

Enhancing Talent Retention of TVET Colleges' Lecturers through Specific Talent Management Dimensions

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Abstract:

Talent management (TM) is a critical strategic issue for higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa (SA) given its impact on institutional performance, however, retaining academic talent remains a challenge in this highly competitive work environment. This study aimed to investigate talent retention (TR) of lecturers through specific TM dimensions (i.e., talent training and development (TT&D), performance management (PM), and compensation) at public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges in the North West province, SA. A quantitative research approach was adopted, employing a cross-sectional study that collected data from 124 lecturers using self-completed questionnaires. This study's results revealed that a substantial number of respondents were considering leaving their employment, citing dissatisfaction with TT&D, PM, compensation, and TR practices at public TVET colleges. A high positive correlation between TT&D and TR, and between compensation and TR, and a moderate positive correlation between PM and TR were established in this study. Policymakers and practitioners can refer to the findings of this study to better understand and improve TR through enhanced TT&D, PM, and compensation practices. Strategic development of policies intended for improving TT&D, PM, compensation, and TR practices at public TVET colleges is thus highlighted.

Keywords:

Academics, Higher Education Institutions, Qualitative Research Approach, Talent Management Dimensions, Talent Retention

Submitted: 2024-12-09. Revised: 2024-12-19. Accepted: 2024-12-26.

Introduction

The National Development Plan (NDP) seeks to have a post-school system in South Africa (SA) that provides quality-learning opportunities to young people, adults who want to change careers or upgrade skills, people who have left school before completing their secondary education, and unemployed people who wish to start a career (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2012a). The NDP is supported by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) which aims to develop capable and well-educated citizens who can sustain and diversify the South African economy to meet the development objectives of the country (ChaaCha & Oosthuysen, 2023), thus indicating that highly capable talent is indispensable in the academic environment. Marozva et al. (2024) posit that the higher education industry plays a key role in developing any country and talented academics ensure that organisational objectives are met. To realise quality education, the Higher Education & Training Research Agenda 2023-2028 developed a research focus area which recognizes that, as the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges sector expands, it will need appropriately qualified and competent teaching staff to respond to the burgeoning student enrolments (DHET, 2023). The significance of academics in the performance of higher education institutions (HEIs) remains uncontested (Davies & Davies, 2010; Paudela, 2021), and HEIs consequently require academic talent for lecturing, researching, administrative duties, and student support (Pedro et al., 2022).

Talent attraction, development, and retention have been acknowledged as one of the major challenges facing companies worldwide (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Hongal & Kinange, 2020; Pagan-Castaño et al., 2022). Studies acknowledged that talent management (TM) has predictive potential for various individual and organizational outcomes in the Southern African context (Lesenyeho et al., 2020; Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Increased talent attraction and retention concerns have been presented as a growing concern for the entire talent management system of HEIs (Barkhuizen et al., 2020; Musakuro & de Klerk, 2021; Mukwawaya et al., 2022). South Africa's HEIs are faced with a challenge of retaining academic talent (Dhanpat et al., 2019; Barkhuizen et al., 2020; Musakuro & de Klerk, 2021), in a competitive workplace era and a war for talent fuelled by competition among HEIs and with the private sector (Musakuro & de Klerk, 2021).

Interest in the TVET colleges is ignited by the recognition that a sound TVET college system is a critical component of a well-established and excellent quality post-school education system that can promote access to the labour market and increase labour productivity given high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment in SA (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). It is acknowledged that overcoming some of the challenges faced by TVET colleges is crucial given that the South African government has assigned the TVET sector through its NDP to have 2.5 million students enrolled in TVET colleges by 2030, thus becoming a major driver in tackling poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Sithole et al., 2022). DHET

Research Agenda 2023-2028 key theme of recruitment and retention of lecturers in PSET institutions (DHET, 2023), cemented this study's focus on TR in the TVET colleges.

The TVET colleges have unfortunately been exposed to various challenges since the abolishment of the apartheid era in SA, such as, among others: low student enrolment levels (NPC, 2012a; Nkomo et al., 2016; Paterson, 2016; DHET, 2019b; Sithole et al., 2022); unattractive image (Billet, 2018; Chang & Shehadeh, 2020; DHET, 2020); low throughput rate (NPC, 2012b; Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Khuluvhe & Mathibe, 2021; DHET, 2021; Du Plooy & Du Preez, 2022); inadequate student support services (Gewer, 2016; DHET, 2020; Tewari & Ilesanmi, 2020); high level of unqualified and under-qualified teachers (Chong & Ho, 2009; NPC, 2012a; Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Van der Bijl & Oosthuizen, 2019; Tewari & Ilesanmi, 2020; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2002; Sebola, 2022; Matabane et al., 2022); lack of funding (NPC, 2012a; Delubom et al., 2020; Tewari & Ilesanmi, 2020; Rajab et al., 2020; Matabane et al., 2022); lack of resources (UNESCO, 2002; UNESCO, 2015; Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority [ETDPS-SETA], 2018; Adio et al., 2019; Sithole et al., 2019; Ikpe et al., 2019; Tewari & Ilesanmi, 2020; National Advisory Council on Innovation [NACI], 2021; Singh & Shawa, 2021).

