Forms were used to create survey questionnaires. Google Forms are free and easy to use. The questionnaire link was distributed to employees using the UKZN staff notice, the notice system available to UKZN employees with access to a computer and the internet. The link was posted in the staff notice for three weeks to ensure the targeted number of employees was reached. The questions were structured in a closed-ended Likert scale format.

1.7.3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

To evaluate quantitative data, the researcher used descriptive statistics. Frequency distribution tables and percentages are more commonly used in descriptive statistics. They are the foundation for more complex techniques, such as inferential statistical tools. Distribution tables are easily read and include crucial information (Brigitte, 2017). Each item's responses were

sorted by scale to show different reaction levels. The conclusion was drawn and tested against the objectives and the research questions.

1.8 Ethical consideration

The study was carried out with ethical regard for human subjects by the UKZN. The UKZN's Research Office issued ethical approval after following due process. The data was maintained securely for a period required by the UKZN Research Office and policies governing research. Participants were informed about the study's objectives and signed a consent form. The consent form clearly stated the study's goal and scope. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could leave anytime. The UKZN Register Office provided the gatekeeper's letter.

1.8.1 Delimitation of the Study

Due to the time and resource limitations of the study, the study concentrated on the support staff at UKZN who have access to computers and the Internet, such as administrators, Accounting Officers, Accountants, Managers, and Portfolio Heads. The results were extrapolated to the entire population to conclude.

1.9 Proposed Thesis Outline Proposal

A total of five sections made up this research. Chapter 1 explains the investigation's context and its justification for being conducted. In addition to outlining the study's goals and methods, this section includes a problem statement that pinpoints the knowledge gap that prompted this investigation. In addition, this chapter provides the study's aims, research questions, and justification.

Examining the study's theoretical data takes up Chapter 2. The study investigated the theoretical foundations of support staff retention and career advancement strategy. This chapter provides readers with information and ideas that have been proven effective by other researchers in supporting staff retention and career advancement.

In Chapter 3, the study research design and methodology are presented. The research methodology details the procedures used to complete the study. You will find details on the study's population, how researchers came up with their sample size, and more in this part, which explains the research methodology used. This chapter detail the data collection

instruments and the procedures to ensure the devices' validity and reliability. Finally, the methods used for data analysis and the display are detailed in this section.

In Chapter 4, the findings are presented and analysed. This chapter details the findings from appropriate methods of assessing essential variables. The analysed outcomes serve as feedback on the first inquiries.

The results, conclusions, and suggestions are summarized in the final chapter 5. The findings were analysed, and comparisons were made to the literature review and the study goals and objectives to make conclusions. Implications of the results are examined at the end of this chapter.

1.10 Work plan

January 2023	Research Proposal Submission
February 2023	Research proposal and feedback
March-May 2023	Application for ethical clearance and gatekeeper's letter.
April 2023	Literature review and research methodology (continuous)
June 2023	Data collection, data analysis, and conclusion
July 2023 – August 2023	First draft submission
September 2023	Final draft submission
October 2023	Final work submitted

Table 1.3: Research work plan. Self-created

CHAPTER 2

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the contemporary and fiercely competitive realm of higher education, universities across the globe must prioritize the retention and professional growth of their staff members (Davis, Schaffhauser, and Bonk, 2019). Universities function as centres of knowledge, playing a crucial role in fostering societal progress and stimulating economic development. In order to effectively fulfil their missions, universities must acknowledge and attend to the importance of employee retention and development (Smith and Johnson, 2020). The average turnover rate for support employees at UK universities is 14.4%, as per the 2019 survey conducted by the Association of University Administrators (AUA), with libraries (17.4%), student services (16.7%), and estates and facilities (16.2%) having the most significant turnover rates (AUA, 2019).

The situation is even worse in Africa, where professional university support personnel, notably administrative and technical staff, are in short supply (Herman and Okeke, 2021). This gap is caused by various factors, including needing more resources, inadequate training and development, and brain drain, which happens when qualified support personnel leaves African countries for better career opportunities abroad. According to the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), African universities need 34,000 more academic and non-academic workers to meet their goals (ACBF, 2018).

Universities in South Africa need help retaining support staff due to various difficulties, such as low pay, limited opportunities for growth, and poor working conditions (Mabokela and Lelliott, 2019). The results published by the South African Labour Market Intelligence Report (SAMIR) shows an average annual turnover rate of support employees in South African institutions is 20%, with finance and administration having the most significant turnover rate (24.5%), followed by human resources (23.6%) (SAMIR, 2019).

According to a Deloitte study, high turnover rates are primarily the result of a lack of career growth opportunities, inadequate salary, and poor management practices. According to the survey, 34% of South African support staff depart due to a lack of professional career advancement opportunities, while 23% leave due to low salaries (Deloitte, 2020).

High levels of support employee turnover substantially impact organizations' bottom lines. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), replacing an employee may cost a company anywhere from 50% to 200% of the individual's annual salary (SHRM, 2019). The high turnover rates among university support employees have a variety of consequences. These include a loss of institutional knowledge, increased recruitment and training costs, decreased productivity, and decreased employee morale (AUA, 2019).

Based on previous studies, this chapter dives deep into a literature review on employee turnover and retention. The review's findings comprehensively explain how support staff retention rates and career advancement have evolved and their impact on the UKZN setting. Additionally, concepts and models relating to employee turnover and career advancement, as well as the factors that contribute to employee turnover, were studied. This chapter also discussed the consequences of employee turnover on organizational development and the strategies employed to retain staff. Regarding the study objectives, policies and practices that enhance employee retention and career advancement were evaluated for relevance.

2.2 The Essentials of Support Staff Career Advancement

It is crucial to emphasize that career development cannot be accomplished in a single day or via a one-time workshop. Instead, it reflects an organized effort to acknowledge service personnel as valuable organizational resources and to grow support staff into more enriched and competent individuals.

Figure 2.1 Fundamental Career Development Components for Support Workers

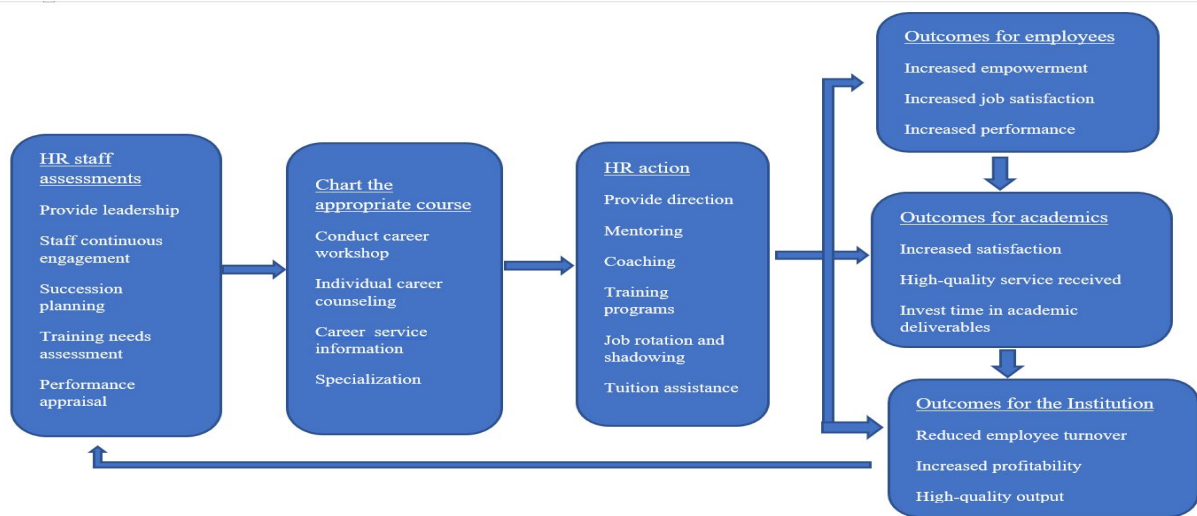


Figure 2.1: Adapted from Jackson, Hollmann, and Gallan (2006)

Figure 2.1 depicts the fundamental career development components for support workers, including HR evaluation in critical areas of the HRM function, charting the proper route, and acting to accomplish outcomes. The model has benefits for supporting employees, academics, and the institution.

2.3 Employee turnover

Staff turnover refers to the pace at which employees leave a company and are replaced by new employees Hom, Tsui, and Wu (2020). This metric is typically a percentage of the total number of employees going to a company in a specific period, divided by the total number of employees. The average is then divided by the number of months that make up a year to get the average number per month to a year. (Bauer and Erdogan, 2021).

According to Hom, Tsui, Lee, and Wu (2020), staff turnover is a complex phenomenon influenced by several personal, organizational, and environmental factors. Individual elements include employee motivation, job satisfaction, and personal values, while organizational ones include managerial techniques, work design, and business culture. External factors like labor market conditions and economic trends might also impact employee turnover.

High staff turnover may be costly to businesses, resulting in poorer productivity, increased recruitment and training costs, and lower employee morale (Bauer and Erdogan, 2021). High staff turnover may also affect an organization's image, making recruiting and retaining top people more challenging (Hom, 2020).

2.4 Various Kinds of Employee Turnover

2.4.1 Random turnover

Employees leave their jobs voluntarily for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to professional advancement, work discontent, family duties, or personal goals, in contrast to involuntary turnover, which refers to workers leaving their jobs due to situations beyond their control (Liu and Luksyte, 2019).

2.4.2 Involuntary turnover

Involuntary turnover occurs when a corporation dismisses an employee. This might happen for several reasons, such as poor performance, disobedience, or downsizing. Involuntary turnover may be disastrous for the person and the company, resulting in negative results such as demoralized staff and low productivity. Strong performance management and communication may assist in preventing involuntary turnover (Carragher, Buckley, and Cavanaugh, 2019).

2.4.3 Rotation of functional roles

When a company's employee leaves, they are replaced by someone who does the same position at a similar level of productivity. This kind of turnover might benefit the firm by enabling underperforming employees to be replaced by more competent employees. Conversely, functional turnover may result in knowledge loss and lower morale among present employees. According to Lee, Mitchel, Sablynski, Burton and Holtom (2016), this turnover is more likely in jobs with high mobility and joint organizational commitment.

2.4.4 Dysfunctional Rotation

When an employee who is exceptionally productive and beneficial to the business leaves, this is referred to as disruptive turnover. This turnover might cost the company money by diminishing productivity and raising recruitment costs. According to Noe, Hollenbeck,

Gerhart, and Wright (2017), organizations with low employee engagement and satisfaction levels have higher rates of dysfunctional turnover.

Understanding the different types of employee turnover can help UKZN identify potential problems and implement solutions to mitigate negative consequences. Monitoring employee departure rates and identifying trends may assist UKZN in developing or improving its retention strategies and employee satisfaction and engagement.

2.5 Factors Contributing to low retention of support employees

University support staff retention is a significant issue, with factors such as job satisfaction, compensation and benefits, work-life balance, and development opportunities all influencing retention rates. Communication, feedback, professional development, and a friendly working environment may increase retention rates. However, research suggests that retention rates at some universities may be low, emphasizing the importance of maintaining focus and effort (Alzaga and Jones, 2018), and (Feng and Hu, 2020).

2.5.1 Competitive Salary and Benefits

Compensation and benefits at universities are critical in reducing turnover and enhancing retention. Competitive salaries and benefits are highly associated with university employees' work satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, decreasing turnover rates (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017) and (Hom, 2020).

Offering competitive remuneration and incentives for activities performed by university staff is one technique for increasing retention via salary and benefits. This ensures that employees are suitably paid for their efforts and reduces the likelihood of personnel being poached by competitor institutions offering more excellent pay (Hom, 2020). Financial incentives like performance-based bonuses or profit-sharing agreements have increased employee motivation and satisfaction, resulting in high retention rates Allen, Bryant, and Vardaman, (2015).

Another retention technique is to provide comprehensive benefits packages that fulfil the various needs of university employees. These include health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, parental leave, and opportunities for professional advancement. These benefits demonstrate that the firm is concerned about its employees' well-being and professional growth, which may increase employee satisfaction and loyalty (Cohen and Golan, 2016).

Non-monetary incentives, such as flexible work arrangements, telecommuting options, and recognition programs, have improved job satisfaction and work-life balance among university workers (Hom, 2020). This, in turn, may lead to decreased stress and more productivity, further increasing retention rates.

Finally, pay and benefits packages reduce staff turnover and increase university retention. Universities may attract and retain top talent by giving competitive salaries, incentives, and comprehensive benefits packages and improving employee satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty.

2.5.2 Professional Career Advancement Opportunities

Career advancement opportunities may effectively reduce support staff turnover by encouraging employees to stay and thrive within the business. Employees who think they have career advancement options are more likely to remain motivated and dedicated, resulting in higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates.

Professional career advancement opportunities are crucial to employee retention. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), providing career development opportunities is the second most significant factor in retaining employees (SHRM, 2017). Similarly, a LinkedIn poll shows that employees emphasize professional career progression while deciding whether to stay with their current employer (LinkedIn, 2019).

Promotional opportunities for university support employees may take numerous kinds. Some examples include training and development programs, mentorship and coaching, job shadowing, and cross-functional work rotations (SHRM, 2017). Furthermore, institutions should create career paths and succession plans to support employees that outline the organization's various functions and opportunities for advancement.

Several studies have found that advancement opportunities positively impact employee retention. In research on healthcare employees, for example, professional development opportunities were positively related to job satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions (Choi and Kim, 2017). Similarly, Kim and Lee (2019) reported in a hotel employee study that professional development opportunities increased employee engagement while decreasing turnover rates.

2.5.3 An enjoyable working environment

A healthy work environment may assist institutions to increase employee retention. According to a study, support employees who work in a friendly atmosphere are happier, more loyal to their organizations, and less likely to resign (Hancock and Freeman, 2021), and (Muzaffar and Maqbool, 2019). Here are some examples of how a pleasant work environment can aid in employee retention:

2.5.3.1 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a multidimensional notion with several aspects involving inner and external variables. The fundamental features of a work, such as task characteristics, amount of autonomy, and possibilities for skill use, are referred to as intrinsic job satisfaction. On the other hand, extrinsic job happiness depends on external factors such as salary, job security, rewards, and interpersonal dynamics among colleagues and superiors (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton, 2012). A positive work environment may increase job satisfaction among support staff by allowing for personal and professional growth, supporting work-life balance, and recognizing employees' achievements (Muzaffar and Maqbool, 2019).

2.5.3.2 Organizational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) define organizational commitment as the degree to which an employee identifies with and is dedicated to the aims of their employing company and is willing to devote effort to accomplishing those objectives. Employees highly committed to their organization are less inclined to partake in job search, encompassing actions such as actively pursuing alternative job opportunities or responding to recruitment endeavours. According to Hom (2020), individuals' loyalty to the organization is inversely related to their likelihood of actively seeking alternative employment opportunities.

A positive work environment may increase support staff commitment by creating a culture that values employees, gives a sense of purpose, and opportunities for involvement and participation (Hancock and Freeman, 2021).

2.5.3.3 Communication and Collaboration

According to Robbins and Judge (2017), communication is transmitting information, ideas, thoughts, and emotions between individuals or groups to attain mutual comprehension and

accomplish a shared objective. The efficacy of communication is contingent upon the active engagement of listening, precise expression of concepts, and the utilization of suitable communication methodologies and mediums. On the other hand, Katzenbach and Smith (1993) defined collaboration as engaging in a joint effort with one or more individuals or groups to attain a shared objective. Collaborative endeavours necessitate the presence of reciprocal esteem, mutual accountability, and a readiness to cooperate towards a unified goal.

A healthy work environment promotes communication and collaboration among support employees, which may contribute to the establishment of trust, stress reduction, and job satisfaction (Hancock and Freeman, 2021).

