



**THE INFLUENCE OF CAREER GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES ON
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS' JOB SATISFACTION AT A SELECTED
UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Thokozani Mfeka, solemnly declare that this thesis represents my original work to the best of my knowledge and credibility. Furthermore, I attest that all sources utilised in this research have been appropriately credited and accurately documented.

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DEDICATIONS

I extend this research dedication to my parents, Thami and Monica Mfeka, along with Nolwazi Mfeka and Dr. Heidi October (Former line manager), acknowledging their enduring support that has been instrumental in navigating this journey.

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ABSTRACT

Career growth opportunities play a crucial role in influencing employee satisfaction across various sectors globally, including among administrative officers in South African higher education institutions. Despite their vital role in organisational support, limited research exists on how career growth impacts the job satisfaction of these professionals. This study addresses this gap by exploring the relationship between career growth opportunities and job satisfaction among administrative officers at a selected South African higher education institution.

Grounded in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the study employed a post-positivist research paradigm, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data was collected through a survey design, using questionnaires administered to administrative officers. Descriptive statistics and thematic content analysis were utilized to interpret the findings.

The study offers several recommendations to enhance career growth and job satisfaction, thereby fostering a work environment conducive to both individual development and organisational success.

Expanding development programs beyond technical skills is essential. By incorporating leadership, conflict management, and personal growth opportunities, institutions can equip administrative officers with the necessary tools to lead teams, manage workplace challenges, and build resilience. This comprehensive development approach will not only improve job performance but also prepare staff for future leadership roles, enhancing career mobility and retention.

Establishing clear career pathways is critical for long-term engagement. A structured and transparent progression framework, supported by mentorship and regular career workshops, will provide administrative officers with a clear understanding of their advancement opportunities. Additionally, cross-training and lateral movement options will broaden their expertise, ensuring continued motivation and commitment to the institution.

Furthermore, enhancing recognition mechanisms will ensure administrative officers feel valued and motivated. Formal recognition programs, paired with personalized feedback from management, can foster a culture of appreciation and drive higher levels of job satisfaction. Performance-based incentives, such as bonuses or salary adjustments, will further reinforce the value of their contributions.

Improving job clarity is also essential for increasing job satisfaction. Regularly updated job descriptions, aligned with officers' skills and aspirations, along with clear performance expectations, will foster a sense of purpose, boost productivity, and ensure accountability.

Finally, investing in employee well-being is vital for maintaining a healthy, engaged workforce. Flexible work arrangements, stress management resources, and wellness programs can enhance morale, reduce burnout, and create a more resilient and productive administrative team.

By implementing these recommendations, institutions will not only cultivate a more satisfied and motivated administrative workforce but also strengthen overall organisational performance and sustainability. These targeted strategies will lead to increased productivity, reduced turnover, and a deeper commitment to institutional success.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DUT: Durban University of Technology

HEIs: Higher Education Institutions

SPSS: Statistical Packages for Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1. Introduction

Chapter One introduces and provides the background for the study. It begins by providing the conceptual and contextual background to the study, after which a research problem is stated. The study aims, objectives and research questions were then formulated. The rationale for conducting the study was provided followed by the scope and limitations of the study. An indicative literature review and research methodology were presented. This was followed by the structure of the study chapter, ending with a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Conceptual background to career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers

In conceptualizing career growth opportunities for administrative officers in public higher learning institutions, it is vital to explore the intricate relationship between career growth and job satisfaction. These two concepts are interrelated; each significantly influences the other, often exhibiting a positive correlation (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2019). Various factors, including environmental, political, intrinsic, and extrinsic elements, can impact this relationship.

Administrative officers face several challenges that can hinder their career growth opportunities, directly affecting their job satisfaction (Stephen, 2024). Understanding the dynamics influencing their professional development and workplace contentment requires examining the organisational factors at play. Key elements, such as organisational structures, leadership styles, and access to training and development opportunities, significantly shape job satisfaction.

Previous studies have highlighted several factors contributing to job dissatisfaction among administrative officers, including inadequate salaries, a lack of promotional opportunities, and insufficient fringe benefits (Mabindisa and Legoabe 2021). Conversely, career growth, recognition, and opportunities for training and development are critical for enhancing job satisfaction (Mbhele 2019). These findings

suggest that the factors influencing administrative officers' job satisfaction are consistent across various sectors and industries. This study carefully defines and operationalizes key concepts such as "career growth," "administrative officer," and "job satisfaction" to ensure clarity and relevance.

Career growth encompasses an individual's progression within an organisation, including professional and academic advancement (Weng and Zhu, 2020). It is an essential aspect of an individual's professional journey, guiding them toward personal and financial fulfilment. Career growth promotes continuous learning, skill development, and adaptability in an ever-evolving job market, which correlates with increased earning potential, financial stability, and a sense of accomplishment. Equally, the absence of career growth can lead to stagnation, diminished motivation, and job dissatisfaction. Thus, organisations must prioritize facilitating meaningful career growth to help employees achieve their professional goals.

The role of administrative officers in South African higher education institutions has evolved over time in response to changing demands and challenges within the sector. According to Antunes *et al.* (2020), administrative officers are responsible for key operational functions such as management, procurement, and finance. Their career growth typically begins in entry-level roles, such as administrative assistants, and can progress to more senior positions, including office managers, executive assistants, or chief administrative officers.

By providing essential administrative support across various functions, administrative officers ensure the efficient operation of universities. Their responsibilities include managing financial processes, maintaining records, coordinating purchasing, and overseeing various administrative services (Keakopa, 2018). These officers are crucial to smooth university operations and meeting the needs of diverse stakeholders—students, academic departments, and university management. According to Mpanza (2017), the performance of administrative officers in higher education institutions is often measured by their ability to deliver high-quality services that satisfy these stakeholders. By implementing efficient systems and processes, administrative officers significantly contribute to the overall success and operational effectiveness of universities. However, Kolade and Owesemi (2022) assert that these officers face

challenges, including limited career growth opportunities, which can adversely impact their job satisfaction. Given their critical role in university operations, it is essential to investigate the factors influencing their job satisfaction, particularly regarding the availability of career growth opportunities.

As administrative officers advance in their careers, they assume greater responsibilities, leadership roles, and acquire new skills. This progression allows them to expand their expertise in areas such as project management, budgeting, and team leadership, thereby enhancing their overall value to the organisation. Professional development through workshops, certifications, and continuing education can further facilitate their career growth. However, Mkhize (2017) notes that the administrative profession faces several challenges, including rapid advancements in office technology, organisational restructuring, and shifts in the global economy, which necessitate continuous skill development.

Administrative officers are instrumental in shaping the direction and effectiveness of their organisations as they gain experience and progress in their careers. However, limited career growth opportunities can result in professional stagnation, unfulfillment, and a decline in motivation and performance. Understanding the factors that influence job satisfaction for administrative officers is critical, particularly the impact of career growth opportunities. To avoid stagnation, administrative officers must continuously learn, expand their professional networks, and undertake challenging assignments to ensure a dynamic and fulfilling career trajectory. Erasmus (2018) observes that administrative officers in higher education frequently experience frustration due to a lack of recognition and limited career advancement opportunities, contributing to high turnover rates and the loss of valuable talent. By investing in professional development, providing skills enhancement opportunities, and establishing clear career progression pathways, organisations can cultivate a culture of continuous learning, boost employee satisfaction, and enhance performance.

Skilled and motivated administrative officers are indispensable to any organisation's effective functioning, and their growth benefits both the individuals and the organisation (Garrido, Trowbridge and Tamura 2019). Therefore, providing career growth and advancement opportunities is critical for the career satisfaction of

administrative officers and the organisation's overall success. By prioritizing continuous learning and professional development, organisations can nurture a highly skilled and dynamic workforce that drives innovation and growth.

Job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that varies according to individual goals and expectations. Perumal and Koorela (2019) define job satisfaction as a general attitude derived from specific attitudes in three key areas: individual characteristics, group dynamics related to the job, and specific job factors. Abun *et al.* (2019) argue that job satisfaction reflects an individual's feelings toward their work, serving as a powerful motivational source.

Numerous studies have examined the complexity and impact of job satisfaction on employees and higher learning institutions. Madlala (2018) found that job satisfaction is influenced by political, environmental, and intrinsic factors, such as career growth, job security, and working conditions. Intrinsic motivation involves the personal satisfaction derived from job tasks, while extrinsic motivation, as Siddiqui (2019) explains, is driven by external rewards like monetary compensation and recognition. Suifan (2019) highlights that extrinsic factors relate to work environment conditions, including compensation and job security. Job satisfaction can positively influence career growth by enhancing motivation, skill development, and fostering a positive work environment. HEIs prioritizing employee well-being, acknowledging achievements, and offering advancement opportunities contribute to a more satisfying and growth-oriented professional experience. Conversely, individuals who actively pursue roles aligned with their personal goals and values are more likely to experience job satisfaction and meaningful career progression.

Despite these insights, a research gap persists in understanding how career growth opportunities specifically impact administrative officers in higher education settings. While existing literature broadly focuses on job satisfaction, limited research explores how targeted career growth initiatives can enhance job satisfaction and retention within this unique administrative context. Providing clear and attainable career paths within the administrative structure can significantly enhance motivation, engagement, and a sense of purpose among administrative officers. Continuous support and professional development initiatives must align with the evolving needs of the

administrative workforce. Identifying and addressing barriers to career advancement is crucial for maintaining high levels of job satisfaction. Zhenjing *et al.* (2019) assert that satisfied administrative staff contribute to a productive and efficient work environment. Recognizing and investing in the career growth of administrative officers is, therefore, a strategic imperative for long-term organisational success.

1.3 Contextual background of the study

The contextual background of the study was a public higher education institution in South Africa. A higher learning institution refers to an organisation that provides tertiary education and post-secondary academic programs leading to qualifications such as degrees, diplomas and certificates and these institutions include universities, universities of technology and colleges (Alemu 2018). South Africa has 26 public universities, each offering a wide range of courses and research opportunities (Sebola 2021). The public higher education sector is made up of six comprehensive universities that provide a combination of academic and vocational degrees and diplomas, while traditional universities offer theoretical-oriented degrees and lastly universities of technology which are vocationally based (Garraway and Winberg 2019).

This research was undertaken at the Durban University of Technology, a higher learning institution in South Africa, which was formed in 2002 through a merger of Technikon Natal and ML Sultan Technikon and became the Durban Institute of Technology (Mtshali and Sooryamoorthy 2019) which was later renamed to Durban University of Technology in line with the rest of universities of technology (DUT Website 2022). DUT is located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, with campuses situated both in Pietermaritzburg and Durban cities (DUT Website 2022). DUT is made up of seven campuses and six faculties situated both in Durban and Pietermaritzburg which provide different disciplines and services to approximately 33,000 students (DUT Website 2022).

The staff of the institution consists of academic and administrative support staff. The administrative support staff is divided into three levels: top management, middle management, and lower-level staff. Administrative officers are employed to support executives in a company or university department. They organise office services and procedures as required by supervisors, such as managing the flow of work and

programs, personnel, budgets, and records for the department and other administrative tasks (Mkhize 2017). Administrative officers provide full administrative support to the relevant department, offering assistance to students, external stakeholders, and academics. In this institution, administrative officers provide support to faculties, departments, and service departments that cater to students, staff, and stakeholders. The study was conducted exclusively on the Durban campus, primarily due to financial and logistical limitations.

1.4 Problem statement

The evolving role of administrative officers in South African higher education institutions highlights a critical gap in research concerning the relationship between career growth opportunities and job satisfaction. Despite their essential contributions to university operations, these professionals often face increasing pressures without adequate support for career advancement. This lack of focus on their professional development poses significant challenges, leading to diminished job satisfaction, decreased productivity, and higher turnover rates.

This study aims to investigate how career growth opportunities impact the job satisfaction of administrative officers at a selected university in South Africa. By examining their perceptions and experiences, the research will uncover specific challenges and identify potential improvements in career advancement. Addressing this issue is vital, as enhancing career growth opportunities can lead to a more motivated and engaged workforce, ultimately benefiting both administrative officers and the institutions they serve. The findings will provide practical insights for university administrators and policymakers, emphasizing the need for strategic initiatives to support the professional development of these crucial staff members in the higher education sector.

1.5 Aim of the study

The study examines the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa to recommend on how career growth opportunities may enhance administrative officers' job satisfaction

1.6 Objectives of the study

The following objectives were formulated to address the aim of the study:

- To establish the aspects wherein administrative officers, require development for career growth and job satisfaction
- To ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction
- To determine the factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers
- To assess using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction

1.7 Research questions

The subsequent research questions were developed to address the objectives of the study:

- In which aspects do administrative officers require development for career growth and job satisfaction?
- What are the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction?
- Which factors influence the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers?
- How can the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa be assessed using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory?

1.8 Rationale of the study

The rationale of this study is to examine how career growth opportunities affect the job satisfaction of administrative offices. This study holds potential benefits for both administrative officers and institutions of higher learning. It will provide valuable insights into the relationship between career growth opportunities and job satisfaction among administrative officers. These professionals will benefit from identifying factors that contribute to their professional development and overall job fulfilment, which could lead to improved career prospects and increased motivation. Meanwhile, institutions of higher learning will gain a better understanding of how to create a more supportive

and fulfilling work environment, ultimately enhancing employee retention, performance, and organisational efficiency, as demonstrated in previous studies (Genu, 2019; Madlala, 2018; Govender, 2016). Notably, its implications extend beyond higher education establishments to encompass various stakeholders such as researchers, management, staff, and students affiliated with the university under study. By probing into the relationship between career growth opportunities and job satisfaction, this study seeks to pinpoint the factors contributing to the retention of administrative officers. Such insights are instrumental in devising strategies aimed at effectively managing and retaining talent within the university environment (al Dalahmeh 2020). Understanding how career growth opportunities align with the expectations of administrative officers can help HEIs adapt and remain competitive in attracting and retaining skilled professionals. A positive correlation between career growth opportunities and job satisfaction can improve the organisational climate, fostering a motivated and dedicated workforce.

1.9 Scope and limitations of the study

Career growth goes beyond the confines of the higher education sector, permeating into various sectors including technology, healthcare, finance, and other sectors (Ramsaroop and Subban 2022). Despite its universal nature, the study was confined to a public higher education institution. It specifically targeted administrative officers given their fundamental role as the primary interface within departments offering a diverse array of administrative support services. This narrow focus potentially restricts the generalisability of the findings to other professionals within the higher education sector. However, it is anticipated that future research will address this gap by centring on other categories of professionals within higher learning institutions such as academics. Even though career growth and job satisfaction are common concerns in South African public higher education institutions, the study was restricted to a single public university in Durban due to scheduling, budgetary, and logistical constraints.

1.10 Literature review and conceptual framework

A comprehensive literature review is presented in Chapter Two (Literature Review). The literature was arranged in accordance with the headings aligned to the objectives of the study: To establish the aspects wherein administrative officers require development for career growth and job satisfaction, Ascertain the perceptions on the

effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction, Determine the factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers and Assess using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction. The study was guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor theory of 1959 as a conceptual framework to address the use of job satisfaction in the workplace which is one of the frameworks used to analyse job satisfaction. The literature sources examined included scientific articles such as dissertations, theses, conference proceedings, books, journal articles, and government reports.

1.11 Research methodology

A detailed research methodology is presented broadly in Chapter Three. The study was conducted within a post-positivist research paradigm, facilitating the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A survey research design was utilised, and the target population were the administrative officers at a selected university in South Africa. The data was collected using a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The quantitative data was examined through descriptive analyses, such as percentages, frequency counts, tables, and graphs, while thematic data examined the qualitative data using texts.

1.12 Structure of the study

The research study comprises of five chapters, each summarised as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction and background of the study

Chapter One: Presents the conceptual and contextual backgrounds of the study. The research problem being investigated with research aims, objectives, and question rationale, scope and limitations of the study are also discussed, and an outline of chapters with the summary closing the chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Chapter two provides the literature on the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers in higher education institutions.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

In chapter three, the research methodology employed in this study is discussed. The justifications for the research methods adopted are also provided.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and presentation of findings

Chapter Four interprets and analyses the research findings gathered from the data obtained.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter Five concludes the findings gathered in Chapter Four and the recommendations.

1.13 Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided a conceptual and contextual background to the study. It was followed by the problem statement, the research aims, and the study objectives, while the research questions provided a specific focus for the study. The rationale of the study was highlighted in terms of its contribution to the field, thereafter the scope and limitations of the study were discussed. The literature review and research methodology were presented. This was followed by the structure of the study chapter, ending with a summary of the chapter. The following chapter will discuss the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided a conceptual and contextual foundation for the study. This chapter delves into the literature to gain a deeper understanding of career growth and job satisfaction in a broad context. The literature review is structured to align with the research objectives of the study. This chapter commences with the clarification of key terminologies. This is followed by the establishment of areas wherein administrative officers, require development for career growth and job satisfaction. The chapter then moved to ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction and also determined and discussed the factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. Finally, the theoretical framework adopted by the study is discussed, with the chapter ending with a summary of the chapter.

2.2 Clarification of the key terminologies

This section highlights the terminologies such as career growth, job satisfaction, administrative officers, and higher education institutions that are important in the study.

Career growth is a developmental journey characterised by continuous learning, skill enhancement, and professional advancement (Barnes, du Plessis and Frantz 2022). One prevalent notion is that development programs play a crucial role in facilitating career growth for administrative officers. These programs are essential in providing individuals with the tools, resources, and opportunities needed to navigate their career paths successfully (Haleem *et al* 2022) By offering avenues for skill enhancement and professional advancement, these programs enable individuals to address new challenges and assume higher-level positions within their organisations. According to Tomprou, Simosi and Rousseau (2022) research indicates that administrative officers who participate in career growth programs are more likely to receive promotions, salary increases, and opportunities for career progression compared to those who do not engage in such programs. The study delves into the significance of career growth as a development program, examining its components, benefits, challenges, and implementation strategies within the higher education sector.

Administrative officers play a crucial role in ensuring an organisation's operations are both effective and efficient. According to management experts Nwanisobi and Christopher (2020) these professionals oversee and organise administrative tasks within the company. Their responsibilities include managing staff, creating budgets, supervising facilities, maintaining records, and facilitating communication. By acting as liaisons between departments or teams, administrative officers ensure that administrative procedures align with the organisation's overall goals Castaner and Oliveira (2020). Ultimately, they support the organisation's strategic objectives by overseeing its administrative structure and ensuring smooth operations.

Job satisfaction pertains to an individual's comprehensive outlook on their job, encompassing their emotional and psychological responses to their work (Tang, Shao and Chen 2019). It includes the degree of happiness, sense of achievement, and enjoyment derived from various aspects of one's job, such as the tasks involved, the work environment, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, opportunities for advancement, and compensation. According to Baxi and Atre (2024), job satisfaction represents a positive or pleasing feeling stemming from the evaluation of one's job or job-related experiences. This evaluation is influenced by an individual's overall sense of worth, drive, and loyalty to their organisation. Job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept shaped by both internal and external factors, playing a crucial role in influencing employee attitudes, actions, and organisational outcomes.

2.3 Aspects for career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers

Administrative officers are crucial in the efficient operation and support of higher education institutions. However, just like any profession, there are aspects where career development can be pursued to enhance effectiveness and adaptability to evolving demands. Several key aspects of career development can enhance administrative officers' effectiveness and contribute to the success of the institution. Administrative officers can benefit from being proficient in relevant software applications and systems and some of the key aspects that require career growth are discussed below.

Technological skills: In today's digital age, technological proficiency is paramount for administrative officers tasked with streamlining processes, analysing data, and making informed decisions (Cantemir, Gabriel and Dorin 2023). To meet these requirements administrative officers must undergo extensive training in various software and tools. These programs do not only enhance their technical skills but also enhance soft skills such as leadership and adaptability, as noted by Osborne and Hammoud (2016) ultimately advancing employee engagement and employment.