Previous studies documented factors underlying employee retention outside HEIs, such as, among others: TR, TT&D, PM, compensation, management support (MS), succession planning (SP) (Wang & Sun, 2020; Kaushik & Gaur, 2022; Adeyefa et al., 2023). Talent management practices notably emerge as pivotal determinants of employee retention, ultimately contributing to an organization's effectiveness and overall productivity (Kaushik & Gaur, 2022). Research on HEIs' talent management in South Africa revealed predominant attention on universities and neglect of TVET colleges (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013; Makondo, 2014; Selesho & Naile, 2014; Theron et al., 2014; Wedekind & Buthelezi, 2016; Barkhuizen et al., 2020; Saurombe & Barkhuizen, 2022). To fill this gap, this study was pursued with the main objective of investigating talent retention (TR) through TT&D, PM, and compensation of lecturers at the public TVET colleges in the North West province, SA. The present study sought to contribute to improved TR of lecturers at the public TVET colleges in the North West province in SA by making recommendations on TT&D, PM, and compensation practices geared at retaining lecturers based on the findings of this study.

The main objective of this study was to investigate the talent retention of lecturers through TT&D, PM, and compensation at the public TVET colleges in the North West province of SA. Based on the above discussions, the following secondary research objectives were developed:

- To determine talent retention levels of lecturers in the public TVET colleges of the North West province

- To determine the perceptions of public TVET college lecturers on training and development at public TVET colleges in relation to talent retention
- To determine the perceptions of public TVET college lecturers on performance management at public TVET colleges in relation to talent retention
- To determine the perceptions of public TVET college lecturers on compensation at public TVET colleges in relation to talent retention

Literature Review

Talent Retention

TR can be described as the implementation of policies and practices that encourage talent to be more attached to their companies and thus stay longer (Mazlan & Jambulingam, 2023). TR is regarded as retention of high-potential and high-performing, talented employees to meet the company's business objectives such as enhanced firm's performance and sustained competitive advantage, by minimizing voluntary talent turnover (Yildiz & Esmer, 2022). TR refers to the plans a business creates to reduce the likelihood of staff turnover and the procedures it implements to boost top TR (Urme, 2023).

It is asserted that most of the higher education institutions' current talent management strategies are generally ineffective because they fail to ensure TR (Chethana & Noronha, 2023). Inability to attract and retain competent staff in the South African Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system was identified as a weakness in the Department of Higher Education and Training Strategic Plan 2020–2025 (DHET, 2019a). The state of flux and uncertainty in the South African TVET sector have negatively impacted on the retention of existing staff (Black, 2022).

Retention of talented employees is necessary for companies' competitive edge (Kumar, 2020; Mey et al., 2021; Mazlan & Jambulingam, 2023). The success of a firm largely depends on retaining key talent, however, the rate of employee turnover has increased in recent years associated with turnover costs such as, among others, replacement costs, loss of productivity, and brand image (Kumar, 2020). Retaining talent improves productivity, innovation, and overall organizational success in addition to lowering turnover costs (Urme, 2023). With regards to higher education institutions, Al Aina and Atan (2020) submit that, TR contributes to their sustained and improved business performance.

A study by Kaushik and Gaur (2022) found that employee retention was positively and significantly influenced by talent management techniques. De Koker et al. (2022) established that voluntary turnover rates among talented academics are alarmingly high, especially in developing countries where there is a need for skilled and competent staff. A study by Lesenyeho et al. (2018) established that more than half of early career academics voluntarily quit their jobs.

Talent Training and Development

Training and development (T&D) have attracted great research attention from academics and yielded a variety of definitions (Nguyen & Duong, 2020). Employee training is considered a systematic process of changing work behaviour and level of competencies (knowledge, abilities, and skills) including employee motivation, which helps to reduce the gap between subjective qualifications (ability to act and use the competencies to meet the organization's goals) and objective qualifications (highest level of education completed, and requirements imposed on employees) and to increase labour productivity (Urbancová et al. 2021). Talent development (TD) is, according to Kaliannan et al. (2023), widely defined as the practice of developing skills and competencies of employees considered as 'talent'; and also defined in terms of career development that matches employees' short and long-term endeavours with that of organizational needs (Kaliannan et al., 2023).