2.5.3.4 Work-life Balance

The idea of work-life balance, which is highly valued in the area of organizational behaviour, has a significant impact on employee turnover rates. Employees who can balance their job and personal duties well are likely to create a strong feeling of devotion to their firm. According to Allen (2013), establishing a healthy work-life balance helps to generate a sense of organizational support, which leads to higher employee loyalty and lower turnover. The existence of a healthy work-life balance has been proven to have a favourable influence on people's levels of job engagement. Employees that are engaged display better levels of motivation, devotion, and immersion in their job (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). This increased involvement leads to improved work satisfaction and a decreased desire to seek other career possibilities. Organizations that emphasize and offer resources for work-life balance demonstrate their commitment to improving employee well-being. The initiatives mentioned above show that the firm values its workers' well-being outside the job, establishing a positive impression and increasing employee retention (Allen, 2013).

2.5.3.5 Recognition and Rewards

Recognition and rewards in the workplace pertain to acknowledging and appreciating employees' endeavours and accomplishments. These acknowledgments are typically presented as concrete or abstract benefits or incentives which inspire and reinforce desirable behaviours. Yamnill, and Snell, (2017). define recognition as acknowledging and expressing appreciation for employee contributions to organizational goals.

A pleasant work environment may recognize and reward individual accomplishments while increasing job satisfaction and fostering organizational commitment (Hancock and Freeman, 2021).

2.5.3.6 Better Working Conditions

Employees exposed to pleasant working circumstances are less likely to consider leaving their jobs. According to Hom, Tsui, Lee, and Wu (2017), a more positive work environment, including moderate workloads, effective communication, and supportive leadership, reduces workers' intentions to quit their present business. Improving working circumstances has a favourable impact on workers' physical and emotional well-being. According to Cohen and Golan (2016), taking enough breaks, providing ergonomic workplaces, and minimizing exposure to stressful environments correlate to improved health outcomes, lower absence rates, and higher morale.

Reducing absenteeism, increasing employee productivity, and creating a safe and healthy workplace may reduce employee turnover (Wong and Tetrick, 2017). This may be achieved by implementing health and wellness programs, creating ergonomic environments, and adhering to safety requirements.

2.5.4 Providing Opportunities for Training and Development

Training and development are vital to human resource management, improving employees' skills, knowledge, and ability to execute their work obligations efficiently (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright, 2017). According to Armstrong (2017), training refers to the act of providing workers with specific skills and information that are required for them to perform their existing job tasks effectively. On the other hand, development refers to preparing people for future responsibilities and professional growth by providing them with essential skills and information.

According to Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2017), training aims to increase workers' job-related skills and knowledge, while development is oriented toward preparing individuals for future employment roles and responsibilities. According to Armstrong (2017), developing a skilled and well-informed staff via training and development is critical for increasing productivity and corporate success.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Studies were conducted to examine the UKZN's ability to develop and retain qualified academics (Ntuli, 2017), (Khoza, 2017) and (Nene, 2020). However, little attention has been given to the development and retention of support staff. As a result, after accumulating the required experience and qualifications, employees prefer to leave the institution to seek career growth elsewhere. Girardi (2019) discovered that the issue is a lack of defined career paths or senior promotion chances inside the organization, which leads to most qualified support staff becoming accidental administrators or departing. The research evaluated the University of KwaZulu-Natal's support staff career advancement and retention strategy in relation to the university's HR policies and whether the support staff has benefited from those policies.

Staff career advancement is defined by Robbins and Coulter (2017) as a sequential transition from one position to another inside an organization, where each role carries more responsibility and income. Staff career advancement entails improving an employee's talents, knowledge, and tasks within a firm to reach their full potential and contribute more critically to the organization's success. Training and development, work rotation, promotion, and other types of career advancement should be integrated as viable paths for professional growth (Noe, 2017). According to Herzberg (1968), staff career development is the evolution and improvement of an individual's professional duties. The necessity of combining income increases, professional progress, and opportunity for engaging and rewarding responsibilities within the broader framework of career growth is emphasized. On the other hand, Thatchenkery and Srikantia (2017) defined career development as the accumulation of career-related experiences that a person accumulates during their lifetime. According to their research, the previous experiences include increases in employment positions and transitions, skill growth, mentoring, and information gain.

The study by Ali and Ahmed (2021) extended that firms may use staff career advancement to retain and motivate workers while cultivating a more skilled and efficient workforce. Giving opportunities for professional development and progress to workers may raise their engagement and dedication to their jobs, leading to higher job satisfaction and excellent performance (Noe, 2017), (Tavares and Cardoso, 2018).

2.6.1 Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no correlation between the support staff career advancement and staff retention.

The hypothesis implies that no statistically significant relationship exists between the career advancement provided to support staff members within UKZN and their likelihood of remaining with the organization (staff retention). In other words, the hypothesis holds that the ability of support staff members to develop in their careers inside the UKZN has no impact on their decision to remain employees of the institution. This hypothesis will be examined using empirical research methods, such as data analysis, to see if a significant association (or lack thereof) exists between support staff career progression and retention.

Ho2: A significant correlation exists between support staff career advancement and staff retention.

The hypothesis states that a meaningful and statistically significant relationship exists between the opportunities for career advancement provided to support staff members within an organization and their likelihood of remaining with the UKZN. In other words, the hypothesis proposes that the extent to which support staff members may grow in their careers inside the UKZN impacts their decision to remain working for the institution.

The below figure presents a conceptual framework proposed by Holland, Fritzsche, and Powell (1994), which shows a link between career advancement and employee retention.

Figure 2.2: Adapted Conceptual Framework

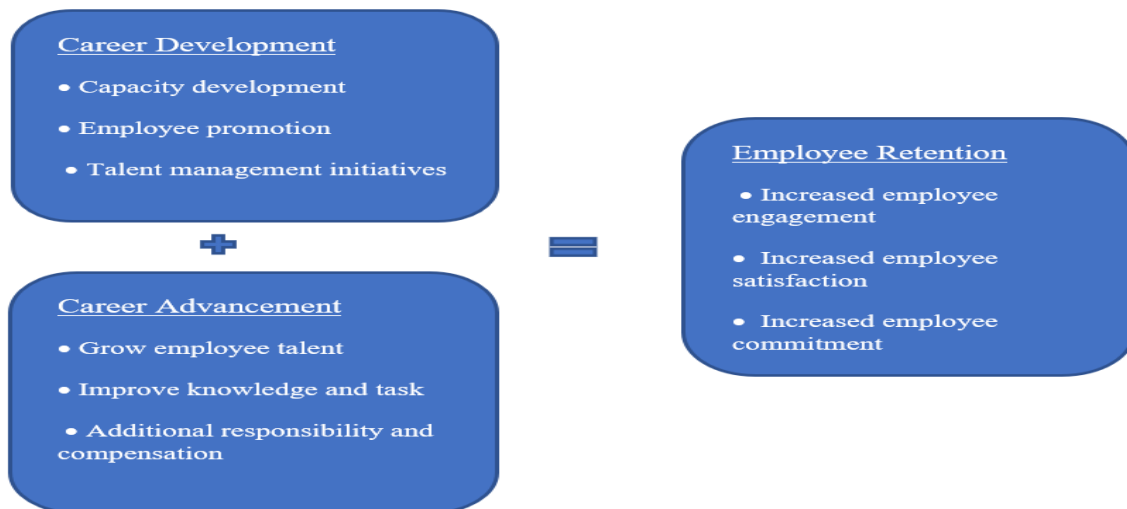


Figure 2.2: Adapted Conceptual framework proposed by Holland, Fritzsche, and Powell (1994)

2.6.2 Capacity Development

Employee capacity development is the process of improving individuals' skills, knowledge, talents, and competencies in order for them to perform better and fulfil their duties more effectively (Noe, 2017). This might include training, seminars, mentoring, coaching, and professional development programs that enable them to adapt to their careers and contribute more effectively to corporate goals.

2.6.3 Employee Promotion

Employee promotion refers to preparing and progressing individuals within a company to higher positions or capacities (Tavares and Cardoso, 2018). It entails identifying and developing the skills, abilities, and experiences required for people to qualify and thrive in higher-level roles.

2.6.4 Talent management

According to Robbins and Coulter (2017), employee talent management efforts are strategic actions that strive to find, recruit, develop, and retain talented employees within a business. These initiatives emphasize maximizing people's potential to promote organizational success

through strategies like talent acquisition, performance management, succession planning, and career development programs.

2.6.5 Employee Talent Growth

Employee talent growth refers to the ongoing development and improvement of an individual's skills, talents, and competencies in a certain area of knowledge or ability (Tavares and Cardoso, 2018). It allows workers to hone and extend their skills through training, education, mentorship, and hands-on experience, aiming to maximize their potential contribution to the organization.

2.6.6 Employee-improved knowledge and tasks

Employee-improved knowledge and tasks refer to the process by which individuals gain new information, skills, and abilities, allowing them to execute their duties more successfully and efficiently (Heineman and Judge, 2009). Training programs, educational opportunities, experience learning, and feedback systems may all contribute to improved knowledge and tasks.

2.6.7 Additional responsibility and compensation

The research on added duty and remuneration displays differing views on the nature of this relationship. On the one hand, proponents of the equitable pay principle say that greater work responsibilities should be accompanied by equal increases in salary to ensure employee fairness and incentive (Adams, 1963). This viewpoint is consistent with expectation theory, which holds that people are motivated to work when they anticipate it will result in desirable outcomes, such as cash benefits (Vroom, 1964).

On the other hand, organizational experts have emphasized the complexity of calculating suitable remuneration adjustments for extra duties. Budget restrictions, market competitiveness, and internal equity concerns significantly impact organizational compensation decisions. Furthermore, the subjective nature of determining the value of extra duties hampers the implementation of uniform remuneration systems (Heineman and Judge, 2009).

2.6.8 Employee engagement and retention

The research on employee engagement emphasizes its importance in retention results. Scholars have offered several theoretical frameworks to explain the link between engagement and retention, including the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). These frameworks show that engaged individuals have better levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and psychological well-being, which increases the chance of retention.

Harter (2002) discovered that engaged workers had lower turnover intentions and were likelier to stay loyal to their businesses. Similarly, Alfes,(2013). meta-analytic evaluations found a strong association between engagement and retention across various organizational contexts and industries.

According to Herzberg (1968), staff career development is the evolution and improvement of an individual's professional duties. The necessity of combining income increases, professional progress, and opportunity for engaging and rewarding responsibilities within the broader framework of career growth is emphasized. On the other hand, Thatchenkery and Srikantia (2017) defined career development as the accumulation of career-related experiences that a person accumulates during their lifetime. According to their research, the previous experiences include increases in employment positions and transitions, skill growth, mentoring, and information gain.

The study by Ali and Ahmed (2021) extended that firms may use staff career advancement to retain and motivate workers while cultivating a more skilled and efficient workforce. Giving opportunities for professional development and progress to workers may raise their engagement and dedication to their jobs, leading to higher job satisfaction and excellent performance (Noe, 2017), (Tavares and Cardoso, 2018).

The literature review offers solid evidence that employee engagement contributes to employee retention. Engaged employees have better job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and loyalty, reducing turnover intentions and increasing retention rates. Furthermore, engagement strategies such as meaningful work, supportive leadership, and growth opportunities have been demonstrated to improve retention.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Introduction and Background

The four theories below provide unique perspectives on staff career advancement and retention. It emphasizes the significance of people being proactive, adaptive, and consistent in their knowledge acquisition to traverse the changing terrain of work effectively. The writers also emphasize the need to invest in one's talents and abilities to increase one's chances of professional success and work happiness while increasing employee retention. The following theoretical frameworks will be examined: Boundaryless career theory, Protean Occupational Theory, Human Capital Theory, and the Two-Factor Theory. Using the two-factor theory in this research will provide a robust scientific basis by serving as a linking framework between support staff career development and retention within the UKZN.

2.7.2 Boundaryless Career Theory

The boundaryless theory, also known as the boundaryless career theory, is a theoretical framework that stresses the value of professional mobility and the capacity to cross traditional job boundaries. According to the theory above, more than conventional career trajectories are needed for individuals. Instead, they must cultivate proficiencies and abilities to demonstrate greater adaptability and flexibility in their professional pursuits (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006).

According to the boundaryless concept, people must actively manage their professional paths and acquire skills and abilities to demonstrate adaptability and flexibility. Individuals have specific qualities, such as flexibility, intercultural competence, and fast learning, which allow them to function well in various circumstances and engage with others from diverse cultural backgrounds Sullivan and Arthur (2006).

The boundaryless approach emphasizes the need to develop a network of relationships to explore new job opportunities and move within the labour market. According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), the network may include mentors, co-workers, and professional associations.

The boundaryless hypothesis contends that, in addition to individual-level concerns, organizational factors play a crucial impact in the development of boundaryless careers.

According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), companies must provide learning, development, and promotion opportunities.

The boundaryless theory is a fundamental conceptual framework that aids in understanding the changing job structure and the necessary competencies and aptitudes for success in today's labour market.

2.7.3 Protean Occupational Theory

According to Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy (2006), research study, the protean hypothesis refers to a vocational concept in which people strive for self-governance, continuous education, and occupational flexibility. The word "protean" may be traced back to Greek mythology, where it was taken from the name of the god Proteus, who was known for his ability to change his shape to fit his circumstances. According to Briscoe and Hall's (2006) study, the protean person can adapt and morph in response to changing employment needs in vocations.

The concept of a protean career has been widely researched and shown to positively influence people's professional growth (Eby, Butts and Lockwood, 2010). According to Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant (1999), individuals who exhibit protean career behaviour are more likely to engage in proactive professional conduct, which includes actively seeking new learning and development opportunities.

The protean theory stresses the need for flexibility, self-directedness, and constant learning in professional development. The initial idea has significant implications for people and businesses navigating the changing demands of the modern labour market.

2.7.4 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory is a theoretical framework highlighting the need to invest in human capital to boost economic growth and development. It is a theoretical construct that focuses on the economic importance of investing in people's education, training, and other types of human capital. According to the idea provided, human capital is a valuable resource that people may get via educational pursuits and practical experience. As Becker proposed in 1964, it is an asset in which enterprises and communities may invest to increase productivity and support economic progress.

The basic idea behind human capital theory is that education and training improve an individual's productivity and earning capacity, increasing economic wealth. Moreover, investments in human capital are made to increase the recipient's productivity, consequently increasing their profits. In this sense, productivity refers to the output produced per input unit (Becker, 1964).

2.7.5 Two-Factor Theory

The Two-Factor Theory, often known as Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, is a well-known organizational behaviour theory developed in the late 1950s. It implies that two elements influence employee motivation and work satisfaction: hygienic issues and motivators. Salary, job security, and working environment are hygiene considerations that must be addressed in the workplace. Motivators, on the other hand, are elements that contribute to work satisfaction and motivation, such as acknowledgment, accomplishment, and personal development. According to the idea, improving hygiene elements will avoid work unhappiness, while the existence of motivators will lead to job satisfaction and motivation.

Figure 2.3 Two-factor theory adapted

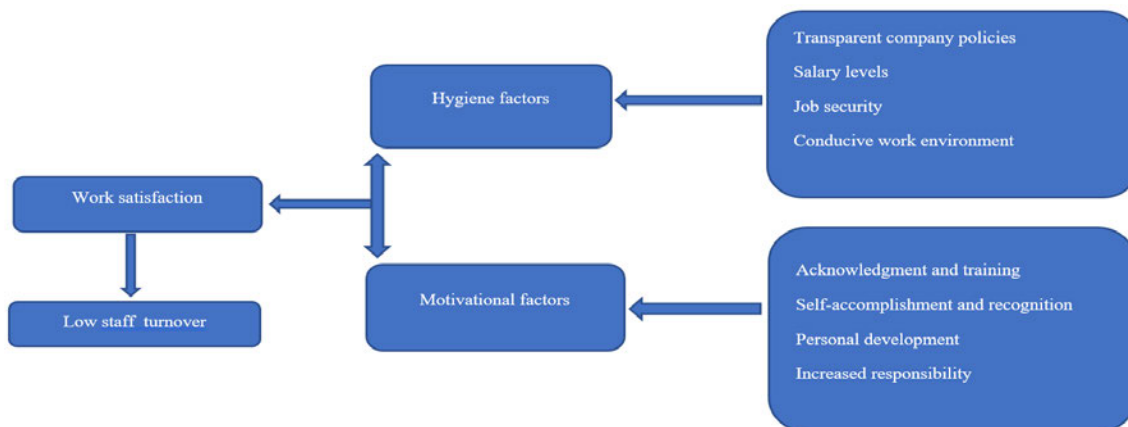


Figure 2.3 Two-factor theory adapted from Christine Lundberg Tourism Management 30 (2009)

Herzberg's thesis has been thoroughly researched and implemented in various organizational environments and is the basis of this research. The study aims to evaluate the UKZN's support staff retention and career advancement strategy by exploring different theories and models that will assist the researcher in understanding the contributors and factors in the topic.

