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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**Attracting and Retaining Highly Skilled Academic Staff: A Case of a Technical,
Vocational Education and Training College in Johannesburg**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Education in Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy**

College of Humanities, School of Education

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Supervisor: Prof PE Myende

February 2024

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, **Matome Peter Mokgathi**, declare that:

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

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This dissertation has been submitted with/~~without~~ my approval.



February 2024

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



20 June 2023

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Dear MP Mokgathi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005498/2023

Project title: Attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff: A case of a technical, vocational education and training college in Johannesburg

Degree: Masters

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This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 18 April 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.

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Yours sincerely,



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INSPIRING GREATNESS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father Masedi Alfred Mokgathi and my uncle Mohale Alpheus Mokgathi for their support and encouragement toward the completion of this study. I also thank the Almighty God and my ancestors for protecting and guiding me throughout my studies. It will be unkindly of me to forget my little daughters (Modjadji and Ditebogo Mokgathi) who had no choice but to understand that I would not be available for them at all times because of my studies.

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ABSTRACT

Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges like any other institution of higher learning rely on the knowledge, abilities and skills of their academic staff to keep abreast with the changing nature of higher education in the country and globally. These institutions of higher learning must be competitive and strive to achieve their strategic goals for them to remain relevant in the sector. Studies have shown that highly skilled academics are leaving the higher education sector specifically the TVET colleges for the private sector for numerous reasons, including better salaries and personal growth. Therefore, attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff is very crucial for the success of any institution of higher learning as this calibre of employees ensure that the institution provides quality education to students. Therefore, it is important for the Technical Vocational Education and Training college to develop attraction and retention strategies to keep highly skilled academic staff in the college.

Given the importance of attraction and retention of skilled academics, I used a qualitative approach and case study design to explore how a selected Technical Vocational Education and Training college in Johannesburg attracted and retained skilled academic staff members. The study focussed on three research questions namely (i) What does the Technical Vocational Education and Training college management understand to be the factors causing the high rate of academic staff attrition? (ii) How does the Technical Vocational Education and Training college management attract and retain skilled academic staff? and (iii) Why does the Technical Vocational Education and Training attract and retain skilled academic staff the way they do?

To understand attraction and retention of skilled academic staff, I drew from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and important theory developed by Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), and Human capital theory, propounded by Schultz in 1961 and later developed extensively by Becker (1964). These theories were very useful to the study as they helped me to understand how the Technical Vocational Education and Training college attract and retain skilled academic staff including the factors causing high rates of academic staff attrition and the challenges that the college faces.

To collect the relevant data, I used the interview method. The participants were purposively and conveniently selected. They consisted of three campus managers and four divisional managers. In analysing data, I used thematic analysis. The findings suggest that there are various factors leading to high rate of attrition in the college. These factors include the lack of promotional opportunity and poor remuneration. Furthermore, the findings suggest that in

addition to the above stated factors, there are challenges that the college faces such as the shortage of academic staff, and the lack of a seamless and effective recruitment process. In addition, the findings also suggest that other than the above factors and challenges, an unsupportive work environment, poor motivation and the provision of inadequate training and career growth also reduces the attraction and retention of skilled academic staff.

Based on the findings, I concluded that it is very important for the Technical Vocational Education and Training college to understand the factors that compel academic staff to either stay or leave the college. This will enable the Technical Vocational Education and Training college to develop strategies to retain skilled academic staff and to ensure the provision of quality education to students. From the conclusions, I recommend that college management must revisit the recruitment process and review it to reduce the time that the college takes to approve the appointment of academic staff and that the contracts of academic staff who are employed temporarily must be converted to permanent ones to minimise attrition as they always leave for permanent positions elsewhere.

Keywords: *Employee attraction, employee retention, highly skilled academic staff and management*

ABBREVIATIONS

CECDP	College Expansion and Capacity Development Programme
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CJC	Central Johannesburg College
COO	Chief Operating Officer
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HOD	Head of Department
ICASS	Internal Continuous Assessment
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISAT	Integrated Assessments
IT	Information Technology
NATED	National Technical Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NSF	National Skills Fund

NCV	National Certificate Vocational
PL 1	Post Level One
PL 2	Post Level Two
PL 3	Post Level Three
PL 5	Post level Five
PQM	Programme Qualifications Mix
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Workplace-Based Learning

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, especially Technical, Vocational Education, and Training (TVET) colleges are very important as they are regarded as sustainable alternatives to universities. These institutions cater for students who fail to gain access to universities. The increased demand for graduates with relevant skills needed by industries in the country, and even beyond has created a high demand for academic staff who are highly skilled and equal for the task in the TVET sector. The attraction and retention of these highly skilled academic staff are essential for good performance by TVET colleges (Cloutier et al., 2015). Therefore, TVET colleges and other institutions of higher learning must attract and retain highly skilled professionals specifically academic staff for them to remain competitive (Chakrabarti & Guha, 2016).

The shortage of highly skilled academic staff in the TVET sector is not anything new. Highly skilled academic staff leave either because of old age or other reasons known to them while others leave in pursuit of greener pastures elsewhere. Lately, this phenomenon has become even more disturbing. In this knowledge-intensive and highly competitive era, attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff are among the major global challenges confronted by TVET colleges and other HEIs (Aguenza & Som, 2018). TVET colleges are experiencing high turnover rates, which have an impact on the student's performance and achievement. Therefore, actions must be taken by TVET management to salvage the situation. Developing strategies for attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff is paramount to the efficient and effective delivery of quality education.

Like any other organisation, TVET colleges rely on the expertise of their academic staff to gain a competitive advantage in global economies and thus require qualified and highly skilled academic staff to deliver the programmes. According to Carter et al. (2019), losing highly skilled employees is much riskier than retaining them through any compensation plans that an organisation can offer. Highly skilled academic staff are considered the most important assets in institutions of higher learning. Importantly, academic staff play an active role on behalf of institutions of higher learning's management in the execution of their institutions' organisational objectives (Gooding, 2018). They are directly involved in realising the goals of

any education programme (Johnson et al., 2019). Lately, organisations are primarily focusing on how to attract and retain highly skilled employees (Aguenza & Som, 2018). This sentiment is reiterated by Arasanmi and Krishna (2019) and Aruna and Anitha (2015) who submit that organisations depend on the attraction and retention of highly skilled employees to succeed. The same applies to TVET colleges as they also depend on academic staff who are highly skilled. These highly skilled academic staff are regarded as the backbone of any TVET college because they are one of the pillars that help them to succeed (Nelson, 2018).

Various scholars state that employees are the greatest assets that organisations depend on (Ansar et al., 2019; Gabčánová, 2011; Manogharan et al., 2018). Organisations must consider the important role played by highly skilled employees for them to develop strategies that will attract and retain these employees. On the contrary, if an organisation does not value its workers, it will be setting itself up for failure (De Sousa et al., 2018). If employees resign, organisations may find it difficult to perform to the level that will make it possible for them to achieve their goals and objectives (Papa et al., 2020; Roslender et al., 2020). In contrast, if highly skilled employees are retained, production and the quality of services may improve since the success of any organisation depends on the availability and efficiency of its employees (Mensah, 2019).

The establishment of TVET colleges by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) was intended to provide quality education to students in the South Africa. The role that these TVET colleges play is of great significance to the development and transformation of the country (DHET, 2015). TVET colleges across South Africa are faced with major challenges that are present throughout the sector such as the provision of quality education, allocation of resources and attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff.

Some of the challenges faced by TVET colleges are critical to overcome. The country has tasked the DHET - TVET sector through its National Development Plan (NDP) to enrol 2.5 million students by 2030, and thereby become a major driver in addressing inequality, unemployment, and poverty. Consequently, the growth in the number of students completing Grade 12 in South Africa has made it more challenging than ever for these TVET colleges to attract and retain the required number of highly skilled academic staff needed to cope with the demand. Further compounding the issue is the National Development Plan 2030, which requires that young people must access quality education. To counteract the rising enrolment

of students in TVET colleges that is created by the increased access to higher education, TVET colleges must ensure that they attract and retain highly skilled academic staff to meet the rising demand. These TVET colleges are no longer just competing for highly skilled academic staff in the geographies in which they operate but with others in the private sector. However, that is not necessarily a bad thing. It just means that TVET colleges must adjust to new realities and adapt how they attract and retain highly skilled academic staff.

As stated above, the various challenges faced by TVET colleges have been exacerbated by considerable growth in the number of learners completing Grade 12 (DHET, 2013a), DHET, and the National Skills Fund's (NSF) need to implement the College Expansion and Capacity Development Programme (CECDP) that was intended to assist young people who were not in education, employment or further training. In addition, the increase in the enrolment of students was intended to expand workplace-based learning (WBL), enhance the capacity of TVET college staff and expand the Programme Qualifications Mix (PQM) of colleges, thus enhancing and expanding public TVET colleges' ability to produce sufficiently skilled graduates to meet the needs of the South African economy (DHET, 2013a).

The increase in the number of college enrolments as required by DHET implies that the number of academic staff increases as well, therefore, making it very important to retain those that are already employed and trying to attract more. According to Selesho and Naile (2014), retaining academic staff in HEIs is a serious concern due to high labour turnover. This poses a significant challenge to academic institutions as stability, quality, and consistency will be affected. In their research, Musakuro and de Klerk (2021) attest that HEIs compete with the public or private sector for talent. Therefore, institutions of higher learning must introduce talent attraction and retention strategies to ensure that skilled individuals remain with the institution for longer periods.

Lately, TVET colleges have experienced considerable growth because of the need to ensure that the NDP becomes a success. To achieve this, the DHET has embarked on a drive to increase the number of TVET colleges to accommodate students (DHET, 2015). DHET must ensure that the TVET sector becomes attractive to highly skilled employees, especially academic staff. These colleges are now competing with other companies in the public sector and the private sector for the highly skilled/quality academic staff that are available in the labour market.

Due to the demand for these scarce skills, attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff has become a big challenge in talent management in these colleges and other institutions of higher learning (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). As a result, public TVET colleges that already have highly skilled, qualified, and experienced academic staff in their employ are compelled to develop strategies that will keep such staff. Given the demand for highly skilled employees, TVET colleges, like any institutions of higher learning are required to have means in place to attract and retain skilled academic staff (Khan, 2018), and hence this study explores how a TVET college in Johannesburg attracts and retains skilled academic staff.

1.2 Background of the study

As indicated earlier that highly skilled academic staff are the engine of any institution of higher learning, and attracting and retaining these employees is essential for an institution of higher learning such as a TVET college to achieve its objectives and gain a competitive advantage. These TVET colleges are expected to produce superior students and alumni that will add value to the growth of the country. Kassaw (2018) states that it is important for academic institutions to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce since these institutions are the places where the country's workforce is produced and cater to all types of organisations. It is important for TVET colleges to develop attractive reward packages to attract and retain highly qualified academics. According to Khalid et al. (2012) and Rusike and Sloka (2019), highly skilled academic staff are the cornerstone of any successful TVET college since they are the highest source of knowledge and awareness production institutions in the country.

Organisations attract and retain staff for many reasons known to them but the main reason for attracting and retaining staff is to ensure that the company gains a competitive advantage while on the other hand satisfying the needs of clients/ customers and maximising profit. Attracting and retaining highly skilled employees is very important for the success of the organisation. Based on extant literature, for an organisation to succeed, it must develop attraction and retention strategies that are suitable to attract the required staff and ensure that they remain in the organisation for a long time (Erasmus et al., 2015; Fernandez & Worasuwan, 2017; Miller, 2006). Despite TVET college's efforts to produce knowledgeable students, it remains difficult to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff because of competition in the labour market. The competition for highly skilled employees is fierce (Kireu, 2019; Mahony, 2019). Schechter et al. (2016) state that organisations are compelled to compete to attract and retain highly skilled

employees in an environment where there is a skills shortage. Schlechter et al. (2016) further state that highly skilled employees in South Africa are continuously in demand and difficult to source. Competition between the public and private sectors in South Africa makes it difficult for HEIs, specifically TVET colleges to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. However, these TVET colleges are faced with the risk of losing the skilled academic staff they already have (Gharib et al., 2017). Losing highly skilled academic staff has serious implications for the delivery of quality education, conducting cutting-edge research, and enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of institutions of higher learning (McCowan, 2018; Yirdaw, 2016).

In their study of the influence of compensation on talent retention at a TVET college, Mabaso and Moloi (2016) found that the poor application of total reward is a cause for a high turnover of academic staff who leave for better opportunities in other sectors of the economy. Buthelezi (2018) posits that most academic staff in the public TVET sector are not satisfied with intrinsic and extrinsic rewards offered by college councils that represent DHET supports. Moreover, Makhubela and Ngoepe (2018) indicate that the resignation of skilled and fully trained employees poses a serious threat to organisations as this leads to a significant cost associated with turnover. Furthermore, Moloantoa and Darasamy (2017) raise a concern that highly skilled academic staff might exit the academic space because of dissatisfaction with such factors as work conditions, workload, benefits, and remuneration.

Previous researchers, Eisenberger et al. (2002); Oswald et al. (2015) show that to keep an employee happy, organisations should consider some key factors like knowing the employee well, creating an interactive, innovative, and cultural environment that indirectly keeps reminding employees to stay loyal to their organisation, offering the reward, and recognising best performers. In addition, Galli (2020) submits that pay, job design, and internal communication methods in the organisation are considered the most important factors that contribute to employee motivation, which in return lead to improved productivity and retention of employees in the organisation. The TVET college must find a way to deal with the challenge of skills shortage.

Lately, researchers have shown that skilled employees are very scarce due to reasons such as resignations and retirements (Horbach & Rammer, 2021; Rasool & Botha, 2011). For every organisation to succeed, it must be highly competitive, and this can only be possible if it attracts and retains highly skilled employees. To achieve this, certain strategies must be employed by

the management of the organisation. The TVET college has a legal and moral obligation to ensure a high-quality student output and to strive to improve performance (Mathimaran & Kumar, 2017). Tourangeau et al. (2017) argue that management possesses an important and obvious role in creating an environment to attract and retain employees to reach its objectives.

Based on the above discussions, for an organisation to succeed, it needs to develop attraction and retention strategies that are suitable to attract the required staff and ensure that they remain in the organisation for a long time. This study intends to assist in identifying gaps that are less researched and provide solutions to problems and challenges that the TVET sector faces in seeking to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff that are needed by TVET colleges if they are to be successful.

1.3 Scope of the study

When conducting a study, the researcher must be specific in terms of the study setting. Simon and Goes (2013) and Akanle et al. (2020) describe the scope of the study as the parameters under which the study is to be conducted. This study was based at a TVET College in the city of Johannesburg, Gauteng province. This TVET college was chosen because of its proximity to the researcher. Further, no previous research known to the researcher was conducted at the TVET college exploring the role of college management in attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff.

All senior academic staff, including Post level 3 (PL3) and Post level 5 (PL5) working at the TVET college were identified as having the required characteristics to participate in this study. Further, the findings of this study will be useful in identifying and addressing challenges that are associated with the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff at the college. While the college comprises various employees such as support and academic staff, the study only focused on academic staff in the college under study.

1.4 Rationale for the study

In today's fast-paced, competitive world, TVET colleges are continually changing due to competition for highly skilled academic staff that are scarce in the market where they operate. This competition for skilled employees is fierce, and skilled employees are not always on the lookout for job opportunities since most of them are employed (Kireru, 2019; Mahony, 2018).

Like other institutions of higher education, TVET colleges are expected to produce faithful and devoted human resources to have insights into science and technology (Dacholfany, 2017). This can only be realised if the colleges craft strategies for attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff.

The study explored the current employee attraction and retention practices used by the TVET college to formulate appropriate recommendations that contribute to the greater effectiveness of these practices. This research contributes to the limited knowledge currently available in the field of the topic and is intended to assist the college in crafting strategies for attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff at the college. The study will be useful to college management including campus managers as it highlights the challenges that the college faces and some suggestions on how the challenges can be mitigated. Moreover, this study will not only expand the researcher's knowledge in the field and in-depth understanding of the dynamics of attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff, but it will also assist the college management in identifying the challenges or factors that affect the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff and making informed decisions on how these challenges can be tackled to improve the overall college performance.

1.5 Research problem statement

The inability of public TVET colleges to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff, coupled with the time taken to hire new academic staff has certain implications for the college and students. When a TVET college loses a skilled, experienced, and talented academic staff, teaching and learning in the area that was taught by the academic staff who resigned might come to a standstill if no replacement is found immediately and lead to students' dissatisfaction. Organisations spend a lot of money replacing and hiring new employees; thus, an organisation must find a way to keep the employees (Dickson, 2017). In a survey conducted by Horbach and Rammer (2021) focusing on labour shortage and innovation, it was found that employers across the world are facing a critical shortage of highly skilled employees since the Great Recession. Therefore, an organisation must attract highly skilled employees and retain the existing skilled ones, to discourage them from leaving the organisation, as it will lead to negative impacts on the organisation such as poor performance, low productivity, and low output.

When I joined the TVET college in 2012, there was a marked increase in the number of highly skilled and experienced academic staff members who were leaving the college for different reasons. Some of these academic staff members were leaving the college for greener pastures in our sister TVET colleges in the public sector, other government departments, and academic institutions in the private sector. Despite the college's attempt to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff, the college still one of the TVET colleges that are struggling to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff and remains one of the lowest-performing colleges in the country. At present, the college is under administration due to mismanagement of funds and other related matters. The mismanagement of funds has led to the dismissal of the college principal and his replacement in 2019.

During the same period, other top management also left the TVET college due to dismissals and resignations. During the same period, a huge number of academic staff also left the college due to various reasons and this has led to the loss of highly skilled academic staff. At present, the college in conjunction with the DHET is desperately trying to speed up the recruitment and placement of top management and academic staff to ensure effective good governance, stability, efficient management of funds, and teaching and learning. Although the management of the college would appear not to be disturbed or concerned about this state of affairs, the number of highly skilled academic staff who left and those that continue to leave the college has raised concerns among academic staff and other senior staff members. Questions on what is happening at the college and what can be done to ensure that highly skilled academic staff are retained remain unanswered.

Several scholars have conducted some research on factors affecting employee retention, the effect of motivation on employee retention (Magaisa & Musundire, 2022), and how work environment affect employee retention (Nel et al., 2012; Yuzliza et al., 2021), and the role of remuneration in employee retention (Kinyili, 2018). Regardless of the huge number of studies that were conducted, few studies were conducted in the TVET sector focussing on the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff. Therefore, a study on exploring the strategies for attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff is imperative.

1.6 Key research questions

1. What does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central understand to be the factors causing the high rate of academic staff attrition?
2. How does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff?
3. Why does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff the way they do?

1.7 Research objectives

1. To explore the factors causing the high rate of academic staff attrition at the TVET college.
2. To understand how the TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attracts and retains skilled academic staff.
3. To understand why a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attracts and retains skilled academic staff the way they do.

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

This study is organised and presented under five chapters, which are briefly stated below:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study

In this chapter, I provided the introduction and background to the study. I also presented the study's problem statement. Further, I discussed the scope of the study, research questions and objectives of the study including the benefits and the rationale for conducting this study. The following chapter introduces the literature reviewed and the theory followed in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature review and Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I provide the review of relevant literature on the research conducted in the field of employee attraction and retention. I also paid specific attention to literature that focused on attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff in HEIs. In this chapter, the discussion starts by explaining the concept of employee attraction and retention, and management and later focusses on the literature related to attracting and retaining employees. In the last section of the chapter, I reflect on the theoretical framework that I used in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I provide a detailed presentation of the methodology used to collect and analyse data for this study. I describe the path followed in the study from start to finish. This includes the choice of study approach, data collection method, selection of participants, research instrument used, and data collection procedure and analysis.

Chapter 4: Presentation of findings

In this chapter, I present the findings obtained from the study based on the data collected and analysed.

Chapter 5

Lastly, this fifth chapter focuses on the discussion of findings. In discussing the findings of the study based on employee attraction and retention, I reflect on what emerged from the interviews conducted with participants in a TVET college setting vis-à-vis extant literature and the theoretical framing. Further, I make recommendations to college management as predicated on the findings. I also make suggestions for further research in the field.

1.9 Chapter summary

In this introductory chapter, I provided the introduction and background to the study, scope of the study, the rationale and research questions informing the study. I also presented the objectives of the study, and an outline of the dissertation. The next chapter is Chapter 2, which is Literature Review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a review of extant literature, reflecting on research conducted in the field of employee attraction and retention. I paid special attention to literature that focused on attracting and retaining staff in higher education institutions (HEIs). Researchers conduct a review of the literature to identify research that is relevant to the study, assess existing knowledge in the field of interest, challenge existing approaches to the research, identify relevant theories and findings, and lastly to compare underlying research to shape current studies (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2014).

Conducting a thorough literature review is one of the key components of the research process, giving the focus and direction of the study in question and assisting the researcher in getting used to what has been researched in the field of interest. Grewal et al. (2016) state that for the literature review to be deemed proper, it must critique scholarly works from various scholars, identify gaps in the literature, and create relevant questions to guide future research relating to the research topic. I start this chapter by explaining the concepts of employee attraction, employee retention, and management, and later focuses on various strategies that assist in attracting and retaining employees. Lastly, I explain the theoretical framework used in this study.

2.2 Conceptualisation of important terms

Before discussing the role and the structure of the organisation in the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) context and how it can attract and retain highly skilled academic staff, the concepts used in the study must be distinguished. Properly describing concepts that are used in the study is very crucial before getting into the details of this write-up. Key concepts that are briefly explained in this chapter are employee attraction, employee retention, and management, and they are very important as explained below:

2.2.1 *Employee attraction*

Employee attraction is important for the organisation to succeed. An organisation that invests in tools that ensure the attraction of experienced and highly skilled staff gains a competitive

edge. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020) and Rynes (1991), the process of getting potential candidates to view the organisation as an employer of choice is defined as employee attraction. Graham – Leviss (2011) define employee attraction as an umbrella term used by organisations to market themselves to potential employees. In addition, Armstrong and Taylor (2020) further explain that employee attraction involves identifying the most qualified candidate's source and evaluating and utilising the most suitable sources of applicants.

2.2.2 Employee retention

The success of a TVET college is based on its ability to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. For this to be realised, it is imperative that the TVET college must retain its employees and develop strategies that are suitable for attracting and retaining them. Retaining employees who are already in the employ of the organisation is very important for the success of the organisation. The term employee retention has been defined and explained differently by different authors (Bidisha & Mukulesh, 2013; Mita, et al., 2014) This is because employee retention is a crucial challenge that faces many organisations in the country and beyond and, in addition, a tool that organisations can use to succeed. Therefore, the definition of employee retention may be complex as it may show a different meaning to other people.

