



**EMPLOYEE TURNOVER WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF
WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY**

by

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ABSTRACT

Employee turnover poses a significant challenge for higher education institutions, affecting operational efficiency and organisational performance. This study examined factors influencing turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University (WSU), South Africa, focusing on job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and pay satisfaction. The research aimed to inform effective retention strategies by analysing the relationship between these factors and turnover intentions. The study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design. Data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed to a stratified random sample of 320 academic and non-academic staff members at WSU. Participants were selected using simple random sampling, and out of 320 questionnaires distributed, 123 were returned fully completed, resulting in a 38.47% response rate. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 28, which included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

Key findings revealed that employee turnover significantly impacts WSU's operational functions, aligning with existing literature on turnover's disruptive nature in academic institutions. Contrary to some previous studies, job satisfaction and organisational commitment showed minimal impact on turnover intentions at WSU. Career development opportunities and pay satisfaction, while positively related to retention, were not decisive factors in turnover intentions. These findings suggest a complex interplay of factors that influence employee decisions to stay or leave the institution.

The study's implications highlight the need for a multifaceted approach to employee retention at WSU. While competitive compensation and career development opportunities are important, they should be part of a comprehensive strategy addressing various aspects of the work environment. The research underscores the importance of regular assessments of employee needs and perceptions to develop targeted retention initiatives. Future research could explore additional factors such as leadership styles, work-life balance, and organisational culture to provide a more comprehensive understanding of turnover dynamics in higher education settings.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that WSU strengthen leadership development and recognition systems, expand career development opportunities, and

adopt flexible work arrangements to improve employee retention. These strategies can help stakeholders create a supportive work environment that fosters loyalty and enhances institutional performance

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed:

Date: 18 August 2025

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences.

Signed:

Date: 18 August 2025

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of my late grandfather, Tsora Koninga, my grandmother, Mamsindweni Koninga, my sister, Hombakazi Koninga and my brother Zwelebango Koninga who during difficult times believed in me when I enrolled for my first degree even though there were insufficient financial resources. Reaching this level of study would have remained a dream forever, if it was not due to your tireless sacrifices and effort, and your value of education.

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Finally, I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me the strength, courage and good health to complete this study.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DUT	: Durban University of Technology
HCT	: Human Capital Theory
HEC	: Higher Education Commission
HEIs	: Higher Education Institution
HEIDIs	: Higher Education Information Database for Institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HR	: Human Resource
HRM	: Human Resource Management
IC:	Intellectual Capital
ICT	: Intellectual Capital Theory
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK	: United Kingdom
WSU	: Walter Sisulu University

CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Employee turnover is a critical issue facing organisations worldwide, particularly in the higher education sector. It refers to the rate at which employees leave an organisation and are replaced by new hires. High turnover rates can significantly impact an institution's operational efficiency, productivity, and overall performance. In higher education, employee turnover can disrupt academic continuity, research progress, and student support services. This study focuses on Walter Sisulu University (WSU) in South Africa, examining the factors influencing employee turnover intentions and their implications for institutional stability and growth.

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research study. It begins by contextualising the research within the broader landscape of employee retention in higher education. The chapter then outlines the specific research problem and aims, followed by the study's objectives and research questions. It presents the hypotheses to be tested and explains the rationale behind the study. A preliminary literature review offers insights into existing knowledge on employee turnover. The chapter concludes with an overview of the methodology employed and a brief outline of the dissertation's structure, setting the stage for the detailed exploration in subsequent chapters.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Higher Education Act (1997:8) defines higher education institutions as those entities that provide higher education on a full-time, part-time, or distance basis and are either:

- (a) established or considered to be established as public higher education institutions under this Act,
- (b) declared as public higher education institutions according to this Act, or
- (c) registered or conditionally registered as private higher education institutions in accordance with this Act.

Ensuring employee retention is critical to maintaining organisational stability and sustainability in executing this mandate. Naris and Ukpere (2010) highlight that higher

education institutions (HEIs) rely heavily on the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of their staff to ensure efficient service delivery, remain adaptive to changes, and achieve their institutional vision. As a result, attracting and retaining talented employees has become a top priority for HEIs.

Recent research indicates that South African higher education institutions face notable challenges in retaining key academic talent (HESA 2011; Robyn 2012). Employee turnover, which refers to the process of employees leaving and being replaced, is a destabilizing factor for organisational performance.

HEIs are particularly concerned with employee turnover because they are losing highly qualified staff to the private sector and other institutions offering more competitive rewards and benefits (Erasmus et al. 2015). Taye and Getnet (2020) further note that high turnover rates may impede progress toward achieving organisational goals. Additionally, the departure of key staff can negatively impact innovation, disrupt service consistency, and cause significant delays in service delivery to clients.

Ongori (2007) acknowledges that organisations invest a great deal in their employees in terms of induction and training, developing, maintaining, and retaining them in their organisations, and mentions that the resources invested in these processes make turnover a costly exercise. Ongori (2007) also states that even though there is no standard framework for understanding the employee turnover process, a wide range of factors have been found useful in interpreting employee turnover. Factors such as colleague relations, organisational commitment, organisational justice, organisational reputation, communication, and organisational politics play an important role in employees' turnover intentions at institutions of higher education in South Africa.

Ongori (2007) identifies several factors that contribute to employees leaving organisations, such as job-related stress and the various elements that cause this stress, often referred to as stressors. Other reasons include a lack of organisational commitment and dissatisfaction with one's job. According to Yezina (2014), employees seek recognition and rewards for their contributions and involvement in achieving organisational goals. Similarly, Wallelegn (2013) emphasises that a lack of appreciation is a key factor driving employees to leave, which in turn increases turnover and reduces overall organisational performance. To address this issue, it is crucial for organisations to recognise and reward their employees in order to

encourage retention. Samuel and Chipunza (2009) further argue that employee turnover is not only harmful to organisations but also financially burdensome. Whenever an employee departs, the organisation must go through the process of recruiting, selecting, training, and allowing the new employee time to acquire the necessary experience to perform the job effectively, which incurs additional costs and disrupts operations.

According to Fisher and Scott (2010), higher education has a uniquely important role to play in resolving the persistent skills shortage in South Africa by producing qualified graduates and postgraduates and by generating research and innovation. Raising education and skills levels is crucial not only for increasing workforce productivity but also for enhancing the innovative capacity of the economy and facilitating the absorption and diffusion of new technology. The interaction of these factors, along with the quality of education, propels economic growth. HEIs must effectively manage employee turnover to prevent any negative impact on their ability to fulfil their mandate.

Academic staff play a central role in determining the quality of teaching, research, and engagement. Other staff—especially professional staff in specialist positions or managerial roles who are highly qualified and well paid—are becoming more important in higher education. They play critical roles in supporting well-performing institutions. While the numbers in clerical roles in higher education institutions are declining, those in professional, managerial, and technical roles are increasing. These staff account for an increasing share of total human resources expenditure, and in some systems, professional support and management staff already outnumber academic staff (Bossu and Brown 2018). The binary division between academic and professional staff (faculty and staff) is being blurred by an emerging partnership in many domains, such as student services, research management, widening participation, educational development, and learning technologies. Cumulatively, staff play a critical role in HEIs becoming highly performing institutions.

Therefore, there is a need to develop a comprehensive understanding of employee turnover, and more specifically, the sources that determine employee turnover and the effects and strategies that managers can put in place to minimise employee turnover (Ongori 2007). Knowing the factors causing employees' turnover can help human resource managers look for better solutions to reduce employees turnover rates and

thus increase productivity at institutions of higher education in South Africa. Therefore, it is very important to identify the factors that cause employees turnover at Walter Sisulu University (WSU).

1.3 Research aims

The aim of this research is to explore how employee turnover negatively impacts higher education institutions in South Africa, with a particular focus on WSU. Data from the Human Resources Department at WSU indicates that between 2015 and 2021, over 150 staff members resigned, while others retired or passed away. Regardless of how WSU is currently managing employee turnover, the WSU Strategic Plan (2020–2030:50) outlines a clear strategic goal to attract and retain talented staff while reducing turnover rates.

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is a relatively new comprehensive institution, established under the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997 (as amended). Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon, and the University of Transkei merged to form WSU in 2005. Higher education plays a pivotal role in generating knowledge that contributes to future talent development and South Africa's socio-economic growth (Takawira, Coetzee, and Schreuder, 2014). However, South African higher education institutions, including WSU, have become increasingly vulnerable to losing highly qualified employees to better-paying private sector roles or recruitment by international higher education institutions (Takawira et al. 2014).

Employee turnover has become an ongoing challenge for institutions of higher learning over the years. Robyn (2012) highlights that talent retention has emerged as a significant concern in the higher education sector due to the ageing workforce and limited opportunities to recruit and retain young, talented individuals. Robyn also emphasises that the strength of an institution lies in its human capital, making it critical for higher education institutions to align their human resource policies to attract and retain skilled employees.

1.4 Research questions

From the above research objectives, derive the following research questions the current study will aim to address:

- i. How does employee turnover affect operational functions at WSU?
- ii. What are the possible determinants of employee turnover at WSU?
- iii. What strategies can be developed and implemented to prevent employee turnover at WSU?

1.5 Objectives of the study

This study will pursue the following research objectives:

- i. To determine the extent to which employee turnover affects operational functions at WSU.
- ii. To examine possible determinants of employee turnover at WSU.
- iii. To develop strategies to mitigate employee turnover intentions at WSU campuses.

1.6 Hypotheses

Kumar (2014) defines a hypothesis as a hunch, assumption, suspicion, assertion, or imaginative idea about a phenomenon or situation that forms the basis for an investigation. A hypothesis is a proposal made by the researcher that needs to be tested and evaluated. Thus, the hypotheses of this research study are:

1.6.1 Contextual Hypothesis

Employee turnover is widely recognised as a significant operational concern, particularly in higher education institutions. High turnover can lead to the disruption of institutional knowledge, increased recruitment costs, and reduced morale and productivity among remaining staff. In the context of Walter Sisulu University (WSU), where resource constraints and retention challenges are prevalent, this issue warrants particular attention. Based on this, the following contextual hypothesis is proposed:

- ***H1: Employee turnover negatively affects the operational functions at WSU.***

This hypothesis is contextual in nature and is not directly tested through empirical analysis in this study but is supported by existing literature (Mpofu, 2013; Grobler, 2021).

1.6.2 Empirical Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated based on the study's theoretical framework and are tested through correlation and regression analysis:

H2: Job Satisfaction and Employee Turnover

- *Null Hypothesis (H0₂): There is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.*
- *Alternative Hypothesis (H1₂): There is a negative significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.*

H3: Organisational Commitment and Employee Turnover

- *H0₃: There is no significant relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.*
- *H1₃: There is a significantly negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.*

H4: Career Development and Employee Turnover

- *H0₄: There is no significant relationship between career development and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.*
- *H1₄: There is a negative significant relationship between career development and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.*

H5: Compensation Satisfaction and Employee Turnover

- *H0₅: There is no significant relationship between compensation (pay and benefits) satisfaction and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.*

- **H1₅:** There is a negative significant relationship between compensation (pay and benefits) satisfaction and turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University.

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that, among the variables considered, only employee turnover's effect on operational functions (H1) was statistically significant. This finding confirms that turnover has a direct and observable influence on the day-to-day running of WSU, leading to disruptions in operations and increased organisational costs.

In contrast, job satisfaction (H2), organisational commitment (H3), career development (H4), and compensation satisfaction (H5) did not demonstrate significant relationships with turnover intentions in this study. Although these factors are widely acknowledged in the literature as predictors of turnover, their lack of significance in this institutional context underscores the importance of recognising unique environmental and organisational dynamics at WSU.

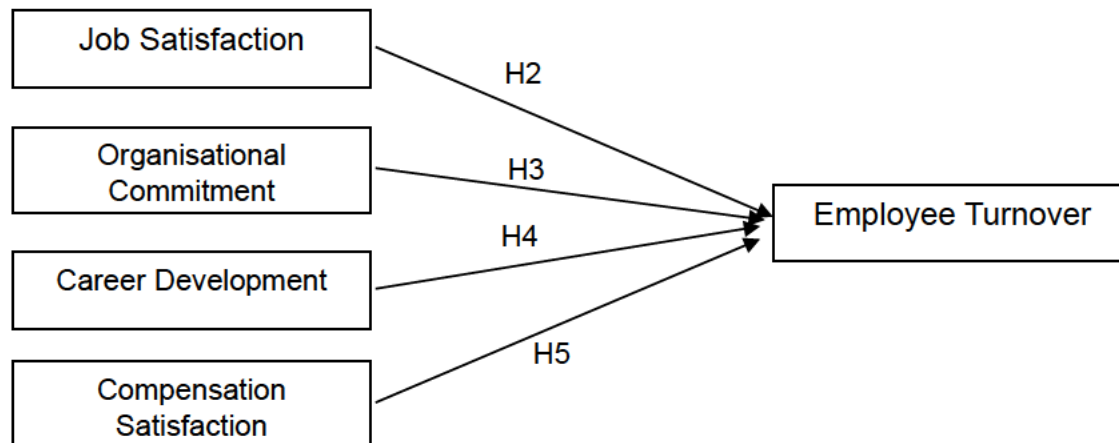
Overall, these findings highlight that while broader human resource factors remain important, turnover at WSU is primarily an operational challenge. Thus, strategies aimed solely at enhancing satisfaction, commitment, or pay may not be sufficient on their own to reduce turnover intentions; instead, interventions must also directly address the operational inefficiencies and disruptions caused by turnover.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework underpinning this study illustrates the hypothesised relationships between the key determinants of employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University. The framework is grounded in the Human Capital Theory and Intellectual Capital Theory, both of which emphasise the value of employees as strategic assets and the importance of retaining their expertise within an institution.

The framework visually presents the expected negative relationships between turnover intentions and the following predictors: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, career development, training, and compensation and benefits satisfaction. Additionally, the broader contextual hypothesis (H1) addresses how turnover impacts operational effectiveness at WSU.

Figure 1-1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



This conceptual model guides the empirical investigation by specifying the proposed relationships that are tested through correlation and regression analyses. It also reflects the broader institutional concerns that motivate the study.

1.8 Rationale for the study

A study by Ezeuduji and Mbane (2017) conducted in Cape Town, South Africa, identified several key factors contributing to high staff turnover in the hospitality sector. These factors included employees perceiving their compensation as inadequate compared to their workload, limited opportunities for career growth, lack of engagement in their work, poor labour relations, and long working hours. These findings align with earlier research by Mohsin et al. (2013), which also attributed hotel employees' intentions to leave their jobs to extended working hours, work-related pressures, and stress. Holston-Okae and Mushi (2018) further argue that factors such as compensation, motivation, employee engagement, work environment, and job satisfaction play critical roles in influencing employee turnover. In a separate study conducted in Iran, Karatepe et al (2014), identified issues such as flawed human resource practices, nepotism, and high employee turnover as major challenges negatively affecting organisational performance.

Additionally, research from the Indian hospitality sector indicated that selection and compensation practices have a significant impact on employees' intentions to leave their positions (Holston 2017). This body of research underscores the complex relationship between HR practices and employee turnover, highlighting that compensation, career growth, and fair treatment are central to employee retention

across industries. In terms of staff turnover in higher education, it is important to investigate some of the underlying causes within this sector. More specifically, many of the staff members (academics and support staff) are leaving WSU; some of them feel they are not safe or protected by the management of this institution. The situation is compounded by several employee protests that show the underlying causes of their demotivation; for instance, small groups of employees have been blocking the main entrances to university campuses, thereby preventing staff and students from entering the university and disrupting work, teaching and learning. These actions illustrate the level of staff dissatisfaction.

This study holds significant value for management as it will aid in developing strategies to address one of the most pressing challenges in human capital management: employee retention. The findings are expected to influence the current and future review of human resource policies, ensuring they are more aligned with effective retention strategies. Additionally, this research will serve as a valuable resource for future scholars and academics, providing a foundation for further exploration into employee turnover. Both employees and management stand to benefit from the study. For employees, it offers an opportunity to voice their perspectives on their work, express their feelings about job satisfaction, and evaluate the organisation's commitment to improving their working conditions. For management, understanding these insights will help them better meet the needs of their workforce, fostering a more engaged and committed team, which in turn can improve organisational performance and reduce turnover rates. Therefore, the study will add value to the management of Walter Sisulu University and other institutions of higher education in South Africa in minimising the turnover rate, proposing retention strategies, and developing an original framework appropriate for employee turnover.

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses the persistent challenge of employee turnover within higher education institutions (HEIs), with a focus on Walter Sisulu University (WSU). By situating turnover within broader theoretical, practical, and policy contexts, the research contributes to both academic scholarship and professional practice.

1.9.1 Theoretical Contribution

The study contributes to the refinement of human capital theory and intellectual capital theory by examining turnover as a multidimensional issue that goes beyond individual exits. While previous studies (Dess & Shaw, 2001; Youndt et al., 2004) largely emphasised the economic or structural costs of turnover, this research extends the discourse by positioning turnover as a direct threat to institutional knowledge, innovation, and sustainability in resource-constrained universities. The findings are expected to fill gaps in the literature regarding the intersection of employee retention, institutional resilience, and the unique dynamics of HEIs in the South African context.

1.9.2 Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, the study provides actionable insights for managers and HR practitioners in HEIs. It highlights how competitive compensation packages, career development opportunities, training, and internal mobility can significantly enhance employee loyalty and reduce turnover. The results will inform management practices at WSU and similar institutions, equipping leaders with strategies to improve staff retention, strengthen organisational culture, and enhance service delivery. Ultimately, the study underscores the link between effective human resource management and improved institutional performance.

1.9.3 Policy Implications

At the policy level, the research offers guidance for university administrators and policymakers in the higher education sector. By identifying turnover's impact on institutional knowledge and academic continuity, the study supports the development of comprehensive retention frameworks and sector-wide policies. These policies can align with national higher education goals, particularly those focused on improving workforce stability, equity, and quality service provision. The study therefore holds potential to influence HR policies not only at WSU but across the South African higher education landscape.

1.10 Literature review

1.10.1 Introduction

According to Erasmus, Grobler, and van Niekerk (2015), employee turnover is a significant concern for higher education institutions (HEIs) as they increasingly lose highly qualified staff to private sector companies and other HEIs that offer more

competitive rewards and benefits. This turnover process is costly and disrupts service delivery, ultimately destabilizing the performance of these institutions. Tariq, Ramzan, and Riaz (2013) add that South African government departments are facing similar challenges in retaining skilled employees who are leaving for better-paying positions in the private sector. Consequently, it becomes crucial to monitor employee turnover and identify the reasons behind it to ensure that HEIs have the necessary skills available to meet their strategic goals and objectives (Pillay 2011).

This section reviews relevant literature pertaining to employee turnover within organisations. The goal of this review is to investigate and discover current information by studying all relevant sources and assessing them for relevance, standard, controversy, and gaps in the current context.

1.10.2 Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical frameworks underpinned this study, namely: the human capital theory and the intellectual capital theory.

1.10.2.1 Human capital theory

Human capital refers to the skills, knowledge, and experiences that employees bring to an organisation (Call, Nyberg & Thatcher, 2015). These assets enhance organisational value by fostering innovation, solving problems, and generating new knowledge (Kostopoulos, Bozionelos & Syrigos, 2015). However, their value is only realised when they are effectively utilised (Daud & Yusoff, 2010). From this perspective, employee turnover represents a major organisational loss, as it entails the departure of critical skills, networks, and institutional knowledge (Dess & Shaw, 2001; Droeg & Hoobler, 2003). The theory highlights why retention is central to sustaining productivity and competitiveness, especially in resource-constrained institutions such as WSU.

1.10.2.2 Intellectual capital theory

Intellectual capital theory extends this discussion by focusing on intangible assets that drive organisational performance. According to Sveiby (2001), intellectual capital consists of three interrelated dimensions: human capital (knowledge, skills, values), structural capital (processes, policies, technologies), and relational capital (networks and external partnerships). Together, these assets form the foundation of competitive

advantage (Youndt et al., 2004; Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005). The departure of employees diminishes not only human capital but also weakens structural knowledge and relational ties, undermining institutional resilience (Marti, 2007).

Historically, thinkers such as Taylor (1911), Schumpeter (1934), and Simon (1947) stressed the role of knowledge and innovation in wealth creation, insights later consolidated into intellectual capital theory (Kolaković, 2003; Rađenović & Krstić, 2017). This theory is particularly relevant for higher education institutions, where intangible resources like academic expertise and collaborative networks directly influence institutional performance and reputation.

By combining human capital and intellectual capital theories, this study frames turnover as more than a staffing issue, it is a strategic risk affecting knowledge continuity, innovation, and long-term sustainability. Within WSU, the frameworks guide the analysis of whether retention strategies sufficiently protect and leverage these critical assets. The study thus contributes to both theory and practice by examining how turnover erodes institutional capital and how effective management can mitigate these risks.

1.10.3 The concept of employee turnover

According to Ongori (2007), employee turnover is defined as the ratio of the number of workers who leave an organisation, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, within a specific period, divided by the number of employees who remain in the organisation during that period. Similarly, researchers like Ngcobo (2014) have described employee turnover as the reduction in the number of employees due to various factors, such as death, retrenchments, resignations, relocations, or retirement. Naseema (2015) suggests that turnover often stems from employees feeling dissatisfied or discontented with their workplace environment. However, dissatisfaction is not the sole driver of turnover. Employees with sought-after skills may be lured by other organisations that provide more competitive compensation, better benefits, or greater opportunities for personal and career growth (Arokiasamy, 2013).

Ngcobo (2014) emphasise that turnover can be influenced by various causes, including involuntary factors like death or retrenchment, as well as voluntary actions such as resignations or retirements. As such, understanding the motivations behind

employee departures is crucial, particularly in distinguishing between those leaving due to dissatisfaction and those seeking better career prospects. Recognizing these distinctions is essential for organisations aiming to develop effective employee retention strategies.

1.10.4 Causes of employee turnover

Employee turnover is a complex issue influenced by multiple organisational factors. Understanding these causes is essential for developing effective retention strategies (Abbassi & Hollman, 2009). One key driver is human resource (HR) practices, as the ability to recruit, train, and retain employees who align with both the job role and organisational culture reduces turnover. Supportive HR practices, such as fair recruitment, talent development, and fulfilment of promises, strengthen perceived organisational support (POS), which has been shown to reduce employees' intention to quit (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2009). Conversely, when organisations fail to deliver on expected rewards or development opportunities, turnover tends to increase (Mohlala, Goldman & Goosen, 2012).

Working conditions are another determinant, with employees more likely to remain where they experience belonging, job security, and a positive environment. Supportive workplaces enhance motivation and commitment, while unsupportive environments contribute to disengagement and exits (Abbassi & Hollman, 2000, 2009). Leadership is also critical; employees often leave managers rather than jobs. Although line managers may excel technically, lack of leadership skills can diminish job satisfaction and encourage turnover (Ladebo, 2009).

Further, compensation significantly affects retention. Employees satisfied with their remuneration are likely to stay longer, while dissatisfaction drives them toward better-paying opportunities elsewhere (Ogora & Muturi, 2015). Similarly, opportunities for promotion motivate employees by recognising their contributions and supporting career growth, thus reducing turnover (Wallelegn, 2013). In contrast, limited promotion prospects may fuel dissatisfaction.

Finally, stress and work overload negatively impact retention. Prolonged exposure to stressful work environments leads to psychological strain, poor performance, absenteeism, and eventual turnover (Monte, 2012; Pradana & Salehudin, 2013).

In summary, turnover is shaped by interrelated organisational practices, conditions, and individual experiences. Addressing these factors holistically—through supportive HR systems, fair rewards, strong leadership, and healthy work environments—can substantially mitigate employee departures.

1.10.5 Strategies to reduce employee turnover

Reducing employee turnover requires organisations to adopt integrated strategies that enhance job satisfaction and loyalty. One key measure is providing competitive compensation packages, including essential benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and fair salary structures, which signal organisational commitment and improve retention (Atul, 2013; Wallelegn, 2013; Mote, 2014). In addition, training and development initiatives strengthen employee competencies, boost motivation, and encourage long-term commitment (Bidisha & Mukulesh, 2013; Mapelu & Jumah, 2013). Organisations should also promote employee involvement in decision-making, as participation fosters higher productivity, stronger relationships with management, and increased job satisfaction (Hendry, 2012). Finally, internal promotion and transfer opportunities enable career advancement, reduce the need for external recruitment, and retain talent within the organisation (Mokoditoa, 2011). Together, these strategies not only minimise turnover but also enhance performance by aligning employee needs with organisational goals.

1.11 Research methodology

Babbie and Mouton (2001) define research as the road map or blueprint according to which one intends to study and achieve her/his research goals and objectives. Research methodology is described as a method through which the researcher collects, analyses, and interprets data in order to achieve the research aims and objectives. Babbie and Mouton (2001) elaborate, stating that research methodology deals with whom or what will be studied to collect information, identification of subjects, and how information will be obtained.

1.11.1 Research design

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2001), research design is a blueprint or a plan detailing how research will be implemented. Christensen (1994) further defines research design as the outline, plan, or strategy specifying the

procedure to be used in seeking an answer to the research question. This definition specifies such aspects as how to collect and analyse data and to control unwanted variation. Welman and Kruger (2003) state that research design is the plan for obtaining research participants and collecting information from them. From an industry point of view, it is evident that staff turnover is a major problem. This problem has been clearly highlighted in the literature review.

A descriptive design employed in this study, which is intended to obtain sufficient dependable information about the characters in a certain field of research. An important aim of this design is identifying a phenomenon in its natural setting (Burns and Grove 2011). This design uses statistical analysis to define and clarify the phenomenon of the research. A descriptive research design is one that describes the characteristics of a population or of a research phenomenon (Roller and Lavrakas 2015). Thus, this type of research design focuses on answering the question of what a research subject is, rather than why it occurs. In simpler terms, the descriptive research design focuses on providing a description of a demographic segment without mainly focusing on the “why” certain phenomena occur (Roller and Lavrakas 2015).

1.11.2 Research approach

Three major approaches that are used in scientific research: qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed research approaches (Creswell, 2014). This study will employ a quantitative approach, which quantifies data using a survey as a research mechanism. Creswell (2014) defines the quantitative research approach as an inquiry approach useful for describing trends and explaining the relationship among variables found in the literature. The quantitative research method entails the analysing or testing numerical data. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories, and hypotheses pertaining to phenomena (Al Balushi et al. 2022). The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships (Al Balushi et al. 2022). Maree (2009) asserts that quantitative research is a systematic and objective method or process that uses numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that

is being studied. Quantitative research is useful for describing trends and explaining the relationship among variables found in the literature (Creswell 2009).

The quantitative research approach is most appropriate for this study on employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University. This method allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, enabling the researcher to test hypotheses and establish statistical relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014). By using a survey mechanism, the study can gather standardised information from a large sample of WSU employees, ensuring representativeness and generalisability of findings (Al Balushi et al. 2022). Quantitative analysis techniques, such as regression and correlation analyses, can effectively measure the strength and direction of relationships between factors like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, pay satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Alam and Asim 2019). This approach also facilitates comparisons with existing literature and provides objective, replicable results that can inform evidence-based retention strategies at WSU and similar institutions (Al Balushi et al. 2022).

1.11.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm refers to a worldview or a set of beliefs that directs the actions taken during research (Mann, 2022). It encompasses elements such as ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and methodology (the process of obtaining knowledge) (Mann, 2022). Common research paradigms include positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Schäfer, 2023). This study adhered to the positivist philosophy because positivism is typically associated with quantitative research (McNabb, 2013), especially as the aim was to explain and predict outcomes while minimising bias.

According to McNabb (2013), positivism is the belief that the only way to obtain true knowledge is through direct observation and experimentation rather than through theology or metaphysics. McNabb further explains that under the positivist philosophy, researchers collect data by conducting experiments or making observations after identifying the research problem, then measure the outcomes, and finally draw inductive conclusions based solely on the data. This study adopts this approach by seeking objective opinions and genuine insights into the relationship between human resource practices and employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University through a

structured methodology. The data collected will be objectively analysed, and conclusions will be drawn about employee turnover within higher education.

1.11.4 Target population

Cooper and Schindler (2008) define a population as the complete set of elements being studied, to which references are made. Similarly, Babbie and Mouton (2003) explain that a population consists of the full collection of elements or groups from which conclusions are drawn. Emmel (2015) describes the population as a large pool of individuals or objects from which researchers select a sample for their study.

Nkatini (2005) refers to the target population as the specific population that can be studied directly. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) further define the target population as the group of elements on which the researcher focuses and to which the findings can be generalised. For this study, the population will include employees from all the campuses of Walter Sisulu University (WSU), comprising the Buffalo City campus, Mthatha campus, Queenstown campus, and Butterworth campus, with a total population of 1923. The sample will consist of 111 academic staff and 209 administrative and/or non-academic support staff, as well as executive management.

1.11.5 Sampling method

Creswell (2014) refers to a sample as a subset of the population that the researcher selects for study in order to make generalisations about the target population. Wisker (2001) defines a sample as a specifically chosen group that serves as the focus of the research. According to Marre (2007), sampling methods can be categorised into two main types: probability and non-probability methods. Probability sampling relies on principles of randomness and probability theory, whereas non-probability sampling does not. Marre (2007) also identifies four types of probability sampling: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling. The most suitable method for a particular study depends on the nature of the research problem (Marre, 2007).

In this study, the researcher employed probability sampling, specifically simple random sampling, to select the sample from the population. Simple random sampling is a foundational method where each member of the population has an identical probability of being chosen, which eliminates selection bias and facilitates the generalisation of

results to the broader population (Horton 2023). The choice of simple random sampling was driven by its rigour and the desire to produce a sample that is truly representative of the entire employee base at Walter Sisulu University. This approach underpins the reliability of the study's findings and supports the validity of any inferences drawn about the employee turnover at the university. By utilising this method, a random subset of 320 WSU employees was chosen to participate, which was deemed sufficient to capture the diverse experiences and perspectives across all campuses and departments.

Kindsiko and Poltimäe (2019) and Vasileoiu et al. (2018) highlight that there are no universal numeric recommendations regarding sample size determination. Instead, these decisions often require a researcher's judgement, informed by their understanding of the context and purpose of the study (Sandelowski 1995). Sandelowski underscores this point by suggesting that the appropriateness of sample size is a "matter of judgement," contingent on the specific aspects that the researcher deems significant within the field of inquiry. However, to guide this judgement, some formal statistical orientations exist to aid in estimating an appropriate sample size. For instance, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) proposed a table with recommended sample sizes for different population ranges to achieve a 95% confidence level. Similarly, Gill, Johnson, and Clark (2010) created a similar tool to aid researchers in selecting sample sizes. Following these guidelines, for a population between 1500 and 2000, a sample size of 306 to 322 is recommended (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970; Gil et al. 2010). Given that the population of the current study, specifically the total number of employees at Walter Sisulu University, is 1923, a sample size within the range of 306–322 seems statistically justifiable.

Aligning with the standpoint of Sandelowski (1995) on judgement-based decision-making, a sample size of 320 was selected by the researcher. The researcher's choice fell towards the upper end of the recommended range to capitalise on statistical power while remaining within the realm of practicality for distribution and analysis. The division of this sample size across the various employee categories within the university should be proportional to ensure representativeness. The literature recommends that each subgroup within the population should be proportionally

sampled (Kindsiko and Poltimäe, 2019; Vasileoiu et al. 2018). Therefore, the researcher allocated the sample size reflective of the presence of each subgroup:

- Academic employees represent 47.5% of the total population; a proportional sample would be 47.5% of 320, equating to approximately 152 individuals.
- Administration support staff represent 29.4% of the total population; a proportional sample would be 29.4% of 320, which is about 94 individuals.
- Management, directors, or deputy directors account for 14.6%; a proportional sample would be 14.6% of 320, close to 47 individuals.
- Executive management/senate, representing 8.5% of the population: a proportionate sample would be 8.5% of 320, which is around 27 individuals.

This method of proportional allocation ensures that each category of staff is adequately represented in the study, allowing the researcher to draw precise and generalisable conclusions about employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University.

Criteria for selecting the participants included employment status, varied departmental affiliation, and representation from each campus to ensure a balanced cross-section of the university's workforce. The use of questionnaires as the primary data collection tool facilitated the efficient gathering of relevant data while allowing for a quantifiable analysis of the factors relating to employee turnover.

Table 1.1. Proposed sample composition

Category	Total Number of employees	Target population
Academic Employees	786	111
Administration: Support Staff or Non-academic	1137	209
Total	1923	320

Source: WSU Annual Report (2022)

1.11.6 Measuring instrument

Data collection for this study was conducted using questionnaires hosted on Google Forms, an online platform that allows for efficient distribution and data gathering. This method was chosen for its accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and ability to reach a wide range of participants across Walter Sisulu University's campuses. The online format facilitated simple completion for respondents and streamlined the data collection process, reducing the time and resources typically required for paper-based surveys.

A questionnaire, as defined by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016), is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions designed to gather information from respondents. It is a structured technique for collecting primary data that allows for the standardisation and comparability of responses across all participants (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In this study, the questionnaire was carefully crafted to address the research objectives, incorporating validated scales to measure job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development opportunities, pay satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

The questionnaire design followed best practices in survey methodology, ensuring clarity, relevance, and ease of completion. It included a mix of closed-ended questions using Likert scales and multiple-choice options, allowing for quantitative analysis of responses. This approach aligns with the study's quantitative research design, enabling the collection of numerical data suitable for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

1.11.7 Data analysis

Data analysis for this study was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. This software was chosen for its robust capabilities in handling complex statistical procedures and its wide acceptance in academic research. The analysis process involved several stages, beginning with data cleaning and preparation to ensure accuracy and completeness of the dataset.

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise the demographic characteristics of the sample and provide an overview of the central tendencies and distributions of the main variables. This included measures such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies, offering a preliminary understanding of the data patterns.

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between variables. This technique allowed for the assessment of the strength and direction of associations between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development opportunities, pay satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

Multiple regression analysis was then performed to test the hypotheses and determine the predictive power of the independent variables on turnover intentions. This method enabled the identification of the most significant factors influencing employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University.

Factor analysis was utilised to validate the construct validity of the measurement scales, ensuring that the questionnaire items accurately represented the intended constructs. Reliability analysis, using Cronbach's alpha, was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the scales.

Throughout the analysis process, attention was paid to statistical assumptions and diagnostic tests to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. The findings from these analyses provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing turnover intentions at WSU, forming the basis for the study's conclusions and recommendations.

Table 1.2. Overview of the data analysis methods to be used in this study

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
Descriptive Analysis • Mean • Standard deviation • Skewness • Kurtosis	Correlational Analysis • Correlations	Inferential Analysis • Multiple regression • Mediation Analysis

Source: Phillips and Burbules (2000)

1.11.8 Delimitations/scope

Simon and Goes (2013) explain that the scope of a study defines the boundaries within which the research will be conducted. This study is focused solely on higher education

institutions and will centre on both current and former employees of Walter Sisulu University. WSU operates across four campuses: Mthatha (the capital of Transkei), Butterworth, East London within the Buffalo City Metropolitan area, and Queenstown.

1.11.9 Limitations of the study

Brutus, Aguinis, and Wassmer (2013) highlight that limitations are potential weaknesses in a study that are outside the researcher's control. One such limitation for this study is the time needed for participants to travel for semi-structured interviews, as no travel reimbursements will be offered. Another limitation stems from the fact that participants are volunteers and may withdraw at any point, which could affect the study's validity. A significant number of participant withdrawals could compromise the reliability of the results.

1.11.10 Validity and reliability/trustworthiness

For social researchers, ensuring that their studies are both reliable and valid is essential, as these concepts are key to establishing the credibility and accuracy of research findings. Both validity and reliability are critical in all research measurements.

1.11.10.1 Validity

Validity is part of an ongoing process that develops through the accumulation of evidence over time; without it, any measurement is rendered meaningless (Neuman, 2006). Neuman further suggests that validity can be evaluated using one of the following three approaches:

- i. **Criterion Validity:** This assesses whether an instrument can accurately predict or diagnose a specific variable. An investigator can compare the results of a new instrument with those of an established one that measures the same variable to test it.
- ii. **Concurrent Validity:** An indicator must correlate with an already-valid pre-existing indicator in order to have concurrent validity.
- iii. **Content Validity:** This form of validity ensures that a measure represents all aspects of the conceptual definition of a construct.

1.11.10.2 Reliability

Reliability in social research refers to the consistency and dependability of the research (Neuman 2011). According to Neuman (2006), validity refers to how well an idea 'fits' with actual reality. What is important is consistency over time for the research findings to have a measure of reliability (Neuman 2011). Neuman (2011) further claims that reliability is concerned with establishing dependability and consistency of the data gathered, while validity within the qualitative research approach is concerned with establishing a fair and balanced view of reality from the perspective of the research participants. Literature will be often consulted and used as a framework for content validity. Questionnaires will be developed using the literature review to ensure content validity.

Neuman (2006:189) proposes that reliability can be assessed using one of three approaches:

- i. Test-retest approach: administer the same instrument at a later time to determine if the results are consistent with those from the initial test.
- ii. Equivalent form approach: each question from the original test, interview, or questionnaire is reworded, resulting in two tests that appear different but essentially ask the same questions.
- iii. Split-half approach: this is a variation of the equivalent form approach, where both tests are combined into a single instrument.

To ensure validity and reliability in the research process, several measures were implemented:

- (1).Content Validity: The questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive literature review and existing validated scales. It was then reviewed by subject matter experts to ensure that all items accurately represented the constructs being measured.
- (2).Construct Validity: Factor analysis was conducted to confirm that the questionnaire items loaded onto their intended constructs, thereby providing evidence of construct validity.
- (3).Reliability: Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each scale to assess internal consistency. A threshold of 0.7 or higher was considered

acceptable, in line with standard research practices (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

- (4).Data Cleaning: Before analysis, data was thoroughly cleaned to identify and address any missing values, outliers, or inconsistencies that could affect the results' integrity.
- (5).Statistical Assumptions: All statistical tests were preceded by checks for relevant assumptions (e.g., normality, homoscedasticity for regression analysis) to ensure the appropriateness of the chosen analytical methods.
- (6).Triangulation: Where possible, findings were compared with existing literature and institutional data to enhance the validity of interpretations.
- (7).Transparency: Detailed documentation of all procedures, from data collection to analysis, was maintained to ensure replicability and transparency in the research process.

By implementing these measures, the study aimed to produce robust, reliable, and valid findings that could confidently inform retention strategies at Walter Sisulu University and contribute to the broader body of knowledge on employee turnover in higher education institutions.

1.11.11 Pilot study

According to Saunders (2009), the aim of a pilot test is to refine the questionnaire by eliminating any ambiguity or bias, thereby ensuring that the measurement tool is properly calibrated for data collection. For this study, 10 respondents were randomly selected to participate in testing the questionnaire, allowing for any necessary revisions to be made before its final distribution to the target respondents. These participants were not part of the main study's target population of 350 individuals. Bhattacharyya (2006) emphasises that one of the most significant errors in research is neglecting the pilot study, as researchers often rush into the main investigation. McBurney (2001) also advises against skipping the pilot study, noting that it enhances the accuracy of the research project. Similarly, Sarantakos (2013) argues that researchers must ensure that all procedures are effective, error-free, and reliable. For a successful research project, conducting a pilot study is essential (De Vos et al. 2013).

Burns and Bush (2010) further state that the entire process and instrument should be open to feedback from the random participants, and their input should be considered when revising the questionnaire for the main study. The pilot study allowed for the pre-testing of the research instrument, ensuring that it was clear to respondents and improving its validity and reliability (Kothari, 2006). Additionally, the pilot study helped the researcher to become familiar with the research process and administration, as well as identify items that required modification.

1.11.12 Ethical Issues

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) define ethics in research as appropriate behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it. Moreover, the authors suggest that ethical behaviour should be considered throughout the research process. This study will adhere to ethical standards by requesting permission to undertake the study and use the population. The researcher is working with the HR Department and ICT Department in the study and will request email addresses of the employees of WSU from them. Some elements of the population will remain anonymous, and all the information will remain confidential. The DUT ethics committee will be approached for the ethical approval of this study. The researcher will obtain permission to conduct research from the management of WSU.

1.11.13 Key Terms of the Study

To ensure clarity and consistency throughout the dissertation, the following key terms are defined:

- Employee Turnover: Refers to the rate at which employees leave an organisation within a specific period, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and the organisation's efforts to replace them (Alkahtani, 2015).
- Compensation: Encompasses all forms of financial and non-financial rewards provided to employees in exchange for their contributions, including salaries, bonuses, benefits, and incentives (Martocchio, 2017).

- **Training and Development:** A systematic process of equipping employees with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform effectively in their current roles and prepare for future responsibilities (Noe, 2020).
- **Employee Involvement:** The degree to which employees participate in decision-making processes, which fosters engagement, motivation, and stronger organisational commitment (Boxall & Purcell, 2016).
- **Internal Promotion and Transfer:** The practice of filling vacancies by advancing or transferring existing employees, thereby retaining talent and creating growth opportunities (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017).
- **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):** Universities and colleges that provide tertiary education and play a central role in research, teaching, and skills development within society (Altbach, 2015).

1.12 Structure of dissertation

This thesis is structured into seven chapters as follows:

Chapter One. Introduction: This chapter is the introductory chapter of the study. This chapter included subheadings such as the research problem statements, research aims and objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, and the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two. Literature Review: Chapter Two provides a detailed literature review (secondary sources) on employee turnover from a global perspective and highlights gaps, problems, or shortcomings in existing research to show the original contribution of the author's thesis. Furthermore, the chapter will summarise previous discussions in this field, demonstrating the author's comprehension of the field and illustrating the study's relevance to it.

Chapter Three. South African perspectives and case study: This chapter will present the South African perspectives and the theory related to the existing literature, the problem statement, and the ontological and epistemological positions.

Chapter Four. Employee turnover models: This chapter will focus on the models of employee turnover. The theoretical framework is a toolbox full of concepts, variables, or hypotheses (one's tools) that one will then use to address and fix the problem.

Chapter Five. Research Methodology: Chapter five will focus on the research methodology, discussing the methods and procedures used in the study. This chapter will cover key topics such as the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Six. Data Analysis and Discussion: This chapter will focus on the analysis and interpretation of the results. It will primarily present a factual summary and categorisation of the research findings into themes, supported by various visual elements such as tables, figures, and charts to illustrate the results clearly.

Chapter Seven. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation: The final chapter will provide the study's results and recommendations based on the research findings.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation for the study on employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University. By outlining the research context, problem statement, objectives, and questions, it has established the framework for investigating the factors influencing turnover intentions among WSU staff. The preliminary literature review has provided insights into existing knowledge on the topic, while the methodology overview has outlined the approach to data collection and analysis. The rationale presented underscores the significance of this research in addressing the challenges of employee retention in higher education institutions.

As we proceed to subsequent chapters, this foundation will guide the in-depth exploration of turnover dynamics at WSU, ultimately contributing to the development of effective retention strategies. The study's focus on job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and pay satisfaction provides a multifaceted approach to understanding turnover intentions. This research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the South African higher education sector by examining these factors within the unique context of WSU. The

findings from this study will not only benefit WSU but also offer valuable insights for other institutions facing similar challenges in employee retention.

CHAPTER TWO. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Strydom and Roestenburg (2021) emphasise that the primary goal of a literature review is to provide a thorough and accurate understanding of the identified problem. They further argue that the literature review should align with the scope of the problem, study objectives, rationale, and significance of the research. Similarly, Towns (2019) notes that a literature review involves consulting a wide range of relevant sources, including books, magazines, articles, dissertations, and newspapers, where opinions are expressed and events reported on the issue being investigated. In line with the study's objectives, this chapter draws upon various sources to examine international perspectives on employee turnover. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011) also highlight that the purpose of a literature review is to contribute to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem at hand. According to them, the literature review should be consistent with the scope of the problem, research objectives, rationale, and significance. Additionally, Kukano (2011) states that conducting a literature review involves reviewing an appropriate selection of literature, such as books, articles, dissertations, and news reports, to gather reported events and expressed opinions on the topic under investigation. Therefore, this chapter uses a range of sources to explore global perspectives on employee turnover, in line with the study's aims.

Employee turnover refers to the process where employees leave their current positions and new hires are recruited to fill the vacancies. When employees leave, the remaining staff often take on additional responsibilities until replacements are found, which can negatively impact the organisation's overall performance. Replacing departing employees can be both costly and disruptive to service delivery. Employee turnover is a key factor that destabilizes organisational performance. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) note that higher education institutions worldwide face challenges in retaining skilled employees, who often leave for better-paying positions in the private sector. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor employee turnover and understand its causes to ensure that organisations, especially higher education institutions, have the necessary skills to achieve their goals (Mohajane, 2017).

Chapter One provided an overview of the study, including the research context, problem statement, objectives, rationale, literature review, and research methodology. The goal of Chapter One was to offer a general orientation to the research. In this chapter, an in-depth review of the literature will be conducted, focusing on global perspectives on employee turnover and its predictors. This chapter will explore the concept of employee turnover, referencing the study's conceptual framework, definitions, comparisons of turnover in higher education institutions across Europe, Africa, and South Africa, motivational theories, and key predictors and demographic factors influencing job satisfaction.

2.2. Conceptualisation of employee turnover

Employee turnover refers to the rate at which employees exit an organisation and are replaced within a given time period (Bwowe, 2020; Ogony and Majola, 2018). It is synonymous with labour turnover and is the opposite of employee retention (Ogony and Majola 2018). According to Lo (2015), voluntary turnover occurs when employees leave an organisation for better job opportunities, improved working conditions, or greater job satisfaction, while involuntary turnover is initiated by the employer, such as in cases of dismissal or retrenchment due to poor performance. Sun and Wang (2017) describe labour turnover as the analysis of employees leaving an organisation, which is used in workforce planning to forecast the number of replacements needed. Akinyomi (2016) notes that labour turnover often disrupts an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives. Studies on turnover intentions and employee turnover have been subjected to research for many decades in both human resource management (HRM) and psychology (Hom et al. 2017; Ngo-Henha, 2017). Turnover is described as the rate at which employees leave the employer and are replaced (Lazzari et al. 2022). It is a costly exercise, and organisations should attempt to avoid or reduce it at all costs.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2016) defines employee turnover as the percentage of employees leaving an organisation within a specific time frame, often calculated on a yearly basis as a proportion of the total workforce. Other scholars view turnover as the process of employees crossing the organisational membership boundary (Thwala et al. 2012). Labor turnover rate is described by Ozolina-Ozoal (2014) as the ratio between the number of employees

departing and the average number of employees in the organisation over a certain period. Naseema (2015) argues that employee turnover typically arises when employees are dissatisfied with their work environment. However, dissatisfaction is not the only reason employees leave. Arokiasamy (2013) explains that employees with specialised, in-demand skills may be attracted to other organisations offering higher pay, better benefits, and greater opportunities for personal growth. Therefore, it is essential to distinguish between employees who leave due to dissatisfaction and those who leave for other reasons.

While most of these definitions focus on numerical rates and causes, they differ in emphasis. For instance, CIPD (2016) provides a purely statistical perspective, whereas Naseema (2015) and Arokiasamy (2013) highlight employee perceptions and market-driven factors. This contrast suggests that turnover cannot be reduced to a single definition; it is simultaneously a numerical measurement, a behavioural outcome, and a strategic HRM challenge. At a doctoral level, it is critical to interrogate these differences because the way turnover is conceptualised influences how organisations, including Walter Sisulu University (WSU), develop strategies to manage it.

Moreover, while some authors (Lo, 2015; Sun & Wang, 2017) emphasise voluntary versus involuntary turnover, others (Hom et al., 2017; Akinyomi, 2016) stress the organisational consequences. The lack of consensus underscores the complexity of turnover, particularly in higher education, where departures may stem from dissatisfaction (e.g., working conditions, limited promotion) or attraction to external opportunities (e.g., global competition for talent). Recognising this complexity is vital for linking the literature to this study's hypotheses (H1–H5), especially regarding whether job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and compensation actually drive turnover intentions in the WSU context.

2.2.1. Types of employee turnover

While there are several causes of employee turnover within an organisation, not all have a negative impact on performance. As a result, it is crucial for organisations to differentiate between involuntary and voluntary turnover. The two main types of employee turnover, voluntary and involuntary, are discussed separately below.

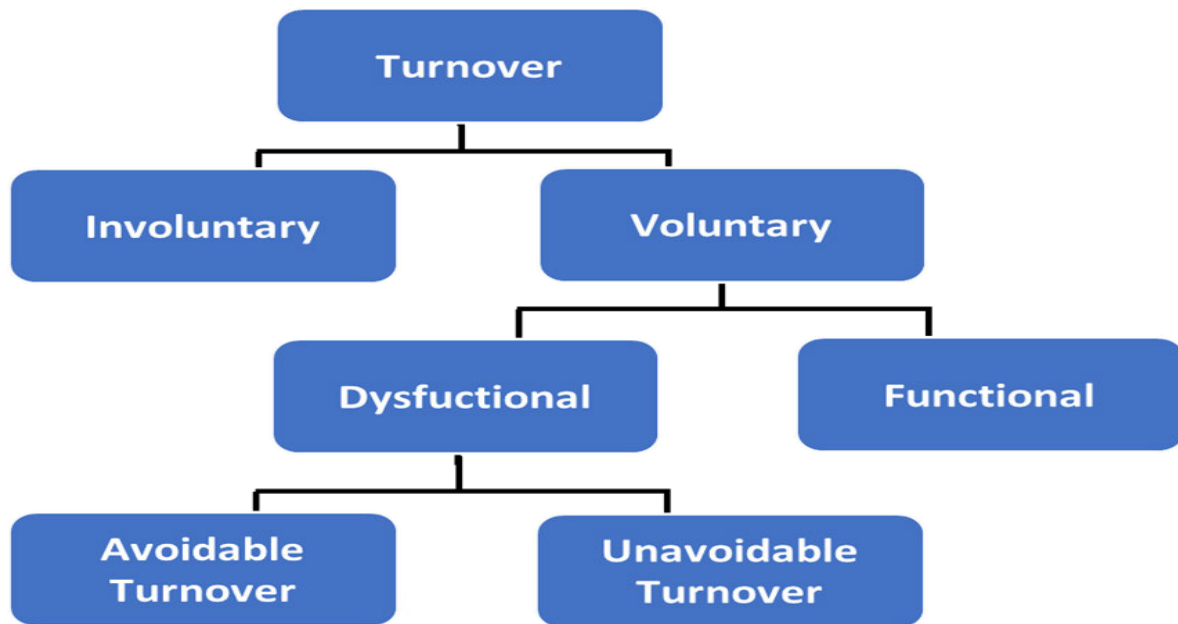


Figure 2-1. Types of employee turnover

Source: Adapted from Loquercio, Hammersley and Emmens (2006)

2.2.1.1. Voluntary turnover

Voluntary turnover refers to the uncontrollable loss of talent, knowledge, and other resources, which can ultimately harm an organisation's performance (Alony, 2015). It occurs when employees choose to leave their current employer of their own accord to join other organisations. As Chaitra and Renuka (2015:127) explain, "voluntary turnover refers to termination initiated by employees". This type of turnover is common when employees willingly leave their organisation in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

Voluntary turnover can be further classified into functional and dysfunctional turnover. Functional turnover occurs when employees who are unable to meet performance standards resign, while dysfunctional turnover happens when high-performing employees who meet the required standards decide to leave (Alony, 2015). Dysfunctional turnover is particularly challenging for organisations as it negatively impacts overall performance. Dysfunctional turnover can be divided into avoidable and unavoidable categories. Melaku (2014:10) states, "avoidable turnover (caused by lower compensation, poor working conditions, etc.) involves causes that an organisation may be able to influence or manage, while unavoidable turnover (due to family moves, serious illness, death, etc.) arises from factors beyond the

organisation's control". Consequently, management should prioritise reducing avoidable turnover, as it can be controlled and addressed to help retain employees.

However, scholars diverge on how damaging voluntary turnover truly is. While Alony (2015) and Melaku (2014) stress the negative organisational effects of losing high performers, other researchers (e.g., Allen et al., 2010) suggest that some voluntary exits can be beneficial, allowing organisations to refresh talent pools and reduce stagnation. This debate is critical for higher education institutions such as Walter Sisulu University (WSU), where staff mobility can simultaneously mean a loss of intellectual capital and an opportunity to recruit new expertise. Understanding whether voluntary turnover is always dysfunctional or can sometimes be functional directly links to the hypotheses in this study (H2–H4), particularly regarding whether job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and career development influence intentions to leave.

2.2.1.2. Involuntary turnover

Rubenstein, Kammeyer-Mueller, Wang, and Thundiyil (2019) describe involuntary turnover as the termination of an individual's employment for various reasons. Rubenstein et al. (2019) explain that involuntary turnover occurs when an employer makes the decision to end the employment relationship. Phillips and Gully (2015) define it as a situation in which employees are asked by the organisation to leave their jobs. Abdali (2011) notes that involuntary turnover happens when employees are laid off, often due to circumstances beyond their control, such as the organisation facing bankruptcy. Curran (2012:11) defines involuntary turnover as "an instance of involuntary turnover, or a discharge that reflects an employer's decision to terminate the employment relationship". This form of turnover is initiated by the employer and can occur under various conditions, such as death, retrenchment, incapacity, or retirement (Arokiasamy, 2013). Factors that were once considered involuntary turnover, such as the need to care for children or elderly relatives, are no longer categorised as such due to government legislation and organisational policies that allow employees to return to work (Ongori, 2007).

Lee (2018) has also identified voluntary and involuntary turnover as the two main types of employee turnover. Voluntariness is the most common type of turnover, simply because it is easy to explain and to represent an organisation's profile. In voluntariness

turnover, there are two categories of turnover, which are voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover. Voluntary turnover is described as employees who choose to quit their jobs and depart from their organisations for various reasons (Phillips and Gully 2015: 358). Heneman, Judge, and Kammeyer-Mueller (2018) further split the category into two types: voluntary turnover can be split into avoidable turnover and unavoidable turnover, and involuntary turnover can be split into discharge, which involves separating individual employees due to performance or discipline problems; and downsizing, which involves reducing groups of employees as a part of a restructuring or cost-reduction program.

The literature also presents contrasting views on involuntary turnover. For instance, Rubenstein et al. (2019) frame it as largely disruptive, while Heneman et al. (2018) suggest that discharge due to poor performance may actually enhance organisational effectiveness. This indicates that not all involuntary turnover is necessarily negative; it may remove inefficiencies and free up resources. For WSU, this raises a critical question: is turnover always a threat to stability, or can some forms, such as the release of consistently underperforming staff, be strategically beneficial? This tension underscores why doctoral-level analysis must go beyond description, interrogating how involuntary turnover interacts with performance management, job security, and the institution's broader strategic goals.

2.3. Global perspectives on employee turnover

Higher education institutions (HEIs) globally play a pivotal role in the development of knowledge, shaping future talent, and contributing to socio-economic growth. While South Africa has its own unique challenges and contributions in this field (Mbithi et al. 2021), the global landscape of higher education exhibits a shared struggle with high turnover rates among staff, which significantly affects the delivery of quality education and institutional performance. The socio-economic and political strategies implemented by various governments, which compete in the global economy, increasingly impact the availability of talent in HEIs negatively. This issue is particularly pronounced during periods of economic downturns, where budget cuts lead to involuntary turnover (Moon 2017). For instance, in the United States, the pressure on budgets has led to a notable increase in both voluntary and involuntary turnover, with institutions often citing economic constraints as the primary rationale for downsizing

(American Council on Education 2022). Here, a tension emerges: while Moon (2017) frames turnover as largely a structural response to economic cycles, others argue that staff decisions are shaped less by macroeconomic shocks and more by institutional cultures and support systems (Pather et al., 2020). This debate highlights the need to move beyond structural explanations and interrogate institutional factors, which is directly relevant to the WSU context where staff cite not only funding but also dissatisfaction with leadership and work conditions as drivers of turnover.

Similarly, in Australia, the expansion and internationalisation of education have heightened competition for highly skilled academic staff, exacerbating turnover rates (Tiwari 2021). Yet, while Tiwari stresses international competition, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) argue that the problem is not only global competition but also insufficient internal career development pathways. This divergence reflects a broader scholarly debate: is turnover in higher education primarily “pushed” by weak institutional support, or “pulled” by external opportunities? WSU staff, as later chapters reveal, appear to be influenced by both poor internal conditions and attractive external opportunities, which justifies why this study tests both organisational commitment and career development (H3, H4) as determinants of turnover intentions.

In Europe, the turnover scenario varies widely between countries, but common threads include budget cuts and the increasing need for competitive compensation packages to retain top talent. A specific look at the United Kingdom reveals that British HEIs face challenges similar to their global counterparts, with high turnover rates, particularly among mid-career academics who seek better opportunities abroad or in other sectors (Buckler and Moore 2023). These movements are not just numbers; they represent a significant drain on institutional knowledge and continuity, which are crucial for maintaining educational quality and institutional reputation. However, scholars diverge on whether mobility of academics should always be framed as “loss.” Buckler and Moore (2023) highlight brain drain, while others (Marginson, 2019) argue that mobility can enhance institutional collaboration and global reputation. This tension is important for WSU: should turnover always be treated as a crisis, or can it be reframed as an opportunity to refresh talent and build networks? This question has practical implications for how retention strategies are designed.

The impact of high turnover in HEIs extends beyond operational disruptions. It affects the morale of remaining staff and often leads to increased workloads, burnout, and a further decline in retention rates (Otache and Inekwe 2022). The loss of experienced faculty members disrupts academic programs and research projects, which are often tailored to the specific expertise of long-term staff members (Pather et al. 2020). Yet, the degree of disruption is contested: some researchers stress severe declines in quality (Otache & Inekwe, 2022), while others suggest that institutional resilience and succession planning can buffer against turnover effects (Emerson & Lemoine, 2021). This contradiction signals a gap that the present study addresses, whether WSU's turnover effects are cushioned by policy frameworks or whether they cause significant operational breakdown, as hypothesised in H1.

Moreover, the internationalisation of education has not only made HEIs globally competitive but also susceptible to fluctuations in the global economy that directly affect their operational stability. This competitive environment necessitates not just local but global retention strategies that address both the economic and personal aspects of academic careers (Alonderiene and Majauskaite 2016). In the United States, for instance, there is a growing trend towards developing more comprehensive support systems for academic staff, including enhanced mentorship programs, career development opportunities, and more flexible work arrangements to improve job satisfaction and retention (Emancipatory Change in US Higher Education 2022). Australia has seen similar initiatives, focusing particularly on the integration of technology and flexible learning environments to attract and retain younger academic professionals who value flexibility and technological integration in their work environments (Australian Higher Education Commission 2022). This comparative evidence is valuable for WSU, where dissatisfaction often stems from lack of career progression and rigid working arrangements. By examining how other HEIs use developmental and flexible strategies, this study draws lessons that inform its recommendations.

The challenge for HEIs around the world is to adapt to these dynamic conditions and develop retention strategies that not only address immediate economic pressures but also enhance the long-term attractiveness of academic careers. This includes offering competitive salaries, but also fostering a supportive work culture, providing clear career pathways, and ensuring job security and satisfaction to mitigate the factors

contributing to high turnover rates. Yet, some argue that overemphasis on financial incentives is misplaced; Herzberg's motivation theory, for instance, suggests that intrinsic motivators such as recognition and career growth may matter more than salary alone. This aligns with this study's hypotheses (H2–H4), which test whether job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and career development weigh more heavily than pay satisfaction in shaping turnover intentions at WSU.

To effectively address these issues, HEIs must engage in ongoing research and dialogue with their staff to better understand their needs and expectations. They must also benchmark against not only national but also international best practices to develop more holistic and attractive employment propositions for their academic staff. What remains underexplored in the literature is how global strategies can be contextualised to institutions with limited resources, such as WSU. This study contributes to that gap by critically examining which of the globally identified drivers (e.g., compensation, career development, institutional culture) actually predict turnover in the South African context.

In conclusion, while the global perspective on employee turnover in higher education reveals varied challenges, the underlying themes of economic pressure, competition for talent, and the need for effective retention strategies are consistent. By understanding and addressing these factors, HEIs can better manage staff turnover, thereby ensuring their ability to fulfil their critical role in society effectively. By synthesising these debates, this study positions itself to test how global patterns resonate, or diverge, in the case of WSU, thereby strengthening the rationale for its research questions, objectives, and hypotheses.

2.3.1. Employee turnover in higher education Institution in Europe

This section undertakes the task of identifying which factors have a greater influence on academic staff retention. It has also been noticed that previous studies have focused solely on either African higher education institutions or European higher education institutions (HEIs); the literature appears to lack any comparisons between Africa, Europe and Asian HEIs and the factors affecting academic staff retention at each. This gap highlights the need for cross-regional analysis, since retention drivers are not uniform across contexts. For example, while compensation dominates debates in Europe, African studies often highlight poor working conditions and lack of

resources. This contrast justifies the comparative framing of the present study, which links WSU's challenges to wider global debates.

2.3.1.1. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom

Schlechter, Syce, and Bussin (2016) emphasised that one of the primary challenges facing higher education institutions (HEIs) is high voluntary employee turnover. Such turnover can negatively impact employee morale and organisational effectiveness, ultimately reducing productivity. Early 20th-century scholars like Douglas (1918) and Lescohier (1919) conducted foundational studies on employee turnover. Additional data from XperthHR provides insights into UK turnover rates for 2017, indicating that academic staff turnover was 11.5%, while non-academic staff turnover was 10.2%. This demonstrates a minimal difference of 1.3% between the two groups (Wortley, 2018). Douglas (1918) found that employers faced significant financial losses due to high turnover, while Lescohier (1919) observed that turnover costs were linked to decreased productivity. In the 21st century, Hom, Lee, Shaw, and Hausknecht (2017) confirmed that turnover has far-reaching consequences, including recruitment and training expenses, along with reduced productivity.

What emerges here is a long-standing consensus that turnover is costly, but disagreement remains over what aspect is most damaging. Some scholars stress direct financial costs (Douglas, 1918; Warnich et al., 2015), while others highlight intangible losses such as institutional knowledge and morale (Morrish, 2019). This tension is important for the WSU case: should management focus narrowly on financial savings or also consider the less tangible but equally harmful effects of losing experienced academic staff?

Employee turnover remains a persistent challenge for HEIs worldwide. It is important to note that staff turnover measurements vary among UK universities, depending on the benchmarking agency, with some including and others excluding employees leaving at the end of fixed-term contracts (Gandy, Harrison, and Gold, 2018). This variance influenced the comprehensive approach taken in this research, as the inclusion or exclusion of fixed-term contract staff can significantly affect the results. This methodological debate is instructive for WSU: without consistent measurement

tools, turnover data can be misleading, making it difficult to design evidence-based retention strategies.

The percentage stability index is a widely used HR metric that measures the retention of experienced employees. It is calculated by dividing the number of employees with at least one year of service by the total number of employees from one year prior, then multiplying the results by ten (Department for Work and Pensions and ACAS, 2014). HEIs have embraced benchmarking to support HR and other management functions. Numerous professional, private, and public organisations use benchmarking to measure staff turnover in UK universities, including The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2016), DLA Piper (2015), the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA, 2014), the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA, 2014), and the Workforce Employment Relations Study (WERS, 2013). To assist HEIs, HESA developed the Higher Education Information Database for Institutions (HEIDI, 2015), a data explorer that offers pre-structured analyses and reports based on HESA data. Staff turnover is one of many HR-related topics explored by these organisations.

In the UK, higher education experiences a high employee turnover rate, which is expected to affect the prosperity of institutions and their competitiveness negatively. According to Agha's (2017) assertion, a workplace that lures, encourages, and retains the best talents is essential in today's globalised competition. The loss of this talent, as emphasised by Morrish (2019), is known historically to impose a hefty financial burden, not only by way of recruitment and training of the replacements but also by the loss of organisational knowledge and expertise that the leaving employees depart with. Such indirect costs are usually the highest level of concern for institutions, impacting long-term innovation and institutional memory. This aligns closely with the intellectual capital theory underpinning this study: when WSU loses senior staff, it does not merely lose labour but crucial intellectual resources that sustain innovation and knowledge continuity.

The UK higher education institutions' traditional turnover rates mirror a worldwide problem where such educational institutions can no longer retain their staff at sustainable rates (Sun and Wang 2017). It is vital for the British universities to tackle the reasons for turnover among the academic personnel, despite its widespread

practice and well-known effects. Research findings show that career changes are common in the UK and in other developed economies because some people are dissatisfied with their current roles while others seek better opportunities elsewhere (Sun and Wang 2017). This distinction between “push” (dissatisfaction) and “pull” (better opportunities) factors directly relates to this study’s hypotheses (H2–H4), which test whether WSU staff are more influenced by dissatisfaction with current conditions or attraction to external alternatives.

The work style of the management within these organisations may also impact turnover rates. Problems in management practices and the attitude of a direct supervisor could lead to high turnover rates. This may cause conflict in the workplace, which will extend to the personal life domains and worsen turnover intentions. Nonetheless, fierce competition from private and global higher education institutions that often offer more lucrative compensation packages to highly qualified staff remains a concerning factor within UK institutions (Ampofo and Karatepe 2022). Here, a clear debate emerges: should turnover be primarily blamed on external competition or internal mismanagement? This unresolved issue mirrors the situation at WSU, where management practices and protests suggest strong internal drivers, even though external opportunities also play a role.

The financial effects of employee turnover in the UK higher education field are huge. According to Warnich et al. (2015), the expenses connected with turnover amount to more than 90% of a worker’s annual salary when considering recruitment, selection, training, and integration processes. Besides these costs, there are additional ones such as loss of productivity and highly skilled employees, and a decrease in the motivation of the surviving staff (Allen and Seaman 2015). Studies reveal that yearly turnover costs may hit as high as 68 million dollars in some workshops, driving the need for efficient retention strategies (Allen and Seaman 2015). For WSU, where resources are already constrained, the financial dimension of turnover may be even more severe. Unlike wealthier UK institutions, WSU lacks the financial cushion to absorb these costs, which reinforces the urgency of effective retention strategies

2.3.1.2. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Germany

As per March 2006, Germany had a total of 1.9 million students and 334 state and state-approved higher education institutions, which are of different profiles: 117

universities, 159 Fachhochschulen (universities of applied sciences), and 58 colleges of art and music. Only universities and equivalent institutions of higher education have the right to award the doctorate (promotion) and a post-doctoral qualification to teach in higher education (habilitation). Research (particularly basic research) and the promotion of junior academics are also distinctive features of universities (Hartwig 2006). According to the German Constitution (Basic Law), the higher education system in Germany is, in principle, a matter that the individual federal states (Länder) are responsible for autonomously. The respective higher education acts of the Länder regulate the legal position of higher education institutions, their financing, and the instruments of governance and management, under the so-called principle of state sovereignty in cultural affairs. The universities are incorporated in the state administration as public corporations; this particularly concerns budget, economic and staff matters. Their annual budgets are part of the Länder budgets, which are adopted by the respective Länder parliaments (Hartwig 2006).

This decentralised model has been praised for allowing flexibility, but critics argue it creates unevenness in employment conditions and opportunities across regions, which in turn may fuel differences in turnover trends. Unlike centralised systems such as in France, Germany's fragmented structure means that staff retention strategies vary widely, making turnover not just an institutional but also a systemic challenge.

In Germany, the terms of continuing contracts are quite strict, and academics are routinely forced to leave a position at the end of a contract. For young researchers, the basic principle is 'up or out'. Professors are generally civil servants with permanent, lifelong positions that they have obtained after receiving habilitation, a formal postdoctoral qualification usually earned after the publication of a major book and a public lecture (Jongbloed 2012). For other academic staff members, such as lecturers and 'postdocs', wages are much lower, and jobs are more insecure; more than two-thirds are temporary employees on fixed-term contracts. The junior professorship is a new academic category in Germany, created to shorten the time until eligibility for a professorship has been reached, with the aim of abolishing the habilitation (Global World News 2012). This "dual system" of stability for professors versus insecurity for junior academics highlights a structural imbalance. While senior staff enjoy job security, the heavy reliance on temporary contracts at lower levels drives high

turnover, particularly among early-career researchers. Scholars such as Jongbloed (2012) therefore argue that financial stability alone cannot offset the career uncertainty embedded in the German model.

To avoid inbreeding, it is a general rule that junior professors need to apply for a position at a different institution after six years. Despite initial expectations, the availability of professorships has not met the anticipated levels. Typically, securing a professorship, gaining promotion, or increasing one's salary involves applying for a position at a different university. If successful, this can sometimes lead to negotiations for salary increases or additional resources either to remain at the current institution or as part of the offer to accept the new position (The Global Window on Higher Education, 2012).

Although this mobility requirement was intended to foster academic diversity, in practice it has intensified turnover by forcing staff to relocate frequently, regardless of institutional commitment. Instead of reducing dependence on habilitation, the junior professorship reform has inadvertently sustained job insecurity and amplified career instability.

Although the income for German academics, particularly due to social insurance and benefits, is competitive compared to other countries, uncertain career prospects make universities fewer appealing employers, particularly for younger researchers (Jongbloed, 2012). This creates an important paradox: while salaries and benefits are relatively attractive, insecurity and contract rigidity diminish the appeal of academic careers. Studies comparing Germany with systems such as the UK and USA suggest that institutional reputation and career progression opportunities often outweigh financial incentives in staff retention (Jongbloed, 2012; The Global Window on Higher Education, 2012). Hence, turnover in Germany is shaped less by pay structures and more by governance and career pathways, underscoring the importance of aligning structural reforms with retention objectives).

2.3.1.3. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Australia

In Australia, staff turnover in higher education institutions (HEI) has a unique impact on the HEI's landscape in comparison to other international contexts because it has new challenges and dynamics. As per research done by Stone (2019), two major

challenges that face Australian HEIs are how to deal with the global competition for top academic talent and managing the unpredictable staffing effects of local market instability. On top of this, there are budgetary limits and government policies that shape the sources of revenues for universities (Gandy et al. 2018). These factors combined create an unstable atmosphere in which employee turnover becomes both the consequence and the cause of the deterioration of the balance within the organisation. High rates of turnover in the Australian university sector have been linked to several factors, mainly related to job satisfaction, career progression and support from the organisation. Samad (2015) opines that people who have no path to career advancement are the ones who make up the majority of those who leave the organisation. They question the existence of strict academic hierarchies in universities that restrict upward movements and bring job dissatisfaction. On the contrary, Rathakrishnan (2016) argues that the basic problem is not only employment opportunities but also the definition of training pathways, which are often not clear and transparent to the staff.

Employee turnover has an impact on the organisation's finances. According to the statement by Haque (2019), the recruitment, induction, and training of new staff are the primary cost sources, but the indirect costs such as knowledge transfer, fall in student satisfaction and learning effectiveness have more severe consequences. These expenses indicate the financial impact of turnover on HEIs, whereas quite frequently the institutions face a dilemma of balancing financial limitations with the necessity of maintaining the competitive edge when it comes to attracting and retaining the core staff. In addition, cultural factors have an imperative role in shaping turnover rates. A study by Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) has shown that the culture of higher education institutions in Australia typically reflects broader national cultural characteristics such as high individualism, which can hinder team cohesion and develop organisational loyalty. This can create a clash between personal and organisational values, with higher turnover rates and management consequences. Indeed, according to Kim, Tam, Kim and Rhee (2017), a powerful, all-inclusive, and enabling organisational culture can overcome these effects and boost employee engagement and satisfaction.

A high employee turnover also ensures HEIs lose research output and the quality of education they provide. According to Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursiere and Raymond (2016),

this phenomenon results in a hindrance for research continuity, student supervision and ultimately an institution's reputation, which will not attract future students, funding and talent. As a result, the cost goes beyond the current problems and involves the strategic place of the institution in the international educational reality. In response to these challenges, Australian HEIs have begun to implement more robust human resource strategies aimed at improving retention. These strategies often include comprehensive onboarding programs, mentorship and support networks for early career academics, and flexible work arrangements to improve work-life balance (Allui and Sahni 2016). Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the need for more transparent and meritocratic promotion and tenure processes to ensure that career progression is both achievable and clearly aligned with institutional goals (Roberts 2018). Australian HEIs have adopted robust human resource techniques, which are intended to address these challenges and increase retention. These strategies often encompass thorough onboarding programs, mentorship and support networks for junior academics, and flexible work hours to ensure good work-life balance (Allui and Sahni 2016). Furthermore, it is becoming evident that the need for a more transparent and merit-based promotion and tenure framework is crucial to make sure that career progression is possible and really accords with the set goals of the institution (Roberts 2018). Dealing with employee turnover in Australia's HEIs is undoubtedly a multi-dimensional task that involves both structural and cultural aspects of the problem. Although financial and vocational factors are important, the organisational culture and the systems that characterise the business environment in which these institutions operate are equally important. Through the adoption of inclusive, context-sensitive, and people-centered strategies that sustain excitement and institutional belonging, HEIs may overcome turnover retention challenges, and hence, their stability and long-term success in the global arena.

2.3.2. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Africa

As mentioned the above, the education sector in Europe has developed at a fast pace. The section determines if the same can be said about Africa with a specific focus on employee turnover.

2.3.2.1. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Ghana

Over the years, successive governments have paid little attention to issues of employment conditions, turnover intentions, and the retention of academic staff in Ghanaian technical universities (Kwami 2001). The effect of poor funding as well as other challenges has been strongly associated with academic staff turnover and a shortage of skilled and qualified staff, which directly affects the quality of graduates produced and other educational outcomes (Amedorme and Fiagbe 2013). Academic performance in institutions of higher learning generally is thought to be falling in Ghana. The declining performance has been attributed to the high turnover rate among lecturers in these higher educational institutions (Hammond and Kutsanedzie 2015). According to Boakye et al. (2022:43), employers that fail to retain high-performing employees end up not only understaffed but also staffed with under-qualified personnel, which can truncate their ability to have an edge over competitors. In the views of Boakye et al. (2021) and Malikaarjunan (2006), managers of organisations are expected to motivate and retain high-performing employees in an environment of increased uncertainties and global competition. Indeed, globalization and progressive technological changes leading to organisational downsizing and restructuring have increased the need to pay attention to employee commitment and retention issues in organisations (Muah et al. 2021). Dovlo (2002) found that many professions, including the tertiary education sector in Ghana, have suffered the problem of retention. While retention of well-qualified employees for both teaching and non-teaching sections remains a crucial requirement for the continued relevance of tertiary institutions (NAB 2008), a key concern, especially the private ones, has been their inability to hire and retain well-qualified staff to actualise their visions and the overall aim of Ghana's education sector. According to Kwegyir-Aggrey (2016), many private universities in Ghana have become vulnerable to losing their highly qualified academic and administrative staff to public universities and a few other private universities.

According to Effah (2003), despite the absence of well-structured data on academic staff turnover in Ghanaian technical universities, these institutions have a staff vacancy level of about 60%. Moreover, Nsiah-Gyabaah (2005) found that Accra Technical University lost about 135 academic staff between 2000 and 2005, while Tamale Technical University lost 43 academic staff between 2008 and 2011. Iddrisu,

Alhassan, and Kinder (2014) reported that between 1996 and 2010 about 111 academic staff voluntarily resigned from the Kumasi Technical University. Comparatively, these technical universities are considered more endowed and better resourced than their counterparts across the country, yet they failed to retain experienced and qualified academic staff. This evidence implies that academic staff turnover might be high in less endowed technical universities, particularly in the northern part of the country because of uneven development across the north and south of the country (Iddrisu, Alhassan and Kinder 2014; Nsiah-Gyabaah 2005). According to Matimbwa and Ochumbo (2019) and Musah and Nkuah (2013), the trend of increasing turnover across the various technical universities can be attributed to several factors, including institutional, economic, and social conditions. In a recent study, Ayentimi, Burgess and Kantha (2018) noted that technical universities in Ghana are victims of frequent employee poaching by traditional universities and private-sector organisations. According to Musah and Nkuaremain (2013), employee turnover and its adverse effects on institutional productivity remain a major challenge to many tertiary institutions in Ghana. Ghana's education sector has experienced a massive transformation from the basic to the tertiary level. Until recently, tertiary education in Ghana was provided by the state and was provided in public universities, polytechnics, as well as other tertiary educational institutions. Besides the public tertiary institutions there are also several private universities, such as the Perez University College at Pomadze near Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. Thus, tertiary education provision in Ghana is liberalized and has therefore become competitive. Adu (2009) opines that one reason for the liberalization of tertiary education in Ghana is to reduce pressure on the public universities in the provision of quality tertiary education. Kidwell and Bennet (2014) assert that retention of talented staff promotes decision-making capabilities, enhances the quality of curriculum programs based on best practices, improves academic services, and reduces turnover costs. Shikha (2012) also added that academic institutions produce highly skilled and enlightened intellectual capital for the social transformation and economic development of a nation and develop core business activities, as well as research expertise to deliver quality learning experiences to students.

A strategic approach to employee retention may include adopting effective methods of engagement, safe and healthy workplaces and creating flexible work arrangements.

Retention practices help create an inclusive and diverse workforce where barriers are reduced and individuals can carry out their duties in an acceptable manner (Afenyo 2012). Mushrush (2014) states that an organisation must measure the cost of turnover, develop retention strategies and plan for some expected turnover and changing workforce culture. Employers must recognise that quality of work life is becoming more and more important to employees. To support this view, Mushrush (2014) lists seven things HEIs should guard against the high rate of employee turnover:

- ❖ Hire the appropriate calibre of people.
- ❖ Undertake continual career development to enhance employees' performance.
- ❖ Provide a conducive working environment with the requisite resources to enhance productivity.
- ❖ Put in place adequate compensation packages to motivate and boost the morale of employees.
- ❖ Recognize employee accomplishments and reward them accordingly.
- ❖ Promote inter and intrapersonal engagements in the workplace to ensure the collective decision-making process.
- ❖ Put in place appropriate retirement benefits to guarantee employees' comfort during old age and any incapacities.

In summary, while the organisation is production/service delivery orientated, it must at the same time be employee-friendly to reduce to the barest minimum employee turnover in the organisation.

2.3.2.2. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Ethiopia

Academic staff turnover intentions are a significant issue affecting various universities in Ethiopia, including Debre Berhan University, where it has become a serious concern. Turnover intention among academics is a widespread problem, particularly in developing countries, with Africa being notably impacted (Ahmad et al. 2012). In Ethiopia, academic turnover intentions present a major challenge for higher education institutions. However, it also serves as a key indicator of human resource development practices and the overall effectiveness of organisational leadership (Yarinbab and Mezgebu, 2019). High turnover rates can jeopardize efforts to achieve organisational

goals, making turnover one of the most costly and challenging workforce issues organisations face. Employee turnover can have a severely negative impact on any institution (Kemal, 2013). In Ethiopian universities, the turnover rate of academic staff has been steadily increasing, placing additional workload on those who remain.

The increased workload placed on employees leads to reduced morale and heightened stress, ultimately resulting in higher absenteeism. Several factors have been identified as significantly influencing staff turnover intention, including job satisfaction, job security, salary, allowances/incentives, opportunities for career growth and training, and positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Haileyesus et al. 2019). Ibrahim Yimer et al. (2017) noted that at Mada Wellabu University, poor working conditions—such as a lack of essential facilities like offices, chairs, internet, and toilets—were the most frequently cited reasons for academic staff turnover. Other key factors included poor management and leadership, along with inadequate salaries. Academic staff with five or more years of service were significantly more likely to leave the institution. This issue is similarly acute at Debre Berhan University, where the 2021 university report indicated that 190 academic staff left between 2018 and 2021.

Turnover intention has a substantial impact on organisational costs, with numerous negative consequences for institutions. The departure of highly skilled employees can disrupt organisational operations, reduce service quality, cause administrative inefficiencies, and increase the costs associated with recruiting and training new staff (Alubelkassaw and Belete, 2018). According to Islam (2013), the concept of organisational fit highlights the importance of aligning employee and organisational goals and values, as this alignment is critical for fostering affective commitment. In Ethiopian higher education institutions, turnover intentions among academic staff are alarmingly high. For example, studies have revealed that turnover intentions at Madda Walabu University, Mettu University, and the University of Gondar stood at 75.6%, 75%, and 66%, respectively (Yimer et al. 2017; Yarinbab and Mezgebu, 2019; Dachew et al. 2016), indicating a significant desire among academic staff to leave these institutions.

Earlier studies have not adequately explored the relationship between specific demographic characteristics, such as age and gender, and turnover intentions among

academic staff in Ethiopian institutions. A few studies focusing on gender in public universities in Ethiopia (Demlie and Endris, 2021; Mulie and Sime, 2018) found that female academics were more likely to consider leaving than their male counterparts. However, Yarinbab and Mezgebu (2019) reported that male academics at Mettu University exhibited higher turnover intentions than female academics. On the other hand, Agmasu (2020) found no significant difference in turnover intentions between male and female academic staff at Woldia University. Similarly, Haileyesus et al. (2019) concluded that there was no substantial gender-based differences in faculty members' turnover intentions, a finding supported by Yimer et al. (2017), who also found no significant gender differences in academic staff turnover intentions.

These mixed results suggest that a definitive conclusion cannot be reached regarding gender and turnover intentions among academic staff. As such, developing nationwide, gender-specific retention strategies for academic employees are challenging due to the inconsistency in findings. Strydom (2011) points out that higher education institutions (HEIs) face numerous human resource challenges in the evolving global environment, and managing human capital is a crucial concern. HEIs aim to provide broad knowledge, foster academic development, educate students, and address national skill development needs. For these institutions to achieve their objectives, Strydom (2011) argues that human capital factors must be prioritised.

In a study conducted by Taye and Getnet (2020) across 10 agricultural colleges, it was found that 82% of employees expressed an intention to leave their jobs. Consequently, the efficiency and performance of Ethiopia's public universities, including Madda Walabu University, are significantly impacted by employee turnover. To fulfil the university's mission and vision, many academic staff members have been sent to short- and long-term training programs, both domestically and internationally, to pursue master's and PhD degrees.

According to Muhammad et al. (2013), employee turnover is a significant issue that can greatly impact an organisation's overall performance (Ubagu and Gbuushi, 2020). It is often recommended that organisations implement clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to reduce the gap between top management and middle management, which can help in identifying and addressing employee turnover (Muhammad et al. 2013). Tadesse (2018) adds that many organisations adopt

practices to retain key talent, such as fostering a positive work environment, involving employees in decision-making, offering growth and career development opportunities, ensuring work-life balance, providing competitive pay, and implementing a range of employee welfare programs. Although the relationship between these factors and employee retention has been widely studied, the findings are often based on research conducted in Western and Asian societies, which may introduce cultural biases that do not fully align with African organisations, such as those in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian government has set a goal to significantly increase the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) and expand the number of universities and university colleges in the country. This plan involves both expanding the intake capacity of existing institutions and establishing 12 new university colleges within a short time frame, while simultaneously maintaining educational quality. However, Ethiopian universities are currently facing a shortage of academic staff (Taye and Getnet, 2020). Employee turnover is also recognised as a critical issue, particularly in human resource management (Chan et al. 2010). Meeting basic needs, offering a good working environment, and providing competitive pay and benefits are complex and challenging tasks for organisations. All businesses aim to increase productivity and reduce turnover, which ultimately contributes to profitability. Educational institutions must manage voluntary turnover effectively to minimise its negative impact on both the organisation and the broader economy. According to Dube, Freeman, and Reich (2010), the cost of replacing an employee is substantial, averaging around \$4,000 per recruit. Gupta and Shaw (2014) further note that employee turnover can lead to reduced efficiency and negatively affect financial performance.

2.3.3. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Asia

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have increasingly normalized high turnover among administrators and faculty, treating it as a common aspect of business practice. Too often, institutions attribute downsizing and budget cuts to broader economic conditions. As departments continue to downsize, the overall operations of the institution become compromised. Staffing shortages lead to increased work demands across various departments, often resulting in employee burnout or poor retention (Du

Plooy and Roodt, 2010). Pakistan will be used as a key reference point for insight into employee turnover in higher education within Asia.

2.3.3.1. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Pakistan

In 1980, there were nineteen universities and two degree-awarding institutes in Pakistan. Today, there are ninety universities and twenty-seven degree-awarding institutions in the country (Zahra, Irum, and Chishti 2013). This phenomenal change was caused by regulatory and statutory changes at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) level. Along with the increase in number, there has been a major change in the business of education. Zahra, Irum, and Chishti (2013) further assert that education has been commercialized to an extent. The single most important factor in the increase of institutions and universities is the projected increase in student enrolment. This paradigm shift has resulted in high turnover among teachers, as many opportunities have become available to them. They can now switch jobs and have the choice to select or reject institutions based on factors they consider most important to their jobs (Zahra, Irum, and Chishti 2013).

According to Müller, Alliata, and Benninghoff (2009), Pakistan's higher education system is highly competitive, with over 135 public and private institutions vying for students and funding. In this competitive environment, having capable, qualified, and skilled academic staff not only boosts an institution's prestige and ranking, but also aids in attracting more students and staying competitive. However, these institutions face competition not only among themselves but also with the private sector for recruiting and retaining qualified employees. Müller et al. (2009) noted that the turnover rate of teaching staff in higher education institutions, particularly in public universities, is around 9 percent. As a result, employee retention is a significant challenge for many higher education institutions in Pakistan, as it is in many other developing countries. Previous research has emphasised that understanding employees' behaviour and attitudes is crucial for improving retention (Müller et al. 2009). However, studies focused on faculty retention in higher education institutions in developing countries remain limited (Ghaffar et al. 2013).

According to Zahra, Irum, and Chishti (2013), most of the Pakistani universities are particularly affected by the problem of turnover, as they face growing pressure to produce graduates to meet the needs of the country's dynamically changing business

environment. Additionally, the availability of skilled faculties is limited. According to Zahra, Irum, and Chishti (2013), HEIs have no choice but to accommodate these changes and address the issue of turnover. Turnover becomes a serious but intractable issue. Unfortunately, despite employee turnover being such a serious problem in Asia, there is a lack of studies investigating it; in particular, studies using a comprehensive set of variables are rare. According to Mubarak, Wahab, and Khan (2012), Pakistan had seriously neglected HEIs until the establishment of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2002 to develop and promote the country's higher education system. HEC regulates all the HEIs, which are mainly categorised as universities/degree-awarding institutions (DAIs) and the affiliated colleges. According to the updated statistical figure of HEC, there are 136 public and private universities/DAIs in Pakistan. Employee turnover has become a major concern of employers, as it indicates an ongoing challenge for current practitioners and researchers (Abdulkareem, Chauhan, and Maitama 2015). According to Yusoff and Khan (2013), employee turnover is one of the major problems in HEIs in Pakistan due to the tremendous growth of the education industry and the high switching of academics as compared to public universities. Faculty retention remains a challenge in Pakistani institutions (Siddiqui 2010). This switching trend among educational institutions has increased during the last decade. Better emoluments from other institutions provide a basis to switch the parent institution these days (Khan 2011). Employees who feel that they are underpaid or not receiving appropriate training or promotion are highly likely to quit the organisation (Coff 1996). Dockel, Basson, and Coetzee (2006) have identified compensation, training development and promotion as the most important retention factors. Perhaps for faculty, the need for learning and progression in the academic career has now become one of the prominent needs. Employee turnover also results in low efficiency, employee performance and morale among employees (Ongori 2007).

The increasing turnover intentions of employees are a chaotic problem for most HEIs in Pakistan. Best-performing employees are looking for new opportunities in the market where they are better off in every aspect of their work in Karachi's private universities. Researchers are working to identify ways in which they can retain their best performers. Most of them have concluded that job satisfaction is a key aspect of retaining any employee (Idrees 2016). Imami, Rathore, and Khan (2017) suggested

that lecturers are the key assets of any education sector, whether private or public. If lecturers are disappointed with the decisions of the management, it will have a major impact on their performance. Their focus will shift away from the classroom, negatively impacting their lectures. As a result, the burden on students will increase because they need to find other sources to study, which will ultimately harm their results. This also causes students to struggle in their careers after completing their higher education. Sarmad, Ajmal, Shamim, Saleh, and Malik (2016) argue that compensation is one of the key motivating factors for retaining employees. They concluded that an employee's motivation increases the chances of their retention. Compensation is a basic requirement of any job, and individuals prefer it to be a top priority while considering work because it is the aspect that will secure their future, which is why focusing on it is a significant consideration.

Armstrong (2009) identified several factors that contribute to employee retention and proposed various measures to ensure it. These include providing opportunities for skill development and career advancement, making the work as engaging as possible, holding line managers accountable for turnover within their teams, ensuring new employees have realistic job expectations and receive adequate training during their induction, establishing consultative bodies to give employees a voice, maximizing job security, and evaluating employee commitment based on results rather than hours worked. Researchers emphasise the importance of estimating the costs of employee turnover before designing effective retention strategies, and the impact of these programs should be continuously assessed to ensure they contribute to organisational success (Scott et al. 2007; Zingheim and Schuster, 2008). In general, employee retention stems from implementing policies and practices that motivate employees to stay by providing a work environment that meets their needs (Baer et al. 1996). However, Allen (2008) notes that there is no simple solution to fostering employee commitment and effectively managing retention. High-quality academic staff are essential for the success of any educational institution, as they are key contributors to the production of knowledge and awareness within the country (Khalid, Irshad, and Mahmood, 2012).

2.3.3.2. Employee turnover in higher education institutions in Malaysia

Employees are the most valuable asset in any organisation, and retaining talented faculty members is crucial for universities to strengthen their capacity in response to the evolving landscape of global research and higher education (Coetzer et al. 2018). However, attracting and retaining young, talented teaching staff has become increasingly difficult due to shifting social, economic, demographic, and psychological factors (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018a). High employee turnover can be costly for academic institutions, as they may need to invest in resources, such as salary benefits, to retain staff (Akgunduz and Eryilmaz, 2018). If not, institutions may find themselves repeatedly engaging in the recruitment process to secure top talent, which leads to increased expenses (Thakur and Bhatnagar, 2017).

HEIs play a crucial role in the advancement of a nation's development and human capital. The progress and growth of a country are intricately tied to the universal provision of education as a fundamental civil right to its entire populace. It is of utmost importance that students receive the best education possible to ensure a nation's progress. Unfortunately, high turnover intentions amongst academic and support staff in universities have had many negative impacts on the quality of education provided to students. Therefore, when it comes to HEIs, the role of academics is vital to producing high-quality graduates, as it is the academics who act as mentors, nurture students, become role models, and spread knowledge to their students. As indicated by Halid et al. (2020), there is a notable prevalence of high turnover rates among employees within specific Malaysian universities. This phenomenon is of significant concern to numerous educational institutions, as highlighted by Masud and Daud (2019). The research conducted by Falahat et al. (2019) revealed an escalation in the annual turnover rate within Malaysia's education sector, surging from 13.2% in 2013 to 20% in 2017. Moreover, Malaysian private universities have significantly higher turnover rates than public universities (GuiXia and Rashid, 2019). Thus, Orpina et al. (2022) also cited in their study that "each year, more than 26% of academic staff at private universities leave, compared to 11% at public universities". Adding to the complexity, the turnover rate among academic staff at Malaysian universities has surged, consequently leading to shortages in labour supply. The turnover rate for academic staff within private universities stands at over 26%, while public universities exhibit a notably lower rate of 11%.

According to the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF, 2012), the turnover rate specifically for academic staff from private higher institutions for the period from July 2010 till June 2011 was 30%. This figure is surprisingly high for a profession that is thought to be less stressful. According to Feng and Angeline (2010), over the past decades, Malaysian colleges have continued to face the problem of academic staff turnover, or 'brain drain'. Academic staff turnover has become a significant global concern. Data from LinkedIn reveals that in 2017, the education sector experienced a turnover rate of 11.2%, making it one of the industries with a notably high turnover (Petrone, 2018). In Asia, the retention of administrative staff is closely tied to organisational support, which serves as a motivating factor to keep them committed to their roles. Additionally, improving incentives can enhance the overall job satisfaction of administrative personnel (Thung, 2021).

In Malaysia, the high turnover rate of lecturers has emerged as a pressing issue in higher education. Paul and Kee (2020) reported a substantial increase in academic staff turnover within the Malaysian education system. This trend has led to growing shortages of academic staff across various disciplines (Nguyen et al. 2020). Khan et al. (2010) argue that lecturers' dissatisfaction is a key factor driving this turnover, citing concerns over "job security, supervisor support, compensation, job autonomy, KPI attainability, and overall job satisfaction" as primary contributors. As a result, the quality of education has suffered, with declining lecturer performance (Rathakrishnan et al. 2016). Despite considerable research on the issue, the problem persists, indicating that it has not been effectively addressed.

What becomes clear from these findings is that while quantitative data (e.g., turnover percentages) consistently demonstrate the magnitude of the problem, there is less consensus on why turnover persists despite awareness. For example, Khan et al. (2010) emphasise intrinsic job-related issues such as autonomy and KPI attainability, while Zamri (2023) points more strongly to structural and extrinsic drivers such as low pay and career stagnation. This contrast suggests that turnover in Malaysia is not reducible to a single factor but reflects the interplay of organisational culture, labour market dynamics, and individual career expectations. The persistence of turnover, despite extensive documentation, signals a gap between academic diagnosis and

institutional response, highlighting the need for context-specific interventions rather than generic retention strategies.

Malaysian universities must tackle the root causes of lecturer turnover and implement strategies for retention. According to Zamri (2023), the turnover of lecturers in Malaysia poses a significant challenge, leading to a loss of talent and experience, reduced productivity, and increased recruitment and training costs. The literature highlights low salaries, inadequate benefits, and limited career growth opportunities as key drivers of high turnover among Malaysian lecturers. These factors contribute to job dissatisfaction, diminished motivation, and a sense of career stagnation, prompting many lecturers to consider leaving their current institutions (Zamri, 2023).

The Malaysian case provides an important comparative lens for this research, which investigates turnover within South African HEIs. By recognising the multi-dimensional drivers of turnover in Malaysia, this study can better frame its own research questions and hypotheses. It also justifies why the present study incorporates both organisational and individual-level factors (e.g., job satisfaction, support, compensation) into its model of turnover intention, ensuring alignment between the literature review, research instruments, and empirical hypotheses.

2.4. Effect of employee turnover on the organisation

Lee (2018) emphasises that a high employee turnover rate can negatively impact organisational performance if not properly managed. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) add that the increasing rate of employee turnover presents a significant challenge for organisations, affecting their overall performance. High turnover can lead clients to question the stability of an organisation's management, causing uncertainty about whether to continue doing business with the organisation.

Kim et al. (2017) argue that while employee turnover can undoubtedly affect organisational performance, it is frequently associated with negative consequences. This is largely due to the loss of experienced workers, which can disrupt organisational output. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) also identify several key areas where employee turnover can influence an organisation's performance, including efficiency, productivity, innovation, quality, and profitability. These factors will be discussed in detail below.

However, while most scholars emphasise the negative implications, some research highlights potential positive effects. For instance, Glebbeek and Bax (2004) argue that limited turnover can bring in new talent and fresh perspectives, thereby stimulating innovation. This indicates that the effect of turnover is not universally negative but highly context-dependent. At a doctoral level, this nuance is critical because it suggests that turnover outcomes depend on how organisations manage the balance between knowledge retention and new talent acquisition, a perspective that directly informs the present study's focus on the higher education sector.

2.4.1. Efficiency

Efficiency in educational institutions reflects how well inputs are converted to desirable outputs, which in turn is a measure of institutional effectiveness. Witte and López-Torres (2017) define the term efficiency as a ratio between inputs like the work force, time and financial resources and outputs produced by the educational process and the operation of the educational institution. An organisation's employee turnover indirectly affects the continuity of this relationship by changing how resources are being spent.

Firstly, staff turnover is related to the allocation and efficacy of resources. Nyaga (2015) shows that allocation of resources is key to fulfilling the organisational goals. Nonetheless, such intervals in staffing may entail disruptive shifts in resource allocation which can cause problems with service effectiveness. For example, new staff might need more training and time to reach the same level of productivity as their predecessors, meaning that there will be an input increase for the same output. In addition, turnover can weaken the quality of the products as institutional memory diminishes when the experienced employees leave the institution (Call et al. 2015). It is not possible to measure this loss, but it significantly influences how well the institution functions. Apart from experienced staff needing to handle their roles, new staff members may also have to learn the institutional culture and internal networks, which are very important when it comes to decision-making and operations.

Critically, while Nyaga (2015) and Call et al. (2015) emphasise resource disruption, Park and Shaw (2013) stress that turnover effects on efficiency depend on whether the departing employees occupy core or peripheral roles. In higher education, the departure of academic staff in scarce disciplines is far more disruptive than turnover in administrative functions. This comparison shows that a uniform interpretation of

turnover may oversimplify its organisational effects, hence the need for contextualised analysis in this study.

Employee's turnover may lead to lower loyalty and knowledge as employees tend to have poor understanding about the organisation. Such a change often increases the levels of absenteeism and lateness, which consequently worsens institutional effectiveness (Al-Suraihi, Samikon, and Ibrahim 2021). Every time a knowledgeable worker leaves, he or she whisks away with them not only their expertise but also their familiarity with the institution's students and its macro-level strategy. The substitution procedure which demands recruitment, selection, and training consumes a lot of time and money, increasing the expenses per output. Lee et al. (2017) state that when the organisation is made up of a high level of novice workers who leave very often, the whole system's efficiency is damaged. Novices have a low production rate at the start of the learning process and therefore need more time and capability to produce the earlier degree of output. This situation includes the need to carry out a continued process of training and readjustment, each of which is obviously less efficient than for a more stable employment case.

This body of work demonstrates contrasting positions: some studies view efficiency losses as inevitable (Lee et al., 2017), while others (Park & Shaw, 2013) see variability depending on role criticality. For the present research, such debates justify examining efficiency losses within the South African higher education system where certain academic roles are indispensable and replacement costs extremely high.

2.4.2. Productivity

According to Terzioglu, Temel, and Uslu Sahan (2016), productivity in an organisational context is defined as the ratio between output and input. Musiige and Maassen (2015) further add, the rate of production per unit of time defines productivity. Productivity is a crucial factor in measuring an organisation's performance. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) add that employees who are knowledgeable about generating a particular unit of output utilise less vitality in generating the unit in a shorter timeframe than the employees who are not knowledgeable. Therefore, when an organisation experiences turnover, some inexperienced employees performing the duties of the employees who have left can negatively affect the productivity of the organisation. However, Mohammed, Mohammed, and Gana (2022) contend that the employees'

skillfulness and capability are important factors in productivity, irrespective of how long the employee has been working for an organisation.

However, Mohammed, Mohammed, and Gana (2022) challenge the assumption that tenure alone drives productivity, arguing instead that skillset and training are more decisive than years of experience. This view suggests that high turnover may not always result in productivity loss if the new recruits are highly skilled or if organisations invest adequately in onboarding.

A research study carried out by Deloitte (2015) in Canada in the construction, sector uncovered that workers with lower work incumbency battled more with achieving production objectives than their knowledgeable colleagues. In that capacity, it can be contended that employee turnover affects productivity in an organisation in a negative manner. Employees are the backbone of any organisational success, and therefore, they need to be motivated and maintained in HEIs at all costs to aid the institutions to be globally competitive in terms of providing quality products and services to society. Employee turnover can cause employee productivity rates to go down, which means that your business may fall short of its goals if employee turnover becomes an issue. If employee turnover is high, there will be a need to spend more money on employee recruitment and replacement costs rather than focusing your efforts on increasing employee productivity.

The debate between tenure-based productivity (Deloitte, 2015) and skill-based productivity (Mohammed et al., 2022) reveals a critical gap for higher education institutions: while academic productivity is often tied to years of research and teaching experience, there is also potential for new entrants with advanced qualifications to perform effectively. This contradiction highlights the importance of balancing retention strategies with talent acquisition, which frames a key dimension of the present study.

2.4.3. Innovativeness

According to Baxter (2018), innovation involves generating new ideas, designs, processes, or products. When employees leave an organisation, contributing to turnover, new talent must be hired. However, it often takes time for these new hires to acquire the necessary knowledge to become innovative, which can negatively affect organisational performance. Perera (2015), in a study of the banking sectors in Sri

Lanka and New Zealand, found that organisations with lower employee turnover tend to be more innovative than those with higher turnover rates. This is because inexperienced employees often struggle to innovate compared to their more experienced counterparts, who are already well-versed in their roles and can generate innovations more easily. Thus, employee turnover can hinder an organisation's innovation capacity, ultimately impacting performance. Qin and Nembhard (2015) emphasise that continual training and support foster a workforce that is competent, competitive, and efficient from the start. Providing employees with the necessary skills early on is crucial for job performance. Additionally, empowering employees can enhance staff retention and continuity, particularly in HEIs. In the higher education sector, frequent turnover of academic and administrative staff not only disrupts knowledge transfer but also weakens the culture of research and innovation, which is vital for institutional growth.

2.4.4. Quality

According to Razak, Nirwanto, and Triatmanto (2016), quality refers to the extent to which a product or service meets specific needs. Ensuring quality requires organisations to improve services, systems, and processes to ensure they are fully functional and effective for stakeholders. Sharma and Srivastava (2018) add that output quality plays a critical role in determining customer satisfaction. Since quality guarantees customer loyalty, it is essential for organisations to retain skilled and knowledgeable employees who can maintain high product and service standards (Al Mamun and Hasan, 2017). Employees with relevant experience in upholding quality are generally more effective than their less experienced colleagues (Lee et al. 2017). Consequently, high employee turnover can negatively impact an organisation's quality levels, which in turn affects its overall performance.

When turnover occurs, the organisation loses knowledgeable employees who are often replaced by less experienced staff. Call et al. (2015) state that this makes it challenging for the organisation to maintain its quality standards. However, in some cases, employee turnover may result in the hiring of new employees with unique skills, which could potentially enhance quality. Despite this, a study by Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) found that high employee turnover typically has a negative impact on an organisation's quality attributes. Providing a high-quality work environment in HEIs,

along with employee-valued benefits, may boost satisfaction levels and reduce turnover. Homer (2007) also notes that staff turnover is both costly and disruptive, reducing output and requiring modifications to schedules and programs. This can lead to significant financial losses as organisations need to hire additional staff to fill the gaps. In HEIs, the impact is particularly evident in teaching and learning delivery, where inexperienced replacements may compromise academic standards and the student experience.

2.4.5. Profitability

According to Lee et al. (2017), one of the primary objectives of organisations is to maximise profits. However, high employee turnover negatively impacts profitability due to the significant costs associated with replacing employees, such as expenses for training, development, and onboarding of new talent. Otache et al. (2022) argue that the competency and effectiveness of new hires are critical in determining the extent of financial loss caused by employee turnover. Kurniawaty et al. (2019) add that some organisations have reported negative profits as a result of high turnover. In HEIs, unmanaged high turnover rates can severely affect profitability. Employee turnover can become a substantial barrier to both productivity and profitability in HEIs, as it reduces the potential revenue that a stable, skilled workforce could generate. Moreover, beyond financial losses, profitability in HEIs is also linked to reputation and student enrolment; frequent staff exits may discourage prospective students and external funders, further eroding institutional sustainability.

2.5. Determinants of Employee Turnover in Higher Education Institutions

Turnover is a persistent and complex organisational phenomenon that occurs across industries, including higher education institutions (HEIs). While it is often treated as a single outcome, research demonstrates that its causes cannot be explained by a single factor but rather by an interplay of multiple organisational, personal, and contextual variables (Al-Suraihi, Samikon, and Ibrahim, 2021; Okyere-Kwakye, Nor, Assampong, and Awang, 2018). Scholars such as Mobley (2011) conceptualise turnover as a multidimensional construct shaped by both “push” factors (e.g. dissatisfaction, lack of development opportunities) and “pull” factors (e.g. external career prospects). This multidimensionality highlights that turnover is not merely a

reaction to one condition but a cumulative response to how employees interpret their work environment.

In the context of HEIs, the determinants of turnover extend beyond typical organisational challenges to include sector-specific pressures such as limited promotional pathways, high workloads, and lack of structured career planning. Studies diverge on which factor exerts the strongest influence: some prioritise job satisfaction (Hom, Lee, Shaw, and Hausknecht, 2017), while others emphasise career development opportunities (Kraimer et al., 2011). These differences point to the need for context-sensitive inquiry rather than universal assumptions.

This study builds on these debates by examining determinants such as career development, recognition, supervision, and work-life balance as predictors of turnover intention in HEIs. By empirically testing these variables, the research not only identifies which factors are most salient in the South African higher education context but also clarifies how they interact to shape employee decisions to remain or leave.

2.5.1. Conditions of service

Management often views improved salaries and benefits as the primary drivers of job-seeking and turnover. However, institutions that offer high salaries and attractive benefits are not necessarily the most successful in retaining employees (Lee, 2018). Retention is believed to be influenced by other factors, such as workplace climate. Ekhsan (2019) defines workplace climate as a work environment that facilitates efficient job performance, which includes physical working conditions, office space, availability of tools and equipment, work hours, internal support from administrative departments, workplace safety, and support from supervisors.

The terms and conditions of academic employment and job satisfaction are critical factors that may impact academics' commitment to quality development (QD), quality management (QM), quality assurance (QA), and overall effectiveness in delivering high-quality education (Phan, 2018). Walter Sisulu University serves as an example where conditions of service significantly influenced employee satisfaction. Research conducted in 2006 revealed that academic staff at the university were concerned about the lack of promotions since 1995 (Mammen, 2006). There was also a perceived lack of recognition for their efforts or incentives for outstanding performance. Phan (2018)

noted that academics were dissatisfied with changes to their conditions of service made without their input, particularly regarding frequent discussions of retrenchment, a lack of stability, high rental costs with reduced housing subsidies, and decreased educational subsidies for dependents. When academics are unhappy with their working conditions and unaware of efforts to improve them, they may seek employment elsewhere (Phan, 2018).

Saunders-Scott et al. (2018) also explored factors that influence academic staff retention. They found that decisions to leave are driven by various factors, including salary, work-life balance, and career opportunities. High turnover in HEIs is often linked to dissatisfaction with senior relations, working conditions, insufficient research time, excessive workloads, lack of financial rewards, limited career advancement opportunities, and poor work-life balance (Saunders-Scott et al. 2018).

Debates in the literature highlight that compensation alone rarely guarantees long-term retention. Herzberg's two-factor theory, for instance, classifies pay as a hygiene factor that prevents dissatisfaction but does not necessarily motivate employees to stay if career growth opportunities are absent. Conversely, career development is frequently seen as a stronger predictor of retention in knowledge-intensive sectors like higher education, where staff value opportunities for promotion, research autonomy, and academic recognition (Kraimer et al., 2011). The interaction between compensation and career growth is therefore crucial: while inadequate pay accelerates turnover intentions, its negative effect can be mitigated if staff perceive clear promotion pathways and recognition structures. Similarly, competitive pay without career advancement prospects often results in disengagement and eventual turnover.

While much of the literature positions conditions of service as a dominant predictor of turnover, there are debates around its relative strength compared to intrinsic motivators such as professional recognition or research autonomy. For example, while Lee (2018) highlights salary as insufficient for retention, Saunders-Scott et al. (2018) stress that career opportunities and work-life balance are equally decisive. This tension suggests that conditions of service operate interactively rather than independently. In this study, conditions of service are tested as a core variable influencing turnover intentions among staff at WSU, particularly to establish whether

extrinsic motivators (pay, benefits, working conditions) outweigh intrinsic motivators (career growth, recognition) in this institutional context.

2.5.2. Organisational culture and commitment

According to Warrick (2017), organisational culture is the distinctive combination of beliefs, values, working styles, and relationships that are present in an organisation. This culture becomes a key factor influencing organisational commitment, which is an employee's degree of identification with, and voluntary membership in, an organisation. According to Hanaysha (2016) institutional culture as one of the defining qualities of HEIs determining whether an individual will stay or leave based on the alignment between the individual's values and the institution's culture. According to Paais and Pattiruhu (2020), those candidates who are selected and recruited when their personal values and career aspirations are in line with the organisational culture have a greater possibility of developing a deep organisational commitment. This dedication makes them stay back, as they would have achieved their growth plans and goals within the organisation. However, a misfit with the organisation's values can cause the employees to feel less connected and seek for new jobs elsewhere where their personal and professional needs are better met. Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi (2019) underline the fact that organisational commitment is a kind of attitudinal position where workers identify with their organisations, thereby enhancing their loyalty and effectiveness are boosted. Individuals with high organisational commitment tend to stay at their work longer (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016). This commitment helps to create a more stable workforce through individual employee as well as organisational citizenship behaviour enabling a cooperative and productive working environment.

Besides, organisational commitment affects turnover by the way it influences employee behaviour and job performance. Tümkən and Sharm (2021) specify that commitment is manifested by an attitude of loyalty, attachment and involvement to the organisation and its objectives. These psychological factors as a whole boost employee's retention, thus leading to lower turnover rates. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) emphasise this by demonstrating a very strong negative correlation between organisational loyalty and the desire to quit. The results of the study show that employees who both enjoy their job and have a strong connection to their organisation

are unlikely to leave. On the other hand, when commitment to the job becomes diminishes, employees are more likely to display turnover behaviour. This may be due to many factors, such as lack of good leadership, a wronged reward system and a lack of shared goals that are essential to boosting feelings of belonging and loyalty among employees (Malietso 2023). The literature consistently shows that commitment across the organisation can help in addressing turnover intentions. It is therefore a strategic concern for HEIs to address high turnover rates and keep their best staff.

Although the consensus in the literature is that strong organisational culture and commitment reduce turnover, some studies caution that excessive conformity to organisational values can also stifle innovation and create dissatisfaction among academics seeking autonomy. This is particularly relevant in HEIs where academic freedom is highly valued. The contrasting evidence highlights the importance of testing organisational commitment as a turnover variable in this study. Specifically, this research examines whether alignment between individual values and WSU's institutional culture significantly predicts employees' decision to stay or leave. By doing so, the study addresses whether organisational commitment operates as a protective factor against turnover, or whether its effects are moderated by contextual issues such as leadership style and resource constraints.

2.5.3. Lack of career development

Career development is defined as an organisation's formal approach to ensuring that employees who possess the necessary skills and qualifications are available when needed (Zacher, Rudolph, Todorovic, and Ammann, 2019). In HEIs, career development is seen as a critical issue. However, many employees in these institutions view their employment not as a long-term career commitment but as a temporary opportunity or a stepping stone (Kurniawaty, Ramly, and Ramlawati, 2019). It is essential that immediate supervisors provide support to employees, but the responsibility for career development ultimately rests with the employees themselves. Guan, Zhou, Ye, Juand, and Zou (2015) argue that employees with higher career adaptability are more likely to achieve career satisfaction, which in turn reduces turnover intentions (Lu, Gursoy, and Neale, 2016). A study conducted in China further demonstrated that employees with strong adaptive skills experienced higher career satisfaction and promotability. Chan et al. (2016) suggest that promotable employees

have less intention to leave, as they feel their supervisors are preparing them for better opportunities. Therefore, employees with greater career adaptability tend to be more satisfied and less likely to leave their organisations (Chan and Mai 2015). In this study, we test career development as a determinant of employee turnover to evaluate whether it is primarily an individual-driven or institution-driven factor in the HEI context.

Further, empirical evidence shows that employees with strong adaptive skills experience higher career satisfaction and promotability, which reduces their turnover intentions (Chan and Mai, 2015). Yet, scholars like Vondracek, Lerner, and Schulenberg (2019) argue that performance improvement is contingent upon the perception of growth opportunities, not just adaptability. This suggests that an employee may be highly adaptable but still dissatisfied if the organisation fails to provide growth pathways. In this study, we investigate this contradiction by examining whether career development opportunities mediate the link between employee adaptability and turnover.

Organisations that support career development tend to see a reduction in voluntary turnover, as employees are more likely to stay if they believe there are opportunities for growth within the organisation (Kraimer et al. 2011). Patton and McMahon (2021) identify several reasons why organisations prioritise career development for their employees:

- ❖ The quality of an employee's work life is improved when he/she can progress in his/her career.
- ❖ Employees can learn new skills which means that there is always a demand for them.
- ❖ Career development of employees decreases an organisation's employee turnover rate.
- ❖ The personal job satisfaction of the employees is enhanced when their abilities have been developed and when they are placed in positions that suit their ambitions and abilities.

Therefore, this study tests lack of career development as a significant variable influencing employee turnover in HEIs, with a focus on whether insufficient career

growth opportunities intensify turnover intentions, despite the presence of individual adaptability.

2.5.4. Engagement and embeddedness

Engagement is a modern concept in motivation that is significant for both employees and employers due to its positive outcomes (Zacher et al. 2019). Holston-Okae and Mushi (2018) argue that poor employee engagement and commitment can lead to higher turnover rates. When individuals perceive strong organisational support, they tend to be more motivated to put in greater effort. Additionally, when employees feel empowered, they are more likely to remain with their employer (Lis, Wahyuddin, Thoyib, Ilham, and Sinta, 2022). Workers become embedded in their jobs when they form close connections with colleagues and see themselves as a good fit within the organisation. Nguyen et al. (2018), cited in Davis (2018), found that employees who are embedded in their roles are less likely to leave the organisation.

This implies that low engagement and embeddedness on the part of employees will probably lead to turnover. Tiwari (2015) posits that low employee empowerment levels can lead to a high turnover rate, while Murray and Holmes (2021) opine that empowerment creates a feeling of obligation in the employees who stay in the organisation even when under pressure to leave from others who may not feel part of the institution.

Alessandri, Borgogni, Schaufeli, Caprara, and Consiglio (2015) argue that higher work engagement in employees leads to an accurate recognition of their work by the employees, as well as proactive and passionate participation in their work. Moreover, they set ambitious goals aside from their current work and have forward-looking attitudes that propel them forward. Work engagement plays a very important role in emphasising the needs of the employees and providing a quality work environment; affinity and passion for one's work can lead to contributions towards corporate performance. Moreover, work engagement has been increasingly used as an indicator of return on investment on human capital by organisation (Alessandri et al. 2015).

2.5.5. Stress and work-overload

Stress has several definitions, but it is regularly utilised to describe sentiments of weakness, misery, and powerlessness to adapt. According to Farooq Abbasi (2015),

stressful work results in psychological strain, which causes employees to show behavioural reactions that lead to turnover. Work overload is known to influence work fatigue, which results in stress (Biganeh et al. 2022). Job stress results in low performance, productivity, absenteeism and ultimately, turnover. Izdebski et al. (2023) identified a few causes of stress in the workplace for employees that lead to turnover, such as work overload, role ambiguity, role clarity, financial insecurity, lack of feedback and career growth. Role ambiguity and role clarity happen when individuals are indistinct or ambiguous about their desires in the working environment or their job role (Palomino and Frezatti 2016). These individuals lack clarity about their expectations and goals.

According to Palomino and Frezatti (2016), in such circumstances result in uncertainty on the part of the employee as to what exactly he or she should be doing in the light of other employees' perspectives and perceptions about their job. The organisation must clearly define each employee's role to prevent role ambiguity. Without this clarity, employees may not understand their roles or responsibilities, leading them to quit their jobs (Izdebski et al. 2023). Financial insecurity occurs when employees are in uncertain financial conditions, and that lead to stress. Lack of feedback causes stress on employees because they do not receive adequate information about their job performance (Wen, Zhou, Hu, and Zhang 2020). Stress can be due to job demands that lead to tiredness and emotional fatigue (Biganeh et al. 2022). When the job is very demanding for employees, their performance declines, and in the end, their depart from the organisation leads to turnover. Stress among workers can result in high employee turnover in most HEIs. Unspecified duties among employees have led to employee dissatisfaction, which in turn results in poor employee performance and contribution. Factors that contribute to employee stress at the workplace range from working conditions, work roles and poor organisational structures (Lin, Xian, Li, and Huang 2020). Koval (2015) affirms that training and development programs are an investment in the employee. Mugabe et al. (2016) indicate that training and development organisations see it as a benefit for employees growth.

2.5.6. Lack of career advancement

According to Butkus et al. (2018), career promotion offers employees in an organisation prospects of growth and career advancement. Iheduru-Anderson (2020)

asserts that a lack of career advancement is one of the causes that lead individuals to leave their jobs in an organisation. Scholars often agree that stagnation is closely tied to job dissatisfaction, which not only reduces productivity but also accelerates turnover intentions. Lack of career advancement in organisations leads to job dissatisfaction, which causes employees to seek opportunities somewhere else. Employees' perception of career opportunity needs to be managed accordingly by organisations if they want to retain the desired employees.

Furthermore, Al-Asfour, Tlaiss, Khan, and Rajasekar (2017) viewed career opportunity as an employee's belief that jobs or positions that match their career goals and interests exist within the organisation. Lack of opportunity for advancement occurs when an employee reaches a dead end in advancement within an organisation, at which point they begin to seek new jobs (Nightingale 2020). In several organisations, some jobs are tedious and lack career progression, which results in a turnover (Okyere-Kwakye et al. 2018).

However, while many studies emphasise structural barriers such as limited promotion channels, others highlight the interplay between advancement opportunities and compensation packages. For instance, Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) stress that lack of promotion in organisations plays a huge role in employees' intention to leave, whereas Wen et al. (2020) argue that unmet expectations around salary increments accompanying promotions can be equally demotivating. This suggests that career growth and financial rewards operate jointly rather than in isolation.

Hence, organisations should have non-discriminatory and unambiguous promotion policies in place. Wen et al. (2020) point out that employees who can meet their career growth expectations within an organisation are more likely to stay with that organisation, whereas those who cannot are more likely to look for a new job. This aligns with the retention theory that promotions act as both intrinsic motivators (status, responsibility) and extrinsic motivators (pay and benefits). Failure to provide both dimensions risks accelerating turnover.

The author also states that those organisations that provide opportunities for employees to grow either by promoting them or increasing their salary will not only keep their employees but also decrease the cost associated with leaving handover of

the employee. A high employee turnover rate could also be due to the absence of potential opportunities for advancement or promotions. Employees prefer other companies, which may provide them with higher posts and increased compensation packages (Butkus et al. 2018).

In this study, lack of career advancement is tested as a determinant of turnover at Walter Sisulu University. Specifically, we examine whether limited promotion prospects combined with stagnant compensation amplify dissatisfaction, thereby pushing employees to seek career growth and better financial rewards elsewhere).

2.5.7. Institutional practices

Theron (2015) categorised institutional practices into general practices, including mentorship, HR support, and access to information, as well as funding opportunities, diversity management, and community service. Mentorship plays a crucial role in the employability and retention of newly hired academics (Lo and Ramayah 2011). Pithouse-Morgan, Masinga, Naicker, Hlao, and Pillay (2016) emphasised that collegial relationships are key to building new academics' confidence. McKay and Monk (2017) argue that peer support and mentorship from senior staff should be integral to professional development. Research productivity, measured by output quantity, is a key marker of success for early-career academics (Sutherland, Wilson, and Williams, 2013). Soogwan, Jang, Kang, and Han (2018) noted that research funding significantly enhances academic staff performance. However, Busch and Ledingham (2016) found that early-career academics often face stressors related to structural barriers in research applications, publishing challenges, and accessing research output.

Researchers have also highlighted infrastructural issues in Southern African HEIs. The National Development Plan projects an increase in South African university enrolment from one million to 1.6 million by 2030 (Bozzoli et al. 2015), creating substantial infrastructure demands during a period of budget cuts (Mushemeza, 2016). Ondari-Okemwa (2011) reported that inadequate infrastructure and reduced budget allocations limit HEIs' capacity to generate knowledge. McGregor (2009) also stressed the need for proactive infrastructure investment to retain academic staff.

2.5.8. Management Support

The significance of management support in talent management is well established. In the context of academic and support staff, such support should encompass effective performance management and recognition, participative and informed decision-making, opportunities to apply skills, and collaborative problem-solving (Matata, Elegwa, and Maurice, 2014; Mohamed and El-Shaer, 2013). Numerous studies have demonstrated that a lack of management support and ineffective leadership styles are major factors contributing to employee turnover intentions (Hundera, 2014; Jain, 2013). Mokgojwa et al. (2017) identified a significant disconnect between management's perception of human capital risks in higher education and those perceived by academic and support staff. Additionally, Calitz and colleagues (2017) found that management exhibited low maturity levels in utilising business intelligence technologies, which negatively impacts strategic planning effectiveness.

Employee turnover remains a persistent challenge across organisations, and in the context of higher education institutions, it carries unique implications for both academic and administrative operations. This review has highlighted a range of determinants that influence employees' decisions to leave, including poor leadership styles, job dissatisfaction, lack of adequate compensation, limited training and development opportunities, poor working conditions, and the absence of career advancement prospects. These factors do not operate in isolation but often interact, creating a cumulative effect that strengthens employees' intention to quit. For instance, inadequate pay without opportunities for growth can amplify dissatisfaction, while weak leadership may exacerbate the effects of poor working environments. What emerges consistently from the literature is that turnover is multi-causal, driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Organisational culture, fairness in promotion, and clarity of policies are equally critical in shaping employees' decisions to stay or leave.

In this study, these determinants are tested as variables within the specific context of Walter Sisulu University. The aim is to establish how each factor, leadership, compensation, job satisfaction, training and development, working conditions, and career advancement, contributes to employee turnover, thereby offering evidence-based insights for management interventions.

2.6. Ways to prevent turnover in higher education institutions

Research indicates that employee turnover is and continues to be an endemic concern in HEIs across the globe. As a customer-driven organisation these institutions rely heavily on people to attain their competitive advantage. Therefore, it is critical for workers at these institutions to remain happy and motivated as they interact with their customers. Since HEIs are labour-intensive, they need to use their human resources effectively. This section concentrates on strategies to prevent employee turnover in HEIs measures to reduce or prevent high employee turnover.

2.6.1. Job dissatisfaction

Job satisfaction, as an important concept and applicable to all organisations, has different and complementary definitions (Farooq Abbasi 2015). In essence, job satisfaction encompasses the feelings of people that are directed to a particular job and its environment (Slišković and Penezić, 2015). Several researchers have attempted to define job satisfaction from a scholarly perspective. Job satisfaction is an important part of overall life satisfaction and wellbeing. According to Okeke and Mtyuda (2017), job satisfaction is therefore an emotional response to the way an employee perceives his or her job. These perceptions are centred on the employee's individual desires and their own interpretation of how these desires can be satisfied. Moussa and Somjai (2019) state that employees will experience satisfaction if they are treated well by their immediate managers and by the conditions of work. However, it is to be noted that an employee experiencing satisfaction is not automatically a productive employee. To know how satisfied or dissatisfied the employees are with their jobs is a very complex summation of distinct job variables (Okeke and Mtyuda 2017). Azeem, Bajwa, Shahzad, and Aslam (2020) identified the following factors as predictors of job satisfaction of workers within the organisations:

- i. Salary
- ii. Job security
- iii. Interpersonal relationships
- iv. Leadership
- v. Organisational culture
- vi. Company policies
- vii. Conditions of employment

- viii. Worker autonomy and
- ix. Possibility of growth, development and promotion
- x. Job content

Figure 2-1. The value percept theory of job satisfaction



Source: Adapted from Colquitt, Lepine and Wesson (2009)

i. Job Security

Job security refers to the degree to which organisations provide stable and long-term employment to their employees. Kujik (2016) suggests that feelings of job security are shaped by an employee's expectation of remaining in their position for an extended

period. Employees who believe their jobs are secure tend to be more committed and are likely to remain with the organisation for a longer time. Job security is a critical motivator for employees. Ralston (2019) asserts that job security enhances employee loyalty, providing psychological and socio-economic stability, which, in turn, adds value to the organisation and boosts employee retention. Jarosch (2023) highlights that job security has a significant and positive impact on job satisfaction, as consistently demonstrated in job satisfaction research. Studies have also identified job security as a key factor in predicting job satisfaction and motivating employees (Bernstrøm, Drange, and Mamelund 2018). According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022), employees report higher job satisfaction in positions they perceive to be secure. European survey data (2013) further supports the strong link between job security and higher job satisfaction (Bernstrøm et al. 2018). The perception of job insecurity has been identified as one of the most stressful burdens an employee can experience.

Studies conducted by Daud (2021) suggest that job security is a key factor in fostering employee commitment. However, other researchers have argued that the relationship between job security and job satisfaction is causal, with security leading to satisfaction (Kurniawaty et al. 2019). Kurniawaty et al. (2019) also propose that low levels of job satisfaction and security are often characteristic of economies with a high prevalence of low-level jobs. Despite the ongoing debate about the connection between job satisfaction and job security, job security remains one of the top drivers of job satisfaction (Okeke and Mtyuda, 2017). According to Kwamboka (2015), every employee seeks a sense of job security, meaning they feel confident that their job is safe and will provide a long-term stable income. Farooq Abbasi (2015) notes that when employees are assured of a stable monthly income, turnover rates decrease and organisational performance improves. Conversely, Gallie, Felstead, Green, and Incan (2017) argue that when employees feel insecure about their jobs, they are more likely to leave the organisation prematurely.

ii. Working Conditions

Employees today tend to place a high value on organisations with good working conditions, considering them an essential factor in job satisfaction (Palomino and Frezatti, 2016). Ekhsan's (2019) research highlights that working conditions are

central to workplace satisfaction, noting the importance of refreshment and recreation facilities, as well as health and safety provisions. According to Okeke and Mtyuda (2017), working conditions encompass various elements such as company culture, management styles, organisational hierarchies, and human resource policies. Kurniawaty et al. (2019) emphasise that in poor working environments, employees tend to be dissatisfied and often move from one organisation to another in search of a better fit. Azeem et al. (2020) further suggest that working conditions significantly impact job satisfaction, as high workloads are commonly linked to reduced performance. Employees generally seek working environments that offer physical comfort and convenience (Palomino and Frezatti 2016), and the absence of such conditions can negatively affect their mental and physical well-being. Otache and Inekwe (2022) argue that working conditions can vary widely, from comfortable to difficult and hazardous.

Walter Sisulu University serves as an example of how conditions of service can influence employee satisfaction. Research from 2006 showed that academic staff were frustrated by a lack of promotions since 1995, as well as the absence of recognition or incentives for good performance (Sete, 2015). Sete (2015) also noted that academics were dissatisfied with changes in service conditions made without their input. Their specific concerns included uncertainty due to frequent discussions of retrenchment, a lack of stability, high housing costs with reduced subsidies, and a reduction in dependent education subsidies.

iii. Promotions

Belch and Belch (2018) define promotion as the advancement of an employee to a role of greater importance and higher compensation. In principle, promotion provides employees with the chance to progress within their current career path or even transition to a new one. McFarlane, Judd, Devine, and Watt (2016) note that promotion also enhances employees' social standing by increasing wages when they move up the promotion ladder, often based on seniority. Arnold, Van Iddekinge, Campion, Bauer, and Campion (2021) argue that external hires tend to have higher failure rates in delivering results compared to internally promoted employees. Furthermore, McFarlane et al. (2016) suggest that promotion has a more significant impact on job

satisfaction than other factors, such as recognition and achievement, as it typically brings benefits like increased pay, autonomy, and supervisory authority.

Ali and Anwar (2021) emphasise that many researchers agree job satisfaction is closely linked to promotion opportunities, with a direct and positive correlation between the two. Okeke and Mtyuda (2017) state that employees who are dissatisfied with the available promotion opportunities are strongly motivated to leave the organisation. This is partly because individuals develop expectations for advancement, and the organisation's ability to meet these expectations significantly influences their perceptions. Employees should be recognised and rewarded for their performance by being promoted through the ranks. Gueldner, Feuerborn, and Merrell (2020) argue that promotions provide opportunities for professional growth and success. Chand (2019) adds that promotions carry intrinsic motivational value because they increase responsibility, authority and status within the organisation. Promotion alleviates feelings of stagnation and frustration, particularly for high-performing employees. When an organisation offers clear promotional pathways, it boosts employee satisfaction and increases retention (Chand, 2019). Conversely, limited or non-existent promotional opportunities can prompt employees to leave the organisation.

iv. Human Resource Policies/Company policies

Human resource policies serve as a guide to management's approach and help in achieving the organisation's human resource objectives. These policies define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour while also outlining the organisation's stance on various issues. Broad guidelines, like mission statements, act as a framework for directing actions (Papa et al. 2020). Ekhsan (2019) points out that certain human resource management policies, such as sick leave and accident disability insurance, are critically important to employees. Sick leave ensures employees receive pay when they are unable to work due to illness, with many organisations offering a standard number of sick leave days—12 days being common. Some organisations cap the accumulation of sick leave to four weeks, after which long-term or disability insurance comes into effect. In some cases, organisations offer employees the ability to accumulate sick leave, paying up to six months of basic pay upon retirement. These measures discourage sick leave abuse while demonstrating that organisational policies serve both the employer's and employee's interests.

Employees who are familiar with and satisfied by their organisation's human resource policies are better equipped to make informed decisions about staying or leaving. Regular reviews and updates to policies are crucial, and policy redevelopment can foster a positive internal work environment and improve job satisfaction (Roberts, 2018).

v. Organisational culture

Culture has been defined with the use of many different terms and phrases, ranging from simplistic expressions, such as how we do things around here, to intricate definitions rooted in academic literature (Owens, Eggers, Keller, and McDonald 2017). According to Kim et al. (2017), culture is the deep-seated (often subconscious) values and beliefs shared by personnel in an organisation. Terzioglu et al. (2016) propose a similar definition, finding that most researchers agree that organisational culture refers to “a system of shared assumptions or meaning held by members that distinguishes one organisation from another.” The concept of organisational culture can also be analysed by looking at three important characteristics:

- ❖ Socialisation in the workplace results in organisational culture being passed on to new employees.
- ❖ Employee behaviour in the work environment is influenced by culture.
- ❖ There are different levels at which organisational culture operates (Fleming and Guldenmund 2015).

Owens et al. (2017) emphasise the importance of culture by using the popular idiom culture eats strategy for lunch. The importance of culture can also be explained by the fact that organisations are able to use social norms to control employee behaviour (Chatman and Reilly 2016). It has become necessary for organisations and leaders to understand culture, as the influence on behaviour plays a key role in the performance of both the individual and the organisation (Owens et al. 2017). Paaïs and Pattiruhu (2020) propose that culture fulfils four distinct functions:

- ❖ provides employees with an organisational identity,
- ❖ facilitates collective commitment,
- ❖ promotes social system stability, thereby creating perceptions in the work environment, and

- ❖ helps employees make sense of their surroundings and, in doing, so shapes behaviour (Paais and Pattiruhu 2020).

vi. Pay/Wage/Salary

It is crucial to understand salary as a source of job satisfaction, falling under the category of extrinsic motivation. Salary refers to the monetary rewards provided to employees, and those motivated by money tend to experience greater job satisfaction if they are paid well (Osabiya, 2015). There are differing views on the relationship between pay and turnover. Some argue that pay positively influences turnover, while others suggest a negative correlation. According to Ludviga et al. (2016), pay does not have a direct effect on employee turnover due to the transparent job grading systems in some organisations. The authors suggest that when an organisation has a clear and fair job grading system, pay will not significantly impact employee turnover.

Ali and Anwar (2021) state that pay levels and pay satisfaction are modest predictors of turnover decisions, meaning that salary alone does not have a strong effect on turnover. They further suggest that organisations can retain employees by offering rewards beyond basic pay, such as increased decision-making power or tailored rewards like benefits, variable pay and flexible work arrangements.

Rasiq and Maulabakhsh (2015) emphasise that pay is among the factors influencing job satisfaction, which in turn affects turnover either positively or negatively. If pay negatively impacts job satisfaction, it is likely to increase turnover intentions, as dissatisfied employees tend to leave the organisation. This concept is supported by Okeke and Mtyuda (2017), whose research involving 200 participants found that pay significantly influences job satisfaction, and higher job satisfaction leads to lower turnover rates.

Numerous studies continue to highlight the issue of poor pay and inadequate recognition for academic staff (Makondo, 2014; Onah and Anikwe, 2016). Chabaya, Tshephe, and Molotsi (2014) discovered that many academic staff members feel underpaid relative to their worth. Academics have identified compensation as a key reason leaving or considering leaving their positions (Selesho and Naile 2014). To address this, Smit, Stanz, and Bussin (2015) argue that a well-structured

compensation package, along with an effective reward strategy, should be linked to the talent management system to facilitate talent retention.

vii. Employee retention policy

HEIs should develop an employee retention policy that serves as a guiding framework for retaining top talent. Proposing and adopting such a policy would assist in decision-making processes related to employee retention. According to Al-Suraihi et al. (2021), a retention policy in the public sector should integrate elements from private sector practices, such as performance-based pay and promotion, to boost retention and productivity. Public institutions can also use benchmarking to remain competitive in the labour market. By aligning public service employee benefits with those offered in the private sector, employees would have less motivation to leave for other organisations that offer no additional benefits. Employee retention policies should include implementing a performance-based promotion system, replacing the current practice of promoting employees based solely on seniority (Al Mamun and Hasan, 2017).

viii. Reinforcement of commitment on the job

Tümkan and Sharm (2021) emphasised that organisational commitment is an attitudinal concept defined as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation. In this context, attitude refers to the degree of positive or negative feelings a person holds toward something, such as a place, situation, object, or person. Employees generally develop a sense of commitment to an organisation by staying with it, thereby aligning themselves with its goals and values. Conceptually, three key elements comprise organisational commitment: a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to go beyond what is expected for the organisation's benefit, and a clear acceptance of its culture and objectives (Malietsso, 2023). Smit et al. (2007) similarly describe organisational commitment—including its goals, culture, and objectives—as the extent to which an individual identifies with their employer. High organisational commitment is linked to reduced labour turnover, as employees who feel committed to their organisation are more likely to stay and contribute to achieving shared goals (Malietsso, 2023). Malietsso (2023) also refers to "attachment to the organisation", highlighting the

role of commitment in minimising turnover and other forms of withdrawal from the workplace.

2.6.2. Career development

Career development involves creating opportunities for promotion within an organisation by offering training and skill development, enhancing employees' employability in the market (Koval, 2015). It ensures employees' success in their careers, leading to greater career satisfaction. Employee performance tends to improve when they perceive ample opportunities for career development within their organisation or industry (Lis et al. 2022). Furthermore, Koval (2015) links organisational support for career development to a reduction in voluntary turnover, as employees are more likely to remain when they see career advancement opportunities within the organisation. Talented employees are essential for maintaining a competitive edge, and they seek career growth as they progress along the career ladder. Methods for facilitating career growth include advancement plans, internal promotions and providing realistic career previews during the hiring process. Key activities in career development include mentoring, staff development plans (Erasmus et al. 2015), succession planning, and career pathing. Career development also allows organisations to identify internal candidates for promotion (Rensburg, Rothmann, and Diedericks, 2017), which increases the likelihood of retaining these employees once they are promoted.

2.6.3. Training and development

According to Zacher et al. (2019), organisational investment in training and development significantly reduces employee turnover. Training and development provide employees with new skills and competencies, motivating them to make long-term commitments to their workplace (Al-Asfour et al. 2017). O'Riordan (2017) defines training as "the use of systematic and planned instruction and development activities to promote learning". Offering training opportunities enhances employee commitment and leads to better retention rates (Bogatova, 2017; McDougall, 2018). O'Riordan (2017) also stresses that organisations should dedicate time and budget to employee training, as sustained training programs help organisations adapt to change. Research by Patton and McMahon (2021) highlights the importance of learning and development as a key retention strategy and shows that fostering a learning-orientated work

environment benefits the organisation. Training new employees helps them acclimatise to their roles, reducing the likelihood of frustration in their new positions.

Vondracek et al. (2019) found that employees who have opportunities to develop new skills through workplace training are more satisfied with their jobs, which increases their loyalty to the organisation. Dhār (2015) further noted that training improves employee output, leading to higher-quality services and increasing the organisation's desire to retain skilled employees in the long term. Al-Asfour et al. (2017) emphasised that proper innovation and knowledge assimilation are crucial for organisational survival, with knowledge being one of the most valuable assets. Heffernan and McKay (2019) added that organisations that invest more in employee training tend to achieve higher levels of performance, evidenced by improved product and service quality, new product development, the ability to attract and retain key employees, and increased customer satisfaction.

2.6.4. Employee involvement in decision-making

Ekhsan (2019) notes that the level of employee involvement in management and operational decision-making can range from no participation to varying degrees of consultation by management, with the highest-level allowing employees to make most decisions within their section of the organisation. Authoritarian managers tend to avoid delegating decision-making to subordinates, often due to concerns that employees may be ineffective in making decisions, fears of losing control and power, or worries that subordinates may threaten their positions.

Conversely, participative managers recognise that employees can contribute significantly to decision-making and problem-solving, as they are often closer to day-to-day operations. Employee participation typically leads to greater commitment to decisions, as well as increased job satisfaction and motivation. According to Ekhsan (2019), the objectives of involving employees in decision-making include improving productivity, promoting workplace democracy, enhancing job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation, fostering human dignity, and strengthening employee relations. Ekhsan further argues that when employees are actively involved in decision-making, it results in higher productivity, greater job fulfilment, and improved relationships between employees and employers.

2.6.5. Involvement and communication

Most employees feel valued by an organisation when they are given opportunities to contribute to important decision-making processes (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023). Selesho and Naile (2014) argues that employees often do not leave their jobs due to dissatisfaction with the work itself, but because they struggle to collaborate effectively with their managers or leaders as part of a team. Encouraging employee participation in decisions that drive the organisation's mission and vision ensures that workers feel involved. Employee involvement and feedback are essential for enhancing the performance of high-functioning teams. Additionally, motivating staff to remain engaged and committed to the organisation over longer periods is critical for ensuring its success (Smit et al. 2015).

In organisations with two-way communication processes where managers actively encourage subordinates' involvement, employees tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with their superiors (Friedman, 2016). Moreover, HR should promote collaboration among various teams, as diverse perspectives working toward a common goal add value to the organisation. McDougall (2018) points out that open communication about strategy, finances, and operations fosters a positive culture, helping employees feel trusted and valued. This approach reduces informal gossip and fosters a sense of shared purpose within the organisation (Rensberg et al. 2017). According to Juneja (2015), open-door policies encourage employees to communicate openly with their superiors, making them feel valued and involved in crucial decisions. As a result, employees are more likely to commit to the organisation and stay for longer periods.

Kim et al. (2017) stress the importance of communication, noting that all business organisations rely on it as the glue that binds various elements, coordinates activities, and enables people to collaborate and achieve results. Bucăța and Rizescu (2017) further argue that since managing involves getting work done through others, strong communication skills are essential for effective managerial performance. They highlight that the ability to communicate both orally and in writing is a crucial managerial skill, as it enables managers to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships, listen actively, resolve conflicts, negotiate, and gather information necessary for creating a high-performance workplace.

Several aspects of communication can influence employees' decisions to stay with or leave an organisation. Factors that encourage employees to remain with the organisation include regular staff briefings, open access to communicate with managers, and effective intercommunication among all employees (Jones, 2008). Studies have shown that regular communication through staff briefings or newsletters significantly impacts employee retention (Jones, 2008). Das and Baruah (2013) note that when communication is at a reasonable level, employees feel more involved in organisational decisions and have a clearer understanding of the organisation's strategic direction. Noah (2008) suggests that involving employees in decision-making fosters a sense of belonging, contributing to a positive work environment and strengthening the employer-employee relationship. Conversely, a lack of communication can leave employees feeling disconnected from the organisation.

2.6.6. Motivation

Motivated employees tend to remain loyal, committed, and dedicated to public service, showing compassion for the community they serve and taking an active interest in policymaking within the public sector (Temminck, Mearns, and Fruhen, 2015). Such employees are typically goal-orientated and understand how their efforts positively impact others. According to Saunders-Scott et al. (2018), employee attitudes, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave are closely tied to the level of trust between employees and their employers. Employees are more motivated when they understand their goals and recognise the importance of their contributions to the organisation's objectives. This sense of purpose boosts productivity, as employees feel they are an integral part of the institution. Conversely, when employees are not fully engaged, they may feel disconnected, increasing their likelihood of leaving the organisation. Therefore, involving employees in planning processes ensures they take ownership of the deliverables and responsibilities (Saunders-Scott et al. 2018).

Managers or supervisors who set challenging goals for employees foster motivation and create opportunities for managerial support and direction, as monitoring and guidance are necessary in such situations (Saunders-Scott et al. 2018). Employees who feel intrinsically motivated through engagement are more likely to fulfil their needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. This highlights the importance of motivation in retaining staff, emphasising that it should be a key consideration in staff

retention strategies. Motivation not only enhances performance due to strong relationships between employees and supervisors but should also be regarded as a core strategy during policy formulation and job design. Intrinsically rewarding jobs, which boost employee motivation, are particularly effective (Papa et al. 2020). Moon (2017) also advises human resource practitioners to recognise and reward employees for their achievements as a means of fostering motivation.

Effective supervisors and managers maintain a positive attitude by valuing employees, treating them fairly, and creating a supportive environment that fosters motivation. The key to developing an efficient motivation system lies in understanding what truly motivates employees (Ali and Anwar, 2021). Motivation is recognised as one of the most important tools for retaining employees and increasing productivity. Organisations design motivation systems not only to encourage employees to perform at their best but also to attract potential candidates. One effective way to motivate employees is by offering rewards and incentives for excellence (Osabiya, 2015). Motivated employees are more likely to stay with an institution for a longer period before considering changing employers.

Motivation is essential for driving employee performance. Without the inclination to engage in work behaviour, employees are unlikely to exert the necessary effort to perform well. However, motivation alone does not influence individual performance within an organisation; other factors such as abilities, a sense of competence, role perception, and available resources also play a role. While motivation is crucial for enhancing productivity and retaining employees, it must be part of a broader strategy. In addition to traditional rewards and monetary incentives, organisations should consider offering compensation benefits to recognise and reward good performance (Ali and Anwar, 2021).

2.7. Conclusion

Employee turnover presents a recurring challenge for organisations worldwide. HEIs play a vital role in producing a skilled and qualified workforce for the labour market (Sun and Wang 2017). Like other sectors, achieving the goals and objectives of university education depends heavily on the contributions of the university workforce, whose roles are essential. In agreement with Hollenbeck and Williams (1986), Williams and Livingstone (1994) suggest that poor performers tend to leave more

frequently than strong performers, meaning that turnover often replaces lower-performing employees with average or strong performers. The organisational impact of employee turnover can be positive, especially for companies that link rewards to individual performance, as they are more likely to retain high performers and lose fewer poor performers. With the tightening labour market, the ageing population, the skills gap and positions to fill, hiring the best and retaining the best becomes a priority. Employee turnover needs leadership attention. Totally, with the existing development in the world, establishments are facing shift demands, dynamic settings, increasing rivalry, and technological progressions that are generating employee's turnover amongst their workforces (Benn, Dunphy, and Griffiths 2014). The next chapter: Chapter Three, South African perspectives and case study—will present South African perspectives and discussed how the theory relates to the existing literature, the problem statement, and the ontological and epistemological positions.

CHAPTER THREE. SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES AND CASE STUDY

3.1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa are increasingly at risk of losing their highly trained knowledge employees to lucrative offers from the commercial sector and headhunting from other HEIs globally (Havenga and Sengane 2019). Consequently, by retaining crucial human capital that makes it feasible to deliver higher education to all stakeholders, including students and society, HEIs may succeed in making a positive impact on the socioeconomic growth of South Africa (Mkulu 2018). A lack of skilled workers in South Africa is seen as one of the main barriers to economic development and job creation, according to Reyes et al. (2019). They say that individuals with crucial skills who quit their employers for better chances outside of South Africa are to blame for the country's severe talent shortages. Due to these factors and the growing local and international rivalry, it is essential for any organisation, especially those in emerging nations with limited skill resources like South Africa, to make sure that it constantly develops and keeps a skilled staff (Havenga and Sengane 2019).

Employee turnover has long been a source of worry for managers and psychologists, particularly the loss of top talent, which has drawn much attention to the literature. Although it is important to understand why individuals quit their jobs, it might be difficult for most organisations to cut down on turnover and keep top performers (Hardy 2018). Businesses must track staff turnover because it is a significant indicator of an organisation's performance. All organisations in South Africa are concerned about talent retention, but the higher education sector is particularly worried about it because of the ageing workforce and the difficulty in finding and keeping young, brilliant people (Mabindisa 2018). HEIs are also especially susceptible to losing highly educated workers to the private sector and other institutions that provide greater pay and benefits (Roodt and Martin 2018). The main topics include the overview of higher education in South Africa, Walter Sisulu University, and employee turnover in South African higher education institutions. The importance of managing employee turnover is covered in the final section (Havenga and Sengane 2019).

3.2. Conceptualisation of higher education in South Africa

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 created HEIs in South Africa. These institutions comprise internal and external stakeholders, including employers, workers, students, suppliers, and other role players and interest groups (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). This study uses the term "HEIs" to refer to South African public universities. HEIs hold a distinctive place in the lives of citizens of any nation because of their vital service of supplying education for the public good (Mabindisa 2018). People who get tertiary education from HEIs may increase their earning potential, live longer lives, and make valuable contributions to the advancement of democracy. There have been several historical developments in South African higher education (Samuel and Chipunza 2017). The emergence of conventional, comprehensive, and technical universities is the outcome of these shifts. Six (6) advanced technical institutions were founded by the South African government in 1967; in 1979, these colleges changed their name to Technikons (Dyk et al. 2017).

Technikons were established with a focus on work-integrated, career-orientated education, prioritising practical instruction and tangible outcomes. This approach, while beneficial for skill development, often resulted in a reduced emphasis on research output. The majority of professors at these universities possessed degrees that were lower than master's degrees, which made the situation worse (Ferguson et al. 2019). Six (6) Technikons were converted to Institutions of Technology (UoTs) in 2003, while other Technikons amalgamated with other universities to become comprehensive universities. Traditional universities have questioned and challenged the present six (6) UoTs' capabilities for doing research and their ability to provide core-degree programs (Timmis et al. 2019). Additionally, there was concern that these institutions might compromise the desired level of academic excellence. These less-qualified academics' ability to join the ranks of their recognised counterparts was affected by the change of Technikons into UoTs (Mzangwa 2019). This put pressure on academics at UoTs to advance their professional position by strengthening their credentials and establishing research records via publishing in peer-reviewed journals, conference presentations, and involvement in postgraduate degree programs (Oni and Tshitangano 2019).

The 21st-century economy is described as knowledge-based, highly global, informational, technology-based, and more socially and environmentally conscious by Willemse et al. (2019) as knowledge-based. The retention of knowledge workers, often known as academics, has become a major problem since HEIs are regarded as the centre of knowledge (Pitan and Muller 2020). Additionally, as the push to extend access to higher education grows, there is a growing need for senior academic staff in South Africa's higher education sector and in the country's training environment (Swartz et al. 2019). These writers contend that this expansion initiative is part of the country's overall issue with a lack of skilled workers, notably in the higher education sector. The lack of skilled workers is made worse by the academic staff's domestic and international movements (Mokgojwa, Barkhuizen and Schutte 2017).

According to arguments made in Higher Education South Africa (HESA 2011), academic staff retention is now a major concern for higher education institutions. Numerous institutions report high turnover rates that can be attributed to a variety of factors, including inadequate promotional procedures, insufficient state and federal funding for research, institutional social problems, and lower-level staff with less experience who are handling heavier workloads (Ndofirepi et al. 2020). Universities employ academic staff to carry out their missions and visions to become centres of excellence, as Swartz et al. (2019) claimed. As a result, universities must be aware of these problems to succeed. It is argued by Dyk et al. (2017) that a further challenge in higher education relates to the retirement of current academic staff who have made significant contributions in teaching, learning and research. These individuals are highly skilled in these areas, but there is an inadequate number of skilled workers to replace them who have the same level of experience and expertise and therefore, cannot achieve the same level of academic contribution (Samuel and Chipunza 2017, Ferguson et al. 2019). This presents a dilemma because there is not enough succession planning for these retirements and there is a shortage of staff members with the necessary skills, (Mzangwa 2019).

The inadequate budgetary allocation and money governments provide for staff and student development are other resource restrictions for such institutions. The institution's restricted budget affects its capacity to hire the necessary number of staff for teaching and research, which has ramifications for academic hiring as well as

career drive and success (Swartz et al. 2019, Willemse et al. 2019). According to this, colleges face the same issues in talent management as other businesses and sectors. The distinction is that colleges today have the added difficulty of managing the talent of knowledge workers (Roodt and Martin 2018). Replacing this talent is more difficult and time-consuming and the academic workforce will suffer badly. Thus, to meet these new difficulties and accomplish their strategic goals, colleges must think about investing a significant amount of time and energy in solutions to curb employee turnover in higher education in South Africa (Ferguson, McKenzie, Dalton and Lyner-Cleophas, 2019).

3.3. Overview of Walter Sisulu University

This section presents an overview of Walter Sisulu University's history, academic profile, and geographical context, establishing its role in the educational and regional landscape.

3.3.1. The brief background of Walter Sisulu University

Government Gazette No. 25787 of November 28, 2003, authorised the establishment of Walter Sisulu University (WSU) in the Eastern Cape on July 1, 2005, as Walter Sisulu University of Technology and Science (later to be known as Walter Sisulu University), following the merger of Border Technikon (BT), Eastern Cape Technikon (ECT), and the University of Transkei (Unitra). It comprises four campuses and eleven delivery locations, dispersed roughly 1000 km in diameter. The following four campuses (WSU Strategic Plan (2020–2030):

- Mthatha (Nelson Mandela Drive Site, Zamukulungisa Site, and Medical Sciences)
- Butterworth (Ibika Site and Vuli Valley Site)
- Komani (Grey Street Site and Masibulele Site)
- Buffalo City (College Street, Chislehurst, Heritage Building, Cambridge Street, Absa Stadium and Potsdam Site (WSU 2023).

As a one-of-a-kind, comprehensive institution, WSU provides students with a wide range of academic options, facilitating articulation and mobility throughout the qualification spectrum, from certificates to diplomas, degrees and postgraduate

programs. WSU is ideally positioned because of its setting and the fact that it is a comprehensive university. WSU offers:

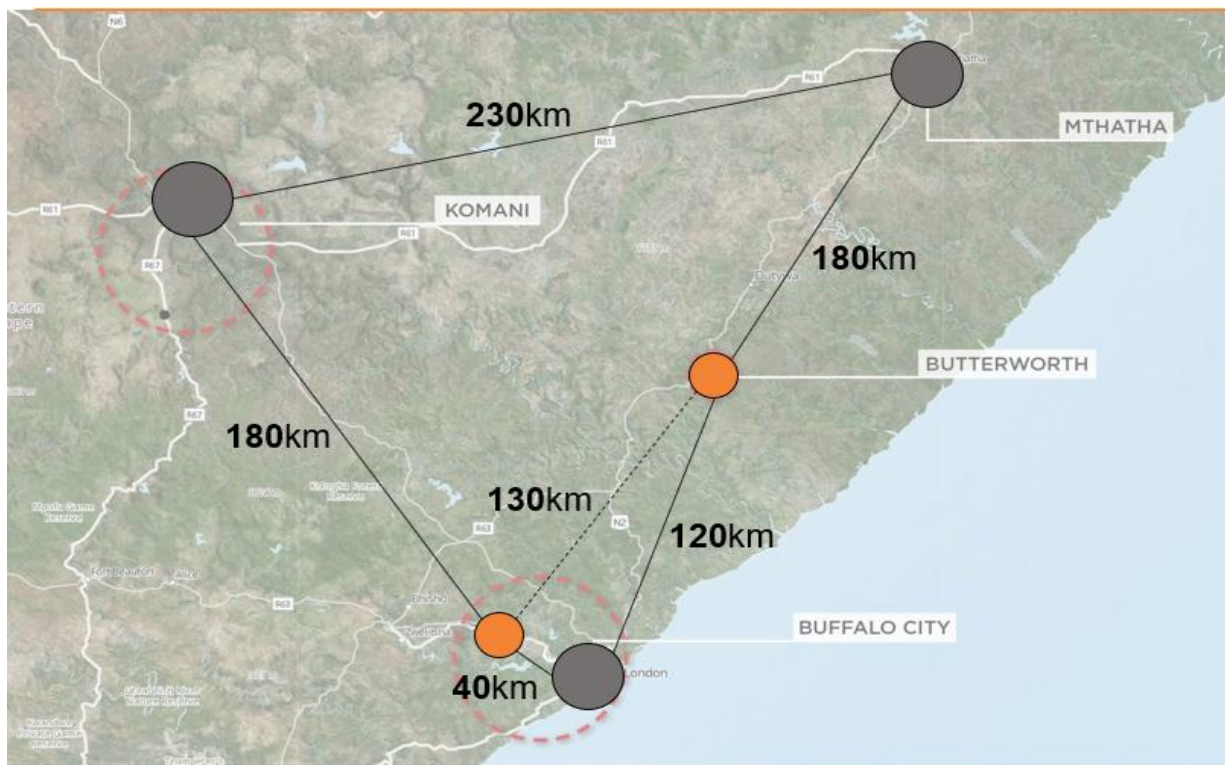
- A wide variety of educational opportunities.
- Horizontal and vertical articulation to increase student movement.
- Credentials for the workplace, ranging from certificates to complete degrees.
- Support for business, industry and the community.
- Research that is inventive and resolves problems.
- Opportunities for continuous learning.
- Flexibility through fostering partnerships with community, civic, government, corporate, and industrial partners for local and regional growth, as outlined in the WSU Strategic Plan 2020 – 2030 (WSU 2023).

3.3.2. Geographic location of university

Despite major investments in service provision, WSU is in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, which is mostly rural and characterised by pervasive and severe poverty. In this region, unemployment, inadequate access to basic services and illiteracy are all still rampant. Additional characteristics of the province include:

- An extensive rural population.
- A significant share of youth experience high rates of unemployment
- A pressing need for sustained socioeconomic growth (Mpini 2018).

Figure 3-1. Walter Sisulu University's location in the Eastern Cape Province



Source: Walter Sisulu University (2020)

The Eastern Cape province, with a total size of 170 600 square kilometres (km²), or 14.0% of the whole landmass of the nation, is the second biggest of the nine provinces in terms of surface area. The Eastern Province, the Border and North-Eastern Cape region, and the old Transkei and Ciskei homelands were combined to form the Eastern Cape Province after 1994. On South Africa's southernmost coast, the Eastern Cape is surrounded by the provinces of the Western and Northern Cape in the south-west, KwaZulu-Natal in the north-east, the Lesotho Kingdom and the Free State in the north, the Indian Ocean in the south-east, and KwaZulu-Natal (WSU 2023).

Six district municipalities make up the Eastern Cape Province: Joe Gqabi, OR Tambo, Chris Hani, Amathole, Cacadu, and Alfred Nzo. Furthermore, the province has two urban municipalities: Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela. WSU is located in three of the six districts, namely OR Tambo, Chris Hani, and Amathole district municipalities. WSU has a campus within the boundaries of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (Dlamini 2020). The Eastern Cape is rich in resources, giving it a competitive geo-economic advantage. To reposition itself for greater effect, the university must pay close attention to its socio-historical and geographic surroundings, as highlighted by the

2030 Vision (Mofolo 2020). The fact that WSU is a multi-campus, comprehensive university with a significant rural and urban presence ought to translate to profound depth and richness in curriculum design, a transformative pedagogical approach, research and innovation focus that is change-engendering, and a partnership-building philosophy that is both imaginative and forward-looking (WSU 2023).

3.4. Conceptualisation of employee turnover in higher education institutions in South Africa

Worker turnover is dangerously high in South African higher education institutions. This harms these institutions' ability to succeed. A previous study has revealed that one of the primary reasons people quit their organisations is that their expectations in their job relationships are not realised (Reyes et al. 2019). The unwritten contract of perceived promises and expectations inside the job relationship is their psychological contract, which violates those contracts. Manik and Ramrathan (2021) conducted research at a significant open-distance institution in South Africa with staff at all levels and discovered the most crucial aspect that influences an employee's decision to remain in their position is the degree to which employees expectations about their work relationships are being satisfied, particularly on an interpersonal level. These results demonstrate the importance of the psychological contract in retaining employees (Maphosa, Dube and Jita 2020). They demonstrate what is required of staff in terms of interpersonal connections, trust, and openness with their immediate superiors, as well as the importance of these factors in employee retention. Employers often strongly emphasise written contracts and labour laws (Botha and Vilyte 2020). My study, however, suggests that the psychological contract may be an even more significant aspect that companies should consider when creating and executing retention initiatives (Scott and Ivala 2019a).

The South African government, to redress historical inequalities that persisted as a legacy of the apartheid rule, ordered the reform or transformation of HEIs (Mkulu 2018). These inequalities included, among other things, expanding access to institutions of higher learning, enhancing staff and student equality, and enhancing the standard of higher education output (Mokgojwa et al. 2017). The consolidation of HEIs in South Africa is similar to the consolidation of any other institution in a different country that has undergone a comparable type of change in that they largely share the

same experiences, particularly when the government is driving the consolidation (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). The primary concern and the study's motivation is how the merger would affect workers' job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and desire to quit, whether directly or indirectly (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) 2013 reports that the strategies put forth by Scott and Ivala (2019b) would help address the growing staffing challenges at South African public universities in retaining and using many academic staff members who are close to retirement (Belluigi 2020). According to the same strategy, university participation rates are anticipated to rise from 17.3% to 25%, or from just over 937 000 students in 2011 to almost 1.6 million enrolments in 2030. According to departmental projections, enrolment will continue to rise from 2013 to 2030 (Mofolo 2020); this will be made possible by implementing free higher education for the underprivileged. Normal enrolment growth is not matched by a rise in academic staff, leaving institutions with a scarcity of academic personnel (Davids and Waghid 2020). In putting the Department's intentions and direction into perspective, the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2016) highlights new plans on increasing student enrolment as a way for people who want to continue their education in universities to do so successfully and the Department's zeal to improve the quality of higher education by strengthening the capacity of academic staff for effective "curriculum development, student success, teaching and learning and research and development" (Botha and Vilyte 2020). The Department released Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF), and outlines plans for developing future generations of academics and strengthening staff capability (DHET 2015).

There were frequent exoduses of skilled and experienced professors because of retirement amid the South African university's increase undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments (Roodt and Martin 2018). According to HESA (2019), nearly half of the professors, or approximately one-fifth of academics, are scheduled to retire in the next ten years. This HESA study also highlights the enormous difficulties in replacing open posts due to insufficient numbers in the current academic and postgraduate pipelines to replace them (Mefi and Asoba 2021). In addition to the involuntary turnover brought on by death and retirement, there is a concerning outflow of professors from historically under-served colleges to advantaged universities

occurs. The less fortunate institutions are now severely short on academic personnel across a range of areas as a result of this outflow (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). The reputation of the institution and the value production for the stakeholders are harmed by the departure of capable and seasoned professors and younger and promising academics. Universities need future and seasoned scholars as vital human capital if they are to succeed (Masango 2020). A tertiary organisation's value and successful results are enhanced by productive human capital. A university's ability to operate properly, maintain its reputation among its customers, and eventually attain high levels of client loyalty are all severely hampered by the loss of strategic human capital, which is the main university asset (Mokoditsoa 2018).

In many of South Africa's rural and underfunded institutions, academic turnover has become the most urgent problem. The issue of academic staff turnover is not unique to South African higher education; it occurs frequently globally (Dyk et al. 2017). For instance, Mkulu (2018) identifies poor pay as one of the main factors contributing to academic staff turnover in Tanzania. According to Mokoditsoa (2018), other issues in higher education that affect staff turnover include "delays in payment at private institutions; a poor leadership style; lack of job security; and low academic staff career growth". Universities, like the University of Cologne, in rich countries have formed themselves to help the German Federal Government build world-class talent management when higher education in underdeveloped countries has difficulties with academic retention (Roodt and Martin 2018). This institution exemplifies the most effective personnel management strategies for preventing academic staff turnover. The University of Pennsylvania's talent management strategies, on the other hand, aim to motivate academic staff to raise the bar for excellence by providing a range of opportunities for academics to progress in their career path through mentoring, career coaching, leadership programs, cohort-based programs for emerging leaders and administrative professionals, and skill enhancement training sessions for managers (Maphosa et al. 2020). Talent is often poached from disadvantaged institutions to advantaged universities during times of high student enrolment and ongoing staffing issues at rural colleges in South Africa (Timmis et al. 2019). Once they have accumulated enough experience, academics employed at underprivileged institutions are lost to favoured institutions, often to historically affluent colleges. Institutions with top-notch facilities, sound leadership and enticing compensation and perks are

preferred (Botha and Vilyte 2020). Additionally, these institutions with strong talent management turn into poachers. The universities' efforts to carry out the reform agenda outlined in Vision 2010 and African Union Vision 2063 were abruptly abandoned as a consequence of the poaching of academic personnel (both older and younger and brilliant individuals) (Dlamini 2020).

Botha and Vilyte (2020) state that all South African academic colleges have been integrated into universities or technical colleges. Some institutions, like technical colleges, have been clustered, and others have undergone mergers and collaborations to change their organisational structures. This process may be unpleasant, particularly for the individuals who are affected by the changes. Staff worries have grown as a result of education college closures (Davids and Waghid 2020). All positions within the institutions that were closed or absorbed will be vulnerable to potential job losses, promotions, layoffs, and other forms of redundancy. Employees may respond adversely to such threats by taking decisions like resignations (Davids and Waghid 2020). Organisations promote turnover the least because it might be detrimental to them. This emphasises the importance of preventing staff members' feelings of insecurity from lingering (Scott and Ivala 2019). Employee morale will suffer, they will experience stress, and if their insecurities persist, their dedication to the organisation will diminish (Reyes et al. 2019). The consequences of feeling insecure include the intent to leave, a decline in commitment, a decline in work satisfaction, and ultimately, departure. However, according to Scott and Ivala (2019), several staff in SA who worked at the merged institutions saw the shift as a window of opportunity and achieved personal development (Belluigi 2020).

The South African National Council on Higher Education (CHE) advocated an ideology that would see HEIs consolidate. It was intended that HEIs would merge to increase staff and student equality, access to institutions, and the quality of higher education output (Belluigi 2020). To rectify inequities in South African society brought on by the old apartheid state, the government advocated changing higher education. To address the consequences of the global environment on national economies and politics, the transition was carried out as a matter of necessity (Botha and Vilyte 2020). In addition, ensuring the profitability and sustainability of the new system was a factor in the focus placed on reorganising HEIs (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021). To

achieve social justice, democracy, and the country's economic and social progress, HEIs in South Africa must merge, a process known as the new system (Dlamini 2020).

The Ministry of Education recommended reducing the number of institutions while maintaining the number of delivery locations. New institutions will be created with new names (Dlamini 2020). The term "delivery site" describes several campuses or divisions of a single higher education organisation. Thirty-six institutions became eleven new institutions (five technological universities, six comprehensive universities, and two national institutes for higher education) that were part of the public higher education system in May 2002 (Ndofirepi et al. 2020). Twenty-two institutions and two institutes were included when totalled. A plan for the merger's implementation was released, and materials were gathered to get the process moving (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). The minister assigned the Department of Education to track how close the merger was to achieving the predetermined goals. It granted authority to the CHE to assess progress (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). The CHE task force projected cost savings through economies of scale via the removal of duplication, rationalisation of programs, and reduction in the number of councils, senates, and members of senior management (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021). The HEIs were under much pressure from the outside forces of the government's environment. The demands for proactive and prompt action to cope with the strain faced by the government increased resource competition (Ferguson et al. 2019). However, the methods used by different nations to handle the issue and their goals varied, with a focus on higher education changes via mergers in particular (Maphosa et al. 2020). According to Reyes et al. (2019), the primary motivator has been the necessity to reach financial viability and prevent a shutdown. Governments' widespread support for merging HEIs to reform them globally seems to drive efforts to address systemic flaws such as resource competitiveness, improving throughput quality, student access, and economic efficiency (Barkhuizen and Schutte 2017). Despite their varied circumstances, the governments found that transforming HEIs via mergers was the best option (Mzangwa 2019). Whatever the motivations for mergers, change is the outcome. Change has to be handled carefully since it may have both positive and negative consequences for the parties concerned (Mofolo 2020).

HEIs in South Africa are more susceptible to losing their highly trained knowledge employees to lucrative offers from the commercial sector and headhunting from other HEIs globally (Mokgojwa, Barkhuizen and Schutte 2017). So, by keeping the crucial human capital that makes it feasible to deliver higher education to all stakeholders, including students and society, HEIs may succeed in contributing to the socio-economic development of South Africa (Mokgojwa, Barkhuizen and Schutte 2017). A key barrier to economic development and job creation in South Africa, according to Scott and Ivala (2019b), is the lack of skilled workers. They go on to say that individuals with crucial skills who quit their employment in search of better chances outside of South Africa are to blame for the country's severe talent shortages (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Due to these factors and the growing local and international rivalry, it is essential for any organisation, especially those in emerging nations with limited skill resources like South Africa, to make sure that it constantly develops and keeps a skilled staff (Songca et al. 2021).

Mokoditsoa (2018) reveals that in South Africa, the issue of high employee turnover is exacerbated by a lack of skilled resources, such as increased knowledge worker emigration and lower educational standards, as well as the effects of legislation and regulations intended to correct historical racial and gender practices. These restrictions subsequently influence the South African labour market's makeup. While businesses work to abide by the law, it is anticipated that this will result in disparities in the voluntary turnover rates and causes of turnover between designated and non-designated employee groups (Swartz et al. 2019; Willemse et al. 2020). Data indicate that a significant number of academic staff members (between 5% and 18%) leave HEIs each year, which makes the issue particularly troublesome for South African HEIs (Mofolo 2020).

Push and pull variables account for employee turnover within an occupational group. First, pull forces happen when the appeal of other work exists (Mofolo 2020). Despite being content with their present position, employees may opt to quit in the quest for a better one that offers a greater salary, better benefits, job stability, and more prospects for professional progress. An organisation seeking to lower turnover would need to determine what workers value and what they are searching for in a career before enhancing its capacity to give it (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Pull factors have been

discovered in these situations. Second, push factors are the belief that something is wrong with the current employer and the desire to leave to find a better job. Employees are likely to join another organisation without knowing much about it simply because they no longer enjoy their current job (Havenga and Sengane 2019). When demand outpaces supply, a skills deficit develops; there is a skills gap in South Africa, which is brought on by two things: the school system is not graduating enough people with the necessary abilities, such as science, management and engineering and some of the skilled workers are moving to other countries (Havenga and Sengane 2019). The legislative hurdles necessary to get work permits in South Africa make it difficult to hire competent individuals from other countries since the country lacks an acceptable number of skilled experts (Mefi and Asoba 2021). The expansion and diversification of new market opportunities, including those in software programming, design and other fields, brought about by the rapid growth and development of the technology and telecommunications industry over the past ten years, has also contributed to a rise in skills shortages (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). HIV/AIDS is another issue that has a big impact on South Africa's severe skills deficit. The above-mentioned variables' impact on the skills gap has sparked a talent war. Organisations that fall short in the battle for talent, are not able to outbid their rivals and have significant employee turnover rates (Mofolo 2020). This is due to the strong demand for managerial-level workers internationally. According to these writers, keeping managerial-level individuals on staff is a crucial challenge for South African organisations (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

Push factors include disliking the organisation's culture, objecting to new structures, and having personality conflicts with co-workers. The organisation must react when push forces are dominant by addressing the root of the unhappiness (Mefi and Asoba 2021). This might include selecting managers carefully, giving them greater training, and routinely evaluating them. It could also include improving the quality of working life or reviewing organisational policies. Mkulu (2018) advocated for "voice" rather than "exit" in work relationships, which means that institutions and cultures should be created to enable internal conflict resolution before it occurs. HEIs rely on the skills, knowledge, and talents of their staff to offer services efficiently and effectively, keeping up with new developments and achieving the institution's mission (Mzangwa 2019). As a result, recruiting and keeping talented workers has become a priority for

educational institutions (Masango 2018). According to these experts, an institution's ultimate objectives can only be met if it has distinct retention tactics. Due to an ageing workforce and the difficulty in finding and keeping young, brilliant people, talent retention has become a big issue for the higher education industry. Harmonising human resource policies and practices to recruit and retain qualified workers is crucial since human capital is an institution's greatest asset (Mokgojwa, Barkhuizen and Schutte 2017).

For many years, psychologists and managers have been concerned about employee turnover, particularly when it comes to top talent, and as a consequence, the topic has garnered much attention in the literature (Ncanywa 2020). It is important to understand why people leave, but it may be difficult for most organisations to minimise turnover and keep high-performing workers on staff. Organisations must monitor employee turnover, a significant performance indicator (Maphosa et al. 2020). All South African organisations now prioritise talent retention, particularly in the higher education sector, which deals with an ageing workforce and limited opportunities to find and keep young, skilled workers (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). HEIs are also especially susceptible to losing highly skilled workers to the commercial sector and other HEIs that provide greater incentives and perks for resignations (Ncanywa 2020). The general issue of academic staff turnover and retention at universities across the globe, for various reasons, is not immune to the challenges in the South African higher education sector. South Africa is regarded as having the greatest academic potential to draw in the neighbouring nations as well (Ncanywa 2020). In addition, changes in the higher education landscape in South Africa have increased both the demand for and supply of universities, leading to the opening of two new universities in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape, which has since increased demand and heightened competition for academic talent (Mzangwa 2019). These considerations have contributed to the high turnover rate at our universities and colleges, as professors quit their positions in search of better-paying positions at other commercial and public institutions locally and abroad. Such variables will continue to exert a lot of pressure on staff retention. Therefore, universities and colleges need to understand what encourages academic staff to remain and what discourages them (Ncanywa 2020).

Considerable academic staff turnover rates in South Africa have forced HEIs to incur high expenses for recruiting and selecting new academic staff members. Additionally, HEIs have undergone restructuring procedures as part of the continuing sectoral reform in South Africa's higher education sector (Ncanywa 2020). However, because of issues with employee turnover and brain drain, HEIs in South Africa have a scarcity of workers. According to research on staff retention at African universities, a significant percentage of academics, between 5 and 18 percent, were exiting South African higher education institutions (Masango 2018). According to the arguments made in Higher Education South Africa (HESA 2011), HEIs need help retaining skilled and important academic personnel (Maphosa et al. 2020). HEIs in South Africa are a key sector, according to Julie et al. (2019), since they help the country's government develop a sustainable economy that benefits all of humanity.

Human beings are an organisation's most valuable resource. The workers make a difference to the services offered by the organisations. They can provide excellent service, which gives them a competitive advantage that will inevitably impact all the organisation's stakeholders, or subpar service that will negatively impact the organisation (Scott and Ivala 2019). Employee happiness with their position and the organisation they work for is crucial for having quality services and high productivity (Samuel and Chipunza 2017, Ferguson et al. 2019). In every company, the most valuable resource is its people. All essential tasks that enable the organisation to realise its goal are carried out by employees. In any company, staff retention is an issue since it has an impact on overall performance (Oni and Tshitangano 2019). The nature of the decision-making process before the final decision to resign has been a topic of discussion for many researchers. Research had a significant impact on the development of the 10-stage model (Oni and Tshitangano 2019), which takes the complexity of most resignation decisions into account. The stages include: evaluation of current position, feelings of job dissatisfaction, thoughts of leaving, assessment of the costs associated with leaving, decision to look for alternatives, search for alternatives, evaluation of alternatives, comparison of best alternative with current position, decision to stay or leave, and finally, resignation (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

According to Mobley's model, which considers both push and pull forces, unhappiness often initiates job searching in the real world. Other models identify elements that can

lead to resignation and do away with linear stages (Davids and Waghid 2020). The model aims to identify the factors that lead to employee turnover and suggest how each relates to the others (Havenga and Sengane 2019). The Price and Mueller model clearly distinguishes between "job satisfaction" and "organisational commitment," contending that it is possible to be happy in your job yet uncommitted to the company you work for (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). It might be claimed that decreased commitment leads to turnover, which can be brought on by reasons other than work discontent. This difference is crucial for managers who desire a better understanding of turnover in their company (Ncanywa 2020).

3.5. Factors contributing to employee turnover in higher education

This section explores the factors contributing to employee turnover within higher education institutions, examining the interplay between organisational dynamics and personal motivations.

3.5.1. Inadequate compensation

An urgent concern in HEIs continues to be the pay and appreciation of the academic and support employees. Workers who believe their talents, efforts, and performance are recognised and acknowledged are more likely to remain with the company (Mokoditsoa 2018). For the most part, research supports academic staff's underpayment and underappreciation. Academic staff members often believe their value exceeds the compensation they get from their employers (Mpini 2018). Compensation has been cited as one of the main reasons why academics quit or think about quitting their jobs. To aid in the processes of retaining talent, the talent management system must be connected to an appropriately designed pay package and an effective incentive scheme (Mzangwa 2019). Employee incentive to do more is mostly attributable to compensation, which raises employee engagement levels. Both monetary and non-monetary rewards are given. People who work for others sometimes want recognition for their achievements (Mzangwa 2019). Strikers are remunerated in the form of money, bonuses and other financial benefits, as well as non-monitored benefits like more vacation days, recognition from the public, gift cards and time off. Additionally, it has been shown that incentives and recognition are the main factors influencing employee engagement (Mofolo 2020). According to research, workers are more likely to respond with greater engagement when they are awarded,

and their services are acknowledged by the organization. According to Kahn (1990), the perceived advantages obtained are a byproduct of an employee's degree of involvement (Davids and Waghid 2020).

To increase employee engagement, workers must feel that their company values them, supports them and recognises their commitments. A lack of appreciation and acknowledgement may play a major role when employees decide to leave their employers (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Numerous businesses provide formal rewards and recognition programs in exchange for employees' dedication and efforts, but many workers still need routine, unofficial acknowledgement (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Therefore, regardless of the quantity or value of the awards that organisations provide to their workers, the substance of those rewards and, subsequently, their impact on employee engagement depends on how the recipients perceive such rewards (Samuel and Chipunza 2017, Ferguson et al. 2019). To increase levels of employee engagement, corporate leaders must be willing to provide their employees with acceptable standards of pay and recognition.

3.5.2. Promotion and acknowledgement

The availability of job structures inside institutions for their personnel is a key factor in promotion opportunities. Workers who believe they have an equal chance to advance are happier in their positions. When a position at a higher level becomes available within a HEI, it is ideal to promote people already working there since it gives them more influence (Samuel and Chipunza 2017, Ferguson et al. 2019). Additionally, it gives them the impression that it is worthwhile to assume liability and take on danger because doing so may result in advancement. Promotion is defined by the progression of personnel to a higher position with more duties, higher compensation, and better working circumstances, which results in a higher status (Mefi and Asoba 2021). The frequency, fairness, and basis for promotions, as well as whether they are given based on ability or not, all have an impact on how satisfied workers are with their employers' promotion policy and execution (Havenga and Sengane 2019). In contrast to salary satisfaction, some workers may not desire promotions often since they entail greater responsibility and longer hours at the office.

Internal promotions are perceived as tying together workers and employers, which might eventually help build trust at all levels of the hierarchy. Havenga and Sengane

(2019) further emphasise that, although being linked to financial rewards, promotions within institutions are perceived as opportunities that give incentives for hard effort. These opportunities also include status-based, non-monetary components. Employees may grow dissatisfied and display indicators of looking for new employment if they do not see any room for advancement at their existing jobs (Ferguson et al. 2019). These indicators include a shift in an employee's mindset, typically from enthusiasm to apathy; a tendency to take more vacation days and lengthy lunch breaks; lower work performance standards; intentional disregard for deadlines; and a reluctance to go above and beyond when it comes to starting new programs for the WSU community (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020).

In other words, workers see it as a just and fair reward in exchange for their hard work and results. If outstanding workers are not recognised and outsiders are promoted over them via an external hiring process, it can lead to feeling alienated (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Employees struggle with issues like insufficient staff training and development opportunities, poor career advancement, and low self-worth, all of which can have a negative impact on their ability to perform their jobs and their intention to leave their current positions (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.5.3. Developing and using new abilities via training

The most valuable perk HEIs can provide staff is training. In addition, employee advancement and personal growth are also key precepts of training because it provides workers with a greater opportunity to improve and expand their skill set; the use of skills throughout the institution's many departments significantly reduces turnover intentions. Factors affecting employee turnover include monotonous or non-value-adding work, a lack of opportunities for professional development, and a need to acknowledge or appreciate one's talents. Insufficient use of skills is strongly associated with higher turnover rates (Ncanywa 2020).

3.5.4. Interactions with individuals

Employees are believed to be more satisfied with their superiors if they interact pleasantly with them. Employees may find it challenging to manage their relationships with managers and co-workers when an institution or department has complex interpersonal dynamics and numerous small groups, and those who put much effort

into building relationships within the organisation are more likely to leave their jobs (Ncanywa 2020). Instances in which supervisors ask employees to carry out tasks that are thought to be against the code of conduct or ethical standards, when unfair employment practices are noticed, when the employee has a significant disagreement with the supervisor/manager, and when the employee feels uncomfortable with the institution's culture and a sense of not belonging are all factors that correlate to leave (Mokoditsoa 2018). In this situation, "the adage people quit managers, not institutions" seems accurate. According to recent research, if there are tense interactions between workers and their managers or supervisors, they would choose to quit the company where they work (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021). A lack of favourable working relationships with management and co-workers may be a major factor in why individuals quit their positions. Additionally, thorough studies of the literature on turnover show that dysfunctional interpersonal interactions with co-workers and supervisors also contribute to the phenomenon of turnover (Manik and Ramrathan 2021).

Some managers communicate with their staff without proper interpersonal skills, including components of respect. Those employees are made to feel as though they have no potential or are not even real people with feelings. Manik and Ramrathan (2021) elaborates that managers' behaviour towards their employees impacts how those employees interact with clients or consumers (students). Workers who want to express similar thoughts must feel valued and be acknowledged. They feel devalued when they go unnoticed, which may be one of the covert causes of their job abandonment. According to the author, employee turnover is a process that may span days, weeks, months, or even years rather than a single occurrence (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). The dissatisfied, emotionally abused, and demoralised workers are unproductive and could impart this mentality to their clients or consumers, specifically students. Davids and Waghid (2020) and Mefi and Asoba (2021) point out that to avoid jeopardising the quality of HEI services due to unfavourable interpersonal interactions, management of HEIs should be effective leaders, monitor their behaviour, and consider how they handle staff difficulties.

3.5.5. Management and administration

Even though supervisory justice does not directly impact employee turnover, the quality of institutional employee relationships has a bearing on it. Managers must notify staff of any decisions or rules that might have an impact on their interactions with the organisation to ensure that their staff members are satisfied with their work and that supervisory justice is upheld (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021). Many skilled workers quit their jobs as they believe they can only perform their tasks without interference from leaders micromanaging their team members' growth (Uitzinger et al. 2018). It has been highlighted that supervisors' leadership qualities have an impact on the workplace, employee happiness and, consequently, turnover (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021). Easing supervisory pressure on staff enhances the facilitation of literacy programs, storytelling sessions, and the teaching of information literacy skills and promotes collaboration between staff members, co-workers, and supervisors (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

According to the authors, employees who are happy with their connections with co-workers and bosses are more eager to put in a long day's work, which results in greater morale, fewer plans to quit their jobs, and more content with their profession. According to a literature study, there is an association between effective leadership and workers' desire to leave their jobs at HEIs (Samuel and Chipunza 2017). Employees' desire to remain or leave the company is significantly influenced by leaders and their leadership philosophies, such as democratic leadership, authoritarian leadership, and laissez-faire leadership (Hardy 2018). This claim is based on the idea that a leader's actions may either motivate or demotivate employees, which can affect their choices and impact their desire to leave the higher education institutions (HEIs) (Davids and Waghid 2020).

According to Belete (2018), leaders' chosen behaviour represents their leadership style and inspires followers to accomplish the HEIs' goals; there is a significant correlation between leadership style and desire to leave a position. The author also notes that autocratic leaders contribute to workers' intention to leave their jobs, whereas democratic leaders', approach to collective decision-making makes people under their control less likely to have such ambitions (Davids and Waghid 2020). Staff members will quit HEIs when they are dissatisfied with their leader's leadership, but

they will remain when they are happy with it (Havenga and Sengane 2019). The authors add that leaders in HEIs, such as directors, deputy directors, deputy registrars, HODs, and senior Mmanagers, are secret weapons in retaining valued talent for longer, as opposed to leaving the duty of keeping well-performing employees in the hands of the human resources department (Davids and Waghid 2020).

Ineffective leadership is associated with poor commitment, low work satisfaction, and high inclinations to leave the organisation. The capacity of a leader to communicate ideas with his followers via implicit conversations and teamwork is referred to as leader-member interaction (Mefi and Asoba 2021). The dyadic interaction between two persons with disparate work levels is the main topic of Mefi and Asoba's (2021) article. The institution performs poorly, and users have a negative experience with low staff morale. The management's lack of appreciation for the poor institutional performance might result in turnover intentions (Havenga and Sengane 2019). The literature analysis indicates that when workers feel their supervisors are not supporting them, they are less likely to remain in their positions. According to Al Mamun and Hasan (2017), poor management or supervision abilities might be addressed by providing feedback and guidance to mitigate the main causes of employee turnover and promote outstanding service.

Employee turnover intentions are influenced by a supervisor, line manager, HOD, or senior lecturer undermining their juniors. Mefi and Asoba's (2021) findings support the author's premise that supervisors' dishonest actions inspire employee turnover intentions. Therefore, regardless of the job designation level, managers must be encouraged to listen to workers and value opinions, beliefs, perspectives and ideas that could solve problems affecting their industries. When a manager or supervisor treats workers with respect and a professional attitude, they are likelier to stay with the company, and turnover will be minimal (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). An autocratic leadership style is an authoritarian one. In all respects, the leader is autocratic; no one else in the organisation is involved in decision-making or can provide input. Employee job satisfaction and desire to leave HEIs will sometimes be impacted by a leader's leadership style (Swartz et al. 2019).

3.5.6. Institutional policies

Mkulu (2018) categorised institutional practices into general practices, including mentoring, assistance from the HR department, information access, institutional financing possibilities, diversity management, and community service. Mentoring is crucial in helping newly recruited academics stay on the job and find employment (Theron 2015). Self-sustaining peer assistance and knowledge mentorship from more senior staff members should be an element of professional development. For academics just starting their careers, research productivity measured by the number of outputs is a crucial sign of success (Pithouse-Morgan, Masinga, Naicker, Hlao, and Pillay 2016).

Research funding is mentioned as being essential to improving the research performance of academic personnel. Early career academics face structural hurdles to the application and availability of research, problems with publication and guidance about the accessibility of research outputs (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Additionally, researchers have brought up infrastructure-related issues with Southern African HEIs. By 2030, South African HEIs want to enrol 1.6 million students, up from the current one million, as stated in the National Development Plan (Mefi and Asoba 2021). As a result, amid budget cut, HEIs will have significant infrastructure needs. The need for more infrastructure and decreasing budgetary allocations constrain HEIs' capacity to develop knowledge, further highlighting the value of proactive infrastructure investment for academic staff retention (Willemse et al. 2019).

3.5.7. Support for management

The crucial role of managerial assistance in talent management has long been recognised. Effective performance management and recognition, informed and participatory decision-making, chances for skill application, and group problem-solving should all be part of management assistance in the academic setting (Willemse et al. 2019). Much research has also shown that academic staff turnover intentions are significantly influenced by inadequate management support and leadership styles; there is a considerable difference between the dangers that management believes academic staff face in higher education and the risks that management perceives for human capital (Manik and Ramrathan, 2021). The usage of business intelligence tools

by managers shows poor maturity levels, which leads to ineffective strategic planning (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.6. Employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University

The university staff complement remains steady at 1923 full-time staff, comprising 786 academic staff and 1137 support staff. The ratio of academic staff to support staff is approximately 1:1.4. The current employee turnover rate remains below 5%. This age analysis report shows that:

- ✓ 65% of our staff can be categorised as young to middle age (20–49 yrs).
- ✓ 33% of our staff are in the retirement age category (50–65 yrs).
- ✓ 2% of our staff are in post-retirement (65 yrs and above).

Most of our post-retirement staff are in the academic enterprise of the university, the majority are teaching staff in the Health Science Faculty (WSU Annual Report 2022).

Table 3.1. Resignation rates at Walter Sisulu University

Campus	Resignations	Year
Butterworth Campus	114	2012–2022
Buffalo City Campus	62	2012–2022
Mthatha Campus	306	2012–2022
Queenstown Campus	22	2012–2022
Institutional Office	99	2012–2022
Grand Total	603	

Source: Adapted from the Walter Sisulu University Annual Report (2019)

WSU understands that human capital is its most important resource. Spending a lot of effort and money on hiring, developing and maintaining staff, it seems sensible to assume that the institution would work to keep such workers and maximise the rewards received, and the costs spent. WSU has a staff retention policy in this respect. By putting this principle into practice, the institution may be able to keep its employees. In reality, the goal of the policy is to help the institution accomplish its goals for

transformation and equality, as well as to enhance service delivery and create a more knowledgeable and engaged staff (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). Atypically high numbers of WSU employees, including senior management, faculty, researchers and support personnel, are quitting their jobs and departing the university. The university can recruit competent, highly skilled employees and provide market-related salaries and benefits, although the turnover rate at WSU is greater than average. The university's ability to successfully carry out its primary missions of teaching and learning, producing research output and providing services is now hampered by this circumstance.

3.6.1. Review of employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University

Because HEIs are losing highly qualified staff to the private sector and other institutions of higher learning that can offer better rewards and benefits, talent retention and employee turnover are major concerns for these institutions (Mefi and Asoba 2021). An employee's choice to leave a business is a complicated process as turnover drivers and other variables create an atmosphere that is no longer tolerable. Attempts are being made to keep outstanding performers (Mabindisa 2018). Walter Sisulu University makes a concerted effort to express its gratitude for the work performed by workers and to reduce employee churn in this organisation. Both the Vice-Excellence Chancellor's Awards, a brand-new event, and the Long Service Awards Event, first held in November 2019, are highlights that motivate staff to work hard (Mofolo, 2020). The latter event aims to reward staff members for their dedication and achievement in various areas, including learning and teaching, research, community participation and support services performance.

Table 3.2. Employee turnover rates at WSU from 2012-2021

Campus	Voluntary Service Packages (VSP)	Retirements	Resignations	Death	Year
Butterworth	-	22	114	-	2012–2022
Buffalo City	-	21	62	1	2012–2022
Mthatha	58	122	306	23	2012–2022

Queenstown	-	6	22	-	2012–2022
Institutional Office	-	42	99	-	2012–2022
Total	58	213	603	24	2012–2022
Grand Total					898

Source: Adapted from WSU ITs (2022)

According to the Audit Report on Walter Sisulu University Report of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), HEQC recommends that Walter Sisulu University swiftly approve an organogram, harmonise contracts and job descriptions, and implement plans to eradicate the identified risks to realise the university's mission and vision (Mofolo 2020). A further recommendation from HEQC (2011) is that Walter Sisulu University should improve its management capabilities by assembling a senior management team that has the necessary knowledge and abilities to oversee the institution's diverse operations and lower staff turnover (Mefi and Asoba, 2021).

3.6.2. Employee turnover at the University of South Africa (UNISA)

In 2008, UNISA confronted the issue of being one of several universities in South Africa vying for the same small pool of academics and professionals, according to HEQC (2008). This suggested that the system was recycling academics rather than introducing and cultivating a new generation of academics (Davids and Waghid 2020; Mefi and Asoba 2021). Many scholars have transitioned from academia to the commercial sector. Due to the fierce competition and aggressive hiring practices in the private sector, UNISA became a preferred place for private organisations to head-hunt their employees (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). Due to this, the institution found it challenging to recruit and maintain the requisite competent personnel and to achieve equality by reflecting the demographics of its students (Mefi and Asoba 2021). HEQC 2008 (cited in Sete 2015), UNISA faced the challenge of being one of many institutions in South Africa competing for the same limited pool of academics and experts. This is a new generation of academics. In addition, many academics left academia for the private sector. As a result of competitiveness and aggressive recruitment in the private sector, UNISA became a popular source for private companies to headhunt their staff (HEQC 2008). This made it difficult for the university to attract and retain the necessary

qualified staff and simultaneously address equity by reflecting the demography of its students (HEQC 2008).

The dearth of academics with the necessary credentials at UNISA, particularly in applied mathematics, engineering, physics, and computer science, continues to be a major issue. The College of Science, Engineering, and Technology (CSET) must generate graduates with a variety of capabilities, enhancing their value both domestically and abroad, especially on the African continent (Maphosa et al. 2020). CSET's capacity to recruit, train, inspire, and retain high-calibre academic and academic support employees is a major factor in the organisation's success. The college needs students who are skilled in technical and scientific fields as well as those who have the passion, dedication, and desire to succeed for both themselves and the school (Masango 2018). CSET must generate graduates with a variety of abilities that will make them relevant to the global community in general and to the African continent in particular (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). According to the Integrated Report (2022), UNISA had 7079 employees in 2022, which included both fixed-term and permanent employees. A breakdown of gender can be found the table below.

Table 3.3. Total number for both fixed-term and permanent employees

Gender	Fixed Term	Permanent	Grand Total
Female	762	3175	3937
Male	533	2609	3142
Grand Total	1295	5784	7079

Source: Adapted from Integrated Report (2022)

Permanent employees qualify for all benefits that are provided by the university. Benefits that permanent employees qualify for, but are not available to short-term fixed-term contract employees include: (i) membership in the retirement fund; (ii) medical aid subsidies; (iii) group life assurance; (iv) paid maternity leave; and (v) housing allowances from P9 to P19. Employees on fixed-term contracts are paid within cost-to-company salary ranges where the values of the benefits mentioned above are included. They are, therefore, compensated in cash for the benefits. A significant portion of the organisation's activities are performed by workers who are not employees. A total of 2052 E-tutors were hired as independent contractors during the year under review. During the year under review, 179 new employees were appointed,

66.5% of whom were between the ages of 25 and 30, while 23.5% were over the age of 50. The remaining 23.5% were under the age of 30. Regarding gender, more male employees (59%) than female employees (41%) were appointed in 2022 (Integrated Report 2022).

Table 3.4. Total number and rate of employee turnover by age

Age group	Total Number	Turnover rate
30 – 50	78	35%
Over 50	146	65%
Under 30	0	0%
Grand Total	224	

Source: Adapted from Integrated Report (2022)

Table 3.5. Total number and rate of employee turnover by gender

Gender	Total number	Turnover rate
Female	128	57%
Male	96	43%
Grand Total	224	

Source: Adapted from Integrated Report (2022)

A once-off, non-pensionable incentive equivalent to 2.7% of each permanent academic employee's fixed pay package was decided by UNISA's management in 2005. The Council and Management of UNISA tried to show their gratitude for the academic staff's contributions to the university by giving these incentives to them in July 2005 (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). According to the self-evaluation portfolio for the HEQC Audit, this program was considered a pilot project until the end of 2008, and the audit document stated that the final decision on its feasibility would be made (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Additionally, it was mentioned in the HEQC Audit of 2008 that UNISA's new performance management system would be tied to performance incentives after it had been completely implemented to inspire and retain workers (Oni and Tshitangano 2019).

3.6.3. Employee turnover at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)

According to the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) was founded as an institution of higher learning on 1 January 2004 (Act No. 101 of 1997). TUT's name came about as a result of the merger of three Technikon campuses in Pretoria: Technikon Pretoria, Technikon North-West, and Technikon Northern Gauteng (Oni and Tshitangano 2019). There are other satellite campuses for this university in Polokwane, Nelspruit, and Witbank; however, the research will primarily concentrate on the three Pretoria-based campuses and ignore the other campuses (Botha and Vilyte 2020). The total number of voluntary resignations, excluding involuntary resignations, deaths, dismissals, and retirement, is equivalent to approximately 30%. This was calculated by taking the total number of employees who have resigned voluntarily and dividing it by the total number of employees in the institution, or $(562/1874)*100 = 30\%$ (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021).

According to the Tshwane University of Technology Academic Annual Report (2018), for the first time since the merger in 2004, the university implemented promotions for instructional and research staff to senior lecturer, associate professor and full professor. TUT developed a plan to implement the second phase of academic staff promotions, and instructional and research staff are hard at work so they can improve their standing in the academic project. TUT set aside a budget in 2019 to realise this objective. In fact, through this promotion project, more than 31% of the instructional and research staff have obtained doctoral degrees, up from 22% in 2015, a jump of nine percent in two years. There is no doubt that the promotion of academic staff has gone a long way toward boosting their morale and may serve as part of a retention strategy for the university. The only challenge that TUT faces is retaining such highly qualified staff who may be poached by other universities.

Table 3.6 Tshwane University of Technology Staff Turnover Trends

Year	Academics	Non-Academics	Total Components	Resignations	%
2004	894	1846	2740	81	1.9
2008	883	1757	2640	80	3.0
2009	852	1720	2572	104	4.0
2007	815	1707	2522	124	4.9

	794	1561	2355	114	4.8
	796	1543	2339	76	3.2

Source: Adapted from Ngoben (2010)

Before the reform of the higher institutions in 2004, the three campuses operated separately, had distinct cultures and were spread out across several locations. Townships Soshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa are home to two campuses, while Pretoria Town is the location of the last campus (Davids and Waghid 2020). Employees expect to be treated with respect by the employer as an asset to the firm they work for. Thus, the remaining staff may be demoralised and less committed to the organisation if they see individuals departing and do not know the real reason for their departure (Samuel and Chipunza 2017). The administration of TUT, after the merger, further reorganised the institutions' internal operations and developed a plan dubbed "match and place". Employees were assigned roles during this staff placement procedure after completion of their work profiles and suggestions made by the placement committee, which were accepted by the TUT council (Davids and Waghid 2020). Most of the staff members remained throughout this internal restructuring for an extended period without knowing where they would be placed. According to the staff placement process outlined on the TUT staff portal website, employees who were not placed were required to apply to be included in the redeployment pool (Botha and Vilyte 2020). Before the merger, some former Technikon personnel had the minimal educational requirements set by the company; however, since the name of the company has changed to the University of Technology, they must raise their educational standards to meet those of a university (Havenga and Sengane 2019).

Conditional appointments were made to current employees in higher positions and to academic staff; these appointments were valid until 2012, when the credentials of the new employees will be verified (Havenga and Sengane 2019). The purpose of this research is to first ascertain how current TUT employees perceive the degree of voluntary turnover in the company and what factors they are considering as a result of the departure of so many of their co-workers (Botha and Vilyte 2020). Secondly, has the voluntary nature of the resignations shocked people so that more people may leave their jobs leading to a potential increase in job turnover? Thirdly, to ascertain if

employees commit to their jobs, are satisfied with them, and have no plans to leave, in this instance, via information sharing (Havenga and Sengane 2019).

The institution has had significant difficulties with personnel retention since the merger in 2004. Twenty-two of the 144 employees who worked in the Faculty of ICT quit in 2007, according to data obtained from the faculty's executive dean's office (Botha and Vilyte 2020). This indicates a 16% worker turnover rate. Instability among the staff and students is a consequence of a lack of staff retention, resulting in a constant turnover of professors (Havenga and Sengane 2019). As a result, students must constantly get used to new lecturers while veteran academics are regularly transferred to teach various courses. The success rate of students, the results of the study, and the expense of hiring and training new employees were all suggested as possible causes (Botha and Vilyte 2020).

This research was started with this justification in mind. The research issue, as stated above, served as the foundation for the creation of the research question; on the record, it is important to note that accessing the information on employee turnover among South African universities was challenging for the researcher; hence, the researcher had to rely on generalised information at his disposal (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.7. Strategic goals to manage employee turnover and staff empowerment

Strategic aims to combat employee turnover and increase worker empowerment are outlined in the Walter Sisulu University Strategic Plan 2020–2030 (WSU 2023). The five objectives are discussed below:

3.7.1. Improved leadership, academic, and support staff capacities and skills

Staff development has a big impact on turnover. Research has established a negative and substantial relationship between employee development and turnover . The results of this study show that employees who receive internal training and development are less likely to quit their employers than those who do not (Davids and Waghid 2020). If an organisation wants to keep its staff, should offer job-specific training rather than more generic and transferable training that would make a worker more appealing to other organisations (Dlamini 2020). The objective is to keep the employees engaged and active while keeping them inaccessible to the outside world.

To reduce employee turnover brought on by rivals' superior job offers in the labour market, businesses should provide workers with training that is specifically tailored to their unique tasks and credentials that are only internally recognised (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.7.2. Increasing institutional operational effectiveness via better staff cost management

An organisation must carefully control employee turnover since it might significantly influence yearly expenditure. Employee turnover is expensive for organisations because each time an individual leaves, a replacement must be chosen, hired, taught, and given time to build experience on the job (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Most of the time, the expenses associated with turnover include the costs of recruiting, selection and employment as well as costs associated with orientation, training, salaries and administration. They also typically include lost productivity, lost human capital, and problems with customer satisfaction (Maphosa et al. 2020). Employees cite a variety of factors, including deficiencies by the employer, poor salary, discrimination, and lack of promotion. Management should examine the causes, which aid the business in creating retention strategies that adequately address the issues (Mefi and Asoba 2021). The new hires often receive on-the-job training and sometimes they are sent on specialised courses to expand their knowledge. These fees are significant, and organisations risk losing all of their previous investments if a highly trained person leaves without providing any documentation to support the substantial training costs (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021).

Organisations may use various strategies to lower the rate of turnover. Managers should consider methodical techniques that would help with managing employee turnover within the company, raising salaries, and enhancing the working atmosphere (Davids and Waghid 2020). Such initiatives would help ensure staff satisfaction and retention. Institutions of higher learning should consider exit interviews and their hiring procedure as they can provide insight into what makes workers happy and what they need to become top-tier employees (Havenga and Sengane 2019). In most situations, applicants who are upfront and honest about their expectations from the company throughout the recruiting process help the company maintain a successful retention strategy. The fact that businesses must take these techniques into account to keep

key staff is the most crucial factor (Mabindisa 2018). The capacity to find other jobs, particularly in a developing economy with a skills deficit like South Africa's, also helps these workers move about more often.

3.7.3. A high-performance-friendly working environment and culture

Organisational culture, by reflecting shared values, social ideologies and beliefs, is described as the social glue that unites workers. Every company should have a distinct and intrinsic culture that dictates how their business operations are conducted since this determines the personality of the organisation (Mabindisa 2018). Whether or not workers agree with an organisation's values is irrelevant when determining how its culture is expressed through its workforce. Employers need to be aware of the dynamic factor that creates corporate culture (Havenga and Sengane 2019). Assumptions and ideas that affect employees at an organisation form the basis of its culture. Corporate policies then reflect this culture is reflected in the rules, guidelines, and operational practices of the business (Mabindisa 2018). In the end, the organisation's conduct impacts the activities, inventions and artefacts that its members make. When an organisation's culture is obvious, it will influence individuals from various backgrounds to accept certain acts and behavioural patterns (Havenga and Sengane 2019). There is an improvement in workers' job satisfaction in organisations when individuals from all backgrounds and levels characterise the organisation's culture in comparable terms (Maphosa et al. 2020). Organisational culture impacts how satisfied or dissatisfied, both consciously and subconsciously, individuals are with their jobs (Havenga and Sengane 2019). According to several research studies, organisational culture positively impacts job satisfaction (Maphosa et al. 2020).

Employees want a workplace that allows them to use their skills and fulfil their fundamental requirements. The working environment significantly influences an employee's choice to remain with an organisation. If they are provided with a suitable workplace atmosphere, employees tend to like their jobs (Maphosa et al. 2020). Organisational culture is crucial to the success of any business because it helps with strategy development execution and gives a company a distinct competitive edge when it executes strategy more effectively than its competitors (Havenga and Sengane 2019). According to Vegro et al. (2016), an unhealthy organisational culture that is weak or negative and does not support the plan generates significant obstacles to the

execution of the strategy, which ultimately leads to the collapse of the company (Maphosa et al. 2020). Due to the significance of organisational culture, university administrators should be aware of and appreciate its underlying characteristics and the effects they have on factors connected to their academic performance, such as work satisfaction and organisational dedication (Havenga and Sengane 2019).

3.7.4. Comprehensive transformation agenda

Social status and "race" continue to impact who may enrol and succeed in higher education. HEIS must undergo further change because of the residual effects of South Africa's infamous apartheid practices, which include social inequality, a lack of financial accessibility, and, of course, subpar educational institutions (Havenga and Sengane 2019). People who were previously subjected to discrimination during apartheid are referred to as formerly disadvantaged persons under the new democratic South African regime (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). The South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has given HEIs a local mandate to address inequalities faced by previously advantaged people by transforming the education sector and acknowledging the relationship between HEIs and social justice and the crucial role of universities (Ferguson et al. 2019).

This overarching social goal inevitably frames efforts to transform South African higher education, including policy formation and implementation to overcome the inherited apartheid social structure with its severe social inequalities and institutionalise a new social order (Samuel and Chipunza 2017). However, the transformation projects are also affected by shifting regional economic and social policies and developments, as well as global circumstances and developments, as well as the paradoxes, ambiguities, contradictions, opportunities, and limitations posed by these situations (Davids and Waghid 2020). Domestic and foreign stakeholders, such as the government, students, funders, and the public, continue to see higher education transformation as timely and important (Davids and Waghid 2020). The efficiency of the reform efforts has been questioned even though they have already seen some success.

3.7.5. Talented personnel recruitment and retention

Retention is everything a company does to persuade capable and effective workers to stay on as employees. The fundamental goal of retention is to lessen the number of valuable employees who leave the organisation on their own will (Davids and Waghid 2020). The percentage of workers with a certain length of service represented as a percentage of the total workforce statistics may be used to assess retention, which has to do with how many employees are still employed there after a certain period (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). Employers are making a concerted effort to develop an atmosphere that motivates existing workers to stay with the company by putting in place rules and procedures that cater to their varied demands (Ndofirepi et al. 2020).

Universities continuously losing academic personnel due to the allure of better-paying colleges in Africa or beyond, as well as the business sphere, which offers lucrative remuneration (Maphosa et al. 2020). Similarly, the HEQC (2012) study finds that universities have significant difficulty retaining qualified workers and suggests that universities immediately implement staff recruitment and retention strategies to address difficulties with staff morale (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). The biggest issue facing HEIs is their failure to keep their employees; excessive personnel turnover is a key issue for HEIs (Dlamini 2020).

WSU is aware of its people resources as its most significant asset (WSU 2014). Personnel selection, instruction, and professional development take time and money. One would assume that the institution will work to keep such workers to maximise the rewards and and minimise costs spent (Dlamini 2020). WSU has a policy for employee retention in this respect. The application of this strategy could help this institution retain its employees (Botha and Vilyte 2020). In actuality, the policy's goal is to contribute to the attainment of the university's transformation and equality objectives, as well as a more qualified and motivated staff, better service delivery, and other goals. It is worth noting that the researcher found accessing the information on employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University was a tall order; hence, the researcher had to rely on generalised information from previously conducted studies (Dlamini 2020).

3.8. Policies concerning retention at Walter Sisulu University

Staff members at WSU, including senior management, faculty, researchers, and support personnel, are abruptly quitting their jobs and departing the university (Botha and Vilyte 2020). Despite the university's ability to recruit competent and highly qualified employees and its capacity to provide market-related salaries and benefits, the turnover rate at WSU is greater than average (Dlamini 2020). The university's ability to successfully carry out its fundamental missions of teaching and learning, doing research and providing services is now being hampered by this scenario (Botha and Vilyte 2020). Insufficient adherence to HR procedures, including training, compensation, recruiting, and selection, all of which are essential to retaining HR at HEIs, was listed by Martin (2011) as one of the reasons for turnover (Maphosa et al. 2020). Many workers at WSU are dissatisfied, as seen by the high incidence of resignations. For the objectives of this research, it is essential to examine some university personnel policies, as they have a significant influence on keeping key talent:

3.8.1. WSU Academic and Promotions Policy (WSU 2022)

Every employee generally wishes to be promoted for personal and professional growth. The WSU promotions policy governs the promotion of academic and support personnel at WSU to the levels of lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, and professor (Maphosa et al. 2020). It outlines the terminology, goals, and primary areas of assessment, as well as other guiding concepts and criteria (Masango 2018). The lack of academic personnel and universities' inability to retain quality academic staff continue to be major obstacles to knowledge production and learning's evolving possibilities and potential (Maphosa et al. 2020). The premise for retention is the acknowledgement of competence and excellence in teaching, research, community participation, and administration, which is utilised to lessen the impact of losses from retirement and resignations (Mefi and Asoba 2021). This thesis has been created to act as a guide for Walter Sisulu University's academic and research staff regarding hiring and promoting personnel.

The policy statement emphasises the substantive and procedural criteria that will be used to evaluate how well the policy is being implemented. This policy document lays out the requirements for academic staff members who are applying for positions at the

associate lecturer, research associate, and professor levels, as well as for appointments and promotions in those positions (Mefi and Asoba 2021). All permanent/contract full-time academic personnel at the university are subject to these rules when hired or promoted. They do not cover part-time academic workers (Mofolo 2020). Additionally, this policy paper outlines the requirements for academic staff members interested in being appointed to or promoted to administrative leadership positions, such as heads of academic departments and deans of colleges (WSU 2014).

According to WSU (2014), every academic staff member should be given the chance to advance to the appropriate rank if there is clear evidence of merit and the ability to meet the requirements for promotion if a post is available (Mofolo, 2020). Put another way, academics need to be promoted based purely on their merits, not only on open positions. Therefore, the standards also hold for promotions made at home (Mzangwa 2019). Academic employees should be informed by their faculties about the requirements and procedures for university appointments to various ranks and promotions from one level to another (Ncanywa 2020). Each faculty member is also permitted to focus on implementing the rules to suit the distinctiveness of each field. A candidate may not have had the chance to participate in teaching and learning or even research; thus, this factor should be considered when choosing them for a job in the faculty (Ncanywa 2020). This policy provides for professional disciplines where a standard doctorate pathway for professional credentials is not always applicable. Instead of focusing on depth as it does with the conventional PhD route, in these situations, equivalency is defined by breadth (Mzangwa 2019). Since many academics at WSU come from a low socioeconomic background, there are obstacles to their advancement in terms of their credentials and experience within the university's ranks and responsibilities that should be eliminated (Mokoditsoa 2018). Therefore, the 2008 policy paper on appointments and promotions for academic staff and the academic development of support personnel specifies developmental appointments and promotions as a concept of developing our academics and its implementation (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.8.2. Employee Study Subsidy Policy at WSU

The Walter Sisulu University is dedicated to providing staff members with formal training and the necessary skills to successfully carry out their duties (WSU 2021). Development is also meant to help with career development where it supports the university's strategic goals and the internal success model of the WSU Strategy (Mefi and Asoba 2021), which emphasises the need to develop leadership potential through the development of academic and support staff with an open mindset (nationally and internationally), critical thinking, respect and mindfulness of the right to freedom of expression (Botha and Vilyte 2020).

The staff education bursary program is available to permanent, full-time employees who require financial support to pursue formal developmental learning and development to acquire the competencies, skills, qualifications, or education necessary to advance their careers at WSU in the short to medium term (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). This is in accordance with the Staff Study Subsidy Policy (WSU 2021). Staff members can still achieve their goals, since the course of study is not a specific requirement for their positions (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Tuition, registration, and test fee subsidies are the only types of financial aid subject to application. WSU fully subsidises master's and doctorate degrees at 100% of fees, another public tertiary school at 75%, and a private university at 100% of the WSU equivalent qualification.

3.8.3. Policy regarding interim appointments (WSU 2021)

According to WSU's Acting Appointments Policy (2021), the chance to fill a vacancy in a post outside of an employee's area of competence at a higher grade level or the same grade is a major growth opportunity. By achieving a balance between the rights of the workers and the university's objectives, this policy aims to establish the requirements and processes for the appointment of employees to acting roles necessary for efficient and uninterrupted service delivery (Heugh 2020). If the employee is acting for a longer time and takes on responsibility for the acting role, an acting allowance must be paid to the employee. If the acting period is longer than 30 calendar days and the person acting assumes full responsibility for the acting position and their current salary, the employee will be given a fixed acting allowance equal to 15% of the median basic salary/package of the job grade in which they will be acting,

or the minimum notch of the grade scale in which they will be acting, whichever is greater (Heugh 2020). The Interim Appointment Policy (2021) outlines the general principles and institutional goals for acting appointments at WSU. The Strategy for Human Resources Management at WSU was created within this framework and is updated regularly. At the campus level, the policy is implemented by the demands of that campus to the extent that is practically possible.

3.8.4. WSU Compensation Policy (WSU 2010)

The university may maintain employee motivation by rewarding them fairly and equally within the terms of the Remuneration Policy (2010) when they assist in achieving the institution's strategic goals. Following the performance management system, the university hopes to recognise high-performing personnel via this policy (Heugh 2020). With the help of the policy, the institution can work toward competitiveness to draw in and keep qualified employees. The university's compensation system is built on the principles of its compensation policy (Havenga and Sengane 2019). This policy aims to draw in, retain, and inspire workers to contribute consistently to those goals because the institution relies on its people resources to fulfil its goals. The compensation policy seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- Rewards are given to those who help the university accomplish its goals.
- The performance management system recognises and rewards those who perform very well.
- The university can recruit and retain top-tier employees while successfully competing in the job market.
- Rewarding employees fairly and equally results in these accomplishments.

As an employer, the university complies with all applicable laws and the terms and conditions indicated in the letters of appointment (WSU remuneration policy 2010).

3.9. Measurement of performance in HEIs

Improving activities involving individuals, groups, departments, and teams is one of the many definitions of performance management. "Through the integrated process, the idea constantly empowers the institution to accomplish strategic goals regarding the organisation's future orientation" (Manhall and Wood 2016). Performance management acknowledges the institution for accomplishing goals via its core

competencies. The planning, control, assessment, and improvement of personnel are only a few tasks covered by performance management (Havenga and Sengane 2019). Performance management continually includes the assessment of performance deficiencies and strengths geared toward improving the institution's competitive edge (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). Given the challenging environment in which these institutions operate, the extensive time horizons over which their influence must be measured and the variety of their aims, performance management of HEIs is a contentious and challenging endeavour (Maphosa et al. 2020). Furthermore, using the wrong performance management framework—a simple error to make—will result in a fresh set of issues and, most of the time, is ineffective (Masango 2018).

Along with many other applications, performance management aids in systematically assessing workers' strengths and shortcomings (Masango 2018). An organisation can achieve effectiveness, cost-cutting, fairness and enhanced performance via performance management. The four main components are commonly acknowledged as the main objectives supporting performance management systems (Maphosa et al. 2020). Institutions often use performance management to increase employee productivity and competency, as well as the effectiveness of their teams, departments, and organisations. "The idea is not a static strategy, but a constant approach intended to assist the growth of human resources in the institutions" (Manhall and Wood 2016). Institutions may protect their core competencies and values, which are in line with their purpose and vision, via the program (Maphosa et al. 2020). The planning, control, assessment and improvement of personnel and the institution are all included in performance management. Performance management enables an institution to assess its staff capability strengths and shortcomings. The ultimate goal of performance management is to enhance the solutions for problem-solving to increase the institution's competitive advantage (Dlamini 2020).

3.9.1. The theory of performance management

The philosophy of performance management is based on the need for a management process that leads the company strategy toward the accomplishment of individual, departmental and institutional objectives (Dlamini 2020). Connecting organisational goals with their mission and vision through staff performance is crucial. An ascension procedure is needed to facilitate the formulation of corporate goals (Maimela and

Samuel 2016). A procedure that is based on values that enable the upkeep of managerial services, including the determination of overall quality, consumer service and business process re-engineering is a necessity (Dlamini 2020).

Performance management is a continuous process that involves all managers and employees inside the organisation, regardless of their position. Performance management is attributed with enhancing employee working relationships and increasing staff effectiveness (Ferguson et al. 2019). Employees may express their concerns in an efficient performance management system. Therefore, an efficient performance management system must address all performance-related factors that are essential to the institution's success and growth (Davids and Waghid 2020). Therefore, it may be claimed that an organisation's potential to advance depends on its staff members' capacity for quick learning and application of new information (Botha and Vilyte 2020). Performance management is a systematic strategy that, among other things, translates an institution's goal into outcomes delivered by people. This is possible by making sure that everyone understands the goals, outcomes, values, and priorities (Belluigi 2020).

The purpose of performance management is to increase performance via coaching and feedback. Fundamentally, the institution's whole personnel participate in the shared process of performance management, which is carried out by managers at various levels of the hierarchy (Belluigi 2020). The scope of performance management requires management by contract, rather than management by demand. The performance management scope is helpful in that it offers a template for strategic planning and management as part of a targeted strategic competence development (Dlamini 2020). Management is recognised for using a performance management scope to create, enhance, and operationalise a common understanding of strategic goals. The performance management scope also encourages collaboration and institutional integration (Manik and Ramrathan 2021).

3.9.2. Why performance management is important in HEIs

Operational and cultural goals are the two fundamental motivations behind performance management.

3.9.2.1. Goals for operations

An operational purpose aids in directing and managing production. It is consequently more important than ever for employees of any institution to have clear guiding principles and guidance that are laser-focused on the goals and objectives of the organisation (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). By connecting institutional goals with personal ambitions, performance management frameworks assist top management in achieving strategic corporate goals. Performance management systems also emphasise behaviour that promote achieving institutional goals (Tlaiss, Martin and Hofaidhllaoui 2017). The importance of creating a performance management system lies primarily in its capacity to ensure institutional alignment of work from the vision and mission, together with policy as well as strategy to institutional and distinct/individual performance (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). A strong performance management system should push an institution to re-evaluate how it operates, considering its primary priorities, and be able to reward excellent performance. This perspective unquestionably emphasises the importance of performance management as a tool for rewarding institutions that perform well (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.9.2.2. The aim of culture

Despite concerns about the system's cultural motivations, it may have been developed due to efforts to boost productivity by fostering more open relationships with employees (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Regarding cultural purpose, performance management aims to establish an organisational performance culture in which individuals and teams assume responsibility for the organisation's ongoing development and their abilities and resources within a framework provided by effective leadership (Maphosa et al. 2020). According to Swaartbooi (2016), performance increase is only possible with a successful continuous improvement process. On the other hand, to fulfil its developmental objective, performance management must implement a clear and strict outline of the employees who perform below the necessary criteria (Maphosa et al. 2020). Performance management is a continuous, extensive, widespread, and more common management approach that emphasises the future, underlines the supportive role of managers who are expected to serve more as coaches than judges, and highlights both parties' potential (Maphosa et al. 2020). The three goals of any performance management framework are to address

inadequate performance, maintain excellent performance and develop performance (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.10. Walter Sisulu University and performance measurement

Walter Sisulu University has implemented a system for measuring performance that aligns with its institutional goals. This system strategically segments performance into core areas such as 'enrolment', 'success', and 'effectiveness and efficiency' (WSU, 2022). This approach is indicative of WSU's commitment to ongoing improvement and accountability within its education framework. The "enrolment" area monitors student numbers and program enrolments to assess recruitment strategies and alignment with enrolment targets (WSU, 2022). The "success" area evaluates student outcomes, graduation rates, and academic achievements to improve teaching quality and support services (WSU, 2022). The "effectiveness and efficiency" area assesses operational efficiency, staff qualifications, and student-to-staff ratios to optimise resource allocation and enhance teaching practices (WSU, 2022).

By aligning institutional goals with tangible achievements in these key areas, WSU demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement and accountability within the educational sphere. This strategic approach helps the university track progress, identify areas for enhancement, and ensure that its operations are in line with its overarching objectives.

3.10.1. Enrolment

The enrolment area focuses on monitoring and evaluating the university's student enrolment figures, including total headcount, first-time entering undergraduates, and enrolment in specific programs. According to the 2022 annual report, the total headcount enrolment targets for WSU for the calendar years 2021 and 2022 were established at 29544 and 30169, respectively. The actual enrolments for these years exceeded the set targets, with 30980 students enrolled in 2021 and 30543 in 2022, thus achieving 101.2% of the targeted enrolment for 2022 (WSU, 2022).

Breaking this down further, undergraduate enrolments, including diplomas and certificates (which encompass Advanced Diplomas and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education), demonstrated an over-enrolment against their targets. In 2021, the actual undergraduate headcount for diplomas and certificates was 17 535 against a

target of 15 129, while in 2022, there were 16 849 enrolments against a target of 14 841, showing a substantial achievement level of 113.5% for the latter year (WSU, 2022). In contrast, undergraduate degree enrolments did not meet the target, with a headcount of 11 750 in 2021, falling short of the target of 11 965. This trend continued into 2022, reaching 11 934 against the target of 12 728, which equates to a 93.6% achievement level (WSU, 2022). The report further revealed that first-time entering undergraduate student enrolment in 2022 fell short by 1.5%, with 7,092 students enrolled compared to the target of 7,200. However, this figure marked an increase from the 2021 enrolment of 6875. The university's enrolment in Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) in 2021 stood at 9 080 students, while business and commerce enrolled 8 139 students, education enrolled 7 198 students, and other humanities enrolled 6 563 students.

For postgraduate studies, there was a notable under-enrolment below master's level, with actual headcounts at 943 and 972 for 2021 and 2022 respectively, compared to targets of 1 725 and 1 820. This resulted in an achievement level of 53.4% for 2022. However, master's programs performed closer to their enrolment targets with 564 enrolments in 2021, with a target of 645, and 594 in 2022, achieving 86.7% of that year's target. Doctoral programs exceeded expectations with a headcount of 102 in 2021 and 109 in 2022, surpassing targets by 14.7% for 2022 (WSU, 2022).

Table 3.7. WSU key enrolment indicators academic year 2021-2022

Key Performance Indicator	2021		2022		Achievement Level
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Undergraduate: Diploma & certificates (including Advanced Diploma and PGCE)	15 129	17 535	14 841	16 849	113.50%
Undergraduate Degrees	11 965	11 750	12 728	11 934	93.60%
Headcount Total Undergraduate	27 094	29 285	27 569	28 783	104.40%
Postgraduate: Below Masters	1 725	943	1,820	972	53.40%
Masters	645	564	685	594	86.70%
Doctoral	80	102	95	109	114.70%
Headcount Total Postgraduate	2 450	1 609	2 600	1 675	64.30%

Total Headcount Enrolment	29 544	30 894	30 169	30 458	101.20%
Proportion of UG: PG	91:9	95:5	92:8	95:5	

Source: Walter Sisulu University 2022 Annual Report (2022)

The data in Table 3-7 above implies that Walter Sisulu University has shown strong performance in undergraduate diploma and certificate enrolments, consistently exceeding its targets, indicating a high demand for these programs. However, the university faced challenges in meeting the enrolment targets for undergraduate degree programs, hinting at potential issues such as student recruitment or retention that may need to be addressed to achieve future targets. Regarding postgraduate studies, there is significant under-enrolment, particularly at levels below master's degrees, which implies that the university may need to investigate and address barriers to postgraduate study. While doctoral enrolments are performing well, the overall low postgraduate enrolment suggests potential gaps in the progression pipeline from undergraduate to postgraduate levels or perhaps a lack of awareness or interest in these opportunities.

The skewed proportion of undergraduate to postgraduate enrolments, with a much higher percentage of undergraduates, aligns with the general profile of a primarily undergraduate institution. It also points to an area for strategic growth and an opportunity for WSU to enhance its postgraduate offerings and research capacity, as postgraduate studies can drive research output and contribute to the academic prestige of the university.

Overall, the enrolment performance at Walter Sisulu University indicates a positive trend, with total headcount enrolment exceeding targets for both 2021 and 2022, translating to an achievement of 101.2% for the year 2022. This demonstrates the university's capacity to attract and retain a student population beyond its planned capacity. High enrolment figures are often associated with a healthy demand for the programs offered and can lead to stronger financial stability for the institution (Ng and Galbraith 2023; Paul et al. 2015; Hussain, Hanaysha and Kamarudin 2019), given that tuition and associated fees contribute significantly to the revenue of higher education institutions.

3.10.2. Success

The success performance area delves into the outcomes and achievements of students within the university. It includes metrics such as graduation rates, academic performance, and progression through academic programs. WSU closely tracks these indicators to ensure that students are successful in their studies and that the institution is fulfilling its educational duties. Data from the 2022 annual report, as reported in Table 3.8 below, shows that WSU demonstrated strong undergraduate success, with the actual number of undergraduates in 2021 reaching 8 384, significantly surpassing the target of 6 322. However, in 2022, there appears to be a slight shortfall, with actual graduates numbering 6 239 against the target of 6 433. This fluctuation suggests the necessity for evaluation of the factors influencing undergraduate completion rates.

Postgraduate numbers present a striking contrast, with the actual number falling short of targets in both observed years. The data reflects a considerable gap, especially in 2022, where only 143 graduates were recorded against a target of 615. This marked underperformance indicates critical areas for review and intervention to enhance postgraduate success rates and support structures. Looking at the degree credit success rates, undergraduate levels have shown commendable performance, with the actual rate positioned at 88% and 87% for 2021 and 2022 respectively, against the target of 82%. This suggests effective teaching methodologies and student support at the undergraduate level, contributing to a high level of student accomplishment.

Conversely, postgraduate degree success rates do not meet the targets, falling from 65% to 49% in 2021 and then rising to 60% in 2022, still below the 65% target. While there is a slight improvement, this pattern reflects underlying challenges within the postgraduate programs that affect student credit accumulation and progression. The overall degree of success indicates a consistently strong performance with 86% in 2021 and 84% in 2022, above the 80% targets. This suggests that overall students at WSU are successfully completing their courses and progressing in their studies, although the lower success rates at the postgraduate level may suggest that there are differing levels of success across the various strata of the institution's academic offerings.

Table 3.8. Success rates and graduate outputs

Key Performance Indicator	2021		2022	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Graduates Under-Graduate	6322	8384	6433	6239
Graduates Post-Graduate	601	286	615	143
Total Graduates	6923	8670	7048	6382
Degree Credit Success UG	82%	88%	82%	87%
Degree Credit Success PG	65%	49%	65%	60%
Overall Degree Credit Success	80%	86%	80%	84%

Source: Walter Sisulu University 2022 Annual Report (2022)

3.10.3. Effectiveness and efficiency

The effectiveness and efficiency area focuses on evaluating the institution's operational efficiency and effectiveness in delivering quality education. It considers factors such as the size and qualifications of academic staff, student-to-staff ratios, and overall fitness for purposes concerning teaching and learning. The headcount of permanent instructional and research staff exceeded the target in both years, achieving a level of 152% in 2022. This indicates that WSU has significantly increased its number of permanent staff, which could enhance the quality of education and research output by reducing the over-extension of staff responsibilities.

The full-time equivalent of instructional and research staff also outperformed the targets, reaching an achievement level of 118% in 2022. A higher-than-planned FTE often implies that the university has either employed more full-time staff or increased the number of hours part-time staff work, potentially leading to better student support and engagement. The percentage of staff holding doctoral degrees shows an impressive overachievement, increasing from 24% to 27% against the target of 17% in 2022, reaching an achievement level of 159%. A higher academic qualification among staff can indicate more experts in their fields are available for teaching and research, which could directly benefit the quality of educational delivery.

For the percentage of staff with master's degrees, the university has achieved 97% of its 2022 target. Despite not fully meeting the target, the actual performance is

profoundly high at 43%, showing that a significant portion of the staff possess advanced qualifications. The university also reached its target number for the nGAP staff with a 100% achievement level for 2022, indicating strategic staffing initiatives to address staffing needs. The FTE ratio of students to staff decreased to 26.63 in 2022 from a target of 33.1, which represents an 80% achievement level. This implies a lower-than-expected student-to-staff ratio, which is generally favourable as it can lead to more personalised attention for students, higher engagement in the learning process, and better academic support. Overall, these numbers reflect a university that is effectively leveraging its staffing resources and qualifications to provide a quality education and research environment. The substantial investment in highly qualified staff and favourable student-to-staff ratios position WSU to efficiently and effectively execute its academic and research programs.

Table 3.9 Instruction/research staff data

Key Performance Indicator	2021		2022		Achievement Level
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Headcount of Perm. Instr./Res. Staff	589	908	598	906	152%
FTE for Instr./Res. Staff	750	857	761	898	118%
% Staff with Doctoral Degrees	15%	24%	17%	27%	159%
% Staff with Masters Degrees	15%	42%	44%	43%	97%
Number of nGap Staff	4	3	4	4	100%
FTE Ratio of Students to Staff	33,1	29,1	33,1	26,63	80%

Source: Walter Sisulu University 2022 Annual Report

Walter Sisulu University's performance metrics signal robust overall health, with enrolment targets surpassed and strong undergraduate success. Despite these successes, postgraduate graduation rates highlight areas for improvement. High academic qualifications among staff and favourable student-to-staff ratios denote a sound operational stance, reflecting the university's commitment to quality education while identifying specific domains for enhancement.

3.11. Definition of talent management

Talent management is a crucial job and a fundamental process that guarantees HEIs have the necessary personnel they need to achieve their immediate and long-term business requirements. The process covers every significant stage of a worker's lifetime, including recruiting, growth, advancement, and performance management (Smit, Stanz and Bussin 2015). The talent lifecycle comprises attraction, acquisition, onboarding, training, and retention. The talent lifecycle is recognised as the method by which the talent lifecycle is accomplished and is considered the track along which most individuals connect to the organisation (Smit, Stanz and Bussin 2015). As a result, the efficacy of personnel investments frequently determines how well an employee's lifetime is managed. Talent optimisation, which Julie et al. (2019) define as the organisation's achievement of a balance in talent acquisition, development, performance, and retention strategies, is another important component of talent management. To maximise the results of those talent investments, which include, among other things, increased employee productivity, noteworthy client retention or purchasing, higher quality and maintenance of sought-after workers, decreased administrative or natural dangers, and strong operational and financial performances, specific processes and policies must be in place (Smit, Stanz and Bussin 2015).

HEIs should invest significantly in recruiting, supervising, and maintaining competent personnel. Every employer should try to ensure that each new hire receives enough training during orientation to be fully acquainted with the information and skills required to fulfil the assigned tasks to meet the organisation's goals (Ncanywa 2020). Employee retention has emerged as a major global concern in as many organisations as possible. The high cost of recruitment and selection, the potential loss of productivity during the orientation and adjustment period, the likely loss of business opportunities, poor customer relations, as well as the hidden cost of lost productivity have all drawn the organisation's attention to the extent of the retention problem (Timmis et al. 2019).

What exactly qualifies as talent is a subject of debate. Talent is what some businesses refer to as top performers. They are classified as high-potential workers by other organisations. For others, they are workers with skill sets (Timmis et al. 2019). Talent refers to people who influence an organisation's performance, either immediately via their contribution or over time by exhibiting the greatest levels of potential (Maphosa

et al. 2020). This study defines "talent" as high-performing personnel with specialised and rare talents since it focuses on foreign academics seen as talented employees (Chabaya, Tshephe and Molotsi 2014).

Talent must be linked in two different ways. The organisational strategy must first be vertical, bringing value to organisational performance. Second, it has to work horizontally with human resources, learning best practices for preventing disparate, random behaviour from degrading someone's respect (Mefi and Asoba 2021). The board's support is crucial because it guarantees that Human Resources and Learning and Development have a thorough understanding of the company's long-term objectives and that talent management is in line with those goals to meet the organisation's future needs (Mofolo 2020). At this point in the debate, it is important to reiterate that new hires need to immediately align with the organisation via good and efficient onboarding and induction (Mkulu 2018). Early on, the relationship between new hires and their leaders, colleagues, or subordinates is essential for integration and alignment. Line managers must establish a friendly atmosphere and unambiguous understandings between themselves and their subordinates (Ncanywa 2020).

3.11.1. Five essential guidelines for developing potential

Potential talent needs to be fostered and developed when talent has been recognised. Developing talent for bigger responsibilities within the organisation and enhancing engagement and retention of such talent may be essential components of talent management (Ncanywa 2020). Prius (2011) presents five fundamental ideas for fostering organisational talent management. These guidelines include:

- Creating a clear policy that defines talent within the organisation is crucial. According to Prius (2011), talent development strategies that consider the whole association as the present talent pool ultimately provide superior business results.
- Considering talent management as a coordinated process and setting it up as a sound effort, from essential talent recruiting and evaluation to talent pipeline and placement, professional growth, engagement, tutoring, teaching, and learning and improvement.
- Implementing talent development activities in response to requests from the workforce to meet the corresponding areas of requirements.

- Giving coaching based on real-life success stories, which helps people enhance their abilities, talents, and business knowledge.

The company can leverage the potential of the talent pool because individuals with the potential to work in teams can provide an enormous and, to a large degree, untapped psychological surplus for the company (Shirk 2010), which might aid in the growth of hierarchies (Mzangwa 2019).

Talent management reduces a high turnover rate and is an accurate predictor of job satisfaction and the quality of work-related life. In conclusion, a successful organisation relies on effective talent management (Mzangwa 2019). According to motivation theory, two variables contribute to work dissatisfaction: push and pull factors (Spinelli and Adams 2016). These elements can encourage or discourage an employee from staying with the organisation or quitting. The pull factors encourage the person to leave their present job, while the push factors encourage them to leave their current job (Mofolo 2020).

3.11.2. Why talent management is important for HEI

It is possible to foretell how well an institution will function based on its faculty's leadership, teaching, and research if talent management is implemented, among other factors (Maghdomi and Keikha 2017). Management of talent and knowledge enhances revenues and rankings (Hazelkorn 2017). The talent management process is essential to higher education institutions' long-term growth and performance, as it applies organisational tactics with highly qualified workers (Ming et al. 2016). Bwowe (2020) states that historically disadvantaged universities need help attracting and retaining highly qualified academics and competent support staff due to the limited ownership and control over economic resources. Where they are lucky to attract them, these employees are normally poached by other well-financially established tertiary institutions or join other private organisations. In some cases, academics and other talented employees leave due to the social conditions of the environment where some of these institutions are located.

There are also cases where institutions need more appropriate leadership and management skills to run them; consequently, some have been placed under administration in the past. At times, this has contributed to employees' job dissatisfaction and stress, potentially increasing their desire to leave. This thesis

examines behavioural turnover intentions to explain the nature and level of turnover at the selected university. It further assesses and discusses factors which are likely to impact turnover intentions in organisations (Bwowe 2020). According to Bwowe (2020), lack of advancement opportunities, job insecurity, workload, job opportunities, and inadequate salary and benefits are the factors that influence turnover intentions the most. The study is significant because it provides important information on employees' intent to leave. In addition, knowledge gained from it can be used to enhance the understanding of factors that predict actual turnover and could also assist in controlling employees' avoidance behaviour. Selesho and Naile (2014) remarked that it is the essence of universities to attract and retain first-class academic staff, but retaining a well-developed and motivated academic workforce has become a challenge in South Africa. Badat (2019) remarked that addressing this issue will enhance academic provision, the quality of graduates, and the research outputs in the years to come. The challenge in managing talent in the South African higher education sector has resulted in the need for a sustainable and viable pool of academics for the next generation.

One way of dealing with this issue is to ensure that HEIs have an effective talent management strategy. An effective talent management strategy aims to create a talent pool for organisations. Talent management aims to provide the right skills for the right job at the right time. HEIs rely on their academic staff to ensure long-term growth and sustainability (Njanjobea 2016). Chow (2014) pointed out that talent planning is part of organisational strategy, and it plays an essential role in positioning a company to propel its talents' effectiveness and gain a competitive advantage. Barkuizen (2015) noted that after talent planning, the organisation can attract and recruit talents (talent sourcing) to create a talent pool. The organisation must still recreate an employee brand to attract the right candidates and establish a culture of recognition and appreciation for talented employees.

3.12. The significance of staff retention and its distinction in higher education institutions in South Africa

Al-EMadi, Schwabenland and Wei (2015) define employee retention as initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation. These initiatives can reward employees for performing their jobs effectively, ensuring

harmonious working relationships and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. Employee retention can also be defined as a voluntary process by any organisation to avail itself of an environment that encourages and motivates employees to remain with the organisation for longer (Al-EMadi et al. 2015). A system that guarantees the employer always has access to human capital capacity, including leadership, to carry out its company plan and operations successfully and efficiently, both now and in the future, is known as an employee retention program (Mofolo 2020). There are different interpretations of academic retention, which is a crucial continuing process where organisation keeps an employee on board until a project is finished. Retention is a voluntary process in which a company offers a setting that encourages and supports individuals to stay with the company for an extended duration (Mokoditsoa 2018). Retention refers to measures management takes to prevent workers from leaving the organisation, such as rewarding workers for effectively performing their jobs, fostering positive working relationships between staff members and managers, and maintaining a secure and healthy work environment (Ncanywa 2020). However, the literature strongly emphasises the value of staff retention, especially in terms of costs associated with turnover.

Numerous academics contend that turnover is expensive in terms of social and financial harm, expenses associated with hiring and training new personnel and affects the morale of those already working there (Akhtar et al. 2016). Developing retention tactics for important personnel is essential to thwarting both turnover intentions and turnover realities (Ncanywa 2020). Relatively little research on employee turnover has specifically focused on the factors that influence an employee to remain with an organisation, and what determines this attachment retention process should be studied in addition to quitting processes (Mofolo 2020). This suggests that investigating staff retention is essential to reducing turnover.

3.12.1. Strategies for retaining employees

Managing and retaining personnel gives organisations a competitive advantage (2020). How to retain outstanding personnel is a difficulty that organisations, especially HEIs, confront globally (Mofolo 2020). The difficulty might be related to the institution's failure to provide competitive pay and ongoing academic growth for new hires. HEIs are becoming more and more aware of the need to keep employees from all

demographic groups to boost worker productivity and strengthen their competitive position (Ncanywa 2020). Additionally, businesses are increasingly cognisant of the enormous challenge of maintaining talented workers, particularly for South African businesses. Creating incentive plans that fit each person's preferences is one method to do this (Mofolo 2020).

Through ongoing management commitment, sound talent management procedures, particularly talent development, reward and performance management, should be maintained (Mokgojwa et al. 2017). Management or leaders at HEIs have a crucial impact on talent retention (Mofolo 2020). Talent sourcing should highlight everyone's capabilities so they may be matched to roles, responsibilities, and challenges rather than only locating the individuals inside an organisation deemed talented by their line managers (Mpini 2018). Career opportunities include a plan for workers to advance their professional objectives, which may include being promoted to a position of responsibility within an organisation. Managers should often discuss talent retention with their staff to reduce the possibility of intended voluntary departure (Mokoditsoa 2018). The need for younger people to enrol in HEIs threatens the institution's long-term viability and capacity to contribute to national growth (South African Council for Higher Education 2016). The absence of knowledge about Generation Y (born between 1980 and 1996) academics in South Africa has resulted in a missed opportunity for growth and progress. Given the anticipated shortages in higher education, this may have impacted the organisational performance of personnel in academia.

An organisation's financial performance is four times higher when its people are highly engaged than when they are not. It is clear from the discussion above that a smart employer has to know how to keep workers in order to provide a decent return on investment (Mokoditsoa 2018). Any investment in personnel is wasted when they leave their existing job because they are unhappy. Organisations struggle with employee retention regularly (Mpini 2018). While finding qualified candidates for the position is critical for employers, retention is more crucial. ***The following section covers the critical retention criteria (Mokoditsoa 2018):***

Positive Workplace: The management must create an atmosphere that encourages workers and allows them to voice their thoughts. Management may think about

creating a positive, creative and productive work atmosphere to keep staff members for a long time (Mpini 2018). Talented individuals need recognition, a sense of accomplishment, excitement, diversity and stimulation, as well as a sense of making a difference inside the organisation (Mzangwa 2019). Reward systems in HEIs should not only keep academic employees but also provide them with the tools they need to produce endowed workers (Ncanywa 2020).

Communication and Employee Assistance: Effective communication is essential to the success of any organisation. It is now emphasised so much in the workplace that it almost seems to be a mantra (Ncanywa 2020). The finest organisations create and implement communication rules with the understanding that their staff members need to be informed and want to be heard (Mofolo 2020). The term "communicate" refers to sharing; staff members foster teamwork and focus via communication, which may be an institution's greatest asset in attaining its objectives (Ncanywa 2020). It is impossible to overstate the value of effective communication in the workplace. Botha and Vilyte (2020) claim that poor communication may harm staff relations, production, errors, wastage, and even accidents. It can also contribute to a high labour turnover rate.

Employee Involvement and Growth: Including workers in the organisational decision-making processes is crucial, particularly when those choices will affect them personally. As argued, this will assist in promoting a culture of employee participation and the new notion of what we are feeling or a culture of engagement and growth. Further evidence suggests that career prospects also have a direct effect on employee retention (Ncanywa 2020). According to Botha and Vilyte (2020), an organisation must keep its essential personnel, particularly those who are the best performers and have the potential to be very effective or hold important positions. An academic profession is essential to the operation of any institution. No academic institution can genuinely guarantee longevity and quality without an academic staff that is dedicated and well-qualified (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Academic institutions need to keep employees of the highest calibre since, unlike most other organisations, they rely more on the academic staff's intelligence, creativity and dedication.

Organisational practices that are in place that influence employee retention or exit, as well as the choice to remain or leave are known as retention factors (Tsabedza and

Ngoepe 2020). Six elements have been identified as being crucial to employee retention in the South African context:

- Job qualities include independence and flexibility, job diversity, using one's own initiative and applying sophisticated or high-level skills.
- Compensation factors include the competitiveness of the wage package, the value of benefits and organisational remuneration policies.
- Opportunities for professional growth and development, job-specific training, product and solution training, and application of learning in the workplace.
- Support from the supervisor includes giving employees constructive criticism for their performance, praising them and rewarding them for their hard work.
- Opportunities for professional growth and personal development inside the organisation
- Work-life balance: How well two domains—work and life—agree or disagree (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020).

3.12.2. The value of retaining employees

In their literature study, Scott and Ivala (2019) stated that turnover may be expensive since it is expensive to locate and hire new replacements for departing workers. Sometimes, the cost of recruiting, selecting, and training new workers costs more than the yearly wage of the post being filled (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Additionally, the direct costs of turnover, job interruptions, losses of organisational memory, and the need for seasoned mentors are all important problems that highlight the value of staff retention (Ncanywa 2020). Organisations have identified and implemented HR policies to assist employee retention because of the loss of competent staff. Staff retention is essential for WSU to perform better (Mzangwa 2019). Pleased workers may lead to satisfied consumers, which enhances the bottom line. Employee retention is crucial because the more time employees spend working for WSU, the more expertise they accumulate, which can then be shared with other workers (Ncanywa 2020). The accomplishment of WSU goals, content customers, and efficient succession planning would come from keeping the best workers on board. Additionally, it could lead to increased investor confidence (Mofolo 2020).

According to Mokoditsoa (2018), HEIs should concentrate their retention strategy on the following:

- Establish a line of sight that outlines the company's goals, the path they will take to get there, and the part workers will play in that process.
- Teach the front-line managers how to foster an environment where their staff members feel engaged.
- Establish a strong communication culture based on openness, sincerity and consistency.
- Encourage high achievement since "A" players like collaborating with "A" players.
- Promote a culture of appreciation.

Employee retention is critical to improving organisational performance, and this can lead to satisfied employees, satisfied customers, and an improved bottom line (Mandhanya 2015). Employee retention is important because the longer the employee stays with the organisation, the more knowledge is gained, which can be disseminated among other employees. Retaining the best employees would achieve organisational objectives, satisfy customers and facilitate effective succession planning. Furthermore, it might also result in improved investor confidence (Mandhanya 2015).

3.13. Employee turnover cost and implications in higher education institutions in South Africa

3.13.1. The cost of staff turnover at institutes of higher learning in South Africa

An organisation must carefully manage its personnel turnover, since this might greatly influence the annual expenditure it incurs. According to Mokoditsoa (2018), employee turnover is expensive for businesses and every time an employee leaves, a replacement must be chosen, hired, taught, and given time to build expertise on the job. Most often, the costs of turnover include those for recruitment, selection, and hiring, as well as costs for orientation, training, compensation, and administrative expenses (Mzangwa 2019). They often need more productivity and human capital to enhance customer satisfaction. Employees cite a variety of factors, including shortcomings on the part of the employer, for example, poor salary, discrimination and

lack of promotion (Ncanywa 2020). Management can examine the causes, which helps the business create retention strategies that effectively address the issues.

3.13.1.1. Cost of hiring and training new staff members

New hires often receive on-the-job training and are sometimes enrolled in courses to acquire specialised expertise (Maphosa et al. 2020). These costs are high, and organisations risk losing all of their previous investments if a highly trained person leaves without providing any documentation to support the substantial training fees (Ncanywa 2020). Staff turnover costs HEIs in South Africa several million rand annually (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Some of the costs associated with employee turnover are listed below:

- Costs for recruitment, selection and placement have increased.
- Costs for training and development have increased.
- Output decreased, while the number of accidents and issues with quality increased.
- Program and project disruption occur when managers and administrators go on leave.

Management must make sure that concise and clear strategies for attracting and keeping valuable employees are established because losing key, top-performing employees result in loss of knowledge and skills (Maphosa et al. 2020). Well-managed strategies also have a significant positive economic impact on organisations. Management should distinguish between regretful and desired voluntary turnover to get a more accurate appraisal of the voluntary turnover in their organisation (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Talented workers leaving their jobs voluntarily are referred to as regrettable turnover. Due to the loss of information, skills and experience, an organisation suffers when these workers leave (Maphosa et al. 2020). Desirable voluntary turnover is defined as when workers leave a company of their own will, and the results have a beneficial impact on the company (Mefi and Asoba 2021). An organisation might benefit from this evaluation since it may shed light on areas that need growth and development, enabling the organisation to create a framework for evaluating the turnover rate (Mofolo 2020).

3.13.1.2. Cost of turnover, both direct and indirect

Production at the organisation is being impacted by turnover (Hodges 2003). The main cause of poor job performance is turnover. A high turnover rate for competent employees has financial repercussions; moreover, the turnover of incompetent employees costs little money (Mofolo 2020). The organisation can hire and fill open positions with skilled, knowledgeable and experienced individuals thanks to the churn of incompetent employees. Maphosa et al. (2020) assert that there are two divisions of costs: direct and indirect (Maphosa et al. 2020). Direct expenses may be quantified, such as a low attrition rate. A person's pay, training, and administrative expenses are examples of direct costs. These expenses fit within the organisation's budget and are simple to calculate (Mofolo 2020). Finding indirect expenses may be challenging. Low performance, job unhappiness, and inefficient service delivery are the major causes of these expenditures. For instance, the company incurs expenses when it employs an employee who consistently performs poorly and receives compensation from the company (Maphosa et al. 2020).

When employees leave a company, it can have a significant economic impact, particularly considering the knowledge and expertise that is lost because of the employee's leaving. Employers should attempt to keep workers from leaving the company to save direct and indirect expenses (Maphosa et al. 2020). Employers should consider both direct and indirect costs c regarding staff turnover. Expenses associated with hiring, choosing, training and using temporary workers are all considered direct costs. Indirect costs include decreased output and ineffective performance (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Excessive employee turnover discourages businesses from investing in training, which leaves staff members who are unable to perform to their full potential on the job (Maphosa et al. 2020). Resignations, often called voluntary turnover, also have psychological and emotional effects. Organisations must recognise indirect costs such as the loss of knowledge and expertise brought on by leaving personnel, the interruption of service delivery, the deterioration of employee morale, the stress brought on by job openings, and unsustainable competitiveness (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

Direct expenses are incurred during the recruiting process, such as those for temporary workers or advertising. Indirect costs include lost productivity, orientation

and training expenses, and termination of employment (Mefi and Asoba 2021). High staff turnover may also make surviving employees doubt their decision to stay in this field of work, which can be discouraging (Havenga and Sengane 2019). Employee churn is a very expensive phenomenon. It has an indirect impact on a nation's economy in addition to having a direct impact on the revenue and profits of businesses (Mefi and Asoba 2021). According to Botha and Vilyte (2020), workers who leave South Africa for positions with greater salaries overseas occasionally take their customers' assets with them, creating a more stressed economy.

Table 3.10. Direct and indirect costs of turnover

Direct costs of turnover	Indirect costs of turnover
• Loss of expertise of the employee • Recruitment costs. • Training of new hires • Induction • Overtime to cover vacated positions. • Administrative time to arrange schedules. • Obtaining approval to hire new staff	• The loss of social networks. • Increased use of inexperienced and tired staff • Insufficient staffing • Decreased morale

Source: Adapted from Lambert and Hogan (2009)

According to Botha and Vilyte (2020), employers are left with significant direct and indirect costs when workers quit a firm. They include, among other things, advertising, headhunting fees, resource management costs, time and efficiency costs, as well as the price of training and development (Ncanywa 2020). The business must regularly assess the costs of turnover and develop mitigating measures. The business may take the appropriate actions for hiring and keeping competent workers if it identifies the most frequent reasons for employee turnover (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). According to research estimates, the expenses of replacing an employee, including their training, run around half as much as their yearly wage (Ncanywa 2020). Productivity decreases every time a worker leaves the company since it takes time to comprehend the position and the company (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Additionally, this cost is increased by the loss of intellectual capital since the organisation loses the human capital and relational capital of the leaving employee, and rivals may acquire these resources

(Maphosa et al. 2020). Therefore, if personnel turnover is not well handled, it will hurt the organisation's expenses and, in the long run, its liquidity situation (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021).

3.13.1.3. Implications of staff turnover in institutes of higher learning in South Africa

Challenges associated with knowledge transmission and knowledge loss.

Employee departures not only run the danger of erasing important organisational information at the individual and social network levels but also run the risk of upsetting established practices, routines, and organisational culture (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021). All businesses, especially public HEIs, need help with staff turnover since losing people results in losing knowledge and skills. (Ferguson et al. 2019). Any organisation's economic success depends on its ability to recruit and retain employees with the right combination of education, training, and experience (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba 2021).

Employee turnover results in knowledge loss that is adversely correlated with organisational traits including the competitiveness of higher education institutions and the organisation's performance capabilities (Havenga and Sengane 2019). Maluleka and Ngoepe (2018) assert that the loss of the most senior and experienced employees, especially those whose services rely on their skills and knowledge, can have disastrous effects on the institution and the community (Davids and Waghid 2020, Mefi and Asoba, 2021). As a result, the institution fails to manage and preserve important information that might hurt the organisational operations via sharing and transfer between people, teams, and sections or divisions (Manik and Ramrathan 2021). Additionally, any organisation, whether public or academic, would suffer if its personnel who possess tacit and explicit knowledge wanted to leave because it will be difficult to fulfil its mission (Davids and Waghid 2020).

Efficiency:

Efficiency serves as a performance indicator. Efficiency gauges how well inputs are converted into outputs or the connection between inputs and outputs. In the researcher's opinion, efficiency refers to the capacity to avoid squandering inputs while achieving the required result. Organisations must allocate resources to workers wisely to accomplish their aims correctly.

Declining morale and productivity:

Low workplace morale, which refers to how people feel about their occupations, is critical to the success of any organisation, including libraries. Low productivity and low staff morale may prevent the organisation from reaching its strategic goals. Because of the issue's detrimental effects on the institution overall—including how it lowers productivity, shatters cooperation, demoralises the remaining personnel, and damages the school's reputation—WSU administration must have the courage to confront turnover intentions. This conversation can lead one to the conclusion that unsatisfied workers are more likely to leave their company than to fix their faults.

Productivity:

Productivity in an organisational environment is the ratio of input to output; the output rate per unit of time defines productivity. Productivity is a key indicator of an organisation's success (Mkulu 2018). Workers with knowledge about producing a certain unit of output use less energy to produce the unit in a shorter amount of time than those without such knowledge (Mzangwa, 2019). As a result, it follows that when an organisation experiences turnover, the productivity of the organisation will be impacted by inexperienced individuals filling the vacant positions. Regardless of how long an individual has worked for a company, the skill and aptitude of the employee are significant determinants of productivity.

Innovation:

Innovation is the creation of novel concepts, layouts, techniques, or goods. Organisations hire new talent when employees leave, contributing to employee turnover. It takes the company some time to adjust and acquire the necessary knowledge to become inventive, thereby impacting the organisation's performance. A study of the banking industry in Sri Lanka and New Zealand revealed that organisations with low staff turnover are more creative than those with high staff turnover. However, this is because less experienced workers struggle with innovation, unlike more experienced workers, who can easily come up with new ideas since they are more accustomed to their jobs. Therefore, it may be argued that personnel turnover has an impact on an organisation's capacity to innovate, which has an impact on performance.

Quality:

It is more difficult and takes longer to replace departing staff; consequently, service quality falls as turnover rises. Additionally, turnover hurts the tie between staff and consumers since long-tenured employees typically get to know WSU clients personally. Quality is the extent to which a given product or service meets a need. Quality aims to ensure that organisations deliver excellent service to their stakeholders by enhancing services, systems, and processes and ensuring that the whole organisation is functional and effective. A key factor in determining customer loyalty in businesses is the quality of the outputs. Organisations should retain qualified staff who uphold product and quality standards since quality ensures consumer happiness.

Employees with relevant expertise in maintaining a certain standard are more employable than their less experienced peers. A high personnel turnover rate might negatively impact an organisation's quality standards, impacting performance. Employee turnover replaces experienced workers with less qualified ones, making it harder for the organisation to maintain quality standards. Even though corporations sometimes employ new hires with special abilities that might improve quality within the firm, employee churn nevertheless happens. Significant staff turnover can have a detrimental effect on an organisation's quality standards. Turnover could potentially impact the long-term client relationships WSU invests in with researchers and students who utilise the institution. However, it should be acknowledged that turnover may sometimes be advantageous. For example, if a non-productive and less dedicated person departs, the effect will be favourable since there is no chance of firing. Additionally, the shift may provide opportunities for other workers, and the organisation may decide to recruit a worker with more advanced skills to reinforce and raise service quality.

Profitability:

One of the main performance objectives of organisations is to achieve maximum profits, yet there is an unfavourable effect on profitability when there is a significant personnel turnover. This is primarily due to the substantial costs associated with replacing departing personnel through training, development and hiring of fresh talent. However, the competence and productivity of new employees are crucial in determining the extent of financial loss incurred by the organisation because of employee turnover. Certain organisations have reported negative earnings because of staff turnover.

The many implications that staff turnover may have on the organisation were highlighted by Mokoditsoa (2018). When highly skilled people leave an organisation, the company risks losing some of its finest assets to rivals that acquire their expertise (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020).

3.13.2. Necessity for measuring employee turnover

Employee turnover is one of the few easily observable characteristics of employee stability, and as such, it is a crucial tool for management decision-making in industrial organisations, according to Mkulu (2018), who explains why it is monitored. Measures of turnover may be used to identify problem areas within an organisation and identify potential root causes. They are indications of how well human resources are performing (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Although some turnover of employees is necessary and even desirable as a way to refresh resources, excessive turnover of employees is expensive in terms of money, time, productivity, and workforce, and it is this excessive turnover that has to be regulated (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). The authors continue by stating that actions taken to reduce employee wastage are likely insufficient and useless without reliable information on the quantity and location of turnover in the labour force. Measuring labour turnover is a fundamental prerequisite for reducing it (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). To do so effectively, it is vital to distinguish between employee groups within the organisation and between preventable and inevitable terminations from the beginning. The problem's size and nature can only be identified in this manner (Maphosa et al. 2020). The goal of labour turnover assessment is to quantify the outcomes of the interaction between the employee and his work environment, and it is helpful to think of this interaction in terms of a person-work connection (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020).

3.13.3. Techniques for calculating worker turnover

According to Mokoditsoa (2018), there must be a handy reference, an objective, and a summary measure that can represent change over a relatively short time for labour turnover statistics to be a helpful management decision-making tool. Numerous measures recommended in the literature on turnover fall short of this criterion (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Despite being very difficult to compute and utilise for regulating labour turnover at the plant level, survival rates, labour wastage rates, labour stability

indices, and other comparable indicators (Maphosa et al. 2020) yield important historical information. Many organisations in South Africa have extensively adopted the strategy of employing three measures in combination since no one measure has been sufficiently constrained. These measures are the rate of labour turnover, median length of service of departing employees and voluntary terminations as a percentage (Dlamini 2020). These three measurements, according to Scott and Ivala (2019b), answer the three main questions that arise in labour turnover analysis: first, how much turnover is taking place within the organisation; second, which group of employees, in terms of length of service, is most affected; and third, what percentage of leavers do so voluntarily (Ncanywa 2020).

3.14. Conclusion

Employee turnover is a persistent problem for most businesses worldwide. Very few organisations are resistant to staff turnover, regardless of size. Although it may not be possible for any organisation to completely eradicate staff turnover for various reasons, they can minimize it. According to Ng'ethe, Iravo, and Namusonge (2012), academic staff retention in higher education is crucial strategically because it serves as the foundation for achieving the mission of higher education and academic excellence. The last section of this chapter focused on controlling employee turnover, providing an overview of higher education in South Africa and examining employee turnover in South African higher education institutions. The theoretical framework is a toolbox full of ideas, variables, or hypotheses (one's tools) that one will use to address and repair the issue. The models of employee turnover and the theoretical framework will be the main topics for the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR. EMPLOYEE TURNOVER MODELS

4.1. Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are concerned about employee turnover because they are losing highly skilled employees to the private sector and to other HEIs that can provide greater pay and benefits (Havenga and Sengane 2019). Organisational performance is significantly impacted by employee turnover (Mabindisa 2020). Due to their migration to better-paying corporate entities in the private sector, government agencies in South Africa have had difficulty keeping competent workers on staff. The South African higher education system is experiencing significant changes. These changes include transformation, growth, the addition of new courses, an increase in student grants, and the government's support for the disadvantaged (Roodt and Martin 2019). The pressures of demand and supply, culture and financial pressures and the difficulty of accessing universities, among other things, have created these changes. Increased student access to further education and training colleges has been associated with the recent attempt by the government to put more effort into the education of the youth (Mkulu 2018). All these changes impact the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of employees, and they contribute toward the organisation's effectiveness.

Employees in all facets of life play a central role in ensuring that the organisation delivers on its mandates, and the loss of critical talent through the various turnover categories may hurt the quality of service provided to service beneficiaries (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Therefore, it is important for organisations to attract and retain good talent. Employee retention is one of the challenges facing many organisations across all sectors and business units globally (Mabindisa 2020). The intensified competition for talent and increased mobility of highly skilled employees from one organisation to another is influenced by many intrinsic and extrinsic factors, which include competitive remuneration, career growth, a conducive working environment, professional support and personal development, all of which will be explored in the literature review (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Furthermore, globalisation requires organisations to develop effective human capital retention strategies that will see them through the global war for talent. Universities play a pivotal role in producing a supply of suitable and qualified workforce for the labour market (Roodt and Martin 2019). Like

all other sectors, central to the realisation of the university education goals and objectives is the university workforce, whose roles are crucial. The academic staff is the core talent at universities, and as such, academic institutions cannot ensure sustainability and quality teaching and learning without well-qualified and committed academic staff (Mabindisa 2020).

The purpose of this section is to briefly review existing turnover retention models of employees because of their usefulness for the design of the theoretical model of this study. Given that employee turnover theory and research are more than one hundred years old, as pointed out by Hom et al. (2016), the current review is a synthesis of existing studies previously conducted by Ramdass (2005), Long (2012), Brasher (2016) and Hom et al. (2016). The theories and models on turnover will be explored, as well as the factors contributing to employee turnover. To ensure that sufficient skills are available to satisfy the aims and objectives of the higher education institution, it is crucial to track staff turnover and determine why it happens (Julie et al. 2019).

4.2. Theoretical framework

This section focuses on the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The literature provides evidence of various theories to explain the causes and impacts of employee turnover in organisations. Human capital theory and intellectual capital theory have been identified as particularly relevant to this study. These theories provide a robust lens through which to understand the implications of employee turnover within HEIs and offer a foundation for analysing the case of Walter Sisulu University.

4.2.1. Human Capital Theory (HCT)

4.2.1.1. Definition, origins and key principles

The human capital theory of employee turnover emphasises the value of employee skills, knowledge, and experience to an organisation (Aliu and Aigbavboa 2019). It posits that employees or individuals are valuable assets, similar to physical capital, with investments in education, training, and health likened to investments in tangible assets (Michael 2023; Aliu and Aigbavboa 2019). As such, organisations must invest in their employees' development and provide fair compensation to retain skilled and experienced staff. This perspective can be traced back to economists like Adam Smith,

who further developed it and by Theodore Schultz and Gary, who emphasised the significance of knowledge, skills and health in improving workforce productivity (Becker 1962).

Call, Nyberg, and Thatcher (2015) define human capital as the acquired knowledge, skills, and experience of individuals, which enable them to act in new ways that are economically valuable to both the individual and the organisation. Human capital brings value to the organisation as a standard of competency and creativity that employees possess, allowing them to solve problems, create new knowledge, challenge current practices, and identify and leverage performance opportunities (Kostopoulos, Bozionelos and Syrigos 2015). Human capital must be accessed, synthesised and utilised to produce economic value for individuals or organisations (Daud and Yusoff 2010). The relative economic value of human capital depends on the context of the organisation in which it is used (Call et al. 2015).

The core argument of human capital theory is that all organisations should work toward improving their staff and operations. Investments in human capital not only enhance individual employees' capabilities but also lead to an increase in the organisation's overall output and income (Ngucwangu 2015). Organisations are responsible for nurturing their workforce and offering support for well-being and career advancement (Bergheim 2005). This organisational support is essential in cultivating a motivated and valued staff (Bergheim 2005). On the other hand, if employees perceive workplace relationships as poor, it can lead to feeling undervalued and lacking motivation (Bergheim 2005; Ngucwangu 2015). These negative sentiments can subsequently adversely impact productivity and jeopardise employee retention efforts.

Additionally, the HCT, the preeminent paradigm of education, contends that investing in education and training increases people's productivity in a real way (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). This theory states that those who are more productive will earn more money and be more employable. Therefore, the net gain in lifetime earnings that results from their investment in education or training can be used to calculate the private economic return on investing in education or training or the gain to the individual (Kryscynski and Morris 2020).

Grounded in the theory of human capital, the premise is that individuals' productivity and efficiency can be bolstered by enhancing their education and training (Pratam et

al. 2021). Human capital pertains to the field of human resources and explores how human capabilities contribute to the creation of economic value within the fabric of our social infrastructure (Pratam et al. 2021). At its core, the theory asserts that just as investments are made in an organisation's technological and physical assets to produce goods and yield profits, it should also make comparable investments directed toward human capital through education and training (Odhong 2021). Such strategic investment in employees' skills, competencies, and values is not merely an expenditure but a means of catalysing organisational growth (Odhong 2021). Over time, this calculated enhancement of workforce expertise can substantially increase the organisation's revenue and elevate its reputation in the marketplace.

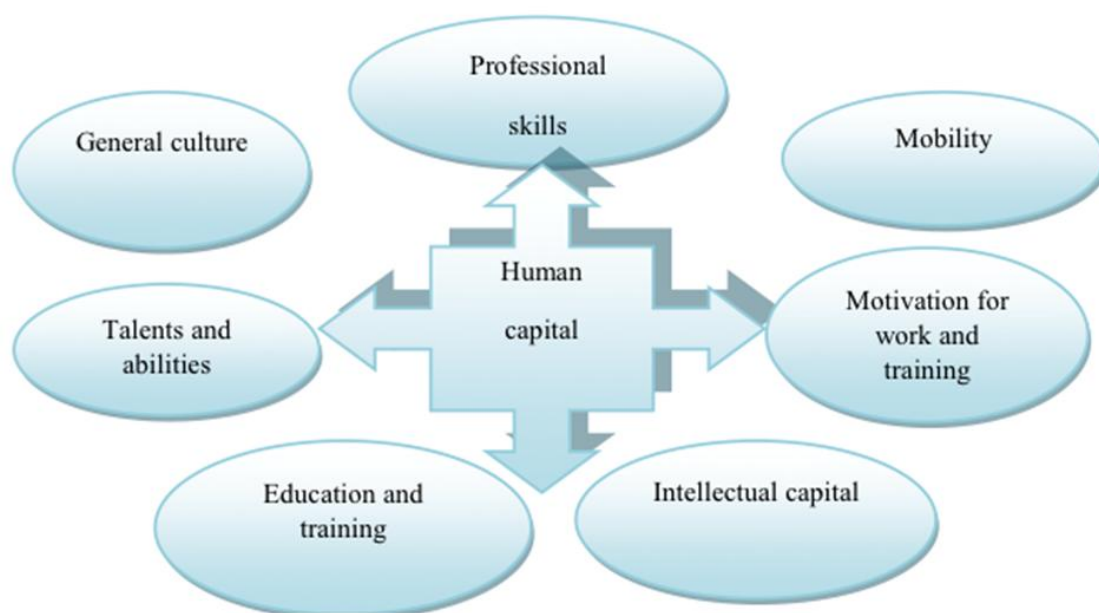
Adam Smith, a seminal Scottish economist, is often recognised for his foundational contributions to the concept of human capital (Masenya et al. 2020). However, the American economist Gary Becker emerged as a staunch advocate of the human capital paradigm (Masenya et al. 2020). Becker (1962) championed the notion of human investment through his extensive work in economics, elucidating the intricate correlation between human labour and production. His insights shed light on how harnessing contemporary human capital can enhance workplace environments (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Importantly, the human capital theory should not be misconstrued as commodifying individuals but rather as valuing and investing in their skills and performances for mutual benefit, fostering advancement for both individuals and organisations (Adelleye and Bengana 2021). A historical review of the theory sheds light on its evolution, offering a deeper understanding of the nuances of human capital theory.

According to Hayes (2015), this theory proposes that employees are less likely to leave their jobs when an organisation invests in human capital through the training and education of employees. As a result, an inverse relationship is created between the training of employees and their intent to leave the organisation, with employees rarely attempting to find job alternatives that may meet their expectations. Investing human capital through education and training may influence employees' turnover intentions (Hayes 2015).

4.2.1.2. Components of human capital

In understanding human capital, it is pivotal to identify its components, as these are the elements that, when effectively leveraged, can significantly enhance an organisation's performance and provide a competitive edge in the marketplace. Typically, these components encompass education and training, professional skills, general culture, talents and abilities, motivation for work, mobility and intellectual capital (Kusnin and Rasdi 2014). These attributes that collectively contribute to an employee's ability to perform, innovate, and add value to the organisation. Figure 4.1 below illustrates these components of human capital visually, enabling a clearer comprehension of how each element interrelates and contributes to the overarching concept of human capital.

Figure 4-1. Components of the human capital



Source: Adapted from the Kusnin and Rasdi (2014)

Education and Training: Education and training are vital in enhancing an individual's human capital by providing them with the necessary knowledge and practical application skills to excel in their chosen field (Ojima 2021). According to Masenya et al. (2020), human capital theory is defined as the information and abilities people gain via education and training, which acts as a form of capital and a conscious investment generating returns. Education shapes an individual's worldview and problem-solving

abilities, while training equips them with specific competencies required in their professional roles.

Professional Skills: Professional skills and talents are essential to human capital, enabling individuals to perform effectively in their roles and contribute positively to organisational success (Liu et al. 2023). These are the capabilities acquired through experience and practice in a professional setting. They include technical know-how and proficiency in applying knowledge to accomplish job-related tasks effectively.

General Culture: General culture, encompassing a broad understanding of societal norms and values, enhances an individual's adaptability and communication skills, further enriching their human capital (Peeters et al. 2020). It refers to the broad knowledge base and awareness of the world an individual has, which can enhance innovation and adaptability. A rich general culture allows employees to navigate complex social dynamics and contribute to a diverse organisational culture.

Talents and Abilities: Talents are innate strengths and capabilities, while abilities encompass skills and proficiencies acquired through education and experience. Research has demonstrated that focusing on talents and abilities is crucial for enhancing organisational performance and gaining a competitive advantage (Harsch and Festing 2019). Organisations that effectively manage talents by recognising and developing individual abilities can adapt to dynamic environments and drive innovation (Μαυρίζος et al. 2023). Talent management practices highlight the importance of combining human capital with appropriate strategies to nurture talents and maximise their potential (Haziazi 2021). By acknowledging and leveraging talents and abilities, firms can enhance their human capital and achieve strategic objectives (Khoreva, Vaiman and Kostanek 2019; King and Vaiman 2019).

Motivation for Work: Motivation drives individuals to continuously improve and achieve their goals, contributing to their overall human capital (Chyne and Syngkon, 2020). It refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that stimulate individuals to act. A highly motivated workforce will likely be more productive and committed to achieving the organisation's objectives.

Mobility: This encompasses the flexibility and adaptability of employees to move within and between job roles or geographical locations (Amit 2022). It reflects an individual's willingness to pursue new opportunities and adapt to changing

environments. Mobility within the workforce allows individuals to gain diverse experiences and perspectives, enriching their human capital and making them more valuable assets to organisations (Zhao et al. 2022).

Intellectual Capital: This represents the intangible assets of an organisation, including the knowledge, experiences, and intellectual property that employees contribute (Abdulaali 2018; Moon and Kym 2006). It is a key driver of innovation and competitive advantage in the knowledge-based economy. Intellectual capital, including innovation and knowledge creation, is a key component that enhances human capital by fostering creativity and problem-solving abilities (Abd-Elrahman et al. 2020).

These diverse components of human capital collectively shape an individual's ability to contribute meaningfully to an organisation. They interact to enhance a person's productivity, adaptability, and capacity for innovation within their professional endeavours. When effectively harnessed and developed, they bolster the individual's career trajectory and drive the organisation's success and resilience in an ever-evolving economic landscape (Kusnin and Rasdi 2014). Hence, recognising and investing in these facets of human capital can yield significant dividends for employees and employers.

4.2.1.3. Human capital in higher education

Human capital is a fundamental component in the academic sector, particularly within higher education institutions. The importance of human capital in higher education is diverse and influences various aspects of institutional performance and success. Research by Passaro et al. (2018) underscores the significance of human capital in shaping entrepreneurial intentions within higher education, highlighting the necessity for policy frameworks to align educational programs with entrepreneurship policies to promote innovation and economic development within academic settings.

Additionally, Chatterji and Kiran (2021) emphasise the role of intellectual capital in higher education, contending that research-orientated policies and employee-centric practices are crucial for enhancing university intellectual capital. This indicates that investing in human capital through research facilitation and stakeholder engagement can notably impact the performance of higher education institutions.

Moreover, Lentjushenkova (2021) emphasises the importance of having creative, well-trained, and motivated staff in higher education to foster innovation. This underscores how human capital—in the form of skilled and motivated individuals—is a key driver of organisational success and innovation within academic institutions. Furthermore, the study by Sirak et al. (2022) supports human capital theory, demonstrating a positive correlation between higher educational qualifications and earnings. This further highlights the value of human capital development in higher education for individuals and institutions.

The application of human capital theory in higher education is multifaceted. Universities invest not only in the technological and physical resources that facilitate learning but also heavily in their faculty members' continuous professional development and academic advancement. Such investment is fundamental to sustaining academic excellence, encouraging innovative research, and maintaining a competitive edge in the global education market. Recognising human capital extends beyond acknowledging faculty qualifications; it involves appreciating the soft skills, experience, and diversity of thought that individuals bring to the institution. These human elements enrich the learning environment, give students a broad perspective, and enhance the institution's reputation through scholarly contributions.

The significance of human capital in higher education cannot be overstated. The sector is facing increased demands for accountability, student-centred approaches, and evolving educational technologies, so the need for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce is more pronounced than ever. As such, WSU, like its counterparts, must navigate these challenges by earnestly investing in its human capital, thereby ensuring the personal growth of its community and fortifying its status as a beacon of knowledge and innovation.

4.2.1.4. Human capital and employee turnover

Human capital—a conglomeration of employees' skills, knowledge, and experience—is widely regarded as a cornerstone of organisational success, particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors like higher education (Sibagariang, Milfayetti, Zainuddin and Lubis 2023; Bucăța and Tileagă 2023). This section explores the intricate relationship between human capital and employee turnover rates, drawing on theoretical underpinnings and empirical studies investigating this dynamic.

The departure of highly skilled and experienced faculty staff can significantly impede an institution's operational effectiveness, innovative capacity, and academic reputation. A study by Newman (2021) found that universities experiencing high turnover typically struggle with maintaining knowledge continuity and productivity due to the loss of institutional memory and expertise. Similarly, Pike and Grosse (2018) highlighted the direct costs associated with the recruitment and training of replacements and the indirect costs of lost social capital and delayed projects (Dess and Shaw 2001).

On the contrary, Shakeel and But's (2015) research suggests that a moderate level of turnover can be beneficial by infusing fresh ideas and perspectives, thereby enhancing the diversity of thought and preventing organisational stagnation. However, it becomes detrimental when the organisation loses its high-potential human capital (Afcha, Garcia-Quevedo and Mas-Verdú 2023; Park, Ji, Oh and Cha 2022; Kwon and Rupp 2013). This loss often results in a diminished capacity to innovate and adapt to the changing landscape of higher education (Niemeyer-Rens, Sullivan and Self 2022).

Moreover, Bwowe (2020) and Ninroon, Khlungsaeng, Boonying and Vaiyavuth (2020) have considered the aspects of human capital that contribute to turnover intention. These scholars have identified factors such as inadequate recognition, inadequate salary and benefits, lack of career advancement opportunities, insufficient professional development support, and job insecurity as significant predictors of high turnover rates. Their findings imply a strong need for HEIs to strategically invest in human capital development, not only for individual growth but also to cultivate an environment conducive to retention.

Ju and Li (2019) also explored the impact of training, job tenure, and education-job and skills-job matches on employee turnover intention. Their hierarchical regression analysis revealed significant relationships between these factors and turnover intention, emphasising the importance of investing in employee development and ensuring job-role alignment to reduce turnover. Moreover, Wei (2022) investigated the moderating effects of human capital and abusive supervision on employee turnover. The study highlighted that employees with high human capital may have more opportunities in the job market, potentially leading to higher turnover rates. This

underscores the need for organisations to attract high-calibre talent and retain them through effective human capital management strategies.

Suganda (2022) also examined the mediating role of work-life balance and organisational commitment in reducing turnover intentions. The study highlighted the significance of psychological capital in influencing employee decisions to leave an organisation, emphasising the importance of fostering a supportive work environment to enhance retention.

Zhang et al. (2022) also explored how workplace social capital affects turnover intentions by mediating job satisfaction and burnout. The findings underscored the importance of fostering positive interpersonal relations in the workplace to mitigate turnover risks, highlighting the role of social capital in employee retention efforts.

These combined studies underscore that managing and retaining human capital is crucial. It also reflects the necessity for HEIs like Walter Sisulu University to implement comprehensive strategies that address the multifaceted nature of employee turnover, ultimately fostering a stable and thriving academic community. By examining various dimensions of human capital and employee turnover, it becomes evident that while some turnover can bring new life to an organisation, the unplanned loss of valuable human capital can have far-reaching negative implications. Understanding this nuanced relationship is essential to developing policies and practices that attract and retain the high-calibre professionals who drive the institution's mission forward.

The collective insights from these studies emphasise that turnover should not be viewed solely as a human resource issue but as a strategic matter deeply intertwined with the overall health and sustainability of a higher education institution's human capital. Therefore, institutions must focus on creating a supportive organisational culture that promotes engagement, recognises achievements, offers clear career progression pathways, and provides ongoing professional development opportunities.

Effective strategies such as mentorship programs, performance-based incentives, and involvement in decision-making have been highlighted in literature as key to reducing turnover rates (Lockhart 2020). For instance, Duddle and Boughton's (2009) work indicated that staff's sense of belonging and empowerment drastically improved retention.

Additionally, the research by Samad, Muchiri and Shahid (2022), focusing specifically on the impact of leadership style in higher education, concluded that transparent, supportive, and transformational leadership styles are significantly associated with lower turnover intentions among academic staff. This is corroborated by Kundu and Lata's (2017) study, which links co-worker support, leadership support and organisational culture relationships with job satisfaction and employee retention.

Ultimately, the interplay between human capital and employee turnover in the higher education sector is a complex phenomenon that can significantly alter the trajectory of an institution. As such, for Walter Sisulu University and similar institutions, continuous attention to the factors influencing human capital retention is beneficial and crucial to their long-term viability and success as pillars of education and research. Through systematic examination and application of findings from relevant human capital and turnover studies, higher education leaders can craft strategies that harness the full potential of their most valuable assets: their people.

4.2.1.5. Rationale for using human capital theory

Human capital theory provides a solid framework for analysing employee turnover within higher education settings. This theory emphasises the importance of investing in employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities to enhance organisational performance (Harris et al. 2022). It posits that employees with higher levels of human capital are more likely to advance in their careers and contribute significantly to organisational success (Harris et al. 2022). Therefore, by applying human capital theory to this study of employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University, the researcher can gain insights into how investing in employees' development and well-being can reduce turnover rates and improve overall organisational outcomes.

Moreover, studies have shown that factors such as job satisfaction, organisational climate, and leadership styles significantly influence employees' turnover intentions (Hao and Wang 2022; Lee et al. 2018; Oh and Chhinzer 2021). For instance, studies have found that supportive organisational climates and transformational leadership reduce turnover intentions by enhancing employee engagement and job satisfaction (Hao and Wang 2022; Oh and Chhinzer 2021). Understanding these factors through the lens of human capital theory can provide a comprehensive view of how investments in human capital development, leadership practices, and organisational

culture can mitigate turnover risks within higher education settings, particularly at Walter Sisulu University.

Furthermore, the theory underscores the value of academics and administrative staff's contributions to the core functions of universities—teaching, research and community service. The institution views an individual's educational background, specialised training, and professional development not only as personal achievements but also as investments that yield returns for the institution through enhanced student learning outcomes, groundbreaking research findings, and meaningful community engagements. Any turnover, especially among highly qualified personnel, signifies a potential loss of this investment and, by extension, a reduction in the institution's intellectual wealth and capacity to fulfil its mission.

Also, the theory provides a systematic approach for analysing the costs associated with turnover. Beyond the direct financial implications of recruiting and onboarding new staff, it factors in the opportunity costs, such as lost productivity and severing valuable relationships within and outside the university. This comprehensive assessment aids in quantifying the impact of turnover and reflecting upon strategies to mitigate its effects.

Lastly, human capital theory highlights the importance of strategic investment in employee retention initiatives. By identifying the key components of human capital within the higher education sector, such as professional development opportunities, conducive work-life balance, and recognition programs, the theory provides a foundation for creating policies that attract talent and are key to its preservation. These measures can lead to heightened job satisfaction and loyalty, lowering turnover rates and fostering a stable academic environment.

In understanding employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University, it becomes evident that the strategic management of human capital is integral not just to the mitigation of turnover but also to the cultivation of a robust educational institution. By employing human capital theory as the underpinning rationale, it provides a nuanced framework for this study to assess the mechanisms of attrition and devise strategies that proactively enhance the retention of valuable human capital, ensuring Walter Sisulu University's continued prominence and efficacy in the higher education landscape.

4.2.2. Intellectual capital theory (ICT)

4.2.2.1. Definition, origins, and key principles

The theory of intellectual capital, which gained significant attention in the 20th century, revolves around leveraging intangible assets within organisations to create value and gain a competitive edge in the market (Voronkova et al. 2021). This concept emerged due to the increasing importance of intangible assets in the economy, leading to a notable disparity between the book value and market value of companies heavily involved in knowledge-intensive processes (Brătianu 2018). Intellectual capital theory explores how organisations can generate value from their resources, particularly focusing on the interactions between human resources' experiences and knowledge to enhance organisational efficiency (Bai 2023).

An organisation's ability to create value and conduct business depends heavily on its intellectual capital. Markets nowadays are more competitive, and consumers are better educated. Additionally, the contemporary workplace is quite dynamic, and organisations must adapt to various changes. Many organisations' skills and willingness to adapt to these developments are crucial to survival (Kryscynski and Morris 2020). The enterprises' ability to swiftly adjust to the changes and maintain their competitiveness in the marketplaces results from their intellectual capital. Due to innovation, intellectual capital has become a source of competitive advantage (Masenya et al. 2020).

Intellectual capital is one of the most important components in today's corporate climate for fostering organisational growth and competitiveness. Estimating the worth of intellectual capital may be difficult since it is often an intangible asset (Kryscynski and Morris 2020). Intellectual capital is often defined as adding value, boosting competitive advantages, and ensuring an organisation's success. Intellectual capital makes developing wealth and other high-value assets possible (Rodrigues et al. 2020). An organisation's intellectual capital encompasses its abundance of ideas and capacity for innovation, which significantly impacts its future. People used to think that the financial and cost factors affected how well an organisation performed (Ngucwangu 2015). However, this strategy is no longer valid. Researchers have concluded that organisational performance-related intellectual capital factors significantly influence an organisation's ability to succeed.

The evolution of intellectual capital theory has shifted toward a more focused approach, highlighting human capital, social capital and organisational capital as the primary facets of intellectual capital (Kengatharan 2019). This shift underscores the importance of human resources, social relationships, and organisational structures for driving organisational innovation and value creation. Moreover, intellectual capital has been associated with enhancing corporate value, financial performance, and organisational resilience, showcasing its broad impact on various aspects of business operations (Basir et al. 2019; Li 2023).

4.2.2.2. Components of the intellectual capital

Elsafy and Ragheb (2021) claim that intellectual capital has three key components: human capital, structural capital, and relational capital.

a) Human Capital

According to Kusumo, Zain and Rohman (2018), human capital is the knowledge and nature of individuals in work, such as intelligence, energy, job satisfaction, learning ability, creativity, motivation, and collaboration skills. Human capital is one of the important capitals for the organisation because it is a source of innovation and renewal of strategy, a re-engineering process, and a source of the dream of the organisation (Sutia, Sudarma and Rofiaty 2013). The organisation consists of individuals who work together to achieve goals. An organisation will not work if there are no individuals in it. Human capital theory plays an important role in ensuring the organisation runs according to its intended purpose.

b) Structural Capital

Structural capital is hardware, software, databases, organisational structures, patents, trademarks, and all organisational capabilities that support employee productivity (Edvinsson and Malone 1997). Structural capital serves as the embodiment of empowerment that supports the human capital infrastructure, organisational capacity and the system used to transmit and store intellectual data (Chatzkel 2002). Chen et al. (2014) asserted that structural capital is related to the mechanism and structure of the organisation that can assist some employees in achieving optimal performance, thereby achieving overall organisational performance. Based on the definition, capital structure serves as a mechanism and organisational structure to support the resources owned to generate productivity and achieve overall performance. Jardon and Martos

(2019) measured structural capital based on product, process and system improvements, as well as product quality.

c) Process Capital

Process capital is one of the organisation's strategies that aims to ensure the organisation can generate profits continuously through services or products that always meet customer needs. Process management or process capital is necessary to ensure that the organisation's resources are able to produce the product or service. Fiz-enz (2009) suggests that the process of capital can be divided into four categories:

- Acquisition process is a process undertaken by the organisation to ensure the implementation of an organisational strategy; the organisation always has the required competencies, both in quantity and quality. In this process, several systems are designed and implemented, especially human wealth planning, assessment and succession systems.
- The development process is undertaken by the organisation to ensure that all human wealth is already in place and that the opportunity to develop the highest competency is available. In this process, several systems are designed and implemented, especially learning and development systems and leadership development systems.
- The engagement process is a process undertaken by an organisation to ensure that its human wealth, especially those with exceptional competence and performance, has a strong attachment to the organisation. Several systems are designed and implemented in this process, especially industrial relations systems and employment relationships.

The organization implements the retention process to ensure that all the awards given by the organisation can be managed with the specific competencies required by the organisation and maintain the performance of everyone within the organisation. In this process, several systems are designed and implemented, such as reward and performance management systems.

Human capital includes the skills and creativity of employees, which can be enhanced through investment in training programs (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Increased staff productivity is likely to improve the organisation's performance. A part of

intellectual capital—structural capital— also comprises an organisation's nonhuman assets (Elsafy and Ragheb 2021). Copyrights, patents, administrative guidelines, and decision-supporting policies are part of this system. The connection between an organisation and its external stakeholders is called relational capital (Pratam et al. 2021). This encompasses the expertise, experience, and trust that make up the crucial connection between an organisation and its clients. Relational capital prevents external stakeholders, like consumers, from walking away from the business connection (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021).

Research conducted by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2016) indicates that investing in intellectual capital brings many benefits to an institution. Such benefits include more competent employees, motivated workers, increased customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and better utilisation of the resources for a better outcome. Given the benefits of investing in intellectual capital, managers must identify the intangible resources that are important in creating and maintaining a competitive advantage within the organisation. The management can use the experiences of other organisations to gain knowledge about intangible resources.

4.2.2.3. Measuring Intellectual Capital (IC)

Measuring intellectual capital (IC) is complex due to its intangible nature, yet it remains a critical endeavour for organisations seeking to understand and harness the value of their knowledge-based assets. As discussed above, intellectual capital consists of three primary components: human capital (employees' skills and knowledge), structural capital (internal processes, patents, and databases), and relational capital (customer relationships and brand value). Several models and methodologies have been developed to capture the essence of IC.

One widely recognised method is the balanced scorecard, which goes beyond traditional financial metrics to include employee, customer and internal process perspectives, encompassing intellectual capital aspects (Bose and Thomas 2007). The balanced scorecard is a strategic planning and management tool developed to align business activities with the organisation's vision and improve communication while monitoring performance against strategic goals (Oliveira et al. 2021). It

encompasses financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth perspectives to provide a holistic view of organisational performance, moving beyond traditional financial metrics to include key non-financial factors that drive success (Quesado, Aibar Guzmán and Lima Rodrigues 2018).

Another method is the Skandia Navigator, developed by the insurance company Skandia, which divides IC into human and structural capital, providing a visualisation of how these assets contribute to future financial success (Sulanjaku 2014). The Skandia Navigator is a pioneering framework for measuring and managing intellectual capital (Afable, Boom and Talisayon 2020). It complements financial analysis by incorporating additional focus areas such as customer and process capital, as well as renewal and development—future-oriented components. This multi-faceted approach aims to capture the full spectrum of an organisation's intangible assets, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of their contributions to value creation and long-term sustainability. It is particularly useful in highlighting the drivers of intellectual growth and their potential impact on organisational performance.

The technology broker model is another framework that counts on intellectual assets and their conversion into tangible outcomes. The technology broker model emphasises the active role of intermediaries in recognising and leveraging an organisation's intellectual assets. This model positions intellectual capital at the core of innovation and commercial success by identifying, transferring, and converting knowledge and technologies into marketable products or services. It encapsulates the transition from abstract knowledge to concrete, measurable results, underlining the strategic importance of effectively managing and deploying intellectual resources for an organisation's competitive advantage and value generation.

Additionally, the value-added intellectual coefficient method quantifies the efficiency of IC and physical capital in terms of adding value to the company. The value-added intellectual coefficient (VAIC) method is a metric that quantifies the efficiency of a company's intellectual and physical capital in terms of value addition. Developed by Dr Ante Pulic, the VAIC method which calculates the value added by human capital, structural capital and employed capital to assess how effectively these assets are utilised to generate wealth. By measuring the contributions of tangible and intangible

assets, the VAIC provides insights into an organisation's ability to transform its capital into profits and sustainable growth.

Despite these methodologies, there remain challenges in measuring IC, including the standardisation of metrics, as IC is highly context-specific. Methods may also fail to capture the dynamism of intellectual assets and how they interact with each other. Moreover, the subjective nature of certain elements, such as employee experience or customer satisfaction, further complicates their quantification. In higher education, the difficulty lies in measuring the output of intellectual activities, such as research impact and teaching quality, and relating these to the university's performance. Nevertheless, developing robust measures of IC is crucial for organisations, including academic institutions like Walter Sisulu University, to understand their full value creation potential, manage resources effectively, and formulate strategies that could reduce employee turnover by highlighting areas where intellectual growth and contribution are most pronounced.

4.2.2.4. Intellectual capital and employee turnover

Intellectual capital represents the intangible assets of an organisation, including the knowledge, skills, and expertise of its employees, as well as the systems and relationships that embody organisational knowledge (Chen 2008). In higher education, intellectual capital is particularly critical as it directly relates to the institution's ability to teach, innovate, and create knowledge.

Employee turnover in higher education can significantly erode intellectual capital. When faculty or staff members depart, they take with them valuable knowledge and skills that contribute to the academic and administrative functions of the institution. The loss is not merely in the tacit knowledge of individual employees but also their contribution to the structural and relational capital of the university. For example, experienced academics enhance the institution's research capabilities and contribute to the development of a robust curriculum, whereas administrative staff members may hold a deep understanding of the university's processes and culture (Hazzan, Lis-Hacohen 2016; Kiptiony, Gladys and Kiptiony 2017).

Furthermore, intellectual capital extends beyond the individual to encompass organisational knowledge. For example, effective teaching methodologies, research techniques, and institutional governance are part of the institution's intellectual capital.

When turnover occurs, continuity in these areas may be disrupted, potentially impacting the quality of education and administrative efficacy (Dalwai and Sewpersadh 2023; Karemore and Karemore 2021).

Therefore, maintaining a stable intellectual capital base is essential for universities, and numerous studies have linked intellectual capital management with reduced turnover intentions. According to Rahmat (2022), institutions that actively manage their intellectual capital through continuous learning opportunities, recognition of expertise, and fostering a collaborative environment are likelier to retain their employees. These practices contribute to employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging and loyalty to the institution. At Walter Sisulu University, the strategic management of intellectual capital could involve mentorship programs that transfer knowledge from experienced to new staff and systems that capture and share organisational knowledge. Investment in continuous professional development and creating platforms for scholarly exchange can further cement the intellectual capital within the university, mitigating the high costs associated with turnover.

Instituting measures to retain intellectual capital has tangible benefits. It can enhance institutional reputation, attract high-quality students and staff, and foster innovation and growth. Therefore, understanding and addressing the nexus between intellectual capital and employee turnover is imperative for higher education institutions' long-term vitality and competitiveness.

4.2.2.5. Rationale for selecting the intellectual capital theory in this study

Intellectual capital, which focuses on improving organisational performance with the aid of available resources, is not a new concept for organisations; however, several studies have been conducted that support this concept, including those by Kayumba and Rusibana (2021). According to research in the hospitality sector, building structural and human capital are the key components to improving organisational performance. There is a strong correlation between intellectual capital and organisational performance, according to earlier research by Masenya et al. (2020). The present study will the three independent variables of human, structural, and relational capital to address the research gap. The prior studies did not consider the third variable, relational capital theory, because they only focused on the first two humans and structure (Masenya et al. 2020). Researchers are currently using these

three variables to draw different conclusions in various contexts, with the aim of developing the best possible solutions for society or the industrial sector to improve organisational performance using intellectual capital (Rodrigues et al. 2020). Since intellectual capital is seen as the primary driver of wealth development, it makes sense that organisations pay particular attention to their efficient administration. Intellect is considered an intangible claim in an organisation (Ngucwangu 2015). Claims cannot be felt, but despite their intangible nature, they may be recognised and categorised in a reasonable manner. Kayumba and Rusibana (2021) identified three intangible assets in an organisation: assets of individual competence, internal structure, and external structure. These are comparable to the intangible assets identified by Pratam et al. (2021). Individual competencies' assets include training, life experience, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Although the corporation does not own the assets, an organisation may utilise them by employing staff. This resource is sometimes called human capital (Kryscynski and Morris 2020). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's research from 2009 shows that an organisation gains various advantages from investing in intellectual capital (Ngucwangu 2015). These advantages include improved customer loyalty, competitive advantage, and better use of the organisation's resources for better results. Other advantages include more competent and motivated staff (Masenya et al. 2020). Given the advantages of investing in intellectual capital, managers must recognise the intangible assets crucial to establishing and preserving a competitive edge inside the organisation (Rodrigues et al. 2020). The management may learn about intangible resources by studying the experiences of other organisations.

Organisations, according to Pratam et al. (2021), are becoming more aware of intellectual capital's role in generating wealth and influence. According to Havenga and Sengane (2019), today's successful organisations understand that intellectual capital is crucial for creating value and producing leverage. Organisations require plans for continuous development to increase employees' capabilities and help them thrive in an increasingly competitive market (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Additionally, companies must have efficient and effective systems and procedures. Finding novel methods of measuring IC is becoming increasingly popular among academics and researchers. The IC metrics industry has developed more than 15 distinct methods to measure what was previously considered unmeasurable

(Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Over the last ten years, businesses have developed a rising interest in intangibles, as have public institutions like universities. Higher education and research organisations in Europe are working to improve universities' comparability, flexibility, transparency and competitiveness since they are seen as crucial institutional players in national innovation systems (Pratam et al. 2021). We all see universities as a source of intellectual capital because they help us develop our human capital and provide us with the information we need to comprehend. However, do universities recognise and depend on their intellectual capital (Odhong 2021)? According to most European educational institutions, we should not presume that universities are aware of what intellectual capital they possess or lack, just as physicians are not always healthy even if they treat patients (Kryscynski and Morris 2020).

The OECD claims that a better way to measure their contribution is highly desirable and required. As a result, the OECD focuses its efforts on enhancing research management and supporting comparative research in European universities by highlighting some methodological (Ngucwangu 2015) and conceptual considerations concerning the analytical framework that needs to be developed consistently (Rodrigues et al. 2020). According to some researchers, all European universities should implement an intellectual capital program that adopts a standard disclosure approach (Masenya et al. 2020). As a result, the Observatory of European Universities (OEU), a cooperative project of 14 European partners established to offer universities tools tailored to the governance of research activities, is developing guidelines for the management of research activities to make disclosure recommendations (Rodrigues et al. 2020). One of the primary paths for achieving the Observatory of European Universities' overarching goal is the development and provision of indicators to assist university management and planning processes. The task is challenging because it requires extensive research, testing of new indicators of university performance, and activities and methods for representing and measuring the multidimensional nature of performance to foster universities' ability to benchmark themselves against other relevant universities (Dyk et al. 2019). Given the increasing significance of intellectual capital within business organisations, it is vital to look at how it contributes to understanding the link between an organisation's market value, financial worth, and overall performance (Julie et al. 2019). In a market where competition is on the rise

and resources are in short supply, IC actions may provide organisations with a competitive edge (Rodrigues et al. 2020). Measuring intellectual capital leads to changes in management, culture and organisation that enable the planning and management of intangible resources in line with the corporate strategy for value creation. Universities might improve intangible asset evaluation, performance measurement, resource allocation and benchmarking exercises might all be improved in universities.

The intellectual capital theory, which has previously been described, is a more sophisticated version of the resource-based theory and the knowledge-based theory. Masenya et al. (2020) showed how knowledge-based and resource-based theories form the core of intellectual capital theory. As shown by (Adelleye and Bengana 2021), the foundation of intellectual capital is knowledge. In this regard, the fundamental tenet of intellectual capital theory is based on the notion and belief that intangible resources have become the most important ones for organisations to use to gain a competitive edge in a knowledge-based economy (Adelleye and Bengana 2021, Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). To demonstrate how to extract value from organisational resources, the intellectual capital theory combines an organisation's reputation, trademarks, staff expertise, employee loyalty, customer happiness, and commercial relationships into one theory (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). Traditional management theory, which focused on resource- and knowledge-based theories, overlooked all of these aspects. Intellectual capital emerged as an organisation's most important resource for gaining a competitive advantage in a knowledge-based economy; there is no question about it (Ngucwangu 2015). According to Pratam et al.'s (2021) argument, the current economy is knowledge-based, and assets based on all types of knowledge, such as intellectual capital, account for most of the value of products and services in organisations rather than solely physical assets.

Many academic works have emphasised the fact that intellectual capital is founded on information that may be utilised to increase revenue and add value to goods and services. In a knowledge-based economy, intellectual capital is an organisation's most valuable and scarce resource (Pratam et al. 2021). Odhong (2021) lends credence to the idea that intellectual capital is the centre of the knowledge-based economy and is essentially built on the idea of intangible value and value creation, which is sparked by using the intangible resources of organisations. Masenya et al. (2020) provided

evidence that intellectual capital is widely regarded as one of the most important resources for generating and enhancing organisational value and performance. Furthermore, they emphasised that value creation is the foundation and the main justification for integrating intellectual capital into an organisation. This idea was backed up by Rodrigues et al. (2020), who emphasised that the intellectual capital-based perspective of the organisation reveals a new "knowledge-based or intellectual-based" framework for organisational rivalry to acquire competitive advantages in a highly competitive economic environment.

Macroeconomic and management theories both serve as the foundation for intellectual capital theory. The intellectual capital theory is a newly popular theory based on the idea that intangible assets not included in the balance sheet are crucial to an organisation's functioning today because they may greatly raise the value of its assets or its market worth (Rodrigues et al. 2020). According to this theory, value is produced by transforming one type of capital into another, and an organisation's wealth depends on its human, structural and relational capital (Adelleye and Bengana 2021). Taylor's 1911 book "The Principles of Scientific Management" in which he discusses the knowledge, experience, and abilities of workers, is credited with establishing the idea of intellectual capital in the 20th century (Masenya et al. 2020). Kryscynski and Morris (2020) underlined the importance of organisational skills, technical know-how, trademarks, brands, patents, and other assets in their writings, which introduced the concept of intellectual capital. By emphasising the recombination of information as an essential requirement for the emergence of new creative goods, Masenya et al. (2020) advanced economic theory further (Rodrigues et al. 2020). In addition, aspects of the idea of intellectual capital may be found in Simon's "Administrative Behavior," who thought that human cognitive capacity and constrained rationality of workers in an organisation were the sole factors limiting intellectual capital (Masenya et al. 2020, Ngucwangu 2015).

4.3. Employee motivation frameworks

Employee motivation theories make an effort to develop models for understanding what drives people to perform better at work (Masenya et al. 2020). Knowing a variety of motivational theories and using a variety of strategies depending on the circumstances and the types of personnel they manage, savvy managers become

knowledgeable in these ideas (Rodrigues et al. 2020). Effective employee motivation can boost workers' output and loyalty; failing to implement these beliefs can increase staff turnover. What, then, are the basic theories of motivation at work? Three well-known theories—Hierarchy Maslow's of Needs, McClelland's Three Needs Theory, and Herzberg's Motivation Theory—that provide an intriguing perspective on what drives various people were chosen to address the question above (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021).

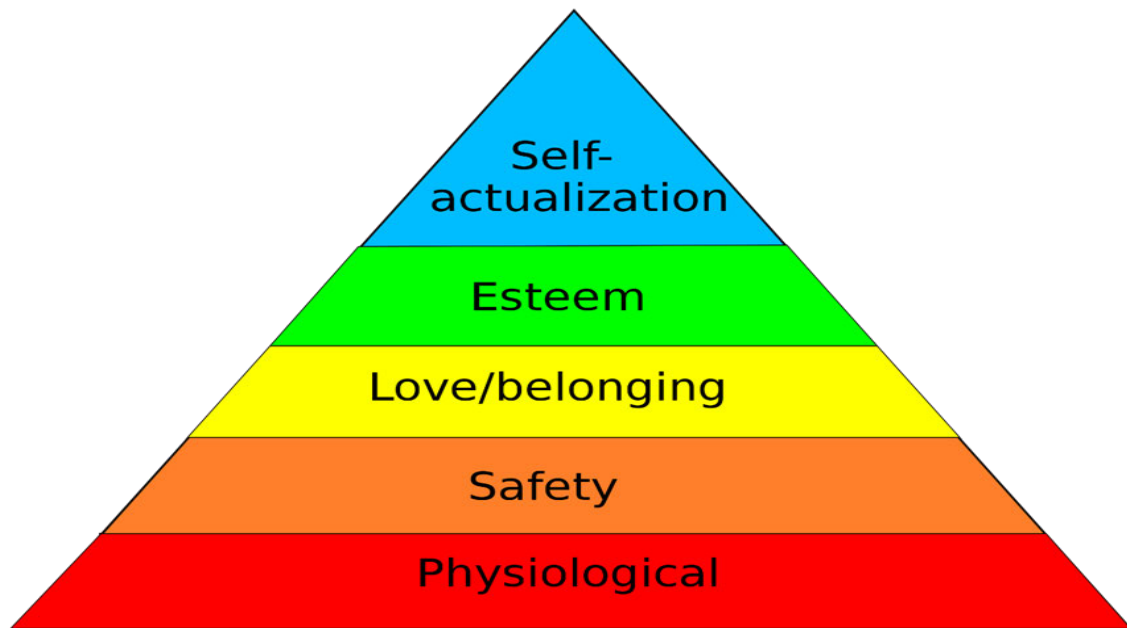
4.3.1. Maslow Hierarchy of needs

Employee motivation is defined by Safiullah (2015) as the dynamic force that brings about a strong will in people to do their absolute best. Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (2016) support this definition by defining motivation as a process that takes into consideration a person's persistent direction and consistent effort in achieving a goal. Deckers (2015) states that human nature motivates individuals to pursue positive incentives and avoid negative ones. An incentive is the expected reward or unpleasant event that is available within the individual's environment (Safiullah 2015). According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, there are five progressive categories that divide an employee's demands, starting with those for fundamental bodily needs and moving up to those for personal growth and professional advancement (Ngucwangu 2015, Masenya et al. 2020). According to Maslow, in order for workers to really commit themselves to organisational objectives, bosses must satisfy each degree of their personnel needs (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). Lack of fulfilment in an employee's professional life can result from not meeting their needs at any level of the hierarchy, which may lead them to finally try to meet those needs on their own, possibly by looking for a new employer that offers greater chances (Pratam et al. 2021).

According to the expectation hypothesis, workers will exert the same level of effort and dedication as they anticipate being rewarded with. Structures for commission pay make use of this notion by enabling workers to make as much money as they want, solely depending on how well they execute their jobs (Masenya et al. 2020). Making sure that workers consistently anticipate pay increases in the future and potential job promotions might motivate them to put forth extra effort toward achieving their own objectives (Rodrigues et al. 2020). If employees anticipate receiving little pay and no

room for advancement in exchange for their work, they may put in only a modest amount of effort up to the point where they start looking to a new organisation for new prospects. There are various motivation theories in management, all of which aim to shed light on what inspires or drives an individual at work (Elsafy and Ragheb 2021). Any business' success depends heavily on its ability to motivate its employees. But because humans are inherently diverse from one another, not everyone will react the same way to a given circumstance or setting (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Organisations must comprehend not only the various traits that make up their workforce but also the motivations behind everyone. With this knowledge, organisation may customise how they encourage or motivate employees, which will significantly raise engagement and motivation levels at work.

Figure 4-2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Adapted from Bagraim, Potgieter, Viedge and Werner (2003)

One of the frequently discussed theories of work motivation is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. According to this motivational theory, people progress through a hierarchy of needs; they shift to the next need once the previous one has been met (Masenya et al. 2020, Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). Maslow's theory of work motivation identifies five levels of needs. The most basic at the base of the hierarchy are physiological needs, which include the bare essentials like food, clothing and shelter. These are the least important and are directly related to an individual's income. Next is security: the need to feel secure. Social: as social beings, the need to fit in with a group follows (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). In the workplace, this may refer to a sense of job security or perhaps just the need to work in a safe setting. Being a sociable species, humans will try to create groups and desire to feel appreciated as a part of those groups (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Ego, the desire to obtain status or recognition follows. Finally, after all the previous requirements are met, a person will reach self-actualisation, a stage when they are more creative or growth-orientated. People will attempt to feed their ego or increase their self-esteem by succeeding at work (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021).

Maslow's Theory of Wants states that each person has a variety of needs that must be met. Food, sleep and water are examples of main requirements. Other needs are secondary (development, achievement, and love). Two types of needs may be distinguished: physiological and psychological (Pratam et al. 2021). The Maslow hierarchy of requirements has five stages and encompasses both physiological and psychological demands. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, people have five fundamental needs (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Basic needs and higher-order requirements were separated into the five groups of needs. Food, water, shelter and safety—the four most fundamental human needs—are seen as being necessary for human survival. Social interactions, self-actualisation, and esteem-building are associated with higher-order demands (Elsafy and Ragheb 2021). The first four tiers address physical requirements: physical, which include safety, love and esteem. Self-actualisation is a psychological desire that is addressed at Level 5. Later, three further stages were added to Maslow's (1954) five-stage model to account for the demands for cognition, aesthetics, and transcendence (Maslow 1970). The desire for information and significance is a cognitive demand that is present at stage five (Elsafy and Ragheb 2021). The sixth stage involves aesthetic demands, where beauty is appreciated. Seventh stage discussion of needs for self-actualisation; on the redesigned hierarchy, transcendence requirements represented the highest level (Ngucwangu 2015, Kryscynski and Morris 2020). People who have attained this level assist others in achieving self-actualisation. Maslow categorises requirements as if they were in a pyramid, with the most basic need at the base and self-actualisation at the summit (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021).

Table 4.1. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs

NEEDS	EXPLANATION
Psychological Need	Psychological needs are the primary needs for food, shelter and clothing that can be directly satisfied by compensation; employees who are paid adequately can provide for their basic needs.
Safety Need	Once the psychological needs have been satisfied, the safety or security needs become a motivational factor. Many employees' most important security need is "job security". Other security factors include increases in salary and benefits.
Affiliation Need	The third level pertains social needs. At this level, workers desire social relationships inside and outside the workplace. Peer group acceptance within the workforce is often an important psychological need for employees.
Esteem Need	Once employees have formed friendships within the organisation and feel a part of the peer group, the need for self-esteem takes precedence. There is a need to believe that one is worthy, capable, productive, respected and useful because most people tend to underestimate themselves.
Self-Actualisation Need	The highest need level is self-actualisation. At this stage, employees seek a fulfilling, useful life in the organisation and in society. Employees seek challenging and creative jobs to achieve self-actualisation.

Source: Adapted from Maslow (1970)

Maslow's hierarchy triangle prioritise needs according to their relative importance. Similar to this, physiological demands take precedence over other needs. According to Elsafty and Ragheb (2021), Maslow's theory is predicated on three tenets. Prior to raising the hierarchy, individuals must meet their lower-order wants. However, the implications of this theory help managers to design motivational tools based on the level of required need (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Motivation depends on personal need, and satisfied need is no longer an effective motivator. Intangible and tangible, internal and external, characteristics and rewards of a physical environment, work cues, and other factors can all be used to motivate employees (Pratam et al. 2021).

4.3.1.1. Analysis of hierarchy of needs as a strategy to enhance employee retention at Walter Sisulu University

Higher education institutions, especially university systems, retain the obligation, through their academic staff, to ensure productive teaching and learning, conduct implementable research, and engage in life-changing community engagement (Tetteh 2018). To ensure effective discharge of the three obligations, the place of qualified and motivated employees to work towards the actualisation of the goal is not negotiable. Therefore, for universities to actualise their aims and objectives, they must strive to attract and retain their trained and productive employees (Selesho and Naile 2014). Unfortunately, literature and personal experiences show that universities, especially in South Africa, find it challenging to retain their high-performing, well-trained and productive academic staff (Erasmus et al. 2015). Therefore, one of the major concerns of HEIs in South Africa is employee turnover, which necessitates the need to eliminate such attrition in the country. This becomes important because it does not only affect the culture of teaching and learning (Selesho and Naile 2014; Towns 2019), student progression and performance rate but also results in financial wastage because of the expenses involved in the recruitment process and employee development stages (Selesho and Naile 2014).

The turnover rate in HEIs is disruptive and costly, and some of the disruptive implications are poor productivity, lack of motivation and poor morale to work, including skill drain (Manogharan, Thivaharan and Rahman 2018). According to Figueroa (2015), some of the hidden implications of employee turnover in HEIs are the effort and the time invested in training the employees. However, there are numerous reasons why employees in HEIs in South Africa migrate from one university to another. A high attrition rate exists among South African higher education institutions, which poses a significant challenge to university productivity as an academic enterprise (Omodan 2022). The attrition/turnover seems disruptive and costly, and some of the disruptive implications are poor productivity, lack of motivation and poor morale to work, including skill drain. This theoretical paper presents Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and its assumptions as a possible motivation that is needed to enhance academic staff retention in the university system. This study was designed using conceptual analysis within the principle interpretive paradigm, enabling the researcher to adequately engage critically in interpreting Maslow's hierarchy of needs

and its assumptions as an alternative strategy that could enhance academic staff retention in the university system. According to Omodan (2022), the five hierarchies of needs (physiological needs, safety/security needs, love and belongingness, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs), as propounded by Abraham Maslow, are essential in ensuring academic staff retention in the system. Rewards in the form of basic needs, environmental safety and job security, the creation of an affectionate work environment, the need for recognition and self-actualisation are the dimensions of academic staff retention in the university system.

4.3.2. The three needs theory of McClelland

According to David McClelland's (1961) motivation theory of management, each person has three fundamental needs: a need for affiliation, achievement, or power. According to McClelland's theory of employee motivation, a person's unique needs will significantly influence their conduct (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). Need for Power: Individuals with this are driven by the desire for control or a position of power. They are usually disciplined and powerful leaders. Need for Achievement: These individuals are driven by achievement or the accomplishment of goals (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). They enjoy a challenge, set high standards for themselves, and strive diligently to achieve them. They thrive in a cooperative or collaborative setting and need affiliation. They like social connections and collaborate well with others (Pratam et al. 2021). McClelland (1961) transformed workplace motivation thinking by developing the achievement-based motivational theory (refer to Figure 4.3). Motivation was investigated within the employment context, and it was discovered that workers and their managers have needs that influence their work performance. The achievement of motivation is one of the needs that refers to an individual's need to achieve realistic goals, get feedback and experience a sense of accomplishment in the workplace (Sokolowski, Schmalt, Langens and Puca 2000). In contrast to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this theory does not view employees' needs as moving in a hierarchical order through which an employee moves.

Figure 4-3. McClelland's achievement motivation theory



Source: Adapted from McClelland's achievement motivation theory

Some employees have a forceful drive to succeed but strive for personal achievement rather than for gifts of attainment (Robbins and Decenzo 2008). In other words, employees desire to perform and execute job activities in a different, yet more efficient fashion than they were done before. These employees search for working conditions under which they have personal responsibility to find solutions to problems, thereafter, receiving feedback on their performance for personal improvement and development. Upon realising improvements, they become satisfied with their jobs as they avoid succeeding by chance. This implicates a need for achievement (Robbins 1989). Employees with a high affiliation need to search for friendship and prefer situations which are integrative and friendly (Robbins and Judge 2007). The affiliation need is informed by the employee's desire to build and uphold close and mutually satisfying relations with co-workers. When the affiliation need is fulfilled, employees tend to be satisfied because their motives to belong to a group enable them to work together in teams where ideas are shared, and they sympathise with each other (Hellriegel et al. 2007). The affiliation need is most important and relevant to job satisfaction because when it is achieved, employees develop non-conscious concern for building, maintaining and re-establishing close personal relationships with colleagues (Ratzburg 2013).

The need for power as indicated in Figure 4.3 is the desire to have the ability to influence the behaviour of other employees. This behaviour does not involve

dictatorship but should impact positively on others (Venter and Levy 2011). Employees who need power desire to take control and opt to be placed in challenging and rank-orientated situations. Their concern is more about being respected and having an influence over others with effective performance in the workplace (McClelland and Burmham 1976). Table 4.2 provides an illustration of McClelland's achievement motivation theory.

Table 4.2. McClelland's achievement motivation theory

Need	Functionality
Achievement	The need for achievement is characterised by a wish to take responsibility to search for solutions to the problems, master difficult and critical tasks, set goals, and receive feedback on the level of success.
Affiliation	The need for affiliation is characterised by a desire to part of a group, an enjoyment of team/group work, a great concern about the relationship with colleagues, and a need to reduce uncertainty.
Power	The need for power is characterised by a desire for the ability to influence the behaviour of others in the workplace, a need to defeat in arguments, a need to convince and be victorious.

Source: Adapted from Grobler and Warnich (2011)

4.3.2.1. Analysis of McClelland theory of motivation as a Strategy to Enhance Employee Retention at Walter Sisulu University

David McClelland believes that motivational needs are learnt during a lifetime of interaction with the environment and that different individuals rate different needs as most important (Acquah, Nsiah, Antie and Otoo 2021; Mpinganjira et al. 2017). Erasmus (2018) explains that employers have the challenge to determine the dominant needs of employees and provide opportunities where these needs can be met. Humans are not static and can improve their own abilities (Vrba 2014). Bataeva (2018) explains that the main motives of human behaviour are developed as early as primary school age. Employee turnover in HEIs is becoming a challenge and requires

a certain level of attention. Academic institutions are equipped with professionals who are entrusted with the duty of building human capacity for future generations. The services academics render to their institutions are irreplaceable, and therefore, every effort must be made to retain them in their place of work (Mumin et al. 2021). Furthermore, the research output of our higher institutions of learning will suffer tremendously without the services of academics, as they represent the backbone and brand image of their universities (Robyn and Du Preez 2013).

Ampomah and Cudjor (2016) found out that employee turnover has both positive and negative effects, whereby the positive effects include new ideas and skills being introduced into the organisation, it opens promotion channels for employees, it helps in reducing redundancy in the organisation and it also helps in the replacement of poor performers. the negative effect involves the loss of skilled manpower, additional cost of replacement recruitment, poor quality of work and difficulties in attracting new staff affect the organisation most. Zeeshan et al. (2016) assert that organisations all over the world are giving more attention and assigning importance to employee turnover, as they know that high levels employee turnover slow down the performance of the employees as well as of the organisation and that it inflates the expenses related to recruitment and new employee training. Mabindisa (2013) adds emphasis that if employee turnover is not taken into consideration, it will cause the productivity of the organisation to decrease, customers will lose trust in the organisation and it will damage the image of the organisation, in addition to the fact that employees will be demotivated to work for an organisation with a high staff turnover rate.

Employee turnover causes disruption and forces employees to learn new job specific skills and get different career prospects. Every time an employee quits, a replacement must be recruited, selected, trained, and permitted time on the job to gain experience. The organisation incurs recruiting costs, selection and employment costs, orientation costs, training costs, lost wages/salaries, administrative costs, lost productivity, loss of human capital, and customer dissatisfaction issues. Skilled professionals, by virtue of their skilled ability, are likely to be re-employed within the same industry by the competitor. Due to turnover, there is a need to conduct exit interviews, which also added costs to the organisation. These costs include the time of the person conducting the interview and the administrative costs involved in processing the resignation letter, including stationery and printing. Before a recruitment process is initiated, job analysis

is necessary to determine the job content of the vacant position. A job analysis expert may need to be consulted to evaluate the outstanding work and job requirements of the vacant position. These unproductive expenses may hinder the organisation's capital development as the budget that could be used for purchasing new equipment is instead consumed by recruitment and training (Molefakgotla, Molefi, Moroke and Katlego, 2014).

In order to reduce turnover, WSU must put in place the following measures: recognise good performance, build trust, and skills development (Ampomah and Cudjor 2016). Administration should develop employee assistance programs to assist employees in eliminating their problems. It is vital to ensure that employees are aware of the introduction of employee assistance programs where troubled employees could receive in-house assistance in order to be able to cope with even personal problems that have a negative impact on their performance that may affect service delivery (Mabindisa 2013). Employees' performance must be closely monitored and recognised; they must be made aware of the expectations from management and offered challenging work to reduce boredom and ensure intensified loyalty and commitment to the organisation because loyal and committed employees barely abandon their duties and are always focused on their job. Staff should also be allowed to be innovative thinkers where their suggestions to the department are recognised (Molefakgotla et al. 2014).

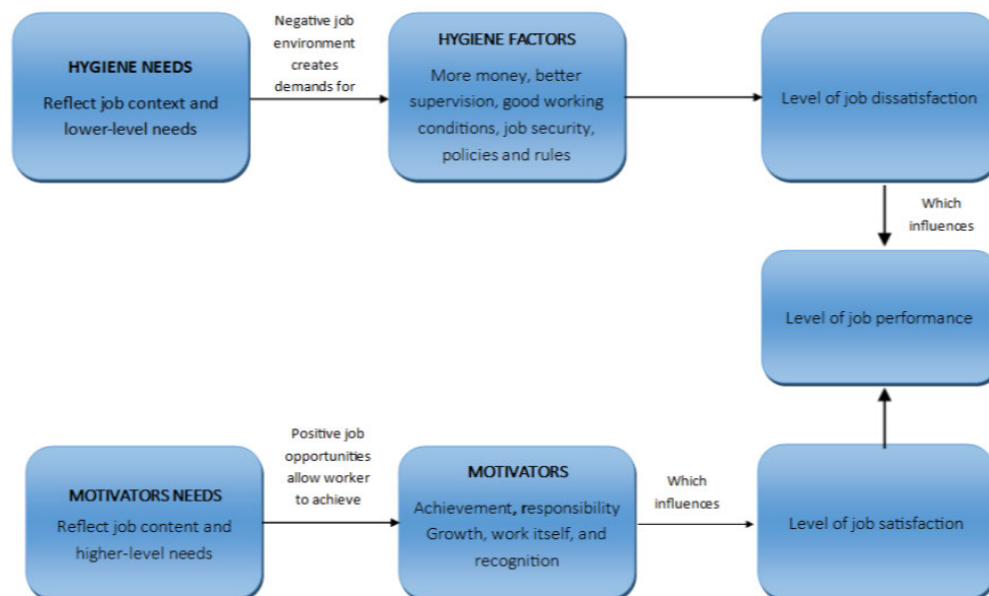
4.3.3. Herzberg's theory of motivation

One of the more popular models of motivation is Herzberg's two factor theory (refer to Figure 4.4), which was formulated in 1959. According to Varma and Malhotra 2022, Herzberg's two-factor theory is also known as motivation- hygiene theory or dual factor theory. The theory states that there are certain factors in the organisational environment that, if present, will motivate employees, and certain factors, if available, may satisfy the employees, but if not, they do not lead to dissatisfaction. The theory was designed to test the concept that a human being has two sets of needs: a need to avoid pain and a need to grow psychologically. Herzberg's theory suggests that the factors involved in producing job satisfaction (and motivation) are separate and distinct from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction (Varma 2019). It implies that people's needs for motivation and hygiene at work fall into two categories (Masenya et al.

2020). While motivators are the things that encourage people to work harder, such as job recognition, advancement and achievement, hygiene refers to a person's work environment, which includes working conditions, wages and workplace relations (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). According to Herzberg, a person's level of job satisfaction is directly related to their workplace environment, and when they are satisfied or motivated at work, it is because of these factors (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021).

Organisations that want to promote a culture of happiness and motivation in their workplaces need to strike a balance between delivering competitive pay and job security, fulfilling work, and promoting chances for people to advance their careers (Pratam et al. 2021). An essential yet difficult aspect of a manager's job is motivating staff. Early in the 20th century, compensation was thought to be a major factor in employee motivation, but today we know there are other factors at play (Masenya et al. 2020). Knowing what motivates your staff members is the first step in creating opportunities or programs that are relevant to their needs (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021).

Figure 4-4. Two-Factor Theory / Herzberg's theory



Source: Adapted: Grobler, Warnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield (2002)

It can be seen in Figure 4.4 that the presence of motivation factors, which are positive, may lead to satisfaction, while the absence of hygiene factors is negative and is clearly evident of the high levels of job dissatisfaction. Therefore, the concept of satisfaction seems to be related to the quality of the job, which will facilitate personal growth and development. These become motivating factors, which will encourage academics to

put more effort into their jobs to gain more satisfaction. The hygiene elements of the theory relate to the concept of working conditions, which in its broadest sense refers to constraints and limitations under which employees work (Varma 2019). Constant monitoring and adjustment of the hygiene factors, while not creating job satisfaction, could go a long way towards counteracting dissatisfaction (Varma 2019). Taking it from that point, if the hygiene factors are in place, conditions of employment are then conducive to motivating academics through improving their jobs and incorporating a wider range of skills and a greater opportunity for their personal development and growth. Employee retention is not only a routine procedure for a business; it is also one of their top concerns. Many problems led to the importance of staff retention. Employee retention, as defined by Kayumba and Rusibana (2021), can be improved in a variety of ways. Literature sources reveal employee retention through HRM practices, organisational practices, personal factors and push and pull factors. Similar to this, motivation is another important talent retention approach that organisations use to keep staff (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). Employee motivation is one of the key elements that may assist the employer in enhancing organisational performance and raising employee morale. Literature sources provide a wide range of motivational notions (Pratam et al. 2021). On the other hand, the effects of conventional motivation theories on employee retention within a single organisation have received the least attention. The incentive theories that underpin employee retention in organisations, according to Elsafty and Ragheb (2021), were identified, examined, and critiqued.

4.3.3.1. Analysis of Herzberg's theory of motivation as a Strategy to Enhance Employee Retention at Walter Sisulu University

According to Dugguh and Dennis (2014), Herzberg determined that different factors lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction of employees. The motivating factors for an individual's internal needs are also called satisfactory, as they lead to employee satisfaction and improved job performance. Therefore, these factors are viewed as the most effective motivational components, which concerned the individuals' needs to develop and improve their skills (Němečková 2017). Hygiene factors that are also called dissatisfactory focus on preventing employee job dissatisfaction and are influenced by management within the organisation, working conditions, policies and remuneration (Němečková 2017). Factors that are intrinsic to the job will fall under

motivation factors, and factors that are extrinsic to the job will fall under hygiene factors (Alshmemri et al. 2017). According to Dugguh and Dennis (2014), Herzberg's theory found that some aspects of a job cause satisfaction, which leads to motivation, whereas others cause job dissatisfaction which is shown in Figure 4 4. Grobler, Warnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield (2002)

Kuijk (2018) stated that there are four different combinations that exist in a work environment, taking Herzberg's theory into account:

- i. The ideal situation will be a case of motivation as well as high hygiene where an employee is highly motivated with almost no complaints.
- ii. A situation where an employee has low levels of motivation but high levels of hygiene. This is where the job is seen simply as a source of income. These employees do not really have complaints, but they are also not really motivated.
- iii. Low hygiene factors and high motivation: this is where employees are highly motivated due to the positive, challenging aspects of their jobs, but there are complaints related to work conditions or salary.
- iv. The worst situation possible is where the employees have low levels of hygiene and low levels of motivation, which means they are unmotivated and have numerous complaints regarding their work conditions.

According to Wang et al. (2016), this theory deals with the factors that make employees feel positive about their jobs. The research done by Herzberg found that employees experiencing job satisfaction attributed their positive feelings to internal factors. Employees who did not feel good about their jobs ascribed their attitude to external factors and this resulted in job dissatisfaction (Bagraim 2011). The theory further indicates that managers should eliminate factors in the work environment that lead to job dissatisfaction and that hygiene factors must be maintained. Managers should also emphasise factors associated with the work itself, such as promotional opportunities, opportunities for personal growth, recognition and attaining a sense of achievement and responsibility (Wang et al. 2016). Pettinger (2010) mentions that the work of Herzberg encourages managers to concentrate on their management style, attitude and approach to the employees, which are based on integrity, honesty and trust. He further states that managers should promote effective and professional relationships between employees. One of the key elements of human resource management in today's world is motivating employees to perform at their maximum

potential. Bakotić (2016) mentioned that employees who are happy with their jobs show more motivation and willingness to perform well in their jobs. These employees tend to be more passionate and enthusiastic about work on the assignments assigned to them, and as a result, the organisation yields a higher quality output (Bakotic 2016). Aziri (2011) is of the belief that one of the main factors concerning effectiveness and efficiency in an organisation is job satisfaction. According to Bakotic (2016), one key factor that has the power to make employees experience high levels of job satisfaction is motivation. This motivation can be in the form of improving the employees' physical work environment, creating policies and structures that enhance favourable interpersonal work relationships between employees, improving their overall potential for receiving benefits, rewards and/or recognition and to allow for career advancement and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Werner (2016) states that dissatisfaction could have a destructive outcome where employees become negative, make more mistakes, are less productive and become more absent. Thus, it was important to determine what factors influenced employee job satisfaction and if it influenced employee motivation towards organisational goals. Many companies do not understand the impact employee dissatisfaction could have on their employees' motivation, which in turn influences organisational success (Bakotić 2016). High levels of employee job satisfaction improve their willingness and commitment to the organisation's success even in their private time (Bakotić 2016). Evidence from previous research emphasises the importance of the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction (Singh and Tiwari 2012). Helping organisations discover the factors that influence employees' job satisfaction will aid in understanding what effect it has on employees' motivation and how organisations can improve it. Employees can be satisfied but not motivated, and vice versa, due to numerous factors (Kuijk 2018). In the opinion of Herzberg (1959), as quoted in Alfayd and Arif (2017), hygiene factors may result in job dissatisfaction without decreasing the level of job satisfaction, whereas the motivation factors could result in job satisfaction, without not reducing the level of job dissatisfaction. However, Herzberg's theory concentrated on the hygiene factors, which are likely to cause job dissatisfaction and influence employee turnover.

4.4. Conceptual framework: employee turnover models

The cornerstone of employee turnover models is still job satisfaction. However, job happiness and performance work together to more accurately predict turnover. Increased performance has an indirect impact on turnover. Furthermore, he contends that greater performance is closely correlated with workers' ease of mobility, that is, their capacity to locate other employment options (Havenga and Sengane 2019). One intriguing claim made by Samuel and Chipunza (2019) focuses on the connection between poor performance and an employee's voluntary departure, even though the individual may have wanted to remain. By describing the process by which an employee makes the choice to depart, Botha and Vilyte (2020) add to the body of knowledge on turnover. They contend that push and pull forces contribute to turnover. Following a shock in the form of a push or pull component, an employee will choose to quit their work along one of the four pathways. An employee will resign from their position in Path 1 without any conscious thought. Path 2: A negative shock will result in work unhappiness, which will ultimately result in the choice to resign (Mabindisa 2020). Path 3 entails cognitive reflection and an assessment of the available alternative employment options, and the choice to resign is motivated by a pull factor, such as new job offers. Path 4 differs from paths 1, 2, and 3 in that an employee continuously evaluates their degree of connection to the organisation. At some point along Path 4, a person makes the decision to leave the organisation because they feel they no longer fit in (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Scholars have asserted that Path 4 also includes mental considerations, such as job searching, assessing possible alternative employment options, and comparing existing and potential employment opportunities (Ferguson et al. 2019). A pre-existing intention to resign may be remembered at any point along the enhanced version of the four turnover routes of the turnover model. They also added to the unfolding turnover model by classifying job options into work and non-work groups.

However, the desire to leave work might still exist even in the absence of viable employment alternatives. Job offers might arise even if no one is actively looking for work. The unfolding model of turnover contends that an employee's choice to leave their current work often depends on how well they would fit into either an alternate opportunity or their existing position (Mkulu 2018). After experiencing a shock, workers will re-evaluate how attached they are to the organisation. If the employee's values,

image, and organisation's objectives do not align, the person will feel dissatisfied, which will lead to the decision to quit (Mokoditoa 2018). The choice to leave a job is influenced not just by work happiness or discontent but also by the fit between the person and the organisation. Fit is defined as a person's compatibility with both work and non-work contexts. The likelihood of leaving decreases as fit increases. A person's choice to remain is significantly influenced by their compatibility with both their professional and personal environments, including their community, co-workers, and location (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). The degree to which an individual is compatible with their work environment is a multidimensional concept and is related to specific outcomes in terms of behaviour and attitude.

Employee turnover was shown to be substantially correlated with a person's compatibility with certain work environment variables. For instance, it has been discovered that a person's congruence with their organisation is significantly related to their intention to leave organisation citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction and psychological attachment (Masango 2018). Similar to this, empirical studies have shown that a person's compatibility with their job, group and vocation is strongly correlated with their intention to leave their position, work adjustment, organisation citizenship behaviour, and job satisfaction (Mkulu 2018). Individuals are drawn to, chosen for, and kept by organisations that share their beliefs. The research on current trends in turnover is reviewed in the part that follows, and the gap and need in the complete retention model are then identified.

4.4.1. The unfolding turnover model

According to Masango (2018), current models of employee turnover are oversimplified and unreliable. They thus proposed an evolving model of voluntary turnover. The unfolding model introduced the idea of shocks that startled the employee out of the present situation. These anticipated shocks were not always negative or work-related, but they may lead people to consider quitting. According to Mkulu (2018), the idea of programmed behaviour was also presented, which suggests that after an employee has experienced shock, they would go along a succession of predetermined choice pathways, ultimately leading to turnover. Only after evaluating how the turnover process develops are researchers and managers able to comprehend why people

depart in order to plan and carry out the necessary measures to prevent unnecessary instances of turnover (Mokoditsoa 2018).

Table 4.3. The unfolding model

	1	2	3	4A	4B
Attribute	Following a plan	Leaving without a plan	Leaving for something better	Leaving without a plan	Leaving for something better
Initiating Event	Shock	Shock	Shock	Job dissatisfaction	Job dissatisfaction
Script/Plan	Yes	No	No	No	No
Relative Job Satisfaction	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Active Job Search	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Example	Planned to go to law school. Quit job when accepted to law school.	Individual was passed over for a promotion. Decided to quit.	Received an unsolicited job offer that looks better than current situation. Decided to quit.	As a result, mounting job dissatisfaction decides to quit current job, without looking for another job.	Accumulated job dissatisfaction results in successful job search. Finds a new job, then quits.

Source: Adapted from Holtom and Inderrien (2006)

According to Mefi and Asoba (2021), the theory predicted that the process of employee turnover will take one of four courses depending on a particular set of characteristics. Each option's decision-making process elaborates on particular aspects, psychological processes, and external events that are affected by a shocks or natural contributing processes (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). The authors stated that any of the choice routes might result in either external shocks in the employee's surroundings or as a consequence of poor work satisfaction as they incorporate both push and pull elements of employee turnover into this model (Mefi and Asoba 2021). The shocks mentioned are big, distinct incidents that upset the routine of the workers, push them

toward conscious judgements about their occupations, and maybe even push them to resign.

4.4.2. Referent cognitions model

Referent cognitions theory, according to Dyk et al. (2019), integrates the assessment of processes within a framework of relative deprivation and more fully explains how injustice leads to discontent. By describing the psychological processes that lead to dissatisfaction, the referent cognitions theory expands on the scope of established turnover models that blame result or procedural unfairness for eroding morale and retention (Mkulu 2018). In particular, the referent cognitions hypothesis describes how discontent develops when a person contrasts the current reality with a more desirable alternative. The idea proposes that individuals engage in three mental simulations, including referent cognitions, reasons, and the probability of amelioration (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Alternative, hypothetical situations that are different from a person's real circumstances are called referent cognitions (Mkulu 2018).

When anticipated outcomes are more alluring than what is really happening, people are more likely to be unhappy. People consider what could have been when they compare reference outcomes to actual results (Mokoditso 2018). Referent results and the processes used to achieve them are contrasted in the same way that existent outcomes are. According to a third tenet of the referent cognitions hypothesis, individuals may see current results as ephemeral because their happiness with them may be impacted by what they anticipate receiving in the future (Mefi and Asoba 2021). Referent cognitions theory has so far clarified how comparisons between actual and hypothetical outcomes and processes are connected to dissatisfaction and turnover.

4.4.3. Job embeddedness model

On- and off-the-job factors may bond individuals to their work, according to a recent study on job embeddedness (DeMatthews et al. 2022). The current study expanded on this line of inquiry by evaluating the potential integration of job embeddedness into a conventional model of voluntary turnover. Work embeddedness was also shown to interact with job satisfaction to predict voluntary turnover, indicating that the concept of job embeddedness goes beyond the unfolding model of turnover (Ampofo et al. 2021). According DeMatthews et al. (2022), turnover depends on how easy it is to

move about and how desirable it is to quit one's employment. The conceptual models proposed in the 1970s and early 1980s by researchers like Mobley (1977); Mobley, Horner, and Hollighsworth (1978); Katzell, Konrman, and Levine (1971); Munchinsky and Morrow (1980); and Price (1977) significantly influenced the theoretical landscape of voluntary turnover to date (Ampofo et al. 2021).

Ampofo et al.'s (2021) unfolding model of voluntary turnover is one prominent exception. This novel viewpoint on turnover suggests other routes to voluntary turnover that are not sparked by unhappiness at work. One of the most significant implications of the research is that, while leaving a job is frequently preceded by some level of mental consideration, such as a comparison to alternative jobs, staying with an organisation may simply be the result of maintaining the status quo (DeMatthews et al. 2022). This implies that before thinking about the potential of leaving one's present employment, one may search for both internal and external causes and rewards. It is crucial to determine if WSU offers its workers the advantages or a combination of factors that makes it possible for them to become ingrained in their work.

Work embeddedness, which encompasses elements like marital status, community activity, and length of employment, has been characterised as the combined pressures that prevent a person from quitting his or her job (DeMatthews et al. 2022). It was proposed that the concept of job embeddedness is made up of contextual and perceptual influences that tie workers to their workplace's setting, other employees, and problems (Ampofo et al. 2021). According to DeMatthews et al. (2022), this construct has so far been operationalised as a combination of two mid-level sub-factors: on-the-job embeddedness and off-the-job embeddedness, which have to do with how ingrained a person is in their community.

Each of these types of embeddedness is represented by three underlying facets: links, formal or informal connections between a person and institutions, locations, or other people; fits which denote an employee's compatibility or comfort with work and non-work environments; and sacrifices which include the cost of the material or psychological benefits that one may lose by leaving one's job or community (Ampofo et al. 2021). According to DeMatthews et al. (2022), job embeddedness is a formative metric; it stands for a focus on the many, often ineffective reasons why someone might

stay in their employment. Job embeddedness is an aggregate multidimensional construct derived from its six aspects (Ampofo et al. 2021). In further detail, its indications are embeddedness-causing factors rather than reflections. For line managers, the application of job embeddedness has significant implications. Leaders in European organisations who are concerned about losing their most important workers should research external pay equity and employee job satisfaction in addition to trying to find workable solutions for assisting employees in becoming ingrained in the organisation and the community (Ampofo et al. 2021). To improve the connections between workers and other members of the organisation, managers may, for instance, set up mentorship programs. Managers may also encourage workgroups to employ new members by giving them a significant voice in the process (DeMatthews et al. 2022). Organisations may support community outreach programs to provide their workers with chances to volunteer and become more integrated into their communities in order to deepen the connections with the community.

Other writers contend that companies must exercise caution when hiring and choosing new hires in order to improve the match between the candidate and the organisation. Before hiring, they must provide realistic information to the applicants, and as a result, companies must help workers plan their careers (Ampofo et al. 2021). Employers may share details of neighbourhood activities or facilities to improve the fitness between the individual and the community. Organisations are urged to provide distinctive perks that are difficult for rival businesses to match. Family-friendly hours or perks over the long term should be used to strongly encourage employees with children to stay with an (DeMatthews et al. 2022). It is crucial to remember that job embedding cannot be effective in environments with high levels of work discontent. In other words, workers cannot be integrated into an organisation that does not value their contributions.

4.4.4. Psychological turnover intention model

An employee's mindset toward leaving an organisation begins before resigning from their current place of employment. An employee's physical and psychological mindset is the reason for turnover intentions (Bergheim 2005). When an employee becomes dissatisfied with the organisation, they usually rationalise resigning. Mobley developed an employee turnover model that included the process and rationalisation of an employee's dissatisfaction level before resigning (Ngucwangu 2015). Mobley's model

assisted leaders in identifying the signs and thought processes of dissatisfied employees to prevent turnover. The first step is when the employee begins evaluating their current position (Kryscynski and Morris 2020). After careful consideration, the employee will then determine whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with their current position and then make the overall decision to leave an organisation. Absenteeism, tardiness, and other forms of passive behaviour are signs an organisation should be aware of as they are indicative of employee dissatisfaction (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021).

Using the employee turnover model, Mobley (1977) noted that the evaluation process of an employee, whether satisfied or dissatisfied with their job, will begin searching for other job opportunities. Mobley determined during the evaluation process that the employee will consider other family obligations and search for a new job (Masenya et al. 2020). Once the employee makes the final decision to leave their current position, the search for new employment begins. The employee will then make a comparison between the two organisations (Elsafty and Ragheb 2021). If the alternative position appears more feasible to the employee, then the process of applying for an open position begins. If the employee does not find the alternative position favourable, then the search will continue (Kayumba and Rusibana 2021). Mobley outlined the psychological process in the employee model that organisational leaders could utilise before the employee decides to leave. Managers have the potential to intervene before an employee makes the final decision to leave their organisation (Pratam et al. 2021).

Leadership is paying closer attention to the psychological factors of their employees. Employees must adjust to policy changes, downsizing, and the ever increasing competition, which results in unfavourable conditions (Masenya et al. 2020). University employees begin to experience the psychological thought process of turnover due of the high demands of the organisation and the need to meet the expected goals (Adelleye and Bengana 2021). Once the employee leaves their current position, the institution can no longer view it as employee turnover intention but instead as actual employee turnover.

4.5. A review of recent trends in employee turnover

The management of people affects academic staff retention since they are the organisation's most precious resource. In order to achieve high levels of staff retention,

organisations and institutions must ensure that the physical environment supports organisational goals for allowing contact and privacy, formality and informality, and functionality in order to achieve high levels of staff retention (Botha and Vilyte 2020). Improving a population's potential for productivity involves making education a key component. Therefore, applying this viewpoint to a management setting results in incremental compensation that reflects job experience and training courses in a certain position rather than the working circumstances that depict the hierarchical structure of the level of income throughout a lifetime (Masango 2018). An employee's wage decreases whenever it is thought that their output is slowing down, which in turn reduces the work satisfaction component. These variables may influence an employee's decision to quit their position (Mduma and Mkulu 2021). Enhancing working conditions and minimising injuries from the workplace are important ways to increase staff retention.

In other words, a healthy work environment in an organisation favourably reflects the sentiments and emotions of the workforce, thereby influencing their decision to quit or remain. Its use could include complimenting strangers, encouraging co-workers, ensuring that information flows freely across the corporation, having access to worldwide merchandising, and establishing connections between businesses and their clients (Masango 2018). According to the work embeddedness theory, job embeddedness might lessen the impact of organisational justice on intentions to leave a job. Specifically, it can be seen that a worker's choice to remain at their current job or leave is influenced by a variety of factors, including job embeddedness (Mkulu 2018). In other words, deeply entrenched workers would be less likely to have plans to leave their organisation if they understood organisational justice. As a result, strongly engrained workers who believe that the results are fair are less likely to express intentions to quit, particularly if these intentions are influenced by respect for pay and incentive distribution or the calibre of managers' interpersonal interactions (Mokoditsoa 2018). This also helped clarify the significance of adequate working conditions for academic staff retention and attrition. The low level of turnover intention also alludes to the fact that deeply embedded workers are more engaged in several projects and with a variety of people, which means they won't forgo a wide range of possibilities and advantages by remaining at their current employer.

In order to determine if the elements of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) adequately explain the reasons of behavioural intentions in specific persons, (Mkulu 2018) examined workers' intentions to leave their current positions using these components. The results show that investigating the causes of any action as well as the larger context helps in understanding the mechanisms through which TPB components are connected to turnover intentions (Mokoditsoa 2018). The study concluded that TPB would be an effective instrument for foretelling purposeful actions like the desire to quit an organisation if used to study conditional behaviour in the workplace. This can assist to explain the behavioural intentions of academic staff members who want to leave their jobs owing to poor working conditions. The topic of turnover intention also benefits from taking into account social and psychological causes (Pitan and Muller 2020). The study demonstrates that the key predictor of intention to leave the job has frequently been job satisfaction.

Research on this workforce segment is scarce. As a result, little is known about how it relates to their perspective on work condition factors. Since it relates to reducing the shortage of qualified graduates available to fill the rising number of openings as well as recruitment, retention, and increased work productivity of employees (Belluigi, 2020), learning more about the working conditions and intention of academic staff to leave their positions could have long-term consequences. In the same vein, Mabindisa (2020) investigated the connections between organisational commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction via an empirical research. High levels of job satisfaction are associated with higher levels of commitment and lower levels of turnover intention, which, in turn positively impacts affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment while negatively impacting turnover intentions (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

As was previously mentioned, academic interest in employee turnover began in the early 19th century. Numerous models and ideas about turnover have since been proposed and tested. The focus of the majority of conventional turnover models is on the attitudes and behaviours of the workforce, including turnover intention, job satisfaction, commitment, and absenteeism, absenteeism, and withdrawal behaviour (Masango 2018). The turnover model also contends that employee turnover is mostly a result of job discontent. In the past, trends in quantitative research have multiplied and empirical investigations have shown a link between work satisfaction and

employee turnover (Mkulu 2018). Some scholars contend that factors other than attitudes and behaviours may also predict turnover. Work-life balance and family life balance are mutually exclusive ideas, and turnover intention is adversely correlated with both (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). The alignment of personal knowledge, abilities, and interests with organisation goals, beliefs, and objectives is also crucial for employee retention, in addition to maintaining a work-life balance.

In order to retain employees, Masango (2018) stresses the significance of employee and corporate values being compatible. Any dissatisfaction between an individual's requirements and skills and the demands and capabilities of the workplace leads to people quitting their positions of their own will or being forced out of the organisation (Mkulu 2018). This argument is fairly similar to the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) paradigm, which is used to explain why individuals with traits that align with an organisation's objectives, values, and characteristics remain with the organisation longer (Mokoditsoa 2018). Contrarily, values are an individual's persistent conviction toward significant objectives and any discrepancy between a person's beliefs and those of the business increases employee turnover.

According to the theory of work adjustment, a person's ability to adapt to his workplace is crucial to his employment. person environment Fit (PE Fit) is the term used to describe how well a person fits into their workplace (Mokoditsoa 2018, Mkulu 2018). PE fit is a multifaceted notion that includes several forms of fit, including person-organisation fit (PO fit), person-job fit (PJ fit), person-group fit (PG fit), person-supervisor fit (PS fit), demand-abilities fit (D-A fit), need supplies fit (N-S fit), and person-vocation fit (PV fit) (Mokoditsoa, 2018, Samuel and Chipunza, 2018). Employee turnover intention is adversely correlated with a person's fit with several components of the workplace, including the organisation, job, group, and vocation. Non-organisational issues in connection with employee turnover are being emphasised in the recent study. For instance, staff turnover has been shown to be correlated with an organisation's reputation and the appraisal of the organisation by internal and external stakeholders (Ferguson et al. 2019). Businesses with a positive reputation are better able to keep their personnel. In addition, the relationship between turnover and an organisation's reputation and perceived prestige was examined (Reyes et al. 2019). A sign of the degree of social honour linked to a certain social position. When workers' assessments and ideas about the organisation are based on data or knowledge from

the outside world, there is a perception of organisational prestige (Swartz et al. 2019). According to several studies, perceived organisational reputation is associated with both student desires to leave a university and staff turnover.

4.5.1. Professional growth chance for academic staff turnover

Professional advancement puts pressure on an employee's perception of the value of his or her prospects. A stressor for an employee is when obstacles to their professional advancement arise at any point while they are working for the organisation (Masango 2018). These pressures might range from issues like being trapped in a job with little chance of advancement to threats of downsizing. In Europe and America, career advancement is substantially more significant than pay, but in Asian cultures, it is seen as equally essential to pay (Mkulu 2018). Career advancement is seen as essential for turnover in moving up or moving out. Lack of possibilities for career progress or promotion may also contribute to high employee turnover. Employees choose alternative employers who could offer them more pay and more prestigious positions (Masango 2018). In particular, an educated population is a productive population, according to Mkulu's (2018) assertion that formal education and training are extremely important and essential to enhancing national production capacity. Apparently many department heads did not regard staff development as one of their duties; human resource managers and heads of department do not always have the abilities required to develop personnel (Mokoditsoa 2018). One of the most significant factors in why workers remain in their positions, particularly young and eager ones, is the availability of training and development opportunities (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). However, it is essential to note that training must be methodical and sequential, based on properly performed performance reviews, the identification of training requirements, and the creation of a competency framework that meets corporate objectives.

Most of the staff will value their opportunities for learning and growth. They will be motivated to progress in their chosen fields and aware of the many opportunities available at their organisation (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Department heads need to ensure the organisation has a learning and development plan as they may be responsible for a high employee turnover rate. Heads of departments should seek assistance to reduce turnover rates if it is necessary. One of the most crucial factors in an employee's decision—particularly when young and eager—to remain is the

possibility of advancement, training and growth. Institutions invest millions on the recruitment, training, and development of their staff (Masango 2018). However, most workers quit after they meet their professional goals. Over a quarter of academics in British universities, according to a similar study, were at the top of their academic scale, meaning they did not receive any promotions or advancement beyond the annual "cost of living" (Mkulu 2018). Employees who feel their portfolios have outgrown them and who believe that more training would not advance their careers inside the organisation sometimes choose to quit.

4.5.2. Job security and the turnover of academic faculty

Job security is defined as the possibility that a person would maintain the job. This definition demonstrate that job security means that workers keep their employment statuses inside the same organisation if they continue to choose to do so. The definitions, however, omit the elements that guarantee workers' jobs in any particular organisation (Mkulu 2018). According to the Public Service Alliance of Canada BC (2008), job security is a clause in a collective agreement that safeguards a worker's job in the event of the introduction of new procedures or equipment; as such, it should be negotiated before the employee begins work (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Similar to this job security is the employee's entitlement to be treated with respect and dignity as embodied in good faith and mutual trust, which the employer should uphold for the time they continue to work together (Dyk et al. 2019). this concept includes treating workers with compassion in order to safeguard them from losing their jobs, but is leaves unclear how job security for workers may be accomplished (Reyes et al. 2019). Given the differences between the aforementioned definitions, Samuel and Chipunza (2019) definition of job security as the degree to which an organisation offers consistent employment for workers was used for this research.

This definition was thought to be valuable because it demonstrates clearly that it is the responsibility of the employer to provide job security for workers. The employer is required to put in place clauses that demonstrate to workers that their employment is secure even in the case of significant organisational changes (Samuel and Chipunza 2019). Several theories have been suggested to explain the connection between job security and job retention. For instance, poor job retention might emerge from

disenchantment with a job even when work security and other dissatisfies are present (Mabindisa 2020).

4.6. Effects of employee turnover on HEI performance

If not properly managed, high personnel turnover rates may have a negative effect on organisational performance. The growth in employee turnover rates is a significant concern for organisations and is ostensibly impacting organisational performance (Roodt and Martin 2019). Customers begin to doubt the management of the organisation because of the high personnel turnover and are unsure of whether they should continue doing business with that organisation. Employee turnover is often associated with negative repercussions, even though it can unquestionably influence an organisation's success. The reason for this is because losing competent employees might be detrimental to the organisation since it could tamper with its production (Samuel and Chipunza 2019). Employee turnover can have a significant impact on an organisation's performance, which includes efficiency, productivity, inventiveness, quality, and profitability, according to researchers.

4.6.1. Effect of employee turnover on HEI performance

Efficiency is a metric for gauging performance; efficiency is defined as the relationship between inputs and outputs, or how well inputs are converted into outputs, according to. Efficiency is the capacity to prevent input wastage while producing the desired output; for goals to be accomplished properly, organisations must allocate resources to workers in an effective manner (Davids and Waghid 2020). Turnover can be expensive to the higher education institution because it can lead to a less devoted and knowledgeable workforce, the loss of priceless institutional memory, an increase in training costs and time, and a greater incidence of behavioural problems like absenteeism and tardiness (Scott and Ivala 2019).

Productivity is the ratio of input to output in an organisational environment; additionally, productivity is defined by the rate of output per unit of time. When evaluating an organisation's success, productivity is a key component (Samuel and Chipunza 2019). Personnel who know how to produce a certain unit of output do it in less time and energy than those who are not. Therefore, it follows that when there is staff turnover in an organisation, the productivity of the organisation will be impacted negatively by

some inexperienced workers filling in for the absent workers (Masango 2018). Employees are the foundation of any successful business, so HEIs must put every effort into keeping them engaged and motivated in order to help them compete globally in terms of offering high-quality goods and services to society (Mokoditsoa 2018).

Dyk et al. (2019) defined innovation as the creation of fresh concepts, layouts, methods, or goods. An organisation's performance is impacted when employees leave and employee turnover increases. When new talent is hired, it takes them some time to get up to speed and acquire the necessary knowledge to be innovative. In a research study on the banking industries of Sri Lanka and New Zealand, Roodt and Martin (2019) found that companies with low staff turnover are more creative than those with high employee turnover. However, this is due to the fact that novice personnel struggle with creativity, in contrast to experienced employees require less effort to generate new ideas since they are more used to their jobs (Reyes et al. 2019). Consequently, it may be argued that personnel turnover impacts an organisation's capacity for innovation, which in turn affects performance. Employee continuity in HEIs may be improved by giving workers more control.

The degree to which a given good or service satisfies a need is its quality. By enhancing services, systems, and processes, quality aims to ensure that organisations provide for their stakeholders while also ensuring that the whole organisation is functional and effective (Mkulu 2018). The level of output quality has a big impact on how loyal customers are to an organisation. Because quality guarantees client pleasure, businesses should make sure to retain qualified staff that will uphold product and quality standards (Dyk et al. 2019). Employees that are knowledgeable about maintaining a certain standard are more employable than less experienced peers (Armstrong 2016). As a result, this implies that a high employee turnover rate can negatively impact an organisation's quality levels, which in turn affects performance (Mkulu 2018). Employee turnover results in the loss of competent workers who are replaced with workers with less experience, making it harder for the organisation to maintain its standard of quality (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). High-quality workplace environments at HEIs with a variety of benefits that are valued by employees may raise satisfaction levels and thereby reduce turnover behaviour.

Mkulu (2018) asserts that one of an organisation's main performance objectives is to maximise profits, but that this profitability is adversely affected by a high personnel turnover rate because the expense of replacing workers who have left the organisation will be considerable due to training, development and the hiring of new talent. An organisation's financial loss due to staff turnover is mostly dependent on the competence and productivity of new hires (Samuel and Chipunza, 2018). Due to staff turnover, some organisations have reported negative earnings. If HEIs do not handle high turnover rates correctly, it might have a severe impact on the profitability of their organisations.

When a member of the academic staff departs, it has an effect on the students to the point that they could petition the institution for their professor. When an academic staff member leaves, students may petition the college for their professor. Dyk et al. 2019 notes the urgency of swiftly finding a replacement and the difficulties of replacing loyal, productive employees with dependable and competent ones. It will have little influence on students and employees in the near term, and they could spread rumours as a result. Students' motivation and staff morale will suffer in the near future, and since the professor departed without providing enough notice, other lecturers will be affected and the former's workload will need to be shared (Reyes et al. 2019). There is no long-term impact since the recruiting process to fill the void will get underway right now.

One of the most prominent individuals in a private higher education institution is the academic staff. It is the responsibility of the academic staff to provide education services to the students and to guarantee that they have the knowledge and skills necessary for receiving a diploma or degree certificate (Reyes et al. 2019). In addition to the primary teaching work that is directly connected to the academic route, public universities and large private institutions concentrate on a select few academic features including research, publications, projects, and other elements (Tsabedza and Ngoepe 2020). Smaller schools, which solely provide diploma, foundation, and certificate programs, divide their academic staff's duties among teaching, administration, and marketing. Small colleges struggle with faculty turnover because it happens much too often (Songca et al. 2021). It is well known that smaller institutions do nothing to keep their academic staffs from leaving due to a high turnover rate while this is taking place. As long as their lecturers are changing, this will undoubtedly have an impact on how classes are run and how satisfied the students are (Mefi and Asoba

2021). Some private institutions often place a strong emphasis on international students, which can harm not just the reputation of the college but also the nation's reputation for its educational system.

This is in direct opposition to the National Higher Education Strategic Plan's (PSPTN 2011) efforts to promote the knowledge economy and, along the way, anticipate attracting more foreign students as Malaysia strives to become a centre for higher education (Ndofirepi et al. 2020). If these universities do not address the concerns of academic staff turnover, the nation's goal will never be reached. One of the factors that makes it difficult to retain academic staff in small colleges is the workload. Pressure is increased by the average of 21 teaching hours per week, in addition to administrative and marketing obligations (Mabindisa 2020). By comparing it to the criterion that suggests just 18 hours of lectures each week, this might be classified as task overload. The academic staff may get worn out as a result, which will impair their desire to remain at the university (Heugh 2020). Instead, they may decide to move on to other organisations that allocate better workloads. In addition, the absence of a competitive compensation and benefits package that matched the academic credentials and anticipated pay of the lecturers at all three colleges made it difficult for them to be retained (Mefi and Asoba 2021).

The academic staff may be willing to put up with pressure and stress if they are well compensated, making this component the most important. The academic staff will, however, undoubtedly go on to another institution that will accommodate their pay scale in accordance with their (Mkulu 2018). This predicament stems from the market's abundance of applicants willing to accept jobs at lower salaries. Smaller schools also make the case that they only enhance salaries for faculty members who have done a great deal for the institution by fulfilling marketing and administrative tasks rather than rewarding lecturers (Mpini 2018). Since teaching is a fundamental skill that does not require compensation increases, smaller schools do not value their academic employees based on that skill. This understanding gives academic personnel greater freedom to choose to leave a small institution (Mzangwa 2019). Academic staff members are not appreciated for their strengths; instead, they are valued for other things, such as tasks they are not experts in. The academic staff will ultimately decide to transfer to another organisation (Dyk et al. 2019).

In accordance with the above reasoning, role conflict is another aspect that contributes to turnover. While academic staff members are supposed to be multi-talented and capable of handling several administrative and marketing tasks, they prefer to concentrate mostly on teaching and other small tasks that may sometimes be allocated (Mkulu 2018). The academic staff must prioritise their administrative duties and see it to completion. When the side task becomes the primary component of performance assessment, a conflict of roles emerges (Havenga and Sengane 2019). According to information gathered so far, all three institutions have said that a factor in the high turnover is the academic staff's inability to manage marketing and administrative tasks. Roodt and Martin (2019) went on to say that they will terminate the contracts of non-contributive employees who failed to do their duties effectively or exhibit good multitasking skills.

The incapacity to manage overseas students and the challenges encountered in doing so are additional factors that directly contribute to the failure of small institutions to retain academic personnel (Roodt and Martin 2019). The diverse student body at tiny institutions, which includes those from the Middle East, the African area, Russia, and other parts of the globe, creates a barrier between the academic staff, making it difficult for them to teach the students. In this situation, communication, culture, ethics, and conventions may be a barrier (Samuel and Chipunza 2019). Since there are a lot of foreign students attending smaller colleges, as stated by Mzangwa (2019), they are likely to fill the classrooms to capacity, which often limits the lecturers' ability to manage the large numbers and ultimately leads to the academic staff's decision to leave. All three of these smaller institutions said that there was not much they could do to keep academic employees on staff and reduce turnover (Reyes et al. 2019). To encourage and incentivise productive academic personnel to remain and contribute more, all three respondents provide extra advantages like bonuses and pay increases from time to time upon assignment completion (Roodt and Martin 2019). These attempts demonstrate how small colleges struggle to retain their academic personnel because their efforts are inconsistent and do not put the welfare and professional development of the academic staff first.

4.7. Higher education institution turnover and an appropriate turnover rate

All South African organisations now prioritise talent retention, but this is particularly true in the higher education sector, which is dealing with an ageing workforce and limited opportunities to find and keep young, skilled workers (Masango 2018). HEIs are also especially susceptible to losing their highly skilled workers to the commercial sector and to other HEIs that provide greater incentives and perks. Turnover can be expensive to a higher education institution because it can lead to a less devoted and knowledgeable workforce, the loss of important institutional memory, an increase in training costs and time, and a higher incidence of behavioural issues like absenteeism and tardiness (Samuel and Chipunza 2018). Turnover rates at HEIs ranged from 4% to 8%. Only one case study in the investigation indicated a much higher turnover rate of 13%. Researchers have shown that many human resource managers did not know the institution's current turnover rate and had no opinion on whether it was high or low (Reyes et al. 2019). Despite this, studies revealed that they did not think that their organisation had a turnover issue. According to reports, the average yearly turnover rate for staff at public research organisations is around 17% globally, which helps put the turnover in HEIs into perspective (Dyk et al. 2019). Currently, there is no benchmark for South Africa. What defines an ideal turnover rate, therefore, is a crucial topic. Early conclusions by Samuel and Chipunza (2018) suggested that too much turnover causes instability and a lack of knowledge, while too little turnover causes stagnation, but that an appropriate turnover rate reduces turnover costs. Employee turnover and organisational performance have an inverted U-shape connection, and both excessively high and excessively low turnover rates are bad for the organisation (Samuel and Chipunza 2019). Turnover of high-performing groups should be minimised to maintain the investment of good workers and working relationships; turnover rates vary across industries and organisations, and extremely low turnover rates can be dysfunctional, unhealthy, and expensive (Mkulu 2018). As a result, the ideal turnover rate maximises the gap between its advantages and disadvantages. In conclusion, no base percentage is specified as an appropriate turnover rate (Mokoditso 2018).

4.8. Conclusion

In brief, the chapter focused on the theoretical and conceptual framework related to employee turnover models. Globally, countries invest a lot of capital in higher education institutions, research and development in general. The expectation is that the return on investment will be greater in the form of a highly skilled national workforce and an increase in the country's economic growth (UNESCO 2018; OECD 2018). The South African higher education is experiencing significant changes. These changes include transformation, growth, the addition of new courses, the increase in student grants and the support that the government is giving to the disadvantaged. The literature study provided the opinions of other academics or philosophers on the subject matter. A literature review is necessary to explore and find current knowledge by evaluating all relevant sources and analysing them for relevance, standards, debate, and holes in the present context structure.

CHAPTER FIVE. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed models related to employee turnover and laid out the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning this study. Its purpose was to briefly review existing turnover retention models of employees because of their usefulness for the design of the theoretical model of this study. This chapter addresses the research methodology employed in this study. It details the research paradigm, design, population, sampling strategy, data collection instrument, ethical considerations, and the approach used for data analysis. The rationale behind each methodological choice is provided to ensure transparency and alignment with the study's objectives. To maintain continuity and clarity, the research questions (RQs), research objectives (ROs), and hypotheses are restated below as a foundation for the methodological discussion that follows.

Table 5.1. Restatement of Research Questions (RQs), Research Objectives (ROs), and Hypotheses

RQ	Research Question	RO	Hypothesis
RQ1	How does employee turnover affect operational functions at WSU?	RO1: To assess the impact of employee turnover on operational functions at WSU.	H1: Employee turnover affects the operational functions at WSU.
RQ2	What is the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions?	RO2: To determine the impact of job satisfaction on employee turnover intentions.	H2: Employees' job satisfaction has a significant negative effect on their turnover intentions.
RQ3	What is the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions?	RO3: To examine the effect of organizational commitment on employee turnover intentions.	H3: Employees' organizational commitment has a significant negative effect on their turnover intentions.
RQ4	How does career development influence employee turnover intentions?	RO4: To investigate the relationship between career development and turnover intentions.	H4: Career development is significantly related to staff turnover intentions.

RQ5	How does compensation and benefits satisfaction influence employee turnover intentions?	RO5: To evaluate the impact of pay satisfaction on employee turnover intentions.	H5: Pay satisfaction is significantly related to staff turnover intentions.

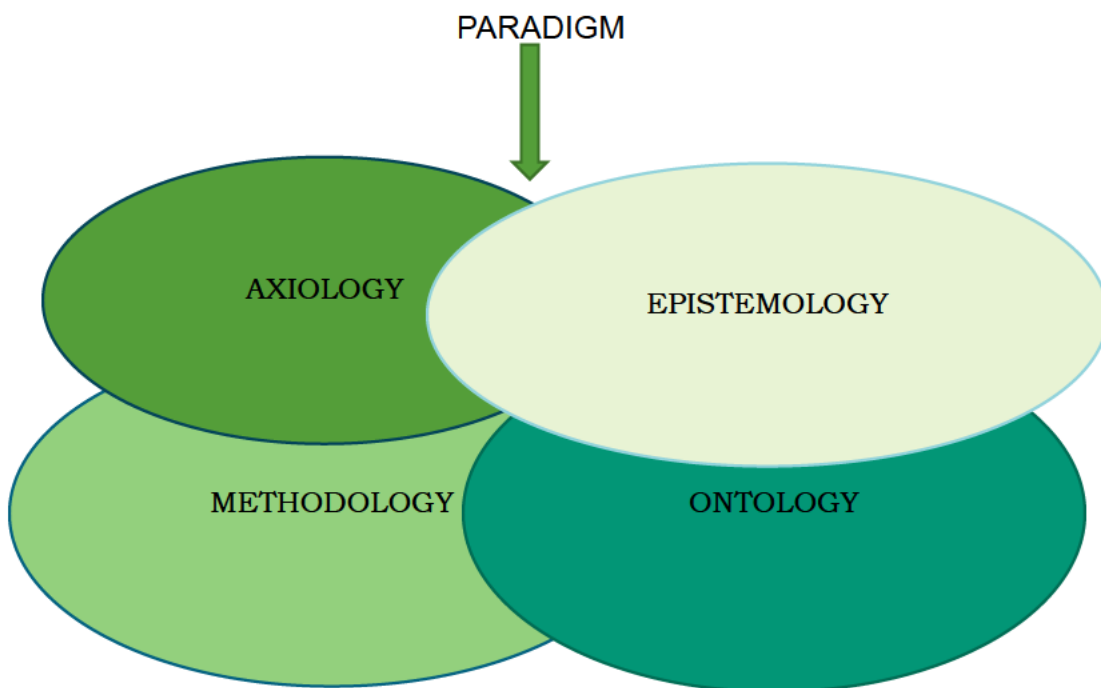
5.2. Research philosophies and research paradigms

According to Collis and Hussey (2014), the philosophical framework that guides how scientific research should be conducted is also referred to as a research paradigm. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) contend that a research paradigm is the “political or ideological orientation of researchers to the social world they are investigating”, which consists of a set of assumptions or beliefs held by each researcher. It is these assumptions or beliefs that shape a researcher’s view of reality (Maree 2016). Saunders et al. (2019) identify four major research paradigms, namely, positivism, realism, pragmatism and interpretivism.

5.2.1. Philosophical assumptions

The four major dimensions of research are ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. These dimensions influence the way research is carried out (Creswell 2018). **Figure 5.1** illustrates that a paradigm is an overlap among these four philosophical assumptions. Ontology is defined as the “study of being”. It answers the questions, “What is a reality?” and “What can be said to really exist?” Ontology is important because philosophical beliefs or assumptions made at the preliminary stage can affect the approach chosen to conduct the research. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the philosophical assumptions of the various research paradigms.

Figure 5-1. Research paradigm



Source: Adapted from Creswell (2018)

Two major categories of ontology are realism and relativism (Varpio and MacLeod 2020). The former entails that an object exists independent of the subject, and only one reality exists. The latter constitutes multiple realities. In fact, relativists argue that reality exists in the mind of the researcher. For instance, an abounded realist creates a mental construction of reality within a limited group (Moon and Blackman 2014). On the other hand, Moon and Blackman (2014) outline three constructs of realism, such as naive, structural and critical realism. In naive realism, also known as perceptual realism, reality is usually perceived directly through our senses. In contrast, structural realism, maintains that a single reality is best understood through scientific theory (Moon and Blackman 2014). In critical realism, reality is generally obtained by critical examination. The researcher adopts a realist ontology, positing that the factors influencing employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University exist independently of human beliefs and can be measured objectively. This stance aligns with the quantitative nature of the study, which seeks to identify potentially universal determinants of turnover that are not subject to individual interpretation.

Epistemology, the second dimension of research philosophy, literally means the study of knowledge. It attempts to answer the question, “How can I know reality?” Epistemology is therefore described as a theory of knowledge (Varpio and MacLeod

2020). This knowledge can be created by means of objectivism, constructionism, and subjectivism (Yulianto 2021). Objectivism entails that reality exists in an object independent of the subject. On the other hand, subjectivism does not recognise external or objective truth, but the subject imposes knowledge on the object. In constructivism, meaning is created from the interaction between the subject and the object. The subject constructs the reality of the objective (Moon and Blackman 2014). Adhering to an objectivist epistemology, the researcher believes that knowledge about employee turnover can be acquired through the systematic collection and quantitative analysis of data. This reflects a belief in the possibility of uncovering truths about employee turnover through empirical methods that do not rely on the subjective perspectives of the individuals involved.

Axiology, the third dimension of the research philosophy, literally means the philosophical study of value. It is also called the theory of value by Varpio and MacLeod (2020). Axiology is important because the values attached to the research influence how it is conducted and how the findings are interpreted. Additionally, the chosen research paradigm and philosophy determine the axiology and data collection techniques to follow. For instance, in realism, the researcher's world view and cultural experiences may have an impact on the way data is collected and interpreted. It is also important to note that both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in realism (Saunders et al. 2019). The axiological perspective of this study recognises that the researcher's values influence the research process; however, it emphasises objectivity and the minimisation of bias in the collection and interpretation of data. The justification for this value-laden approach is to ensure that the findings are credible and that recommendations for addressing employee turnover are based on reliable evidence rather than subjective opinions. This is particularly important in an academic setting where the integrity and applicability of research findings must withstand scrutiny.

The fourth dimension of research philosophy—methodology—guides the conduct of research and the selection of appropriate methods. According to Ngulube (2015), methodology is a very important aspect in research as it influences the way in which the researcher obtains knowledge about the subject being studied and makes conclusions regarding the research questions. Pandey and Pandey (2015) also refer to the methodology as a step-by-step process to solve a research problem. The

research methodology provides the underlying process used to gather and analyse data for the study. The research methodology framework of will be used to achieve the research objectives of the current study and to explain the methodological choices made (Saunders et al. 2019). The research methodology describes the strategy in deciding the research population and sample, which data collection techniques are suitable for the study and the measuring instrument used to collect data (Rehman and Alharthi 2016). The methodological framework for this research is underpinned by a deductive approach, where hypotheses regarding the causes of employee turnover are tested against the collected data. The justification for this methodology lies in its compatibility with the quantitative research design and positivist epistemology. It allows for the operationalisation of concepts into measurable variables, the utilisation of statistical tools to analyse data, and the drawing of conclusions that are logically derived from the empirical evidence. This systematic approach aligns with the goal of identifying actionable insights to reduce employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University.

5.2.2. Research Paradigms

Greener and Martelli (2018) describe research paradigms as clusters of beliefs or world views that guide researchers in determining what to study and how to interpret the results. Collis and Hussey (2014) also discuss a research paradigm as a choice that one employs pertaining to methods of addressing a research question. A research paradigm lays the foundation for a research study and allows communities throughout the research universe to share similar perceptions and engage in commonly shared practices (Friendrich, Schlauder, Weidinger and Raab 2017). It also helps researchers present assumptions about knowledge and how that knowledge was acquired (Friendrich et al. 2017). Whilst Saunders and Lewis (2018) argue that there are **four paradigms** or research philosophies (positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism), Collis and Hussey (2014) conversely argue that there are two main paradigms, namely positivism and interpretivism, that exist on opposite ends on a continuum of paradigms and that other paradigms, such as those formed towards the end of the 19th century, can exist simultaneously on this continuum, with features and assumptions replaced with movement along the continuum. The use of paradigms in research varies from one researcher to the next (Kankam 2019), depending on the researcher's preferences and the nature of the topic under inquiry. The term research paradigm refers to a set of beliefs held by scientists. A research paradigm is a set of

assumptions about the nature of reality and how knowledge is created. In this case, the belief is that knowledge can be created in an objective manner. Paradigms have an impact on research topics, procedures and the way data are collected and processed (Davis and Fisher 2018). Research paradigms are a set of agreements about how challenges should be understood, how one should approach the world and how one should conduct research (Rahi 2017). Furthermore, these paradigms include a set of fundamental beliefs or assumptions that influence research topics.

5.2.2.1. Positivism

Hussain, Elyas and Nasseef (2013) indicate that the ontology of the positivism paradigm is realism. Therefore, social reality can be observed and studied objectively and scientifically, independently of the observer. Dudovskiy (2018) states that positivism adheres to the view that only “factual knowledge gained through observation (the senses), including measurement, is trustworthy”. The author further expounds that in positivism studies, the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation in an objective way. Positivism was the only research paradigm for hundreds of years and is usually associated with natural science research. This paradigm is objectively focused, promotes the idea of experimentation to prove or disprove hypotheses, and the subsequently generates new laws or principles by consolidating observed facts (Greener and Martelli 2018). A positivist uses quantitative research methods, which are usually in the form of experiments or hypotheses. Generalisation is realised through statistical probabilities. The research progresses through the formulation of hypotheses and deductions, in which causality is usually demonstrated (Park et al. 2019). Based on this paradigm or philosophy, true knowledge can be obtained by observation and experiment. Positivists use scientific methods to generate knowledge and positivism is associated with phrases such as scientific method, empirical science, post positivism and quantitative research (Rahi 2017). The shared idea is that there is a universal generalisation that may be used in a variety of situations. Khaldi (2017) states that the research approach selected by the researcher is guided by the research philosophy or paradigm they support, and this choice influences the study objectives and research instruments used to resolve the research problem. According to Wayhuni (2012), the quantitative research model

underpins the positivist research paradigm. This strategy concentrates on collecting new data objectively in response to a problem.

5.2.2.2. Interpretivism

An interpretivism research approach is an epistemological position that prioritises participants' subjective interpretations and understandings of social phenomena and their own actions (Maree 2016). As stated by Quinlan (2011), the interpretivists hold that reality is unique to each individual and to the way individuals, given their own unique set of circumstances and life experiences, construct, experience and/or interpret their worlds. Interpretivism focused on the study of social phenomena taking place in their natural environment. An example of interpretivism would include the need to understand more of what is happening within a work organisation, with research conducted among 'social actors'—a metaphor to the social roles that we play according to the meaning we give to the roles (Saunders and Lewis 2018). The emergence of capitalism and industrialisation saw researchers turn their focus to these social phenomena. This paradigm believes that social reality is shaped by our perceptions and thus highly subjective. To gain such an interpretive understanding, interpretivists apply methods that aim to unpack meaning, as opposed to the frequency, of phenomena in the social world (Collis and Hussey 2014). The interpretivist paradigm has no intention of statistically analysing data or quantifying research data and is associated with qualitative research data that tends to provide meaning through detail and nuance (Collis and Hussey 2014).

5.2.2.3. Pragmatism

Bryman (2012) defines pragmatism as the combination of interpretive and positivist approaches where problems are studied with a variety of methodologies. It can be deduced from the above-mentioned discussions that pragmatism is the paradigm that accommodates mixed methods and is therefore applicable to both quantitative and qualitative methods (Makombe 2017). Therefore, pragmatism utilises the mixed methods approach and exploits the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The table below presents differences between positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism paradigms.

Table 5.2. Differences between positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism paradigms

Positivism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
An objectivism reality is discovered using conventional scientific methodologies. Empirical observation and measurement. It holds a deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes. It is deductive in nature. It is reductionist because its intention is to reduce the ideas into small, discrete test variables that consist of hypotheses and research questions. Theory verification. Closed-ended questionnaires are used for data collection. Research findings are usually represented quantitatively in numbers. It is widely known to generalise information obtained from a sample.	Reality is subjective and socially constructed by its participants. Multiple participant's meaning. Theory generation. It is naturalistic-oriented as it studies real-world situations as they unfold naturally. It uses in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and naturalistic observation for data collection. Research findings are reported descriptively using words. It is inductive in nature. Partnership with research participants can lead to deeper insight into the context of understanding and adding richness and depth to the data.	Multiple approaches (pluralistic) are derived from quantitative and qualitative research for collecting and analysing data. Combination of positivist and interpretive approaches. It relies on abduction to move back and forth between deduction and induction (Brierley 2017). There are multiple methods, different worldviews and different assumptions. It uses both quantitative and qualitative data because the best understanding of a research problem is critical. It is real-world practice-oriented as it includes a postmodern turn, which is a theoretical lens that is reflective of social justice and political aims. It is regarded as consequences of actions bearing in mind that the researcher looks to what and how of research based on the intended consequences.

Sources: Adapted from (Leedy and Ormrod 2015)

5.2.2.4. Research Design Justification

This study adheres to the positivist research philosophy, which is characterised by its quantitative orientation towards the investigation of phenomena (Wayhuni, 2012). Positivism advocates for a structured methodology that relies on empirical evidence and observable data to develop knowledge about a particular subject (McNabb, 2013). In line with this philosophy, the study employed quantitative methods to objectively measure and analyse the factors that contribute to turnover. This approach is grounded in the belief that reality can be quantified and understood through statistical analysis, allowing for the derivation of factual and generalisable conclusions. The positivist paradigm is thus a fitting framework for this research, as it supports the use of systematic and scientific techniques to investigate the underlying causes of employee turnover, ensuring that the outcomes are based on solid empirical evidence.

Additionally, the positivist paradigm justifies the use of statistical tools and standardised instruments to collect and analyse data on employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University. The aim is to identify and interpret patterns and trends that exist independently of individual beliefs or perceptions, thus enabling a fact-based understanding of the turnover issues within higher education.

Given the complex and resource-constrained nature of WSU as a historically disadvantaged institution, a positivist approach allows for the identification of consistent, measurable relationships between organisational variables and staff turnover intentions. This ensures that the research is not only objective but also practically useful for policy recommendations within the university.

Moreover, in the South African higher education context, where labour issues are often politically and socially charged, a quantitative, positivist methodology provides credibility and neutrality, which is crucial for institutional decision-making. It avoids subjective interpretation and offers statistically validated insights to guide interventions.

5.3. Research approaches

Research approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Similarly, Bertram and Christiansen (2020) define

research approach as the actual process or steps that are used to answer the research questions. According to Yin (2009), the researcher should choose a research strategy as a function of the research situation since each research strategy has its own specific approach to collecting and analysing empirical data. There are three common methodological approaches to research used in social research, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Currently, there are two recognised and well-known research approaches, namely the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach (Tillman 2002). The distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is based on different research paradigms.

5.3.1. Qualitative approach

Qualitative research methods are described by Saunders et al. (2016) as naturalistic processes used to make sense of subjective and socially constructed meanings concerning a phenomenon being studied. The researcher studies the participants' meanings and the relationships between them, playing an integral role in the process, building rapport, and gaining cognitive access to the participant's data (Saunders et al. 2016). Examples of qualitative methods include action research, case studies, ethnography, and narrative research (Saunders et al. 2016). Qualitative research is based on naturalism, which advances those social actors to create and impart meaning in the social world—this is the nature of knowledge.

Qualitative data is not solely concerned with mathematical formulae and/or statistics but is also concerned with context, definitions, meanings, attitudes, experiences, and influences on the social world, which is the laboratory of the social researcher. The previously mentioned may well be a limitation to the quantitative approach to research because of the omission of such underlying elements existent in the social world. However, qualitative data is not an impeccable qualitative measurement as it is influenced by definitions and meanings, while quantitative measurement is disinterested in those elements (Clarke and Braun 2013 and Babbie 2016).

Babbie (2016) argues that the central element that distinguishes the approaches to scientific research is that qualitative data is non-numerical while quantitative data is grounded in statistical measurement. The qualitative approach emphasises 'quality' and not 'quantity', that is, social meanings rather than the collection of numerical statistical data. According to Woolfolk (2017), qualitative enquiries use words,

dialogue, events, themes and images. He says that the goal is not to discover general principles but rather to explore specific situations or people in depth and to understand the meaning of the events to the people telling their stories. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that qualitative research is used to examine the understandings of individuals or groups regarding a socially relevant problem. Rahman (2017) states that qualitative research entails the investigation of the people's everyday realities. such as life experiences, daily life, feelings and emotions, social behaviour and social interactions. Jonker and Pennink (2010) indicate criticisms of the qualitative approach.

- ✓ Working with an open question, or frayed outline of the initial research question, involves dealing with uncertainty.
- ✓ Often, it is difficult to distinguish between diagnosis, design, and change.
- ✓ Qualitative research typically lacks an explicit theoretical framework, concept, or model at the beginning of the study.
- ✓ There can be a problematic relationship with a classical research design, whether it takes the form of a case study or not.
- ✓ It is difficult to revise qualitative data because of their nature.
- ✓ This study acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher, as the researcher is not an outsider but an individual who is involved in the research.
- ✓ Methodologies and methods are not distinguished clearly, and similar instruments are used.
- ✓ Facts and interpretations are poorly distinguished.
- ✓ The open-ended nature of the research process can be problematic.
- ✓ There is a low likelihood of repeatability for a research design that has been used only once.
- ✓ There is an inability to accurately predict results in advance.
- ✓ There is limited applicability of classical methodological criteria when analysing results (Jonker and Pennink 2010).

Qualitative researchers also make use of inductive inquiry, following ethnographic approaches, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenology and narratives (Mertens 2015). An open-ended questionnaire, in-depth interviews, observations, document study and focus groups are some of the data collection methods employed for the qualitative approach (Magwa and Magwa 2015).

5.3.2. Quantitative approach

Creswell (2014) defines the quantitative research approach as an inquiry approach useful for describing trends and explaining the relationship among variables found in the literature. According to Maree (2016), quantitative research methods represent important elements such as objectivity, the use of numerical data and generalisability of the findings. Maree (2016) also describes quantitative research as systematic and objective in the process employs data. Examples of quantitative methods used are structured questionnaires, structured interviews, surveys, observation and experiments (Saunders et al. 2016). According to Saunders et al. (2016), the purpose of the research greatly influences the researcher's methodological choice. **Table 5.3** summarises three types of studies differentiated by their respective purpose, namely, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Saunders et al. 2016). Furthermore, the ability to verify the falsity or veracity of interrelations between regularities of the social environment is credited with this approach. The quantitative research approach involves the collection and analysis of numeric data with an intention to make generalisations about the target population (Daniel 2012). Jonker and Pennink (2010) note criticisms about the quantitative approach.

- ✓ A quantitative approach relies on the assumption that a theory can represent the reality of a problem if it occurs within a particular context.
- ✓ The quantitative approach examines a reality that is separated from that which is experienced by the majority of people.
- ✓ Research that utilises quantitative methods adheres to a strict methodology that leaves no room for unexpected changes in the field.
- ✓ Despite the fact that the researcher uses a conceptual model that is methodically and technically sound, it does not, however, provide information about the underlying phenomena.
- ✓ Excessive attention is paid to technical details in the research, in particular to methods and techniques of measurement.
- ✓ Statistics used in quantitative research are regarded as objective truths, as they are intentionally generated and interpreted by the researcher as being objective.
- ✓ The quality of quantitative research can only be judged by its apparent or instrumental neutrality.

- ✓ Quantitative research always implies interpreting the generated data before the data becomes meaningful again.
- ✓ For the researcher's results to be relevant, the researcher must have them translated by the organisation involved (Jonker and Pennink 2010).

The approach's logic is deductive, ranging from general to specific enquiries, and its major assumptions are positivist. It thrives on duality and naive realism. Quantitative research precisely defines and concentrates on variables to clarify their interactions through experimental or correlational analysis and use broad generalisations across larger populations to anticipate and explain specific events (Langeveld, 2019).

Table 5.2 below compares the quantitative and qualitative research design:

Table 5.3. Difference between quantitative and qualitative research approaches

Quantitative	Qualitative
Behaviour can be explained in causal deterministic ways and people can be manipulated and controlled.	Behaviour is intentional and creative, and it can be explained but not predicted.
Objective: researcher seen as detached from the object being studied.	Subjective: because interaction takes place with the subject (object of investigation).
Questions/hypotheses/objectives are stated and subjected to empirical testing to verify them.	Dialectical and interpretative.
Sample size is large.	Sample size is small.
Depends on the use of numbers and measurements.	Does not depend on the use of numbers or measurements.
Focuses on phenomena that can be explained by numbers and statistics.	Focuses on phenomena that cannot be explained adequately with statistics.
The researcher needs to play a more prominent role in the data gathering process.	The researcher is unobtrusive or a participating observer.
The researcher experiences subjects on a secondary level through the interpretation of numbers and measurements.	The researcher encounters the subjects through first-hand experience.
The amount of information from each respondent varies.	The amount of information from each respondent is substantial.

Has a structured data collection process.	The data collection process is semi-structured. Processes are naturalistic, participatory and interpretative in nature.
Needs a set plan for the completion of research.	Is very flexible and changes as the data and circumstances change.
One of the main focuses is to test hypotheses/objectives.	The researcher can develop new hypotheses during the research process.
Tries to establish causal relationships.	Generates hunches.
The degree of replicability is high.	The degree of replicability is low.

Sources: Adapted from Leedy and Ormrod (2015)

Table 5.2 highlights the difference between the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. A qualitative research approach focuses on the analysis of the written and spoken word, while the quantitative research approach is concerned with numerical data and expressing results in numbers. The qualitative research approach permits more flexibility, whereas the quantitative research approach is structured. The researcher must understand each research approach associated with the research paradigms to establish the most suitable approach for the study. According to Table 5.2, a positivistic research paradigm connected with the quantitative research approach is appropriate for this study to determine the relationships between the variables.

Hence, the study adopted a quantitative research approach, aligning with the aim to quantify aspects of employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University through the generation and analysis of numerical data. This method is particularly suited to measure attitudes, behaviours, opinions, and the extent of various phenomena within a larger population, facilitating the extrapolation of results to a broader context. Numerical representation of data, such as frequency and mean scores, enables a precise assessment of patterns of turnover, providing a clear, objective view of the issue.

Quantitative research's strength lies in its capacity for large-scale data collection and the production of consistent, researcher-independent results (Nayak and Singh 2021). This approach is objective, focusing on the validity and reliability of findings, and allows for extensive sample sizes, enhancing the generalisability of the results. The objectivity inherent in this approach echoes principles of positivism, employing

structured data collection techniques and statistical analysis to explore the relationships among variables. The research tests specific hypotheses—the anticipated patterns and correlations in the turnover data—rather than theories. This is achieved by collecting fresh data from a significant portion of the university's employees and analysing it in a manner that sets aside personal narratives, emphasising an objective interpretation. Statistical tools, both descriptive and inferential, will be utilised to interpret the data, assuring sound conclusions with regard to the elements impacting turnover while maintaining a precise focus on the phenomena of interest (Rahi 2017). This structured, numerical approach supports the testing of hypotheses and contributes robust evidence to the discourse on employee turnover in higher education.

5.3.3. Rationale for selecting the quantitative method

To begin a study, researchers need to determine which research paradigm fits with their research objectives the most and create a process for narrowing the research methodologies for the study. A research paradigm guides the researcher and their roles during the study. For the purposes of this study, a positivistic research paradigm and quantitative research methodology have been selected. This paradigm requires the collection of quantitative data. The reasons for selecting a quantitative research paradigm for this study arises from its ability to gather quantitative data that is based on mathematical and statistical techniques free of bias. This is in line with the objectives of the current study to conduct an empirical investigation to determine the influence of the predetermined variables on employee retention in the financial services industry (Moore 2016). This study also contains several hypotheses that can only be tested through a quantitative research approach. The study includes a large sample of employees at Walter Sisulu University, which would simply take too many resources (time, money, labour) to perform qualitatively. Quantitative research is useful for describing trends and explaining the relationship among variables found in the literature (Creswell 2009). Quantitative research is concerned with the measurement of a specific phenomenon in numerical terms (Alharahsheh and Pius 2020). This study collected from former and currently employees of Walter Sisulu University in a numerical form (e.g., frequency) and presented in a numerical form (e.g., through mean scores). Quantitative research is very effective for performing large-scale research because it is independent of the researcher and it allows

consistent results to be obtained, irrespective of the researcher (Nayak and Singh 2021). A quantitative approach was applied, enabling the researcher to quantify the findings and give weight to the theory by proving or disproving that employee turnover affects operational functions at WSU using descriptive statistics.

5.4. Research design

Research design is a set of methods and procedures utilised by the researcher to gather and analyse measures of variables stated in a research problem. Furthermore, research design is a strategy the researcher uses to answer the research question and the research problem (Lewis 2015). Through the research design, the researcher will outline sample selection, sample size, data collection instrument, procedures, and ethical requirements. According to Bryman et al. (2014), a research design offers a structure for the collection and analysis of the data that was gathered from the participants. In other words, the research design is a framework for collecting and analysing data to answer a research question (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019). The research design also explains the choices regarding the position of the numerous variables of the research method. Rahi (2017) identified three research design typologies: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research.

Exploratory research pursues new insights and a deeper understanding of a particular subject that can be further investigated (Rahi 2017). The main purpose of exploratory research, also referred to as formulative studies, is to formulate and investigate a problem and to postulate operational hypotheses without the testing thereof (Kothari 2004). This research design typology emerges when a new topic within a field study is identified and new insights within this new topic are sought (Babbie 2016).

Descriptive research enables the researcher to draw conclusions about the current state of a situation (Leedy and Ormrod 2015). The main emphasis of descriptive research is to explain what is prevalent in the research problem of the study (Kumar 2019). The purpose of descriptive research is to collect new data, which may be combined with existing data to answer the research question (Schindler 2019). Descriptive research portrays accurate characteristics of situations, people and events to determine the real situation (Rahi 2017).

Explanatory research, also known as causal research, seeks to identify the relationships between two or more variables in which the change (effect) in one variable is directly caused by another variable (Kumar 2019, Saunders et al. 2019). This research design typology is usually concerned with predictive studies, which predict an effect on a dependent variable by manipulating another independent variable (Schindler 2019). Leedy and Ormrod (2015) noted that this research design typology involves the gathering of quantitative data through a survey, yielding numbers.

Table 5.4. Types of research design

Type of study	Purpose
Exploratory	○ Discover what is happening. ○ Gain insights about a topic of interest. ○ Clarify understanding about the nature and extent of an issue, problem or phenomenon. ○ Produce qualitative data usually.
Descriptive	○ Obtain an accurate profile of events, persons or situations. ○ Extend exploratory research. ○ Require description before explanation of a phenomenon, known as descripto-explanatory studies. ○ Produce qualitative data usually.
Explanatory	○ Establish causal relationships between variables. ○ Study a situation or problem to explain the relationship between Variables. ○ Produce quantitative data usually.

Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2016)

5.4.1. Rationale for selecting the descriptive research

Given the objectives of the study, a descriptive research design was adopted to provide a detailed account of the current state of employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University. Descriptive research is suitable when the intent is to capture and portray the characteristics of a particular phenomenon—in this case, the patterns and rates of turnover among university employees. This design enables the researcher to observe and describe the prevalence of turnover as it naturally occurs within the university environment without manipulating any variables. Neuman (2011) further argues that a

descriptive research study starts with a well-defined issue or question and tries to describe it accurately. Additionally, Nassaji (2015) argues that the goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. Descriptive research enables the researcher to conclude the current state of affairs regarding a situation (Leedy and Ormrod 2015). The main emphasis of descriptive research is to explain the prevalent issues within the research problem of the study (Kumar 2019). The purpose of descriptive research is to collect new data, which may be combined with existing data to answer the research question (Schindler 2019). Descriptive research portrays accurate characteristics of situations, people and events to determine the real situation (Rahi 2017). Babbie (2016) contends that descriptive research can be both quantitative and qualitative; in the former, the emphasis is on scientific accuracy, but in the latter, the focus extends to an interrogation of why certain patterns are prevalent and what they imply. Loganathan (2013) states that descriptive research describes characteristics about a subject that is under investigation. Descriptions are used for frequencies, averages and other calculations. Although this type of research is factual and statistically accurate, it may not explain what caused a situation. Therefore, this type of research cannot be utilised to establish causal relationships between variables and may also have a low requirement for internal validity.

It is clear from the preceding explanations that this study will follow descriptive research design typologies. Descriptive research, which is intended to obtain sufficient dependable information about the characters in a specific field of research, will be employed. An important aim of this design is identifying a phenomenon in its natural setting (Burns and Grove 2011). This design uses statistical analysis to define and clarify the phenomenon of the research. A descriptive research design is one that provides a description of the characteristics of a population or a research phenomenon (Roller and Lavrakas 2015). Such research design thus focuses on answering the questions of what rather than why of a research subject. In simpler terms, the descriptive research design focuses on providing a description of a demographic segment without mainly focusing on the “why” certain phenomena occur (Roller and Lavrakas 2015). Descriptive research is not limited to a detailed explanation of social phenomenon but goes further to probe why certain patterns are prevalent and their implications thereof. The descriptive design is suitable for this study as it facilitates the quest to respond to the research question by providing a vivid description of the

research problem and the achievement of the research objectives, ultimately providing an answer to the overarching question. By utilising a descriptive approach, the study aims to systematically collect quantitative data that can reveal important insights into the frequency and distribution of employee turnover. This information is crucial for understanding the scope of the issue and can serve as a foundation for future research or interventions aimed at reducing turnover. Descriptive research not only pinpoints areas of concern but also helps establish a baseline against which any changes or trends can be measured over time.

5.5. Population and sampling

5.5.1. Population

Eller et al. (2018) reveal that a population is the aggregation of all individual units of interest relevant to the study. McMillan (2010) further states that a population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, which conform to specific criteria and is intended to generalise the results of research. According to Pascoe (2014), a population comprises all the people or entities as a group with the same characteristics that the researcher is interested in, and that information will be required from. The population is referred to by Collis and Hussey (2014) as a body of people or collection of items that are under consideration for statistical purposes. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) describe population as a set of components of the research's focus to which the obtained results can be generalised. Given the objectives of the study, the study's population consists of all employees across the four campuses of Walter Sisulu University, namely Mthatha, East London, Butterworth, and Komani in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The total number of employees included in the study amounts to 1800 (WSU, 2024). This selection is intended to capture a comprehensive view of employee turnover within the diverse contexts of each campus, thereby ensuring that the findings are reflective of the university as a whole.

5.5.2. Target population

Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2014) define the target population as the total collection of elements from which some inferences can be made. Jackson (2016) states that a target population is the entire population that the study aims to generalise. Similarly, Gravetter and Forzano (2016) describe it as the entire set of individuals of interest to a researcher. Gravetter and Forzano (2016) maintain that elements in a

target population share the same characteristics. Thus, the target population for this study includes academic employees, retired staff, non-academic (support) staff, and university management from all campuses of Walter Sisulu University. Cresswell (2014) affirms that the target population comprises the group of individuals who have the same characteristics, which a researcher can identify and study. Furthermore, the target population is a group of potential participants identified as the target participants.

Table 5.5. Sample composition

Category	Target population
Academic Employees	200
Administration: Support Staff or Non-academic	120
Management (directors or deputy directors	20
Management (Executive Management/ Senate)	10
Total	350

Sources: Adapted from WSU Annual Report (2018/2019)

5.5.3. Sampling

Sampling refers to a share of a population or universe (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016). Collis and Hussey (2014) define a sample as a subset of a population from which it is permissible to draw a conclusion about a population. Gravetter and Forzano (2016) define a sample as a “set of individuals selected from a population and is usually intended to represent the population in a research study”. According to Kadam and Bhalerao (2010), a sample is a subset of the population of which the researchers would like to include in a study. Two major sampling criteria are probability and nonprobability. The non-probability sampling technique restrains the random selection of subjects, which could be considered one of the major differences between the two types of sampling technique (Hague 2017).

5.5.3.1. Probability sampling

A distinctive characteristic of probability sampling, also known as random sampling, ensures that every participant of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Etikan et al. 2016). This sampling method attempts to prevent bias and ensure that each unit of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample

(Goddard and Mellville 2014). As Saunders et al. (2016) describe, it is a process where the probability of each case's selection is known. Jackson (2016) similarly defines it as giving all elements in the population an equal chance to be part of the sample. Patton (1990:95) emphasises the strength and validity of probability sampling, noting that it hinges on selecting a random and statistically representative sample, allowing for confident generalisations from the sample to the broader population. Baker (1988:469) views it as a design adhering to probability rules, facilitating the assessment of the sample's likelihood to represent the population. Goddard and Mellville (2014) contribute by highlighting the method's objective to minimise bias, while Sekaran and Bougie (2016) clarify that the egalitarian nature of sample selection can be straightforward (simple random sampling) or more complex (structured probability sampling).

Collis and Hussey (2014) discuss five (5) types of probability sampling, such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and multistage sampling.

Simple random sampling selects a sample from a population in such a way that each individual has an equal probability of being chosen (Collis and Hussey 2014). It is a basic sampling technique that is easy to implement and ensures each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Shaheen et al. 2023).

Systematic sampling is a method where elements are selected at regular intervals from an ordered list (Collis and Hussey 2014). It is easy to implement and can provide more efficient estimators compared to simple random sampling or stratified sampling for certain types of populations (Azeem 2022).

Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into subgroups or strata based on certain characteristics and then taking a random sample from each stratum (Collis and Hussey, 2014). This method ensures that each subgroup is represented in the sample, allowing for more precise estimates for each stratum (Li et al. 2021).

Cluster sampling involves dividing the population into clusters, then randomly selecting entire clusters to include in the sample (Collis and Hussey 2014). This method is useful when it is difficult to create a complete list of the population, as it allows for a more practical way of sampling large populations (Räty et al. 2020).

Multistage sampling is a complex form of cluster sampling where additional sampling is done within each selected cluster (Collis and Hussey 2014). It involves multiple stages of sampling and is often used when a complete list of the population is not available or when different levels of sampling are required (Räty et al. 2020).

Each of these probability sampling methods has its own advantages and is suitable for different types of research studies based on the characteristics of the population and the research objectives. Table 5.5 below illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of probability sampling.

Table 5.6. Advantages and disadvantages of probability sampling.

Probability Sampling	Advantages	Disadvantages
	Cost- and time-effective: This method saves money and time and allows for the selection of a larger sample by first assigning numbers to the tests and then selecting random data from the larger sample.	Chances of just choosing a certain class of samples: If a researcher is hired to gather information on any family-related statistics, there is a good likelihood that he or she will start counting from the oldest to the youngest member and the numbers will only be rising or falling. Only the oldest or most recent generations will be used as samples in this situation.
	It is easy and uncomplicated: Probability sampling is a simple method of sampling since it does not need a difficult procedure. It is rapid and efficient. Thus, the time saved may be applied to data analysis and conclusion-making.	Superfluous and tedious work: There is a potential that the surveyor may become bored because of the repetitive tasks required to allocate the numbers and collect the data, which will lower the system's efficiency.
	It is not technical: Due to its simplicity, this sampling technique does not require any technical expertise. It is not very long and does not call for complex knowledge.	Lack of use of new information: It ignores any further information that the population may have.

	Lack of bias: Probability sampling should eliminate any signs of bias. Each member of the vast population group has the same likelihood of being picked since the people who form the subgroup of the bigger number are selected at random. Most of the time, this results in a balanced subset with the best chance of accurately reflecting the wider group in its entirety.	
	Lower level of judgement: The procedure of probability sampling is made more efficient and reliable by the random trend used when allocating the number to a population item.	

Source: Adapted from Collis and Hussey (2014)

5.5.3.2. Rationale for using probability sampling

Probability sampling is a method where each member of the target population has an equal and known chance of being selected (Malik et al., 2022). This approach eliminates researcher bias and ensures that the resulting sample is representative of the wider population, thereby enhancing the generalisability of findings (Chen et al., 2019). Unlike non-probability sampling, which often relies on subjective judgement and may not guarantee representativeness, probability sampling provides a scientifically rigorous foundation for drawing valid inferences about the study population (Etikan et al., 2016).

Among the different types of probability sampling, this study adopted simple random sampling. In this method, every employee at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) had an identical probability of being selected, thereby minimising selection bias and ensuring that the sample adequately reflects the characteristics of the population (Horton, 2023). The choice of simple random sampling was guided by its objectivity, fairness,

and suitability for quantitative research designs that aim to establish relationships between variables.

In practice, a list of all academic and non-academic staff members across WSU campuses served as the sampling frame. From this list, 350 employees were randomly selected, ensuring representation across departments and campuses. This sample size was considered sufficient to capture the diversity of staff experiences while maintaining feasibility in terms of data collection. The inclusion criteria required that participants were current employees of WSU, with representation sought across permanent, contract, academic, and support staff.

The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire, which was distributed to the selected participants. The use of simple random sampling enhanced the reliability of the findings by reducing systematic error and supported the validity of the study by ensuring that conclusions drawn could reasonably be applied to the wider WSU employee base.

Table 5.5 below outlines the strengths and limitations of probability sampling, highlighting its appropriateness for this study. The methodological rigour introduced by this approach provides a solid foundation for analysing employee turnover factors and ensures that the results meaningfully reflect the realities of WSU's workforce.

Table 5.7. Advantages, disadvantages of simple random sampling techniques to the research under study

Simple Random Sampling	Advantages	Disadvantages
	Lack of Bias: The use of simple random sampling removes all hints of bias, or at least it should. Because individuals who make up the subset of the larger group are chosen at random, each individual in the large population set has the same probability of being selected. In most cases, this creates a balanced subset that carries the greatest potential for representing the larger group as a whole.	Difficulty Accessing Lists of the Full Population An accurate statistical measure of a large population can only be obtained in simple random sampling when a full list of the entire population to be studied is available. Think of a list of students at a university or a group of employees at a specific organisation.
	Simplicity: As its name implies, producing a simple random sample is much less complicated than other methods. There are no special skills involved in using this method, which can result in a fairly reliable outcome.	Time Consuming: When a full list of a larger population is not available, individuals attempting to conduct simple random sampling must gather information from other sources. If publicly available, smaller subset lists can be used to recreate a full list of a larger population, but this strategy takes time to complete.
	Less Knowledge Required: It is already established that simple random sampling is a very simple sampling method to execute. But there is also another, similar benefit: It requires little to no special knowledge. This means that the individual conducting the research does not need to have any information or knowledge about the larger population to effectively do their job.	Costs: In addition to the time, it takes to gather information from various sources, the process may cost a company or individual a substantial amount of capital. Retrieving a full list of a population or smaller subset lists from a third-party data provider may require payment each time data is provided.

		Sample Selection Bias: Although simple random sampling is intended to be an unbiased approach to surveying, sample selection bias can occur. When a sample set of the larger population is not inclusive enough, representation of the full population is skewed and requires additional sampling techniques.
		Data quality is reliant on researcher qualifications: The success of any sampling method relies on the researcher's willingness to thoroughly do their job. Someone who is not willing to follow the rules or deviates from the task at hand won't help get a reliable result. For instance, there may be issues if a researcher does not ask the appropriate questions or asks the wrong ones. This could create implicit bias, ending up in a skewed study.

Sources: Adapted from Horton (2023)

5.6. Data collection techniques

Data is defined as the facts presented to the researcher from the study's environment (Cooper and Schindler 2014). Scholars postulate that data can be obtained through two main sources, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources (Sekaran and Bougie 2013; Kanchan 2014).

5.6.1. Primary data

According to Schindler (2019), primary data is new raw factual data to address a research problem at hand. Moreover, primary data collection is the original data or first-hand information that the researcher obtained through direct experience (Surbhi 2016). Alvi (2016) refers to a target population as a complete group of individuals selected based on a set criterion for a research investigation. People selected to participate in the investigation are the sample, which can be drawn from the target population. A sample is a subgroup, or a smaller group of individuals taken from the target population (Chikanda and Kupangwa 2013). Gravetter and Forzano (2016) assert that a primary data source is a first-hand report of observations obtained by the researcher. Therefore, primary data for this study will be obtained through a structured, self-administered questionnaire to Walter Sisulu University employees.

5.6.2. Secondary data

Johnston (2014) refers to secondary data as the information collected by other researchers for another primary purpose. Moreover, secondary data involves the scrutiny of previously collected data in a certain area of interest. Secondary data refers to the use of available data to test new hypotheses and to answer new research questions (Dunn, Arslanian-Engoren, DeKoekkoek, Jadack and Scott 2015). Kanchan (2014) contends that secondary data is one of the most important aspects of research, as it is the unit of information from which other measurements and analyses can be done. Furthermore, secondary data can be collected more easily and rapidly (Ajayi 2017). For the purposes of this study, the researcher obtained their secondary data from textbooks relevant to the study, newspaper articles and journal articles from Google Scholar, the Walter Sisulu University Library site and the Durban University of Technology University library site that contains books and journals, accredited journals and digital commons (theses and dissertations).

5.7. Research instrument for data collection

Saunders et al. (2012) state that a questionnaire is a data collection technique in which each respondent is asked to respond to the same questions in a pre-determined order. According to Kumar (2014), a questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. Thus, Sharma (2010) identifies different ways

of collecting data from questionnaires. These include the personal method, mail surveys and telephone surveys. Thus, the questionnaire of this study was administered using the personal method which requires that the researcher himself or herself distributes and collects the study questionnaire from the respondents.

A questionnaire is a research tool with a written list of questions. The answers are recorded by respondents from a population within a specific geographic area (Kumar 2014). A questionnaire has two types of approaches, namely, open (unstructured) and closed (structured questions). An open-ended question gives the respondent the choice of what to say in response. A closed-ended question gives the respondent a limited set of responses to choose from. Furthermore, closed-ended questions are also known as multiple-choice questions (Bryman 2012). The most common instrument used in survey research designs is a questionnaire.

The research instrument is defined by Godfred (2016) as a fact-finding strategy, which can include interviews, questionnaires, observation and reading. This study collected data using a questionnaire, as this is a positivistic study. This was supported by Godfred (2016), who further explains that a questionnaire is used mostly in quantitative studies. The author refers to a questionnaire as a document containing a systematically compiled and organised series of questions. Godfred (2016) discusses two types of questionnaires, a structured and a non-structured questionnaire. A questionnaire comprises written questions to be answered by respondents after reading and interpreting what is required from them (Kumar 2019). The development of the questionnaire requires effective planning to ensure the correct data is collected (Goddard and Mellville 2014). The appearance of the questionnaire design may assist in an increased response rate; therefore, the design of the questionnaire, as stated by Schindler (2019), should:

- ❖ be easy to read.
- ❖ offer clear instructions.
- ❖ include personalised communication.
- ❖ provide notification of information regarding the survey, and
- ❖ encourage respondents to complete the questionnaire.

Table 5.8. Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire

Advantages of Questionnaires	Disadvantages of Questionnaires
▪ A cost-effective technique to speedily collect considerable amounts of information. ▪ Built-in statistical analysing tools allow quick results. ▪ No time constraints on the part of the respondents. ▪ Able to ask as many questions as possible on every aspect of a topic. ▪ Online, mail-in questionnaires and email surveys allow respondents to maintain their anonymity and provide honest responses on the subject matter.	▪ Dishonesty for the multiplicity of reasons, such as attempting to protect privacy. ▪ High probabilities that certain questions may be ignored or self-selecting bias (Kumar 2014). ▪ Unable to fully capture the emotional responses or feelings of respondents. ▪ Unconscientious responses because of respondents not truly understanding the question. ▪ Inappropriate for individuals with reading difficulties, impaired vision and failure to understand written English (Albaqami 2016). ▪ Respondents may suffer from questionnaire or survey fatigue, which could result in a low response rate.

Source: Adapted from Debois (2019)

A questionnaire aims to obtain comparable data across all cases to determine similarities and differences to report the research results (Schindler 2019). Leedy and Ormrod (2015) and Goddard and Mellville (2014) explained that the researcher should consider:

- ❖ Distributing the questionnaire when it is convenient for the respondent,
- ❖ Making a first impression,
- ❖ An effective layout, with concise questions that are reasonable to answer,
- ❖ Motivating respondents to cooperate by sending an email accompanying the questionnaire,
- ❖ Explaining the importance of the research
- ❖ Gently persuade respondents to complete the questionnaire, and

- ❖ Offering a summary of results if required.

To collect the necessary data in this study, a self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions was employed primarily to minimise logistical expenses, prevent scheduling issues such as cancellations or postponements, and curtail the costs associated with traditional survey methods (see Table 5.7 about to understand the advantages and disadvantages of open-ended questions). The administration of the questionnaire involved a blend of email distribution and the Drop-Off/Pick-Up (DOPU) approach.

Initially, the potential respondents were contacted via their institutional email addresses to inform them of the study's purpose and solicit their voluntary participation. Along with this initial contact, an informed consent form was provided, delineating the study's scope, the confidentiality of their responses, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Consent was obtained before any questionnaire was distributed to respect ethical research standards and participant autonomy.

Once consent was received, the questionnaire was emailed to those who preferred electronic participation. Participants were given a timeline to fill out the questionnaire at their convenience and return it via email. Simultaneously, the DOPU method was implemented for those who preferred or required a hard copy. In this process, printed questionnaires were dropped off at designated locations on each campus where participants could easily access them. After a set period, the questionnaires were collected from the same locations. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity with the email method, each participant received a unique identifier for their questionnaire response, and personal identifying information was not attached to their submission. This separation of identifiers from the responses allowed for the preservation of privacy while enabling effective tracking and compiling of data for analysis.

Both methods allowed participants to complete the questionnaire at a time and place that was convenient for them, thereby increasing the likelihood of thoughtful and thorough responses. By incorporating two different mechanisms for questionnaire distribution and collection, the study aimed to accommodate the diverse preferences of the university staff, aiming to enhance the response rate and data quality. The researcher informed participants of their right to withhold information. Data will be kept

under lock and key at the researcher's office to ensure proper data management and security.

5.7.1. Layout of the questionnaire

One of the most crucial steps in research is the development of a questionnaire. This step is important because it has a huge impact on the quality of the research information or data obtained from the respondents. A poor-quality questionnaire will result in bad or inaccurate data (Acharya 2010). A questionnaire contains research questions with measurement scales used to obtain information or data from the respondents or research participants (Acharya 2010). It enables the researcher to systematically collect information.

The questionnaire was divided into two major sections (see Appendix A): Section A (Demographic Information) and Section B (Employee Turnover-Related Constructs). The questionnaire was designed to collect quantifiable data to assess relationships between key constructs, as outlined in the research questions (RQs), research objectives (ROs), and hypotheses (Hs).

The items were adapted from validated instruments used in previous empirical studies, ensuring content validity and contextual relevance. These include tools developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) for organizational commitment, and studies by Price (2001), Barkhuizen et al. (2014), and Adriano & Callaghan (2022) on job satisfaction, career development, and turnover intentions. Items were contextualized to suit the specific environment of Walter Sisulu University (WSU).

Section A gathered demographic data (age, gender, marital status, race, qualifications, tenure, campus, employment category, and province of residence). This helped profile the staff and analyse how demographic variables may moderate key turnover constructs.

Section B measured the core variables: turnover intentions, job satisfaction, pay and benefit satisfaction, career development, and organisational commitment. All items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to ensure standardisation and facilitate statistical analysis.

Table 5.9. Likert type scales

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

On this scale, 1 means strongly disagreed, 2 disagreed, 3 neither disagreed nor agreed, and 4 agreed and 5 strongly agreed with the statement provided. The intervals 2, 3 and 4 were to be regarded as equal intervals between 1 and 5. The questions will be presented in such a way that they will not elicit more than one answer.

A matrix was created (see Appendix B) mapping each questionnaire item to the relevant hypothesis, research objective, and research question, as advised by examiners, ensuring coherence across the research design.

5.7.2. The covering letter

The questionnaire included a covering letter addressed to the participants explaining the significance of the study, the value of their participation, and the ethical considerations involved. Participants were advised that it was a voluntary exercise but that participation would be appreciated. This letter was prepared by the researcher using the institution's letterhead (Durban University of Technology) for authenticity.

5.8. Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are two fundamental elements in the evaluation of a measurement instrument such as a questionnaire or an interview schedule (O'Connor 2018). Yin (2009) attests that validity and reliability tests are used to establish the quality of any empirical social research. The concepts such as reliability, validity and generalisability are typically associated with quantitative inquiries (Noble and Smith 2015). Interestingly, Walliman (2011) posits that even though reliability and validity are fundamental for progress in knowledge they also depend on the honesty of the researcher and the co-operation of employees of WSU in the study. Therefore, the questionnaire instrument used in this study was designed in such a manner that it took all the above concerns into consideration. To overcome the limitations of honesty

among the employees of WSU, the researcher piloted the questionnaire with a small sample population to overcome. This will help ensure a high level of consistency.

5.8.1. Validity

According to Creswell and Guetterman (2018), validity refers to the potential of a design or an instrument to achieve or measure what it is supposed to achieve or measure. It is imperative in the research study to ensure validity measure, as it is concerned with matters relating to the face validity, content validity and construct validity (Kumar 2014 and Brynard et al. 2014). The concept of validity is explained in terms of measurement procedures, which is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure (Kumar 2014). Validity must be checked in both qualitative and quantitative data, especially for data-collection tools (Creswell 2014).

To guarantee credibility (validity) in the research, different documentary data sources such as WSU policies, reports, strategic documents and publications will be compared to ensure trustworthiness. The documentary data used in the study is aligned with the research objectives and is relevant and useful in answering the research question. Bryman (2012) asserts that triangulation is a process of using different data sources to ensure accuracy and correspondence in the data, thereby ensuring that the research findings are reliable.

5.8.1.1. Face validity

Face validity is the extent to which, on the surface, an instrument looks like it is a reasonable measure of a particular characteristic or some variable, and it relies entirely on subjective judgement (Johnson 2021).

To ensure face validity in this study, the researcher reviewed the questionnaire with faculty members who have experience in employee turnover. Their feedback confirmed that the questions seemed relevant and appeared to effectively capture the essence of the turnover issues being investigated. This step was crucial in ensuring that the instrument appeared valid on the surface level to those with a solid understanding of the subject.

5.8.1.2. Content validity

Leedy and Ormrod (2015) describe content validity as the degree to which a measurement tool is a representative sample of the content area being measured. Content validity also refers to the correctness and appropriateness of the questions included in a questionnaire (Brynard et al. 2014). The judgement that an instrument is capable of measuring what it is supposed to measure is principally centred upon the logical connection between the research questions and objectives of the study.

To ensure content validity, the researcher extensively combed through existing literature to identify the key factors known to influence employee turnover as evidenced by empirical studies. The questionnaire was carefully crafted to include items that tackled the identified areas, thereby ensuring a broad and inclusive representation of the construct. Additionally, the researcher sought insights from HR professionals within the education sector to gauge if the questionnaire comprehensively encapsulated all aspects of employee turnover, which enhanced the content validity of the study.

5.8.1.3. Construct validity

Leedy and Ormrod (2015) describe construct validity as the extent to which an instrument measures a characteristic that cannot be directly observed but is assumed to exist based on patterns in people's behaviour. Construct validity is based on the logical relationships among variables. Construct validity refers to the degree to which a measurement technique uncovers the information that it was designed to uncover (Brynard et al. 2014). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), construct validity refers to whether items measure hypothetical constructs or concepts and whether the scores have positive consequences when used in practice. Construct validity consists of convergent validity, where the correlation between different scales is used to measure the same construct, and discriminant validity, which refers to the absence of correlation between distinctive scales (Saunders et al. 2019). Leedy and Ormrod (2015) indicate that construct validity measures characteristics that cannot be observed directly and assumes they exist based on respondent's behaviour.

Construct validity was used in this study to establish whether the questionnaire constructs measured what it was intended to measure. Middleton (2019) states that using the correct sampling method can ensure validity. The researcher standardised

the data collection instruments by comparing them with the relevant literature review. For instance, the constructs that are captured by the quantitative approach were linked sufficiently closely to variables that can be theoretically justified (Flick 2011). Furthermore, the construct validity incorporates the correlation that exists between the selected measurement and underlying theory. Additionally, this study makes use of a simple random sampling method to ensure that each employee gets an equal chance of being part of the study. This also will eliminate researcher bias when selecting the sample. Validity is about the degree to which the study measures what it intends to measure (Middleton 2019).

5.8.2. Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument yields consistent information about the characteristics under assessment (Leedy and Ormrod 2015). Creswell and Creswell (2018) share a similar view with the authors that reliability is related to consistency and repeatability of results using the same methodology on more than one occasion, across different but related test items or by different respondents. While, the reliability of the measuring instrument focuses on consistent data and results, several forms of reliability that are frequently used in research studies include test-retest reliability, internal consistency reliability and equivalent form reliability (Kumar 2014). In simpler terms, reliability relates to the accuracy, dependability and consistency of measures. This implies that the same instrument must be able to produce the same data at a later stage under similar conditions, for example, by means of a test-retest technique (Brynard et al. 2014). Reliability is typically used to evaluate the quality of the specific instrument used. It refers to the consistency of the results obtained, such as the reliability of the method used (Sutrisna 2009). It requires error-free data and findings. It describes consistency within the employed analytical procedures (Noble and Smith 2015).

In the study, the researcher took several measures to ensure the reliability of the research instruments. First, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. This statistical measure evaluates how well different test items that propose to measure the same general construct produce similar results (Taber 2018; Kennedy 2022). A high Cronbach's alpha value, typically above 0.70, would indicate that the scale items have a high

degree of correlation and are therefore reliably measuring the same underlying concept (Kennedy 2022). To further enhance the questionnaire's reliability, the researcher piloted the questionnaire with a small subset of the target population before full-scale data collection began. This pilot test allowed for the identification and correction of any ambiguous or unclear questions. Adjustments were made based on the feedback received to improve the questionnaire's clarity and ensure participants' consistent understanding and interpretation of the questions by participants.

Moreover, the researcher documented the data collection procedures in detail to ensure that the process could be replicated. This included standardised instructions for completing the questionnaire as well as procedures for data entry and analysis. The researcher aimed to ensure that the findings would be reliable and could be confidently attributed to the phenomena under investigation rather than to extraneous variables or measurement error by maintaining procedural consistency.

5.9. Pilot study

According to Saunders et al. (2016), recommends pilot testing a questionnaire,, whereby a small-scale version of a study is conducted amongst potential respondents. The purpose of a pilot study is to detect any problems with the questionnaire and to refine it, if necessary, to minimise any difficulty or problems experienced by respondents in completing the questionnaire (Saunders et al. 2016). A pilot study determines if a study should go ahead or not, and if the study is going ahead, it provides a guideline or roadmap for the study (In 2017). The pilot study assists the researcher to minimise the errors, such as ambiguous and misleading questions, which may produce uninterpretable responses. In other words, pre-testing ensures that the meaning of questions conveys the intended meaning and that the participants understand them in the same way (Hilton 2015). According to Mitchell and Jolley (2012), pilot testing involves conducting a preliminary test of data collection tools and procedures to identify and eliminate problems, thereby allowing corrective changes or adjustments to be made before collecting data from the target population. A pilot study is necessary to evaluate the internal consistency of the items (reliability) and improve the questions, layout and instructions to the participants (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Brace (2018) acknowledged that the objective of the pilot study is to test the reliability for consistency of responses and validity thereby determining whether the

questionnaire is measuring what it is supposed to measure. The advantages of a pilot study are explained in Creswell and Creswell (2018) as follows:

- ❖ It assists in testing the hypothesis potentially leading to a more precise hypothesis in the main study.
- ❖ It provides the researcher with ideas and clues that may not have been seen prior to a pilot study, thus enabling the researcher to get clearer findings in the main study.
- ❖ It enables the researcher to check the planned data collection instrument in order to make alterations should a need arise.
- ❖ It reduces the number of unanticipated problems due to chance that a researcher may need to redesign parts of the study; and
- ❖ It assists the researcher in trying several alternative measures in the study to achieve clearer results in the main study.

Yin (2016) concurs that a pilot study is important for testing and refining the measuring instrument as it allows researchers to pinpoint unclear and biased questions and language mistakes and provides researchers an opportunity to learn the behaviour and attitudes of the respondents towards the study. For the purpose of this research, a pilot study was carried out to pre-test the measuring instrument. A total of 40 questionnaires was distributed to WSU's retired, resigned or current employees. The pilot study created awareness of the study and enabled the researcher to understand employees' perceptions of the study. The pilot study helped minimise errors and increase the efficiency of the measuring instrument, resulting in relevant and error-free data being gathered.

5.10. Ethical considerations of the study

Trochim et al. (2016) state that it is important for the researcher to abide by ethical norms when conducting research because they promote moral and social values. In addition, ethical norms ensure the quality and integrity of the research (Trochim et al. 2016). Ethical issues surface in both quantitative and qualitative inquiries (Creswell 2012). Ethics are associated with morality and the ability to distinguish between what is wrong and what is right (Gustafson and Woodworth 2014). Neuman (2014) agrees with this stating that ethical considerations require the researcher to balance two ideals, such as the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and the rights of the respondents

being studied. According to Welman et al. (2011), research invokes ethical issues that need careful consideration. A researcher considers ethical issues that are related to issues of confidentiality, anonymity, protection from harm, and research permission, as explained below.

5.10.1. Ethical clearance

Full ethical clearance was obtained from Durban University of Technology's Institutional Research Committee (IREC) prior to any data collection.

5.10.2. Permission to conduct the study

According to Saunders et al. (2012), a researcher needs to ask for permission to conduct research in an organisation. Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Campus Rector of Butterworth Campus (WSU). The study's purpose was clearly explained, and the guidelines relating to sharing information were agreed upon.

5.10.3. Confidentiality and anonymity

Saunders et al. (2012) state that one of a researcher's responsibilities is to protect respondents' anonymity and confidentiality to prevent potential harm to the respondents. Domingo-Ferrer et al. 2020 asserts that confidentiality refers to the protection of attribute values against disclosure, ensuring that the information provided by participants is kept secure and not shared with unauthorised individuals. On the other hand, anonymity primarily pertains to protecting the identities of research subjects, safeguarding them against re-identification and ensuring that their responses cannot be traced back to them (Domingo-Ferrer et al. 2020).

To uphold confidentiality, the researcher ensured that all information collected during the study was securely stored and only accessible to the research team. Identifying information was removed or encrypted, and participants were reassured that any data obtained would be used exclusively for the purposes of the study. To guarantee anonymity, the researcher did not collect names or any other personal identifiers in the questionnaires. Furthermore, when reporting on the study, data was presented in aggregate form so that no individual could be identified, even indirectly, by their responses. In addition, the respondents were assured that all information would be treated as strictly confidential. The researcher was sensitive about protecting the rights and interests of more vulnerable participants. Information that was obtained during the

research, which may reveal the identity of a participant, will be kept confidential unless the participant agrees to disclose it.

5.10.4. Protection from harm

According to Creswell (2013), a researcher should take all necessary precautions to ensure the well-being and dignity of participants and prevent potential victimisation, or physical harm. Thus, respondents will be assured of precautions to protect them from any form of harm, such as victimisation, during the research process. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) state that, in line with ethical guidelines within the research domain, the participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time. Therefore, participation is strictly voluntary and informed. The authors also stress that honesty with professional colleagues is of critical importance. For instance, researchers must report their findings in a complete and honest manner and without misrepresentations or fabrication of data to support a specific conclusion.

5.10.5. Informed consent

Collis and Hussey (2014) state that each participant should be informed of the purpose of the research and that written consent from the participant should be obtained where possible. According to Salkind (2018:79), "Every research project involving human participants should have an informed consent form that is read and signed by each participant or the person granting participation (in the case of a minor child with the parent signing)". Regarding participant consent, Lorell et al. (2015) corroborate that voluntary participation is formalised in the concept of informed consent, which occurs when a participant in a research study comprehends the intention of the researcher and agrees to take part in the study. In a similar vein, Zikmund et al. (2010) state that informed consent occurs when a respondent in a research study comprehends what the researcher expects them to do and agrees to take part in the study. Welman et al. (2011) point out that the most fundamental ethical consideration that needs to be respected is the issue of acquiring informed consent. Thus, all research participants were made aware of the study objectives. Participants were advised that they have the right to withdraw their participation at any time.

5.11. Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of converting raw data into processed understandable information using documented actionable steps, including the development of summaries, the identification of patterns derived from the raw data, and the use of accepted statistical methods organised together into a research report (Flick and Wernet 2014). Furthermore, Albers (2017) states that data analysis is not merely collecting raw data and presenting it. The raw data from the results section is turned into information that illustrates why the research is important and how it may be applied to technical communication in general.

The purpose of data analysis is to uncover the underlying patterns, trends and relationships that exist within a study's context (Albers 2017). According to Baxter and Pack (2018), the purpose of data analysis is also to ensure that the variables' impact and relationships' impact with the environment are assessed and compared. A researcher uses data analysis to identify relationships and obtain a better understanding of what the information from the data collection means and how it is significant. The data analysis provides the foundation for answering the questions "who cares" and "what is really happening" in the study article's discussion part (Albers 2017).

Data analysis in this study involved several distinct steps to distil meaningful patterns from the collected information. The initial step was descriptive analysis, which included calculating statistical measures such as means, modes, frequencies, and standard deviations. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the data, highlighting general patterns and key characteristics of the population studied.

Internal consistency reliability was estimated using the Cronbach's alpha test, which determined the coherence and stability of the scales used within the questionnaire. This test gauged whether multiple questionnaire items that aimed to measure the same concept yielded consistent results, and thus, it was an indicator of the reliability of the constructs measured.

Further analysis included multiple regression analysis, a statistical technique used to understand the relationship between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables. In this study, it was used to assess the impact of various factors on employee turnover. By using multiple regression, the researcher could identify

which factors had the most significant predictive power concerning employee turnover rates.

Quantitative data collected via the questionnaires were meticulously entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which was used to organise and preliminarily analyse the data. Excel's functionality allowed for initial sorting, coding, and simple statistical functions.

For more advanced statistical analyses, the researcher utilised SPSS version 25 for Windows, a powerful software program widely used for data management and statistical analysis in social science research. SPSS is equipped to handle large datasets and perform a range of complex analyses, including the aforementioned descriptive statistics, reliability testing with Cronbach's alpha, and multiple regression analysis, among others (Babbie, 2018). Its user-friendly interface provides researchers with tools for managing data efficiently and conducting rigorous quantitative analysis, contributing to the credibility and depth of the study's findings (Babbie 2018). Additionally, the use of SPSS in the analysis process allowed for a more in-depth investigation of the research questions. Through sophisticated data manipulation and analysis capabilities, SPSS supported the researcher in uncovering underlying trends, testing hypotheses, and arriving at the substantive conclusions that comprise the study's contributions to understanding employee turnover within the higher educational context of Walter Sisulu University.

Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher carefully followed methodological protocols to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the analysed data, thereby reinforcing the study's overall validity and reliability.

5.12. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was utilised in this study. This chapter covered issues concerning the research methodology, the research paradigm, and the adopted research methods. The chapter also outlined and discussed the population of the study, the method of data collection, and the analysis of the collected data. The chapter also showed how the differences in quantitative and qualitative research paradigms are rooted in the researcher's beliefs and worldviews about them, with quantitative having a realist or positivist approach and qualitative being subjective

(Muijs 2010). The rationale behind the selection of the questionnaires as the data collection instrument was presented. The chapter also presented issues of reliability, validity, and ethical considerations, as they are equally important in carrying out a research study. This chapter also highlighted the importance of adhering to the ethics procedure before the investigation, the validity and reliability of the study, and it clearly stated the study's limitations. Chapter 6 will present the data analysis.

CHAPTER SIX. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings derived from the analysis of the collected data regarding employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University. The chapter discusses the findings in detail, connecting them to existing literature and the study's research questions. The demographic profile of the sample, encompassing characteristics such as age, gender, job position, and length of service at the university, is presented in Section 6.2. Section 6.3 focuses on the presentation of findings, utilising descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, and regression. A comprehensive discussion of these findings follows in Section 6.4, linking them to relevant research and theoretical frameworks. Section 6.5 acknowledges the limitations of the study, while Section 6.6 concludes the chapter with a concise summary of the key findings and their implications.

6.2. Response rate and demographics

The main objective of this study was to investigate the factors influencing employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University. The study sought to understand the relationship between employee turnover and various factors, guided by the following research hypotheses:

- H1: Employee turnover affects the operational functions at WSU.
- H2: Employees' job satisfaction has a negative effect on their turnover intentions.
- H3: Employees' organisational commitment has a negative impact on their turnover intentions.
- H4: Career development is negatively related to staff turnover intention.
- H5: Pay and benefits satisfaction has a negative effect on staff turnover intention.

The study employed quantitative research design, using a questionnaire survey as the primary data collection method. A total of 320 questionnaires were distributed to employees across various departments, including academic employees, administration/support staff (non-academic), management (directors or deputy

directors), and executive management/senate. This comprehensive approach aimed at gathering insights into employees' perceptions and experiences related to factors influencing turnover across different levels and roles within the university.

Participants were selected using simple random sampling, a probability sampling technique that ensures every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. This method helps to minimise sampling bias and enhance the generalisability of the findings to the broader population of WSU employees. Out of the 320 questionnaires distributed, 123 were returned fully completed, resulting in a response rate of 38.47%.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 28. Prior to analysis, data cleaning procedures were performed to ensure data accuracy and consistency. No missing data were identified in the returned questionnaires.

6.2.1. Age profile of respondents

This section presents the age distribution of the survey respondents. Understanding the age demographics of the workforce is crucial as it can have implications for various HR practices, including recruitment, retention, and training and development initiatives. Table 6.1 provides a detailed breakdown of the respondents' age distribution.

Table 6.1. Age profile of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent
18–25 years	10	8.13%
26–35 years	45	36.59%
36–45 years	39	31.71%
46–55 years	20	16.26%
56 and more	9	7.32%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-1. Age profile of respondents

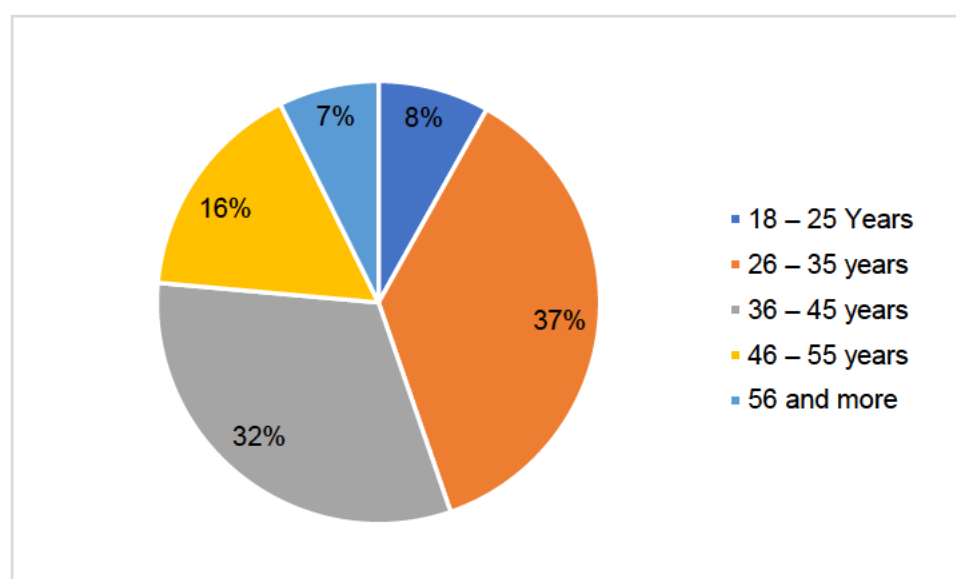


Table 6.1 above reveals that the largest age group represented in the study sample is 26–35 years, comprising 36.59% of the respondents. This is followed closely by the 36–45 years age group (31.71%). The youngest age group (18–25 years) represents the smallest proportion of respondents at 8.13%. Overall, the sample is skewed towards a younger demographic

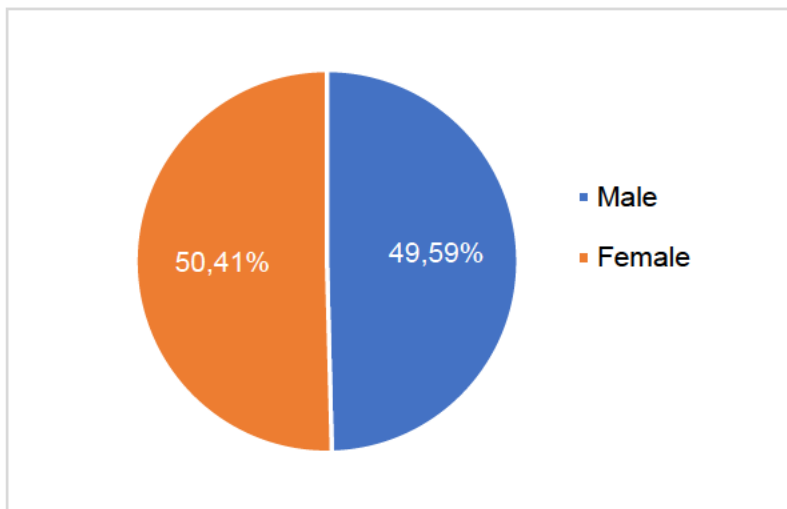
6.2.2. Gender distribution of respondents

This section presents the gender distribution of the survey respondents. Examining the gender composition of the workforce is essential for promoting diversity and inclusion within the university. Table 6.2 below presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by gender.

Table 6.2. Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	61	49.60%
Female	62	50.40%
Total	123	100.00%

Figure 6-2. Gender distribution of respondents



The sample exhibits a balanced gender distribution, with female respondents constituting a slightly higher proportion (50.41%) than male respondents (49.59%). This near-equal representation of genders suggests that the study's findings are less likely to be skewed by gender-specific biases and can be considered broadly representative of the experiences and perspectives of both male and female employees at WSU.

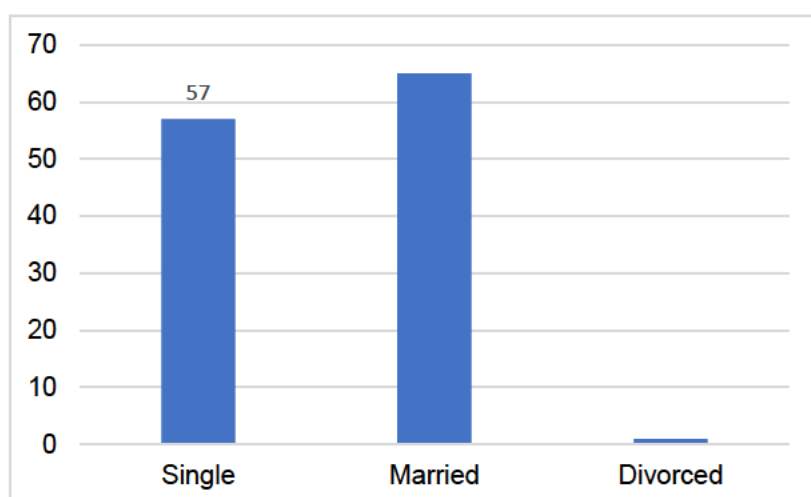
6.2.3. Marital status of respondents

This section presents the marital status distribution of the survey respondents. Understanding the family structures of employees can provide insights into their personal responsibilities and potential work-life balance considerations. Table 6.3 below presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by marital status.

Table 6.3. Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	57	46.34%
Married	65	52.85%
Divorced	1	0.81%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-3. Marital status of respondents



The majority of respondents are married (52.85%) with a significant portion being single (46.34%). A very small percentage (0.81%) reported being divorced. This information can be valuable for understanding the potential influence of marital status on factors such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intentions. For example, married employees might have different priorities and considerations compared to single employees, which could influence their decisions to stay with or leave the organisation.

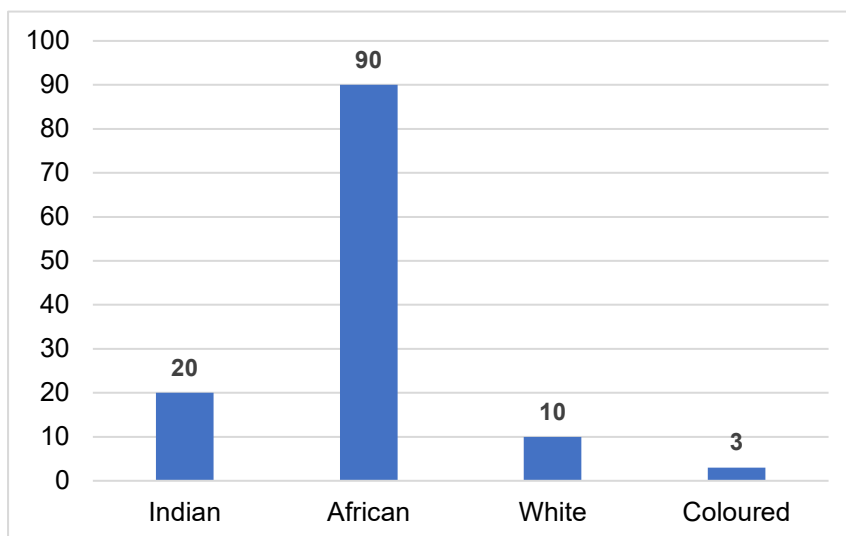
6.2.4. Racial demographics of respondents

This section examines the racial distribution of the survey respondents. Analysing the racial composition of the workforce is crucial for assessing the university's diversity and inclusion efforts and identifying potential areas for improvement. Table 6.4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by race.

Table 6.4. Racial Demographics of Respondents

Race	Frequency	Percent
Indian	20	16.26%
African	90	73.17%
White	10	8.13%
Coloured	3	2.44%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-4. Racial Demographics of Respondents



The dominant racial group represented in the sample is African, comprising 73.17% of respondents. This is followed by Indian respondents at 16.26%, White respondents at 8.13%, and Coloured respondents at 2.44%. Given the historical context of South Africa, it is important for WSU to continue monitoring its racial composition and implementing initiatives that promote equity and inclusivity for all racial groups within the institution.

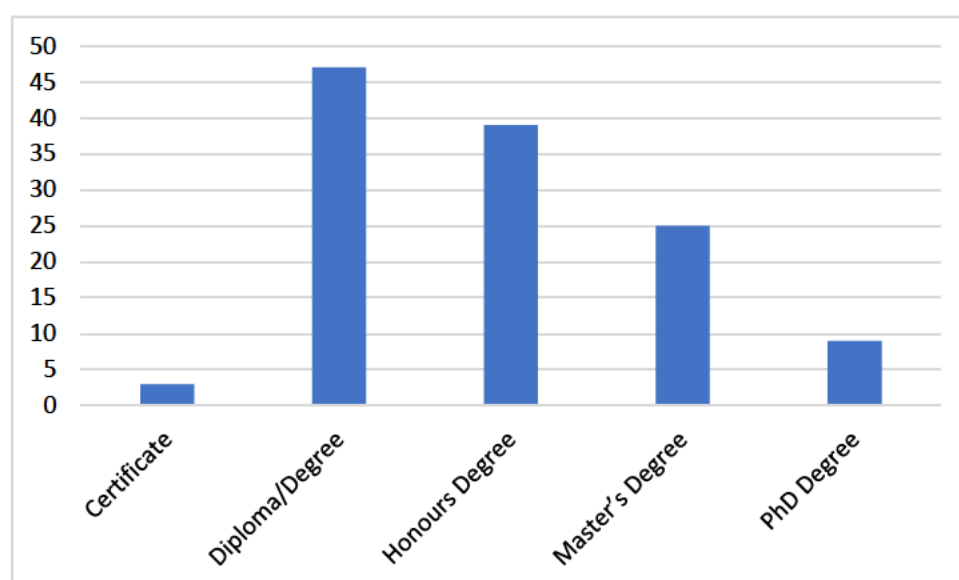
6.2.5. Educational qualifications of respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents based on the highest educational qualification obtained. Understanding the educational backgrounds of employees is important because it influences their skill sets, knowledge base, and potential for career advancement. Table 6.5 provides a breakdown of the respondents' highest qualifications.

Table 6.5. Highest qualification of respondents

Highest qualification	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	3	2.44%
Diploma/Degree	47	38.21%
Honours Degree	39	31.71%
Master's Degree	25	20.33%
PhD Degree	9	7.32%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-5. Highest qualification of respondents



The most common highest qualification among respondents is a diploma or degree, which is held by 38.21% of the respondents. A significant proportion (31.71%) hold an honours degree. Furthermore, a notable percentage of respondents possess postgraduate degrees, with 20.33% having obtained a master's degree and 7.32% holding a PhD degree. Only 2.44% of the respondents possess a certificate. The overall data suggests that WSU has a generally well-educated workforce, which could be a valuable asset to the institution.

6.2.6. Work Experience at WSU

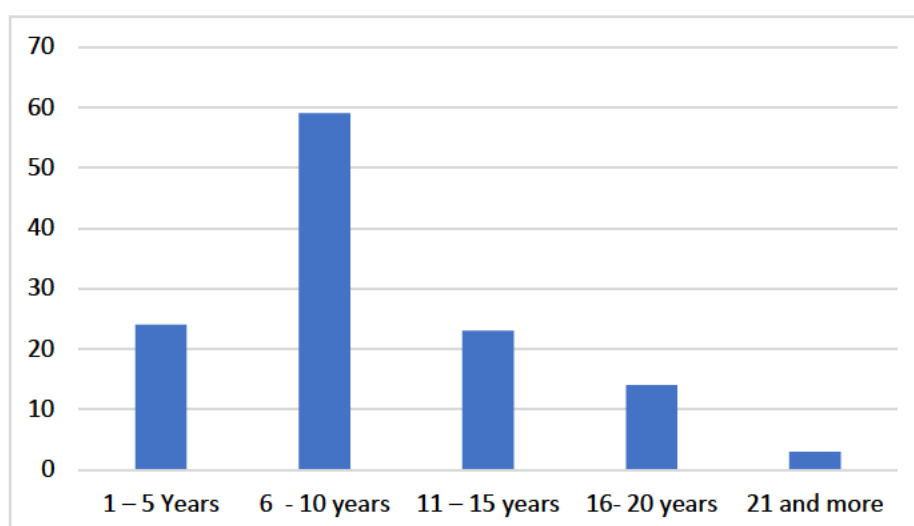
This section analyses the distribution of respondents based on their length of work experience at Walter Sisulu University. Understanding the tenure of employees can provide insights into institutional knowledge, employee retention, and potential

expertise within different departments. Table 6.6 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents based on their years of service at WSU.

Table 6.6. Work experience at WSU

Work Experience at WSU	Frequency	Percent
1–5 Years	24	19.51%
6–10 years	59	47.97%
11–15 years	23	18.70%
16–20 years	14	11.38%
21 and more	3	2.44%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-6. Work experience at WSU



The largest proportion of respondents (47.97%) have been employed at WSU for 6 to 10 years. A significant percentage (19.51%) have worked at the university for 1 to 5 years, while 18.70% have been employed for 11 to 15 years. Only a small percentage (2.44%) have been with WSU for 21 years or more. This distribution suggests a relatively experienced workforce overall, with a considerable number of employees having accumulated substantial institutional knowledge and experience during their tenure. However, the lower percentage of employees in the higher experience brackets could indicate potential future challenges related to succession planning and knowledge transfer as longer-tenured employees retire.

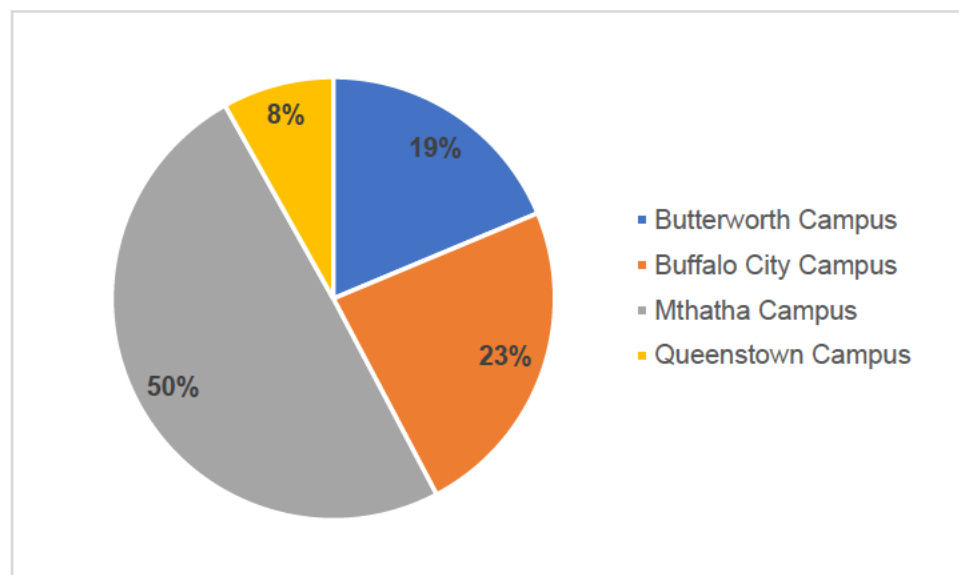
6.2.7. Campus distribution of respondents

This section examines the distribution of respondents across the different campuses of Walter Sisulu University. Understanding the representation of each campus in the survey is important for assessing the generalisability of the findings and identifying any campus-specific trends or issues. Table 6.7 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents per campus.

Table 6.7. Campus distribution of respondents

Campus Name	Frequency	Percent
Butterworth Campus	23	18.70%
Buffalo City Campus	29	23.58%
Mthatha Campus	61	49.59%
Queenstown Campus	10	8.13%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-7. Campus distribution of respondents



As expected, the highest percentage of respondents (49.59%) are from the Mthatha Campus, which is the main campus of WSU. The Buffalo City Campus follows with 23.58% representation, then the Butterworth Campus with 18.70%, and lastly the Queenstown Campus with 8.13%. This distribution suggests a fairly proportional representation of the different campuses in the sample, increasing the likelihood that

the findings reflect the overall employee experiences at WSU. However, the sample's underrepresentation of certain campuses, particularly Queenstown, might limit the generalisability of findings specific to those campuses.

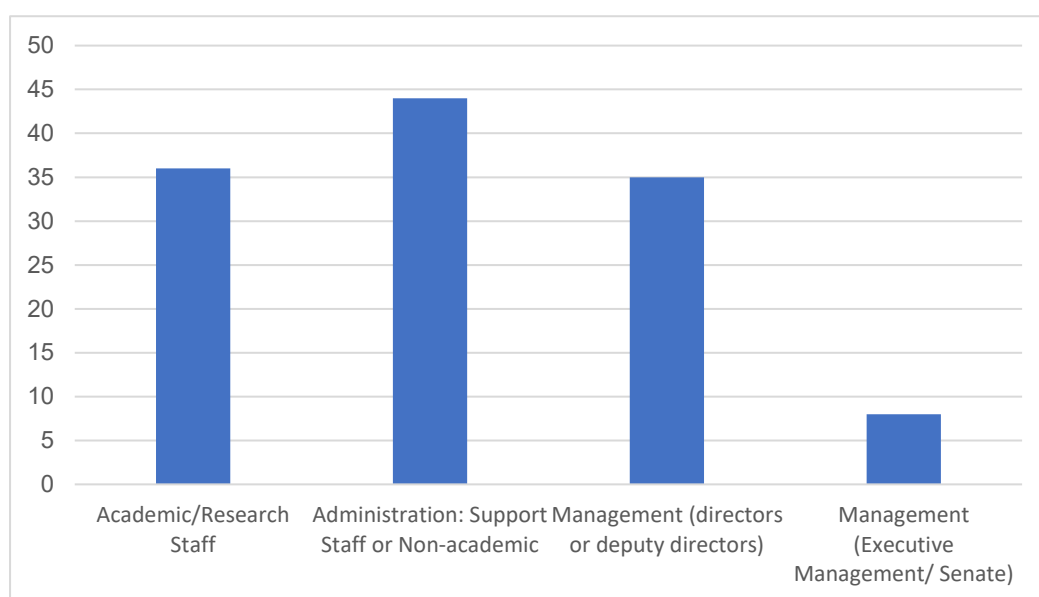
6.2.8. Employment category of respondents

This section analyses the distribution of respondents based on their employment category at Walter Sisulu University. Understanding the representation of different employee groups is crucial for assessing the perspectives and experiences of various stakeholders within the institution. Table 6.8 presents respondents' frequency and percentage distribution by employment category.

Table 6.8. Employment category of respondents

Employment Category	Frequency	Percent
Academic/Research Staff	36	29.27%
Administration: Support Staff or Non-academic	44	35.77%
Management (directors or deputy directors)	35	28.46%
Management (Executive Management/ Senate)	8	6.50%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-8. Employment category of respondents



The largest group of respondents (35.77%) belong to the Administration: Support Staff or Non-academic category. Academic/Research Staff make up 29.27% of respondents, while those in Management positions (directors or deputy directors) comprise 28.46%. A smaller percentage (6.50%) belongs to the highest management level (Executive Management/Senate). This distribution indicates a fairly diverse representation of different employee groups within WSU, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of employee experiences across various levels and roles within the institution. However, it is important to note that the experiences and perspectives of specific employee groups, such as those in Executive Management/Senate, might not be fully captured due to their smaller representation in the sample.

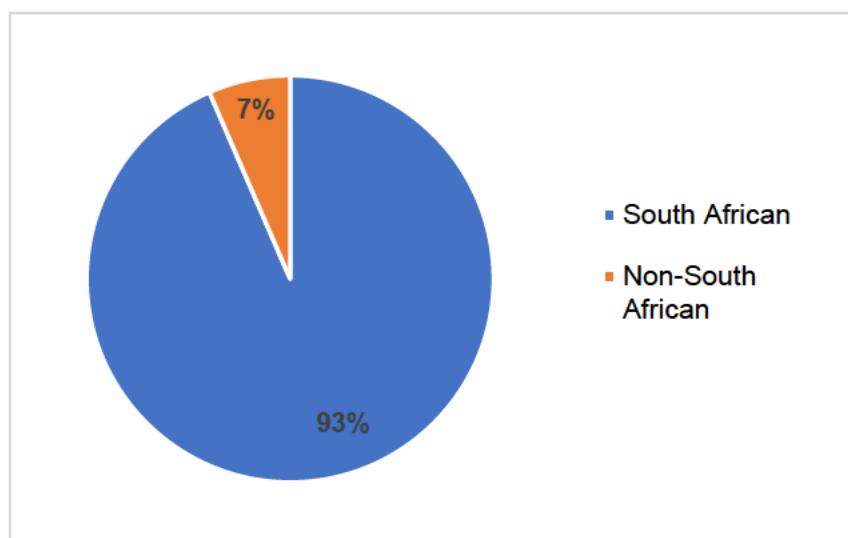
6.2.9. Nationality of respondents

This section examines the distribution of respondents based on their nationality. Understanding the representation of employees' nationality can provide insights into the diversity of the workforce and potential differences in experiences related to cultural background and integration within the university. Table 6.9 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by nationality.

Table 6.9. Nationality of respondents

Nationality	Frequency	Percent
South African	115	93.50%
Non-South African	8	6.50%
Total	123	100%

Figure 6-9. Nationality of respondents



The vast majority of respondents (93.50%) are South African, while a small percentage (6.50%) are non-South African. This suggests that the experiences and perspectives captured in the survey are likely to be largely representative of South African employees at WSU.

6.3. Analysis and presentations of results

This section delves into the findings of the study, aiming to provide a clear and comprehensive analysis of the data collected. To examine the relationships between variables and test hypotheses, appropriate statistical tests were conducted using SPSS version 28. This involved analysing both descriptive and inferential statistics to gain a holistic understanding of employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University.

The following sub-sections will first present the descriptive statistics, providing a snapshot of the sample characteristics and the variables under investigation. Subsequently, inferential statistics will be presented to explore the relationships between variables and draw conclusions based on the hypotheses formulated.

6.3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics play a crucial role in summarising and describing the fundamental features of a dataset. They provide a clear and concise overview of the sample characteristics and the distribution of individual variables (Heumann and Shalabh, 2016). In this section, we will first present the descriptive statistics for each variable individually, followed by an overview of the descriptive statistics for all variables considered in the study.

6.3.1.1. Descriptive statistics for employee turnover items

Employee turnover, which refers to the rate at which employees leave an organisation, was measured using a scale comprising eight items. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”. Table 6.10 below presents the descriptive statistics for each of the employee turnover items.

Table 6.10. Descriptive statistics for employee turnover items

Descriptive Statistics	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Employee turnover intentions	123	2.13	5.00	4.125	0.4380
Individual scale items					
Employee turnover is costly for WSU	123	2.00	5.00	4.2114	0.8421
Employee turnover hampers the morale of other employees	123	2.00	5.00	4.0650	0.7866
Employee turnover disrupt the operations of WSU	123	2.00	5.00	4.1220	0.7953
Employee turnover has a negative impact on services rendered to its customers.	123	1.00	5.00	4.0163	0.7241
Job satisfaction has a significant impact on employee attitudes.	123	2.00	5.00	4.1301	0.7461
Job insecurity leads to employee turnover.	123	2.00	5.00	4.1626	0.7615
Inadequate performance appraisal systems lead to employee turnover.	123	2.00	5.00	4.1057	0.7222
Employee turnover causes a decline in WSU's image.	123	2.00	5.00	4.1870	0.6053

As shown in Table 6.10, the mean scores for all employee turnover items range from 4.0163 to 4.2114, indicating that, on average, respondents tend to agree with these statements. This suggests a general understanding among WSU employees that employee turnover has various negative implications for the institution. The standard deviations for the items range from 0.4380 to 0.8421, indicating some variation in the responses. Items related to the cost of employee turnover and its impact on morale exhibit greater variability, suggesting a wider range of opinions on these aspects. In contrast, items related to the impact on WSU's image and the link between job insecurity and turnover show less variability, indicating a more consistent understanding of these aspects among respondents.

Individually, the item with the highest mean score (4.2114) is "*Employee turnover is costly for WSU*," highlighting the perceived financial burden of employee turnover. The consensus among WSU employees that employee turnover is costly, as indicated by a mean score of 4.2114, is well-supported by extensive research highlighting the financial burdens associated with turnover. Employee turnover incurs significant costs related to recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and lost productivity, which is echoed in various studies (Vakira et al. 2022; Carriquiry 2013; Bangura and Lourens, 2024). For instance, Bangura and Lourens (2024) reported that employee turnover can lead to inefficiencies in service delivery, increased workloads, and errors in work processes, all of which contribute to financial strain on organisations. Similarly, the study conducted by Vakira et al. (2022) on state universities in Zimbabwe revealed that turnover results in high costs due to the need for recruitment, selection, and training of new employees, further exacerbating the financial impact on institutions. In the healthcare sector, studies at Jakarta Cempaka Putih Islamic Hospital and Hospital "X" underscored that turnover among nurses not only disrupts service continuity but also necessitates substantial investment in recruiting and training replacements, thereby inflating operational costs (Meliani et al. 2024; Yaser 2023). Moreover, the study by Khan (2023) confirmed a significant negative association between employee turnover and organisational profit, emphasising that high turnover rates can detract from a company's profitability by increasing recruitment costs and reducing overall productivity. Lastly, the research by Carriquiry (2013) examined the costs of voluntary employee turnover, particularly for engineers in a knowledge-intensive manufacturing firm. The study found that productivity loss was the most significant cost associated

with turnover. The author reported that the cost of an employee voluntarily leaving was approximately \$41,549, with productivity loss accounting for about 73% of the total costs (Carriquiry 2013). Collectively, these findings illustrate that the financial implications of employee turnover are multifaceted, affecting various sectors and underscoring the importance of effective retention strategies to mitigate these costs. The alignment of WSU employees' perceptions with these research findings highlights a broader recognition of the economic challenges posed by turnover, reinforcing the need for comprehensive measures to enhance employee retention and minimise associated expenses.

Similarly, the statement "*Employee turnover hampers the morale of other employees*" garnered a mean score of 4.0650, indicating agreement about the negative impact on the workplace atmosphere. This resonates with studies demonstrating that high turnover can lead to increased workloads, stress, and uncertainty among remaining employees, ultimately affecting morale and engagement (Bangura and Lourens 2024; Desiana et al. 2024). For instance, the study by Bangura and Lourens (2024) indicates that performance appraisal feedback, job insecurity, stress, and work overload are significant factors influencing employee turnover, which in turn negatively affects organisational performance through inefficiencies in service delivery and increased errors in work processes.

Additionally, work-related stress, a common precursor to turnover, has been shown to decrease job performance and satisfaction, further exacerbating the likelihood of employees leaving their jobs (Trchalíková 2023). Additionally, the loss of experienced employees can result in inefficiencies in service delivery, increased errors, and a reduction in the sense of loyalty among the remaining workforce. Moreover, Desiana et al.'s (2024) study aimed to investigate the mediating roles of employee well-being and engagement in mitigating the impact of work stress on turnover. The study, which surveyed 425 employees in Indonesia, found that while both work stress and employee engagement directly influence turnover intention, employee well-being does not have a direct impact (Desiana et al. 2024). Importantly, employee engagement was found to significantly mediate the relationship between work stress, employee well-being, and turnover intention. This suggests that fostering employee engagement is crucial for mitigating the negative effects of work stress and promoting retention,

even if employee well-being initiatives are in place (Desiana et al. 2024). However, some research indicates that while high turnover rates are generally detrimental, moderate turnover can have positive effects. For instance, moderate turnover can introduce new ideas and skills into the organisation, which can enhance innovation and efficiency (Ampomah and Cudjor 2015).

This influx of fresh perspectives can reduce organisational blindness and groupthink, thereby potentiating efficiency gains and minimising retention costs (Mia, Jibir and Omeke 2023). Additionally, turnover can provide opportunities for existing employees to be promoted, which can improve job satisfaction and organisational commitment as employees perceive better career opportunities within the organisation (Pizzolatto 1988). This is particularly important in the context of employee perceptions of development (EPD), which have been shown to positively influence job satisfaction and intent to stay, thereby reducing turnover in the long run (Kasdorf and Kayaalp 2022). Furthermore, turnover can stimulate organisational change and the adoption of innovative human resource practices, such as flexible working arrangements and enhanced employee engagement, which can improve overall organisational performance (Saridakis and Cooper 2016). However, it is crucial to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary turnover, as their impacts can vary significantly. Voluntary turnover, when managed well, can lead to positive outcomes, whereas involuntary turnover might not yield the same benefits (Hur 2013). Therefore, while high turnover generally hampers morale and organisational performance, moderate turnover, when managed effectively through strategic HR practices and supportive work environments, can potentially offer benefits by fostering opportunities for growth and development within the organisation. This nuanced understanding underscores the importance of tailored strategies to manage turnover—balancing the need to retain talent with the benefits of organisational dynamism and renewal.

Furthermore, the mean score of 4.1301 for the statement "Job satisfaction has a significant impact on employee attitudes" clearly shows a strong agreement among your respondents. This aligns with a large body of research highlighting the positive influence of job satisfaction on employee retention. Research consistently demonstrates that job satisfaction acts as a significant mediator between various organisational factors and employee retention. For instance, the study conducted by

Singh (2024) aimed to examine the impact of employee benefits on job satisfaction and retention and found a moderate positive correlation between employee benefits and overall job satisfaction, which in turn influenced retention rates positively. However, some employees still expressed a higher likelihood of leaving due to unmet work-life balance needs. The study highlighted that satisfied employees are more likely to stay with the organisation (Singh, 2024). Similarly, Kiran et al. 's (2024) study in the Pakistani manufacturing sector showed that compensation, training and development, and favourable working conditions directly impact employee retention, with job satisfaction serving as a crucial mediating factor in this relationship. Furthermore, workplace culture, characterised by positive communication styles, leadership approaches, and value alignment, significantly impacts job satisfaction and thereby reduces employee turnover rates (Vincent, 2024). The study underscored that organisations that prioritise creating a supportive and inclusive culture, fostering mutual respect, collaboration, and professional growth, are more successful in retaining employees (Vincent 2024). Moreover, the study by Lasanov et al. (2023) reported that the implementation of policies focusing on job satisfaction, along with work environment and career development, significantly enhances employee retention. Therefore, by ensuring high levels of job satisfaction among employees, organisations can effectively increase their retention rates, ultimately contributing to a more stable and loyal workforce (Lasanov et al. 2023). Therefore, the findings from this study align with the above studies that underscore the critical role of job satisfaction in fostering a committed and stable workforce, suggesting that WSU should prioritise initiatives that enhance job satisfaction to improve employee retention.

Overall, the results reveal a general understanding among WSU employees that employee turnover has various negative implications for the institution. The consistently high mean scores across all eight statements, averaging 4.125, signify a shared understanding among respondents that employee turnover poses a multifaceted challenge for Walter Sisulu University. High turnover rates are linked to several detrimental effects, including increased recruitment and training costs, work overload for remaining staff, and disruptions in team-based work environments (Vakira et al. 2022; Singh 2015). Additionally, turnover can lead to a loss of talent and negatively impact organisational performance and productivity, as evidenced by the

findings that institutions with low turnover rates may still experience low productivity, indicating that turnover is not the sole indicator of performance (Abdulraheem and Adebola 2014). Managers often fail to utilise information regarding employee turnover effectively, exacerbating the problem, as many organisations struggle to manage turnover objectively (Kumar 2022; Linhartová 2011). The causes of turnover are multifaceted, including poor career progression, lack of promotion, poor leadership strategies, and inadequate working conditions (Vakira et al. 2022).

6.3.1.2. Descriptive statistics for job satisfaction items

Job satisfaction, a multifaceted concept reflecting an employee's overall contentment and fulfilment with their job, was measured using a three-item scale. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”. Table 6.11 presents the descriptive statistics for each of the job satisfaction items.

Table 6.11. Descriptive statistics for job satisfaction items

Descriptive Statistics	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Job Satisfaction	123	1.00	5.00	3.2629	0.8560
<i>Individual scale items</i>					
I feel that I could leave this job.	123	1.00	5.00	3.0569	0.9607
I am actively looking for other jobs.	123	1.00	5.00	3.4959	0.9949
If I was completely free to choose, I would leave this job.	123	1.00	5.00	3.2358	1.0795

Table 6.11 reveals intriguing insights into the job satisfaction levels of WSU employees. The overall job satisfaction mean score of 3.2629 suggests a moderate level of satisfaction. This indicates that, on average, WSU employees are neither extremely satisfied nor extremely dissatisfied with their jobs. This finding aligns with research by Temesgen et al. (2018), which aimed to assess job satisfaction and its associated factors among 575 health professionals in Ethiopia. Their study revealed that only one-third of participants reported being satisfied with their jobs. Factors like workload, experience, education, and access to professional resources were identified as significant predictors of job satisfaction (Temesgen et al. 2018). The study by Sivasankaran and Kannan (2023) argued that job dissatisfaction often stems from

misunderstandings between teammates and ego clashes, which can reduce the ethical climate and lead to issues like high employee turnover. Echoing these results, Youcef's (2023) study on the Algerian Electricity and Gas Company added that leadership style and job stability are critical dimensions of job satisfaction, while workload and remuneration are less significant. Cebotari (2022) further elaborates that job satisfaction is a blend of positive and negative feelings about one's work, closely tied to the extent to which an organisation meets an employee's expectations and is directly related to productivity and personal well-being. On the other hand, Efendi et al. (2023) found that demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and marital status also play a role in job satisfaction, with married workers and male workers generally reporting higher satisfaction levels. Collectively, these studies suggest that while the mean score of 3.2629 reflects a moderate level of satisfaction, it underscores the importance of addressing various intrinsic and extrinsic factors to enhance overall job satisfaction. This moderate score indicates that employees experience a balance of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, influenced by a complex interplay of personal and organisational factors.

For instance, the statement "*I feel that I could leave this job*" received the lowest score (mean = 3.0569), indicating that, on average, respondents feel relatively less inclined to leave their jobs. This implies that while WSU employees might be actively searching for other jobs and open to leaving if given the perfect opportunity, they do not necessarily feel a strong urge or push to leave their current positions. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of "passive job seeking" (Suen and Chen 2018), where individuals might be open to new opportunities but are not actively pursuing them due to a lack of strong dissatisfaction with their current situation (Subbarao et al. 2022; Mansfield 2021). This is evident in the study conducted by Suen and Chen (2018) on employees in Croatia, which found low rates of turnover intention and a perception of few alternative employment opportunities, suggesting that employees do not feel a strong urge to leave their current jobs. Similarly, the research on rural healthcare workers in China revealed that while 46.3% had experienced job mobility, a significant portion still exhibited turnover intent, suggesting that even those who had changed jobs were not entirely committed to leaving their current positions unless a better opportunity arose (Liu, Mao and Zhu 2021). Additionally, Pelekh et al.'s (2022) study examined the employment crisis among unemployed youth with higher

education and reported the frustration and uncertainty these youth face in the job market. These youth may be open to opportunities but are hindered by external circumstances such as professional exclusion and a difficult financial situation may hinder them, leading to passive job-seeking behaviour. In Indonesia, recent university graduates faced intense competition and anxiety during job searches, yet many remained in their current positions due to the challenging job market, further illustrating passive job-seeking behaviour (Karyanta et al. 2017). Public health professionals' intention to leave their jobs was also influenced by job dissatisfaction and organisational factors, but many stayed due to the lack of better alternatives, reinforcing the concept of passive job seeking (Tripković and Šantrić, 2022). The theory of planned behaviour, used to model intentions to leave among fresh graduates, showed that higher job embeddedness and psychological contracts decreased the intention to leave, indicating that employees might stay in their current roles unless a significantly better opportunity presents itself (Mukhlis and Salehudin, 2008). University teachers in public sector institutions also exhibited intentions to leave due to poor work environments, but many remained due to the lack of immediate alternatives, aligning with passive job-seeking behaviour (Shoaib et al. 2022). Collectively, these studies corroborate with the findings reported in Table 6.11, underscoring that while WSU employees might be open to new opportunities, they often remain in their current positions due to a combination of various factors, which may include job satisfaction, perceived job security, and the challenging job market, which aligns with the concept of passive job seeking (Shoaib et al. 2022; Karyanta et al. 2017).

On the other hand, the statement "*I am actively looking for other jobs*" received the highest score (mean = 3.4959). While this was the highest score among the job satisfaction items, it is noteworthy that the mean remained relatively low overall. This indicates that, despite the relatively low inclination to leave their current positions, a significant proportion of WSU employees are actively exploring other employment options. This seemingly contradictory behaviour, characterised by active job searching despite moderate levels of job dissatisfaction, challenges traditional assumptions that job searching is primarily driven by dissatisfaction. The research by Tavárez de Henríquez and Domínguez Valerio (2023) indicates that job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct influenced by various elements such as leadership quality, work

engagement, and relationships with co-workers, which can affect employees' overall contentment and engagement with their roles. However, the act of job searching can also be a proactive career management strategy rather than a direct response to dissatisfaction. For instance, the study by Rohendi (2022) highlighted that individuals may engage in job searching as a strategic career management tactic, even when relatively satisfied with their current roles. The study highlighted that there is usually a non-conformity asymmetry between interest and job satisfaction among job seekers, with the shape of the mismatch varying between suitability and interest comparisons (Rohendi, 2022). This implies that job searching can be opportunity-driven rather than solely dissatisfaction-driven, highlighting the dynamic nature of career development and the importance of self-efficacy in aligning personal interests with job satisfaction levels (Rohendi, 2022). Additionally, the motivation to search for new job opportunities can stem from a desire to improve one's salary, working conditions, or job roles, rather than from dissatisfaction alone (Muslim, 2017). Career dissatisfaction, while often a trigger for job crafting and proactive work behaviour, can also coexist with high levels of occupational self-efficacy and social support, suggesting that individuals may seek new roles to further enhance their career trajectories rather than merely escape dissatisfaction (Wang, Chen and Lu 2020).

Overall, job satisfaction at WSU presents a mixed picture. While the average scores suggest a moderate level of satisfaction, indicating employees are neither overly content nor significantly dissatisfied, there is a notable nuance. Despite this moderate satisfaction, a significant portion of employees are actively seeking other employment opportunities. This suggests that while WSU employees are not necessarily unhappy, they are open to exploring alternative career paths, potentially seeking better alignment with their interests, improved growth opportunities, or other factors beyond their current experience. The standard deviations for all three items used to measure job satisfaction are relatively high, ranging from 0.8560 to 1.0795. This indicates a considerable variation in responses, suggesting that employees' feelings and intentions regarding job satisfaction and potential turnover are diverse. While some employees might be content with their current positions, others might be actively seeking new opportunities or open to leaving if the right one arises.

6.3.1.3. Descriptive statistics for compensation satisfaction

Compensation satisfaction, a crucial aspect of overall job satisfaction, pertains to employees' contentment with their salaries, benefits, and the perceived fairness of their compensation package. This variable was measured using a seven-item scale, employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. A score of 1 represents "strongly disagree," indicating strong dissatisfaction with the compensation aspect being measured, while a score of 5 signifies "strongly agree," reflecting strong satisfaction. Table 6.12 below presents the descriptive statistics for each of the compensation satisfaction items.

Table 6.12. Descriptive statistics for compensation satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Compensation (benefits and pay) satisfaction	123	1.86	5.00	3.8676	0.5396
Individual scale items					
I am happy with the benefits at work.	123	2.00	5.00	3.6992	0.7459
The benefits at WSU meet my and my family's needs.	123	2.00	5.00	3.7967	0.7784
I am content with my yearly increases.	123	2.00	5.00	3.9756	0.8633
The organisation pays well.	123	2.00	5.00	3.8780	0.7530
The fringe benefits the company provides are good and competitive.	123	1.00	5.00	3.8780	0.8645
WSU provides adequate support for continued education and professional development	123	2.00	5.00	3.9431	0.7924
I am satisfied with the opportunities for pay increases and promotions at WSU	123	1.00	5.00	3.9024	0.7401

Table 6-12 above offers a glimpse into how WSU employees perceive their overall compensation and specific aspects of it. The overall compensation satisfaction score stands at a mean of 3.8676 with a standard deviation of 0.5396. This suggests a generally positive sentiment toward compensation at WSU, falling slightly above a neutral midpoint on a likely 5-point scale. However, the standard deviation hints at some variation in opinions (0.5396), indicating that not all employees share the same level of satisfaction.

Examining the individual components of compensation satisfaction reveals a more nuanced understanding of employee perceptions at WSU. The university appears to

excel in areas directly related to financial recognition and career advancement. The highest satisfaction score (mean = 3.9756) centres on yearly increases, suggesting employees feel valued and appropriately rewarded for their contributions. Similarly, the positive perception of the overall pay structure (mean = 3.8780) indicates that WSU is viewed as competitive within the job market, a crucial factor for attracting and retaining talent. Furthermore, the positive feedback on support for continued education and professional development (mean = 3.9431) underscores WSU's commitment to fostering a culture of learning and advancement, likely boosting both employee morale and organisational effectiveness.

However, while WSU demonstrates strength in these areas, the data reveals a potential area for improvement in benefits satisfaction, particularly concerning family needs. While employees generally perceive benefits as "good and competitive" (mean = 3.8780), the slightly lower score (mean = 3.7967) for benefits meeting family needs, coupled with the highest standard deviation among benefit-related items (SD = 0.7784), suggests potential disparities in how benefits cater to employees with families versus those without. This finding highlights an opportunity for WSU to examine its benefits package through a family-focused lens, potentially identifying areas for greater flexibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness to the diverse needs of its workforce.

The data aligns with research highlighting the multifaceted nature of compensation satisfaction, such as Lawler's model (Hackman and Lawler 1971), which emphasises that employees evaluate not just their pay but also benefits, growth opportunities, and how well these elements align with their individual and family needs (Yao et al. 2018; Akinyemi, George and Ogundele 2022). This comprehensive view is supported by multiple studies. For instance, Gupta and Pathak's (2024) research underscores the significant role of benefits in enhancing job satisfaction, showing that employees with comprehensive benefit packages report higher satisfaction levels. Similarly, Katabalo and Mwita (2024) found that effective compensation policies, including benefits, significantly influence job satisfaction, employee performance, and organisational performance. Moreover, Lee and Sin's (2024) study on social workers highlights the critical link between benefits satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall life satisfaction, demonstrating that a well-structured compensation system positively impacts work-life balance and family support, which in turn enhances life satisfaction.

Additionally, Salim, Kustiani, and Supanto (2024) also emphasise that compensation, alongside transformational leadership, significantly affects job satisfaction, suggesting that organisations should consider these factors to foster a supportive and satisfying work environment.

Overall, the results suggest that WSU is succeeding in creating a rewarding and growth-orientated work environment, at least in terms of compensation and development opportunities. However, these positive perceptions appear to contradict the previously discussed trend of employees seeking alternative employment opportunities. If employees are satisfied with their pay, benefits, and growth opportunities, why would a significant portion be actively looking for other jobs? This apparent contradiction highlights the complexity of job satisfaction and suggests that factors beyond compensation, such as workload, work-life balance, high job stress, organisational culture, or leadership, might be contributing to employee desire to leave WSU (Fajriansyah et al. 2024; Raditriono and Hendarsjah 2024; Akinyemi et al. 2022). Further investigation into these areas is crucial to fully understand and address the underlying reasons behind employee turnover intentions.

6.3.1.4. Descriptive Statistics for Career Development

Career development, specifically focusing on personal growth and development within the workplace, reflects the opportunities and support employees perceive they have to enhance their skills, knowledge, and career progression. This variable was measured using a seven-item scale, employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. A score of 1 represents "strongly disagree," indicating a lack of perceived opportunities and support for personal growth and development, while a score of 5 signifies "strongly agree," reflecting a strong perception of available opportunities and support. Table 6.13 below will present the descriptive statistics for each career development item.

Table 6.13. Descriptive statistics for career development items

Descriptive Statistics	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Career Development	123	3.00	5.00	3.9861	0.4124
Individual scale items					
I have enough development and learning opportunities within my department/organisation.	123	2.00	5.00	3.7886	0.7493
My workload is realistic.	123	2.00	5.00	3.8943	0.7334
I believe that the company is committed to making active efforts to grow and develop its employees.	123	2.00	5.00	4.1057	0.7445
I take full responsibility for my career.	123	2.00	5.00	4.1057	0.7107
My proposed career path fits in with my own career aspirations.	123	2.00	5.00	3.9268	0.8013
I am supported by my organisation in my career aspirations.	123	2.00	5.00	4.0407	0.7618
I have a career plan in my organisation that directs my training and development.	123	2.00	5.00	4.0407	0.7059

Table 6.13 above reveals that, overall, WSU receives positive feedback regarding career development opportunities, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.9861 out of 5. This suggests that employees generally feel supported in their professional growth and see potential for advancement within the institution. This finding aligns with the literature on employee retention, which consistently highlights the importance of career development opportunities as a key factor in attracting and retaining talent. For instance, the research by Ledebor et al. (2024) emphasises the importance of structured career development programs in enhancing employee satisfaction and retention. Their study suggests that organisations offering clear pathways for advancement and skill development tend to experience higher levels of employee engagement and loyalty (Ledebor et al. 2024). Similarly, Arasanmi and Krishna (2019) and Osborne et al. (2023) found that employees who perceive strong support for their career progression are more likely to remain with their current employer because they feel valued and see potential for future growth within the organisation. Govender's (2024) research further corroborates these findings by demonstrating that career development opportunities are a critical factor in employee decision-making regarding job tenure. Employees who are provided with continuous learning and development opportunities are more likely to report job satisfaction and commitment

to their organisation (Govender 2024). Calvert et al. (2020) also highlight that organisations investing in employee development not only improve retention rates but also enhance overall organisational performance by fostering a more skilled and motivated workforce. However, Pichainarongk's (2022) study points out potential limitations, noting that while career development is crucial, it must be part of a broader strategy that includes competitive compensation, work-life balance, and a positive organisational culture to be truly effective in retaining talent (Pichainarongk 2022). This suggests that while WSU's positive feedback on career development is a strong indicator of employee satisfaction, it should be complemented by other supportive measures to maximise retention.

Drilling down into specific areas within career development reveals some interesting insights. The highest score (mean = 4.1057) emerges for the statement "I believe that the company is committed to making active efforts to grow and develop its employees," indicating a high level of trust in WSU's dedication to employee development. This finding resonates with research emphasising the importance of organisational support and commitment to fostering a culture of learning and development. Research by Sinaga et al. (2024) underscores the importance of organisational support in enhancing employee development. Their study suggests that when employees perceive a strong commitment from their organisation, it leads to increased motivation and engagement in personal and professional growth activities (Sinaga et al. 2024). This aligns with the high mean score observed for WSU, indicating that employees feel supported in their development efforts. Simiyu and Mutua (2019) further elaborate on this by discussing how organisational commitment to employee development can lead to improved job performance and satisfaction. They argue that when companies actively invest in their employees' growth, it not only benefits the individuals but also enhances overall organisational performance (Simiyu and Mutua 2019). This supports the notion that WSU's commitment is likely contributing to a positive work environment and employee morale. Moreover, Ahamad et al. (2018) highlights the role of a supportive organisational culture in facilitating continuous learning and development. Their findings suggest that organisations that prioritise employee development create a more dynamic and adaptable workforce, which is crucial in today's rapidly changing business landscape (Ahamad et al. 2018). This perspective reinforces the significance of WSU's efforts in maintaining a competitive edge through employee development.

Finally, Younis et al. discuss the psychological impact of perceived organisational support, emphasising that employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Younis et al. 2013).

Additionally, the statement "My proposed career path fits in with my own career aspirations" receives a favourable score (mean = 3.9268), indicating that employees generally feel their career goals align with the opportunities available at WSU. This alignment between individual aspirations and organisational opportunities is crucial for career satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. For instance, Park's (2018) research highlights the importance of career development opportunities in organisations. The study indicates that when employees see a clear path for advancement that aligns with their personal goals, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and remain committed to the organisation (Park, 2018). This finding is consistent with the notion that career alignment is a key driver of employee engagement and retention (Karakış, 2021; Houssein et al. 2020). Ogunyemi and Babalola (2019) further support this by highlighting that career satisfaction is significantly influenced by the alignment of personal and organisational goals. Their research points out that when employees perceive a match between their career aspirations and the opportunities available, it leads to enhanced job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions (Ogunyemi and Babalola 2019).

Conversely, while scores remain positive, items related to workload (mean = 3.8943), development opportunities within departments (mean = 3.7886), and organisational support for aspirations (mean = 4.0407) show slightly lower means and larger standard deviations. This suggests potential variations in experiences and perceptions across departments or employee groups, warranting further investigation to identify any specific areas for improvement. Research indicates that workload perceptions can significantly impact employee well-being and job satisfaction. For instance, excessive workload is often associated with stress and burnout, which can lead to decreased productivity and higher turnover rates (Bowling et al. 2015). The mean score of 3.8943 for workload suggests that while employees generally perceive their workload positively, there is notable variability, as indicated by the larger standard deviation. This variability might reflect differences in individual coping mechanisms or departmental workload distribution. Development opportunities within departments,

with a mean score of 3.7886, also show a slightly lower score. This could imply that while some employees feel they have adequate opportunities for growth, others may perceive a lack of such opportunities, which can affect motivation and career satisfaction (Hayati et al. 2022). Organisations that invest in employee development tend to see higher levels of engagement and retention, suggesting a need for more consistent and accessible development programs across departments (Pandita and Ray 2018; Kundu and Lata 2017). The mean score of 4.0407 for organisational support for aspirations indicates a generally positive perception, but the larger standard deviation suggests that not all employees feel equally supported. This could be due to differences in managerial support, resource availability, or organisational culture (Rajan 2018). Ensuring that all employees feel supported in their career aspirations is crucial for fostering a positive organisational climate and encouraging long-term commitment. In summary, while the scores for workload, development opportunities, and organisational support are positive, the variability suggests areas for improvement. Organisations should consider strategies to balance workloads, enhance development opportunities, and ensure consistent support for employee aspirations to improve overall satisfaction and performance (Sugiarti 2024; Anwar and Raharja 2023). Addressing these issues can lead to a more engaged and productive workforce, ultimately resulting organisational success.

6.3.1.5. Descriptive Statistics for organisational commitment

Employee organisational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment and identification with their organisation. It reflects their belief in the organisation's values, willingness to exert effort on its behalf, and desire to remain a part of it. This variable was measured using a six-item scale, employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. A score of 1 represents "strongly disagree," indicating a weak sense of commitment to the organisation, while a score of 5 signifies "strongly agree," reflecting a strong sense of organisational commitment. Table 6.14 below presents the descriptive statistics for each of the organisational commitment items.

Table 6.14. Descriptive Statistics for organisational commitment

Descriptive Statistics	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Organisational_Commitment	123	2.67	5.00	3.9675	0.4495
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this university	123	1.00	5.00	3.7480	0.8740
One of the few negative consequences of leaving this university would be the scarcity of available alternatives	123	2.00	5.00	3.7480	0.8158
I really feel as if this university's problems are my own	123	1.00	5.00	3.9512	0.8575
I feel emotionally attached to this university	123	1.00	5.00	4.1138	0.7704
I feel like "part of family" at my organisation	123	2.00	5.00	4.1382	0.7280
I owe a great deal to this university	123	3.00	5.00	4.1057	0.5980

Moving on to organisational commitment, generally positive sentiment among WSU employees is reflected in an average score of 3.9675 out of 5. This suggests a significant level of loyalty and identification with the institution, which aligns with the literature that emphasises the beneficial outcomes associated with high organisational commitment. Research consistently shows a positive correlation between reduced turnover rates and organisational commitment, which is generally understood as the psychological attachment and loyalty employees feel towards their organisation (Chen et al. 2002; Ahmad 2018), is positively correlated with reduced turnover rates. Employees who feel committed to their organisation are less likely to leave, thereby reducing the costs and disruptions associated with high employee turnover (Oliveira, Santos and Andrade 2024). This is supported by Chayomchai et al.'s (2023) findings that highlight the role of organisational commitment in fostering a stable workforce, which is essential for maintaining continuity and achieving long-term strategic goals. Moreover, organisational commitment is linked to increased job satisfaction. Employees who identify strongly with their organisation tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, which in turn enhances their overall work experience and productivity (Mohamed 2024). This relationship is crucial as satisfied employees are more likely to contribute positively to the organisational culture and performance, creating a virtuous cycle of engagement and productivity (Mohamed 2024). Improved performance is another significant outcome of strong organisational commitment.

Committed employees are generally more motivated and willing to exert extra effort, which leads to enhanced individual and organisational performance (Issa et al. 2022). This is particularly important in dynamic and competitive environments where organisations rely on the discretionary effort of their workforce to achieve competitive advantage. However, it is important to consider potential limitations and contextual factors that might influence these outcomes. For instance, the specific organisational culture, leadership styles, and external economic conditions can moderate the relationship between organisational commitment and its outcomes (Putranto et al. 2022). Therefore, while the positive sentiment among WSU employees is promising, continuous efforts to nurture and sustain this commitment are essential for realising its full benefits.

However, examining the individual components of employee commitment at WSU reveals a complex interplay of affective, normative, and continuance commitment dimensions. Affective commitment, which reflects an emotional attachment to the organisation, is notably high among WSU employees. This is evidenced by the strong agreement with statements such as "I feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation" (mean = 4.1382) and "I feel emotionally attached to this university" (mean = 4.1138) demonstrates this. These findings suggest that employees perceive a strong sense of belonging and emotional connection to WSU, which is crucial for fostering a positive organisational culture and enhancing employee retention (Nelms and Barton-Arwood 2024; Rehman et al. 2023). Normative commitment, which is characterised by a sense of obligation to remain with the organisation, is also significant. The statement "I owe a great deal to this university" (mean = 4.1057) indicates that employees feel a sense of indebtedness and loyalty towards WSU. This sense of obligation may stem from perceived support or benefits received from the university, which aligns with findings from other studies that highlight the role of organisational support in enhancing normative commitment (Mtshweni 2024; Goh and Kim 2023).

However, the analysis also reveals some ambivalence regarding long-term career prospects at WSU. The statement "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this university" receives a lower mean score (mean = 3.7480) and a larger standard deviation, suggesting uncertainty among employees about their future at WSU. This could be attributed to concerns about career progression opportunities,

organisational stability, or broader trends in the higher education sector, such as funding cuts or changes in academic policies (Sukmarani 2024; Laranjeira and Teixeira 2024). Continuance commitment, which involves staying with an organisation due to the perceived costs of leaving, appears to be less pronounced. The statement "One of the few negative consequences of leaving this university would be the scarcity of available alternatives" also scores lower (mean = 3.7480). This suggests that employees may not perceive a significant lack of external job opportunities, which could be influenced by factors such as geographic location, specialisation within higher education, or the overall job market dynamics (Idrus and Wahab 2023; Qamar et al. 2024).

To sum up, while WSU employees exhibit strong affective and normative commitment, there is a degree of uncertainty regarding long-term career prospects and external job opportunities. This highlights the importance of addressing career development and organisational stability to enhance employee retention. Future research could explore the specific factors contributing to these perceptions and develop strategies to strengthen employee commitment across all dimensions. By understanding and addressing these nuances, WSU can foster a more committed and satisfied workforce, ultimately benefiting both the employees and the institution.

6.3.2. Reliability and validity tests

Before examining the relationships between variables, it is crucial to establish the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments used in this study. This ensures that the scales accurately and consistently measure the intended constructs.

6.3.2.1. Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. A reliable scale produces similar results under consistent conditions (Hajjar 2018). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the multi-item scales, including employee turnover intention, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, benefits and pay satisfaction (compensation), and career development. Cronbach's alpha measures how closely related a set of items are as a group (Taber 2018). A higher alpha coefficient indicates greater internal consistency, with a value of 0.7 or higher, which is generally considered acceptable (Taber 2018).

Table 6.15. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee turnover intentions	8	0.723
Job Satisfaction	3	0.800
Compensation (benefits and pay) satisfaction	7	0.807
Career Development	7	0.852
Organisational Commitment	6	0.799

The results from Table 6.15 reveal that all scales demonstrated acceptable to high reliability, ranging from 0.723 for employee turnover intentions to 0.852 for career development. A slightly lower reliability of the employee turnover intentions scale (0.723) potentially due to the complex nature of turnover intentions influenced by various factors is noted. Despite this, the alpha value indicates that the items within this scale are measuring a similar construct, supporting the overall reliability of the scales. To address this question, it is essential to consider the broader context of scale reliability and the factors influencing turnover intentions. Reliability coefficients, such as Cronbach's alpha, are crucial in determining the internal consistency of a scale, indicating how well the items measure a single construct (Taber 2018). A coefficient of 0.723, while lower than others in the study, still falls within the acceptable range (coefficient > 0.7), suggesting that the scales used are a reliable measure of turnover intentions (Taber 2018; Hajjar 2018), albeit with room for improvement. Various factors, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and external opportunities, contribute to the complexity of turnover intentions, which may introduce variability in responses. This complexity is supported by research indicating that turnover intentions are multifaceted and influenced by both individual and organisational factors (Németh et al. 2024; Nguyen et al. 2024). On the other hand, career development (0.852), compensation (benefits and pay) satisfaction (0.807), job satisfaction (0.800), and organisational commitment (0.799) all demonstrate strong internal consistency, indicating that the items within each of these scales are highly intercorrelated and likely measuring a unified underlying construct.

The generally high Cronbach's alpha values provide evidence that the measurement instruments used in this study are reliable and internally consistent, strengthening the

validity of the findings. However, it is important to note that reliability is just one aspect of measurement quality. Therefore, validity should also be considered to ensure your measures accurately capture the intended concepts. The results about the validity of the findings are presented and discussed in the following section.

6.3.2.2. Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument accurately measures the concept it is intended to measure (Almanasreh, Moles and Chen 2019). In this study, construct validity was assessed using factor analysis, specifically by examining convergent and discriminant validity.

- Convergent validity tests that the constructs that are expected to be related are, in fact, related (Shenoy, Aithal and Raj 2021). Convergent validity is assessed by examining the correlations between the items intended to measure the same construct. Generally, average factor loadings above 0.7 are considered indicative of good convergent validity (Shrestha 2021).
- Discriminant validity (or divergent validity) tests that constructs that should have no relationship do, in fact, not have any relationship (Taherdoost 2016). This is assessed by comparing the average variance extracted for each construct to the square of the correlation between those constructs. Discriminant validity is established if the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than the squared correlation with other constructs (Taherdoost 2016).

Table 6.16 presents the results of the convergent and discriminant validity assessment for the constructs measured in this study.

Table 6.16. Convergent and discriminant validity assessment

Constructs	Factor Loading	AVE	Square of correlation
Employee turnover intentions	0.6991	0.5102	0.106
Job Satisfaction	0.846	0.715	0.313
Compensation (benefits and pay) satisfaction	0.682	0.467	0.156
Career Development	0.824	0.625	0.250
Organisational Commitment	0.732	0.587	0.325

Table 6.16 presents the convergent and discriminant validity assessment of the measurement model, providing crucial insights into whether your constructs are well-defined and measured.

Convergent Validity: Convergent validity examines whether the items intended to measure a specific construct actually converge or correlate strongly with each other (Shenoy et al. 2021). In simpler terms, it assesses whether the items designed to measure "job satisfaction" are indeed measuring the same underlying concept. The results show that job satisfaction (0.846), career development (0.824), and organisational commitment (0.732) exhibit factor loadings above the generally recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating good convergent validity (Shrestha 2021). This suggests that the items within these scales are strongly related and effectively capture their respective constructs (Shenoy et al. 2021). Employee turnover intentions (0.6991) and Compensation Satisfaction (0.682), on the other hand, have factor loadings slightly below the 0.7 threshold. A common threshold for acceptable factor loadings is 0.7, which indicates a strong correlation. However, loadings slightly below this threshold, such as employee turnover intentions (0.6991) and Compensation Satisfaction (0.682) are still considered acceptable by some researchers (Zulkifli et al. 2017; Effendi et al. 2019), depending on the context and the specific field of study. For instance, Zulkifli et al. (2017) found standardised factor loadings ranging from 0.6 to 0.8 to be acceptable, indicating that even within this range, items can still contribute meaningfully to the measurement of their respective constructs. This aligns with what Effendi et al. (2019) and Norhayati and Aniza (2014) assertion that factor loadings

above 0.6 show that items are useful for measuring the thing they were meant to measure. Furthermore, Raditrono and Hendarsjah (2024) posit that while a factor loading of 0.7 is often used as a benchmark but loadings slightly below this threshold can still be deemed acceptable if they contribute significantly to the model's overall fit and if the sample size is sufficiently large to support the stability of the factor structure. This is supported by Mohamed et al. (2022), who note that the context of the study and the nature of the constructs being measured can influence the acceptability of lower factor loadings, emphasising the importance of theoretical justification and empirical support. Given that all factor loadings in this study are above 0.6, the scales demonstrate acceptable convergent validity. This suggests that the items within each scale are effectively measuring their intended constructs.

Discriminant validity assesses whether constructs that are theoretically distinct are indeed measured as distinct constructs (Taherdoost 2016). In essence, it ensures that "job satisfaction" and "organisational commitment," while related, are not so highly correlated that they become indistinguishable from each other. Table 6.16 indicates that in each case, the average variance extracted for each construct is greater than the corresponding "square of correlation" value. This finding is crucial for establishing discriminant validity. AVE represents the average amount of variance captured by a construct's items relative to the variance due to measurement error (Shrestha 2021). The squared correlation represents the shared variance between two constructs (Hair Jr, Howard and Nitzl 2020). A higher AVE than the squared correlation for each pair of constructs indicates that each construct explains more variance in its own measures than it shares with other constructs, supporting discriminant validity (Cheung et al. 2023; Nawanir et al. 2018).

The overall support for construct validity strengthens the foundation for interpreting your research findings. It assures us that the relationships observed between variables are reflective of actual relationships between the underlying constructs, rather than being artefacts of measurement error or poorly defined constructs. This strengthens the validity and generalisability of your findings, allowing you to confidently draw conclusions about the interplay of factors influencing employee turnover within the context of your study. Moreover, the robust measurement model enhances the study's contribution to the broader body of knowledge. By establishing a sound measurement

approach, your research provides a reliable framework for future investigations in this domain. Other researchers can confidently adopt or adapt your measurement instruments, fostering consistency and comparability across studies and deepening our understanding of employee turnover dynamics.

6.3.3. Correlation analysis

This section examines the relationships between the study variables using correlation analysis. Correlation is a statistical technique that measures the strength and direction of the linear association between two continuous variables (Schober et al. 2018). It provides a numerical value called the correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1 (Neupane et al. 2021). A positive correlation indicates a direct relationship (as one variable increases, the other tends to increase), while a negative correlation indicates an inverse relationship (as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease) (Neupane et al., 2021). A correlation coefficient of 0 indicates no linear relationship between the variables (Schober et al. 2018; Neupane et al. 2021). The Pearson correlation was employed in this study to assess the bivariate relationships between the study variables. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis are presented in Table 6.17 below.

Table 6.17. Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

		Turnover Intentions	Job Satisfaction	Pay satisfaction	Career Development	Organisational Commitment
Turnover Intentions	Coefficient	1	0.075	0.178*	0.086	0.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.412	0.049	0.345	0.375
	N	123	123	123	123	123
Job Satisfaction	Coefficient	0.075	1	-0.129	-0.235**	-0.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.412		0.154	0.009	0.075
	N	123	123	123	123	123
Pay satisfaction	Coefficient	0.178*	-0.129	1	.482**	0.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.049	0.154		0.000	0.000
	N	123	123	123	123	123
	Coefficient	0.086	-0.235**	0.482**	1	0.438**

		Turnover Intentions	Job Satisfaction	Pay satisfaction	Career Development	Organisational Commitment
Career Development	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.345	0.009	0.000		0.000
	N	123	123	123	123	123
Organisational Commitment	Coefficient	0.081	-0.161	.525**	.438**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.375	0.075	0.000	0.000	
	N	123	123	123	123	123
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

The analysis of the Pearson correlation matrix, as reported in Table 6.17 above reveals the following results:

Turnover Intentions: Turnover intentions showed a weak, statistically insignificant positive correlation with job satisfaction (0.075) and career development (0.086). This suggests that, in this sample, there was no meaningful relationship between these variables. This aligns with findings from Widyanata and Dwiatmadja (2024), who noted that job satisfaction alone might not be a strong predictor of turnover intentions, as other factors like organisational culture and leadership style could play more significant roles. Interestingly, the correlation between turnover intentions and pay satisfaction was weak but statistically significant (0.178*), indicating a slight tendency for higher pay satisfaction to be associated with higher turnover intentions. This counter-intuitive finding suggests that while employees may be satisfied with their compensation, other unmet needs or opportunities elsewhere could drive their intention to leave. Özdemir's (2024) research supports this by highlighting that financial satisfaction does not always equate to overall job satisfaction, as intrinsic motivators and career growth opportunities might be lacking. Furthermore, the lack of a significant correlation between turnover intentions and organisational commitment (0.081) suggests that commitment levels do not strongly influence employees' intentions to leave. This is consistent with findings by Muhammad et al. (2023), who observed that organisational commitment might be overshadowed by external factors such as market opportunities and personal circumstances in influencing turnover intentions. Overall, these findings underscore the complexity of turnover intentions, suggesting that while pay

satisfaction has a statistically significant relationship, it is not necessarily indicative of lower turnover intentions. The interplay of various factors, including intrinsic motivators and external opportunities, must be considered. Future research should explore these dynamics further, potentially incorporating qualitative methods to understand the underlying reasons behind these statistical relationships.

Job Satisfaction: It is crucial to remember that job satisfaction was measured using negatively worded items, meaning higher scores reflect lower job satisfaction. Therefore, the negative correlations observed actually represent positive relationships. The findings from the research indicate that higher job satisfaction is significantly associated with higher pay satisfaction, career development satisfaction, and stronger organisational commitment. Specifically, the negative correlation coefficients suggest that as job satisfaction increases (lower scores), pay satisfaction ($-0.129, p < 0.05$), career development satisfaction ($-0.235^{**}, p < 0.01$), and organisational commitment ($-0.161, p < 0.05$) also increase. The study by Zulaikha et al. (2024) supports these findings by highlighting the importance of pay satisfaction in enhancing overall job satisfaction, suggesting that employees who feel adequately compensated are more likely to report higher job satisfaction. Similarly, Köklü's (2023) research emphasises the role of career development opportunities in fostering job satisfaction, indicating that employees who perceive growth opportunities are more satisfied with their jobs. This aligns with the positive relationship observed between career development satisfaction and job satisfaction. Furthermore, Indrani Das Gupta's work underscores the significance of organisational commitment, by noting that employees who feel a strong sense of belonging and commitment to their organisation tend to report higher job satisfaction (Gupta, 2023). This is consistent with the positive correlation between organisational commitment and job satisfaction evidenced in this study.

Pay Satisfaction: Pay satisfaction is strongly and positively correlated with both career development satisfaction ($0.482^{**}, p < 0.01$) and organisational commitment ($0.525^{**}, p < 0.01$), emphasising the importance of pay satisfaction in enhancing both career development satisfaction and organisational commitment. Firstly, the positive correlation between pay satisfaction and career development satisfaction suggests that employees who perceive their compensation as fair and adequate are more likely

to be content with the opportunities for growth and advancement within their organisation. This relationship can be attributed to the perception that fair pay reflects an organisation's investment in its employees, which in turn fosters a supportive environment for career development that accounts for this relationship (Agung et al. 2024; Jalaman and Encarnacion 2024). Moreover, when employees feel adequately compensated, they are more likely to engage in career development activities, perceiving them as worthwhile investments in their future within the organisation (Arifin and Ariffin 2024). Similarly, the strong correlation between pay satisfaction and organisational commitment indicates that employees who are satisfied with their pay are more likely to develop a stronger emotional attachment to their organisation. This attachment is often manifested in increased loyalty and a willingness to go above and beyond in their roles (Katabalo and Mwita 2024). Pay satisfaction can enhance organisational commitment by fulfilling employees' basic needs and providing a sense of security, which are foundational to developing a deeper connection with the organisation (González Navarro 2022). However, it is important to consider potential limitations and contradictions in these findings. For instance, while pay satisfaction is a significant factor, it is not the sole determinant of career development satisfaction or organisational commitment. Other factors such as organisational culture, leadership, and work-life balance also play crucial roles and may moderate these relationships (González Navarro 2022; Jalaman and Encarnacion 2024).

Career Development: Career development satisfaction showed a strong positive correlation with organisational commitment (0.438^{**} , $p < 0.01$), indicating that employees who feel supported in their career growth and development are more likely to exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment. The positive relationship between career development satisfaction and organisational commitment is a well-documented area of research, with multiple studies highlighting the positive correlation between these two variables. For instance, the study by Fitriani et al. (2024) emphasises the importance of career development programs in enhancing employee satisfaction and commitment. The authors found that structured career development initiatives significantly contribute to employees' sense of belonging and loyalty to the organisation, thereby increasing their commitment levels. This aligns with the correlation coefficient of 0.438^{**} , indicating a strong positive relationship between career development satisfaction and organisational commitment. Similarly, Pranoyo's

(2024) research underscores the role of career development in fostering organisational commitment. The study suggests that when employees perceive opportunities for growth and advancement, they are more likely to develop a stronger attachment to their organisation, which is crucial for retaining talent and reducing turnover rates (Pranoyo, 2024). Iswahyuni et al. (2024) further corroborate these findings by highlighting that career development satisfaction not only enhances organisational commitment but also improves overall job performance. This suggests that organisations investing in career development are likely to see a dual benefit of increased commitment and enhanced productivity (Iswahyuni et al. 2024). Moreover, Zulaikha et al. (2024) discuss the psychological contract between employees and employers, noting that career development opportunities fulfil part of this contract, thereby strengthening organisational commitment. Employees who feel their career aspirations are supported are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty and dedication (Zulaikha et al. 2024).

6.3.4. Multiple regression analysis

This section delves deeper into the relationships between the study variables by employing multiple regression analysis. The primary goal is to test the following hypotheses:

- **H2:** Employees' job satisfaction has a negative effect on their turnover intentions.
- **H3:** Employees' organisational commitment has a negative impact on their turnover intentions.
- **H4:** Career development is negatively related to staff turnover intention.
- **H5:** Pay and benefits satisfaction has a negative effect on staff turnover intention.

The dependent variable in this study is employee turnover intentions, representing the employee's inclination to leave the organisation, and it was measured using 8 items. The independent variables are:

- Job satisfaction: The overall level of contentment employees experience with their jobs. This was measured using three items.
- Organisational commitment: The degree to which employees feel a sense of loyalty and attachment to their organisation was measured using six items.
- Career development: The perceived opportunities for growth and advancement within the organisation. It was measured using seven items.
- Pay and benefits satisfaction: The level of satisfaction with compensation and benefits packages was measured using seven items.

It is important to note that all variables were measured using multiple items on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree". Table 6.18 below presents the results of the multiple regression analysis.

Table 6.18. Results of multiple regression analysis

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.307	0.507		6.522	0.0000
Job Satisfaction	0.053	0.048	0.103	1.107	0.2702
Pay Satisfaction	0.150	0.091	0.184	1.643	0.1030
Personal Development	0.028	0.115	0.026	0.242	0.8090
Organisational Commitment	-0.011	0.107	-0.011	-0.100	0.9201

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intentions

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig
1	0.429 ^a	0.420	0.399	0.43597	1.287	0.0203
a. Predictors: (Constant), Organisational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Personal Development, Compensation.						

The multiple regression analysis aimed to determine the combined effects of job satisfaction, compensation, personal development, and organisational commitment on turnover intentions among employees at Walter Sisulu University. Here's a detailed breakdown of the findings:

Overall Model Fit

The overall model was **statistically significant** ($F(4, df2) = 1.287, p = 0.0203$), indicating that, together, job satisfaction, compensation, personal development, and organisational commitment explain a statistically significant portion of the variance in turnover intentions. The R-squared value of 0.420 demonstrates that the model accounts for 42% of the variance in turnover intentions. This suggests that the variables included in the model hold considerable explanatory power regarding why employees might consider leaving the university.

Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared value, which takes into account the number of predictors in the model, is 0.399. This value indicates that even after considering the model's complexity, it still explains a substantial portion of the variance in turnover intentions (39.9%). This reinforces the model's practical significance, suggesting that it can be useful in understanding and predicting employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University.

Individual Predictors

Job Satisfaction: The results do not support hypothesis H2, which posited a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions was not statistically significant ($B = 0.053$, $p = 0.270$). It is crucial to note that because the study used negatively worded items to measure job satisfaction, a positive coefficient indicates a negative relationship between the latent construct of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Therefore, the positive coefficient ($B = 0.053$) suggests that higher levels of job satisfaction are weakly associated with *lower* turnover intentions. However, this relationship is not statistically significant, meaning we cannot confidently conclude that job satisfaction, as measured in this study, influences an employee's intention to leave.

Pay satisfaction: The analysis does not provide strong support for hypothesis H5, which proposed a positive relationship between compensation satisfaction and turnover intentions. While the unstandardised coefficient for compensation was positive ($B = 0.150$), suggesting a slight tendency for higher compensation satisfaction to be associated with higher turnover intentions, this relationship was only marginally significant ($p = 0.103$). This finding requires cautious interpretation and further investigation. It is possible that other factors not included in the model moderate the relationship between compensation satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Personal Development (H4) and Organisational Commitment (H3): Hypotheses H3 (negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions) and H4 (negative relationship between personal development opportunities and turnover intentions) were also not supported. Neither personal development ($B = 0.028$, $p = 0.809$) nor organisational commitment ($B = -0.011$, $p = 0.920$) showed a statistically significant relationship with turnover intentions. This suggests that these

factors, as measured in this study, do not significantly predict an employee's intention to leave Walter Sisulu University.

The multiple regression model provides a useful starting point for understanding the factors influencing turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University. While the model demonstrates good explanatory power, the lack of statistical significance for most individual predictors suggests a more nuanced interplay of factors than initially hypothesized. Future research should focus on exploring additional variables, potential moderating effects, and refining the measurement of existing constructs to develop a more comprehensive and precise understanding of employee turnover dynamics within the university.

6.4. Discussion of findings

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research's hypotheses. The study aimed to investigate the impact of various factors on employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University. The following hypotheses were proposed:

- H1: Employee turnover affects the operational functions at WSU.
- H2: Employees' job satisfaction has a negative effect on their turnover intentions.
- H3: Employees' organisational commitment has a negative impact on their turnover intentions.
- H4: Career development is negatively related to staff turnover intention.
- H5: Pay and benefits satisfaction has a negative effect on staff turnover intention.

The study employed descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis using employee turnover intentions as the dependent variable and job satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, personal development, and organisational commitment as independent variables to examine these hypotheses. Data were analysed using SPSS version 28.

6.4.1. Impacts of employee turnover on operational functions at WSU

The first objective of this study aimed to determine the extent to which employee turnover affects operational functions at Walter Sisulu University. The findings, derived from a survey of WSU employees, reveal a strong belief that turnover negatively affects the university's operations. The descriptive statistics for employee turnover items as reported in Table 6.10 provide compelling support for Hypothesis 1. Employees consistently highlighted the negative consequences of turnover across various aspects of WSU's operations.

First, employees overwhelmingly perceive employee turnover as a costly burden for WSU (mean = 4.21), leading to significant disruptions in the university's operations (mean = 4.12). This finding aligns with established research emphasising the financial strain and operational challenges associated with employee departures. Employee turnover is widely recognised as a significant financial strain on organisations due to the costs associated with recruiting, hiring, and training new employees, as well as the loss of institutional knowledge and productivity during transition periods (Kiernan, 2018; Shenoy, 2016; O'Connell and Kung 2007). For instance, research by Oni and Fatoki (2017) highlights the financial implications of employee turnover, emphasising that the costs extend beyond direct expenses to include indirect costs such as decreased morale and productivity among remaining staff members. This aligns with the perception at WSU that turnover is a costly burden. Similarly, Kiernan found that pilot turnover in a Part 135 cargo operator reached 46%, leading to a substantial cost of \$17,405 per pilot. This finding highlights the significant financial burden and operational disruption that employee departures can have on an organisation, aligning with the perceptions of WSU employees who acknowledge the costly nature and operational disruptions associated with turnover. Furthermore, Linhartová's (2011) research underscores the operational challenges posed by employee turnover, noting that frequent departures can disrupt workflows and lead to inefficiencies within organisations. Živković et al. (2023) also discuss the broader organisational impacts of turnover, including the potential for decreased service quality and customer satisfaction that can further exacerbate financial and operational challenges. This supports the notion that turnover is not only a financial burden but also a significant operational challenge. Additionally, Iqbal et al. (2024) note that turnover disrupts

workflow continuity and can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge, which is particularly detrimental in academic settings where specialised skills and knowledge are crucial. This disruption is echoed by Al Amri and Pandey (2019), who highlight that turnover can affect service delivery and organisational performance, leading to a decline in the quality of education provided. Moreover, the psychological impact of turnover on the remaining employees can further hinder an organisation's operations. Bai et al. (2022) point out that turnover can lead to decreased employee engagement and motivation, which in turn affects productivity and the overall work environment. This is supported by Alo and Dada (2020), who contend that high turnover rates can create a culture of instability and uncertainty, further impacting operational efficiency. However, it is important to consider the context-specific factors that may influence the perception and impact of turnover. For instance, Lewis-Wilson (2019) suggests that the effects of turnover can vary depending on organisational culture and the availability of resources to manage transitions effectively. Bwowe (2020) also notes that strategic human resource practices, such as effective succession planning and employee engagement initiatives, can mitigate some of the negative impacts of turnover. In conclusion, the perception that employee turnover is a costly burden at WSU is well-supported by existing research, which underscores the financial and operational challenges associated with employee departures. The alignment of these findings with broader research highlights the universal nature of turnover issues across different organisational contexts. However, addressing turnover effectively requires a nuanced understanding of the specific factors at play within each organisation, as well as the implementation of strategic measures to minimise its impact.

Secondly, the study also reveals a clear link between employee turnover and negative perceptions of staff morale (mean = 4.07) and the quality of services provided to students (mean = 4.02) at WSU. This suggests that turnover creates a ripple effect, impacting not only immediate operational efficiency but also the broader university environment and stakeholder satisfaction. Firstly, negative perceptions of staff morale often correlate with employee turnover. High turnover rates can lead to instability within teams, causing the remaining employees to feel overburdened and undervalued, which in turn diminishes morale (Al-Suraihi et al. 2021). This is supported by research indicating that turnover can disrupt team dynamics and lead to a loss of institutional knowledge, which is crucial for maintaining a positive work environment and high

morale (Bangura and Lourens, 2024; Kerangani et al. 2024). The mean score of 4.07 for negative perceptions of staff morale at WSU underscores the significant impact turnover has on the workforce's emotional and psychological well-being. Moreover, the quality of services provided to students is also adversely affected by high turnover rates. When experienced staff leave, the continuity and quality of student services can suffer, as new or remaining staff may lack the necessary experience or be overwhelmed by increased workloads (Mujtaba and Senathip, 2020; De Vries et al. 2023). This can lead to delays, errors, and a general decline in service quality, as reflected in the mean score of 4.02 for service quality perceptions at WSU (Sharma and Syal 2022; Mukuze et al. 2021). The disruption caused by turnover can hinder the university's ability to deliver consistent and high-quality educational experiences, which is critical for student satisfaction and retention. The ripple effect of turnover extends beyond immediate operational challenges. It can affect the university's reputation, as stakeholders, including students, parents, and potential employees, may perceive the institution as unstable or poorly managed. This perception can deter prospective students and staff, further exacerbating the turnover problem and creating a cycle of instability and dissatisfaction (Al Amri and Pandey 2019; Ali et al. 2020). However, it is important to consider that not all turnover is detrimental. Some level of turnover can bring fresh perspectives and new skills to an organisation, potentially leading to innovation and improvements in service delivery (Rony et al. 2020; Liquid 2024). The key is to manage turnover effectively, ensuring that it does not reach levels that negatively impact morale and service quality (Alo and Dada 2020).

Employees further identify turnover as a contributing factor to a decline in WSU's overall image. The mean score of 4.19 indicates a strong perception among employees that turnover is detrimental to WSU's reputation. This perception aligns with broader research findings that highlight the negative consequences of high turnover rates on organisational image and performance (Al Amri and Pandey 2019; Al-Suraihi et al. 2021). A damaged reputation can hinder an institution's ability to attract and retain both students and talented staff, creating a vicious cycle of turnover and reputational decline (Alo and Dada 2020). This is particularly critical for educational institutions like WSU, where reputation plays a crucial role in attracting prospective students and faculty. Moreover, turnover can disrupt the continuity of service and academic programs, leading to dissatisfaction among current students and staff, which

further exacerbates the negative perception of the institution (Iqbal, Khan and Ahmed 2020). The long-term consequences of failing to address turnover include not only a decline in reputation but also potential financial losses due to decreased enrolment and increased operational costs. Addressing turnover requires a strategic approach that includes improving employee engagement, offering competitive compensation, and fostering a positive organisational culture (Iqbal et al. 2024). By implementing these strategies, WSU can mitigate the adverse effects of turnover, enhance its image, and strengthen its position in the competitive educational landscape.

6.4.2. Determinants of employee turnover at WSU

The second objective of this study aimed to examine the possible determinants of employee turnover intentions at WSU. To achieve this, multiple regression analysis was conducted with employee turnover intentions as the dependent variable and job satisfaction (H2), organisational commitment (H3), personal development (H4), and pay satisfaction (H5) as independent variables.

6.4.2.1. Hypothesis 2: Job satisfaction and turnover intentions

H2: Employees' job satisfaction has a negative effect on their turnover intentions.

The regression analysis revealed a non-significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions ($\beta = .103$, $p = .270$). This finding suggests that job satisfaction, as measured in this study, is not a significant predictor of employee turnover intentions at WSU. This result aligns with findings from Al-Ali, Ameen, Isaac Khalifa and Shibami (2019), who found no significant effect of job satisfaction on turnover intention within the oil and gas industry in the United Arab Emirates. Similarly, Berry (2010) found that job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between employee engagement and turnover intent, or between compensation fairness and turnover intent, among faculty members at a large land-grant institution. Furthermore, the study by Setiyanto and Hidayati (2017) aimed to investigate the relationship between work satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intention. Analysing data from 162 questionnaires using SPSS, they found that work satisfaction did not significantly influence turnover intentions (Setiyanto and Hidayati 2017). In the same line, the study by Dewi and Nurhayati (2021) also reported that job satisfaction has no effect on turnover intentions at PT Control Systems Arena Para Nusa.

The non-significant positive relationship ($\beta = .103$, $p = .270$) suggests that while there may be a slight positive trend, it is not statistically significant, indicating that other factors might play a more critical role in influencing turnover intentions. The study by Raditrono and Hendarsjah (2024) reported that job satisfaction alone may not be a robust predictor of turnover intentions because organisational culture and leadership styles can significantly mediate this relationship. This suggests that even if employees are satisfied with their jobs, other organisational dynamics might influence their decision to stay or leave (Raditrono and Hendarsjah 2024). Similarly, Koshak, Almadni, and Rajkhan (2024) found that while job satisfaction is an important factor, its impact on turnover intentions can be overshadowed by external factors such as economic conditions and job market opportunities. This supports the notion that job satisfaction might not always directly correlate with turnover intentions, especially in varying economic contexts. Gautam et al.'s (2024) research further supports this by indicating that personal and professional development opportunities, as well as work-life balance, can be more significant predictors of turnover intentions than job satisfaction alone. This suggests that employees might prioritise growth and balance over mere satisfaction in their current roles. Moreover, da Silva's (2024) study emphasises the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, suggesting that while job satisfaction is important, factors such as recognition, rewards, and career advancement opportunities can have a more substantial impact on turnover intentions. Finally, Singh et al. (2024) suggest that the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions can be moderated by individual differences, such as personality traits and personal values, which can either strengthen or weaken this relationship.

Conversely, the result contradicts a large body of research that consistently identifies job satisfaction as a key antecedent to turnover intentions. For instance, Lukas et al. (2024) found that job satisfaction negatively correlates with turnover intention, suggesting that higher job satisfaction reduces the likelihood of employees intending to leave their jobs. Similarly, Finthariasari et al. (2024) reported that job satisfaction is a critical determinant of turnover intentions, with dissatisfied employees more likely to consider leaving their organisation. This finding is echoed by Sahputra (2024), who also identified job satisfaction as a significant predictor of turnover intentions (positive correlation), emphasising its role in employee retention strategies. Further supporting this view, Dewi and Nurhayati (2021) highlighted that job satisfaction has a negative

but significant influence on turnover intention, with satisfied employees showing lower turnover intentions. Wibowo et al. (2023) also confirmed that job satisfaction is inversely related to turnover intention, reinforcing the idea that enhancing job satisfaction can be an effective strategy to reduce employee turnover. Gunawan et al. (2024) added that job satisfaction, along with other factors like organisational commitment, plays a crucial role in shaping turnover intentions. However, some studies present a more nuanced view. Vanessa et al. (2023) also noted that while job satisfaction impacts turnover intention, its effect might be less pronounced in certain industries or job roles, indicating that other factors could mediate this relationship. Pratama et al. (2023) provided a slightly different perspective, suggesting that in some cases, job satisfaction might not have a significant direct effect on turnover intention, particularly when other factors like career advancement opportunities and work-life balance are more pressing concerns for employees. Agustin and Samekto (2023) also pointed out that while job satisfaction is generally important, its impact on turnover intentions can be overshadowed by external economic conditions or personal circumstances, which might lead employees to stay despite low satisfaction.

To sum up, while this study found no significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions at WSU, aligning with some existing research, it contradicts a substantial body of evidence that positions job satisfaction as a key factor influencing employee turnover. This discrepancy highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of turnover intentions, suggesting that while job satisfaction may play a role, its impact can be moderated by a myriad of other personal, organisational, and external factors specific to the WSU context. Further research is needed to explore these moderating variables and develop a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions within WSU.

6.4.2.2. Hypothesis 3: Organisational commitment and turnover intentions

H3: Employees' organisational commitment has a negative impact on their turnover intentions.

The analysis further indicated a non-significant negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions ($\beta = -.011$, $p = .920$). This suggests that organisational commitment, as measured, is not a significant predictor of

employee turnover intentions at WSU. This finding aligns with several previous studies. For example, Ardianto and Bukhori's (2021) study of 59 employees at PT Taruma Mandiri Indonesia, found that organisational commitment did not have a statistically significant effect on turnover intentions. Similarly, Silaban and Syah (2018) found no impact of organisational commitment on turnover intentions, suggesting that factors like compensation and basic need fulfilment might be more influential in employee retention. Their study highlighted the possibility of employees remaining in their positions primarily for financial stability and immediate needs, rather than a sense of loyalty or commitment to the organisation. Tnay et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intention within a production industry. Their findings, based on 85 responses, also indicated that organisational commitment did not have a significant relationship with turnover intention among the employees. Furthermore, Saeed et al. (2014) explored factors influencing employee turnover intentions using a sample of 166 employees. Their study, contrary to their initial hypothesis, found no statistically significant relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions.

However, the findings from this study contradict a large number of studies that reported a negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions. Organisational commitment is generally understood as the psychological attachment an employee feels towards their organisation, which can significantly influence their intention to stay or leave. A negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions is well documented, with higher commitment typically leading to lower turnover intentions. For instance, Berber and Gašić (2024) found that organisational commitment significantly reduces turnover intentions by fostering a sense of loyalty and belonging among employees. Similarly, Raditriono and Hendarsjah (2024) emphasise that strong organisational commitment can mitigate turnover intentions by enhancing job satisfaction and employee engagement. This negative relationship is further corroborated by several other studies. Research conducted by Dewi and Nurhayati (2021) and Bachri and Solekah (2021) found that organisational commitment has a negative and significant influence on turnover intention. The same finding is echoed by the research of Rawashdeh and Tamimi (2019), which found organisational commitment to have a negative effect on turnover intention. Moreover, research by Hilasseba and Rozaq (2014) highlights that

employees with strong affective commitment are less likely to consider leaving their organisation, as they feel a sense of belonging and alignment with organisational goals. Similarly, Özdemir et al. (2024) found that when employees perceive their organisation as supportive and aligned with their personal values, their commitment increases, which in turn reduces their intentions to leave. Furthermore, the study by Pranata and Ketut Netra (2019) also found that organisational commitment has a negative and significant effect on turnover intentions. This convergence of evidence underscores the importance of fostering organisational commitment as a strategy to reduce employee turnover.

Conversely, some studies have reported a positive relationship, albeit less common, where certain types of commitment, such as continuance commitment, might increase turnover intentions. This occurs when employees feel trapped in their roles due to a lack of alternatives or fear of losing benefits, leading to dissatisfaction and eventual turnover (Elrayah and Mabkhot, 2023). Elrayah and Mabkhot (2023) emphasise that when employees' commitment is driven by necessity rather than desire, it can paradoxically increase turnover intentions as employees seek to escape an unsatisfactory situation.

However, studies have shown that the relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions can be moderated by a multitude of factors, influencing both the strength and direction of this association. For instance, cultural differences can play a significant role in shaping organisational commitment and influencing turnover intentions. Bui et al. (2024) discuss how cultural contexts can alter the dynamics of commitment, suggesting that in some cultures, the relationship might not be as straightforward due to differing values and work ethics. Additionally, the nature of the industry and organisational climate can also affect this relationship. Özdemir et al. (2024) note that in high-stress environments, even committed employees might experience burnout, leading to increased turnover intentions despite high levels of commitment. Furthermore, methodological differences, such as sample size, measurement tools, and analytical techniques, can lead to varying results. Haleem et al. (2023) point out that inconsistencies in research findings often arise from differences in how organisational commitment and turnover intentions are

operationalised and measured. This highlights the importance of considering methodological rigour and consistency when interpreting research outcomes.

In conclusion, a negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions is widely acknowledged; the finding from this study underscores the complexity of this relationship. Factors such as cultural context, industry-specific dynamics, and methodological variations can lead to contradictory findings.

6.4.2.3. Hypothesis 4: Career development and turnover intentions

H4: Career Development is negatively related to staff turnover intentions

The analysis from the multiple regression analysis also showed a non-significant positive relationship between opportunities for personal development and turnover intentions ($\beta = .026, p = .809$). This suggests that perceived opportunities for personal growth and career development are not significant predictors of employee turnover intentions at WSU. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Bibowo and Masdupi (2015), who found that career development has no significant effect on employees' intentions to leave their jobs. Similarly, Marsyah and Widigdo's (2024) study reported that, contrary to the common belief that employees who perceive growth opportunities are less likely to leave, their study found that turnover intention is unaffected by career development. Instead, Marsyah and Widigdo (2024) positively identified work overload as a factor positively influencing turnover intention. Furthermore, Situmorang et al. (2023) examined the role of organisational culture and employee performance and found no significant effect of career development on turnover intention, nor did organisational culture moderate this relationship. The authors suggested that the impact of career development on turnover intentions might be contingent on other organisational factors, such as culture and performance metrics (Situmorang et al. 2023). Additionally, Solihin and Sagala's (2020) study also concluded that career development does not significantly influence employee turnover intentions. Furthermore, Dewi and Iqbal's (2023) quantitative study examined the mediating role of job satisfaction on the relationship between career development, job stress, and turnover intention on 122 organisation employees and found that career development did not significantly impact turnover intentions.

However, this contradicts findings from several other studies that have reported a negative link between training and development and turnover intentions. Jayasri and Annisa's (2023) research indicated a negative and significant influence of career development on turnover intention, suggesting that greater career opportunities within a company could actually lead to higher turnover intention rates. Similarly, the study by Dewi and Nurhayati (2021) yielded similar results: a lower chance for career advancement correlated with a higher drive for turnover intention. Kasdorf (2020) also found a negative and significant influence between career development and turnover intention, suggesting that robust career development programs within a company can significantly reduce the turnover intention rate. Furthermore, Putra et al.'s (2020) study, which aimed to determine the relationship between career development and turnover intentions, found a negative relationship between the two variables. Their research, conducted on 103 employees of PT Benua Penta Global in Medan, revealed that career development contributed to 9% of the variance in turnover intentions. Aburumman et al. (2020) found that human resource management practices such as compensation, performance appraisal, promotion, and training and development have a negative impact on employees' turnover intention, with career satisfaction partially mediating this relationship. Similarly, Dewi and Nurhayati (2021) highlighted that career development has a negative and significant impact on turnover intention, emphasising the importance of considering job satisfaction and organisational commitment as mediators in this relationship. Adiputra (2024) further supported these findings by establishing a negative and significant influence between career development and turnover intention, suggesting that high levels of career development within a company can reduce turnover intention rates. Moreover, Salleh et al. (2020) demonstrated that career planning and career satisfaction play a crucial role in reducing employees' turnover intention, with career satisfaction acting as a partial mediator between career planning and turnover intention. The negative impact of career development on turnover intention was also confirmed by Burhanudin and Wijanarko (2022), who aligned with previous research indicating that career development significantly influences employees' turnover intention.

Despite extensive research on the relationship between career development opportunities and employee turnover intentions, the findings are far from conclusive. This study found no significant relationship between the two, suggesting that perceived

opportunities for personal growth and career development are not significant predictors of employee turnover intentions at WSU. However, the contrasting findings from other studies, indicating a negative relationship, underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of this relationship. It is evident that factors beyond simply the availability of career development opportunities—such as perceived value, individual aspirations, and organisational context—likely moderate this relationship.

6.4.2.4. Hypothesis 5: Pay satisfaction and turnover intentions

H5: Higher levels of pay satisfaction are negatively related to employee turnover intentions.

Lastly, the analysis revealed an insignificant positive relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intentions ($\beta = .184$, $p = .103$). This finding suggests that pay satisfaction, as measured in this study, is not a significant predictor of employee turnover intentions at WSU. Consequently, hypothesis 5, which posited a significant negative relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intentions, was rejected.

This finding aligns with a large body of research that reported no statistically significant relationship between pay satisfaction/compensation and turnover intentions. For instance, Nugroho and Tanuwijaya (2022) investigated the drivers of turnover intention among food and beverage industry employees. Their study, using SEM analysis of 125 respondents, found no significant effect of salary satisfaction on employee turnover intentions. Similarly, Yue (2019) examined the relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intention within the Canadian hospitality and tourism industry. The study analysed 199 surveys and revealed that there was no direct relationship between pay satisfaction and employee turnover intentions. Ezech and Olawale (2017) also investigated the relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intentions among federal civil servants in Nigeria. Their study, involving 377 participants, found no significant relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intention. Additionally, the study by Raharjo Praditya and Marhalinda (2022) explored the determinants of turnover intention, including compensation, among employees at an Indonesian stock exchange-listed company. Using the SEM method, the study did not find a significant effect of compensation on turnover intention. Moreover, Wajdi and Nafisa (2023) examined the impact of compensation on turnover intentions among

young female employees in private healthcare institutions. Their study, using PLS-SEM analysis, found that compensation did not significantly impact turnover intentions. Similarly, Sinaga et al. (2022) investigated the impact of compensation on turnover intentions with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Their study, using SEM with SmartPLS 3.0, found that compensation did not significantly affect turnover intentions. Surbakti et al. (2021) also examined the determinants of turnover intentions at Mitra Sejati Hospital Medan. Using multiple linear regression and path analysis on 75 samples, the study concluded that compensation did not directly impact turnover intentions. Lastly, Choiriyah, Fatimah, and Amir (2019) investigated the influence of financial compensation on turnover intentions at Muhammadiyah Hospital Palembang. Analysing data from 86 medical and non-medical employees, the study found that financial compensation alone did not affect turnover intentions. However, it did reveal a significant combined effect of financial compensation and job satisfaction on turnover intentions.

However, these findings contradict a considerable body of research that suggests compensation is a significant factor in employee turnover decisions. For instance, the study by Pakpahan and Sihombing (2024) demonstrates that compensation significantly affects turnover intentions among HR employees at PT Bank Rakyat Indonesia, even when transformational leadership does not show a similar impact. This underscores the importance of fair compensation in retaining employees. Similarly, Berber and Gašić's (2024) research in Serbia reveals a negative relationship between compensation systems and turnover intentions, with employee commitment partially mediating this relationship. This suggests that effective compensation strategies can enhance employee commitment, thereby reducing turnover intentions. Further supporting this, Indiyati and Sary (2024) found that in the mining sector of Mimika Regency, compensation significantly reduces turnover intentions, highlighting the necessity of fair compensation strategies to mitigate high turnover rates. This study also emphasises the role of motivation along with compensation in influencing employee retention (Indiyati and Sary, 2024). Nursanti and Marpaung's (2024) research on cooperative employees also identifies compensation as a significant factor negatively impacting turnover intentions, alongside work environment and career development. This indicates that compensation, when combined with other positive workplace factors, can effectively reduce turnover. Finally, Shah et al. (2024)

highlight a strong correlation between low compensation and increased turnover in microfinance banks in Pakistan, suggesting that addressing compensation issues is crucial for reducing turnover. Further supporting this view, research by Triningsih and Darma (2024) found that compensation had a significant negative impact on turnover intention, with employee engagement serving as a mediating factor. This suggests that compensation not only directly affects turnover intentions but also influences other factors like engagement, which in turn affect turnover.

Overall, the above discussion reveals that the relationship between compensation and employee turnover intentions is complex and multifaceted. While this study, along with a subset of existing research, found no direct relationship between compensation and turnover intentions, this finding contradicts a substantial body of evidence highlighting compensation as a key factor in employee retention. This discrepancy underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of the factors driving turnover at WSU, acknowledging that the impact of compensation might be moderated by various individual, organisational, and contextual variables. Further research exploring these moderating factors is crucial to developing effective strategies for employee retention at WSU.

Table 6.19. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result	Decision
H1	Employee turnover affects the operational functions at WSU.	Significant (supported by descriptive analysis).	Accepted
H2	Employees' job satisfaction has a negative effect on their turnover intentions.	Not significant.	Rejected
H3	Employees' organisational commitment has a negative impact on their turnover intentions.	Not significant.	Rejected
H4	Career development is negatively related to staff turnover intention.	Not significant.	Rejected
H5	Pay and benefits satisfaction has a negative effect on staff turnover intention.	Not significant.	Rejected

6.4.3. Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for WSU. First, the lack of support for the hypothesised relationships suggests that other factors not included in this study might be more influential in driving turnover intentions at WSU. Further research is needed to identify these factors. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the unique context of WSU when interpreting these findings. Factors such as organisational culture, leadership styles and the specific challenges faced by HEIs in South Africa may be influencing employee perceptions and behaviours. To effectively address turnover, WSU should develop targeted interventions that address the specific needs and concerns of its employees. This might involve conducting focus groups or surveys to gather employee feedback and identify areas for improvement. By understanding the factors that contribute to employee turnover intentions, WSU can take proactive steps to create a more positive and supportive work environment that fosters employee retention.

6.5. Study limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations, as they may impact the generalisability of the findings:

6.5.1. Sample size and response rate

The study was limited by a low response rate. Only 123 of the 320 questionnaires distributed were returned, resulting in a 38.7% response rate. This small sample size (n=123) may not be fully representative of the entire employee population at WSU, potentially limiting the generalisability of the findings to the broader university setting. This limitation is crucial because predictive models with small sample sizes may lead to overfitting, instability, and poor performance as they may not adequately capture the variability within the population, leading to overestimated effect sizes and reduced reproducibility (Riley et al. 2024; Barch 2023). This is particularly problematic in studies with complex variables or when the effect sizes are small, as small samples are less likely to detect true effects, increasing the risk of Type I and Type II errors

(Volovici and Brody 2023; Burgess et al. 2022). Moreover, small samples can result in high uncertainty and instability in individual-level risk estimates, which undermines the trust and fairness of the findings (Riley et al. 2024). Conversely, larger sample sizes enhance the statistical power of a study, which is the probability of detecting a true effect if it exists. This is because larger samples provide more precise estimates of population parameters, reducing standard errors and increasing confidence in the generalisability of the findings (Szreder 2022; Barch 2023; Anderson et al. 2017). Larger samples also allow for more accurate effect size estimations, as they provide a better representation of the population, leading to narrower confidence intervals and more reliable conclusions (Barch 2023; Gumpili and Das 2022). Therefore, a larger sample size would enhance the statistical power of the analysis, increasing the likelihood of detecting significant relationships if they exist within the WSU employee population.

Furthermore, low response rates can introduce non-response bias, where individuals who choose to participate in the study may differ systematically from those who do not (Cheung et al. 2017). This bias can skew the results and threaten the validity of the findings. The study by Bai (2024) highlighted that declining response rates have been linked to potential non-response bias, which could distort the survey's depiction of time use patterns across the U.S. population. This bias is particularly concerning when non-respondents belong to groups with weaker community ties, which may not be adequately represented in the survey results (Bai 2024). Similarly, in online surveys, low response rates are a significant contributor to bias, affecting the overall quality of results (Shiyab et al. 2024). Strategies such as well-designed surveys, financial incentives, personalised invitations, and multiple recruitment strategies are recommended to improve response rates and mitigate bias (Shiyab et al. 2024). However, while low response rates often raise concerns about non-response bias, some studies have demonstrated that this bias might not always be substantial. For instance, the study by Lie et al. (2019) on a nationwide survey of long-term cancer survivors found limited evidence of non-response bias despite a modest response rate. This suggests that surveys with low response rates can still be valuable and generalisable if the characteristics of respondents and non-respondents are similar (Lie et al. 2019).

Therefore, while the study provides valuable insights, future research should aim for a larger and more representative sample size to enhance the generalisability and reliability of the findings. Strategies to improve response rates, such as follow-up reminders, incentives for participation, and ensuring the survey's relevance to the target population, should be considered.

6.5.2. Single organisation and context

The study focused solely on Walter Sisulu University. Therefore, the findings may not be generalisable to other universities or organisations, particularly those operating in different contexts or geographical locations. This limited generalisability stems from the fact that organisational cultures, leadership styles, and employee experiences can vary significantly across institutions and sectors, as highlighted by Malik and Norman (2023). Factors unique to WSU, such as its specific challenges, geographical location, and institutional policies, might have influenced the observed relationships, making it difficult to generalise the findings to other settings.

6.5.3. Self-reported data

The study relied on self-reported data from employees, which can be subject to response bias, potentially impacting the accuracy and reliability of the findings. As noted by Schroder et al. (2003), respondents might adopt recall strategies that are more accurate for longer timeframes, potentially compromising the precision of responses related to recent experiences. Furthermore, participants may have provided socially desirable responses, aligning their answers with perceived norms or expectations rather than reflecting their genuine perceptions. This tendency toward social desirability is particularly relevant when researching sensitive topics like job satisfaction and turnover intentions, as individuals might hesitate to express dissatisfaction openly. O'Sullivan (2008) elaborates on the challenges of obtaining accurate self-reported data on sensitive behaviour and highlights the potential influence of social desirability bias. Similarly, the study by Schell, Godinho and Cunningham (2021) on gambling behaviour found that socially desirable responses, particularly impression management, affected self-reported gambling measures over time, with males showing less change in scores due to higher impression management scores. This suggests that participants may alter their responses to align with

perceived social norms, thereby skewing the data. Additionally, responses could be influenced by transient factors such as current mood or recent experiences, leading to inconsistencies in responses over time. For instance, a recent positive or negative event at work could disproportionately influence an employee's perception of overall job satisfaction, even if it is not representative of their typical experience (Tziner et al. 2019; Cai, Humphrey and Qian 2016). Moreover, the study on psychosocial work factors and self-reported health (SRH) underscores the potential for response bias, as self-reported health can be influenced by current mood or recent experiences, leading to variability in responses over time (Niedhammer et al. 2022). This is particularly relevant in longitudinal studies where participants' perceptions may change due to external factors, such as changes in the work environment or personal life events (Niedhammer et al. 2022). The research on emodiversity among remote workers also highlights the influence of mood on self-reported data. The study found that emotional diversity decreased on days when participants reported poorer mental health, indicating that current emotional states can significantly impact self-reports of mental health and well-being (Minusa et al. 2023). This aligns with the notion that self-reported data can be substantially influenced by transient emotional states, leading to potential inaccuracies. The lack of consistent definitions and measurement tools further complicates the reliability of self-reported data in this context, as individuals may interpret, and report discrimination differently based on their personal experiences and biases.

Therefore, while self-reported data offers valuable insights into employee perceptions, it is essential to acknowledge the potential for response bias and interpret the findings cautiously. Future research could incorporate multiple sources of data to triangulate the findings and mitigate the limitations of self-reported data.

6.5.4. Limited scope of variables

The study focused on a limited number of variables related to employee turnover intentions. The model did not include other factors that could potentially influence turnover intentions, such as work-life balance, supervisor support, organisational culture, and external job opportunities. A study by Hilasseba and Rozaq (2014) on employees in East Java found that work-life balance positively affects organisational commitment, which in turn influences turnover intentions, suggesting that a balanced

work-life can reduce the desire to leave an organisation. Similarly, supervisory support is a critical factor; it enhances job attachment, which negatively correlates with turnover intentions. This relationship is mediated by job attachment, emphasising the importance of supportive leadership in retaining employees (Raditriono and Hendarsjah 2024). Organisational culture, encompassing factors like leader empowerment, task support, and emotional commitment, also plays a vital role. A systematic review conducted by Bemvenuti (2024) identified these elements as significant contributors to turnover intentions, alongside the need for recognition and alignment with company values. This underscores the necessity for a positive organisational culture to mitigate turnover. External job opportunities are another influential factor. A study among educators in Lebanon found that perceived alternative job opportunities, although not directly affecting job satisfaction, can influence turnover intentions, especially during economic crises when job opportunities are scarce (Ibrahim et al. 2024). This suggests that the availability of external opportunities can sway employees' decisions to stay or leave.

Future research should address these limitations by:

- Employing strategies to increase response rates and obtain a larger, more representative sample.
- Conducting comparative studies across multiple universities or organisations to assess the generalisability of the findings.
- Utilising longitudinal designs to examine the causal relationships between variables over time.
- Incorporating a wider range of variables that might influence employee turnover intentions.
- Considering the use of mixed methods approaches, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights from interviews or focus groups, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving turnover.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter delved into the factors influencing employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University, analysed data collected from employees and connected the findings to

existing research. Beginning with a demographic overview (Section 6.2), the chapter established a profile of the university's workforce, considering factors like age, gender, job roles, and length of service. Section 6.3 then presented the core findings using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, and regression techniques. Notably, no significant correlations were found between employee turnover intentions and the independent variables studied. This suggests that the factors initially hypothesised to impact turnover, such as job satisfaction or career development opportunities, did not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with employees' intentions to leave the university.

Section 6.4 provided a thorough discussion of these results, interpreting their meaning within the context of existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks. The lack of correlation between expected predictors and turnover intentions highlights a need to explore alternative explanations for employee departures. The chapter acknowledged the potential limitations of the study in Section 6.5, ensuring a balanced perspective on the findings. This conclusion underscores the need for further research to uncover the unique factors driving turnover within this specific organisational context.

CHAPTER SEVEN. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1. Introduction

This study examined factors influencing employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University (WSU). The research employed a quantitative approach, utilising a questionnaire survey distributed to 320 employees across various departments, yielding 123 responses. Five hypotheses were tested, exploring the relationships between turnover intentions and operational functions, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and training. Data analysis encompassed descriptive statistics and inferential techniques, including correlation and regression analyses. This comprehensive investigation aimed to provide insights into employee retention strategies within the higher education context at WSU.

The chapter begins with an overview of the study, providing context for the research. It presents a summary of key findings, followed by a discussion that interprets the results in the context of Walter Sisulu University and compares them with existing literature. The chapter also addresses the study's limitations, offers actionable recommendations for improving employee retention, outlines future research directions, and concludes with comprehensive insights into strategies for enhancing retention within the higher education sector.

7.2. Overview of the study

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the study, examining the various chapters that collectively address employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University. The study employs a robust methodological approach to analyse data and derive insights, offering conclusions and recommendations aimed at enhancing employee retention strategies within higher education institutions. The introductory chapter laid the groundwork by clearly articulating the study's purpose and significance, focusing on the pressing issue of employee turnover within higher education. It underscored the impact of turnover on operational efficiency and institutional goals at Walter Sisulu University, highlighting the challenges faced by the institution. This chapter set the stage for the research questions and hypotheses, aiming to identify the underlying factors that contributed to turnover. By situating the problem within the specific context

of WSU, the introduction emphasised the need for targeted interventions designed to reduce turnover and foster a stable, committed workforce. The chapter further outlined the research objectives, detailing the specific aims and goals of the study. It provided a comprehensive roadmap for the research, guiding the reader through the subsequent chapters and illustrating how each component of the study contributed to understanding and addressing employee turnover. In doing so, the introduction established a clear and focused framework for the research, ensuring its relevance and applicability to the challenges faced by higher education institutions.

In the second chapter, the study expanded its focus to include a global perspective on employee turnover, providing a comprehensive overview of its conceptualisation and the various types that exist. This chapter examined turnover within HEIs across diverse regions, including Europe, Africa, and Asia, and offered a comparative analysis of trends and practices observed in these areas. By doing so, it highlighted the varied nature of turnover issues and their manifestations in different cultural and institutional contexts. The chapter delved into the organisational impact of turnover, noting significant effects such as decreased productivity and morale, which can severely hinder institutional efficiency and effectiveness. It explored a range of reasons behind turnover, from job dissatisfaction and lack of career development opportunities to organisational culture and work-life balance issues. The chapter concluded by discussing preventive measures that HEIs worldwide can adopt, drawing on successful strategies implemented in various regions. These strategies included enhancing employee engagement, offering career development programs, and fostering a supportive work environment. This global lens provided a contextual backdrop for understanding turnover dynamics more broadly and highlighted the importance of adapting strategies to fit specific regional and institutional contexts.

The third chapter focused specifically on South Africa, offering a detailed examination of the higher education landscape through the lens of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. This legal framework was instrumental in shaping the HEIs in the country, providing a structured approach to governance and policy implementation. The chapter provided an overview of Walter Sisulu University, delving into the unique challenges it faced concerning employee turnover. It highlighted significant turnover trends at WSU, noting that over 603 employees had resigned since 2012, resulting in a 1.5% turnover rate. This analysis offered insights into the strategic goals set by the

university to manage turnover effectively, emphasising the importance of staff empowerment and robust retention policies. Additionally, the chapter explored performance measurement within higher education institutions, focusing on talent management and the crucial role of staff retention in maintaining institutional stability. By adopting this localised perspective, the chapter underscored the specific institutional and cultural factors influencing turnover in South Africa, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and strategies relevant to the country's higher education sector.

The fourth chapter examined the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpinned the study. It began by introducing foundational theories such as human capital theory and intellectual capital theory, establishing their relevance to understanding turnover dynamics. These theories were pivotal in explaining how the skills and knowledge of employees contributed to organisational value and how their departure could affect institutional stability. Additionally, the chapter delved into employee motivation through well-established frameworks like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Motivation Theory, illustrating how psychological and motivational factors influenced turnover intentions. In reviewing employee turnover models, the chapter assessed the Unfolding Turnover Model and Job Embeddedness Model, evaluating their applicability to the higher education sector. This review included a discussion on recent trends in employee turnover and their implications for institutional performance, highlighting how these models and theories offered a comprehensive framework for analysing turnover. Ultimately, these insights informed the development of effective retention strategies tailored to higher education institutions.

In the fifth chapter, the study detailed its research design and methodology. The chapter emphasised a positivist philosophy and quantitative approach, described the descriptive research design and outlined the study's population, which comprised 1 777 individuals from WSU. A sample of 350 was selected using random sampling, and data was collected through a questionnaire-based survey hosted on Google Forms.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The chapter highlighted ethical considerations, ensuring the integrity and

validity of the research process. This methodological framework supported the study's findings and informed its conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter six presented the data analysis and discussion. It reported that all variables, except for the first hypothesis, were found to be insignificant. The only hypothesis accepted was that turnover affects operational functions at Walter Sisulu University. This chapter interpreted these findings within the specific context of WSU, providing insights into the factors that influence employee retention. The discussion set the stage for a comprehensive synthesis of key findings, aligning them with broader institutional goals and the necessity for effective retention strategies. This analysis formed the basis for the study's subsequent conclusions and recommendations. By linking the data to practical outcomes, the chapter highlighted the critical areas needing attention to improve retention. It emphasised the importance of targeted interventions to address turnover, thereby supporting WSU's strategic objectives. The findings underscored the impact of turnover on institutional performance, reinforcing the need for a focused approach to managing human resources in higher education.

The final chapter synthesises the study's findings and offers actionable recommendations. It begins with a summary of key insights, addressing each hypothesis and drawing conclusions about the factors influencing employee turnover at WSU. The chapter provides strategic recommendations for enhancing retention, discusses the study's limitations, and suggests avenues for future research. By integrating findings with practical strategies, the study aims to inform policy and practice within higher education, contributing to improved employee retention and institutional performance. This comprehensive conclusion underscores the study's significance and its potential impact on higher education institutions.

7.3. Summary of key findings

This study conducted at Walter Sisulu University sought to understand the dynamics of employee turnover and its impact on institutional performance. Through a structured research approach, the study addressed several hypotheses aimed at identifying the factors influencing turnover and proposing strategic interventions. The key findings of the research are summarised as follows:

One of the primary findings was the confirmation that employee turnover significantly impacts the operational functions at WSU. This was the only hypothesis accepted, highlighting the direct correlation between turnover rates and the university's operational efficiency. Descriptive statistics revealed that mean scores for employee turnover items ranged from 4.0163 to 4.2114, indicating a consensus among respondents that turnover has negative implications for the institution. This includes increased costs, disrupted operations, reduced employee morale, and a decline in service quality. These insights underscore the critical need for targeted strategies to mitigate turnover and maintain operational efficiency.

Conversely, several hypotheses related to other potential factors influencing turnover were rejected. These included hypotheses concerning job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and pay and benefits satisfaction. Each of these factors was analysed using multiple regression analysis to determine their impact on turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University. Despite their reputation as critical determinants of employee retention in many organisational settings, the data does not support their significant influence on turnover intentions at WSU.

Table 7.1. Summary of Hypotheses, Methodologies, and Outcome

Hypothesis	Methodology Used	Outcome
Employee turnover affects the operational functions at WSU.	Descriptive statistics	Confirmed
Employees' job satisfaction negatively affects turnover intentions.	Multiple regression analysis	Rejected
Employees' organisational commitment negatively impacts turnover intentions.	Multiple regression analysis	Rejected
Career development is negatively related to staff turnover intention.	Multiple regression analysis	Rejected
Pay and benefits satisfaction negatively affects staff turnover intention.	Multiple regression analysis	Rejected

The regression analysis at Walter Sisulu University revealed a baseline turnover intention level of 3.307, independent of the factors studied. This suggested a moderate inherent turnover intention among employees. Job satisfaction, with an

unstandardised coefficient of 0.053 and a standardised coefficient of 0.103, showed a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with turnover intentions ($p = 0.2702$). This indicated that changes in job satisfaction had a minimal impact on employees' decisions to stay or leave, necessitating further investigation into other influencing factors.

An unstandardised coefficient of 0.150 and a standardised coefficient of 0.184 exhibited a positive relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intentions, yet this relationship remained statistically insignificant ($p = 0.1030$). While pay satisfaction might have influenced turnover intentions to some extent, it was not a decisive factor within the context of WSU. This finding suggested that, although compensation was important, it did not singularly determine employees' intentions to remain with or depart from the institution.

Personal development opportunities, with an unstandardised coefficient of 0.028 and a standardised coefficient of 0.026, had a negligible impact on turnover intentions, as indicated by a high p -value of 0.8090. This suggested that personal development was not significantly affecting employees' decisions at WSU. The minimal influence of personal development on turnover intentions pointed to the need for WSU to explore and enhance other areas that might have been more impactful in retaining staff.

Organisational commitment showed a very slight negative relationship with turnover intentions, with an unstandardised coefficient of -0.011 and a standardised coefficient of -0.011, yet this relationship was statistically insignificant ($p = 0.9201$). This indicated that organisational commitments did not significantly deter turnover intentions at WSU, contrary to typical expectations. This finding highlighted the possibility that other factors—perhaps related to organisational culture or external influences—might have been more crucial in shaping employee retention.

The model summary indicated an R value of 0.429 and an R square of 0.420, suggesting that the model explained approximately 42% of the variance in turnover intentions. With an F -value of 1.287 and a significance level of 0.0203, the model was statistically significant overall. This suggested that, while individual predictors might not have been significant, they collectively provided some explanation for turnover intentions, emphasising the need to explore additional variables that could better account for employee retention dynamics at WSU.

7.4. Interpretation of the findings in the context of WSU

This study conducted at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) offers critical insights into the dynamics of employee turnover and its implications for the institution. By examining various hypotheses related to turnover, the research provides a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing staff retention and the operational implications for WSU. This interpretation seeks to contextualise these findings within the unique environment of WSU, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities for improving employee retention.

H1: Employee turnover affects operational functions at WSU

The confirmation of the hypothesis that employee turnover significantly affects operational functions at WSU underscores a critical challenge for the institution. High turnover rates disrupt workflow, leading to increased workloads for remaining staff and potential declines in service quality (Oni and Fatoki 2017; Linhartová 2011; Živković et al. 2023). The authors also discuss the broader organisational impacts of turnover, including the potential for decreased service quality and customer satisfaction, which can further exacerbate financial and operational challenges. This finding is particularly relevant for WSU, where maintaining operational efficiency is crucial for achieving educational goals and sustaining institutional reputation. The negative implications of turnover on morale and productivity suggest an urgent need for targeted interventions to stabilise the workforce and enhance operational continuity.

Rejected Hypotheses and Implications (H2-H5)

The rejection of hypotheses related to job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and pay and benefits satisfaction reveals the complexity of turnover dynamics at WSU. While these factors are traditionally viewed as critical retention determinants, their negligible impact in this context suggests that other variables may be more influential. This outcome indicates that WSU's organisational culture, leadership practices, or external economic conditions might play a more significant role in shaping turnover intentions (Indradewa and Santiajie, 2024; Bhat et al. 2021). Understanding these unique dynamics is essential for developing effective retention strategies tailored to WSU's specific needs.

The findings suggest that organisational culture and leadership styles at WSU may significantly influence employee turnover. A supportive and inclusive culture, coupled with effective leadership, can enhance employee engagement and commitment, thereby reducing turnover intentions (Vincent, 2024; Indradewa and Santiajie, 2024). It is crucial for WSU to assess its organisational culture and leadership practices, identifying areas for improvement and fostering a more positive work environment. Initiatives such as leadership development programs and cultural assessments could be instrumental in aligning the institution's values with employee expectations, thereby enhancing retention.

The study highlights the importance of strategic human resource management (HRM) in addressing turnover at WSU. Effective HRM practices, such as employee engagement initiatives and performance recognition (Cahyono, 2024), coupled with work-life balance (Hilasseba and Rozaq, 2014), are vital for retaining talent. Given the study's findings, WSU should prioritise these areas, ensuring that HR policies are aligned with the institution's strategic goals and responsive to employee needs. Tailoring HR strategies to the unique challenges faced by WSU can help create a more stable and committed workforce.

The rejection of several hypotheses suggests that broader exploration is needed to fully understand turnover dynamics at WSU. Future research should consider additional factors, such as work-life balance, job security, and external economic influences, which may impact turnover intentions. By expanding the scope of the investigation, WSU can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes of turnover and develop more effective interventions.

7.5. Study's limitations

In any research endeavour, acknowledging the limitations is crucial for contextualising the findings and guiding future studies. This study on employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University is no exception. Several limitations were identified that may have influenced the results and interpretations.

One significant limitation was the sample size. While the study aimed to capture a comprehensive view of employee turnover at WSU, the sample may not have been large enough to represent the entire population adequately. This limitation affects the

generalisability of the findings, as the results may not be applicable to other HEIs or even other departments within WSU. Future research could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the robustness of the findings.

Additionally, the study primarily relied on quantitative data collected through surveys and descriptive statistics. While this approach provided valuable insights, it may have overlooked qualitative aspects of employee turnover, such as personal experiences and perceptions that are not easily quantified. Incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing turnover.

Furthermore, the study focused on specific variables like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and pay and benefits satisfaction. However, the rejection of these hypotheses suggests that other unexamined factors may play a significant role in turnover intentions. Variables such as organisational culture, leadership styles, and external economic factors were not explored in depth. Future research should consider a broader range of variables to capture the complex dynamics influencing turnover.

Moreover, the study's specific time frame may not have taken into account changes in employee attitudes or institutional policies over time. Turnover dynamics can be influenced by temporal factors such as economic shifts, policy changes, or significant organisational events. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into how these dynamics evolve and identify trends over time.

Lastly, another limitation is the potential for response bias in survey data. Employees may have provided socially desirable answers or may not have fully disclosed their true feelings about their work environment and turnover intentions. Ensuring anonymity and employing techniques to minimise bias could improve the accuracy of future data collection efforts.

While the study provides valuable insights into employee turnover at WSU, these limitations highlight areas for improvement in future research. Addressing these limitations could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of turnover dynamics and inform more effective retention strategies tailored to the specific needs and challenges of higher education institutions.

7.6. Conclusions

This section summarises the key findings related to employee turnover intentions at Walter Sisulu University, focusing on the impact of various organisational and personal factors.

7.6.1. Impact of turnover on operations

This study confirms that WSU employees perceive employee turnover as negatively impacting the university's operational functions. Participants acknowledged the costs associated with employee turnover (mean = 4.21, SD = 0.84) and its detrimental effect on staff morale (mean = 4.07, SD = 0.79). Furthermore, respondents indicated that employee turnover disrupts WSU's operations (mean = 4.12, SD = 0.80) and negatively impacts services rendered to its stakeholders (mean = 4.02, SD = 0.72). These findings highlight the perceived negative consequences of employee turnover on WSU's operational effectiveness and service delivery.

7.6.2. Job satisfaction

The analysis revealed a non-significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions at WSU. This finding suggests that job satisfaction, as measured in this study, might not be a strong predictor of employee turnover intentions at WSU. This finding contradicts some studies that emphasise the importance of job satisfaction in employee retention. However, it aligns with other research indicating that the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover can be complex and influenced by other factors.

7.6.3. Organisational commitment

The study found a non-significant negative relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions at WSU. This suggests that a strong sense of belonging and identification with WSU, as measured in this study, might not directly translate into a reduced intention to leave among its employees. Further research is needed to explore other factors that might mediate or moderate this relationship within the context of WSU.

7.6.4. Career development

Contrary to expectations, this study found no significant relationship between career development opportunities and employee turnover intentions at WSU. This suggests that the perceived availability of career growth and advancement opportunities within the university might not be a primary factor influencing employees' decisions to stay or leave. This finding highlights the need for further research to understand what other factors related to career development—or other job aspects altogether—might play a more significant role in shaping employee retention at WSU.

7.6.5. Pay and benefits satisfaction

The analysis revealed a non-significant relationship between pay and benefits satisfaction and employee turnover intentions at WSU. This finding suggests that satisfaction with compensation and benefits might not be a primary driver of employee retention at the university. This suggests that other job aspects—such as career development opportunities or organisational culture—might play a more significant role in shaping employee retention decisions at WSU.

According to the above findings, while employee turnover significantly impacts operational functions at WSU, traditional factors such as job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, personal development, and organisational commitment did not significantly predict turnover intentions. This suggests that other, perhaps unexamined, factors might be influencing turnover dynamics at the university. The confirmed impact of turnover on operations underscores the urgency for WSU to develop targeted strategies to stabilise its workforce and maintain productivity. The findings indicate that WSU must look beyond conventional retention determinants to address turnover effectively. The potential influence of organisational cultures and leadership styles suggests that fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment could enhance employee engagement and loyalty. Additionally, while compensation is important, it should be part of a broader strategy that includes career development opportunities, work-life balance initiatives, and recognition programs to attract and retain talent. The study's findings proposes several recommendations below to enhance employee retention at WSU. These include implementing leadership

development programs, conducting cultural assessments, and establishing clear career pathways.

7.7. Recommendations

The findings from this study provide a foundation for developing targeted strategies to address employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University (WSU). Based on the analysis, several recommendations can be made to enhance retention and improve operational efficiency. These recommendations focus on addressing the unique dynamics at WSU and leveraging existing strengths while exploring new opportunities for improvement.

7.7.1. Enhance organisational culture and leadership

WSU should prioritise creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that fosters employee engagement and loyalty. This can be achieved through:

- i. **Leadership Development Programs:** Implement training initiatives that enhance leadership skills, focusing on communication, conflict resolution, and team building. Effective leaders can inspire trust and commitment, thereby reducing turnover intentions.
- ii. **Cultural Assessments:** Conduct regular assessments to understand the current organisational culture and identify areas for improvement. Engaging employees in this process can provide valuable insights and foster a sense of ownership and involvement.
- iii. **Recognition and Reward Systems:** Develop systems that recognise and reward employee contributions, while reinforcing positive behaviour and promoting a culture of appreciation. This can enhance job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

7.7.2. Focus on career development opportunities

Although personal development did not significantly impact turnover intentions in the study, enhancing career development opportunities can still play a crucial role in retention. WSU can implement the following strategies:

- i. **Clear Career Pathways:** Establish clear and attainable career progression paths for employees, providing them with a sense of direction and purpose. This can be supported by regular performance reviews and development plans.
- ii. **Professional Development Programs:** Offer workshops, seminars, and courses that enable employees to acquire new skills and advance their careers. Encouraging participation in these programs can increase engagement and reduce turnover.
- iii. **Mentorship Initiatives:** Develop mentorship programs that pair experienced staff with newer employees, facilitating knowledge transfer and professional growth. Mentorship can also enhance organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

7.7.3. Improve compensation and benefit packages

While pay satisfaction was not a decisive factor in turnover intentions, competitive compensation and benefits remain essential for attracting and retaining talent. WSU should consider:

- i. **Regular Market Assessments:** Conduct regular assessments of compensation packages to ensure they are competitive with industry standards. Adjustments should be made as necessary to attract and retain skilled employees.
- ii. **Flexible Benefits Options:** Offer a range of benefits that cater to diverse employee needs, such as health insurance, retirement plans, and wellness programs. Flexibility in benefits can enhance overall satisfaction and retention.
- iii. **Incentive Programs:** Develop incentive programs that reward performance and encourage long-term commitment. These could include bonuses, profit-sharing, or other financial incentives aligned with institutional goals.

7.7.4. Address work-life balance and job security

The study suggests that factors beyond the traditional retention determinants may influence turnover intentions. WSU should explore:

- i. **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Implement flexible work schedules, remote work options, or compressed workweeks to accommodate employees' personal needs. This can improve work-life balance and reduce stress.
- ii. **Job Security Measures:** Communicate clearly about job security and future prospects within the institution. Providing transparency and stability can alleviate concerns and foster loyalty.
- iii. **Employee Well-being Programs:** Develop programs that support mental and physical well-being, such as stress management workshops, fitness classes, or counselling services. A focus on well-being can enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover.

Addressing employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University requires a multifaceted approach that considers the unique dynamics of the institution. By improving organisational culture, focusing on career development, improving compensation, and exploring work-life balance, WSU can create an environment that supports retention and operational success. These recommendations, coupled with ongoing research, will enable WSU to develop effective strategies that align with its goals and values, ultimately fostering a more engaged and committed workforce.

7.8. Future research directions

This study conducted at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) has provided valuable insights into employee turnover and its implications. However, the complexity of turnover dynamics necessitates further exploration to develop a comprehensive understanding and inform effective retention strategies. Future research should focus on several key areas to address the limitations of the current study and explore new dimensions that may influence employee retention.

7.8.1. Broadening the scope of variables

The current study focused on specific variables, such as job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, personal development, and organisational commitment. Future research should consider a broader range of factors that may influence turnover intentions. These could include:

- i. **Organisational Culture and Climate:** Investigating the impact of organisational culture and climate on turnover intentions can provide insights into how the work environment affects employee retention. Understanding the cultural dynamics at WSU can help identify areas for improvement and foster a more supportive and inclusive environment.
- ii. **Leadership Styles:** Exploring the role of different leadership styles in influencing turnover intentions can offer valuable insights. Research could examine how transformational, transactional, or servant leadership styles impact employee engagement and retention at WSU.
- iii. **Work-Life Balance:** Given the increasing importance of work-life balance, future studies should investigate how flexible work arrangements, remote work options, and other work-life balance initiatives affect turnover intentions. Understanding these dynamics can inform policies that enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

7.8.2. Incorporating qualitative research methods

Quantitative data provides a broad overview of turnover dynamics, but qualitative research can offer deeper insights into the underlying reasons for employee turnover. Future research should incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies to explore:

- i. **Employee Experiences and Perceptions:** Gaining insights into employees' personal experiences and perceptions can provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing turnover. Qualitative data can reveal the emotional and psychological aspects of turnover intentions that quantitative measures may overlook.
- ii. **Barriers to Retention:** Identifying specific barriers to retention through qualitative research can help develop targeted interventions. Understanding the challenges employees face in their roles and the factors that drive them to consider leaving can inform more effective retention strategies.

7.8.3. Longitudinal studies

Conducting longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into how turnover intentions and retention dynamics evolve over time. These studies can track changes in employees' attitudes, organisational policies, and external factors that may influence turnover. Longitudinal research can help identify trends, assess the impact of interventions, and inform long-term retention strategies.

- i. **Tracking Employee Journeys:** Monitoring the career paths and experiences of employees over time can provide insights into key milestones and factors that influence turnover intentions. Understanding the critical points in an employee's journey can inform targeted interventions to enhance retention.
- ii. **Assessing Policy Impact:** Longitudinal studies can evaluate the effectiveness of retention policies and initiatives implemented at WSU. By tracking changes in turnover rates and employee satisfaction over time, researchers can assess the impact of specific interventions and make data-driven recommendations for improvement.

7.8.4. Exploring external influences

Employee turnover is often influenced by external factors beyond the organisation's control. Future research should explore how external economic conditions, industry trends, and labour market dynamics impact turnover intentions at WSU. Understanding these external influences can help the institution anticipate challenges and develop strategies to mitigate their impact on retention.

- i. **Economic Conditions:** Investigating how economic fluctuations, such as recessions or economic growth, affect turnover intentions can provide insights into the broader context in which WSU operates. Understanding these dynamics can help the institution adapt its retention strategies to changing economic conditions.
- ii. **Industry Trends:** Exploring industry-specific trends and their impact on turnover intentions can provide valuable insights. Research could examine how changes in the higher education sector, such as technological advancements or shifts in funding, influence employee retention at WSU.

7.8.5. Expanding the sample size

The current study utilised a sample of 123 participants, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. Future research should aim to expand the sample size to include a more diverse and representative group of employees. A larger sample will provide a more robust analysis and enhance the reliability of the results, allowing for more accurate insights into the factors influencing turnover intentions across different departments and roles within WSU.

By addressing these areas, researchers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of turnover dynamics and inform effective retention strategies. These efforts will enable WSU to create a supportive and engaging work environment that fosters employee satisfaction and long-term commitment, ultimately contributing to the institution's success and sustainability.

7.9. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of employee turnover and its implications for Walter Sisulu University (WSU). Through the analysis of various factors such as job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, personal development, and organisational commitment, the research offers valuable insights into the dynamics influencing staff retention. The conclusions drawn from this study highlight both the challenges and opportunities WSU faces in enhancing employee retention and operational efficiency.

The analysis revealed that while employee turnover significantly impacts operational functions at WSU but traditional factors such as job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, personal development, and organisational commitment did not significantly predict turnover intentions. This suggests that other, perhaps unexamined, factors might be influencing turnover dynamics at the university. The confirmed impact of turnover on operations underscores the urgency for WSU to develop targeted strategies to stabilise its workforce and maintain productivity.

The findings indicate that WSU must look beyond conventional retention determinants to address turnover effectively. The potential influence of organisational culture and leadership styles suggests that fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment could enhance employee engagement and loyalty. Additionally, while compensation is

important, it should be part of a broader strategy that includes career development opportunities, work-life balance initiatives, and recognition programs to attract and retain talent.

The study has proposed several recommendations based on its findings to enhance retention at WSU. These include implementing leadership development programs, conducting cultural assessments, and establishing clear career pathways. Improving compensation packages, offering flexible work arrangements, and developing employee well-being programs are also critical components of a comprehensive retention strategy. Furthermore, ongoing research is essential to explore additional factors influencing turnover and to assess the effectiveness of implemented interventions.

The complexity of turnover dynamics at WSU necessitates further exploration. Future research should broaden the scope of variables to include organisational culture, leadership styles, and external influences. Incorporating qualitative methods can provide deeper insights into employee experiences and perceptions, while longitudinal studies can track changes over time and assess policy impacts. Understanding external economic conditions and industry trends will also help WSU anticipate challenges and adapt its retention strategies accordingly.

In conclusion, addressing employee turnover at Walter Sisulu University requires a multifaceted approach that considers the unique dynamics of the institution. By focusing on improving organisational culture, leadership, and strategic human resource management, WSU can create an environment that supports retention and operational success. These efforts, coupled with ongoing research, will enable WSU to develop effective strategies that align with its goals and values, ultimately fostering a more engaged and committed workforce. This comprehensive approach will not only improve employee satisfaction and retention but also contribute to the institution's long-term success and sustainability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.Questionnaire Instrument

Section A: Demographic Factors

This section aims to gather demographic information about the respondents to understand the diverse characteristics within the employee population at Walter Sisulu University.

1. What is your age group?

- 18 – 25 Years
- 26 – 35 Years
- 36 – 45 Years
- 46 – 55 Years
- 56 Years and above

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Divorced

4. What is your race?

- Indian
- African
- White
- Coloured

5. What is your highest educational qualification?

- Grade 12 Certificate
- Certificate
- Diploma/Degree
- Honours Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD Degree

6. How long have you worked at Walter Sisulu University?

- 1 – 5 Years
- 6 – 10 Years
- 11 – 15 Years
- 16 – 20 Years
- 21 Years and more

7. At which campus of WSU are you primarily based?

- Butterworth Campus
- Buffalo City Campus
- Mthatha Campus
- Queenstown Campus

8. In which employment category are you currently working at WSU?

- Academic/Research Staff
- Administration: Support Staff or Non-academic
- Management (Directors or Deputy Directors)
- Management (Executive Management / Senate)

9. In which province do you primarily reside?

- Eastern Cape
- Free State
- Gauteng
- KwaZulu-Natal

- Limpopo
- Mpumalanga
- North West
- Northern Cape
- Western Cape

10. What is your nationality?

- South African
- Non-South African

Section B: Assessing Employee Turnover at WSU

Please rate each of the following statements using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

2.1 Impact of Employee Turnover at WSU

- Employee turnover is costly for WSU.
- Employee turnover hampers the morale of other employees.
- Employee turnover disrupts the operations of WSU.
- Employee turnover has a negative impact on services rendered to its customers.
- Job satisfaction has a significant impact on employee attitudes.
- Job insecurity leads to employee turnover.
- Inadequate performance appraisal systems lead to employee turnover.
- Employee turnover causes a decline in WSU's image.

2.2 Job Satisfaction

- I feel that I could leave this job.
- I am actively looking for other jobs.
- If I was completely free to choose, I would leave this job.

2.3 Benefits and Pay Satisfaction

- I am happy with my benefits at work.
- The benefits at WSU meet my and my family's needs.
- I am content with my yearly increases.
- The organization pays well.
- The fringe benefits the company provides are good and competitive.
- WSU provides adequate support for continued education and professional development.
- I am satisfied with the opportunities for pay increases and promotions at WSU.

2.4 Personal Growth and Development

- I have enough development and learning opportunities within my department/organization.
- My workload is realistic.
- I believe that the company is committed and making active efforts to grow and develop its employees.
- I take full responsibility for my career.
- My proposed career path fits in with my own career aspirations.
- I am supported by my organization in my career aspirations.
- I have a career plan in my organization which directs my training and development.

2.5 Employee Organizational Commitment

- I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this university.
- One of the few negative consequences of leaving this university would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
- I really feel as if this university's problems are my own.
- I feel emotionally attached to this university.
- I feel like "part of the family" at my organization.
- I owe a great deal to this university.

Appendix B. Mapping of Questionnaire Items to RQ, RO, and Hypotheses

Section	Item Description	Research Question (RQ)	Research Objective (RO)	Hypothesis (H)
2.1	Employee turnover is costly for WSU	RQ1	RO1: To determine the operational impact of turnover	H1
2.1	Turnover hampers employee morale	RQ1	RO1	H1
2.1	Turnover disrupts operations at WSU	RQ1	RO1	H1
2.1	Turnover negatively affects services to customers	RQ1	RO1	H1
2.1	Job satisfaction impacts employee attitudes	RQ2	RO2: To examine the influence of job satisfaction	H2
2.1	Job insecurity leads to turnover	RQ2	RO2	H2
2.1	Poor appraisal systems lead to turnover	RQ2	RO2	H2
2.1	Turnover reduces WSU's institutional image	RQ1	RO1	H1
2.2	I feel I could leave this job	RQ2	RO2	H2
2.2	I am actively job searching	RQ2	RO2	H2
2.2	I would leave if I could	RQ2	RO2	H2
2.3	I am happy with my benefits	RQ4	RO4: To examine the effect of compensation	H4
2.3	Benefits meet family needs	RQ4	RO4	H4
2.3	I am content with yearly increases	RQ4	RO4	H4
2.3	The organization pays well	RQ4	RO4	H4
2.3	Fringe benefits are competitive	RQ4	RO4	H4
2.3	WSU supports continued development	RQ4/RQ5	RO4/RO5: To assess training and career dev. opportunities	H4/H5
2.3	I am satisfied with pay increases and promotion opportunities	RQ4	RO4	H4
2.4	Enough learning and development opportunities	RQ5	RO5	H5

2.4	My workload is realistic	RQ5	RO5	H5
2.4	Organization supports employee growth	RQ5	RO5	H5
2.4	I take responsibility for my career	RQ5	RO5	H5
2.4	Career path aligns with aspirations	RQ5	RO5	H5
2.4	I am supported in my career aspirations	RQ5	RO5	H5
2.4	I have a formal career development plan	RQ5	RO5	H5
2.5	I would be happy to stay at WSU	RQ3	RO3: To examine impact of organisational commitment	H3
2.5	Leaving WSU has few alternatives	RQ3	RO3	H3
2.5	I share WSU's problems	RQ3	RO3	H3
2.5	I feel emotionally attached to WSU	RQ3	RO3	H3
2.5	I feel like family at WSU	RQ3	RO3	H3
2.5	I owe a great deal to WSU	RQ3	RO3	H3

Appendix C. Turnitin report

Turnitin report_Koninga S Complete Thesis 20 Spetember 2024.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

11 %	10 %	1 %	2 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

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2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	2 %
3	www.coursehero.com Internet Source	1 %
4	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
5	iiespace.iie.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
6	ir.dut.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
7	digiresearch.vut.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
8	"The International Encyclopedia of Higher Education Systems and Institutions", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2020 Publication	1 %

Appendix D. Language editing certificate

Sury Bisetty Academic Editing Services

CIPC No. 2021/360666/07



The pen is mightier than the sword

To whom it may concern

I edited the thesis titled: Employee Turnover within Higher Education: A Case Of Walter Sisulu University by SIYABONGA KONINGA, student number: 22173827, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration: Public Management in the Department of Public Management Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology

Signed:

Date: 2 November 2024

Professional Language and Technical Editor



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CERTIFICATION:

BA. PG. UHDE (English Majors)
MLA – Academic Editing & Proofreading
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PEGSA: Critical Reading [etc.]

Disclaimer: I provided language and technical editing as per discussion with the client. The **content and structure** of the thesis were not amended in any way. The edited work described here may not be identical to that submitted. The author, at his/her sole discretion, has the prerogative to accept, delete, or change amendments/suggestions made by the editor before submission.

My editing adds tremendous value to your document, but I am only human. Although I rigorously check and recheck my work, it is impossible to guarantee 100% perfection.

Appendix E. Consent letter



CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: Employee turnover within higher education: A case of Walter Sisulu University

Names of Researcher/s: Siyabonga Koninga

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, S. Koninga, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: **31082316**
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature	Right
Thumbprint				

I, Siyabonga Koninga herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

<u>Siyabonga Koninga</u>	<u>28.06.2021</u>	<u>S. Koninga</u>
Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date

Signature

Please note the following:

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level- use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counselling (Department of Health, 2004).

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. a wrong date or spelling mistake, a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant's file and not thrown away, and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

References:

Department of Health: 2004. *Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Structures and Processes* <http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/factsheets/guidelines/ethnics/>

Department of Health. 2006. *South African Good Clinical Practice Guidelines*. 2nd Ed. Available at: http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page_id=14

Appendix F. Ethics approval letters from DUT and WSU



MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (FREC)

28 October 2023

Student No: 22173827

Dear Mr S Koninga

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

TITLE: Employee turnover within higher education: A case of Walter Sisulu University

Please be advised that the FREC Committee has reviewed your proposal and the following decision was made: **RESUBMISSION TO REVIEWERS– Ethics Level 2**

Date of FRC Approval: 31 August 2023

Please ensure that you address the following:

- The Reviewers have provided you with extensive feedback in their Report, please use this guidance to provide clarity on the points requested.
- All amendments must be undertaken in RED font.

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 FREC according to the FREC SOP's. Please note that ANY amendments in the approved proposal require the approval of the FREC as outlined in the FREC SOP's.

Yours sincerely

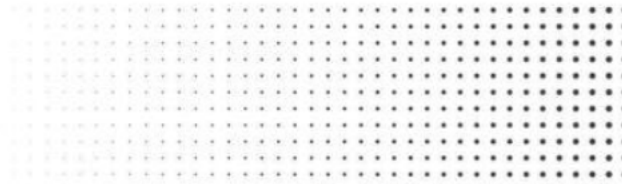
Prof Shalini Singh

Chairperson: Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Appendix G. Gatekeeper Permission Letter



Directorate of Research & Innovation



Office of the Acting Director: Post Graduate Studies
Private Bag X1 • Mthatha • 5117
Eastern Cape • Republic of South Africa
Tel: (+27) 047 401 6070 • Cell: (+27) 084 719 5900 • Email: tncanywa@wsu.ac.za

01 December 2023

Siyabonga Koninga
Walter Sisulu University
Department: Research and Innovation
MTHATHA
5100

Dear Mr. Koninga,

Gatekeeper's Permission Letter to conduct research at Walter Sisulu University
Ethical Clearance Number: 31082316 (Mr S Koninga) (22173827)
Institution: Durban University of Technology

A Gatekeeper Letter is hereby granted for the study "**Employee turnover within higher education: A Case Study of Walter Sisulu University.**" Provided that copies of your completed study will be submitted to the post-graduate studies office and the Directorate of Research & Innovation.

All data pertaining to Walter Sisulu University will be treated confidentially and you are required to always abide by ethical principles. It is your responsibility to seek consent from Participants.

Kind regards

Prof T Ncanywa
Acting Director: Postgraduate Studies.

Walter Sisulu University