2.7.5.1 Transparent Company Policies

Mone and London (2018) and Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, and Sucharski (2017) assert that establishing transparent company policies is critical to promoting employee satisfaction. Transparent policies create a positive work environment by promoting trust, fairness, employee involvement, effective communication, and perceived organizational support. Organizations that emphasize the importance and dissemination of specific policies tend to foster a sense of appreciation, involvement, and drive among their workforce, resulting in elevated levels of job contentment and overall success.

2.7.5.2 Salary Levels

High pay levels have been shown to improve work performance. Robbins Judge (2019) found a link between work performance and wage satisfaction. According to the data, workers who believe their earnings are equal and competitive are likelier to perform well. Compensation motivates employees, and greater wage levels correlate to improved motivation and work satisfaction. The meta-analysis conducted by Gerhart Milkovich (1992) found that pay levels can significantly increase employee motivation and work satisfaction, leading to better levels of engagement and commitment. Increased salary favourably affects the balance between work and personal life, becoming essential to employee happiness. Allen, French, Dumani and Shockley, (2013) found that higher-income individuals have less work-family conflict and view their work-life balance as more positive. As a result, work satisfaction and general well-being improve.

2.7.5.3 Job Security

Providing job security to employees can mitigate uncertainty by fostering a perception of stability and predictability. De Witte's (2005) study shows elation between job security and reduced job-related stress and anxiety levels among employees. This association is linked to enhanced psychological well-being and increased job satisfaction. The presence of job security within an organization can cultivate a perception of dedication and allegiance among its workforce. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), job security employees tend to cultivate affective commitment, which denotes their emotional bond with the organization. The establishment of an emotional connection between individuals and their work environment has been shown to have a positive impact on job satisfaction and employee retention over an extended period

2.7.5.4 Conducive Work Environment

The issue of employee well-being is of particular relevance. The provision of a supportive work environment has a favourable effect on employee well-being. According to Amabile and Kramer's (2011) study, businesses that promote employee well-being have a beneficial influence on job satisfaction and workers' mental and physical health. According to Dutton and Ragins (2017) study, cultivating trust, respect, and collaboration in the workplace favourably influences employee happiness and retention.

Workplace motivation variables include an opportunity for advancement, recognition, and autonomy. Assisting workers in meeting their psychological demands for competence, autonomy, and relatedness may increase intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and retention rates.

2.7.5.5 Acknowledgement and Training

Studies have shown that recognizing and appreciating workers significantly influences their career advancement and retention within a business. Employees who believe their efforts are recognized and appreciated, have better levels of work satisfaction and organizational commitment, (Noe, 2017). This shows that providing acknowledgment and appreciation is critical to encouraging staff retention.

Furthermore, providing acknowledgment and appreciation is a component of an employee's professional growth. Recognizing an employee's efforts may foster a feeling of value and thankfulness, increasing self-assurance and self-reliance. Positive reinforcement motivates people to continue their professional growth and actively explore new opportunities for job advancement. According to Mone and London (2018) acknowledgment and recognition may help employees improve and succeed by establishing a supportive atmosphere.

2.7.5.6 Self-accomplishment and Recognition

Significant elements such as self-accomplishment and recognition may impact employee performance and retention. Work seen as necessary and rewarding, leading to a feeling of self-accomplishment, has been shown to improve employee performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, recognition for their accomplishments enhances workers' motivation and loyalty to the firm, resulting in a better likelihood of employee retention. Grant Parker (2020) established the importance of self-accomplishment in improving employee performance.

According to the study, workers who feel successful and happy in their jobs are likelier to engage in proactive activities, demonstrate higher motivation, and achieve better performance results.

On the other hand, acknowledging one's efforts has been identified as critical in increasing staff productivity and retaining employee loyalty to the firm. Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2017) researched the impact of employee appreciation on workers' intentions to quit their employment. According to the study's findings, workers who received continuous acknowledgment for their performance had lower turnover intentions, indicating that recognition plays a role in employee retention.

2.7.5.7 Personal Development

Staff retention is a significant challenge for firms seeking to maintain a stable and engaged workforce. Personal development efforts are increasingly acknowledged as a strategic way to mitigate turnover concerns successfully. A variety of academic studies have been done to investigate the relationship between personal growth and employee retention. Inyang and Ajang (2016) discovered a favourable association between the availability of personal development chances and reduced employees' willingness to quit their current jobs. Similarly, Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, and Bravo (2017) discovered that firms offering comprehensive personal development programs have higher levels of employee engagement and lower turnover rates.

2.7.5.8 Increased responsibility

One plausible approach for augmenting staff retention entails offering employees greater responsibility and avenues for professional development within their respective positions. Numerous studies have consistently indicated a positive correlation between heightened levels of responsibility and the retention of staff members. An empirical investigation by Allen, Bryant, and Vardaman (2019) revealed a positive association between career progression through heightened job responsibilities and enhanced organizational commitment among employees. In a study conducted by Sun, Aryee, and Law (2017), a noteworthy association was discovered between the availability of skill development opportunities and decreased employees' intentions to leave their current organization. Professional growth and skill development are commonly linked to an escalation in responsibility. According to Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2017), employees who are presented

with novel responsibilities are afforded the chance to augment their repertoire of skills, enrich their level of expertise, and widen their scope of knowledge. The ongoing process of learning and enhancing skills plays a significant role in fostering a sense of advancement and growth, consequently bolstering employees' commitment to their positions and the organization.

2.8 Support staff retention and career advancement in the South African University's Context

Support staff retention and promotion are critical challenges at South African institutions because they impact service quality and personnel development (Mone, 2018) and (Eacott, 2019). Administrative, technical, and infrastructural support personnel are essential to the smooth operation of institutions. Support staff retention refers to an organization's ability to keep its workers. On the other hand, career advancement relates to employees' ability to advance their professional paths within the organization's limits.

Retention and advancement of support workers have emerged as essential concerns in South African institutions, with complex ramifications for organizational stability and performance. These issues are integrated into a larger socioeconomic and organizational environment, necessitating academic attention and strategic interventions to guarantee long-term human resource management practices (Bagraim, Nkomo, and Maseko, 2013) and (Chitakunye and Coetzee, 2018).

A significant factor influencing the retention and promotion of support personnel in South African institutions is a need for recognition and aid for their efforts. According to Chitakunye and Coetzee (2018), support personnel in South African institutions endure emotions of devaluation and disfavour, resulting in a lack of motivation and job happiness. The authors propose that universities acknowledge and approve the duties and contributions of their support staff members to the organization.

The availability of training and development opportunities is a significant factor in promoting staff retention and career advancement in South African institutions. According to Bunting and Cloete (2013), many support staff personnel in South African educational institutions are denied the opportunity to receive training and development, limiting their capacity to improve their competencies and advance their professional trajectories. The authors' point is that institutions should provide more opportunities for staff training and professional growth.

In response to these issues, South African organizations are implementing various efforts to improve the retention and development of support employees. The University of Cape Town (UCT) has designed a program to support staff professional development, providing training and development opportunities (UCT, 2017). Similarly, the University of Pretoria (UP) formed a career pathing program for support staff members to provide them with a well-defined professional trajectory (UP,2016).

Staff retention and career progression are critical challenges for South African universities. Insufficient support and recognition and adequate training and development opportunities impact employee retention and career advancement.

2.9 Support Staff Retention and Career Advancement in the UKZN Context

This research examines the University of UKZN's support staff retention and career advancement strategy. Staff retention and progression must be prioritized for efficient human resource management in institutions. The UKZN has implemented several initiatives to improve the retention and advancement of all its employees, including the support staff.

The UKZN has developed different policies and programs to assist its employees in training and development opportunities. The UKZN Staff Development Program focuses on leadership, communication, and project management abilities (UKZN,2022). The program aims to promote the development of employees' competencies and knowledge, allowing them to improve their performance and advance in their respective job responsibilities.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal has developed a structured career trajectory framework for supporting employees that gives a clear path for professional development and promotion (UKZN, 2022). The framework defines the many occupational categories supported workers cover and the skills required for advancement within each category. The framework is a tool that assists workers in their career development by making it easier to identify the essential skills and knowledge to proceed to the next level.

Furthermore, the UKZN has implemented a performance management system that consistently evaluates support staff performance and identifies opportunities for improvement (UKZN, 2022). This method makes it easier to analyse the strengths and shortcomings of support staff and set targets for development. Furthermore, the performance management system correlates

with career advancement prospects, as it allows support personnel to use feedback to improve their competencies and expertise, facilitating their professional growth.

The UKZN has adopted several retention and advancement programs for its support employees. The strategies above include professional development and learning provisions, a planned path for career promotion, and a process for assessing and improving work performance. These strategies enabled the university to retain skilled and devoted support employees, allowing it to provide better services to its stakeholders.

This research emphasizes the human resource policies put in place at the UKZN to maintain and promote employees. The UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy, Remuneration Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Tuition Remission Policy, Private Ruminant Policy, and Staff Development Plan are discussed in this context.

2.9.1 Integrated Talent Management Policy

The UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy (Ref No: CO/04/0512/11) was aimed at attracting, nurturing, and retaining a diverse and skilled workforce by providing opportunities for professional growth and advancement. The policy creates a framework for identifying and fostering talent inside the institution, aligning personal goals with the University's larger goals, and ensuring unbiased and transparent career advancement processes.

Employee retention may be increased by identifying and developing high-potential workers and providing advancement opportunities such as training, mentorship, and coaching. This increases their value to the academic institution and their chances of remaining affiliated with the organization.

The policy includes a performance management structure that provides employees with frequent performance evaluations and feedback. According to the policy, employees understand their duties and responsibilities, get recognition for their efforts, and have well-defined career growth objectives.

The institution's career planning and development framework policy makes it easier for workers to identify their professional goals and ambitions and create a career path. Employee engagement and motivation may be maintained by giving them a clear purpose. The approach includes a succession planning process that identifies possible successors and provides

developing opportunities to ensure the continuation of critical jobs. This technique ensures that the company is prepared to manage future developments and that its personnel understand the professional development opportunities available to them.

The UKZN's Integrated Talent Management Policy strives to promote an environment that allows personnel to enhance their competencies and capacities while providing possibilities for career advancement within the institution (UKZN, 2011).

2.9.2 Remuneration Policy

The Remuneration Policy (Ref No: HRE/08/011/CO), which took effect on 01 January 2012, allows the university to maintain employee engagement by fairly and justly compensating workers for their contributions to achieving its strategic objectives. The institution uses the policy to honour staff who have shown excellent achievement in line with the performance management framework. Adopting this strategy may allow the institution to improve its competitiveness in attracting and retaining top talent.

2.9.3 Recruitment and Selection Policy

The UKZN has policies to ensure the university attracts, develops, and retains high-quality employees. The Recruitment and Selection Policy CO/04/2502/05 was enacted on 01 January 2012. The goal of this policy is to regulate and provide clear guidelines based on best HR practices so that the University can recruit and select staff of the highest quality to meet operational needs and achieve strategic objectives, as well as to ensure opportunities for career advancement for existing staff to accomplish the goals of employment equity and academic excellence.

2.9.4 Tuition Remission Policy

The University of KwaZulu-Natal has a program that provides financial assistance to its employees who want to extend their studies at any of South Africa's academic institutions. The Tuition Remission Policy (Ref No: CO/04/1710/08), effective from March 2012, aimed at improving employee performance and productivity while fostering career advancement by allowing employee enrolment in job-relevant credentials. Furthermore, as stated in the UKZN remission policy, the policy was also designed to facilitate the enrolment of staff dependents in any university programs in South Africa, and it forms part of employee benefits.

2.9.5 Private Work Remuneration (PWR) Policy

The UKZN has implemented a Private Work Remuneration (PWR) Policy, identified as CO/01/1009/12, which came into effect in January 2013. This policy aims to enable University staff to offer their professional services to external individuals and organizations for a fee. This policy seeks to facilitate the continuous improvement and development of staff members' knowledge and skills in their respective fields, ultimately benefiting the employees and the university by enhancing their expertise and generating additional income.

2.9.6 Employee Development Programme

The Staff Development Programme (SDP) (2021) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal is designed to provide workers with opportunities to expand their abilities and knowledge, advance their careers, and improve the quality of their output. The SDP is open to all UKZN employees, including academic, administrative, and support staff.

The program offers a wide range of courses, seminars, and other opportunities for professional development in areas such as leadership, communication, project management, financial management, and information technology. The methods above are available in various delivery modes, including virtual, face-to-face, and hybrid education.

In addition to attending seminars and lectures, the SDP encourages the formation of mentoring and coaching relationships between those wishing to improve their skills and knowledge and their more seasoned counterparts. Furthermore, the program includes various resources and tools to enhance staff professional development. A competence framework, a learning management system, and a staff development magazine are among them.

Employees must engage in self-assessment to define their developmental needs and goals to participate in the SDP. Individuals may choose courses and seminars that match their professional development goals and are funded through study fee remission.

2.9 Conclusion

Academic institutions in South Africa and throughout the African continent increasingly recognize the need to invest in their support staff and give opportunities for promotion. Prioritization of growth, employee retention, and career development aims to build a positive working environment and retain great individuals. This entails committing financial resources

to educational activities, making opportunities for professional advancement available, and creating separate career paths. Furthermore, many academic institutions are working to improve labour conditions and compensation for auxiliary personnel. Implementing such programs benefits not just support employees but also the university's overall performance by cultivating a competent and motivated workforce. The success of the support personnel is inextricably related to the institution's success as a whole. However, there is still a need to ensure that support staff have equal access to advancement opportunities and recognition and compensation for their achievements.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Support employees are essential to the functioning of the world's universities, notably in South Africa. They provide critical administrative and logistical support, ensuring the institution's teaching and research missions are met. The support staff is essential to effectively operating academic departments, research groups, and other administrative tasks. They contribute significantly to effective governance at South African institutions by helping decision-making processes and ensuring policy and regulatory compliance.

The previous chapter explored the literature of earlier studies regarding university support staff retention and career advancement. The literature highlighted the role and importance of building reliable and dedicated support staff by assisting them in developing and progressing in their careers. Different theories were examined to establish the conceptual framework for the study. The measures the University of KwaZulu-Natal implemented to ensure that seasoned and well-experienced support employees are retained were discussed.

The current chapter focuses on the researcher's study methodology and research techniques. The chapter evaluates the investigation's aims in hindsight and elaborates on the participation and location of the research activity. The discussion includes a thorough explanation of the study methodology and design and a comparative evaluation of sample methodologies. The investigator described the methods used to select the sample for the study to ensure that the respondents were qualified to provide the necessary data to answer the research question. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the methodology for developing the data collection tools. Finally, the researcher discusses the data analysis techniques used in the study's results analysis.

3.2 Research Aim

The support staff at the UKZN makes up a more significant portion of its workforce. This research evaluates the efficacy of the Integrated Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies at the UKZN in promoting retention and career advancement among support staff. It aims to scrutinize the support staff retention strategy at UKZN, investigate the

contribution of support staff line managers, division heads, and HR in facilitating career development, and appraise the implementation of the staff development plan to enhance the professional growth and career advancement of support staff.

3.3 Location and Participation in The Study

The research was carried out across the UKZN's five campuses: Edgewood, Howard College, Pietermaritzburg, Nelson Mandela Medical School, and Westville, emphasizing support personnel. The UKZN employed 3444 support staff in 2023, down from 3923 in 2022 and 4034 in 2021. These numbers include employees on fixed-term contracts and permanent support staff. Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary, with no monetary benefits for both the researcher and the participants. The study was purely for academic purposes.