Various researchers have also attempted to establish the meaning of employee retention ((Hong et al., 2012; Meaghan et al., 2002); Shakeel and But (2015). Amushila and Bussin (2021) states that employee retention is a planned and coordinated activity that is taken by an organisation to meet the needs of the employees with the view of retaining them. Ndeipanda (2018) describes the retention of employees as a measure that is used by organisations to encourage employees who are productive and highly skilled to continue working in that organisation. In the view of Mita (2014) and Sishuwa and Phiri (2020), employee retention is a technique that is adopted by an organisation to keep an effective workforce and to meet its time operational requirements. According to Temba (2020), employee retention is defined as the way of inspiring and motivating staff to make them highly committed to the organisation for a period that lasts longer or until the completion of a given task. Further, employee retention is a process of holding highly skilled and talented employees for an extended period (Temba, 2020). Balakrishnan and Vijayalakshmi (2014) and Singh (2019) define employee retention as the different organisational practices and policies, which ensure that employees become loyal to the organisation for a long time. Nasir et al.'s (2019) definition of employee retention shares similar points with the definition of Balakrishnan and Vijayalakshmi (2014) and Singh (2019),

as they both describe employee retention as procedures, arrangements, and policies meant to retain employees for a longer period. Furthermore, Huang and Zhang (2016) define employee retention as steps used by an organisation to inspire employees to continue working for a long time. In addition, Naim and Lenka (2018) explain that employee retention is an effort put in place by an organisation to retain its employees to maintain its levels of productivity thereby achieving its business objectives.

2.2.3 The Concept of management

Every organisation tries to ensure that it functions effectively. While this is happening in most organisations, the TVET college as an organisation must also ensure that it functions in a proper way. The management of a TVET college plays a crucial role in ensuring that the college attracts and retains highly skilled academic staff to achieve its organisational goals and objectives. Various researchers define management differently depending on the industry where they operate (Bateman & Snell, 2013; Chiekezie, 2017). Some managers in organisations confuse the terms "manager" and management. Bateman and Snell (2013) and Chiekezie, (2017) describe management as the pursuit of organisational goals with organisational resources. Similarly, Algahtani (2014) describes management as a process that is continuously being exercised by a group of individuals who are appointed as executives, administrators, and supervisors. The management performs functions and activities that are vital for the organisation's success. Without good management practices, most organisations will find it difficult to survive (Monye & Ibegbulem, 2018).

The lack of strategic direction, disorganisation, and unmotivated employees will characterise the organisation and thus leading to workers not knowing whether they are performing as expected (Monye & Ibegbulem, 2018). Management comprises different managers in the organisation; these managers perform different roles and responsibilities. Godwin et al. (2017) submit that functions and activities performed by management are not only limited to planning, organising, leading and controlling but also the extent to staffing, delegation, mentoring, and resolving conflicts in the organisation. As stated, that management comprises managers in the organisation, and these managers are individuals who manage various departments of the organisation with the purpose of achieving the set organisational objectives. Management is also regarded as an individual who is responsible for achieving the objectives that are set by an organisation through the efficient and effective use of resources (Lussier (2017), In an

organisation, managers perform different roles and responsibilities, which are intended to support the strategic decision of the organisation. These roles and responsibilities must correlate with the position and the level the person occupies in that organisation. Based on the definition above, a manager must be both efficient and effective in the organisation, meaning that if they are not efficient and effective, that person cannot be regarded as a manager.

Every organisation's management is divided into three levels starting from top, middle, and first-level management. Having these three levels of management ensures that division of powers and responsibilities are clearly defined to promote the principle of good management practice in an organisation (Mahmood et al., 2012; Boutmaghzoute & Moustaghfir, 2021). In the context of TVET colleges, managers occupy different positions that start from top management, being the college principal as the head of the college and encompass the deputy principal academic responsible for academic staff, deputy principal corporate, responsible for human resources and other related duties, deputy principal finance, and the newly created position of deputy principal registrar or innovation. These top managers are responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of a TVET college, which include developing strategies that are in support of the overall DHET strategy. The TVET college's top management role extends over the entire college and encompasses divisions such as financial roles, marketing roles, human resources roles, operations, and procurement. Middle-level management encompasses campus managers and departmental managers, and their roles are focused on a specific campus and are responsible for ensuring that campus operations run efficiently and effectively. The last category of management is first-line managers or subject specialists who are responsible for managing individual academic staff in their departments.

2.3 The role of TVET colleges in the country

Understanding the role that the TVET college sector plays in South Africa's play is important to assist in describing and understanding the challenges that colleges face in attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff. Almost a decade ago, South Africa had approximately 50 public TVET colleges and more than 50 private TVET colleges (DHET, 2015). TVET colleges enrol many students per trimester, semester, and yearly and therefore, TVET colleges must ensure that they attract and retain highly skilled academic staff as they are the backbone of every organisation's success (Nelson, 2018). Having strategies that appeal to prospective and current academic staff could relate to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and human capital theories

that is based on motivating factors that ensure that academic staff are attracted to the organisation and remain in the organisation.

In today's fast-paced, competitive world, public TVET colleges are continually changing due to competition in the market space in which they operate. The competition for skilled employees is fierce, and most of these skilled employees are not always desperate for job opportunities since they are involved in consultancy work (Kireru, 2019; Mahony, 2019). TVET colleges as institutions of higher learning must upskill the community and the nation at large. These TVET colleges play an important role in ensuring that they produce students that are industry relevant and can contribute new knowledge to the industry and the economy. Therefore, these TVET colleges are expected to attract and retain skilled employees that will be able to transfer skills and knowledge to students who must come out of the institution as qualified alumni with knowledge relevant to their field of study.

2.3.1 Overview of college management and their work context

The TVET college under study is situated at the heart of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng province. The college has more than 380 academic staff members based at the college's various campuses. The College has seven campuses in parts of the Municipality such as in Parktown, Alexandra, Braamfontein, Doornfontein, Troyville, Langlaagte and crown mines. Its management is responsible for all the activities of the organisation including strategically planning what must be done, organising activities, mobilising resources, and tools needed to achieve the set objective, leading the team in performing the tasks, motivating staff, and controlling how things must be done in the organisation. The management also plays an important role in all management processes. This includes providing strategic direction and leadership to ensure that the organisation fulfils its mission, objectives, and goals. Their roles also entail guiding the organisation to success.

2.3.2 Management Categories in the Context of TVET Colleges

As stated earlier that the management of the TVET college plays an important role in ensuring that the college attracts and retains highly skilled academic staff, this role is divided into various categories of management, which are intended to support the organisational goals and objectives.

While it is common that top management in organisations normally uses job titles such as Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), President, or Vice President, in the context of the TVET college, top-level management comprises senior-level executives such as the college principal, deputy principal – corporate, deputy principal – academic, deputy principal – finance and deputy principal – innovation. These senior level executives are responsible for setting the overall direction of the TVET college by developing strategies that attract and retain skilled academic staff and ensuring that the college’s major objectives are achieved as per the guideline from the. This top management also extend to campus managers who are involved in managing different campuses of the college and are led by the deputy principal academic and are also responsible for ensuring that the strategic objectives of the college are extended to their respective campuses.

The TVET college’s top management role extends over the entire college and encompasses campus management and its divisional managers. The deputy principal – academic, provides strategic leadership by ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of quality education, curriculum services, and programme offerings in the college. Other responsibilities include the following: managing the registration process at the college, coordinating the compilation and implementation of all student administration policies and procedures, and ensuring that examination preparation for all the programmes and other related activities takes place as planned.

Every campus manager as stated above, report to the deputy principal academic and is responsible for the overall management of the campus' academic and support staff, leads and coordinates the daily management of staff, students, and campus activities. The campus manager is also responsible for institutional quality assurance at the campus level, overseeing the professional development of both academic and support staff members. Further, the campus manager is accountable for all the assets and financial transactions of the institution, monitoring and evaluating campus administration processes, assisting with the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of policies and procedures to ensure effective and efficient management at the campus.

Middle-level management encompasses senior subject specialists and departmental managers who report to the campus manager. Their roles are focussed on coordinating the teaching and learning support strategies aimed at ensuring that there is the monitoring of student

performance across the campus, developing and coordinating the dissemination of study tools and techniques to students across the campuses. Further, they monitor the availability and utilisation of other academic support resources by students.

The last category of management is first-line managers or subject specialists who are responsible for teaching, learning, and managing individual academic staff members in their departments. They are responsible for coordinating students, lecturers, and administrative processes within the specific department such as management, finance, marketing, or engineering department/ section, ensuring effective and efficient utilisation of the available resources in the department. Further, they are responsible for coordinating teaching and learning, coordinating all academic activities within the section including the management of timetables, attendance, and staff allocation and ordering of textbooks, monitoring, and evaluation of curriculum delivery. First-line managers or subject specialists prepare all internal continuous assessment (ICASS) and Integrated assessments (ISAT) activities including the verification of marks and ensuring adherence to policies on attendance and sub-minimum.

2.4 Understanding highly skilled academic staff

Highly skilled academic staff provide the TVET college with a competitive advantage in that they provide quality education. Therefore, they are more important than the physical assets of the college (Stafford, 2018). Losing highly skilled academic staff does not only involve a loss of individual skill in the TVET college but might also lead to more workload for the remaining academic staff as they must carry an extra workload and this may also affect the provision of quality education to students (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Kurdi, et al., 2020). The loss of highly skilled academic staff is not only a loss to the TVET college, but a loss to the economy as this leads to the loss in intellectual and technical knowledge that is important as it contribute to the economic and social growth of the country in general.

2.4.1 Defining a highly skilled academic staff

An academic staff who exhibit the characteristics that are intended to assist the college achieve its objectives and goals are regarded as being highly skilled. According to Gupta and Sinha (2020), a highly skilled academic staff member is an employee who works effectively with others and has a sense of commitment, is knowledgeable, innovative, bright and an expert in his or her field of work. Similarly, Thomas and Letchmiah (2017) describe highly skilled

academic staff as an employee who demonstrates consistent levels of high performance, drives exceptional business performance through competence, and committed to performing his roles effectively.

2.4.2 Characteristics of highly skilled academic staff

Academic staff are the most important employees because they are the ones who are constantly in contact with the students in the college. According to Gupta and Sinha (2020), highly skilled academic staff are an important resource for the TVET college due to their critical character, knowledge and skills, and it is their characteristic that make them the most valuable assets in the college. Since these highly skilled academic staff have the potential to advance and grow within the TVET college, it is critical to attract and retain them to enhance the success and sustainability of the college as they might be overlooked (Thomas & Letchmiah, 2017).

Firstly, academic staff act as a link between the TVET college and the students because their role is to facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom. This means that academic staff must be highly skilled because they are responsible for transferring skills and knowledge that is required by the students, the community and the country in particular. Secondly, a highly skilled academic staff is the one who drives exceptional TVET college performance through competence, commitment, and contribution (Hayashi & Dolan, 2013; Korantwi –Barimah, 2017). They possess the skills and knowledge that are required by the TVET college and demonstrate consistent levels of high performance in the organisation, have the required academic and professional qualifications in the relevant field that is coupled with considerable experience in teaching and general administration. Lastly, a highly skilled academic staff is someone who is capable of handling and coordinating multiple roles and maintaining a high level of professional and ethical standards in and outside the TVET college.

This is in line with the terms stated in the Government Gazette No: 36654 on policy for professional qualifications for lecturers in TVET college that was adopted to encourage academic staff to pursue appropriate higher degrees and thereby gain qualifications that could be used to achieve the development of professionalism across the TVET sector (DHET, 2013). In terms of this policy, academic staff at a TVET college must possess the requisite qualification and related industry experience to teach in their area of competence (DHET, 2013). Accordingly, the need for professional qualifications for lecturers (academic staff) in

TVET is very important for addressing the skills gap that is also exacerbated by the turnover of highly skilled academic staff and strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, having a highly skilled academic staff provides strong academic, and intellectual and leads to the TVET college being successful.

2.4.3 The importance of attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff in the TVET college

Attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff is key to the success of any TVET college. TVET colleges must keep in their employ academic staff who are highly skilled to ensure that the institutions can assist and support students thereby achieving their objectives. Attracting and retaining these highly skilled academic staff by the TVET college in today's fast-paced and complex business world has become very critical than ever. According to Ortlieb and Sieben (2012) and Yameen et al. (2021), attracting and retaining employees has become an effort by organisations globally since employees contribute to organisational success. Castellano (2013) argues that an organisation must engage the most highly skilled employees within the market to remain competitive. These highly skilled academic staff are essential for the effective provision of quality education and the success of the college, the TVET college must attract and retain its highly skilled academic staff for a long period as they assist it to successfully achieve its desired goals and outcomes (Kossivi, et al., 2016). The TVET college's ability to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff might give the college management the confidence and assurance that they have the best team in place to effectively provide the quality education that is required by the students, the community, the country and the economy.

The importance of highly skilled academic staff cannot be overstated as they provide valuable support and expertise needed by the TVET colleges to assist their students in completing their programmes. One of the primary roles of the academic staff includes effective classroom teaching, academic advising and counselling of students, and they disseminate knowledge to students and assist them with developing an understanding of that knowledge and the ability to apply it. Furthermore, highly skilled academic staff can assist with the recruitment of students and initiatives designed to help students succeed academically, as well as other assigned duties. Thus, highly skilled academic staff play a critical role in today's world regarding the effective offering of quality education. Without them, the country may struggle to satisfy its needs of the community and those of the broader world. Therefore, TVET colleges must attract and

retain experienced and knowledgeable academic staff to ensure that the college is successful and able to service its clients.

2.5 Strategies for attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff

Institutions of higher learning achieve their objectives of discharging effective teaching and learning through the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff (Selesho & Naile, 2014). When these highly skilled academic staff are attracted but not retained, it causes attrition in the TVET system. Academic staff as employees of a TVET college are very important for the provision of quality education and its success. These academic staff are also key to ensuring that the college achieves its goals and objectives. To attract and retain highly skilled academic staff, the TVET college must develop suitable strategies (Raj & Bribdha 2017). According to Ramos (2019), there are various employee retention strategies that include competitive compensation and benefits, providing opportunities for career growth and development, fostering a positive work environment, and appreciating employees through the provision of recognition of their contribution and rewarding employee achievements.

Several studies reveal that various strategies are used by organisations to attract and retain skilled employees and this is dependent upon the level of skilled employees that the organisation wishes to attract and retain (Brown et al., 2002; Nekoei & Weber, 2017). For example, strategies may be put in place to attract and retain senior officials, people in specialised positions, and early vocation high-potential employees with career paths and development techniques. The study conducted by Boswell et al. (2017) and Bibi et al (2018) submits that pay, benefits, work-life balance, performance and recognition, development, and career opportunities assist with the process of attracting and retaining employees to the organisation. Similarly, studies that were conducted in employee attraction and retention also identified the factors that lead to attrition and thus have an impact on the organisation's success (Brown et al., 2002; Nekoei & Weber, 2017). Among factors that lead to attrition in TVET colleges, Owence et al. (2014) and Deas (2027) identified poor leadership, a poor salary scale, poor working conditions, the lack of growth and career opportunities, and excess workload as factors that lead to employees deciding whether to stay or leave the organisation.

Many studies are important to the current study (Adeosun & Ohiani, 2020; Jadon & Upadhyay, 2018; Maria et al., 2021; Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou, 2019; Papa et al., 2018). Although some of the above studies were not conducted in the context of HEIs, they provide a theoretical

background and literature on employee attraction and retention. They provide a better understanding of the complexity of challenges faced by organisations in determining the factors that are important for attracting highly skilled employees. Many factors can lead to an organisation being able to attract highly skilled staff. Weerasinghe (2017) argues that for organisations to succeed, they must implement talent management in their strategies and retain their employees.

While attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff is considered a serious challenge, the same is said of retaining them. For an organisation to succeed, it needs to develop a retention strategy that will appeal to employees so that they can stay in the organisation. According to Mathimaran and Kumar (2017), retaining key or highly skilled academic staff is critical and important to the long-term health and success of any organisation. Gan and Yusof (2019) state that highly skilled employees are the major assets of organisations and could improve overall organisational performance. Further, Gan and Yusof (2019) submit that to enhance their competitiveness, organisations must look for strategies/ factors that can attract and retain employees, especially those that are highly skilled.

Theron's (2015) talent retention framework identified key contributors to employee retention. According to this framework, an organisation must consider factors such as compensation and recognition, management support, and satisfaction with organisation practice to retain academic staff. Similarly, the study conducted by Singh (2018) affirms that compensation, work-life balance, self-grooming, and great interchange are the factors that mostly affect the rate of employee attraction and retention in organisations. Some researchers have identified key factors that attract and retain skilled employees (Adeosun & Ohiani, 2020; Maria et al., 2021). According to Adeosun and Ohiani (2020), for companies to attract and retain talent, they can leverage salary, brand name, referral, and job security as core factors in attracting and recruiting quality talent. Research focusing on talent attraction and retention of private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia found that to attract and retain highly skilled employees, most organisations relied on employee referrals as a recruitment source, interviews as a selection method, and providing training programmes for developing employees and creating opportunities for growth as part of their employee retention strategies (Maria et al., 2021).

Organisations that are not always successful in attracting and retaining highly skilled employees, can use attraction and retention strategies that are tried and tested by other

organisations (Bibi et al., 2018; Covella et al., 2017; Kehr, 2020). Similarly, Qazi et al. (2015) argue that organisations must have a strategy for retaining such highly skilled employees to create feelings that they are appreciated in the organisation. Johennesse and Chou (2017) state that employee retention is intended to maintain a state in which employees individually decide on whether they leave or stay with their organisation. In addition, Ojasalo and Tähtinen (2016) posit that involving employees in setting policies and decisions within their organisation ensures that they find it difficult to leave the organisation.

The study conducted by Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou (2019) submit that strategies such as compensation, training and development, teamwork, succession planning, and friendly culture are used to retain talent. Similarly, Jadon and Upadhyay (2018) posit that strategies for attracting and retaining employees include empowerment, management practices, cooperation, operating styles, and role performance. On the contrary, Chinyio et al. (2018) state that salary, gratuity, and pension are used as strategies to influence employees to stay with the organisation. Studies exploring the causal relationship between the antecedents and consequences of talent management for early career academics in South African HEIs, it was found that recognition, rewards, and compensation have negative implications on turnover (Barkhuizen et al., 2017; Lesenyeho et al., 2018). On the other hand, Mabaso and Dlamini (2018) argue that a total rewards strategy that consists of compensation, performance management, recognition, and employee development and career opportunities, benefits, and work-life balance enhance the commitment of academic staff in a HEI.

It is difficult for TVET colleges and other organisations to replace the knowledge, skills and experience that might be lost due to resignations and other factors (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018). It is important that strategies that will attract and retain highly skilled academic staff be crafted since the inability to attract and retain these employees could have a negative impact upon the college operational functions including the provision of quality education.

2.5.1 Supportive work environment/ conditions

A supportive work environment is an environment that is neat, hygienic, and has the required infrastructure. According to Tripathi (2014), the work environment can be defined as the environment in which people work including physical setting, job profile, culture, and market condition.

A supportive work environment is defined as a climatic component that consists of supervisory/peer support, obstacle, and prospect to apply learned behaviour in the workplace (Boswell et al., 2017). This includes the physical environment as well as the conducive mental climate required for the smooth performance of the employee. According to Onu et al. (2018), a workplace environment is defined as a system of structures where needs, equipment, and other facilities are put in place to serve and meet the requirements and needs of employees tasked with the responsibility to achieve a given set organisational goal.

A workplace environment is anything that exists around an individual saddled with the responsibility to carry out a function (Mušura et al., 2013). The work environment consists of both internal and external environments where the internal embodies facilities, structures, office arrangements, and welfare arrangements made to serve the employees in specific and organisation in general (Obiageli et al., 2015), whereas the external environments are often regarded as elements which are beyond the control of the organisation that engages the employees. This work environment also influences the organisation's ability to retain talented people (Massoudi & Hamdi, 2017). However, for a work environment to be an effective employee retention factor, the work environment needs not only to be simply the location where employees complete their tasks on a daily basis, but must also be where the working experience for employees is a pleasant one, where adequate resources are provided and where there is some degree of flexibility, for example, in terms of work hours (Kagwi, 2018; Massoudi & Hamdi, 2017). According to Kagwi (2018), work environment and conditions can be categorised into the physical workplace environment (which is the context of the office layout and design) and, the psychosocial work environment (which are factors including working conditions, and social support from supervisors).

Research has shown that a supportive work environment, informal work culture, fair and ethical leadership, and positive reputation are some of the factors responsible for attracting prospective and retaining current employees (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019; Deepa & Baral, 2018; Jain & Bhatt, 2015). When the work environment is good, it leads to greater job satisfaction and greater motivation leading to enhanced performance. The provision of a supportive work environment is important to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. Some scholars are of the view that for an organisation to succeed in attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff, it needs to provide academic staff with a supportive environment (Irshad, 2023; Nasir et al., 2019; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017).

In the study conducted by Msengeti and Obwogi (2015) and Kundu and Lata (2017), it was discovered that a positive work environment influences employee retention. Some employees quit their jobs because of the climate in which they work (Irshad, 2023; Naz et al., 2020; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Pawirosumarto et al. (2017) further emphasize that having a supportive work environment gives a good impact on the continuity of employment, while on the other hand, a toxic work environment will negatively affect the continuity of employment. This creation of a supportive work environment inspires employees to accomplish tasks and achieve organisational plans (Dwesini, 2019). Further, this creation of a supportive work environment encourages employees to come to work while on the other hand inspiring them and sustaining them the whole day (Dwesini, 2019). Employees will remain in the organisation if they enjoy the work environment. However, the results of the study conducted by Nurisman (2015) found that work environment and employee development were not significant in employee retention.

Massoudi and Hamdi (2017) submit that creating a good work environment can encourage employees to feel positive about the space they are working in and be more productive and stay in the organisation. The study conducted by Way et al. (2019) found that the work environment influences the productivity of academics in organisational settings. These findings corroborate the findings of study conducted by Kapenda and Pieters (2017). Kapenda and Pieters (2017) argue that for productivity to improve in an organisation, a desirable and supportive work environment must be in place. Similarly, Rattu et al. (2018) added that a supportive work environment has a positive influence on the retention of employees. This corroborates findings by Gangwani et al. (2016) who submit that the work environment plays an important role in employee retention. Having a supportive work environment ensures that there is a good and long-lasting relationship between employees and the organisation in which they work.