Repercussions of ignoring implementation of talent training and development (TT&D) practices are acknowledged by Barkhuizen and Gumede (2021) who concede that poorly applied talent development practices lead to job dissatisfaction and consideration for quitting jobs. Organisations without continuous T&D of their employees will not develop in today's highly competitive environment (Urbancová et al., 2021). A study by Musakuro and de Klerk (2021) established that T&D at a selected SA public HEI lacked efficiency and effectiveness.

Implementation of T&D practices is considered beneficial for organisations based on the presented repercussions of failure to implement, and this calls for the benefits to be presented. T&D provide benefits of additional skills, knowledge, and abilities, and producing intangible results such as high self-esteem, enhanced morale, and satisfaction of subordinates (Nguyen & Duong, 2020). For an organisation to enhance its competitive advantage and sustain its business, training and developing talent is recommended (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). Training improves work efficiency, develops work interests, satisfies employees and strengthens the commitment to the organization leading to retention of employees (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020). Urbancová et al. (2021) highlight that strategic development of human resources is closely related to growth of the entire organisation and reduction in staff turnover. Employee T&D, according to Mali et al. (2020), helps to keep employees motivated and feel positive about the organization.

Results of a study by Nguyen and Duong (2020) provided a strong basis for arguing that T&D is fundamental in increasing young employee retention in Vietnam organizations. A study by Malik et al. (2020) established that T&D have a strong and significant effect on employee retention. Kalyanamitra et al. (2020) study concluded that providing employees with training helps them to develop new goals and careers that results in increased level of satisfaction and increased retention in the same organisation. A study by Suryani et al. (2023) established that training is significantly associated with

employee retention in the education sector. The results of a study by Bharadwaj (2023) revealed a significant positive relationship between T&D and ER, and this is also established in a study by Elsafty and Oraby (2022).

Based on what is already known about TT&D in relation to TR the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: Talent training and development have a positive relation with talent retention

Performance Management

PM is a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and workgroups and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). PM is viewed as the process of evaluating employee performance and judging their tasks based on a set of established standards (Alajlani & Yesufu, 2022). In higher education, performance management is regarded as an activity where universities use the information acquired through performance measurement to achieve and demonstrate progress towards a predetermined set of goals (Kivistö et al., 2019).

Public TVET college PM challenge includes public TVET college educators' governance by the school-oriented Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 that subjects them to the same performance appraisal system as school teachers (Black, 2022). A study by Musakuro and de Klerk (2021) established HEIs in SA do not have a formal PM policy that should guide the practices of PM, and line managers at the HEI do not have full knowledge and skills to conduct PM. PM is identified as one of the most common critical skills gaps for TVET college managers (ETDPS-SETA, 2018).

The benefits of PM are acknowledged in literature, as Urme (2023) indicates that employees can identify their strengths and areas for progress with the help of clear performance standards, periodic reviews, and helpful feedback. Effective PM defines jobs in a clear manner, enables employee engagement, clarifies goals of employees, and assists organisations to clarify their goals (Luthia, 2022). Organizations that implement efficient PM procedures and give regular feedback to workers foster engagement, growth, and recognition, all of which boost worker satisfaction and retention (Urme, 2023). Given the importance of PM system in the organisation, Luthia (2022) suggests that PM system should be considered as a talent management strategy instrumental in realizing business value and reward the individual contribution of employees.

A study by Alajlani and Yesufu (2022) established that performance appraisals have a significant impact on perceptions of employee retention in the three private higher educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates. Results of a study by Malik et al. (2020) showed that performance appraisal has a strong and significant effect on employee retention. A study by Barkhuizen et al. (2020) that sought to determine the factors affecting the TR of early career academics in selected South African higher education

institutions, established that some participants pointed out that more attention should be paid to performance evaluation.

Given the above discussion about PM and TR the following hypothesis was developed:

H 2: Performance management has a positive relation to talent retention

Compensation

Compensation is defined as the entire sum of monetary and non-monetary pay agreed to be given to an employee by the employer in return for work performed as required (Bussin & Brigman, 2019). The cumulative rewards given to employees in return for their dedication and effort in their jobs and their contribution to an organization's success are called compensation and benefits (Beijer et al., 2021). Employee compensation includes salary and wages, benefits, bonuses, and additional rewards (Sorn et al., 2023).

Compensation is considered a key challenge faced by the TVET subsystem in SA since the Department of Higher Education and Training Strategic Plan 2020–2025 acknowledged that highly qualified professional staff, are employed and remunerated at the same level as administrative staff resulting in qualified staff leaving the system when they find better opportunities, and consequently resulting in the system with unsuitably qualified staff to support students (DHET, 2019a). It is revealed that TVET colleges' lecturers in their own view have lower status than general school teachers and are poorly remunerated compared to their industry counterparts (Papier, 2017). TVET college lecturers' salaries in SA, according to Black (2022), cannot compete with those of experienced artisans and specialists from the private sector, making enticing those with industry experience back to the colleges to teach exceedingly difficult.