3.4 Research Design and Methodology

Research methodology refers to the procedures or methods used to locate, select, process, and analyse material relevant to a study topic (Creswell, 2018). It enables the reader to assess a study's validity and dependability (Kaya, 2013). Perreault (2011) defined the research design as the overall technique used to rationally and cohesively integrate numerous study components to ensure that it adequately answers the research questions. This means that research design is a plan or set of procedures for gathering data, analysing it, and presenting the results in a way that meets the study's objectives.

The research was conducted through a literature study and empirical data collection on the UKZN's support staff career advancement and retention strategy. Secondary data from books, journal articles, the internet, annual reports, and other institutional papers were used to construct the study's theoretical and contextual framework. The researcher used the UKZN notice to distribute questionnaire links to participants. The questionnaire comprised 5 primary themes, each with 3 to 6 clarity questions. The questions were formulated as closed-ended Likert scale questionnaires, and Google Forms were used to design a questionnaire. The participants were given three weeks to complete the questionnaire. The link was posted daily on the UKZN staff notice for three weeks to increase the response rate. The researcher was prohibited from contacting participants using staff emails or any direct contact to maintain the anonymity of participants. Participation in the survey was voluntary and entirely for academic purposes.

After reaching the targeted number of participants, the questionnaire link was deactivated to take responses. The data were reviewed and compared to secondary and primary data to draw conclusions and make recommendations. To protect the data collected, Microsoft one-drive, which is password protected, was used to store the data.

3.5 Research Philosophy

Ontological assumptions are a person's beliefs about the underlying nature of reality and the things that exist within it. Epistemological assumptions are a person's beliefs about obtaining knowledge and the scope of what may be grasped. The interdependence of these two assumptions significantly impacts how people research and develops understanding.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), realism is an ontological premise claiming a reality beyond our experiences and observations. In contrast, the theoretical framework of social constructivism asserts that the social processes of human interaction and language affect the nature of reality, as described by Berger et al., (1966) in their foundational work. Relativism is an extra ontological premise that holds that there is no objective reality and that all knowledge is subjective and contextual (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Epistemological presuppositions may vary greatly, with positivism being one of the more noticeable paradigms. The positivist philosophical approach is based on the belief that knowledge may be gained via scientific processes and empirical observation (Bryman, 2016). Conversely, the interpretative paradigm holds that knowledge is subjective and inseparable from the knower (Schwandt, 2015).

The study was influenced by ontological philosophy, which aimed at comprehending human behaviour or experience based on a specific observation, as indicated above, to assess the effectiveness of UKZN's support staff retention and career advancement strategy by evaluating the efficacy of the Integrated Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies in promoting career advancement, and retention strategy of support staff.

3.6 Research Strategy

The research strategy, specific research objectives, and data-gathering procedures influence the study's research approach. According to Creswell (2018), quantitative research collects and

analyses numerical data. It can spot trends and averages, make forecasts, verify causal linkages, and extrapolate results to larger groups.

Unlike qualitative research, quantitative research involves systematically collecting and analysing numerical data to test hypotheses, discover relationships, and make generalizable conclusions. This research used statistical tools to examine data and develop conclusions about a more significant population based on a smaller representative sample. According to Creswell (2018), quantitative research is a rigorous, objective, and disciplined technique for gathering information about the world.

Mixed-methods research is a research technique that combines qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to create complete knowledge of a study topic. According to Creswell (2018), mixed-methods research incorporates qualitative and quantitative research procedures.

The study aimed to understand how the UKZN has applied staff development policies such as Integrated Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies to support staff turnover and career advancement among support staff. The data was collected from a large group of support staff to increase the response rate and population representation. The results were extrapolated to the entire population of support staff employed by the UKZN.

The researcher chose quantitative research since it is frequently supported to represent a bigger group. It made it simple to extrapolate research findings to a larger population to make conclusions. Because the quantitative research approach is controlled and rigorous, it enables study replication and verification. It was convenient and practical. It enabled variable exact measurement and quantification, creating causal relationships between variables.

3.6.1 Surveys

According to Creswell (2018), surveys are systematic questionnaires that provide a quantitative or numeric portrayal of trends, attitudes, and viewpoints for a large sample. The study issued questionnaires to collect data. The Likert scale closed-ended questionnaires link was shared with participants through the UKZN staff notice. The questionnaire was formulated to address the research questions and achieve the objectives.

3.6.2 Descriptive Research

A descriptive study is a research approach that attempts to represent the characteristics of specific phenomena or populations. The process comprises collecting data using various methods such as surveys, interviews, and observations and then organizing and synthesizing the data to offer a comprehensive picture of the study topic (Creswell, 2018).

Descriptive research is helpful because it provides vital insights into the features of specific phenomena or groups. It allows the researcher to discover regularities, trends, and linkages that may not be readily apparent by describing a group's or event's qualities. Creswell (2018) claims that this may be a valuable tool for easing decision-making processes and guiding following research activities. Compared to other research methods, descriptive research is a cost-effective and time-efficient study approach. It allowed the researcher to collect data using questionnaires sent to many people simultaneously.

3.7 Population and Sampling

3.7.1 population

A study population is a well-defined group of individuals or things with similar characteristics (Creswell, 2018). On the other hand, Polit and Beck (2017) define the study population as the entire set of individuals or objects to which the researcher intends to apply the study results. To ensure the study's external validity, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria for the group under examination must be established, and the sample must represent the population.

The defined study population is a group of persons or things with common traits and is the focus of analysis to draw conclusions or inferences about a particular occurrence. The study population is an essential component of the research technique because it impacts how far the results may be extended to the general population.

The population for the study was the support employees at all levels at the UKZN five campuses. The UKZN Institutional Planning headcount report 2023 shows 3444 support employees at the UKZN. This includes permanent and fixed-term employees. The UKZN categorizes the support staff as top management, senior management, professionally qualified staff, junior management, semi-skilled and discretionary, and unskilled and defined decision staff (UKZN, 2021).

The study examined employees at various levels of the organizational hierarchy, including top management, senior management, professionally qualified individuals, junior management, semi-skilled workers, and discretionary employees, across all five campuses of UKZN. The campuses encompassed within the institution are Howard College, Medical School, Pietermaritzburg, Westville, and Edgewood. Typically, unskilled employees do not have access to a laptop and internet connectivity, which is required to access the questionnaire link. Consequently, they were precluded from participating in the survey. The questionnaire was posted on the UKZN staff notice, granting access to all employees who possessed a computer with internet connectivity and a UKZN email account. The survey was conducted voluntarily, with three weeks duration to ensure the attainment of the desired number of participants. Once the predetermined number of participants was reached, the survey was closed and removed from the staff notice.

Table 3.1 UKZN Support Staff Headcount Table 2023

Perm/Temp/Contr	AgeGroup	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	20 - 25	31	35	17	13	6	0	28
	26 - 30	316	319	264	207	178	124	228
	41 - 45	1190	1285	1300	1236	1226	1153	1025
	41 - 45	631	670	656	651	610	603	582
	46 - 50	667	668	656	643	623	631	571
	51 - 55	561	579	600	595	623	612	513
	56 - 60	403	448	465	472	480	495	397
	60 +	96	140	187	247	288	305	100
Total		3895	4144	4145	4064	4034	3923	3444
Employees left UKZN			-249	-1	81	30	111	479
Turnover rate			-6%	0%	2%	1%	3%	12%

Table 3.1: Adapted from UKZN Institutional Planning Headcount Data June 2023.

The table above presents the number of support staff at the UKZN as published in the Institutional Planning headcount at the UKZN in June 2023. The statistics present the number of employees per age group and the number of employees who left the university.

3.7.2 Sampling

Voluntary sampling, or self-selection sampling, is a non-probability sampling strategy used in research to gather data from people who choose to participate in a study based on their preferences and availability (Neuman, 2019). This technique does not use a random procedure

to choose individuals from a larger population. Instead, individuals select their readiness to engage independently, frequently in response to an open invitation or a call for volunteers.

The researcher collected data by voluntary sampling since it is easy and cost-efficient. This was consistent with the gatekeeper's letter, which banned direct interaction with participants through staff emails to safeguard participant identity. The survey questionnaire was posted on general staff notice, where all UKZN employees in all five campuses had access, provided that they had access to a computer with internet connectivity and UKZN staff email. The survey was posted for three weeks. Participants who were interested in participating in the study completed the survey. The survey was closed after receiving the correct number of participants.

While voluntary sampling offers benefits in terms of convenience and cost-effectiveness, it also has the potential for bias. Individuals who choose to participate may have different qualities or motives than those who choose not to engage, resulting in a non-representative sample and impacting the generalizability of results to the larger community (Babbie, 2016). To avoid any possible prejudice, the questionnaire was designed to provide equal possibilities to those who replied positively and those who reacted negatively. The questionnaire was also accessible to all employees with computer access, internet connection, and the UKZN staff email. All employees were given an equal opportunity to participate in the survey.

3.7.3 Sample Size Selection

Determining an adequate sample size was an integral part of the research technique since it can considerably impact the reliability and accuracy of study results. Choosing the best sample size required careful study and balancing of statistical parameters, practical constraints, and research goals. According to Bougie (2010) the appropriate sample size must be between 30 and 500 participants to achieve the most reliable results.

The study goals and the target population determined the sample size. As a result, it was critical for the researcher to carefully consider the research question, study design, statistical considerations, and practical constraints when determining the appropriate sample size.

The formula introduced by Israel (1992) was considered appropriate for the sample selection of the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$= 3444 / (1 + (3444 \times (0,05) \times (0,05))) = 358$$

Where n = sample size, N= population, e = level of precision

3.8 Data Collection and Instrument

Lyons (1978) defined data collection as systematically gathering and measuring information on variables of interest to answer specific research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. Collecting data is essential because it allows the researcher to include objectivity, accuracy, generalizability, replicability, and comparability. The advantages above make quantitative research effective for generating innovative insights and interpreting phenomena across several fields.

The data collection involves using data collection instruments such as interviews, observations, and questionnaires. For quantitative research, questionnaires are the appropriate tool (Brigitte, 2017). The data was collected using the questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed the study questions regarding the UKZN's retention and career advancement strategy focusing on support staff. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first sections looked at the general questions for statistical purposes, such as gender, ethnic group, age, number of dependents, campus name, nature of employment, and years of service. The second part consisted of a section to address the level of education of support staff, whether they are currently studying, and how they finance their studies if they are learning. The last part consisted of three questions looking at the training of support staff as provisioned in the Integrated Talent Management Policy, how the UKZN support staff benefit from the implementation of the Integrated Talent Management Policy since the UKZN adopted it, and how the has UKZN implemented the policy to retain the support staff.

The questionnaire was structured in a Likert scale using google forms. The link was sent to support staff using the UKZN staff notice, the communication platform available to all UKZN employees with computer and internet access. The notice was made available for three weeks to allow a chance for all support staff who want to participate in the study.

3.8.1 Consent and Declaration

Obtaining authorization for data collection refers to getting unambiguous and knowing agreement from persons to collect, manage, and use their personal information. According to the Information Commissioner's Office (2020), the procedure provides persons with detailed and transparent information about the purpose, characteristics, and scope of the data collection and any potential risks or results associated with obtaining or withholding permission. Worldwide, consent is a vital part of data protection and privacy regulation. Its relevance stems from its potential to enable people to control their data and make informed decisions about its use.

The researcher devised the declaration and consent form in a format that the Research Ethics office authorized. The primary objective of this form was to furnish the participants with comprehensive information regarding the researcher, as well as the purpose and goals of the research. The researcher's personal and contact information and those of the UKZN research were furnished to afford the participants unambiguous means of communication, should the need arise.

The participants were given a consent form and the questionnaires, which they were required to complete. The purpose of the consent form was to obtain written consent from the participants for the researcher to access and utilize their data solely for the specific research being conducted. The consent form provided a clear explanation of the participant's right to either participate or decline participation.

3.9 Data Analysis

For the quantitative analysis of the investigation, descriptive statistics were used. Descriptive statistics, which include frequency distribution tables and percentages, are more well-known and serve as a basis for more advanced procedures such as inferential statistical tools (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2016). Frequency distribution tables are an excellent approach to presenting essential facts to readers since they are simple and straightforward. The replies to each issue were grouped under each scale to indicate the range of potential answers. The data was structured as graphs and tables for ease of use. Different categories made use of both percentages and numerical numbers.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of the Study

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency a research instrument shows over time (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). This implies that the research instrument used should possess the ability to provide consistent outcomes when utilized in various investigations and throughout diverse circumstances. The researcher used the first ten results obtained in the first week to test the consistency between the results using Cohen's kappa Coefficient (Brown, Williams, and Garcia, 2022). With a high consistency of 1 and no consistency at -1, the coefficient of 0.77 was deemed reliable. The results were included in the total results.

On the contrary, validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately assesses what it is intended to examine, as stated by Sekaran and Bougie (2013). The researcher confirmed the validity of the study instrument by doing factor analysis on all the questions included in the questionnaires. The results were consistent throughout the test.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research technique and design, the study's environment, participants, characteristics, and procedures for choosing a representative sample. This chapter also covers data-gathering methods and the development of data-collection equipment. Furthermore, this chapter describes the researcher's techniques for analysing the survey and interview data. The following chapter will discuss the study's findings and their analysis.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

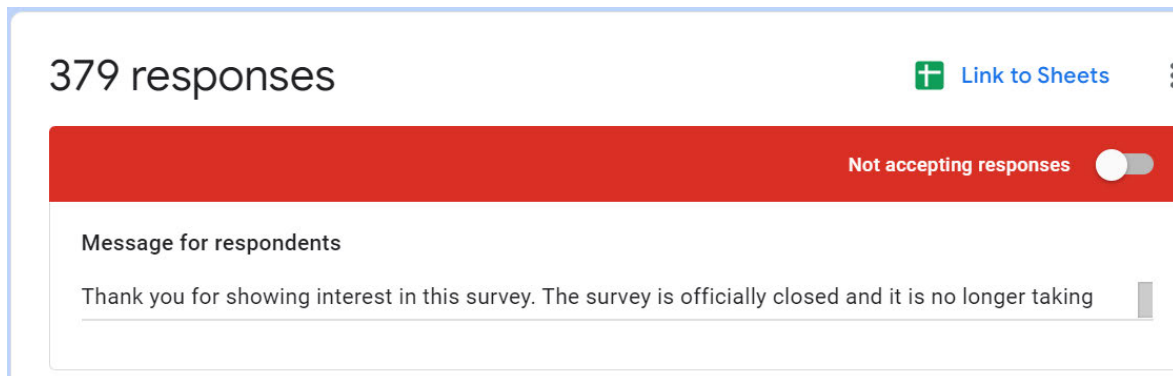
The preceding chapter examined the research method and design, the setting of the study, participants, characteristics, and processes for selecting a representative sample. It also described data collecting methodologies and the advancement of data collection technology. It finished by explaining the researcher's processes for data analysis. 358 support personnel from five UKZN campuses were included in the research. The survey was administered to senior management, junior management, semi-skilled, and discretionary employees with access to a computer or mobile phone with an internet connection and UKZN staff email. The survey was administered through Google Forms on a Likert scale. It was displayed on the UKZN staff noticeboard for three weeks. To meet the study topics and goals, the questionnaire consisted of 5 primary themes, each with 3 to 6 clarity questions.

After all ethical considerations were considered, the questionnaire was put on the UKZN employee notice for three weeks. The researcher was not allowed to contact participants through staff email. As a result, participation in the research was completely optional and anonymous. There were 379 answers; 361 (95,5%) consented to participate, and 18 (4,75%) did not wish or consent to participate. After obtaining the required number of participants, the survey was closed and removed from the staff notice. The results are presented below:

4.2 Presentation of Results

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to give informed consent to participate in the study. A total of 379 responses were received. Of the 379 responses received, 361 (95%) gave consent to participate, 17 (4,49%) chose not to participate, and 1 (0,51%) participated but did not consent to participate and will be conceded as an outlier.