2.5.2 Training and development

Academic staff are required to have the required skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies to be able to provide quality education to students (Al Kurdi et al., 2020). As a way of attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff, training, and development are very important as trained employees can perform their job effectively. Training and development are regarded as a process of upskilling the workforce in the organisation. Various researchers define training differently. According to Vincent (2020), training is regarded as a procedure that is organised

to ensure that a person learn a skill or knowledge for a period with the purpose of achieving a particular objective. Chang and Teng (2017), describe training as a process where a skill is acquired for the purposes of a task. Considering the above definitions, they all refer to training as a skill that is obtained for a particular purpose. In an organisation, training is used to ensure that employees are developed in the field of their work with the purpose of achieving the set organisational objectives.

Organisations use training and development as tools to motivate employees to stay in an organisation for a long time. The terms training and development are sometimes regarded as the same. Armstrong and Brown (2019) describe training as the use of systematic and planned instruction activities that are intended to promote the learning process. Training and developing employees are very important for the organisation to realise its objectives and succeed. The two play an important role in ensuring that the organisation stands out amongst its competitors in terms of performance and production. When employees are trained and developed, they feel motivated and that improves their stay in the organisation (Ahmed, 2016). Similarly, some scholars recognise that training and development as having an impact on employee attitudes towards their respective organisation on whether to leave or stay (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Mathis et al., 2017). On the one hand, lack of training and development in the organisation demotivates employees. This view is supported by Bishop (2018), asserting that training and development of employees is very important in the rapidly changing work environment. If academic staff are not constantly trained, they will cease to be relevant and equal to the task as their skill and knowledge may be outdated with time. On the other hand, training academic staff will increase their morale and increase their retention rate. Moreover, providing adequate training will minimise errors that are normally committed by less skilled employees and prevent the disruption of service in the college.

Various studies have found that for employees to grow within the organisation, they depend on training and development (Ldama & Bazza, 2015; Koteswari et al., 2020). Further, these employees' career growth is dependent on the training and development of employees. In another study, Omoikhudu (2017) found that training employees has a greater impact on employees' decision to quit or to hold on to the organisation. Omoikhudu (2017) further states that trained employees feel more delighted, satisfied, and cheerful when managers or supervisors appreciate their performance, which makes them more active and motivated in their roles. Similarly, in a study conducted by Okechukwu (2017), it was discovered that a positive

relationship between training and development and employee attitude (job satisfaction) in higher education in Malaysia prevailed.

Bibi et al. (2018) argue that while training and development help in retaining employees, they also make the employees attractive to other organisations by increasing their skills, knowledge, and abilities thus making it easier to be attracted by competing organisations. Gharib et al. (2017) maintain that training and development have a significant effect on talent retention. By investing in the training and development of its employees, an organisation creates an environment that will encourage communication and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas among employees (Mzimela & Chikandiwa, 2017; Bhakuni & Saxena, 2023). In addition, Aliyu et al. (2018) submit that training and development enhance employee performance and productivity.

Academic staff who are competent strive to boost their teaching abilities, and increase knowledge, and are eager to upgrade their qualifications. Shen and Tang (2018) argue that even the knowledge applied, and the skills that employees acquire from the workplace, as well as the effect of training and development on service quality, are currently not clearly defined. Developing academic staff helps with their job satisfaction and potentially reduces their workload. When this is done, it is hoped that it may lead to increased attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff. Their stay in the organisation can be realised if the training provided is intended to provide the skills that improve the performance of the employees (Babakuset al., 2017; Santoro et al., 2020).

According to Salah (2016), the provision of limited training to academic staff results in them being demotivated, and unproductive, and their abilities being hindered significantly towards the provision of quality education, teaching, and learning. If academic staff are not continuously trained and developed, they will continuously struggle to perform their core functions, which include research in the subject content, teaching and learning, continuous professional development, and community engagement. Furthermore, Al-refaei (2019) argues that when the organisation supports employees by offering training and development to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities, then employees feel obligated to support their organisation by providing a high level of service quality.

Focusing on the training and development of highly skilled academic staff in the TVET sector will ensure that they remain up to date with new knowledge and skills that are relevant to their work, which in turn leads to an increase in their morale and results in them remaining in the organisation for a longer period (Adejare et al., 2020). If the academic staff stay in the TVET college for a longer time, they will be more skilled and productive. Yaghi and Bates (2020) submit that it is important that institutions of higher learning invest in the training and development of their academic staff for the benefit of both the staff member and the institution. This view corroborates Shen and Tang (2018), who argue that every training programme that is offered to employees guarantees them obtaining a piece of new knowledge or skills, that could help to increase the benefit from their work and to have more promotions in their work.

2.5.3 Career development opportunities and growth

Good employees want to advance in their careers. Career growth is considered another important variable affecting employee intentions on whether they stay with organisation or leave. Employees are motivated by the prospect of promotions, and the chance to take on more challenging work. If the training they received does not enhance their career growth within the organisation, they start looking for opportunities elsewhere. Johnson (2020) views career development as a process used to explore self-knowledge, and decision-making that shapes an individual's career. According to Fadhallah (2013) and Thomas et al. (2017), a career is defined as a life experience behaviour and attitude that is shown by a person concerning the activities and work experience, values, and aspirations to develop throughout one's lifetime.

Career growth is a practice that is intended to improve and employee's employability in order to pursue the career of choice (Adnyani & Dewi (2019). While it is true that employees will one day leave the organisation, providing them with career growth opportunities may improve retention. Failure by the employer to ensure that employees are considered for career growth opportunities will lead to them finding that elsewhere. When career growth opportunities are available and easily accessible to employees, they tend to feel empowered and encouraged to make the most out of their current skills and further explore their full potential in the workplace. Again, providing employees with career growth opportunities makes them feel valued, appreciated, and cared for beyond their job title. Further, making career growth part of the organisation's values and culture can also assist with improving the retention of employees.

Given that some institutions of higher learning may not afford the funding for academic staff, they must focus on career development as it will assist academic staff to remain competitive in the job market (Moyo & McKenna, 2021). Similarly, Moodly and Toni (2017) submit that it is important for institutions of higher learning to offer career growth to employees as this is an ongoing process and lifelong. It is very critical that employees are recognised in one way or the other and respected.

Al-sharafi et al. (2018) argue that career development has no relationship with employees' retention. However, Smit et al. (2016) submit that investing in employees' career growth opportunities develops their sense of obligation and organisational commitment. The findings also indicate that not enough is done to ensure that every academic staff is developed to their optimum. While there are many ways in which the TVET college management can promote the growth of highly skilled academic staff, failure to ensure that it is ongoing and continuous may lead to this highly skilled academic staff not feeling supported and ending up deciding to leave the TVET college. Therefore, it is important that the TVET college must create opportunities for growth/ to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff.

2.5.4 Recognition and employee reward

To ensure that highly skilled academic staff are attracted and retained, it is important that the TVET college must be recognised and rewarded for their contribution to the college. Recognising and rewarding highly skilled academic staff for their hard work goes a long way in increasing productivity, enthusiasm, and retention. Previous research has found that employees who get recognised and rewarded for their hard work tend to have higher self-esteem, are more confident in what they do and are also willing to take more challenging jobs (Nyakundi et al., 2012; Tirta, et al., 2020). According to Magaisa and Musundire (2017), rewards increase the morale of the employees, self-esteem, and well-being. However, the lack of recognition and rewards for academic staff may hurt their decision to stay in the college.

Similarly, in a work environment where the employer values employees' contribution, employees are appreciated to boost their morale and improve their stay in the organisation. When academic staff are not given recognition and rewarded accordingly for their efforts and contribution in the college, they will be demotivated and start looking elsewhere for opportunities (Elstad & Vabø, 2021). While it cannot be disputed that offering adequate remuneration is critical to attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff, it is equally important for the

TVET college to have a recognition and reward programme that appreciate the contribution of academic staff if it wishes to attract and retain highly skilled academic.

The reward system is believed to be a very powerful strategy that motivates and retains employees in an organisation. According to Langove and Isha (2017), recognising and rewarding employees for their hard work increase their morale, self-esteem, and well-being. Giving employees monetary or non-monetary rewards ensures that prospective employees are attracted to the organisation. Rewards provided by organisations are often categorised into one of three distinct types namely task, social and organisational rewards (Nazir et al., 2016; Hussain et al., 2019). A good rewarding system motivates employees (Cheema et al., 2013). A good reward such as a salary and a bonus attract prospective employees to the organisation.

Employees want to be paid handsomely and if the company can pay employees well, this will be a good factor to attract them. Ahsan (2018) submits that rewards such as direct wages and salaries and fringe benefits influence employees' decisions to stay or quit their jobs. Idris et al. (2017) suggest that if an organisation is to retain skilled employees, it must give them financial rewards. On the other hand, Bustamam et al. (2014) classified rewards into two main categories, which are financial rewards and non-financial rewards. In the view of Akgunduz et al. (2020), when employees receive financial rewards, they instantly perceive the meaning of their work. In addition, Obicci (2015 as cited in Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018) submit that for any organisation to be able to attract and retain highly skilled and committed employees, it must put in place appropriate total rewards since it plays an important role in enhancing employees' commitment thereby leading to their retention in the organisation.

Recognition and rewards are considered as motivating factors for ensuring that employees remain with an organisation for longer than they may otherwise have done. According to Koo et al. (2020) recognition and rewards are given to not only motivate the employees so that they work hard for the organisation but also, to assist in attracting highly skilled employees and retaining employees as well. In addition, it is very difficult to reward an academic staff due to its design. The industry is highly regulated and most of the decisions are taken at a centralised level. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the organisation recognises and rewards employees to avoid the dissatisfaction, which may encourage them to leave the organisation (Mngomezulu et al., 2015). In addition, in trying to attract and retain employees, the organisation can also give them monetary rewards in the form of cash and allowances, or it can

be non-monetary recognition in the form of certificates of appreciation (Nasir & Mahmood, 2018). Hassan (2022), Ndungu (2017) and Rodriguez (2014) states that giving employees rewards and incentives increases their morale and adds value to their achievements while on the other hand, motivating them to be more productive. If employees are dissatisfied, it will lead them to look for opportunities elsewhere.

2.5.5 Compensation

Although academic staff may be more motivated by a desire to shape the country than some other employees, training, development, and promotions are not enough to retain highly skilled academic staff in the college. The extent to which potential academic staff chooses to enter and stay in the teaching sector is highly influenced by the availability of better compensation and higher-paying job opportunities. Boardman et al. (2020) submit that compensating employees who value their work adequately is very important as it assist in improving their retention.

Compensation is described differently by various researchers (Hasibuan, 2011; Sorn, et al., 2023). It includes salary and wages, benefits, bonuses, and additional perks. Researchers such as Osibanjo et al. (2014) and Handaru, et al., (2013) describe compensation as both financial and non-financial remuneration as a form of appreciation offered to employees by employers for the various contributions they made to the organisation. Heathfield (2016) posits that a bonus is compensation for extra work over and above the amount of payment stated in the employee's contract of employment. In Bernadin's (2015) view, compensation is described as all the forms of financial returns and tangible benefits that the employer gives the employees as part of their employment relationship. It is the entire sum of monetary and non-monetary pay given to an employee by the employer in return for work performed as required (Bussin & Brigman, 2019).

There are 10 forms of compensation for employees, such as job bonuses, holiday/pension allowance, family health insurance, employee involvement in the insurance programme, employee recreation programme, awards for outstanding employees, and adequate leave periods (Hafanti, 2015). For Berry (2015), compensation is categorised into two broad types namely wages and salaries. A wage is paid to employees who are employed for a fixed period and paid hourly or daily while a salary is what is paid to people that are on a continuous term contract and this salary is fixed weekly, monthly or an annual rate of pay. Olson et al. (2018)

state that these forms of compensation are very important to the needs of employees. Compensation systems, therefore, are intended to reward past and influence future employee behaviours.

Adequate compensation is important for the success of any organisation. It plays a fundamental role in attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff in the college. Therefore, the TVET college must have a compensation plan that is competitive in the market so that academic staff can remain in the college. Compensation is the main reason why people want to work (Putri et al., 2019). Putri et al. (2019) explain that compensation is an appreciation received by employees of the company and from the company, whether in the form of money or not money in return for having devoted their energy, time, and mind to always provide the best performance in the organisation. According to Gomez-Mejia et al. (2016), employee compensation is made up of base pay and fringe benefits. Gomez-Mejia et al. (2016) added that base pay or cash pay is the direct pay provided by an organisation to employees for work performed and these include salary, overtime pay, shift allowance, uniform allowances, and pay contingent on performance like merit awards, incentive pay, bonuses, etc.

In their study focussing on talent retention of academic staff in South African higher education institutions (HEIs), Barkhuizen et al. (2020) state that researchers (Makondo 2014; Onah & Anikwe, 2016) confirm that poor pay affects an academic's decision to leave an institution. This corroborates Chabaya et al. (2014) who found that academic staff feel that the pay they receive from their employers is not worth their value. Selesho and Naile (2014) also highlighted the effect of compensation on the academic staff's decision to leave or consider leaving the sector. While compensation is believed to be important in the attraction and retention of employees (Das & Baruah, 2013), Amoatema and Kyeremeh (2016) argue that this has very limited short-term effect on employee attraction and retention.

On the contrary, Kossivi et al. (2016) argue that there is no relationship between compensation and the retention of employees, meaning that employees who are rewarded handsomely by their employers may also leave if they feel there is a need to do so. A TVET college needs to provide a fair compensation system for its employees if it is to retain them (Syahreza et al., 2017). Turnea (2018) added that organisations that want to attract and retain talented employees also need to provide them with an attractive compensation plan. Fair compensation contributes to attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff (Sorn et al., 2023; Wibawa

& Indrawati, 2015). According to Mabaso and Dlamini (2018), organisations that have a compensation strategy that is competitive play an important role in motivating, encouraging, and retaining skilled employees. Chiekezie et al. (2017) argue that failure by management to develop and implement a fair compensation plan might lead to highly skilled academic staff looking for better offers elsewhere. Fair compensation has a high effect on employee retention within an organisation because if employees are compensated accordingly, they will feel that the organisation is caring about their needs. Consequently, providing fair compensation ensures that employees are retained in the organisation (Kanaiya & Mustanda, 2020; Putra & Rahyuda, 2016; Syahrenza et al., 2017).

Organisations that offer a salary with benefits that are hard to match can attract and retain highly skilled employees (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Shaukat et al., 2017). Research has shown that high compensation is associated with employee turnover intentions (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Shaukat et al., 2017). Having a compensation plan that is attractive to employees helps them to remain motivated and want to stay in the organisation. In addition, Alferaih et al. (2018) support that if an organisation has an appropriate organisational compensation system in place, it will help to make their employees more efficient.

2.5.6 Work-life balance

Practicing a healthy work-life balance involves an interaction between work and other activities such as participating in family meetings or gatherings, community activities, leisure, social obligations, health and personal development. Lately, work-life balance is considered by organisations as playing an important role in an employee's decision to leave or stay in the organisation. A healthy work-life balance is important for academic staff's psychological wellbeing as it involves their ability to balance their work and private or family life.

Work life balance is explained differently by various authors It is the ability by an individual to balance one's professional work, family responsibilities, and other personal activities (Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020; Kumar, 2017). Similarly, Mazerolle (2018) describe work-life balance as the ability of employees to balance their time to fulfil both work and home responsibilities, which are enhanced through time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance with both roles and responsibilities. In the view of Robbins and Coulter (2012), work-life balance encompasses various resources for caring for the parents of the

employees and their children including their healthy and having a programme in place to deal with the welfare of its employees.

Several scholars have stressed the importance of having a healthy work-life balance in the workplace (Coulter, 2023; Garg & Yajuverdi, 2016) According to Abdirahman et al. (2020), work-life balance is an important issue that organisations must address to ensure that employees are retained. The creation of a work-life balance by the organisation makes employees feel satisfied with their job and remain in the organisation for a long time. Academic staff in TVET colleges are faced with challenges of how to integrate their work and family affairs (EL-Kassem, 2018). A healthy work-life balance is also important to help employees stay motivated at work and be retained. Employees must achieve a balance for the benefit of their health, family, and work responsibilities. Bothwell (2018) states that academic staff in HEIs suffer from poor mental health outcomes such as stress, anxiety, and depression. To reduce this, Rodríguez et al. (2020) submit that work-life balance can provide employees with flexible practices that reduce stress, fatigue, and conflict. Rodríguez et al. (2020) further state that implementing work-life balance policies in the organisation is one of the retention strategies that must be implemented by the management of an organisation. However, the outbreak of the coronavirus diseases 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the shift to remote work that was necessitated by the need to continue operating, have taken a toll on the work-life balance of most employees in organisations. This led to less employee engagement and it constitutes a major cause of employee burnout. If the college can give attention to employees who struggle to manage work and home life, it will go a long way towards retaining highly skilled academic staff.

According to Balamurugan and Pasupathi (2018), work-life balance has become a matter of great concern to both the employer and the employee in the organisation. A healthy work-life balance leads to employees being loyal to the organisation that they are working for (Garg & Yajuverdi, 2016). Lestari and Margaretha (2021) posit that work-life balance allows employees an opportunity to balance their career work life on one side and their personal life on the other side and leads to job happiness. Noronha and Aithal (2020) submit that individual, family, and organisational elements play a pivotal role in determining the extent of work-life balance amongst academic staff. A study conducted by Tyagi (2020) among teaching professionals focusing on their work-life balance, found that obtaining a suitable balance between

professional and personal life was very crucial in determining organisational and overall effectiveness.

Daily, academic staff find themselves having to many responsibilities such as managing classroom teaching and learning, performing administrative duties in the TVET college, and developing themselves through the acquisition of higher qualifications, researching relevant subject content, and attending academic gatherings. These have proven to be difficult for individual employees to manage with family affairs. These challenges often overlap as an academic staff has extra work hour duties such as weekend classes, thereby spending considerable time away from home. Creating a healthy work-life balance is essential for employees, given that employees are satisfied when they have understanding managers. Therefore, creating a work-life balance for academic staff can be a trigger not only for the quality of education but also for ensuring that programmes that are offered by the TVET college are more sustainable in the short to long term (Mythili & Alban, 2018; Zehra & Rukhsana, 2020). Further, the organisation must create a work-life balance that will attract and retain employees. The failure by the TVET college to provide favourable work-life balance to highly skilled academic staff may affect the core business of the college, which is teaching and learning. In addition, it is important for the TVET college to develop programmes that are aimed at meeting the needs of the employees while creating a balance between their private life and work life.

While it is important for the TVET college to focus on the provision of quality education to students, it is equally important that it also focusses on the psychological aspects of its academic staff to stimulate positive attitudes, self-esteem and motivation so that they can remain in the college. The psychological wellbeing of academic staff includes high self-esteem, satisfaction with their work and an overall sense of harmony in their life. This idea of focussing on the psychological aspects of academic staff ensures that they have adequate time to fulfil their family and work commitments (Abdirahman et al., 2020).

2.6 Theoretical framework

In qualitative research, a theory assists in making sense of what will be of help in answering the research questions. According to Collins and Stockton (2018), a theory is explained as a big concept for organising many notions with strong clarifying influence. As noted by Kivunja

(2018), theoretical frameworks in the research context consist of the theories expressed by researchers in their fields of study and which provide a theoretical focus for both the data analysis and the interpretation of results. These theoretical frameworks provide answers to the research questions which originated from the review of relevant literature, including both theoretical and empirical literature, as well as from the evident gaps in the literature (Lederman & Lederman, 2015).

Literature suggests that the attraction and retention of employees are addressed through motivational theories (Akhtar et al., 2014). Motivational theories are useful when trying to establish how various motives affect human behaviours. Many theories explain the vital role that organisations play in attracting and retaining employees. This study relies on management and talent theories. For this study, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and the human capital theory were selected as the most suitable theoretical frameworks for this study.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs and human capital theories were used in this study to explore how the TVET college's management can attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. Although these theories were propounded to address motivational issues in the workplace, they were also found to be necessary for understanding the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff. These theories were selected for their relevance to the topic under study since the factors addressed under the theories motivate employees on whether they stay with the organisation or leave. In addition, using these theories assisted me in addressing what employees value as important for them in the TVET college.

The choice of Maslow's hierarchy of need theory can help the TVET college on strategies that can be used to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff by understanding their fundamental needs such as the creation of a positive work environment, encouraging teamwork and providing opportunities for academic staff to grow. In addition, addressing academic staff's fundamental needs using Maslow's hierarchy of needs can have a significant impact on academic staff retention. On the other hand, human capital theory was chosen to complement Maslow's hierarchy of needs as it encourages management to invest in academic staff development. The development of academic staff can not only ensure academic staff growth but can also drive the college to new heights while on the other hand improving organisational performance (Ahmed et al., 2023). In addition, like Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the

application of this theory can also assist with the retention of highly skilled academic staff which is crucial for the TVET college's success.

Most of the literature reviewed focused on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and its role in attracting and retaining employees in different work settings other than the TVET sector (McLeod, 2018). Few studies have been conducted on this hierarchy of needs in academic settings, especially among highly skilled academic staff in TVET college settings (Fisher & Royster, 2016); Omodan, 2022). Therefore, the study aimed to explore the current employee attraction and retention practices used by the TVET College to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. On the same note, the human capital theory that was proposed by Schultz in 1961 and later developed extensively by Becker (1964) was also found to be suitable for this study. In addition, using these theories will assist in addressing what employees value as important for them. In addition, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and human capital theories are appropriate for this study because they complement each other. Employees are attracted and retained by the organisation that has strategies in place. Factors such as better pay that helps employees meet their needs, job security, and a quality work environment are very important in attracting and retaining employees. For workers to perform better and remain in the organisation for a long period they must be trained, thus human factor theory connects with Maslow's theory in that workers need to have skills that are necessary for the organisation.

2.6.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

When Maslow wrote a paper titled "A Theory of Human Motivation," he proposed five core needs that form the basis for human behavioural motivation as he believed that they play an important role in motivating employees. Maslow's hierarchy of needs posits that humans are driven to rise above the basic "deficiency needs" to what is described as "self-actualization." Using this theoretical framework as a starting point in analysing reasons for the high rate of highly skilled academic staff attrition in the TVET college helps college management to better understand the factors that lead to the attraction and retention of these staff members. Although this theory was developed many years ago, it is still being used by organisations to understand the employee's needs, satisfy them, and motivate them so that they can stay for a long period. Organisations must accommodate new needs that might be brought by employees as their wants and needs change with time. The theory views motivation as an important factor that should be considered by management to attract and retain skilled staff.

While Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory has been criticised by other researchers for its lack of empirical support and the inadequate operationalisation of its concepts (Acevedo, 2018), other researchers such as Fey (2005); Wahba and Bridwell (1976) argue that Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is still relevant and affirmed that employees are motivated when needs are satisfied in order of importance. In addition, satisfying the needs of employees such as the provision of good pay, proper working conditions, and other benefits will go a long way in ensuring that the organisation attracts and retain skilled employees (Saleem, 2006). These needs can be connected to what the organisation can do to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. This theory is based on the idea that managers can influence the decisions of employees on whether they stay. The theory laid the foundation for understanding the organisation of human needs and the sequence in which these needs are arranged based on satisfaction (Cherry, 2022).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is used to explain the concept of employee attraction and retention and assumes that the needs must be satisfied before all other needs. This theory can also be used by the college to understand employees' needs and satisfy those needs. Maslow categorised and placed human needs in a hierarchical order of importance to employees beginning with physiological needs as the basis for motivating employees and the need for self-actualisation at the top. According to Heathfield (2016), Maslow believed that when employees' needs are satisfied, they have an impact on their behaviour on whether to stay or leave the organisation. These needs are physiological, safety needs, love, and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs and are structured in a pyramid as shown below:

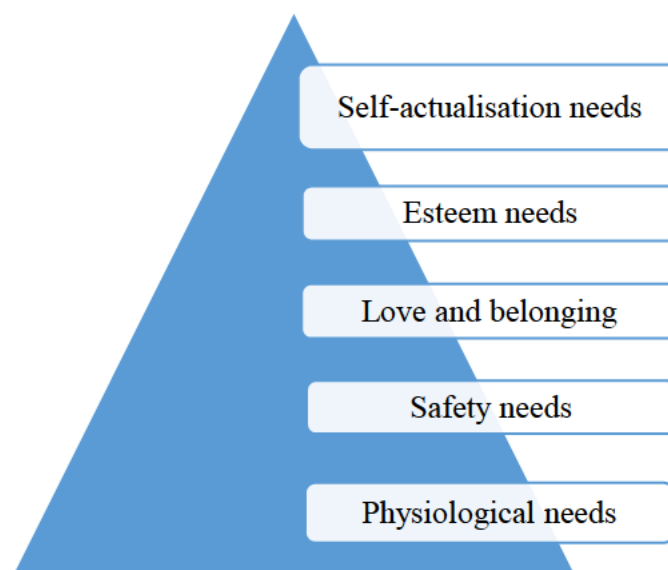


Figure 2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory (1943)

According to the above pyramid, physiological needs are based at the bottom level of the pyramid while self-actualisation needs are placed at the top of the pyramid. This level is made up of fundamental biological needs such as food, water, air and shelter. The theory submits that the needs in the lower tiers must be fulfilled for one to progress to the higher levels of needs (Heathfield, 2016).

When Maslow's hierarchy of needs is applied in the TVET college work environments, it might shed some light on possible obstacles that hinder highly skilled academic staff from being attracted and retained in the college. Maslow's framework might also help in identifying what can be done by the college to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. The TVET college can address esteem needs by recognising accomplishments, focusing on the expertise of an employee, and applauding accomplishments. In the context of this study, the provision of a good workplace environment, good work-life balance, provision of opportunity for growth, appropriate compensation plan, and recognition for good work can be used to attract and retain skilled academic staff (Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou, 2019; Maria et al., 2021; Rodríguez et al., 2020).

2.6.2 Human Capital Theory

Human capital is very important for organisational effectiveness and employees are the most valuable assets that an organisation can have (Erasmus et al., 2015). Various authors define human capital differently. According to Nyberg and Wright (2015), the definitions of human capital varies across disciplines, and it depends upon the level of analysis. This definition of human capital is supported by Bohlander et al. (2001) and Mitia et al. (2018) who state that the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of individual employees form part of human capital. Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018) state that the human capital theory has been estimated to have been used in organisation since the 1950s for the greater good of an organisation. This theory mostly focuses on the development of individual employees in the workplace and enhances human productivity and efficiency through the education and training of the workforce. Mubarik et al. (2018) identified education, experience, training, and skills as the top four constructs in the human capital of organisations. Weatherly (2003) and Adeniji et al. (2019) regard human capital as a collection of different knowledge, creativity, and features that individual employees use in doing their jobs effectively. According to this theory, each employee in the organisation possesses skills, technical know-how, knowledge, creativity, education, and good health as shown below:

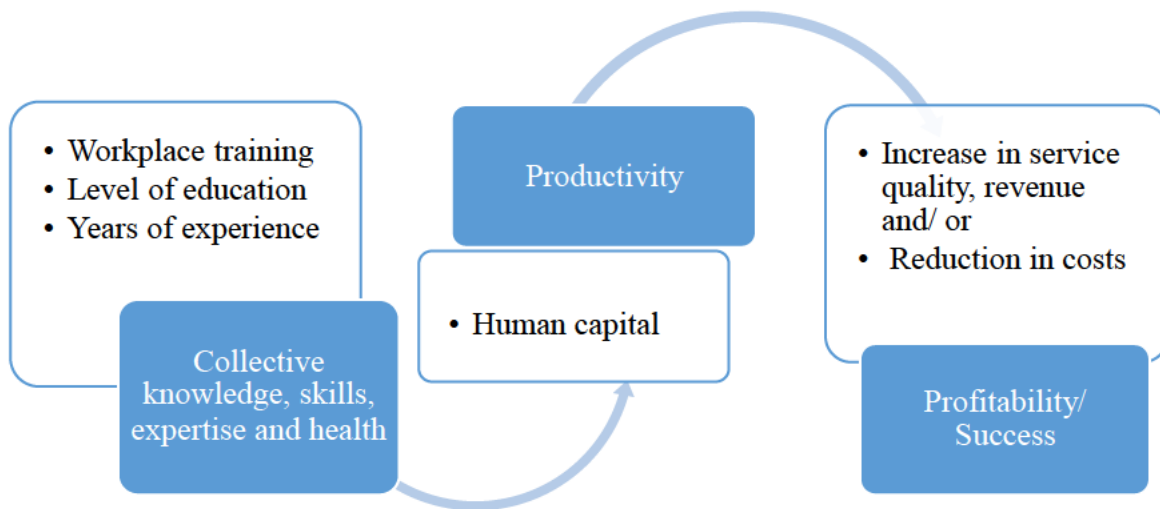


Figure 2.2 Human capital theory

Adapted from the AHP model by Mubarik et al. (2018).

The theory encourages organisations to comprehend how best they can assist their team members to develop their abilities as this will lead to the success of the organisation through improved productivity. In the view of Gillies (2015), providing education to individuals in the workplace is beneficial as the individual employees accrue material advantage to other employees. The human capital theory suggests that imparting useful knowledge and skills through the training and development of staff increases their performance thus raising the productivity of the organisation and increasing their lifetime earnings (Becker, 1994). Becker (1994) views human capital as similar to other physical means of production such as factories and machines. The theory encourages organisations to focus on developing their employees so that they can gain skills and knowledge that will be useful to the organisation. According to Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018), the human capital theory puts more emphasis on investing in education for better productivity by employees.

When employees are trained, they become confident, more skilled in their field, and can do the job with minor or no mistakes or challenges. An organisation that invests adequately in the skills of employees will reap the reward of having employees who are innovative and creative, are readily useful and available to the organisation, and are willing to do a good job. According to Buta (2015), the education and training of employees lead to an increase in the demand for competent employees who will achieve a competitive advantage over their competitors. In addition, investing in employees' education and on-the-job training will result in enhanced

individual knowledge, expertise, and productivity, thus leading to employees remaining in the organisation (Ahmad et al., 2016; Schultz, 1961). This theory is also relevant to the current study as it comprises human capital that constitutes the skills of the employees, their abilities, and their knowledge. Accordingly, employees are attracted to an organisation that gives them the chance and opportunity to enhance their skills, as well as considering their wellbeing and growth needs. The relevance of this theory is that if an organisation focuses more on attracting and retaining highly skilled employees, it will be able to achieve its objectives.

2.7 Chapter summary

From the foregoing literature review, issues regarding the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff were dealt with, and it is important for the realisation of the college and the DHET's goals and objectives. This literature review on attracting and retaining highly skilled employees has shown that attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff is a serious challenge facing institutions of higher learning. Consequently, organisations must decide on strategies that they consider suitable for attracting and retaining skilled employees. The next chapter describes the research methodology used to collect the data.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a detailed discussion of the literature regarding the attraction and retention of employees in various sectors including higher education institutions (HEIs). In this chapter, I describe the research methodology that I used in this study. I also present the description of the research approach, paradigm and design, the research setting, the research population, and a sample of the study that includes the sampling method used, and the collection of data and analysis techniques used. Thereafter, the chapter ends with a discussion of the measures used to ensure trustworthiness and reflects on ethical considerations in the study, followed by an explanation of what was perceived as the limitations of the study.

The research method and design have proven to be useful in providing a framework for conducting this study. According to Jamshed (2014) and Mbhele (2021), a research methodology is defined as a strategy used by the researcher to find or solve a problem related to the topic. It is a systematic procedure that is adopted by the researcher to describe, explain, and predict a phenomenon (Igwenagu, 2016; Sileyew, 2019). Adding to the above definitions, Dresch et al. (2015) submit that when choosing a research methodology, the researcher should choose a research methodology that addresses the research question and increases the likelihood of gaining in-depth information about the research topic. Thus, the research method selected should be based on the research goals (Kothari, 2017).

3.2 Research approach

When researchers conduct studies, they use different approaches that are available at their disposal. Yin (2018) states that there are three types of research approaches that a researcher can choose from when conducting research namely qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. These research approaches are used differently and in different situations by various researchers. On the one hand, quantitative researchers gather numerical data to establish correlations between variables and outcomes (Choy, 2014). On the other hand, other researchers use a qualitative research approach when they seek to understand individuals' actions and behaviours and understand a topic from the participant's point of view (Park & Park, 2016). Researchers use the qualitative approach to explore and interpret the; what, how,

or why of a phenomenon where there is limited or no understanding that exists (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Yin, 2018). In addition, where the researcher feels that a qualitative or quantitative research approach alone cannot address the research questions, they normally consider combining the two into a mixed research approach (qualitative and quantitative research approaches) (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

In this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted. A qualitative research approach is a type of research where rich and descriptive data is collected from participants to gain an in-depth understanding of what the researcher is studying (Lune & Berg, 2017; Maree, 2007). Qualitative research is a method applied to collect in-depth details of the research problem (Rahi, 2017). Thus, qualitative research approaches are applied when a researcher seeks to understand individuals' actions, behaviours, and a topic from the participant's point of view (Rahi, 2017).

According to Creswell (2014), using qualitative research allows the researcher to investigate and comprehend the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human situation. Although I have a choice of different approaches other than a qualitative approach such as quantitative or mixed methods that are available (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the qualitative method is suitable for the study. Firstly, I chose the qualitative over quantitative and mixed method approach because I wanted to explore and understand how managers of the TVET college attract and retain highly skilled academic staff and this allowed me to fully capture their perceptions, perspectives, understanding, and their experiences. Secondly, I chose the qualitative approach because I did not intend to do calculations on the answers I required from the participants. Furthermore, I decided to use the qualitative approach to support the exploratory nature of the research questions (Yin, 2018) and to provide flexibility for an in-depth dialogue for uncovering features of a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2014) since neither the quantitative approach nor the mixed methods approach was appropriate for the current study.

3.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is described differently by various authors. Cohen et al. (2018) describe a research paradigm as a worldview or set of assumptions about the nature of what researchers are studying, how it can be understood, and the purpose of the inquiry. According to Rehman

and Alharthi (2016), a paradigm is a way of seeing and understanding the reality of the world we live in. Denzin (2018) and Nieuwehuis (2020) contend that a paradigm is a set of theories that govern the underlying research technique and also serve as a guide for action. On a similar note, Flick (2022), Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) and Nguyen (2019) submit that a paradigm is a set of broad theoretical beliefs about the world (ontology) and how people potentially recognise it (epistemology) while on the other hand, axiology is concerned with ethical issues and therefore, very important for researchers to consider the elements when conducting research.

In this study, I used the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm was used because of my understanding that people behave differently due to various factors such as their environment and background experience. This means that understanding someone's reality can only be done through their experience of that reality, which may be different from another person's shaped by the individual's historical or social perspective. This paradigm was chosen because this study sought to understand how the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college management attracts and retain highly skilled academic staff by acquiring their insight to develop an understanding of the participants' view.

Following the points indicated above, the paradigm was chosen because this study sought to understand how the TVET college management attracts and retain highly skilled academic staff by acquiring the participants' insight and views. Through the use of this paradigm, I was able to explore the factors that affect the attraction and retention of academic staff through their views and opinion and this have greatly assisted me with the analysis of the data collected (Cohen et al., 2018). In addition, this paradigm enabled me to interact and engage with the study participants and get an in – depth understanding of their thoughts, perceptions and realities on how they attract and retain skilled academic staff.

3.4 Research design

Research design serves as a guideline for the researcher when conducting an investigative study (Daniel, 2019). For instance, depending on the choice of the researcher, the selected research design provides a guideline for the methods and tools for data collection that are to be used (Almalki, 2016). When the researcher chooses a research design to use for a research study, the researcher must consider Phenomenological, ethnographic, narrative, grounded theory, and case studies since they are the most used designs in qualitative research (Lewis, 2015).

In this qualitative study, I used a case study design. A case study is described as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident (Yin, 2009). Harrison et al. (2017) submit that qualitative researchers use the case study design to explore a multifaceted event or phenomenon in depth in the natural context of the event. Furthermore, a case in a study may be a person, a community, an institution, or a collection of institutions (Cohen et al., 2018). I used a single case study design of one TVET college in Johannesburg. A case study may be a person, a community, an institution, or a collection of institutions (Cohen et al., 2018). A case study researcher explores, describes, or analyses an event or phenomenon to determine why and what occurred (Yin, 2018).

The case study design was useful in asking questions and probing deeper into the phenomenon experienced by the participants (Campbell, 2014; Mokoena, 2021). It also helped in exploring how the TVET college management attracts and retains skilled academic staff. This design was considered appropriate for the study since I was able to study and understand how the TVET college attracts and retains skilled academic staff and why the college attracts skilled academic staff the way they do. Moreover, case studies seek to explore how the TVET college attracts and retains highly skilled academic staff the way they do to generalise and predict understanding of similar cases from a single example, hence the need for an in-depth investigation that will provide an extensive description of the phenomenon under study (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.5 The research setting

The study was conducted in one of the colleges based in the Gauteng province with campuses spread around the city of Johannesburg. The TVET college has eight campuses namely, Elispark, Parktown, Alexandra, Smit Street, Troyville, Langlaagte, and Riverlea. and offers various programmes such as business studies, clothing, engineering, and tourism. The research site selected was easily accessible to me as the researcher since I work on one of the campuses of the TVET college under study.

3.6 Research population and sample

3.6.1 Research population

A population is defined as a group of individuals who share characteristics of interest and are the subject of, and the primary source of data for a study (Asiamah et al., 2017). Similarly, Ary et al. (2019) state that population encompasses a wider group which include people, events and objects from which the researcher seeks to generate findings. The targeted population for the current qualitative single case study included current managers who are responsible for attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff in the TVET college and are placed on various campuses of the college. The TVET college managers included experienced college managers who were responsible for managing the college daily and attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff whenever a vacancy exists (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). In qualitative research, a researcher determines whether the target population of individuals can share their experiences and thoughts to answer the research question (Asiamah et al., 2017). The TVET college had 22 academic managers in terms of categories, ranging from the top (PL5 campus managers) and (PL3 divisional managers), and these categories were interviewed since they were identified as those who possessed the characteristics and could provide the required information for the study.

To qualify to participate in the study, the above-stated managers were selected based on their experience, knowledge, and position including responsibilities in the TVET college. Again, they were considered for the study because they were responsible for the attraction and retention of academic staff on their respective campuses. The other reason why these managers were selected was that they were the first to identify an academic staff vacancy since they were the ones who planned and allocated duties to academic staff and were also responsible for approving the application for a request to fill vacant academic posts on their campuses before they could be sent to the human resources department for recruitment.

3.6.2 Research sample

Sampling is the general research process of identifying and selecting a limited number of participants and/or site(s) needed to conduct the research (Cohen et al., 2018). Qualitative researchers use a small sample size to acquire the number of participants suitable for the study's design (Pandey & Pandey, 2021; Robinson, 2014). According to Yin (2018), researchers should choose the sample size that has the best opportunity for exploring the details and

complexities of a phenomenon for a better understanding. Hence, seven participants consisting of three campus managers and three divisional managers participated in the study. This was because of participants no longer providing new information that was needed. The following were found to be suitable for this study.

3.6.2.1 Purposive sampling.

This is a non-probability sampling technique that involves constituting a sample based on the researcher's judgment (Saunders & Townsend, 2018). To select the suitable participants for this study, I used my judgment as I am based at the college and selected participants who occupied key positions such as campus management and divisional manager because they would be able to provide the information needed to complete the study. This method ensures that each participant participates in the study (Suen et al., 2014) through the researcher's judgment to handpick the individuals based on the characteristics sought (Cohen et al., 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2019). The participants were purposively selected based on a minimum of three years of experience in their current position. In addition, these participants were selected due to their job description, which includes attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff on their respective campuses. In addition, this sampling method was used since it provided me with an opportunity to use my expertise and knowledge to select a sample that is most useful to the purposes of this study and enabled me to ensure trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bagheri et al., 2019). This sampling technique ensured that the data that I collected were robust in answering the research questions.

3.6.2.2 Convenient sampling.

Convenient sampling was also used to recruit easily available participants. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used when the researcher's homogeneous target population is easily accessible (Etikan et al., 2016) stated that convenience sampling helps the researcher to obtain the desired study participants and can easily influence the study outcome because of the similar nature of the study participants. According to Etikan et al. (2016), this method of sampling is a method of sampling applied by a researcher to data collection from individuals who are conveniently available to participate in a study. I chose convenience sampling on the grounds of affordability and accessibility because I work at the TVET college under study. This sampling method was also used to include managers who were

most accessible to me since I am based at the college. While convenience sampling is subject to selection bias because the researcher's participants are self-selected or chosen based on researcher-defined characteristics (Etikan et al., 2016), I ensured that participants who met the criteria as stated above were selected.

3.7 Data collection methods

Data is a process of gathering information from all relevant sources to find answers to the study topic and to develop an initial understanding of a small population (Dudovskiy, 2019). According to Tran (2016), the collection of data is regarded as a systematic process that is implemented by the researcher to solve a research problem and provide answers to the research questions. This systematic process of data collection requires that a researcher identify a suitable instrument that is to be used for data collection. In this study, primary, qualitative data were collected from the participants through an in-depth interview. Primary data is first-hand information that is obtained by using data collection instruments that were identified by the researcher (Bryanard et al., 2014). Cronin (2016) describes an in-depth interview as a face-to-face encounter that takes place between the researcher and an informant. In the view of Oltmann (2016), interviews are the most preferred method of collecting data in qualitative research since they allow and encourage the participants to speak for themselves in their own words. Goldkuhl (2019) states that conducting interviews is key as it allows the researcher access to the participants' everyday life reality about a phenomenon. However, in the same vein, Goldkuhl (2019) acknowledges that conducting interviews poses a serious challenge for researchers since they rely on the interviewee for information, and at times it is not easy to spot when the interviewee is expressing it appropriately or not.

3.7.1 Data generation instruments

To ensure that the correct information is collected from the participants, an interview schedule was used as a data collection instrument. The use of this instrument assisted me to ensure that I conduct an interview in such a way that I do not lose any information that is required to answer the research questions. In this study, I found the in-depth interview to be suitable for this study because I needed to ask open-ended questions that were intended to assist in answering the research questions thus allowing participants to tell their story in their own words (Noon, 2018). I also wanted to know the independent thoughts of each academic manager in respect of attracting and retaining academic staff. Individual in-depth, semi-structured

interviews were used to uncover prevalent trends in the thoughts and opinions of the research participants (Levitt et al., 2018).

According to Clark and Vealé (2018), when conducting qualitative research, the researcher is regarded as instrumental in data collection and analysis. I was the key instrument in the generation, and therefore, ensured that I continuously reviewed the data to identify gaps or issues that may need further attention. The in-depth interviews were conducted with the TVET college management in English as it is the official language used in the TVET college. Further, this was done to understand how the participants were attracting and retaining skilled academic staff. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with participants on their respective campuses. To start with, I sent invitation emails to the participants. These were accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research and requesting their consent before data was collected. Clark and Vealé (2018) state that the researcher collects data in the environment of the study participants and presents assumptions and reasons for selecting the research topic.

The researcher ensures that the study is beneficial, identifies risks to research participants, and provides confidentiality and anonymity to research participants (Roth & von Unger, 2018). Additionally, researchers must ensure that participants are treated ethically, are respected, and are treated without exploitation (Emanuel et al., 2016). In addition, during the interview, as the researcher, I was able to seize the opportunity to ask participants questions regarding the strategies used by the TVET college to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff (Ravitch & Carl, 2018). The personal views and responses of the research participants were interpreted and analysed to provide the meanings of the research phenomenon and to provide answers to the research questions. Using semi-structured interviews, I was able to generate extensive data on the inquiry. The generated data was then presented according to themes that emerged from it. This allowed me as the researcher to produce extensively descriptive data, which is also one of the key features of qualitative research (Vetter, 2017).

3.7.2 Data collection procedure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually and face-to-face with managers at the various campuses of the college. Firstly, I started by sending each participant an invitation to participate in the study. I arranged with individual participants so as not to inconvenience them to avoid a situation where the interview would interfere with their work. Questions that were

used during the interview were developed based on the research questions stated in Chapter 1 of the current study. Each interview lasted for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. I started by introducing myself and explaining the purpose of the study and what I intended to achieve with the study. As agreed with participants, interview sessions were recorded with a voice recorder and later converted into a textual Microsoft Word, coded and managed together. Immediately after each interview with participants, the interviews were transcribed to ensure that the information was collated on time. By so doing, I wanted to ensure that I did not lose any important statement or information provided by the participants. Transcribing the interviews immediately also help to improve the quality of interviews because I could identify weaknesses and gaps in my probing, which I would then strive to improve in subsequent interviews. These interview recordings were of great assistance to me when transcribing what was said by the participants and when I was checking what I wrote and what was said by the participants against the transcripts for trustworthiness purposes.