Investing in the career development of administrative officers, as demonstrated by Nassieef (2022) is essential for enhancing operational efficiency and promoting a culture of continuous improvement. Institutions must develop specific training and development programs for administrative officers, focusing on office technology. Office technology training equips administrative officers with the skills necessary to leverage technological tools effectively in modern workplaces (Beer and Mulder 2020). In addition to traditional clerical duties, administrative officers utilise technology to streamline operations and support organisational growth. These programs teach them to utilise various tools, software, and platforms to enhance office efficiency.

The primary objective of office technology training is to optimise workflow by automating tasks, managing information, and facilitating communication (Strom 2017). Proficiency in word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software enables administrative officers to create, analyse, and present information effectively. Additionally, familiarity with email management tools and calendar applications provides effective communication and time management.

Given the prevalence of cyber threats, office technology training also educates administrative officers on recognising and mitigating risks (Li and Liu 2021). By safeguarding sensitive data, administrative officers contribute to organisational security and prevent potential liabilities. Zamiri and Esmaeilie (2024) believe these training programs foster a culture of continuous learning, ensuring that administrative officers remain informed of technological advancements and best practices. This ongoing development enhances individual competence and organisational resilience, enabling adaptation to digital transformation and sustained success in the modern

workforce. Tailored office technology training programs are essential for empowering administrative officers with the skills and expertise needed to excel in their roles, contribute to organisational efficiency, and thrive in today's digital-first environment.

Time management and organisation skills: Training in time management and organisational skills contributes to enhancing productivity, efficiency, and overall effectiveness in any organisation. Time management involves proficiently allocating and utilising time to fulfil tasks, goals, and responsibilities based on priorities, while organisational skills encompass the ability to efficiently arrange, coordinate, and manage tasks, resources, and information (Aeon, Faber and Panaccio 2021). In today's dynamic and fast-paced work environment, administrative officers are essential in ensuring the seamless implementation of daily tasks, effective resource management, and facilitating smooth communication across departments. However, the evolving demands on administrative officers necessitate the ability to multitask effectively while maintaining high performance standards. This emphasises the importance of comprehensive training in time management and organisational skills.

Efficient time management allows administrative officers to prioritise tasks based on their significance and urgency, thus boosting their efficiency. By utilising tailored training programs, administrative officers can acquire valuable techniques such as prioritisation matrices, task batching, and time-blocking to optimise their time allocation (Schwartz and Solomon 2023). Additionally, they can develop strategies to address common productivity challenges such as procrastination, distractions, and multitasking, enabling them to maintain focus and meet deadlines effectively.

Administrative officers need to manage their time efficiently, maintain accurate records, and coordinate intricate schedules. Training in organisational skills provides them with the tools and methodologies to establish structured systems for information management, document organisation, and task delegation, ensuring seamless execution amidst the busy administrative environment (Jones and George 2016). Furthermore, mastering techniques such as goal setting, workflow optimisation, and effective communication enables administrative officers to foster collaboration within their teams and across departments. Beyond individual proficiency, time management and organisational skills training cultivate a culture of accountability and

standardisation within the organisation. By advocating best practices and standardised processes, these training initiatives establish a cohesive framework for time and resource management across the administrative hierarchy (Stouten, Rousseau and De Cremer 2018). Moreover, they empower administrative officers to serve as exemplars and mentors for their colleagues, sharing their expertise to elevate the collective performance of the entire team.

Investing in time management and organisational skills training for administrative officers yields tangible benefits, such as enhanced productivity, reduced stress levels, and enhanced job satisfaction. As asserted by Sony (2019), equipping administrative officers with the tools and techniques necessary for excellence in their roles enables organisations to adopt operational excellence, drive innovation, and achieve sustainable growth in today's competitive landscape. Providing as the basis of administrative functions, empowered and well-trained administrative officers are essential catalysts for efficiency, effectiveness, and success organisation-wide.

Problem-solving and decision-making skills: Problem-solving and decision-making workshops are increasingly recognised as essential elements of career development. These structured environments provide administrative officers with the opportunity to refine their problem-solving skills and decision-making processes, crucial aspects of effective administrative roles. According to research by Zajac *et al.* (2021) participation in such workshops equips administrative officers with practical strategies to effectively address challenges and adopt a proactive problem-solving approach. This proactive approach enhances issue resolution and enables administrative officers to significantly contribute to organisational success.

The primary advantage of problem-solving and decision-making workshops for administrative officers lies in their ability to enhance their skills and professional development. These workshops offer administrative officers access to various problem-solving techniques and decision-making frameworks applicable to their daily responsibilities. Devoted to diverse methods and real-world case studies, as highlighted by Duchek, Raetze and Scheuch (2019) these workshops enable administrative officers to cultivate a versatile toolkit for effectively tackling complex challenges.

Problem-solving and decision-making workshops adopt valuable networking opportunities and knowledge exchange among administrative officers. Through interactions with peers from various organisations and industries, administrative officers gain insights into different problem-solving strategies and decision-making strategies. This exchange does not only enhance perspectives but also creates a collaborative learning environment conducive to sharing and applying best practices, (Loes, Culver and Trolan 2018). It is particularly advantageous for administrative officers seeking to expand their professional network and stay away from industry developments, this networking aspect highlights the significance of investing in such workshops.

By investing in problem-solving and decision-making workshops, organisations can effectively navigate challenges, drive innovation, and contribute to organisational success. These workshops provide a valuable platform for skill refinement, knowledge acquisition, and professional growth, enabling administrative officers to excel in their positions and positively impact organisational outcomes.

Customer service skills: Customer service in higher education institutions encompasses providing assistance and support to students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders within the academic community. Therefore, customer service training for administrative officers is essential to ensure a seamless connection between the institutions and their customers, vendors, and internal stakeholders. Administrative officers serve as the primary point of contact for inquiries, support, and assistance, making comprehensive customer service training essential for maintaining positive relationships, promoting trust, and enhancing the overall customer experience (Lemon and Verhoef 2016).

These training programs encompass a variety of topics aimed at equipping administrative officers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to excel in their customer-facing roles (Mamburu 2020). These programs emphasise effective communication techniques, active listening skills, conflict resolution strategies, and the ability to empathise with customers' needs and concerns. They employ interactive workshops, role-playing exercises, and real-life scenarios to facilitate learning.

Administrative officers acquire proficiency in interacting with professionalism, confidence, and empathy, adeptly handling various customers. According to Rane, Achari and Choudhary (2023) administrative officers are trained to respond promptly and politely to inquiries, address customer complaints and inquiries promptly, and prioritise solutions to meet customers' needs. Also, administrative officers are encouraged to exceed customer expectations, anticipate potential issues, and offer personalised solutions that emphasise the organisation's dedication to customer satisfaction (Metz, Lies and Nisor 2020). Additionally, these training programs often incorporate modules on cultural sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that administrative officers interact with customers from different backgrounds with respect and understanding.

Before imparting practical knowledge, customer service training for administrative officers fosters a culture of excellence within the organisation. By investing in the professional development of their administrative officers, HEIs can establish a reputation for exceptional customer service, nurture enduring client relationships, and ultimately drive business success in today's fiercely competitive marketplace.

Financial and budget management training: Financial and budget training is essential for individuals and institutions seeking to effectively manage their finances, allocate resources efficiently, and achieve financial objectives. AL-Rawashdeh *et al.* (2021) suggest that such training can be conducted through workshops, seminars, online courses, or formal education programs provided by universities or professional organisations. For administrative officers, financial and budget management training is crucial as they often play a pivotal role in overseeing financial processes, managing budgets, and tracking expenses across departments (Botlhoko 2017). Providing administrative officers with the necessary expertise and expertise to handle financial matters effectively is essential for organisational success.

Financial and budget management training provides administrative officers with the necessary tools and techniques to make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and expenditure prioritisation. van Roestel (2016) emphasised that these training programs emphasise the importance of effective communication and collaboration in financial management processes. Administrative officers learn how to

collaborate with department heads, finance teams, and external stakeholders to gather relevant information, coordinate budget planning activities, and ensure transparency and accountability in financial decisions.

This training equips administrative officers with the ability to identify and mitigate financial risks that could impact organisational performance. They learn how to assess potential threats, develop risk management strategies, and implement controls to safeguard financial assets and mitigate the risk of financial liabilities. Moreover, financial and budget management training for administrative officers is crucial in promoting financial literacy, accountability, and stewardship within organisations (Moolman and Der Waldt 2022). By investing in the professional development of administrative officer in this area, institutions can enhance their financial stability, optimise resource allocation, and effectively achieve their strategic objectives.

2.4 To ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

Perceptions of the effectiveness of career development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction encompass a wide range of perspectives influenced by various factors. These perceptions are shaped by the individual experiences of administrative officers within their respective Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Recent research by Sellar (2022) highlights the instrumental role of career development programs in shaping career growth and enhancing job satisfaction among administrative officers. Based on survey data from a diverse group of administrative officers, the study indicates that most believe participation in career development programs positively impacts their career advancement opportunities. This underscores the importance of considering administrative officers' perspectives when evaluating the effectiveness of development initiatives. Thus, institutions of higher learning must frequently implement career development programs aimed at improving the skills, competencies and job satisfaction of administrative officers (Els and Meyer 2023).

Administrative officers often perceive career development programs as advantageous opportunities for career development, skill refinement, and career growth. These programs typically include training workshops, seminars, mentorship opportunities,

and networking events tailored to the specific needs of administrative officers. As emphasised by Ghandi (2022), such initiatives yield tangible benefits by enhancing job-related proficiencies, broadening knowledge bases, and nurturing personal growth, thus contributing to career development and overall job satisfaction. However, perceptions of effectiveness may vary depending on various factors. One critical determinant is the alignment between the content of development programs and the career ambitions of administrative officers. Programs meticulously tailored to align with administrative officers' needs and occupational roles are more likely to be deemed effective in advancing careers and boosting job satisfaction (Bhati, Deogade and Kanyal 2023). On the contrary career development programs lacking relevance to administrative functions or adopting a generic approach may face scepticism regarding their effectiveness.

Institutional support and resource allocation also influence perceptions of career development program effectiveness. According to Cakir and Adiguzel (2020) Administrative officers tend to view career development initiatives more positively when they receive support from organisational leadership, adequate funding, and allocated time for participation. Likewise, transparent communication regarding the purpose and value of these programs enhances their perceived effectiveness by demonstrating the organisation's commitment to administrative officers' career development.

The integration of ongoing evaluation mechanisms and feedback loops within development programs significantly influences perceptions of their effectiveness. Initiatives that include opportunities for self-reflection, evaluation of learning outcomes, and post-program support are more likely to receive positive evaluations from administrative officers (Darling-Hammond *et al.* 2019).

As already mentioned in the study perceptions of the effectiveness of career development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction are complex and can be influenced by various factors, including program relevance, organisational support, communication strategies, and evaluation frameworks. In a longitudinal study conducted by Harb, Eyupoglu and Tashtoush (2023), the relationship between participation in structured development activities and job

satisfaction among administrative officers was examined. The findings revealed a positive correlation between engagement in development programs and levels of job satisfaction. Administrative officers who actively participated in these initiatives reported greater satisfaction with their roles, suggesting that development programs can not only contribute to career growth but also play a crucial role in boosting job satisfaction and morale in the workplace.

While the perceived benefits of development programs for administrative officers are evident, challenges and limitations must also be considered. Research by Mlambo, Silen and McGrath (2021) highlight concerns among some administrative officers regarding the alignment of program content with their job responsibilities and the adequacy of resources allocated for professional development. Furthermore, issues related to inclusivity and fairness in program access may arise, potentially affecting perceptions of program effectiveness and organisational commitment. Therefore, understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the impact of development programs on administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction.

Assessing the effectiveness of career development programs for administrative officers' job satisfaction requires a structured methodology incorporating various quantitative and qualitative measures. Gede and Huluka (2023) posit that establishing clear objectives and outcomes is foundational to this process, ensuring alignment with organisational objectives and the professional development requirements of administrative officers. Objectives typically include enhancing job-relevant skills, advancing career advancement opportunities, and enhancing overall job satisfaction within administrative positions. In designing evaluation instruments, HEIs must employ robust tools capable of capturing the significant impact of career development programs on job satisfaction. Taherdoost (2021) asserts that such instruments may include surveys, focus groups, performance evaluations, and job satisfaction scales meticulously tailored to the administrative environment. These instruments must possess validity, reliability, and sensitivity to the diverse nature of job satisfaction among administrative officers.

Quantitative metrics are essential indicators in assessing the impact of career development programs on job satisfaction. Institutions can use data analytics to scrutinise variables such as pre and post-program job satisfaction scores, turnover

rates among administrative officers, performance metrics, and retention rates (Singh *et al.* 2022). Through quantitative analysis, objective outcomes are analysed, facilitating longitudinal comparisons and insights into program effectiveness. Qualitative feedback examines the subjective experiences and perceptions of administrative officers regarding program effectiveness. Qualitative data from, focus groups, and open-ended survey questions illuminate aspects such as perceived program value, content relevance, and overall satisfaction with program delivery (Gundumogula 2020). These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced dynamics affecting administrative officers' job satisfaction.

The establishment of comparison groups enhances evaluation efforts, enabling a comparative assessment of program effectiveness. Soomro and Shah (2019) argue that by contrasting the job satisfaction levels of administrative officers participating in programs to those who do not, institutions can determine the specific impact of these initiatives while controlling for confounding variables. Longitudinal analysis is essential in determining sustained changes in job satisfaction among administrative officers over time. Such analysis provides insights into the durability of program-induced improvements and identifies areas necessitating continuous refinement in program design and implementation (Nowell *et al.* 2017). Furthermore, engaging stakeholders such as administrative officers, program facilitators, supervisors, and institutional leaders enhances the overall comprehension of program effectiveness. Using evaluation findings to drive continuous improvement initiatives is essential for enhancing program effectiveness. Varma (2018) asserts that institutions may utilise findings obtained from program evaluations to recognise both strengths and areas for improvement, making necessary adaptations to enhance job satisfaction among administrative officers and consequently enhancing organisational effectiveness.

Perceptions regarding the effectiveness of career development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction are multifaceted. Current research underscores a positive correlation between participation in such activities and career advancement opportunities, alongside increased job satisfaction among administrative officers. However, it is necessary to address concerns regarding program design, resource allocation, and inclusivity. By incorporating administrative officers' perspectives and addressing these challenges, higher education institutions

(HEIs) can tailor development initiatives to meet their workforce's diverse needs, thereby maximising their effectiveness in promoting career growth and enhancing job satisfaction.

2.5 Determining the factors influencing administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

Determining the factors that influence the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers is imperative for gaining insights into their professional journey. According to Alkhodary (2023) these factors are influenced by several aspects stemming from both internal and external sources and can include organisational culture, leadership styles, job responsibilities, opportunities for development, work-life balance, and the level of support and recognition received within the workplace. Additionally, factors such as training and development opportunities, compensation and benefits, job security, and the overall economic climate can also significantly impact the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers (Rahaman *et al.* 2023). Understanding and addressing these factors is essential for creating a positive and fulfilling work environment for administrative officers as a result these factors are discussed below.

Organisational factors: Organisational support and culture are key determinants of administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction. Research by Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2021) emphasises the importance of leadership support and effective management practices in creating a conducive work environment. Institutions that prioritise employee well-being and offer opportunities for skill development and career development tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction among administrative officers. Additionally, the organisational culture, as highlighted by Radu (2023) significantly influences job satisfaction levels. A positive organisational culture that values transparency, collaboration, and employee development promotes a sense of belonging and satisfaction among administrative officers.

Organisational factors play a significant role in shaping administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction. One key factor is the organisational structure and culture. A hierarchical and bureaucratic structure may limit opportunities for career growth, as promotions and decision-making power are often concentrated at the top. In contrast,

Tarik, Nathalie and Vincent (2020) contend that a flat organisational structure with decentralised decision-making can provide more opportunities for administrative officers to take on leadership roles in certain projects and advance in their careers. Additionally, Radu (2023) argues that a supportive organisational culture that values employee development and recognises the contributions of administrative officers can enhance job satisfaction and motivation. According to Rodriguez and Walters (2017) organisations that invest in training programs and professional development opportunities for administrative officers are likely to have more satisfied and motivated employees. These programs not only enhance the skills and knowledge of administrative officers but also signal to them that the organisation values their growth and development. Furthermore, Sinha (2019) put forward that organisations that provide clear career paths and opportunities for advancement, such as mentorship programs or rotational assignments, are more likely to retain talented administrative officers and maintain high levels of job satisfaction within the workforce

Individual factors: Individual factors such as skills, competencies, and motivation also play a crucial role in determining career growth and job satisfaction among administrative officers. Rodriguez and Walters (2017) stress the importance of continuous learning and skill-building for career growth. Administrative officers actively seeking opportunities to enhance their skills and competencies are more likely to experience career growth and job satisfaction. Also, goal clarity and intrinsic motivation are essential drivers of job satisfaction (Aljumah 2023). Administrative officers who have clear career goals aligned with organisational objectives are more engaged and satisfied with their work.

One crucial individual factor is the level of education and specialised skills possessed by administrative officers. Research by Mainga *et al.* (2022) indicates that administrative officers with higher levels of education such as bachelor's or master's degrees in business administration or related fields are often better positioned for career growth opportunities. Additionally, acquiring and enhancing specific skills such as communication, problem-solving, and technology proficiency can enhance job performance and increase job satisfaction among administrative officers (Bucata and Rizescu 2017). These skills not only improve efficiency in carrying out administrative

tasks but also empower administrative officers to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities, thereby contributing to their overall career growth and satisfaction.

Another critical individual factor influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers is their work ethic and professionalism. Research by Gamage, Dehideniya and Ekanayake (2021) highlight the importance of personal attributes such as dedication, integrity, and a strong sense of responsibility in promoting career growth and job satisfaction. Administrative officers who demonstrate a commitment to excellence, reliability, and ethical conduct are more likely to be recognised and rewarded for their contributions within the organisation. Likewise, exhibiting professionalism in interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and external stakeholders enhances one's reputation and credibility, leading to increased opportunities for career growth and job satisfaction in the role (Tatar 2020). Thus, individual characteristics such as work ethic and professionalism play a pivotal role in shaping administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction.

Environmental factors: Career growth and job satisfaction for administrative officers are influenced by technological advancements and economic conditions. Sapta, Muafi and Setini (2020) highlight the role of technology in shaping administrative work and job satisfaction. Embracing technological tools and innovations can enhance efficiency and job satisfaction among administrative officers. Furthermore, economic stability and growth impact career opportunities and job satisfaction levels (Davidescu *et al.* 2020). During economic downturns, administrative officers may face challenges such as limited promotional prospects and job insecurity affecting their overall job satisfaction and career growth.

Environmental factors play a key role in shaping administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction. The work environment factors further include factors such as organisational culture, leadership style, and workplace policies that significantly impact an administrative officer's professional journey. For instance, a supportive and inclusive organisational culture promotes a conducive atmosphere for career development by providing opportunities for skill enhancement and advancement. According to research by Akpa, Nneji and Asikhia (2021) organisational culture profoundly influences employee attitudes and behaviours, ultimately affecting job

satisfaction and performance. Administrative officers thrive in environments that value transparency, open communication, and employee empowerment, as these foster a sense of belonging and motivation to excel in their roles.

Organisational, individual, and environmental factors collectively influence the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. By understanding and addressing these factors comprehensively, the institutions of higher learning can create a conducive work environment that fosters the career growth and well-being of administrative officers. Investing in career development programs, and technology adoption while promoting a positive organisational culture can significantly enhance job satisfaction and career growth among administrative officers in HEIs.

2.6 Theoretical framework for assessing administrative officers' career growth opportunities job satisfaction

The study of employee career growth and job satisfaction has long been a central focus within the fields of organisational psychology and management theory. Several prominent theories have explored job satisfaction, including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Equity Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, and Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model. Among the various theoretical frameworks that have emerged in this domain, Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is widely regarded as a foundational contribution. Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, also known as the Two-Factor Theory, was developed by Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Bloch Snyderman in 1959 (Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman 1959). As noted by Van Breugel (2023) this theory offers valuable insights into the factors influencing employee motivation and job satisfaction, presenting a framework that has been widely applied across various organisational contexts, including administrative offices.

Herzberg's Two-Factor theory is a cornerstone in understanding employee attitudes and behaviour within the workplace, delineated into two distinct factors namely hygiene and motivators factors. Hygiene factors also known as extrinsic factors pertain to elements within the work environment that are essential for preventing dissatisfaction but do not inherently contribute to job satisfaction when present (Ihensekhien and Joel 2023). These include salaries, working conditions, company

policies, and interpersonal relationships. On the contrary, motivators which are referred to as intrinsic factors contribute directly to job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. These include opportunities for advancement, recognition, accountability, achievement, and the nature of the work itself (Aljumah 2023).

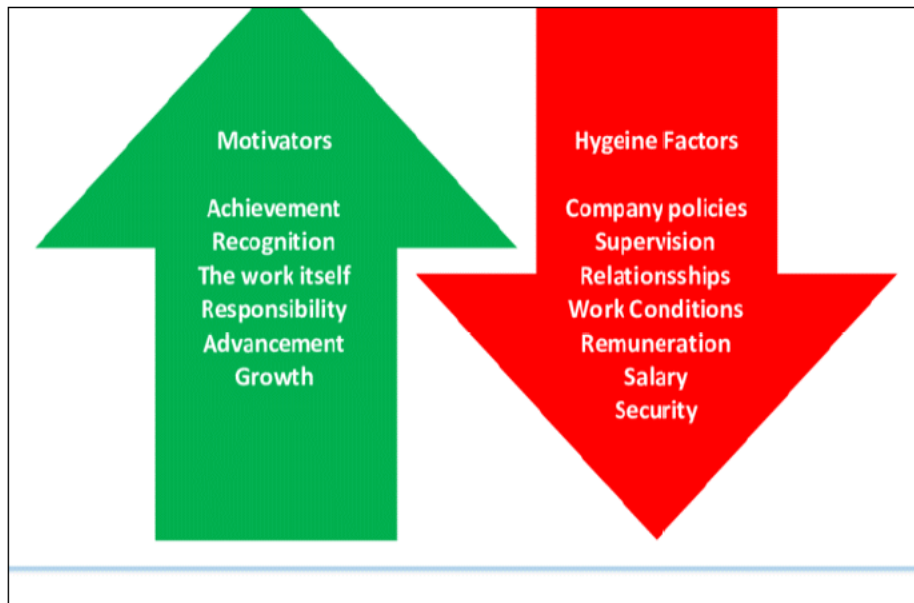


Figure 2. 1 Herzberg Two-factor theory (McPherson 2021)

Herzberg's Two-Factor theory diagram in Figure 2.1 illustrates a dual-axis model depicting motivators leading to job satisfaction when present and hygiene factors preventing dissatisfaction when adequate, with the absence of hygiene factors leading to dissatisfaction but not necessarily to satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman 1959). The importance of Herzberg's Two-Factor theory to administrative officers is particularly crucial given the critical role these professionals play in organisational functioning. According to Garrido, Trowbridge and Tamura (2019) Administrative officers are tasked with diverse duties, ranging from managing administrative duties to facilitating communication and coordination within the organisation. Therefore, their job satisfaction and motivation are essential for maintaining operational efficiency and promoting organisational success.

By examining the relevance of Herzberg's Two-Factor theory to administrative officers, this study aims to examine the specific factors that influence their motivation and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide insights into how organisational

leaders and managers can develop strategies to enhance these factors, thereby promoting a more positive and productive work environment for administrative officers (Osborne and Hammoud 2017). Through a deeper understanding of Herzberg's framework, organisations can better address the needs and concerns of their administrative staff, ultimately leading to improved performance and organisational outcomes.

Herzberg's theory emphasises the importance of intrinsic motivators in driving long-term commitment. Therefore, HEIs should design career development programs that not only address external factors such as promotions and training but also emphasise the intrinsic rewards associated with personal and professional growth (Manzoor, Wei and Asif 2021). There are motivators factors which lead to job satisfaction and hygiene factors which lead to job dissatisfaction (Acquah *et al.* 2021). Understanding how these factors interact is essential for creating a workplace that promotes well-being and high performance. The below section focuses on the discussion of these factors.

Intrinsic job satisfaction factors are elements of a job that contribute to an individual's sense of fulfilment, motivation, and happiness. These factors, as described by Ihensekien and Joel (2023), stem from internally generated aspects that influence behaviour, rather than being produced by external rewards. While intrinsic factors do not negate the importance of incentives, they suggest that external motivators alone may not be enough to sustain motivation (Kum 2022). Mbhele (2019) mentions that employees find their worth through motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, individual growth, and development, which are given to them by the organisation. These factors revolve around individual needs, with employees deriving intrinsic rewards directly from the tasks they perform (Engidaw 2022). The following are common intrinsic job satisfaction factors observed in the workplace.

Recognition: Recognition involves acknowledging and appreciating an individual's abilities, efforts, or achievements, which can be expressed through various means such as praise, awards, or rewards. It plays a crucial role in fostering motivation and a sense of value among employees. Yvette (2022) describes recognition as the acknowledgement employees receive for meeting specific objectives or delivering high-quality work. Administrative officers who receive recognition are more likely to

experience job satisfaction and maintain a dedication to their roles (Madhani 2020). Conversely, a lack of recognition can lead to disengagement and hinder career progression. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor theory (Herzberg *et al.* 1959), recognising employees' efforts enhances their job satisfaction, as it makes them feel valued and motivated to excel further, thereby enhancing organisational efficiency. This recognition also strengthens their commitment to the organisation, particularly for administrative officers who may work behind the scenes (Yang, Jiang and Cheng 2022). Effective recognition practices are crucial for talent retention and attraction. Higher education institutions that implement tangible recognition programs reduce turnover rates among administrative officers, ensuring operational continuity (Joseph 2023). Moreover, a well-designed recognition system signals to potential employees that their contributions will be valued, thereby attracting top talent.

When employees anticipate recognition for their efforts, they are motivated to exceed expectations. Performance-based rewards, including recognition, cultivate a culture of accountability and continuous improvement in skills and productivity (Liu and Liu 2022). For administrative officers managing multiple tasks, the prospect of recognition serves as an incentive for excellence, ultimately leading to heightened job satisfaction and organisational effectiveness.

Achievement: Achievement is defined by Manzoor, Wei and Asif (2021) as successfully fulfilling professional goals and objectives, encompasses meeting or surpassing performance standards, producing high-quality work, and positively impacting organisational goals. It significantly influences the job satisfaction of administrative officers, as the sense of accomplishment derived from task completion and organisational contribution is integral to their overall satisfaction (Varma 2018). Achievement drives continuous improvement and innovation within administrative roles. Intrinsically motivated administrative officers set challenging goals, pursue professional development opportunities, and strive for excellence in their work, enhancing both individual satisfaction and organisational effectiveness (Khan *et al.* 2020). By fostering a culture of achievement and continuous improvement, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can cultivate a motivated and engaged administrative workforce dedicated to delivering high-quality services and driving organisational success (Osborne and Hammoud 2017).

The intrinsic job satisfaction derived from achievement contributes to a positive work environment characterised by high morale, motivation, and job engagement among administrative officers (Steinmann, Klug and Maier 2018). Proactive behaviours, such as initiative-taking and innovation, are more prevalent when administrative officers experience a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment in their roles. This proactive orientation enhances both individual job satisfaction and organisational effectiveness in dynamic and competitive environments. Therefore, HEIs that prioritise the achievement of administrative officers are likely to benefit from increased job satisfaction, employee engagement, and organisational performance over time.

Work Itself: The concept of "work itself" encapsulates the intrinsic qualities of a job, including task diversity, autonomy, avenues for skill enhancement, and the perceived significance of the tasks, all of which collectively shape an individual's job satisfaction and motivation (Ndhlovu 2018). Scholarly investigations indicate that the nature of work significantly influences the motivation and job satisfaction of administrative officers (Mnyani 2022). Herzberg's Two-Factor theory underscores the pivotal role of the inherent characteristics of work in fostering fulfilment among administrative professionals. When their responsibilities are intellectually stimulating, purposeful, and aligned with their competencies and interests, they are more inclined to experience heightened motivation and satisfaction (Herzberg 1968). Tasks that entail varied challenges, problem-solving opportunities, and decision-making responsibilities contribute to their sense of fulfilment and motivation.

To elevate job satisfaction among administrative officers, organisations should prioritise job enrichment strategies that accentuate the intrinsic value of work (Tumi, Hasan and Khalid 2021). By facilitating skill enhancement, diversifying tasks, and granting autonomy, organisations can cultivate a sense of ownership and engagement among administrative officers. Administrative officers derive greater satisfaction when they are empowered to make decisions, exercise creativity, and witness the direct impact of their contributions. Thus, meaningful and intellectually stimulating work, conducive to personal development, emerges as a cornerstone for bolstering job satisfaction.

Job crafting, characterised by proactive initiatives undertaken by employees to shape their work environment, presents another avenue for augmenting job satisfaction (Geldenhuys, Bakker and Demerouti 2021). Administrative officers can tailor their tasks, cultivate relationships, and refine their perceptions of their roles to align with their preferences and strengths. By customising their responsibilities to leverage their skills and interests, administrative officers can derive enhanced satisfaction from their work. The autonomy and control afforded by job crafting in shaping job design significantly contribute to their overall job satisfaction and well-being.

Responsibilities: Job responsibilities play a crucial role in shaping career opportunities and job satisfaction for administrative officers, as highlighted in scholarly research by Roszkowska and Mele (2021). These responsibilities encompass the specific tasks, duties, and obligations inherent in an individual's role within an organisation, serving to clarify expectations, guide employees, and form the basis for performance evaluations (Brown *et al.* 2019). Therefore, it is essential that employees thoroughly understand their responsibilities to contribute to organisational success effectively. The complexity of responsibilities directly influences workload, stress levels, and opportunities for skill development, which are critical factors impacting job satisfaction and career advancement. Employees are more likely to find fulfilment when they feel accountable for their tasks and decisions, experiencing empowerment through autonomy and responsibility (Osborne and Hammoud 2017). This sense of trust and empowerment not only fosters sustained satisfaction but also contributes to organisational effectiveness (Alshmemri *et al.* 2017).

A clear definition of job responsibilities is vital for enhancing employee performance and minimising confusion or conflicts within the workplace (Pervaiz, Li and He 2021). When administrative officers have a clear understanding of their roles and duties, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction, driven by their awareness of their contribution to organisational objectives (Pervaiz, Li and He 2021). Moreover, responsibilities play a crucial role in shaping administrative officers' skills and abilities, enabling organisations to identify the required skills for each role and offer appropriate training opportunities (Gutterman 2023). Additionally, responsibilities provide a framework for performance evaluation, facilitating objective assessment and

constructive feedback, thereby fostering a culture of continuous learning and development (Harper, Cameron and Edwards 2024).

Clearly outlining and communicating job responsibilities significantly contribute to organisational effectiveness, employee engagement, skill development, and performance management. (Mbhele and de Beer 2021). Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that prioritise clear definitions and communication of job responsibilities observe enhanced employee satisfaction, productivity, and long-term success (Khan *et al.* 2022). Regular review and updating of administrative officers' job positions are essential for organisations to adapt to evolving business requirements and ensure alignment with strategic objectives (Singh and Misra 2022).

Advancement: Advancement refers to an individual's internal drive to improve their personal and professional development (Alshememri, Shahwan-Akl and Maude 2017). In the workplace context, it means a positive and upward status or position of an employee. Administrative officers in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play crucial roles in supporting the institution's mission, managing operations, and facilitating a positive academic experience for students, faculty, and staff. Therefore, administrative officers' intrinsic motivation for advancement is closely tied to their professional growth and the satisfaction they derive from contributing to the academic community.

Research has shown that employee development programs in HEIs are essential in fostering the intrinsic motivation for advancement among administrative officers (Rodriguez and Walters 2017). Such programs include workshops, seminars, and skill-building initiatives, which provide opportunities for administrative officers to enhance their abilities and pursue career growth within the academic sector. The availability of these programs also correlates positively with job satisfaction and staff commitment (Davidescu *et al.* 2020). HEIs that prioritise employee development experience lower turnover rates and higher staff commitment, which positively impacts their organisational success.

Continuous learning and skill development are crucial for administrative officers in HEIs, given the dynamic nature of their roles and the ever-evolving landscape of

higher education. By providing developmental programs, HEIs demonstrate a commitment to fostering their employees' growth and competence, thereby reinforcing administrative officers' intrinsic motivation for advancement (Lee and Kim 2023).

Growth and development opportunities: Access to growth and development programs is crucial for the career development of administrative officers. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should prioritise employee development by offering workshops, seminars, and skill-building programs. These initiatives, highlighted by Rodriguez and Walters (2017), allow administrative officers to enhance their abilities and pursue career growth opportunities. Embracing continuous learning enhances job satisfaction and equips administrative officers with the skills to adapt to evolving job requirements. These opportunities promote professional growth, skill refinement, and career progression, fostering a sense of fulfilment and motivation among the workforce. Davidescu *et al.* (2020) emphasise that job satisfaction is linked to the availability of developmental programs, indicating the organisation's commitment to fostering employees' growth and competence. Access to training programs ensures that administrative officers remain updated on industry trends, technological advancements, and best practices, empowering them to fulfil their duties effectively and confidently. Lee and Kim (2023) note that organisations prioritising employee development experience lower turnover rates and higher staff commitment.

Administrative officers who perceive their employers as invested in their professional development are likelier to demonstrate loyalty and dedication, viewing training as recognition and support that fosters a positive work environment and strengthens their commitment to organisational goals.

Growth and development programs are vital for talent management and succession planning within administrative departments. These initiatives enhance the skills of administrative officers, preparing them for future leadership and specialised roles. Ejiwale (2019) emphasises that systematic training and development efforts address current skill gaps and ensure the continuity and sustainability of organisational operations. This proactive talent development approach instils confidence in administrative officers regarding their career progression, boosting their job satisfaction and engagement levels. Through tailored workshops, seminars, and

certification programs, administrative officers gain new knowledge, tools, and perspectives that enrich their work experiences and expand their capabilities. Radu (2023) highlights that organisational cultures emphasising learning foster a sense of fulfilment and self-actualisation among employees, aligning with their intrinsic motivations and aspirations. Encouraging administrative officers to pursue continuous learning fosters a sense of value and empowerment, leading to increased job satisfaction and a deeper sense of purpose in their roles.

All the factors discussed above are perceived by administrative officers as intrinsic to their role. These factors exert a direct influence on job satisfaction. Failure on the part of HEIs' management to address these factors may result in job dissatisfaction, compromised service quality, and increased attrition among administrative officers.

Extrinsic factors are influenced by both rewards and circumstances and wield a profound influence on job satisfaction (Karaferis *et al.* 2022). These factors encompass a multitude of elements within the work environment profoundly shaping employees' attitudes and behaviours. This section below provides a comprehensive overview of several essential factors that contribute to job satisfaction.

Remuneration packages: Remuneration encompasses the compensation or payment provided to employees by an organisation in exchange for their work and services, which includes financial rewards like salaries, bonuses, and benefits. Che, Zhu and Huang (2022) highlight remuneration as a crucial aspect of the employment relationship, reflecting the value of an individual's contribution to the organisation's objectives. In Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), remuneration holds particular significance for administrative officers who play pivotal roles in supporting the institution's academic mission and overall effectiveness.

Competitive remuneration is essential for attracting and retaining top administrative talent in HEIs, as emphasised by Hogue and Tshutsha (2022). Research consistently underscores that offering competitive compensation not only enhances employees' well-being but also significantly boosts their job satisfaction and motivation (Chimwene, Wanjere and Otuya 2020). Conversely, inadequate compensation can lead to employee dissatisfaction, reduced morale, and ultimately, turnover.

Furthermore, remuneration packages influence employees' perceptions of fairness and equity within the organisation. Khumalo's (2022) research stresses the importance of aligning workload with equitable compensation to foster a sense of fairness and satisfaction among employees. When employees perceive their compensation as fair and proportional to their contributions, it cultivates a positive work environment and diminishes turnover intentions.

The HEIs must thoughtfully design and administer remuneration packages that not only attract and retain administrative talent but also promote fairness and equity among employees, ultimately contributing to organisational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

Working conditions: Working conditions encompass the physical, social, and organisational factors that affect employees' well-being and productivity in the workplace (Adams 2019). Working conditions represent another indispensable facet influencing job satisfaction. Encompassing the physical workspace, amenities, and working hours, these working conditions profoundly impact productivity and employee contentment (Sundari and Priya 2020). It is noteworthy that administrative officers benefit from safe, secure, and well-equipped office environments, as these factors possess a strong correlation with heightened job satisfaction rates (Mazubane 2016). Therefore, the establishment of conducive working conditions fosters a supportive atmosphere and significantly contributes to employees' overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Job security: Security within the organisational framework plays a critical role in bolstering employee dedication and efficacy (Cavallari 2023). Song (2018) emphasises the significance of working conditions as a foundation for assured employment, protecting individuals from involuntary job displacement. This assurance not only fosters stability but also provides predictability regarding ongoing tenure, instilling employees with a profound sense of financial security and peace of mind.

Job security, closely linked with stability and predictability, deeply resonates within organisational cultures, enhancing employee engagement and productivity (Bejakovic and Mrnjavac 2018). In higher education, job security is particularly vital due to its

direct impact on retaining skilled professionals, which is crucial for institutional efficacy (Marginson *et al.* 2023). In an environment where the pursuit of knowledge and academic excellence is paramount, the continuity of expertise and institutional memory is of utmost importance.

Administrative officers play pivotal roles in ensuring the smooth functioning of academic institutions, serving as linchpins across various administrative processes (ChaaCha and Oosthuysen 2023). Their commitment and efficacy are integral to administrative functions, ranging from admissions to financial management. Therefore, initiatives aimed at ensuring employment stability are crucial for this cadre of professionals, as their job satisfaction and retention directly affect organisational performance.

These initiatives involve implementing tenure-track programs, establishing robust retention policies, and providing opportunities for professional development and career advancement (Simonyan 2019; Bejakovic and Mrnjavac 2018). By investing in the holistic well-being and job satisfaction of administrative officers, educational institutions not only strengthen their workforce but also enhance their resilience in the face of economic uncertainties and organisational challenges.

Job security goes beyond being a mere employment guarantee; it is a foundational element in nurturing a positive work environment, fostering employee engagement, and ultimately driving organisational success (Gamage, Dehideniya and Ekanayake 2021). By prioritising employment stability, particularly in the unique context of higher education, institutions lay the groundwork for sustained excellence and innovation.

Supervision: Supervision is fundamental in assessing the competence, equity, and efficacy of an organisation's functions. According to Abukakbr (2018), supervision is the process of overseeing and guiding employees to ensure proficient and efficient task execution, while also furnishing support and feedback for professional development. Alshmemri (2017) underscores supervisors' significance in task delegation, fairness assurance, and possessing adequate job knowledge. Effective supervision entails continual guidance, feedback, and support, directly influencing employee performance and job satisfaction (Masoka 2021). Simultaneously, proficient

supervision fosters a culture of progression and enrichment, thus contributing to employees' overall job satisfaction (Magasi 2021). The employee-manager relationship is crucial for organisational goal attainment, with managers tasked with delineating clear objectives and guiding their accomplishment.

In the era of rapid technological advancement, supervisors must ensure continuous training and updating of administrative officers on the latest technological developments. Effective supervision involves motivating employees to excel, with motivation serving as a key driver for enhanced work efficiency. Adam *et al.* (2016) propose that promotion and advancement opportunities serve as significant motivating factors, facilitated by departmental heads. Madhanga (2018) scrutinised supervision styles and their impact on employee performance and found that transformational leadership and supervision styles yield positive outcomes. The study further advocates for proactive managerial approaches, employee support, and the provision of ample resources and training to bolster performance. These studies underscore the indispensable role of supervision, leadership, and managerial backing in guaranteeing employee competence, equity, and organisational performance.

The impact of extrinsic job satisfaction on administrative officers within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) cannot be overstated. Key factors such as salary, benefits, and working conditions play a pivotal role in shaping the overall job satisfaction of administrative officers. When these fundamental factors are not given due attention by HEI management, it can lead to a host of negative outcomes, including low morale, subpar service quality, and high turnover rates among administrative staff. Thus, it is crucial to recognise and address extrinsic job satisfaction factors to foster a positive work environment and promote organisational effectiveness within HEIs.

2.7 Summary of the chapter

The concluding chapter delved into the relevant literature regarding the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. It commenced by clarifying the key terms that are fundamental to the study, followed by a comprehensive discussion of relevant literature aligned with the study's objectives. The study explored the aspects of career growth and job satisfaction. Subsequently, it ascertained the perceptions on the

effectiveness of development and further determined the factors influencing career growth and job satisfaction. Finally, the study concluded with a discussion of the Herzberg Two-factor theory as a theoretical framework.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined the literature relevant to the study. The present chapter presents the research methods the study adopted. The chapter sets off by discussing the concepts of research methods and research methodology. This is followed by a presentation of the research methodology dashboard. The chapter continues to present the research paradigm, research approach, and research design while promoting the adoption of these concepts. The study then moved to describe the population targeted. The chapter goes on to describe the data collection instruments and the procedures used to pretest the validity and reliability of the instruments. Subsequently, the procedures for employing the research instruments and the ethical deliberations were clarified. Following a comprehensive justification of the data analysis methodology, a summary of the chapter was provided.

3.2 Understanding research methods and research methodology

Research methods and research methodology play critical roles in ensuring that research is conducted systematically, ethically, and reliably leading to reliable outcomes. However, there is an ongoing debate in the research literature regarding the definitions and applications of these terms creating ambiguity, confusion, and inconsistency among researchers (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat 2018). To address these challenges and foster a clearer understanding scholars often refer to definitions provided by experts in their respective fields (Aspers and Corte 2019).

One significant perspective articulated by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), suggest that research methodology outlines the logical sequence and systematic flow of processes involved in a research project. This viewpoint underscores the importance of understanding how each step contributes to knowledge acquisition about a particular research problem. Another perspective put forth by Barroga and Matanguihan (2022) distinguish research methods as the various procedures, schemes, and algorithms used in research. These methods encompass planned scientific and value-neutral approaches including theoretical procedures, experimental studies, numerical schemes and statistical approaches. Research methods aim to facilitate sample

collection, data gathering and the development of problem-solving strategies. Scientific research methods in particular necessitate explanations based on reliable facts, measurements and observations relying solely on reasoning.

Equally, research methodology is described as a systematic approach to problem-solving, constituting a science that examines how research is conducted (Patel and Patel 2019). It involves studying the procedures used by researchers to describe, explain and predict phenomena. Research methodology is also defined as the study of the methods through which knowledge is acquired with the overarching goal of providing a comprehensive work plan for research endeavours (Busseto, Wick and Gumbinger 2020). Given the inherent ambiguity, confusion and inconsistency surrounding these concepts, this study aims to clarify the adopted research methods and methodologies. This involves a meticulous exploration of the systematic steps typically embraced by scholars in the social sciences. The rationale for using these methods will also be explained, resulting in a more transparent and comprehensive understanding of the research process.

Table 3. 1 Research methodology dashboard

Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study examines the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers’ job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa to recommend on how career growth opportunities may enhance administrative officers’ job satisfaction
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish the aspects wherein administrative officers, require development for career growth and job satisfaction. • To ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers’ career growth and job satisfaction. • to determine the factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction.
Paradigm	Post-positivist
Approach	Both Quantitative and qualitative
Design	Survey design
Target population	49 administrative officers through the Census
Research instruments	Questionnaires
Data type	Primary data
Data analysis method	Descriptive statistics and thematic content analysis

The research dashboard above displays the research methodology and techniques used to achieve the research's goal, which was to examine the influence of career growth on administrative officers' job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa.

3.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a set of rules or patterns that guide research to ensure the use of a suitable ideology in a study. A research paradigm, according to Frog (2018) is a pattern, model, or typical example, such as worldviews, mindsets, cultural motifs, and ideologies. The research paradigm lays the foundation that the study will employ. According to Siddiqui (2019) a research paradigm can be understood as a collection of conceptual frameworks and underlying assumptions that are logically coherent. Research paradigms are categorised in many ways and the section below briefly discusses the different research paradigms that are commonly used in the research studies.

The interpretivism paradigm is rooted in the hermeneutic tradition and emphasises the exploration of phenomena through subjective interpretations and socio-cultural meanings (Pervin and Mokhtar 2022). Utilising qualitative methods like ethnography and phenomenology, it delves deeply into human experiences, notably in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and education (Collins and Stockton 2018). In contrast, the positivism paradigm originates from the natural sciences and prioritises objective observation and measurement to formulate empirical laws and theories

(Alakwe 2018). Employing quantitative methods such as experiments and surveys, positivism seeks generalisable and replicable findings commonly found in fields like psychology and economics (Park, Konge and Artino 2019). On the other hand, the critical paradigm is influenced by critical theory and critically examines power structures and social injustices, advocating for emancipatory aims through participatory action research (Jacobs 2018). Widely utilised in critical psychology and education, this approach challenges dominant ideologies to promote social change and equity (Pham 2018).

This study employed a post-positivist research paradigm that recognises the presence of diverse approaches to comprehending the world, this involves acquiring both quantitative and qualitative data. Post-positivist acknowledges the limitations of positivism while emphasising empirical inquiry and scientific rigour (Maksimovic and Evtimov 2023). The post-positivist paradigm was chosen for this study as it encompasses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. According to Bonache and Festing (2020) the post-positivist paradigm embodies a form of pluralism that merges positivist and interpretive approaches, thus enabling researchers to employ various methods based on the research question's nature.

3.4 Research approach

A research approach refers to the systematic plan and framework administering how research methods, data collection, interpretation and data analysis are organised within a study. It is a structured strategy that researchers adopt to conduct a study and address specific questions or objectives (Sileyew 2019). Researchers typically select a method or combination of methods that align with their philosophical standpoint, the study's objectives, and the type of data needed to address the research questions (Zukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitiene 2019). The selection of a research approach is influenced by the researcher's philosophy and methodology (Okesina 2020). Researchers must choose an appropriate research method(s) from the three main categories of research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, to answer the research questions. Quantitative research methods focus on numerical data and quantities to describe an event supporting hypothesis testing and prediction modelling (Ansari *et al.* 2022). In contrast, qualitative research employs diverse data collection methods, including, focus groups, observations, open-ended questions, and

documentaries, to delve deeply into phenomena. (Mwita 2022). Lastly, mixed methods research aims to address questions that cannot be adequately answered by either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone, combining both types of data collection and analysis within a single study (Sekaran and Bougie 2016). The fundamental premise of mixed methods is that integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches offers a more comprehensive understanding of the research issue than either approach in isolation (Creswell and Creswell 2018).

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches enabling the researcher to use closed-ended (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) questions, thereby enhancing the depth and breadth of the research findings.

3.5 Research design

The primary aim of research design within a study is to methodically direct the researcher towards acquiring pertinent data essential for addressing the research problem with precision and accuracy. As articulated by Majid (2018), research design encompasses the utilisation of evidence-based methodologies, protocols, and frameworks that provide the necessary tools for executing a research study. It encompasses not only delineating the research problem and objectives but also encompasses considerations such as scope, timeline, methodologies for data collection, analysis techniques, limitations, and modes of presentation (Thakur 2021). Within the spectrum of research methodologies, distinct approaches are discerned, including both quantitative and qualitative paradigms.

Qualitative research designs by encompass methodologies such as grounded theory, ethnography, case study, phenomenology, action research, and narrative inquiry (Ugwu and Eze 2023); and Abuhamda, Ismail and Bsharat (2021). Conversely, quantitative research designs associated with the quantitative paradigm include descriptive studies, surveys, exploratory research, experimental designs, correlational studies, and quasi-experimental designs (Kumatongo and Muzata, 2021; Apuke 2017).

This study employed a survey research design. Sha and Gabel (2020) argue that a survey is a series of questions or statements used in a questionnaire or interview to

assess the responses of respondents. The study employed a survey design to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a deeper exploration of the research questions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). While the quantitative data provided numerical insights through structured questions, it was the qualitative data from open-ended responses that truly brought the participants' voices to life. Analyzing this qualitative data was a vital part of the process. By identifying key themes and patterns in the participants' narratives, the researcher was able to uncover the real challenges and opportunities that administrative officers face regarding their career growth and job satisfaction. These personal stories added rich context to the numbers, illuminating the human experiences behind the data.

The combination of qualitative insights with quantitative findings created a fuller picture of the issues at play. This holistic approach not only enhanced the study's conclusions but also offered practical recommendations for improving career advancement opportunities within higher education institutions. Ultimately, the voices of the administrative officers highlighted the importance of supporting their professional journeys and well-being, ensuring that their needs are recognized and addressed.

This study examined the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa. A survey was ideal for documenting perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, or knowledge within a predetermined sample of individuals (Paradis *et al.* 2016). The survey was suitable for the study as it provided a strategy for the desired objectives, which included the research approach development of instruments for data collection and data analysis (Asenahabi 2019). Additionally, it provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by examining the population (Creswell and Creswell 2018).

3.6 Target population and sampling procedures

Target population pertains to the systematic gathering of precise data from a chosen cohort of subjects. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) delineate the population as encompassing the entirety of individuals, events, or entities of interest that the researcher intends to investigate. The significance of delineating the target population within a research inquiry lies in facilitating the acquisition of accurate data; by improving on the target population, the researcher can effectively concentrate on a

specific subset of individuals rather than the entire populace. Busseto, Wick and Gumbinger (2020) contend that scrutinising the attributes of ideal research participants serves as a pivotal method for delineating the population.

The population targeted were administrative officers from all 6 academic faculties at the Durban University of Technology. Based on the information obtained from DUT Website, (2024), there were 91 in total.

Table 3. 2 Target population distribution

Target population	Total number
Faculty Office (Faculty of Accounting and Informatics)	14
Faculty Office (Faculty of Arts and Design)	12
Faculty Office (Faculty of Applied Sciences)	14
Faculty Office (Faculty of Health Sciences)	18
Faculty Office (Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment)	17
Faculty Office (Faculty of Management Sciences)	20
Total	91

The census methodology is the most suitable method for this study, as it captures every single unit of the universe, leaving no space for omissions, and thus providing accurate and comprehensive information (Taherdoost 2021).

3.7 Research instruments

Data collection represents a systematic approach employed by researchers to gather and evaluate information from participants. Knott *et al.* (2022) suggest that this process aims to gather data on specific variables to address research inquiries. The methods of data collection can be categorised into distinct types. According to Taherdoost (2021) these types primarily include primary data and secondary data. Primary data pertains to information collected directly by the researcher through firsthand experiences, whereas secondary data comprises information gathered by

others from published sources for various research or non-research purposes (Ruggina and Perry 2019).

In this study, primary data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) describe a questionnaire as a written set of questions where respondents record their answers. The questionnaire design encompassed both structured (quantitative, close-ended) and semi-structured (qualitative, open-ended) elements. Structured questionnaires provide respondents with predetermined response options, whereas semi-structured questionnaires allow participants to respond more freely and on their terms, without restrictions on their responses (Ranganathan and Caduff 2023).

3.8 Administration of the instruments

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire survey aimed at collecting data from 91 administrative officers across six faculties at the Durban University of Technology. Following the guidelines of Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a questionnaire is a pre-formulated set of written questions designed to gather specific information from respondents, typically through narrowly defined response options.

The questionnaire was designed with both structured and semi-structured components to capture a comprehensive set of data. The structured part included quantitative closed-ended questions using a Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes and perceptions systematically. The semi-structured part comprised qualitative open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide more detailed and nuanced answers. This combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was chosen to enable respondents to share their views on career growth expectations and opportunities comprehensively, covering any aspects that might not have been anticipated by the researchers. The use of a questionnaire was preferred over interviews due to time constraints and logistical challenges, as the administrative officers were distributed across different faculties within the university.

The distribution process involved physical and emailing the questionnaires to the participants along with a cover letter. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study, requested their participation, assured them of confidentiality, and informed them

of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on various topics, including demographic details, remuneration and compensation, work experience, qualifications, training, and career growth.

The data collection period extended over seven months, during which the questionnaires were administered to the administrative officers at the Durban University of Technology campuses. This extended period allowed sufficient time for participants to complete and return the questionnaires, ensuring a robust data collection process.

3.9 Reliability and validity

When conducting a research study, it is crucial to consider the reliability and validity of the research instrument. According to McDonald, Schoenebeck and Forte (2019) these concepts are fundamental in assessing the quality of research. Reliability refers to the consistency of results when a study is repeated under similar conditions. If a study produces the same results when conducted again, it is deemed reliable (Surucu and Malsakci 2020). A reliable measure is free from bias and ensures consistent measurement over time and across different items in the instrument (Sekaran and Bougie 2016).

Validity, on the other hand, pertains to how accurately an instrument measures the intended concept. It is about measuring the correct concepts accurately (Sekaran and Bougie 2016). Taherdoost (2016) Validity is defined as the extent to which an instrument measures what it intends to measure. To assess the validity of the study, the researcher pre-tested questionnaires with five administrative officers' employees at a selected university of technology to ensure the respondents understood the questions. These pre-tested questionnaires were not included in the final study. High validity indicates that the results of the research correspond to real properties, characteristics, and variations in the physical or social world (Mohajan 2018).

3.10 Pre-testing

Before commencing the data collection process, a researcher must conduct a pre-test of the research instrument. This step is aimed at identifying any potential issues that respondents might encounter in understanding or interpreting the research questions

(Taherdoost 2021). Pre-testing involves engaging a small number of respondents to assess the accuracy of the questions and their comprehensibility, allowing for the rectification of any deficiencies before the full implementation of the instrument. The primary goal of pre-testing is to minimise confusion and ensure clarity (Sekaran and Bougie 2016).

In this study, the research instruments underwent pre-testing on five administrative officers: two from the Faculty of Management Sciences, two from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and one from the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment. The purpose of the pre-test was to identify and address any necessary modifications before using the questionnaire in the actual research study. The findings from the pre-test indicated that all participants effectively understood the questions, leading to the decision not to modify the questionnaire thereafter.

3.11 Ethical considerations

When conducting research, integrity and honesty are vital, particularly in safeguarding the identities and sensitive information of participants through adherence to ethical standards. This study followed the ethical guidelines and regulations of Durban University of Technology(DUT). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) ethics in research pertains to the expected standards of behaviour and societal norms.

To maintain ethical standards, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable. An Information Letter was provided to participants, clearly stating that their information would be used solely for academic purposes. Ethical clearance and permission to conduct the study were obtained from the university's Ethics Research Committee. Participants were assured of confidentiality and protection against any form of victimisation, and they were informed of their right to withdraw from the study without prior notice. The data collected from participants were used exclusively for research purposes.

This study took into consideration the following ethical matters discussed below:

Informed consent

The researcher informed the respondents about the objectives of the study and participants were informed about their voluntary participation by signing the attached consent form, indicating their understanding and agreement. Prior permission was obtained from participants before distributing the questionnaires.

Right to withdraw

The rights of respondents were clearly outlined. Furthermore, participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable or unwilling to continue their participation. This was clarified to the respondents at the beginning of the study.

Anonymity and confidentiality

To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, respondents were not required to provide their names in the questionnaire. The researcher assured that all data would be kept confidential and stored for five years, after which it would be destroyed. Furthermore, the research findings will be accessible at the DUT Library.

3.12 Data analysis

There are various data analysis techniques available for specific research studies. According to Bhatia (2020), the primary goal of data analysis is to convert complex data into a more understandable and straightforward format that supports decision-making. Sibiya (2018) divides data analysis into quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative techniques involve collecting and interpreting numerical data, while qualitative techniques help in understanding non-numerical data such as text or audio recordings (van Schie 2023).

This study utilised a descriptive analysis technique to analyse quantitative data, while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify and categorise patterns of meaning in the dataset pertinent to the research question. This approach can be applied across different research frameworks, not limited to the original research question (Snyder 2019). Both descriptive and thematic analyses were deemed appropriate for this study, which

investigated the viewpoints of administrative officers regarding career growth and job satisfaction.

3.13 Summary of the chapter

Chapter Three discussed and outlined the research methodology employed in the study. The chapter began by discussing the research methods and methodology concepts employed through the dashboard table. The study examined the research paradigm, research approach, and research designs, their relevance and justification for the research. The study then shifted to target the population and the research instruments utilised data and how the administration of data was conducted. The study further examines the reliability and validity of the research. Lastly, the chapter concludes by discussing the pretesting of research instruments while emphasising the importance of ethical consideration in the research study, ending with a summary of the chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter delineated the research methodology utilised in this study. This chapter focuses on analysing and discussing the findings. It begins by explaining how both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Then, it presents the response rate and the profile of the respondents. The analysis and discussion of the content data are structured around four themes that directly relate to the study's objectives: establishing aspects wherein administrative officers require development for career growth and job satisfaction, ascertaining perceptions of the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction, determining factors influencing career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers, and assessing using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

While the previous chapter presented the research methodology that guided the study, this chapter focuses on analysing and discussing the findings. The chapter commences with the procedures followed to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. Thereafter, the chapter presents the response rate for the targeted population and the profile of the respondents. The content data is then analysed and discussed under the following four themes as per the study's objectives: To establish the aspects wherein administrative officers require development for career growth and job satisfaction, ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction, determine the factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers and assess using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction. The chapter concludes with a summary.

4.2 Procedures followed to analyse quantitative and qualitative data

The procedures employed for data analysis are outlined in this section. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data using a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The quantitative data was analysed utilising descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data was analysed through thematic content analysis. Quantitative data was classified, coded, and analysed using Microsoft Excel, with data being presented in tables, graphs, and percentages, while the procedure for qualitative data involved identifying themes such as patterns that are important and interesting to address research questions.

4.3 Response rate and the profile of the respondents

Response rate refers to the percentage of individuals or entities who participate in a survey or research study compared to the total number of individuals or entities invited or eligible to take part (Sakshaug, Vicari and Couper 2019). Researchers calculate the response rate by dividing the number of completed responses by the number of eligible participants and then converting that figure into a percentage. This metric is critical for research, as it can impact the accuracy and reliability of the study's outcomes (Snyder 2019). In this study, 91 administrative officers were targeted, however, the researcher only managed to reach 49 participants due to the reasons deliberated in Chapter Three, 3.6. Following the data collection phase, a systematic method of filtering and organising was employed to eliminate data that failed to meet predetermined criteria. Of the 49 questionnaires assessed, 9 were deemed to be unsuitable for further analysis thus achieving a response rate of $(40/91*100 = 44\%)$.

Respondents' profiles encompass the characteristics or demographics of individuals involved in a survey or research endeavour (Casteel and Bridier 2021). These may include details like age, gender, educational accomplishment, occupation, income, and other relevant variables tailored to the study's aims. Researchers must scrutinise and interpret data considering various subgroups within the population (Lester, Cho and Lochmiller 2021). This approach is beneficial in drawing meaningful conclusions and disseminating findings concerning particular groups or individuals.

The study focused on administrative officers at a selected university in South Africa as its target population. The data collection process was conducted through a census

method, which involves a complete enumeration of all individual elements or units within a population. With a population size of 91, a census was deemed appropriate for the study. Singh and Masuku (2014) suggest that for small populations like 200 or less, a census is preferable since sampling the entire population is necessary to attain a satisfactory level of precision. Table 4.1 below presents the overall response rate.

Table 4.1 Overall response rate

Total number targeted	91
Total number responded	49
Total number usable	40
Percentage response rate (40/91*100)	44%

Table 4.2 Breakdown of response rate by faculty

Target population	Total number	Percentage
Faculty Office (Faculty of Accounting and Informatics)	14	15
Faculty Office (Faculty of Arts and Design)	12	13
Faculty Office (Faculty of Applied Sciences)	13	14
Faculty Office (Faculty of Health Sciences)	18	20
Faculty Office (Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment)	15	17
Faculty Office (Faculty of Management Sciences)	19	21
Total	91	40

The results in Table 4.2 above indicates the response rate of respondents by faculty. The Faculty of Management Sciences has the largest population of administrative officers with 19 (21%), followed by the Faculty of Health Sciences with 18 (20%). The Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment accounts for 15 (17%) of the population. The Faculty of Accounting and Informatics employs 14 (15%) of the population, while the Faculty of Applied Sciences employs 13 (14%). Lastly, the Faculty of Arts and Design comprises 12 (13%) of the population. The findings indicate

a greater representation of administrative officers in faculties with larger or more complex administrative requirements, such as Management Sciences and Health Sciences. This trend suggests that these faculties need more administrative assistance due to their broader scope of operations and various activities.

Table 4.3 Demographic profile of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	13	32
Female	26	65
Prefer not to say	1	3
Total	40	100
Age group		
18 – 24 Years	16	40
25 – 30 Years	9	22
31 – 35 Years	7	18
36 Years and above	8	20
Total	40	100
Duration of years of service		
0 – 10 Years	25	62
11 – 20 Years-	10	25
21 – 30 Years	3	8
31 Years and above	2	5
Total	40	100
Units		
Faculty Office (Faculty of Accounting and Informatics)	7	17
Faculty Office (Faculty of Arts and Design)	8	20
Faculty Office (Faculty of Applied Sciences)	6	15
Faculty Office (Faculty of Health Sciences)	5	13
Faculty Office (Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment)	8	20
Faculty Office (Faculty of Management Sciences)	6	15
Total	40	100

Job designation		
Secretary	13	32
Administrative assistant	11	28
Faculty assistant	10	25
Faculty research officer	6	15
Total	40	100
Qualification		
Matric /Senior Certificate	2	5
Higher Certificate	5	12
Diploma	8	20
B-Tech	11	27
Honours	9	23
Masters	5	13
Total	40	100
Employment status		
Permanent	27	67
Contract	8	20
Fixed term contract	5	13
Total	40	100

Table 4.3 above displays the target population and response rate, providing insights into the study's demographic composition. The data reveals that out of the 40 respondents, 26 (65%) identified as female 13 (32%) as male, and 1 (3%) chose not to disclose their gender. This high proportion of females may be due to the historical association of administrative work with fields traditionally dominated by women. Galsanjimed and Sekiguchi (2023) assert that this association reflects entrenched stereotypes stemming from traditional gender roles, wherein organisational and clerical duties were typically assigned to women.

The study's age distribution indicates that 16 (40%) of the participants are between 18 and 24 years old, suggesting an important presence of younger individuals in the cohort. Additionally, 9 (22%) of the respondents fall within the 25-30 age bracket, indicating a smaller yet considerable representation from this group. Furthermore, 7 (18%) are between 30 and 35 years old, adding to the diversity of age ranges in the study. Finally, 8 (20%) of the participants are 36 years old and above, representing a

notable portion of the older demographic of the population. These results offer a detailed insight into the age distribution among the study's participants, highlighting variances across different age groups. Yadav and Lenka (2020) emphasise the importance of addressing age diversity in the workplace, as it reflects the multifaceted nature of modern workforce demographics.

The research findings further indicate that a majority of the respondents, specifically 25 (62%) have accumulated 0 to 10 years of experience at the institution. This is followed by 10 (25%) respondents with 11 to 20 years of experience. Additionally, a smaller proportion of 3 (8%) respondents possess 21 to 30 years of experience, while only 2 (5%) respondents have 31 years of experience and above. These results highlight the varying levels of tenure among the participants. Kim (2023) argues the significance of considering the tenure of employees, as it can have implications for factors such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The data suggest that a significant portion of the workforce is composed of young adults at the early stages of their careers, indicating a need for opportunities for career development to support their ambitions for growth.

The study further investigated the distribution of administrative officers across different units. Table 4.2 above indicates that the administrative officers of the Faculty Office (Faculty of Arts and Design) comprise 8 (20%) respondents. Similarly, the Faculty Office (Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment) has a total of 8 (20%) of the population. The Faculty Office (Faculty of Accounting and Informatics) represents 7 (17%) of the population. Contributing 6 (15%) to the population are the Faculty Office (Faculty of Management Sciences) and the Faculty Office (Faculty of Applied Sciences). Lastly, the Faculty Office (Faculty of Health Sciences) represents 5 (13%) of the population.

These statistics provide a balanced distribution of administrative officers across various faculties. The faculties of Arts and Design, Engineering, and the Built Environment, and Accounting and Informatics have relatively similar proportions of administrative staff, each comprising approximately 17-20% of the total respondents. Meanwhile, the faculties of Management Sciences and Applied Sciences share an equal proportion, contributing 15% to the population. The Faculty of Health Sciences

has a slightly lower representation, accounting for 13% of the administrative staff population.

Based on the data analysis of participants' job designations, it was observed that the largest proportion of respondents, comprising 13 (32%), are classified as secretaries. This is followed by 11 (28%) respondents holding the designation of administrative assistants, while faculty assistants account for 10 (25%) and faculty research officers make up 6 (15%) respondents. The collected data reveals that secretaries dominate the categories, while faculty research officers constitute the smallest number within the population. According to Perifanis and Kitisios (2023), this breakdown of job roles provides valuable insights into the composition of the participant pool, showcasing a predominant presence of administrative support positions. This information is crucial for understanding the professional landscape and organisational structure within which these individuals operate.

After examining the qualifications of the respondents, The study revealed that there is a broad spectrum of educational backgrounds. The majority of respondents, 11 (27%) hold B-Tech qualifications indicating a significant presence of vocational training within the group. This was followed by 9 (23%) who hold Honours degrees suggesting that a notable portion of the respondents had specialised academic training. Additionally, 8 (20%) respondents possess Diplomas, highlighting a considerable number of respondents who possessed basic vocational training, while 5 (13%) have Master's degrees indicating that only a minority of respondents had advanced postgraduate qualifications. Similarly, 5 (12%) hold Higher Certificates, demonstrating a moderate presence at an intermediate academic level. Even though only 2 (5%) respondents possess Matric qualifications, this foundational level was still represented within the group. The combination of educational qualifications emphasises the diversity of the surveyed individuals' backgrounds, encompassing both vocational, foundational, and advanced academic experiences.

According to the data analysis, 27 (67%) of the population are permanently employed, while 8 (20%) are employed on a contractual basis. Additionally, 5 (13%) are employed in fixed-term contracts. As pointed out by Mai, Song and Donnelly (2023)

understanding these employment dynamics is crucial to evaluate workforce stability and security, and formulating policies related to labour rights and job security.

The allocation of administrative officers to various departments, as shown in Table 4.2 earlier, is based on established principles of organisational management and human resources. This emphasises the importance of aligning administrative resources with organisational goals, functions, and strategic objectives.

4.3.1 The influence of gender on career growth opportunities and job satisfaction on administrative officers **N = 40**

This study aimed to investigate how gender influences the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. The participants were asked to select from three options - Yes, No, or Neutral to indicate their perspective on the matter. Out of the 40 participants, 31(78%) selected 'No,' 7 (17%) 'Yes,', and 2 (5%) 'Neutral.' and participants did not respond. These results indicate that gender does have an impact on the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. Empirical evidence supports the notion that gender plays a role in career growth and job satisfaction. Endendijk and Portengen (2022) argue gender stereotypes can affect individuals' career choices and opportunities, which contributes to their satisfaction and growth within organisations. Furthermore, studies conducted by Galsanjigmed and Sekiguchi (2023) emphasise the importance of organisational culture and gender bias in shaping career experiences and satisfaction levels.

4.3.2 The influence of age on career growth opportunities and job satisfaction of administrative officers **N = 40**

The purpose of this question is to determine the influence of age on career growth opportunities and job satisfaction among administrative officers. Respondents were asked to choose from three options – Yes, No, or Neutral to indicate their opinion. Among 40 participants, 19 (47%) respondents chose 'No', 15 (38%) chose 'Yes', and 6 (15%) chose 'Neutral' and opted not to answer. Lee and Park (2021) found that older workers tend to have greater importance on factors such as job security and work-life balance, which can influence their job satisfaction. Similarly, a study by Naegale, De Tarvenier and Hess (2019) demonstrated that older employees may perceive fewer opportunities for career advancement than their younger counterparts, which could

contribute to their satisfaction in their careers. Additionally, research by Cavanagh, Kraiger and Henry (2020) highlights the importance of examining individual differences, including age, in determining career development and job satisfaction. This study emphasises that age-related factors, such as career stage and generational differences, can contribute to shaping individuals' career experiences and satisfaction. The findings of this study add to the existing literature by providing insights into how age may influence the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers, highlighting the need for organisations to consider age-related factors in their workforce planning and management strategies.

4.4 To establish the aspects wherein administrative officers require development for career growth and job satisfaction

The aim of this objective is to establish the aspects where administrative officers require development for career growth and job satisfaction. To accomplish this, participants were requested to identify these specific aspects.

4.4.1 Aspects of administrative officers' current job (career growth and job satisfaction needs) that require development **N = 40**

It is imperative to identify precisely what administrative officers require for job satisfaction and career development. This will not only aid in efficient resource management but also ensure the retention of top talent and below are the specific aspects highlighted by the respondents.

Communication skills: The significance of effective communication skills in the workplace cannot be overstated. The findings reveal that a considerable portion of respondents, 32 (26%), credited their professional success to communication skills. This discovery is consistent with research by Bucata and Reziscu (2017) that emphasised the critical role of communication in promoting collaboration and enhancing organisational success. Moreover, communication is crucial in facilitating teamwork, ensuring efficient information sharing, and integrating organisational objectives.

Time management skills: Based on the data collected 28 (23%) respondents highlighted the significance of time management in terms of enhancing productivity

and meeting project deadlines. Effective time management enables individuals to allocate their resources efficiently, prioritise tasks, and maintain focus on key objectives, which ultimately results in increased productivity and achievement of project milestones. Administrative officers can reduce procrastination, decrease distractions, and utilise available resources more effectively through time management, leading to improved outcomes and overall performance. Jes Bella (2023) emphasises that skilled time management skills contribute to reduced stress levels and enhanced work-life balance, promoting increased job satisfaction and well-being among employees.

Teamwork and collaboration skills: Among the participants, 22 (18%) acknowledged the significance of teamwork and collaboration underlining the essential role of interpersonal skills in accomplishing shared goals (Driskell, Salas and Driskell 2018). According to Woerkom, Meyers and Bauwens (2023) individuals must recognise their roles within a team and work collaboratively to utilise each other's strengths for optimal performance. Thus recognising the importance of teamwork and advancing interpersonal skills not only enhances organisational success and resilience in dynamic environments but also enhances organisational success and resilience.

Institutional policies and procedures: As per the data findings 18 (15%) respondents highlighted the significance of being familiar with institutional policies and procedures. Knowing these policies is crucial in guiding decision-making processes and ensuring compliance with regulations and standards within the organisation (Bhati, Deogade and Kanyal 2023). Recognising institutional policies and procedures enables employees to navigate complex organisational structures effectively and make informed decisions that align with the organisation's goals and objectives. Furthermore, it promotes a culture of accountability and respect for established protocols, enhancing efficiency and minimising the risk of errors or non-compliance.

Technological skills: The data indicates that 15 (12%) participants expressed a keen interest in training for the newly released Peoplesoft software, recognising the essential nature of technological proficiency in modern workplaces. This finding emphasises the importance of staying updated with technological advancements to remain competitive and effective in today's digital age. Beer and Mulder's (2020)

research highlights the benefits of incorporating new technologies, such as improved efficiency, improved decision-making, and increased competitiveness. Investing in training and development programs for new software can lead to significant improvements in organisational performance and employee satisfaction.

The study conclude that 8 (6%) did not specify specific aspects, suggesting a potential area for further investigation into their priorities. This analysis suggests that participants focused on different aspects. Communication skills were the most crucial, followed by time management and teamwork. This finding suggests that while certain skills are universally valued, there may be other skills or factors that are more individual or context-based. Future research could examine the reasons behind the variability in priorities among respondents and how these differences impact workplace performance and satisfaction.

4.4.2 Aspects that do not support administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

N = 31

Gaining insights into the factors that hinder administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction is crucial for organisational management. Identifying these challenges is crucial for promoting employee retention, improving productivity, improving the organisation's reputation, and ensuring compliance with regulatory regulations. This can be achieved by advancing a work environment that is characterised by support and contentment, which in turn leads to mutual benefits for both employees and the organisation, ultimately contributing to the success of the organisation. The participants were asked to identify these aspects and the findings are discussed below;

The research findings suggest that most of the 22 (71%) of the total respondents selected 'None' or 'N/A' when prompted to identify aspects of their job that do not support their career growth and job satisfaction, this can be attributed to several factors. The predominance of participants to chose 'None' or 'N/A' in response to identifying specific challenges in their roles may indicate a reluctance or inability among some respondents to articulate their concerns. According to Noskeau, Santos and Wang (2021) this phenomenon aligns with research findings suggesting that individuals may hesitate to express dissatisfaction due to fear of repercussions.

Furthermore, a lack of self-awareness regarding career goals and satisfaction drivers has been identified as a potential obstacle to accurately identifying challenges in the workplace, Mogotloane and Louw (2024) posit that there is evidence to suggest that individuals may perceive acknowledging dissatisfaction as detrimental to their professional image, leading to underreporting of issues. Additionally, the research questions could have influenced the participants' responses. The wording of the question, the survey format, or the timing of the data collection may have influenced participants' interpretations and responses. Participants may have interpreted the question narrowly, focusing solely on immediate job-related issues, while overlooking broader systemic issues or personal issues. The predominance of 'None' or 'N/A' responses indicates a complex interaction among individual perceptions, job contexts, organisational influences, and research methodologies, all influencing how participants evaluate the factors impacting their career growth and job satisfaction.

The research further discovered that the participants highlighted 'Performing irrelevant tasks' at 9 (29%), and the participants raised their dissatisfaction with spending a lot of time performing a task that is not related to their job description. One participant shared the following responses as evidence of performing irrelevant tasks. One participant stated that she has to constantly assist other departments' HODs with files, while it is not her job.

' Since I am known to be reliable, all the HODs come straight when they require students' information and I end up spending a lot of time in the backroom retrieving students' files'

While the majority of participants reported 'None' or 'N/A' regarding aspects that hinder their career growth and job satisfaction, the emergence of 'Performing irrelevant tasks' suggests a significant issue of dissatisfaction. This indicates a potential misunderstanding between participants' perceptions and the reality of their work environment. To address this, HEIs should provide a welcoming and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their concerns. Furthermore, job roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined to minimise the occurrence of tasks that are not related to employees' job descriptions, thus enhancing overall job satisfaction and productivity.

4.4.3 Aspects pertaining to administrative officers' jobs that require development/training (skills or competencies) for career growth and job satisfaction

N= 40

Identifying the aspects where administrative officers require skills or competency development is fundamental. It facilitates the development of skills, enhances career advancement opportunities, enhances job satisfaction, and ensures employees can adapt to evolving roles. Offering training signifies a commitment to employee development, improves organisational effectiveness, and increases employee retention. The following aspects were highlighted by the respondents:

Continuous learning 9 (9%): The participants stressed the importance of continuous learning. This research supports existing research that highlights the crucial importance of continuous learning in both academic and professional fields. Continuous learning enhances individuals' ability to adapt to changing trends and knowledge frameworks, enabling them to adapt effectively (Said and Abdallah 2024).

Effective communication skills 17 (16%): The findings of the study indicate that effective communication is crucial for promoting prosperous academic and professional connections. Bond-Barnard, Fletcher and Steyn (2017) examine the significance of effective communication in promoting trust, addressing conflicts, and fostering cooperation within these domains. Transparent channels of communication are crucial in articulating concepts and advancing shared comprehension. This underlines the significance of communication in advancing a favourable organisational environment, ultimately leading to employee satisfaction and fulfilment.

Conflict management skills 23 (22%): Conflict management is identified by the respondents as a crucial aspect requiring training and development. This highlights the importance of acquiring skills in conflict resolution to address interpersonal conflicts and promote collaboration among faculties and administrative officers. Kwame and Petrucka (2021) demonstrate that effective conflict management can be beneficial for organisations to remain united and maintain employees' happiness. Salvation (2019) asserts that managing conflicts effectively can prevent them from becoming worse and help maintain good relationships among academic colleagues.

Wang and Wu (2021) conducted research indicating that effective conflict resolution can improve both communication and teamwork among faculty and staff. Their studies emphasise the need to cultivate conflict management skills to maintain a favourable work environment in academic settings.

Institutional policies and policies 11 (10%): These targeted training programs are designed to enhance administrative officers understanding and compliance with institutional protocols, aligning with specific job functions in the institution. Paunescu, Nikina-Ruohonen and Stukalina's (2022) research suggest that tailored training programs improve employees' knowledge of institutional policies and procedures, resulting in better-quality operations within HEIs. Similarly, a study by Joao, Spowart and Taylor (2019) emphasises the importance of continuous training in ensuring staff members' compliance with institutional guidelines, thereby promoting efficiency and consistency in service provision. Rodrigues and Walters (2017) demonstrate how regular training programs contribute to a culture of compliance and accountability among employees in service/support roles. This highlights the importance of ongoing education in enhancing institutional standards and fostering a cohesive working environment within academic institutions.

Technological proficiency 28 (26%): Based on the data gathered, technological proficiency particularly the newly established institution system, Peoplesoft, was identified as a major aspect in need of training or development. Technological proficiency is essential in modern academic settings, as it facilitates individuals to utilise digital tools and systems, ultimately enhancing productivity and efficiency. Saad and Sankaran (2020) emphasise that technological proficiency is essential for individuals to adapt to new technologies and systems in academic settings. The ability to effectively navigate and utilise digital platforms such as Peoplesoft can considerably improve an individual's ability to perform tasks efficiently. Rodriguez and Waters (2017) emphasise the importance of ongoing training and development in technological proficiency and further assert that institutions should invest in providing continuous learning opportunities to ensure that individuals remain competent in using digital tools and systems, such as Peoplesoft, to support their administrative duties.