Figure 4.1. The survey informed consent



Do you agree to participate?

378 responses

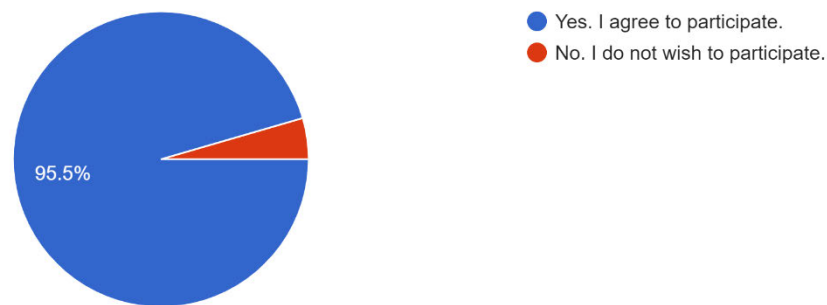


Figure 4.1. The survey informed consent to participate in the study.

The second section of the survey was designed for statistical reasons. Participants were asked to identify their gender. Either female or male, or they opted not to reveal. The gender distribution data are shown in Figure 4.2. Participants were 40.2% male, 47.6% female, and 12.2% decided not to disclose. The findings demonstrate a gender balance in participation.

Figure 4.2 Gender Distribution of Participants

2.1 Gender
361 responses

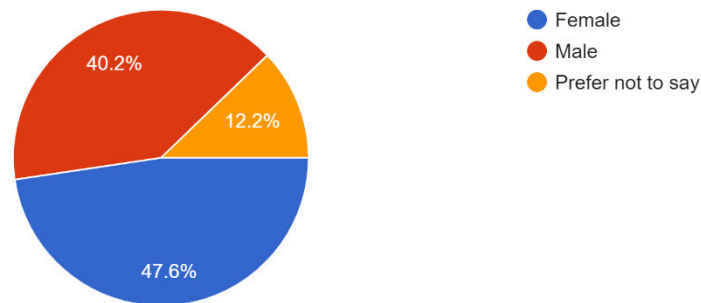


Figure 4.2 The gender distribution of participants (Sample Google Forms).

Figure 4.3 presents the age distribution of the participants. 11% of participants were between the ages of 20-30. 45,9% were between the age of 31-40. 29% were between the age of 41-50, 9,1% were between the ages of 51-60, and 5% were over 60. This aligns with the UKZN Institution Planning data, with 70% of UKZN employees aged 30 to 50.

The age distribution of the participants is shown in Figure 4.3. 11% of those who took part were between 20 and 30. 45.9% of those polled were between the ages of 31 and 40. 29% were between the ages of 41 and 50, 9.1% were between the ages of 51 and 60, and 5% were beyond 60. According to UKZN Institution Planning statistics, 70% of UKZN workers are between 30 and 50.

Figure 4.3 Age Distribution

2.2 What is your age group
361 responses

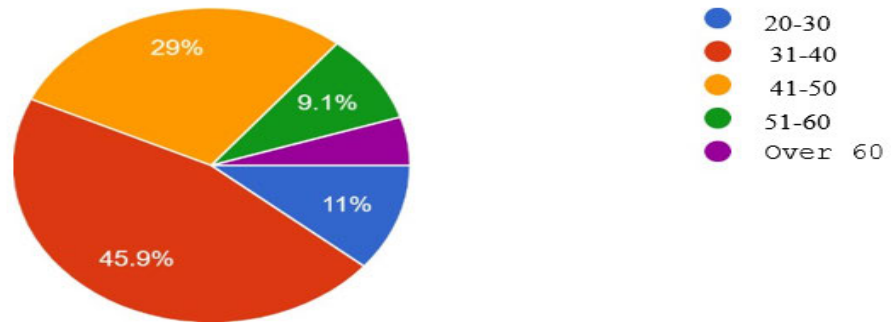


Figure 4.3 The age distribution of participants (Google Forms)

Figure 4.4 depicts the distribution of participants by campus. Edgewood had 10% of the participants, Westville had 39.6%, Medical School had 4.2%, Howard College had 19.7%, and Pietermaritzburg had 23.3%.

Figure 4.4 Distribution of Participants Per Campus

2.3 Which UKZN campus are you working at?
361 responses

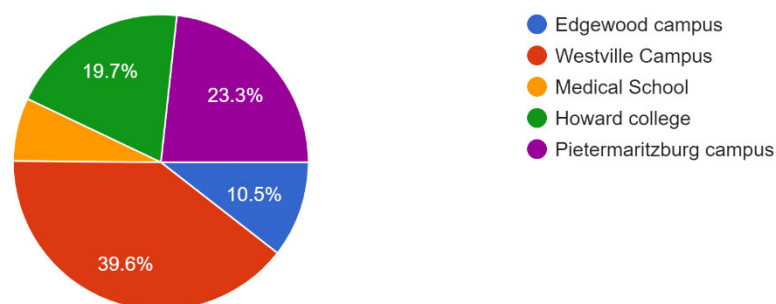


Figure 4.4 presents the distribution of participants per campus (Google Forms).

Figure 4.5 depicts the distribution of employment connections based on their kind. Permanent staff members provided 90.6% of the replies. Employees on fixed-term contracts accounted for less than 9,4% of the total.

Figure 4.5 Distribution of Employees According To Employment Contract

2.4 Nature of employment?

361 responses

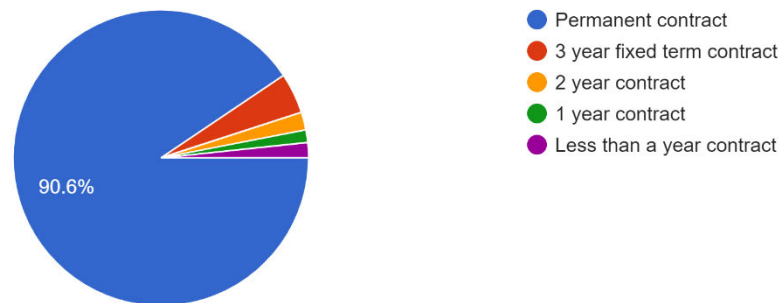


Figure 4.5 presents the distribution as per the nature of the employment contract (Google Forms).

Figure 4.6: A presentation of the participant's years of service. Employees with more than 6 years of service to the UKZN accounted for 38.9% of the total. Employees with more than 5 years of service accounted for 17.2%. Employees with more than four years of service accounted for 20% of the total. Those with more than three years of service accounted for 14.2%, while those with one to two years of service accounted for slightly under 10%.

Figure 4.6 Participants' Years of Service

2.5 Number of years of service?

360 responses

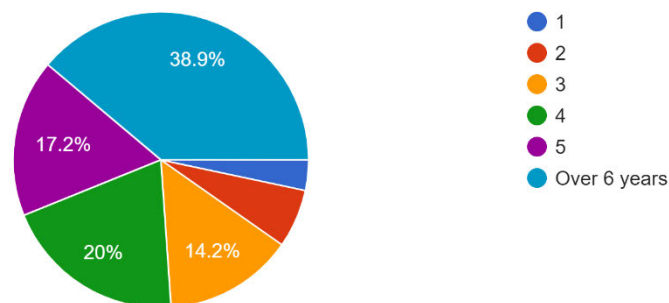


Figure 4.6 Presentation of participants' number of years of service (Google Forms)

Figure 4.7 presents the position held by the participants. 23,5% of participants came from support staff in administration positions. 33,1% of participants were accounting officers. 8,8% of participants came from accountants, and the balance was from managers, supervisors, and general employees.

Figure 4.7 Participants Positions

2.6 Position held?
361 responses

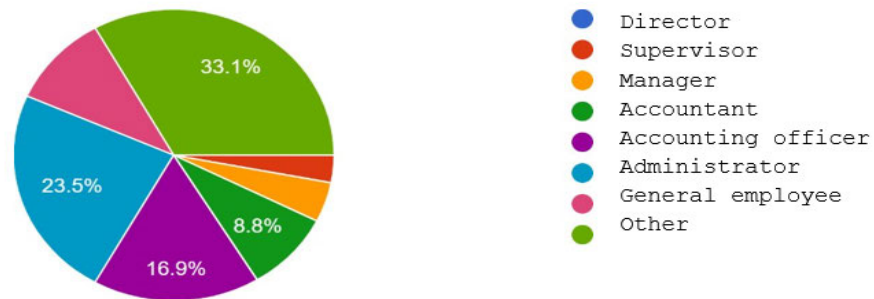


Figure 4.7 presents the position held by the participants (Google Forms)

Section three of the survey inquired about the education level of the support employees. Education levels range from matriculation through Ph.D. It is expanded by considering the support staff's enthusiasm in pursuing their education and their source of funding if they are studying.

Figure 4.8 depicts the distribution of participants' educational levels. 24,9% of the support employees polled had an honours degree. 33,1% have completed their first year in college. National diplomas are held by 23,8% of the population. A master's degree is held by 10,2% of the support employees polled. 2,8% have a Ph.D., while 5,2% of support employees have a matric or post-matric diploma.

Figure 4.8 Distribution of Participants' Level of Education

3.1 What qualifications do you have?
361 responses

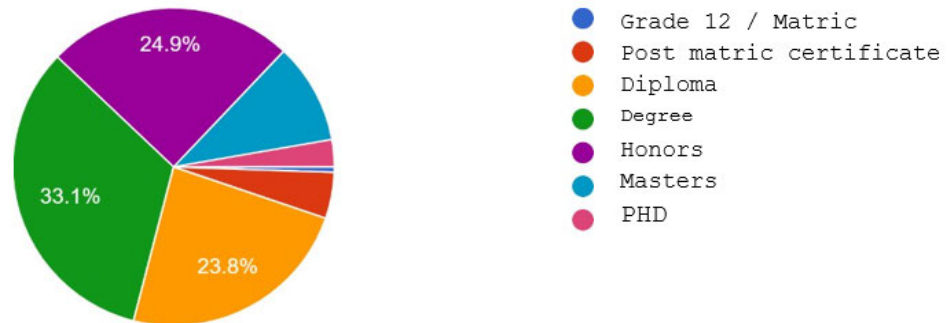


Figure 4.8 presents the distribution of participants' level of education (Google Forms).

Figure 4.9 presents the current registration status of participants. 42,5% of surveyed participants are furthering their studies. 57,5% of surveyed support staff are not studying.

Figure 4.9 Current Registration Status of Participants

3.2 Are you currently studying?
361 responses

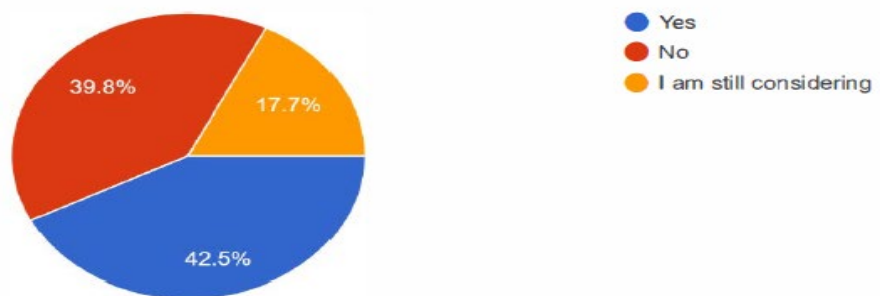


Figure 4.9 presents the current registration status of the participants (Google Forms).

Figure 4.10 shows how participants finance their studies for those who are studying. The funding was either self-provided, external bursary, UKZN bursary, or study remission by UKZN, or the participants are not studying. Therefore, the option is not applicable.

The UKZN study fee remission funds 24,8% of the surveyed support workers. 11,8 percent are self-funded. External bursaries finance 4,5% of the support employees polled. Internal bursaries fund 3.4% of the total. Finally, 55,5% are not enrolled in school. As a result, no funding was provided.

Figure 4.10 Participants Source of Funding Their Studies

3.3 If you are studying, how do you finance your studies?
355 responses

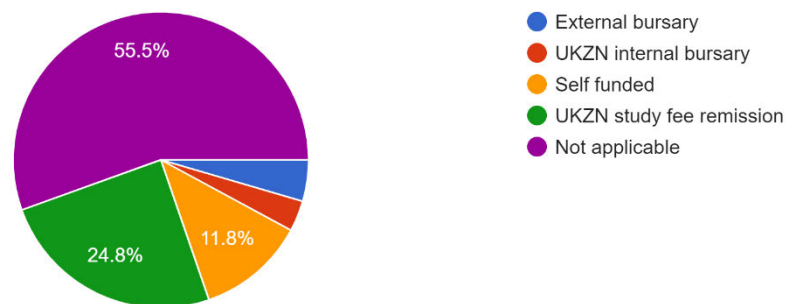


Figure 4.10 shows how participants finance their studies (Google Forms).

Section four of the survey examined whether the participants received any formal training provided by the UKZN as provisioned in the Integrated Talent Management Policy. It also assessed the relevance of the training in their current positions and for career development. The role of line managers in assisting their subordinates in building their careers and whether the Integrated Talent Management Policy requires any amendments.

Figure 4.11 depicts the individuals who got official training at the UKZN to maintain their expertise up to date. 51.9 percent of support employees questioned have no formal training. The course was received by 33.7% of the participants. Finally, 14.4% of respondents do not remember obtaining formal instruction.

Figure 4.11 Participants Who Received Formal Training

4.1 Did you receive any formal training at UKZN to ensure you keep your skills and knowledge updated?
361 responses

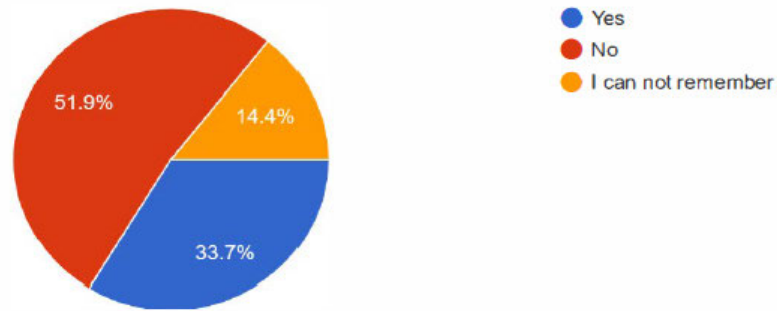


Figure 4.11 presents the participants who received formal training at the UKZN to keep their knowledge updated (Google Forms).

Figure 4.12 depicts how the UKZN training aided the participants in their current roles. 43,3% of UKZN support personnel who were questioned and got formal training did not benefit from the training. 14,4% of individuals who got training said it was generic and added no value. 10,8% of those polled said the training was practical and added value to their existing positions. 12,8% are unsure if the training was beneficial or not. Finally, 18.7% were undecided.

Figure 4.12 Role of Training Provided by The UKZN IN Employee Promotion and Progression

4.2 Did the training provided by the UKZN assist you in your current role?
360 responses

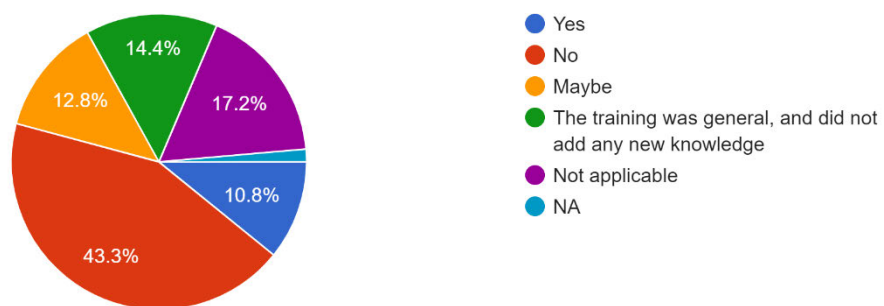


Figure 4.12 presents how the training provided by the UKZN assisted the participants in their current positions (Google Forms).

Figure 4.13 depicts the findings on whether the training offered by the UKZN aided participants further their careers. 62.8% of polled support personnel did not benefit from UKZN training. Training benefitted 1.4% of the support employees polled. 35.8% did not obtain training or did not receive training.