3.8 Data analysis

In this study, qualitative data analysis took place. Creswell and Creswell (2017) state that the data analysis section is intended to present findings with a certain degree of interpretation, order, structure, and meaning in the data collected. Analysing data in qualitative research involves systematically organising, synthesizing, and explaining data that is generated to understand participants' interpretation of the phenomenon in question (Cohen et al., 2018). The data analysis approach employed in this study relied on the six stages of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Clarke & Brain, 2017)). This method of data analysis assisted me in identifying, organising, describing, and reporting themes or similarities that were found within generated data (Nowell et al., 2017). This method was considered suitable for this study since I was interested in the subjective experience of participants such as their views, opinions, perceptions, and understanding thereby assisting me to answer the how, and what questions of the study. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012) and Nowell et al. (2017), data that had been collected through the semi-structured interview was analysed following the steps mentioned below. These six stages of thematic analysis comprise being familiar with the data collected, coding the data, generating the themes, reviewing the themes, defining the themes, and writing and producing the report.

3.8.1 Familiarisation with the data

The first step was to familiarise myself with the data collected by re-reading the whole data including transcripts while taking down notes to ensure that I wouldn't leave out nothing important. To do this, I used intelligent verbatim transcription, which allowed me to write down every word while omitting irrelevant fillers to improve readability, and fixing grammar mistakes, broken sentences, and long paragraphs that may have been written or recorded during the interview. This also involved transcribing the data that I had collected through audio recording and working through the data to identify patterns and meanings that appeared in my data set. This was done in line with the submission by Stuckey (2015), that data generated from an audio recorder must be transcribed to provide the researcher with an opportunity to make sense of the data.

3.8.2 Coding the data

Secondly, after having familiarised myself with the data, I went through the transcript of every interview that I had conducted with participants to create a set of initial codes that represent the meanings and patterns that I saw in the data. This included highlighting or labelling certain words or group of words that came out as relevant to the study including phrases in the data that all together indicated something. I then created a codebook to keep track of the codes. A codebook is a document that contains a list of codes and is used by researchers in conducting data analysis. Creating a codebook allowed me to stay organised while doing coding and assisted me in reducing the mistakes that occurred. After creating a codebook, I went back to reread, identify excerpts that were interesting to the study, and ensure that I applied the code that was appropriate and relevant to them.

3.8.3 Generating themes

Thirdly, I looked over the codes that I had created and identified patterns and excerpts that assisted me in coming up with themes. After identifying excerpts and patterns that were interesting to the study, I then grouped them according to their association with a particular code. Instead of using software that is available in the market, I used a pen and a writing pad to group the excerpts by code since this method is cost-effective. Once I generated codes, I then derived themes from the codes. Since I did my coding manually, I used coloured highlighters to mark codes and themes and coloured pens to take notes on the text that I

analysed to ensure that codes and themes were not confusing This allowed me to discard information that was not needed.

3.8.4 Reviewing the themes

Fourthly, I reviewed the themes to ensure that they were useful to the study and represented the data collected. The review process was done by revisiting the codes and themes to make sure that they were all truly representative of the data, and that I could use them in the final report. Further, this review was done to ensure that the data was accurate and no crucial information was left out. This allowed me to modify the codes and themes if necessary.

3.8.5 Defining the themes

In the fifth stage, after having my initial sets of themes done, I gave named the themes, which made it easy for me to understand the data collected. The next step was to review and revise the available themes. Later, I merged themes that were related or similar while those that did not have enough data to be used were discarded.

3.8.6 Writing and producing the report

Lastly, I began writing up the analysis of the data while providing a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story from the data within and across themes. I also ensured that my write-up provided sufficient evidence of the themes within the data to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme. Moreover, I also ensured that the write-up did not only provide data but also illustrated the story that I was telling about my data and made an argument about the research question.

3.9 Measures for ensuring trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument that is used to collect the required data. According to Hammarberg et al. (2016), qualitative research should be conducted in a procedural transparent, and explicit manner like any other form of research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Ngcobo (2020) submit that qualitative researchers can establish whether the research findings are trustworthy by using the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Similarly, Shenton (2004) explains that there are strategies that can be used to ensure that the study is trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed strategies to ensure

that the findings of the study are trustworthy. Bloomberg (2022), Creswell and Creswell, (2018) and Morse (2018) state that dependability, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and integrity as provided by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are trustworthiness criteria used by qualitative researchers to ensure the precision of their findings. I documented all the steps of the research procedure.

3.9.1 Credibility

When conducting a study, it is important to ensure that the study is credible. Credibility is regarded as a source of data that can be relied upon to ensure that the information presented in the study is correct and not misrepresented (Korstjens & Moser, (2018). This is the most considered criterion for ensuring congruency and confidence in qualitative studies (Coleman, 2022). In the study, credibility was addressed by going through the data collected, again and again, analysing it, documenting it, and updating the concepts as needed to minimise and decrease misunderstanding and misrepresentation (Yin, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews played an important role in ensuring that the researcher prompted more questions to get answers to the research questions. In addition, semi-structured interviews ensured 'iterative questioning', which involves using probe to obtain detailed data thereby further enhancing the credibility of the study (Shenton, 2004). To further buttress the credibility of the study, I audio-recorded interviews to enhance the accuracy of the transcripts and made written notes during interviews and when analysing documents. The guidance and recommendations from my supervisor further enhanced the credibility of the study.

3.9.2 Transferability

According to Gunawan (2015) and Hendricks (2017), transferability is the degree to which qualitative research findings can be transferred to other context settings. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), transferability refers to how qualitative research demonstrates that the findings of one study can be applied to other situations in different settings. Ravitch and Carl (2019) and Masambuka (2020) state that transferability is the extent to which the research findings can be applied to other situations by the readers. The data collected during the interview were recorded, while I took notes when prompting questions, and the data was transferred in writing by using the technique of transcription. In this sense, the audio-recorded semi-structured interviews were transferred into the text to ensure that the data was readily

available. Again, I ensured that I provide a "rich description" of the participants and the study method so that the reader may determine whether my findings apply to their situation and to ensure that the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. Because I wouldn't know their circumstances, this can be established by providing adequate information about the research participants and setting so that readers may assess whether the findings of a study can be applied to their situation.

3.9.3 Dependability

According to Anney (2014) and Janis (2022), dependability refers to the stability of findings over time. Dependability refers to the consistency of findings across time (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This involves participants evaluating the findings, interpretation, and recommendations of the study to ensure that everything was supported by the data received from the participants. During the data collection process, dependability was assured by securely keeping all documents, including records that were collected, including notes for verification. Thirdly, to ensure that other researchers can depend on my study for information, I provided more information on how the study was conducted. Other researchers must depend on my study for information if conducting a similar study. To put this in order, if other researchers conduct the same study, they should have enough information from my research report to do so and come up with similar results.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' viewpoints and not the researcher's biases and viewpoints (Cope, 2014; Hendricks, 2017). To ensure the confirmability of my study, I confirmed transcriptions from the audio recordings with the participants and used direct quotes from participants sparingly to present my findings. Confirmability refers to the degree of ensuring that the findings of the study can be confirmed by others to ensure that the collected information is not biased (Moon et al., 2016). The study addressed confirmability by ensuring that the participants verified the findings. In this regard, after the researcher transcribed the interview responses, the transcribed data were sent via email to each of the research participants to confirm and verify what was written according to their stated views and opinions (member checking).

I ensured that the interpretation was based on the data collected and nothing else. Korstjens and Moser (2018) state that to ensure that the study confirms what was collected, interpretations of the findings must be derived from the data, not from the inquirer's imagination, and the interpretation should be based on the evidence rather than the researchers' personal preferences and perspectives (Shenton, 2004). The emphasis here is on the interpretation process, which is a part of the analysis process. Confirmability, on the other hand, refers to the necessity to ensure that the data's interpretations and findings are consistent. This helped to ensure that the outcomes of the research study appropriately reflected the views of the participants. Lastly, to ensure integrity, I remained committed to confidentiality and anonymity with the primary data set and ensured that only myself and my supervisor had access to the data.

3.10 Ethical consideration

In line with the requirements for ethics when conducting research, ethical clearance was granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Protocol number: HSSREC/00005498/2023). Johnson and Christensen (2018) and Resnik (2019) defined ethics as guidelines for conduct that differentiate between standard and nonstandard behaviours. Ethics in research are sets of guiding principles that are intended to assist researchers in conducting ethical investigations (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Arifin (2018) states that organisations and institutions prescribe certain guidelines and principles to which researchers ought to adhere before, during, and after the research project. To ensure that I adhere to the guidelines of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I requested permission to conduct research from the TVET college management specifically the college administrator as he oversaw the college for approval. I obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal before the research was conducted.

In line with ethical requirements, a researcher cannot start collecting data until approval has been given by the relevant office, which in this case was the HSSREC. Therefore, data were only collected between the 18th of July and the 25th of August 2023 at each participant's workplace (campus) after ethical clearance was obtained. Each participant gave informed consent. After obtaining approval from the above-stated institutions to conduct the study, I then had to deal with the issues of consent and informing the participants about the risks involved if any. Research participants should be informed about the risks and benefits of a research

study. The informed consent process includes providing study participants with participation details (Pacho, 2015).

Kendall and Halliday (2014) identified informed consent, minimising harm, and privacy and confidentiality of participants as key aspects of ethical research. As suggested by Pacho (2015), participants must be given details about the study so that they can decide whether to give consent to participate or not. Head (2020) states that it is the researcher's responsibility to obtain informed consent from participants who have shown an interest in participating in the study before conducting an interview. When consent is given, it will allow the researcher to commence with the interview (Ho et al., 2018).

I sent each study participant an email inviting them to participate in the study. In the email, I explained the study purpose, benefits, risks, and conditions for voluntary participation or non-participation. I also ensured that all the participants were aware of the objectives of the research and their autonomous, anonymous, and voluntary role in the research and that if they did not feel comfortable, they could withdraw at any time. In addition, I also ensured that no harm in any form was done to participants and that all the information provided or collected from the participants was kept safe and confidential to adhere to the ethical conduct expected of researchers. Study participants were also sent consent forms to complete as confirmation that they agreed to participate in the study. importantly the consent forms stated the voluntary nature of the research and included the options for participants to accept or decline the invitation. Since ethical issues may arise when dealing with human participants (Madikizela-Madiya, 2017), consent forms were used where participants gave consent to participate in the study.

3.11 Limitations of the study

Limitations in research are those characteristics that influence the interpretation of the findings in the study (Olufowote, 2017). According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018), limitations are issues that are of great concern to the researcher since he or she has no control over them. Such limitations can exist due to constraints present in the research design and methodology that impact and influence the research study and they typically out of the researcher's control (Dimitrios et al., 2019). What follows is an overview of the limitations that were experienced in this study and which the researcher had to overcome to complete the study.

There are many TVET colleges in Gauteng province which are located and spread all over the five municipalities namely Tshwane, Midvaal, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, and Mogale City. This study was limited to only one TVET college in the Gauteng province. It was not easy to receive permission from the TVET college administrator to conduct the study. For example, I submitted my application on the 23rd of October 2022 and did not get a response until March 2023 when I spoke to the deputy principal of corporate who agreed to act as a middleman between me and the administrator. I sent the deputy principal my application on the 20th of March 2023 and he forwarded it to the administrator who approved it on the 22nd of March 2023 and this had an impact on the time for applying for ethical clearance. Following the many months to obtain the approval letter, I also struggled to obtain ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal because this process was new to me and required knowledge to complete the document and attach the required documents for it to be considered and approved on time. Fortunately, the clearance certificate was issued on the 21st of June 2023 paving the way for me to start the collection of data process.

After sending out invitations to the identified participants, some participants did not respond to my invitation while most of them responded accordingly. This was evident from the time I sent out emails requesting them to participate in the study as within a day of sending out invitations, two campus managers responded while others took time to respond. Although the selected participants contributed to the study with information, some participants were not prepared to reveal important information. To counter this, I had to assure them that their identities will not be disclosed to any other person. A lack of knowledge of TVET management practices was also a great challenge affecting other participants who were unable to respond specifically to the questions asked. All the participants accepted that their interviews be audio-recorded and this made it easy for me as I was able to listen to the recordings if there was something I could not understand.

3.12 Chapter summary

The chapter presented a clear description of the methods used to analyse the data for the study. Interviews that were conducted provided a detailed description of the qualitative research method that was executed. The chapter focused on the interpretivism research philosophy which was used to develop the research design. It also detailed a description of the research methodology with a justification of how the research methods were utilised. An extensive

description of the qualitative research design, interpretivist worldview, and data collection instruments was also given. Other matters discussed in this chapter included, how the semi-structured interviews were conducted and with whom, how, and when data collection was collected. The research methods were deemed to be more suitable for exploring how the TVET college attracts and retains highly skilled academic staff. In addition to the above, the following were also addressed; ethical considerations observed in the study and its limitations. In the next chapter, research findings are presented.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discuss the research design and methodology that I adopted to generate data for this study. As discussed in the previous chapters, this study explored how college management in a selected Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college attracts and retains highly skilled academic staff. Within this aim, this chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The chapter presents the findings based on the responses obtained from the participants who were campus managers and their divisional managers as they reflected on their experiences of attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff.

Initially, I intended to include 10 participants. However, I eventually manage to secure interviews with seven participants who agreed to participate in this study. The other three accepted to be interviewed but due to their other work commitments, it was difficult to get hold of them. The seven comprised three campus managers and four divisional managers. In-depth interviews were conducted with seven college managers to gain an in-depth understanding of how they attracted and retained highly skilled academic staff. Interview data revealed factors that could be linked to the attrition of highly skilled academic staff in the TVET college. The statements made by participants in the study are written verbatim and were edited but ensured that they do not lose meaning to reflect the actual opinions and views of the participants. After data collection, I analysed and interpreted the data, which was generated using face-to-face, semi-structured, and audio recorded interviews and drew conclusions based on the views the participants expressed.

4.2 Profiling the college and the participants

4.2.1 Profile of the college

The study was conducted in a TVET college where seven participants comprising of campus managers and divisional managers were interviewed on their respective campuses. This college is situated in the economic hub of Africa Johannesburg in the Gauteng province. This college was established from the merger of colleges, around the city of Johannesburg. The college is made up of various campuses with the head office being in Park Town. The college has 295

academic staff made up of Lecturers, senior lecturers, senior subject specialists, and campus managers. The TVET college offers national accredited programmes in the following fields: Engineering Studies, Business Studies, and Humanities, i.e., National Technical Education (NATED) and National Certificate (Vocational) NC (V) which are quality assured by Umalusi, the relevant SETA Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) unit and the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, to ensure a national standard.

4.2.2 Profile of participants

This study sample comprised seven participants namely three campus managers and four divisional managers with a minimum of four years of experience in their current positions. These participants were considered for the study because they were not only responsible for planning, organising, leading, and controlling the activities of the college but also responsible for the attraction and retention of academic staff on their respective campuses. According to Godwin et al. (2017) participants are selected based on their characteristics., The other reason was that they were the first to identify an academic staff vacancy and were responsible for approving the application for a request to fill vacant academic posts on their campuses before they could be sent to the human resources department for recruitment. The information regarding participants is presented in the table shown below.

Table 4.1 Profiles of participants

Participant	Position of participant	Qualification	Number of years in the college	Number in current position
Participant 1	Campus manager	Honours degree	15	15
Participant 2	Campus manager	Honours degree	14	8
Participant 3	Campus manager	Honours degree	23	4
Participant 4	Divisional manager	Honours degree	16	4
Participant 5	Divisional manager	Advanced diploma	14	10
Participant 6	Divisional manager	Advanced diploma	32	12
Participant 7	Divisional manager	National higher diploma	25	10

4.3 Presentation and discussion of findings

The findings of this study are presented under four major themes and nine subthemes. These findings are based on the research questions stated in Chapter 1.

- (i) What does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central understand to be the factors causing the high rate of academic staff attrition?
- (ii) How does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff?
- (iii) Why does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff the way they do?

The major themes were constructed guided by the research questions of this study and the sub-themes emerged in the process of data analysis. Table 4.2 below provides a tabulation of these major themes and sub-themes.

Table 4.2: Themes

	Theme	Subthemes
1	Factors contributing to the high rate of attrition in the college	Promotional opportunities Remuneration Lack of job security
2	Challenges of attrition in the college	Shortage of highly skilled academic staff Recruitment process
3	Strategies for academic staff attraction and retention	Supportive work environment Academic staff motivation
4	Training and development	Career growth Academic staff training

4.3.1 Factors contributing to the high rate of attrition in the college

This theme is based on what may be the factors leading to a high rate of attrition in the TVET college. Based on this theme, participants were interviewed on what may be the causes of the high rate of attrition in the college. They expressed their views and opinions on what might be the causes of the high rate of attrition in the college. In their responses, it surfaced that promotional opportunities, remuneration, and the lack of job security were the main causes of the high attrition rate. These causes are discussed in detail in the next section.

4.3.1.1 Promotional opportunities.

From the interviews with participants, promotional opportunities were identified as one of the factors contributing to the increase in academic staff attrition in the college. Participants stated that the lack of promotional opportunities increased the rate of attrition among academic staff. Some participants shared the following,

Most of the academic staff who leave the college do so because of promotional posts. If ever we have the problem of academic staff leaving the college, those that are leaving are those on temporary posts. When they get permanent posts, they leave the college (Participant 1).

When most of the academic staff leave, we subject them exit interviews and ask them the cause for their leaving. For example, to find out if the academic staff is not happy at work or to understand what led to them deciding to leave. What we observed is that most of them opt for better offers in terms of promotions while others prefer to work closer to their home to minimise traveling costs. Another reason can be that we don't quickly convert temporary employment into permanent employment and as such, academic staff would feel that their jobs are insecure and if they stay for long in temporary employment. Thus, they opt for permanent employment elsewhere (Participant 2).

Participant 1 stated that the college was recruiting temporary academic staff for a short period of 3 months or even a year and in most situations, these are the ones that leave the college as they are not guaranteed permanent employment. He stated that if ever the college had the problem of lecturers leaving the college, these would be lecturers employed on a temporary and when they get opportunities somewhere, they leave. The participant further stated that short-term contracts led to the college not being able to attract experienced academic staff and the college eventually grabs whatever is in front of management to fill the gap left by the experienced academic staff who would have left the college.

Adding to what was submitted by participant 1, another participant offered a different view by stating the following:

Most academic staff do not complain of poor treatment but those that leave the college are temporarily employed while those that are permanently employed leave the college to be close to their home and minimise costs (Participant 2).

The above participants believed that often, academic staff would not leave the college unless there was a promotional post. The participants reported that based on their opinions, academic

staff would leave the TVET college for different reasons. They stated that while some of the academic staff would leave the college, they were not lost to the sector as they would often move to other colleges within the TVET sector.

Another participant stated that although some causes for attrition may be internal, there are those causes that are external such as when opportunities arise in other companies, they leave:

Most of the academic staff leave the college for various reasons. One of the reasons is that they are looking for greener pastures because they are engineers and artisans. They compare the remuneration that they receive from the TVET college with the ones offered by other industries, and then opt to leave for those companies as the money is better than what is offered by the TVET colleges. Some academic staff leave due to the nature of their contracts such as being in a fixed contract of one year and will leave if they find better contracts elsewhere (Participant 6).

The above participant further stated that while other academic staff leave for reasons known to themselves, others leave because of the nature of their contracts with the college. Most of the employees who leave happen to be on short-term contracts such as 1-year renewable contracts. When an opportunity arises, they tend to leave if they are offered permanent contracts.

Another participant was of the view that the college was not stable as it was under administration and that led to academic staff leaving the college:

Some of the reasons why skilled academic staff are leaving the college are associated with the lack of stability in the college in terms of the decisions and the permanent appointment of senior managers, the work environment not being conducive enough for academic staff in terms of morale, poor staff morale, the lack of motivation including promotional challenges (Participant 4).

The participant further indicated that from the college exit interviews that the college conducted to would the causes of the high rate of attrition when the academic staff leave, it is evident that they were not leaving on good terms based on the way they were tendering their resignations:

Some of the academic staff who leave the college send resignation letters by email and never set their feet in the college without participating in an exit interview and that is another sign that they do not feel appreciated (Participant 4).

While the statement above may be true, another participant indicated that the issue of staff attrition was dependent on the faculty or field that an academic staff in question. In his own opinion, the participant stated the following:

It differs according to the field or faculty, we have faculties that are in demand, for example, it is difficult to get IT-qualified people in the TVET college because most of them do not have a teaching or education-related qualification. Another thing is that when they come into the system, they find that there are very limited opportunities in terms of progress, hence they decide to leave. Again, other factors are beyond the college such as remuneration for academic staff who are highly educated, and they are here because there are no opportunities out there. Thus, when opportunities arise, they leave (Participant 5).

Unlike in other departments of the TVET college where academic staff resign, another participant indicated that in his department, there were few resignations unlike in other departments of the college. When asked about their view regarding the causes of attrition in the college, he stated,

In my department, I have not experienced the issue of academic staff leaving the college, most of those that left the department were due to death, and retirement. Again, the college's inability to advertise permanent posts and appoint academic staff, which may lead to those that are on contract to leave when they are not absorbed or appointed permanently (Participant 7).

In contrast, one participant highlighted the frustration that the college creates by employing people who are not educators by profession as they tend to leave when opportunities arise in their areas of speciality. One participant explained,

The college is attracting the wrong people being non-educators who do not possess teaching methodology, and because of the high unemployment rate, these people see an opportunity to join TVET colleges. (Participant 3).

The participant indicated that once artisans and technicians have joined the college, they tend to leave the college when opportunities arise outside the college. The participant further suggested that the college must attract educators who are qualified to teach the subjects available as this will reduce the number of academic staff leaving the college.

When participants were asked to share their views on promotional opportunities, most of them stated that the lack of promotional opportunities affected the rate of attrition among academic staff. The participant had this to say,

The college provides promotional opportunities where a PL 1 lecturer will be promoted to PL2 if a senior academic staff gets a post for Head of Department (HoD). Even when academic staff do not get promotions, there is a chance that an academic staff can earn a salary equivalent to the one earned by senior academic staff through a system called pay progression (Participant 1).

Not sufficiently because the college offers promotional posts that are not guaranteed to academic staff. When posts are advertised, academic staff are encouraged to apply and some of them get those posts. Academic staff are also encouraged to apply for acting positions whenever the opportunity arises so that they can gain experience (Participant 4).