The importance of compensation in the South African HEIs context is highlighted in a study by Manenzhe and Ngirande (2021). Successful retention of high-performing staff can be realised by proactive analysis and modification of remuneration structures in accordance with market developments (Urme, 2023). Employees, according to Urme (2023), are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs when they believe that they are being paid properly for their labour, and consequently employee retention rates increase because contented workers are less likely to look for work elsewhere. Proper and high levels of compensation tend to help organisations retain talent (Tanjung et al., 2022). Enterprises can appeal, retain, and motivate employees to achieve high performance of the employees with the help of a reward management system (Manzoor et al., 2021). Organizations can reduce frequent turnover expenses, such as, among others, recruiting, training, and lost productivity, by keeping experienced and talented workers through competitive compensation and benefits as high-performing individuals are more likely to stay with a company that offers competitive pay and benefits (Urme, 2023).

Research has shown that dissatisfaction with compensation is one of the main reasons for employees leaving organisations (Kumar, 2020). Salas et al. (2012) established high-performance work practice, such as compensation systems, predicted employee retention and performance, as well as long-term measures of corporate financial performance. Alansari and Javed (2021) established that incentives are not only designed to attract people who are capable but also to motivate them towards superior performance and retaining them over an extended period. Alajlani and Yesufu (2022) established that compensation and benefits have a significant impact on perceptions of employee retention in three private higher educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates. Kalyanamitra et al. (2020) established that benefits and compensation affect employee retention positively and significantly. A study by Odiro (2017) established that dissatisfaction with pay is one of the primary reasons why academic staff would leave TVET colleges. Mabaso and Moloi (2016) found that the poor application of total rewards in TVET colleges resulted in a high turnover of academic staff.

Based on the above discussion about compensation and TR, the following hypothesis was developed:

H 3: Compensation has a positive relation with talent retention

A list of this study's three hypotheses is presented below:

H1: Talent training and development have a positive relation with talent retention

H 2: Performance management has a positive relation to talent retention

H 3: Compensation has a positive relation with talent retention

Research Framework

The social exchange theory (SET) by Blau (1964) is used to help understand TR whereby employees are expected to be loyal and stay longer in exchange for better treatment. Cropanzano et al. (2017) defined the social exchange theory as (i) an initiation by an actor toward the target, (ii) an attitudinal or behavioural response from the target in reciprocity, and (iii) the resulting relationship. Kumar (2020) acknowledges that talent management strategies are instrumental in developing a positive attitude and increasing TR. The relevance of the SET in this study is that the high-quality social relationships that result from positive social exchanges, such as T&D, PM, and compensation (i.e., independent variables of this study) from public TVET colleges, can reinforce beneficial conduct and initiate positive transactional chains, such as TR (i.e., independent variable of this study) of lecturers in the public TVET colleges (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

The conceptual framework, in Figure 1, presents TR of lecturers as a dependent variable with T&D, PM, and compensation of lecturers at public TVET colleges as independent variables.