Figure 4.13 Benefits of UKZN Training in Assisting Employees Develop Their Careers

4.3 Did the training provided by the UKZN assist you in your career development?
361 responses

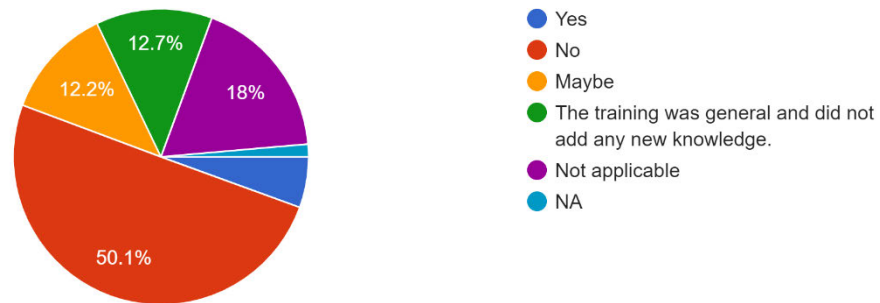


Figure 4.13 presents the results on whether the training provided by the UKZN assisted the participants in developing their careers (Google Forms)

Figure 4.13 depicts the findings on whether the training offered by the UKZN aided participants in furthering their careers. 62.8% of polled support personnel did not benefit from UKZN training. Training benefitted 1.4% of the support employees polled. 35.8% did not obtain training or did not receive training.

Figure 4.14 Success of UKZN In Applying Integrated Talent Management Policy to develop and retain the support staff

4.4 Is the UKZN succeeding in applying Integrated Talent Management Policy to develop and retain support staff?
360 responses

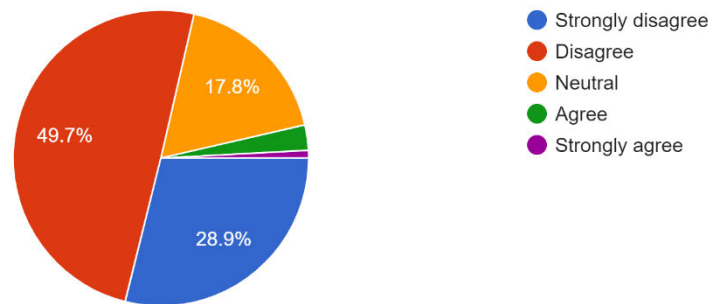


Figure 4.14 shows the results of the success of the UKZN in applying the Integrated Talent Management Policy to develop and retain the support staff (Google Forms)

Figure 4.15 Assessment of Line Manager's Role

4.5 Do you believe line managers are doing enough to assist their subordinates in learning and developing their careers?
358 responses

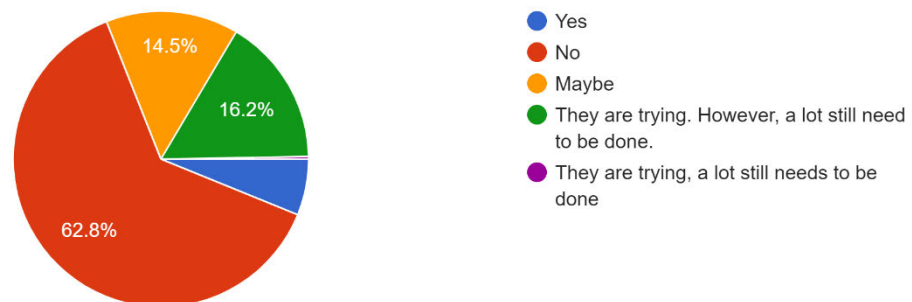


Figure 4.15 Accessing the line managers' role in assisting their subordinates to grow and develop their careers (Google Forms).

Figure 4.15 shows whether line managers sufficiently support their subordinates' learning and career development as the Integrated Talent Management policy outlines. 62.8% of those polled felt their line managers were not doing enough to help them grow and advance in their

professions. Conversely, 37.2% of polled workers say that their line supervisors are attempting to support them, but more work still needs to be done.

Figure 4.16 Participant's Views on The Integrated Talent Management Policy

4.6 Does the Integrated Talent Management Policy require any improvement to benefit all support staff?

360 responses

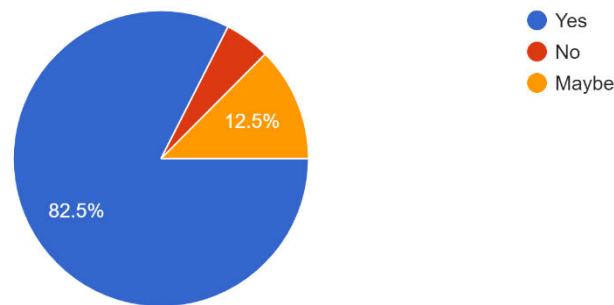


Figure 4.16 presents the participant's views on whether the Integrated Talent Management Policy requires improvements to benefit the support staff (Google Forms).

Figure 4.16 Presents responses on whether the Integrated Talent Management Policy requires any improvements to benefit the support staff. 82,5% of the surveyed participants believe that the policy requires amendments to improve its benefit to support staff. 12,5% are unsure, while 5% are happy with the policy and application

The fifth section looked at supporting staff to new opportunities and advance in their careers through acting positions or job secondment to senior positions within the UKZN as provisioned in the Integrated Talent Management Policy. It also looked at their opportunities of getting private work outside the UKZN while working for the UKZN as provisioned in the Private Remunerated Work Policy.

Figure 4.17 Number of Participants Promoted to The Current Roles

5.1 Did you get promoted to your current job?
361 responses

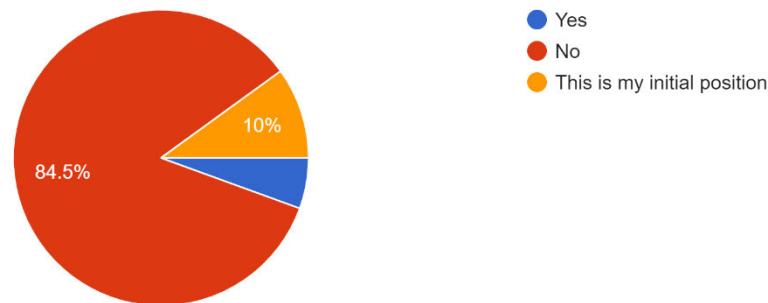


Figure 4.17 depicts the number of participants promoted to their current roles (Google Forms).

Figure 4.17 shows how many participants were promoted to their present positions. 94,5% of those polled were never promoted and are still in their first jobs. On the other hand, 5,5% of employees were promoted to their present jobs.

Figure 4.18 Number of Participants Level Of Education

5.2 Do you meet the requirement to take up a more senior position if it comes?
361 responses

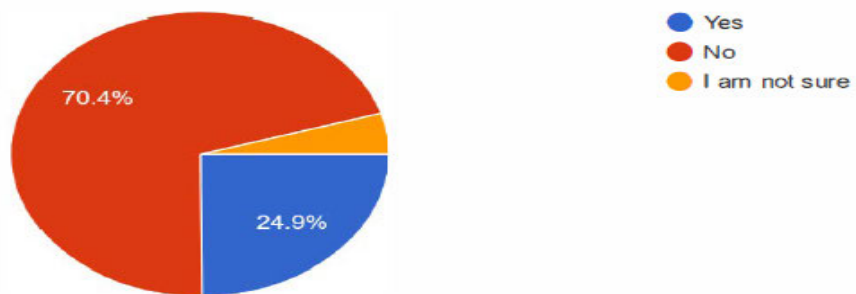


Figure 4.18 depicts the number of participants with qualifications to take more senior jobs (Google Forms).

Figure 4.18 indicates the number of qualified participants for more senior positions. 24,9% of those polled do not satisfy the qualifications for more senior posts. On the other hand, 70,4%

have the qualifications to advance to more senior roles. 4,7% of participants are unsure if they match the criterion.

Figure 4.19 Participants Appointed to Senior Positions

5.3 Have you ever been seconded or acted in a more senior position than yours?
361 responses

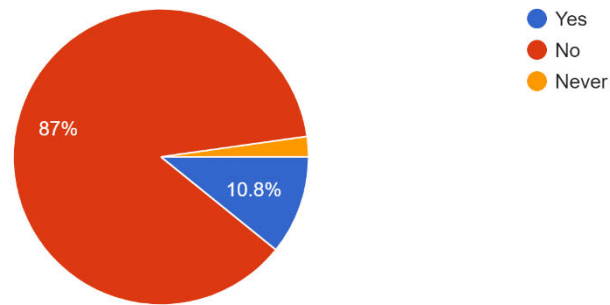


Figure 4.19 presents the number of participants appointed to act or seconded into senior positions (Google Form)

Figure 4.19 Presents the number of participants appointed to act or seconded into senior positions. 89,2% of the surveyed participants have never been appointed into senior acting positions or seconded into senior positions. 10,8% have once been appointed to act or seconded to senior positions.

Figure 2.20 Participants with Private Remuneration

5.4 Do you have a private remunerated job outside UKZN?
361 responses

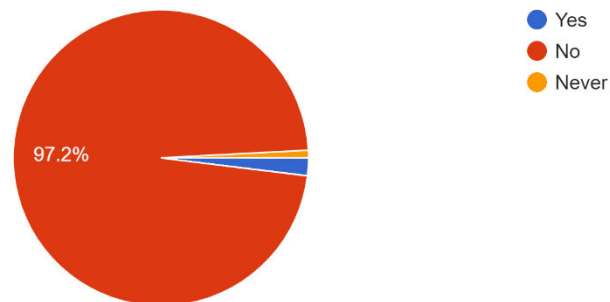


Figure 2.20 depicts the number of participants with private remuneration outside UKZN employment (Google Forms).

Figure 2.20 depicts the number of participants with private remuneration outside UKZN employment as provisioned in the Private Remunerated Work policy. 98% of the surveyed support staff do not have approved private remunerated work outside the UKZN employment. 2% of participants have approved private remunerated work outside UKZN.

Figure 4.21 Participants Interest in Taking Senior Positions

5.5 Would you take up an acting position, private remunerated work, stand for someone temporarily absent, or job secondment if the opportunity comes?

361 responses

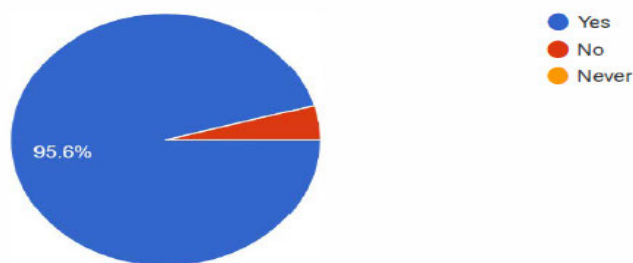


Figure 4.21 depicts the number of participants willing to take up acting positions, secondment, remote work, or standing for someone absent from work (Google Forms).

Figure 4.21 depicts the number of participants willing to take on acting roles, secondment, private employment, or stand-in for someone unable to work. 95.6% of those polled are prepared to do acting, secondment, private remunerated jobs, or fill in for someone who is out from work for an extended length of time. 4.4% of those polled do not want any more labour.

The last section of the survey dealt with the willingness of support staff to stay employed by the UKZN. It also assessed whether they are satisfied with their current pay and consider the UKZN the best employer.

Figure 4.22 Number of Participants Seeking Employment Outside The UKZN

6.1 Would you take up a new job outside UKZN if it comes?

361 responses

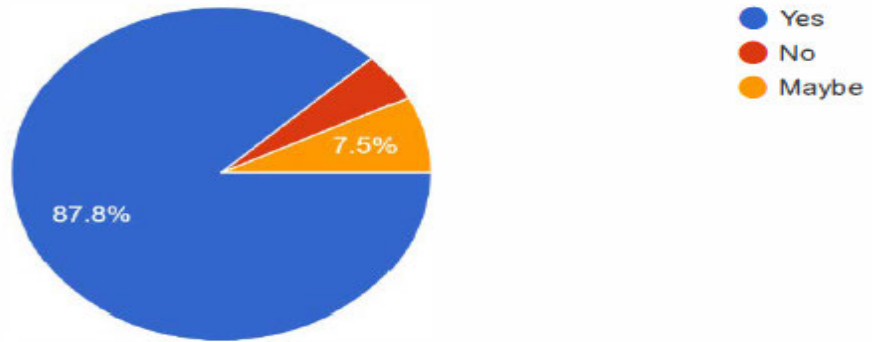


Figure 4.22 depicts the number of participants seeking jobs outside the UKZN (Google Forms).

Figure 4.22 shows the number of participants who intend to work outside the UKZN. If the questioned individuals are prepared to take up a new job outside of UKZN and actively seek new employment, the figure is 87.8%. 7,5% are unsure, while 4,7% are not seeking new work.

Figure 4.23 Number Participants Actively Looking for Jobs Outside UKZN

6.2 Are you actively looking for a new job outside UKZN?

361 responses

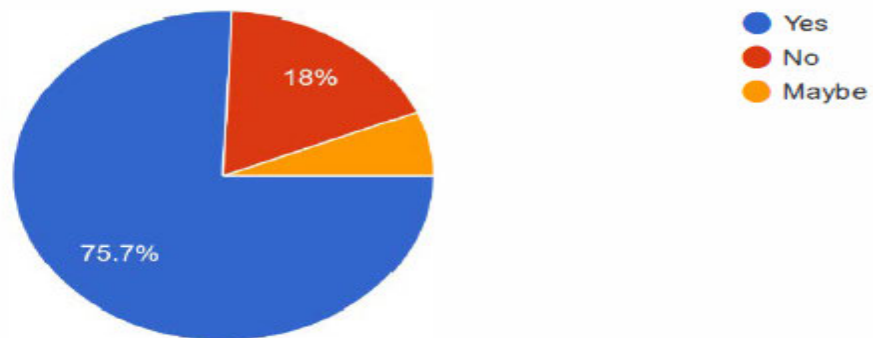


Figure 4.23 depicts the number of participants actively seeking jobs outside the UKZN (Google Forms)

Figure 4.23 presents the number of participants actively seeking work outside the UKZN. 185 of the surveyed participants are not looking for new employment. 75,7% actively seek new employment, and 6,3% prefer to remain neutral.

Figure 4.24 Number of Participants Who Consider the UKZN The Best Employer

6.3 Do you consider the UKZN as the best employer?
361 responses

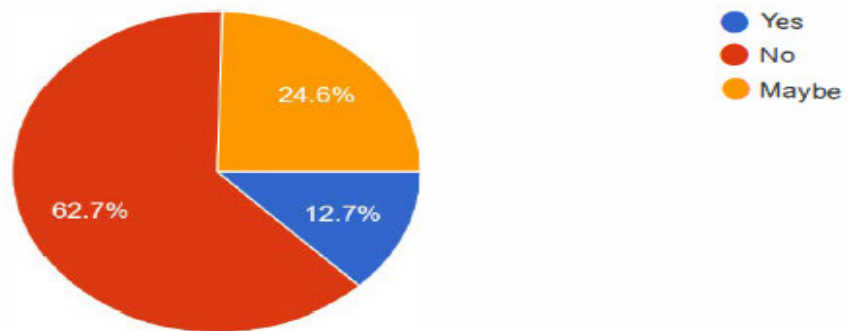


Figure 4.24 presents the number of participants considering the UKZN the best employer (Google Forms).

Figure 4.24 presents the number of participants considering the UKZN the best employer. 62,7% of the surveyed support employees do not consider the UKZN the best employer. 12,7% consider the UKZN as the best employer, while 24,6%.