Participant 1 also indicated that through pay progression, there was opportunity for academic staff to stay in the college because they would eventually earn the salary of a senior academic staff or a divisional manager (HoD) due to long service in the college. The participant also indicated that in support of the programme mentioned above, the college was also providing bursaries to academic staff who had the desire to develop themselves through studying for postgraduate programmes.

When asked if the college was doing enough to ensure that academic staff get promotional posts, one participant stated the following,

The college is not doing enough because it offers promotional posts that are not guaranteed to academic staff. When posts are advertised, academic staff are encouraged to apply and some of them do get those posts. Academic staff are also encouraged to apply for acting positions whenever an opportunity arises so that they can gain experience (Participant 4).

In addition to the question above, participants were asked to express their views on what the college was doing to retain employees in the organisation, and they stated the following,

There is something that the college is doing. Academic staff are given opportunities to perform senior roles or duties that are normally done by senior academic staff and Heads of Departments (HoDs) to make them stay (Participant 6).

The college provides training to equip academic staff so that they can offer quality teaching and learning and not any other thing. It will be difficult for the college to retain academic staff through promotion and other strategies as this depends on the availability of promotional posts. Although the college cannot guarantee trained academic staff promotions as a way of retaining them, most of the advertised promotional posts are occupied by internal academic staff (Participant 7).

Contrary to what the above participants stated, participant 3 stated that there were no plans in place to promote academic staff and they would often leave for other colleges or different sectors. Another participant indicated that the college had introduced something to ensure that academic staff do not leave the college. In his response, the participant stated that,

There are no plans in place in the college to keep trained employees, through promotions and other strategies. We only develop academic staff to ensure that they are effective in their job of facilitating teaching and learning (Participant 4).

Based on the interviews conducted with participants regarding promotional opportunities, it emerged that opportunities for promotions were availed to academic staff based on their availability and this is not guaranteed to academic staff. The findings from the interviews on academic staff attrition indicate that academic staff is high in the college due to the college's inability to create promotional opportunities for academic staff to retain them.

The findings indicated that the inability of the college to promote academic staff led to staff attrition, with academic staff opting for other sectors of the economy and other TVET colleges where they believed that they will be considered for promotions (Ndeipanda, 2018). However, the availability of promotional opportunities was expected to remove frustrations that would be triggered by the dynamics of promotions among academic staff. The findings suggested that existence of these promotional opportunities had the potential to assist the college in retaining highly skilled academic staff. Most academic staff were of the view that it was taking longer for one to be promoted as there were no opportunities for promotion. For example, one had to wait for an academic staff at a higher-level position to resign, retire, or even pass away before they could be considered for promotional opportunities due to the shortage of vacant promotional positions. This finding corroborates the findings of the study conducted by Chand et al. (2019), which focussed on the opportunities for growth and the impact on employee retention. This finding was also found to be supported by the findings of the study conducted by Ampomah and Cudjor (2015), which found that a lack of promotional opportunities leads to employee turnover.

4.3.1.2 Academic staff remuneration.

Remuneration plays an important role in ensuring that employees stay or leave the organisation. As opined by De Bruyn (2014), remunerating academic staff adequately is beneficial not only because the academic staff can sustain the lifestyle of their choice but also to the college as it will be able to attract and retain highly skilled personnel. Hence, it is very critical for the TVET college that it must provide adequate remuneration to academic staff. When employees are not satisfied with the package offered by their employer, they tend to look at competitors or other sectors for better pay. Moreover, the ability of the organisation to pay its employees accordingly also plays an important role in ensuring that employees are retained. Against this background, an attempt was made to establish whether academic staff regarded their remunerations as adequate.

When participants were asked whether they considered the salary scale for highly skilled academic staff as adequate or not, or as one of the reasons why academic staff were leaving the college, the participant stated that the salary scales were not enough for PL1 and PL2 academic staff. Most of the participants mentioned that academic staff salaries were not sufficient to cover their cost of living. Below is what the participants had to say,

To be honest, the salary paid to PL1 and PL2 academic staff is not a living wage because with that money, considering the current situation, if the academic staff buys a car, he cannot be able to also buy a house and vice versa. This is one of the reasons why academic staff leave when opportunities arise somewhere. So, when opportunities arise, they leave (Participant 1).

It is not adequate especially when we compare the salary that they get from other sectors after leaving the college. The salaries out there are normally twice what they get in the college (Participant 3).

It is not too low or too little, but it is also not too much, but academic staff can survive. Although we cannot benchmark the salary with the ones offered by universities, to improve salaries, all academic staff be required to have an honours degree as an entry qualification and the salaries be increased to a point where they are reasonable (Participant 4).

The above participant believes that the current salary paid to academic staff has an impact on the current turnover of academic staff. The participant further suggested that academic staff be given a competitive salary like other industries if the college is to reduce turnover. When

pressed to explain more about what he would regard as a better or reasonable salary, the participant's response was,

No, the problem of salaries for PL1 and PL2 academic staff is that they were determined or when job evaluation was done, it was based on the basic education tools and not based on what is happening in the TVET sector (Participant 5).

The participant stated that when considering the salaries of teachers in basic education, they were comparable to what was offered in the TVET colleges even though TVET colleges were on post-school education. The participant further stressed that there is a big gap between what is offered as salaries for academic staff in TVET colleges with what is offered in universities of technology to lecturers at the entry-level. In his opinion, the salaries of TVET academic staff must be pegged at the level of entry lecturers in universities. When the participant was further asked to explain if the low salaries of academic staff at the TVET college an impact on academic staff had leaving the college, the participant stated that it significantly contributed to the high rate of attrition in the college.

Another participant stated that in the event of an academic staff getting an offer at a university, he/she would take the offer because most of them had the same qualifications in terms of the level. They said,

It is not adequate. There was a year where the salaries of academic staff were not revised and that impacted negatively on their salaries since the prices of goods went up during that period (Participant 6).

The participant further stated that most of the academic staff were motivated by remunerations and unfortunately this remuneration is determined by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in the bargaining council and follows a particular salary scale.

While the above statements might be true, another participant shared a different sentiment on whether the remuneration given to academic staff was adequate. When he was asked the same question, he stated the following,

So, far I cannot say that because staff members who are leaving the college do not leave the college for other sectors, but they leave for other colleges, and thus the salary may not be the issue. If they were leaving for the private sector where they are promised bigger packages, we would say yes, the salary is not adequate (Participant 2).

In contrast with what the above participant said concerning the remuneration of academic staff specifically within the category of PL1 and PL2 lecturers, another participant is of the view that the remuneration provided is adequate since most people want to join the TVET sector. In his statement, the participant stated the following,

I see the salaries of academic staff as adequate because they are negotiated in a bargaining council where decisions are made, and once they have reached an agreement, they are then implemented (Participant 7).

While the above statements by participants indicate that academic staff does not receive adequate remunerations, participant 4 was of a different view in that he believed that academic staff is rewarded handsomely and stated that he would not say that it was not enough, but it is something that the academic staff can live with. When he compares it with peers in other sectors it is quite very low.

From the above interviews, it was clear that remuneration plays an important role in attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff. The participant stressed that, unlike in other sectors where in the event an employee want wishes to leave the company negotiates with the employee to top up the remuneration, the TVET college sector is different as everything is determined by DHET in consultation with organised labour in the bargaining council. Although TVET colleges are highly regulated, it is expected of college management to find ways in which they can handsomely compensate highly skilled academic staff.

The findings indicate that remuneration for academic staff was also found not to be adequate. Again, the findings indicated that the remuneration given to academic staff is comparatively low when compared with equally qualified employees in other sectors of the economy. This assists in explaining the reasons why most of the academic staff tend to leave TVET college for better salaries elsewhere. In support of this view, Bwowe (2020) submits that remuneration that is not competitive results in highly skilled employees being absorbed by the private sector. Similarly, poor remuneration affects an academic's decision to leave an institution (Makondo, 2014; Onah & Anikwe, 2016). This is corroborated by the findings of the study conducted by Chabaya et al. (2014) who found that academic staff feel that the pay they receive from their employers is not worth their value. These findings are in line with the findings of Ashley (2018), which found that remuneration plays an important role in ensuring that employees are satisfied with their work and thus leading to them staying with the organisation. In addition,

this finding also resonates with the findings of Yimer et al. (2017) that it is important for employees to be given adequate financial compensation as this will cement retention.

4.3.1.3 Lack of job security

Job security plays an important role in ensuring that employees are attracted and retained in the organisation. On the one hand, when academic staff are assured of their job security, they will feel valued. On the other hand, the lack of job security can lead to prolonged anxiety and burnout thus, leading to poor performance and poor retention. Employees who are employed on permanent basis tend to be committed to the organisation and in most situations, they perform well as they would have developed a bond with the organisation.

When they are not employed permanently, chances are that they will be persistently looking for other opportunities elsewhere as their contracts will be of a limited duration. When participants were asked about what the college was doing to ensure that employees stay for a long time in the college, one participant stated that the college was giving lecturers 12 months' contracts that would assure us that they were going to be with us for that period. When pressed to explain further, the participant indicated that the TVET college was relying on the so-called funding grid that is provided by DHET and lecturers could only be appointed permanently if it was approved by the department. The participant further stated that if the post was not approved by the department, the college would need to fund that:

The Department of Higher Education and Training must approve and fund the posts and if the college appoints without the approval of the department, the college must use its funding that is not even enough (Participant 1).

Other participants shared similar sentiments with participant 1 on the issue of job security among temporary academic staff.

Some academic staff leave the college because of the nature of their contracts such as one-year renewable contracts and when they get opportunities elsewhere that are permanent, they consider them because of job security (Participant 6).

Academic staff are recruited and appointed for few months or even a year and when the college does not absorb or appoint them within that period, they decide to go elsewhere where they will secure permanent appointments (Participant 7).

Based on the above explanations from the participants, it was apparent that employees wanted to be appointed permanently, which would help them to be committed to the organisation. In the college, it emerged that the appointment of academic staff on fixed-term contract was affecting the college's performance because the college would recruit forever. Job security is crucial for academic staff retention. Academic staff who leave the college, do so because they were not guaranteed that they would be appointed in a permanent capacity within the foreseeable future. This lack of job security also has financial implications for the college as it had to advertise and appoint new academic staff every trimester, semester, and even a year.

Academic staff value job security where they are guaranteed to be with the college for a long time. This was seen from the number of contract academic staff who were leaving the college even before their contracts expired. Job security was important to ensuring that academic staff would remain in the employ of the college for a longer period. Job security in a TVET college is crucial for academic staff as it discourages one from looking for other opportunities in other organisations thus saving the college time and money in looking for replacement staff (Saif & Adnan, 2019). Again, ensuring job security for academic staff increases their motivation and commitment to the college. Furthermore, when academic staff is provided with adequate job security, they develop a sense of self-belonging and commitment to the college, which will increase academic staff retention. From the findings, it is very clear that this exercise of appointing academic staff on temporary contract encourage them to look for permanent appointments in other companies. The findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted by Aluu and Okechukwu (2023) in private sector universities in Nigeria. The study found that job security affects academic staff retention.

The participants indicated that job security was very important for the college to succeed. Academic staff who were employed on fixed-term contracts knew that they were in danger of losing their jobs at any time. Therefore, they were continuously looking for secure opportunities. As opined by Wilson et al. (2020) and Zhang et al. (2020), lack of job security is a potential challenge to employees as they always think that their jobs are on the line due to the kind of contract they would have entered into, which is not long term. The findings from the interviews conducted on factors contributing to a high rate of attrition in the college indicated that the kind of contract that temporary academic staff enter leaves them with no option but to be on the lookout for available opportunities elsewhere. This finding corroborated the findings of a study conducted by Oginni et al. (2017) to assess the effect of job security on

the retention of teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria which found that there is a positive relationship between job security and employee retention.

4.3.2 Challenge of high attrition in the college

Teaching and learning are the core business of TVET college. Management must always ensure that this core business is not disrupted. When highly skilled academic staff leave the college, students who were being taught by the academic staff who left the college may find themselves having no lecturer for some time and that may later affect their performance as in many situations. This is even worse given that these academic staff often leave on short notice. The interviewed participants expressed their views on the challenges that the college faces when an academic staff leaves the college on short notice. In their responses, they indicated that the shortage of highly skilled academic staff and the recruitment process hinder the college's success. These challenges are discussed in detail in the next section.

4.3.2.1 Shortage of highly skilled academic staff.

The participants stated that the college was offering trimester, semester, and year courses, and thus the process to recruit replacements was taking longer given the three-month process and during that period students were left without a lecturer, which created a serious challenge as it affected teaching and learning. Cognisant of the many challenges that the TVET college faced daily, participants were asked to state the challenges that the college faced and the following were stated:

Since we are doing year courses at the campus, it becomes a challenge because of the recruitment process that is followed when the academic staff resigns. When we recruit, the process takes three months to appoint an academic staff to fill the post and during that period, students are left without a lecturer (Participant 1).

Most of the challenges that the college faces are to do with when a temporary academic staff wants to leave the college immediately after getting permanent employment somewhere because the position is waiting for him/her on the other side and cannot wait any longer. This creates a problem as it leaves students unattended and delays teaching and learning and ultimately affects the students' performance since the process to recruit a replacement takes time (Participant 2).

Adding to the above comments from participants 1 and 2, other participants believed that attrition has a serious impact on teaching and learning as the core business of the college:

When academic staff leave the college, they leave with their experience and skills that are not easy to replace since they have expertise in certain fields. Again, it is also a challenge because the process of advertising the position takes time to fill due to the process and procedures that must be followed for the approval of the post. Further, when a new person is employed, the skills are not replaced by the recruit (Participant 4).

It takes time to appoint academic staff as certain documents must be signed and approved before an appointment can take place and that leaves students without an academic staff as we sometimes must wait for three or more months before we can get a replacement (Participant 7).

Participant 7 further indicated that if academic staff who intend to leave the college were required to serve a period of one-month notice to allow the college to fill the position without compromising the future of students.

Adding to the same view that the shortage of academic staff is a challenge to teaching and learning as students were sometimes left alone during the time of recruitment, other participants had this to say,

Students are left unattended due to the long process of recruitment where this involves the advertisement of the post including other processes that need to be adhered to before the actual appointment can take place (Participant 3).

Normally, when an academic staff leaves the college, there is what we call an exit interview, which must be conducted before the academic staff leave. What I have picked up at the college is that when academic staff leave, they are not leaving on good terms even though I do not know what their reasons are. This is seen when the academic staff just send an email to notify the college of his/her resignation without being interviewed and never put this/her foot in the college (Participant 4).

Further, participant 4 stated that when the college loses a highly skilled academic staff, it replaces this skilled academic staff with someone who is not skilled, and this has an impact on the results as they drop. The participant further stated that only a few academic staff who leave the college leave on good terms. The participant thought that another reason may be that academic staff feel that the college was not appreciating their good work. When prompted to state more about the impact that these challenges have on the performance of the college, the participant said,

The main impact that this challenge has is on teaching and learning as this is the core business of the college. When academic staff leave the college, you will find that some

of these academic staff are very experienced and have the expertise in certain subject fields and it becomes a loss to the department and the college (Participant 4).

The participant further expressed his views on the loss of experienced and highly skilled academic staff in that it has an impact not only on the student's performance but also on the college operations as the college had to use some resources that could have been used elsewhere to advertise the position and appoint new academic staff. While the person may be found to fill the position, the person might not be able to replace the skills or expertise that the academic staff who left had. The views expressed above show that the participants had to deal with frustrated students who were left unattended in the classroom.

The views above were also echoed by other participants who also highlighted some of the challenges associated with the issue of academic staff attrition:

Replacing academic staff is a problem. If an academic staff with 2 – 4 years leaves the college, getting a new replacement in the system takes time as one must groom that academic staff for him to become productive. In addition, this appointment of inexperienced academic staff also hurts the results or performance of students (Participant 5).

When another participant was further asked about what the college was doing to retain the trained employees, the participants stated that:

The college and the Department of Higher Education and Training have introduced a programme to develop academic staff who are not professionally qualified with the hope that once qualified, they will stay in the system (Participant 6).

The participant also stated that since the education system was involved, the college was subjecting academic staff to short courses such as online teaching and blended learning that would make education more interesting as a way of encouraging academic staff to stay while on the other hand enhancing their knowledge. Below are some of the explanations,

What we do as management is that we give lecturers a yearly contract to ensure that a lecturer is contracted to us for a year. Again, we asked the department (DHET) to convert the temporary posts into permanent posts as a way of alleviating that challenge (Participant 1).

We give the central office all the requirements for the academic posts in the college per campus including job allocations and then they invite applicants and interview all of them and put them in our database so that when there is a need for an academic staff,

we will just call them and appoint them without subjecting them to interviews (Participant 2).

We try a bit by being available to provide support to the academic staff who need assistance in terms of resources for them to do their jobs effectively. We also thank them for the good work that they do (Participant 4).

While the quotations above showed that some support was provided to academic staff, one participant was of the view that it is difficult for the college to operate like the private sector where employees could be prevented from leaving by providing top-ups since the college was operating in a difficult environment where there were limitations on what it could do:

The college operates in an environment which is influenced by many issues. The terrain on which the college operates in has many limitations from the national budget and the department (DHET) itself. This prevents the college from being able to attract and retain highly skilled and experienced academic staff (Participant 5).

The above responses from the participants indicated that the college was facing a serious challenge regarding the time that it would take to appoint a replacement academic staff when one leaves the college. According to the participants, college management was not doing enough to improve on the issue of academic staff recruitment and appointment. When participants were asked about what they were doing, this is what they said,

In most cases, we get the posts that we request from the department, but it is important to note that we depend on what is called the funding grid since we are funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training (Participant 1).

It is still new and a start in the right direction, but I feel that it will need us to work as a collective (campus management and including college management) if it is to succeed (Participant 4).

It is not working as academic staff are motivated by remuneration and unfortunately the salaries of TVET college academic staff are gazetted by the Department of Higher Education and Training in agreement with labour in the bargaining council (Participant 6).

In contradiction with the above statements, other participants believed that the college was not doing enough to facilitate attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff who are qualified academics. When he was asked to explain what the college was doing to address this high rate of attrition in the college, the participant responded by stating the following,

To be honest, the college does not put some effort in ensuring that we attract and retain highly skilled academic staff; it happens to be lucky if we get one who is qualified and willing to stay. The other thing is that when the college advertises posts, the posts will be on the college website only and people who cannot afford to google that will miss the opportunity and thus reducing the chances of attracting highly qualified and experienced staff (Participant 3).

As far as I know, nothing is being done to address the challenge faced by students who do not have a lecturer, and this was supposed to have been done immediately when the gap was identified (Participant 7).

From the interviews, the findings demonstrated that the shortage of academic staff was a serious challenge facing the TVET college. The problem of shortage of skilled employees was not only affecting the TVET sector but also other industries. It emerged that the TVET sector, this challenge had been continuing for many years and was largely perpetuated by many factors such as insufficient funding from the Department of Higher Education and Training, poor strategic planning, poor motivation, and an unfavourable working environment. In the college, the causes of the shortage of highly skilled academic staff may be attributed to competition with other sectors of the economy since most of these academic staff possessed qualifications that were also in demand in other organisations. In addition, this could also be associated with a lack of proper strategic planning to support teaching and learning in the college.

These findings corroborated the findings by Jacob and Garba (2021) found that inadequate funding, the lack of strategic manpower planning, brain drain, poor motivation, and an unconducive working environment are some of the factors leading to a shortage of academic staff. When academic staff leave the college and are not replaced on time, it leads to a situation where students are left unattended for a long time while the college is trying to find a replacement. Consequently, this in turn increases the workload of available academic staff as they must cover for those academic staff that will not be available as students need to be taught.

4.3.2.2 Recruitment process.

Most participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the way the college was managing the recruitment of academic staff especially where one needed to be replaced immediately since not filling the post urgently would affect teaching and learning. Some of them expressed their views by stating the following,

It takes time to fill the position due to processes that must be followed such as approval for advertisement, shortlisting, interviews, and the appointment of the right candidate. All these affect teaching and learning (Participant 4).

The recruitment process for the replacement of academic staff takes 2-3 months and for that period, students are left sitting without a lecturer. This delay in appointing a replacement lecturer is exacerbated by the period it takes to get approval to advertise, shortlist, interview, and conduct verification checks of the successful candidate before an appointment can be made (Participant 6).

If an academic staff leaves the college, it takes time before the college can get a replacement because of the process that needs to be followed to fill a post. These activities or the process make us wait for many months without an academic staff and this results in students being unattended for a prolonged period (Participant7).

As stated by another participant, one of the challenges that the college management faces are the inability to urgently fill the vacant post that is left by the academic staff who would have left the college. In their view, the participant said,

The inability of the college to urgently appoint academic staff also increases our workload as at some stages we stand in for the academic staff who left the college to assist the students. In addition, it is also a challenge as we must ask and convince other academic staff to step in and assist students (Participant 7).

One participant added that these failures by the college to urgently appoint academic staff increase management's workload as they must assist the students until the new academic staff is appointed. In addition to the above, some participants stated that the college was prioritising the appointment of central office staff rather than those that are focussing on the core business of the college. The above quotes indicate that there was no urgency by management to fill the most important posts in the college and that influences academic staff since it also leads to a situation where some of them must increase their workload to cater for the students that are not being taught.

From the interviews, most participants identified a lengthy recruitment process as one of the challenges facing the college. The findings reflected that the college was taking a long time before an academic post can be filled and this has an impact on the college in general in that some students were left without a lecturer while the college is busy with the process of recruiting a replacement. Unlike other private organisations where decisions are often expedited to fill vacancies swiftly, in the TVET college there was a process that was supposed

to be followed based on the guidelines from the Department of Higher Education and Training when filling a vacancy. As stated by Omisore and Okofu (2014), various researchers have indicated that staff recruitment plays an important role in their turnover intentions or the ability of the organisation to retain them. According to Alatawi (2017), the employee recruitment process should be scientific, with the overarching aim of minimising employee turnover. This recruitment process necessitates a more deliberate and considered approach in that there should be input from different people in the college until the post is approved before finalising an appointment. This procedure delayed the time when the replacement staff would start work in the classroom.

4.3.3 Strategies for the attraction and retention of academic staff

For employees to stay and be productive in the organisation, they prefer to work in an environment that is conducive to them. If the work environment is toxic, they tend to be more demotivated and later opt to leave for an environment that they believe will be conducive for them. When they were interviewed on strategies that could be used to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff, the participants submitted that a supportive work environment and staff motivation are important strategies that ensure that academic staff stay with the college. These academic staff attraction and retention strategies are discussed in detail below.