Organisational skills 18 (17%): Organisational skills encompass the effective management of time, resources, and tasks that ensure that responsibilities are fulfilled promptly and efficiently. Chaudhari (2022) asserts that effective organisational skills are essential for administrative officers to prioritise tasks and meet deadlines. These skills contribute significantly to the process of reduction, productivity enhancement, and overall efficiency in academic institutions. Institutions that promote the development of these skills among staff tend to achieve higher levels of academic success and operational efficiency. This highlights the crucial role that organisational skills play in establishing a conducive working environment in academia. Continued emphasis on the development and refinement of these skills can lead to enhanced academic performance, increased productivity, and the cultivation of a more effective academic community overall.

The study findings demonstrate the diverse range of skills required by administrative officers to enhance their career development and job satisfaction, such as communication, conflict resolution, technological proficiency, and interpersonal skills. These findings demonstrate the importance of continuous training and development programs to enhance individuals' abilities in academic institutions.

4.4.4 Aspects that support career growth and job satisfaction N = 36

This question aims to ascertain the satisfaction levels among administrative officers regarding various aspects of support in their career growth and job satisfaction. Participants were instructed to select their applicable response from the following options: 'Satisfied,' 'Very Satisfied,' 'Neutral,' 'Dissatisfied,' and 'Very Dissatisfied.' The following data was collected from the respondents.

Opportunities for growth: The analysis of data suggests that a considerable proportion of respondents express satisfaction with growth opportunities with 11 (31%) reporting being 'Satisfied', followed by 5 (14%) indicating being 'Very Satisfied'. However, 9 (25%) a significant number of participants adopt a 'Neutral' stance holding back from expressing a strong satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In contrast, some participants express dissatisfaction with 7 (19%) reporting dissatisfaction, further supported by 4 (11%) indicating being 'Very dissatisfied' with growth opportunities. Literature supports the importance of growth opportunities in enhancing employee satisfaction.

Herzberg (1968) states that career growth opportunities are crucial factors contributing to job satisfaction, fulfilling individuals' higher-level needs in the workforce. Hackman and Oldham (1976) assert that the availability of growth and development opportunities contributes to employee motivation and satisfaction, based on the observed trends in the data.

Training and development: The data indicates varying levels of satisfaction among respondents regarding the training and development programs provided by their institution. Specifically, 10 (27%) report being 'Satisfied', with a further 4 (11%) indicating they are 'Very Satisfied'. In contrast, 7 (19%) remain 'neutral' on the matter, neither expressing satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Data further revealed that some respondents are dissatisfied with 9 (24%) reporting being 'Dissatisfied', and a further 7 (19%) indicating they are 'Very dissatisfied' with the training and development programs. Existing literature underscores the significance of efficient training and development initiatives in improving employee satisfaction and performance. Arulsamy *et al.* (2023) state that well-designed training programs can increase job satisfaction, as they provide employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties efficiently. Furthermore, research by Mampuru, Mokoena and Isabirye (2024) suggest that training and development opportunities contribute to job satisfaction, particularly when employees perceive these programs as beneficial and beneficial to their career prospects.

Working conditions: The data analysis reveals various perspectives on working conditions among respondents. 14 (36%) of the participants stated that they were 'Satisfied', with 7 (18%) indicating they were 'Very Satisfied'. However, 5 (13%) remained 'neutral' on the matter, and did not express any opinions. According to some respondents, dissatisfaction is evident, with 9 (23%) expressing being 'Dissatisfied', and a further 4 (10%) indicating they are 'Very Dissatisfied' with the work conditions in the institution. Zhenjing *et al.* (2022) examined the importance of favourable working conditions in enhancing employee satisfaction and well-being. They contend that factors such as comfortable physical environments, fair workload distribution, and supportive organisational culture contribute significantly to employee satisfaction. Also, a study by Hsiao and Lin (2018) found that the perceptions of working conditions

significantly impact overall job satisfaction, suggesting that improvements in working conditions can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction among employees.

Relationship with colleagues: The data analysis reveals varying perceptions of relationships with colleagues among respondents. In particular, 18 (47%) report being 'Satisfied', with a further 9 (24%) indicating they 'Strongly Agree' with their relationship with colleagues being healthy. However, 5 (13%) remain 'Neutral' on the issue, withholding their opinions. According to some respondents, dissatisfaction is evident, with 6 (16%) expressing being 'Dissatisfied' with their relationship with colleagues. Abun, Jean and Basilio (2023) examined the importance of positive relationships with colleagues in enhancing job satisfaction and overall well-being. They argue that supportive relationships at work can reduce the negative impact of job demands, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, a study by Sadaf *et al.* (2022) found that positive relationships with colleagues are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, indicating the importance of fostering positive relationships in the workplace.

Communication skills: The data analysis indicates varying perceptions of communication skills among respondents. Particularly 13 (32%) report being 'Satisfied', with 8 (20%) indicating they are 'Very Satisfied' with communication skills. However, 6 (15%) remain 'Neutral', abstaining from sharing their opinions on the matter. Dissatisfaction is evident among some respondents, with 10 (25%) expressing being 'Dissatisfied', and a further 3 (8%) indicating they are 'Very Dissatisfied' with communication skills. Jankelova and Joniakova (2021) highlighted the crucial role of effective communication skills in the organisation for enhancing both employee satisfaction and organisational performance. They argue that clear and open communication promotes trust, reduces confusion, and promotes a positive work environment. Additionally, a study by Curado *et al.* (2022) found that employees who perceive their communication skills to be inadequate are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction and increased stress levels, highlighting the significant impact of communication skills on employee well-being and job satisfaction.

Academic support: The data reveals a variety of opinions regarding the academic support provided to respondents. A significant portion, of 11 (27%) expressed their

satisfaction with an additional 8 (20%) indicating they were highly satisfied with the academic assistance. However 9 (22%) remain neutral, opting not to express viewpoint. But, dissatisfaction is evident among some respondents, with 7 (18%) expressing dissatisfaction, further supported by 5 (13%) indicating they are highly dissatisfied with the academic support provided. Scholarly literature stresses the importance of academic support in boosting staff satisfaction and effectiveness. Francis (2019) highlight mentorship and ongoing professional development as key factors in promoting staff engagement and longevity in higher education. Likewise, Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) found that staff who feel they receive strong academic support demonstrate greater commitment to their roles and achieve better outcomes, highlighting the critical role of comprehensive academic support systems in facilitating staff success.

4.5 To ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

This objective aims to ascertain the administrative officers' perceptions on the effectiveness of career growth and job satisfaction development programs. To achieve this, respondents were asked to identify the current training and development programs.

4.5.1 Identifying the existing training and development programs available for better support for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction at your institution

N = 34

Administrative officers need to identify the training and development programs that are available in their institutions. This will help institutions make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and optimise resources. By understanding the effectiveness of these programs, institutions can provide better support for the career growth and job satisfaction of their administrative officers. This will also help in tailoring support and improving employee engagement and retention.

The data reveals a significant disparity in the provision and implementation of development programs among administrative officers. The majority of respondents 20 (47%) who did not participate in any developmental initiatives indicate potential gaps in organisational support for professional growth or individual reluctance towards such

endeavours. This raises questions regarding the organisation's culture and the perceived importance of skill development in the population. The prevalence of Microsoft Excel training, identified by 8 (20%) of respondents, reflects the critical role of technical proficiency in modern administrative roles. This finding resonates with the argument put forth by Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2020) who emphasises the increasing importance of digital literacy in contemporary workplaces. Formby, Medlin and Ellington (2017) suggest that proficiency in software applications like Microsoft Excel is integral for organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, the inclusion of POPIA Act Training, which is acknowledged by 6 (15%) of respondents, underscores the increasing emphasis on regulatory compliance within organisational frameworks. Duchek, Raetze and Scheuch (2020) argue that these initiatives promote compliance and enhance the organisation's sustainability and sustainability.

4.5.2 Satisfaction levels with the effectiveness of the development programs in place aimed at enhancing administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

N = 40

This question aims to assess the satisfaction levels of administrative officers regarding the effectiveness of development programs designed to enhance their career growth and job satisfaction. Participants were instructed to rate a variety of programs, providing responses ranging from "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied" to "Neutral," "Dissatisfied," and "Very Dissatisfied."

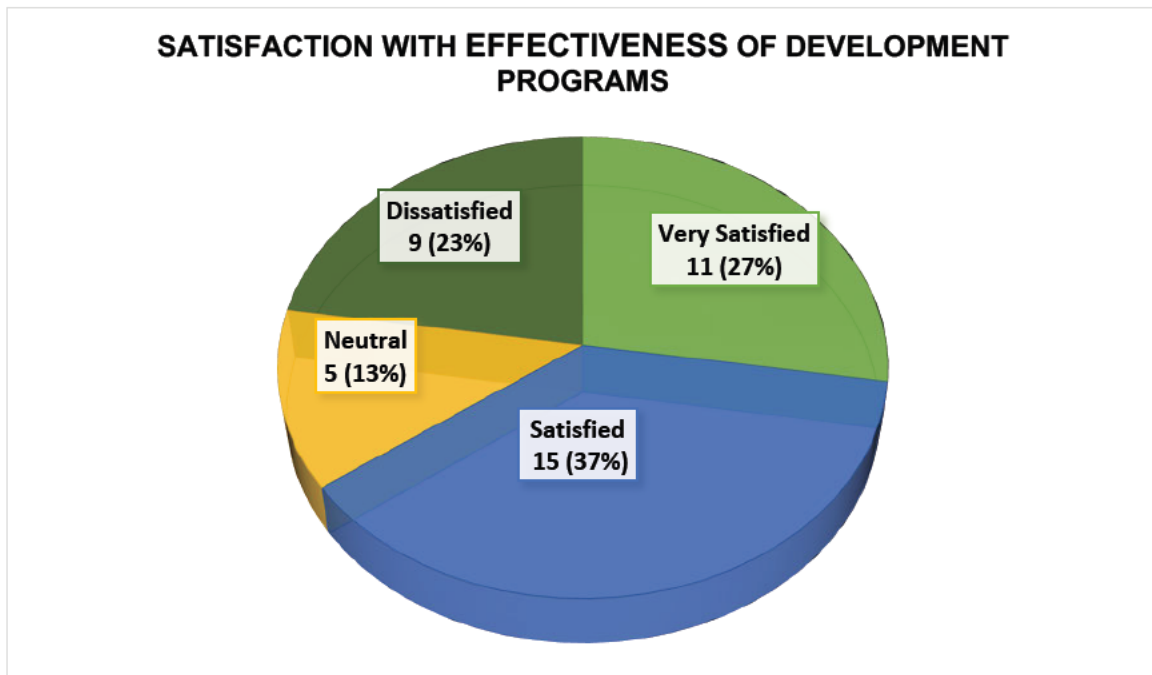


Figure 4.1 Satisfaction with the effectiveness of development programs on administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

The research findings displayed in Figure 4.1 above reveal that a significant proportion of the participants have expressed positive views about the effectiveness of the development programs. Among the respondents, 15 (37%) individuals have reported being "Very satisfied" with the programs, indicating their high level of approval. Furthermore, 11 (27%) respondents have reported being "Satisfied," which further strengthens the positive sentiment towards the programs. However, it is important to note that 9 (23%) respondents have expressed dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the development programs, indicating the need for improvements or adjustments to meet their needs. Additionally, 5 (13%) remained neutral on the issue, suggesting that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the programs. These findings are consistent with past research by Wong and Chapman (2023) which suggests that satisfaction levels with development programs can vary significantly among participants. The results highlight the importance of continued evaluation and enhancement of these programs to ensure that they cater to the diverse needs and expectations of the participants.

4.5.3 Development programs offered by the institution that have influenced career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers N = 40

This objective is crucial since it gives insight into understanding the effectiveness of the institution's development programs in promoting the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. Gathering participants' viewpoints provides valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of these programs, enabling informed decisions to enhance the support for administrative officers.

The research findings indicate a range of perspectives regarding the influence of development programs on administrative officers. While some respondents expressed positive outcomes, such as improved comfort levels, work ethics, and increased confidence, it is essential to note that 27 (67%) respondents chose not to share their opinions, indicating 'N/A' or 'None.' This suggests that a significant portion of the population did not perceive a notable influence from the development programs.

The research findings highlight the importance of examining different factors that influence respondents' perceptions of development program effectiveness. Individual experiences, such as program quality and prior exposure, significantly shape these perceptions. Organisational support also plays a crucial role in shaping these perceptions. The diversity of opinions among respondents highlights the significant impact of development programs on career advancement and job satisfaction. Khoo (2022) argue that research is necessary to understand specific factors influencing perceptions and to tailor programs effectively, ultimately enhancing their impact on administrative officers.

The research findings suggest that 5 (13%) of the participants reported an increase in their comfort levels in institutional settings. This improvement was largely linked to the cultivation of interpersonal relationships which were perceived as instrumental in creating an atmosphere supportive of both effectiveness and a proactive attitude towards seeking help. This evidence highlights the importance of supportive social dynamics in institutional settings highlighting their role in enhancing individual well-being and functioning. Further research revealed that 8 (20%) of the population reported an increase in self-confidence, resulting in a greater sense of self-assurance. This finding indicates that programs that incorporate activities or resources to enhance

self-assurance and effectiveness are beneficial. Furthermore, a better understanding of different personalities and work ethics was identified as another benefit. This indicates that programs that incorporate elements that enhance communication, teamwork, and cultural awareness are essential in various workplaces. These traits contribute to growth and job satisfaction. Khawam, Di dona and Hernandez (2017) argue that the importance of supportive social dynamics and self-assurance in institutional settings is crucial. They advocate for programs that enhance communication, teamwork, and cultural awareness to enhance career progression and job satisfaction among administrative officers.

These findings suggest that the effectiveness of such programs varies among administrative officers, based on factors such as program content, delivery methods, and individual needs. Further analysis and customisation of these programs may be necessary to adequately address the diverse requirements of administrative personnel and optimize their career progression and job satisfaction.

4 5.4 Rating the administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction using the optins provided below: N = 40

It is important to rate the administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction to determine the effectiveness of career development initiatives in an institution. By conducting a survey, participants can provide feedback based on their perceptions of these programs. This feedback can then be used to identify areas for improvement, tailor career development initiatives to better meet the needs of administrative officers, and ultimately enhance overall job satisfaction and career progression within the institution.

Sufficient opportunities for growth: The first statement sought to determine if the institution provides sufficient career growth opportunities. The results indicate that a significant proportion of participants 10 (26%) agreed with this notion, while an additional 9 (24%) respondents expressed strong agreement. At the same time, 8 (21%) assumed a neutral stance, while 11 (29%) voiced disagreement, thereby implying a perceived inadequacy in the provision of career opportunities.

Managerial support: When it comes to the perceived level of managerial support for career development. Results indicate that 10 (26%) acknowledged the presence of such support with an additional 12 (32%) respondents strongly endorsing this notion. However, 9 (24%) remained neutral, while 7 (18%) expressed dissent suggesting a lack of managerial support for career development initiatives.

Compensation: The study examined the correlation between compensation and individual contributions. It was discovered that 11 (27%) respondents agreed with this arrangement, while 8 (20%) expressed strong concurrence. However, a significant proportion of participants 11 (28%) contested this alignment, with an additional 5 (13%) respondents expressing disapproval of it. These findings suggest a degree of dissatisfaction regarding the perceived association between compensation and contributions.

Organisational culture: The data findings indicate that 11 (27%) of the population 'Agree' followed by 9 (22%) who 'Strongly agree' that organisational culture influences job satisfaction, while 15 (38%) remained 'neutral' and did not share any views on the matter, and 5 (13%) indicated that they 'Disagree' with the statement.

Recognition and rewards: The impact of recognition and rewards on motivational levels was also examined, revealing a distinct perspective among participants. 10 (25%) acknowledged the motivational effectiveness of recognition and rewards, with an additional 8 (20%) respondents strongly opposing this view. Similarly, 10 (25%) participants expressed dissatisfaction, with 3 (8%) expressing dissatisfaction, thus reflecting divergent perceptions of the motivational effects of recognition and rewards.

Job satisfaction responsibilities: The study analysed the participants' satisfaction with their current job responsibilities, with findings indicating a mixed sentiment. Although 11 (35%) respondents agreed with their current duties, 13 (42%) strongly endorsed this view. In contrast, 7 (23%) expressed dissatisfaction with their current job duties, highlighting various levels of contentment among employees.

Availability of career growth opportunities: The study examined the availability of opportunities for career advancement within the institution. Based on the results, 13

(34%) acknowledged the existence of such opportunities, with an additional 8 (21%) respondents strongly supporting this assertion. However, 10 (26%) contested the availability of advancement opportunities, along with 7 (19%) strongly disagreeing, thereby indicating perceived limitations in advancement opportunities.

Administrative officer's value to the institution: Perceptions regarding the institutional value of administrative officers' contributions were analysed. 7 (18%) participants agreed to the recognition of their contributions, and an equivalent number 14 (37%) strongly endorsed this sentiment. However, a significant proportion of participants, comprising 11 (29%), remained neutral on this issue, while 5 (13%) disagreed and an additional 1 (3%) respondents vehemently opposed it.

Job Fulfilment: In addition, the study examined the levels of employment among participants. According to the results, 14 (28%) respondents expressed satisfaction with their current positions, while 10 (24%) expressed a negative attitude. Likewise, 11 (28%) expressed dissatisfaction, thus indicating various levels of employment.

Adequate professional support: The findings indicated that 9 (24%) respondents acknowledged such support with a further 6 (16%) strongly opposing it. However, a considerable proportion of participants 14 (37%) assumed a neutral stance, while 5 (13%) respondents reported receiving no support further reinforced by 4 (10%) who vehemently disagreed with the provision of support for professional development.

4.6 Factors that influence administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

N = 40

This section aims to ascertain the factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. To achieve this objective, participants were tasked with identifying the factors that significantly impact their career growth and overall job satisfaction.

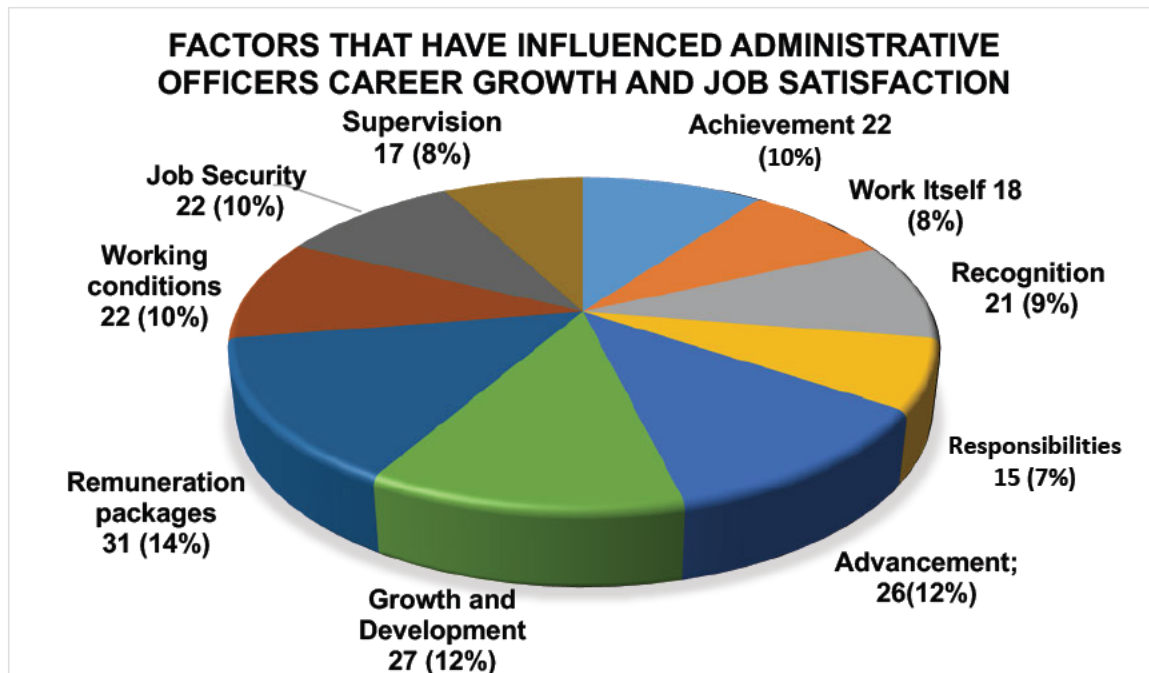


Figure 4.2 Factors that influence administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

It is fundamental to understand the factors that contribute to the growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. By recognising the influence of these factors on the workforce, the institution can allocate resources towards the development of administrative officers' careers and their overall job satisfaction. This will lead to cost efficiency and significantly contribute to the institution's success and prosperity.

Research findings depicted in Figure 4.2, the majority of respondents 31 (14%) bring up remuneration packages as the primary factor affecting their job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Dehkordi's (2019) assertion that financial rewards are a key determinant of job satisfaction. Additionally, Locke's (1976) discrepancy theory of job satisfaction indicates that an individual's perception of their salary in relation to their worth has a significant impact on overall job satisfaction. Following closely behind remuneration packages, 26 (12%) of respondents cited growth and development opportunities and advancement as crucial factors influencing job satisfaction. This aligns with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which posits that esteem needs, including the desire for growth and advancement, are fundamental to job satisfaction.

The data also revealed that achievement, working conditions, and job security each scored 22 (10%). These findings are in line with Herzberg's (1959) Two-factor theory which suggests that factors such as achievement and working conditions contribute to job satisfaction and their absence can lead to dissatisfaction. Other factors, such as recognition 21 (9%), the work itself 18 (8%), and supervision 17 (8%), were also mentioned as important contributors to job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model, which highlights the significance of meaningful work, recognition, and supportive supervision in enhancing job satisfaction.

The research data suggest that remuneration packages are a significant factor in job satisfaction, as supported by Aliyu, Abbas and Kachala (2023). Opportunities for growth and advancement, in line with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, are also crucial. Additionally, other factors such as achievement, working conditions, job security, recognition, the nature of the work itself, and supervision, as highlighted by Herzberg (1959) and Hackman and Oldham (1976) also play important roles, albeit to a slightly lesser extent.

4.7 Assessing using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction N = 40

Assessing the influence of career growth on the job satisfaction of administrative officers is crucial. It impacts motivation, engagement, and productivity at work. Understanding how such opportunities contribute to job satisfaction can inform talent retention, development, and succession planning. It can also improve existing career development programs and organisational performance. By applying Herzberg's theory, the research seeks to gauge the influence of career growth opportunities on the job satisfaction levels of administrative officers. To achieve this objective, a questionnaire was developed to evaluate the relationship between career growth opportunities and job satisfaction among administrative officers. The questionnaire covered both motivators (such as recognition, job fulfilment, and the intrinsic nature of work) and hygiene factors (including working conditions and salary), allowing participants to articulate the extent to which these factors contribute to their overall job satisfaction (Herzberg *et al.* 1959).

Table 4. 4 Factors that influence administrative officers job satisfaction

Factors	Very Important		Important		Neutral		Less Important		Not Important	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Achievement	14	45%	8	26%	3	10%	5	16%	1	3%
Recognition	14	41%	8	23%	6	18%	5	15%	1	3%
Work itself	18	58%	7	23%	4	13%	2	6%	-	-
Growth and development opportunities	14	39%	18	50%	4	11%	-	-	-	-
Supervision	16	52%	10	32%	3	10%	2	6%	-	-
Responsibilities	19	51%	11	30%	4	11%	3	8%	-	-
Achievement	21	62%	8	23%	5	15%	-	-	-	-
Remuneration package	29	72%	9	23%	2	5%	-	-	-	-
Job security	21	52%	12	30%	7	18%	-	-	-	-
Working conditions	17	42%	13	30%	8	20%	2	5%	-	-

Table 4.4 above delineates both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Participants were requested to identify factors influencing career growth and job satisfaction. Subsequently, the analysis of the findings for each of these factors is presented below.

Achievement: The findings reveal the varying influence of achievement as a factor on job satisfaction among respondents, with 14 (45%) respondents deeming it as 'Very Important', while 8 (26%) considered it 'Important', attributing a positive influence. On the contrary, 3 (10%) respondents maintained a neutral stance, whereas 5 (16%) regarded it as 'Less Important' and 1 (3%) as 'Not Important'. The substantial agreement among respondents underscores the notion that achievement positively impacts job satisfaction, echoing earlier studies emphasising the significance of factors like job autonomy and supportive leadership in bolstering well-being (Aljumah 2023). However Gasper (2018) contends that the notable presence of a neutral group suggests uncertainty or lack of information among respondents regarding the factor's impact. Equally, dissenting opinions, as suggested by Louw (2021) may signify dissatisfaction with certain workplace aspects or organisational policies. These findings underscore the nuanced perspectives among participants regarding factors influencing job satisfaction. While a considerable number of respondents acknowledge the positive influence of achievement, the existence of dissenting views and neutral stances highlights the necessity for further research and assessment within organisational settings.

Recognition: The insights into respondents' perspectives concerning the significance of recognition of career growth and job satisfaction reveal that a notable proportion of participants 14 (41%) consider it 'Very Important' and 8 (23%) rate it as 'Important', recognise the fundamental role of recognition in this sphere. On the contrary a contingent 16(18%) maintained a 'Neutral' stance on the matter. Additionally, 5 (15%) participants deemed recognition as 'Less Important' and 1(3%) who considered it 'Not Important', hold divergent views regarding the influence of recognition on career progression and job satisfaction.

These findings align with scholarly literature, which stresses the impact of recognition on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organisational outcomes. Notably, a study by Yang, Jiang and Cheng (2022) illustrates how recognition and appreciation

from both supervisors and peers contribute to employee engagement and job satisfaction. Similarly, research by Forner *et al.* (2020) highlight recognition as a fundamental psychological need that advances individuals' sense of competence and autonomy, thereby enhancing their motivation and satisfaction in the workplace. Moreover, Herzberg's Two-factor theory (1959) classifies recognition as a hygiene factor that, while capable of alleviating dissatisfaction, does not directly instigate satisfaction. Still, the substantial consensus among respondents regarding the importance of recognition in the present study suggests its significant role in shaping perceptions of career growth and job satisfaction.

Work itself: There is consensus among respondents regarding the importance of the intrinsic nature of the work as a factor contributing to job satisfaction. Data indicate that 23 (57%) respondents work itself as 'Very Important', while 11 (28%) regard it as 'Important'. Additionally, 4 (10%) respondents expressed neutrality on this aspect, while a minority of 2 (5%) respondents hold an opposing view, considering it's Less Important. These findings are compatible with established research on job satisfaction, which consistently emphasises the pivotal role of the inherent characteristics of work. Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model (1976), for instance, highlight the significance of meaningful work tasks, autonomy, and feedback in augmenting job satisfaction. Similarly, Herzberg's Two-Factor theory (1959) posit that intrinsic factors such as the nature of the work itself, achievement, and recognition are primary drivers of satisfaction. The findings of this study confirm these theoretical frameworks, emphasising the central role of the intrinsic qualities of work in shaping individuals' satisfaction levels in their respective roles.

Growth and development opportunities: Unanimity among participants regarding the significance of growth opportunities and development. Specifically 16 (40%) indicated it as 'Very Important', while 18(45%) considered it Important. Similarly 6 (15%) adopt a neutral position on the subject. Scholarly investigations support these findings. Mansor *et al.* (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study examining the impact of growth opportunities on employee engagement and organisational performance. Their analysis aligns with the sentiments expressed in the current data, highlighting a positive association between growth opportunities and employee commitment. Furthermore, Hollar, Kuchinka and Feinberg (2022) explore the relationship between

growth opportunities and job satisfaction. Their synthesis of existing research further supports the notion that development opportunities significantly contribute to overall job satisfaction among employees. Thus the collective perspective of the participants, supported by empirical evidence from these authors, underscores the importance of growth opportunities and development in enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction.

Supervision: Data on supervision preferences among respondents indicate distinct patterns of importance attribution. However a majority 18 (45%) view supervision as 'Very Important', indicating a high degree of value placed on this aspect of professional practice. This finding aligns with previous research indicating the crucial role of supervision in organisational effectiveness (Nwosu *et al.* 2021). Moreover a significant proportion of 12 (30%) of respondents view supervision as 'Important'. About 8 (20%) of respondents were neutral, indicating uncertainty about how important supervision is. This shows the need to look deeper into what influences people's views on how effective supervision is (Rothwell *et al.* 2021). Additionally, the minority viewpoint 2 (5%) indicating supervision is Less Important underlines the existence of contrasting viewpoints within the workforce regarding the necessity and impact of supervision. Identifying and addressing the concerns of this minority group is crucial for enhancing supervisory practices and ensuring organisational cohesion and productivity. The data analysis indicates that the perceptions of supervision in professional settings are complex. It highlights the need for ongoing research and organisational efforts to improve supervision and create positive workplace results.

Responsibilities: A significant proportion of the respondents perceive the responsibilities allocated to them in the organisation as a crucial factor in influencing their career growth and job satisfaction. Particularly 20 (44%) rated this factor as "Very Important." As well as 13 (29%) respondents consider it "Important." In contrast, a smaller proportion of 3 (18%) view responsibilities as "Less Important," while 4(9%) respondents chose to remain neutral on the matter. This data complements existing literature highlighting the importance of job responsibilities in shaping employees' career growth and job satisfaction levels. Albrecht *et al.* (2021) assert that clear role expectations and meaningful tasks are essential for enhancing employee engagement and well-being. According to Mlambo, Silen and McGrath (2021) these findings

underline the need for institutions to carefully design and allocate responsibilities to employees, ensuring that they are aligned with individuals' career aspirations and contribute meaningfully to their professional development. By doing so institutions can enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction and ultimately organisational performance. The data suggests that employees perceive their job responsibilities as a significant factor in their career growth and job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of effective job design and role allocation in organisational settings.

Advancement: According to the findings a majority of respondents comprising 27 (67%) strongly believe that career advancement is 'Very Important' as a factor contributing to job satisfaction. Additionally 8 (20%) agree that it is 'Important' in the context of job satisfaction. However a portion of 5 (13%) of participants chose not to provide their views on this issue with 'Neutral'. These findings align with existing research, which consistently highlights the importance of career advancement opportunities in enhancing job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Additionally a study by Lee *et al.* (2023) shows that perceived opportunities for career advancement positively influence job satisfaction levels among employees. Thwin *et al.* (2023) conducted research that suggests clear paths for career progression contribute to employees' desire for fulfilment and commitment in their roles. Furthermore Herzberg's Two-Factor theory (1959) asserts that advancement opportunities are intrinsic motivations that contribute to job satisfaction. According to this theory, factors such as career advancement are crucial in enhancing individuals' satisfaction with their work. The strong agreement among participants regarding the importance of career advancement in the current study validates these theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, underscoring the significance of advancement opportunities as a key driver of job satisfaction.

Remuneration packages: The data reveals that a substantial majority of participants comprising 29 (72%) individuals indicated 'Very Important'. Additionally a significant proportion of 9 (23%) participants expressed the 'Importance' of remuneration packages. Similarly, 2 (5%) participants remained neutral from expressing their opinion on this issue. These findings align with existing scholarly literature, which consistently emphasises the importance of compensation in shaping employee attitudes and behaviours. Kissoonduth, Webb and Kahn (2019) found that competitive

compensation packages are crucial in attracting and retaining talented employees, thus contributing to organisational success. Additionally, Tatar (2020) asserts that fair and equitable compensation practices foster a sense of value and appreciation among employees, ultimately enhancing their employment satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. Herzberg's Two-Factor theory (1959) asserts that, while adequate compensation may not necessarily lead to employee satisfaction, its absence can result in dissatisfaction. This theory supports the notion that remuneration packages serve as hygiene factors that alleviate dissatisfaction rather than directly causing satisfaction. However, the substantial emphasis placed on remuneration packages by the majority of participants in the current research underscores their significance as a fundamental component of workplace satisfaction and employee motivation.

Job satisfaction : The results depicted in Table 4.4 above illustrate the significance of job security in respondents' career growth and job satisfaction. Particularly 21 (52%) respondents regard job security as Very Important, emphasising its substantial contribution to their job satisfaction. Furthermore, 12 (30%) respondents agreed with this notion by rating it as Important. Similarly, 7(18%) participants adopt a neutral stance regarding the role of job security in their job satisfaction. These observations find support in additional research. Abouelenien *et al.* (2024) conducted a longitudinal study spanning five years, investigating the impact of job security on employee morale and performance. Their findings parallel the current data, indicating a positive correlation between job security and job satisfaction. Furthermore, Asfaw and Chang (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of multiple studies exploring the relationship between job security and various aspects of employee well-being. Their results affirm that job security significantly influences job satisfaction across diverse workforce populations. The prevailing sentiment among respondents, coupled with supporting evidence from the aforementioned authors, underscores the indispensable role of job security in promoting job satisfaction and career growth.

Working conditions: The data presented in Table 4.4 reveals insights into the perceived importance of working conditions among respondents. A significant proportion of 17 (42%) considered working conditions to be extremely important, suggesting a strong emphasis on the quality of the work environment. According to Mustika and Martdianty (2023) this finding echoes existing literature highlighting the

crucial role of working conditions in influencing employee well-being, satisfaction, and performance. A notable proportion consisting of 13 (33%) respondents regard working conditions as 'Important,' emphasising their acknowledged significance on organisational outcomes (Zhenjing *et al.* 2022). This finding resonates with earlier studies that demonstrate the impact of various aspects of the work environment, including physical, psychological, and social factors, on employee engagement and productivity (Lindenberg *et al.* 2022). The presence of a neutral category, comprising 8 (20%) respondents suggest some uncertainty or variability in perceptions about working conditions. This highlights the need for further investigation into the specific factors contributing to this indecision (Priyashantha, Dahanayake and Maduwanthi (2022). Addressing the concerns of individuals in this category could facilitate targeted interventions to enhance the overall workplace quality. Additionally a minority viewpoint hold by 2 (5%) respondents stated that working conditions were less important. Bataineh (2019) argues that negating prioritising working conditions could result in adverse outcomes such as decreased morale, decreased turnover rates, and reduced organisational performance.

The analysis of the provided data underlines the multi-layered nature of perceptions regarding working conditions and highlights the importance of proactively managing and improving the work environment to adopt employee well-being and organisational success.

4.8 Improvements or initiatives could the institution undertake to enhance the career growth opportunities and job satisfaction of administrative officers

N = 34

This question aims to solicit opinions from the participants to enhance the career growth opportunities and job satisfaction of administrative officers, the institution could consider implementing the following recommendations below. The opinions expressed below represent a portion of the respondents, with the majority comprising 8 (23%), indicating 'N/A' in response to the questions.

Improve working conditions: Any workplace must have optimal working conditions. When the working conditions are favourable, employees tend to be more engaged, motivated, and productive. Furthermore, they are less likely to experience stress,

fatigue, or health issues related to their work environment. Data indicate that 5 (15%) of the population recommend that the institution should improve its working conditions to significantly increase job satisfaction. This could involve providing ergonomic workstations, ensuring a comfortable and safe work environment, and addressing any workload or work-life balance issues. One respondent shared these suggestions:

'Working conditions that everyone will respectively follow'

Provide more opportunities to younger staff members: Research suggests that 8 (23%) of the participants recommended that the institution should provide younger staff with more opportunities for growth, and mentorship. This can help them advance their careers and boost their job satisfaction. The possibilities could include special training, job rotations, or projects that match their career ambitions. One of the respondents shares the following suggestions;

'in my view, the institution could enhance career growth opportunities and job satisfaction for administrative officers by offering tailored training, mentorship programs and promotional processes'

In-house appointments when there's a vacancy: In-house appointments are important, as indicated by data where 4 (12%) of the population believes that promoting internal candidates for vacant positions can enhance morale and motivation among administrative officers. This practice acknowledges their abilities and loyalty, increasing their visibility and standing within the institution. Two respondents shared these views.

'In-house appointments when staff resign or go on pension'

'Internal job posting and promotion and job rotation'

Organise wellness programs: One of the suggestions put forward by the respondents was the implementation of wellness programs. Data indicate that 3 (9%) of the participants believe that wellness programs can improve the overall health and well-being of administrative officers, resulting in higher job satisfaction and productivity.

These programs could include fitness classes, stress management workshops, or mental health support services. Other respondents shared similar suggestions.

'Organise wellness programs and motivational talks for staff to help motivate them'

'The institution can do training and development programs to assist us in doing better and better improve in our/my current job'

'The institution should provide training to the student before they start their in-service training'

Employ long-term contracts permanent: To address employment concerns, findings reveal that 6 (18%) of the respondents recommend that the institution offer long-term contracts or permanent positions to committed and high-performing administrative officers. This approach aims to enhance job security and satisfaction, facilitating the retention of skilled employees seeking stable employment. One respondent shared the following:

'Employ the term long-term contract as permanent'

Implementing these suggestions can be beneficial for career opportunities and enhancing job satisfaction for administrative officers. This could lead to increased chances for career growth and higher levels of job satisfaction.

4.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided the data analysis and the findings of the study. The chapter commenced with a discussion of the procedures followed to analyse data, this was followed by a discussion of the response rate and profile of the participants. The study then moved to analyse data in accordance with the study's objectives which encompasses; Establishing the aspects wherein administrative officers, require development for career growth and job satisfaction. to ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction. to determine the factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers and to assess using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job

satisfaction. The chapter concludes by giving suggestions from the respondents and providing a summary of the chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study's findings were discussed and interpreted in detail, offering a clear picture of the areas where administrative officers could benefit from development for both career growth and job satisfaction. This chapter will now provide a summary of those findings, framed within each of the research objectives. It will also offer actionable recommendations based on the gaps identified, aiming to bridge those gaps and propose practical ways to improve the professional lives of administrative officers.

5.2 Summary of findings of the research study

The summary of the research study findings are provided below:

5.2.1 Development Needs of Administrative Officers for Career Growth and Job Satisfaction

This objective aimed to establish the aspects wherein administrative officers require development for career growth and job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa. By identifying these areas, the study aims to equip administrative officers to execute their current responsibilities efficiently and prepare them for future challenges and prospects within the institution. One of the key goals of this research was to pinpoint where administrative officers need development to better align their growth with job satisfaction. It is important to highlight that administrative officers play a vital, often understated role in university operations. Recognising and addressing their development needs is not only about increasing productivity but also about nurturing their well-being and career aspirations.

The study revealed several areas of development crucial for administrative officers:

Communication skills: Clear and effective communication is foundational. Without it, administrative tasks can become disjointed, and the sense of belonging within an institution can weaken. Investing in communication skills ensures that administrative

officers feel confident and empowered in expressing themselves, while simultaneously improving the overall efficiency of teams.

Time management: Time management is not just about getting more work done. It's about reducing stress, enhancing the quality of output, and promoting a better work-life balance. When administrative officers manage their time effectively, they can prioritize what matters most and, in turn, feel more accomplished and less overwhelmed.

Teamwork: The ability to collaborate is vital. In modern workplaces, teamwork allows individuals to tap into collective strengths and generate solutions that wouldn't arise from working in isolation. For administrative officers, developing this skill could significantly increase job satisfaction, as it promotes a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose.

Familiarity with institutional policies: Navigating the intricacies of institutional policies can be daunting. However, administrative officers who are well-versed in these policies become better equipped to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully to the institution's compliance with regulations, enhancing both their confidence and professional credibility.

Technological proficiency: In today's fast-paced, digital world, technology is non-negotiable. Mastering software systems like PeopleSoft not only makes administrative tasks more efficient but also opens up new career pathways, enhancing job security in an increasingly digital work environment.

One significant finding was the dissatisfaction some respondents expressed with irrelevant tasks they were assigned. While these tasks may seem minor, their accumulation over time can erode job satisfaction. Clarifying job roles and ensuring that responsibilities align with employees' core strengths and interests could help alleviate this issue. Furthermore, while some respondents were content with growth opportunities and working conditions, others were either neutral or dissatisfied. This suggests that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and institutions must take a more individualized approach to fostering career development and satisfaction.

5.2.2 To ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

The aim of the objective is to ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction, to achieve this, the respondents were requested to identify the existing training and development programs available for better support their career growth and job satisfaction.

The research indicates a diverse range of training and development programs for administrative officers. A considerable number of respondents lacked access to such programs, indicating potential gaps in institutional support and urging questions about the organisation's culture and the perceived value of proficiency. This research also examined how administrative officers perceive the effectiveness of existing development programs designed to support their career growth and job satisfaction. The findings offer a mixed picture, signalling both successes and areas for improvement.

Access and availability: While many administrative officers acknowledged the availability of training programs like Microsoft Excel and POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act) compliance training, a notable percentage reported that they had not participated in any such initiatives. This raises a critical question about accessibility— are these programs reaching those who need them the most? It is essential to ensure that such opportunities are widely advertised and made accessible, particularly to those who may feel overlooked.

Relevance and content: While technical training is undeniably important, a strong case emerges for expanding the scope of these programs. Skills like leadership, problem-solving, and conflict resolution are equally important and, if cultivated, could significantly enhance career satisfaction. Furthermore, personal development programs could help employees navigate their own career paths, better understand their strengths, and identify areas for improvement.

Satisfaction levels: While many respondents expressed satisfaction with the training programs, a substantial number felt neutral or dissatisfied. This ambivalence could

indicate that the programs, while beneficial, are not fully meeting the diverse needs of all participants. It also points to the necessity for more targeted feedback mechanisms—institutions need to listen to what employees find most valuable and adapt their offerings accordingly.

This evidence points to the critical importance of regular program evaluation and the need for development initiatives to be dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of administrative staff. Only by doing so can institutions ensure that these programs remain relevant and impactful over time.

5.2.3 Factors that influence administrative officers' career growth and job satisfaction

This objective was intended to determine factors that influence the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. The findings reveal compelling insights into the factors that significantly contribute to the growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers. The study highlights the influence of remuneration packages on job satisfaction, revealing how financial incentives directly affect employees' overall happiness and satisfaction in their roles. This finding highlights the crucial role that remuneration plays in shaping the morale and motivation of administrative officers, highlighting the complex relationship between financial rewards and job satisfaction. This study identifies several key factors that significantly affect their job satisfaction and career growth:

Remuneration: It is no surprise that salary remains one of the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. Fair and competitive remuneration packages not only boost morale but also foster a sense of being valued by the institution. Employees who feel they are fairly compensated are far more likely to remain loyal and motivated.

Opportunities for growth: Professional development is a central pillar of job satisfaction. Administrative officers need to feel that their roles are not static and that they have a future within the institution. Creating clear career pathways and offering opportunities for continuous learning can greatly enhance both job satisfaction and retention.

Working conditions: The physical environment where administrative officers work, as well as the relationships they build with colleagues and supervisors, deeply influence job satisfaction. Supportive, respectful environments foster a sense of belonging and well-being, encouraging individuals to give their best at work.

Recognition and achievement: Everyone wants to feel valued. Regular acknowledgement of contributions—whether through formal recognition programs or informal feedback—can significantly enhance an employee's sense of purpose and fulfilment.

Job security: Stability is a critical factor. Administrative officers who feel secure in their jobs are more likely to engage fully in their work, take initiative, and innovate. Job insecurity, on the other hand, can lead to anxiety and disengagement.

These findings emphasize that job satisfaction is not determined by any single factor but rather by a confluence of variables. For administrative officers to thrive, institutions must address this full spectrum of needs in a balanced and thoughtful manner.

5.2.4 To assess using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers

The objective was to assess how career growth opportunities influence job satisfaction among administrative officers at a South African university, using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory. A questionnaire assessed both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The results showed that respondents value remuneration packages, job security, training, and recognition for job satisfaction. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how career growth opportunities affect administrative officers' job satisfaction. The theory distinguishes between intrinsic motivators (achievement, recognition, and the nature of the work itself) and extrinsic factors (salary, working conditions, and job security).

Intrinsic Factors: Many administrative officers indicated that they derive significant satisfaction from the nature of their work, especially when given opportunities for meaningful achievement and recognition. These intrinsic motivators are essential for fostering a sense of purpose and fulfilment. In particular, opportunities for growth and

development stand out as key drivers of job satisfaction. Employees who are challenged and given the space to grow feel more invested in their role.

Extrinsic Factors: While intrinsic rewards are important, the role of extrinsic factors cannot be ignored. Salary, job security, and working conditions continue to play a significant role in determining job satisfaction. Without these, even the most fulfilling job can become unsustainable in the long run. Thus, a balanced approach is needed— institutions must nurture both the intrinsic and extrinsic needs of their employees to create an environment where administrative officers can thrive.

5.3 Conclusion

This study has effectively illuminated the significant relationship between career growth opportunities and job satisfaction among administrative officers at a selected university in South Africa. By identifying critical competencies such as communication, time management, teamwork, and technological proficiency, the research emphasizes the evolving demands placed on administrative staff in contemporary workplaces. While some respondents expressed contentment with their roles and the opportunities for professional growth, others reported dissatisfaction, underscoring the necessity for clearly defined job roles and customized development programs.

Furthermore, the investigation revealed that various factors—such as remuneration, working conditions, job security, recognition, and the intrinsic value of the work—play a crucial role in shaping career growth and job satisfaction. These findings suggest that a comprehensive approach is vital for creating a supportive workplace culture that fosters both individual and organisational success. Applying Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the study highlights the importance of addressing hygiene factors like remuneration and job security alongside motivators such as training and recognition. The recommendations for improving working conditions, providing tailored training, promoting from within, and implementing wellness programs aim to enhance employee well-being and drive organisational performance. This research contributes valuable insights into the complexities of job satisfaction and career advancement for administrative officers. It highlights the need for further studies to develop targeted interventions that cater to the unique needs of individuals within this diverse group, ensuring that initiatives are both relevant and effective. By addressing these

multifaceted factors, universities can foster a more supportive and engaging work environment, ultimately leading to greater job satisfaction and enhanced performance among administrative staff.

5.4 Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers, ensuring that institutions build a work environment that is both supportive and growth-oriented. These recommendations are designed to address the core challenges identified, creating a more holistic and sustainable approach to developing the administrative workforce.

Broaden access to development programs: To fully support the professional growth of administrative officers, institutions should ensure that all staff have access to a comprehensive range of development opportunities. These opportunities should not only focus on technical skills but also include leadership development, conflict management, and personal growth programs. Technical training remains essential, but it is equally important to provide officers with the tools to manage interpersonal dynamics, lead teams, and navigate complex organisational challenges. Leadership development initiatives, including coaching and executive training, would equip administrative officers with the skills needed for future leadership roles, enhancing their career mobility within the organisation. Conflict management workshops are crucial for helping staff resolve issues proactively and fostering a positive and harmonious workplace. Personal growth programs, such as those focused on emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and resilience, would ensure that administrative officers are well-rounded professionals capable of navigating both professional and personal challenges.

Establish clear career pathways: One of the key drivers of job satisfaction and retention is the ability to see a clear path for career advancement within the organisation. Institutions should develop structured career growth plans that outline various advancement opportunities available to administrative officers. These pathways should be transparent and well-communicated to ensure employees understand how they can progress in their careers. To complement these career pathways, mentorship programs should be established, allowing junior administrative

staff to receive guidance and support from more experienced colleagues. Regular career development workshops and one-on-one sessions with supervisors should be integrated into these plans to help employees set and achieve specific career goals. By creating a clear and accessible career progression framework, institutions will not only improve job satisfaction but also foster a sense of long-term commitment and loyalty among administrative officers. Providing opportunities for lateral movement and cross-training in different administrative functions will further enhance career growth and broaden skill sets.

Strengthen recognition mechanisms: A robust recognition program is crucial for reinforcing the value of administrative officers and motivating them to continue performing at a high level. Institutions should formalise processes for recognising staff contributions regularly, ensuring that recognition is both sincere and aligned with institutional values. This could include a variety of recognition methods, such as annual performance awards, "Employee of the Month" programs, and public acknowledgement during institutional meetings or at team events. In addition to these formal recognition programs, financial incentives such as bonuses or salary increases tied to performance achievements would further emphasise the value of administrative officers to the institution. Recognition should also be personalised, with managers taking the time to acknowledge individual contributions, both big and small. Employees who feel valued are more likely to be engaged, committed to their work, and motivated to go above and beyond in their roles. This sense of appreciation also builds a culture of excellence within the organisation.

Enhance job role clarity: One of the most effective ways to increase job satisfaction is by providing administrative officers with clear and well-defined job roles. Ambiguity in job responsibilities is a common source of frustration and can lead to disengagement and decreased productivity. Institutions should conduct regular reviews of job descriptions to ensure that each officer's responsibilities align with their skills, interests, and career aspirations. Job roles should be adjusted to prevent administrative officers from being assigned tasks that fall outside their areas of expertise or interest. This alignment not only improves job satisfaction but also increases the efficiency and quality of work produced. Providing officers with clear performance expectations, along with transparent criteria for evaluating success, will

give them a greater sense of purpose and clarity about how their work contributes to the overall success of the institution. Clear role definition also fosters greater accountability and reduces the likelihood of role overlap, ensuring that administrative staff can work efficiently and effectively.

Invest in well-being: Employee well-being is critical to maintaining high levels of engagement and productivity. Institutions should invest in comprehensive wellness programs that address the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of administrative officers. Offering stress management programs, mindfulness sessions, and access to counselling services will help staff cope with the pressures of their roles. Additionally, implementing initiatives that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, telecommuting options, and wellness days, will contribute to reduced burnout and improved morale. On-site wellness activities such as yoga classes, fitness programs, or nutrition workshops can further support employees in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. A focus on well-being not only enhances job satisfaction but also leads to a more resilient and productive workforce. When employees feel supported in all aspects of their lives, they are more likely to remain loyal to the institution and continue contributing positively to its mission.

Foster a culture of inclusion and collaboration: A supportive and inclusive workplace culture is essential for job satisfaction and career growth. Institutions should prioritise building an environment that values diversity, encourages open communication, and promotes collaboration across teams. By creating an inclusive workplace where every individual's contributions are valued, institutions can foster stronger teamwork, greater innovation, and a more positive work environment. Encouraging regular cross-functional meetings, team-building activities, and social events will help break down silos and promote collaboration across departments. This inclusive culture not only enhances job satisfaction but also allows for a more diverse range of perspectives, ultimately leading to better decision-making and innovation within the institution.

Provide opportunities for social impact and meaningful work: Administrative officers who feel that their work is contributing to a larger purpose or social good are more likely to be engaged and satisfied in their roles. Institutions should provide

opportunities for administrative staff to engage in social impact projects, volunteer initiatives, or organisational committees that align with their values and interests. By allowing staff to contribute to meaningful work beyond their primary duties, institutions can cultivate a deeper sense of purpose and connection to the institution's mission. This can significantly enhance overall job satisfaction, as employees feel they are not just performing administrative tasks but are actively contributing to the broader goals of the institution.

By implementing these comprehensive recommendations, institutions can create a work environment that not only nurtures the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers but also strengthens the organisation as a whole. With clear career pathways, structured development programs, robust recognition mechanisms, job clarity, and a strong focus on well-being, institutions will foster a more engaged, motivated, and loyal administrative workforce. This, in turn, will drive improved productivity, lower turnover, and contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of the institution. Investing in the growth and well-being of administrative officers is an investment in the future success of the institution itself.

5.5 Opportunities for further research

In its current form, this study focuses on the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers within higher education institutions. However, it is essential to acknowledge that these factors likely affect a broader spectrum of administrative staff. Future research could extend its scope to include various administrative roles, such as support personnel, clerical staff, and office managers, all of whom may similarly experience career-related challenges and opportunities. A more expansive inquiry into these areas could yield a comprehensive understanding of how career development and job satisfaction influence the entire administrative workforce. This approach would enable institutions to devise more inclusive and targeted policies that address the specific needs of all administrative employees.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INFORMATION



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Hope this letter finds you well

My name is Thokozani Mfeka (Student Number 20704965) a registered student in the Department of Information and Corporate Management for Masters Management Sciences in Administration and Information Management at the Durban University of Technology.

I am conducting research that seeks to examine the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa. I kindly request your participation in this study. Be assured that by taking part in this study, your responses will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

Details of the study at hand are provided below:

Title of the Research Study: The influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Master of Management Sciences in Administration and Information.

Brief Introduction and the Purpose of the Study: This research holds great importance as it can provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to job satisfaction and retention in administrative roles. By understanding these factors, universities can create a work environment that advances administrative officers' job satisfaction and increases retention rates, leading to a more productive workforce. I would be grateful if you could support this research project by providing me with detailed information regarding the career growth opportunities available to you as an administrative officer at your institution. I am particularly interested in learning about

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Agreement declaration to participate in research study as a student

- I,....., confirm that Mr. T. Mfeka has informed me about the purpose of the study, procedures, benefits, and risks. Research Ethics Clearance Number: 158/20.
- I have read and understood the participant's letter of information for the study.
- I agree that my demographic information will be anonymous in the study report.
- I consent to the researcher processing the study data electronically.
- I can withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.
- I affirm my voluntary decision to participate after having the chance to ask questions.
- I will be informed of any significant findings related to my participation.

Name of the participant **Date** **Signature**

I, Mr. T. Mfeka, hereby confirm that the participant above has been thoroughly informed of the nature, procedures, and potential risks associated with the study.

Name of researcher **Date** **Signature**

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for collecting data on career growth opportunities of administrative officers' job satisfaction at a selected university in South Africa

INSTRUCTION FOR FILLING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read carefully and select the appropriate answer. Additionally, kindly use the spaces provided to write your answers

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your gender identify

Male	1
Female	2
Non-Binary	3
Prefer not to say	4
Other, please specify.....	5

2. Please provide your comments on whether your gender influences your career growth opportunities and job satisfaction as an administrative officer.

.....
.....

3. Please indicate your age:

18 - 24 Years	1
25 - 30 Years	2
31- 35 Years	3
36 Years and above	4

4. Based on your own experience, please indicate whether your age influences career growth and job satisfaction.

.....
.....

5. Please specify the duration of your service as an administrative officer in your institution.

0-10 Years	1
11-20 Years	2
21-30 Years	3
31 Years and above	4

6. Please indicate the name of your faculty where you serve as an administrative officer

Faculty of Accounting and Informatics	1
Faculty of Arts and Design	2
Faculty of Applied Sciences	3
Faculty of Health Sciences	4
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment	5
Faculty of Management Sciences	6
Other (Specify).....	7

7. Please indicate your job designation.

Administrative Officer	1
Administrative Assistant	2
Faculty Assistant	3
Office Assistant	4
Receptionist	5
Secretary	6
Other (Specify).....	7

8. Please indicate your highest qualification obtained.

Matric/Senior Certificate	1
Higher Certificate	2
Diploma	3
B-Tech	4
Honours	5
Masters	6

PhD	7
Other (Specify).....	8

9. Please indicate your current employment status:

Permanent	1
Contract	2
Fixed-term contract	3
Other (Specify).....	4

SECTION B: To establish the aspects wherein administrative officers, require development for career growth and job satisfaction

10. Which aspects of your current job (career growth and job satisfaction needs) do you require development in?

.....

11. Which aspects of your current job do not support your career growth and job satisfaction?

.....

12. In which aspects pertaining to your job do you require development/training (skills or competencies) for career growth and job satisfaction?

.....

13. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job in terms of supporting your career growth and job satisfaction?

Aspects	Satisfaction Rating (1-5)
Opportunities for growth	
Training and development	
Working conditions	
Relationships with colleagues	
Recognition and rewards	
Communication skills	
Academic program support	

Student services	
Technology integration	
Emotional intelligence	
Technical proficiency	
Financial management	
Customer service	
Event planning and coordination	
Other (Specify).....	

SECTION C: To ascertain the perceptions on the effectiveness of development programs for administrative officers’ career growth and job satisfaction

14. Identify the existing training and development programs available for better support for administrative officers’ career growth and job satisfaction at your institution.

.....
.....

15. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of the development programs in place aimed at enhancing your career growth and job satisfaction?

Please select the appropriate response from the following options.

Options	Rating
Very Satisfied	
Satisfied	
Neutral	
Dissatisfied	
Very Dissatisfied	

16. Describe how the development programs offered by your institution have influenced your career growth and job satisfaction as an administrative officer

.....
.....

17. How do you perceive/rate your career growth and job satisfaction using the statement in the table below. Please select one option per statement.

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The institution provides sufficient opportunities for career growth					

I feel adequately supported by the manager in my career development					
Compensation and adequately reflect my contributions					
Organisational culture impacts my job satisfaction					
Recognition and rewards motivate me to excel					
I am satisfied with my current job and responsibilities					
Opportunities for career advancement are readily available					
My institution values the contribution of administrative officers					
My job provides me with a sense of fulfilment					
I received adequate support for my professional development					

SECTION D: Factors influencing the career growth and job satisfaction of administrative officers

18. From the table below please select the factors that have influenced your career growth and job satisfaction as an administrative officer in your institution.

Factors	Select
Achievement	
Recognition	
The work itself	
Responsibilities	
Advancement	
Growth and development opportunities	
Remuneration packages	
Working conditions	
Job security	

Supervision	
Other (Specify).....	

SECTION E: Assess using Herzberg's Two-Factor theory the influence of career growth opportunities on administrative officers' job satisfaction

19. Please rate using Herzberg two factor theory the influence of each of the following factors on your career growth and job satisfaction. (Please select and rate the relevant factors based on their importance to your career growth and job satisfaction, using a scale where 1= Very important, 2= Important, 3= Neutral, 4= Less Important and 5= Not important).

Factors	Rate (1-5)
Achievement	
Recognition	
The work itself	
Responsibilities	
Advancement	
Growth and development opportunities	
Remuneration packages	
Working conditions	
Job security	
Supervision	

20. In your opinion, what improvements or initiatives could the institution undertake to enhance the career growth opportunities and job satisfaction of administrative officers?

.....

.....

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Benoni Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology
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28 April 2021

Mr T Mfeka
E 746 Mbuyazwe Road
KwaMashu
4360

Dear Mr Mfeka

Exploring the conditions of service of administrative assistants at three Universities in KwaZulu-Natal.

Ethical Clearance number IREC 158/20

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

Professor J K Adam
Chairperson: IREC

APPENDIX E: GATEKEEPER LETTER



Directorate for Research and Postgraduate Support
Durban University of Technology
Trompsburg Annex, Steve Biko Campus
P.O. Box 1334, Durban 4000
Tel.: 031-3732576/7
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1st March 2021
Mr Thokozani Mfeka
c/o Department of Information and Corporate Management
Faculty of Accounting and Informatics
Durban University of Technology

Dear Mr Mfeka

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DUT

Your email correspondence with respect of the above refers. I am pleased to inform you that the Institutional Research and Innovation Committee (IRIC) has granted **Full Permission** for you to conduct your research "Exploring the conditions of service of administrative assistants at three Universities in KwaZulu-Natal" at the Durban University of Technology.

The DUT may impose any other condition it deems appropriate in the circumstances having regard to nature and extent of access to and use of information requested.

We would be grateful if a summary of your key research findings would be submitted to the IRIC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards.
Yours sincerely

DR LINDA ZIKHONA LINGANI SO
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT DIRECTORATE