Figure 4.24 Participants' Salary Expectation UKZN

6.4 Are you happy with your current salary?
361 responses

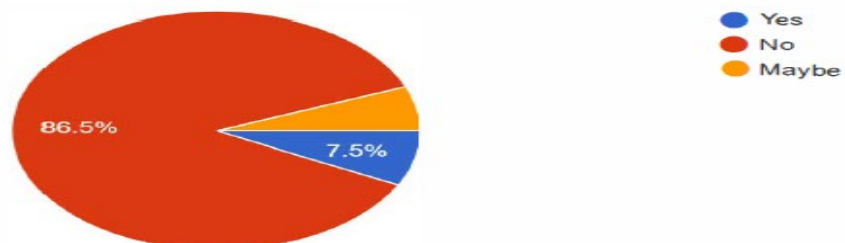


Figure 4.25 depicts the number of happy participants about their current salaries (Google Forms)

Figure 4.24 depicts the number of happy participants about their current salaries. 86,5% of the surveyed support staff are unhappy with their current salaries. 7,5% are pretty happy, and 6% prefer to remain neutral.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

4.3.1 Introduction

In today's competitive academic climate, the capacity to retain and advance the careers of support staff is critical to an institution's overall success and effectiveness. Recognizing the importance of this issue, detailed research was conducted to analyse the effectiveness of the UKZN approach to the retention and career advancement of its support employees. The study aimed to assess the implementation of the Integrated Talent Management Policy and other personnel development policies at UKZN, focusing on the benefits provided to support staff for professional advancement and prolonged tenure at the institution. The following section will describe, interpret, and discuss the research findings in relation to different UKZN policies and previous studies in a similar field.

4.3.2 Support Staff Training and Development

The UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy (CO/04/0512/11) was enacted on 01 January 2011. The policy has never been reviewed or amended since its inception. Paragraph 5 states, “The Integrated Talent Management Policy aims to facilitate and promote the achievement of institutional objectives through a process of identifying, attracting, nurturing and retaining talent across the whole of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.”

The policy provides that to achieve this goal, the institution recognizes the need to provide attractive work conditions and channels for staff to fulfil their professional objectives and enhance their talents. The Integrated Talent Management policy is based on the University's deep appreciation for its employees and their critical contribution to developing its goals. According to the policy, the University strives to enhance the performance of its employees in their current jobs while also preparing them for future responsibilities and shifting positions by emphasizing the growth of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The survey found that a significant percentage of support staff, 82.5%, expressed the view that the Integrated Talent Management Policy necessitates a review and revision, as it fails to benefit all support staff. Simultaneously, a significant percentage of support staff, precisely 78.6%, believe that the university is not implementing the policy for its intended purpose. A substantial percentage of the support staff, 66.3%, have yet to undergo formal training to enhance their competencies and remain abreast with the latest industry developments. This lack of training may result in suboptimal performance that fails to align with the evolving requirements of the university. Conversely, a notable proportion of 27.1% of the surveyed support staff who underwent the training program reported that it was generic and yielded no discernible improvement in their job-related efficacy. Furthermore, it did not contribute to their professional growth.

Paragraph 7.3 of the policy requires that the University have a Talent Development Plan emphasizing accelerating talent pool development to build internal capacity and ensure adequate bench strength at different leadership specialist levels. The policy places the responsibility of employee development on the institution. The responsibility to implement the plan lies with the employee, as captured in the personal development plans. Lastly, the line manager provides support and guidance to develop the employee. 62,8% of surveyed support staff believe that line managers need to play their roles in building individual development plans and providing support and guidance for their development. On the other hand, 82,5% of surveyed support staff want the entire policy to be revised and amended as it does not benefit the support staff and does not provide any measure to ensure the development plans are created and implemented. 78,6% of participants believe the university is not implementing the policy for its intended purpose, but only selected sections are implemented.

The study results align with previous research studies, which found that inadequate support staff development resulted in inefficiencies in administrative processes, resulting in delays, blunders, and misunderstandings (Nyambe and Mphande, 2019). Inefficiency inhibits the university's smooth operation, resulting in service delivery delays and negatively impacting the institution's overall smooth running and production. Obonyo and Kemoni (2017) concurred that inadequate training and professional development opportunities for support employees result in a lack of critical skills and knowledge to help students effectively and in academics, which results in an unpleasant experience and a negative perception of the institution.

On the other hand, Mlambo and Ruvimbo (2020) discovered that failure to emphasize professional development for support employees is the major contributor to high turnover rates and low morale. The lack of opportunities for professional development and the acquisition of new skills was pointed out as major contributors to underappreciation and a lack of motivation among support workers, which resulted in dissatisfaction with their positions and an increased proclivity to pursue other job opportunities outside the institution. Mwafulirwa and Maunde (2016) found that failure to emphasize support staff leads to an institution being seen as unprofessional and lacking quality, restricting opportunities for local and international expansion, collaboration, and alliances.

The neglect of support staff development limits the institution's ability to adopt developing technologies, use appropriate techniques, and keep up with changes in administrative processes (Sibanda, 2018). According to the study findings by Mutepfa and Mupa (2019), failure to emphasize the development of support employees in countries defined by educational disparities, such as Africa, aggravates pre-existing imbalances in the workplace. Individuals who do not have access to training opportunities face greater marginalization, perpetuating a cycle of limited personal growth and limited opportunities for professional achievement. Furthermore, it was discovered that support staff who see themselves as lacking acknowledgment and appreciation are a risk of hurting society (Nwagwu, 2018).

4.3.3 Staff Training as Provisioned in the Study Fee Remission Policy

The UKZN has implemented a policy that provides study fee remission to its employees, policy number CO/04/1710/08, which came into effect on 01 March 2012 and was last reviewed in December 2015. The primary objective of this policy is to facilitate employees' access to education, thereby improving their performance in their current roles and supporting their career advancement. As per the policy statement, The University of KwaZulu-Natal has pledged its dedication to facilitating and encouraging the professional growth of its staff members, providing attractive remuneration packages that establish its reputation as a preferred employer. The institution offers tuition remission to qualifying personnel, spouses or domestic partners, and dependent children.

The survey results show that out of the 361 surveyed support employees, 24,9% of the support employees polled had an honours degree. 33.1% have completed their first year in college. National diplomas are held by 23.8% of the population. A master's degree is held by 10.2% of the support employees polled. 2,8% have a Ph.D., while 5,2% of support employees have a

matric or post-matric diploma. The UKZN study fee remission funds 24,8% of the surveyed support workers furthering their studies. 11,8% are self-funded. External bursaries finance 4,5% of the support employees polled. Internal bursaries fund 3.4% of the total. Finally, 55,5% are not enrolled in any qualification.

The findings reveal that support personnel are educated and capable of becoming more than just administrators. They are eager to enhance their jobs and their studies. Though the findings suggest that workers are eager to learn, it is nevertheless alarming that many of the questioned support staff are not enrolled in any formal education programs. To support staff development and training, Basnyat, and Clarence, (2019) found that high turnover rates interrupt workflow, drive up recruiting costs, and degrade institutional knowledge, all of which threaten organizational stability. Suyoto, and Murtiharso, (2021) found that employers who fail to invest in employee development contribute to a workforce with obsolete skill sets, resulting in a skills deficit that limits the organization's capacity to innovate and compete successfully. On the other hand, Aula, and Mantere, (2020) concluded that for effective team dynamics, balanced teams with people with varied skill sets are essential. Ignoring staff development can lead to skill inequalities among teams, which can lead to disputes, poor collaboration, and subpar project outcomes.

According to Deloitte (2022) analysis, employee's educational assistance indicates an employer's commitment to encouraging professional progression and success, resulting in increased employee participation and investment. Allen (2019) found that organizations that commit resources to their workforce's educational needs have higher job happiness and motivation levels, resulting in increased production and lower attrition rates.

4.3.4 Staff Career Advancement and Growth as Provisioned in the PWR Policy

The UKZN has implemented a Private Work Remuneration (PWR) Policy, identified as CO/01/1009/12, which underwent a review process in 2016. This policy aims to enable university staff to offer their professional services to external individuals and organizations for a fee. This policy seeks to facilitate the continuous improvement and development of staff members' knowledge and skills in their respective fields, ultimately benefiting the employees and the university by enhancing their expertise and generating additional income.

The survey results in assessing the openness of the policy to support staff showed that out of 361 surveyed support staff, 77% never got the opportunity to have private work remuneration

as provisioned in the PWR policy. 95,6% of the surveyed participants are willing to take up the opportunity if it comes.

4.3.5 Support staff career advancement opportunities

The Integrated Talent Management Policy provides for staff talent development. Paragraph 7.3.3 of the policy provides a combination of development strategies that can be implemented to enable the development of employees. Those development strategies include coaching and mentoring, formal training courses, on-the-job experience learning, job rotation lateral moves, acting positions, shadow roles, stretched assignments, internal projects, and action learning projects.

According to the survey results, 70,4% of support staff will not be able to take up more senior positions if they come due to the lack of experience and training. 87% of surveyed support staff have never been appointed to acting positions, job shadowing, or received any development as provisioned under paragraph 7.3.3 of the policy. 95,6% of the surveyed support staff are willing to take up the stretched assignments such as standing for someone absent from work, acting positions, private employment as provisioned in the PWR policy, and job secondment as provided in the policy. Depriving them these opportunities limits their chances of getting the experience and getting hired or promoted to senior positions. As a result of the survey, 84,5% of support staff have never received any form of promotion to acting in senior roles.

The survey results align with the previous studies, which heightened the importance of providing the support staff with career progression opportunities for the organizations and employees' benefit. In their study, Awuzie and Onyali (2020) discovered that the firm risks failing to use its employees' skills and abilities by disregarding promotion opportunities for support personnel. Furthermore, Oyinlola and Adeyemi (2021) discovered that there is a danger that employees with latent abilities and aspirations are underutilized, failing to capitalize on potential chances for innovation and enhanced service delivery. Support workers lack professional development chances that are required for obtaining new skills and remaining current with industry trends (Oyinlola and Adeyemi, 2021). This problem causes a shortage of specialized knowledge and inhibits the institution's capacity to respond to changing needs (Mafini and Netshikweta, 2016). Support personnel without a clear path to advancement become comfortable in their respective professions and lack enthusiasm, leading to worse performance and productivity (Ogunyemi and Adekunle, 2019). Girardi (2019) discovered that

the issue is a lack of defined career paths or senior promotion chances inside the organization, which leads to most qualified support staff becoming accidental administrators or departing.

4.3.6 Staff Retention

The significance of staff development in establishing an internal talent pool and guaranteeing good leadership or specialization skills within the University of KwaZulu-Natal is acknowledged in Paragraph 7.3 of the integrated Talent Management Policy. The policy mandates the expeditious cultivation of talent reservoirs to augment the likelihood of progression, which is imperative for personnel retention.

According to the survey findings, a majority of 67.2% of the support staff surveyed do not regard UKZN as the most favourable employer. Additionally, 75.7% of the respondents actively seek employment opportunities outside UKZN, while 87.8% are open to accepting job offers from organizations other than UKZN. The findings are consistent with the UKZN project renewal initiatives developed in 2021 to be implemented in the UKZN 2023 to 2032 strategic plan (UKZN 2023-2023 Strategic Plan). The strategic plan will implement the findings of the project renewal in reducing the attrition of critical personnel in both the academic and support staff to alternative educational institutions over time. The elevated employee turnover rate leads to a depletion of skilled personnel within the UKZN and a phenomenon known as brain drain.

The study by Awuzie and Onyali (2020) found that a university's reputation is built not only by the quality of its educational programs but also by the professionalism and efficiency of its support services. High turnover rates among support personnel harm the institution's reputation, leading to negative impressions among students, scholars, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, Moyo and Dube (2017) discovered that a lack of retention of support employees leads to a loss of institutional memory and expertise. It also causes an interruption in the smooth operation of the university business since newly employed employees need time for acclimation and familiarization (Ogunyemi and Adekunle (2019).

4.3.7 The Effect of Staff Remuneration on Staff Retention

Employee remuneration is crucial in retaining a steady staff in business organizations. The salary and benefits supplied to employees directly influence their motivation, happiness, and commitment to the organization, hence important in staff retention.

The UKZN has a Remuneration Policy, which came into effect on 01 January 2012 and was last reviewed on 01 July 2014. The Remuneration Policy's primary goals are to ensure that the remuneration system rewards individuals for achieving the University's goals and encourages high performance. Recognizing exceptional performance through the performance management system allows the University to effectively compete in the labour market, attract and retain talented staff, and establish fairness and equity in remuneration and rewards.

UKZN Support Staff Salary Scale

Peromnes Grade	Minimum TCE	1st Level Progression	2nd Level Progression	3rd Level Progression	4th Level Progression & Max
4	1 144 022	1 201 223	1 261 284	1 324 348	1 390 566
5	876 996	920 846	966 888	1 015 232	1 065 994
6	646 552	678 880	712 824	748 456	785 888
7	493 203	517 863	543 756	570 944	599 491
8	404 408	424 629	45 860	468 153	491 561
9	321 230	337 531	354 156	371 864	390 457
10	294 792	309 531	325 008	341 258	358 321
11	263 826	277 017	290 868	305 411	320 682
12	186 906	196 251	206 064	216 367	227 186
13	156 386	164 206	172 416	181 037	190 089
14	133 105	139 760	146 748	154 085	161 790
15	123 341	129 509	135 984	142 783	149 922
16	115 135	120 891	126 936	133 283	139 947
17	97 818	102 709	107 844	113 236	118 898

Table 4.26 UKZN Support Staff Salary Scale 2018

The table below presents the current salary scale of support staff at the UKZN as per the conditions of Service 2018. Effective from 01 January 2018. The salary ranges include the total cost to the employer (TCE), which covers salary and employer contributions as fringe benefits. A new employee is offered the minimum, which takes four years to progress to the next pay level.

The study by Obeidat, Al-Suradi, and Tarhini (2017) concluded that monetary incentives such as pay, bonuses, and perks significantly influence employee retention within a firm. Employees who are well rewarded are less likely to seek other work options because they feel fulfilled and motivated to stay with their current company. According to the survey results, 86,5% of support staff at UKZN are unhappy with their current salaries. At the same time, 6,1% of surveyed staff are still determining but can live with the current salary.

4.4 Conclusion

Creating policies inside a business aims to provide clear guidelines, norms, and expectations for workers and stakeholders. Policies are a foundation for decision-making, creating standard processes, encouraging uniformity, and ensuring conformity to legal, regulatory, and ethical norms. Corporate policies aid decision-making, strengthen company culture, improve efficiency, reduce risks, and communicate expectations. By enacting well-defined policies, organizations may create an organized and transparent environment that aids the achievement of their objectives. The chapter examined different UKZN staff policies that directly support staff retention and career advancement to ensure effective implementation and compliance. The results of the support staff were analysed in relation to each policy to gain a clear insight into how the UKZN has applied those policies over the years. The next chapter will conclude and recommend how effectively the UKZN could use its policies to benefit the support staff.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research assessed the UKZN support staff retention and career advancement strategy. Different theories and literature were explored to investigate the topic. The study consisted of four objectives, and they were achieved. The study objectives were as follows:

- To evaluate how the UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies is implemented to support staff in advancing their careers.
- To determine the support staff retention strategy at the UKZN.
- To evaluate the role of support staff line managers, division heads, and HR to assist employees in developing and advancing in their careers.
- To assess how effective the UKZN is in implementing the staff development plan to benefit the support staff.

In this chapter, each objective will discuss the survey results and the literature. The recommendations for improvements will be discussed, and where the university is doing well, credit due will be given.

5.2 Research Objectives and Recommendations

5.2.1 Research Objective 1

Evaluating how the UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies have been implemented to support the support staff in advancing their careers.

According to the literature, support staff career development is a significant problem at many institutions worldwide, in Africa and South Africa, for various reasons. Low pay, restricted advancement opportunities, lousy working conditions, and poor management practices all contribute to support worker difficulties.

To address some of these issues, the UKZN has implemented various measures. On January 1, 2011, the UKZN Integrated Talent Management Policy (CO/04/0512/11) went into effect. The

strategy was to support and promote the fulfilment of institutional goals by finding, recruiting, cultivating, and maintaining talent throughout the University of KwaZulu-Natal. According to the policy, the institution acknowledges the necessity to create appealing work circumstances and channels for employees to accomplish their professional aims and expand their abilities to achieve this purpose. The University's Integrated Talent Management policy is founded on great respect for its workers and their essential contribution to developing its objectives.