4.3.3.1 Supportive work environment.

The work environment is very important to retain employees in the organisation. If the work environment is toxic, most academic staff will leave the college but if it is not toxic, the level of retention is improved. During the interviews, it emerged that the working conditions that academic staff found themselves were not conducive. Firstly, the academic staff were of the view that due to the college being under administration, many things in the college had changed thus impacting their work. One participant raised the issue of trust between management and academic staff as one of the reasons the environment is not conducive. Secondly, the issue of the college management not prioritising the issue of filling vacant posts was also raised by most of the participants led them to carry an extra workload. Furthermore, the academic staff felt that college management was not adequately supporting them as they performed their duties. This was evident when participant 7 stated that sometimes they would step in to assist students who were left unattended when the academic staff left the college.

As much as the academic staff were concerned about students who were not being attended to, this also affected the college negatively as the workload of the academic staff who stepped in to assist also increased. When another participant was asked whether he regarded the current work environment as conducive or toxic for highly skilled academic staff to stay, this is what he said,

The environment for teaching and learning is very conducive for academic staff if they do their work. What I like about the TVET sector is that even before we begin with activities at the college for the year, the Department gives us ICASS guidelines, ensuring that academic staff know exactly what they need to do (Participant 1).

The participant further stated that once academic staff know what to do, it becomes easier for them to operate effectively. In their view, the strategic planning that is done in preparation for the next year including operational plans and college or campus management plans is done to make it easier for academic staff to plan their work accordingly as they will know what is expected of them in the current year.

In support of the statement provided by participant 1, another participant stated the following,

I do not think it is toxic because we are open for the academic staff to lead projects in the areas that they service. Academic staff are allowed to volunteer and lead projects even though some staff members feel that they are used when they are asked to volunteer (Participant 2).

The participant further stated that academic staff could come forward if they wished to lead available projects that will on the other hand receiving experience. This view was also supported by participant 6 who submitted that the work environment is good if academic staff follow the set rules and regulations of the college especially when policies are implemented accordingly.

One participant felt that the work environment was toxic as many things were happening in the college such as administration and others. When asked to state in his words what he meant by that, the participant's response was that:

The current work environment is still toxic because it is full of politics and there are people that you cannot step on their toes and since the college moved out of

administration, there is still a lot of confusion as most staff members do not know what is happening (Participant 3).

In addition to this, the participant also emphasised the importance of involving employees in activities such as team building and other activities that can work toward the improvement of people's morale at the workplace. Moreover, when the other participants were asked to explain whether they regarded the work environment as conducive, the participants stated the following,

The fact that we were under administration shows that the work environment was not conducive but since the college is now managed by the principal, hopefully, there will be an improvement in that regard (Participant 5).

At this point, the environment is not conducive at all and that is the reason why academic staff are leaving the college, especially PL1 and PL2 academic staff. Other academic staff are not leaving the college for greener pastures but for promotions to satisfy their self-actualisation needs (Participant 4).

When one participant was asked about what he thought could be done by management to ensure that the work environment becomes conducive for academic staff to work in the college and not leave for other colleges and companies, they said,

Functional systems must be in put in place to cater for issues like governance. For example, when a new employee is appointed, the person is not taken through induction as there is no system in place to ensure that employees are put through induction before they can commence their duties. Employees are just thrown in the deep end and expected to perform miracles in terms of performance (Participant 4).

The responses of the participant above indicated that the working conditions were still toxic as many academic staff found it difficult to get support from the management of the college. Most of the participants' responses reflected common characteristics of working conditions in the TVET college. According to the participants, management was not doing enough to improve the level of trust among employees. The participant further stated that resources that are needed by academic staff for him to do the job effectively were not immediately made available.

The findings from the interviews indicated that the work environment was not conducive for academic staff to work and perform effectively. Conditions of work play an important role in realising the goals and objectives of the organisation. When academic staff work in a supportive environment, their morale improves and they also develop a sense of community, and

interpersonal relationships that are useful to retaining them (Kinman, 2016). Therefore, to ensure that academic staff are satisfied with their work environment, the participants suggested that the college was supposed to create an environment that was supportive and could retain employees.

The working conditions in the college are important for its success. As suggested by Msengeti and Obwogi (2015), college management should find a way to improve the working conditions of academic staff to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. A poor working environment will lower the morale of academic staff and thus affect their performance and productivity. If academic staff are not satisfied with their work environment, this will encourage them to look elsewhere for opportunities. Therefore, as stated by Funminiyi (2018), the college management must create an environment that is attractive, creative, comfortable, satisfactory, and motivating to employees so that they can be proud of what they do as this will improve their retention. This finding is in line with the findings from previous research which found that a poor work environment hurts employee retention (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Nasir et al., 2019).

4.3.3.2 Academic staff motivation.

As stated above the work environment plays an important role in employee attraction and retention. Further, motivating them also ensures that their morale is improved and therefore, increases their retention. Motivation is key to the success of the organisation as most employees remain in the organisation if they are motivated. It gives academic staff the energy to perform better and encourages them to want to do more. Motivation can be provided in different forms such as praise, award, and others. Like other organisations, the TVET college must develop or craft motivational strategies to attract and retain academic staff. When participants were asked to identify motivational strategies they use to motivate academic staff to ensure that they do not leave the college. This is what they said,

We reward good performance by having awards where we reward good performance, even if they are without money such a function will motivate workers who will in return be committed to the college (Participant 1).

If academic staff perform well, we recognise the academic staff through awards. For example, academic staff is rewarded through word of thanks and in the form of tokens appreciation depending on the flexibility and availability of a budget (Participant 2).

Another participant believed that involving academic staff in the activities of the college would motivate them and ensure that they would feel like being at work all the time. In his own words, the participant said,

The idea that I think will work is to have each academic staff list their interests besides their current work schedule that can be offered to the college so that they can be given opportunities to lead projects when they arise (Participant 2).

Participants were later asked to provide any other information that they thought could assist in attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff. Another participant expressed his view on the effect of unemployment in the country. The participant stated that because of the high rate of unemployment in the country, the college did not get people with the required skills. The participant further stated that to teach vocational education effectively, one needs to employ a person who has four to five years of experience in the industry and yet these people are not easily attracted. The following was said,

You cannot just come and teach vocational subjects from university or college; you need to have four to five years of experience. Unfortunately, we are unable to attract those people because of salary. If we were offering a good salary, we would have attracted those people with skills. Sadly, students are taught by people who have never been to the industry (Participant 1).

Further, the participant gave an example of an academic staff who had never been an artisan but was teaching students a module on electricity but he was never in the industry and did not even know the components he was teaching students about. The participant suggested that academic staff that teach vocational subjects must hail from the industry. Through probing, participants were asked to explain whether the college was able to compete with other companies for such skilled people, the participant said,

It is the biggest challenge as the system is flawed because we just pick up anybody to close the gaps and that is seen through the results that are always very low specifically for the vocational subjects across the colleges (Participant 1).

Most people are attracted to organisations by the package that is offered by the employer but as a college, we are not there yet as a government institution since we are regulated and can only promise academic staff awards for good performance (Participant 2).

Another participant indicated that motivation had been part of the college where previously, academic staff would be invited to a function such as staff evenings where they would even meet their students' parents and dine together. In his own words, the participant said,

Previously, many things were done in the college to motivate academic staff such as staff evenings where we would meet with the parents of our students in the college or hotel and socialise in trying to bring or improve our morale, but lately nothing is done to motivate us (Participant 3).

When the participant was asked to explain what the college was doing to motivate academic staff, the response was as follows,

What we are currently trying to do is to give praise where it is due and recognise good performance even though we do not provide gifts. In addition to that, we give some of them responsibilities that will encourage them to want to remain in the college such as performing the duties that are normally performed by senior academic staff and HoDs (Participant 3).

The above statements highlighted the concerns that the participants had with the way the college was dealing with the motivation of academic staff. Again, there is a clear indication from the above statements by participants 1 and 3 that the college may not be handling the issue of motivation of academic staff although some of the academic staff are not happy with not being motivated. Some participants are of the view that the college was doing something to deal with the motivation of academic staff, however, this was not adequate for the good job that academic staff were doing.

When participants were asked about what the college was doing to motivate academic staff, participants shared different views in that regard. Some participants shared the views below,

There is nothing much that is done to motivate academic staff at this campus. However, at the college level, employees are being recognised for good performance by way of staff awards, although this is new (Participant 4).

As a way of motivating academic staff, the college encourage them to participate in part-time classes where they receive extra payment for working part-time and this part-time payment comes from the college's budget. Again, the college rewards good performance when employees have performed well. It holds reward ceremonies to reward academic staff with vouchers and certificates and, provide bursaries for academic staff to study further (Participant 6).

When asked to provide information on what could be done to improve the situation in the college, one of the participants said,

As part of college management, we must develop, guide, and support academic staff in what they do in the college and refrain from instilling fear in them as that will lead to them deciding to leave the college (Participant 7).

Another participant believes that creating a conducive environment is the responsibility of the human resources (HR) department. In his response, he explained,

The task of motivating staff is in the HR department as they are mandated to create an environment that is conducive for academic staff to work. This includes making proposals on what can be done to improve the working relationship. Again, a programme was introduced recently to reward academic staff based on their students' performance (Participant 5).

Further, participant 5 explained that the issue of motivating academic staff must be a collective effort by everyone in the college's management structure to ensure that all academic staff feel comfortable working in the college. In addition to what the participant said, he suggested that the college must invite motivational speakers, and create some strategic partnerships with other TVET colleges to share skills and knowledge on educational matters that will be helpful to the academic staff and the college. The participant further suggested that academic staff be given goods such as branded jackets, bags, caps, and other paraphernalia that could motivate them.

Later, participants were asked to identify other strategies that they thought could improve the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff. When they were asked about other strategies that the college could use to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff and how they would apply them, they said,

If it was for me to decide, I would be happy if the salary of an academic staff is improved and they be given the salary of a senior academic staff (PL2), and if not, the salary must be structured in such a way that after some time the salary must be adjusted based on the cost of living (Participant 1).

The participant further suggested that like in other sectors of the public service, academic staff must be automatically promoted to a higher position or next-level position after a certain number of years in a position because of the period of service. In that proposal, it would mean

that academic staff would be promoted without attending interviews and competing for available higher positions.

In support of the above statement, another participant believed that the college must develop a career pathing as a strategy to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. The participant said,

Currently, the college does not prioritise or give preference to internal staff but appoint based on one's performance during interviews. Promotional posts are open for everyone who qualifies regardless of whether the candidate works for the college (Participant 2).

The participant indicated that the college was in the process of developing a career pathing and waiting for the council to approve a policy dealing with that strategy. When participants were asked about what the college doing to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff or to ensure that these academic staff do not leave the college, they explained,

The thing that we are doing now is that we make sure that we give academic staff a yearly contract, meaning that we are assured that they will be contracted with us for a year. We are lucky that for most academic staff that are contract employees, we request the DHET to give us those posts permanently. So, if those posts are permanent, that will be the method to alleviate the challenge (Participant 1).

There is no plan in place to promote academic staff as a way of retaining them after they are developed and this leads to them leaving the college, let alone the strategy to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff (Participant 3).

Further, participant 6 stated that for those who were lucky to be promoted, it was dependent on who applied, who the panellists were, and other things, and this at some stages would lead to a situation where the wrong person was appointed.

When pressed to state if the method that they use for recruiting academic staff as a way to reduce the time taken to fill the vacancy is working, the participant stated that they rely on the Department of Higher Education and Training, which they recommend, and the department appoints based on the so-called funding grid where academic staff were funded by the department. If the college appoints without the approval of the department, the college had to use its funding which is not even enough. The participant said,

We have started something as a college and currently we give the central office HR department all the requirements for all the posts per campus so that they can advertise. Interviews are held with shortlisted candidates and successful candidate names and contact details are saved on a college register/ database so that when one academic staff member resigns, it will be easier to replace that person (Participant 2).

I probed participants to explain if what the college was doing in terms of striving to employee motivation and retention was working, the participant stated that although it was still new, they hoped that it was going to work because it has already attracted a lot of applicants. Hence, they were waiting for implementation. The participant further stated that based on the response from the applicant. Using this strategy will make it easier for the college to quickly fill the post since the replacement academic staff had already been interviewed and can be called as soon as possible.

Another participant shared their sentiment on the recruitment and appointment of academic staff who are employed to replace the one who would have resigned. The participant was of the view that even if the college could recruit on time, the problem was that the recruit may not have the required experience, skills, and knowledge needed to fill the gap. The participant said,

It is lucky when you get a person who has the skill, knowledge, and qualifications that are needed and remains in the college. No efforts are made by the college to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff (Participant 3).

Another participant indicated that the college would advertise posts internally and, on their website, and that is not enough as the information does not reach everyone. The participant also felt that it would be fair and in the best interest of the college if the posts are advertised in addition to the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) system for advertising posts, also be advertised in other media such as newspapers to attract skilled people nationally. The participant is of the view that attracting skilled, experienced, and knowledgeable people can only be realised if the college offers competitive remuneration. In his view, the participant indicated that based on what the college was offering, it is difficult to attract people with skills and the required knowledge.

Other participants had these to say,

Lately, the college has decided to appoint qualified academic staff whose profession is education and at least they will stay in the system and only move when there is a promotion. Replacing academic staff is a problem. If an academic staff with 2 – 4 years

can leave the college, getting a new replacement in the system takes time because the college must groom that academic staff member for him/her to become productive (Participant 6).

It is difficult when looking at the way the TVET colleges are designed or configured. Some of the things are beyond the college's mandate. TVET colleges are not able to do top-ups, especially to convince an academic staff member who is leaving the college based on a better salary somewhere to stay (Participant 5).

Participant 5 stated that it would be ideal if the configuration of TVET colleges was like what being done in the private sector. The participant further stated that in the private sector, companies were counteroffering what was promised to the employee who intended to leave for another company. The participant said,

The college is operating in an environment that is influenced by many factors or challenges and there are many limitations such as the national budget, departmental issues, and the college council that in some instances might make plans to retain highly skilled academic staff although this happens in rare cases. (Participant 5).

From the quotes above, motivating academic staff at the college was a serious challenge to the college's management since the staff was not motivated regularly. Some participants mentioned that they were not being rewarded for good performance. It is evident from the above discussion that the college management had different experiences and perceptions of the motivation of academic staff. Some were of the view that highly skilled academic staff were not appreciated for their exceptional performance.

Recognising and rewarding good performance assists in motivating academic staff to continue with the good work they were doing in the classroom. According to Magaisa and Musundire (2022), rewards increase the morale of the employees, boost their self-esteem, and wellbeing. However, the lack of recognition and rewards for academic staff may hurt their decision to stay in the college. Similarly, in a work environment where the employer values employee contribution, employees are appreciated to boost their morale and encourage them to stay in the organisation. Like in other organisations, the academic staff want to be appreciated in one way or the other for their good work. When students' progress to the next level, it is a sign that a particular academic staff would have performed well, and they must be appreciated.

The findings from the interviews indicated that while less was being done by the TVET college to recognise and reward good performance as a way of motivating academic staff, the work

environment was also not conducive for them to work and be productive. As submitted by Ahsan (2018) employees' decision to stay is influenced by the rewards they receive from the organisation. Again, it was stated by most of the academic staff that there was no recognition and rewards for academic staff who were performing exceptionally well. One participant stated that previously, academic staff used to meet with other stakeholders, for example, parents and guardians of students and engage and share ideas on college matters but this was no longer happening for quite some time. The findings from this study also reflected some similarities to the findings of a study conducted by Rodriguez (2014), which found that recognising and rewarding employees increased their morale and added value to their achievements while on the other hand, motivating them to be more productive.

4.3.4 Training and development

During the interviews, participants were also asked to share their views on whether the college was providing training and career growth. When asked whether the college was offering training opportunities and career growth, their responses varied depending on how participants understand career growth. On the one hand, some participants understood career growth to be related to promotions while on the other hand, some considered it to relate to academic growth. From their responses, it was clear that although the participants may not be using the same term to mean the same thing, their understanding of growth opportunities was not far apart. Others spoke of career growth opportunities in terms of promotional posts while on the other hand, some referred to growth opportunities in terms of training. In the end, it surfaced that career growth and academic staff training were important to ensuring that highly skilled academic staff were attracted and retained in the college. These issues are discussed in detail in the next section.

4.3.4.1 Career growth/ development.

During the interview, the issue of developing academic staff professionally was also discussed. Participants were asked if the college was providing academic staff with the opportunity to develop themselves. Some participants indicated that the college was providing bursaries that were also regarded as grants to academic staff who wanted to further their studies. Some participants said,

The college has a human resources development department that is focussed on ensuring that academic staff grow academically through the involvement of campus managers who do training analysis to determine the required training for academic staff. If one comes without the requisite teaching methodology, the campus manager must ensure that the person is developed (Participant 1).

It depends on what is regarded as growth, but when we look at career growth, it depends on the nature of the programmes that are being offered by the college and the number of Full – Time Equivalent (FTEs). Academic staff who want to study further at external institutions are provided with the opportunities to do so and funding is made available, although it is not enough. The fact that the opportunity is made available to them, I then regard the development and training of academic staff as adequate. Again, internal programmes such as soft skills are also provided, but there is less progress in that regard (Participant 5).

In support of what participants 1 and 5 said, other participants believed that the college was providing support through academic staff bursaries to develop their skills. The participants said,

The college is offering bursaries, which they must apply for, and they are regarded as grants since academic staff are not required to pay back when they complete their studies and this allows them to grow as academics. The college also encourages academic staff who do not have a teaching qualification to enrol for this important professional qualification in education (Participant 6).

The college has enrolled some of the academic staff with institutions of higher learning to ensure that they are qualified as educators especially those who do not have a teaching qualification (Participant 7).

Other participants explained that,

We work with the DHET to enhance the growth of academic staff in terms of personal growth and career pathing. What we do is that we ask the academic staff to identify their training needs and as a college, we then prioritise the needs based on the college's growth plan. Academic staff is also developed to assist those that are not performing well (Participant 2).

The college is developing academic staff through different ways, lately a programme to develop academic staff who do not have a teaching methodology is being offered in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Again, those who want to study further or to develop themselves must apply to the institutions of their choice and the college pays (Participant 3).

The responses from participants indicated that most of the participants agreed that academic staff were provided with an opportunity to study further and in support of this, the college was

providing bursaries to academic staff registered to study in the field of their choice at any institution of higher learning. Nevertheless, although training was provided, most participants believed that the training provided was either irrelevant or not adequate to support them in the provision of quality education. The participants stated there was growth, although it below their expectation. Opportunities for career growth in the workplace make employees to be satisfied with their work. If they are satisfied with their work, they are more likely to stay with the college.

As the training and development of employees are considered crucial for the success of any organisation (Bogatova, 2017), the college is also expected to train and develop academic staff so that they can gain the required skills and knowledge that will assist them in the provision of quality education. From the findings, it is evident that academic staff were not provided with growth opportunities and due recognition for their exceptional performance. Demotivated employees are more likely to quit their companies and seek alternative options. Allowing employees to grow and learn will always motivate them to stay with the organisation and be more productive and effective at work. Most of the academic staff stated that there were no opportunities for growth and this left them with no options but to look elsewhere for promotional opportunities. Academic staff are the backbone of the college, and the college must make sure that they are always happy, since if they are demotivated, performance will be affected thus leading to them performing poorly. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers such as Smit et al. (2016) who also found that investing in employees' career growth opportunities develops their sense of obligation and organisational commitment. The findings also indicate that not enough is done to ensure that every academic staff is developed to the optimum level.

4.3.4.2 Academic staff training.

During the interviews, participants expressed their negative views about the training that they normally receive at the college and expressed their dissatisfaction with its relevance to what they were doing in the classroom. Participants also conceded that their views were not considered because annually, when performance evaluation was done in terms of integrated quality management system (IQMS), they indicated the training that they needed to enhance and improve teaching and learning in the classrooms, but nothing was done to satisfy the identified training needs.

When they were asked whether the trainings that they were receiving were relevant and adequate to what they were doing at work, some participants were of the view that what the training was providing was not adequate or relevant in terms of assisting them to effectively provide proper teaching and learning to students. A participant cited the lack of proper and relevant training as one of the reasons academic staff were leaving the college. The participant said,

As academic staff, we are not given proper and relevant training to what we do, but we are given training that was meant for basic education, yet we are in the TVET sector. Academic staff do not have a method for teaching in the TVET sector and DHET has developed a qualification (Advanced Diploma in TVET Teaching) that is relevant. They have capacitated TVET colleges to train academic staff so that they can be relevant (Participant 1).

The college is not yet giving academic staff the relevant training they need, but is driving toward that through the development of academic staff especially those without teaching qualifications by putting them in such programmes as the Advanced Diploma in TVET Teaching (Participant 2).

Supporting the above comments by participants regarding the availability of relevant training programmes, other participants had these to say,

Not everyone is trained and developed because the college takes time to allocate funding for the training and development of academic staff. However, lately some academic staff have opted to enrol with other institutions of higher learning to acquire more knowledge and skill (Participant 7).

Training is not adequate, there is what we call a personal development plan where academic staff identify their training needs but unfortunately, none of those training needs identified by the academic staff are implemented (Participant 4).

When participants were asked if academic staff were receiving relevant or adequate training, the participants had different views on the issue of training and development. The following are the different views that were provided by participants,

Annually, a budget must be made available for academic staff development because currently, there are no funds budgeted to develop academic staff and the college must ensure that these academic staff are developed based on the identified training needs (Participant 4).

When another participant was asked to state what the college was doing to keep the trained and developed academic staff in its employ, he said,

Unfortunately, the college cannot refrain from developing its own staff because of the fear that they might leave the college because it has a duty to empower the academic staff based on the skills that it needs. If academic staff are empowered, skilled, or trained on what they are doing, the college will improve in terms of production (results/output). Nevertheless, this empowerment will not stop them from leaving (Participant 5).

The participants were also asked to explain if the college had a strategy to ensure that trained and developed academic staff were considered for promotion to ensure that they were not developed for competitors or other sectors. One participant said,

We do not train academic staff so that they must not leave the college, but we train them to ensure that they can deliver. If there are positions somewhere, they may leave. If we do not train them, we are going to have academic staff that do not deliver. The only thing that we can do is to let them sign a contract that states the period the trained academic staff must work for the college before they can leave for other companies (Participant 1).

The participant emphasised the importance of ensuring that academic staff were equipped with relevant training that could address the needs of the industry for them to be able to transfer the same knowledge and skills to their students in the classroom. The participant was of the view that academic staff required training that would enhance or develop them within the subject which they were teaching. Further, the participant gave an example of engineering as a subject that required specialised skills that could only be obtained through training. When probed to explain further regarding what he thought was required to ensure that trained and developed academic staff wouldn't leave the college, the participant indicated that the college could ensure that by,

Developing the academic staff in the relevant field such as taking them to participate in various short courses that will enhance teaching and learning. (Participant 6).

The participant further indicated that if academic staff were introduced to blended learning and online teaching and learning, that will enhance their knowledge, and chances were that they would feel motivated to stay.

From the views of the participants above, it is evident that the college was taking the training and development of academic staff as very important strategies for mitigating staff attrition, even though less was done to ensure that academic staff received adequate or relevant training. Since academic staff were not receiving training that would assist them when conducting teaching and learning in the classroom, this might have resulted in students performing poorly. What this means is that the training provided to academic staff should ensure that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge they require to effectively perform their jobs in the classroom.

The training and development of academic staff should include content knowledge regarding the relevant field of the job so that they can provide quality education to students. For the TVET college to provide quality education to students, it needs to constantly upskill academic staff with new and relevant skills and knowledge. In the opinion of Koteswari et al. (2020), providing relevant training to employees improves their skills and knowledge and makes them fit for the job. The provision of adequate training to academic staff coupled with opportunities for career growth is important for academic staff. Continuous training is important because it equips academic staff with the basic skills required for the efficient execution of the functions for which they are hired (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2019). Consequently, training these academic staff and not retaining them will negatively affect the college's performance.

The findings from the interviews on the training of academic staff indicated that although the academic staff were being trained to enhance their performance, the training that was provided was not adequate or relevant as in most situations, they were only offered courses on assessing, moderating, and facilitating. This finding corroborates previous research, which found that the provision of training that is not adequate or relevant hurts academic career motivation, success, and productivity (Bwowe, 2020; Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). This finding is also in line with the findings of a study conducted by Abdullahi (2018) on the effect of training and development on employee productivity among the academic staff of Kano State Polytechnic in Nigeria. In that study, it was found that the training provided had an impact on the performance and productivity of academic staff. Based on the findings, providing relevant training was identified as a challenge to the college and if this could be improved, it will have a positive impact on the attraction, retention, and even the performance of highly skilled academic staff. These findings also corroborate a study conducted by Bishop (2018), which observed that workers of tomorrow must continuously upgrade their skills in their initiatives.

4.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I provided a presentation of findings using data that was generated from the interviews conducted with participants who were based at a TVET college in Johannesburg. From the findings, four themes emerged, and these were discussed in detail. The findings suggested that various factors including challenges reduced the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff in the college. The next chapter is a chapter summary of the study, the research findings including the conclusion and lessons for research and practice. Lastly, it also includes the recommendations for further studies and final words.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed discussion and analysis of the research findings. In concluding this study, Chapter 5 presents a summary of the research findings. It provides an overview of the five chapters, followed by a discussion of key findings, limitations of the study, conclusions based on the findings of the study, and recommendations for future research.

5.2 Summarising the study chapters

Providing an overview of the chapters presented in the research report is very crucial as it provides the reader with a summary of what transpired in individual chapters. This is also done to assist the reader to understand the findings and recommendations as provided below.

Chapter 1 – In this chapter, I described the background of the study and its scope. I also explained the rationale, the research problem statement and provided the key research questions including the aim, which guided the entire research study. Lastly, I concluded the chapter by providing an overview of structure of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 – In this second chapter, I started by providing the conceptualisation of the important terms for the study and then discussed the relevant literature on employee attraction and retention in institutions of higher learning including other organisations in South Africa and internationally. This included the characteristics of highly skilled academic staff and strategies applied by institutions to attract and retain them. In the process of conducting literature review, it was apparent that there is less research conducted in the context of the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector regarding how TVET colleges attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. Lastly, I discussed the theories that underpin the study.

Chapter 3 – In this chapter, I described the research methodology, research approach and the research paradigm which were applied in the study. I then justified the type of research design including the sampling methods used to obtain information on how college management attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. This included the data collection instrument used, the

procedure followed to collect data and the method of data analysis. I concluded the chapter by describing the methods followed to ensure trustworthiness, ethical consideration, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 –The chapter presented the findings from the data collected through the in-depth interviews. These findings were grouped into themes and sub-themes which emerged during the data analysis process. I concluded the chapter by including quotations based on the participants' views and subsequently discussed the findings to support these themes and subthemes.

Chapter 5 – In this chapter, I discuss the summary of findings, conclusions and lessons for research and practice. The chapter reflected on the research questions to assist the reader understand the findings and recommendations as provided below. To conclude the chapter, I then reflected on the journey I took and the few lessons I have learnt about the topic, research process and findings.

5.3 Summary of findings

This section summarises the findings of the study that were categorised under the four themes being factors contributing to a high rate of attrition in the college, challenges of attrition in the college, strategies for academic staff attraction and retention, and training and development. These included the sub-themes that emerged in the process of data analysis. In addition, to summarise the findings, I restate the research questions that guided this study. These questions were,

- (i) What does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central understand to be the factors causing the high rate of academic staff attrition?
- (ii) How does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff?
- (iii) Why does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff the way they do?

5.3.1 RQ1: What does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central understand to be the factors causing the high rate of academic staff attrition?

The research question above sought to explore the factors contributing to the high rates of academic staff attrition in the TVET college. Based on the above research question, it emerged that high rates of academic staff attrition were caused by factors such as the lack of promotional opportunities, poor remunerations, and job insecurity. On promotional opportunities, the study revealed that academic staff were not usually promoted as there were few or no promotional opportunities in the college leading to academic staff looking for promotional opportunities in other TVET colleges and private companies. During the interviews, participants indicated that chances for promotion to senior positions were slim because most of their senior managers were not close to retirement. For them to be promoted, they had to wait for their managers to resign, retire or die. This posed a serious challenge to academic staff as they expected to be promoted at some stage and if there were no prospects for promotions, they would eventually leave the college.

It was also clear from the findings that academic staff were not satisfied with the remuneration they were receiving, which they considered inadequate. This view was shared by college managers who indicated that the remuneration given to academic staff was not adequate when compared to their counterparts in other organisations. Some identified this inadequate remuneration as one of the reasons that most of the academic staff were leaving the college. The responses of both campus managers and divisional managers indicated that they concurred that the remuneration of academic staff specifically PL1 and PL2 was not enough. They also suggested how best this could be solved. From the findings, participants indicated that academic staff were not receiving adequate remuneration as it was less than what their counterparts in universities and other companies requiring equivalent qualifications were getting. Other participants even suggested that the concerned remuneration be benchmarked with those at universities, especially with entry-level positions.

The other factor contributing to high rates of attrition was job insecurity. The findings indicated that job security remains an issue in the TVET college especially for academic staff who were employed on fixed-term contracts. Academic staff who were on fixed-term contracts were always on the lookout for available opportunities in other sectors. If they were not employed permanently after having worked for some time in the college, they would start looking for other opportunities in other companies including other colleges. While job security can be

regarded as beneficial to academic staff, it can also benefit the college as it can assist in improving the bottom line. Providing job security to academic staff can also help the college in attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff and encourage them to effectively contribute to the college. However, if academic staff are not provided with job security, it is difficult for them to commit and give their best at work, and this may also lead to them starting to look elsewhere for stable and secure employment.

5.3.2 RQ2: How does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff?

The above research question was intended to understand how the TVET college management in Johannesburg Central was attracting and retaining skilled academic staff. The findings revealed that working conditions at the college were not conducive as the college was still under administration. To academic staff, putting the college under administration made it difficult for them to perform effectively as the decisions were now centralised. On academic staff motivation, the interviews with participants revealed that the college was not doing enough to motivate academic staff. It emerged that academic staff were not well motivated to improve their performance. This was supported by one participant who mentioned that previously, they were being motivated through meetings with other stakeholders such as parents and they would engage on challenges and explore opportunities available. The management of the college was allegedly not concerned with motivating academic staff through the provision of rewards and recognition for good work. The participants highlighted that failure by the college to motivate academic staff was one of the reasons that led to academic staff leaving the college. To most of the participants, the college was doing nothing to motivate academic staff. The participants further expressed that the college was not giving them exposure to other departments that would broaden their careers and open more options to specialise.

It was also revealed that the college did not have a growth plan or even succession planning in place. The availability of a growth plan or a succession planning assists in making the college more appealing to highly skilled academic staff. The existence of growth opportunities helps to retain and attract employees. Career growth results in more academic staff being committed to their work and thus increase their retention. Since chances for academic staff being promoted were slim, chances are that they would look for promotions elsewhere. In addition, the findings

on training indicated that academic staff were not receiving relevant training at work. One participant mentioned that the training that was usually provided to academic staff included assessing, moderating, and facilitation. These trainings were not specific to what the academic staff were doing in the classroom but only focused on assessment, which is a single component.

5.3.3 RQ3: Why does a TVET college management in Johannesburg Central attract and retain skilled academic staff the way they do?

The above research question was necessary to understand why a TVET college management was attracting and retaining skilled academic staff the way they do. From the findings, it appeared that academic staff were not attracted to the college due to the way the college was attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff. This was a culmination of the process that the college was engaging in when recruiting an academic staff. It was found that the college did not prioritise the recruitment and appointment of academic staff that were needed urgently to replace academic staff who were leaving the college on short notice as this would leave students unattended for a long time. Similarly, the inability of the college to fill the posts affected students' performance in the long run. Again, the extreme challenge of the student not having lecturers in the classrooms as shown above suggests the urgent need to expedite the recruitment process or to come up with new ways of ensuring that academic posts were filled as soon as they were vacant.

Waiting for a long period such as two to three months is not good for the college as some campuses offer trimester and semester courses. Reducing the time that the college spends on advertising, shortlisting, and interviewing candidates will help the college because simplifying and expediting this recruitment process can help the college in securing highly skilled candidates before they are enticed by other organisations who offer better remunerations. Again, the findings indicated that the kind of training provided to academic staff did not enhance their work namely teaching and learning to students. Lastly, the college was experiencing a serious shortage of academic staff yearly due to the way they manage the recruitment and placement of academic staff, and this is seen through the continuous recruitment that take place every trimester, semester and yearly.

5.4 Learning from the findings: Conclusions

In this study, I found that most participants shared similar views and experiences on what was enhancing the process of attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff in the college. The study identified a need for academic staff to be developed to ensure that they are productive in the college. If academic staff are trained and developed in their areas of specialisation, their performance will improve leading to higher throughput. By developing them, the college will be able to provide quality education since these academic staff would have gained the requisite skills and knowledge needed by the college. Again, the study identified factors that were contributing to high rates of academic staff attrition in the college such as the lack of promotional opportunities, inadequate remunerations, and job insecurity.

It is also evident from the above statements that one of the contributors to the challenge of attrition among academic staff was the failure of college management to consider appointing academic staff on permanent posts. Some of the managers also go as far as asking for an update regarding the appointment of new academic staff, however, they receive no joy as they are always told that the college is working on that. Further, it is also evident that academic staff were leaving the college regularly due to job insecurity, and as stated by some participant, some were leaving the college for promotional posts in other TVET colleges. The findings from the interviews also indicated that the longer it takes the college to fill an academic position; the longer it would take for students to be attended to in the classroom and this was not only frustrating the students but also the academic staff that would step in to assist as this created an extra workload to academic staff, which would culminate in the task being affected negatively. It must also be noted that when highly skilled academic staff leave an institution, they do not leave their knowledge and skills behind, and the new hire might not be experienced enough to replace the skills and knowledge lost.

5.5 Recommendations

The recommendations of this study are drawn from the aim of this study broadly, particularly from the findings. The recommendations cover suggestions for practice regarding the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff members and suggestions for future research.

5.5.1 Recommendations for practice

5.5.1.1 Recommendations for campus management.

While the strategic decision may include the development of a recognition and reward system, recruitment and placement plans decided at the college level, campus management can also play a role in ensuring that highly skilled academic staff are attracted and retained at their campuses. To realise this, campus managers can develop their campus-level strategies that support the college's overall strategies. In addition, they can create a work environment that is supportive of academic staff performance through the recognition and appreciation of their contribution to the campus and the entire college.

5.5.1.2 Recommendations for college management.

The findings of this research study have important practical implications for the TVET college and the TVET sector in general.

The college management should know that the college's success is dependent on the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff. Therefore, they must consider prioritising the appointment of academic staff on a permanent basis to minimise turnover. Again, it is recommended that college management should consider recognising academic staff regularly for their good performance and accomplishments and create opportunities for growth in terms of promotions such as adding new programmes that will create opportunities for promotions.

Although the remuneration of TVET academic staff is discussed in a bargaining council for the public service, the college should find a way of incentivising their remunerations by considering the introduction of monetary rewards for the most improved subject in terms of performance as a way of motivating them so they can stay in the college. Furthermore, it is recommended that the college should revisit the recruitment process and review it to reduce the time that the college takes to approve the appointment of academic staff and craft a recruitment and placement process that is seamless and effective in such a way that the college can fill vacant vacancies especially academic staff vacancies as soon as they become vacant. Additionally, I recommend that the contracts of academic staff who are employed on contract basis be converted to permanent ones to minimise attrition as they always leave for permanent positions elsewhere.

5.5.2 Recommendations for further research

5.5.2.1 Limitations and delimitations.

In this study, I aimed at interviewing 10 participants. However, I only managed to collect data from only seven. This was because during the data collection, some of the identified participants were busy conducting examinations in their various campuses while most of them were busy with student registrations since the college offers trimester, semester and year courses. Their busy schedule left them with little time to participate in the interviews. To ensure that I managed to get hold of most of the participants, I had to visit two or three times to check their availability. The other limitation was encountered after collecting data when I was supposed to start transcribing each interview conducted. This took a lot of time as I had to listen to the recordings time and again to ensure that I did not miss important information when transcribing.

Again, since this study was conducted in a single TVET college in Johannesburg, the findings and recommendations can only be generalised to the college concerned. The findings of this research can also not be expanded to the rest of the province or country since it is only applicable to the specific TVET college where the research was conducted.

5.5.2.2 Recommendations for further research.

Since this study was conducted in one TVET college in Gauteng province, another study focusing on other TVET colleges in Gauteng or even in other provinces may add something to the body of knowledge. Another study if conducted in other TVET colleges may result in similar or different findings. However, the study may be useful to other researchers conducting their studies in similar or related fields of employee attraction and retention in higher education. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to all TVET colleges in South Africa due to the small sample size. This research study has the potential to be explored further in the TVET sector, especially concerning the different employee attraction and retention strategies that are applicable when to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. The data was collected through the interview method and the sampling techniques were purposive and convenient sampling thus other studies in the relevant field may use other data collection methods and sampling techniques. In addition, this study will contribute to existing knowledge in the fields of employee attraction and retention.

A future study could also explore whether the findings from this research can be transferred to other TVET colleges in Gauteng province, other provinces, South Africa, and even beyond. Moreover, not all employee attraction and retention strategies such as employee support; employee involvement; provision of regular feedback, and adequate resources were explored in this study, thus giving future researchers other options to focus on. Again, this study can be extended to other staff members of the TVET college such as cleaning staff, support staff, and academics (PL1 and PL2 lecturers). I feel that these staff members can contribute immensely to the study, given that they are also employed by the TVET college. The study can also be extended to other colleges in the province, other provinces, and even beyond since this might reach certain important findings given the different contexts. In addition, the information gained in this research study should contribute to the current limited understanding of how TVET college management can attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. The data can be used in the formulation of strategies to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff in TVET colleges.

5.6 Final words

As an academic staff based at the TVET college that constitutes the study's research site, conducting in-depth interviews with participants allowed me to explore and understand what attracts and retains highly skilled academic staff in the college. This also allowed me to get their perspective on what motivates them to continue working at the college. From the findings, academic staff is motivated by many things including the provision of non-monetary motivational tools such as recognition and honour awards, providing relevant and adequate training programmes, and praising and encouraging them to do more. Regarding the study, I expected a challenge because I had not conducted full research before. I found the research process to be straightforward. The most challenging aspects of the research process were the formulation of the theoretical framework, the collection of data and data analysis. Collecting data was very problematic as some of the potential candidates, who were identified as having the required information useful to the study were not responsive as I had expected that they would respond on time as required. Therefore, I had to make some follow – ups. In addition, I had to create a work, study and life schedule that catered for my daily activities to be able to deal with the challenges.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Dear sir/madam

My name is Matome Peter Mokgathi and employed by Central Johannesburg TVET college as a lecturer at the Park town campus. I am currently studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa for a Master's degree in education (Educational management and leadership).

For me to complete the programme, I need to conduct a research and write a report about my work. For that reason, you are kindly invited to participate in the following research study: **Attracting and retaining highly skilled academic staff: A case of a technical, Vocational education and Training college in Johannesburg.**

The study aims to explore the strategies that are used by TVET college to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff. Participation in this study is voluntary and there will be no remuneration for participation. You may also withdraw participation at any point if you feel uncomfortable.

Through your participation, I hope to understand how the TVET college attracts and retains highly skilled academic staff. The results of this survey are intended to contribute to the understanding of what is being done and what needs to be done to attract and retain such academic staff in the college.

The interview will not take more than 30 minutes of your time as you are considered to be having a busy schedule and as a participant, you will not incur any penalty or discrimination, or be liable for any cost should you decide to withdraw from the discussion. However, I as the researcher kindly request you to inform me in advance, should you not want to proceed with participation.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

As the researcher in this study, I assure you as the participant that your anonymity and confidentiality will always be upheld. There will not be sharing of information for any other reasons outside the purposes of this research. You are not obliged to use your real name; you may use pseudonyms. Research findings will only be shared with the supervisor who will be guided by the University of KwaZulu-Natal research ethics.

Permission to conduct this study in the college was duly approved by the previous college administrator (Mr. Mpho Diago) and the deputy principal academic (Mrs. Thembi Mashele) on the 23rd and the 24th of March 2023. Ethical clearance was also approved by the University of Kwazulu – Natal on the 20th of June 2023. To verify this, you can contact them at the following email addresses;

Mr. Phaka – phakam@cjce.edu.za

Mrs. Thembi Mashele – mashelet@cjce.edu.za

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed below.

Yours Faithfully

Investigator’s signature: Mokgathi MP Date: 05/07/2023

MP Mokgathi (Mr)

Cell No. [REDACTED]

Email: mokgathim@cjce.edu.za/ [REDACTED]

Supervisor’s Details

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CONSENT FORM

I _____(Full names and Surname), have been informed about the study entitled (Attracting and Retaining Highly Skilled Academic Staff in the college) by (Matome Peter Mokgathi). I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without any consequences. If I has any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at () if I have any further questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study.

	YES	NO
1	I have read the participant information sheet and have understood what my participation will involve.	
2	I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
3	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my data, without providing a reason, until the time and date outlined in the participant information sheet by contacting the lead researcher.	
4	I am happy for my data to be anonymised and used in the writing of a thesis/academic papers	
5	I prefer a face-to-face interview	
6	I prefer the online interview	
7	Audio-record my interview	
8	Video-record my interview	

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Purpose: The purpose of this semi-structured interview is to explore strategies used to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff in the TVET College. Participation in the study is voluntary, the information will be treated in the strictest confidence. Everything we share and discuss will be treated as confidential and will not be revealed to a third party.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

What is your age in years?

What is your gender?

How long have you been employed at Central Johannesburg TVET College/ Period employed at the CENTRAL JOHANNESBURG TVET COLLEGE?

Are you a divisional manager or a campus manager?

How many years have you been in your current position?

What is the highest level of education that you have completed/ academic qualification?

PART B: EMPLOYEE ATTRACTION AND RETENTION-RELATED QUESTIONS

As explained in my request letter for you to participate in this study, I am doing a study on how you as a college manager attract and retains academic staff.

Mr/Mrssince I arrived at the college in 2012, I observed a quite number of academic staff leaving the college and this can be confirmed by the continuous recruitment that happens now and then, would you kindly share with me your opinion about what may be the causes of high rate of attrition in the college? Please explain in detail.

Please tell me more about the challenges that the college faces concerning academic staff attrition. Please explain in detail.

1. Now that you have discussed what causes high rate of attrition in the college, as part of college management, would you share with me what the college management is doing to try and address this high rate of attrition?
2. What is it that the college do to attract and retain these academic staff or how do you ensure that these academic staff do not leave the college.
3. You just shared with me what the college is doing to ensure that academic staff is not leaving the college, in your own view, is that what the college is doing working? Please explain in detail.
4. Does the TVET college provide opportunities for academics to grow? Please explain how it is done in detail.
5. Do you regard the current pay/ remuneration offered by the college to PL1 and PL2 lecturers as adequate? if yes/No please explain in detail.
6. Do you regard the current working conditions as toxic/ conducive for highly skilled academic staff? If yes/ No, please explain in detail.
7. What do you think of the current training and development of academic staff? are they properly developed and given relevant training? Please explain in detail.
8. After academic staff has been trained and developed, are there plans in place to ensure that they are considered for promotions so as to ensure that you do not develop them for your competitors or other sectors? Please explain in detail.
9. Other than creating a conducive or supportive work environment, developing and training academic staff, creating growth opportunities, creating a work–life balance, and providing satisfactory pay, what other strategies do you suggest and how will you apply them to attract and retain highly skilled academic staff? Please explain in detail.
10. In a normal work environment employees need to be motivated to remain in the organisation, what motivational strategies do you use to ensure that academic staff are not leaving the organisation?
11. What other information can you add regarding the attraction and retention of highly skilled academic staff?

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX 3: EDITOR'S LETTER



Mufasa Research Consultancy

SERVING WITH DISTINCTION

08 February 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Editor's Letter

Attracting and Retaining Highly Skilled Academic Staff: A Case of a Technical, Vocational Education and Training College in Johannesburg

Below is the scope considered during language editing of the above titled doctoral thesis:

- Grammar check
- Sentence construction
- Spelling check
- Punctuation
- In-text referencing
- Formatting/document layout

As a professional editor, I pledge that the above aspects of the master's dissertation were, to the best of my knowledge, meticulously and correctly done at the time the work was sent to the candidate. However, I am not responsible for any corrections that were made after the editing process finalised.

Yours faithfully,

Kemist Shumba (PhD)

PhD in Health Promotion: University of KwaZulu-Natal [UKZN]
Master of Social Science in Health Promotion (*now laud*): UKZN
Bachelor of Social Science Honours in Cultural & Media Studies: UKZN
Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Great Zimbabwe University
Bachelor of Arts (English): University of Zimbabwe

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