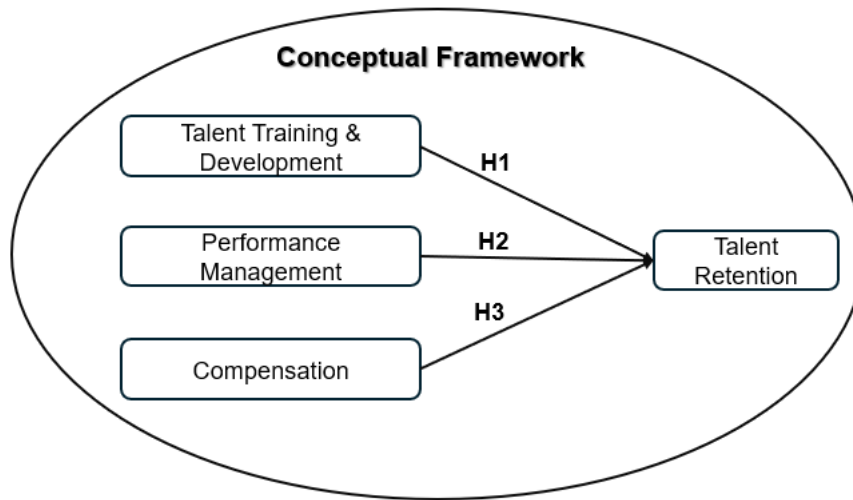


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methods and Data

Research Design

This study is grounded in a positivism research paradigm which is associated with the idea of objectivism, quantitative data collection methods and statistical analysis involving hypothesis testing to obtain “objective” truth (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; Nyaruwata, 2013; Subedi, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The deductive approach to theory development was adopted, which is associated with quantitative research in which theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses) are established followed by a research strategy designated to test the hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2019; Nunan et al., 2020). Quantitative research approach looks at numbers and statistical interpretation of the data collected from questionnaires, rather than looking at processes and meanings as in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2017), consequently, the quantitative research approach suitable for using structured predetermined response options in a formalised procedure (Burns & Veeck, 2020) was adopted in this study. A cross-sectional study of a descriptive research design, which measures units from a sample of the population of interest at only one point in time, was considered in this study (Leavy, 2017; Saunders et al., 2019; Burns & Veeck, 2020), as it reduces time, cost, and effort of data collection (Nunan et al., 2020). The hybrid data access method, using both primary and secondary data sources (Babbie, 2021; Johnson & Christensen, 2019; Burns & Veeck, 2020), was employed to collect data.

Sample and Procedure

The target population (N = 674) of lecturers at the three public TVET colleges in the North West province, yielded a sample of 214 self-completion questionnaires distributed in person to selected campuses using

proportional cluster sampling technique by dividing the entire population into several clusters based on campuses across the three public TVET colleges in the North West province. Cluster probability sampling was adopted as it is ideal when a full listing of individuals in the population is not available, but a listing of cluster is available (Mertens, 2015). Received and usable questionnaires from respondents amounted to 124 (66.4% response rate).

The ethics clearance certificate number NWU-00651-17-A9 for this research issued by the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC), a letter of support issued by DHET (Research Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation [RCME]), and application form from the DHET (DHET 004: Appendix 1: Application Form for Students to Conduct Research in Public Colleges) were submitted to the three public TVET colleges in the North West province in accordance with Policy Standard on Approval to Conduct Research in Public Colleges: DHET 004 (DHET, 2015). Self-completion questionnaires for this research were distributed upon approval by the DHET RCME and the specific public TVET college principal in hard copy to clusters of campuses from the three public TVET colleges in the North West province. The purpose of the study was clearly explained as well as the nature and rights of the study's participants, and careful consideration was given to declaration by applicant on the Policy Standard on Approval to Conduct Research in Public Colleges: DHET 004 (DHET, 2015). Respondents were informed of their voluntary participation and that they could withdraw at any time. The respondents were required to place the completed questionnaires inside sealed boxes provided at the public TVET college campus manager's office.

Measures

The adapted questionnaire was pretested to a randomly selected volunteering public TVET colleges lecturers from a specific TVET college campus in the North West province and on a small number of lecturers at the North-West university (Mahikeng campus). Suggested modifications were considered to improve the understanding and clarity of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs were greater than 0.70 confirming that all the statements in the questionnaire were reliable (Saunders et al., 2019). The structure and design of the self-completion questionnaire consisted of nine demographic questions, and while 42 questions related to latent management variables, including TT&D (8), PM (16), CM (7), and TR (8), using a 5-point Likert scale to measure the latent variables.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted to give meaning to meaningless numbers, thereby breathing life into lifeless data (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016), with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 28.0) (International Business Machines Corporation [IBM], 2021). Data were recorded and validated to ensure that the gathered data were valid and accurate (Gerber, 2021), cleaned aimed at

consistency checks and treatment of missing responses (Malhotra, 2015), password protected to enable only authorized personnel to access the information when required (Acami & Carañana, 2012). Data editing was conducted to check data collection forms for omissions, legibility, consistency in classification, correctness, and completeness of all questionnaires so that worthless questionnaires may be discarded (Malhotra, 2015; Gerber, 2021; Zikmund et al., 2011). Data coding was carried out by assigning a letter and number associated with the possible response to each question on the questionnaire to the responses so that they can be entered into a database (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Johnson & Christensen, 2019; Gerber, 2021).

The highly relied on measure of “internal consistency”, Cronbach’s alpha, was used to measure the consistency of responses to a set of questions (scale items) combined as a scale to measure a particular concept (Saunders et al., 2019; Hiar et al., 2019; Chetwynd, 2022). It consists of an alpha coefficient with a value between 0 and 1, and values of 0.7 or above indicate that the questions combined in the scale are measuring the same thing (Saunders et al., 2019). A commonly accepted rule for describing internal consistency when using Cronbach's alpha is: $\alpha \geq 0.9$ = excellent, $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ = good, $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$ = acceptable, $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$ = questionable, $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$ = poor, $0.5 > \alpha$ = unacceptable (George & Mallery, 2019).

Association analysis was used to determine if two variables are related in a systematic way by employing the Pearson product moment correlation to measure the linear relationship between two interval- and/or ratio-scaled variables (scale variables) depicted conceptually by scatter diagrams (Burns & Veeck, 2020). A zero correlation coefficient indicates that no linear relationship between two continuous variables, and a correlation coefficient of -1 or $+1$ indicates a perfect linear relationship (Mukaka, 2012; Burns & Veeck, 2020).

Results

A measure of sample adequacy (MSA) was conducted to determine whether the sample size was adequate for factor analysis followed by exploratory factor analysis used to determine the factor structure of the measuring instruments, followed by reliability analysis. Descriptive data analysis was used to describe the sample dataset in such a way as to portray the ‘typical’ respondent and reveal the general pattern of responses (Burns & Veeck, 2020). A widely used 5-point Likert rating scale with five response categories ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’ was used that required participants to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements related to the stimulus, in which 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree (Nunan 2020 et al., 2017; Burns & Veeck, 2020).

Reliability and Validity

Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the factor structure of the measuring instrument. The appropriateness of the data for factor analysis of different scale measures was determined by applying the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) which determines the degree of intercorrelations between the variables and Bartlett's test of sphericity to the inter item correlation matrix of the measurement instruments (Field, 2019). The guideline of Hair et al. (2019) for measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) $\geq 0,60$ were used to determine the adequacy of the sample for factor analyses.

Table 1 shows that the KMO test values were above 0.7 of which it is known that test values of 0.7 to 0.9 are acceptable (Liao et al., 2022), and 0 values of Bartlett's test of sphericity in all variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained were all above 0.8 implying that the instrument's internal consistency was relatively high, and as Cronbach's alpha coefficients in Table 1 are greater than 0.7 this implies that the respondents have responded consistently to the survey items.

Factors	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	No. of Items	Internal Consistency
Talent Retention	0.90	0.92	2.48	8	Excellent
Training and Development	0.92	0.92	2.52	8	Excellent
Performance Management	0.87	0.90	2.63	8	Good
Key Variables Considered for Performance Appraisal	0.72	0.83	2.60	3	Good
Significant Reasons for Performance Appraisal	0.83	0.90	2.65	5	Good
Compensation	0.87	0.91	2.25	7	Excellent
How frequently do you consider the following	0.71	0.91	3.54	3	Excellent

Table 1: This is a Factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha for the subscales of the instrument distribution (Developed by authors)

Notes. All Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value = 0.000

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of respondents from the public TVET colleges in the North West province presented in Table 2 indicates that most of the respondents were females (54.0%), aged between 36 and 50 years (64.5%), employed for less than 11 years (55.6%), and had no professional teaching qualification (57.3%) and industry experience (63.7%). An overwhelming majority of the respondents were Black / African (87.9%) lecturers (78.2%), permanently employed (90.3%), and from the department of commerce (73.4%), and without occupational certificate (79.8%). Academic qualifications of respondents were mainly varied among diploma or advanced certificate (20.2%), bachelor's degree or advanced diploma (32.3%), and an honours degree (25.0%), constituting 77.5% of all respondents.

Attribute	Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Gender	Female	67	54	54	54
	Male	57	46	46	100.0
	Own Preference	0	0	0	100
Population Group	Black/African	109	87.9	87.9	87.9
	Coloured	5	4.0	4.0	91.9
	Indian	0	0	0	91.9
	White	9	7.3	7.3	99.2
	Own Preference	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
Age group	Less than 35 years	0	0	0	0
	31-35 years	7	5.6	5.6	5.6
	36-40 years	23	18.5	18.5	24.2
	41-45 years	36	29.0	29.0	53.2
	46-50 years	21	16.9	16.9	70.2
	51-55 years	16	12.9	12.9	83.1
	56-60 years	17	13.7	13.7	96.8
	61-65 years	3	2.4	2.4	99.2
Greater than 65 years	1	0.8	0.8	100.0	
Academic Qualifications	National Certificate	2	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Higher Certificate	2	1.6	1.6	3.2
	Diploma or Advanced Certificate	25	20.2	20.2	23.4
	Bachelor's Degree or Advanced Diploma	40	32.3	32.3	55.6
	Postgraduate Diploma	15	12.1	12.1	67.7
	Bachelor Honours Degree	31	25.0	25.0	92.7
	Master's Degree	7	5.6	5.6	98.4
	Doctoral Degree	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
Tenure in the Public TVET College(s) - Lecturers	Less than 5 years	19	15.3	15.3	15.3
	6-10 years	50	40.3	40.3	55.6
	11-15 years	36	29	29	84.7
	16-20 years	11	8.9	8.9	93.5
	21-25 years	4	3.2	3.2	96.8
	More than 25 years	4	3.2	3.2	100.0
Employment Type	Permanent	112	90.3	90.3	90.3
	Fixed-Term	6	4.8	4.8	95.2
	Temporary	5	4.0	4.0	99.2
	Other, Specify	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
Job Title	Junior Lecturer	5	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Lecturer	97	78.2	78.2	82.3
	Senior Lecturer	11	8.9	8.9	91.1
	Head of Department	10	8.1	8.1	99.2
	Other, specify	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
Department	Commerce	91	73.4	73.4	73.4
	Engineering	20	16.1	16.1	89.5
	Other, specify	13	10.5	10.5	100.0
Industry Experience	Yes	45	36.3	36.3	36.3
	No	79	63.7	63.7	100
	Yes	53	42.7	42.7	42.7

Professional Teaching Qualification	No	71	57.3	57.3	100.0
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Table 2: Summary of demographic variables distribution in the sample (n = 124)
(Developed by authors)

Descriptive Statistics

- **Key variables of the study**

Table 1 indicates that the respondents, on average, had a neutral view about TT&D, PM, key variables considered for performance evaluation, and significant reasons for performance evaluation, however, disagreed with TR and compensation practices at public TVET colleges.

- **Frequency of considering certain conditions in relation to resignation**

Respondents often searched for another position outside their organization when considering certain conditions in relation to resignation as depicted in Table 3. Respondents, however, revealed that they sometimes wanted to leave the current position and planned to leave the current organisation.

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Wanting to leave the current position	3.35	1.163
Searching for another position outside my organization	3.62	1.341
Planning to leave the current organization	3.42	1.269

Table 3: Descriptive statistics: Frequency of considering certain conditions in relation to resignation (n = 124) (Developed by authors)

Note: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

- **Factors you are dissatisfied with that would most likely make you leave TVET college**

Table 4 indicates that respondents agreed that TR practices, remuneration, career development opportunities, T&D practices, promotion opportunities, and talent attraction practices were the primary factors they were dissatisfied with that would most likely make them leave the TVET college.

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Dissatisfied with talent retention practices	3.94	1.018
Dissatisfied with my remuneration	3.87	1.313
Dissatisfied with career development opportunities	3.81	1.18
Dissatisfied with training and development practices	3.78	1.079
Dissatisfied with promotion opportunities	3.77	1.261
Dissatisfied with talent attraction practices	3.69	1.053
Dissatisfied with the TVET college policies	3.18	1.155
Dissatisfied with the current manager	2.89	1.264
Dissatisfied with the job itself	2.63	1.358
Dissatisfied with the people I work with	2.45	1.15
Dissatisfied with the number of hours I am required to work	2.41	1.189

Table 4: Descriptive statistics: The factors you are dissatisfied with that would most likely make you leave TVET college (n = 124) (Developed by authors)

- **Considering leaving the organization**

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (90.3%) indicated that they considered leaving their organisation, as indicated in Table 5.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	112	90.3	90.3	90.3
	No	12	9.7	9.7	100.0
	Total	124	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5: Considered leaving the organisation (n = 124) (Developed by authors)

Testing the Hypotheses

Pearson correlation analysis results presented in Table 6 show a high positive correlation between TR and TT&D, and between TR and compensation, however a moderate positive correlation is noted between TR and PM.

Correlation matrix of study variables indicating Pearson's correlation coefficients				
	TT&D	TR	PM	C
Talent Training and Development (TT&D)	1			
Talent Retention (TR)	.863*	1		
Performance Management (PM)	.581**	.647**	1	
Compensation (C)	.686**	.743**	.579**	1

Table 6: Correlation matrix of the study variables indicating Pearson's correlation coefficients (Sig. -2 tailed, n= 124) (Developed by authors)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), * . Correlation is v6significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to investigate TR of lecturers through TT&D, PM, and compensation at the public TVET colleges in the North West province, SA.

This study revealed that respondents maintained that TT&D positively influenced TR of lecturers. This study concurs with previous studies that established a positive relationship between T&D and employee retention (ER) in their findings (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2020; Nguyen & Duong, 2020; Bharadwaj, 2023; Suryani et al., 2023). The first hypothesis (H1) of this study, viz., talent training and development have a positive relation with talent retention, is thus accepted.

This study found that respondents maintained that performance management positively influences retention of lecturers in the public TVET colleges. This is in support of previous studies, which established that dissatisfaction with performance management practices contributed significantly to higher voluntary lecturer staff turnover intentions (Barkhuizen et al., 2020; Alajlani & Yesufu, 2022). The second hypothesis (H2) of this study, viz., performance management has a positive relation to TR is accepted in this study as this study's results confirmed that PM at public TVET colleges significantly influenced TR of lecturers at public TVET colleges.

This study established that respondents disagreed with compensation practices of the public TVET colleges, and indicated that there is positive correlation between compensation and TR. As with previous studies, the results of this study also showed that dissatisfaction with financial compensation enhances the inclination of academic staff to quit their jobs voluntarily (Salas et al., 2012; Mabaso & Moloi, 2016; Odiro, 2017; Kumar, 2020; Alansari & Javed, 2021; Alajlani & Yesufu, 2022). The second hypothesis (H3) of this study, viz., compensation has a positive relation with talent retention, is thus accepted.

This study determined that there is a low retention of talent of lecturers in the public TVET colleges in the North West province. An overwhelming majority of respondents (90.3%) indicated that they considered leaving their organization, confirming the results of Lesenyeho et al. (2018) study, which established high levels of voluntary turnover intentions among academic staff. It is therefore probable that poor TT&D, PM, and compensation have influenced the low levels of retention of talent in the public TVET colleges, which encouraged voluntary talent turnover intentions.

This study used the social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) to help understand TR, in which employees are expected to be loyal and stay longer in exchange for better treatment, such as TT&D, PM, and compensation. The findings of this study validate the applicability of SET in the context of HEIs, specifically public TVET colleges, given that high-quality social relationships that result from positive social exchanges, such as TT&D, PM, and compensation of public TVET college lecturers, can reinforce beneficial conduct and initiate positive transactional chains, such as TR of public TVET college lecturers.

Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

The main objective of this study was to investigate TR of lecturers through TT&D, PM, and compensation at the public TVET colleges in the North West province, SA. TVET colleges play a crucial role in contributing to containing poverty, inequality, and unemployment through education in SA. It appears that TM of public TVET colleges' lecturers is still in the embryonic stage, thus exposing these HEIs at the risk of failed TR. In this study, three hypotheses were proposed, and all were accepted after testing. The study provides empirical evidence on the relationship between its variables as the study found a high positive correlation between TT&D and TR, and between compensation and TR, and a moderate positive correlation between PM and TR.

This study provides relevant insights from theoretical and empirical perspectives in the field of talent management within the HEIs. Firstly, theoretical understanding is broadened by introducing TT&D, PM and compensation as dependent variables influencing TR from the perspective of HEIs, particularly public TVET colleges. Secondly, this study provided a theoretical implication by giving further empirical evidence on the SET, in which talent management practices have been hypothesised as resources for

TR. The findings support the proposition of the SET that high-quality social relationships that result from positive social exchanges can initiate positive transactional chains.

This study has important managerial implications as it highlights the importance of having sound TT&D, PM and compensation policies and practices geared at TR of lecturers at public TVET colleges. Training and development of lecturers is expected to be tailored to the needs of lecturers and public TVET colleges, lecturers' performance should be continuously and fairly evaluated and recognised through PM practices and appropriately compensated to ensure TR. Respondents were, however, particularly dissatisfied with TR practices, and this consequently calls for the review of TT&D, PM, compensation and TR policies and practices to realise desired TR. It is, therefore, essential for public TVET colleges' management to take note of this study's findings and take proactive action to prevent turnover due to poor TT&D, PM and compensation of their lecturers. This, therefore, implies that TT&D, PM, and compensation should be considered as a strategic priority geared toward retaining talent.

Despite some valuable contributions, this study was faced with several limitations considered instrumental in assisting future researchers in advancing the body of knowledge related to this study. The cross-sectional nature of the study presented a limitation of data collection at one point, thus limiting making cause and effect inferences over the longer term. The respondents in this study were limited to public TVET colleges in the North West province and, consequently, the results cannot be generalised to other TVET colleges in SA.

Based on what this study established, regarding TR of lecturers through TT&D, PM, and compensation at the public TVET colleges in the North West province, SA, the following practical recommendations are presented:

- Consider talent management as a strategic priority at the public TVET colleges, instrumental for public TVET colleges to realise their strategic priorities, such as, among others, improved organisational performance, and talent retention.
- Review of TM policies, strategies and practices, such as those relating to, TT&D, PM, compensation and TR, intended to realise desired TR.
- Development of sound TM policies, strategies and practices, including TT&D, PM and compensation, aimed at TR of lecturers at public TVET colleges.

Recommended future research of benefit to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers related to TVET colleges acquiring a more comprehensive understanding of TR in TVET colleges include:

- a study with larger sample composed of several public TVET colleges in SA to allow generalization of results.

- a comparative study of both private and public TVET colleges in SA to establish the influence of TT&D, PM and compensation on the retention of lecturers.
- a pluralistic research approach study to explain quantitative results in more detail, and an exploratory study to explore other talent management dimensions hindering TR of lecturers, including TVET colleges.

In recognition of conclusions made, practical and future research recommendations are presented for the benefit of policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

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International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)

an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.

Volume: 06 Issue: 01 Year: 2025

<https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2024.ktet.45635>

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