According to the study's findings, the support staff believes that the UKZN has failed to implement the policy, and the policy requires modification to benefit both the employer and the employees, precisely those in support service. This stems from the fact that, after working for the UKZN for many years, support staff still find it challenging to take on more senior roles owing to a lack of experience, training, restricted career advancement, and inadequate implementation of staff development programs. As a result, external candidates have more advantage over internal employees to take up new positions. All new or replacement vacant posts at the UKZN are advertised externally with no added advantage to internal applicants.

The study also indicated that support employees felt that line managers and department heads needed to do more to help them advance their careers by providing development opportunities and ensuring that development plans were made and followed through on.

Finally, as the custodian of these regulations, it was discovered that the HR department is severely disengaged in enforcing and ensuring compliance and equitable implementation of the policies. The support employee believes that the HR is more willing to assist management and line managers in enforcing the policies to employees but could not extend the same to employees, which results in the imbalance in application of the HR policies.

5.2.2 Recommendation

Employees in university support are crucial to the institution's functioning and success. They assist students by managing buildings, maintaining technical infrastructure, assisting with research activities, handling financial operations, improving campus services, fostering collaboration, and contributing to student accomplishment and pleasure. Their efforts are essential to establishing a thriving academic community and preserving the university's reputation.

The UKZN must guarantee that policies are updated regularly to reflect the university's and its communities' current and future requirements. Since its adoption in January 2011, the Integrated Talent Management Policy has never been modified. The UKZN must regularly assess and update its policies to remain current, relevant, and conform to legal and industry standards. The UKZN may foster a culture of compliance, efficiency, employee satisfaction, and agility while reducing potential risks and liabilities.

The HR department must assist other departments in adhering to HR policies through policy development and communication, training and education, consultation and guidance, monitoring and auditing, policy implementation support, compliance with employment laws, and policy review and enhancement. Their role is crucial for promoting policy adherence, maintaining a compliant and respectful workplace, mitigating risks associated with noncompliance, and ensuring that the line managers and HODs receive regular training and support on staff policies and equitable distribution of development opportunities among all support staff.

When workers need to report or inquire about any HR concern, HR often requires them to go via their line managers. HR regulations do not cover this practice, leading to injustices and non-compliance with HR policies. Human resources must return to its primary duty of identifying and leveraging employee perspectives inside the organization. HR assists in creating a productive and thriving workplace by actively engaging with employees, promoting open communication, resolving conflicts, fostering professional progress, and establishing inclusive policies.

5.2.3 Objective 2

Determine the support staff retention strategy at the UKZN.

Organizations must attract and retain the finest people to stay competitive, fulfil their goals, and promote a good and productive work environment. The importance of excellent talent goes beyond individual performance and adds to the organization's overall success and progress.

The UKZN has policies to ensure the university attracts, develops, and retains high-quality employees. The Recruitment and Selection Policy CO/04/2502/05 was enacted on 01 January 2012 and was last updated in January 2015. The goal of this policy is to regulate and provide clear guidelines based on best HR practices so that the University can recruit and select staff

of the highest quality to meet operational needs and achieve strategic objectives, as well as to ensure opportunities for career advancement for existing staff to accomplish the goals of employment equity and academic excellence.

The second policy employed by the UKZN is the Integrated Talent Management Policy (CO/04/0512/11). The policy aimed at supporting and promoting the fulfilment of institutional goals by finding, recruiting, cultivating, and maintaining talent throughout the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Lastly, the Remuneration Policy HRE/08/011/CO was enacted on 01 January 2012 and was last updated in July 2014. The remuneration Policy aims to guarantee that the remuneration system rewards people for achieving the University's objectives and promotes high levels of performance, recognizes outstanding performance by individuals via the performance management system, and allows the University to compete successfully in the labour market as well as to attract and retain high-calibre employees, and achieves justice and equality in compensation and incentive.

According to the findings, most support employees do not consider the UKZN the best employer as the UKZN has good policies but fails to implement them to benefit all its employees. Their efforts of hard work are not acknowledged since there are no performance incentives, no prospects for career advancement, and university pay is not competitive with the industry. The support staff believes that the performance agreement entered between the line manager and employee annually, as provisioned in the HR policies, does not assist them much as it does not create any obligation on the part of the institution to award hard performers.

The study also discovered that support personnel seek better work opportunities outside the UKZN due to difficulties that the UKZN cannot solve. The support employees do not get to be promoted to senior or acting positions for career growth. Lastly, they do not get approval from management to take up privately remunerated work to supplement their income, as provisioned in the PWR policy of the university. This results in support staff dissatisfaction and low morale, directly affecting the services to academics and students.

5.2.4 Recommendation

The UKZN must update policies regularly to respond to changes, comply with regulatory obligations, manage risks, stimulate employee involvement, and maintain an excellent

reputation. It must ensure policies stay adequate, relevant, and aligned with the university's aims and the changing business environment. The UKZN policies were last updated ten years ago, and there have been many changes in the higher education space, and the work performed by the support staff has also changed.

The university's compensation scale was established in 2018 and still needs to be updated to reflect the fundamental change in inflation. If a new employee is hired today, they will receive a salary package equivalent to 2018. This is despite significant fluctuations in inflation throughout the years, as well as economic situations and other variables. The UKZN support staff salaries are far below compared to industry peers and the private sector. The university must match its pay with the market and benchmark with other institutions to boost its appeal and competitiveness regarding top talent.

The UKZN must guarantee that its workers' career development permits the institution to have a talent pool inside the university. The institution saves money on recruiting and training by having a talent pool. It must also enable internal workers to apply for new posts that become available inside the institution before making them accessible to external candidates. This will drive staff to work hard to better themselves and demonstrate that the UKZN values employee development.

5.2.5 Objectives 3 and 4

To evaluate the role of support staff line managers, division heads, and HR to assist employees in developing and advancing in their careers and to ensure the implementation of the development plan to benefit the support staff.

According to paragraph 7.3 of the Integrated Talent Management Policy, the University must establish a Talent Development Plan that focuses on speeding the development of talent pools to enhance internal capacity and guarantee enough bench strength at various leadership/specialist levels. The policy sets the institution in charge of staff development. As stated in personal development plans, the employee is responsible for implementing the plan. Finally, the line manager supports and advises the employee's development.

The policy extends to guide how the development plan should be structured and financed by providing that the HR must centralize and oversee the funds for in-house training and development programs for statutory/mandatory and institutional/strategic training. The budget

for specialized learning, training, and development activities not included in the In-House schedule for individuals identified through the Performance Management System in their Personal Development Plans shall be decentralized to relevant university structures, who must submit a plan before the annual budgeting cycle.

The research found that the support staff need more relevant training to enhance their knowledge and advance their careers. The line managers are not providing support for employee training and development, and employees are constantly confronted with budget issues when requesting training. Those who receive training offered by the HR department viewed those training programs as irrelevant and not adding value to their development as it offers the same training every year.

5.2.6 Recommendation

The HR department must collaborate with other departments to ensure that development opportunities are available to employees, development plans are captured in employee performance contracts with their line managers, and funds are made available to finance the development plan. The HR must also ensure that the training programs offered are based on the development needs of employees and are not generic.

The HR department must provide continuous training to line managers and division heads to ensure they have appropriate awareness of the rules. Finally, the HR department must assist them and monitor non-compliance with the regulations. Any non-compliance of the management part must be explained, and measures must be implemented to ensure it does not repeat.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The study aimed to assess the support staff retention and career promotion plan. The research questionnaire was sent through a staff notification at UKZN. The support workers need a computer or a mobile phone with internet connectivity and UKZN staff email to access the link to the questionnaire. Because of the nature of their employment, employees who do not have access to the computer with internet and staff emails were excluded in the study. Those employees include some from campus management and protection services.

5.4 Researcher's Reflection

The study started with the researcher writing a fascinating research proposal outlining the study's aims and the researcher's approach to accomplishing those goals. The secondary sources of information were then gathered to generate the research literature review. The researcher found this aspect of the study exciting but primarily challenging and overwhelming since it needed a full search for the proper theoretical information, including books, journal articles, and UKZN policies. When the researcher got down to write the literature review chapter, he had a strong understanding of the support staff issue and a wealth of expertise in selecting, reading, and interpreting relevant information to enrich the study. Another contributing factor to understanding the support staff's needs and frustrations was that the researcher is also in the UKZN support, making the data collection much more accessible.

5.5 Conclusion

The survey's primary result is that career development for support employees is not taken seriously at the UKZN. Because there is a lack of attention on professional progression and promotion chances, brilliant employees are forced to seek better opportunities elsewhere, losing critical internal knowledge. The lack of suitable training and personnel development programs exacerbates the issue by impeding internal employees' capacity to advance to more senior positions within the organization. As a result, they are at a disadvantage when compared to external applicants who may have the required credentials and expertise.

Compensation was also identified as a source of concern, with the analysis revealing a significant wage disparity between UKZN and other universities in the market. This disparity hurts employee morale and makes it difficult for UKZN to recruit and retain top personnel. Furthermore, the lack of rewards for exceptional performance provides a disincentive for supporting employees to surpass expectations, affecting the department's overall productivity and effectiveness.

The study also revealed a troubling degree of disengagement within the HR department, resulting in many violations of HR policies designed to safeguard and reward support staff. This failure to comply weakens employee trust and confidence and exposes the organization to legal and ethical difficulties. Outdated rules and procedures exacerbate the issue by failing to reflect current industry standards and forcing personnel to adapt to old ways.

The UKZN must thoroughly evaluate the HR department's performance to solve these challenges. This investigation should seek to discover the fundamental reasons for disengagement and noncompliance and execute corrective actions. Furthermore, it is critical to give training and assistance to line managers and departments to guarantee the equal implementation of laws and best practices. Not only will this improve compliance, but it will also build a culture of justice.

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UKZN has the Remuneration Policy (HRE/08/011/CO)

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APPENDIX 1: GATE KEEPERS LATER



29 March 2023

Vuyolwethu Collen Kheswa (SN 213523826)
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
College of Law and Management Studies
Westville Campus UKZN
Email: KheswaV@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Vuyolwethu

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 degree, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Evaluating the University of KwaZulu-Natal's support staff retention and career advancement strategy."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample as follows:

- With a request for responses on the website. The questionnaire must be placed on the notice system <http://notices.ukzn.ac.za>. A copy of this letter (Gatekeeper's approval) must be simultaneously sent to (govenderlog@ukzn.ac.za) or (ramkissoonb@ukzn.ac.za).

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

- 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 the 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

Dr KE CLELAND: REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 7971 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 2: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



22 May 2023

Vuyolwethu Collen Kheswa (213523826)
Grad School of Bus & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear VC Kheswa,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005590/2023

Project title: Evaluating the University of KwaZulu-Natal's support staff retention and career advancement strategy.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 04 May 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 22 May 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dìpane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Date: 29 April 2023

Dear Colleagues,

I am Vuyolwethu Kheswa, a Master of Business Administration student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Graduate School of Business and Leadership (GSBandL). My contact details are kheswav@ukzn.ac.za; 213523826@stu.ukzn.ac.za; ext:7083 or Cell [REDACTED].

You are invited to consider participating in a study involving research to **“Evaluate the University of KwaZulu Natal support staff retention and career advancement strategy.”** This research aims to assess how the UKZN has applied its Talent Management Policy and other staff development policies to assist support staff in advancing their careers and how these policies have benefited the support staff.

The study is expected to enrol all support staff in all five UKZN campuses who will have access to complete the online survey. The study targets 357 support staff at all levels. The participants will be required to complete the five essential questions. The link will be sent through the UKZN staff notices. The link to the questionnaire will be posted for three weeks to ensure that all employees willing to participate get a chance.

The study carries no risk to the participants. There are no monetary benefits to be paid to the participant as the participation is voluntary. We hope the study will benefit the UKZN in measuring the effectiveness of applying its policies and how It can improve. The research will also benefit the UKZN support staff to understand their roles in building their careers by applying these policies’ provisions.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00005590/2023).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may contact the researcher at (kheswav@ukzn.ac.za/ 213523826@stu.ukzn.ac.za/ 031 260 7983 or [REDACTED] or the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any point or choose not to participate. The withdrawal from participation in this research will incur no costs or penalties to the participants.

Participation in the survey will be completely anonymous. Participants will never be required to complete personal information such as name, surname, ID numbers, or staff numbers. The results of this research will be kept confidential and stored in the Microsoft One Drive, which is password protected. The data will be kept for a period prescribed by the UKZN on the research data, and after that, the data will expire.

CONSENT

- I have been informed about the study entitled “Evaluating the University of KwaZulu Natal support staff retention and career advancement strategy” by Vuyolwethu Kheswa.
- I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.
- I have been allowed to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.
- If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at kheswav@ukzn.ac.za/ 213523826@stu.ukzn.ac.za/ 031 260 7983 or [REDACTED]
- If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I may contact:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

APPENDIX 4: SIMILARITY INDEX

VUYOLWETHU KHESWA FINAL DISSERTATION SUBMISSION

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10% SIMILARITY INDEX	9% INTERNET SOURCES	2% PUBLICATIONS	2% STUDENT PAPERS
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PRIMARY SOURCES

1	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	3%
2	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	1%
3	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	theemployerdomain.tumblr.com Internet Source	<1%
5	repository.iainkudus.ac.id Internet Source	<1%
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9	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1%

APPENDIX 5: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. **Do you agree to participate?**

Yes. I agree to participate.

No. I do not wish to participate.

2. **Personal questions for statistical purposes**

2.1 Gender

Female

Male

I prefer not to say

2.2 What is your age group

20-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

Over 60

2.3 Which UKZN campus are you working at?

Edgewood campus

Westville Campus

Medical School

Howard College

Pietermaritzburg campus

2.4 Nature of employment?

- Permanent contract
- 3-year fixed-term contract
- 2-year contract
- 1-year contract
- Less than a year contract

2.5 Number of years of service?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Over six years

2.6 Position held?

- Director
- Supervisor
- Manager
- Accountant
- Accounting officer
- Administrator
- General employee
- Other
-

3. Support staff development and training

3.1 What qualifications do you have?

- Grade 12 / Matric
- Post matric certificate
- Diploma
- Degree
- Honors
- Masters
- PHD

3.2 Are you currently studying?

- Yes
- No
- I am still considering

3.3 how do you finance your studies if you are studying?

- External bursary
- UKZN internal bursary
- Self-funded
- UKZN study fee remission
- Not applicable

4. Training support staff as provisioned in the Integrated Talent Management Policy?

4.1 Did you receive any formal training at UKZN to ensure you keep your skills and knowledge updated?

- Yes
- No
- I cannot remember

4.2 Did the training provided by the UKZN assist you in your current role?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- The training was general and did not add any new knowledge
- Not applicable

4.3 Did the training provided by the UKZN assist you in your career development?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- The training was general and did not add any new knowledge.
- Not applicable

4.4 Is the UKZN succeeding in applying Integrated Talent Management Policy to develop and retain support staff?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

4.5 Do you believe line managers are doing enough to assist their subordinates in learning and developing their careers?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- They are trying. However, a lot still needs to be done.

4.6 Does the Integrated Talent Management Policy require any improvement to benefit all support staff?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

5. How has support staff at the UKZN benefited from the Integrated Talent Management Policy over the past years for career progression?

5.1 Did you get promoted to your current job?

- Yes
- No
- This is my initial position

5.2 Do you meet the requirement to take up a more senior position if it comes?

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

5.3 Have you ever been seconded or acted in a more senior position than yours?

- Yes
- No
- Never

17. **5.4 Do you have a private remunerated job outside UKZN?**

- Yes
- No
- Never

5.5 Would you take up an acting position, private remunerated work, stand for someone temporarily absent, or job secondment if the opportunity comes?

- Yes
- No
- Never

6. How has the UKZN implemented staff retention as provisioned in the Integrated Talent Management Policy?

6.1 Would you take up a new job outside UKZN if it comes?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

6.2 Are you actively looking for a new job outside UKZN?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

6.3 Do you consider the UKZN as the best employer?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

6.4 Are you happy with your current salary?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe