



Research Paper

Strategies For Retaining Scarce Skills and Reducing Turnover in The South African Public Sector

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Abstract

The South African public sector confronts a problem in retaining scarce skills because it competes in the labour market with the private sector, which provides higher packages/ benefits and conducive working conditions. Higher turnover of workers with scarce skills is a serious problem for service delivery and a costly exercise for the government. When scarce-skilled employees leave the public sector, vacant positions in the institutions' post establishments arise; as a result, the public institutions' ability to provide quality service delivery declines, and the recruitment and selection process is a costly process that further strains the government's budget. The capacity of a public institution to provide world-class service to its citizens is entirely dependent on the availability of competent staff who will carry out their tasks in such a manner that service delivery is enhanced. This paper aims to assess the current turnover rate among scarce skills employees within the South African public sector, and present viable alternatives for the government to address the escalating turnover issues, ultimately ensuring the retention of these valuable employees. To achieve the objective of the article, this paper used a review of the literature. The findings of this study revealed that the South African public sector is having difficulty attracting and retaining scarce skilled employees, which has a negative impact on the delivery and development of services. This higher turnover is faced by all levels of government and is driven by a competition for scarce skills between the government and the private sector, unfavourable working conditions, and less competitive packages, which has resulted in a situation where posts in the public sector remain vacant for longer periods of time. Few studies address concerns about scarce skills, high turnover, and personnel retention, particularly in the South African public sector. The author contends that this field should be further researched because effective and efficient public service delivery depends on the qualified staff.

Keywords: *Performance; Retention; Scarce Skills; Service Delivery; Turnover*

INTRODUCTION

The capacity of the South African government to deliver quality services is hampered by a lack of adequately trained staff and high rates of labour turnover, particularly among those in crucial positions. The number of qualified employees leaving the public service has increased at an unprecedented rate, threatening the viability of its operations (Sibonde & Dassah, 2021). Favourable packages and fringe benefits allow organisations to remain competitive by attracting skilled and experienced personnel in the development in which they have invested and who would be difficult to replace. The difficulty in the South African public sector is that the government has standardised packages and benefits, whereas the private sector has the capacity to surpass and even outbid offers for scarce skills (Fernandez & Madumo, 2023). The findings of Adriano & Callaghan's (2022) study demonstrated that highly innovative individuals are often highly valued in the workplace, given the competitive constraints that organisations experience. These individuals appear to have much higher turnover intentions and may be more difficult to keep. This indicates the need for the South African government to improve retention strategies as it competes with the private sector for scarce skills. Skills shortages and competition for limited skills are not new challenges for developing and transitional economies such as South Africa. Developing economies like South Africa has become a bountiful universal hunting ground for other economies to undertake a replacement recruitment plan in a world community that offers an open market for employment and career prospects for scarce skills (Horwitz, 2013).

The performance of the public sector is based on the talents of professional personnel; however, skilled individuals are rare in the labour market, and attracting and retaining these skills

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in public institutions has proven to be a serious difficulty. When skilled staff is hired and retained for a longer period, improvements in service delivery will be apparent. According to Mohajane (2017), staff retention is understudied in South Africa. The lack of study on employee retention is especially noticeable in the South African public sector, which is the country's largest employer. Mohajane further stated that Employee retention was highlighted as an independent variable because the public sector's capacity to retain personnel is based on the success of the measures in place to keep people content with their jobs. Creg & Corin (2019) emphasised that due to an increasing number of voluntary resignations and retirements, public institutions have pressure to retain staff at the managerial level. Despite the importance of managing turnover in the public sector, research on the matter is limited.

According to Lee (2018), employee turnover results in both monetary and non-monetary expenses, such as the cost of recruiting and training newly assigned employees, and this turnover process has a detrimental impact on organisational performance. The monies that public institutions spend on hiring and training new personnel monthly could be better spent on training and retaining existing employees and creating a pleasant environment for them, lowering turnover, and improving service delivery. Employee turnover is expensive. Total turnover costs, for example, have been found to range from a minimum of one to a maximum of two years' salary and benefits for an individual employee (Adriano & Callaghan, 2022). Turnover is undoubtedly negatively associated with performance for the fundamental aim of the organisation (Meier & Hicklin, 2008).

According to Mzini (2019), because employee retention is a complicated issue, there is no single approach to retaining individuals within the organisation. The objective of this paper is to assess the current turnover of scarce skills employees in the South African public sector and propose alternatives the government can adopt to address issues around increased turnover in the public sector to retain scarce skills employees. Although there is little literature on the hot topic surrounding this paper in the context of South Africa, this study will significantly add to the body of existing knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-factor Theory of Motivation

The work of Sisuri & Cheche (2021) emphasises that according to Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, a conducive working environment has a positive effect on the organisation because it develops the skills of employees. Motivating and focusing the attention of individual employees could lead to the success of job enrichment interventions, resulting in increased employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organisation effectiveness. Public institutions need to motivate employees and create a good creative working environment so that turnover will decrease and retain scarcely skilled employees. Employee training can also encourage and retain employees, according to Moses & Cheche (2021). The public institution should offer training to the skilled staff; hence, by doing so, the turnover rate in the public sector.

There is a connection between job improvements and a positive working environment with personnel who are content with their jobs; this provides positive input on the safety and health climate at work. Hygiene elements may not provide satisfaction or motivation but may help minimise employee unhappiness (Abraham & Prasetyo, 2021). Bevins (2018) stated that achievement, appreciation, and work itself were the top three elements recognised by Herzberg with regard to retention and motivation of staff. The government needs to recognise employees who are doing well and appreciate them as this could decrease turnover rate and ensure scarce skills employees stay for a long period of time in public originations, this would enhance organisational performance, decrease the cost of recruitment and selection processes and improves service delivery. Achievement, appreciation, a healthy workplace atmosphere, delegated powers, and opportunities for expansion and development are all factors that contribute to employee retention and job satisfaction (Abdulrahman & Hui, 2018).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, according to Hopper (2020), is a theory that states that employees are motivated by five main groups of necessities: esteem, self-actualisation, safety, love, and physiological demands. Public institutions must recognise the demands of their employees and meet them halfway. For example, an employer could provide a gift of appreciation to a top-performing employee, which could be monetary or non-monetary. Employees will be inspired to work at their best because of the employer's actions, and they may stay with the company because recognition goes a long way. The physiological needs of Tefan, Popa & Albu (2020), according to Tefan, Popa, and Albu (2020), include payment and material rewards such as air, food, shelter, and water. Because these basic needs are essential to human survival, employees will be driven to work to obtain them. Organisations must ensure that their employees are paid market-related salaries so that they can live comfortably. Employees will be encouraged to advance to the next level after achieving it; this exercise will keep them motivated and content, as well as reduce turnover and retain scarce talented employees. Hence motivated employees are easy to retain within the organisation. According to Maslow's hierarchy, the professional performance of employees is positively connected with enthusiasm by fulfilling higher-level needs, employees are motivated to achieve the highest level in the hierarchy of needs, which is esteem and self-actualisation; the quest to achieve these needs improves employee morale and enhances organisational performance. Maslow begins with the premise that humans always desire something, and what they want depends on what they have achieved, according to Mullins (2007).

Employee turnover can be reduced by applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs due to the fact that the organisation already knows what the desires of its employees are. Employee motivation to complete the tasks given will improve, and employees will be more likely to stay on the job (Lahida & Pangemanan Rumokoy, 2017). Public institutions must realise the importance of being responsible for employee needs; according to Maslow's theory, it is evident that employees are likely to remain in the organisation if their well-being is considered by the employer. If an organisation values its workers and their work, it is more likely to achieve positive work outcomes and achieve both individual and corporate goals. When human needs are addressed in the best possible way, it is a well-known phenomenon that people attempt to maintain their positions to contribute to the fulfilment of those needs (Tahir & Iraqi, 2018).

Empirical Review

The fundamental goal of employee retention is to maintain and encourage employees to stay with the organisation for a long time. The main objective of retaining employees is to prevent the exit of capable personnel, as turnover could have a negative impact on productivity and service delivery (Mzini, 2019). The South African government is currently dealing with a high turnover problem, particularly among scarce skills such as doctors, nurses, engineers, information technology specialists and scientists, among others, due to competitive packages in the private sector, both locally and globally, which has a negative impact on public service delivery because these scarce skills provide essential services to the public. In support, Zwane (2019) agrees that public sector organisations struggle to recruit and retain talented technical staff due to ineffective recruitment and retention tactics. When it comes to remuneration for employees with key skills, the recruitment process should be adaptive, and the public sector's present recruitment policy should be evaluated in order to overcome the obstacles of critical skilled employee recruitment and selection. Turnover impedes organisational performance in the following ways. The first is the creation of new human resource recruitment and training costs. The second problem is the decrease in productivity caused by the loss of trained employees. The last methods are structural

communication harm and the problem of deterioration of trust between members. (Kim and Park, 2014) and Matlala & Lumadi (2019) expound that, in contrast to the current strategy in the public sector, more flexible retention techniques are required to retain public employees. The high turnover in the South African public sector implies that current efforts to attract and retain scarce skilled workers have failed, and the government must rethink its strategy to prioritise public service delivery. Letchmiah & Thomas (2017) agree that to attract and retain rare skills, organisations must employ effective retention and talent development strategies. Organisational recruitment tactics must provide information on scarce skills and the choices of employees for remuneration. The public sector is constantly looking to establish recruiting and retention strategies that will ensure effective recruitment, retention, rewarding, and development of employees to improve service delivery due to competition in the labour markets and changing environments. The private sector is the most difficult competition for public institutions (Ibrahim, Hashim, & Rahman, 2018). The increase in turnover in the South African public sector is felt strongly by citizens who use government services, mainly the poor and vulnerable. Ngure (2016) established that the loss of scarce skills from employees could have a significant impact on the organisation. The employees the organisations want to retain are often the ones who leave the organisation. The work of Mathimaran & Kumar (2017) identified that employee retention is important because it involves organisational challenges such as training time and investment, knowledge loss, insecure employees, and a costly candidate hunt. As a result, losing a key employee is a costly proposition for an organisation. According to various estimates, losing a middle manager can cost up to five times his compensation in most organisations. According to Guma (2011), poor employee retention results in a range of expenditures, such as increased workload for existing employees, recruiting and training expenses, reduced productivity, client loss, and intellectual capital loss. Ganegama (2018) agrees that recruiting is always an expensive endeavour, whereas retention is always cost-effective for the organisation. The consequences of turnover include the loss of valuable staff, decreased performance, and increased recruitment costs (Erwina, 2021). Employee turnover has occasionally produced challenges in organisational process operations since some employees have left with their knowledge in their heads, which is not kept in the organisation (Syarafina & Sushandoyo, 2021).

Sultana (2017) stated that employee retention is a top priority for any institution, and retaining individuals with rare skills is critical to optimise organisational performance. Employee retention is defined as an employer's efforts to establish a work environment that encourages employees to stay with the same company for a longer amount of time. According to Kossivi & Kalgora (2016), employee retention helps to retain or motivate individual employees to stay in the organisation for as long as possible. It is important for organisations to retain their employees because their ability to remain in operation depends on it. Employee retention tactics, according to Das & Baruah (2013), are centred on making sure people spend a length of time in the organisation. A stronger retention strategy becomes an effective recruitment instrument. Mathimaran & Kumar (2017) emphasised that skills and knowledge are critical to organisational success, and an organisation's ability to attract and retain scarce talented employees improves the organisation's performance and service delivery. Furthermore, an organisation faces another issue today: ensuring that employees are satisfied on a consistent basis. According to Mathimaran & Kumar (2017), employee retention methods assist organisations in improving commitment and workforce support for critical corporate projects by facilitating effective employee communication. The most valuable resource in an organisation is its skilled staff. Their value to organisational performance involves not only attracting them but also maintaining them over time Kossivi & Kalgora (2016). Zwane (2019) stated that the public sector should have a clear succession training program and

strategy that focus on both scarce skills personnel and managerial leadership qualities. The public sector should also foster career growth through a long-term program to develop scarce and key technical skills. The ability of the institution to recruit, attract, and retain scarcely skilled employees is one of the most important concerns in human resource management. Organisations can achieve this through comprehensive human resource management practices. Employee retention must be effectively linked to acquisition processes and procedures, as well as the approaches used to recruit candidates for the job (Chandrasekara & Perera, 2016). The work of Letchmiah & Thomas (2017) speculated that employee retention is not just a South African issue; it has now become a critical Human Resources Management mission in other countries since a successful retention strategy improves organisational performance and success. Public institutions must employ skilled people within the market; this will ensure that the organisation achieves its goals and objectives and remains effective. Employee retention is much more than just paying more than your labour market competitors. It is about nurturing diversity and shared trust in the workplace, providing stimulating career options, and treating people with respect and admiration (Bussin & Brigman, 2019). Employee retention is positively impacted by greater rewards and recognition, a pleasant working environment, supervisor support, and the contribution of improved supervisor support career opportunities (Mahesh & Narmadha, 2020).

According to the Muzanenhano & Rankhumise (2023) study, human resource employees are overworking manually due to a lack of systems. They are working harder rather than smarter, which is leading to employee burnout. The data revealed a substantial turnover of workers in the HRM department, which can be a source of dissatisfaction among human resources personnel. Even HR personnel leave the South African public sector due to unfavourable working conditions, demonstrating how serious the difficulties are with respect to the retention of skilled employees in the public sector. Pross (2022) agrees that African employees have faced a variety of issues due to the high turnover rate. Many approaches have been created by various businesses to reduce high staff turnover, such as implementing laws and regulations to control the behaviour of individuals at work and encouraging employees; however, indicators still reveal significant employee turnover in organisations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper used a review of the literature to answer the underlying arguments of the paper. This method enabled the collection of rich data that will be useful in this study. This approach was used to broaden understanding of the issue of high turnover in the South African Public Sector and to indicate strategies that the government can use to lower the turnover rate in the public sector, as recruitment and selection is a costly process, and the retention of scarce skills is a critical factor for effective public service delivery. Therefore, the narrative of the turnover of scarce skills, retention strategies, and what this means for the delivery of public services will become integral in allowing the article to reach a meaningful conclusion, which justifies the use of this methodological approach.

Table 1. Article Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Date of Publication	Articles published from 2000 to 2023 (before publication)	Articles that included public sector turnover rate, scarce skills retention, the impact of shortages of skills in the public sector, and any topic

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
		not related to scarce skills retention before 2000
Article type	Original research articles/empirical articles and reviews	Conference proceedings and unpublished Dissertations, and Thesis
Language	English articles	Other language articles
Articles relevance	Articles Relating: Scarce Skills, Retention, and Turnover Topics in the public sector And challenges of these factors in public service delivery or on the operations of the government	Articles not relevant to the research topic in question for this study

The criteria for which articles were included in the literature review and which were excluded are shown in Table 1. Publications were retrieved from scientific databases. The reports were sourced from several databases, including Google Scholar, Web of Science, published reports, Science Direct, EBSCOHost, and others. In doing so, relevant keywords such as 'public sector scarce skills', 'retention in the public sector', and 'public sector turnover'. Thus, the study was able to identify and provide future research directions on pressing issues that still need to be explored in the South African public sector in terms of scarce skills, turnover rate, retention strategies, and competition between the private and public sectors for scarce skills and how this affects the delivery of public services in the country.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Scarce Skill Retention Challenges in the South African Public Sector

According to Lesego (2012), the post-1994 public sector confronts huge problems in terms of reform and providing services to the people of South Africa. South African public service departments are under enormous pressure to perform successfully to provide outstanding services to citizens. The South African public sector is plagued by a skills shortage, which has an adverse effect on economic productivity and meeting developmental needs. The predominance of scarce skills can be found in all levels of government, with positions remaining vacant for extended periods of time, primarily due to a shortage of experienced and qualified talent, either because such individuals are inaccessible or do not meet the specified employment eligibility requirements (Breier, 2009). Ogony & Majolo (2018) indicated that employee turnover is detrimental to government operations because it impacts productivity, efficiency, and innovation. South African government departments have been grappling with the difficulty of retaining competent individuals when they transition to higher-paying corporate entities in the private sector. This trend has emerged as a crucial driver in the local state, and young people are not able to continue in the appropriate service to build the necessary institutional knowledge and expertise. The consequences of this withdrawal include the prospect of disassembling the core project team, which would result in not only major challenges related to institutional knowledge loss, but also change management effects on the team and productivity performance issues (Moodley & Chetty,

2022). South Africa's government faces numerous challenges due to a lack of qualified personnel and many open positions. It also fails to manage performance and train employees adequately. The high vacancy rates persist because the government has ineffective human resource management systems and ineffective performance management systems (Draai & Oshoniyi, 2013). The negative effects of labour turnover on service delivery extend beyond the public service's overall perception; they also negatively affect the government department's capacity to deliver services. Instead of simply attributing poor public service delivery to a lack of skills, it is critical to ascertain whether underperforming or poorly performing public employees are doing so because they lack the skills necessary to complete their assigned tasks (Omotoye & Malan). Zwane et al., 2021 state that the South African government has experienced continuous staff turnover, which is inefficient, particularly in terms of scarce and critical technical skills. Preliminary appointed employees typically stay in government Departments for no more than five years before resigning or moving to the private sector or nongovernmental organisations. Employee complaints about the routinisation of jobs and a decrease in their autonomy have been cited as the main reasons for employee turnover in government organisations (Kiyak & Karkin, 2022).

According to Schlechter, Syce, & Bussin (2016), extraordinarily skilled workers are in high demand and challenging to find in South Africa. High staff turnover rates are a problem for government agencies that fall short of their counterparts in the talent competition. Finding strategies to encourage staff has become a serious concern for many managers in today's more competitive business world. It is a problem in the South African government, as seen by high turnover among officials in important positions and poor service performance. As qualified workers depart for jobs in the private sector, the government is forced to hire new graduates without experience, which reduces service quality, causes consumer distrust, and leads to more citizen unrest (Sibonde & Dassah, 2021).

The work of Horwitz (2013) identified the following challenges to the retention of public servants in South Africa, namely:

1. Ineffective level of commitment of management to appreciate and utilise diversity for improvement and competitive gain.
2. Managerial unwillingness to give responsibility and accountability to decision-making.
3. Shortage of cross-cultural awareness and sympathy
4. Cultures of dominant self-perpetuating power within organisations.
5. Interruption between reinforced policy and practice with insufficient attention to execution procedures, including recruitment, improvement, and retention methods.
6. Fighting change due to fear and impartiality.
7. Shortage of talent management policy, including career development, mentoring, and coaching.
8. Relative lack of training, development, and growth opportunities
9. Futile consultation and communication on employment fairness.
10. Revolution of resistance beliefs and values.

Techniques that the South African Government can use to attract and retain scarce skills

1. Recognition/reward for Good Performance

Mngomezulu et al., (2015) claim that all components of retention are influenced favourably by recognition. This indicates that recognition affects employee retention. Recognition/reward for excellent performance has a substantial impact on retention. Employees, particularly those with self-esteem and self-actualisation drives, want to be appreciated and rewarded, not necessarily with money, but by publicly recognising their accomplishments and contribution to the fulfilment of organisational goals and objectives (Michael & Crispen, 2009). In agreement, Kumari (2019)

indicated that rewards and recognition might be quite beneficial in keeping your staff motivated to perform admirably, achieve goals, and stick to the organisation. Employee appreciation is very important, especially when there are dozens of lucrative opportunities available to them. Reward and recognition are the most effective ways to motivate and retain talent. The highest priority for retention is acknowledging work and receiving incentives related to work and the work environment (Saravanan & Kavitha, 2019). Mngomezulu et al., (2015) indicated that most workers quit because they have not received little or no recognition, and there is little opportunity for professional advancement and development.

2. Career development

Career development is regarded as one of the human resource techniques that aid in the retention management challenge. A lack of professional growth opportunities within an institution leads to excessive turnover of employees. Organisations that adopt career development programs, on the other hand, are more likely to have a high sense of commitment and retention among their workers (Al-sharafi, Hassan, & Alam, 2018). Career development techniques inside the organisation will retain an employee with the organisation for a longer amount of time and successfully enhance the organisation's process (Nagarathanam, Venkitasamy & Attiah, 2018). Employee commitments promote organised career development, which is a critical component in human resource management methods, particularly in employee retention. Thus, self-evaluation development will enhance employee performance in the company and improve skills in the workplace, which will promote employee retention (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000). Organisations must be aware of employee retention and job satisfaction in terms of career growth. Employee retention and work satisfaction are better in companies that invest in their personnel.

3. Training / Development Opportunities

Training/development is often praised as a key organisational approach that affects both staff retention and the expansion of human capital. The most specific advantage of training and development is that it is best seen as an incentive to improve employee retention, particularly for those who want to grow in their careers. Nowadays, most workers are eager to gain new skills so that they can take on additional tasks. Training can excite employees and increase organisational engagement and loyalty by making them understand that the company is helping them achieve their professional goals (Chen, 2014). Hassan et al., 2013 indicated that training/ development is one of the most critical components in keeping personnel in these organisations. Knowing the retention elements or the influence of training on retention might help organisations retain personnel who have a high turnover rate. Employee retention, according to Ldama & Bazza (2015), entails maintaining the employees that one wishes to keep and preventing their departure for any cause, particularly to rival companies. In other words, an organisation must have the appropriate people, in the appropriate numbers, with the appropriate skills and competencies, at the appropriate times and locations. This occurs when companies plan and carry out efficient hiring, selection, training, development, and retention of high-performing qualified workers. There is a significant correlation between organisational training opportunities and long-term employee retention when it comes to the impact of training on employee retention. All retention-related factors, other than the desire to leave, are significantly correlated. There is a strong link between training procedures and staff retention (Nkosi, 2015).

4. Motivation

Employee retention depends on motivation. Motivation may be analysed via two lenses:

monetary reward and nonfinancial reward (Shah & Asad, 2018). Employee motivation influences retention rates and other organisational behaviours. There is a clear association between employee motivation and decreased turnover intentions. When employees are inspired at work, they feel dedicated to the organisation (Ramrez Garca, Del Cerro Ramón & Fornells Herrera, 2019). According to Sandhya & Kumar (2011), individual motivation is one of the critical aspects that may assist employers in improving employee and organisational performance. Different motivation theories are addressed. Employee retention can be improved by engaging workers in the following areas: open communication, employee incentive programs, career development programs, performance-based bonuses, recreation facilities, and gifts on special occasions. According to the results of Eberendu and Kenneth- Okere (2015), motivation is a key element in determining staff retention among managers and nonmanagers. Highly motivated workers have high levels of job engagement, are more likely to manage tough workplace duties, are less likely to participate in disputes, and are more likely to stay with a single organisation for a long time without contemplating moving in pursuit of better employment conditions.

5. Great salary & Perks

When the topic of employee motivation is brought up, financial incentives often come to mind first. There is no doubt that a well-thought-out general compensation package can have a big impact on employee performance and retention. However, it is advised that a worker's fundamental motives must be taken into consideration before income may inspire a worker to stay with the company (Nyibol, 2008). Employee retention includes five primary motivators: compensation, growth, support, relationship, and environment. The employees in the organisation anticipate the salary as a motivator for their personal advantages. When an employer rewards an employee for achieving the intended organisational objectives, compensation is a significant motivation. Money is believed to be the most effective motivator (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). Michael & Crispen (2009) discovered that the salary package had a substantial impact on retention in the public sector. Employees rated competitive pay, positive interpersonal interactions, a pleasant working environment, and job security as significant motivators that encouraged their retention in organisations. Grissom et al., (2016) concur that more wages in the public sector are correlated with decreased employee turnover.

According to Maicibi (2005), a fair salary combined with decent working conditions has a stabilising influence on labour in the organisation and acts as an attractive and retention factor for new labour that may be necessary.

6. Good Working Environment

Employee retention is also influenced by the company's goodwill. Maintaining a company's goodwill is only achievable if attrition rates are low. By maintaining improved employee retention rates, employers can encourage potentially skilled workers to join the organisation by providing a safe workplace (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). The findings of Vasquez (2014) were consistent with the staff retention strategy. The results demonstrated that fostering a positive work environment will result in employee retention in the company and include managerial support, reward, and incentive programs. Another essential factor in sticking with an organisation is the working environment, as well as excellent interactions between management and staff. When an organisation or management supports its workers, it provides another essential motivation for employees to stay with the organisation. Employee retention can enhance organisational performance (Olson, 2010). Employee attitudes toward their jobs are reflected in their job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This perspective is influenced by the extent to which employees' primary needs are met by their work. When the elements of their working environment meet their needs, employees have better

levels of job satisfaction and, as a result, reduced turnover intentions (Bright,20008).

Discussion

Effective and efficient public service delivery is imperative in South Africa; therefore, the majority of residents are unemployed and live below the poverty line. It is critical for the government to encourage the recruitment and retention of rare talents since they are critical for the public sector's optimum performance. To retain talent in the public sector, the government must invest in employee development, recognise outstanding performance, and provide competitive pay packages. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, a conducive working environment has a positive effect on the organisation because it develops the skills of employees. The South African government, as an employer, must promote a conducive working environment that prioritises employees' needs through the provision of career development opportunities and competitive pay packages to retain scarce skilled employees and improve service delivery efficiency. The South African School of Government and government departments have not done enough to promote training in the public sector, whereas the private sector offers training to its employees, giving the private sector a competitive advantage. The government should improve its staff training policies to improve staff skills and promote employee retention of scarce skills.

According to Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory, the public institution should provide training to skilled staff; therefore, doing so will reduce the turnover rate in the public sector will be decreased. Currently, the South African government is struggling with several difficulties, including an over-bloated wage bill that is impeding service delivery, and the government has been advised by the National Treasury to reduce the wage bill. As a result, the government has not filled critical positions, reduced salary increases, and eliminated performance bonuses. These factors will result in a loss of skilled workers in the public sector. There appear to be issues with human resource practices and policies in South Africa, which has resulted in a higher turnover rate, which the government is currently attempting to address. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that employees are motivated by five main groups of necessities: esteem, self-actualisation, safety, love, and physiological demands. Public institutions must recognise the demands of their employees and meet them halfway. The government's decision to cut the public wage bill and certain public employee benefits, which include performance bonuses, will further escalate the challenges of retaining and attracting scarce skilled employees in the public sector.

Hence, the above measures currently implemented by the government do prioritise employees' needs indicated by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The government must recognise that the delivery of public services is critical in South Africa, a developing country where most citizens rely on the government. To improve the efficiency of public service delivery, the government must consider how to handle issues pertaining to the workforce, as the efficiency of the public sector is dependent on the efficiency of public employees. The government can investigate the strategies proposed in this article to address the issues raised by high turnover and the retention of scarce skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Retaining and attracting scarce-skilled employees is essential for successful service delivery in South Africa. The current high turnover rate in the South African public sector is due to unfavourable working conditions and inadequate pay and benefits packages. Consequently, people who are still working are dissatisfied, and those with rare talents are quitting the public sector. The government can do a lot to retain and motivate public workers without spending any money; just recognising outstanding work and promoting a healthy working environment that meets the requirements of public servants can go a long way toward guaranteeing optimum staff performance

in the public sector. The performance of public servants in South Africa is reported to be low due to a poor working relationship between the employer and the employees. This study met its objectives by recommending strategies for the government to use to retain and attract scarce skillsets and reduce turnover in the public sector. The study also found a gap in studies investigating the issues surrounding the retention and attraction of scarce skilled employees, as well as the impact of turnover on public service delivery in South Africa. The South African government may have some strategies and plans for the public sector, but based on the higher turnover rate in the public sector and the ongoing battle over service benefits between the government and public servants, these strategies appear to be only on paper. This study added to the body of knowledge by successfully proposing techniques the South African government can use to attract and retain scarce skills

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Although a thorough evaluation of the current literature and other published sources is required, the authors identify some significant shortcomings in this investigation. First and foremost, the authors relied on previously published publications. There is little research on the retention of scarce skills and the turnover rate in the South African public sector. Future researchers can explore the following:

1. The Impact of Increased Turnover in the South African public sector
2. Difficulties in Retaining Employees with Limited Scarce Skills
3. Exploration of retention strategies that the government can be implemented
4. What can the government learn from the private sector?

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