



**HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES IN SELECTED PRIVATE TERTIARY  
INSTITUTIONS IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Formal human resources practices are essential for fostering a motivated, skilled, and committed workforce within Private Tertiary Institutions. This study investigates informal HR practices in selected Private Tertiary Institutions in Windhoek, Namibia, focusing on employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and employee development since 2014. The research aims to propose a formal human resource management practices model to mitigate these issues and enhance institutional reputation. Guided by a pragmatism paradigm and a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through questionnaires and structured interviews from academic staff and Human Resource staff.

The study adopted a mixed research method (convergent parallel design), collecting quantitative data through a questionnaire and qualitative data through structured interviews. Data were gathered from academic staff and Human Resource staff from three Private Tertiary Institutions. The questionnaire distributed via Survey Monkey, received responses from 171 academic staff members, while eight Human Resources staff participated in online interviews via Zoom. Quantitative data were processed using Stata (Version 17), and qualitative data were processed using Atlas.ti.22.

The study found that informal HR practices in career development and growth, working conditions and work-life balance, performance management and recognition, remuneration and selection contributed to performance deterioration, absenteeism, and a decline in employee development. These negative behaviours increased the likelihood of academic staff leaving their respective institutions. Based on these findings, the study proposed a formal human resource management practices model tailored to Private Tertiary Institutions' limited resources to improve HR outcomes. This research offers new insights specific to the Private Tertiary Institution environment and informs policy development for effective HR practices, providing a foundation for future research and practical applications within the sector.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

4IR	4 <sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution
AMO	Ability, Motivation and Opportunity
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
HRIS	Human Resources Information Systems
HRM	Human Resources Management
HRP	Human Resource Planning
MBO	Management by Objectives
NCHE	National Council of Higher Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NNTU	Namibian National Teachers Union
NIPM	Namibia Institute of People Management
NPC	National Planning Commission
NQA	Namibia Qualification Authority
NSFAF	Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund
NTA	Namibia Training Authority
PA	Performance Appraisal
PTIs	Private Tertiary Institutions
SABPP	South African Board of Practices
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SHRM	Strategic Human Resources Management
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WMS	Work Management System
RBV	Resource-Based View

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction and background of the study

In Namibia, there are public and privately owned tertiary institutions. The first Higher Education Institution (HEI) to be established in Namibia was the Polytechnic of Namibia, which was established in 1980 under the Academy for Tertiary Education Act No. 13 of 1980, focusing on teacher training and secretarial courses (Kotecha, Wilson-Strydom & Fongwa, 2012:64). This legislation was updated to Academy for Tertiary Education Act No. 9 of 1985 that resulted in the establishment of an additional Technikon and College for Out-of-School Training high school graduates. The Technikon offered 17 diploma and certificate courses, while the College for Out-of-School Training offered 13 certificate courses in technical and commerce areas. After independence in 1990, these three institutions were converted into two independent higher education institutions (HEIs), a university and a polytechnic. The Promulgation of the University of Namibia Act No.18 of 1992 (Government of Namibia [GoN], 1992) in the National Assembly was the one used to establish the University of Namibia (UNAM). UNAM is the country's largest and leading national institution of higher education. It is a diverse institution with eight faculties and a student population representing 43 countries from all continents.

Furthermore, the Polytechnic of Namibia Act No. 33 of 1994 (GoN,1994) merged the Technikon in Namibia with the College for Out-of-School Training to become the Polytechnic of Namibia. This Act provided for the gradual phasing out of vocational training courses and granting degrees by the polytechnic. It was later converted to a university in 2015, namely the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), which offers bachelor, honours, master, and Doctoral /Ph.D degrees in Informatics, Cybersecurity, and Mining Engineering (Namibia University of Science and Technology, 2020; Tyobeka & Kgabi, 2016: 62).

In addition to Namibia's two universities, the government established Vocational Training Centres (VTC) in different regions offering technical vocational programmes. Furthermore, the Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) was certified by the Namibian Public Commission in 1994 to assist pupils in improving their Grade 12 results. NAMCOL also offers a certificate, diploma, and degrees in education (Kotecha et al., 2012:64). Therefore, the University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibia University of Technology (NUST), Vocational Training Centres (VTC) and the Namibia

College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) comprise Namibia's public tertiary institutions. With these higher education institutions in place, Namibia was rated by international standards as having a weak education system (Tyobeka & Kgabi, 2016:63). This encouraged Namibia to develop policies that attracted the formation of private tertiary institutions.

In this regard, the establishment of Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) began, some of which are registered, while others are registered. The registered tertiary institutions included PTI-1, established in 1994, offering diplomas, and later obtained its university status in 2002 with branches in different parts of the country. PTI-2 was established in 1999 when it started offering franchised qualifications from the United Kingdom in various branches nationwide. PTI-3 was established in 2006 and supported high school pupils in science and mathematics using computer-aided learning. This college was enlarged in 2007, and tertiary courses in management studies were offered in collaboration with the Association of Business Managers and Administrators (ABMA), an examination board based in the UK. In 2008, it introduced engineering courses in partnership with City and Guilds in the UK. It signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Tanzania to offer a variety of degrees. It also has various branches in different towns in Namibia.

PTI-4 was established in 2001 to offer diplomas. PTI-5 was established in 2011 and offers diplomas. PTI-6 was established by citizens of German heritage in 1971 as a white-only state music conservatory and currently offers seven full-time degree programmes to all races. Lastly, the PTI-7 was established in 2009, offering different types of bachelor's degrees and doctorates via branches in other towns in Namibia (Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, 2011). All the programmes offered by these PTIs were fully accredited by the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) with localised examination centres. It was evident that the PTIs dominate the higher education sector in Namibia; therefore, they employ large numbers of academics and administrative staff across various parts of the country. Their challenges have some impact on the Namibian economy. Subsequently, private tertiary institutions (PTIs) complement public universities to improve the education system by developing highly qualified graduates who can work in the Namibian economy. It is important to note that six out of the seven PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia, were family-owned, a norm confirmed by Mustafa, Caspersz, Ramos and Siew (2018:165), who state that generally, private organisations in the world are owned by families. A primary concern was that HR practices in family-owned firms relied primarily on informal HR practices based on social networks (Steijvers, Lybaert & Dekker, 2017; Csillag, Csizmadia, Hidegh & Szászvári, 2019:63; Mira, Choong, & Thim, 2019:782), whereby individuals



were often employed without proper recruitment procedures being adhered to. As a result, some employees were incorrectly placed in jobs, negatively affecting the institutions. This notion was supported by Aliyu (2021:184) and Mihi (2023:29), who highlighted that correct job placement influenced the high performance of employees. The latter required formal HR practices to boost performance, encourage employee development, and reduce turnover and absenteeism in PTIs.

According to Madurapperuma (2009:563), fair recruitment practices, employment security, high wages with incentive pay, employee participation and empowerment, and promotion opportunities, together with training and skills development, were the HRM practices recognised as having the most significant impact on the organisation. Typically, the informal HR practices adopted by private organisations were within an HR department that was managed by non-specialists, operated with no written policies for recruitment and performance management, and no written HR plan with a budget for the training and development of employees (Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). Inevitably, such informal HR practices have increased employee turnover rate by 15% and absenteeism by 10%. In comparison, employee performance dropped by 5%, and employee development declined by 15% between 2014 and 2018, as reflected in HR annual reports of selected PTIs in Windhoek.

The problem of informal HR practices escalated when the PTIs' owners (employers) realised that many unemployed graduates in Namibia were willing to work for lower salaries than the currently employed experienced lecturers (De Koker, 2021:26). This situation resulted in the family owners (employers) implementing unfavourable HR practices that forced many lecturers to resign from the PTIs to seek better employment opportunities in institutions with formal HR practices. These unfavourable HR practices included not paying lecturers during vacation periods and not allowing them to take accumulated leave days (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020:32). Unfortunately, the PTIs' family owners were not concerned about the rising employee turnover rate owing to a constant supply of unemployed graduates willing to fill the vacant posts. Consequently, these unfavourable HR practices have also negatively affected the development of the remaining lecturers, adversely affected their performance levels, and contributed to staff absenteeism, as reflected by HR Annual reports of some selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia (PTI-1 Annual Report 2020, PTI-2 Annual Report 2020; PTI-3 Annual Report 2020).

These problems are worth investigating since the PTIs are pivotal in providing higher education opportunities in Namibia, where private institutions dominate the tertiary education sector. Investigating the informal HR practices that contribute to academic staff turnover, performance

deterioration, absenteeism, and a decline in employee development in these institutions will offer insights to policymakers, institutional leaders, and PTI owners, enabling them to implement formal HR practices for staff retention while improving academic staff performance and development and reducing absenteeism.

Despite the acknowledged importance of formal HR practices, limited research explicitly addresses the transition from informal to formal HR practices within PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how informal HR practices contribute to employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a decline in employee development. By responding to the research questions posed by this study, thereby identifying the specific challenges and proposing strategies for formalising HR practices, this research seeks to propose a formal human resources management (HRM) practice model that can be adopted by PTIs in Namibia to address their challenges.

## **1.2 Problem statement of the study**

The main problem identified in this study was the informal HR practices adopted by selected Namibian PTIs (PTI-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3) that had increased employee turnover by 15% between 2014 and 2018, as reflected in their HR annual reports. This increase in employee turnover adversely affects the institutions' reputation and service delivery to students. Examples of HR practices in some of these selected PTIs included paying employees' low salaries, not paying salaries during vacations, lacking job security, lack of training and development opportunities, and limited employee participation on issues that involved them directly. This was due to the absence of formal HR practices at these selected PTIs, which resulted in emerging sub-problems:

**Sub-problem 1:** The HR practices have led to a decrease in employee performance by 5% between 2014 and 2018. This fact was revealed in the performance appraisal results from different departments, which reflected a performance deterioration. The latter included employees who previously had exceptional performance and were gradually deteriorating, while others failed to meet set performance standards. Innovation was also negatively affected because lesson plans seemed to be recycled, and the research output was meagre. More concerning was the ever-increasing number of students who failed to reach the sub-minimum mark in the examination compared to previous years.

**Sub-problem 2:** The HR practices in selected PTIs contributed to the escalation of lecturers' absenteeism rate to 10% since 2014, as reflected in their annual reports. Some PTIs have found it necessary to recruit an employee to monitor lecturers' attendance in lecture halls.

**Sub-problem 3:** The HR practices in selected PTIs have negatively affected employee development, as indicated by the decline of 15% since 2014. As technology changes rapidly, the lack of employee upskilling adversely affects the PTIs' effectiveness and efficiency. It is expected that an institution providing knowledge and skills to students would invest in the training and development of their staff; however, such programs are not among the informal HR practices adopted.

The above-stated problems emanated from the informal HR practices adopted by the selected PTIs. Therefore, there was a need to research this topic because the lack of effective HR practices adversely affected employee turnover, triggered absenteeism, decreased performance levels, and reduced employee development. The adoption of formal HR practices by these selected PTIs would benefit not only the family owners but also enable these institutions to contribute positively to the Namibian economy by producing quality graduates as inputs to stimulate employment creation and increase revenues in a bid to alleviate poverty (Mapetere, Mavhiki, Nyamwanza & Mavhiki, 2018:484). Additionally, adopting formal HR practices would enable the country to achieve its key goals of building capable and healthy human resources while promoting good governance through effective institutions, as set out in Namibia's 5th National Development Plan for 2017 (Government of Namibia, 2017:5).

The linkage between informal HR practices and adverse organisational outcomes is evident through the lack of structured approaches for managing human resources. Organisations struggle to implement competitive, consistent, and fair policies without formal HR practices, leading to employee dissatisfaction and disengagement (Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). This disengagement manifests as higher academic staff turnover, increased absenteeism, deteriorating performance, and stunted employee development, all of which ultimately impair organisational effectiveness and sustainability.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the informal HR practices adopted in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia, and, after that, to propose a human resource management (HRM) practices model that PTIs can adopt to reduce employee absenteeism and turnover to improve

academic performance and promote employee development. Furthermore, its objective was to recommend formal HR practices that encourage employee retention within PTIs in Namibia. To achieve the goals of this research study, the following objectives were articulated:

Main objective: To determine the HR practices adopted by PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover.

Sub-objective 1: To ascertain how HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia.

Sub-objective 2: To identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia.

Sub-objective 3: To determine the obstacles hindering employee development within selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia.

Encompassing objective: To recommend a formal HRM practices model that can be adopted by PTIs in Namibia to improve employee retention.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

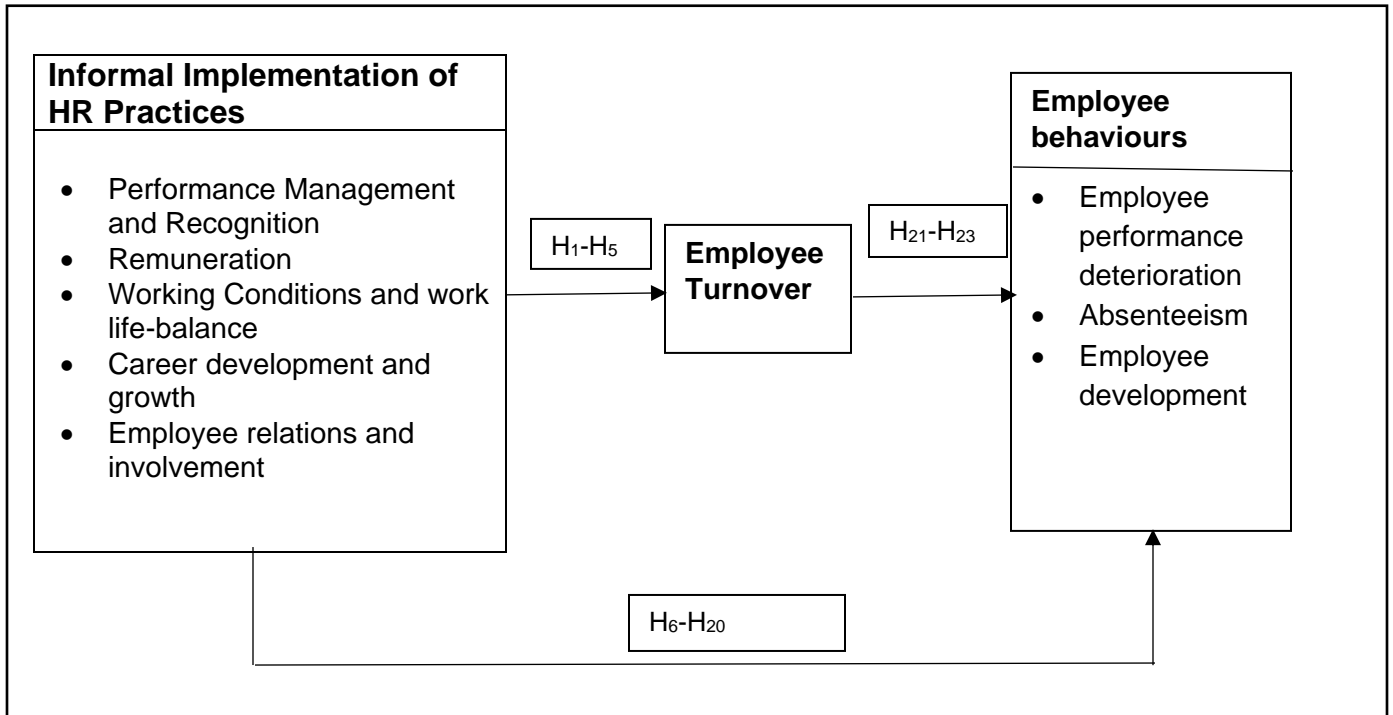
The study sought to address the main question: What HR practices adopted by PTIs negatively affect employee turnover?

The following sub-research questions emanated from the above-stated sub-research objectives:

- How do HR practices at selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia, contribute to employee performance deterioration?
- What factors contribute to employee absenteeism in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia?
- What obstacles hinder employee development within selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia?
- What recommendations could be devised into a formal HRM practices model for PTIs in Namibia to improve employee retention?

## 1.5 Conceptual framework and study hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework of this study, the following conceptual framework was guided by the resource-based view (RBV) and the human capital theory, from which the hypotheses were drawn and tested. The conceptual framework was discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis, and the hypotheses were tested using the structural equation model (SEM) in Chapter Five.



**Figure 1.1:** Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Author's own design

Based on the conceptual framework in Figure 1.1, the following hypotheses were proposed in relation to the study's aim. Table 1.1 shows the hypotheses that were tested against each research objective.

**Table 1.1:** Study hypotheses

Objective	Hypotheses
To determine the HR practices adopted by PTIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H<sub>1</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee turnover.</li> <li>• H<sub>2</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee turnover.</li> </ul>

<p>that negatively affect employee turnover.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H<sub>3</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance, and employee turnover.</li> <li>• H<sub>4</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee turnover.</li> <li>• H<sub>5</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee turnover.</li> </ul>
<p>To ascertain how HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H<sub>6</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee performance deterioration.</li> <li>• H<sub>7</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee performance deterioration.</li> <li>• H<sub>8</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance and employee performance deterioration.</li> <li>• H<sub>9</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee performance deterioration.</li> <li>• H<sub>10</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee performance deterioration.</li> </ul>
<p>To identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H<sub>11</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and absenteeism.</li> <li>• H<sub>12</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee performance deterioration.</li> <li>• H<sub>13</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance and absenteeism.</li> <li>• H<sub>14</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and absenteeism.</li> <li>• H<sub>15</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and absenteeism.</li> </ul>
<p>To determine the obstacles hindering employee development within selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H<sub>16</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee development.</li> <li>• H<sub>17</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee development.</li> <li>• H<sub>18</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance, and employee development.</li> <li>• H<sub>19</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee development.</li> <li>• H<sub>20</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee development.</li> </ul>
<p>To determine the relationship between employee turnover and employee behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H<sub>20</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee performance deterioration and employee turnover.</li> <li>• H<sub>21</sub> There is a positive relationship between absenteeism and employee turnover.</li> <li>• H<sub>23</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee development and employee turnover.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's own design

## **1.6 Research methodology**

The study adopted a pragmatism paradigm because it allowed the use of different methods and approaches, making it fit for a mixed-method study. This flexibility ensured a comprehensive understanding of informal HR practices implemented in selected PTIs (Maarouf, 2019:10; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020:4; Toyon, 2023:4). Moreover, pragmatic research was highly contextual, considering the specific environment and circumstances of this study. This ensured that the findings were relevant and applicable to the context of Namibian PTIs. By understanding the unique challenges and opportunities within these institutions, the research tailored recommendations that address the specific needs of the PTIs.

### **1.6.1 Literature review**

The literature for this study was presented in two sections. The first section comprised a theoretical framework and a comprehensive review of HR practices impacting employee turnover, absenteeism, performance management, employee development, and retention strategies. The second section examined Namibia's higher education institutions (HEIs), focusing on the selected PTIs. The reviewed literature was derived from textbooks, academic journals, websites of institutions, annual reports, the internet, legislation, and institutional policies. This process enabled the researcher to establish the available knowledge for HR practice concerning PTIs, identify research gaps, generate questions for the questionnaire and the interview guide, and build a strong foundation for the study's investigation.

### **1.6.2 Population and sampling techniques**

The study target population comprised academics and HR staff in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia (PTI-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3). There were 184 participants in total. The study population was derived using the purposive and stratified random sampling method because it enabled the researcher to select the sample members affected by HR practices. The study focused on academic staff and employees working in the HR departments of the selected PTIs. The study employed purposive sampling because it restricted the potential participants to those who could provide the desired information since they fit the criteria set by the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:359; Sekaran, 2003:277). The HR and academic staff possessed information to address the study's research objectives. However, this process was complemented by the stratified random sampling method in which the sample represented each segment (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:351), i.e., academics and HR staff. In addition, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table was used to determine the number of samples from the population (Sekaran, 2003:253).

### **1.6.3 Data collection instruments**

This study implemented the questionnaire and the interview guide for data collection. A combined questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions linked to a Likert scale and open-ended questions for participants to reflect on their experiences (Dawson, 2002:31). This type of questionnaire enabled the researcher to obtain descriptive answers regarding the objectives because Saunders et al. (2007:356) highlighted that a study about opinions, attitudes, and behaviour, should have a questionnaire posing these two types of questions because it enables the researcher to identify and describe the variability in different phenomena. The questionnaire was administered to academics at the selected PTIs and distributed using Survey Monkey.

This study also used a structured interview. Interviews were conducted with HR staff in the selected PTIs using the Zoom online platform. These structured interviews enabled the interviewer to employ prepared questions that guided the interview and, thus, remain focused on the information that needed to be gathered (Saunders et al., 2007:312). The study used a convergent parallel design, comparing quantitative statistical results and qualitative findings to identify converging and diverging results.

### **1.6.4 Data coding and analysis**

The data collected via the closed-ended questionnaire were systematically coded (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:377; Kothari, 2004:122) so that the statistical package (Stata version 17) used to process quantitative data could understand them. The qualitative data comprised responses to the open-ended questions from the questionnaire and the interviews. These were grouped into themes, and the data was processed using Atlas.ti.22.

For this study, data were analysed independently and combined using joint display analysis to interpret and draw conclusions.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The 21st-century labour market is experiencing a 'war for talent' (Stuss, 2020:203). Consequently, PTIs must retain their academic staff to maintain continuity in teaching and research, support students effectively, uphold teaching excellence, bolster the institution's reputation, and ensure stability. Consequently, the proposed formal HRM practice model developed in this study could be significant in promoting consistency in implementing HR Practices in PTIs in Namibia and contribute towards employee retention (Meyer, 2011:9; Denver, Gibson, Tonderayi & Severino,



2018:494). Furthermore, this model could help reduce absenteeism, improve employee performance, and promote employee development in the selected PTIs (Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018:19; Mwanza, 2018:120; Shava, 2017:110).

It is important to note that the proposed model could guide HR staff and PTI owners to effectively implement formal HR practices that support employee retention within PTIs. The findings of this study thus contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding HR practices and their implementation within PTIs in Namibia, which could be used for reference by HR scholars.

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

This study investigated HR practices in three Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) in the Khomas Region of Windhoek, Namibia, focusing on practices that influence employee turnover, absenteeism, performance, and development. These institutions' main campuses are situated in this region. Data was collected from academic staff through questionnaires and HR staff via interviews, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the HR practices in place. Additionally, the study benchmarked these practices against the HR Standards Model established by the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP), given the absence of documented HR standards by the Namibia Institute of People Management (NIPM) for the Namibian industries.

## **1.9 Clarification of key concepts**

### **1.9.1 Human resource practices**

Tan and Nasurdin (2011:157) describe HR practices as organisational policies and activities focused on building employees' commitment, motivation and retention while managing their performance to ensure the organisation achieves its goals and creates a competitive advantage.

### **1.9.2 Tertiary institutions**

Higher learning institutions offer education after secondary education (Brachem & Braum, 2018:67).

### **1.9.3 Employee turnover**

This term refers to the number or percentage of employees who voluntarily leave the institution and are replaced by new employees (Chaitra & Murthy, 2015:126; Hussani Ali & Abeygunawardana, 2018:41).

#### 1.9.4 Performance

The activities of a job that an employee executes at the expected standard (Pradhan & Jena, 2016:70).

#### 1.9.5 Absenteeism

Karimbil (2019:273) viewed absenteeism as employees not coming to work to perform their given duties as and when expected.

#### 1.9.6 Employee development

Thoman and Lloyd (2018:156) define employee development as learning new skills and knowledge to help improve performance.

### **1.10 Outline of the thesis**

The following chapters are organised systematically to tackle the research objectives through a procedural scholarly investigation. First, Chapter 2 comprehensively reviews prior research on HR practices contributing to employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a decline in employee development. Additionally, it reviews retention strategies that HEIs can adopt. This chapter began by presenting the two theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, i.e., the resource-based view (RBV) and the human capital theory. They were followed by the HR practices adopted by organisations, focusing on formal and informal HR practices. It further examines the practices and challenges emerging in HRM in the 21st-century workplace.

Similarly, the chapter discusses employee turnover. Under this heading, the literature review presents the concept of employee turnover, HR practices associated with employee turnover, and the effects of employee turnover in HEIs. In addition, this chapter discusses the concept of absenteeism, the factors contributing to absenteeism in the workplace, and its consequences. This discourse follows an overview of employee performance, effects of performance deterioration in HEIs, general employee development, and perceived obstacles for their academic staff. The chapter concludes with employee retention strategies in HEIs and those implemented in Namibian HEIs. The literature review was aimed at helping readers understand the existing knowledge and the gaps this study sought to address.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on HEIs in the Namibian context, focusing on selected PTIs (PTI-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3). It commences with an overview of Namibian HEIs, discusses the history of

PTIs, including the legislative framework used in establishing PTIs, how the government manages PTIs, and explores how employees are managed, and the HR practices enforced by Namibian law. Furthermore, the chapter looks at HR practices contributing to employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and practices hindering employee development in Namibian PTIs. In addition, it provides a contextual overview of selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia. This literature review seeks to help readers understand the evolution of PTIs in Namibia, the HR practices derived from Namibian law, and their implementation in the selected PTIs. It strives to create an awareness of the HR practices that trigger problems in these PTIs. This chapter unpacks the new knowledge created by this study and highlights its significance.

Chapter 4 explains the study's research process. It discusses the research philosophy, paradigm, approach, research methods, research design, sampling methods, and data collection instruments adopted and provides some justification for their use in this study. Furthermore, the chapter examines how data was collected and analysed. The study adopted a mixed-method research approach, and the way data was integrated is addressed. The chapter concludes by addressing the ethical considerations of the research process.

Chapter 5 presents the study results. The chapter presents data and reports quantitative and qualitative results separately before data integration. The data was integrated to present the main findings using a joint display analysis.

Chapter 6 discusses the study results that are linked to the literature review, thus helping to correlate the current research findings with previous research studies. In addition, the study answers the posed research questions and discusses the hypotheses emanating from the study's conceptual framework.

Chapter 7 presents the proposed formal HR practice model that Namibian PTIs could adopt to retain academic staff, reduce absenteeism, improve employee performance, and promote employee development. This model consists of three phases: input, transformation, and output. The input phase outlines the informal HR practices currently implemented by selected PTIs, the transformation phase indicates the intervention selected PTIs should introduce to transform their informal HR practice into formal HR practice, and the output section presents the outcomes that PTIs could experience after implementing formal HR practices.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents concluding remarks addressing the research objectives. Based on these remarks, the chapter will formulate recommendations based on the conclusions drawn from

the findings. This chapter also outlines the study's limitations, makes suggestions for future research, and delineates the study's contribution to HR's body of knowledge. The chapter ends with a summary of the entire thesis.

### **1.11 Summary**

The introduction outlines the research's aim and purpose, providing an overview of the broader context and specific focus on informal HR practices within selected private tertiary institutions (PTIs) in Windhoek, Namibia. Chapter 1 establishes the research problem, objectives, and significance, contextualised within the historical and institutional development of higher education in Namibia. This includes the establishment and evolution of institutions public and private institutions. Furthermore, the literature review for this study comprised two sections: (1) theories underpinning the study, a comprehensive review of HR practices impacting employee turnover, performance management, absenteeism, and employee development, and (2) a section focusing on HEIs in Namibia, specifically PTIs. This literature review formed the basis for constructing the study's conceptual framework from which the proposed research hypotheses emanated.

Furthermore, the study adopted a mixed-method approach by collecting data from three selected Namibian PTIs using questionnaires and interviews. The findings of this study will contribute to the HR body of knowledge regarding the formal implementation of HR practices within PTIs in Namibia that HR scholars could reference. The next chapter will review the literature on HR practices that affect employee turnover.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HR PRACTICES AFFECTING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter comprehensively reviews prior research on HR practices that impact employee turnover, absenteeism, performance management, employee development, and retention strategies. It commenced with a theoretical framework looking at the theories that underpin the study, a review of the literature on the HR practices adopted by organisations, and a cover formal HR practices, including the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) HR staff practice standards 2014, and a discussion on informal HR practices and their impact on the workplace. It further investigated HRM, addressing the factors that have contributed to changes in the HR function in the 21st-century workplace. Next, an investigation will be conducted into the challenges emerging in HRM in the 21st-century workplace. Organisations are trying to cope with the ever-changing environment; thus, there are HR practices they need to adopt in the modern-day workplace. Hence, PTIs fail to implement effective HR practices fully, causing increased employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a lower rate of employee development.

This chapter then reviews the literature on the HR practices associated with employee turnover and the effects of this turnover in HEIs. Employees who intend to leave an organization are often absent from their duties, the performance of the employees deteriorates, and employee development is adversely affected simultaneously. Therefore, this study also reviewed extant literature on the causes and effects of absenteeism in the workplace. Likewise, the HR practices influencing employee performance in HEIs and the impact of performance deterioration in the workplace were discussed. Chapter 2 ends with a summary of the literature review.

#### **2.2 Theoretical framework of the study**

This study aimed to determine the impact of informal HR practices on employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and employee development in selected Namibian private tertiary institutions (PTIs). Therefore, the theories that underpin this study are the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the human capital theory.

### **2.2.1 Resource-based view (RBV) theory**

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory is a strategic management framework used to determine the strategic resources a firm can exploit to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The RBV focuses on the internal resources of an institution as the key to achieving and maintaining competitive advantage (Barney, 1991:105; Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001:917). Resources are the assets, capabilities, organisational processes, firm attributes, information, and knowledge controlled by a firm that enables it to conceive and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991:105; Barney 2020:6; Hussain & Waheed, 2019:80). They can be tangible, that is, physical assets, financial resources and intangible such as brand reputation, intellectual property, and culture (Barney, 1991:105; Hall 1993:610). These resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable to provide a competitive edge (Barney, 1991:106; Spanos & Lioukas, 2001:922). In this regard, resources must give value to the firm by enabling it to exploit opportunities or neutralise threats, be rare among its current and potential competitors, and be difficult to imitate. This can be due to unique historical conditions, causal ambiguity, or social complexity, and must be no strategically equivalent valuable resources that are themselves either not rare or imitable (Cegliński, 2016:66). Authors such as Wright et al (2001:917); Saha and Gregar (2012:3); Davis (2017:5) and Collins (2021:350) asserted that human resources are a strategic asset that contribute to an institutions' competitive advantage. While capabilities are the firm's capacity to deploy resources, usually in combination, using institutional, to affect a desired end. They are often embedded in the firm's routines and practices. Therefore, institutions need policies that will lead to HR practices that will develop a pool of human capital with high skills and motivation to exhibit productive behaviour (Wright et al., 2001:917; Collins, 2021:351).

The study has adopted this theory as it emphasizes that human resources are a strategic source of competitive advantage. Thus, employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities are valuable resources that can drive organisational success. So, PTIs should invest in training and development to enhance human resources, making them more valuable and rarer. Furthermore, effective HR practices develop institutional capabilities, such as a solid corporate culture, leadership, and teamwork. These capabilities are often unique to the firm and embedded in its practices, making them difficult for competitors to replicate. Based on this view, selected PTIs in Windhoek will be able to promote employee retention and job satisfaction, which will reduce absenteeism and motivation, improve employee performance and employee development, and contribute to sustaining the institution's competitive advantage. For instance, a comprehensive performance management system that aligns employee goals with organizational strategy

ensures that employees work efficiently toward the company's objectives (Shrestha,2022:145). Creating a knowledge-sharing culture where employees are encouraged to share insights and learn from each other enhances institutional capabilities. This makes the firm's knowledge resources valuable, rare, and inimitable (Singh, Mazzucchelli, Vessal & Solidoro, 2021:100839; Cao & Nguyen, 2022:745). Implementing innovative HR practices such as flexible work arrangements, employee wellness programs, and inclusive workplace policies can make an institution's human resources non-substitutable (Amri,2024:1019).

It is important to note that the RBV theory highlights the importance of an institution's internal resources and capabilities as a source of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is essential for an institution operating in a competitive market and selected PTIs in Windhoek are no exception. The study assumed that the challenges faced by PTIs impacted their ability to gain a competitive advantage. Hence, the study determined the informal HR practices in Namibian PTIs.

### **2.2.2 Human capital theory**

The human capital theory asserts that investments in employee education, training, and development increase their productivity and performance (Becker, 1967:9; Rahman & Akhter,2021:71). The theory puts human capital into two categories, that is, general and specific (Mincer 1970:4). General human capital refers to an employee with standard competencies that can be used at several organisations. In contrast, firm-specific human capital enables the employee to be efficient with the immediate employer (Schultz, Chowdhury & Van de Voort, 2013:425). On this note, organizations get employees from the market with general human capital. Therefore, employers need to equip their employees with skills that will make them firm-specific human capital to be productive. This can be achieved through working, training, and development (Arokiasamy, Fujikawa, Piaralal, & Arumugam, 2023:1820). Therefore, employers should invest in on-the-job training to improve the skills and productivity of their workforce, leading to greater efficiency and competitiveness in health as this will enhance individuals' physical and mental capabilities, reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity and in education and training (Becker, 1967:9). It is important to note that human capital benefit both the employer and the employee because it enhances productivity, employability, leading to higher wages, career advancement and economic growth (Birasnav, Rangnekar & Dalpati, 2011:118). The theory emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and skill development for organizational success. According to Lepak and Snell (1999:44), skills and knowledge can depreciate if not

continuously updated. Technological advancements and changes in industry standards can render specific skills obsolete, necessitating ongoing education and training.

The selected PTIs in Windhoek face the challenge of deterioration of academic staff performance. This makes the human capital theory significant for this study because it provides ways of increasing employee performance and the benefits of investing in human capital. Based on the human capital theory view, PTIs must implement HR practices that will lead to continuous learning, increasing training, and development activities in these institutions. Subsequently, institutions invest in hiring individuals with high potential, considering their educational background, skills, and abilities as indicators of future performance and productivity. However, the theory emphasizes training and development to enhance general human capital for academic staff to be institution specific to meet the institutional objectives (Schultz et al., 2013:425). HR practices for performance management will be used to identify skill gaps and provide targeted training to improve performance. There is also a need to develop clear career paths based on skills and competencies to encourage employees to invest in their human capital. The theory informs the compensation structures that employers should reward employees based on their education, skills, and experience, aligning with the idea that investments in human capital should yield financial returns (Chowdhury & Schulz 2022:26). Providing opportunities for growth and development help retain top talent, as employees are more likely to stay with an organization that invests in their human capital.

In summary, the human capital theory provides a framework for understanding the importance of investing in employee development. This enables the study to investigate the informal HR practices implemented by selected PTIs regarding remuneration, performance management, employee wellness, career development and growth, and recruitment and selection, which lead to employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and a decline in employee development.

### **2.2.3 Integration of the two theories for this study**

In examining the impact of informal HR practices on employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a decline in employee development, this study integrates two pivotal theories: the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and the human capital theory. This integration provides a comprehensive understanding of how these HR practices influence organisational performance and employee behaviour. RBV focuses on the strategic value of human resources, while human capital theory emphasizes the need for continuous investment in



employee development. These theories provide a multi-faceted understanding of how informal HR practices impact employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and employee development in Namibian PTIs.

In this study, RBV theory will guide the analysis of how PTIs manage their human resources as strategic assets. The human capital theory will inform the examination of career development and growth practices, assessing whether investments in employee development are adequate. These theoretical lenses were applied to qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively analyse the impact of informal HR practices.

The integrated theoretical framework of RBV and human capital theory provides a robust foundation for analysing the impact of informal HR practices on employee outcomes. By recognizing the strategic importance of human resources and investing in their development, organizations can enhance their competitive advantage and achieve sustainable success. This framework stresses the necessity of transitioning from informal to formal HR practices to effectively address employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a decline in employee development.

### **2.3 HR practices adopted by organisations**

Researchers (Tan & Nasurdin, 2011:157; Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:28) state that HR practices are organisational activities and policies that focus on building employees' commitment, motivation and retention while managing their performance to ensure the organisation achieves its goals and creates a competitive advantage. The HR practices should meet the requirements of the laws and regulations of the country in which the organisation operates (Mathi & Malathi, 2013:139). The organisation needs to have recognisable policies and regulations that are documented and used as a decision-making tool to identify the institution using formal HR practices (Hashim, Ismail & Hassan, 2016:49; Nguyen & Bryant, 2004:601; Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). In this regard, various authors (De Kok, Thurik & Uhlener, 2003:7; Hashim et al., 2016:48; Nguyen & Bryant, 2004:600; Srour, Srour & Lattouf, 2017:534; Steijvers et al., 2017:157; Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204) classified HR practices as both formal and informal. They further noted that large organisations adopt formal HR practices, whereas family businesses adopt informal ones. Most of the PTIs in Windhoek are family businesses and, thus, are likely to implement informal HR practices.

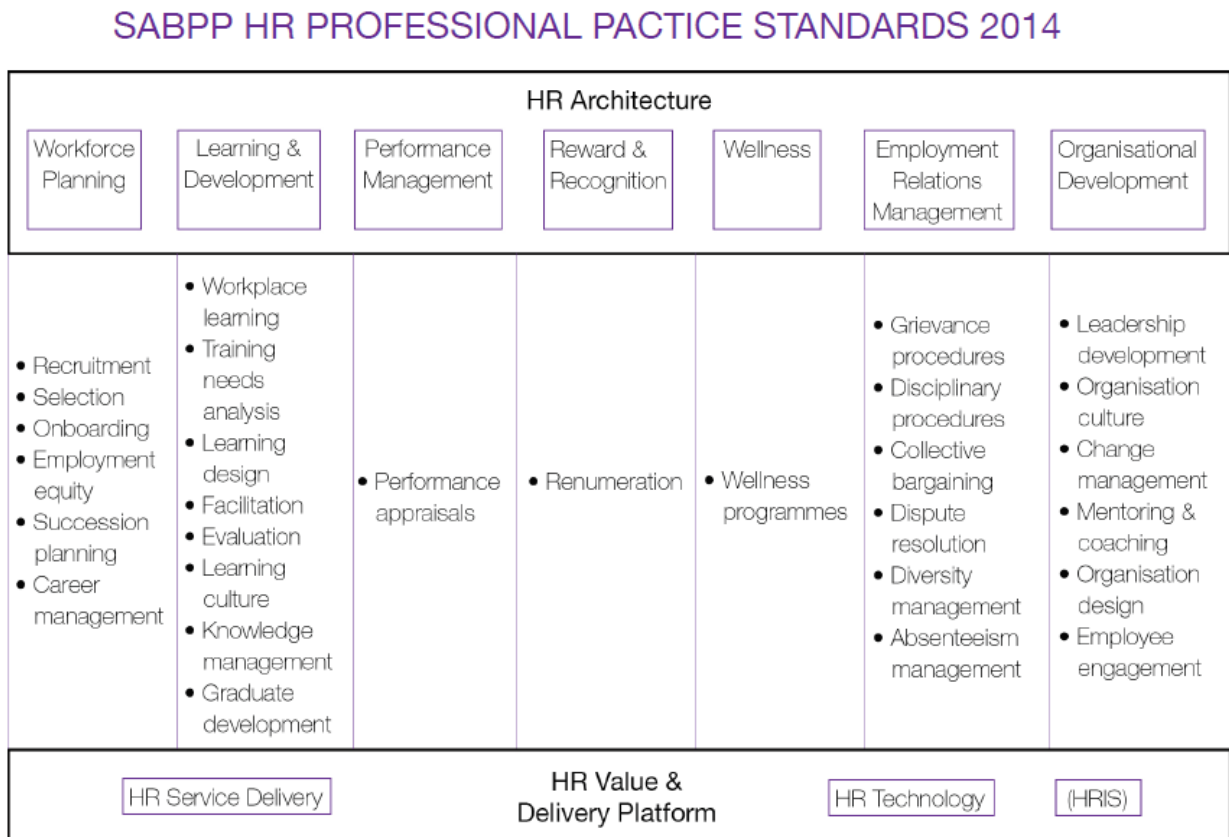
### **2.3.1 Formal HR practices in organisations**

Various HR practices are adopted by different institutions globally (Har, Boon-in & Hsien, 2010:6284; Tan & Nasurdin, 2011:157; Hashim & Hameed, 2012:49; Aslam, Aslam, Ali & Habib, 2013:93; Haider, Rasli, Akhtar, Yussoff, Malik, Aamir, Naveed & Taria, 2015:64; Mapetere et al., 2018:494) and comprise practices such as organisational learning, workforce planning, counselling, training and development, performance management, compensation and remuneration, health and safety, selective hiring (recruiting the 'right' people), recognition and reward (for motivating employees) performance appraisal (conducted for job evaluation purposes), self-managed teams (for encouraging a cooperative culture) and extensive training (establishing a learning culture), all of which can improve the level of knowledge management if they are well-established. Specifically, Steijvers et al. (2017:157) highlight formal HR practices that can be adopted by family businesses to improve their organisation's performance, such as formal recruitment systems, training programmes, performance management, and reward systems. These HR practices were drawn from those implemented by Belgium, Malaysia, and Palestine's hotel, manufacturing, and telecommunication industries. Consequently, this study will use this information to recommend formal HR practices that PTIs in Namibia can adopt to improve employee retention.

This study recommends that the selected Windhoek PTIs adopt formal HR practices because these processes will enable these institutions to reduce the rising rate of employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and the decrease in employee development that they are currently experiencing. These latter problems have been caused by the informal HR practices these institutions adopt, such as not paying salaries to current academic staff during vacation periods and offering lower salaries to prospective employees.

It is important to note that HR practices should be designed to support business operations and the organisational strategy. However, Gould-Williams (2016:767) noted that managers implement HR practices unrelated to organisational objectives. He also gave an example of performance management that can be used to provide feedback and encourage employees, identify the skills gaps, and recognise employees' efforts. Some managers use performance management as a management tool for controlling employees' behaviour to ensure it meets set performance targets that need to be achieved by employees at a given time. Therefore, the research study assumed that the informal HR practices adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs do not support their institutional strategies, particularly regarding performance management, because these institutions have reflected a performance deterioration of 5% since 2014.

Specifically, regarding the Southern African context, the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) HR staff practice standards illustrated in Figure 2.1 below indicate the HR standard practices in the HR functional architecture as a way of strengthening and reinforcing the HR system and reducing inconsistencies in the workplace.



**Figure 2.1:** South African Board of People Practices (SABPP) HR Standards (Meyer 2014:37)

According to Meyer (2014:37), the HR standards comprise the HR practices that PTIs can implement to reduce employee turnover absenteeism and boost performance and the rate of employee development. Therefore, this research study focused on the HR standards and practices for workforce planning that comprise HR practices such as recruitment, selection, onboarding, employment equity, succession planning, and career management, as well as learning and development HR practices such as workplace learning, training needs analysis, learning design, facilitation, evaluation, learning culture, knowledge management, and graduate development. In addition, performance management processes should be implemented using the HR practice for performance appraisals. Furthermore, there is a need for a wellness programme for wellness in the workplace. Moreover, the HR architecture of employment relations should include HR practices such as grievance and disciplinary procedures, collective bargaining,

dispute resolution, and managing diversity and absenteeism. Finally, the HR architecture for organisational development includes HR practices such as leadership development, organisational design and culture, change management, mentoring, coaching, and employee engagement (Meyer, 2014:37).

However, Denver et al, (2018:494) noted that if these HR practices are partially adopted or not implemented consistently, they tend to yield unfavourable outcomes. Consequently, this research study surmised that if HR practices for recruitment, selection, onboarding, career management, remuneration, performance appraisal, organisational culture, grievance and disciplinary procedures, collective bargaining, and absenteeism are partially or inconsistently implemented, they can result in performance deterioration, employee absenteeism, and increased employee turnover. In addition, employee development can be hindered by a lack of HR practices such as a workplace learning culture and graduate development.

Hence, Windhoek PTIs, being self-sustained and family-owned, are likely to compromise or not implement some of the HR practices highlighted by Meyer (2014:37) because of a lack of resources (Coetzer, Knock & Wallo, 2017:120; Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). Moreover, private institutions are known for adopting informal HR practices (Hashim et al., 2016:48; Srour et al., 2017:534; Steijvers et al., 2017:157; Csillag et al., 2019:5782) and paying low salaries to maximise profit (Shava, 2017:110; Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018:19; Mwanza, 2018:120) thereby triggering employee turnover, absenteeism, poor performance and, often unknowingly, hinder employee development.

Specifically, some research studies conducted in Namibia (Shava, 2017:110; Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018:19; Mwanza, 2018:120) highlight the HR practices that negatively impact employee performance. These researchers concluded that a promotion dominated by nepotism and tribalism, poor leadership, work-related stress, organisational development, and delayed taxed overtime payment negatively impacts employee performance and encourages employee turnover. Subsequently, poor performance is influenced by poor employment relationships, recruitment policies not linked to the Namibian Affirmative Act of 1988, and the lack of job descriptions (Mwanza, 2018:120; Shava, 2017:110). Since organisations can implement policies that are not linked to the above Act, the researcher presumed that the informal HR practices implemented in selected Windhoek PTIs are not linked to some gazetted laws that should be followed by institutions in Namibia, thereby leading to the problems that these PTIs are facing

currently. In addition, the selected Windhoek PTIs may compromise on implementing the suggested HR practices (Meyer, 2014:37), resulting in a negative outcome. Therefore, the study intends to discover the informal HR practices that affect employee turnover, employee performance, and absenteeism and hinder employee development in Windhoek PTIs with the help of the SABPP HR staff model proposed by Meyer (2014:37) and directed by the implementation ethic suggested by Meyer (2011).

### **2.3.2 Informal HR practices in organisations**

Informal HR practices are those human resource management activities that lack formal structure, standardization, or documentation. These practices often arise out of necessity, tradition, managerial discretion, or lack of resources rather than being based on formal policies or procedures (Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). While informal HR practices may work well in small organizations, they cause challenges as the organization grows (Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). Authors like Roberts, Sawbridge and Bamber (1992:255), Hann (2012:5), and Horvatova, Mikusova, and Kashi (2020:5510) have noted that organizations employing more than twenty employees need to implement formal HR practices. Given this context, the selected PTIs in Windhoek are now at a stage where formal HR practices are necessary to address the challenges arising from informal HR practices.

Informal HR practices can violate employment laws and often lack written policies on recruitment, selection, performance management, and training budgets. This is usually due to a lack of qualified HR staff to manage these functions (Nguyen & Bryant, 2004:603; Hashim et al., 2016:50; Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). Consequently, employees may not receive formal employment contracts, and performance appraisals may be used primarily for monitoring rather than development. Training is typically not based on needs analysis, and institution owners may be unwilling to offer market-related salaries and benefits (Bassanini, Breda, Caroli & Reberioux, 2013:450; Hashim et al., 2016:50).

Additionally, Horvatova et al. (2020:5510) highlighted that succession planning is often based on family and personal relationships rather than formal systems. Recruitment, promotion, and remuneration practices tend to favour family members (Perry, Ring, Matherne & Markova, 2015:22). Michiels (2018:8) noted that remuneration decisions made on a person-by-person basis can lead to inconsistency and employee dissatisfaction. These practices are typically

implemented to meet the needs of the employer/owner without considering their effects on employees and the organization.

Informal HR practices can lead to employee dissatisfaction, resulting in turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a lack of employee development (Tiwari & Saxena, 2012:693; Hee, Yan, Rizal, Kowang, & Fei, 2018). Between 2014 and 2018, the implementation of informal HR practices in Namibian PTIs has led to a 15% increase in employee turnover, a 5% decrease in employee performance, a 10% rise in lecturers' absenteeism, and a 15% decline in employee development, as reflected in their annual reports.

There is limited understanding of the impact of informal HR practices on employee outcomes in the context of growing private tertiary institutions (PTIs) in Namibia. While there is substantial literature on formal HR practices, the specific effects of informal HR practices on employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and employee development within these PTIs have not been thoroughly investigated. This study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on the detrimental effects of informal HR practices and offering recommendations for transitioning to formal HR systems to enhance organizational performance and employee satisfaction. As higher education institutions strive to eradicate undesirable HR practices, they must adopt more effective HR functions in the 21st-century workplace to remain competitive, as reflected in the RBV and the human capital theory.

## **2.4 Human resource management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

A review of the history of HRM indicates that it has been changing names due to changes in social and economic activities. These name changes have influenced the changes in the HR function (Ahammad 2017:412). It is essential to observe that each era has operated in a different environment. The first form of HRM was known as 'Industrial Welfare' and comprised the following aspects:

- Factory inspectors were male.
- Women and children worked for sixty (60) hours per week.
- The formation of the trade union began.

However, the HR function then comprised grievance handling, dismissals, safety, and supervisor training on new legislation and practice (Whatishuman resource.com, 2017:1; Ahammad, 2017:412).

Personnel management began towards the end of the 19th century – a period characterised by poor industrial relations. The HR function then was mainly administrative and transactional (Ahammad, 2017:415): recruitment and selection, compensation and benefits, new employee orientation and training, and performance appraisal systems. HRM involves compensation and benefits, recruitment and selection, performance management, organisational development, safety, wellness, employee motivation, communication, administration, and training (Ahammad, 2017:416).

The HR function in the 21st-century world of work has changed drastically owing to developments in globalisation, technology, changing demographics and the need for organisations to gain a competitive advantage using their human resources (Stone & Deadrick, 2015:141; Nasir, 2017:216; Cascio, 2019:284; Sheppard & Droog, 2019). Globalisation refers to an organization's ability to connect, exchange, compete, or collaborate globally (Cascio, 2019:285). Key characteristics of globalisation include access to cheap labour, abundant resources, fewer trade barriers, the rapid spread of the cyber revolution, and easy travel and communication, all of which have created expansive global labour markets (Faugoo, 2009:123; Cascio, 2019:285). This global labour market has made the academic sector increasingly competitive, with institutions worldwide vying for skilled professionals.

This context makes it essential for this study to explore the HR practices implemented by selected PTIs for recruitment and selection while also identifying the informal practices that may promote employee turnover, performance deterioration, and absenteeism. Specifically, the study must investigate how current HR practices at PTIs influence the rate of employee turnover, especially considering the increased job opportunities globalisation offers academic staff seeking better prospects. By understanding these dynamics, the study can recommend formal HR practices enabling PTIs to attract and retain high-calibre candidates from the global labour market, thus enhancing their competitive edge and organisational performance.

Globalisation has significantly transformed the workplace, marked by an increasing number of women joining the workforce, a highly competitive environment, a diverse workforce, greater reliance on technology, growth in part-time employment, and a heightened need for flexible work arrangements (Faugoo, 2009:215; Blom, Kazeroony & Du Plessis, 2019:1). To thrive in this era, organisations, including the selected Windhoek PTIs, must leverage the positive impacts of globalisation. Notably, implementing flexible HR practices that promote work-life balance is

crucial, as neglecting this can lead to increased absenteeism and performance deterioration due to poor health (Mohd, Shah, Anwar & Mahzumi, 2016:153; Ogar & Amanze, 2019:156).

Given the existing challenges of absenteeism and performance deterioration faced by the selected PTIs, exploring the informal HR practices related to working conditions and work-life balance is imperative. Formal HR practices are well-documented for their positive outcomes in these areas. Additionally, the recruitment and selection processes must be enhanced by utilising global recruitment platforms enabled by current technologies. This approach allows PTIs to draw from a larger pool of applicants, ensuring the best fit for the job. Therefore, while technology presents advantages and challenges, its strategic use in recruitment can significantly benefit PTIs by attracting top talent globally.

The foundation of organizations and global businesses is driven by five technologies: cloud and mobile computing, big data and machine learning, sensors, and intelligent manufacturing, advanced options and drones, and clean energy. These technologies help employees perform better and, at the same time, enable intense changes in how work is conducted within the organisation (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016:351; Bersin, 2015:2). Organisations have adopted the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) to improve the HR function. The HRIS comprises logical procedures and functions to procure, store, retrieve, scrutinise, manipulate, and distribute significant information about an organisation's personnel (Obedidat, 2012:192; Savalam & Dadhabori, 2018:75; Moussa & El Arbi, 2020:20). These components can be used to improve such practices as HRP, employment equity, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, health and safety and employee relations (Poisat & Mey, 2017:2; Shrivastan, 2019:62; Begum, Bhuiyan, Alam, Awang, Masud & Akhtar, 2020:189; Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473) internal and external communication, employee self-service systems, performance appraisal, payroll administration, and attendance recording (Irum & Yadav, 2019: 5; Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473).

Adopting HRIS in selected PTIs could help them rectify their problems in the 21st century, such as performance deterioration. These institutions can adopt HRIS that encourages employee involvement in performance management, whereby employees can continuously check their performance and improve on those aspects in which the system reflects shortfalls (Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473) rather than annual performance evaluations that do not motivate employees to work hard thereby leading to performance deterioration (Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473). In this regard, some authors (Irum & Yadav, 2019:5; Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473) highlighted those organisations that conduct annual performance evaluations tend to experience problems of



employee performance deterioration. Therefore, this study evaluated the nature of the performance management practices implemented in the selected Windhoek PTIs to identify the ones contributing to employee performance deterioration.

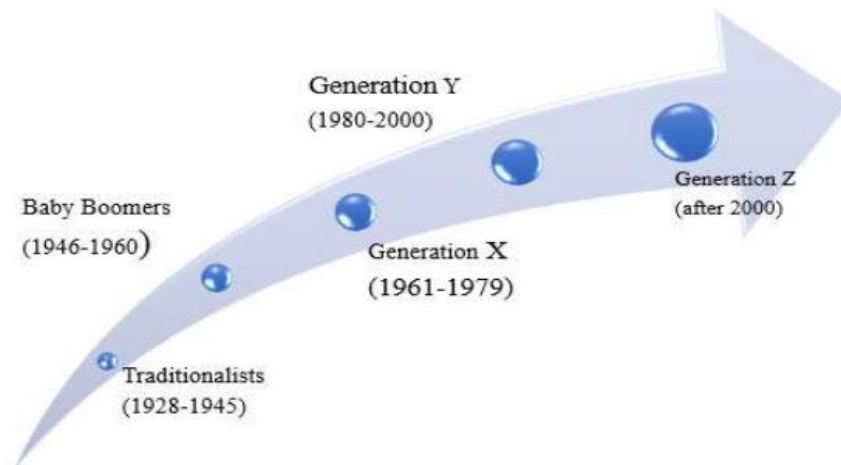
In addition, the implementation of the HRIS for training and development can assist employees in identifying training and development programmes based on the skills and qualifications that they possess and facilitate self-learning using computers (Jahan, 2014:6; Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473; Shrivastava, 2019:62). It is important to note that the availability of these systems within the organisation can also guide the HR department on development programmes to be offered to employees. At the same time, employees also can engage in online learning to improve their skills and knowledge. These practices will enhance employee performance and promote training and development in the workplace. Meanwhile, the 10% decrease in the rate of employee development in selected Windhoek PTIs may be due to a lack of systems that determine suitable training and development programmes for employees.

Furthermore, there are HRIS for recruitment and selection that can help the organisation to attract, select and retain employees in the organisation (Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473; Shrivastava, 2019:62). In addition, the HRIS for internal and external communication promotes the use of the internet and intranets for effective communication within and outside the organisation (Quaosar & Rahman, 2021:473). This process will make implementing HR practices for work-life balance (WLB), flexibility, and employee involvement much easier. Likewise, the availability of the HRIS for employment relations offers autonomy to employees to publish their feedback on official web portals, thereby facilitating the immediate resolution of their grievances (Irum & Yadav, 2019:4).

Conversely, HRIS is very expensive to install; therefore, organisations with limited resources are not likely to invest in such a system or will only adopt the essential ones. On this note, the COVID-19 pandemic forced Windhoek PTIs to adopt the HRIS for internal and external communication because lecturers were supposed to conduct online classes. However, other aspects of the HRIS are also crucial to an organisation because if issues such as poor recruitment and selection, lack of WLB, flexibility, employee involvement, and grievances are not resolved in time, they tend to cause an increase in performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee turnover.

About demographic change, both Cascio (2019:286) and Stone & Deadrick (2015:141) agree that there is a demographic change globally and cite the estimates made by the United Nations (UN) that by 2060, for every 100 people of working age 65 and older, that is more than double the old-to-young people employed at the time these studies were conducted. These statistics imply the increase of labour supply in some professions and the entrance of the new generation into the

workforce. In addition, workforce diversity has led organisations to need to manage a multi-national workforce. Therefore, HR staff should strive for HR practices that shun discrimination and bullying in the workplace and, at the same time, cater to the primary goals and values of multi-generations of employees (Stone & Deadrick, 2015:141). The 21st-century workforce typically ranges from the veterans/traditionalists (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011:3) to baby boomers, generations X, Y, and Z (Nasir, 2017:219) – Figure 2.2 below indicates the birth ranges of each generation. As the veterans/traditionalists are close to retirement age, this research focused more on employees who fall into baby boomers and generations X, Y and Z.



**Figure 2.2:** Generations' evolution (Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:97)

Baby boomers are satisfied by monetary rewards and job security while at the same time, being comfortable with the traditional ways of working, resistant to change and in need of constant supervision (Jiri, 2016:104; Nasir, 2017:219; Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:98). Furthermore, Aslam et al. (2013:90) mention that the baby boomers opt for part-time jobs, or if employed full-time they can resort to early retirement, whereas Jiri (2016:119) and Saileela and Thiruchanuru (2017:98) noted that, the baby boomers continue to work even after reaching the retirement age because of financial instability. Their characteristics (stated above) are not ideal in today's business world, where the environment changes rapidly, and employees need to adapt to these changes to survive. The baby boomers need to leave when they reach retirement age to enable other generations to join the workforce and bring new ideas into the workplace since they lack innovation.

Generation X is hard working, committed to their job, technologically oriented, flexible, and requires little supervision, but demands WLB, a path for career development, good communication, and rewards. To retain this generation, Hannay and Fretwell (2011:9) suggest

that they should be provided with adjusted career paths, regular feedback, adequate rewards, WLB, good communication channels, a technology-savvy work environment, and, if appropriate, given leadership positions. However, because it is impossible to provide all of them with leadership positions, the research study suggested that organisations should implement HR practices that give Generation X more control over their work.

Generation Y possesses cultural and technological 'savvy' (Jiri, 2016:118; Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:100), but they expect WLB, attractive benefits, monetary rewards, flexibility, regular feedback, and teamwork. They are more interested in what the company can offer them than what they can offer the company and regularly change jobs if unsatisfied with their working environment. In addition, their work-related attitudes include job satisfaction, organisation commitment, and turnover intentions, and they are easily depressed (Jiri, 2016:118; Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:100). However, Nnambooze and Parumasur (2016:226) tend to agree with Teng (2020:339) who attested that generation Y enters the work environment without experience. So mentoring programmes should be initiated in the workplace to enable them to work with more experienced professionals and, in exchange, share their superior technological skills – such a process will build mutual respect among generations and promote employee development and self-realisation. Hence, teamwork contributes to performance and reduces employee turnover and absenteeism (Nnambooze & Parumasur, 2016:226; Teng, 2020:339). Satisfying their needs may motivate Generation Y employees to remain with the organisation, reduce absenteeism, and result in high performance.

Generation Z is characterised by people who have poor listening skills and lack the interpersonal skills required for communicating and working with others – their 'communities' are websites such as Google, Facebook, and Orkut. They need their rewards to be regularly reviewed to meet the changing demands and expectations, and in terms of learning and development, they opt for technology-enhanced learning opportunities (Jiri, 2016:105; Gaidhani, Arora & Sharma, 2019:2811; Teng, 2020:339). HR staff must be aware of these characteristics and become proactive in crafting HR practices that suit Generation Z's needs as it enters the workplace.

As highlighted earlier in this study, Windhoek PTIs are experiencing a high employee turnover rate. The research assumes that Generation X and Y employees predominantly leave the organization due to informal HR practices. This assumption is because these generations dominate the current workforce and favour environments that promote learning and recognition, as Saileela and Thiruchanuru (2017:100) and Teng (2020:339) noted. Therefore, this study aims to identify the obstacles hindering employee development in selected PTIs in Namibia.

Additionally, the literature suggests that HR staff need to adopt practices that encourage employee loyalty and retention by providing a remuneration system with both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, a performance management system that fosters regular feedback, and a positive organizational culture that supports work-related attitudes (Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:100; Teng, 2020:339). This stresses the importance of the study in identifying the informal HR practices currently implemented by PTIs, particularly in performance management and remuneration. The objective is to recommend formal HR practices to retain and enhance employee performance. By doing so, PTIs can create a more stable and productive workforce, ultimately contributing to the institution's success and the broader educational landscape in Namibia.

Ultimately, with the characteristics of various generations that are found in the present workplace, authors such as Mabaso and Dlamini (2018:3), Bussin, Serumaga-Zake and Mohamed-Padayachee (2019:1), and Boucher and Flynn (2023:2) concur that organisations should abstain from the 'one-size-fits-all' approach for retaining employees since it is no longer adequate for this multi-generational workforce. Moreover, many organisations, including the Windhoek PTIs, face a challenge: the lack of resources to implement the HR practices that will retain the loyal services of this multi-generational workforce. Teng (2020:340) further noted that if the needs of these different generations are not met, their turnover intentions increase that, in turn, will negatively impact absenteeism, employee performance, and development (Allen, 2008:6). Therefore, it is essential for this study to analyse the HR practices that are used at selected Windhoek PTIs to determine if they meet the needs of a multi-generational workforce.

The changes in the constitution of the workforce have led to changes in the HRM strategies, the relationship between the employer and the employee, and the way employees are managed and motivated (Stone & Deadrick 2015:139; Cascio, 2019:284; Sheppard & Droog, 2019:2). In this regard, organisations now need to adopt strategic human resources management (SHRM) that establishes a link between the business strategy and the HR strategy (Kaur, 2013:46; Meyer, 2013:28). SHRM is characterised by consistent internal formal HR policies and practices that are formulated and administered to capacitate the employees to achieve the organisation's objectives (Baird & Meshoulam, 1988:117; Delery & Doty, 1996; Barnes & Adam, 2018:135). Consequently, organisations, including the selected Windhoek PTIs, must formulate formal HR policies and practices that will respond to the challenges of globalisation, technology, and the changing

demography while gaining a competitive advantage. Barnes & Adams (2018:136) encourage HR staff to use the resource-based view and human capital theory when formulating their HR practices. The resource-based view theory notes that an organisation's competitive advantage is determined by its resources. Therefore, to establish a competitive advantage, the organisation should create value in a way that its competitors cannot imitate. However, formal HR policies and practices are brutal for other organisations to emulate to gain a competitive advantage, compared to such sources as technology, equipment, and geographical area (Faugoo, 2009:124; Barnes & Adam, 2018:136). This study presupposes that an institution experiencing a high employee turnover rate is not creating a competitive advantage.

Furthermore, the HR staff should formulate the HR practices that can manage and influence employees' attitudes and behaviour towards achieving the organisation's objectives. If the HR practice is not achieving the desired outcome, the HR staff should replace it with the one that contributes to the organisation's goals (Barnes & Adam, 2018:136). Hence, it is essential for organisations facing problems regarding employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and a decline in employee development to identify the HR practices contributing to these problems and replace them with the ones that can produce the desired outcomes.

Globalisation, technology, and demographic changes have transformed the 21st-century workplace. These changes have affected the HR function and placed greater emphasis on adopting strategic HRM processes to survive in this era. These innovative HR strategies are the key to gaining a competitive advantage; therefore, the HR staff should design policies and practices that address the prevailing environmental problems. Using HRIS in an organisation can improve the implementation of HR practices such as recruitment and selection, WLB and flexibility, employee involvement, and employment relations. In contrast, implementing unsatisfactory informal HR practices can lead to employee turnover. In addition, informal HR policies and practices tend to affect the organisation negatively. However, there are challenges faced by HR staff in the 21st-century workplace because they are striving to create a competitive advantage for their organisations or institutions, such as the selected Windhoek PTIs.

#### **2.4.1 Challenges emerging in HRM in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace**

As organisations strive for competitive advantage in the globalised marketplace, new workplace challenges are emerging. These challenges include the following HR practices: planning, recruitment and selection, career development and growth, employee relations and conflict

management, workplace flexibility, and WLB (Nasir, 2017:217; Sirgy & Lee, 2018:234; Chaudhuri, Arora & Roy, 2020:166).

#### a) Human resource planning

Human Resource Planning (HRP) is the strategic process of forecasting. Determining the optimal placement of human capital within an institution to achieve the highest levels of efficiency (Fahed-Sreih, 2018:3). By implementing HRP, organizations can ensure that employees are effectively utilized in their roles, positioning them in the 'right place at the right time' to enhance overall performance (Fahed-Sreih, 2018:4). Key roles of HRP in the 21st century include recruiting and maintaining diversity in ethnicity, gender, and religion; forecasting and adapting to change; increasing productivity through long-term strategic planning; ensuring employee safety and well-being; and establishing benefits systems that promote a satisfactory workplace environment, thereby enhancing employee performance (Fahed-Sreih, 2018:3).

A workplace environment that promotes job satisfaction is less likely to experience issues such as performance deterioration, employee turnover, absenteeism, and lack of employee development (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015:718; Bibi, Pangil, Johari & Ahmad, 2017:380; Bibi, Ahmad & Majid, 2018:117). Therefore, HR staff must ensure that HRP procedures foster job satisfaction among employees.

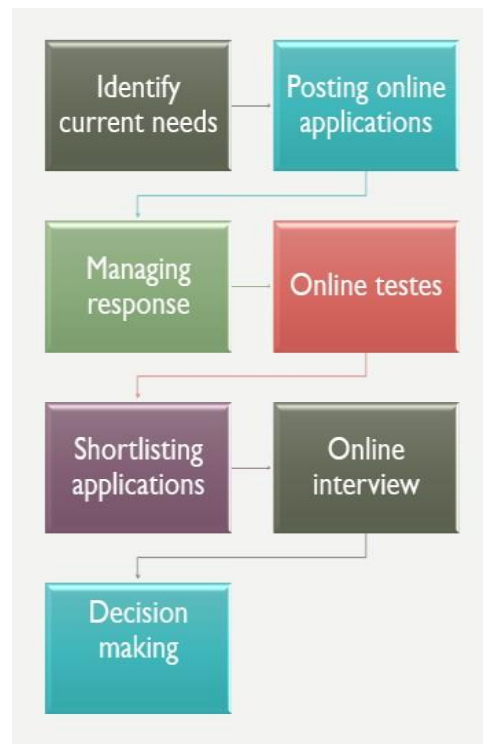
Conversely, institutions lacking an effective HR plan or having a substandard one face numerous challenges, including job-person mismatch, limited growth opportunities and recognition, lack of trust and support among co-workers, and work-life imbalance, all of which contribute to increased employee turnover (Gampala & Shilpa, 2019:100). Additionally, unmotivated employees (George, 2017:7), absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a decline in employee development are other adverse outcomes (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015:718).

Given these issues, this study investigated the informal implementation of HR practices in the selected PTIs. Informal HR practices can lead to job dissatisfaction, causing employees to leave, exhibit poor performance, reduce participation in development activities, and increase absenteeism. This study aimed to recommend formal HR practices that the selected PTIs can adopt to mitigate employee turnover, absenteeism, and performance issues while enhancing employee development activities and overall performance.

## b) Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection processes in the 21st century is significantly influenced by globalisation, organizational changes, legal frameworks, technological advancements, social trends, societal changes, applicant perceptions, fairness, and diversity (Hmoud & Laszlo, 2019:21). Modern HR practices emphasize the need for sound recruitment policies, job specifications, and job descriptions that are generated for a job analysis to attract the best candidates for vacancies (Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:218; Mahapatro, 2021:62; Mihi, 2023:28).

Effective recruitment and selection process management is crucial for ensuring positive employee performance and reducing turnover. Starting from advertising vacant posts to extending job offers (Lee, Hom, Eberly & Li, 2018:19; Aliyu, 2021:184; Mihi, 2023:29). The recruitment and selection significantly influence the efficiency and success of an organization by attracting and retaining top talent. Properly managed recruitment processes can lead to higher job satisfaction, better performance, and lower employee turnover rates (Aliyu, 2021:184; Mihi, 2023:29). Figure 2.3 displays D'Silva (2020:208) proposed online recruitment and selection process.



**Figure 2.3:** Online recruitment and selection process (D'Silva, 2020:208)

Organisations need to adopt an e-recruitment process to benefit from globalisation. Especially, selected PTIs will be able to deal with informal HR practices that can arise in recruitment and selection, such as favouritism, nepotism, and inconsistency. The process commences with identifying current needs; when an organization seeks to hire new employees, it is crucial to align their skills and talents with the company's existing goals, strategies, and structure. This alignment ensures that the new hires will effectively contribute to the organization's future success. Therefore, identifying the right talent involves considering both the current objectives of the organization and the capabilities required to achieve long-term success (D'Silva, 2020:208).

Second, posting an online application makes the job known to the prospective applicant. The methods for advertising jobs have also evolved, incorporating various internal and external platforms, such as web recruiters, social media sites, trade magazines, online job boards, company websites, headhunting, and referrals from existing employees (Korotkova, 2017:12; Baykal, 2020:425; Mahapatro, 2021:76). These approaches help institutions attract a larger pool of applicants, increasing the likelihood of finding the most suitable candidate for the job (Sutherland & Wocke, 2011:24; Mahapatro, 2021:76).

i) Online job portals and boards

Job portals such as LinkedIn and Indeed are popular places where organisations post vacancies in Namibia. These platforms provide job seekers with detailed information and job descriptions, including the job title, required qualifications, and salary. Applicants can view and apply for multiple job opportunities simultaneously, saving both time and money compared to traditional methods like searching through newspapers or magazines. With the convenience of the internet, everything is just a click away (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023:229; D'Silva, 2020:208; Mahapatro, 2021:72).

ii) Company Websites

The company's direct website allows candidates to better understand job roles, requirements, and duties. Job postings are often listed on the company's career page, such as Google Careers, where Google posts its job openings. This helps job seekers to identify the specific requirements for roles at companies they are interested in. Most top companies list vacancies on their websites, enabling candidates to compare jobs within the same industry. Responses from applicants go directly to the company, bypassing intermediaries. This direct approach allows companies to



maintain control over their recruitment process (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023:229; Baykal,2020:420; D'Silva, 2020:208).

### iii) Social Media

Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter are increasingly used for recruitment. These platforms enable employers to engage with potential candidates, promote their employer brand, and reach a broader audience (Nikolaou, 2014: 277; Koch, Gerber & de Klerk, 2018:4; Armstrong, 2023:230; Baykal, 2020:421).

Third, managing response is done after candidates submit their applications, and recruiters must review their skills and qualifications to ensure they align with the job specification and job description. Evaluation criteria are used to assess candidates. As outlined by Mekuria and Hadgu (2015:50), the fundamental principles of recruitment and selection in human resource functions include:

- Publicising the job post.
- Ensuring merit-based selection according to predetermined criteria.
- Maintaining records of all recruitment and selection decisions.

The most suitable candidates are then shortlisted for further assessments, which can include online tests or interviews (D'Silva,2020:208).

Fourth, the online tests will evaluate candidates' technical knowledge, subject expertise, aptitude, and language skills for prospective lecturers. These tests assist recruiters in effectively identifying suitable candidates. Conducting online assessments early in the recruitment process can significantly determine a candidate's competence and fit for the role. The standardized administration, scoring, and comparison of results with other test takers facilitate the selection of competent candidates more likely to succeed in the job (D'Silva, 2020:208).

Fifth, shortlisting candidates is done after conducting the tests; recruiters can identify candidates who possess the required skills and knowledge for the job. This makes it easier to shortlist candidates for the next round of the selection process. The online tests help to filter out those who meet the necessary criteria, ensuring that only the most qualified candidates move forward (D'Silva, 2020:209)

Sixth, online interviews enable the organisation to assess person-organisation or person-job fit. This can be done by background checks and online interviews during the selection process because misfits can lead to resignation (Lee et al., 2018:90; D'Silva, 2020:209).

Lastly, decision-making is done after completing the interviews; the final decision is made based on the candidate's knowledge, test scores, communication skills, and motivation to work. This decision is then communicated through an official email from the organization, including an offer letter. It is equally important to inform candidates who were not selected, ensuring they receive proper notification about their status. This maintains professionalism and helps preserve the company's reputation (D'Silva,2020:209).

There are times when organisations may need to implement headhunting practices, particularly for senior management positions or critical roles that are challenging to fill (Baykal, 2020:245). In the context of tertiary education, headhunting can be essential for recruiting highly specialised positions that are difficult to find through traditional recruitment methods. However, Baykal (2020:247) emphasizes that headhunting must follow a structured recruitment process to ensure fairness and transparency. Mahapatro (2021:76) highlights that headhunting has long grappled with unethical recruitment practices, though specific unethical practices are not detailed. This study aims to uncover these unethical practices by investigating the informal HR practices (of which recruitment and selection are part of the HR practices being investigated) that contribute to high employee turnover in selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia. By identifying these practices, the study will provide insights into how informal HR practices in recruitment and selection processes impact organisational outcomes, including employee retention and performance.

While existing literature stresses the importance of managing recruitment and selection processes, there is a lack of detailed studies on how these processes are handled within private tertiary institutions (PTIs), particularly in developing countries like Namibia. The unique challenges HR practitioners face in these institutions, such as limited resources, informal HR practices, and the lack of structured policies, have not been thoroughly examined. Furthermore, the literature outlines the characteristics of formal recruitment, which is usually implemented in large organisations whereas small institutions implement informal, unstructured, and ad-hoc methods of recruiting new employees (Baykal,2020:417). Due to the increase in employee turnover experienced by selected PTIs, this study explored the informal HR practices implemented in these institutions connected to recruitment and selection. Poor recruitment and selection have an impact on the quality of the human capital in the institution, which triggers performance deterioration,

increases the training and development expenses, and possible lawsuits (Sutherland & Wocke, 2011:24; Lee et al., 2018:90; Mihi, 2023:29).

c) Career development and growth

Career development and growth practices are essential in the 21st century since technological development and globalisation require an organisation to train and develop its workforce to meet the changing environment (Kaur, 2013:48; Nasir, 2017:218). This requirement applies especially to the HEIs since they have a role in the skills development of future and existing employees, which improves the economy; therefore, they require professional staff (Adeyi, Apansile, Okere & Okafor, 2018:2; Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018:1; Asbari, Purwanto, Ong, Mustikasiwi, Maesaroh, Mustofa, Hutagalung & Andriyani, 2020:102). The ever-changing environment makes career development essential in today's workplace. Career development and growth is a process of career enhancement that enables employees to progress to higher positions with constantly expanding duties, prestige, rewards, and responsibilities (Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32). Therefore, the lack of career development and growth can hinder an institution from adapting to the changing environment, thereby contributing to performance deterioration among its employees. In this regard, the organisation should have promotion and growth opportunities because these potential openings can encourage employees to continue developing themselves and to remain in the organisation because they desire 'to climb the career ladder' (Das & Baruah, 2013:11; Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32, Singh, 2019:427). Consequently, the lack of employee development, opportunities for promotion and training are some of the reasons for employees leaving organisations (Azeez, 2017:5; Lin & Huang, 2021:420). To cater to the growth of employees, an organisation can have an advancement plan relating to internal promotion at the time of hiring because it is essential to provide applicants with a career preview.

Therefore, the organisation should provide a clear career progression plan for jobs. Such a plan is essential in HEIs because academics must know how to progress from junior lecturers to senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors. For example, those academics who have achieved doctoral status through their research should be given clear guidelines as to the number of research papers that an individual needs to publish, as well as the criteria for being appointed as an associate professor and, later, a professor. Furthermore, there should be clear guidelines regarding the promotional procedures for the Heads of Departments, Deans, and other similar positions within the institution.

Consequently, institutions should have a career management policy that includes development processes such as an individual career plan emphasizing opportunities for employees to develop qualifications, competency profiles, and career paths in an organisation, career counselling services, and an employee participation process with involvement in the job evaluation committees and accurate job profiling (Meyer, 2017:20). These practices will encourage employees to remain with the organisation because they will be aware of the benefits of so doing (Ohunakin, Adeniji, Ogunlusi, Igbadumhe & Sodeinde, 2020:197).

Similarly, there should be a focus on employee development and training programs implemented based on feedback from performance reviews, and training needs analyses (Nasir, 2017:218; Mehale, Govender & Mabaso, 2021:9; Igudia, 2022:49). This ensures that training is targeted and effective, addressing the specific needs of employees and enhancing their skills. However, this study aims to identify the informal HR practices that hinder employee development in selected PTIs in Namibia, as these practices can undermine structured training efforts and impede organisational growth. By investigating these informal practices, the study will provide insights into how they negatively impact employee development and propose formal HR practices to enhance training and development programs.

Providing comprehensive career development and growth opportunities within an organisation will reduce employee turnover, increase employee performance and promote employee development (Nasir, 2017:218). Owing to the existing high rate of employee turnover in selected PTIs, it is probable that there are no clear guidelines on career progression and growth opportunities in these institutions. This deficiency has resulted in a 5% rise in employee performance deterioration, a 15% rise in employee turnover, and a 15% decrease in employee development between 2014 and 2018.

#### d) Employee relations and conflict management

Employee relations are of paramount importance in the 21st-century workplace, and thus, organisations are striving to adopt HR practices that will promote good employee relations while simultaneously boosting employee performance (Ngui, 2016:24; Samwel, 2018:3; Tewari & Kumar, 2019:328). The foundation for healthy employee relations is good communication. Today's workforce needs to be up to date with what is happening around them, and if this practice is not achieved, there are strong chances of employee disputes (Tewari & Kumar, 2019:327). Good organisational communication has positively impacted employees' motivation, advocacy,

branding, performance, and job satisfaction, thereby lowering employee turnover, creating a sense of belonging, and reducing HR issues that arise in conflict (Tewari & Kumar, 2019:327). In this regard, organisations must build a culture that encourages two-way communication, promoting healthy workplace employee relations.

However, employee relations during past decades have been affected by issues such as the employees' level of education, available information media, increased standard and cost of living, futuristic thinking, sources of training and development, lack of employee involvement in issues that concern them, lack of communication, increased political and self-influence, changes in management practices, lack of employee development and unfair labour practices (Nanaware & Dadas, 2012:161; Samwel, 2018:9; Tewari & Kumar, 2019:327). This research study assumed that most of the factors highlighted by these authors apply in a private institutional setting in which the owners are also the managers, and the employees are less active in decision-making on issues that involve them directly and the implementation of policies – both factors that can cause conflict in the workplace.

Kaur (2013: 48) noted that the 21st-century workplace is characterised by long working hours and high levels of competition for attaining set targets that have a negative impact on employees. Tewari and Kumar (2019:328) also state that cost-cutting, layoffs, increased workload, greater emphasis on performance, risk-taking, flexibility, harassment, and employee grievances often result in stress and conflict in the workplace. This situation calls for HR managers qualified to deal with constructive and destructive conflict (Nasir, 2017: 219). Constructive conflict is productive and leads to a positive outcome in the organisation. Conversely, destructive conflict has many adverse outcomes for employees, such as burnout, stress, job dissatisfaction, barriers in communication channels, uncertainty and resistance to change, and strained relationships that can result in absenteeism, performance deterioration, and increased employee turnover (Van Niekerk, De Klerk & Pires-Putter, 2017:221; Chen, Xu & Phillips, 2019:5; Obiekwe & Eke, 2019:1). Therefore, the organisation needs to diagnose destructive conflict in the workplace as it adversely affects both the employer and the employees.

Nevertheless, there are some approaches that HR managers in the 21st century can employ to manage conflict. The first style is the integrated style, which comprises cooperation between individuals in examining their differences, sharing information, and being open to one another to reach an acceptable solution (Rahim, 2017:372). He further highlights the circumstances in which this style can be used, such as complex issues in which (1) parties have to synthesize ideas and find the best solution, (2) commitment is needed from other parties for successful implementation,

(3) there is ample time for problem-solving, (4) an individual cannot solve the problem and (5) there is need to bring together resources to solve a problem.

The second style is the obliging style, which overlooks differences and emphasizes commonalities to satisfy the other party's concerns (Dixit & Mallik, 2008:31; Rahim, 2017:372). Rahim (2017:374) noted the situations that are ideal for this style of conflict resolution as follows: when one party considers it may be wrong or when the issue is more vital to the other party when one party is willing to give up something in exchange for something from the other party, when one party is weaker than the other and when one party value the relationship.

The third style is the dominating style, in which one party wins over the other party. It is important to note that in such a situation, there is high concern over self rather than the interests of others (Rahim, 2017:372). This style can be used on trivial issues and also when (1) a prompt decision is needed, (2) implementing an unpopular course of action, (3) it is essential to overcome self-assured subordinates, (4) the decision made by one party may be costly to the other party, (5) subordinates lack expertise in making technical decisions and (6) an issue is essential to one party you (Rahim, 2017:372).

The fourth style is the avoiding style, in which there is a lack of concern towards the issue, or parties involved in the conflict (Rahim, 2017: 372; Van Niekerk et al., 2017: 222). This style is "associated with withdrawing, buck-passing, or side-stepping situations" (Dixit & Mallik, 2008:31). This style is appropriate when dealing with trivial issues and when (1) there is the potential dysfunctional effect of confronting the other party outweighs benefits of resolution and (2) there is a need for parties to 'cool' their tempers (Madalina, 2016: 810; Rahim, 2017:374).

The fifth style is the compromising style, described by Dixit and Mallik (2008:31) as an "intermediate concern for both the self and others." "It involves give-and-take or sharing whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision" (Rahim, 2017: 373). The compromising style is suitable when (1) parties have mutual goals, (2) parties are at the same hierarchy level, (3) parties cannot reach a consensus, and either domination or integration is successful, and (4) it can be used as a temporary solution if time is limited (Madalina, 2016:810; Rahim, 2017:374).

The sixth approach is the open-door policy, whereby an organisation possesses a communication policy that stimulates openness and transparency from its employees by allowing them unrestrained access to the top management for them to make their complaints or contribute ideas that they believe will help to move the organization forward (Ndulue & Ekechukwu 2016:70,

Obiekwe & Eke, 2019:6). An open-door policy permits employees to approach management on issues pertaining to job performance, co-worker conflicts, innovative ideas for business improvement and company policies (Francis, 2018).

Employee involvement and problem-solving occur when employees are involved in decision-making on issues that pertain to them (Ndulue & Ekechukwu, 2016:70). However, strategies such as compromising and dominating lead to low employee morale, which increases employee turnover, performance deterioration, and absenteeism due to stress and illness. Some employees even become violent (Isa, 2015:56-57; Ndulue & Ekechukwu, 2016:70).

The HR manager should always have an employment relations policy to help manage conflict and ensure transparency (Meyer, 2011:45; Nasir, 2017:219). This employment relations policy should cover the industrial relations structures, collective agreement, communication, disciplinary codes and procedures, grievance procedure, industrial action, retrenchments, health and safety, employment conditions, dispute resolution, and freedom of association (Meyer, 2011:45). This researcher further noted that documented practices and policies help to prevent inconsistencies when dealing with employees. In support of this notion, Maurya and Chatterjee (2018:32) also confirmed that inconsistencies in grievance procedures result in employee dissatisfaction that tends to increase employee turnover, absenteeism, and performance deterioration.

The issue of conflict resolution is critical, as the failure to build effective labour relations, manage conflicts, and document practices and policies may be contributing to the 15% rise in employee turnover, 10% increase in absenteeism, and 5% decline in employee performance, leading to a 15% decrease in employee development in the selected Windhoek PTIs between 2014 and 2018. Authors such as Dixit and Mallik (2008:31), Isa (2015:56-57), Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016:70), and Rahim (2017:372) suggest that specific conflict management strategies can negatively impact employee turnover, performance, and absenteeism. This research study will investigate the conflict resolution strategies implemented in PTIs, focusing on informal HR practices related to labour relations and employee involvement.

Previous research has not sufficiently highlighted which HR practices within these conflict resolution strategies may trigger increased employee turnover, performance deterioration, and absenteeism. This study will further explore whether selected PTIs have established written grievance and disciplinary procedures and if the committees responsible for managing conflicts are utilising effective conflict management styles to reduce turnover and absenteeism and promote employee performance and development. Therefore, this study aims to uncover the HR

practices adopted by selected PTIs in fostering positive employee relations and effective conflict resolution within the workplace.

e) Workplace flexibility and work-life balance (WLB)

The concept of WLB is gaining momentum in the 21st-century workplace, and organisations are required to implement HR practices that promote a flexible working environment to facilitate the balance in employees' work and personal lives (Nasir, 2017:220; Kelliher, Richardson & Boiarinsteva, 2019:98; Wöhrmann, Dilchert & Michel, 2020:83; Kaya & Karatepe, 2020:200). WLB can be defined as an employment scheduling practice that is designed to give employees more control over their work and personal life (Agha, Azmi & Irfan, 2017:164; Husin, Ghazali, Abdullah & Hadi, 2018:46; Kelliher et al., 2019:102). Therefore, organisations should be able to balance work and personal life to achieve WLB practice in their organisations. Some authors have suggested predictors for WLB that organisations, such as organisational and personal predictors can use.

- i) Organisational predictors are divided into two categories, i.e., job characteristics and organisational support. The job characteristics that influence WLB are job demand, pressure at work, role ambiguity, job autonomy, and flexibility scheduling (Sirgy & Lee, 2018:240; Wöhrmann et al., 2020:83). In terms of organisational support, the organisation should design programmes that are aimed at helping employees to manage their work and life demands. The support programmes include part-time work, flexi-time, child care assistance, parenting resources; the family leaves policy, social support at work (Garg & Yaijurvedi, 2016:105; Noronha & Aithal, 2017:20; Sirgy & Lee, 2018:24; Chaudhuri et al., 2020:158) compressed working hours, paternity leave, teleworking (Garg & Yaijurvedi, 2016:105; Husin et al., 2018:46; Chaudhuri et al., 2020:166) and health programmes (Gie, 2017:136; Sirgy & Lee, 2018:241; Chaudhuri et al., 2020:166).
- ii) Personal predictors are also divided into two groups, i.e., individual characteristics and cultural values. The characteristics affecting WLB include job involvement, family involvement, diligence, neuroticism, and coping style. Cultural values that affect WLB comprise individualism, which influences the way work and family roles are segregated; power distance that influences the level of supervisory support for WLB (Sirgy & Lee, 2018: 241; Adamovic, 2022:102448); masculinity, which impacts competitiveness at work and uncertainty that moderates the degree to which WLB influences overall life satisfaction (Sirgy & Lee, 2018:239; Chaudhuri et al., 2020:167).



It is essential to note that some WLB predictors can be implemented effectively in organisations with resources since they have some financial implications. For example, work flexibility necessitates additional job resources (Nasir, 2017:220; Kelliher et al., 2019:98), child care assistance needs workplace renovations (Agha et al., 2017:164; Nasir, 2017:220; Feeney & Stritch, 2019:445), maternity and paternity leave, annual leave and working from home (Agha, et al., 2017:164; Aprilinda, Susyana, Fauziah, Anisa & Buana, 2020:4648) will require an organisation to increase its employees and, thus, will increase their salary budget. Furthermore, Helvaci, Bakalim, Can and Akkoyun (2017:84) agrees with Saini and Bansal (2023:224) that HEIs should offer seminars and psycho-training on WLB, stress management, and counselling support within the universities for academics. Meanwhile, implementing some of these programmes will be difficult for private organisations with limited resources (Coetzer et al., 2017:120; Dundon & Wilkinson, 2018:204). Based on this fact, there is a need to recommend formal HR practices that promote work-life balance, given their limited resources. If they are valuable, rare, inimitable, or non-substitutable, they will lead to a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991:105; Barney, 2020:6).

However, selected Windhoek PTIs should implement HR practices such as offering maternity and annual leave because this practice will both promote WLB and comply with the Namibia Labour Act of 2007. Meanwhile, this research study observed that while some of the HR practices that promote WLB in HEIs are not listed in the Namibian Labour Act of 2007, it would be wise for these institutions to adopt such practices gradually because this action will help them to improve employee performance, reduce absenteeism and employer turnover (Garg & Yajurvedi, 2016:105; Husin et al., 2018:44; Nasir, 2017:220; Agha et al., 2017:164; Sirgy & Lee, 2018:235; Aprilinda et al., 2020:4648).

This research study assumed that where there is a lack of WLB, employees are likely unable to commit to employee development because of work stress. Many academic staff members in HEIs are failing to maintain a balance between their demanding workload, research publications, and family responsibilities (Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021, 278; Barnes, du Plessis & Frantz, 2021:7).

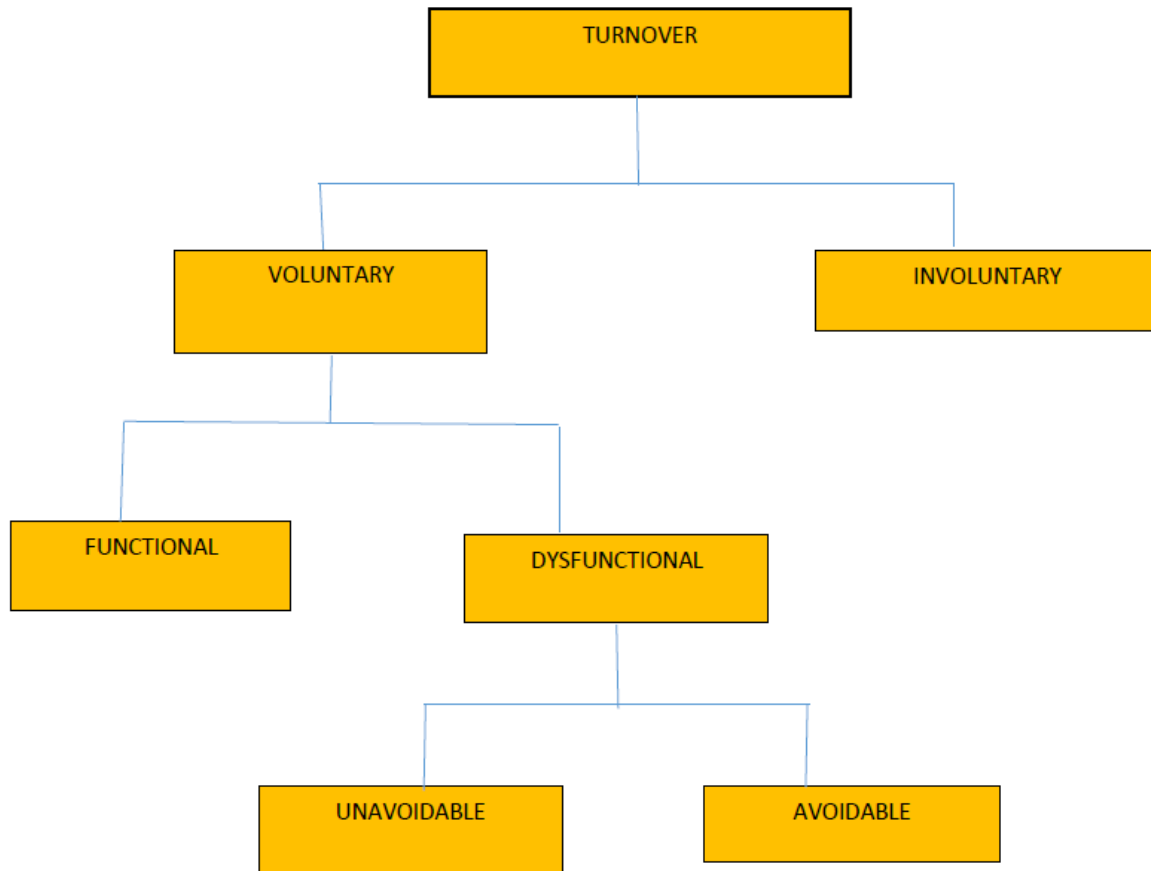
While some proposed programmes are ideal for developed countries (Garg & Yajurvedi, 2016:105), this study aims to recommend those suitable for the selected Windhoek PTIs. However, these programs cannot be effective without incorporating a work-life balance (WLB) programme, which is crucial as a retention strategy. The absence of a WLB program negatively affects employee performance, turnover, absenteeism, and development. Therefore, this study is

concerned with identifying the informal HR practices that impact the HR practices for working conditions and work-life balance, which affect employee turnover, absenteeism, performance, and development in the selected PTIs in Windhoek.

In the 21st century, organizations employ a multi-generational workforce, necessitating diverse HR practices and planning to promote job satisfaction and employee performance. However, many organizations still operate without a proper HR department with professionals capable of developing and implementing HRP and utilizing modern recruitment and selection methods. Consequently, they continue to rely on informal HR practices. Additionally, these organizations often lack the resources to implement essential HR practices such as career development and growth, workplace flexibility and work-life balance (WLB), recognition programs, and competitive salaries. Private organizations with limited resources are mainly known for prioritizing profit maximization. This study aims to investigate the informal HR practices that negatively impact employee turnover, attendance, performance, and development to recommend formal HR practices for improvement.

## **2.5 Employee turnover**

According to Hussani Ali and Abeygunawardana (2018:41), employee turnover can be defined as an employee leaving the job and being replaced by another employee. Hence, employee turnover can be classified as voluntary and involuntary; see Figure 2.4 below. Voluntary turnover refers to an employee who chooses to terminate the contract of employment, whereas involuntary turnover refers to the termination of the employment contract that is initiated by the employer (Aldhuwaih, Shee & Stanton, 2012:121; Mwanza, 2018:103; An, 2019:451).

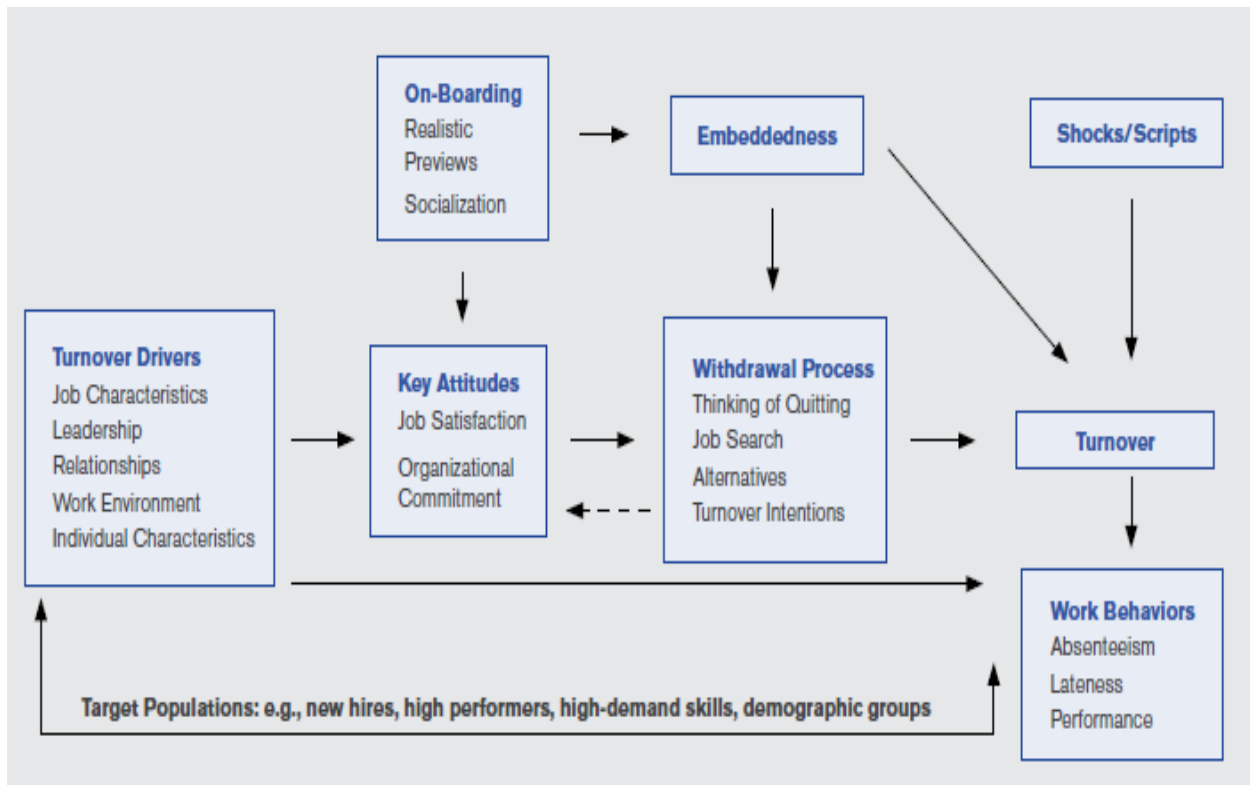


**Figure 2.4:** Turnover Classification (Allen, 2008:2)

Allen (2008:2) classified voluntary turnover as functional and dysfunctional. Functional turnover does not impact the organisation; for instance, low, easily replaceable performers terminate their employment contracts. However, dysfunctional turnover is detrimental to the organisation and includes termination of employment by high-performing employees who are difficult to replace (Allen, 2008:6; Al-Qahtani & Gadhoum, 2016:277). Allen (2008:2) further classified dysfunctional turnover into avoidable and unavoidable. Avoidable turnover occurs when organisations influence employees who intend to leave by implementing retention strategies to avoid voluntary dysfunctional turnover. In contrast, unavoidable turnover refers to an employer with no control or influence over an employee's resignation, for example, when employees resign to further their studies or because of health issues (Allen, 2008:3).

Hence, this study needs to ascertain the strategies that are used by selected Windhoek PTIs to avoid voluntary and dysfunctional turnover.

Long, Kowang and Chin (2017:826) noted that the intention for an employee to resign is influenced by the assessment of perceived alternatives or better opportunities and dissatisfaction issues that tend to cause employee turnover. The view that job dissatisfaction causes employee turnover is supported by various authors (Ongori, 2007:50; Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018:19; Mwanza, 2018:104). Meanwhile, this study will focus on voluntary turnover in selected Windhoek PTIs; thus, further discussion regarding a comprehensive voluntary turnover model is required (see Figure 2.5 below).



**Figure 2.5:** A comprehensive voluntary turnover model (Allen, 2008:6)

The comprehensive voluntary turnover model in Figure 2.5 above indicates the turnover drivers that affect job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Once affected, the employee could commence withdrawal, which is characterised by the intention to quit the current job and search for alternative employment. Turnover drivers are also associated with work behaviours such as absenteeism, lateness and poor performance. The turnover drivers include job and individual characteristics, leadership, relationships, and work environment.

In this regard, Mwanza (2018:104) noted that turnover drivers differ from one organisation to another. This study observed that the turnover drivers are related to HR practices; therefore, the study identified the turnover drivers that affect job satisfaction and commitment while

simultaneously causing employee turnover, absenteeism, poor performance, and hindering employee development in selected Windhoek PTIs. Namibia is a developing country that gained its independence in 1996; thus, the study surmises that the country is focusing on developing sound HR systems in public HEIs while noting that in the less regularised PTIs, the turnover drivers may differ from those suggested by Allen (2008:6).

### **2.5.1 HR practices associated with employee turnover**

While different HR practices impact employee turnover, there are some standard HR practices. Authors (Long & Perumal, 2014:120; Hashim et al., 2016:14; Long, Kowang & Chin, 2017:829;) think that career development, training, remunerations, and performance management are the HR practices that impact turnover. Therefore, the HR staff should implement these formal HR practices in their organisation because if they do not meet their employees' needs, it will lead to increased employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and reduced employee development.

In contrast, Longmore and Lonnie (2014:369) suggested that failure to implement unique HR practices such as paying employees their correct salaries on the agreed date, updating employees' information, good communication systems, respect and being valued by HR staff, can strengthen employees' intention to leave and, thus, lead to increased employee turnover.

The factor of concern here is the behaviour of employees when they intend to leave the organisation. As highlighted in the comprehensive voluntary model in Figure 2.6 above, employees are likely to be absent from work and come to work late, resulting in a deterioration in employee performance. These are some of the behaviours that selected Windhoek PTIs are experiencing. Therefore, this study must identify the HR practices that impact employee turnover in these specific PTIs since various authors offer different opinions. It will also investigate the behaviours associated with employee turnover and its effects on organisations and their employees.

### **2.5.2 Effects of employee turnover in HEIs**

Organisations need to take employee turnover seriously because of the costs incurred in replacing the employee who has left the organisation. Mello (2015:574) estimated the costs of employee turnover to be between 150% and 250% of that employee's annual salary. This

estimate shows the high costs of employee turnover and the need for employers to retain their employees to reduce such expenditure. These costs result from the organisation continually repeating the process of recruitment, selection, and training new employees, as well as performance deterioration since employee turnover can affect the morale of the remaining employees.

Furthermore, performance deterioration can also be caused by the resultant work overload for the remaining employees, who often must share the workload of the employee who has left while the HR department tries to find a replacement (Iqbal, 2010:278; Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017:66). It is important to note that performance deterioration in an HEI can cause students to leave the institution, resulting in a loss of revenue and, subsequently, degrading the education programmes, leading to the poor quality of graduates produced.

Moreover, this study supports Chaacha and Botha's (2021:10) view that academic staff turnover within an HEI tends to decrease students' critical skills development and make knowledge retention difficult. The institution will experience a 'brain drain' simultaneously, making training needs analysis for critical skills very difficult because the staff complement changes rapidly. This situation then affects the rate of employee development in HEIs.

This research study supposes that the selected Windhoek PTIs are not incurring the costs Mello (2011:574) estimated since they are experiencing some increases in employee turnover, absenteeism and the deterioration of employee performance and development but do not appear to be working towards solving the problems they are facing. In addition, this study assumed that this situation results from their failure to follow formal recruitment and selection processes and not training new employees. Performance deterioration and decreasing rates of employee development are being witnessed at these institutions; therefore, the study assumes that the employers are ignoring the adverse effects of these two factors that affect the quality of education offered (Chaacha & Botha, 2021:10) on the organisation and its clients (students). This situation will have a negative impact on student enrolment, revenue for the institution and the institution's reputation while the rate of employee turnover will continue to increase.

The factors of concern here are the negative consequences of employee turnover likely to be encountered by the selected Windhoek PTIs. Since the current informal HR practices are likely to continue to increase the rate of employee turnover and absenteeism while lowering the rate of

employee performance and development, this situation has prompted this research study to recommend a formal HRM practices model that can be adopted by PTIs in Namibia to improve their employee retention.

## **2.6 Absenteeism in the workplace**

Absenteeism is viewed as the act of employees not coming to work and performing their given duties because of different reasons (Cascio & Boudreau, 2010:52; Tiwari & Saxena, 2014:677; Karimbil, 2019:273). However, this study defines absenteeism as an employee not reporting for duty without permission. Absenteeism can be categorized into three different types namely:

Planned and approved absenteeism occurs when an employer has asked permission to take leave, and this request has been approved by the employer, for example, annual leave, maternity or paternity leave, and study leave (Singh et al., 2016:107; Raja & Gupta, 2019:582). However, paternity leave does not apply in the Namibian context.

Unplanned but approved absenteeism occurs when circumstances beyond the employees' control result in their anticipated absence from duty. The employer already approves these circumstances; therefore, the employer cannot deny the employee leave of absence, for example, illness and bereavement (Singh et al., 2016:107; Raja & Gupta, 2019:582). However, employees sometimes misuse sick leave to cover for absenteeism due to personal reasons (Badubi, 2017:36; Grigore, 2020:416).

Unplanned and unapproved absence occurs when an employee is absent from duty without permission and offering a valid explanation (Singh et al., 2016:107; Raja & Gupta, 2019:582;). Sometimes, these employees give the reason for their absence when they return to work.

This research study will focus on the factors and effects of unplanned and unapproved absenteeism in organisations because of their adverse effects on the organisation.

### **2.6.1 Factors contributing to absenteeism in the workplace**

Absenteeism has been a problem in the workplace for many decades. However, there are several factors contributing to absenteeism that different authors have identified. The causes of absenteeism include a lack of job satisfaction, poor working conditions, stress and burnout,

illness, personal problems, acute medical conditions, alcohol or drug-related conditions, organisational culture, poor supervision, control and management, unmet expectations and tenure.

- Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is referred to as a favourable emotional feeling resulting from an assessment of an individual's work (Pradhan, Dash & Jena 2019:121). Lack of job satisfaction adversely impacts academic staff's behaviour and attitude towards work (Alfaki & Alkarani, 2021:3083). It has a significant effect on employee turnover, absenteeism, grievances, accidents and being late for work (Pouliakas & Theodoroulos, 2015:134; Singh, Chetty & Karodia, 2016:107; UI Islam, Bangish, Muhammad & Jehan, 2016:44; Serinkan & Kiziloglu, 2021:10;) and employee performance (Agnihotri, 2013:6; Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016:157; UI Islam et al., 2016:44; Okechukwu, 2017:5; Grigore 2020:416).

An organisation needs to implement HR practices that will promote job satisfaction because job dissatisfaction has a negative impact on the organisation. On this note, Herzberg proposed a motivator–hygiene theory that organisations can use to promote job satisfaction, reduce employee turnover and absenteeism, and increase employee performance and development. The above theory consists of motivation and hygiene factors, as presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1:** The hygiene and motivation factors (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014:173)

<b>Motivation factors (Intrinsic factors)</b>	<b>Hygiene factors (Extrinsic factors)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition</li> <li>- Responsibility</li> <li>- Growth</li> <li>- Promotion</li> <li>- Work itself</li> <li>- Achievements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Company policy</li> <li>- Supervision</li> <li>- Physical working condition</li> <li>- Salary</li> <li>- Job security</li> <li>- Interpersonal relations</li> <li>- Status</li> </ul>

Motivation factors include a sense of achievement when an employee completes a task. Recognition refers to praise, noticing what has been done, and criticism that an employee can receive from colleagues or management relating to work that has been performed. Work itself



describes the tasks that are involved in the job. Responsibility refers to employees having control over their work or being assigned new responsibilities. Lastly, advancement occurs when an employee is promoted to a higher position (Herzberg, 1971, cited by Hilmi, Ali & Nahil, 2016:189).

Meanwhile, hygiene factors include the company policies designed and used to run the organisation. Supervision refers to the behaviour of managers towards employees. Salary refers to the money paid to an employee in compensation for the work performed. Interpersonal relations refer to the social relations between colleagues, workers, and supervisors. Working conditions involve the physical environment and the availability of resources in the workplace (Herzberg, 1971, cited by Hilmi, Ali & Nahil, 2016:189). Job security refers to the assurance that an individual will retain their job without the risk of becoming unemployed (Qin, Wu, Liu, Liu & Lu, 2021:7376). Hence, an employee with a sense of job insecurity will likely experience frustration, anxiety, and stress (Qin et al., 2021:7376). This situation occurs because they fear that losing their job will adversely affect their financial stability and future career prospects and negatively impact these employees' mental well-being.

Besides affecting employee well-being, job insecurity impacts employee performance and triggers the intention to leave the job (Lee, Huang & Ashford, 2018:342). That means the employees will develop a need for security. They will start searching for jobs. They will leave once they secure a stable job, increasing employee turnover. During the job hunt period, absenteeism is likely as the employee needs to attend interviews and lacks mental well-being (Grigore, 2020:405). Lee et al. (2018:337) highlighted that job dissatisfaction leads to performance deterioration and career dissatisfaction, and the study assumed that it could lead to reduced interest in employee development. Li, Yang, Lin, and Xu (2020:590) presented a positive perspective on job insecurity, suggesting that it can motivate employees to work harder to impress their managers and secure their positions, enhancing performance. However, it is essential to recognize that despite employees' efforts to use job preservation motivation, these efforts may not always be successful. This study posits that job insecurity is influenced by the HR practices implemented within an organization. Specifically, if these practices are designed or manipulated effectively, they can transform an insecure job environment into one that fosters job security. Nonetheless, without proper support and fair practices, employees' attempts to preserve their jobs may still fall short, failing to achieve the desired performance improvements and job security.

It is important to note that the organisation's HR practices incorporate the implementation of motivation and hygiene factors that should be adopted to satisfy the employees' needs and yield positive results.

Motivation affects the intensity of a person's direction and persistence of their intended behaviour, which can result in an organisation meeting its objectives (McShane & Glinow, 2017:320). Therefore, the motivating factors suggested by Herzberg can be used by organisations to stimulate effective employee performance and behaviour (Chiat & Panatik, 2019:13). However, the motivating factors need to be combined with the hygiene factors for the organisation to obtain positive results. Lack of hygiene factors causes dissatisfaction among employees. Suppose the employees are motivated but also feel some dissatisfaction with their work. In that case, their performance will deteriorate, they will be absent from duty, and their intention to leave the organisation will be high. In contrast, a motivated and satisfied workforce is productive, creative and willing to continue working for the organisation (Chiat & Panatik, 2019:13).

It is important to note that a lack of motivation and hygiene factors in the organisation will result in the deterioration of employee performance, increased absenteeism, and employee turnover. This research study assumed that employees who experience job dissatisfaction are likely not to value employee development.

In contrast, the study by Yusoff, Kian and Idris (2013:19) reveals that job satisfaction is influenced by the type of profession, the employee's level of education and age. The research studies by Fang Yang (2011:295) and Wong and Heng (2009:92) concluded that extrinsic motivation factors can motivate employees, while the absence of intrinsic motivation has no impact on job satisfaction. However, other authors (Danish & Usman, 2010:165; Saraswathi, 2011:75; Tan & Waheed, 2011:93; Wan Fauzah & Tan, 2013:101) investigated different aspects of the hygiene and motivating factors and attained different results relating to employees' ages and professions. However, research studies conducted in public and private HEIs to determine the HR practices that impact job satisfaction highlight such practices as a competitive salary, promotion, support from Heads of Departments (Masum, Azad & Beh, 2015:12; Asan & Wirba, 2017:84; Jawabri, 2017:208; Alfaki & Alkaran, 2021:3087), leadership styles, training and development, job security, recognition, administration policies, organisational culture, working conditions/satisfaction and team cohesion (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016: 157; Bcak & Wahass, 2019:306; Cheung, Wu & Ching Chi, 2019:393; Matla & Xaba, 2020:734; Alfaki & Alkaran, 2021:3087; Al Kuwait, Serinkan

& Kiziloglu, 2021:9). The Herzberg theory of motivating employees can also be used by HR staff in HEIs.

It is essential to note that failure to implement the HR practices highlighted above, as well as those mentioned by other researchers (Masum et al., 2015:12; Asan & Wirba, 2017:84; Jawabri, 2017:208), will result in job dissatisfaction and lead to employees being late for work, grievances, accidents, absenteeism, employee performance deterioration and increased employee turnover. Failure to implement these HR practices may account for it can be inferred, therefore, that employee dissatisfaction was the reason for the 15% increase in employee turnover, 5% decrease in employee performance, 10% escalation in lecturers' absenteeism rate, and 15% decline in employee development between 2014 and 2018.

a) Conducive working environment

Employees desire a conducive working environment; thus, a poor working environment can lead to absenteeism, low productivity and employee turnover (Singh et al., 2016:109; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016:616; Węziak-Białowolska, Dong & McNeely, 2018:10; Garba & Jacob, 2021:61). These researchers identified other factors relating to working conditions, e.g., working hours, medical benefits, clean restrooms, recreational facilities, and good grievance management. They stated that the payment of minimum wages with few or no benefits leads to frustration and higher levels of absenteeism. Employees need a good working environment to be motivated to work daily and perform well. However, some employers are reluctant to improve employees' working conditions, a situation that has resulted in lower performance and absenteeism (Grigore, 2020:416; Garba & Jacob, 2021:61)

Research studies indicate that the informal HR practices implemented in selected Windhoek PTIs contributed to the 10% escalation of academic staff absenteeism between 2014 and 2018, as reflected in their annual reports. This study attempted to identify the working conditions that may contribute to absenteeism in selected Windhoek PTIs.

b) Stress and burnout

Stress can result from personal and work-related factors such as work overload, irregular working hours, boredom, lack of work autonomy, conflict, unrealistic objectives (Panigrahi, 2016:155; Singh et al., 2016:110), special responsibility, lack of professional career development, organisational changes, interpersonal changes and role conflict within the organisation

(Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:164; Sirgy & Lee, 2018:237). Stress affects the employee's mind and body (Panigrahi, 2016:154). Work overload occurs when an employee is assigned too many tasks and is expected to meet the expectations outlined by the organisation (Panigrahi, 2016:155). An employee will be overwhelmed, thereby making work stressful. This research study assumes that today's workplace is stressful, especially for academic staff expected to teach, conduct research, perform administrative duties, and perform community service. In this regard, HEIs should implement HR practices that will combat stress in the workplace because of its negative effect on both the employees and the employer. Work autonomy encompasses the degree of control employees have over their assigned work. Employees today need to have control over their work. If there is no or limited control, they become stressed and lose interest in meeting the organizational expectations (Panigrahi, 2016:155; Singh et al., 2016:110). The lack of professional career development was viewed as causing employees the most stress because, in addition to job security, they require opportunities for career development leading to promotion (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:166). Failure to supply these factors can stress HEIs' employees.

Furthermore, organisational changes influence employees' professional career development. Organisational changes may affect the working activities, departmental structures and work teams. For example, changes in work activities may result in different skills needed to complete the new tasks and make some employees redundant (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:166). When an employee becomes redundant, they suffer from anxiety and fear of losing their job. In addition, this study assumed that if the organisation no longer needs the skills possessed by an employee, the employee may start searching for another position in which their skills are needed. This process may lead to performance deterioration, absenteeism, and, eventually, employee turnover. An interpersonal relationship is a shared relationship between co-workers and subordinates. A positive interpersonal relationship enables employees to achieve both individual and organisational goals, whereas a negative interpersonal relationship results in stress that can lead to absenteeism (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:164; Sirgy & Lee, 2018:237), performance deterioration, employee turnover, depression, anxiety, lack of concentration and the abuse of drugs (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:164; Sirgy & Lee, 2018:237). The research study supposes that workplace stress can also adversely affect the employee's learning ability, thereby reducing the rate of employee development. Role conflict occurs when an employee is given contradictory orders and tasks (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:166).

However, employees are sometimes stressed by personal and family issues, which can result in performance deterioration and employee turnover (Singh et al., 2016:110; Badubi, 2017:36). Furthermore, personal problems, such as not having money for transport, having a sick child or relative who needs to be taken to the hospital, the death of a close relative, and a domestic crisis, can also cause absenteeism (Singh et al., 2016:111).

It is essential to note that stress and burnout adversely influence employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a lack of willingness to participate in employee development programmes (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:164; Akca & Küçükoğlu, 2020:61).

This research study identified factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs; therefore, stress, burnout, and personal reasons are examined as determinants of absenteeism. However, some authors (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:169; Holman, Johnson & O'Connor, 2018:755) highlighted the HR practices that organisations can use to manage workplace stress, e.g., training and development, conflict management, WLB, employee involvement and wellness programmes.

The employer provides wellness programmes to create awareness, change behaviour, and ensure a conducive environment that supports a health practice (Jones, Molitor & Reif, 2019:1753). These programmes include elements such as occupational safety, absenteeism monitoring, sick leave policy, medical aid provision and a company clinic (Meyer, 2013:37), health education, a supportive social and physical work environment, integration of a wellness programme into the organisational structure, workplace screening and education (Passey, Brown, Hammerback, Harris & Hannon, 2018:1789). These programmes improve employee performance (Meyer, 2013:36; Kunte, 2016:334; Ott-Holland, Shepherd & Ryan, 2019:163), job satisfaction, turnover, the level of stress and absenteeism (Kunte, 2016:334; Passey et al., 2018:1789; Ott-Holland et al., 2019:163). It is important to note that a physically and emotionally healthy workforce is productive. An institution's absence of wellness programmes can trigger employee turnover, absenteeism, and performance deterioration (Ott-Holland et al., 2019:163).

Therefore, this study recommends that PTIs in Namibia adopt a formal human resource management practice model to improve employee retention. This proposal makes it essential for this study to identify the HR practices that can persuade employees to remain in these institutions.

c) Lower salaries

Academic staff seem motivated by competitive salaries, and lower salaries tend to reduce staff morale, leading to lecturers absenting themselves from duty and attending to their private work (Karimbil, 2019:276; Ali & Ainebyona, 2020:63). This process can be a contributing factor to absenteeism in selected Windhoek PTIs since one of their practices is paying lower salaries to their employees.

d) Control and management

Poor supervision, control, and management can influence employee absenteeism. Some organisations have ineffective systems to monitor work attendance that advantages the employees who can be absent without their supervisors noticing this fact (Badubi 2017:34). Srour et al. (2017:543) likewise concur that poor management leads to absenteeism and comment on overstaffing in some departments. When departments are overstaffed and under-utilised, some employees are absent because others can cover for them without feeling overloaded. In this regard, due to the limited resources in the selected Windhoek PTIs, this study disagrees with the views of Badubi (2017:34) and Srour et al. (2017:543) about overstaffing in departments. Therefore, the study assumed that the contributing factors to absenteeism in selected PTIs could be poor supervision, control, and management caused by the lack of formal HR practices in these institutions. PTIs need to take measures to control absenteeism and ensure that employees know that absenteeism is a serious issue that does not benefit the institution, staff or students. The above two researchers also observed that in organisations where management does not take absenteeism seriously, employees would absent themselves from work without a legitimate reason, creating a culture of absenteeism in the institution.

e) Unmet expectations

Expectations can be defined as the promises employers make during recruitment that become part of a psychological contract (Wangithi & Muceke, 2012:118; Badubi, 2017:34). Jones (2017) defined a psychological contract as a perceived employment relationship between the employer and the employee. Similarly, Wangithi and Muceke (2012: 118) noted that the psychological contract is an unwritten set of employee/employer expectations within the organisation. This research study defines a psychological contract as the promises and practices that an employee witnesses being applied to other employees that, while not recorded, have become expectations of employees. Therefore, if these expectations are not met, it can cause employee dissatisfaction,

which is exhibited through employees' failure to report for duty (Wangithi & Muceke, 2012:118; Badubi, 2017:34; Grigore, 2020:409).

Although a psychological contract is perceived or unwritten, Wangithi and Muceke (2012:118) noted that a favourable psychological contract promotes good employee performance, whilst an unfavourable psychological contract tends to reduce performance and increase absenteeism and employee turnover. In this regard, PTIs need to have formal HR practices that influence the formation of a favourable psychological contract (Katou, 2013:573; Chaubey, Bisht & Kothari, 2016:4). Informal HR practices can result in an unfavourable psychological contract, leading to dissatisfaction (Parzefall & Salin, 2010:766; Cropanzano, Antony, Daniels & Hall, 2017:480; Salin & Notelaers, 2017:361).

Psychological contracts have been categorized into relational and transactional contracts (Wangithi & Muceke, 2012:118). Employees with a relational contract are willing to work overtime without payment and will 'go the extra mile,' helping their peers in their jobs and supporting organisational development. Rousseau (2004:122) observed that employees with a relational contract have job security, training, and career development opportunities and support with their problems. However, they tend to seek remedies if their relational contract is violated. If the organisation fails to solve its problems, it reduces its contribution to the organisation or quits its job, thus leading to employee performance deterioration (Wangithi & Muceke, 2012:118).

Conversely, a transactional psychological contract is based on a short-term tangible agreement. In the event of changes to their working conditions, employees with a transactional psychological contract will move to another organisation (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2010:197; Wangithi & Muceke, 2012:118). Guest (1998:660) expressed that violating the psychological contract reduces institutional commitment and job satisfaction and results in cynicism, absenteeism, deterioration of employee performance and employee turnover. In addition, Arshad (2016:242) and Abela and Debono (2019:2) posited that attitudinal behaviours emanate when employees perceive a breach of the social exchange relationship, i.e. when they believe they are giving more than they are receiving from their employer.

The psychological contract breach is often caused by the institution's failure to meet justice's distributive, procedural, and interactional aspects (Pate et al., 2003:560). In this regard, distributive violation happens when employees feel that outcomes such as compensation are

unfairly distributed. In contrast, procedural violation occurs when employees feel there is an unfair implementation of workplace rules and procedures. Finally, an interactional violation occurs when employees believe they are unfairly treated (Pate et al., 2003:560).

Hence, since the selected Windhoek PTIs are known to implement informal HR practices, there is a chance that these institutions have created an unfavourable psychological contract that is characterised by inconsistencies in dealing with employees. This practice might have led to distributive, procedural, and interactional violation and resulted in a 15% increase in employee turnover, a 5% decrease in employee performance, a 10% escalation in lecturers' absenteeism rate, and a 15% decline in employee development between 2014 and 2018, as reflected in their annual reports.

#### f) Tenure

Sheikha and Younis (2006:70) highlighted those employees who have performed satisfactorily for the organisation for a long time tend to be loyal and are less often absent. This finding disagrees with those of Singh et al. (2016:112) and Srour et al. (2017:543), who opined that long-serving employees have a high absenteeism rate because they view their jobs as secure. Such employees tend to understand the systems better and, if absenteeism is not monitored, will take advantage of this. Even though PTIs face challenges in employee turnover, some long-term employees know they can take advantage of the weak monitoring system, thereby increasing absenteeism.

### **2.6.2 Consequences of absenteeism in HEIs**

Organisations need to take absenteeism seriously because it negatively impacts their performance, costs, productivity, and employees.

#### i) Performance deterioration

The research study conducted by Onikoyi, Awolusi, and Ayodeji (2015:68) found that absenteeism negatively impacts productivity, profitability, quality of service delivery, and swiftness in meeting customers' needs. Experience is a good teacher; however, assigning a task to an employee who has not previously performed the task may reduce the quality of service that was formerly delivered by the absent employee. In this respect, the selected Windhoek PTIs are experiencing a 5% performance deterioration that may result from absenteeism.



## ii) Organisational costs

Institutions incur direct and indirect costs that are caused by employee absenteeism. The direct costs include lost days, sick pay, productivity, and decreased service delivery. Indirect costs include loss of income, termination of contracts, employee turnover, decreased productivity, low employee morale, training costs for replacement, loss of expertise and experience, disruptions and administrative costs of monitoring and administering the leave policy (Singh et al.,2016:113). Production time will be lost when management recruits a replacement or tries to reassign the work to the remaining employees. Reassigning work may lead to overtime payments, burnout, and stress for employees because of their additional workload (Singh et al., 2016:113). The recruitment of a replacement will attract recruitment and training costs (Foy, Dwyer, Nafarrete, Hammoud & Rockett, 2019:17) and is time-consuming.

It is important to note that burnout, stress, low morale, and work overload have a negative impact on employee turnover. In this regard, the selected Windhoek PTIs have experienced a 15% rise in employee turnover due to the informal HR practices implemented in these institutions. This situation can result from their trying to meet institutional objectives with limited staff.

## iii) Impact on productivity

Employees who have been assigned an extra load may need to spend extra time training to perform the newly assigned work and, thus, compromise the quality-of-service delivery (Singh et al., 2016:114; Raja & Gupta, 2019:593). In an HEI environment, assigning work to another employee may necessitate a lecturer having to prepare for the newly allocated lectures before going to class, during which time the students will not receive tuition. This situation tarnishes the HEIs and may lead to students transferring their credits to other institutions.

## iv) Impact on the employees

Absenteeism may reduce employee morale among subordinates who temporarily replace the absent employee. More supervision will be required when subordinates are unfamiliar with the newly assigned task, which can result in burnout, stress, and resentment toward the absent employee. Thus, conflict among employees and an increased absenteeism rate can result (Singh et al., 2016:114). The elements highlighted by Singh et al. (2016:114) can lead to employee turnover, performance deterioration, and decreased employee development.

Studies conducted by Badubi (2017:35) and Singh et al. (2016:151) revealed that some situations beyond the employee's control cause absenteeism, but there are also some instances when employees are absent from work to display job dissatisfaction. Hence, this study will identify the causes of absenteeism in the selected Windhoek PTIs due to their adoption of informal HR practices.

Organisations need to control absenteeism in the workplace because it affects organizational and employee performance. Srour et al. (2017:542) maintain that HR practices impact absenteeism, and changing such systems can reduce it.

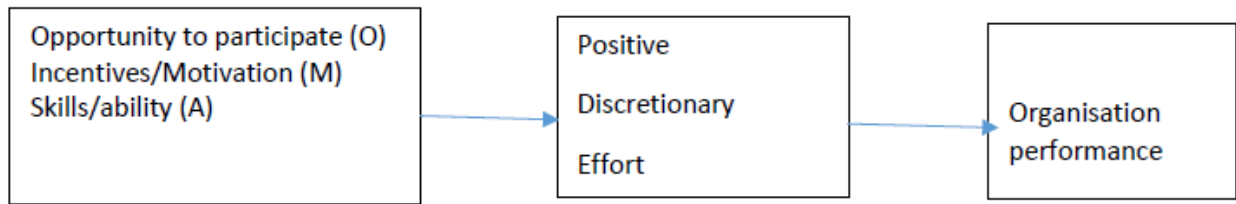
## **2.7 Employee performance**

Inuwa (2016:92) defined employee performance as the effort made by the employee to complete the required task while following the procedure laid out by the organisation. Similarly, Liao, Lu, Huang and Chiang (2012:5301) defined employee performance "as the standard for advancement, redundancy, reward, punishments, reviews and salary changes". Therefore, the level of employee performance is determined by the achievement of the expected task according to the standards laid out by the organisation. Employee performance is a 'yardstick' to determine if an employee can be promoted, rewarded for desirable behaviour, penalized for undesirable behaviour as suggested by Skinner's Reinforcement Theory of Motivation (Amos, Ristow & Pearse, 2009:184), and receive either a salary increase or decrease. However, some of the measures used for performance management can demotivate employees and lead to performance deterioration and employee turnover. Some PTIs are experiencing employee performance deterioration and increased employee turnover because they are implementing punitive practices such as salary decreases that have a negative effect. Furthermore, they may not recognise and reward employees for meeting/exceeding institutional expectations.

### **2.7.1 HR practices influencing employee performance in HEIs**

There are HR practices that HEIs can use to improve the performance of employees, such as employee involvement, autonomy enhancement, adequate job resources, recruitment and the selection and WLB that have been adapted from the ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) model (Marin-Gracia & Thomas, 2016:1055), training and development, performance appraisals (Delbari, Rajaipour & Adebini, 2021:766; Marin-Gracia & Thomas, 2016:1055), clear job description, employees feeling valued, organizational culture, remuneration and employee

relations (Delbari et al., 2021:766). This research study adopted this model because it can help selected Windhoek PTIs experiencing a 5% rise in performance deterioration to improve their academic staff's performance. Figure 2.6 below illustrates the AMO model:



**Figure 2.6:** The AMO model of performance adapted from Marin-Garcia and Thomas (2016:1055)

The AMO model encourages HR practices to improve performance, classified as opportunity-enhancing, ability-enhancing, and motivation-enhancing (Blom et al., 2019:5; Marin-Garcia & Thomas, 2016:1053). According to Marin-Garcia and Thomas (2016:1065), an opportunity is defined as a circumstance that permits an employee to perform a task because employees are expected to demonstrate their skills and knowledge within the workplace.

a) HR practices for enhancing opportunity

Marin-Garcia and Thomas (2016:1065) further listed the HR practices that can boost an organisation's opportunities. They were grouped into four groups: job design practices, employee involvement practices, knowledge sharing practices, and autonomy enhancing practices. This research study, however, focused on the impact of employee involvement and autonomy-enhancing practices to improve academic performance. In this regard, researchers (Delbari et al., 2021:766; Wilkins, Butt & Annabi, 2018:60) highlighted that a lack of employee engagement with issues that involve them leads to job dissatisfaction, thereby adversely affecting employee performance.

It is important to note that HR practices such as opportunity enhancement in Windhoek PTIs will be influenced by the leadership styles adopted by the supervisors in these institutions, who promote employees' involvement in decision-making and autonomy-enhancing practices.

b) HR practices to enhance the ability to perform the job

Employers must ensure that employees have the necessary resources for the tasks they are expected to perform (Delbari et al., 2021:766; Sarikwal & Gupta, 2013:13). Therefore, to improve employee performance, PTIs should provide them with the required resources. However, PTIs likely lack the resources lecturers need to perform their work. In this fourth industrial revolution

(4IR) in which generation Y dominates the workplace, the PTIs should have a reliable network, a laptop for each lecturer, projectors in lecture rooms, and a subscribed online platform for lesson delivery. In addition, the HR practices that enhance employees' ability to perform their tasks include recruitment and selection, training and development and performance appraisal (Marin-Garcia & Thomas, 2016:1064).

#### *Performance appraisal (PA)*

PA is a strategic approach for regularly monitoring employees' performance on tasks and responsibilities assigned to them by the organisation (Mollel, Mulongo & Razia, 2017:48; Aydin & Tiryaki, 2018:102; Shrestha, 2022:134). Hence, in most organisations, PA is used to gauge the need for salary increases, promotions, employee development and training and session planning (Idowu, 2017:36; Mollel et al., 2017:45; Aydin & Tiryaki, 2018:102; Zondo, 2018:6; Shrestha, 2022:145). Furthermore, the primary purpose of performance appraisal in HEIs is to identify employees' strengths and weaknesses to improve their performance. This information is then used to provide them with feedback on their performance, rewarding, training, and promoting employees (Makokha, Namusonge, Kanali & Milgo, 2017:24; Saraih, Karim, Ahmad & Nordin, 2017:74; Bansal, Soni & Mishra, 2018:108). However, Mollel et al. (2017:48) observed that in the public service management policy, the PA is completed by an employee to meet ministry requirements but has no influence on employee performance this is viewed by Shrestha (2022:145) as waste of time since the feedback is only used for compliance. This research study assumed that in selected Windhoek PTIs where there is employee performance deterioration, lack of employee development and increased employee turnover, the organisation may be using PA purely to meet the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) requirements.

It is important to note that PA enables the institution to ensure its employees possess the relevant knowledge and skills at any given time. This situation improves employee performance and builds commitment among employees that, in turn, reduces employee turnover (Bansal et al., 2018:104). There are various PA systems that HEIs can use to monitor employee performance, such as the 360-degree/multi-rate PA and management by objectives (Bansal et al., 2018:108; Shrestha, 2022:145). PTIs in Namibia mostly employ the 360-degree/multi-rate PA system.

#### *360 degree/Multi-Rate Performance Appraisal*

The 360-degree PA system incorporates the views of people whom employees interact with while performing their work (Idowu, 2017:17; Ramchandani & Aggarwal, 2018:80). It should consist of

critical assessments such as self-assessment, immediate supervisor assessment, subordinate assessment, customers, suppliers and peer assessment (Zondo 2018:2; Ramchandani & Aggarwal, 2018:80; Shrestha, 2022:140). However, in PTIs, this PA system should consist of critical assessments such as self-assessment, peers, students, and the Head of Department (HoD). The 360-degree PA system allows the appraiser to gather information from different angles. This helps to validate an employee's performance and overcome prejudice, subjectivity and 'halo errors' (Ramchandani & Aggarwal, 2018:81; Shrestha, 2022:142).

Despite its advantages, Ramchandani and Aggarwal (2018:81) noted the PA's shortcomings, such as peers being biased in their responses and subordinates tending to give false feedback because they fear their superiors. In addition, employees are unlikely to be rated highly by all the stakeholders because it is difficult for them to please everyone. In addition, this research study assumed that the reviewers may fail to interpret the scales provided if training is not offered and, thus, the PA's results will be distorted.

#### *Management by objectives (MBO)*

Management by objectives (MBO) is a result-based evaluation programme (Choon & Embi, 2012:189; Shrestha, 2022:144). The goals to be achieved by the employee are determined by subordinates, supervisors and other employees. The MBO process commences with establishing clear objectives for the employee and a comprehensive plan that she/he will use to implement the stipulated objectives (Ramchandani & Aggarwal, 2018:80).

MBO emphasizes the value of employee involvement and promotes objectivity, two-way communication, efficiency and fairness in the workplace. Nevertheless, this PA approach does not allow reviewers to measure how employees deal with every possibility over time. In addition, it does not promote benchmarking in the changing environment during the work period under review (Idowu, 2017:18).

#### c) HR practices for enhancing motivation

Employees need motivation to encourage them to perform effectively. Marin-Garcia and Thomas (2016:1064) defined motivation as "the degree to which an individual wants and chooses to engage in certain specified behaviours". This concept is divided into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Minbaeva, 2013: 380; Sarikwal & Gupta, 2013:14). Intrinsic motivation focuses on long-term commitment and includes factors such as recognition, responsibility, growth, promotion,

work itself and achievements (Herzberg,1959) whereas extrinsic motivation focuses on preventing job dissatisfaction (Garcia & Thomas, 2016:1064) and comprises factors such as company policy, supervision, physical working conditions, salary, job security, interpersonal relations and status (Herzberg,1959). However, motivation can also be affected by an employee's lack of the skills needed for their job (Bos-Nehles, Riemsdijk & Kees-Loose, 2013: 862).

To enhance motivation, the following HR PA practices should adopt extrinsic incentives: pay for performance for both individuals and at the group level, recognition, job security, internal promotion, social activities, WLB opportunities, and intrinsic motivation: personal or team satisfaction, willingness to perform, corporate sense and collaborative climate (Armstrong, Flood, Guthrie, MacCurtain & Mkamwa, 2010: 979; Demortier, Delobbe & El Akremi, 2014: 1203). The absence of HR practices suggested by various authors (Ahmad & Shahzad, 2011:5250; Armstrong et al., 2010:979; Demortier et al., 2014:1203; Inuwa, 2016:92; Marin-Garcia & Thomas, 2016:1065) within an organisation can cause performance deterioration.

The AMO model of performance will help this study identify the HR practices required to improve performance by investigating which of the various HR practices are not implemented by PTIs and, thus, are affecting employee performance. According to Ahmad and Shahzad (2011: 5250), omission of any element in implementing HR PA practices affects the results; for example, performance evaluation that lacks coaching and continuous feedback will not improve performance. This study will investigate the missing elements in implementing the HR PA practices that have affected employee performance in PTIs. The selected Windhoek PTIs are self-sustained and, thus, are likely to compromise in certain practices to maximize their profit.

### **2.7.2 Effects of performance deterioration in HEIs**

Due to performance deterioration, employees tend to have low morale. The low morale of one employee may affect the other subordinates. This effect may cause employee insubordination and destroy team spirit (Le, 2020:17; Hlengane & Bayat, 2013:87), lower the competitiveness of the institution and cause employee absenteeism (Shaban, Al-Zubi, Ali & dan Alqotaish, 2017:6). In this respect, this research study assumed that the employees in selected Windhoek PTIs have low morale due to the performance deterioration of other employees that led to a 10% rise in absenteeism, as reflected in their annual reports.

The quality of work produced by employees will be sub-standard and, thus, tarnish the organisation's image (Le, 2020:17). If a learning institution's image is negatively affected, students

will not enrol in that institution because they are afraid it will lower their chance of obtaining employment after finishing their studies. Furthermore, employee turnover is high in organisations that accept performance deterioration. This practice occurs because hard workers will see their efforts as being a waste and move to perform organisations with a good reputation in which they can grow (Le, 2020:17; Hlengane & Bayat, 2013:87). It is important to note that academics prefer to be associated with HEIs that have a good reputation. Therefore, the 5% rise in employee deterioration may adversely impact the selected PTIs' reputation, increasing employee turnover rate as academics move to institutions with good reputations.

Managers tend to be stressed by managing poor performance in the workplace, which is a very time-consuming process. Ultimately, this study noted that if performance deterioration is not managed, it can spread to hard-working employees, increase the rate of employee turnover and absenteeism, tarnish the organisation's image, and reduce its market and revenue.

## **2.8 Employee development**

Employee development involves improving employees' ability to function efficiently in their present or future jobs within the organisation (McCauley & Hezlett, 2002:314). Thoman and Lloyd (2018:156) define employee development as acquiring new knowledge and learning new skills that will help improve performance—this study will adopt this latter definition.

Employee development can be conducted in a formal or on-the-job setting (Tam & Gray, 2016:688). Consequently, employee development methods include formal education, 'on-the-job' training and experience, professional relationships, assessment of personality, skills, and abilities that help employees' professional growth (Noe, Clarke, & Klein, 2014:247; Dachner, Ellingson, Noe & Saxton, 2019:100739;) and self-directed learning (Dachner et al., 2019:100739). This study will discuss some of the employee development and training methods that PTIs can adopt.

### *Formal education*

Formal education comprises classroom instruction, online courses, webinars, degree programmes, and mentorship programmes. Since selected Windhoek PTIs offer bachelor's degrees and postgraduate programmes, it is important for them to adopt these forms of formal education; consequently, their lecturers need to upgrade their knowledge and skills to meet the new demands of formal education.

Online courses and webinars constitute independent development activities that can improve the knowledge and skills of employees and students (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014:285; Dachner et al., 2019:100739; Cera & Kusaku, 2020:19). Such courses remove the distance barrier because learning and training are enabled through digital resources such as computers, mobile phones and internet-connected tablets (Lawless, 2018; Dachner et al., 2019:100739). The technologically competent Generation Y currently dominates the workplace; thus, HR staff in PTIs can recommend online courses, webinars and e-training to promote employee development. This research study surmises that online courses, webinars and e-training will motivate employees to extend their knowledge and skills since such courses are flexible and promote the use of technology. The selected Windhoek PTIs have branches in different towns; thus, e-training programs will be cost-effective for them. In this regard, Amara and Atia (2017:3) recommend using e-training styles in the workplace; see Figure 2.7 below.



**Figure 2.7:** E-training styles (Amara & Atia, 2017:4)

*On-the-job experience*

The on-the-job experience involves "employees proactively engaging in tasks and making changes to meet skills need and fulfil personal career aspiration." For HR staff to achieve this form of employee development, they should have HR practices for job-crafting and granting employees sabbaticals (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:179). Job-crafting can be achieved by using task-emphasizing and job-expanding approaches. Task-emphasizing involves modifying



the nature of a task. In contrast, job-expanding involves engaging in a new task in which employees will use different skills that will allow them to try new approaches (Berg, Grant & Johnson, 2010:980). However, job crafting can also have negative consequences, such as burnout and stress, when the employee is trying to reduce the job demands (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2015:925; Bakker & de Vries, 2021:9). It also can yield positive consequences that improve employee productivity and reduce employee turnover and absenteeism through job satisfaction and work engagement (Demerouti, Bakker, & Halbesleben, 2015:459; Tim et al., 2015:925; Bakker & de Vries, 2021:10). With the growing demands of the academic profession, it was important for this study to investigate the informal HR practices that negatively impact employee turnover in selected PTIs since the modification of task if not executed properly as suggested by Bakker and de Vries (2021:9) can result in employee withdrawal. As a result, less work engagement leads to employee turnover, performance deterioration and absenteeism. This will enable the study to recommend the formal practices that the selected Windhoek PTIs should try to implement job-crafting to reduce employee turnover from 15% and improve the 15% decrease in employee development and the 5% decrease in employee performance. It is important to note that employees appreciate employee development, which increases their knowledge, skills, expertise, and career opportunities.

#### *Professional relationships*

Professional relationships involve community engagement whereby employees invest effort in nurturing relationships with other professionals because it promotes employee development (Dachner et al., 2021:100742). Community engagement and networking promote knowledge sharing through accomplishing a goal or task and enhance personal growth and career development (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015:1660). These activities enable employees to learn tacit knowledge from experts and peers through increased communication during task execution. Moreover, they can guide inexperienced employees appointed to a new position (Cordery, Cripps, Gibson, Soo, Kirkman & Mathieu, 2015:648; Teng 2020:339). It is important to note that in Namibia, HEIs are promoting the employment of Namibian professionals despite the scarcity of such persons. Hence, new graduates entering the field with less experience will benefit from developing relationships with experienced lecturers.

#### *Assessment of personality, skills, and abilities*

Assessment involves certification by professional bodies and feedback-seeking by employees that helps them update their skills and improve their performance. Certification assures one's knowledge, skills and experience in a specific professional area. Individuals who meet the

required standard will receive certification as proof of expertise (Dachner et al., 2021:100740). According to Dachner et al. (2021:100741), certification enables employees to acquire up-to-date knowledge and skills to meet the demands of their professional work environment. This practice is essential for HEIs' academic staff because it guarantees competent staff who positively impact the quality of graduates they produce.

Similarly, feedback-seeking involves employees inquiring about their work performance so that they know their strengths and weaknesses and can devise ways to improve their performance. Therefore, there is a need for a system that provides feedback for the employees. The absence of such performance feedback will likely exist in the selected Windhoek PTIs and has decreased employee development, performance, turnover and absenteeism. In this regard, Bersin (2015:2) recommended using the "performance development at GE app," whereby employees can give or inquire about feedback at any given time.

#### *Self-directed learning*

In self-directed learning, employees will identify the skills they need to grow, pursue development opportunities and manage their careers with or without an institutional investment. While identifying the skills employees need for growth and pursuing development opportunities is a principled desire, this research study proposes that HEIs should invest in enhancing their employees' skills and knowledge to feel valued. In addition, Hamori (2018:73) concurs with Dachner et al. (2021: 100744), who suggested that institutions should provide funding to employees undertaking online courses, PhDs, and any other work-related programmes because such financial assistance is likely to reduce employee turnover and absenteeism and improve employee performance. In this regard, the HEIs/PTIs' management needs to support the HR department when implementing staff development programmes financially.

Self-directed learning may cause stress, burnout, and anxiety in some employees (Noe et al., 2014:249). In contrast, Dachner et al. (2021:100737) and Chen, Ma, Feng and Lin (2023:2514) tend to view self-directed learning as a way of reducing academic burnout and enhancing employees' personal control and work-life balance. It is important to note that self-directed learning has some components that are needed by the millennium generation in the workplace, such as growth, work mentors, feedback, developing strength, and meeting their life goals (Lee, Hom, Eberly & Li, 2018:90). Self-directed learning comprises formal programmes, assessment, professional relationships and on-the-job training (Dachner et al., 2021:100739).

Many authors (Demerouti et al., 2015:459; Hamori. 2018:74; Lee et al., 2018:90; Dachner et al., 2021:100739) noted that employees like to pursue development programmes. Therefore, selected PTIs must adopt methods of development that can cater to most of the academic staff, as this will improve attendance. This research study needs to investigate the informal HR practices adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs and determine the obstacles that hinder employee development since they have experienced a 15% decrease in employee development since 2014. This decrease may have led to a 5% rise in employee performance deterioration and a 15% rise in employee turnover since development programmes can motivate academic staff to stay in an institution.

### **2.8.1 The effects of employee development in HEIs**

Vosburgh (2007:14) concurs with Coetzer et al. (2017:120), who mentioned that employee development is crucial in an institution because it enables employees to adapt to a changing business environment. Employees need to be equipped with appropriate skills for their jobs because the skills and knowledge needed for their jobs are also changing. Lepak and Snell (1999:44) explained in their examination of the dynamics of the HR architecture that skills are delayed due to the changes in the environment; thus, for HEIs to remain competitive, they need to train their employees. Congruently, training should be done to meet the needs of both employees and the organisation. As a result, these institutions should perform a training needs analysis before executing any training that will be directed by the performance appraisal (Cera & Kusaku, 2020:19). This comment also applies to the selected Windhoek PTIs since they are also operating in a competitive and changing environment that requires the lecturers to upgrade their knowledge and skills for the institutions to survive.

In this regard, the organisation will improve employee performance and help employees gain innovative and tacit skills, adaptive expertise, technical skills and self-management skills (Janev, Hadzi-Vasileva & Sofijanova, 2018:17; Jaworski, Ravichandran, Karpinski & Singh, 2018:1). Therefore, the organisation will empower long-term employees. In support of this claim, Lin and Huang (2021:420) noted that employees who receive continuous employee development tend to remain in that organisation. The research study supposes that if the selected Windhoek PTIs develop their employees, they will feel indebted to the institution and, consequently, will work hard and stay in the organisation.

Moreover, the quality and quantity of the organisation's performance are also improved, and costs are reduced (Janev et al., 2018:17). In a service-providing organisation such as HEIs, improved

quality will produce a higher calibre graduate who will create a good reputation for the institution resulting in its enrolling more students globally. In addition, employee performance will also include research completed by academics that is submitted to reputable journals, thus improving the institution's global rating. This research study surmises that academic staff prefer to be associated with reputable institutions and remain in such institutions for long periods.

It is important to note that employee development creates organisational reputation, customer satisfaction and improves employees and organisational performance and job satisfaction thereby reducing employee turnover and absenteeism (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014: 286; Haider et al., 2015:65; Janev et al., 2018:17; Jaworski et al., 2018:1; Cera & Kusaku, 2020:19).

### **2.8.2 Perceived employee development obstacles for academic staff in HEIs**

Even though employee development is imperative in the workplace, some public and private institutions experience problems fostering employee development (Coetzer et al., 2017:120). These include both private and public HEIs. On this note, employee development in HEIs has been hindered by individual, departmental, institutional and external challenges. However, this research study focused on the obstacles hindering employee development within the selected Windhoek PTIs due to departmental and institutional HR practices. These departmental HR practices include workload allocation, role transition and understaffing, career management policies and support systems, performance review and feedback, financial resources and role conflict (Barnes et al., 2021:8), lack of knowledge needed to facilitate learning and development and proper feedback structures (Coetzer et al., 2017:120) and lack of a learning culture (Sambrook, 2002:526; Barnes et al., 2021:10).

#### *Departmental level*

The workload allocation for academics in HEIs is problematic because they are supposed to teach, perform administrative responsibilities, and increase their research output. This excessive workload makes it difficult for academics to focus on employee development activities. This situation has caused academic staff to experience an imbalance between their career path and the departmental performance objectives that they are expected to meet regarding their strengths and competencies (Gregory & Lodge, 2015:220; Barnes et al., 2021:8). Consequently, HR staff in HEIs need to have an appropriate workload policy that enables the academic staff to fulfil their lecturing, administrative and research responsibilities and participate in employee development activities.

Role transition – academics at times fulfil leadership roles that require them to adjust to different sets of expectations, competencies, responsibilities and positional power (Barnes et al., 2021:9). It is important to note that when employees have been equipped with leadership skills, they need to continue to use them because when these employees return to their previous positions, their leadership skills will be underutilized, a fact that can demotivate employees from taking leadership roles, thereby negatively affecting employee development.

Understaffing—Understaffing in a department leads to work pressure for department members as they strive to meet the department's objectives, thereby neglecting employee development (Barnes et al., 2021:9).

#### *Institutional level*

The career management policies in HEIs are too broad and lack clear criteria for promotion (Barnes et al., 2021:9). This tends to demotivate employees, who will not see the reason for employee development because they do not understand how they will benefit from the training or additional qualification acquired.

Policies, systems and support – Many HEIs lack policies and systems that support knowledge sharing, thus impeding employee development (Coetzer et al., 2017:120; Barnes et al., 2021:10). Some HEIs, however, have HR practices that allow academics sabbatical leave during the first five years of employment (Barnes et al., 2021:8), teamwork and mentoring (Noe et al., 2014:256; Teng, 2020:339). Barnes et al. (2021:9) further noted that some academic staff in HEIs have worked for more than five years but have not taken sabbatical leave; this omission can affect their career progression and employee development.

Performance review and feedback—HEI PA systems often lack clear performance expectations and indicators that are aligned with individual, departmental, and institutional goals (Bussin et al., 2019:1; Barnes et al., 2021:10); performance management in HEIs is often a management tool rather than an employee development tool.

Financial resources: In HEIs, policies are laid down to access funding for publications (Barnes et al., 2021:10), although not all HEIs provide funding for research and publication. However, building an academic fund cannot be completed overnight, impacting new academics' growth. Moreover, for Windhoek PTIs that do not receive funding from the government, establishing a research fund for academics may be challenging. Various researchers (Sambrook, 2002:527; Szelągowska-Rudzka, 2018:218; Zacher, Rudolph, Todorovic & Ammann 2019:32) state that HEIs often lack funds for academic development such as training, postgraduate studies, seminars

and conferences, thereby adversely affecting employee development. In this regard, private institutions like the selected Windhoek PTIs prefer informal learning practices and do not sponsor their employees' formal learning and development (Coetzer et al., 2017:112). The research study has assumed that employee development in the selected Windhoek PTIs may be hindered by a lack of financial resources, resulting in HR practices that do not support employee development.

Role conflict – Role conflict is comprised of hindering employee development. Since academics have roles as lecturers, administrators, researchers, leaders and community service providers, they find it challenging to manage their roles and responsibilities; thus, engaging in career development is challenging (Barnes et al., 2021:10)

Lack of proper feedback—Institutions need transparent systems governing learning and development that provide feedback to employees on their progress (Sambrook, 2002:526). However, the lack of such HR practices hinders employee development. This fact highlights that the selected Windhoek PTIs should have a clear training and development policy that provides employee feedback.

Lack of knowledge to facilitate learning and development – HEIs need to have an HR department run by professionally trained HR staff who can facilitate learning and development in the workplace. The HR staff should be able to close the gaps identified by the training needs analysis and the PAs. This process involves identifying the appropriate method of training needed by the employee.

Lack of a learning culture inhibits learning (Sambrook, 2002:527; Barnes et al., 2021:10). However, management in small institutions does not always foster a culture of continuous learning and development. Thus, if an employee has sufficient experience and can fulfil the current job requirements, it is assumed that there is no need for additional employee development (Coetzer, 2007:431). This lack of a learning culture can be caused by traditional training attitudes (Sambrook, 2002:527). As highlighted by Coetzer, Redmond and Sharafizad (2012:5), private employers fear that employees may leave the organisation if they become more qualified. This situation could apply to the selected Windhoek PTIs.

It is important to note that employee development in HEIs has been hindered by an academically heavy workload, role transition, understaffing in departments, policies, and systems that do not support employee development, performance review and feedback that are not an employee development tool, role conflict and the lack of financial resources, the knowledge needed to facilitate learning and development and learning culture in these institutions. These results apply

to large HEIs that receive financial support from the government. Therefore, this study assumed that self-funded academic staff in selected Windhoek PTIs are likely to have more obstacles hindering employee development, which has caused the 15% rise in employee development deterioration rate in these institutions.

Consequently, the factor of concern here is to determine the obstacles hindering employee development within selected Windhoek PTIs with the help of the literature provided by various researchers (Gregory & Lodge, 2015:220; Coetzer et al., 2017:112; Szelagowska-Rudzka, 2018:218; Zacher et al., 2019:32; Barnes et al., 2021:8-10). In addition, this study will recommend the HR practices that should be adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs to support employee development since employee training and development help to reduce employee turnover and absenteeism and increase employee performance.

## **2.9 Employee retention strategies in HEIs**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterised by the 'war for talent' that has arisen due to globalisation, the development of advanced technologies, and the demand for employee talent is higher than the supply, causing the market for employee talent to become more competitive (Peny,2012:16; Singh, 2019:425). Furthermore, Stuss (2020:203) noted that today's workplace is full of educated employees without technical skills and experience. The research study postulates that employers are unwilling to pay a competitive salary, so they lose talented employees and replace them with employees lacking technical skills and experience. Such employees are expensive for the organisation because they need training and reduce productivity. This situation makes retaining talented employees essential for the organisation to win the 'war for talent' – a process that requires the organisation to implement effective HR practices that will motivate employees and retain talented staff (Kaur, 2013:48; Stuss, 2020:203). Failure to retain talented personnel will increase the rate of employee turnover, as these employees can move from one organization to another and from one country to another. In this regard, this research study will benefit selected Windhoek PTIs since they are experiencing increased employee turnover. It will recommend a formal HRM practices model that can be adopted by Namibian PTIs to improve employee retention.

HR managers should be able to identify and retain good performers and employees with knowledge and skills essential to the business strategy (Collins, 2021:350). In this regard, PTIs must retain talented lecturers who drive the organisational strategy because they are valuable

employees (Singh, 2019:430). There are HR practices that have been identified by various authors (Das & Baruah, 2013:11; Haider et al., 2015:67-68; Azeez, 2017:5; Mahadi, Woo, Baskaran, 2020:205; Lin & Huang, 2021:420) that can be used to retain employees in different organisations. These HR practices include training and development, organisational culture, employee involvement, leadership, remuneration, recognition and working environment. However, this section will not discuss the working environment and training and development since they were discussed in previous sections.

#### a) Positive organisational culture

Organisational culture is a set of beliefs, values, and behaviours that management formulates to resolve problems in their business environment. It is taught to new employees as the 'right' way of doing things (Schein, 1990:115). Organisations need to have a positive organizational culture that instils ethical values in employees. A positive organizational culture can direct employees' behaviour (Haider et al., 2015:65).

Nonetheless, when the employees' values and interests' conflict with the organisational culture, it can lead to workplace stress (Nekoranec & Kmosena, 2015:167). As a way of dealing with stress, employees can decide to leave the organisation. It is important to note that when employees seek employment elsewhere, this process tends to affect their performance and increase their absenteeism rate. Hence, an organisation needs to assess all the elements that formulate its culture and devise ways of using this culture to reduce stress and retain employees. However, organisational culture is hard to manage and control directly (Haider et al., 2015:65).

It is important to note that the selected Windhoek PTIs have a culture of adopting informal HR practices when dealing with their employees. Therefore, it is essential to determine if this organisational culture is contributing to increased employee turnover and triggering performance deterioration, absenteeism and reduced rates of employee development.

#### b) Employee involvement

Employees have a sense of belonging if they are involved in decision-making processes. This practice builds a good relationship between the employee and the employer (Das & Baruah, 2013:11; Singh, 2019:427). In this regard, Serhan, Tsangari, Bengoa and Mekdessi (2016:59) noted that involvement in decision-making encourages employees to remain in the organisation and improve employee performance. Management should communicate with employees regarding issues that involve them instead of dictating to them. This practice will make employees feel like they are part of the organisation, not just mere workers. For example, empowerment, goal-setting participation, decentralised decision-making, performance measurement systems,



training, and rewards can foster employee involvement (Ai-Najjar, Tharikh & Khudari, 2024:548). Formally implementing this HR practice can improve employee commitment and loyalty (Obiekwe & Zeb-Obipi, 2018:54). Loyal employees must tend to stay long in an organisation. However, most of the Windhoek PTIs are family-owned, so it is likely that decisions made by employees on issues that concern them have no impact on these institutions, thus leading to demotivation, employee turnover and absenteeism because employees feel the organisation does not value them.

### c) Leadership

Leadership is a critical practice that influences an employee to stay or leave the institution (Azeez, 2017:4; Lin & Huang, 2021:420). Some managers' leadership styles may directly or indirectly influence the employees to leave their jobs. Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2015:185) mentioned that managers should adopt appropriate leadership styles that enable the organisation to meet its business strategy while motivating and boosting the morale of employees to retain employees (Azeez, 2017:4; Lin & Huang, 2021:420) and improve employee performance (Cera & Kusaku, 2020:20). On this note, Fries, Kammerlander and Leitterstorf (2021:8) identified the leadership style that are adopted by family business as the autocratic, participative, referent, transactional, transformational and laissez-fair leadership style. Hence, some of them negatively impact employee satisfaction, resulting in employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration and a decline in employee turnover. Job dissatisfaction can be caused by autocratic leadership style and leaders that pose a paternalistic behaviour (Fries et al., 2021:8). This tends to agree with the studies that we conducted by scholars such as Huang, Li, Meschke and Guthrie (2015:120) and Amofa, Okronipa and Boateng (2016:133). Hence, selected Windhoek PTIs are family owners and are likely to implement leadership styles that can contribute to the 15% rise in employee turnover, a 15% decrease in employee development, and a 5% rise in employee performance deterioration since 2014, as reflected in their annual reports. The democratic leadership style is characterised by managers who involve their employees in decisions that concern them. Amofa et al. (2016:134) highlighted that democratic leadership creates a conducive working environment and promotes consultation and feedback, thereby improving employee performance. A lack of such leadership may affect performance negatively, which could be the case in selected Windhoek PTIs. The bureaucratic leadership style is characterised by managers who follow the institution's rules and policies with no room for emotional intelligence. The laissez-faire leadership style is characterised by employees with the authority to make their own decisions, set goals and resolve problems with little guidance from the manager. This type of leadership has been viewed by some authors (Diebig & Bormann, 2020:326; Gottschalck,

Guenther & Kellermanns, 2020:3) to be one of the causes of employee stress because of role ambiguity. If such employee stress is not managed, it can result in performance deterioration, absenteeism and staff turnover (Botwe, Amoah-Binfoh & Enid, 2017:799; Harmen, Amanah, Harahap & Naibaho 2019:589), ill health, accidents and disengagement (Botwe et al., 2017:799). Hosseini, Hajipour, Haffashpoor, and Darikandeh (2020:281) caution that the incorrectly chosen leadership style has a high chance of decreasing employee performance and increasing absenteeism and turnover.

Consequently, the HR staff in PTIs should encourage managers to adopt leadership styles that motivate employees to remain with the organisation, i.e., one that promotes employee innovation. The researcher, therefore, considered it essential to investigate the HR practices that lead to performance deterioration in selected Windhoek PTIs.

#### d) Remuneration

Studies conducted by Haider et al. (2015:65), Deloitte (2018:35), Mabaso (2018:415), and Boucher and Flynn (2023:2) revealed that rewards influence a person to join and remain in the organisation. Organisations are advised to adopt the total reward strategy as a way of retaining employees as it promotes employee satisfaction and engagement (Boucher & Flynn, 2023:2). In this regard, organisations need to transcend traditional market-related rewards and adopt a comprehensive total reward strategy that incorporates broader, sustainable offerings. These offerings should support an individual's well-being, align with their personal purpose, and reflect shared organisational values (Boucher & Flynn, 2023:2). This alignment ensures that the rewards attract and retain employees and drive behaviours that support the achievement of organisational objectives. Therefore, understanding and implementing a total reward strategy can address the gaps caused by informal HR practices, particularly in Namibia's private tertiary institutions (PTIs), where these informal practices have led to increased employee turnover and performance deterioration. Below is the Total Reward 2.0 developed after COVID-19, when organisations embraced digital transformation as a new norm, improving the total reward strategies.



**Figure 2.8:** Total rewards 2.0 model (Bolger & Hansen, 2021:2)

There is a growing emphasis on employee well-being, including mental and physical health, work-life balance, and flexible working arrangements. Organizations recognise the importance of supporting employees' well-being to maintain high productivity and satisfaction levels. Comprehensive well-being programs are now considered essential components of the total reward strategy, reflecting a shift towards a more employee-centric approach (Deloitte, 2018:35; Bolger & Hansen, 2021:2). Well-being includes workplace and financial well-being. Thus, the employees need a conducive working environment where they feel valued (Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016:616; Węziak-Białowska et al., 2018:10; Garba & Jacob, 2021:60). Boucher and Flynn (2023:2) highlight that Generation Z and millennials frequently face financial concerns, particularly regarding the cost of living, prompting them to seek new working models to increase their income. This stresses employers' need to offer competitive salaries with benefits to help employees meet their needs, discouraging them from seeking additional part-time work elsewhere. The assumption is that such a practice could lead to absenteeism, reduced employee development, and performance deterioration as employees become overwhelmed by juggling responsibilities at multiple institutions, ultimately increasing employee turnover. This practice also undermines the HR practice of promoting employee well-being. It is important to note that this trend may be exacerbated by the informal implementation of HR practices related to remuneration. Consequently, there is a need for a formal HR practices model to mitigate these issues and support employee well-being and organisational success.

Furthermore, total reward strategies have increasingly focused on training and development, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This evolution responds to regulatory and societal pressures while

leveraging the benefits of diverse perspectives to foster innovation and improve financial outcomes. Embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into the total rewards strategy enables organizations to create a more inclusive work environment that values and leverages differences, promoting employee involvement and shunning discrimination, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction and performance (Bolger & Hansen, 2021:2). Training and development initiatives are crucial as they enhance employee performance and growth, making employees more employable and prepared for future challenges.

Authors such as Bussin et al. (2019:1) and Teng (2020:340) highlight that the 21st-century workforce is increasingly dominated by Generation X, Y, and Z, with the latter group particularly inclined to leave organizations if they do not perceive opportunities for career growth. This demographic shift necessitates a strategic focus on continuous learning and career development to retain talent and maintain a competitive edge. By addressing these needs through a comprehensive total reward strategy, organizations can reduce turnover and absenteeism, improve performance, and support employee development, achieving sustainable success.

Additionally, the total reward strategy incorporates a comprehensive digital strategy, integrating communication, learning, innovation, collaboration reward and recognition into a single platform (Bolger & Hansen, 2021:2). This digital integration allows for real-time data collection and analysis, enabling organizations to tailor their reward programs to individual employee needs and preferences. Personalisation of rewards helps in increasing employee engagement and retention by addressing their unique motivations and career aspirations (Deloitte, 2018:35; Marin, 2021: 4; Boucher & Flynn, 2023:2). The one-size fit remuneration strategy will make it impossible to attract, motivate and retain employee because of the generations that are now found in the 21st workplace (Bussin et al., 2019:1; Marin, 2021:4; Boucher & Flynn, 2023:2). Employees also need to be recognised for meeting institutional objectives, as institutions can adopt financial or non-financial recognition methods. Mabaso and Dlamini (2018:4) highlighted that lack of recognition leads to dissatisfaction, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee turnover. On this note, institutions can adopt methods such as institutional incentive practices, sustainable HRM, corporate social initiatives, employee as a customer, monitoring the employee lifecycle, and considering the 'gig' economy.

*i) Institutional incentive practices*

These are HR practices that the HEIs can implement to help their employees meet their objectives. These practices include mentorship, institutional funding opportunities, and community service (Barkhuizen, Lesenyeho & Schutte, 2020:180). Mentorship is essential for the

employability and retention of new academic staff. Institutional funding opportunities will help the academics to further their studies (Master's and PhD qualifications) and increase their research output. Doh, Jang, Kang and Han (2018:58) allude to the importance of research funding as a critical enhancer of academic staff's research performance and career progression. However, research funding seems to be a challenge for many HEIs (Barkhuizen et al.,2020:186; Shin, Jung & Lee, 2023:161). It is important to note that academics will not remain in institutions that do not support their career progression.

*ii) Sustainable HRM*

Sustainable HRM is the adoption of HRM strategies and practices that enable the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organization and over a long-time horizon while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback (Ehnert, Parsa, Roper, Wagner & Muller-Camen, 2016:90).

Sustainable HRM can be adopted by institutions facing an acute shortage of talented employees, a diverse workforce, and employees with problems achieving WLB, work stress, and performance deterioration (Singh, 2019:429). Suppose the institution fails to manage a diverse workforce (different generations, multicultural), promote WLB, reduce stress, and improve employee performance. In that case, it is likely to face problems of employee turnover, absenteeism, employee deterioration, and a decrease in employee development.

These problems are faced by selected Namibia PTIs as reflected by their annual reports between 2014 and 2018. Adopting sustainable HRM will help these PTIs gain a competitive advantage, address the problems faced by the employees, and retain employees (App, Merk & Büttgen, 2012:274; Singh, 2019:429). Therefore, this research study is justified because it will recommend a formal HRM practices model that can be adopted by Namibian PTIs to meet their needs and help improve employee retention.

*iii) Corporate social initiative*

The research conducted by Bode, Singh and Rogan (2015:1728) cited by (Singh, 2019:429) showed that today's workforce has different preferences, i.e., some employees prefer low remuneration over engaging in corporate social initiatives. Such practices boost their motivation, improving employee performance and willingness to remain in the institution.

*iv) Employee as a customer*

HEIs need to view academics as their internal customers, whom they are unwilling to lose. The institution will meet the needs of its internal customers (academics), which will build a good

relationship between the employer and the employee while making employees identify closely with the organization (Singh, 2019:430). This research study supposes that treating employees as customers will create loyalty and a sense of value and make employees remain with the institution.

v) *Monitor the employee lifecycle*

The employee, in common with a product, goes through a lifecycle. The institution needs to understand the life cycle of an employee and implement appropriate HR practices that will make employees remain in the institution.

Initially, in the introduction phase, the employee arrives from an HEI without work experience or institution-specific knowledge and skills (Apps et al., 2012:272; Singh, 2019:430). It is important to note that Namibia promotes the employment of Namibians in all sectors, and HEIs are not exempt from this practice; thus, Namibian graduates are entering the academic field. The essential HR practice for this phase is employee development (mentoring) because it will help the new academic staff understand the institution and its culture, promote high employee performance from the beginning, and help retain these employees.

Secondly, employees in the growth phase are increasing their performance through learning and continuing to develop individually and professionally. Therefore, HR practices for training, employee development, career development, and growth are essential (Apps et al., 2012:273; Singh, 2019: 430).

Thirdly, employees in the maturity phase are at a point when their careers are stagnating and are at risk of reaching a career plateau. These employees are likely to withdraw from the institution, leading to performance deterioration (Apps et al., 2012:272; Singh, 2019:430). Hence, to avoid performance deterioration, the institution should promote WLB and wellness programmes to preserve employee performance and retention (Apps et al., 2012:273; Singh, 2019:430). Failure to do so will result in problems of performance deterioration and increased employee turnover.

Lastly, the employees in the decline phase are facing a problem of performance deterioration, and the institution needs to implement policies and HR practices that will boost employee performance (Apps et al., 2012:273; Singh, 2019:430)

Different HR practices have been recommended for different phases, but they need to be complemented with other HR practices such as performance management, recruitment selection, and remuneration.

*vi) Considering the 'gig' economy*

The gig economy operates in a market-based environment with short-term contract work or independent contracts rather than full-time contracts (Mathias, 2018:1). This practice is gaining momentum because of the 4IR and is ideal for Generation Z (Mathias, 2018:1; Gaidhani et al., 2019:2811). However, the study has a different view that can be practical in another economy, based on Namibia's employees' job security. The 'gig' economy may trigger employee turnover. Therefore, the study needs to recommend some recognition programs that can be adopted by selected PTIs in Namibia for employees who need job security since it is still essential in the 21st century. Therefore, the research study will determine the informal HR practices that negatively affect employee turnover, absenteeism, performance and development.

The total reward strategies strongly emphasize using human capital analytics to measure the impact of reward programs on both financial and qualitative goals. Metrics such as Human Capital Return on Investment (HCROI), Human Capital Value Add (HCVA), and training effectiveness are now integral to evaluating the success of these programs. This data-driven approach allows organizations to make informed decisions and continuously improve their reward strategies (Bolger & Hansen,2021:2). Adopting these metrics can provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of formal HR practices compared to the informal ones currently in place in the studied PTIs, offering insights into how these institutions can improve employee retention, employee performance, reduce absenteeism and promote employee development.

It is paramount to find out how employees are rewarded in selected Windhoek PTIs; if they are still implementing the one-size-fits-all and paying market-related salaries, it is likely triggering the challenges these institutions face. Furthermore, the research study assumed that private institutions do not implement HR practices for total reward compensation; if they do, these are implemented partially. This situation affects their employee turnover rate and then negatively impacts employee performance, absenteeism, and development. This research study consequently assumed that PTIs cannot implement all these benefits, so they need to ascertain the ones that lecturers value most.

### 2.9.1 Retention Strategies in HEIs in Namibia

'Brain-drain' and the 'war of talent' also affect Namibian HEIs, but they should remain competitive and retain their employees. According to their annual reports, this sector is challenged by a high employee turnover rate - selected PTIs have had a 15% rise in employee turnover since 2014. However, the research conducted by researchers (Boparikar & Smith, 2019; Pieters, van Zyl & Nel, 2020; Amushila & Bussin, 2021) shows that there are still many systems that need to be introduced because very few of the following HR practices are being implemented to retain employees:

#### a) Employee development

To promote employee development, HEIs need to have a staff development policy that benefits both employees and their family members (Pieters, van Zyl & Nel, 2022:6). Even though some of these institutions have a staff development policy, its implementation does not motivate employees to take part in employee development programmes (Naris & Ukpere, 2012:1082). In this regard, the selected Windhoek PTIs experienced a 15% decrease in employee development, a 15% rise in employee turnover, and a 5% increase in performance deterioration.

#### b) Talent management

The HEIs in Namibia have partially implemented talent management policies for retaining employees, which involve HR practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance (Amushila & Bussin, 2021:8), but they have not reduced employee turnover.

#### c) Benefits and working conditions

This study assumed that HEIs in Namibia provide good working conditions and benefits to their academic staff as a retention strategy. However, the findings of a study conducted by Pieters et al. (2022:8) at the University of Namibia (UNAM) showed a negative relationship with turnover. This result might be because the academic staff do not perceive their working conditions and benefits as sufficiently valuable to make them remain with UNAM (Russell & Van Sell, 2012:136; Pieters et al., 2022:8). In this regard, the research study has assumed that the benefits and the working conditions offered by HEIs in Namibia are not sufficiently competitive to stop staff looking for greener pastures. This fact has resulted in a 15% increase in employee turnover in selected Windhoek PTIs.

Although Namibian HEIs implement a few retention strategies, they are not retaining academic staff. However, some authors (Naris & Ukpere, 2010:1083; Boparikar & Smith, 2019:36; Pieters



et al., 2020:10; Amushila & Bussin, 2021:8) suggested a retention strategy that Namibian state universities can adopt. This research study, hence, recommends the formal HRM model that Namibia PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention.

## **2.10 Summary**

This literature review has shown that the HR function has changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to technological developments, globalisation, changing demographics and the need for organisations to gain a competitive advantage using their human resources. However, as organisations strive to meet the demands of the changing environment, they face challenges in implementing HR practices that are ideal for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The organisations are still employing HR staff who do not have the required knowledge and skills to develop positive HRPs, use modern recruitment and selection methods, and manage conflict in the workplace. Furthermore, the organisations have limited resources that affect the implementation of HR practices such as career development and growth, workplace flexibility and WLB, paying competitive salaries and recognition programmes. This research study assumed that these challenges have resulted in selected Windhoek PTIs employing informal HR practices that cause inconsistencies when dealing with employees because they may trigger employee turnover, absenteeism and the deterioration of employee performance and development.

In addition, there are retention strategies that HEIs can adopt to retain academic staff. This includes training and development, performance management, career development and growth, positive organizational culture, employee involvement, leadership, use of a total reward model, recognition programmes, institutional practices, sustainable HRM, corporate social initiatives, treating employees as customers, monitoring the employees' lifecycle and considering the gig economy. However, some HEIs are facing challenges in implementing these strategies.

Namibian HEIs are implementing a few retention strategies, but these are not helping to retain their academic staff. In this regard, the selected Windhoek PTIs have experienced a 15% rise in employee turnover, a 10% rise in absenteeism, a 5% rise in performance deterioration and a 15% decrease in employee development. These PTIs need to take employee turnover, absenteeism, and performance deterioration seriously because they have a negative effect on both the employees and the employer. The literature review has provided recommendations for retention strategies for state-owned Namibian universities. It, however, will be difficult for the PTIs to adopt some of these retention strategies because of their limited resources. Thus, this research study will recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt to improve

employee retention and achieve the Namibia Vision 2030 in conjunction with the Namibian Labour Act. Namibian legislation needs to be followed by institutions to assist them in managing human resources in the workplace through effective HR practices within their institutions. Specifically, the Labour Act of 2007 has some sections that contain regulations that guide institutions on HR practices.

## CHAPTER 3

### HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

#### 3.1 Introduction

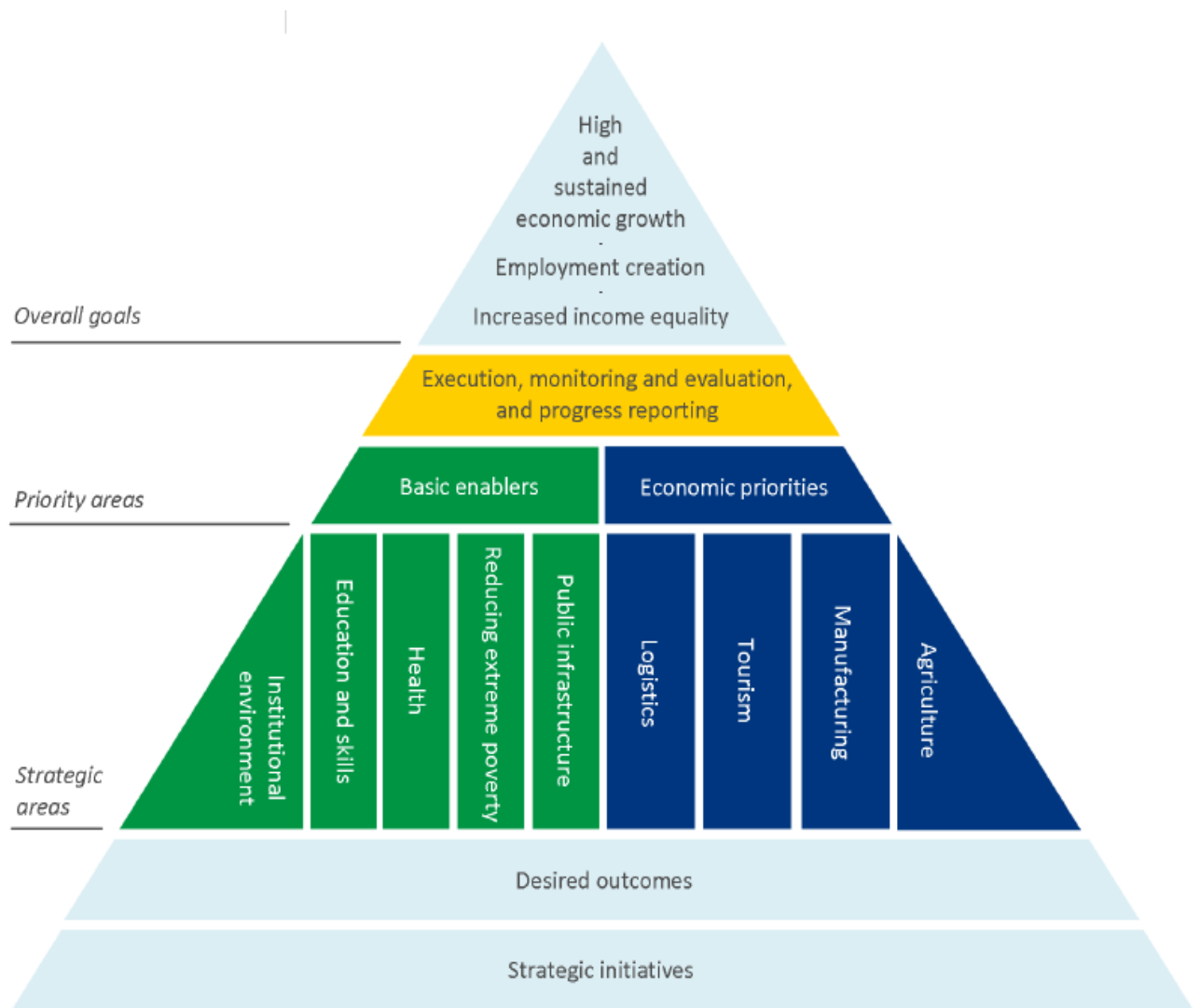
This chapter focuses on HEIs in Namibia, especially the selected Windhoek PTIs, that is, PTI1, PTI2 and PTI3. Therefore, this chapter will commence with an overview of HEIs in Namibia and discuss Namibia's education system, the motive for the formation of HEIs, and how they are managed in Namibia. Furthermore, it explores the HR practices implemented by Namibia HEIs that contribute to performance deterioration and absenteeism among employees and hinder employee development. Additionally, there will be a contextual overview of selected Windhoek PTIs and the study's conceptual framework.

#### 3.2 Overview of HEIs in Namibia

The higher education system in Namibia consists of public and private institutions, including universities, colleges, and vocational training centres. There are two public universities (the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and one private university, The International University of Management (IUM). There are 17 vocational training centres, 13 of which are state-owned (National Youth Service, Namibia Academy for Tourism and Hospitality, Namibia Military School, Katutura Youth Enterprise Centre, Windhoek Vocational Training Centre, Nakayale Vocational Training Centre, Okakarara Vocational Training Centre, Rundu Vocational Training Centre, Valombola Vocational Training Centre, Zambezi Vocational Training Centre, and Ngato Vocational Training Centre). In contrast, four are privately owned (Wolwedans Foundation Trust, African Hospitality and Tourism, Africa Institutional Management Services, and Africa Leadership Institute). Furthermore, the country has 37 accredited colleges that are privately owned (Adonai College, Anistemi College, Business School of Excellence, College of Arts, Headstart Mercy Montessori Teachers College, Institute of Information Technology, International Training College Lingua, International University of Management, Monitronic Success College, Triumphant College, Welwitchia Heath Training Centre, Wolwedans Foundation Trust, Atlantic Training Institution, Clocknet Technology Centre (Namibia Qualification Authority, 2024:2). Hence, all the institutions are accredited by the National Qualification Authority (NQA) and the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) (Hangula, Matengu, Likando & Shanyanana, 2018:2). Among the accredited colleges, some are offering degrees and post-graduate programmes but have not yet been awarded university status. It is

important to note that Namibia's HEIs were established to contribute to the National Development Plan (NDP).

The Namibian government has a development plan (Vision 2030) initiated by the National Planning Commission (NPC) that outlines the vision and desires of the country and guides its developmental route. Vision 2030 is outlined in Figure 3.1 below.



**Figure 3.1:** Namibia Vision 2030 (Namibia. Ministry of Economic Planning, 2012:2)

The overall goals of Vision 2030 are high and sustained economic growth, employment equity and increased income equality (Namibia Ministry of Economic Planning, 2012:1). It is hoped that Vision 2030 will lead to a change in Namibia's society from primarily resource-based to a

knowledge-based economy (National Planning Commission, 2004:86). Furthermore, it highlights the need to have a robust platform for generating adequate high-level skills that will be able to cope with the challenges of technology and industrial development (Tyobeka & Kgabi, 2016:62).

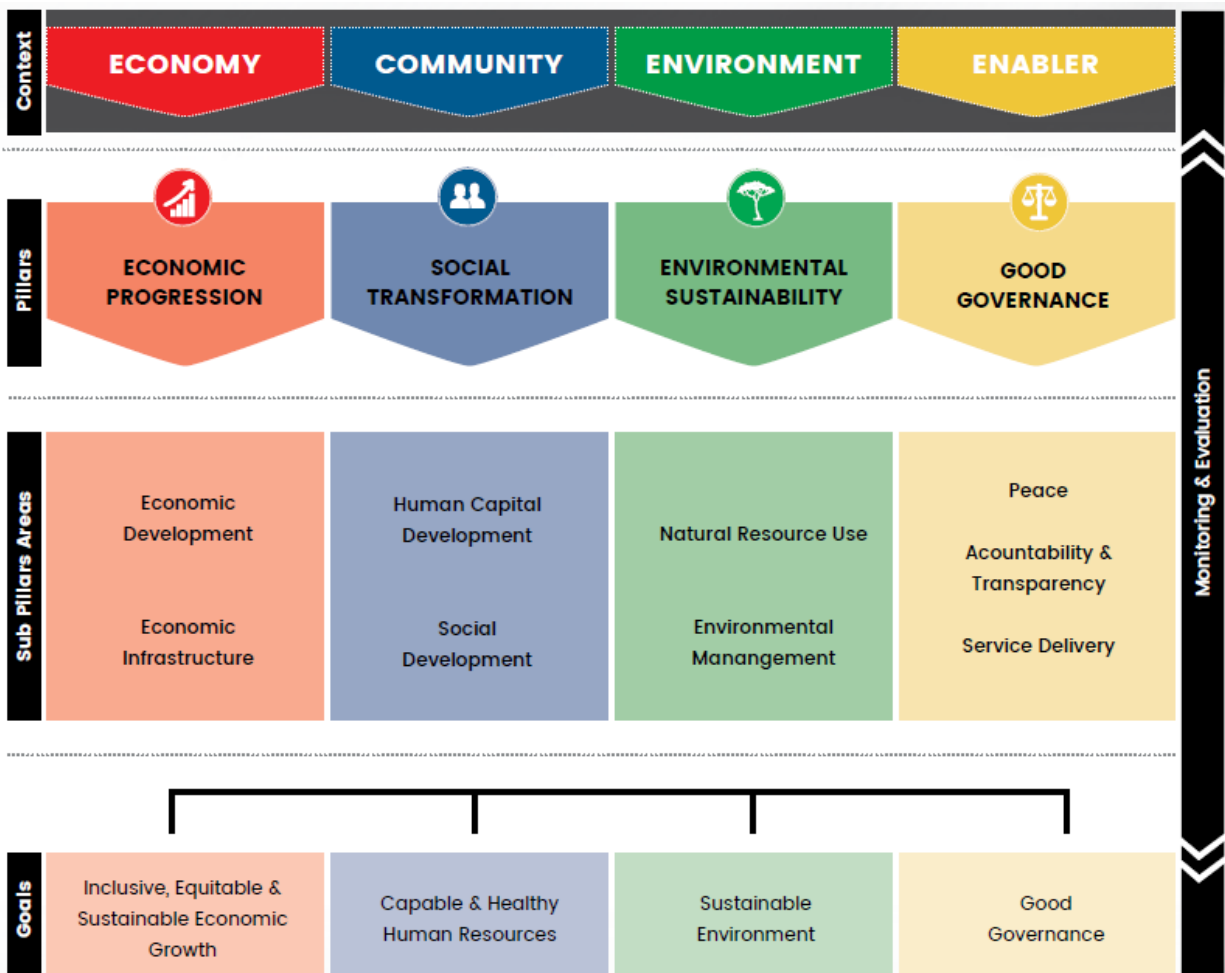
The National Development Plans (NDPs) will be used for implementing Vision 2030 for the nation to achieve its goals (Tyobeka & Kgabi, 2016:63). In the development of the NDPs, the country noted that the education system was weak when rated against international standards. Therefore, there was a need for it to be prioritized to meet the goals of the country (Institute of Public Policy Research, 2010; Education Conference, 2011, cited by Tyobeka & Kgabi, 2016:63). For this reason, education and skills were made one of the priority areas and an enabler to achieving the goals of the country (Namibia, Ministry of Economic Planning, 2012:46). It is critical to note that the enhancing of education and skills called for the country to have more HEIs that could provide a curriculum that will equip students with the knowledge skills necessary for meeting industrial needs. During that time, Namibia had a limited number of public owned HEIs. Namibia formulated some policies that promoted the development of private HEIs (Namibia. Ministry of Economic Planning, 2012:47). This practice brought about the evolution of PTIs in Namibia.

Initially, the NDP1 was established in 1995 with its five-year plan, followed by NDP2 and NDP3. However, it was the NDP4 (2012/2013 – 2016/2017) that brought the evolution of many PTIs since it proposed the need for Namibia to focus on education and skills as the primary enablers to drive economic development in the priority areas of agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and logistics. Consequently, the strategies for the country were to "widen access to higher education through equity and inclusion, improve quality of teaching and learning in universities, strengthen research capacity at HEIs and promote private sector investment in higher education" (Namibia Development Plan, 2012:47). As a result, higher education remained critical in providing essential skills (Tyobeka & Kgabi, 2016:63; Agarwal, Matipira, Kapenda, Kangira, Mvula, Sazita & Ndungaua, 2019:21).

However, as a provider of education and skills, the HEIs and PTIs should provide quality education and promote research. To achieve this, the academic staff needs to have up-to-date knowledge of the areas they are teaching, and this requirement makes training and development an essential tool in HEIs. This view is supported by the Namibia Development Plan (2012:46), which highlights that the people responsible for transferring knowledge should be equipped with the proper knowledge and skills. This study assumed that this requirement is an essential HR

practice that will enable the country to meet its goals; thus, a matter of concern is the 15% decrease in employee development selected Windhoek PTIs are experiencing.

Furthermore, the NDP5 (2017/18 – 2021/22) was developed with four (4) pillars: economic progress, social transformation, environmental sustainability, and good governance (see Figure 3.2 below). These pillars aligned with Namibia's commitment to eradicating poverty and inequality as outlined in Vision 2030, The Harambee Prosperity Plan (2016: 37), and the SWAPO party manifesto (2014: 34).



**Figure 3.2:** NDP5 structure (Namibia. Ministry of Economic Planning, 2017:4)

Firstly, the pillar for social transformation aims to build a human resource that can optimise productivity in the country. However, the country must invest in youth, education, health, economic reforms, and good governance to achieve this goal. In this regard, they will improve

their human development index (HDI). Meanwhile, this pillar is congruent with the purpose of PTIs, i.e., continuing to be relevant in achieving Vision 2030. Therefore, there is a need for the PTIs to implement HR practices that will promote a conducive environment that enables these institutions to produce quality graduates capable of meeting industrial needs. Hence, the factor of concern here is the 15% rise in employee turnover, the 5% rise in employee performance deterioration, the 10% rise in absenteeism, and the 15% decrease in employee development since 2014, as reflected by annual reports of the three accredited Windhoek PTIs under study. Initially, this study intended to conduct research within five large, accredited Windhoek PTIs with students funded by the Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) and Namibia Training Authority (NTA). In addition, these selected PTIs attract international students, especially from Angola. However, the researcher only obtained consent from three such Windhoek PTIs, while the other two declined to become involved. The study assumed that some of the owners of PTIs do not understand the essence of research and regard it as a fault-finding process. The three PTIs used for this study will be named PTI1, PTI2, and PTI3 throughout the study to maintain confidentiality.

Nevertheless, the study assumes that Windhoek PTIs can increase their market share and be Namibian citizens' first choice if they solve the challenges of employee turnover, performance deterioration, academic staff absenteeism, and declining employee development. For this reason, the study recommended a formal HRM practice model that PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention.

PTI1, PTI2, and PTI3 are family-owned institutions run by the owners who have complete control of the day-to-day running of the institutions. These institutions are being managed in Namibia, where there is no educational policy that regulates higher education providers, and this has resulted in gaps in the quality of education provided by some HEIs (Hangula et al., 2018:2). The research study surmises that this could be the reason why the selected PTIs seem reluctant to attempt to combat employee turnover, absenteeism, employee performance deterioration and promote employee development, all of which affects the quality of graduates produced, especially employee performance deterioration and insufficient employee development.

However, some laws gazetted by the Namibian government provide HEIs with guidelines to enforce formal HR practices in their workplace, which should promote a conducive working environment for employees to remain employed by the selected PTIs.

### 3.3 Legislative Framework

Before independence, Namibian labour relations were identified as unstable due to industrial unrest and disharmony between trade unions, employers, and employees. This problem was caused by the following:

"Resistance to oppressive mechanisms of the South African apartheid regime, such as systematic discriminatory policies on wages and labour conditions based on race, gender, ethnicity, and political affiliation" (Namibia Technical Memorandum, 2012:3).

Additionally, the unfair employment conditions, poor occupational health and safety standards, and lack of freedom of association contributed to the decline in labour conditions (Namibia Technical Memorandum, 2012:3).

The independence of Namibia gave birth to several political reforms, such as those concerning the eradication of poverty and promoting robust social policies, justice, and democratic organisations to generate broad-based sustainable development (Namibia, Technical Memorandum, 2012:3). In this regard, Namibia used the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions to form the Labour Advisory Council. Furthermore, it instigated the enactment of different labour legislation to warranty the rights of employees through labour social security, affirmative action, and anti-discrimination Acts.

The laws that materialised from the reforms are as follows:

- The Pension Matters of Government Institutions Amendment Act No.5 of 1990,
- The Social Security Act No. 34 of 1994,
- The Public Service Act No.13 of 1995,
- The Employees Compensation Amendment Act No.5 of 1995,
- The Affirmative Action (Employment Equity) Act No.29 of 1998,
- The Labour Act No.11 of 2007,
- The Employment Service Act No.8 of 2011 and
- The Pension Funds Amendment Act No.5 of 2011.

Some of the Acts above were revised and are still used today to improve the welfare of Namibia's employees. Therefore, the Windhoek PTIs must adopt HR practices that comply with the provisions of these Acts to decrease employee turnover and absenteeism and improve employee performance and development.



### **3.3.1 The HR practices enforced by the Namibian labour legislation**

Implementing Namibian labour legislation in the HEIs will promote formal HR practices such as recruitment and selection, employee relations, a comprehensive reward system, WLB, and health and safety. These formal HR practices enable a conducive working environment.

#### **3.3.1.1 Employment Service Act 8 of 2011**

In Namibia, job seekers are supposed to be registered with the National Employment Service. Employers and institutions should inform the National Employment Service of job vacancies, after which the employers and institutions will be provided with job seekers who are qualified to fill the vacant job post. This practice will also help in reducing discrimination based on race, sex, disability, religion, and HIV/AIDS status (Namibia Technical Memorandum, 2012:4). A concerning factor is that HR practices in family-owned firms rely primarily on informal HR practices that are based on social networks (Steijvers et al., 2017:115; Csillag et al., 2019:57; Mira et al., 2019:782) whereby individuals are often employed without following proper recruitment procedures. As a result, some employees are incorrectly placed in jobs, negatively affecting the institutions. Notably, the 5% decrease in performance, 15% rise in employee turnover, and 10% rise in absenteeism may result from not following the proper recruitment procedures.

#### **3.3.1.2 Labour Act No.11 of 2007**

Namibia has a Labour Act that public and private organisations must implement in their workplaces. The objectives of the Labour Act No.11 of 2007 are to promote and sustain employee welfare and labour relations that are favourable to economic growth, stability, and productivity. In addition, the Act stimulates free collective bargaining, improving salaries and conditions of employment, advancing people prejudiced by past discriminatory laws and practices, encouraging sound labour relations, rational employment practices by promoting freedom of association, outlining minimum primary conditions of service, and giving the effect of conventions and endorsements of the ILO (Namibia Technical Memorandum, 2012:4). However, this Act is designed for employers and employees operating in Namibia. It excludes consultants and independent contractors (Namibia Technical Memorandum, 2012:4). The Namibian PTIs must comply with the Labour Act.

It is important to note that complying with the Labour Act will help the Windhoek PTIs develop formal HR practices that contribute towards a conducive working environment, sound employee relations, a comprehensive reward system, WLB, and health and safety. Hence, these HR

practices should help to combat the current challenges experienced with employee turnover, absenteeism, and performance deterioration. Since the selected Windhoek PTIs have the Namibian Labour Act to help them implement formal HR practices, this study needs to determine why these institutions continue to use informal HR practices that negatively impact employee turnover, lecturers' absenteeism rate, employee performance, and employee development.

### **3.4 HR practices contributing to employee turnover in PTIs in Namibia**

Research shows that the problem of employee turnover in HEIs in Namibia dates to 2010 (Deloitte, 2015:4; Amushila & Bussin, 2021:2). However, most of the research was conducted in public universities. It was noted that there is no literature on employee turnover in Namibian PTIs. However, they are also facing a problem of employee turnover, as reflected by the annual reports of the selected Windhoek PTIs. In this regard, the research study will investigate HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover and then recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention.

Generally, employees are leaving HEIs in Namibia owing to a lack of career growth, job security (Non-Namibians who are appointed on a fixed-term contract have no guarantee it will be renewed), job dissatisfaction based on traditional HR practices, limited non-monetary incentives, lack of a proper performance management system, employee burnout, lack of training and development opportunities (Amushila & Bussin, 2021:9; Naris & Ukpere, 2010:1082), lack of job resources required by academics, and poor employee relationships (Amupanda, 2019; Pieters et al., 2022:8). In addition, Baporikar and Smith (2019:36) highlighted that the employees feel that their skills and abilities are not valued.

It is important to note that public universities in Namibia are fully funded by the government and receive 85% of the State budget allocated to HEIs (Tyobeka & Kgabi, 2016:63; Hangula et al., 2018:2), as reported in their investigation into the inequality of distribution of resources, level of autonomy, governance, and operational reporting systems in Namibia's higher education system. Even with the extensive financial support the government is giving to public universities, there are HR practices that are only partially implemented in these institutions (Amushila & Bussin, 2021:9; Baporikar & Smith, 2019:36). Given this fact, this study has assumed that the selected Windhoek PTIs are experiencing more challenges than public HEIs since they receive only 15% of the State budget in the form of subsidies for student tuition fees. In addition, the Namibian Government

does not provide grants to PTIs (Hangula et al., 2018:2). Thus, the PTIs remain largely self-sufficient with limited resources, which may have influenced the implementation of informal HR practices as a cost-saving initiative. Therefore, it is unsurprising that fewer leave days are provided to staff, academics' salaries are lower than those paid at public universities, and they are not paid salaries during vacations. This situation resulted in academics using PTIs as a 'steppingstone' to better job opportunities and contributed to the increase in employee turnover between 2014 and 2018, reflected in their annual reports.

### **3.4.1 The application of leave benefits in PTIs**

In Namibia, employees are entitled to sick leave, maternity leave, compassionate leave, and annual leave (Namibia: 2007:31). Employees who work five days a week are entitled to not less than 30 paid working days for sick leave in a cycle; these days are taken when the employee is sick on the production of a medical certificate from a medical practitioner as proof of illness. 12-weeks maternity leave is granted to pregnant female employees. Maternity leave commences four weeks before the delivery date given by a medical practitioner and eight weeks after the baby's birth. It is important to note that employees who take maternity leave and sick leave are paid by Social Security (Namibia: 1994: 28; Namibia Technical Memorandum, 2012:5). As a result, the employer deducts a certain amount from the employee's monthly salary that allows them to receive these two benefits. Thirdly, employees receive five working days of compassionate leave each year, which applies when there is a death or severe illness in the family. These three types of leave benefits (sick, maternity, and compassionate leave) have fewer financial implications for the institution because the government pays them. This study, however, focuses on the provision of annual leave days that has a more significant financial impact on the PTIs that are known for limited resources (Sambrook, 2002:527; Coetzer et al., 2017:112) and informal HR practices (Hashim et al., 2016:50). In this regard, the study noted that allowing academics to use their annual leave days during the semester requires a substitute lecturer to be appointed at the expense of the PTI, thus, incurring more labour costs. To manage this expense, PTIs inform the academics to use their annual leave days during the end-of-year vacation. Employees are entitled to paid annual leave depending on the number of days worked per week, as indicated in the table below.

**Table 3.1:** Annual leave days in Namibia (Namibia, 2007:31)

Number of days in ordinary work week	Annual leave entitlement in working days
6	24
5	20
4	16
3	12
2	8
1	4

In the PTIs, employees must work five days a week; therefore, they are entitled to 20 paid annual leave. However, in the selected Windhoek PTIs, employees must use these leave days at the end of the second semester (December vacation) and cannot take their leave days during the year. In public HEIs Namibia, however, the December vacation is not perceived as leave days, and employees can carry forward their leave days and use them when needed – a situation that is impossible in the PTI working environment. At one participating Windhoek PTI, the 20 annual leave days are not paid during the December vacation – a practice non-compliant with the Namibia Labour Act No.11 of 2007. The study, thus, assumed that this HR practice could cause increased employee turnover because employees seek better HR labour practices regarding the granting of annual leave. A concerning factor is that restricting the taking of annual leave to the December vacation may lead to employees using their sick leave during the academic semester when they are not ill, often without following the correct procedures and resulting in an abuse of sick leave (Badubi, 2017:36; Grigore, 2020:416). It is important to note that the HR practice relating to annual leave has the likelihood of contributing to fatigue, work stress, and burnout among employees, all of which tend to cause absenteeism in the workplace (Singh et al., 2016:110; Badubi, 2017:34), and, thus, helping to explain the 10% rise in lecturers' absenteeism rate selected Windhoek PTIs. As a result, these PTIs are incurring extra costs by hiring someone who monitors lecturers' classroom attendance. In addition, how leave days are implemented in these PTIs can be the reason for performance deterioration – working for the whole year without a break can cause burnout and depression (Sambrook, 2002:527) and ease employee morale, thereby negatively affecting employee productivity (Badubi, 2017:34; Singh et al., 2016:110; Grigore, 2020:405) and employee development. Regular leave during the year helps employees reduce work stress and burnout, increases employee morale, and improves employee productivity, promotes WLB (Ulfiyah, Al Musadieq & Sulisty, 2018:114; Isma & Soetjipto, 2019:1891).

The factor of concern here is to find out if the HR practice of implementing the annual leave in selected Windhoek PTIs may be the reason for the high rate of turnover, absenteeism, employee performance deterioration, and low employee development.

### **3.4.2 Remuneration practices in PTIs**

Remuneration has proven to be one of the retention strategies that an institution can use to retain employees (Matimbwa & Ochumbo, 2019:12; Bussin & Amushila, 2021:10; Pieters et al., 2020:10). However, the employer needs to offer competitive remuneration packages to attract and retain employees, failure to do so can increase the rate of labour turnover. It is important to note that when employees intend to leave the institution, they tend to absent themselves from duty, reduce their performance, and be late for duty (Allen, 2008:6). Since the academics in selected Windhoek PTIs earn lower salaries compared to public HEIs, this may be the reason for their increase in employee turnover and absenteeism and decrease in employee performance and employee development.

Remuneration for academic staff in selected Windhoek PTIs is paid monthly using direct deposit (Namibia, 2007:24). An employee with a year contract should be paid for 12 months of the year; the fact that they do not receive a salary in some months will motivate employees to seek another job with a competitor who is offering better remuneration. Therefore, the HR practice of not paying salaries during vacations is likely to have contributed to employee turnover in PTIs – such a practice is non-compliant with the law.

The Namibia government has gazetted minimum wages for some sectors that employers must comply with. On this note, the security officers, domestic workers, and the construction sector employees have a gazetted minimum wage. Gazetting wages aim to reduce poverty, improve the living standard, maintain peace, and prevent or curb the exploitation of employees in these sectors (Namibia, 2017:4). However, most sectors remain unregularised in terms of the remuneration that needs to be paid to the employee. Consequently, the employer and the employee need to agree on the remuneration that needs to be paid. Because there is no gazetted remuneration for the educational sector, the academics at selected Windhoek PTIs are paid lower salaries than those at public HEIs, and some lecturers are not paid during vacation periods. The study noted that selected Windhoek PTIs have no set academic payment standards. Shava (2017:120) highlighted that lower remuneration has adversely influenced employee turnover in private organisations.

PTIs' academics find it difficult to fund their development. Likewise, owing to their limited financial resources, the PTIs find it challenging to finance in-house training and pay professional facilitators/mentors in the different areas where the academics need development, adversely affecting employee development. Hence, this study needs to investigate if the HR practice relating to employee remuneration has contributed to the increase in employee turnover and the decline of employee development in selected Windhoek PTIs.

### **3.4.3 Labour relations practices in PTIs**

Employees in different sectors are allowed to affiliate with a trade union of their choice in their industry, and the institution is responsible for collecting their subscriptions and transferring them to the respective trade union (Namibia, 2007:62). Trade unions are the bodies that engage in collective bargaining with the employers in the industry that they represent. Hence, collective bargaining is a "keystone of Namibia's system of labour relations" (Tshukudu, 2021:171). On this note, a collective agreement enables rules of conduct to be documented and agreed upon by the employer and the employees. The collective agreements reached by parties usually cover salary scales, training, health and safety, working hours, overtime, and grievance procedures (Tshukudu, 2021:177). In addition, they promote downward communication, i.e., communication from the employer to the employee, and upward communication, through which employees can interact with management on work issues that involve them (Tshukudu, 2021:166). In this way, HR promotes employee involvement while, at the same time, creating good employee relations in the workplace.

In Namibia, there is the National Union of Namibia Workers (NUNW), a federated trade union that has affiliates such as the Namibian National Teachers Union (NNTU), Namibian Food and Allied Workers Union (NFAWU), the Namibian Public Workers Union (NPWU), the Namibian Transport and Allied Workers Union (NTAWU), the Metal and Allied Namibia Worker Union (MANWU) and the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) (Jauch, 2018:8; Mathekga, 2021:20). Consequently, among these trade unions, HEIs employees can be affiliated with the NNTU in which most of the members are teachers. In this regard, Amupanda (2019:1) noted that the HEIs' employees, especially academics, are not represented by a union, and this deficiency has led to employee relations problems in their institutions because most academics are not affiliated with the NNTU (Trade union). Likewise, the employees of selected Windhoek PTIs are not affiliated with any trade union, and the study has assumed that they feel unrepresented, considering that their

challenges differ from those of teachers and academics at public HEIs. This lack of employee representation leaves academic staff in PTIs with unresolved grievances. Unresolved grievances often lead to dissatisfaction, which can cause performance deterioration (Nosike, Nosike & Agagwuncha, 2023:230) and employee turnover (Dunford, Mumford, Boss, Boss & Boss, 2020:546). Therefore, addressing this gap is crucial. By improving labour relations in PTIs, this study aims to reduce employee turnover and enhance academic performance, thereby fostering a more stable and productive work environment.

It is important to note that collective bargaining helps institutions create a conducive working environment that promotes employee involvement and good employee relations. As a result, employees tend to stay longer in organisations that foster good employee relations through their HR practices. However, the study supposes that academics in selected Windhoek PTIs have unsolved issues that could/should have been handled by either a trade union representative or the workers' committee. These problems include low salaries, non-payment of salaries, restrictions relating to annual leave, lack of training and development opportunities, and lack of job security – all of which have helped to increase employee turnover. Therefore, the factor of concern is how employee involvement and relations are conducted in these PTIs. The study assumes there is a possibility that these institutions are not promoting employee involvement in issues that concern them, thereby adversely affecting employee relations. It is important to note that the owners of the selected Windhoek PTIs are the ones who make the final decisions regarding all employee-related matters, a fact that could have caused the increase in employee turnover and a deterioration in employee performance that these PTIs have experienced since 2014. Therefore, the research will recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibia PTIs can adopt to help resolve employee dissatisfaction and grievances.

#### **3.4.4 Termination practices in PTIs**

To terminate the employment contract, employees are supposed to be given a notice period depending on the duration they have served in an organisation, that is, one day if employed for four weeks or less, one week if employed for more than four weeks but less than a year and one month if employed by the same employer for more than one year. However, an employer and employee may agree to a more extended notice period. Additionally, the notice period should be given in writing; oral notice only applies to illiterate employees (Namibia, 2007:37). Likewise, if there is a notice payment, this can be paid instead of serving a notice period or vice versa. It is important to note that when terminating an employee's contract, the employer should exercise

substantive fairness, i.e., have a valid reason for the dismissal, and procedural fairness, i.e., the employer must have followed the correct procedures for dismissal, including disciplinary hearings. Failure to observe this termination of employment procedure can be considered unfair dismissal. For instance, at PTI-1 and PTI-3, all foreign nationals are employed on a fixed-term contract (PTI-3,2017:333; PTI-2,2016:7), whereas at PTI-1, all the employees are employed on a fixed-term contract (PTI-1, 2021:19), therefore, to comply with the Labour Act all termination of employment before the expiry date of the contract must follow the correct procedures for dismissal. Hence, this practice is likely not followed in institutions that implement informal HR practices since they do not have documented procedures and policies relating to employment conditions (Nguyen & Bryant, 2004:603; Hashim et al., 2016:50).

Unfair dismissal is experienced in some organisations in Namibia. The research conducted by Wombulu (2020:69) on "an analysis of high staff turnover at Namibia Roads Authority" revealed that unfair dismissal was one of the reasons that increased the rate of employee turnover, thereby adversely affecting employee performance. Subsequently, it is assumed that the selected Windhoek PTIs are unlikely to have an HR practice preventing unfair dismissal of employees due to their implementation of informal HR practices. In this regard, Burhan, Swailes, Hameed and Ali (2020:4) state that the informal implementation of the grievance procedure results in unfair dismissal. Unfair dismissal causes low morale and a lack of job security, leading to increased employee turnover (Burhan et al., 2020:4; Wombulu, 2020:69), absenteeism, and employees unwilling to engage in development programmes. Hence, it is necessary to determine if unfair dismissal issues in the selected Windhoek PTIs adversely affect employee turnover and cause performance deterioration.

### **3.5 HR practices contributing to performance deterioration in PTIs in Namibia**

The growth and development of HEIs (including selected Windhoek PTIs) depend on employee performance (Shirbagi & Aryamanesh, 2017:83; Delbari et al., 2021:760). Therefore, it is concerning that these PTIs' annual reports reflect a 5% decrease in employee performance, although they are supposed to be able to meet Namibia's 5th National Development Plan (NDP5).

There are HR practices that contribute to performance deterioration in Namibian HEIs. Academics in one Namibian university experience job dissatisfaction because of the poor implementation of PA procedure since the academic managers do not have a performance management tool with which to monitor employees' performance (Amushila & Bussin, 2021:9). Since job dissatisfaction



is experienced in some public universities in Namibia due to the poor implementation of the PA processes, this study has assumed that similar conditions could be the cause of job dissatisfaction and employee performance deterioration in PTIs in Namibia.

Moreover, Baporikar and Smith (2019:36) noted that the lack of HR practices to address performance deterioration caused by a lack of skills and competencies in HEIs in Namibia has a negative impact on employee development and performance. The selected Windhoek PTIs must comply with the Namibia Labour Act No.11 of 2007 by promoting workplace health, safety, and welfare, providing a conducive working environment and well-being that enhances employee performance and development. Specifically, the selected PTIs in Windhoek should ensure that employees have sufficient job resources to achieve their goals. These resources can help reduce job demands, lower the associated physiological and psychological costs, and stimulate personal growth and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017:282). These resources include feedback, rewards, autonomy (job control), job security, and supervisor support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017:282). Similarly, Han, Yin, Wang and Bai (2020: 1781) categorised the job resources for supporting academics as (1) teaching resources, (2) peer support, (3) administrative support, and (4) teacher efficacy. Hence, this study will focus on these four categories.

### **3.5.1 Provision of teaching resources**

Teaching resources promote a conducive working environment and help academics meet set goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007:320; Bakker & de Vries,2021:10). Teaching resources include autonomy, use of skills, task variety, and availability of tools. The majority of Namibian PTIs are owned and managed by families. However, they must promote employees' autonomy because it has gained popularity in the 21st-century workplace and contributes to job satisfaction (Han et al., 2020:1774). Autonomy in the workplace enables employees to find better ways of achieving set goals and boosts their innovative skills and morale. The concerning factor here is the availability of autonomy in an environment known for implementing informal HR practices and owners making decisions on all matters, even those concerning employees' work (Steivers et al.,2017:115).

Furthermore, because the selected Windhoek PTIs are self-sufficient, this study investigated the availability of adequate equipment for lecturers to execute their duties, such as laptops, copiers, scanners, and projectors. The office administration department needs computers, printers, scanners, and copiers. In some departments, lecturers must wear protective clothing, e.g., the mechanics' department, which the institution must supply. It is important to note that a lack of job

resources negatively impacts the institution and its employees (Schaufeli, 2017:122; Han et al., 2020:1776).

### **3.5.2 Peer Support**

The Head of Department (HoD) should promote good teamwork because it can also enable lecturers to meet the objectives of the department with less work stress as they can work together as peers (Chang et al., 2010:211; Nweke & Gbarage, 2022:132). This approach aligns with Gie's (2017: 323) findings at a South African HEI, indicating that social support in a university workplace "should be based on honest, mutual respect and communication between employees, their superiors and management teams." Peer and social support are congruent with the Demand–Control–Support theory or Iso-Strain Model (Johnson & Hall, 1988: 1336-1342), in which the level of social support within the workplace may act as a buffer for work-related stress (Gie: 2017: 39) at the same time improving employee performance (Nweke & Gbarage, 2022: 132).

### **3.5.3 Job support**

If the HEI appreciates and supports academics, this practice motivates them to work towards the set goals (Han et al., 2020:1774). The HEI must provide academic staff with development resources such as performance feedback, recognition, career development, and monitoring their qualitative and quantitative job requirements, for example, workload and WLB (Schaufeli, 2017:122; Naidoo-Chetty, & du Plessis, 2021:280). Performance feedback will help employees see their performance gap and work with the HEI to find ways to close it (on-the-job training, off-the-job training). In addition, the workload model used by the HEI must promote the growth and WLB of lecturers.

### **3.5.4 Teacher efficacy**

Teacher efficacy effectively teaches and positively impacts student learning and outcomes (Han et al., 2020:1776). It encompasses a teacher's confidence in their skills, strategies, and knowledge to manage classrooms, engage students, and facilitate learning experiences that lead to student success. High teacher efficacy is associated with greater motivation, resilience, and commitment to teaching and better student performance and achievement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017: 283; Yan et al., 2020:1783). It is influenced by professional development, support from colleagues and administration, and past teaching experiences (Han et al., 2020:1776).

It is essential to recognize that the job resources proposed by Han et al. (2020:1781) necessitate the formal implementation of HR practices, such as improving working conditions and promoting work-life balance, to foster a low-stress environment and support career development and growth, which in turn enhance teacher efficacy. Additionally, job resources significantly boost engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017:283). Therefore, selected PTIs in Namibia must prioritize and not compromise on implementing HR practices to achieve positive outcomes that align with employee job resource needs.

Working conditions and work-life balance also contribute to performance deterioration in Namibia. In this regard, working hours are determined by the number of days worked per week. Employees who work five days or fewer per week are expected to work nine hours a day, while those who work more than five days per week should work eight hours a day. Employees at selected PTIs typically work five days a week and nine hours a day (Namibia, 2007:28). However, PTIs offer various modes of delivery, including full-time classes during the day, part-time classes in the evening, and distance learning programs with on-campus sessions on designated weekends. It should be noted that lecturers teaching full-time classes also handle part-time and distance classes.

Consequently, Heads of Departments (HoDs) must use a work management system (WMS) to manage workload effectively. This system helps determine the hours lecturers work, identify those exceeding their daily work hours who should be compensated for overtime, and assess the need for part-time academics. Long working hours increase employee turnover, absenteeism, and performance deterioration (Shava, 2017:120).

Hence, HoDs in selected PTIs need to benchmark the average working hours for academics per work to avoid adverse effects from working long hours. Inegbedion (2017:331) and Boncori, Bizjak and Sicca (2020:62) noted that the average working hours per week for an academic was 40. The average workload in South African universities differs from 37 to 40 hours per week (Bitzer, 2007:29; Nnadozie, 2015:465). In Namibia, the working hours are 45 per week for full-time academics and 20 per week for part-time academics. Suppose full-time academics conduct part-time classes in the evening and distance classes during weekends. In that case, their working hours may exceed 45 hours per week and become overtime for which the employees must be paid 1.5 times their average salary (Namibia, 2007:26). Allocation of workload in PTIs is done

using a spreadsheet for accurate calculating of working hours allocated to everyone. The lack of a WMS in selected PTIs compromises some essential components that attract an academic to an HEI. This is a signal of the informal implementation of the HR practice for working conditions and work-life balance that may be the causes of the challenges that were faced by the selected PTIs when the study was conducted.

The WMS includes components such as teaching and learning, research, research supervision, administration, community engagement, and academic citizenship (Bitzer, 2007:28; Nnadozie, 2015:463; Miller, 2019:640; Okeke-Uzodike & Gamede, 2021:16). Teaching and learning consist of scheduled and non-scheduled activities within the spectrum. The scheduled workload includes lecturing, tutoring, seminar facilitation, and supervision of experiments, tests, and examinations. Non-scheduled activities entail the preparation time for scheduled activities, for example, the time taken preparing for a lecture (Okeke-Uzodike & Gamede, 2021:17). Lecturing is the core business of academic staff in HEIs. However, this study assumed that compromising research, community engagement, and academic citizenship affect HR practices in career progression, growth, and employee development. It is important to note that the 21st century workplace is dominated by Generation X and Y, who have an interest in employee development, career progression and growth (Jiri, 2016:118; Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:100; Teng, 2020:340). Hence, compromising these HR practices may cause dissatisfaction among these generations and increase their intention to resign, thereby increasing the rate of employee turnover in PTIs. Moreover, academics in selected PTIs must produce the research output stipulated in their performance management policy to facilitate career progression. For that reason, comprising that component may cause performance deterioration in the research component or leave the institution going to the ones that promote the component for research to avoid stagnation.

On that note, Okeke-Uzodike and Gamede (2021:34) found that if time is not allocated appropriately between these components, lecturers become overloaded. Other researchers (Boncori et al., 2020:63; Miller, 2019:643) encourage HEIs to adjust the hours allocated by the WMS model for each component to reduce work stress and burnout among academics, specifically, those HEIs that are using the 40:40:20 model (40% teaching, 40% research and 20% administration and community engagement). Miller (2019:643) noted that some activities are not captured by the model and recommended 40% teaching, 25 % research, and 35% administration, community engagement, and academic citizenship to reduce academics' workload. The factor of concern here is the lack of a WMS in selected Windhoek PTIs and whether the system they use

that compromises some essential components adversely impacts employee performance and turnover. Academics can overload themselves to cater to the compromised components, especially research because it promotes their growth. A study by Pieters et al. (2022:8) in a Namibian HEI highlighted that the academic staff experienced work overload that led to burnout. This situation could occur in PTIs because owners are known to over-expend their employees' capabilities to attain economic benefits (Babatunde, Yusuf & Aiyelabegan, 2018:133). There is a high probability of a lack of WLB resulting in work stress and burnout in the selected Windhoek PTIs that could have triggered increased employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a decrease in employee development.

Career development and growth positively impact employee performance (Mwashila, 2018:74; Delbari et al., 2021:779); thus, HEIs should support academics' career development. Unfortunately, Pieters et al. (2022:8) noted that Namibian HEIs lack career development opportunities, so their academic staff do not broaden their knowledge and skills. This situation has led to their outdated teaching abilities, failure to motivate students, and loss of interest in their jobs, thus resulting in performance deterioration and increasing their intention to leave the institution.

To posit, PTIs need to provide resources (feedback, recognition, career perspective, WLB, use of skills, task variety, availability of resources, a good team atmosphere, and role clarity) for its academic staff because it promotes employee wellness and a conducive working environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017:280; Meirina, Ferdian, Pasaribu & Suyuthie, 2018:102). Job resources help an institution boost employee performance, reduce absenteeism, and promote safety and employee development, thus combatting employee turnover while increasing its market share and revenue (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017:283; Yan et al., 2020:1783). The concern is whether employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and a decline in employee development in Namibian PTIs result from a lack of job support in these institutions. Therefore, this study investigates the informal HR practices contributing to employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and a decline in employee development at these institutions.

### **3.6 Factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in PTIs in Namibia**

The research by Kamati (2020:105) at a Namibian HEI experiencing a 28% rate of absenteeism between 2014 and 2016 noted the causes of absenteeism as job stress, unequal rewards, relocation issues, employee problems, and employee dissatisfaction. Job stress is caused by

institutional demands that result in absenteeism and a high turnover rate (Kamati, 2020:116; Simushi, 2020:111). The problems highlighted by these authors show the informal implementations of the HR practices of labour relations and involvement (unequal rewards and employee problems) and working conditions and work-life balance (job stress and relocation issues, which the study has linked to limited family support), leading to employee dissatisfaction in HEIs in Namibia. Some of the problems need the effective implementation of the Namibia Labour Act; for example, unequal rewards signify workplace discrimination. However, adhering to the Namibian Labour Act on that component will promote labour relations, boost job satisfaction, and reduce absenteeism.

### **3.6.1 Workplace discrimination**

The Labour Act (2007:14) and the Affirmative Action Act (1998:13) prohibit discrimination in the workplace. Employers must not discriminate against employees in recruitment, selection, remuneration, benefits, facilities, training, development, promotion, demotion, transfer, tenure, discipline, and dismissal arising from redundancy because of an employee's race, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, religion, political opinion, disability, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), or Human Immune Virus (HIV) status or previous, current or future pregnancy. In this regard, the research by Kamati (2020:105) showed discrimination in HEIs in Namibia in terms of remuneration. Discrimination tends to negatively impact job satisfaction in the working environment, thereby triggering employee turnover, lowering employee performance, and increasing absenteeism (Thrasher, Wells, Spencer, Cofie & Yen, 2016:202; Olori, Jumbo & Comfort, 2017:55). Due to the informal HR practices implemented in selected Windhoek PTIs, the working environment could be discriminatory in areas such as recruitment, selection, training, development, promotion, and remuneration. In support of this notion, Shava (2017) noted that family-owned businesses are characterised by nepotism and favouritism in promotions and salary grading. Favouritism is "the act of offering jobs, contracts, and resources to the members of one's social group in preference to others who are outside the group" (Bramoulle & Goyal, 2016:16). Favouritism can occur when offering training and development opportunities and promotion. The perpetrator can favour employees according to gender, religion, race, and social group – actions that the Labour Act (2007:14) defines as discriminatory. Nepotism and favouritism cause performance deterioration, job dissatisfaction, low motivation and morale, depression, and burnout (Karakose, 2014; 250; Jones & Stout, 2015; Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020:37). Therefore, PTIs should implement formal HR practices because these will combat discrimination and, promote

transparency and consistency (Meyer, 2014:24) and reduce demotivation and employee turnover (Ahmad & Allen, 2015:521; Burhan et al., 2020:2).

It is important to note that informal recruitment and selection HR practices can lead to incorrect job placement, negatively impacting employee performance and job satisfaction (Aliyu, 2021:184; Mihu, 2023:29). Furthermore, when HEIs/PTIs' HR departments advertise vacant positions, they should incorporate a statement of employment equity. As highlighted by O'Brien, McAbee, Hebl and Rodgers (2016:616), this statement confirms that no discriminatory institutional policies exist. However, the study noted that vacancies advertised on the selected Windhoek PTIs' websites contain such a declaration. For this reason, the study assumed that this deficiency might have caused the 15% rise in employee turnover and the 5% decrease in employee performance and contributed to the 10% escalation in lecturers' absenteeism rate between 2014 and 2018, as reflected by these PTIs' annual reports.

Moreover, this study assumed that in an environment that discriminates regarding employees' training, development, and promotion, there is a high chance that few employees are involved in employee development or receive promotion because such practices are reserved for privileged individuals. The fact that the other employees cannot participate in these activities lowers the employee development rate in these institutions.

Therefore, the concern is establishing whether HR practices used for recruitment and selection, training and development, promotion, and remuneration have discriminatory traits. This information will help the researcher to recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention.

### **3.6.2 Limited family support**

It is noted that accommodation is expensive in Windhoek, and the PTI lecturers' salary makes it financially challenging for them to move their family from their hometown to the city. Research conducted by Kamati (2020:116) in one of Namibia's HEIs found that the families of some academics are not staying with them due to their low salaries. Although employees may visit their families on weekends, the travel time and logistics around public transport may cause problems in arriving late for duty on a Monday or extending the weekend with no annual leave available. Family support is viewed as a buffer for work stress (Gie, 2017:39; Peeters & Le Blanc, 2001: 53-72). Therefore, if PTI employees have limited physical family support, it may contribute to job

burnout and illness, resulting in more absenteeism. This assumption is congruent with findings from Kamati (2020:116) and Simushi (2020:111), who stated that academic problems hinder them from fulfilling their duties. Academics may consider searching for another job that pays a higher salary that will enable them to meet their personal and family needs. Lack of family support could be one of the factors increasing the rate of absenteeism and employee turnover and decreasing employee performance in the selected Windhoek PTIs.

### **3.6.3 Sexual harassment**

The study also investigates sexual harassment, which is becoming common in today's workplace and has a negative impact on employee absenteeism, turnover, and performance (McLaughlin, Uggen & Blackstone, 2017:345; Siuta & Bergman, 2019; Gupta & Garg, 2020:199).

Sexual harassment is defined as an "unwarranted conduct of sexual nature towards an employee which constitutes a barrier to equality in employment" (Namibia, 2007:17). The behaviour of the perpetrator is hostile, offensive, insulting and intimidating, with inappropriate comments and unwanted sexual advances to another party (Salman, Abdullah & Saleem, 2016:89). Therefore, the victim should make it known to the perpetrator that the behaviour is offensive and when they persist the victim should report the case to their manager. The organisation must train employees regarding sexual harassment and formulate procedures for reporting such offences.

Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal, non-verbal, and in a technological cyber form. The physical form of harassment involves behaviours such as uninvited touching, caressing, hugging, or kissing. The verbal form of harassment includes sexually suggestive and unpleasant remarks or jokes, inappropriate invitations to participate in 'dates,' unpleasant questions about one's private life, and unpleasant remarks about a colleague's physical appearance. Non-verbal harassment is inappropriate and intimidating and includes staring or leering, being shown or given unpleasant sexually explicit pictures, indecent exposure, and being forced to view pornographic material against one's wish. Technological cyber harassment occurs when the victim receives unpleasant sexually explicit e-mails or short message service (SMS) and inappropriate, unpleasant advances via an internet chat room (Kahsay, Negarandeh, Nayeri & Hasanpour, 2020:2). It is important to note that sexual harassment makes the victim suffer from anxiety, depression, sleeping disorder, and low self-esteem (Kahsay et al., 2020:2). Furthermore, sexual harassment has a negative impact on employees such as lower job satisfaction, performance deterioration, absenteeism, reduced organisational commitment and conflict, thus, increasing the



victim's intention to leave the institution (Salman et al., 2016:95; Uggen & Blackstone, 2017:345; McLaughlin, Siuta & Bergman, 2019; Gupta & Garg, 2020:199; Herrmann, Seubert & Glaser, 2020:23). The victim of sexual harassment feels insecure and hates the workplace, especially if the perpetrator holds an influential position within the organisation. Sexually harassed employees frequently absent themselves from work, resign from their jobs, and start looking for employment elsewhere, lowering performance and escalating absenteeism and employee turnover.

Consequently, organizations need to protect employees from sexual harassment by having a sexual harassment policy in place that will help them to comply with the law, create awareness of such inappropriate behaviour, prevent its occurrence in the workplace and create a conducive working environment. The absence of such a policy in some selected PTIs may result in sexual harassment in the workplace. This study, consequently, made the supposition that sexual harassment has an impact on absenteeism and employee performance in the selected Windhoek PTIs.

Given various problems triggering absenteeism in HEIs in Namibia, as Kamati (2020) revealed, this research study will attempt to precisely identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs whose employees are exposed to informal HR practices. It will then recommend a formal HRM practices model for Namibian PTIs to improve their employee retention rate.

### **3.7 HR practices hindering employee development in PTIs in Namibia**

The HR practice for employee development is essential in the 21st century because it helps academics in the institution to keep pace with the changing environment and meet the needs of the multi-generational workforce. The education environment has changed drastically, and academics must equip students with skills that will enable them to adapt to 21st century demands. The students need to acquire such skills as effective communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, and the efficient use of technology (Ahmad, Yoke, Yunos & Amin, 2019:15; Liesa-Orus, Latorre-Cosculluela, Vázquez-Toledo & Sierra-Sánchez, 2020:5341; Murugiah, 2020:410).

Therefore, academics should possess the knowledge that will enable them to impart the above skills to students (Ahmad et al., 2019:16). Hence, employee development remains the key to assisting academics to acquire the additional skills required in the 21st century. For instance,

there is a transformation in teaching methodology whereby academics utilise blended teaching (face-to-face and online teaching) and project-based learning. Consequently, academics should be trained in these new teaching methods and assessment practices, preparing student-centred teaching materials and developing critical thinking assessments. Academics also should be trained to use the ever-changing modern technologies.

Furthermore, the industry demands are changing; thus, PTIs began introducing more postgraduate programmes in 2016 to meet the needs of their customers and increase their market share and revenue. This transformation has led to the need for training and development programmes that encompass the additional knowledge, and skills academics now require, e.g., the use of different software, thesis supervision and workshop facilitating skills. Employee development will enable academic staff to acquire the knowledge and skills relevant to the newly introduced levels at the legislated standard of performance, leading to quality graduates who will build a good reputation for the institution.

As previously indicated, the 21st century workplace is dominated by generations X and Y, who enter the work environment without experience (Nnambooze & Parumasur, 2016:226; Teng, 2020:339). The study acknowledges that Namibian PTIs are recruiting graduates without work experience who are prepared to accept low salaries. Therefore, there is a need for employee development programmes, such as mentoring programmes in these institutions, that will build mutual respect among the different generations, enable naïve graduates to learn from experienced academics, and foster self-realization (Teng, 2020:339).

The primary concern here is the decline of employee development activities in Namibian PTIs, one HR practice that can enable academics to adapt to changes in the education system (teaching millennium students and catering to postgraduates). Thus, this study supposition that the decline in employee development may have exacerbated employee performance deterioration within Namibian PTIs.

The research carried out by researchers (Naris & Ukpere, 2012:11863; Amushila & Bussin, 2021:9) attests to the poor implementation of the HR practice for performance management in Namibian HEIs. Development activities are not based on performance feedback, and, as a result, some employees are being developed in areas that are not in line with their work and, so, will not be eligible for a salary increase (Naris & Ukpere, 2010:1082). Others are being developed in areas that they are already adequately performing.

It is important to note that performance feedback can be used to direct an institution's development programmes. These development programmes will close the gap between employees' current and expected performance. For instance, an academic with difficulty designing assessments for third-year students will benefit from mentoring programmes and relevant workshops that will enable them to meet the required academic performance standards and positively impact their professional skills. Most employees are interested in development programmes that enable them to promote their career growth by acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the future demands of their institution (Harry, 2014; Hammond & Churchill, 2018:69). Employees tend to be active in activities that benefit them. Thus, failure to offer such programmes may hinder employee development and increase absenteeism and employee turnover.

Given the above observations, the research study postulates that poor performance management practices may be one reason for the decline in employee development in Namibian PTIs. Development activities guided by performance tend to improve employee performance, thus closing the performance gap. Subsequently, this study assumed that employee development not influenced by performance management could fail to address employees' weaknesses and, thus, may have resulted in the performance deterioration currently facing Namibian PTIs.

However, this study will draw conclusions based on the findings from its study of three Windhoek PTIs to justify the assumption that informal HR practices negatively affect employee turnover and performance and trigger increased absenteeism and employee turnover in Namibian PTIs.

### **3.8 Contextual overview of selected PTIs in Windhoek**

The selected Windhoek PTIs offers certificates, bachelor's, honours and postgraduate diplomas, master's and doctoral degrees. One has university status among the three studied PTIs, while the others are recognised as colleges. The programmes they offer are accredited by the Namibia Qualification Authority (NQA) and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). They are family-owned and managed and have faced severe challenges of lecturer absenteeism, employee turnover, performance deterioration, and a decline in employee development since 2014, as reflected in their annual reports.

### **3.8.1 Private tertiary institutions (PTIs)**

This section provides a brief historical background of the PTIs under study, details of the academic programs offered by each institution, an overview of their enabling environments, HR policies and procedures, and the student facilities available within these institutions.

#### **3.8.1.1 PTI-1**

PTI-1 was established in 1994 and initially offered diplomas and obtained university status in 2002; the main campus is in Windhoek, with five branches in different provinces throughout Namibia. Its intellectual and vocational bases are firmly in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and management science disciplines. PTI-1 works in association with organisations such as the University of Namibia, Asia of University, Shareworld Open University of Malawi, Mount Kenya University, Hunan Normal University, University of Uyo, Murdoch University, Open Window Institute of Arts and Digital Science, The Association of Business Executives, Institute of Open Learning, Raymond G. Dabney University, Jamaica University of Technology and the Institute of Development Management.

PTI-1 has ten faculties, namely: Business Administration, Education, Health Science, ICT, Strategic Management, Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management, School of Post Graduate Studies, Centre of Environmental Studies, Centre of Improved Institutional Performance (CIIP), Centre for Distance and e-learning and the Graduate School of Business. Table 3.2 below shows the number of certificates, diplomas, postgraduate diplomas, bachelors, honours, master's, and doctoral degrees each faculty offers. PTI-1 has a staff complement of 150 academics and 7000 students in Windhoek ([www.PTI-1.edu.na](http://www.PTI-1.edu.na)).

**Table 3.2:** Number of programmes offered by each faculty at PTI-1

Faculty name	No. of Certificate programs	No. of Diploma Programs	No. of Bachelor Degrees	No. of Honours Degrees	No. of Post graduate Diploma	No. of Master Degrees	PHDs
Business Administration	2	2	6	1	1	2	1
Education	-	1	2	1	1	1	1
Health and Social Sciences	2		1		1	2	
Information and Communication Technology	1	1	5	-	-	12	1
Strategic Management and Leadership	2	2	4	-	1	4	-
Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management	1	1	2	-	1	1	1
Environmental Studies	2	2	5	-	1	5	5
Distance and e-learning	9	-	4	-	2	1	-
Graduate School of Business	-	-	-	-	-	5	1
Centre for Improved Institutional Performance	15	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: ([www.PTI-1.edu.na](http://www.PTI-1.edu.na))

### 3.8.1.2 PTI-2

PTI-2 was established in 1999 and offered franchised qualifications from the United Kingdom (UK) in its four campuses, which are in different Namibia provinces. Its main campus is situated in Windhoek. In 2006, PTI-2 phased out the franchised qualifications and began offering programmes accredited by NQA.

PTI-2 has seven faculties: Faculty of Engineering Science, Faculty of Business and Management Science, Faculty of Postgraduate Studies, Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality and Event

Management, Faculty of Arts, Centre of Short Courses, and Centre for National Vocational Qualifications. Table 3.3 below shows the number of certificates, diplomas, bachelor's and master's degree programmes each faculty offers. PTI-2 has a staff complement of 25 academics and 3300 students in Windhoek (Nafacts.com; [www.courseseye.com](http://www.courseseye.com)).

**Table 3.3:** Number of programmes offered by each faculty at PTI-2

Faculty name	No. of Certificate Programs	No. of Diploma Programs	No. of Bachelor Degrees	No. of Master Degrees
Engineering Science	7	2	-	-
Business and Management Science	-	4	6	-
Postgraduate Studies	-	-	-	4
Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management	-	1	3	
Arts			2	
Centre of Short Courses	6	-	-	-
Centre for National Vocational Qualifications.	6	2	-	-

Source: (Nafacts.com; [www.courseseye.com](http://www.courseseye.com))

### 3.8.1.3 PTI-3

PTI-3 was established in 2006 and used computer-aided learning to support high school pupils in science and mathematics. This college was enlarged in 2007, and tertiary courses in management studies were offered in collaboration with the Association of Business Managers and Administrators (ABMA), an examination board based in the UK.

In 2008, PTI-3 introduced engineering courses in collaboration with City and Guilds in the UK and signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Tanzania to offer a variety of degrees. It has six campuses throughout Namibia, with the main campus in Windhoek. PTI-3 has five faculties (Faculty of Engineering Science, Faculty of Business and Management Science,

Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law and Humanities, and Faculty of Postgraduate Diplomas). Table 3.4 below shows the number of programmes offered by each faculty.

**Table 3.4:** Number of programmes offered by each faculty at PTI-3

Faculty name	No. of Certificate Programs	No. of Diploma Programs	No. of Bachelor Degrees	No. of Post graduate Diploma	No. of Honours Degrees	No. of Master Degrees
Engineering Science	4	4	1	-	1	
Business and Management Science	7	7	8	-	8	
Education	-	-	-	-	3	-
Law and Humanities	3	3	2	-	2	1
Postgraduate Diplomas	-	-	-	3	-	-

Source: ([www.courseseye.com](http://www.courseseye.com); [www.PTI-3.edu.na](http://www.PTI-3.edu.na))

All the programmes offered by PTI-3 are taught in three modes: full-time (during the day), part-time (evening classes), and distance learning ([www.courseseye.com](http://www.courseseye.com); [www.PTI-3.edu.com](http://www.PTI-3.edu.com)). PTI-3 has a staff complement of 50 academics and 5,500 students in Windhoek (PTI-3, 2022:4).

### 3.8.2 Enabling physical working environment

An enabling physical working environment helps to stimulate employee motivation, thereby boosting employee performance (Ukah & Atah, 2021:13; Kanonge & Bussin, 2022:9). To promote such an environment, institutions should provide adequate job resources to meet their academic job demands such as well-equipped offices, teaching facilities, equipment, infrastructure, and social amenities (Kanonge & Bussin, 2022:9). This study made the supposition that the availability of teaching facilities, equipment, and infrastructure reduces the chance of academics experiencing stress and burnout when performing their tasks and enabling them to achieve their desired outcomes. It is important to note that a poor physical working environment adversely impacts employee turnover, employee performance, and absenteeism (Nekoranec & Kmosena,

2015:164; Singh et al., 2016:109; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016:616). Therefore, this study will discuss the job resources designed for academics in the selected Windhoek PTIs.

#### 3.8.2.1 PTI-1 – Enabling working environment

To create an enabling physical working environment, PTI-1 has lecture halls that contain sophisticated audio and visual systems and well-equipped computer laboratories. There is a wireless network that is open for staff. PTI-1 has a photocopying room for academics to make copies and scan documents using their passwords. Full-time lecturers are also provided with a laptop on which PTI-1 installs the software they need and makes repairs when necessary. In addition, PTI-1 has a Centre of Improved Institutional Performance (CIIP) that offers short courses and is also used for employee development. PTI-1 schedules an employee development programme for academics during student recess ([www.PTI-1.edu.na](http://www.PTI-1.edu.na)). This study noted that PTI-1 appears to have sufficient job resources that promote an enabling physical working environment that researchers recommend (Ukah & Atah, 2021:13; Kanonge & Bussin, 2022:9). However, the study observed that PTI-1 uses the student recess periods for employee development that results in academics working throughout the year and having limited time to rest before the commencement of the following semester. This situation may cause burnout among academics and lead to performance deterioration and increased employee turnover (Akca & Küçükoğlu, 2020:61).

#### 3.8.2.2 PTI-2 – Enabling working environment

PTI-2 provides an enabling working environment through well-ventilated lecture halls and a computer science lab designed for computer classes. However, the lecture halls do not have projectors –these are allocated per department, and the academics sign for the projector before conducting lectures. PTI-2 has a wireless network that is open to staff. Due to limited office space, only Deans have individual offices, while other academic staff use a staff standard room, in which they are provided with an office desk and chair. The staff standard room is well-ventilated and has air conditioning since Namibia experiences high temperatures during summer and low temperatures in winter. It mirrors the facilities listed by various researchers. Ashkanasy, Ayoko, and Jehn (2014:1176) and Khazanchi, Sprinkle, Masterson, and Tong (2018:607) highlighted that open-plan offices reduce employee concentration due to distraction, lack of privacy, and limited working space. Academics are required to concentrate; therefore, distraction can hinder their performance (Oyetunji, 2014:36; Węziak-Białowolska et al., 2018:10), trigger absenteeism and employee turnover (Weiak-Białowolska et al., 2018:12; Garba & Jacob, 2021:60). This study also observed that the academics use their laptops to conduct classes – a fact which implies that PTI-



2 has limited job resources that may result in an environment that does not promote excellent performance amongst academics and may contribute to the challenges faced by PTI-2 because academics usually prefer to work at an institution with the necessary infrastructure that boosts their performance.

### 3.8.2.3 PTI-3 – Enabling working environment

PTI-3 provides an enabling physical working environment through well-ventilated lecture halls with mounted projectors, a computer lab designed for computer classes, and a workshop equipped for engineering students. However, students have limited access to the computer labs that are mainly provided for lecturers.

PTI-3 has a wireless network that is open to staff. A photocopier attendant makes copies for academics and students. The name of an academic, what has been copied, and the number of copies made are recorded and signed for. While this process monitors institutional resources, it can decrease intrinsic motivation among employees who feel untrustworthy (Jiang, Tsohou, Siponen & Li, 2020:1626). This study assumed that such a practice can contribute to performance deterioration at PTI-3.

PTI-3 has limited office space and only provides offices for Deans, while HODs and other academics use the staff common rooms. There are three large staff standard rooms, i.e., for the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculties of Management and Business Studies and Humanities, and the Faculty of Law. These staff standard rooms are well-ventilated, with air conditioning, an office desk and a chair in each work area. However, this study noted that communal spaces, such as staff standard rooms, can have a negative impact on employee performance, absenteeism, and employee retention (Oyetunji, 2014:36; Węziak-Białowska et al., 2018:10; Garba & Jacob, 2021:60). This fact may be the cause of absenteeism employee turnover and performance deterioration experienced by PTI-3.

Garba and Jacob (2021:61) observed that most academic staff employed by Namibian HEIs are not provided with the teaching resources to do their job effectively. The study supports this observation because PTI-3 does not provide academics with laptops for teaching or research. Some new lecturers cannot afford to buy a laptop, and this deficiency can affect their performance. Other than teaching resources, PTI-3 has a restaurant that provides a variety of meals that academics can buy.

### 3.8.3 HR policies and procedures in selected PTIs

There is a need for the selected Windhoek PTIs to remain competitive, increase their market share, and retain their academic staff because excessive employee turnover tends to affect employee performance and the quality of graduates. Therefore, these PTIs should formulate comprehensive HR policies to manage their employees and achieve their objectives. These HR policies should support employee performance, workplace relations, distribution of resources, functioning of an institution (Khushk, 2019:49), and job satisfaction. These HR policies must be written down and communicated to the employees. They become the HR practices the institution implements, e.g., procedures for recruitment and selection. Consistent HR policies are the backbone of an institution (Meyer, 2014:36; Kapur, 2020:2). This study outlined the HR policies that are implemented in the selected Windhoek PTIs that were taken from the policies and procedure manual of each institution (See Table 3.5) below.

**Table 3:5:** HR policies and procedures in selected PTIs

PTI1	PTI2	PTI3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the conditions of employment policy (remuneration, leave days, promotion, performance management process)</li> <li>- recruitment and selection policy</li> <li>- equal opportunities policy</li> <li>- official travel policy</li> <li>- financial accounting policies and procedures</li> <li>- termination and retrenchment policy</li> <li>- confidentiality</li> <li>- outside employment policy statement</li> <li>- sexual harassment policy</li> <li>- vehicle/transport policy</li> <li>- quality assurance policy</li> <li>- patents, copyright and inventions</li> <li>- use of university property/equipment and asset disposal</li> <li>- gifts and donation</li> <li>- smoking policy</li> <li>- life threatening diseases/HIV and AIDS policy</li> <li>- disciplinary policy and procedure</li> <li>- grievance policy and procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recruitment and selection policy</li> <li>- equal opportunities</li> <li>- remuneration policy</li> <li>- performance management policy</li> <li>- training and development policy</li> <li>- quality assurance policy, disciplinary policy and procedure</li> <li>- grievance policy and procedure</li> <li>- outside employment policy</li> <li>- leave policy (annual, sick, maternity, unpaid, study)</li> <li>- patents, copyright and inventions</li> <li>- smoking policy</li> <li>- Traveling policy</li> <li>- gifts and donation</li> <li>- the use of college property policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recruitment and selection policy</li> <li>- equal opportunities</li> <li>- remuneration policy</li> <li>- performance management policy</li> <li>- training and development policy</li> <li>- quality assurance policy, disciplinary policy and procedure</li> <li>- grievance policy and procedure</li> <li>- outside employment policy</li> <li>- leave policy (annual, sick, maternity, unpaid, study)</li> <li>- patents, copyright and inventions</li> <li>- smoking policy</li> <li>- Travelling policy</li> <li>- gifts and donation</li> <li>- the use of college property policy</li> </ul>

Source: (PTI-1, 2021:7-80; PTI-2, 2016:5-56, PTI-3, 2017:330-401)

It is important to note that PTI-2 and PTI-3 have similar policies, whereas PTI-1 has additional policies covering issues relating to sexual harassment, termination and retrenchment, confidentiality, vehicle/transport, and life-threatening diseases/HIV and AIDS. There is a lack of uniformity in the way these three PTIs operate. Therefore, the study supposed similar policies may differ in application and be partially or inconsistently implemented in these PTIs. The selected PTIs are facing unfavourable outcomes such as absenteeism, employee turnover, performance deterioration and a decrease in employee development that may be due to missing HR policies and the way the existing ones are implemented.

In this regard, the study notes that the selected Windhoek PTIs do not have a workload policy and acceptable usage policy that outlines the rules and guidelines for the appropriate use of an institution's IT resources, ensuring responsible, ethical, and legal usage by all users while supporting educational, research, and administrative activities. Additionally, no career progression policy or policies enhance employees' health and safety, freedom of association, and collective agreement. The absence of a workload policy may cause inconsistencies in workload allocation among academics, overloading some academics' schedules. As a result, there will be dissatisfaction, work stress, and burnout among academics, all of which negatively impact the PTIs. The above missing policies make the HR practice for labour relations incomplete (Meyer, 2011:45). They may cause the lack of employee participation in issues involving them (working hours, salaries, overtime). Furthermore, the fact that PTI-2 and PTI-3 do not have termination or sexual harassment policies may have an adverse impact on these institutions.

#### **3.8.4 Student facilities in selected PTIs in Windhoek**

The number of selected accredited PTIs has increased rapidly since 2014, resulting in increased competition among Namibian PTIs. Thus, the selected Windhoek PTIs strive to improve their infrastructure and provide 'state-of-the-art facilities' for their students. Table 3.6 below shows the facilities available at the selected Windhoek PTIs.

**Table 3.6:** Students' facilities in each selected PTI

PTI1	PTI2	PTI3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hostel catering for one hundred and seventy three (173) students.</li> <li>- Student transport</li> <li>- Student cafeteria</li> <li>- Lecture halls with sophisticated audio and visual system and technology computer laboratories</li> <li>- Photocopying room (students load money on their student cards and acquire a credit. They use their student cards for photocopying.</li> <li>- Campus wireless network</li> <li>- Library</li> <li>- University nurse</li> <li>- Student counsellor (www.PTI-1.edu.na)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lecture halls that are well ventilated</li> <li>- Well-equipped computer lab</li> <li>- Photocopying room (students pay cash for photocopying)</li> <li>- Campus wireless network</li> <li>- Library</li> <li>- Student counsellor (www.PTI-2.edu.na)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student transport</li> <li>- Restaurant</li> <li>- Lecture halls with mounted projectors and a computer lab</li> <li>- Well-equipped workshop (for the faculty of engineering)</li> <li>- Photocopying room(students pay cash for photocopying)</li> <li>- Campus wireless network</li> <li>- Library</li> <li>- Student counsellor (www.PTI-3.edu.na)</li> </ul>

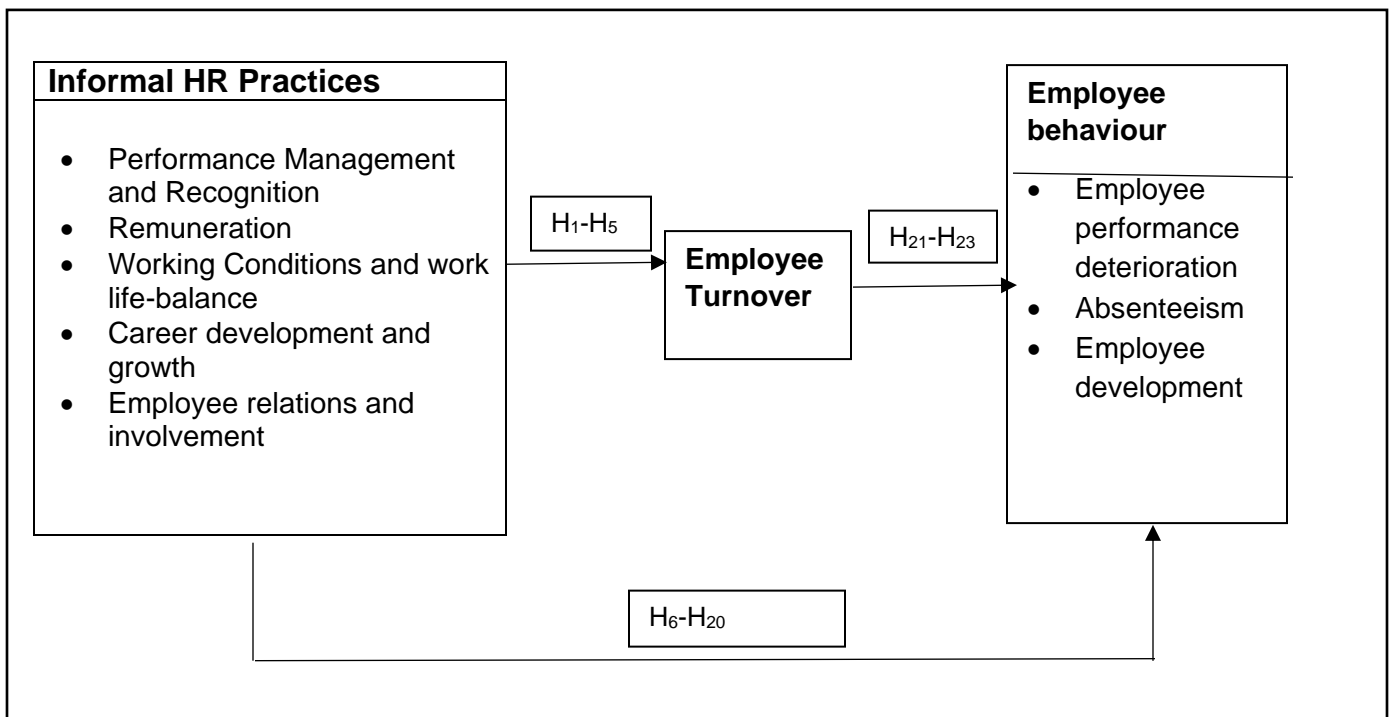
Student facilities influence both student and employee performance. Moreover, rapidly changing technology also influences employee development. When the PTI acquires sophisticated equipment for the students' use, academics must learn how the equipment functions. Consequently, employee development is vital for PTIs to remain competitive and attract more students.

### 3.9 Conceptual framework of the study

Grant and Osanloo (2014), cited by Adom, Hussein, and Agyen (2018:439), define a conceptual framework as a structure that outlines how ideas relate to each other and explore the research problem. In this study, the development of the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 3.3 was guided by the resource-based view (RBV) and human capital theories to identify HR practices that selected PTIs can improve to reduce absenteeism and academic staff turnover, increase academic staff performance, and enhance employee development, thereby gaining

competitiveness. Employees are a critical resource for selected Windhoek PTIs to remain competitive (Wright et al., 2001:917; Saha & Gregar, 2012:3; Davis, 2017:5; Collins, 2021:350). Therefore, these institutions need to adopt formal HR practices, as informal HR practices can lead to academic staff turnover, triggering performance deterioration, absenteeism, and a decline in participation in employee development programs.

The independent variables in this study are the informal HR practices, including performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and work-life balance (WLB), career development and growth, and employee relations and involvement. The dependent variables were employee behaviour which was measured through performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee development, all affected by informal HR practices and employee turnover. Employee turnover acts as a mediating variable on the relationship between the informal HR practices and employee behaviour. The effectiveness of HR practices relies on their consistent implementation within an institution. Inconsistencies and partial implementation result in informal HR practices.



**Figure 3.3:** Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Author's own design

To present a study that informs current knowledge on the impact of informal HR practices in PTIs and investigate the HR practices adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs that trigger employee

turnover while causing performance deterioration, absenteeism, and a lack of employee development. The study, therefore, proposed the following hypotheses from the conceptual framework.

H<sub>1</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee turnover.

H<sub>2</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee turnover.

H<sub>3</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and, work-life balance and employee turnover.

H<sub>4</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee turnover.

H<sub>5</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee turnover.

H<sub>6</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee performance deterioration.

H<sub>7</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee performance deterioration.

H<sub>8</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance and employee performance deterioration.

H<sub>9</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee performance deterioration.

H<sub>10</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee performance deterioration.

H<sub>11</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and absenteeism.

H<sub>12</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee performance deterioration.

H<sub>13</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance and absenteeism.

H<sub>14</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and absenteeism.

H<sub>15</sub> There is a relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and absenteeism.

H<sub>16</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee development.

H<sub>17</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee development.

H<sub>18</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and, work-life balance and employee development.

H<sub>19</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee development.

H<sub>20</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee development.

H<sub>21</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee performance deterioration and employee turnover.

H<sub>22</sub> There is a positive relationship between absenteeism and employee turnover.

H<sub>23</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee development and employee turnover.

### **3.10 Summary**

The Namibian higher education system is comprised of public and private HEIs. Namibia has 40 accredited PTIs situated in different towns. These PTIs were formed to meet the Namibian Vision 2030, a development plan established by the National Planning Commission (NPC). This study focused mainly on three selected Windhoek PTIs – PTI-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3- the resources available in these PTIs for academics and students and the implemented HR policies because these influence employee performance and development. Meanwhile, the Namibian budget prioritises state universities, and the PTIs are self-sufficient. This fact has led the selected Windhoek PTIs to implement informal HR practices regarding allocating academics' leave and remuneration. As a result, these PTIs have experienced a 15% rise in employee turnover, a 10% rise in absenteeism, a 5% decrease in employee performance, and a 15% decrease in employee performance since 2014. In addition, the lack of an educational policy that unifies HEIs has led to a quality gap in the education provided in Namibia that can hinder their meeting the objectives of Namibia's 5th National Development Plan (NDP). However, there are legislative laws that Namibia has implemented that can be used by PTIs when formulating workplace policies that will enable them to create formal HR practices that will promote WLB, a conducive working environment, and sound employee relations. Consequently, the PTIs will be able to reduce absenteeism and employee turnover while simultaneously improving employee performance and employee development.

One of the striking aspects of the Namibian higher education landscape is the scarcity of literature on the HR practices that negatively impact employee turnover and influence performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee development in PTIs. While some researchers have

conducted studies in HEIs in Namibia and identified the main causes of absenteeism, employee turnover, performance deterioration, and decreasing employee development, the focus has largely been on state universities. Their studies have pointed to the poor implementation of HR practices such as performance management, work-life balance (WLB), remuneration, employee relations, and employee development. Given the reputation of the selected Windhoek PTIs for implementing informal HR practices, this study assumes that it is likely to uncover more HR practices that are triggering absenteeism, employee turnover, performance deterioration, and poor employee development.

Therefore, this study adopts a descriptive research approach to identify the HR practices that have contributed to the increase in the rate of absenteeism, employee turnover, and the deterioration of employee performance and development in Namibian PTIs. The aim is to recommend propose a formal HRM practice model that can be adopted by these PTIs. Such a model, if adopted, could significantly improve employee retention rates. This, in turn, would contribute to Namibia's goal of building capable and healthy human resources and promoting good governance through effective institutions, including HEIs.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 discusses the research methods that this study used to determine the HR practices adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect absenteeism and employee turnover, contribute to performance deterioration, and hinder employee development to recommend a formal HRM model that Namibian PTIs could adopt to improve employee retention. Initially, it discusses the research paradigm that outlines the perceptions held by the research study regarding the HR practices implemented by the selected Windhoek PTIs. The chapter further discusses the research design, methods, population and sampling techniques adopted by the researcher. In addition, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations are discussed. The chapter ends with a summary.

#### **4.2 Research process**

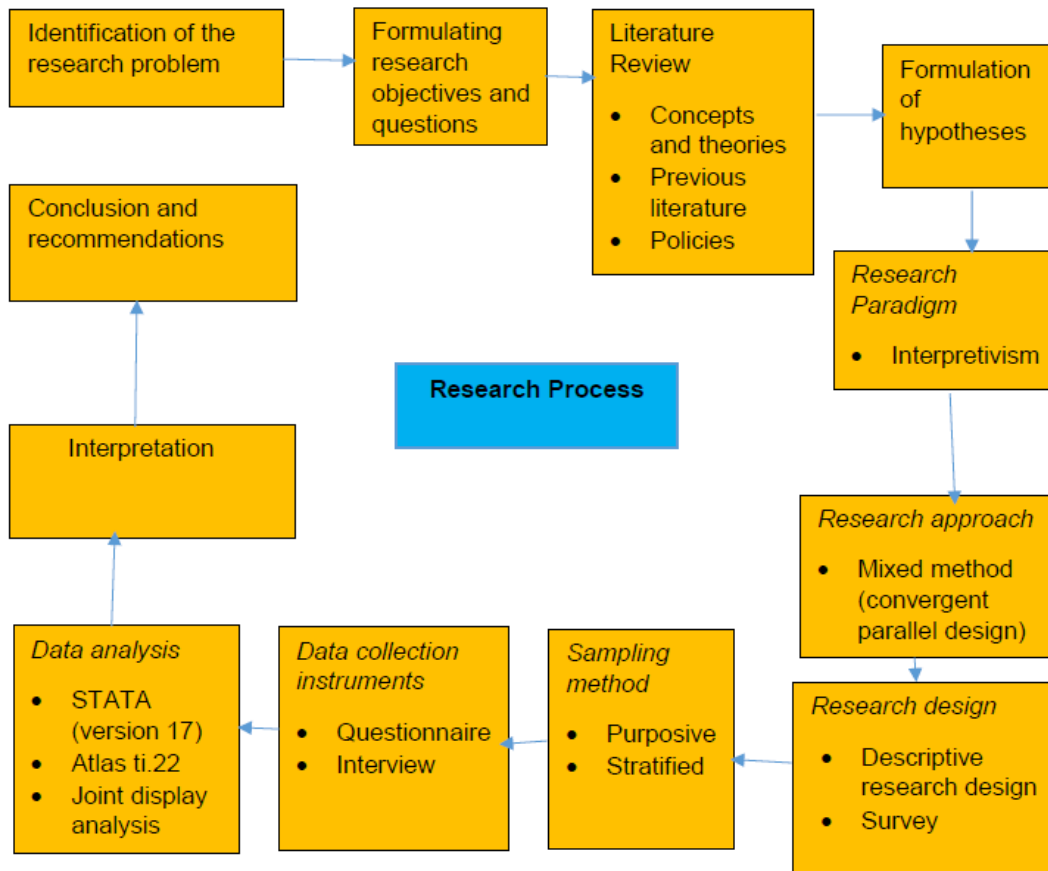
Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012:160) noted that the main objective of conducting research and addressing a problem lies in the research process. Figure 4.1 shows the 11 stages followed by this study.

The study commenced by identifying the problems experienced by Namibian PTIs. The problem variables were employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and a decline in employee development.

Furthermore, the following research objectives of the study were formulated:

- To determine what informal HR practices Namibian PTIs adopt that negatively affect employee turnover.
- To identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs, Namibia.
- To ascertain how HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs, Namibia.
- To determine the obstacles hindering employee development within selected Windhoek PTIs, Namibia.

- To recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention.



**Figure 4.1:** The Research process

A comprehensive literature review that was related to the research problem was conducted and included examining texts from academic journals, conference proceedings, Namibian policies (Labour Act No 11 of 2007, Employment Service Act 8 of 2011, and the Government Gazette No.6411), books, HR manuals, and the internet. After completing the literature review, the study managed to develop its hypotheses. As highlighted by Kothari (2014:14), the role of hypotheses was to guide the researcher to the area of focus, sharpen the thinking processes, focus on important facets of the problem, and indicate the type of data required and the data analysis method to be adopted by the study.

## **4.2.1 Research philosophy**

### **4.2.1.1 Ontology**

Ontology is conceptualised as a reality cycle. This cycle is based on one reality and multiple perceptions of this reality among human beings (Maarouf, 2019:7). In this study, ontology helps define what aspects of informal HR practices are fundamental and worth investigating. An appropriate ontological stance recognizes the complexity and multifaceted nature of HR practices (Barnes, 2019:304; Toyon, 2023:3). Thus, acknowledging that HR practices involve both tangible elements, such as measurable employee turnover rates, employee performance, employee development, and absenteeism, and intangible aspects, such as employee perceptions and informal interactions. By considering objective and subjective realities, the study provides a holistic understanding of how informal HR practices influence employee outcomes in private tertiary institutions in Windhoek.

### **4.2.1.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology concerns the nature and scope of knowledge, including how knowledge is acquired and validated (Barnes,2019:304; Maarouf, 2019:7). The epistemological foundation of your study involves understanding that knowledge about informal HR practices can be derived from multiple sources and through different methods. Quantitative methods allow for the measurement and analysis of patterns and correlations within large datasets, providing statistical insights into the prevalence and effects of these practices (Barnes,2019;304). On the other hand, qualitative methods enable an in-depth exploration of individual experiences and perceptions, uncovering the underlying reasons and motivations behind informal HR practices.

The study's ontological and epistemological foundations provided a framework for comprehensively exploring and understanding informal HR practices. This approach supports the integration of diverse data sources, offers a holistic view of the phenomena, and ensures that the findings are robust, reliable, and relevant for improving HR practices in the specific context of private tertiary institutions in Windhoek, Namibia.

## **4.2.2 Research paradigm**

A research paradigm is a perception held by a researcher that is grounded on a set of shared assumptions, ideas, values, and practices (Johnson & Christensen, 2010:13). There are four main research paradigms, namely, interpretivism, positivism, realism and pragmatism (Maxwell & Wooffitt, 2005:36; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:102). This study adopted the pragmatism

paradigm to address the research objectives. Pragmatism emphasizes practical solutions and real-world applications, making it well-suited for exploring the complex issues within HR practices in Namibian PTIs (Maarouf, 2019:10; Barnes, 2019:306; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020:4; Toyon,2023:4)

The pragmatic paradigm allows for multiple methods and approaches, adapting the research design to fit the research questions and objectives best. This flexibility ensured a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of informal HR practices in selected Windhoek PTIs (Maarouf,2019:10: Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020:4; Toyon,2023:4). This study combined qualitative and quantitative methods to leverage the strengths of both. This mixed methods approach enables a thorough exploration of HR practices, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and employee development. The study provided a more nuanced and complete picture of the HR landscape in Namibian PTIs by employing qualitative and quantitative techniques. Furthermore, pragmatism facilitates the integration of various data collection (the study used the questionnaire and the structured interviews) and analysis techniques (qualitative and quantitative analysis), enabling a thorough exploration of the HR practices in question.

Pragmatism enabled the study to focus on practical outcomes and the applicability of research findings (Maarouf,2019:10; Kelly & Cordeiro,2020:4; Toyon,2023:4). This approach seeks to produce results that can directly inform HR practices and policies in PTIs. By prioritising practical solutions, the study aims to propose the HRM practice model that PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention, reduce absenteeism, enhance performance, and foster employee development within the institutions.

Moreover, pragmatic research was highly contextual, considering the specific environment and circumstances of the study. This ensured that the findings were relevant and applicable to the context of Namibian PTIs. By understanding the unique challenges and opportunities within these institutions, the research tailored recommendations that address the specific needs of the PTIs.

### **4.2.3 Research approach**

Three main approaches can be adopted in a research study, i.e., inductive, deductive (Saunders et al., 2007:102), and abductive (Hurley, Dietrich & Rundle-Thiele, 2021:67). However, the choice of approach depends on the paradigm adopted by the study. This research study chose to combine the inductive and deductive approaches.

The inductive approach is adopted to develop a philosophy after observing empirical data (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010:10; Saunders et al., 2012:672). This approach enabled the research study to "understand the meanings humans attach to events and a close understanding of the research context" (Saunders et al., 2007:120). This research study commenced with data collection (using interviews and questionnaires) and analysis of this data. The analysis recommended a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs could adopt to improve employee retention.

The deductive approach emphasizes the following:

"Scientific principles, the need to explain causal relationships between variables, the application of controls to ensure the validity of data and the researcher independence of what is being researched" (Saunders et al., 2007:120).

This research study utilised the deductive approach because it sought to discover the relationship between informal HR practices and employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and employee development.

#### **4.2.4 Research methods**

There are three research methods: quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approaches (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003:18; Hughes, 2016:1). The qualitative research method includes:

".....display of interpretive methods which seek to explain, interpret, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the world" (Copper & Schindler, 2014:144).

Therefore, its objective is to determine the behaviour and gather the opinions and expectations of the people in a population sample. This exploratory method uses techniques such as structured and semi-structured interviews, field observation, and focus groups (Queirós, Faria & Almeida, 2017:374).

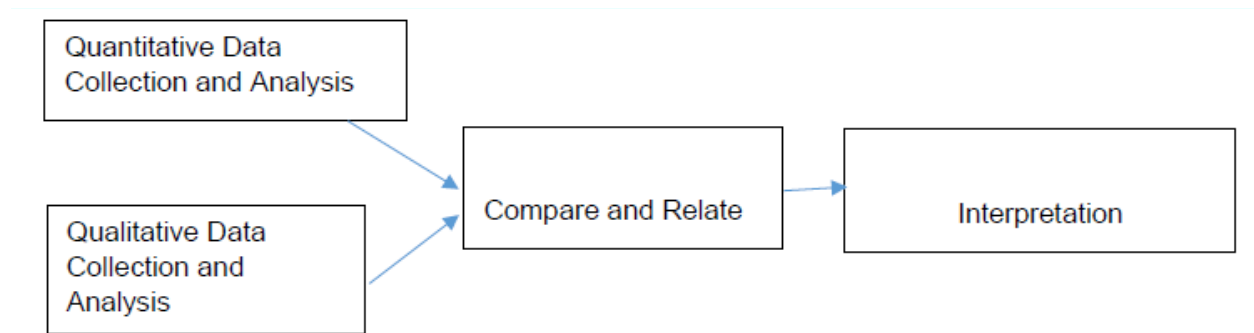
The quantitative research method is:

"... based on the methodological principles of positivism and neo-positivism and adheres to the standards of strict research design developed prior to the actual research" (Adams, Khan & Raeside, 2014:6).

It anticipates assessing and measuring the people's behaviour in a population (Almeida, 2018:138). However, Almeida (2018:138) noted that research questions could not be addressed by using quantitative or qualitative research methods alone but by adopting a mixed method that will use the merits of both these research approaches. Consequently, this study adopted the mixed method. Creswell and Clark (2017:56) define a mixed method as a research methodology whereby the study collects, analyses, and integrates the qualitative and quantitative study into a single study—this is the definition adopted by this study.

Moreover, the mixed research method has six basic designs: convergent parallel design, explanatory sequential design, exploratory sequential design, embedded design, transformative design, and multiphase design (Creswell & Clark, 2017:68; Creswell et al., 2003:216; Barnes 2019:306).

Consequently, given the research objectives, the study adopted a mixed research method convergent parallel design, through which the study concurrently collected quantitative and qualitative data. The data collected was analysed independently, and the results were compared to observe patterns and inconsistencies using a joint display analysis (Creswell & Hirose, 2019:6; Akotia, Awuzie & Egbu, 2023:9). The Convergent Parallel Design is presented in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2:** The Convergent Parallel Design (Creswell & Clark 2017:68)

The Convergent Parallel Design aims to compare statistical results and qualitative findings for validation purposes (Sauro, 2015:4; Shoonenboom & Johnson, 2017:109; Demir & Pismek, 2018:123). In addition, it helped to consolidate interrelated quantitative and qualitative results, hence giving a holistic understanding of phenomena (Creswell & Clark, 2011:77; Ponterotto, Mathew & Raughley, 2013:47; Mckim, 2017:211; Akotia et al., 2023:3). It improves the quality of the study because it blends the different advantages and non-overlapping disadvantages of the quantitative method (broad sample size, tendency and generalisation) with those of qualitative method (narrow sample, details and in-depth understanding) (Johnson & Christensen, 2010:31;

Patton, 1990 cited by Creswell & Clark, 2011:77; Plastow, 2016:89; Akotia et al., 2023:3) and enables the collection of different but interrelated data on the same topic (Morse, 1991:122; Shoonenboom & Johnson, 2017:2; Akotia et al., 2023:3).

Therefore, the questionnaire and the interview guide were designed to address the research objectives which were (1) to determine the HR practices adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover, (2) identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs, (3) ascertain how HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs, (4) determine the HR practices hindering employee development within selected Windhoek PTIs and (5) recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention. Additionally, the hypotheses set in this study were also tested.

#### **4.2.5 Research Design**

A research design is a plan for the study, which guides the study to gather and analyse data (Denscombe, 2017:100). It also works as a blueprint for carrying out the study (Denscombe 2017: 100). There are four types of research design, namely: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and experimental (Saunders et al., 2012:170; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017:68). This study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the HR practices in selected Windhoek PTIs. A descriptive research design "describes the phenomena as they exist." It concerns people's attitude towards a particular entity (Zikmund, 1988, cited by Akhtar, 2016:75-76). In this regard, the research study focused on the attitude of employees towards the HR practices implemented by selected Windhoek PTIs that have negatively affected employee turnover, performance, and development while increasing the rate absenteeism. In addition, the descriptive research design allowed the study to answer research questions such as:

- What HR practices adopted by Namibian PTIs negatively affect employee turnover?
- How do HR practices at selected Windhoek PTIs, Namibia, contribute to employee performance deterioration?
- What factors contribute to employee absenteeism in selected Windhoek PTIs, Namibia?
- What obstacles hinder employee development within selected Windhoek PTIs in Namibia?
- What recommendations could be devised into a formal HRM practices model for Namibian PTIs to improve employee retention?

Moreover, the descriptive research design allowed the study to describe the HR practices in selected Windhoek PTIs using quantifiable and narrative descriptors (McCombes, 2022:1; Kothari, 2004:114). In addition, this design gives the study a high degree of objectivity and neutrality since the investigation is conducted without manipulating the variables of the phenomenon (Lans & Van Der Voordt, 2002:55; McCombes, 2022:1). The lack of manipulation improves the reliability of the study.

Furthermore, the chosen research design allows information to be gathered on the phenomenon using observation, survey and case study (Kothari, 2004:120; Jackson, 2015:17; McCombes, 2022:1). This study adopted the survey collection method because it describes, records, analyses and interprets existing relationships or conditions, opinions held by people, processes implemented in an institution, and evident effects or developing trends (Kothari, 2004:120). Subsequently, the use of the survey enabled the study to describe the opinions held by academic staff on the HR practices implemented in selected Windhoek PTIs that have led to an evident effect reflected in their annual reports, i.e., a 15% rise in employee turnover, a 5% decrease in employee performance, a 10% escalation of lecturers' absenteeism rate and a 15% deterioration in employee development since 2014.

Furthermore, the survey enabled the study to address objectives needing descriptive answers and collect data from a large sample without incurring significant financial expenditure. Data can be collected in a survey using questionnaires, structured observations, and interviews (Saunders et al., 2007:139; Cooper & Schindler, 2014:220). Hence, the study used a questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions to gather quantitative data and open-ended questions and structured interviews to gather qualitative data (Williams, 2007:70). This process allowed the study to collect a mixture of data.

#### **4.2.6 Population**

A population is a group with something in common that allows the study to answer its research questions (Zikmund, 2003:145). The study determined a target population (the total number of respondents that the study could use to gather data, Zikmund, 2003:145). The population comprises academic and HR staff in selected Windhoek PTIs, Namibia. To maintain confidentiality, the selected PTIs were identified by numbers, i.e., PTI-1, PTI-2 and PTI-3. The population of each PTI was as follows:

- PTI-1 consists of four HR staff members and 150 academic staff members.



- PTI-2 consists of two HR staff members and 25 academic staff members.
- PTI-3 consists of two HR staff members and 50 academic staff members.

Therefore, the study's total population was eight HR staff members and 225 academic staff.

#### **4.2.7 Sample and sampling methods**

Sampling is selecting participants from the target population to make the study sample a manageable size that represents the population. The outcome of the data collected from the sample was used to evaluate the impact of HR practices on Namibian PTIs (Greener, 2008:47; Kamur, 2011:210; Saunders et al., 2007:205). Cooper and Schindler (2014:348) further explained that there should be a relative relationship between the size of the sample and that of the population from which it is drawn. Sampling comprises two forms, namely, non-probability random sampling and probability random sampling. Non-probability random sampling is

"... a sampling procedure that will not bid a basis for any opinion of probability that elements in the universe will have a chance to be included in the study sample" (Etikan & Bala, 2017:1).

Non-probability random sampling uses techniques such as quota sampling, accidental sampling, judgemental or purposive sampling, expert sampling, snowball sampling and modal instant sampling (Etikan & Bala, 2017:1; Greener, 2008:47-48; Kumar, 2011:181).

Whereas probability random sampling "is a sampling which permits every single item from the universe to have an equal chance of presence in the sample" (Etikan & Bala, 2017:1). It includes sampling techniques such as multistage sampling, area sampling, cluster sampling, stratified sampling and systematic random sampling (Etikan & Bala, 2017:1; Greener, 2008:48; Kumar, 2011:181).

This study adopted a mixed sampling method, combining purposive sampling (non-probability random sampling) and stratified sampling (probability random sampling). Purposive sampling is a technique whereby the study selects participants from the population who possess the knowledge and experience that will best answer the study's objectives (Etikan & Bala, 2017:1; Kumar, 2011:189; Vehovar, Toepoel, Steinmetz, 2016:330). The employment of purposive sampling enabled the study to select the sample participants affected by HR practices and the implementers of these HR practices in selected Windhoek PTIs. Therefore, the study focused on academic and HR department staff members. The study advocated for the purposive sampling

method because it targets specific types of people who can provide the anticipated information since they are the ones on the ground or fit the criteria set by the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:359; Sekaran, 2003:277). The PTIs' HR staff and the academic staff had the information that addressed the study's research objectives.

Furthermore, the purposive sampling method is complemented by the stratified random sampling method in which the sample will have a representation from each segment (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:351). In this case, there was representation from both academic and HR staff. The stratified random sampling method further divided the target population into strata, using simple random to select a sample from each stratum (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:351; Saunders, 2007:221; Sekaran, 2003:273). There was a stratum for academics and HR staff. Cooper & Schindler (2014:351) mentioned that stratified sampling provides sufficient data to analyse each segment. Consequently, the sample size table was used to determine the number of samples from a known population (Sekaran, 2003:253) (see Table 4.1 below).

**Table 4.1:** Sample Size Table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)

N-----n	N-----n	N-----n	N-----n	N-----n
10-----10	100-----80	280-----162	800-----260	2800-----338
15-----14	110-----86	290-----165	850-----265	3000-----341
20-----19	120-----92	300-----169	900-----269	3500-----346
25-----24	130-----97	320-----175	950-----274	4000-----351
30-----28	140-----103	340-----181	1000-----278	4500-----354
35-----32	150-----108	360-----186	1100-----285	5000-----357
40-----36	160-----113	380-----191	1200-----291	6000-----361
45-----40	170-----118	400-----196	1300-----297	7000-----364
50-----44	180-----123	420-----201	1400-----302	8000-----367
55-----48	190-----127	440-----205	1500-----306	9000-----368
60-----52	200-----132	460-----210	1600-----310	10000-----370
65-----56	210-----136	480-----214	1700-----313	15000-----375
70-----59	220-----140	500-----217	1800-----317	20000-----377
75-----63	230-----144	550-----226	1900-----320	30000-----379
80-----66	240-----148	600-----234	2000-----322	40000-----380
85-----70	250-----152	650-----242	2200-----327	50000-----381

90-----73	260-----155	700-----248	2400-----331	75000-----382
95-----76	270-----159	750-----254	2600-----335	100000-----384

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970:608)

N= Population size, and n= sample size required

Table 4.1 above displays the population size and the sample size as determined by the sample size table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). However, the number of HR staff in the selected Windhoek PTIs was small, thus everyone participated in the study. In this regard, the sample size for HR staff was eight, while for academic staff, it was 176; thus, the total sample size was 184.

**Table 4.2:** Population statistics for academic and HR staff in selected PTIs

Name of Institution	No. of academic staff	Sample Size	No. HR Staff	Sample Size	Total Sample Size
PTI 1	150	108	4	4	112
PTI2	25	24	2	2	26
PTI3	50	44	2	2	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>184</b>

Source: Author's own design

The sample size was 184. However, Babbie (2010:220) defines a sampling error as "the degree of error to be expected in probability sampling." The sampling error for this study was 7.4% (1 over the square root of 184 expressed as a percentage).

#### 4.2.8 Data collection instruments

Several instruments that can be used in a study have been identified by various scholars (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:152; Kothari, 2004:96; Saunders et al., 2007; Sekaran, 2003:223). This study implemented the questionnaire and the interview guide for data collection.

##### 4.2.8.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument used to objectively gather data about individuals' perceptions, beliefs, concepts, behaviours, knowledge and attitudes (Jain, Dubey & Jain, 2016:1). For the questionnaire to achieve the intended results, the study adopted the integrated layers of Labaw, (1980) framework cited by Gendall (1998:3) of designing a questionnaire, i.e., objectives,

questions, words and layout. The objective layer defines the purpose of the questionnaire. In this study, the research study's objectives and proposed hypotheses were integrated into the questionnaire with the help of questions formulated from the literature review on HR practices, absenteeism, employee turnover, performance deterioration, employee development and employee retention.

Firstly, to determine the HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover, the agreement statements were used that are based on job characteristics, supervision, work environment, career development, training and development, work flexibility, conflict management, WLB, compensation, sound communication systems, being valued and recognition. Secondly, to identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs, the study generated questions based on absenteeism due to lack of job satisfaction, working conditions, stress, illness, personal problems, acute medical conditions, alcohol or drug-related conditions, organisational culture, poor supervision, unmet expectations, burnout and fatigue. Thirdly, to ascertain how HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs, the study utilised the agreement statements based on the availability of resources, performance appraisals, setting of performance targets, performance improvement and job descriptions. Fourthly, to determine the HR practices that hinder employee development in selected Windhoek PTIs, the study made use of agreement statements to check for the availability of a training and development policy, knowledge needed to implement employee development, proper feedback channels, individual and employee motivation towards learning and development and recognition for training and development achievements in selected Windhoek PTIs. Lastly, the research study asked respondents about the factors that influenced them to remain in the PTIs. This process helped the study establish the retention strategies the selected Windhoek PTIs adopt. Table 4.3 presents questionnaire measurement constructs and their sources.

**Table 4.3:** Questionnaire measurement constructs

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Sample Statements</b>	<b>Select References</b>
Turnover	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The institution applies a career development policy that enables employees' career growth.</li> <li>2. The career progression pathway is clear within the institution.</li> </ol>	Meyer (2014); Nasir(2017); Asbari,et al.(2020); Tewari and Kumar (2019); Allen (2008); Labour Act No.11 of 2007

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The institution provides a policy for promotion.</li> <li>4. The institution has a written procedure for managing disciplinary cases.</li> <li>5. The institution has a formal policy on academic workload to ensure equitable distribution of academic activities amongst lecturers.</li> </ol>	Longmore and Lonnie (2014); Rahim (2017); Amushila and Busssi (2021)
Absenteeism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The institution provides a good working environment.</li> <li>2. I absent myself because of personal reasons.</li> <li>3. The institution has systems to monitor absenteeism.</li> <li>4. Burnout and fatigue make me not go to work</li> <li>5. The organisation has a culture of absenteeism so I adopted the culture.</li> </ol>	Hertzberg (1971); Hilmi et al. (2016); Yusoff et al. (2013); Namibia (2007) Alfaki and Alfaran (2021); Sing et al. (2016); Badubi (2017); Kamati (2020).
Employee development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The institution has a workload policy that encourage employee development.</li> <li>2. The institution has the HR department that can facilitate employee development.</li> <li>3. The institution reward for additional qualifications.</li> <li>4. The institution sponsorship its employees for formal learning and development.</li> <li>5. Supervisors provides proper performance feedback to employees that identifies areas of development.</li> </ol>	Meyer (2011); Dachner et al. (2019); Barnes et al.(2021); Coetzer et al.(2017); Zacher et al. (2019); Naris and Ukpere (2012)
Performance management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Top management communicates the vision, mission and values of the institution to employees</li> </ol>	Marin-Gracia and Thomas (2016); Delbari et al. (2021); Bansal et al. (2018);

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Employees who are not performing well are provided with training and development to reach the required job standard.</li> <li>3. Employees are provided with all the job resources that are required to complete their work.</li> <li>4. The institution has a performance management policy.</li> <li>5. The performance evaluation is fair and consistent.</li> </ol>	Ramahandani and Aggarwal (2018);
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Source: Author's own design

The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A contained questions relating to demographical information: age, gender, level of education, and length of service at a PTI. Section B explored the different HR practices implemented in the selected Windhoek PTIs through closed-ended questions linked to a 4-point Likert scale. The Likert scales ranged from 1 to 4 (1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree, and 4- Strongly agree) and open-ended questions for respondents to reflect on their experiences (Dawson, 2002:31). The reviewed literature suggests that the inclusion of a midpoint (neutral) prompts respondents to be biased towards the midpoint (neutral). This statement implies that the study would acquire data reflecting a "social desirability bias" (Chyung, Roberts, Swanson & Hankinson, 2017:19; Garland, 1991:65). Guided by this view, the study's questionnaire excluded the midpoint, hence utilising the 4-point Likert scale. In addition, close-ended questions can be quickly answered but do not allow the respondent to give alternative views other than the ones provided by the questionnaire (Jain et al., 2016:1). Consequently, the study incorporated five open-ended questions to complement the close-ended questions. As the study sought to collect the participants' opinions, attitudes and behaviour, it needed a questionnaire comprising both open and close-ended questions to enable the study to identify and describe the variability in different phenomena (Saunders et al., 2007:356).

Lastly, the study ensured that the questionnaire's layout and format were readable, and the instructions and response choices were clear to motivate respondents to complete the questionnaire, thus enhancing the response rate.

Adopting a questionnaire as a research instrument in this study offers several advantages. It enables efficient data collection from many respondents within a short period, which is crucial for

comprehensively addressing the study's objectives across three PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia. The standardized nature of questionnaires ensures consistency, enhancing the reliability of data and facilitating accurate comparisons. Additionally, the structured format supports quantitative analysis, allowing for the identification of patterns and correlations related to HR practices, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and employee development. The option for anonymity in questionnaires encourages honest responses, especially on sensitive topics, while their cost-effectiveness makes them suitable for studies with budget constraints. The versatility of distribution methods, including online platforms and printed copies, increases the response rate by accommodating different respondent preferences.

Additionally, a well-designed questionnaire can comprehensively cover the study's various aspects, and its structured format simplifies data analysis through easy coding and statistical processing. Finally, the standardized approach enhances the study's replicability, enabling future research to use the same questionnaire for comparative studies, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of HR practices in PTIs. Furthermore, respondents were given sufficient time to answer the open-ended questions to increase the chance of obtaining well-thought-out answers (Kothari, 2004:101).

#### 4.2.8.2 Interview guide

There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Stuckey, 2013:56) and narrative interviews (Green, 2013:63). This study adopted a structured interview process in which each interviewee is asked the same questions in a pre-determined order to maintain the consistency of the research process (Stuckey, 2013:57).

Therefore, for this study, the interview guide's design was guided by the research objectives and reviewed literature (see the interview guide measurement constructs in Table 4.4 below). The interview questions focused on the HR strategy and practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that influence employee turnover, absenteeism, performance management, employee training and development, recruitment and selection, and retention strategies.

**Table 4.4:** Interview guide measurement constructs

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>	<b>Select References</b>
Employee turnover	1. What is the aim of the institution's HR strategy?	Lee et al. (2018); Matla and Xaba, (2020)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. During exit interviews, what reasons were given by staff for leaving the institution?</li> <li>3. What processes do you follow when filling a vacant position?</li> </ol>	
Absenteeism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in your institution?</li> <li>2. How does HR monitor unauthorised absenteeism?</li> </ol>	Alfaki and Alkaran (2021); Serinkan and Kiziloglu (2021)
Employee development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What training and development opportunities does your institution offer its employees?</li> <li>2. To what extent is employee training linked to their job requirements?</li> </ol>	Barnes et al. (2021); Coetzer et al. (2017)
Employee performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How is performance management implemented at your institution?</li> <li>2. To what extent are employees recognised and rewarded for good performance?</li> </ol>	Barkhuizen, et al. (2020); Delbari, et al. (2021); Aydin and Tiryaki (2018); Marin-Gracia and Thomas (2016).
Retention Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What employee retention strategies are applied at your institution to retain its employees?</li> </ol>	Amoatema and Kyeremeh (2016); Cera and Kusaku (2020); Pieters et al. (2020).

Source: Author's own design

Adopting structured interviews as a research instrument offered significant advantages for this study. Structured interviews ensured consistency and comparability across respondents using pre-determined questions. This standardization enhances the reliability and validity of the data, making it easier to analyse and compare responses systematically (Saunders et al., 2007:312; Megaldi & Berler, 2020:4827; Ruslin, Rasak, Alhabsyi & Syani, 2022:25). Despite their rigid format, structured interviews still allow for in-depth exploration of critical issues related to informal HR practices, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and obstacles to employee development in PTIs. They efficiently gather detailed information while maintaining a high level of control over the data collection process (Sekaran, 2003:251; Megaldi & Berler, 2020:4827; Ruslin et al., 2022:25). Additionally, structured interviews facilitate easier replication of the study in the future, contributing to the broader body of knowledge on HR practices in Namibian PTIs. The consistency



and focus of structured interviews help ensure that all relevant topics are covered uniformly, providing comprehensive and comparable data across all participants.

### 4.3 Data collection procedure

In line with the data collection methods, ethical considerations were applied to gain access to the research target sample respondents. After gaining access to the selected PTIs in Windhoek, the HR department for each PTI provided the e-mail addresses of academic staff in the Windhoek campuses. Survey Monkey was used to distribute the questionnaire following the guidelines laid out by Tivian (2023:8). The questionnaire was administered per PTI for the study to group the responses per PTI (See Table 4.5) below.

**Table 4.5:** Questionnaire distribution schedule

Date	Institution	Follow-up date
1 September 2021	PTI-1	23 September 2021
1 October 2021	PTI-2	24 October 2021
1 November 2021	PTI-3	23 November 2021

Source: Author's own design

First, the questionnaire was uploaded to SurveyMonkey, an online survey platform known for its user-friendly interface and robust data collection capabilities. The survey was configured to include clear instructions, ensuring that respondents understood the purpose of the study and how to complete the questionnaire.

Second, e-mails participants received containing a link to the SurveyMonkey questionnaire were sent to response rates; the e-mail included a brief explanation of the study's purpose, the importance of participation, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity.

Third, follow-up e-mails were sent to respondents after three weeks to encourage participation and increase response rates. These reminders reiterated the study's importance of each participant's input. Additional reminders were sent periodically until the desired sample size was reached.

Fourth, the survey remained open for four weeks, allowing sufficient time for respondents to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. The data collection period was monitored to

ensure a steady inflow of responses and to address any technical issues that participants might encounter.

Sixth, responses were monitored throughout the data collection period to ensure completeness and consistency. Incomplete or duplicate responses were identified and addressed to maintain the integrity of the data.

Seventh, upon the survey's closure, the collected data were exported from SurveyMonkey in a suitable format for analysis. The data were securely stored and backed up to prevent loss or unauthorised access.

Following this systematic data collection procedure, the study ensured the efficient gathering of reliable and comprehensive data necessary to address the research objectives and provide meaningful insights into HR practices within Namibian PTIs.

The Zoom platform was used to interview the HR staff in the three selected Windhoek PTIs. Eight HR staff were interviewed: two from PTI-1, two from PTI-2, and four from PTI-3. The interview was then conducted according to the time scheduled by the interviewee (HR practitioners), (See Table 4.6) below.

**Table 4.6:** Interview Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of institution</b>	<b>Time</b>
8 June 2022	PTI-1	12:30
8 June 2022	PTI-2	09:00
9 June 2022	PTI-1	17:30
9 June 2022	PTI-3	13:30
10 June 2022	PTI-1	17:00
14 June 2022	PTI-1	15:00
16 June 2022	PTI-3	17:00
17 June 2022	PTI-2	14:00

Source: Author's own design

The process commenced by scheduling interview slots based on the availability of the participants according to their work schedules. Then, invitations were sent via e-mail, including details about the interview purpose, duration, and a Zoom link for the meeting. Participants were assured of

confidentiality and the voluntary nature of their participation. Before each interview, the technical setup was checked to ensure a stable internet connection and functioning audio and video equipment. Zoom settings were adjusted to enable the session to be recorded with participants' consent. At the beginning of each interview, participants were informed about the study's purpose, the use of the data, and their rights as participants. Written consent was obtained electronically.

Interviews were conducted according to the interview guide, with the flexibility to probe deeper into relevant topics as needed. The interviewer maintained a neutral and professional demeanour to encourage open and honest responses. Interviews were recorded with participants' consent, and notes were taken during the session to capture key points and non-verbal cues. At the end of the interview, the interviewees were thanked for participating.

The study opted to use the Zoom platform for its online interviews because it provided the opportunity to record the audio and video of the meeting. The interaction with web cameras was like that in onsite face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, the Zoom platform made it possible for interviewees to schedule times after working hours that were convenient for them so as not to disturb their work schedule. The interviewees were familiar with the Zoom platform.

#### **4.4 Data coding and analysis**

Statistical analysis is essential for gaining meaningful insights from quantitative data. It enables the study to draw trustworthy findings and make judgments supported by the available facts (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019:87).

The collected questionnaire data was cleaned using Microsoft PowerBI, Microsoft SQL Server, and Microsoft Excel. The cleaning process involves checking for completeness of responses and consistency in answering questions. This process was conducted for both open and closed questions. Depending on the level of incompleteness, non-completed observations were excluded from the analysis. At the same time, some records with missing data were verified to see if these were missing or if there were errors during the data consolidation process. Cleaned data was systematically coded (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:377; Kothari, 2004:122) to organize the data logically and comprehensibly.

The descriptive characteristics (age, gender, occupation, length of service, and the highest qualification obtained by academic staff in these PTIs) of the participants were described as

frequencies and percentages since the data was categorical. The descriptive statistics provided basic information about study participants.

The statements/items on staff turnover were grouped into pre-determined domains, and a total score was calculated for everyone by summing scores for each item answered. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe employee/staff turnover and job satisfaction, and the results were presented as a pie or doughnut chart.

The five HR practices domains were (1) performance management and recognition, (2) remuneration, (3) working conditions and WLB, (4) career development and growth, and (5) employee relations and involvement. The secondary outcomes influencing employee turnover domains were employee development and absenteeism. The performance management and recognition domain were measured by six items assessed on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Most of the statements/items were measured on a four-point Likert scale, with strongly disagree as the least and strongly agree as the highest. Scores were calculated for these domains by the highest score represents a positive likelihood of a better working environment.

The total score for each domain was summarised using the measured central tendency parameters- mean (standard deviation (SD) and median (interquartile range (IQR))- to give a general distribution of how the participants answered each domain. The box and whisker plots were used to provide a pictorial view of the measures of central tendency for each domain with a 50 %-mark reference point. The Cronbach's Alpha measurement, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values, and the Bartlett test of sphericity were assessed to evaluate each domain's reliability and internal consistency.

Every item in each domain was summarised using frequencies, percentages, and median (IQR) estimates. The scale reliability coefficient was estimated for overall study measurement items, domains, and items using the Cronbach Alpha approach. A score of 0.7 was preferred. Within each domain, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett test of sphericity was performed. A KMO close to 1 and a significant Bartlett test are preferred when performing factor analysis. The factor loadings for each item in each domain were estimated, and a cut-off of 0.7 was used. After running factor analysis, the predicted scores were used in the structural equation modelling to predict factors associated with employee turnover, performance

deterioration, absenteeism, and development. The results were reported as coefficients and 95% confidence intervals.

The purpose of this study is to determine factors that predict absenteeism and employee turnover using structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM is a tool used for data analysis to verify complex phenomena, and it formalises the direct and indirect relationships in employee turnover (Zareei, Zamani & Tanaomi, 2014: 2; Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019: 29). Performance deterioration, employee development, and absenteeism were the mediating factors. The endogenous factors used in the SEM model were employee turnover, absenteeism, employee development, and performance deterioration.

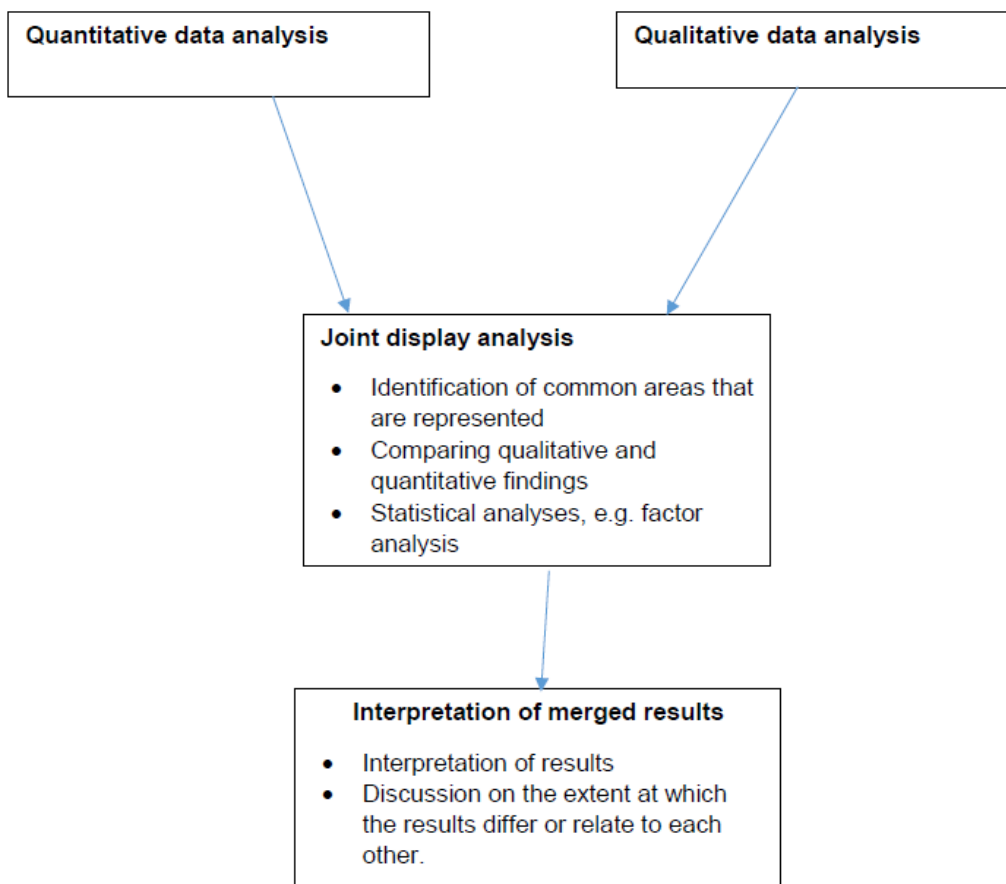
The first step in SEM analysis was the model specification, which involved the development of a theoretical model that defined the variables, and their relationships based on the existing literature and theory. The measurement model was specified with all the constructs. No latent constructs were used in this model since no convergence was achieved. The structural equation obtained evaluates the specific structure coefficient. Each equation has a prediction error that specifies the degree of variance in the latent endogenous variables. The equation also specifies the predicted relationships. The path diagram also shows these relationships between endogenous and observed variables. The structural equation model measured the data using the maximum likelihood estimation method (Finch, West & Mackinnon, 1997: 90). The model modification was done to explore the best-fitted model that fits the data perfectly. Finally, the validity of the structural model was assessed by checking the goodness of fit indices (GOF) and the significance, direction, and size of structural parameter estimates. A  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$  indicated a good model fit.

The SEM analysis was performed using STATA version 17. The results were reported as a coefficient, 95% confidence interval, and the  $p$ -values for all the relationships investigated.

Furthermore, verbatim transcription of the qualitative data obtained through interviews was conducted and processed using Atlas ti.22. This analysis commenced with a thematic analysis that identified themes by recognizing patterns in the data that are related to research questions or have some link to the research problem (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3354). The study identified themes related to HR practices and linked them to the research questions. The analysis was conducted using the Braun and Clarke (2006) six-phase guide cited by Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3354), indicated as follows:

- Become familiar with data
- Generate initial codes
- Search for themes
- Review themes
- Define themes
- Write-up

Data integration from the quantitative questionnaire and interview responses was combined to interpret the research findings and draw conclusions, as illustrated in Figure 4.3 below.



**Figure 4.3:** Data integration for convergent parallel design (Creswell & Clark, 2017:78; Fetters & Tajima, 2022:3)

In keeping with the mixed research method convergent parallel design, a joint display analysis was used to merge the analysis from the two data sets (qualitative and quantitative). A joint display analysis merges the analysis through a side-by-side comparison to analyse for the "fit" of the

findings (Fetters, Curry & Creswell, 2013: 2143; Haynes-Brown & Fetters, 2021:2; Akotia et al., 2023:9). Firstly, the study identified common areas that are represented in both data sets. Secondly, it used dimensions (themes) from qualitative findings to compare with quantitative findings. Thirdly, themes were converted to counts for further analysis. On this note, statistical analyses included thematic counts (Creswell & Clark, 2017:78; Fetters & Tajima, 2022:3). This process enabled the study to confirm, expand or explain the discordance between the qualitative and quantitative findings (Fetters et al., 2013:2144; Creswell & Hirose, 2019:6). In this regard, confirmation happened when the findings reinforced each other, and expansion occurred when the findings of the two data sets complemented each other. At the same time, discordance arose when the two data sets contrasted.

The joint display was adopted because it allowed the researcher to concurrently contemplate the findings of the two data sets for related constructs. This process led to new insights beyond the information gained from data gathered separately based on the qualitative and quantitative findings (Fetters et al., 2013: 2143; Guetterman, Fetters & Creswell, 2015:557; Akotia et al., 2023:9).

#### **4.5 Data validity and reliability**

Data validity and reliability are paramount in research to achieve credible and trustworthy results. Validity refers to the extent to which the research accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept it is intended to measure (Jain et al., 2016:1). On the other hand, reliability refers to the consistency of a measure; a research instrument is considered reliable if it produces the same results under consistent conditions (Taherdoost, 2016:30; Jain et al., 2016:1). In this study, various methods were employed to ensure both the validity and reliability of the data collected. For quantitative data, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency and reliability, whereas content validity and content criterion were implemented to ensure validity. For qualitative data, Guba's constructs for trustworthiness were applied, encompassing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, to ensure rigorous quality assurance (Shenton, 2004: 64; Stahl & King, 2020: 26). These measures collectively enhance the robustness of the research findings, providing a solid foundation for the conclusions drawn.

#### 4.5.1 Quantitative data

Valid and reliable data rely on the formulation of the questionnaire. In this regard, the study adopted the principles highlighted by authors such as Fowler (1995) and Sudman, Bradburn and Schwarz (1996) cited by Taherdoost (2016:30) in formulating the questions. Therefore, the questions were designed to produce valid and reliable answers, and these concepts were then tested. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to extract information relating to HR practices, employee turnover, employee performance, absenteeism, employee development, and employee retention strategies. The study's questionnaire was submitted to the researcher's supervisor, who helped to ensure the questionnaire contained questions that addressed the objectives of the study for content validity (Taherdoost, 2016:30). Moreover, the questionnaire achieved criterion validity because it managed to:

- determine the HR practices adopted by PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover,
- ascertain how HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs,
- identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs and
- recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the scale reliability. The internal reliability statistics of each research domain indicated that performance management and recognition ( $\alpha=0,724$ ), working conditions and work-life balance ( $\alpha=0,844$ ), career development and growth ( $\alpha=0,707$ ), labor relations and involvement ( $\alpha=0,842$ ), and absenteeism ( $\alpha=0,844$ ) all showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0,7 or higher—which is acceptable—reflecting the reliability of these domains (See Table 4.7) below. However, the HR practice domain for remuneration ( $\alpha=0,5097$ ) showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of below 0,7, which signifies that the questions in this domain were unreliable in measuring the relationship between remuneration and employee turnover. In this regard, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0,9576, above 0,7, indicating high internal reliability and consistency (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2023).

**Table 4.7:** Internal reliability statistics for the research domains

Domain	Scale Items	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>HR practices</b>		
Performance management and recognition	Q7; Q15; Q23; Q48; Q49,54	0.724
Remunerations	Q4; Q5; Q8; Q9; 14	0.5097



Working conditions and Work-life balance	Q10; Q11; Q16; Q17; Q18; Q22; Q25	0.844
Career development and growth	Q1; Q2; Q3; Q39; Q41; Q42; Q43; 55	0.707
Employee relations and involvement	Q6; Q12; Q13; Q46; Q50; Q51; Q52; Q53	0.752

Source: Author's own design

#### 4.5.2 Qualitative data

The study adopted Guba's construct for trustworthiness to ensure the validity of qualitative data. First, to ensure credibility, member checking was conducted. After the interviews, summaries were shared with the participants to verify the accuracy of the captured data. Second, for transferability, detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and findings were provided to allow readers to judge the applicability of the results to other settings. Third, dependability: an audit trail was maintained, documenting all the research steps, from data collection to analysis. This audit trail includes notes on decisions made during the research process, changes in the research plan, and reflections on the data. Lastly, to ensure confirmability, researcher bias was minimized through triangulation (Shenton, 2004: 64; Stahl & King, 2020: 26).

#### 4.6 Ethical considerations

Ethics refers to acceptable research behaviour, especially when dealing with the research participants and respecting their rights (Saunders et al., 2007:178). This study observed research ethics guided by methodology literature (Dawson, 2002:150; Saunders et al., 2007:179; Cooper & Schindler, 2014:28). The study sought written permission to conduct the research from five selected Windhoek PTIs. A detailed letter requesting permission to conduct the research was written to the PTIs' Directors and their research committees, explaining the purpose of the research and how it could benefit the institution, as well as ensuring their anonymity and the confidentiality of the data collected. However, three institutions only granted permission (PTI-1, PTI-2 and PTI-3). Furthermore, ethical clearance was sought and obtained through the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) Faculty Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A: Clearance Certificate No. 2020FOBREC809).

The study allocated numbers to each participating PTI instead of identifying them by name. The individual research participant's informed consent form was attached to both data collection

instruments, part of the questionnaire, and the interview guide. The participants' informed consent forms emphasized voluntary participation and indicated their full understanding of the research study's purpose and process (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008:170; Cooper & Schindler, 2014:31).

Moreover, research respondents remained anonymous, emphasizing the steps taken to ensure respondents would not be identified by their names (Dawson, 2002:153). Accordingly, the questionnaires' demographical information did not require the respondents' personal information and was coded per the PTI number. No personal information was required from the interviewees. For instance, the recordings for the interviewees were saved as "transcribed 1" and "transcribed 2" so that the respondents remained anonymous. Additionally, the electronic folder containing the recordings was encrypted with a password.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout this study; no information collected was revealed to third parties (Dawson, 2002:151; Saunders et al., 2007:181; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017:120) and Wakefield (2014:609) emphasize the issue of ethics in data security for online interviews. In this regard, the interview transcriptions and recordings were downloaded to a folder that was encrypted by a password.

The study ensured that no respondent was exposed to situations that could cause pain, embarrassment, physical or emotional stress, and exploitation (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008:170; Cohen et al., 2017:120).

#### **4.7 Summary**

Accordingly, the study employed the pragmatism paradigm, a flexible approach that prioritises the most effective methods of answering research questions, be they qualitative or quantitative. This adaptability allowed the study to use both research methods to address the research problem and contribute to practical solutions that selected Windhoek PTIs can adopt.

In addition, the study combined the inductive and deductive research approaches. The inductive approach enabled the researcher to understand the importance of HR practices and the value employees attach to them. The deductive approach helped to enlighten the relationship between informal HR practices and employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee development.

Furthermore, a comprehensive mixed research convergent parallel design was adopted for the research method. This design, which utilised the merits of both the quantitative and qualitative methods, allowed us to describe the HR practices in selected Windhoek PTIs using quantifiable and narrative descriptors. The study population comprised academic and HR staff from three Windhoek PTIs. The population size was 225, and the sample size was 184. The study used purposive and stratified sampling methods. In addition, the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size table was used to determine the number of respondents (academic staff) in each institution.

The study used a questionnaire and structured interviews to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed using Survey Monkey, and the interviews were conducted using the Zoom online platform. Anonymity, confidentiality, avoidance of physical and emotional harm risks to respondents, and exploitation of relationships were safeguarded during the data collection process. Data analysis was completed using a statistical package, Stata (version 17), Atlas.ti.22, and the joint display analysis was used to integrate the qualitative and quantitative results. The research results are presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The data presentation in this chapter was conducted in three segments, i.e., quantitative, qualitative, and joint display analysis, using a convergent parallel design. The study used Stata version 17 to process the questionnaire's closed questions (quantitative analysis). Furthermore, Atlas ti.22 was used for qualitative analysis to process interviews and the questionnaire's open-ended questions. The chapter ends by combining the qualitative and quantitative findings of similar aspects of the same phenomenon in a joint display analysis, and findings are viewed side by side to assess the extent to which the results converge or diverge.

#### **5.2 Statistical analysis of quantitative data**

Statistical analysis is essential for gaining meaningful insights from quantitative data, enabling the study to draw trustworthy findings and make judgments supported by the available facts (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019:87). In this section of Chapter 5, an examination of correlations, patterns, and trends associated with employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and employee development in selected Windhoek PTIs using statistical analysis was performed on the quantitative data. This section commences with employees' demographic data, including age, gender, occupation, length of service, and the highest qualification obtained by academic staff in these PTIs, followed by the questionnaire data guided by the study's research objectives. Significance was set at 5%. Indirect effects were assessed, but none were found statistically significant. Only the direct effects are presented in this study report.

##### **5.2.1 Demographic data**

Overall, 171 participants completed questionnaires that were returned and analysed for this study. There was a 95,37% response rate, and these responses are presented in this section. PTI-1 contributed 103 (60,23%) of completed questionnaires, PTI-2 contributed (14.04%) completed questionnaires, and PTI-3 contributed 44 (25.73%) completed questionnaires. It is important to note that the number of completed questionnaires was determined by the number of academic staff in a PTI. However, the questionnaire data presented the combined findings for the three Windhoek PTIs.

The data was captured in Excel and imported into Stata version 17 for further analysis. The demographic variables were summarised using frequencies and percentages to show the distribution of the demographic findings from three Windhoek PTIs in Table 5.1 below. It is important to note that these demographic variables are critical in understanding the context within which the identified problems related to informal HR practices at private tertiary institutions (PTIs) in Windhoek, Namibia, manifest. By examining these demographics, we can gain insights into how different employee groups are affected by employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration, and obstacles to employee development.

**Table 5.1:** Demographic characteristics of the PTI staff

Variable	Categories	PTI-1		PTI-2		PTI-3	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Age	18-25 years	11	10.68	1	4.17	5	11.36
	26-35 years	44	42.72	15	62.50	19	43.18
	36-45 years	38	36.89	6	25.00	15	34.09
	46-55 years	8	7.77	2	8.33	4	9.09
	56-65 years	2	1.94	0	0.00	1	2.27
Gender	Male	58	56.31	10	41.67	23	52.27
	Female	45	43.69	14	58.33	21	47.73
Occupation	Lecturer	84	81.55	24	100.0	42	95.45
	Senior lecturer	19	18.45	0	0.00	2	4.55
Length of service	At most a year	16	15.53	3	12.50	6	13.64
	2-3 years	30	29.13	19	79.16	25	56.81
	4-5 years	27	26.21	1	4.17	5	11.36
	6 years and above	30	29.13	1	4.17	8	18.18
Highest qualification	Undergraduate	18	17.48	5	20.83	23	52.27
	Honours/PGDip	27	26.21	0	0.00	9	20.45
	Master's degree	45	43.69	17	70.83	10	22.73
	Doctoral degree	13	12.62	2	8.33	2	4.54

#### 5.2.1.1 PTI-1 demographics

As shown in Table 5.1 above, most of the respondents are Generation X and Y, aged 26 to 55 years (87.38%). Additionally, the institution is dominated by male academic staff (56.31%). 81.55% of the academic staff are lecturers; 29.13% have worked for 6 years and above. Lastly, most of the academic staff at PTI-1 have a master's degree, i.e., 47.36% of respondents.

### 5.2.1.2 PTI-2 demographics

As shown in Table 5.1 above, most of the respondents are Generation X and Y, aged 26 to 55 years (95.83%). Additionally, PTI-2 is dominated by female academic staff (58.33%). All the academic staff are lecturers; hence, 4.17% have worked for 6 years or more. Most of the academic staff at PTI-2 have an Honours' degree/Postgraduate diploma, i.e., 70.83% of the respondents.

### 5.2.1.3 PTI-3 demographics

As shown in Table 5.1 above, most of the respondents are Generation X and Y, aged 26 to 55 years (86.36%). Additionally, the institution is dominated by male academics (52.27%). Most (95.45%) of the academic staff are employed as lecturers; hence, 18.18% have worked for 6 years and above. Most of the academic staff at PTI-3 have attained Undergraduate degrees (52.27%).

Consequently, the study noted that the selected Windhoek PTIs are dominated by generations X and Y (92.39%), as predicted by the study. Most of the respondents were male (53.21%). Most of the academic staff are lecturers (87.71%), and 22.80% have worked for 6 years and above. This statistic reflected the high employee turnover rate in the selected Windhoek PTIs. Moreover, most respondents have attained master's degrees (42.10%), and 9.94% had Doctoral degrees – this figure makes a Doctoral degree a unique qualification in the selected Windhoek PTIs.

## 5.2.2 Questionnaire data

### 5.2.2.1 Employee turnover outcome

The employee turnover was measured by the respondents' motivation to remain in the PTI. The participants responded to this question using the Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The participants' responses are shown in Figure 5.1 below.

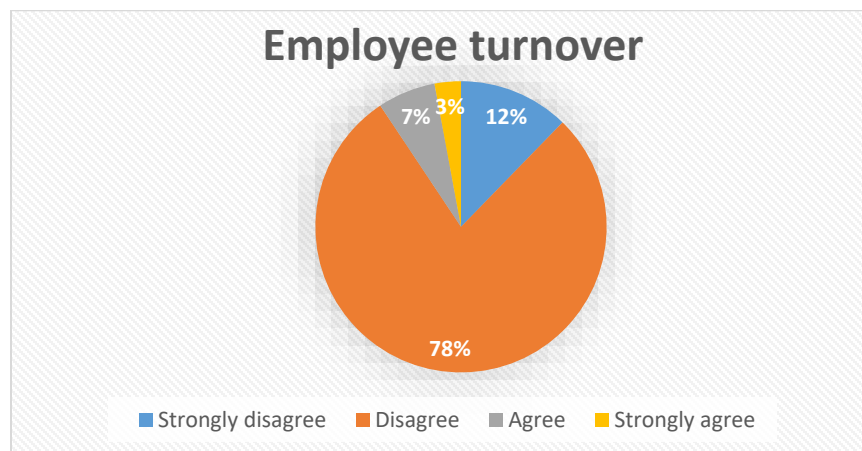
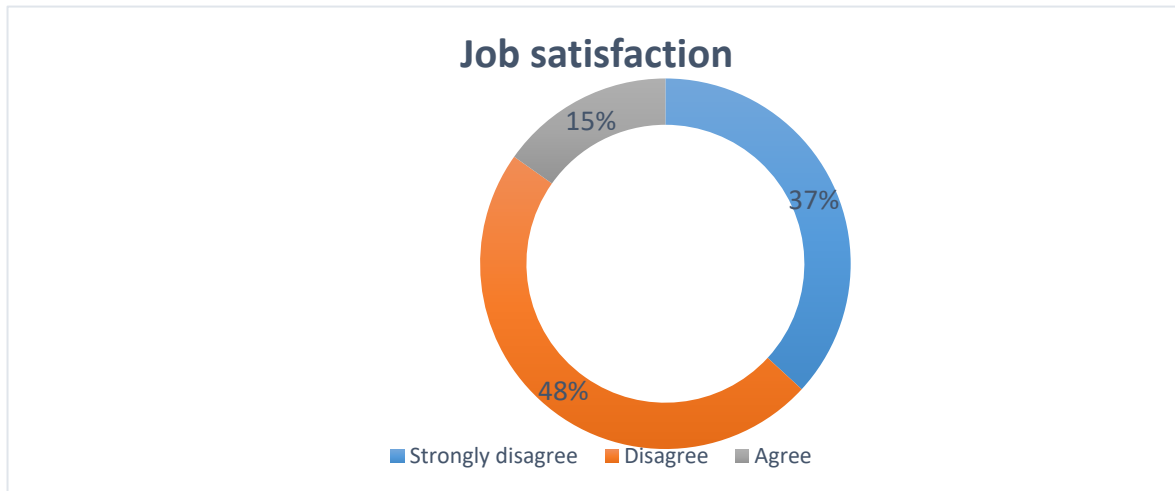


Figure 5.1: Staff turnover distribution

Most of the respondents (90%) showed that they were not motivated to remain in the PTI (78% (n=134) disagree, and 12% (n=21) strongly disagree); hence, possibly a high staff turnover. However, 7% (n=11) and 3% (n=5) agreed and strongly agreed that they were motivated to remain in their current jobs.

#### 5.2.2.2 Job satisfaction

Respondents' job satisfaction was assessed by asking if the participants were satisfied with their current job or not. The responses were classified as strongly agree, disagree, or agree. Figure 5.2 below shows the distribution of the job satisfaction responses by the respondents.



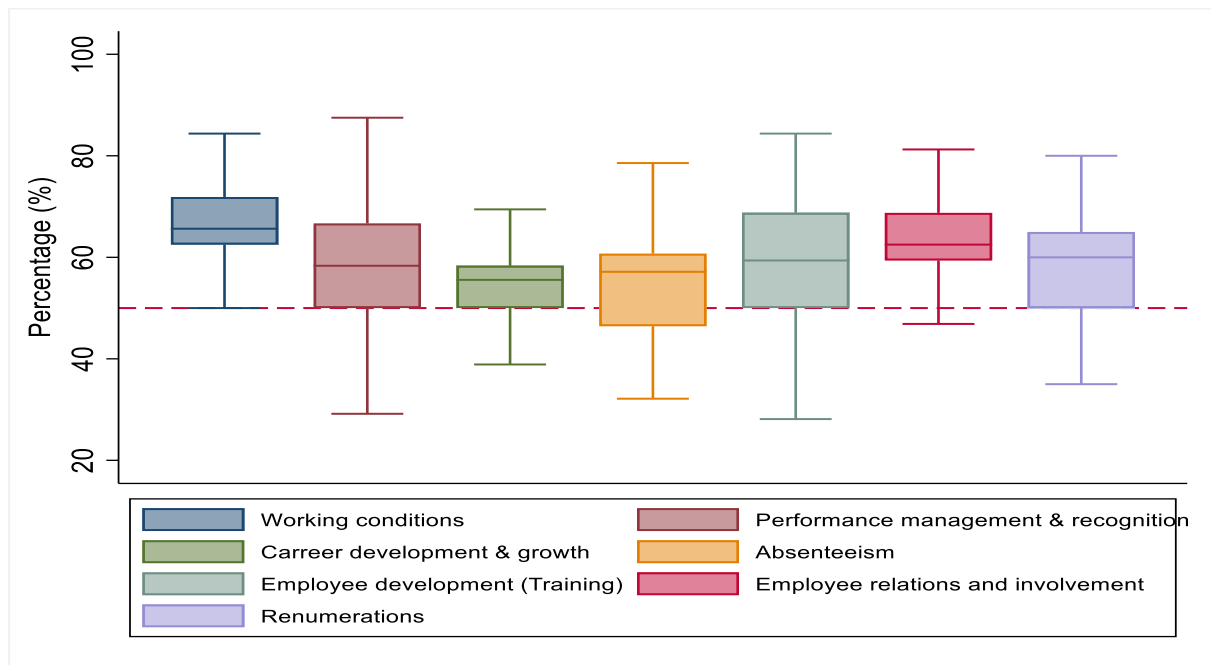
**Figure 5.2:** Job satisfaction distribution of the participants

Most of the participants were dissatisfied with their current job since 36.8% (n=63) strongly disagreed with their job satisfaction, and 48% (n=82) disagreed with their job satisfaction. 15.2% (n=26) indicated they were satisfied with their current job.

#### 5.2.2.3 HR practices domains that may influence employee turnover

Seven domains were defined based on factor analysis to assess the staff's motivation to stay as a measure of staff turnover (see Table 5.2 below). The five HR practices domains identified were (1) performance management and recognition, (2) remuneration, (3) working conditions and WLB, (4) career development and growth, and (5) employee relations and involvement. The secondary outcomes influencing employee turnover domains were employee development and absenteeism.

The descriptive scores of the domains were presented using a box and whisker chart that shows the minimum and maximum values, the median values, and the lower and upper quartile values of each domain score. Figure 5.3 shows the distribution chart of the domain scores.



**Figure 5.3:** Box and whisker plots for the domain relative scores

Most lower quartile values were above the 50% reference point, which means that, in this study, most participants strongly agree and agree on remuneration, performance management, and working conditions. In general, the box and whisker plots show that the participants were happy with their working conditions, they were recognised at work, their PTI had a clear career development path for its workers, and the participants were involved at work.

The Cronbach's Alpha measurement was assessed to evaluate each domain's reliability, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values, and the Bartlett sphericity test. The results for each domain are shown in Table 5.2 below, with the corresponding measures of central tendency and dispersion estimates.

**Table 5.2:** Descriptive statistics, factor analysis parameters and reliability coefficients of the research domains

Domain	Mean $\pm$ SD score	Median (IQR) score	Bartlett p-value	KMO*	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>HR practices</b>					
Performance management and recognition	59.9 $\pm$ 12.2	58.3(50-66.67)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.713	0.724
Remunerations	57.4 $\pm$ 11.2	60(50-65)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.544	0.5097
Working conditions and WLB	65 $\pm$ 10.6	65.6(62.5-71.8)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.93	0.844
Career development and growth	53.8 $\pm$ 10.3	55.6(50-58.3)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.704	0.707
Employee relations and involvement	63 $\pm$ 10.9	62.5(59.4-68.8)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.730	0.752
<b>Secondary outcomes</b>					
Employee development					



	57.4±12.9	59.4(50-68.8)	<0.001	0.833	0.842
Absenteeism	53.6±10.7	57.1(46.4-60.7)	<0.001	0.719	0.844
Overall reliability					<b>0.9576</b>

\*KMO= Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

Performance management and recognition domain using Bartlett's test of sphericity had a p-value <0.001, which was overwhelmingly statistically significant. This statistic shows that the performance management and recognition domain items were correlated (significantly different from zero), and the correlation matrix of the performance management and recognition domain was significant to support factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) coefficient for performance management and recognition was 0.713 (above 0.5). The KMO suggested a substantial correlation between performance management and recognition domain items, implying strong variable collinearity. The performance management and recognition domain reliability were measured by Cronbach's Alpha, whereby the amount of variance shared among the domain items was compared. The performance management and recognition domain had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7, which is acceptable, showing that the performance management and recognition domain items were reliably measured.

The remuneration domain using Bartlett's test of sphericity had a p-value <0.001, which was overwhelmingly statistically significant. This statistic shows that the remuneration domain items were correlated (significantly different from zero), and the correlation matrix of the remuneration domain was significant to support factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) coefficient for remuneration was 0.5, just slightly above the cut-off value. The KMO suggested a reasonable correlation in the remuneration domain items, implying strong variable collinearity. The remuneration domain reliability was measured by Cronbach's Alpha, whereby the amount of variance shared among the domain items was compared. The remuneration domain had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.5, below the acceptable value of 0.7, showing that the remuneration domain items were not so reliably measured; however, they were acceptable for further analysis, and the overall Cronbach's Alpha was close to 1.

Working conditions and WLB domain using Bartlett's test of sphericity had a p-value <0.001, which was overwhelmingly statistically significant. This statistic shows that the working conditions and WLB domain items were correlated (significantly different from zero), and the correlation matrix of the working conditions and WLB domain was significant in supporting factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) coefficient for performance management and recognition was 0.9, above 0.5. The KMO suggested a substantial correlation between working conditions and

WLB, implying strong variable collinearity. The working conditions and WLB domain reliability were measured by Cronbach's Alpha, whereby the amount of variance shared among the domain items was compared. The working conditions and WLB domain had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8, which is acceptable, showing that the working conditions and WLB domain items were reliably measured.

Career development and growth domain using Bartlett's test of sphericity had a p-value <0.001, which was overwhelmingly statistically significant. This statistic shows that the career development and growth domain items were correlated (significantly different from zero), and the correlation matrix of the career development and growth domain was significant to support factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) coefficient for performance management and recognition was 0.7, above 0.5. The KMO suggested a substantial correlation between career development and growth domain items, implying strong variable collinearity. The career development and growth domain reliability were measured by Cronbach's Alpha, whereby the amount of variance shared among the domain items was compared. The career development and growth domain had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7, which is acceptable, showing that the career development and growth domain items were reliably measured.

Using Bartlett's sphericity test, the employee relations and involvement domain had a p-value <0.001, which was overwhelmingly statistically significant. This statistic shows that the employee relations and involvement domain items were correlated (significantly different from zero), and the correlation matrix of the employee relations and involvement domain was significant to support factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) coefficient for performance management and recognition was 0.7, above 0.5. The KMO suggested a substantial correlation between employee relations and involvement domain items, implying strong variable collinearity. The employee relations and involvement domain reliability were measured by Cronbach's Alpha, whereby the amount of variance shared among the domain items was compared. The employee relations and involvement domain had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8, which is acceptable, showing that the employee relations and involvement domain items were reliably measured.

The employee development domain using Bartlett's test of sphericity had a p-value <0.001, which was overwhelmingly statistically significant. This statistic shows that the employee development domain items were correlated (significantly different from zero), and the correlation matrix of the employee development domain was significant to support factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) coefficient for performance management and recognition was 0.8, above 0.5. The KMO suggested a substantial correlation in the employee development domain items, implying

strong variable collinearity. The employee development domain reliability was measured by Cronbach's Alpha, whereby the amount of variance shared among the domain items was compared. The employee development domain had an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8, showing that the employee development domain items were reliably measured.

The absenteeism domain using Bartlett's test of sphericity had a p-value <0.001, which was overwhelmingly statistically significant. This statistic shows that the absenteeism domain items were correlated (significantly different from zero), and the correlation matrix of the absenteeism domain was significant to support factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) coefficient for performance management and recognition was 0.7, above 0.5. The KMO suggested a substantial correlation in the absenteeism domain items, implying strong variable collinearity. The absenteeism domain reliability was measured by Cronbach's Alpha, whereby the amount of variance shared among the domain items was compared. The absenteeism domain had an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8, showing that the absenteeism domain items were reliably measured.

*5.2.2.4 Individual domain items' factor loading and reliability coefficients*

The descriptive summaries, factor loading, and reliability coefficients for each domain, i.e., performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement, and the secondary outcomes that may affect employee turnover, including performance deterioration, employee development, and absenteeism, are discussed below.

a) Performance management and recognition

Six items were assessed on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree in the performance management and recognition domain. The item response for this domain is shown in Table 5.3 below, together with the corresponding factor loading and item-specific Cronbach's alpha values.

**Table 5.3:** Descriptive summaries, factor loading and reliability coefficients of the **performance management and recognition** domain items

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Median (IQR)	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
<b>Performance management and recognition</b>							
The institution has a formal policy on academic workload to ensure equitable distribution of	24.56	46.78	22.81	5.85	2(3-3)	0.853	0.591

academic activities amongst lecturers.							
The institution has a performance management policy.	7.6	29.82	43.86	18.71	2(2-2)	0.712	0.635
The institution provides training to evaluators and employees.	8.77	18.13	70.18	2.92	3(2-3)	0.288	0.755
Employees receive recognition for good work performance.	16.37	62.57	16.96	4.09	2(2-2)	0.324	0.734
The institution values its employees.	14.04	52.63	33.33	0	2(2-3)	0751	0.644
Employees are provided with all the job resources that are required to complete their work.	5.26	38.01	49.71	7.02	3(2-3)	0441	0.719

When asked if their PTI provides training to evaluators and employees, the respondents' responses had the lowest factor loading of 0.428; however, their scale reliability coefficient was the highest (0.767). Most participants (71.3%) disagreed that their PTI has a formal policy on academic workload to ensure equitable distribution of academic activities amongst lecturers; 78.9% disagreed that employees receive recognition for good work performance, and 66.7% disagreed that their PTI values its employees. It was noted that 62.6% and 73.1% agreed that their PTI has a performance management policy and provides training to evaluators and employees. These findings highlight deficiencies in the informal HR practices of PTIs, particularly regarding training, workload management, employee recognition, and employee perceived value. The data suggests that while some formal policies exist, their implementation and the perceived fairness and comprehensiveness of these policies are lacking.

#### b) Remuneration

The remunerations domain for the three Windhoek PTIs was measured by five items on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The item response for this domain is shown in Table 5.4 below, together with the corresponding factor loading and item-specific Cronbach's alpha values.

**Table 5.4:** Descriptive summaries, factor loading and reliability coefficients of the **remuneration's** domain items

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Median (IQR)	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
<b>Remuneration</b>							
I am fairly rewarded compared to similar jobs outside my organisation.	36.26	46.2	16.37	1.17	2(1-2)	0.271	0.537
The institution provides fringe benefits (housing allowances, transport allowances)	30.99	46.2	22.81	0	2(1-2)	0.395	0.511
Salaries are always paid on time.	10.53	25.15	38.01	26.32	3(2-4)	0.679	0.252
The institution participates in annual salary negotiations with employees.	28.65	56.14	12.87	2.34	2(1-2)	0.397	0.461
Salaries are paid during the vacation period.	2.34	11.11	65.5	21.05	3(3-3_)	0.401	0.461

There were 82.5% of respondents who disagreed that they were fairly rewarded compared to similar jobs outside their PTI, 77.2% disagreed that their PTI provides fringe benefits (housing allowances, transport allowances), and 85.8% disagreed that their PTI participates in annual salaries negotiation with employees. The minimum factor loading in this domain was 0.111, while the minimum scale reliability coefficient was 0.148. These findings collectively highlight critical gaps in the informal HR practices of the PTIs, particularly in compensation, benefits, and employee engagement in salary negotiations. They point to underlying causes of high employee turnover, absenteeism, and performance deterioration. The data stresses the importance of revising HR policies to include fair compensation, adequate benefits, and transparent communication channels to address these issues effectively.

### c) Working conditions and WLB

The working conditions and WLB domain for the three Windhoek PTIs were measured by eight items on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The item response for this domain is shown in Table 5.5 below, together with the corresponding factor loading and item-specific Cronbach's alpha values.

**Table 5.5:** Descriptive summaries, factor loading and reliability coefficients for the **working conditions and WLB** domain items

Items	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Median (IQR)	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha
In order to meet my job requirements, I often work longer hours than stated in my contract of employment.	1.75	12.28	52.05	33.92	3(3-4)	0.819	0.802
I frequently work during weekends to complete my weekly tasks.	5.26	9.36	61.4	23.98	3(3-3)	0.611	0.833
My job does not negatively impact my family life.	23.39	45.61	12.28	18.71	2(2-3)	0.386	0.856
The institution cares about its employee welfare.	9.36	45.61	42.11	2.92	2(2-3)	0.631	0.826
I can accrue leave days and use them when there is a need.	9.94	70.76	16.96	2.34	2(2-2)	0.613	0.828
The institution provides a good working environment.	14.62	30.99	46.78	7.6	3(2-3)	0.694	0.818
The institution meets employees' expectations.	8.77	33.92	48.54	8.77	3(2-3)	0.722	0.812
Employees are provided with assistance on work-related issues.	5.26	14.62	78.36	1.75	3(3-3)	0.692	0.822

Items under the working condition domain had a reliability scale of at least 0.802. The factor loading ranged from 0.386 to 0.819. More than 50% of the participants agreed that to meet their job requirements, they often work longer hours than stated in the employment contract; 85.4 % agreed that they frequently work during weekends to complete weekly tasks; 54.4% agreed that their PTI provides a good working environment; 57.3% agreed that their PTI meets employees' expectations and 80.11% agreed that employees are provided with assistance on work-related issues. Most participants (69%) disagreed that their job does not negatively impact their family life; 55% disagreed that their PTI cares about its employees' welfare, and 80.7% disagreed that they can accrue leave days and use them when needed. The findings reveal a complex picture of working conditions at PTIs, with significant implications for the research problem. The frequency of extended working hours and weekend work indicates a need for better workload management and policies to prevent burnout and reduce absenteeism. While the positive

perceptions of the working environment and support for work-related issues are encouraging, the negative impact on family life and perceived lack of concern for employee welfare highlight serious areas for improvement. Additionally, issues with leave policies suggest that employees cannot take necessary time off, exacerbating stress and dissatisfaction that triggers employee turnover.

d) Career development and growth

The career development and growth domain for the three Windhoek PTIs was measured by nine items measured on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The item response for this domain is shown in Table 5.6 below, together with the corresponding factor loading and item-specific Cronbach's alpha values.

**Table 5.6:** Descriptive summaries, factor loading and reliability coefficients **career development and growth** domain item

Items	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Median (IQR)	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Career development and growth</b>							
The institution applies a career development policy that enables employees' career growth.	14.04	57.31	21.05	7.6	2(2-3)	0.504	0.674
The career progression pathway is clear within the institution.	30.99	45.03	15.2	8.77	2(1-2)	0.395	0.689
The institution provides a policy for promotion.	9.36	52.63	32.75	5.26	2(2-3)	0.522	0.679
The institution rewards additional qualifications.	53.22	36.84	8.19	1.75	1(1-2)	0.325	0.711
The institution sponsors its employees for formal learning and development.	14.62	50.29	31.58	3.51	2(2-3)	0.715	0.636
The institution has a training and development policy that promotes employee development.	24.56	50.29	16.37	8.77	2(2-3)	0.616	0.646
The institution has a learning culture.	2.92	30.99	61.4	4.68	3(2-3)	0.381	0.698
I am not motivated to learn.	11.11	66.67	21.64	0.58	2(2-2)	0.071	0.741
The institution offers opportunities for advancement in some posts (Head of the department,	19.3	52.05	28.65	0	2(2-3)	0.719	0.643

principal/dean, and research coordinator).							
--------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

The factor loadings were very low for most of the items in this domain. The lowest factor loading was 0.071; however, the scale reliability coefficients were at least 0.643. Most participants disagreed with the issues mentioned in the career development and growth domain (Table 5.6 above). Most participants (71.4% ) disagreed that their PTI applies a career development policy that enables employees' career growth, 76.02% disagreed that the career progression pathway is apparent within their PTI, 62% disagreed that their PTI provides a policy for promotion, 65% disagreed that their PTI sponsors its employees for formal learning and development, 74.9% disagreed that their PTI has a training and development policy that promotes employee development, 77,7% disagreed that they are not motivated to learn, and 71.4% disagreed that their PTI offers an opportunity for advancement in some posts (HoD, Principal/Dean and Research Coordinator). 90.1% of the participants strongly disagreed that their PTI rewards additional qualifications, while 66.1% agreed that their PTI has a learning culture. These findings stress some gaps in the career development and growth policies at PTIs, highlighting these HR practices' informal and inadequate nature. The widespread disagreement on the existence and clarity of career development policies, promotion pathways, and sponsorship for learning points to a systemic issue that hampers employee growth and satisfaction. The lack of formal training and development policies and the absence of rewards for additional qualifications further caused the challenges that were faced by selected PTIs when the study was conducted.

e) Employee relations and involvement

The employee relations and involvement domain for PTI-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3 was assessed by eight items measured on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The item response for this domain is shown in Table 5.7 below, together with the corresponding factor loading and item-specific Cronbach's alpha values.

**Table 5.7:** Descriptive summaries, factor loading and reliability coefficients for **employee relations and involvement** domain items

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Median (IQR)	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
<b>Employee relations and involvement</b>							
Generally, employees enjoy good working relations within the institution.	9.94	33.92	53.8	2.34	3(2-3)	0.206	0.783



The institution has a written procedure for managing disciplinary cases.	1.75	37.43	43.86	16.96	3(2-3)	0.748	0.687
The institution has a written procedure for resolving grievances.	5.85	29.24	55.56	9.36	3(2-3)	0.664	0.714
The performance evaluation is fair and consistent.	12.87	53.8	29.82	3.51	2(23)	0.742	0.677
Grievances are resolved amicably.	16.96	47.95	23.39	11.7	2(2-3)	0.804	0.667
Top management communicates the vision, mission and values of the institution to employees.	14.04	49.71	31.58	4.68	2(2-3)	0.487	0.737
Employees agree on performance objectives set by management.	9.36	38.01	43.27	9.36	3(2-3)	0.592	0.715
Employees are given written job descriptions on the commencement of employment.	4.68	8.19	81.29	5.85	3(3-3)	0.117	0.791

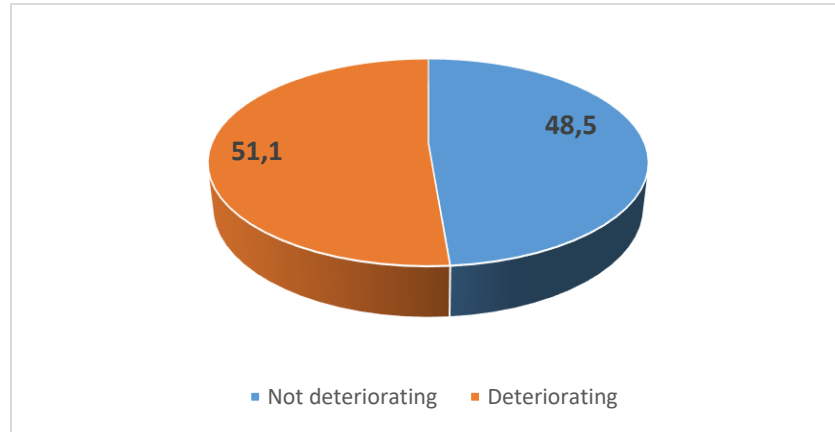
Over 50 of the respondents (56.1%) agreed that generally, employees enjoy good working relations within their PTI, 60.8% agreed that their PTI has a written procedure for managing disciplinary cases, 64.9% agreed that their PTI has a written procedure for resolving grievances, 52.6% agreed that employees agree on performance objectives set by management, and 87.1% agreed that employees are given written job descriptions on the commencement of employment. The minimum factor loading in this domain was 0.117, while the minimum scale reliability coefficient was 0.677.

These findings highlight strengths and areas for improvement in the HR practices at PTIs. The generally positive working relations and the presence of written procedures for disciplinary cases and grievance resolution are encouraging signs of a structured and supportive work environment. These aspects can enhance employee satisfaction and retention by ensuring fair and transparent handling of workplace issues. The agreement on performance objectives and the provision of written job descriptions further supports a well-defined and organized HR framework. Clear performance goals and job descriptions help employees understand expectations, align their efforts with organizational goals, and improve their overall performance. However, the relatively low factor loadings suggest that while these practices are in place, their implementation and impact may vary. Ensuring consistent application and effectiveness of these HR practices is crucial.

f) Secondary outcomes that may affect employee turnover

➤ Performance deterioration

The employee performance deterioration was also measured, and the results are displayed in Figure 5.4 below.



**Figure 5.4:** Performance deterioration distribution

Regarding performance deterioration, 51.1% (n=88) of the respondents were deteriorating their performances (Figure 5.3 above). Performance deterioration is closely linked to other negative employee outcomes such as increased turnover, absenteeism, and low morale. Addressing performance issues can have a positive effect, improving employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity.

➤ Employee development

The employee development domains PTI-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3 were measured using eight items on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The item response for this domain is shown in Table 5.8 below, together with the corresponding factor loading and item-specific Cronbach's alpha values.

**Table 5.8:** Descriptive summaries, factor loading and reliability coefficients for **employee development** domain items

Items	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Median (IQR)	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Employee development</b>							
The institution provides job	15.79	59.65	19.88	4.68	2(2-2)	0.751	0.817

enrichment to its employees.							
Innovation and autonomy are encouraged within the institution.	10.53	49.12	32.75	7.6	2(2-3)	0.764	0.813
The institution provides employees with training and development.	4.68	32.75	61.99	0.58	3(2-3)	0.229	0.864
The institution has a workload policy that encourages employee development.	12.28	37.43	43.27	7.02	3(2-3)	0.861	0.791
The institution has an HR department that can facilitate employee development.	19.3	26.3	50.88	3.51	2(2-3)	0.785	0.811
Supervisors provide proper performance feedback to employees that identifies areas of development.	13.45	31.58	50.29	4.68	3(2-3)	0.795	0.798
I have a fear of taking responsibility for personal development.	16.37	61.4	20.47	1.75	2(2-2)	0.229	0.865
Employees who are not performing well are provided with training and development to reach the required job standard.	18.71	49.71	29.24	2.34	2(2-3)	0.715	0.809

The minimum factor loading in this domain was 0.229, indicating that some survey items may not strongly correlate with the underlying construct intended to measure, suggesting variability in employee perceptions of HR practices. This variability stresses the inconsistent implementation of HR practices across different PTIs. While the minimum scale reliability coefficient was 0.791. More than half (75.4%) of the participants disagreed that their PTI provides job enrichment to its employees, 59.7% disagreed that innovation and autonomy are encouraged within their PTI, 77.4% disagreed that they have a fear of taking responsibility for personal development, and 68.7% disagreed that employees who are not performing well are provided with training and development to reach the required job standard. The data reveals significant gaps in implementing HR practices at the selected PTIs, particularly concerning job enrichment, innovation, and support for underperforming employees. Moreover, lack of formalised support

mechanisms suggests that informal HR practices are prevalent, where the absence of structured training and development policies leaves employees without the necessary resources to enhance their performance.

On the other hand, 62.6% agreed that their PTI provides employees with training and development, 50.1% agreed that their PTI has a workload policy that encourages employee development, 54.4% agreed that their PTI has an HR department that can facilitate employee development, and 55% agreed that the supervisors provide proper performance feedback to employees that identifies areas of development. Although partially positive, these aspects indicate that there are foundational elements in place that could be strengthened through formal HR practices to support employee development better.

➤ Absenteeism

The employee development domain for the three PTIs was assessed by eight items on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The item response for this domain is shown in Table 5.9 below, together with the corresponding factor loading and item-specific Cronbach's alpha values.

**Table 5.9:** Descriptive summaries, factor loading and reliability coefficients for **absenteeism** domain items

Items	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Median (IQR)	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Absenteeism</b>							
I am absent myself because of personal reasons.	23.98	57.31	15.2	3.51	2(2-2)	0.638	0.824
I have an acute medical condition that needs me to stay away from work.	13.45	36.26	45.61	4.68	3(2-3)	0.555	0.842
The institution has systems to monitor absenteeism.	26.32	41.52	27.49	4.68	2(1-3)	0.753	0.808
The organisation has a culture of absenteeism, so I adopted the culture.	29.82	47.37	22.81	0	2(1-2)	0.733	0.813
The medication that I am using makes me not come to work sometimes.	23.39	43.27	29.24	4.09	2(2-3)	0.561	0.841
Stress makes me not go to work sometimes.	19.88	54.97	22.81	2.34	2(2-3)	0.684	0.819
Burnout and fatigue make me not go to work	16.96	30.99	50.88	1.17	3(2-3)	0.748	0.811

The minimum factor loading in this domain was 0.561, indicating that the survey items accurately capture absenteeism issues, which are significant and consistent across the respondents. This alignment reinforces the need to address these issues through formal HR practices to mitigate absenteeism and improve employee performance and satisfaction. While the minimum scale reliability coefficient was 0.808. Most participants (81.3%) disagreed that they are absent from work because of personal reasons, 67.8% disagreed that their PTI has systems to monitor absenteeism, 77.2% disagreed that their PTI has a culture of absenteeism, and 74.9% disagreed that stress makes them not go to work sometimes. There were 50.1% of the participants agreed that they have an acute medical condition that needs them to stay away from work, while 52.1% agreed that burnout and fatigue make them not go to work. The findings imply that the informal HR practices related to absenteeism at PTIs in Windhoek are inadequate and contribute to insufficient employee attendance management. The lack of monitoring systems and formal policies to address absenteeism aggravates the problem, leading to increased employee burnout and fatigue, which triggers absenteeism.

### 5.3 Structural Equation Modelling

Table 5.10 and Figure 5.5 below show the factors that predict absenteeism, performance deterioration, employee development, and employee turnover using the structural equation modelling.

**Table 5.10:** The HR practices that predict performance deterioration, employee development, absenteeism and employee turnover

Outcome variables	Predictors	Coefficient (95%CI)	P-value
Performance deterioration	Performance management and recognition	0.003(-0.009 to 0.016)	0.547
	Career development and growth	-0.028(-0.069 to 0.011)	0.164
	Remuneration	0.002(-0.006 to 0.011)	0.602
	Working conditions and work-life balance	-0.005(-0.016 to 0.006)	0.366
	Employee relations and involvement	0.002(-0.014 to 0.017)	0.851
Employee development	Performance management and recognition	<b>0.133(0.088 to 0.178)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001***</b>
	Career development and growth	<b>0.215(0.068 to 0.362)</b>	<b>0.004***</b>
	Remuneration	0.005(-0.024 to 0.038)	0.72
	Working conditions and work-life balance	<b>0.097(0.057 to 0.137)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001***</b>
	Employee relations and involvement	0.053(-0.004 to 0.110)	0.071
Absenteeism	Performance management and recognition	<b>0.361(0.211 to 0.512)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001***</b>
	Career development and growth	<b>1.676(1.186 to 2.167)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001***</b>
	Remuneration	-0.023(-0.127 to 0.069)	0.562
	Working conditions and work-life balance	<b>0.173(0.039 to 0.307)</b>	<b>0.012**</b>
	Employee relations and involvement	<b>-0.273(-0.464 to -0.082)</b>	<b>0.005***</b>
Employee turnover	Absenteeism	0.005(-0.009 to 0.02)	0.453
	Performance deterioration	<b>0.239(0.096 to 0.384)</b>	<b>0.001***</b>

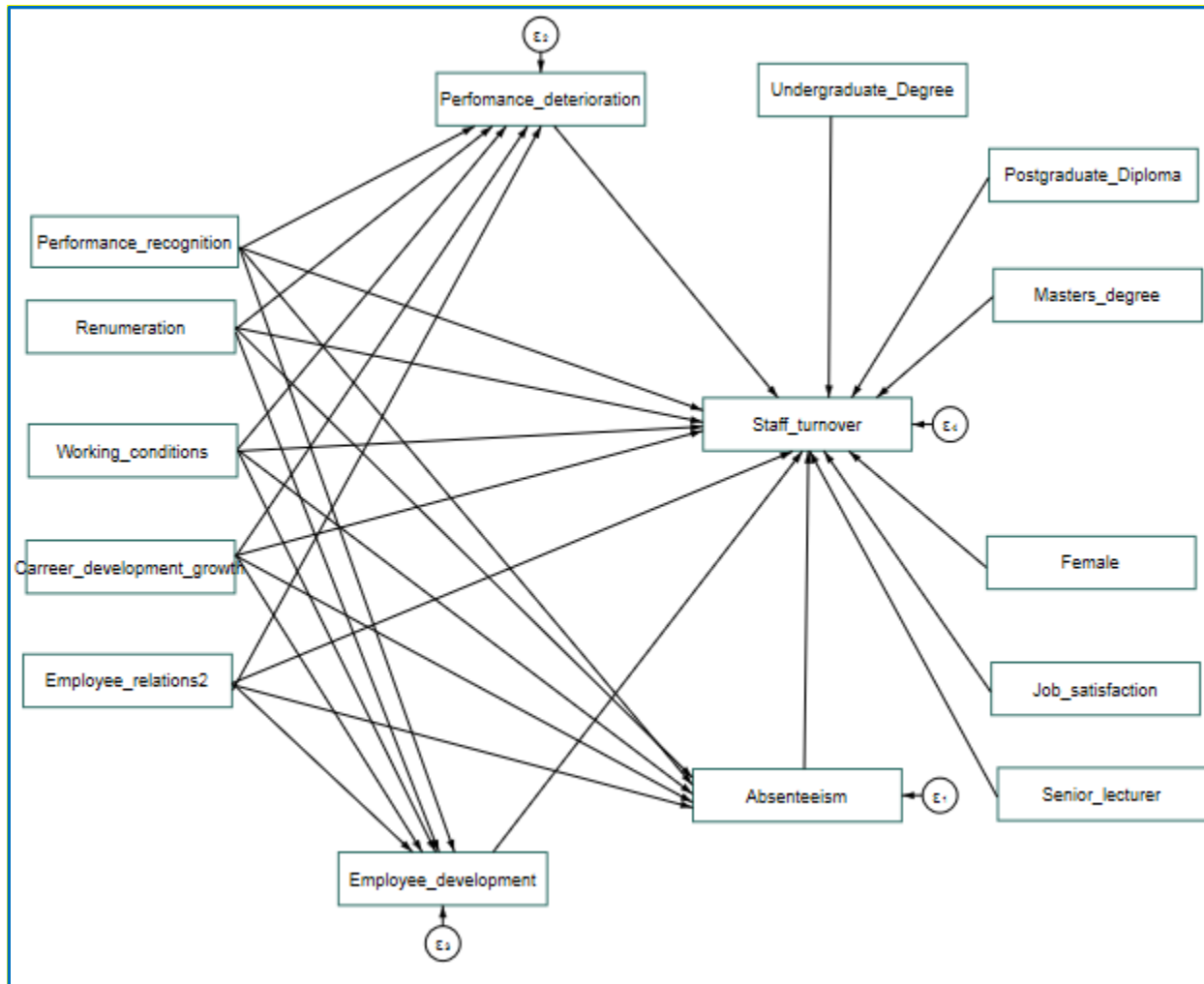
Employee development	-0.006(-0.051 to 0.039)	0.794
Performance management and recognition	0.004(-0.01 to 0.019)	0.547
Career development and growth	-0.012(-0.056 to 0.033)	0.600
Remuneration	0.003(-0.005 to 0.012)	0.431
Working conditions and work-life balance	<b>0.014(0.003 to 0.025)</b>	<b>0.012**</b>
Employee relations and involvement	-0.001(-0.012 to 0.015)	0.991
Gender (female)	<b>0.292(0.129 to 0.456)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001***</b>
Job satisfaction	<b>-0.375(-0.723 to -0.027)</b>	<b>0.043**</b>
Occupation (Senior Lecturer)	<b>-0.794(-0.129 to -0.368)</b>	<b>0.035**</b>
Level of education (Undergraduate)	<b>-0.91(-1.44 to -0.38)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001***</b>
Level of education (Postgraduate)	<b>-0.8(-1.38 to -0.38)</b>	<b>0.001***</b>
Level of education (Masters)	<b>-0.001(-0.016 to 0.015)</b>	<b>0.001***</b>

\*\*\*-significant at alpha=0.01    \*\*-significant at alpha=0.05    \*significant at alpha=0.1

No factors were significantly associated with performance deterioration in this study since all the predictors were not significant, with a p-value > 0.05. On the factors associated with employee development, an increase in the performance management and recognition score by 0.133 (95%CI: 0.088 to 0.178) significantly predicts a positive effect on employee development. The more the employees are recognised, the more their personal development improves. Good personal development and recognition among employees result in improved personal development. A career development and growth score increase of 0.215 (95%CI: 0.068 to 0.361) significantly predicts a positive effect on employee development. This positive relationship shows that employee development is directly improved if a PTI has career development structures. An increase in working conditions score by 0.097 (95%CI: 0.057 to 0.137) was associated with employee development score, and the results were statistically significant. This statistic means that good working conditions positively influence employee development. Employees operating in good working conditions have a conducive environment to develop.

On the factors associated with absenteeism, an increase in the performance management and recognition score by 0.361 (95%CI: 0.211 to 0.512) significantly increases the likelihood of the employees being absent from duty. This was surprising since the performance management and recognition at the selected Windhoek PTIs are good, and the employees are motivated to report for duty. An increase in career development and growth score by 1.676 (95%CI: 1.186 to 2.167) significantly increases the likelihood of the employees absent from duty. An increase in working conditions score by 0.173 (95%CI: 0.039 to 0.307) was associated with absenteeism, and the results were statistically significant. This fact was surprising since good working conditions motivate employees to report for duty. As expected, employee relations and involvement scores reduced the likelihood of being absent from duty by 0.273 (95%CI: 0.464 to -0.082). As working

conditions are good, the likelihood of being absent from duty is lowered because employees are motivated to always come to a conducive working environment.



**Figure 5.5:** Pathway analysis of employee turnover

The presence of an employee performance deterioration resulted in a 0.239 (95%CI: 0.096-0.384) increase in the likelihood of participants leaving their jobs, and this fact was statistically significant. This finding means that once employees' performance deteriorates, it increases their likelihood of leaving the job. An increase in the working conditions scores increases the likelihood of staff turnover by 0.014 (95%CI: 0.003-0.012). This fact was surprising since good working conditions may motivate employees to remain in their jobs.

Female workers were more likely to leave their jobs by 0.292 (95%CI: 0.129 to 0.456), and this finding was statistically significant. Those who were satisfied with their jobs were 0.375 (95%CI: -0.723 to -0.027) less likely to leave their jobs, and this fact was statistically significant. This result was as expected since if employees are satisfied with their jobs, they tend to remain and keep

their jobs. Senior lecturers, those with undergraduate degrees, those with postgraduate degrees, and those with master's degrees were 0.794 (95%CI: -0.129 to -0.368), 0.91 (95%CI: -1.44 to -0.38), 0.8 (95%CI: -1.38 to -0.38) and 0.001 (95%CI: -0.016 to 0.015) less likely to leave their jobs.

#### 5.4 Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses assessed in this study are described in Table 5.11 below and derived from the study's conceptual framework in Chapter 3. Of the 23 statements tested, nine of these hypotheses were significantly supported at 1% and 5% significance levels. This study hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and WLB and employee turnover. This hypothesis was supported at the 5% level of significance since working conditions and WLB increased the likelihood of employee turnover by an effect of 0.014(95%CI:0.003 to 0.025). The study findings suggest that as informal working conditions and WLB increase, the likelihood of employee turnover also increases. This study hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between employee performance deterioration and employee turnover. A 1% level of confidence overwhelmingly supported this fact. This study observed that performance deterioration increased the likelihood of staff turnover by 0.239(95%CI: 0.096 to 0.384), and this statistic suggests that performance deterioration increased the likelihood of staff turnover by 0.239.

**Table 5.11:** Hypotheses testing results

Hypotheses	P-value	Remarks
H <sub>1</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee turnover.	0.547	Not supported
H <sub>2</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee turnover.	0.431	Not supported
H <sub>3</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and, work-life balance and employee turnover.	<b>0.012</b>	Supported at 5%
H <sub>4</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee turnover.	0.6	Not supported
H <sub>5</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee turnover.	0.991	Not supported
H <sub>6</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee performance deterioration.	0.547	Not supported
H <sub>7</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee performance deterioration.	0.602	Not supported
H <sub>8</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance and employee performance deterioration.	0.366	Not supported
H <sub>9</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee performance deterioration.	0.164	Not supported
H <sub>10</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee performance deterioration.	0.851	Not supported



H <sub>11</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee performance deterioration and employee turnover	<b>0.001</b>	Supported at 1%
H <sub>12</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and absenteeism.	<b>0.001</b>	Supported at 1%
H <sub>13</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee performance deterioration.	0.602	Not supported
H <sub>14</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance and absenteeism.	<b>0.012</b>	Supported at 5%
H <sub>15</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and absenteeism.	<b>0.001</b>	Supported at 1%
H <sub>16</sub> There is a relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and absenteeism.	<b>0.005</b>	Supported at 1%
H <sub>17</sub> There is a positive relationship between absenteeism and employee turnover	0.453	Not supported
H <sub>18</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee development.	<b>0.001</b>	Supported at 1%
H <sub>19</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee development.	0.72	Not supported
H <sub>20</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions, work-life balance, and employee development.	<b>0.001</b>	Supported at 1%
There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee development.	<b>0.004</b>	Supported at 1%
H <sub>22</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee development.	0.071	Not supported at 5% Supported at 10%
H <sub>23</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee development and employee turnover	0.794	Not supported

This study hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and absenteeism. This hypothesis was statistically supported at a 1% significance level with a positive effect of 0.361 (95%CI: 0.211 to 0.512) on absenteeism. Therefore, this finding implies that when employees perceive informal performance management and recognition practices, they are more likely to absent themselves from duty. This study hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and absenteeism. This theory was significantly supported at a 1% significance level, showing a positive effect of 1.676 (95%CI: 1.186 to 2.167) on absenteeism. Accordingly, when the informal career development and growth score increases, it enhances the likelihood of the employees being absent from duty. This study hypothesised that there is a negative relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and absenteeism. A positive effect of -0.273 (95%CI: -0.464 to -0.082) was estimated, and this prediction was significant at a 1% level of significance that suggests that higher levels of informal employee relations and involvement are associated with increased absenteeism. This study hypothesised that there is a relationship between working conditions and WLB and absenteeism. A positive effect of 0.173 (95%CI: 0.039 to 0.307) was estimated, and this prediction was significant at a 1% significance level.

Consequently, this finding implies that employees are more likely to be absent when they perceive unfavourable working conditions and a lack of WLB.

This study hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee development. The positive effects of employee development were estimated to be 0.133 (95%CI: 0.088 to 0.178), and this prediction was supported at a 1% level of significance. This finding indicates that when employees perceive effective informal performance management practices and receive recognition for their work, it positively impacts their organisational development. This study hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between informal working conditions WLB and employee development. The positive effects of employee development were estimated to be 0.097 (0.057 to 0.137), and this prediction was supported at a 1% level of significance. This finding implies favourable working conditions and a healthy WLB contribute to employees' development within the PTIs. This study hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between career development and growth and employee development. The positive effects of employee development were estimated to be 0.215 (95%CI: 0.068 to 0.362), and this prediction was supported at a 1% level of significance. This finding suggests that employee career development and growth opportunities positively influence their overall development within the PTIs.

## **5.5 Theme analysis of qualitative data**

This section summarises the qualitative part of this study, comprising interviews and open-ended questions from the questionnaire that aimed to inductively determine the HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover. To achieve this goal, the study started by establishing what type of HR practices were adopted by these PTIs derived from their HR strategy, recruitment and selection process, and the reasons that academic staff gave when leaving the PTI during an exit interview.

The interviews also helped to ascertain how HR practices contributed to performance deterioration. In this regard, the HR practices for performance management and training and development were explored. Furthermore, the interviews also attempted to identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs and how they monitored unauthorised absenteeism. In addition, the interviews established the retention strategies that these PTIs used.

All eight intended interviewees in three Windhoek PTIs' HR units were conducted; hence, a 100% response rate was achieved. Appropriate procedures and ethical considerations were followed throughout this study. The study used Atlasti.22 to analyse the qualitative data.

## 5.6 Demographics of the interviewees

The characteristics of the respondents differed significantly in terms of the sample demographics. The pertinent personal information about the respondents is delineated in this section, including the respondents' gender, age, occupation, length of service, highest HR qualification, and name of interviewees' PTI, as illustrated in Table 5.12 below.

**Table 5.12** Demographics of the Interviewees

<b>Demographic categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Gender of interviewee</b>		
Male	5	62,5
Female	3	37,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age of interviewees</b>		
27 years	1	12,5
35 years	2	25
45 years	4	50
56 years	1	12,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
HR Business Partner	5	62,5
HR Director	3	37,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Length of service at the institution</b>		
2 years	2	25
3 years	1	12,5
4 years	2	25
7years	1	12,5
8 years	1	12,5
10 years	1	12,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Highest HR qualification of the interviewee</b>		
No qualification	1	12,5
Diploma	1	12,5
Honours degree	1	12,5
Master's degree	5	62,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Name of interviewee institution</b>		
PTI-1	4	50
PTI-2	2	25
PTI-3	2	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

The interviews were conducted among the three selected Windhoek PTIs. Most of the interviewees were from PTI-1, with a representation of 50%, whereas PTI-2 and PTI-3 had a representation of 25%. Furthermore, the demographics show that most interviewees were male,

representing 62.5%. Most of the interviewees were HR business partners, representing 62.5%. Among the interviewees holding HR positions in these institutions, only 12.5% do not have HR qualifications. This finding showed that most of the staff employed in the HR department of selected Windhoek PTIs are qualified HR professionals. Surprisingly, these selected PTIs are implementing informal HR practices. Moreover, most interviewees were 35 years and above, with a service length ranging from 2 to 10 years.

## 5.7 Themes

The table (Table 5.13) below presents the key themes identified in this study, which focuses on the impact of informal HR practices in private tertiary institutions (PTIs) in Windhoek, Namibia. These themes are derived from the analysis of data collected through various methods, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee development within these institutions. Additionally, the table highlights the strategies employed by PTIs to enhance employee retention.

**Table 5.13:** Themes, sub-themes and codes for qualitative data

Themes	Sub-theme	Codes
Theme1: HR practices adopted by PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover	Reasons for academic staff leaving the selected PTIs.	Low remuneration
		Use PTIs as a training ground
		Lack of job security
		Excessive workload
		Non-payment of salaries during vacation.
	HR practices for selected PTIs	Training
		Recruitment and selection
		Working conditions
	Processes followed for filling a vacant position.	Post advertised
		Interview
		Induction
		Non-discrimination disclosure
		Headhunting
		Remuneration

	HR practices that can influence academics to leave selected PTIs.	Job security Fringe benefits Workload Working environment Work-life balance Sexual harassment
Theme 2: HR practices at selected PTIs contributing to performance deterioration among its employees	Implementation of the HR practice for performance management at selected PTIs.	Annual rating
		Appraised by the supervisors.
		Appraised by the supervisor and the students.
	The extent employees are recognized and rewarded for good performance.	Appraised by the supervisor, committee and the students.
		No feedback mechanism
		Lack of incentives Inconsistent incentives
	Uses of performance appraisals in selected PTIs.	Promotion
		Requirement for NQA
	HR practices hindering employee performance in selected PTIs.	Lack of recognition
		Lack of motivation
Performance management		
Theme 3: Factors that contribute to absenteeism among academics in selected PTIs	Factors contributing to absenteeism among academics in their PTIs.	Limited leave days
		Tough supervisors
		Sickness
		Working conditions
	Methods used to monitor unauthorized absenteeism.	Sage payroll
		Manual logging in and out
		Physical check
	Reasons that influenced academics from not going to work.	Part-time jobs
		Job dissatisfaction
		Workload
		Labour relations
		Sickness
Personal issues		
Theme 4: The obstacles hindering employee	Training and development opportunities offered to academic staff in selected PTIs.	In-house training
		Special leave

development within selected PTIs		Publishing in the institution journal without a cost.
		Understudy programme
		Discounts on programmes offered by the institution.
	Training and development programmes linked to the job requirements.	Trending skills
		Suggestions from academic staff.
	Factors hindering employee development in selected PTIs.	Lack of commitment from PTIs
		Lack of financial resources
		Work policies
		Workload
	Theme 5: Employee retention strategies applied in selected PTIs to retain its academic staff	Retention strategies implemented by selected PTIs.
Fringe benefits		
Improve job security		
Increase salaries		
Staff development		
Factors that can influence academic staff to remain selected PTIs.		To gain experience
		None
		Scarce jobs
		Autonomy
		Fringe benefits
	Good industrial relations	

Source: Author's own design

### 5.7.1 Theme 1: HR practices adopted by PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover

The study sought to determine the HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover. On this note, the HR professionals in three selected PTIs were asked what reasons academic staff gave for leaving the institution during their exit interviews, the HR practices connected to HR strategy for their PTI, and how the HR practice for recruitment and selection is implemented. Furthermore, the study asked the academic staff in these PTIs to name the factors that can influence them to leave their institution.

#### 5.7.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Reasons for academic staff leaving selected PTIs

The responses given by the interviewees from selected PTIs regarding reasons for academic staff leaving the institution included a lack of job security, which was mentioned by 6 out of 8 respondents. The respondents pointed out that.

*"The lecturers leaving our institutions as their better opportunities and job security. Everyone is employed on a 5-year contract no was in permanent." (Respondent 1).*

*"There is no job security, especially for expatriates, as renewal of the contract is based on non-availability of a Namibian with the same qualification." (Respondent 8).*

Furthermore, 6 out of 8 respondents pointed out that academic staff is offered low remuneration, which leads them to look for 'greener pastures.'

*"The salaries that are given to lecturers are lower compared to the offered by NUST and UNAM, so when lecturers get opportunities in these institutions, they leave." (Respondent 4).*

*"Lecturers leave for greener pastures." (Respondent 7).*

Moreover, an excessive workload was also highlighted by 5 out of 8 respondents as the reasons that influenced academic staff to leave these PTIs. This was indicated by respondents such as Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8.

*"The lecturers also complain of workload as they say it makes it difficult for them to meet professional development needs." (Respondent 6).*

*"The lecturers mention the issue of too much workload as they are looking for institutions with better workload that will enable them to grow." (Respondent 4).*

Additionally, some academic staff left PTI-3 when they had gained sufficient experience to become competitive in the labour market. This was revealed by the response given by Respondents 1,2,3 and 4, who said.

*"We recruit people with higher qualifications but lacking experience. We train them, and after that, they leave." (Respondent 1)*

*"Lecturers use us as a training ground once they acquire the skills and knowledge needed in reputable institutions they leave." (Respondent 3)*

Furthermore, respondents 5 and 6 highlighted that some academic staff leave PTI-2 because they do not pay salaries during vacation.

*"Academic staff are not paid during the vacation as they will not be working."  
(Respondent 5).*

*"Lecturers do not work during vacation; therefore, they are not paid, so on exit interview, most of them mention that they have found an institution that can pay all year round."  
(Respondent 6).*

The interview responses from selected Windhoek PTIs highlighted several issues related to job security, remuneration, working conditions, and work-life balance, significantly influencing employee turnover. Specifically, interviewees identified a lack of job security, low remuneration leading academic staff to seek better opportunities, excessive workloads, and non-payment of salaries during vacation periods as primary reasons for staff departures. Additionally, some academic staff left PTI-3 after gaining enough experience to become competitive in the labour market.

These findings suggest that the informal implementation of HR practices related to remuneration, working conditions, work-life balance, and career development and growth was detrimental to employee retention. The issues of low remuneration and excessive workload indicate that the compensation and benefits provided do not meet the employees' expectations or market standards, leading to dissatisfaction and turnover. Moreover, the lack of job security and non-payment during vacations highlight inadequate employment policies that fail to provide stability and financial assurance for the staff. Furthermore, informal HR practices at PTI-3 have contributed to a lack of structured career development paths, prompting staff to leave once they have gained enough experience.

The conceptual framework of this study, guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, incorporates vital HR practices, including remuneration, working conditions, work-life balance, career development, and growth to be tested against employee turnover. The interview responses validate the importance of these HR practices in influencing employee retention. By addressing these critical HR practices, PTIs can improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover, ultimately supporting the institution's competitive advantage.



### 5.7.1.2 Sub-theme 2: HR practices for selected PTIs

Although the data collection instrument referred to HR strategy, this study sought to explore HR practices in PTIs. Therefore, it was essential to develop a connection between HR strategies and visible HR practices, notwithstanding the terminology discrepancy. HR practices are built on strategies that include comprehensive plans and methods for efficiently managing human resources. The investigation identified several HR strategies that complemented the PTIs' strategic objectives, including recruitment and selection, training, and working conditions.

Two PTI-1 interviewees mentioned HR strategies that derived from training, recruitment, and selection. One interviewee stated that these HR practices aimed to ensure that PTI-1 had an excellent working environment that retained employees, translating to the HR practice of working conditions.

*"We make sure that we hire qualified lecturers and will train them so they can be able to produce highly qualified graduates." (Respondent 3).*

Respondents at PTI-2 indicated their HR strategy was to employ the best-qualified employees who would enable PTI-2 to produce high-quality graduates for Namibian industries. Therefore, properly implementing the recruitment and selection HR practice is needed to achieve this strategy.

*"We employ the best-qualified employees that will enable us to produce high-quality graduates for Namibian industries." (Respondent 5).*

In addition, respondents at PTI-3 mentioned that the HR strategy used at PTI-3 was to recruit highly qualified employees to have the best-quality lecturers in the Namibian education system, as respondents 6 and 7 pointed out. This strategy led to the implementation of effective recruitment and selection HR practices.

*"We recruit highly qualified employees so that we have the best lecturers in the Namibian education system." (Respondent 7).*

Based on the responses from the interviewees, PTIs are grounded in the HR practice of recruitment and selection, with PTI-3 also emphasizing maintaining a good working environment. This HR practice focuses on hiring highly qualified and skilled employees, ensuring that the institutions have the best talent available to meet their goals. However, despite these efforts, PTIs are experiencing employee turnover due to failure to implement formal HR practices fully. This

indicates that while recruitment and selection are critical, they must be complemented by other supportive HR practices to retain employees and achieve institutional objectives effectively.

#### *5.7.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Processes followed for filling a vacant position*

The aim of examining the recruitment and selection HR practices in PTIs was to understand their methods for attracting and screening qualified individuals since recruitment impacts employee turnover. This data will help determine the impact of these practices on the challenges faced by the institutions.

The data collected from the selected PTIs revealed a range of HR practices related to recruitment and selection. These practices include advertising job openings on their websites, noticeboards, and newspapers and conducting interviews and induction processes, which all respondents consistently highlighted. Especially, PTI-1 is the only institution that includes a non-discrimination disclosure in its job advertisements.

*"We have a recruitment and selection policy. All the positions must be advertised, and they must be in a newspaper for three weeks, and anybody can apply. We should not discriminate against females with disability. Those selected can attend the interviews and then the induction process. We abide by the Affirmative Act. We disclose our non-discrimination." (Respondent 3).*

*"We are following the procedures laid down in our recruitment policy. We normally put it in the newspaper, where it is supposed to appear for three weeks, and on our website, we also put it on the noticeboard around the campus. Also, on Facebook." (Respondent 6).*

*"As soon as the need for filling a vacant position arises, we advertise the position in the newspaper and our website and after that do shortlisting before we interview the successful candidates, and only from the pool of interviewees will the best candidate be appointed and inducted accordingly." (Respondent 7).*

However, the findings indicated that PTI-2 and PTI-3 HR practitioners use "headhunting" as a recruitment method, as reflected by 4 out of 8 respondents.

*"There are times when we do "headhunting" due to limited time. Sometimes we do not interview the candidates. They just start work immediately." (Respondent 5).*

*"There are times when we do "headhunting," and we need to feel in the position immediately, and the recruitment and selection process is ignored." (Respondent 7).*

The data from the selected Windhoek PTIs exposed various HR practices associated with recruitment and selection, such as advertising on their websites, noticeboards, and newspapers, conducting interviews, and induction processes. However, the data indicated that PTI-2 and PTI-3 HR staff use "headhunting" as a recruitment method. PTI-1 included the non-discrimination disclosure in its job advertisements. These facts indicated that the selected Windhoek PTIs implement informal recruitment and selection HR practices.

*5.7.1.4 Sub-theme 4: HR practices that can influence academics to leave selected PTIs*

The open-ended question was answered by 171 academics from PTI1, PTI2 and PTI3. The factors that were mentioned by these academics that influenced them to leave their PTI included remuneration (low salaries not commensurate with employee input), industrial relations (unsolved conflicts, poor employee welfare, ill-treatment, victimisation, lack of teamwork, employees not valued, poor working relations and unfair treatment), WLB and lack of flexibility. In addition, career development and growth (lack of growth, no opportunity for improving my qualification, no promotion), recognition (lack of appreciation, lack of appreciation financially and verbally), job security, workload (work overload, inconsistencies in workload allocation), poor working environment, lack of motivation, poor management (leadership style of the organisation, absence of good leadership with two-way communication), sexual harassment, performance management (poor performance appraisals), working conditions (no study leave, welfare and organisation culture, lack of autonomy in the institution, salaries not paid during the holiday), lack of employee development and lack of employee engagement, Table 5.14 below shows the frequency of each of the above-identified factors.

**Table 5.14:** Factors that can influence academics to leave selected PTIs

<b>HR Practice</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Remuneration	Remuneration	124	73
Working conditions	Job security	22	80
	Fringe benefits	4	
	Workload	21	
	Working environment	42	
	Work-life-balance	42	
	Sexual harassment	5	

Performance Management	Recognition Poor performance Lack of motivation Performance management	24 4 18 4	29
Employee Relations	Employee Relations	51	30
Career development and growth	Career development and growth	36	21
Leadership	Poor management Employee engagement	24 4	16
Employee development	Employee development	12	7

Accordingly, the factors mentioned by the academic staff in selected Windhoek PTIs who participated in this study identified the informal HR practices that triggered employee turnover: remuneration, working conditions, performance management, employee relations, leadership, employee development and career development and growth. However, the informal HR practices that mainly triggered employee turnover were working conditions (80% of respondents) and remuneration (73% of respondents).

### **5.7.2 Theme 2: HR practices at selected Windhoek PTIs contributing to performance deterioration among its employees**

The study ascertained how HR practices contributed to performance deterioration among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs. It interviewed HR professionals in selected Windhoek PTIs regarding the implementation of performance management practices and posed an open-ended question to academic staff on practices hindering performance in their PTIs. The data gathered from PTI-1, PTI-2, and PIT-3 is presented in this section.

#### *5.7.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Implementation of the HR practice for performance management at selected PTIs*

This study needed to examine the implementation of the HR practice for performance management to obtain insight into how the selected Windhoek PTIs managed employee performance. The findings indicated that there are standard practices in these PTIs for implementing HR practices for performance management, such as appraising academic staff annually. In contrast, some practices vary, such as the people responsible for appraising employees, as reflected by the responses given by respondents such as Respondents 1, 2, and

8. Hence, the performance appraisal system cannot be linked to any performance appraisal method.

*"We have a performance management system, which we use yearly. The supervisors manage this, and the performance appraisals come to the HR department in September –October. The supervisor is the only one that appraises the staff." (Respondent 1).*

*"We have a performance tool, and it applies to everyone. Lecturers are evaluated by their supervisors in their departments based on their performance as per their job description every year in November" (Respondent 5).*

*"We usually do that every end of November each year, where the students appraise employees, appraisal committee that consists of the supervisor and a quality assurance officer." (Respondent 8).*

#### *5.7.2.2 Sub-theme 2: The extent employees are recognised and rewarded for good performance*

The findings showed no feedback mechanism, little recognition, and a poor reward system due to a lack of incentives for good performance. When incentives are provided, they are not consistent. These results are based on the responses given by respondents such as respondents 3, 4, and 7.

*"We used to have a monetary reward, but now there is no reward due to Covid and even went to a 40 percent salary cut. The institution is trying to recover from COVID-19, and the government does not fund the institution. We depend on student fees." (Respondent 3).*

*"Performance rating is done, but no feedback and incentives are given in this regard." (Respondent 5).*

*"Once in a while, the reward is not constant and does not depend on performance. It is an appreciation given to everyone, and then Employee of the Year is awarded. Nevertheless, I am unsure of the criteria being used as this is "done by the institution's owner (Respondent 7).*

### 5.7.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Uses for performance appraisals in selected PTIs

The responses show that the PTIs implement the performance management HR practice with different motives, as the following respondents pointed out.

*"Since last year, we have started performance appraisals for promotions. In previous years, we used them to award bonuses to those who earned 65%, but now the university is undergoing a financial crisis, and bonuses are no longer available." (Respondent 2).*

*"Performance management is a requirement for NQA, so it is supposed to be done every year" (Respondent 6).*

*"Since I have been in this office, performance appraisals are filed to meet the requirements for the NQA." (Respondent 8).*

Overall, in view of the responses, HR practices for performance management and recognition in the PTIs suggest that they are not effectively serving their intended purpose of enhancing employee performance and satisfaction. This HR practice is being implemented informally because of inconsistency in recognition, a lack of a plan for improving weaknesses, using it for compliance, and a lack of an appraisal system.

### 5.7.2.4 Sub-theme 4: The practices hindering employee performance in selected PTIs

The practices hindering employee performance that was noted by academics in the three selected Windhoek PTIs included recognition (management not appreciating employee accomplishments such as meeting departmental objectives), poor management (demotion, entitlement, inability to lead, performance appraisals conducted to meet NQA requirements, lack of clear communication channels, unclear expectations, unrealistic expectation, lack of motivation, lack of encouragement from the institution), remuneration (delays in salary payments, low remuneration), discrimination (ethnicism, favouritism, nepotism), employee development (lack of coaching, limited training, and development activities) performance management (lack of constructive feedback, untrained evaluators and lack of a performance management policy) and industrial relations (lack of teamwork, no workers committee to raise employee concerns, workers grievances are not fully addressed, poor leadership style in resolving disputes). Furthermore, these practices included external factors, such as workload, working conditions, career development and growth, job security, lack of resources, poor communication, and recruitment and selection. However, most participants indicated that the lack of recognition was the primary deterrent hindering employee

**Table 5.15:** The practices hindering employee performance in selected Windhoek PTIs

HR Practice	Theme	Frequency	Percentage %
Remuneration	Remuneration	17	10
Working conditions	External factors	1	31
	Workload	23	
	Working conditions	9	
	Discrimination	17	
	Job security	4	
Performance Management	Recognition	40	51
	Lack of motivation	27	
	Performance management	21	
Employee Relations	Employee Relations	13	8
Career development and growth	Career development and growth	3	2
Leadership	Poor management	27	39
	Lack of competition	4	
	Organisational culture	5	
	Lack of resources	22	
	Poor communication	8	
Employee development	Employee development	19	11
Recruitment and selection	Recruitment and selection	5	3

51% of the PTI respondents identified the HR practice for performance management as the primary contributor to performance deterioration in selected Windhoek PTIs. Hence, the themes linked to this practice included the lack of recognition and the lack of motivation and performance management. Working conditions were identified by 31% of the respondents, and leadership was indicated by 39%. As a result of these findings, this study noted that these issues have less impact since only a minority of the respondents mentioned them. The same comment applies to the HR practices of remuneration, employee relations, career development and growth, employee development, and recruitment and selection.

### 5.7.3 Theme 3: Factors that contributed to absenteeism among academics in selected Windhoek PTIs

The interviewees were asked to give the factors that contributed to absenteeism in their PTIs and how they monitor unauthorised absenteeism to identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs. Furthermore, the academic staff were asked to list the reasons that could influence them not to come to work. In this regard, the study managed to gather the following results.

#### 5.7.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Factors contributing to absenteeism among academics in their PTIs

The HR practitioners in selected PTIs noted that employees are awarded five leave days during the year, and 19 were used at the end of the year. Due to this allocation of leave days, academics tend to absent themselves from work without seeking permission. Three respondents alluded to this, but the practices are not implemented at PTI-2 since academics do not work during vacations.

*"We close in December for 19 days during the year. The employees have five days to use. So, the five days become small for the people trying to stay out of work, so they either use sick or compassionate leave. Because five days a year and wait for December. There is a lot to do in a year. We are entitled to 30 days." (Respondent 1).*

*"The five days per year can accumulate. If you use more than five days, the other days will be unpaid. Employees always come back with a sick note." (Respondent 2).*

Other responses varied: two respondents noted that strict supervisors did not quickly approve leave, leading to staff absenting themselves and returning with sick leave authorised by a doctor. In this regard, the respondents reflected that tough supervisors stress the employees, leading to absenteeism, as indicated by respondents 3 and 4.

*"A tough supervisor who does not approve of leaving staff ended up lying and faking sick leave so they could go where they want to go during working hours. Sometimes, some people have a lot on their plate because some come out of Windhoek, and employees are entitled to 5 days' leave during the year and then 19 days in December, but there is a lot to be done during the year. Policies are not promoting work-life balance. Poor management that leads to stress." (Respondent 4).*



Four respondents mentioned sickness and working conditions influencing absenteeism at their institutions. They highlighted that working conditions, such as low remuneration, forced academics to seek extra sources of income to sustain their families. In addition, the workload made career development difficult for academics, leading to absenteeism.

*"Sometimes poor working conditions can also lead to absenteeism as lecturers always complain about the workload, end up staying home to catch up on pending work, especially the ones that study." (Respondent 8).*

*"Lower salaries and lecturers tend to look for extra jobs leading to absenteeism on their main job" (Respondent 2).*

*"Sickness excuses." (Respondent 8).*

The most influential HR practice contributing to absenteeism in the selected Windhoek PTIs was related to working conditions, as cited by 100% of the respondents. The issues identified included implementing leave days, low remuneration, and excessive workloads. Additionally, 50% of the interviewees mentioned sickness, while 25% cited the presence of strict supervisors. These findings highlight the impact of the informal implementation of HR practices regarding remuneration, working conditions, and work-life balance. Hence signalling the abuse of sick leave.

#### *5.7.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Methods used to monitor unauthorised absenteeism in selected PTIs*

When asked about the methods used to monitor unauthorised absenteeism in their institutions, the respondents at PTI-1 used Sage payroll. However, this software only monitors authorised leave days, considering the days left for each employee. This leaves PTI-1 without a method for monitoring absenteeism.

*"We have a sage payroll where we note all the leave taken through their supervisors." (Respondent 1).*

*"We have a sage payroll where we note all the leave taken through their supervisors." (Respondent 3).*

Meanwhile, PTI-2 and PTI-3 respondents pointed out that they used the logging in and out method, whereby staff signed in upon arrival and signed out when leaving the premises.

*"Lecturers clock in when they arrive showing the time of arrival and clock out when leaving showing the time they left." (Respondent 5).*

*"Signing in of all lecturers when they come to work and sign out when leaving." (Respondent 7).*

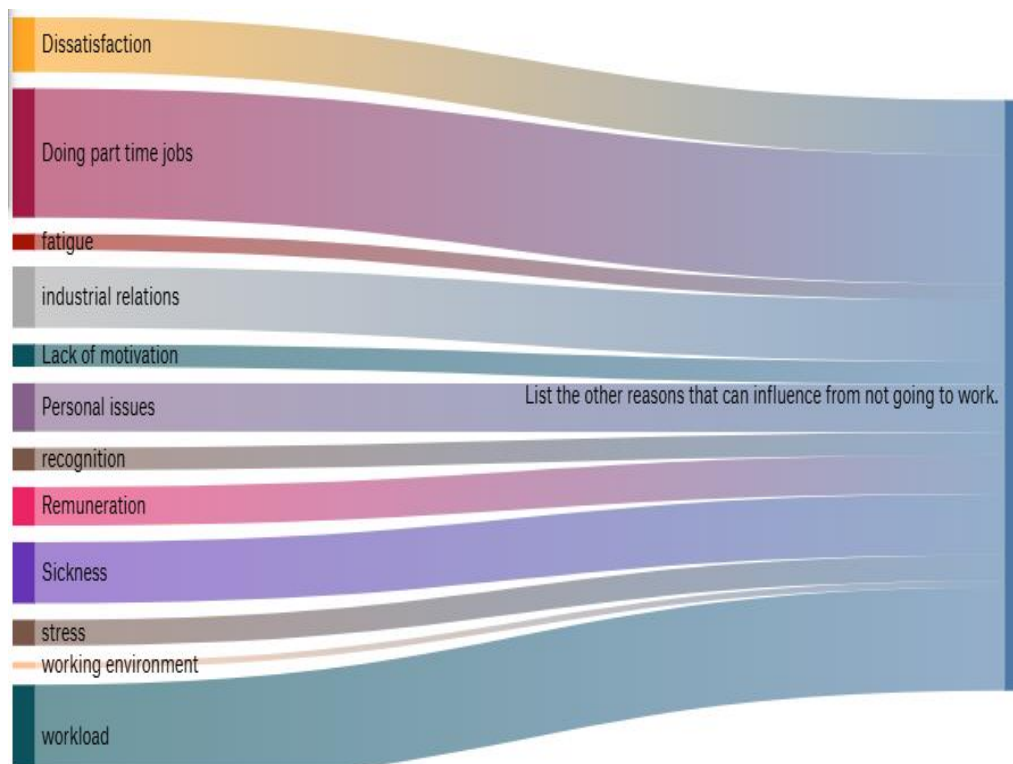
Additionally, PTI-3 has employed a quality assurance officer who monitors the lecture rooms to check if the lecturers are conducting lectures as scheduled. As indicated by the two respondents from this institution.

*"We have employed a quality assurance officer who conducts a physical check of attendance of lecturers for classes." (Respondent 8).*

Overall, the responses indicated that PTI-1 does not have a method to monitor absenteeism, while PTI-2 and PTI-3 relied on manual logging in and out system when the study was conducted. Surprisingly, these Windhoek PTIs did not have an absenteeism policy in place, and 50% of the interviewees mentioned using manual logging systems despite the availability of more advanced technological solutions. These findings highlight the informal implementation of HR practices related to labour relations, emphasizing the need for effective absenteeism management.

#### *5.7.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Reasons that influenced academics from not going to work*

The reasons that influence academic staff from not going to work were gathered from 171 respondents. These respondents highlighted reasons such as dissatisfaction, performing part-time jobs, fatigue, industrial relations, lack of motivation, personal issues, recognition, remuneration, sickness, stress, working environment, and workload. Hence, the most common reasons for not coming to work noted were performing part-time jobs, job dissatisfaction, workload, labour relations, sickness, and personal issues, as illustrated by Figure 5.6 below.



**Figure 5.6:** Reasons influencing you from not going to work

#### 5.7.4 Theme 4: The obstacles hindering employee development within selected PTIs

The employee development rate has decreased by 15% since 2014 in selected Windhoek PTIs. Thus, this study sought to determine the obstacles hindering employee development in these PTIs. The HR professionals were asked to comment on the training and development opportunities offered to academic staff in their PTIs and how much training is linked to their job requirements. An open-ended question was posed in the questionnaire that required the academic staff to identify the factors that hinder training and development in their PTIs. The data gathered thereby is presented in this section.

##### *5.7.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Training and development opportunities offered academic staff in selected PTIs*

All the respondents indicated that they offer in-house training to their academic staff in their institutions. On this note, PTI-1 has a centre offering short courses to the public that need their service at a cost; this centre is also used for employee development for their employees. In addition, this centre customises its programmes to meet the job requirements of the employees that are being trained. In this regard, the environment is examined to establish the skills needed

by academic staff during the 4IR and develop courses accordingly. One interviewee indicated that during the past two years, academics have been trained in ways to deliver lectures online and engage in research writing.

Meanwhile, at PTI-2 and PTI-3, depending on the availability of funds, the institution can hire a qualified facilitator to train the employees in an area identified by management, for example, how to use Moodle. Sometimes, they identified a peer familiar with the area to facilitate the development programme. This was pointed out by respondents such as respondents 1, 6 and 8.

*"We look at the trends in the lecturers' environment. For example, now there is online teaching, so we provided development on online teaching. We also offer training in customer care and disciplinary hearings. We offer these courses as short courses so academics can join through their supervisors. We have not implemented the practice of a training need analysis yet" (Respondent 1).*

*"We offer in-house; the appointed training officer organises training in areas that staff need to improve and learn. Facilitation depends on the availability of funds. Peers can also facilitate if they are familiar with the area to save costs." (Respondent 6).*

*"We offer in-house training. Since last year, the institution has offered higher education diplomas, and academics do not have that. However, attendance was low as they complained about workload" (Respondent 8).*

Moreover, some respondents highlighted that academic staff were entitled to special leave when attending a conference to support their employee development, as highlighted by respondents such as respondents 2 and 7. Additionally, at PTI-1, academics can publish in the institution's journal without a cost, but if they decide to publish with other journals, they cater for their costs, as indicated by respondent 2.

*"If you are publishing, you should publish in our journal. You get special leave to go to conferences. No sponsorship is in place when you are going for conferences, and if you want to publish in an outside journal, you sponsor yourself." (Respondent 2).*

*"The lecturers are given a special leave when going for a conference at the moment the lecturers fund themselves to attend conferences." (Respondent 8).*

All the respondents indicated that they have an 'understudy programme' for all the positions occupied by foreign nationals through which they train a Namibian staff member with limited experience in the same area of expertise.

*"For every position occupied by a foreign national, that lecturer is expected to mentor a Namibia staff for the duration of their work permit. This is a requirement for Home Affairs." (Respondent 4).*

*"The institution promotes mentorship programs to Namibia graduates through the understudy program." (Respondent 5).*

*"We are implementing an understudy program where unexperienced Namibia is being prepared to occupy the position occupied by a foreigner. The foreigner is in charge of the mentoring program." (Respondent 7).*

Furthermore, academic development was affected by the implementation of HR practices for career development and growth. All (100%) of the eight interviewees suggested implementing this HR practice. Respondents at PTI-1 mentioned that the institutions allow academics to enrol in programs offered at a 40% discount. When enrolment is done at another institution, no financial help is provided. Meanwhile, at PTI-2 and PTI-3, all the respondents revealed that their institutions offered 100% funding for programs offered by the institution and no funding when they enrolled with another institution, as indicated by respondents 4 and 7.

*"What we have is what every employee is entitled to: the lower income they get 75% and the better income that is lecturers they get 40%. This only applies when you are learning in the institution. If you go to other institutions, you cover your costs." (Respondent 1).*

*"If you are publishing, you should publish it in our journal. You get special leave to go to conferences. No sponsorship is in place when you go to conferences; if you want to publish in an outside journal, you sponsor yourself. Since last year, the institution has been offering higher education diplomas, but most academics do not have that. They were complaining about the workload. The staff will pay 40% of the fees for that program." (Respondent 2).*

*"We offer study assistance for relevant qualifications that the institution offers without a cost." (Respondent 4).*

*"The institution assistance if you enrol in the programmes offered by the institution and you do not pay tuition fees, but when you enrol with another institution, you need to cater for your fees." (Respondent 7).*

The response alluded to by the HR practitioners in selected PTIs shows that the HR practices for training and development and career development and growth are implemented in different ways in these institutions. Hence, these HR practices are informally implemented; for example, they offer in-house training not influenced by either a training need analysis or weaknesses derived from the performance appraisals. It stresses the lack of a systematic approach to identifying training requirements that align with organisational goals and individual employee development needs. In addition, in PTI-2 and PTI-3 training, development is not a top priority since it depends on the availability of funds. At the same time, institutions need to have a budget for this each year. When they are conducted, they are limited to face-to-face facilitation. This is due to limited financial resources. Furthermore, the HR practice for labour relations hinders academic development because of discrimination in mentoring activities as it is only offered to Namibia graduates without experience. Based on these facts, employee development is hindered by the informal implementation of the HR practice for training and development, career development and growth, and labour relations.

#### *5.7.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Training and development programmes linked to the job requirements*

HR practitioners' responses for selection alluded to the fact that all the training and development programmes they offer are linked to the requirements. Contrary to expectations, the link is determined by developing employees on the trending skills in the environment and suggestions from academic staff. This was indicated by respondents such as respondents 2, 5, and 8.

*"Our programmes are linked to the job requirements. Now we look at the trends for lecturers' environment. Now there is online teaching, so we provided development on online teaching" (Respondent 2).*

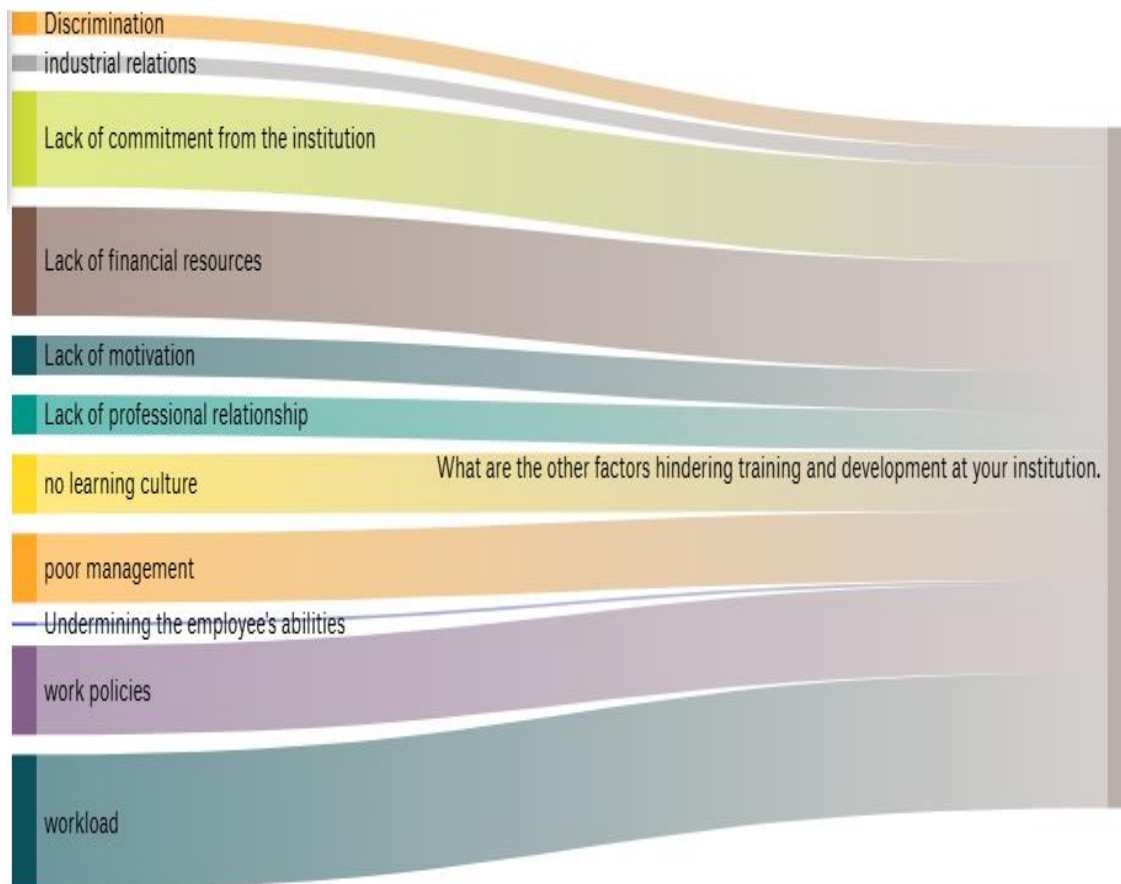
*"The programmes are linked as we ask staff the areas, they need to improve on but sometimes we just train them on new technologies that we will be introducing in the system which are linked to their job." (Respondent 5).*

*"Yes, they are, as they always have something to do with their job, recently we did a workshop on research paper writing. This is linked to their job, right." (Respondent 8).*

It is important to note that enhancing employee skills is good, but there is also a need for targeted employee development programmes. Lack of this practice of offering targeted programmes can lead to decreased employee attendance at training programs, reduced engagement and motivation, missed opportunities for skill development, and lower organisational performance.

*5.7.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Factors hindering employee development in selected PTIs*

The factors hindering training and development in PTI-1, PTI2, and PTI-3 in Windhoek that 171 participants noted included discrimination, industrial relations, lack of commitment from the PTI, lack of financial resources, lack of motivation, lack of professional relationship, no learning culture, poor management, undermining the employees' abilities, work policies and workload (see Figure 5.7). It is important to note that most participating academics mentioned a lack of commitment from the PTIs, lack of financial resources, work policies, and workload factors hindering employee development in their PTIs (indicated with the thicker lines in a Sankey diagram below). Only a few respondents mentioned those factors with thin lines; thus, they were deemed to have less impact on employee development.



**Figure 5.7:** Factors hindering training and development in selected PTIs

### 5.7.5 Theme 5: Retention strategies applied at selected PTIs to retain its academic staff

The selected Windhoek PTIs have been experiencing a 15% increase in employee turnover since 2014, as shown in their annual reports. For this reason, the study sought the retention strategies these PTIs use to retain academic staff. These findings will enable the researcher to recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention. The retention strategies that were adopted by the selected PTIs are presented as follows:

#### *5.7.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Retention strategies implemented by selected PTIs*

All the respondents indicated that they offered study assistance on programmes offered on in their institutions to retain academics staff. At PTI-2 and PTI-3, these programmes are offered free of charge, while at PTI-1, Academics are given a 40% study rebate. At PTI-3, this practice even benefits immediate family members; they can study free of charge on programmes offered by this institution. That is the only practice they have in common.

Specifically, PTI-1 respondents pointed out that academics can work as consultants and receive 10% of the fee, while 90% will be paid to the institution. In addition, they mentioned that PTI-1 had tried to improve its staff's job security by replacing two-year contracts with five-year contracts to retain employees. They also noted that the institution paid 60% of the medical aid and 60% of the pension contributions for its employees. Furthermore, the institution increases academics' salaries if they acquire an additional qualification linked to their job requirements. Three respondents also indicated that PTI-1 is increasing salaries to reduce the gap between the PTI salaries, but they are still not at par with the public HEIs. One interviewee noted that PTI-1 gave academics special leave to attend conferences but does fund conference fees and research publications. However, academics can publish their research papers in PTI-1's journal for free. PTI-1 also offers staff development training programmes to their employees.

*"We encourage them to do research, publish, and attend conferences. When they go, they use special leave. We do not fund them; most of the conferences they attend are funded by the organisers." (Respondent 1).*

*"Try to increase their salaries and reduce the gap between our institution and the public universities, medical aid 60% paid by the employer, pension 60% paid by the employer. The contracts have been improved. They used to be on a two-year renewable contract, but now*



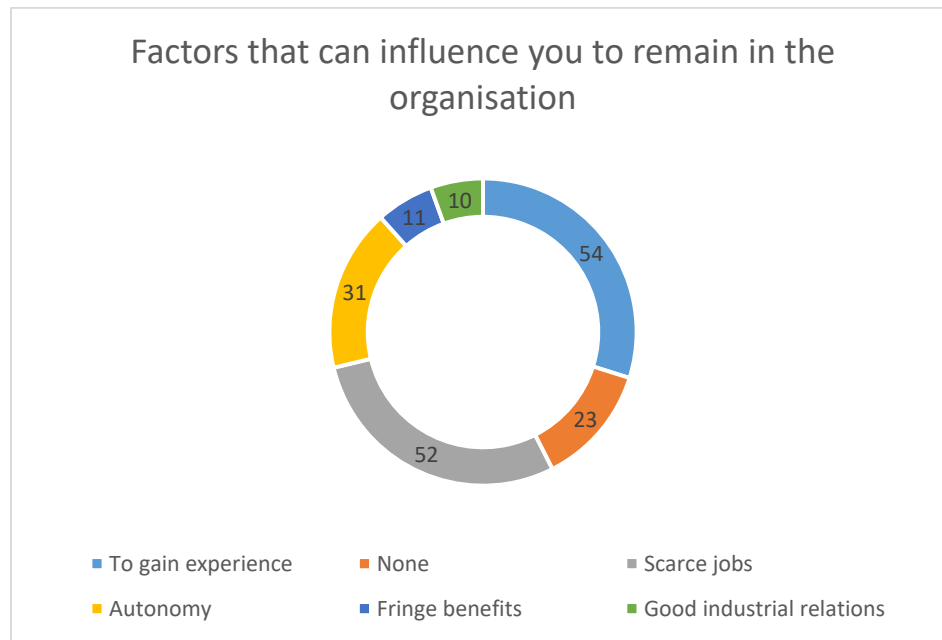
*they are on 5-year renewable contracts. Academics can consult on behalf of the institution to get a 10% while the institution gets 90%." (Respondent 3).*

*"Staff development is one of them, as well as salary increments and study rebates for all staff" (Respondent 4).*

*"Study assistance with bonding." (Respondent 8).*

In summary, all the selected Windhoek PTIs have an employee development policy that benefits employees and their immediate families in terms of the training programmes offered by their PTIs. In addition, PTI-3 will fund external programmes depending on the availability of funds. However, there is no uniformity in implementing this practice because some of the participating PTIs' employees and immediate family can study for free. At the same time, staff must pay 40% of the tuition fees at another PTI. Given these findings, the academic staff will not benefit significantly from such employee development practices because 65% of the respondents have already attained the qualifications offered by their PTIs. Unexpectedly, the HR practice for career development and growth is partially implemented by one out of three participating PTIs (33%), in which academics are given special leave to attend conferences and free publication in the PTIs' journal. Consequently, most academics fund themselves when attending conferences and publishing papers in reputable journals. Similarly, one out of three PTIs (33%) provides fringe benefits in 60% of employees' medical aid and pension fund costs.

*5.7.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Factors that can influence academic staff to remain in selected PTIs*  
Figure 5.8 below shows the factors that influence academic staff to remain in the selected Windhoek PTIs. These factors include gaining experience, scarce jobs, autonomy, fringe benefits, good industrial relations, and none. The common factors that influence the respondents to remain in their PTI are to gain experience, scarce jobs, autonomy, and none (they receive no motivation to remain with the PTI).



**Figure 5.8:** Factors that can influence you to remain in the organisation

The results shown in Figure 5.1 above indicate that 30% of the respondents are influenced to remain in their current positions due to practices their PTI implements, such as autonomy, fringe benefits, and good employee relations. Whereas any HR practices do not influence 70% of respondents, others remain in these PTIs to gain the experience that will make them more marketable, and some are affected by limited opportunities in Namibia (there are only two public HEIs). They are waiting for an opportunity to avail themselves. These findings are not surprising because the participating PTIs are all facing the challenge of employee performance deterioration.

### 5.8 Joint display analysis

The joint display analysis (integrated visual display) was used to show results of similar aspects of the same phenomenon from quantitative and qualitative data and then assessed the extent to which these results converge or diverge. These results are illustrated in Table 5.16 below.

**Table 5.16:** Integrated visual display

Qualitative	Quantitative	P - value	Analytical integration
<b>Theme 1: Employee turnover</b> The academics leave the selected PTIs for greener pastures, lack of job security, lower remuneration, work	<b>Employee turnover</b> - Absenteeism - Performance deterioration - Employee development	0.453 <b>0.001***</b> 0.794	- There was convergence across some of the

<p>overload, lack of an environment that supports research and non-payment of salaries during vacation. Highly qualified academics without work experience used PTI-1 as a training ground; once they gained experience and acquired the needed skills, they would leave the institution. Industrial relations (unsolved conflicts, poor employee welfare, ill-treatment, victimisation, lack of teamwork, employees not valued, poor working relations and unfair treatment), work-life-balance and lack of flexibility. Career development and growth (lack of growth, no opportunity for improving my qualification, no promotion), recognition (lack appreciation, lack of appreciation financially and verbally, lack of motivation), poor management (leadership style of the organisation, absence of good leadership with two-way communication), sexual harassment, performance management (poor performance appraisals), working conditions (no study leave, welfare and organisation culture, lack of autonomy in the institution, salaries not paid during the holiday), lack of employee development and lack of employee engagement were highlighted by academics as factors that can influence them to leave the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance management and recognition</li> <li>- Career development and growth</li> <li>- Remuneration</li> <li>- Working conditions and work-life balance</li> <li>- Employee relations and involvement</li> <li>- Gender (female)</li> <li>- Job satisfaction</li> <li>- Occupation (Senior Lecturer)</li> <li>- Level of education (Undergraduate)</li> <li>- Level of education (Postgraduate)</li> <li>- Level of education (Masters)</li> </ul>	<p>0.547</p> <p>0.600</p> <p>0.431</p> <p><b>0.012**</b></p> <p>0.991</p> <p><b>&lt;0.001***</b></p> <p><b>0.043**</b></p> <p><b>0.035**</b></p> <p><b>&lt;0.001***</b></p> <p><b>0.001***</b></p> <p><b>0.001***</b></p>	<p>quantitative and qualitative findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In quantitative findings, performance deterioration, working conditions and work-life balance, job satisfaction, gender, occupation (senior lecturer), and level of education (undergraduate and Master) proved to trigger employee turnover. Whereas employee development, performance management and recognition, career development and growth, remuneration, employee relations and involvement were reported not to have significant to employee turnover</li> <li>- In qualitative findings, factors that influence employee turnover were highlighted as working conditions, highly qualified academics using the institutions as the training ground, industrial relations, work-life and lack of flexibility, career development and growth, recognition, poor management, sexual harassment, performance management, lack of employee development and lack of employee engagement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 2: Performance deterioration</b></p>	<p><b>Performance deterioration</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no convergence across</li> </ul>

<p>-Academics were appraised annually</p> <p>-The supervisor appraised them and then submitted the reports to the HR department.</p> <p>- Performance appraisal for academics is done annually, and the supervisor and the students conduct it; the reports are then handed to the HR department.</p> <p>- The performance management system shows the weaknesses of an employee, but there is no plan to work on the weaknesses raised.</p> <p>- The supervisor and quality assurance committee conducted it, and the students' reports were then submitted to the HR department.</p> <p>- Lack of financial incentives for good performers.</p> <p>- The good performers can use their ratings, especially for publications, as this will enable them to be promoted.</p> <p>- There were inconsistent financial incentives attached to performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance management and recognition</li> <li>- Career development and growth</li> <li>- Remuneration</li> <li>- Working conditions and work-life balance</li> <li>Employee relations and involvement</li> </ul>	<p>0.547</p> <p>0.164</p> <p>0.602</p> <p>0.366</p> <p>0.851</p>	<p>the qualitative and quantitative findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The quantitative results showed that performance management and recognition, career development and growth, remuneration, working conditions and work-life balance, employee relations and involvement do not influence performance deterioration.</li> <li>- The qualitative findings indicated that PTIs implemented performance management differently, with PT11 not involving students. There is no peer review in these three institutions. Performance appraisal is conducted, but there is no plan to work on the weaknesses raised and lack of financial incentives for good performers in the two institutions, whereas the one that gives financial incentives is not constant.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 3: Absenteeism</b></p> <p>-The institution awarded five (5) leave days during the year, and nineteen (19) were used at the end of the year due to the limited days the academics</p>	<p><b>Absenteeism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance management and recognition</li> </ul>	<p><b>&lt;0.001***</b></p> <p><b>&lt;0.001***</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was convergence across some of the quantitative and qualitative findings.</li> </ul>

<p>tend to absenteeism themselves from work without seeking permission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tough supervisors who did not easily approve leave, leading to staff absenting themselves and returning with sick leave authorised by the doctor</li> <li>-Tough supervisors stress the employee, leading to absenteeism</li> <li>-sickness and working conditions influencing absenteeism at their institutions. The working conditions, such as low remuneration, forcing them to seek extra sources of income to sustain their families, and workload make career development difficult for them to progress, and they need to be absent themselves to do their research work.</li> <li>-Dissatisfaction, doing part-time jobs, fatigue, industrial relations, lack of motivation and recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Career development and growth</li> <li>- Remuneration</li> <li>- Working conditions and work-life balance</li> <li>- Employee relations and involvement</li> </ul>	<p>0.562</p> <p><b>0.012**</b></p> <p><b>0.005***</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In quantitative results, performance management and recognition, career development and growth, working conditions and work-life balance, employee relations and involvement were reported to contribute to employee absenteeism. At the same time, remuneration showed no influence towards absenteeism.</li> <li>- In qualitative results, low remuneration was highlighted as a factor that contributes to absenteeism as it forced academics to seek extra sources of income to sustain their families.</li> <li>- In addition to the factors that were statistically proven to contribute to absenteeism, the respondents noted limited leave days, tough supervisors, stress, sickness, dissatisfaction, doing part-time jobs, fatigue, and lack of motivation as factors contributing to absenteeism.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 4: Employee development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They have been developing academics on ways to deliver</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employee development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance management and recognition</li> </ul>	<p><b>&lt;0.001***</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is convergence across some of the qualitative and quantitative findings.</li> </ul>

<p>lectures online and research writing (in-house training).  - The institution had a centre for short courses.  - They had an understudy programme on all the positions occupied by foreign nationals where they developed a Namibian employed with limited experience in the same area of study.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Career development and growth</li> <li>- Remuneration</li> <li>- Working conditions and WLB</li> <li>- Employee relations and involvement</li> </ul>	<p><b>0.004***</b></p> <p>0.72</p> <p><b>&lt;0.001***</b></p> <p>0.071</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In quantitative results, performance management and recognition, career development and growth, working conditions and WLB tend to be predictors of employee development. Whilst remuneration, employee relations and involvement were reported as insignificant to employee development.</li> <li>- In qualitative results, the predictors that respondents identified were in-house training understudy programmes designed for Namibians.</li> </ul>
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The main findings of this study have been derived from Table 5.16 above and will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

The HR practices that proved to trigger employee turnover in selected Windhoek PTIs were performance deterioration, remuneration (low salaries), recruitment and selection (headhunting and non-discrimination disclosure, working conditions and WLB. It is reassuring to note that the results of the working conditions and work-life HR practices obtained from the quantitative findings align with the qualitative findings, enhancing the robustness of our research. The other HR practices were significantly represented either in qualitative or quantitative findings.

All the variables tested to determine the HR practices influencing performance deterioration from quantitative data were insignificant. However, the qualitative findings revealed that the HR practice for performance management contributed to performance deterioration in the participating PTIs. 51% of the respondents mentioned this fact, who cited practices such as no feedback mechanism, no performance appraisal method, poor recognition and rewards system, and lack of motivation.

The study determined the factors contributing to absenteeism in selected Windhoek PTIs: performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, employee relations and involvement, career development and growth, and job dissatisfaction. Quantitative and qualitative

findings converged on the results of job dissatisfaction, employee relations, working conditions, and WLB. Hence, other HR practices included were significantly represented in qualitative or quantitative findings. Additionally, the qualitative findings revealed that the participating PTIs lacked an effective formal monitoring system for absenteeism.

The predictors of employee development in selected Windhoek PTIs were identified as performance management and recognition, career development and growth, working conditions and WLB. In this regard, the results showed that there was informal implementation of the HR practices of working conditions and WLB but that it was linked to work policies that were not promoting employee development. From the findings, the study noted that formal mentoring was only implemented for Namibians with limited experience. Areas of employee development were determined by trending skills in the environment and suggestions from academic staff. The HR practice for leadership also hindered employee development in these selected Windhoek PTIs because respondents highlighted the lack of financial resources and commitment from the PTIs. Furthermore, employee development in these PTIs was limited to face-to-face facilitation conducted by peers.

Lastly, a few retention strategies are implemented in the selected Windhoek PTIs. The research findings partially implemented the HR practices of employee development, career development growth and remuneration.

## **5.9 Summary**

Chapter 5 presented the research findings in three segments, i.e., quantitative, qualitative and a joint display analysis. This comprehensive approach ensures that all aspects of the research are thoroughly covered. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, for which a box and whisker plot was used to describe the distribution summarised of the score, and additional information was reported as mean. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett Test of Sphericity was performed. The factor analysis was conducted, and the predicted scores were used in the structural equation modelling to predict factors associated with employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and employee development. Furthermore, of the 23 hypotheses statements tested, nine of them were significantly supported both at 1% and 5% levels of significance. The scale reliability coefficient was estimated for overall study measurement items for each domain, and for each item using the Cronbach Alpha approach, a score of 0,7 was preferred. Moreover, data was presented using graphs, tables and pie charts to enhance understanding.

The qualitative data consisted of responses to interviews and open-ended questions from the questionnaire. This data was analysed under five themes: employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, employee development, and retention strategies. Data was presented using tables, bar charts, pie charts, and Sankey diagrams.

In addition, the integrated visual display was used to show results of similar aspects of the same phenomenon from quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate which results converge or diverge. The following chapter will discuss the research findings by linking the literature review and empirical evidence.



## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and analysed the study's results, and this chapter focused on discussing these results. The chapter addresses the research questions posed by the study in Chapter 1 and the hypotheses that emanated from the study's conceptual framework in Chapter 3 by interpreting the results and explaining the implications of the study's key findings. The results will be discussed based on the thematic areas that were derived from the research objectives, namely, the HR practices adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover, contribute to performance deterioration among their employees, contribute to absenteeism among employees, hinder employee development, retention strategies, and secondary outcomes. This discussion will commence by examining the demographic profile of the study participants because it helps provide the study context and an in-depth understanding of the following themes.

#### 6.2 Demographic profile

Demography is "the study of variables characterising human populations" (Vogt & Johnson 2011:102). Demographics can include aspects such as age, sex, ethnicity, and level of education. This study recorded the age, gender, occupation, length of service, and highest qualifications of the study respondents. Most respondents (92.39%) fall under Generation X and Y (26 – 55 years) – this statistic tends to agree with Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:100, who noted that these two generations dominate the 21st century. Researchers (Jiri, 2016:118; Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:100; Teng, 2020:340) attested that such people are more adventurous in trying new opportunities and, if they are dissatisfied with their current situation, they tend to seek better positions. These generations have some preferences that motivate them to stay with their current employer in the institution if they are not satisfied. Generations X and Y advocate for independence, WLB, job security, recognition, work autonomy, career development and growth.

Furthermore, these two generations appreciate being consulted regarding work decisions that involve them, leaders who encourage teamwork, provide regular feedback, and use coaching and mentoring as a leadership style (Jiri, 2016:118; Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:100). However, some of their preferences are not implemented in selected Windhoek PTIs that has resulted in

employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and a decline in employee development.

The results relating to the senior lecturers' qualifications are as follows: undergraduate degrees, postgraduate degrees (honours), and master's degrees – 0.794 (95%CI: -0.129 to -0.368), 0.91 (95%CI: -1.44 to -0.38), 0.8 (95%CI: -1.38 to -0.38) and 0.001 (95%CI: -0.016 to 0.015) respectively, these results were statistically significant. These findings indicate that academic staff holding senior lecturer positions with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are less likely to leave their jobs. Specifically, the results revealed that 7.02% of the respondents are senior lecturers. Hence, they are less likely to leave their jobs since they are unique within the selected Windhoek PTIs. They may be the staff group with six years or more of service in these PTIs, represented by 22.8% of the respondents. They are rewarded because 17.5% of respondents agreed that their remuneration matches similar jobs outside the PTIs. Employees do not see the need to change their employer for 'greener pastures' if they are earning a market-value salary (Nnambooze & Parumasur, 2016:225; Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018:3). Moreover, lecturers with undergraduate degrees, postgraduate degrees (honours) and master's degrees may not leave due to employee development programmes in the PTIs that enable them to gain more experience, as reported by 30% of the respondents.

Additionally, the PTI-1 interviewees mentioned that the academics came without experience and used the institution as a training ground. Once they gained experience and became more competitive, they left the PTI. This statement satisfies the claim that new lecturers join the workplace without experience and use the PTIs' training and mentorship programmes to further their academic careers before finding better employment opportunities (Nnambooze & Parumasur, 2016:226). As a result, this study notes that the fact that academics are less likely to leave their lecturing posts in selected Windhoek PTIs is not attributed to job satisfaction but to personal growth because the results showed that 85% of the respondents were dissatisfied with their jobs and 70% were not retained by the HR practices offered by these institutions (Figure 5.2, pg. 154).

Moreover, most of the lecturers holding undergraduate and honours' degrees in selected Windhoek PTIs are not so likely to get other jobs due to globalisation, which has resulted in a high level of employment competition among these groups and the increasing implementation of lecturers with master and doctoral degrees in the HEI systems (Nerad, 2011:769; Aithal & Aithal, 2019:11). Consequently, the study assumed that all lecturers need to have at least a master's degree because this qualification will improve their employability and suitability for teaching

honours and master's degrees. After all, such qualification has become the norm for most lecturers in HEIs globally. The selected PTIs are also gradually introducing master's programmes into their institutions. It will be a proactive action to have lecturers who have acquired a master's degree because it will help with the accreditation process when introducing new programmes such as master's degrees. PTIs should have lecturers who can teach at the master's level in their system. It is also best practice for lecturers to have a higher qualification than the level they teach to promote excellence. Accordingly, the study results showed that 26.9% of the academic staff possess undergraduate degrees, while 31% have earned honours degrees. It is convenient for lecturers to remain in the selected Windhoek PTIs, where an employee development policy benefits and permits them to advance their qualifications at a low cost. In addition, such academic settings may provide a wealth of networking and collaboration opportunities for academic staff.

Lecturers may value their relationships with colleagues inside and outside their HEIs. These connections can result in research partnerships, knowledge exchange and mutual support, advancing their professional and personal development, making them more competitive in the labour market. Faugoo (2009:215) and Blom et al. (2019:1) support this idea and state that the labour market in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is exceptionally competitive. On this note, some employees of the selected Windhoek PTIs are not motivated to work but have an agenda for remaining or staying because they have no other option, resulting in performance deterioration and absenteeism.

Lastly, there was a high response rate to the questionnaire (95.37%), probably because the questionnaire was launched twice in each selected Windhoek PTI – the number of questionnaires completed at the first launch was too small compared to the population size suggested by researchers (Greener, 2008:47; Kamur, 2011:210; Saunders et al., 2007:205). This high response rate was because the academic staff wanted the selected Windhoek PTIs to improve their HR practices so they could remain in these PTIs, and the study findings are likely to be representative of these three PTIs. PTI-1 contributed most of the completed questionnaires (60.23%), followed by PTI-3 (25.73%) and PTI-2 (14.04%). The number of questionnaires completed depended on the number of academic staff in each PTI. PTI-1 had 150 academic staff, PTI-2 had 25 full-time academic staff, and PTI-3 had 50 full-time academic staff. Therefore, there was a complete representation of each PTI. Furthermore, the findings for the three selected Windhoek PTIs were combined to identify common patterns or trends because the study aimed to propose a formal HRM practices model that will help improve employee retention in Namibian PTIs.

### **6.3 The HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover**

Employee turnover has negative consequences such as increased costs for recruitment and selection (Mello, 2015:574), performance deterioration due to work overload on remaining staff while waiting for a replacement (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017:66), and decreasing knowledge retention that makes developing critical skills difficult (Chaacha & Botha, 2021:10). There is a need to combat the effects of employee turnover that the study's literature review has established. Therefore, the study determined that the informal HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs negatively affected employee turnover. These practices included performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement, and recruitment and selection. Furthermore, the study proposed the following hypotheses connected to employee turnover from the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3 of this report.

- *H<sub>1</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee turnover.*
- *H<sub>2</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee turnover.*
- *H<sub>3</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions, work-life balance, and employee turnover.*
- *H<sub>4</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee turnover.*
- *H<sub>5</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee turnover.*

Among the five proposed hypotheses, only H<sub>3</sub> received support from the data analysis, and H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>, and H<sub>5</sub> were not supported regarding their direct impact on employee turnover in the selected Windhoek PTIs. Nevertheless, qualitative findings and inferences drawn from the data provided by most respondents shed light on informal HR practices that negatively influence employee turnover.

The qualitative results highlighted various aspects contributing to the informal implementation of HR practices within the selected Windhoek PTIs. These informal practices encompassed performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement, and recruitment and selection.

### **6.3.1 Performance management and recognition**

Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> was proposed in line with the informal HR practice of performance management and recognition but was not supported since it had a p-value of 0.547. This coefficient suggests a moderate positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition, but it does not support the hypothesis that this relationship leads to increased employee turnover. The data collected under this HR practice may have been insufficient and yielded inconclusive results. Despite hypothesis H1 not being supported, the study's qualitative results revealed that performance appraisals are conducted annually within the selected Windhoek PTIs, but the study results have failed to link the way performance appraisals were conducted to any performance appraisal method. Additionally, the performance management system for the selected Windhoek PTIs lacked recognition and rewards for good performance.

The performance management system needs to recognise employees for reaching departmental objectives either verbally or financially because such a practice will motivate the employees to continue working hard since they view themselves as valued by the institution (Mollel et al., 2017:45; Aydin & Tiryaki 2018:102). However, regarding the selected Windhoek PTIs, the findings showed a lack of employee recognition. The respondents highlighted issues such as the lack of verbal and financial appreciation of employee accomplishments for meeting departmental objectives. Of the eight interviewees from the three selected Windhoek PTIs, 62.5% noted that academic staff are not given any incentives for good performance. This fact was confirmed by 62.6% of the respondents who answered the questionnaire. Whereas 25% of interviewees at PTI3 mentioned that the incentives were inconsistent and, as a result, they did not have a positive impact on employee retention (Amoatema & Kyeremeh, 2016:16). Subsequently, the informal implementation of this HR practice prompted academic staff to leave the selected Windhoek PTIs. Notably, lack of recognition contributes to the perception of lack of employee appreciation – 52.6% of the respondents indicated that their PTI does not value their efforts. As a result, there will be demotivation and a lack of job satisfaction amongst the staff, leading to employee turnover – a notion supported by Mabaso & Dlamini (2018:4).

### **6.3.2 Remuneration**

Hypothesis H2 was proposed to establish if there is a relationship between remuneration and employee turnover. The study findings did not support this relationship because it had a p-value of 0.431. This figure could have resulted from the variables used because the study did not use

a tested measuring instrument. In support of this is the reliability coefficient of 0.5097, which was below 0.7, which signifies that the questions in this domain were unreliable in measuring the relationship between remuneration and employee turnover. However, the HR practice of remuneration has been established by various authors (Mendis, 2017:70; Shava, 2017:120; Mwanza, 2018:120; Ogony & Majola, 2018:93) as a predictor of employees' intention to leave the institution.

The academics were leaving selected Windhoek PTIs due to their lower remuneration than other institutions (82.5% of the respondents). In this regard, 77.2% of the respondents indicated that their PTI does not offer fringe benefits. Hence, the total reward model encourages employers to include some fringe benefits together with employees' salaries. This practice helps retain employees by creating a more attractive package that enhances employee satisfaction and motivation (Bolger & Hansen, 2021:2). The academic staff in the selected Windhoek PTIs expressed dissatisfaction with their remuneration, leading to increased employee turnover rates. This sentiment was echoed by 100% of the interviewees, who stated that academics often seek other employment that offers better compensation and opportunities. These results tend to agree with Deloitte (2018:35), Mabaso (2018:415), and Boucher and Flynn (2023:2) that a satisfactory salary was crucial in motivating employees to work in an institution. These PTIs should consider implementing formal HR practice that attracts and retains employees and is able to drive behaviours that support the achievement of organisational objectives. This can be achieved by adopting a total reward model without compromising its components.

### **6.3.3 Working conditions and work-life-balance**

The study proposed H<sub>3</sub> in line with the informal HR practice for working conditions and WLB to find their relationship with employee turnover. The research findings revealed a positive relationship between informal working conditions, WLB, and employee turnover. Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub> was supported at the 5% significance level since working conditions and WLB increased the likelihood of employee turnover by an effect of a p-value of 0.012. These findings suggest that as informal working conditions and WLB increase, the likelihood of employee turnover also increases. Meanwhile, the informal working conditions and WLB in selected Windhoek PTIs contribute to employee turnover. Working conditions and WLB were mentioned by 80% of respondents (see Table 5.14, pg.181) as factors influencing employees to leave the selected Windhoek PTIs. This percentage was derived from factors mentioned by respondents, such as job security (22), workload (21), WLB (42), sexual harassment (5), fringe benefits (4) and working

environment (42). It is important to note that these factors contributed to the HR practice of working conditions and WLB. Therefore, the study totalled the frequency of these factors and converted it to a percentage of the total respondents. This action enabled the study to determine the percentage of academic staff influenced by working conditions to leave the selected Windhoek PTIs. Among the factors mentioned by respondents relating to working conditions, some have a low frequency, such as sexual harassment and fringe benefits. Thus, this section will not discuss them since the researcher assumed they have less effect because only a few respondents highlighted them.

#### a) Job security

All the employees in the selected Windhoek PTIs are employed on a five-year contract that is renewed based on performance, apart from foreign nationals whose contracts are renewed based on both performance and the non-availability of a Namibian academic having the required qualification and experience (mentioned by 100% of the respondents). However, despite this contractual arrangement, the lack of job security has significantly impacted on employee turnover within the selected Windhoek PTIs. This finding tends to agree with the results of a study conducted by Lee et al. (2018:342) and Mahadi et al. (2020:205) in different industries. The uncertain nature of contract renewal, dependence on performance evaluations, and the possible availability of local candidates with equivalent qualifications contributed to increased job insecurity among employees. Job security plays a vital role in influencing employee satisfaction, performance and employee turnover (Chiat & Panatik, 2019:13). Consequently, employees may actively seek alternative employment opportunities with greater job security, resulting in increased employee turnover.

#### b) Workload

The study's findings indicate that academic staff members in the selected Windhoek PTIs often work longer than stipulated in their employment contracts. Most respondents (85.97%) reported this fact, agreeing that they exceeded the specified working hours to meet the job requirements. Additionally, a high percentage of respondents (85.38%) indicated that they work on weekends. The findings highlight a significant issue regarding the workload experienced by academic staff within the selected Windhoek PTIs. Working longer than their contractual obligations indicates substantial and possibly excessive job demands. The necessity for many respondents to work during weekends further underscores their workload's intensity and extended nature.

This excessive workload has negatively impacted academic staff's work-life balance (WLB), with 69% of respondents reporting dissatisfaction with their WLB. This observation aligns with a study conducted by Pieters et al. (2022:7) at a public university in Namibia, which also found that academic staff have excessive workloads. Generation X and Y, who dominate the selected PTIs, highly value WLB; its absence leads to job dissatisfaction and increased intentions to leave (Jiri, 2016; Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017; Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Teng, 2020; Mahadi et al., 2020:205).

Furthermore, long working hours cause performance deterioration due to fatigue and burnout, negatively affecting absenteeism, employee turnover, and overall performance (Panigrahi, 2016; Singh et al., 2016). Given that Generation X and Y comprise 92.39% of the sample population, addressing WLB is critical to reducing job dissatisfaction and turnover.

#### **6.3.4 Career development and growth**

Hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> proposed a relationship between the informal HR practices of career development and growth and employee turnover. The statistical analysis of the data revealed that this hypothesis was not supported, as evidenced by the high p-value of 0.6. This finding indicates that the study's factors, specifically those related to career development and growth, failed to demonstrate a significant relationship with employee turnover. Despite hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> not being supported, the findings indicated that respondents disagreed significantly with various career development and growth aspects within the selected Windhoek PTIs. These aspects include applying a career development policy, clarity of career progression pathways, availability of promotion policies, sponsorship for formal learning and development, implementation of training and development policies and opportunities for advancement.

Most respondents (71.3%) disagreed that their PTI applied a career development policy enabling employee career growth. Therefore, the study surmises that no structured and supportive career development initiatives were implemented within the selected Windhoek PTIs. This finding corresponds with Table 3.5 (see pg.116), which presents the policies used by the selected Windhoek PTIs in which no career development policy exists. A clear policy enables academics to identify and pursue career growth opportunities that can impact academic motivation and job satisfaction, thereby influencing employee turnover as established by Chaacha and Botha (2021:7). Similarly, a significant percentage of respondents (76%) disagreed that there was a career progression pathway within their PTI. This lack of clarity can lead to uncertainty and frustration among academic staff regarding the criteria and steps for career advancement.



Consequently, a clear and transparent career progression pathway is crucial for academic staff to understand their growth opportunities and make informed decisions regarding their professional development (Hutagalung & Andriyani, 2020:102). On this note, promotion and growth opportunities encourage academic staff to adopt self-development programmes and remain in their positions as they look forward to progressing up the ladder. Failure to see growth opportunities will cause the academics to look for opportunities where they can grow, leading to an increase in employee turnover (Das & Baruah, 2013:11; Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32, Singh, 2019:427). Correspondingly, 62% of the respondents disagreed that their PTI provides a policy for promotion. The study, thus, supposes that the selected Windhoek PTIs lack formal guidelines or criteria that are used for promoting employees. The absence of such a policy can create ambiguity and a sense of unfairness in the promotion process, potentially impacting employees' morale and prompting academic staff to search for HEIs with a clear promotion policy.

Most respondents (90%) disagreed with the notion that PTIs sponsor their employees' formal learning and development. This finding stresses the lack of financial support and limited opportunities for employees to access new knowledge and skills through formal training programmes. The absence of the respondents' PTI's support for formal learning and development is evident because the currently supported formal training programmes in the selected Windhoek PTIs are limited to academics who have enrolled in programmes offered directly by their respective PTI. All the interviewees revealed the fact that formal training could be attained for free or at a 40% discount on programmes offered by their PTI. This practice does not benefit many employees since the selected Windhoek PTIs only offer a limited number of master's and doctoral degrees (see Tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4, pg. 111-113) that show the programmes each faculty offers in the selected Windhoek PTIs. In this regard, 35.1% of the respondents hold a master's degree, which makes their next achievement a doctoral degree. However, only one of the three selected Windhoek PTIs (33.3%) offers two doctoral programmes. Therefore, most formal training programmes available will benefit only academic staff with undergraduate degrees (26.9% of the respondents) and those with honours degrees (31%). It is important to note that 35.1% of the respondents who have acquired master's degrees do not benefit from this HR practice of formal training and development and, thus, are likely to leave the selected Windhoek PTIs since growth opportunities tend to encourage employees to continue developing themselves and remain in those institutions that offer such development (Das & Baruah, 2013:11; Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32). Additionally, 65% of the respondents disagreed that the training and development policy within their PTI promotes employee development. This result indicates a perceived gap in

implementing policies or initiatives that support employee training and skills enhancement. A comprehensive training and development policy is crucial for fostering a learning culture and ensuring that employees have access to relevant training opportunities to enhance their competencies (Coetzer et al., 2017:120; Janev et al., 2018:17). Additionally, 65% of respondents expressed significant disagreement that the selected Windhoek PTIs offer opportunities for advancement. This finding highlights a lack of career progression and advancement opportunities within the said PTIs that can lead to talent stagnation. The absence of opportunities for employees to acquire new knowledge and skills and receive promotions can negatively impact employee motivation, job satisfaction and retention (Azeez, 2017:5; Lin & Huang, 2021:420).

Respectively, one of the interviewees from PTI-1 mentioned that the institution began encouraging research and publication in 2022, allowing academics to publish articles in the PTI's journal without paying a fee. However, given the pressures of globalization and the necessity for academics to publish in high-ranking journals to remain competitive, there is a risk that they may leave their institution for one that better supports their research and growth objectives. While this practice partially supports career development and growth, it may not be sufficient to retain academic staff seeking more robust advancement opportunities.

### **6.3.5 Labour relations and involvement**

Hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> was proposed to find if there is a relationship between the informal HR practice for labour relations and involvement and increased employee turnover. This hypothesis was not supported since it had a p-value of 0.991. This finding illustrates that the variables used by the study to measure labour relations and involvement were insignificant regarding employee turnover. Despite hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> not being supported, the study findings revealed positive aspects and areas for improvement within the HR practice of labour relations and involvement in the selected Windhoek PTIs, such as good working relations, formal disciplinary and grievance management procedures, and job descriptions. However, there is a need to address concerns related to performance evaluation, resolving grievances, and communication of vision, mission, and values. Most respondents (66.67%) disagreed that the performance evaluation processes in their PTI were fair and consistent. This finding suggested a perceived lack of fairness and consistency in evaluating employee performance that can potentially affect motivation, job satisfaction, and employee morale (Le, 2020:17). Additionally, a considerable number of respondents (63.75%) disagreed that the vision, mission, and values of their PTI were effectively communicated to employees. This finding showed a need for improvement in communicating the

organisational vision, mission, and values to ensure academic staff understand and align with their PTI's goals and values, thereby boosting employee involvement and for them to have a sense of being valued by the institutions (Wilkins et al., 2018:60; Delbari et al., 2021:766).

Similarly, a significant number of respondents (64.91%) disagreed that grievances were resolved amicably in their PTI, leading to unsolved grievances (Amupanda 2019:1). This finding showed that resolving employee grievances within the selected Windhoek PTIs might require attention and improvement to ensure a fair and satisfactory outcome for all involved parties. Unsolved grievances often lead to dissatisfaction, which causes performance deterioration (Nosike et al., 2023:230) and employee turnover (Dunford et al., 2020: 546). Surprisingly, these PTIs have grievance and disciplinary procedures to be followed to solve conflicts. It, thus, appears that the availability of a policy does not necessarily mean the correct implementation of the HR practice since 30% of the respondents reported that the selected Windhoek PTIs have academics who have experienced unsolved conflict, poor employee welfare, ill-treatment, victimisation, lack of teamwork and do not feel valued. These factors compromised the implementation of the HR practice for employee relations and involvement, highlighted by Meyer (2014:37). This finding implied that the high employee turnover rate in selected Windhoek PTIs was contributed to by the informal implementation of the HR practice for labour relations and involvement.

### **6.3.6 Recruitment and selection**

The recruitment and selection policy in selected Windhoek PTIs guides the recruitment and selection process. This practice enables consistency because written policies promote consistent policy implementation (Meyer, 2014:37). It is important to note that effective management of recruitment is crucial as it promotes employee performance at the same time reducing employee turnover (Aliyu, 2021:184; Mihi, 2023:29). Therefore, it is essential for the selected PTIs to adopt formal and current practices for recruitment and selection. For instance, when the study was conducted, the selected Windhoek PTIs followed the recruitment and selection policy, advertised vacant posts on institution websites, Facebook, national newspapers and noticeboards, conducted interviews and provided an induction programme for new employees (mentioned by all respondents). In this regard, the study noted that the selected Windhoek PTIs have not yet adopted the current recruitment process that can attract a large pool of applicants in this era of globalisation, such as e-recruitment, as emphasized by authors such as Armstrong and Taylor (2023:229), D'Silva (2020:208) and Mahapatro (2021:72). Moreover, the efficacy of using noticeboards in a professional environment predominantly characterised by Generation X and Z

employees (92.39% of the respondents) who are well-known for their technological proficiency needs careful examination. Given their technological 'savvy,' it is possible to assert that relying solely on noticeboards as a means of communication may be ineffective in engaging Generation X and Z employees in the information disseminated in this manner 'outdated' manner.

In addition, the study noted aspects of the recruitment and selection process that need to be attended to, specifically that the employment equity statement on job advertisements is only included in the advertisements prepared by PTI-1. The exclusion of the employment equity statement from the job advertisements of PTI-2 and PTI-3 meant that their HR practice of recruitment and selection is informally implemented. Since the employment equity statement shows that institutions' policies are discrimination-free (O'Brien et al., 2016:616). The absence of the employment equity statement in job advertisements for PTI-2 and PTI-3 suggests that some traits of discrimination in selected Windhoek PTIs adversely affect job satisfaction, thereby causing employee turnover (Thrasher et al., 2016:202; Olori et al., 2017:55).

Another significant finding was that 66.66% of the interviewees highlighted that there are times when they use "head hunting" as a recruitment method. This approach deviates from the standard recruitment and selection process because candidates are not always interviewed. It is important to note that while "headhunting" is typical for scarce skills, the PTIs should still follow the appropriate HR procedure for recruitment and selection (Baykal, 2020:247). However, lack of consistency in selection procedures compromises the recruitment and selection process in the selected Windhoek PTIs. This tends to agree with the study conducted by Mahapatro (2021:76) in China. The study assumed that candidates may not be interviewed due to limited time because the post needs to be filled promptly. Hence, this informal process can result in employing a person who is not competent for the job. This finding is consistent with the practice observed in family-owned businesses, where recruitment often occurs through social networks (Steijvers et al., 2017:151; Csillag et al., 2019:57; Mira et al., 2019:782). However, such informal recruitment methods can lead to incorrect job placements, resulting in employee turnover and potentially affecting performance (Aliyu, 2021:184; Mihu, 2023:29).

The above findings demonstrate that the recruitment and selection HR practice at two out of three selected Windhoek PTIs is compromised. This result aligns with previous research suggesting that compromised recruitment and selection practices can negatively affect employee turnover and performance (Denver et al., 2018:494; Lee et al., 2018:19; Aliyu, 2021:184).

In summary, the informal HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affected employee turnover were identified as performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement, and recruitment and selection. These HR practices are informally implemented, thereby triggering employee turnover. Performance management and recognition lacked recognition for good performance. Remuneration was pronounced low because it was not based on the market value and lacked fringe benefits. There are some good working conditions and WLB practices in selected Windhoek PTIs. However, the work overload that makes academic staff work outside contractual hours and during weekends affects WLB, triggering employee turnover and lack of job security. The absence of the career development and growth policy affected career development and growth policy, resulting in a lack of clarity in career progression pathways. The selected Windhoek PTIs are providing financial support for formal learning and development. This support primarily benefits academic staff with undergraduate and honours degrees, who can pursue degrees offered directly by their respective institutions. Employee relations and involvement – Despite the positive aspects highlighted by respondents, they perceived a lack of fairness and consistency in evaluating employee performance and a lack of involvement as the vision, mission, and values are not communicated to employees. Additionally, they were unsolved conflicts even though there was a disciplinary and grievance procedure to be used to solve conflicts in these Windhoek PTIs. On the proposed hypothesis, the study found a positive relationship between informal working conditions, WLB, and employee turnover.

#### **6.4 HR practices contributing to performance deterioration among selected Windhoek PTIs' employees**

To address this theme, the study asked questions that checked the implementation of HR practices such as performance management and recognition, career development and growth, remuneration, working conditions WLB, and employee relations and involvement. Furthermore, hypotheses were proposed in Chapter 3 to establish the relationship between these HR practices (employee performance and recognition, remuneration, working conditions, WLB, employee relations, and involvement) and performance deterioration, as reiterated below.

- *H<sub>6</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee performance management and recognition and performance deterioration.*
- *H<sub>7</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee performance deterioration.*

- *H<sub>8</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions, work-life balance, and employee performance deterioration.*
- *H<sub>9</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee performance deterioration.*
- *H<sub>10</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee performance deterioration.*

Surprisingly, none of these hypotheses were significantly associated with performance deterioration because they were not supported since all the test results were  $P \leq 0.05$ . Nevertheless, the studies conducted by other researchers (Cera & Kusaku, 2020:26; Saleem & Khurshid, 2014:679) that tested HR practices such as remuneration, recognition and working conditions were supported. Meanwhile, this study assumed that *H<sub>6</sub> to H<sub>9</sub>* was not supported because the above researchers used different research methods from the one used by this study, and their sample sizes were more significant than that of this study. In support of this assertion, Goodhue, Lewis and Thompson (2006:9) noted that if the sample size is too small, the tests may fail to detect meaningful relationships in larger populations, even if they exist between the variables and performance deterioration.

However, qualitative results revealed that performance management and recognition, and working conditions (workload) contributed to performance deterioration in selected Windhoek PTIs. In this regard, 51% of the respondents identified performance management and lack of recognition as contributing to performance deterioration (Table 5.15, pg. 185) and workload (Table 5.3, pg. 157).

#### **6.4.1 Performance management and recognition**

The investigation of implementing HR practices for performance management and recognition was a significant aspect of this study because it provided insights into how the selected Windhoek PTIs managed employee performance. These findings identified standard and varying practices in implementing performance management within the selected Windhoek PTIs. The common practice observed was the annual appraisal of academic staff mentioned by all (100%) interviewees. This finding indicated that the selected Windhoek PTIs recognised the importance of regularly evaluating employee performance. However, there were variations in the individuals responsible for the appraisals and the specific performance appraisal methods used. In PTI-1, 50% of the interviewees indicated that the HoDs appraised academics. In PTI-2, 25% of the

interviewees indicated that the HoDs and the students assessed academics. In PTI-3, 25% of the interviewees indicated that PAs were conducted by the HoDs, the quality assurance committee and the students. These differences show that there may be inconsistencies in how the selected Windhoek PTIs approach performance management.

The study revealed a significant gap in the appraisal practices of the selected Windhoek PTIs, failing to link the appraisal of academics to any specific method. It was observed that the appraisal system currently adopted does not incorporate feedback from colleagues and other stakeholders with whom the employee interacts during their work, as recommended by Idowu (2017:36), Ramchandani and Aggarwal (2018:81) and Shrestha (2022:145). This limitation is critical, as inclusive feedback systems are recommended for a more holistic performance evaluation.

The reliance on a limited number of evaluators in the appraisal process opens the door to potential biases, subjectivity, and halo errors (Ramchandani & Aggarwal, 2018:81; Shrestha, 2022:142). These issues are well-documented problems that can undermine the fairness and effectiveness of performance appraisals. Consequently, these biases and errors can lead to job dissatisfaction among employees, which, in turn, negatively impacts performance (Tiwari & Saxena, 2012:693; Van Niekerk et al., 2017:221; Chen et al., 2019:5; Obiekwe & Eke, 2019:1).

These findings stress the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive appraisal system within the selected Windhoek PTIs to enhance job satisfaction and reduce adverse outcomes such as low performance, absenteeism, and turnover. Incorporating diverse evaluators and perspectives could mitigate these issues and contribute to a more supportive and motivating work environment.

Additionally, PAs were only used for the promotion of academic staff at PTI-1 (33% of the respondents), whereas the outcomes from performance appraisals also can be used to increase employee development and training (Mollel et al., 2017:45; Idowu, 2017:36; Aydin & Tiryaki, 2018:102; Zondo, 2018:6; Shresta, 2022:145). At the same time, the other two selected PTIs in Windhoek did not implement feedback mechanisms. Feedback plays a crucial role in performance management because it helps employees to know both their strengths and areas for improvement (Makokha et al., 2017:24; Saraih et al., 2017:74; Bansal et al., 2018:108; Shrestha, 2022:145). This lack of feedback mechanism suggests a lack of strategy to enhance employee performance and development. This assumption correlates with the findings of research conducted by Baporikar and Smith (2019:36) in one of Namibia's public universities. This study surmises that PAs were completed to meet the NTA's requirements since academics are not being given feedback on the results of these practices, nor are they being used for staff development. This

practice is not a new occurrence that selected PTIs in Windhoek completed appraisals merely to meet the requirements of NTA; it is also common in public departments (Mollel et al., 2017:18). Hence, improving performance is not prioritized, leading to performance deterioration.

This study recommends that the selected Windhoek PTIs provide academic staff with feedback on the PAs and use the highlighted weakness to craft employee development and training programmes because these processes will enhance performance. In addition, there was a lack of incentives for good performance, plus the fact that even when recognition and rewards were provided, they were not consistent, as indicated by 78.94% of the respondents. This lack of recognition makes academics feel undervalued since 66.67% of the respondents disagreed that their PTI values its employees, thus suggesting that employees may not feel adequately appreciated and motivated to perform at their best. When employees are not valued or recognised, they tend to lack the motivation to meet departmental objectives, leading to performance deterioration and employee turnover. Conversely, motivated employees tend to be productive, creative, and willing to continue working at the institution (Mcshane & Glinow, 2017:320; Chiat & Panatik, 2019:13). The study results likewise agreed with those of Baporikar and Smith (2019:36) and Amushila and Bussin (2021:9), which indicated that if the HR practice for performance management is informally implemented, it does not yield the expected results.

#### **6.4.2 Workload**

This study noted that the selected Windhoek PTIs do not have a formal HR policy regarding the academic workload that ensures lecturers have equitable distribution of academic activities, as highlighted by 71.4% (see Table 5.3, pg.157) of the respondents. This finding concurs with Table 3.5 above, which presents the policies used by Windhoek PTIs in which the workload policy is not included. This deficiency resulted in work overload being identified as a contributor to performance deterioration in selected Windhoek PTIs, as recorded in the respondents' responses to open-ended questions. This finding suggests that academics' time is not appropriately allocated, leading to work overload, as reflected in the study conducted by Okeke-Uzodike and Gamede (2021:34) as well as that of Pieters et al. (2022:8) in one of the Namibian HEIs. Work overload tends to trigger work stress and burnout among academic staff (Boncori et al., 2020:63; Miller, 2019:643; Pieters et al., 2022:8), resulting in performance deterioration and employee turnover (Badubi, 2017:36; Shava, 2017:120; Singh et al., 2016:110; Garba & Jacob, 2021:61).



The participating academics from the selected Windhoek PTIs highlighted the issue of inconsistencies in workload allocation and consequent work overload. It is evident that this lack of a work management system (WMS) in these selected Windhoek PTIs will lead to some components (administration, teaching and learning, research, research supervision, community engagement and academic citizenship) of the WMS being compromised. These deficiencies will prompt academic staff to create time out of working hours to compensate for compromised components. Additionally, academic staff may perceive a lack of fairness in allocating academic responsibilities among faculty members, creating a perception of favouritism and triggering job dissatisfaction. Therefore, selected PTIs should have a work management system that promotes lecturers' growth and WLB since the workload needs to support academics' career progression and growth, leading to improved performance and employee retention.

In conclusion, the HR practices that impacted performance deterioration among employees of the selected Windhoek PTIs were performance management, recognition, working conditions and WLB (workload). Although the academics are appraised annually, the method employed cannot be linked to any formal appraisal method. There is a need for an approach that incorporates the views of all the people interacting with the academic staff members while completing their various tasks. Similarly, the selected Windhoek PTIs' informal implementation of the HR practice for performance management and recognition lacks an appropriate feedback mechanism. The academics' workload contributed to performance deterioration because of the absence of a formal workload policy. It is important to note that even a moderate deterioration in employee performance can increase employee turnover.

### **6.5 Factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs**

Regarding this theme, this study investigated absenteeism-related factors, such as performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, and employee relations and involvement. In addition, the study proposed the following hypotheses to establish the relationship between various HR practices (performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement) and absenteeism. These hypotheses include the following.

- *H<sub>11</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and absenteeism.*

- *H<sub>12</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and absenteeism.*
- *H<sub>13</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance and absenteeism.*
- *H<sub>14</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and absenteeism.*
- *H<sub>15</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and absenteeism.*

The study findings revealed that absenteeism in selected PTIs was caused by the informal implementation of the HR practices for performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and work-life balance (workload, limited leave days, sickness and personal issues and performing part-time jobs), career development and growth, and employee relations and involvement and job dissatisfaction. It is important to note that the informal implementation of highlighted HR practices are the ones that cause job dissatisfaction that triggers absenteeism (Grigore, 2020:416; Alfaki & Alkan, 2021:3087; Alkuwait et al., 2021:9; Garba & Jacob, 2021:61).

#### **6.5.1 Performance management and recognition**

The study results indicated that H<sub>12</sub> was statistically supported at a 1% significance level. The positive effect of 0.361 (95% CI: 0.211 to 0.512) suggests that higher levels of informal performance management and recognition are associated with increased absenteeism. This finding implies that when employees perceive informal performance management and recognition practices, they are more likely to absent themselves from duty. In this regard, there is an informal implementation of performance management and recognition at the selected Windhoek PTIs since academic staff feel undervalued, as reflected by 66.67% of the respondents; the weaknesses of academic staff are not addressed to improve performance and lack of constant recognition for good performance. These informal HR practices tend to cause job dissatisfaction, leading to absenteeism (Alfaki & Alkan, 2021:3087; Alkuwait et al., 2021:9).

#### **6.5.2 Remuneration**

The study findings showed that the academic staff in selected PTIs are paid low remuneration, which leads them to engage in part-time jobs during working hours to meet their needs. This finding aligns with the studies conducted by Gaidhani, et al. (2019:2811) and Boucher and Flynn

(2023:2) on the characteristics of Generation Z. As academic staff try to increase their income, they cannot be in two places simultaneously, resulting in absenteeism from their primary institution. The study concludes that lower remuneration forces academic staff to explore different ways to widen their income, reducing their motivation and morale and increasing absenteeism (Karimbil, 2019:276; Ali & Ainebyona, 2020:63).

### **6.5.3 Working conditions and WLB**

Regarding  $H_{13}$ , this study found a significant relationship between working conditions, WLB, and absenteeism at a 1% significance level. The estimated positive effect of 0.173 (95% CI: 0.039 to 0.307) suggests that poorer working conditions and WLB are associated with increased absenteeism. This finding implies that when employees perceive unfavourable working conditions and a lack of WLB, they are most likely to be absent from duty (Garba & Jacob, 2021:61).

On this note, the qualitative results of this study reflected poor working conditions in these selected Windhoek PTIs, such as work overload and limited leave days that academic staff can use during the year, which resulted in absenteeism.

#### *6.5.3.1 Work overload*

The Sankey diagram (Figure 5.6, pg. 161) indicates a thick line of workload, which implies that many academic staff in selected Windhoek PTIs are absent from work due to work overload. These results concurred with the responses given by HR practitioners of selected PTIs in Windhoek, Namibia. Academic staff is required to lecture, perform administrative work, supervise, and conduct research. These tasks contribute to evaluating academic staff's performance in the selected Windhoek PTIs. They resort to absenteeism to meet work deadlines and personal growth needs to achieve the required performance rating. Moreover, academic growth lies in their educational qualifications and research output. Hence, most respondents (35.1%) only possess a master's degree in a competitive labour market in which engagement in doctoral studies increases their competitiveness.

It is important to note that work overload causes employee stress and burnout, triggering absenteeism, performance deterioration and employee turnover (Badubi, 2017:36; Chiat & Panatik, 2019:13; Grigore, 2020:416). Consequently, the burnout and fatigue reported by 52.02% of the respondents may result from work overload and, thus, have caused academic staff to absent themselves from duty. A significant percentage of respondents (50.3%) agreed that they

had an acute medical condition that required them to stay away from work. This finding suggests that a considerable portion of the workforce faces health challenges that impact their ability to attend work regularly. This study assumed that some acute medical conditions could be triggered by fatigue and burnout caused by work overload in these selected Windhoek PTIs due to the lack of a formal HR workload policy that promotes WLB supportive policies and practices that help ensure employees' well-being.

#### 6.5.3.2 *Leave days*

The system in which academics' leave days are implemented in the selected Windhoek PTIs results in academic staff working almost continually without sufficient time to rest, as highlighted by 100% of the interviewees. The HR practitioners in the selected Windhoek PTIs noted that academics are entitled to five working days' leave during the year and 19 days at the end of the second semester; thus, the leave days are limited for an academic to rest and participate in family life. As a result, the academics absent themselves from work without permission. The HR practitioners observed that employees absent themselves without permission tended to bring a medical certificate from a doctor – such a practice implies that limiting how employees utilise their leave days might force academic staff to opt for this unofficial method to take time off when needed. This has led to an abuse of sick leave in selected PTIs; however, this practice is common in institutions where employees are denied leave days (Badudi,2017: 36; Grigore 2020:416).

It is important to note that this informal HR practice regarding the allocation of leave days increases the absenteeism rate in selected Windhoek PTIs while contributing to performance deterioration. The lack of appropriate rest periods and overtime might eventually result in burnout and a decline in employee performance. At the same time, a lack of WLB can also adversely affect academic productivity, quality of work, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the misuse of sick leave burdens other employees who are always at work, creating a perception of mistrust between the employer and management, impacting employee morale and contributing to developing a culture of absenteeism in the selected Windhoek PTIs. However, the results of this study showed that the absenteeism problems faced by these three PTIs had not reached the extent of being an organisational culture because 78.2% of the respondents disagreed that the selected Windhoek PTIs have a culture of absenteeism, thereby indicating that they have not adopted such a culture.

Therefore, the selected Windhoek PTIs need to remedy this challenge before absenteeism becomes an organisational culture by amending their current leave policy to ensure it promotes a healthy work environment.

#### **6.5.4 Career development and growth**

This study found significant support for H<sub>14</sub>, indicating a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and absenteeism. This hypothesis was supported at a 1% level of significance. The positive effect of 1.676 (95% CI: 1.186 to 2.167) denotes that higher levels of informal career development and growth are associated with increased absenteeism. Accordingly, academics will likely be absent from duty when the informal career development and growth score increases. More than half of the respondents (71.4%) stated that the selected Windhoek PTIs implemented a career development policy that did not promote academic career growth. This study assumed that if this informal HR policy is not promoting career growth, it forces academics to create their own time for personal growth. Consequently, academic staff may fail to balance their professional roles with personal growth demands, resulting in absenteeism.

Additionally, the lack of career growth within the selected Windhoek PTIs may encourage academic staff to seek other alternatives for professional growth individually, such as online learning and distance education, leading to absenteeism while attending to personal growth issues. There is a scarcity of lecturers who possess PhDs in the selected Windhoek PTIs; thus, the above practice may apply especially to the 35.1% of the respondents with master's degrees who need to pursue doctoral studies. Consequently, self-funding is needed to pursue this higher qualification if the academic staff in the selected Windhoek PTIs are to remain competitive. Due to this fact, a career development policy is needed to cater for paid study leave and individual personal growth opportunities within a structured framework because this will reduce absenteeism.

#### **6.5.5 Labour relations and involvement**

The findings for hypothesis H<sub>16</sub> demonstrated a significant positive relationship between informal labour relations and involvement and absenteeism at a 1% significance level. The estimated positive effect of -0.273 (95% CI: -0.464 to -0.082) suggests that higher levels of informal employee relations and involvement are associated with increased absenteeism. This result converges with the qualitative results as illustrated by a thick line on a Sankey diagram (see

Figure 5.6, pg. 161), further supporting the relationship between these factors. The themes contributing to this HR practice included unsolved conflict and labour relations, further supported by 64.9% of respondents who disagreed that the employees' grievances were resolved amicably in the selected Windhoek PTIs. These findings show that academic staff are dissatisfied with the grievance resolution process within these PTIs, thus increasing absenteeism (Alkuwait et al., 2021:9; Garba & Jacon, 2021:61). Academics' grievances may not be resolved amicably due to ineffective communication channels that compromise the implementation of the grievance procedure (Amupanda, 2019:1).

### **6.5.6 Control and management**

The management of absenteeism is one of the HR functions that need to be effective at a workplace because ineffective absenteeism policies result in employees not taking absenteeism seriously, thereby creating a culture of absenteeism in the institution (Badudi, 2017:34; Garba & Jacob 2021:60; Alfaki & Alkan, 2021:3087). This study noted that 50% of the interviewees reported that their PTI used a manual check-in/check-out method to monitor their academic staff's attendance. In contrast, the other 50% of the respondents mentioned that the Sage payroll system records academic staff leave days but does not monitor their absenteeism. Therefore, there is no record of their unauthorised leave days. This study notes that using a logbook for manually monitoring absenteeism can be less effective because it can/may be subject to manipulation since academic staff can check in/check out on behalf of their colleagues. This practice raises concerns regarding the accuracy and reliability of the data collected through manual monitoring methods.

On the other hand, this study also assumed that a monitoring mode that involves excessive supervision, such as manual check-in/check-out, may decrease autonomy within the selected Windhoek PTIs, even though it can be a measure to control dual employment (engaging in part-time jobs) that seems to be common among the selected Windhoek PTIs' academic staff. However, excessive supervision decreases autonomy and can impact employees' job satisfaction (Wilkins et al., 2018:60; Delbari et al., 2021:766), triggering absenteeism. Correspondingly, there is a need for an effective HR absenteeism management system that promotes transparency, ensures that employees are held accountable for their attendance and leave, and promotes fair and consistent treatment without micro-managing academic staff.

The findings of the factors influencing absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs enabled this study to statistically prove that increased informal performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth,

employee relations and involvement are associated with increased absenteeism in these PTIs. These results indicate that the selected Windhoek PTIs should be cautious of the impact of the implementation of these identified informal HR practices on absenteeism. Meanwhile, the informal implementation of the HR practice for performance management that lacks recognition of academic staff's good performance has prompted academic staff to prioritise part-time jobs, neglecting their primary job and resulting in increased absenteeism. Likewise, the HR practice relating to working conditions and WLB is affected by workload, limited leave days during the year, and practices that have caused fatigue, lack of WLB, and burnout in the selected Windhoek PTIs. Due to the lack of a formal HR policy that promotes career development and growth, academic staff are absent to meet the needs for their personal growth. Unresolved conflicts in these three PTIs affect the successful implementation of the HR practice for employee relations and involvement. The selected Windhoek PTIs also lacks effective absenteeism management.

## **6.6 Obstacles hindering employee development within selected Windhoek PTIs**

The obstacles hindering employee development within the selected Windhoek PTIs included the informal implementation of HR practices such as performance management and recognition, as well as deficiencies in career development and growth, working conditions and work-life balance (WLB), remuneration, and employee relations and involvement (see Table 5.10, pg.167). Additionally, lack of financial resources and PTIs' commitment further impedes employee development (see Figure 5.7, pg.193). Addressing these challenges is crucial because employee development is an essential HR practice in 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education institutions (HEIs). It enables academics to equip students with valuable skills needed in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). As highlighted by human capital theory, institutions need to foster a culture of continuous learning to ensure academics are always equipped with the necessary skills, thereby meeting institutional objectives and improving academic performance (Rahman & Akhter,2021:71). Furthermore, effective employee development reduces employee turnover and absenteeism, promotes job satisfaction, and leads to the production of high-calibre graduates, enhancing the institution's reputation (Janev et al., 2018:17; Jaworski et al., 2018:1; Cera & Kusaku, 2020:19). Recognising these benefits, this study proposed five hypotheses related to employee development, which are discussed in detail below:

- *H<sub>16</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee development.*

- *H<sub>17</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee development.*
- *H<sub>18</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal working conditions and work-life balance, as well as employee development.*
- *H<sub>19</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal career development and growth and employee development.*
- *H<sub>20</sub> There is a positive relationship between informal employee relations and involvement and employee development.*

The analysis of the data collected from participants showed that hypothesis H<sub>17</sub>, which proposed a positive relationship between informal remuneration and employee development, was not supported by the findings. The coefficient of 0.72 suggests a relatively strong positive effect but did not reach statistical significance. Whereas hypotheses H<sub>16</sub>, H<sub>18</sub>, H<sub>19</sub>, and H<sub>20</sub> were supported at 5%, and H<sub>22</sub> was supported at 10%.

### **6.6.1 Performance management and recognition**

The study hypothesised (H<sub>18</sub>) a positive relationship between informal performance management and recognition and employee development. The positive effect of employee development was estimated to be 0.133 (95%CI: 0.088 to 0.178), and this relationship was supported at a 1% level of significance. This result indicates that when employees perceive effective informal performance management practices and receive recognition for their work, their employee development positively impacts the HEI. In contrast, such development did not occur within the selected Windhoek PTIs. The informal HR performance management and recognition practice implemented in these PTIs negatively impacted employee development because it is not linked to employee development activities.

Academic staff are motivated when they receive feedback highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. The selected Windhoek PTIs should recognise their academic staff's strengths with monetary or non-monetary rewards and facilitate development activities that mitigate their weakness (Makokha et al., 2017:24; Saraih et al., 2017:74; Bansal et al., 2018:108; Barkhuizen et al., 2020:180; Shin et al., 2023:161). However, the employee development and training initiatives conducted in these selected Windhoek PTIs are not informed by the performance management system, as highlighted by 100% of the interviewees, but are guided by the environment, management, and HR staff. If the weaknesses of the academic staff guide such



programmes, HR staff can devise various methods of closing the performance gap (Chen et al., 2023:2514). Besides, the absence of a direct link between performance evaluations and development programmes can result in a disjointed and inconsistent approach to identifying and addressing employee development needs. This practice may reduce academic participation in employee development activities because academics will not value what is offered since it does not close their performance gap. Likewise, a notable percentage (68.42%) of the respondents disagreed that under-performing employees are provided with training and development opportunities to reach the required job standard. This finding indicates a potential gap in addressing performance issues and providing appropriate support to enhance employees' skills and performance levels that can be achieved through employee development initiatives. Surprisingly, 100% of the interviewees reported that the selected Windhoek PTIs provide employee development programmes for academic staff linked to their job requirements. Hence, the study assumed that while the employee development activities were linked to job requirements and equipped academic staff with new knowledge, they were not addressing the existing weaknesses among academic staff.

## **6.6.2 Working conditions and WLB**

This study hypothesised a positive relationship between informal working conditions and WLB and employee development. The positive effect of employee development was estimated to be 0.097 (95%CI: 0.057 to 0.137), and this relationship was supported at a 1% level of significance. This result implies that favourable working conditions and a healthy WLB contribute to employees' development within the selected Windhoek PTIs.

Conversely, this HR practice was being compromised in selected Windhoek PTIs since some contributing factors have been reported to hinder employee development, such as workload allocation and work policies, since they are represented by a thick line in a Sankey Diagram (see Figure 5.7, pg. 193).

### *6.6.2.1 Workload allocation*

Academic staff in the selected Windhoek PTIs have a very demanding work schedule – they are expected to teach, research, supervise students' research, perform administrative duties and participate in community engagement and academic citizenship (Miller, 2019:640; Okeke-Uzodike & Gamede, 2021:1). This excessive workload has affected employee development negatively as is illustrated by a thick line in a Sankey diagram (see Figure 5.7, pg. 193). This thick

line on the Sankey diagram indicates that many respondents mentioned a demanding work schedule hindering employee development. Teaching is the core business of a HEI. Hence, it is allocated the most hours, leaving only a few hours for research supervision, research and administration. This work allocation compromised employee development because academics had to spend most of the time achieving institutional objectives (Barnes et al., 2021:8).

#### *6.6.2.2 Work policies*

The thick line on the Sankey diagram (see Figure 5.7, pg.197) indicated that the selected Windhoek PTIs have some policies that hinder employee development because most respondents mentioned a lack of employee development compared to other themes. These results tend to support earlier studies (Coetzer et al., 2017:120; Barnes et al., 2021:10). This study noted (100% of the interviewees) that there is 'understudy development' (job shadowing mentoring) that is designed for Namibians with limited experience. While this development practice method is effective because all newly appointed junior Namibian academic staff with limited experience will learn 'on-the-job', it can be classified as discriminatory regarding nationality. In this regard, the number of academic staff attending mentoring activities is affected since it is not open to all the academic staff. As academic staff join the selected PTIs in Namibia, they need to be mentored regardless of nationality to acquire the skills that meet the needs of their institutions (Nnamboozee & Parumasur, 2016:226; Teng,2020:339). This tends to agree with Teng (2020:339), who highlighted that academic staff needed mentoring activities despite having a qualification, especially Generation Y, who entered the profession with limited experience.

The study results indicated that the selected Windhoek PTIs have a significant representation of this generation (45.6% of the respondents). Consequently, this restriction negatively impacts the employee development of academic staff from other countries who are employed with limited experience. In support of this view, 75.4% of the respondents disagreed that their PTI provides job enrichment opportunities to all its employees, thus indicating a perceived lack of employee development within the three PTIs that may be attributed to its selective provision.

Furthermore, the results showed that the HR practice for employee development was informally implemented (Meyer, 2014:37). As a result, the HR practice yielded unfavourable outcomes (Denver et al., 2018:494) because the selected Windhoek PTIs checked for trending skills and then offered a programme to develop them. For example, in 2020, because of Covid 19, these PTIs focused on assisting academics to use online platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Moodle, and Blackboard) for teaching purposes, as indicated by 100% of the interviewees. Academics need some skills to help their growth and simultaneously make the institution competitive, such

as research skills needed to publish in reputable academic journals. As a result of this observation, the study assumed that the selected Windhoek PTIs only focus on skills that improve academics' teaching practices, neglecting components that promote their personal growth. It is important to note that for employee development to be effective, the selected Windhoek PTIs should conduct a training needs analysis and use lecturers' performance evaluation feedback to design their employee development programmes (Sambrook, 2002:527; Barnes et al., 2021:10).

### **6.6.3 Career development and growth**

The study hypothesised ( $H_{19}$ ) a positive relationship between career development and growth and employee development. The positive effect of employee development was estimated to be 0.215 (95% CI: 0.068 to 0.362), and this relationship was supported at a 1% level of significance. This finding suggests that when employees have career development and growth opportunities, they positively influence employee development within the institution.

Most respondents (62%) agreed that the selected Windhoek PTIs provide employees with training and development opportunities. This response suggests that these PTIs recognise the importance of investing in employee growth and skills enhancement. It, however, was concerning to note that despite such activities, the selected Windhoek PTIs are still experiencing a decline in employee development. This finding then prompted the study to assume that the programmes offered do not address the employees' developmental needs, even though 100% of the interviewees had indicated that the training needs offered are linked to their job requirements. However, while they are so linked, academic staff may not value them, resulting in them not attending since the training offered will not improve their performance. This finding was supported by 68.4% of the respondents who disagreed that employees who did not perform well were provided the necessary training and development to reach the required job standard. Hence, employee development that enables academic staff to reach the required performance is regarded as very important in the selected Windhoek PTIs since their academic performance determines the renewal of the academics' contracts.

In addition, the study observed that employee development offered by the selected Windhoek PTIs is limited to face-to-face employee development (reported by 100% of the interviewees). The study assumed that this situation could have negatively impacted employee development in these PTIs. In this era of technology, in which the workplace is dominated by 92.4% of Generation X and Y employees who possess computer savvy, e-training can be convenient for both the PTI and the academic staff (Amara & Atia, 2017:4).

#### **6.6.4 Lack of financial resources**

For employee development to take place, financial resources are needed to cater for workshops, conferences, webinars, seminars, research and training. The selected Windhoek PTIs seems to have limited financial resources because 50% of the interviewees indicated that the availability of funds determined employee development activities in their PTIs. Sometimes, such programmes were conducted by peers to reduce costs. Furthermore, 50% of the interviewees noted that academics attended conferences at their own expense; thus, those without sufficient personal funds can spend years without attending a conference. Similar, for research papers they are only funded when publishing with the institution journal for those at PTI-1 while in other PTIs there is no funding. This practice against reduces research performance and career progression (Doh et al., 2018:58). This finding reveals a lack of financial resources for academic development in these selected Windhoek PTIs and supports the results of earlier studies (Sambrook, 2002:527; Zacher et al., 2019:32). This lack of funding may have affected the rate of employee development in these PTIs because a significant percentage (77.77%) of the respondents disagreed that they have a fear of taking responsibility for their personal development. This finding suggests that employees are willing to participate in employee development activities if their PTI financially supports them.

#### **6.6.5 Lack of commitment from the institution**

Many respondents felt the selected Windhoek PTIs needed to show more commitment to employee development, as demonstrated by most respondents. This finding suggests that a significant number of respondents mentioned this theme. Hence, this study assumed that if PTI's management takes employee development seriously, these institutions will design policies that enable academics to prioritise their development, resulting in a learning culture. This situation is important because 50% of the interviewees highlighted that they regard their PTI as a training ground for public HEIs. This finding correlates with Coetzer et al. (2017:112), who highlighted that many private employers fear that employees may leave the institution if they become better qualified. This study assumed that this perception of the selected Windhoek PTIs being a 'steppingstone' for academic staff's acquisition of skills and experience may be why management is not fully committed to employee development initiatives. Hence, this practice has hindered employee development in these PTIs.

Regarding this theme, the study found a positive relationship between performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, and career development and growth with employee development. If these HR practices are formally implemented in these selected Windhoek PTIs, they can promote employee development. However, performance management and recognition strategies in these selected Windhoek PTIs had failed to promote employee development because they lacked a direct link between performance evaluations and development programmes. Working conditions and WLB affected employee development in these PTIs due to workload allocation and some work policies only benefitting selected academic staff. The employee development policies were not promoting modern ways of implementing employee development activities, thereby decreasing employee development rates. Additionally, employee development in these selected Windhoek PTIs was affected by a lack of financial resources and commitment from the management.

### **6.7 Secondary outcomes that can affect employee turnover**

Regarding this theme, the study proposed three hypotheses to find the relationship between performance deterioration, employee development, absenteeism, and employee turnover. These hypotheses are presented below:

- *H<sub>21</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee performance deterioration and employee turnover.*
- *H<sub>22</sub> There is a positive relationship between absenteeism and employee turnover.*
- *H<sub>23</sub> There is a positive relationship between employee development and employee turnover.*

The research findings only supported H<sub>21</sub>, i.e., there is a positive relationship between employee performance deterioration and employee turnover. This hypothesis was overwhelmingly supported at a 1% level of confidence. This study observed that performance deterioration increased the likelihood of staff turnover by 0.239. The significance supported at a 1% confidence level indicates a strong statistical association between the two variables.

Meanwhile, performance deterioration increased the likelihood of staff turnover by 0.239. Subsequently, the selected Windhoek PTIs should take performance deterioration seriously because the perceived effect size reports that even a moderate performance decline can significantly impact the likelihood of employee turnover. Currently, 51.1% of the academic staff's performance is deteriorating (see Figure 5.4, pg.164), which means there is a need to formally

implement the HR practice for performance management. Involvement, working conditions, and WLB are the ones that the study identified as the main contributors to performance deterioration in the selected Windhoek PTIs. The suggestions for implementing these HR practices have already been outlined in this chapter under the theme of HR practices that contributed to performance deterioration among the selected Windhoek PTIs employees.

However, hypotheses H<sub>22</sub> nor H<sub>23</sub> were supported by the study findings. The lack of support for these hypotheses indicates that absenteeism and employee development do not directly impact the rate of employee turnover within the selected Windhoek PTIs. Despite the absence of a direct link between absenteeism, declining employee development and employee turnover, it remains crucial to implement formal HR practices to address underlying issues within these three PTIs.

Formal HR practices such as performance management and recognition, improving working conditions and WLB, fostering career development and growth opportunities, enhancing remuneration packages, and promoting positive employee relations and involvement should be prioritised. These HR practices are currently informally implemented, contributing to absenteeism and hindering employee development efforts.

It is important to acknowledge that absenteeism and the lack of employee development can have a negative impact on employees' performance (López-Cabarcos et al., 2022:367; Utami & Harini, 2019:106), ultimately influencing the likelihood of employee turnover within the selected Windhoek PTIs. By proactively addressing these issues through effective formal HR practices, these PTIs can create a more supportive and conducive work environment, leading to improved employee engagement, reduced absenteeism and enhanced opportunities for employee development. These practices, in turn, can positively impact employee performance and employee retention.

## **6.8 Retention strategies adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs**

This study intended to recommend the retention strategies the selected Windhoek PTIs could adopt to retain their academic staff. To achieve this objective, the study first had to determine the retention strategies these PTIs are using and the factors influencing academic staff to remain in the institution before making any recommendations. The study discovered that the selected Windhoek PTIs implemented informal HR practices such as employee development (indicated by 100% of the interviewees) and that employees and their immediate families only benefit from the programmes offered by their PTI. Therefore, academics with master's and doctoral degrees will

not participate in these employee development programmes because 42.11% of the academic staff have already attained the qualifications offered by their PTIs.

Furthermore, the selected Windhoek PTIs informally implemented strategies relating to performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, and employee relations and involvement. Similarly, only one of the three selected PTIs (33%) informally implemented the HR practice for career development and growth, giving academics special leave to attend conferences and free publication in the institution's journal. Even though HR practitioners viewed this as a retention strategy, the study had a different perception. This study viewed this practice as negatively impacting the growth of academic staff because they cannot publish their research paper in reputable journals if they do not have funds. This finding correlates with that of Coetzer et al. (2017:112), who noted that PTIs do not support public HEIs' practice of sponsoring their academics' formal learning and development practices. In addition, only one out of three PTIs (33%) provides fringe benefits such as 60% cost cover on employees' medical aid and pension fund. The lack of fringe benefits in 67% of the selected Windhoek PTIs reduces their competitiveness.

However, these informal HR practices do not appear to retain academic staff in the selected Windhoek PTIs because, as indicated in (Figure 5.1, pg.152), 90% of the respondents indicated that they are not motivated to remain in their PTI. This finding justifies the challenges the selected Windhoek PTIs faced in terms of their academic staff looking for alternative positions or intending to leave their current job (Allen, 2008:6; Long et al., 2017:826). This situation results from implementing informal HR practices that do not comprise all the components necessary to achieve positive results (Meyer, 2014:36; Denver et al., 2018:494).

As a result of the above practices, the majority (70%) of the academic staff in these selected Windhoek PTIs are not motivated to remain in their PTIs (see Figure 5.8, pg.196). This finding shows that by not motivating their academic staff, these selected Windhoek PTIs have employees in the 'withdrawal process' who exhibit negative work behaviour such as absenteeism, and performance deterioration (Allen, 2008:6).

To mitigate the challenges (employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and a decline in employee development) faced by the selected Windhoek PTIs, this study proposed a formal HRM practices model that selected Windhoek PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention. This proposed model is discussed fully in the next chapter.

## 6.9 Summary

The chapter discussed the significant findings of this study in relation to the reviewed literature on employer turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee development. The chapter commenced by discussing the demographic profile of the study's respondents. It was revealed that generations X and Y academics dominated the selected Windhoek PTIs. It was also found that the informal HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs negatively affected employee turnover; such practices included informal performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement, and recruitment and selection. The performance management processes lacked recognition for good performance. Remuneration was pronounced low because it was not based on the market value and lacked fringe benefits. The selected Windhoek PTIs have implemented some adequate working conditions and WLB practices. However, the excessive workload forced academic staff to work beyond their contractual hours and during weekends. This practice negatively affected WLB, triggering employees' lack of job security and turnover. The absence of a career development and growth policy made academics lack clarity in their career progression pathways. The selected Windhoek PTIs only provides financial support for the formal learning and development programmes they offer, affecting academics' career development and growth in these institutions. Despite the positive aspects highlighted by respondents, they perceived a lack of fairness and consistency in evaluating employee performance and a lack of employee involvement because the institutional vision, mission, and values were not communicated to employees, compromising the HR practice for employee relations and involvement. Additionally, there were unsolved conflicts even though there was a disciplinary and grievance procedure to be used to solve such differences in these selected Windhoek PTIs.

The HR practices that impacted performance deterioration among the selected Windhoek PTIs employees were performance management, recognition, working conditions, and WLB (workload). Even though the academics are appraised annually, this practice cannot be linked to any formal appraisal method. There was a need for an approach that incorporated the views of all the people interacting with the academic staff members during their duties. Similarly, the selected Windhoek PTIs lacked a feedback mechanism, thus compromising the HR practice's performance management and recognition implementation. The absence of a formal workload policy resulted in the academics' heavy workload and contributed to performance deterioration. A moderate decline in employee performance deterioration can increase employee turnover.



The findings on the factors influencing absenteeism among employees in the selected Windhoek PTIs statistically proved that increased informal HR practices negatively impact performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations, and involvement – all of which are associated with increasing absenteeism in the selected Windhoek PTIs. The adverse effects observed indicate that the selected Windhoek PTIs should be cautious of the informal implementation of these HR practices on employee absenteeism. It was particularly evident that the informal implementation of the HR practice for performance management and recognition that fails to reward academic staff for good performance has prompted academic staff to prioritise part-time jobs, neglecting their main tasks and resulting in increased absenteeism. Likewise, workload and limited leave days during the year affected the HR practice for working conditions and WLB. Such practices have caused fatigue, lack of WLB and burnout in the selected Windhoek PTIs. Due to the lack of a policy that promotes career development and growth, academic staff are absent to satisfy their personal growth needs. Unresolved conflicts in these participating PTIs adversely affect the HR practice's implementation for employee relations and involvement. The selected PTIs also lack an effective absenteeism management policy.

This study found a positive relationship between performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, and career development and growth with employee development. If these HR practices are positive in an HEI, they can promote employee development. However, performance management and recognition had failed to promote employee development because they lacked a direct link between performance evaluations and development programmes. The working conditions and WLB affected employee development in the selected Windhoek PTIs due to workload allocation and work policies targeting only a few academic staff. The employee development policies did not promote modern ways of employee development activities. Additionally, employee development in these PTIs was affected by a lack of resources and management commitment.

Given the informal implementation of most HR practices in the selected Windhoek PTIs, it is evident that a change is needed to retain academic staff. This study stresses the necessity for these PTIs to adopt a formal HRM practices model. The next chapter will delve into this proposed model in detail.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **PRESENTATION OF A PROPOSED FORMAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES MODEL FOR SELECTED PRIVATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The selected Windhoek PTIs are self-sustained and face the challenge of employee turnover. This challenge is due to implementing informal HR practices such as performance management and recognition, career development and growth, working conditions, and WLB, employee relations and involvement, training, and development, recruitment and selection, and remuneration – some of which are only partially implemented. In this regard, employee performance, absenteeism and employee development have been negatively impacted, resulting in the likelihood that employees will leave the selected Windhoek PTIs. This chapter will present a proposed formal HRM practices model that could be applied in Namibian PTIs to improve employee retention while reducing absenteeism, improving employee performance, and promoting employee development. This chapter will commence by explaining how the proposed HRM practices model was developed and then present the proposed model.

#### **7.2 Development of the proposed HRM practices model**

This study aimed to propose a formal HRM practices model that could be adopted by Namibian PTIs to improve employee retention. Data was gathered from 179 respondents using a mixed research method. Consequently, the proposed formal HRM practices model used findings generated from quantitative and qualitative analysis as suggested by Shafique and Mahmood (2010:6). Firstly, from a quantitative perspective, the study used the structural equation modelling (SEM) to verify the HR practices that have a direct or indirect relationship with employee turnover, absenteeism, employee development and performance deterioration. Secondly, from qualitative analysis, the study adopted HR practices extracted from the perceptions and experiences of the respondents perceived as causes of employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and a decline in employee development. It is worth emphasizing that most of these perceptions and experiences aligned with the quantitative analysis. Thirdly, there was a need for the study to change the informal HR practices to formal ones that will promote positive work behaviour and retain academic staff. Therefore, the study followed the transformational process model to

develop the formal HRM practices model for Namibian PTIs (Serfontein, 2006:170). This model will assist these PTIs to comprehend why the informal HR practices they are currently implementing fail to yield positive outcomes – an intervention that is needed – and the tentative outcome of these practices.

### **7.3 Presentation of the proposed formal HRM practices model**

The formal HRM practices model presented in this chapter (see Figure 7.1) was based on the systems theory model that comprises three phases: inputs, transformation and outputs. The systems theory offers a view through which institutions can be perceived as social systems consisting of interconnected departments working together to achieve organisational objectives (Churchman, 1968, cited by Teece, 2018:360; Johnson, Kast & Rosenzweig, 1963:370). As a result, the mismanagement of one department can reverberate across other departments. Within this framework, the selected Windhoek PTIs faced challenges such as employee turnover, absenteeism, performance deterioration and a decline in employee development.

These challenges stemmed from the informal implementation of HR practices – a HR department responsibility supported by the PTIs' top management. Guided by the systems approach, the development of a formal HRM practices model for Namibian PTIs allowed this study to identify the root causes behind these challenges mentioned above, thus enabling the formulation of a contingency plan. This strategy addresses the specific problems these selected Windhoek PTIs face and generates ripple effects throughout the entire organisation, consequently fostering a competitive advantage (Teece, 2018:366). Notably, adopting the systems theory facilitated the comprehension of the complex phenomenon of employee turnover and heightened the probability of devising accurate solutions (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972:463). In this pursuit, the study aligns with the open system perspective, akin to a transformation model (Input-Transformation-Output model), acknowledging that systems can be categorized as closed or open (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972:450).

Firstly, the input phase shows the informal HR practices currently implemented in the selected Windhoek PTIs that are causing employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and reducing employee development in these PTIs. Secondly, the transformation phase shows the intervention that needs to be executed by these selected Windhoek PTIs to change all their current informal HR practices to formal ones.

This process will be driven by the HR strategy of these PTIs. Lastly, the output phase will give the outcomes of implementing formal HR practices in these selected Windhoek PTIs. Each of these phases in the HRM practices model needs further explanation.

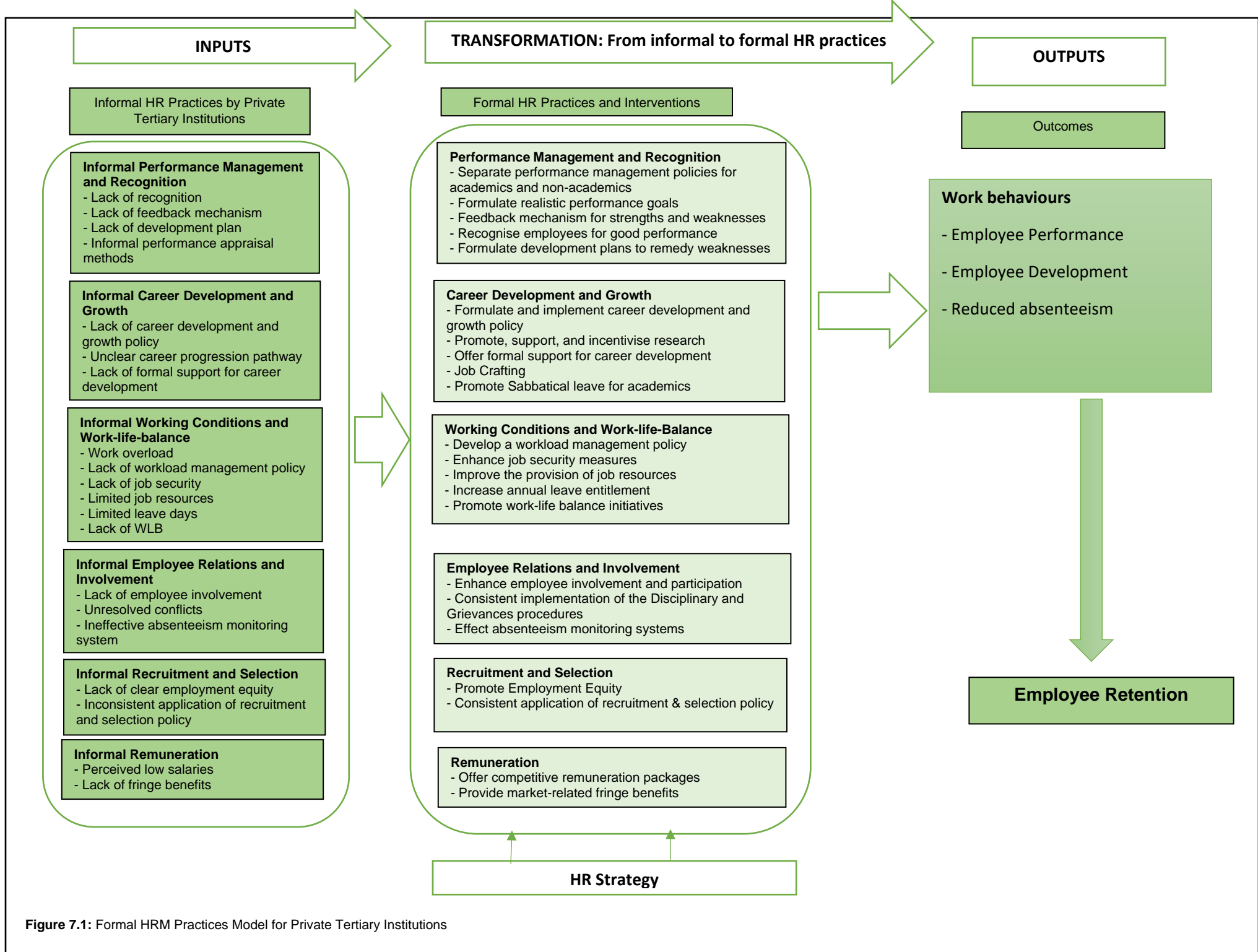


Figure 7.1: Formal HRM Practices Model for Private Tertiary Institutions

### 7.3.1 Inputs

The input phase in Figure 7.1 above shows the informal HR practices implemented in the selected Windhoek PTIs that have triggered employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and employee development deterioration, i.e., performance management and recognition, career development and growth, working conditions and WLB, employee relations and involvement, recruitment and selection and remuneration.

Firstly, employee performance is defined as the effort made by the employee to complete the required task while following the procedure laid out by the organisation (Inuwa, 2016:92). In this regard, the selected Windhoek PTIs should have HR practices that support employee performance in the workplace. However, this study found that the HR practice for employee performance and recognition was informally implemented in these institutions; thus, it did not improve employee performance. The selected Windhoek PTIs has a performance appraisal system that lacks recognition; thus, employees are not rewarded for good performance. When employees are rewarded for good performance, they are motivated to continue working hard and improving their performance (Delbari et al., 2021:766). Additionally, the performance appraisal system should seek to identify the strengths and weaknesses of employees (Idowu, 2017:17; Ramchandani & Aggarwal, 2018:80). It is important to note that these strengths and weaknesses must be communicated to the employees, thereby raising their awareness of such issues. However, in the selected Windhoek PTIs, these strengths and weaknesses are not communicated to employees, reducing their involvement in these institutions. Given this fact, the appraisal system in the selected Windhoek PTIs is merely a 'black box' because it does not motivate employees to perform better and achieve promotions. Additionally, there is no development plan to assist employees in overcoming their weaknesses, thus leading to performance deterioration.

Moreover, although there is a performance management policy and academic staff in these selected Windhoek PTIs are appraised annually, they do not have a transparent appraisal system. This deficiency adversely affects the impact of the HR practice for employee performance and recognition, resulting in performance deterioration that increases the likelihood of employees leaving the selected Windhoek PTIs. This finding was supported at 1% with a p-value of 0.001, suggesting that when employees' performance deteriorates, there is a high chance of those employees leaving the selected Windhoek PTIs, resulting in employee turnover. In addition, the informal HR practice for performance management and recognition also has a negative impact

on absenteeism as it was supported at 1% with a p-value of 0.001, implying that when employees perceive informal performance management and recognition practices, they are more likely to absent themselves from duty. Further, employee development was also supported at 1% with a p-value of 0.001, indicating that when employees perceive effective informal performance management practices and receive recognition for their work, it positively impacts their employee development. In this regard, informal HR performance management is yielding an adverse outcome within the selected Windhoek PTIs, making it important for them to transform such a process into a formal HR practice.

Secondly, career development and growth entail a progressive journey of enhancing one's career that involves how an employee advances through positions that come with increasing responsibilities, expanded duties, higher prestige and more significant rewards (Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32). The selected Windhoek PTIs should have a policy that shows employee progression and supports academic staff's career growth. Contrary to this requirement, however, this research study found that the selected Windhoek PTIs have no career development policy. This deficit has resulted in the lack of a clear path of progression for academic staff, leading to employee turnover (Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32). In addition, the selected Windhoek PTIs have limited financial resources; hence, they are unable to offer financial support for formal training programmes or fund the publication of academics' research papers in reputable journals. As a result, they only offer financial support for limited formal career development programmes conducted within their institutions. Due to this situation, 42.1% of the study's respondents cannot obtain financial support for formal training, thereby resulting in talent stagnation and limited opportunities for promotion, thus leading to attrition in these selected Windhoek PTIs (Azeez, 2017:5; Lin & Huang, 2021:420). It is of paramount importance to correct such stagnation because this study also found that these informal career development and growth practices have a negative impact on absenteeism and employee development. Absenteeism was supported at 1% with a p-value of 0.001, showing that informal career development and growth increase the likelihood of the employees being absent from duty, and employee development was supported at 1% with a p-value of 0,004, suggesting that when employees have opportunities for career development and growth, it positively influences their overall development within their PTI.

Thirdly, working conditions and WLB are determined by the practices implemented in their institution because employees prefer a conducive working environment, while a poor working environment can lead to absenteeism, low productivity and employee turnover (Singh et al.,

2016:109; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016:616; Węziak-Białowolska et al., 2018:10; Garba & Jacob, 2021:60-61). Poor working conditions within the selected Windhoek PTIs are caused by the informal implementation of the working conditions and WLB, resulting in outcomes highlighted by the reviewed literature previously presented in this study. This study also found that the informal working conditions and WLB within selected Windhoek PTIs significantly influenced employee turnover, absenteeism and employee development. Employee turnover was supported at 5% with a p-value of 0.012, suggesting that as informal working conditions and WLB increase, so does the likelihood of employee turnover. Absenteeism was supported at 5% with a p-value of 0.012, implying that when employees perceive unfavourable working conditions and a lack of WLB, they are more likely to absent themselves from work. Employee development was supported at 1% with a p-value of 0.001, implying that favourable working conditions and a healthy WLB contribute to employees' development within the selected Windhoek PTIs. Therefore, informal working conditions and WLB contribute to the declining employee development in these PTIs.

The factors that contributed to the informal implementation of the HR practice of working conditions and WLB in selected Windhoek PTIs included a lack of a formal WMS that resulted in academic staff experiencing work overload. It is important to note that such a work overload in selected Windhoek PTIs has caused 85.4% of the respondents to work during weekends, resulting in a lack of WLB) in these PTIs. The absence of WLB among employees triggers stress, fatigue, and burnout, worsened by the limited availability of leave days during their working year. Academics were entitled to five leave days during the working year and 19 during the end-of-the-year recess. This practice left academics with limited time to rest, attend to family issues, and focus on their career development needs.

Consequently, HEIs/PTIs must have wellness programmes for their academic Staff (Gie, 2017:136; Helvaci, 2017:84; Saini & Bansal, 2023:224). Unfortunately, such wellness programmes do not exist in the selected Windhoek PTIs since they do not have a wellness policy to guide the implementation of these programmes. In addition, the study found limited job resources and a lack of job security within the participating Windhoek PTIs. Hence, employees with a sense of job insecurity are likely to experience frustration, anxiety, and stress (Qin et al., 2021:7376). Due to the need for stability, employees will always search for more stable positions. This fact has caused increased employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and reduced employee development within the selected Windhoek PTIs.



Fourthly, employee relations and involvement promote employee performance in an institution (Ngui, 2016:24; Samwel, 2018:3; Tewari & Kumar, 2019:328). This practice can be accomplished by implementation of an organisational policy that covers the employee relations structures, employment conditions, collective agreement, communication, disciplinary codes and procedures, grievance procedure, industrial action, retrenchments, health and safety, dispute resolution and freedom of association (Meyer, 2011:45).

Nevertheless, this study found that the selected Windhoek PTIs have a formal disciplinary and grievance management procedure and a job description that helps academics know what is expected. However, there is a lack of employee involvement in issues that concern them in these PTIs; for example, 63.8% of the respondents were not aware of their PTIs' vision and mission nor of the main goal of these institutions. The respondents indicated that employees have unsolved conflicts due to the informal implementation of the grievance procedure. The selected Windhoek PTIs experience absenteeism because of an ineffective absenteeism monitoring system that has led to micro-management of academic staff that can adversely affect job satisfaction, resulting in employee turnover. Informal HR practices (e.g., lack of employee relations and involvement, unsolved conflict and an ineffective absenteeism management system) identified by the study respondents can have negative consequences in the workplace (Nanaware & Dadas, 2012:161; Samwel, 2018:9; Tewari & Kumar, 2019:327). Thus, the selected Windhoek PTIs must discontinue the practice of informal employee relations and involvement due to their potentially negative impact on absenteeism, as supported by the statistical findings of this study. Absenteeism was supported at 1% with a p-value of 0.005, suggesting that higher levels of informal employee relations and involvement are associated with increased absenteeism.

Fifthly, recruitment and selection should be undertaken using a sound recruitment and selection policy, job specification and job description to attract the best candidates for the vacant posts in the institution (Saileela & Thiruchanuru, 2017:218; Mahapatro, 2021:62; Mihu, 2023:28). Therefore, the selected Windhoek PTIs should follow a formal recruitment and selection process because this process will enable the PTI to hire the most appropriate candidate for the vacant position. This study found that the selected Windhoek PTIs follow a recruitment and selection policy, i.e., advertise vacant posts on the PTIs' websites, Facebook, national newspapers, and noticeboards, conduct interviews, and induct new employees. However, two out of the three participating PTIs do not include the employment equity statement in their job advertisements –

the exclusion of this statement leads to a perception of discrimination within an organisation (O'Brien et al.,2016:616) such as the selected Windhoek PTIs and can trigger employee turnover. Furthermore, the selected Windhoek PTIs lacked consistency in their recruitment and selection process when they engaged in "headhunting," which can lead to employee misplacement. The study assumes that this process could be why some of their academic staff leave their PTI when they experience a 'job misfit' because they cannot meet their job's performance requirements. The informal recruitment and selection process practised in the selected Windhoek PTIs has resulted in their hiring a limited number of employees without undergoing the standard interview process. While these PTIs may be eager to promptly fill vacant positions to avoid disadvantaging students, compromising the selection process results in job misfits that can lead to employee resignation (Meyer, 2011:9; Lee et al., 2018:90) and underperformance, mainly when inexperienced candidates are selected.

Sixthly, to retain employees, the selected Windhoek PTIs should pay salaries based on the market value or even more than what by other HEIs and implement a total reward system (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018:3; Boucher & Flynn, 2023:2). The HR practices for total reward compensation have been used by organisations that are facing excessive employee turnover as a way of reducing this practice (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018:3; Deloitte, 2018:35; Boucher & Flynn, 2023:2). This research study found that the 73% of the respondents in the selected Windhoek PTIs perceived that they earned low salaries compared to others fulfilling the same position in other HEIs. Furthermore, their salary does not include fringe benefits that help improve the employees' salary. As a result, academic staff leaves these PTIs for more favourable positions, thereby increasing the rate of employee turnover in selected Windhoek PTIs.

The considering the outcomes that have been caused by the selected Windhoek PTIs' implementation of informal HR practices (i.e., performance management and recognition, career development and growth, working conditions and WLB, employee relations and involvement, recruitment and selection and remuneration), it is of paramount importance for these PTIs to transform the implementation of such HR practices into formal exercises.

### **7.3.2 Transformation**

The transformation phase of the HRM practices model will convert all informal HR practices to equivalent formal ones (e.g., performance management and recognition, career development and

growth, working conditions and WLB, employee relations and involvement, recruitment and selection, and remuneration).

The informal HR practice used by the selected Windhoek PTIs for performance management and recognition was so termed because it was not governed by a formal performance appraisal method and lacked recognition, a feedback mechanism and a development plan linked to employee weaknesses. Therefore, it needs to recognise employees' good performances formally to transform this informal performance management into a formal HR practice. This recognition system should be consistent because this practice will motivate employees to reach a higher level of performance (Makokha et al., 2017:24; Saraih et al., 2017:74; Bansal et al., 2018:108). There is a need for the selected Windhoek PTIs to adopt a PA system that will reduce subjectivity, prejudice and the halo effect in the performance evaluation process (Saraih et al., 2017:74; Ramchandani & Aggarwal, 2018:81; Shrestha, 2022:142). Such a system will highlight employees' strengths and weaknesses and make the process effective; feedback on the PA's outcome must be communicated to the employees to make them aware of their performance (Saraih et al., 2017:74; Bansal et al., 2018:108; Shrestha, 2022:145). The weaknesses thus identified should be used to formulate a development plan to remedy these deficiencies. This process will improve employee performance, promote employee development and reduce absenteeism. The study found that improved performance increases employees' likelihood of remaining employed by the selected Windhoek PTIs.

The HR practice for career development and growth employed by the selected Windhoek PTIs was classified as informal due to its deficiency in providing a formal career development and growth policy, which resulted in an unclear career development progression pathway for employees. These three PTIs' informal HR practices also lacked formal support for career development and, thus, resulted in employee turnover, absenteeism and a decline in employee development. Given this fact, for the selected Windhoek PTIs to remain competitive, they should begin implementing formal HR practices for career development and growth. The transformation process should begin with formulating and implementing a formal career development and growth policy supporting the academic staff's career journey. It should establish a clear progression path, outlining advancement opportunities within the PTI. It must offer formal support for career development and promote continuous learning and skills development through funding for attending conferences and studying degrees offered by other HEIs.

Furthermore, the formal policy should promote, encourage, and support research activities among academic staff. This practice can be made possible by awarding research grants, providing

recognition for research publications, and offering opportunities for collaborative research projects. This process will cultivate a research culture in the selected Windhoek PTIs that can enhance academic excellence and the PTIs' reputation. Moreover, the policy should consider the importance of WLB, which can be achieved by promoting sabbatical leave options in the selected Windhoek PTIs that are common in public HEIs. It is important to note that sabbaticals enable academic staff to participate in academic exchange programmes. By so doing, they will acquire new knowledge and skills that can benefit the selected Windhoek PTIs. Formal career development and growth will not only retain academic staff but also reduce absenteeism and increase employee development, thereby reducing performance deterioration.

The HR practice for working conditions and WLB has been described as informal due to the work overload experienced by academic staff within the selected Windhoek PTIs that results from the lack of workload management policy and job security, limited job resources, restricted leave days and the lack of WLB. These PTIs must implement formal HR practices for working conditions and WLB to help them establish a conducive working environment. To improve their working conditions and WLB, the selected Windhoek PTIs should optimise workload allocation, enhance job security, increase annual leave entitlement, improve the provision of job resources and promote WLB. The study, therefore, proposes the implementation of a WMS that caters to all the activities performed by academics, i.e., administration, teaching and learning, research, research supervision, community engagement and academic citizenship (Bitzer, 2007:28; Nnadozie, 2015:463; Miller, 2019:640; Okeke-Uzodike & Gamede, 2021:16). The percentage for each component should be realistic and enable the selected Windhoek PTIs to remedy the unreasonable workload that academic staff currently experience. Moreover, the WMS will ensure fair and balanced task distribution among academic staff, prevent fatigue and burnout, and remove the current perception of unfair workload distribution by 71.3% of the respondents. Improving job security will instil stability and commitment among academic staff in the selected Windhoek PTIs. By offering long-term fixed contracts, academic staff may have opportunities for professional growth that will motivate them to remain for a more extended period in these PTIs (Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32). The administering of leave days plays a vital role in promoting WLB so the study suggests that the selected Windhoek PTIs should allow academics to use 50% of their term breaks to meet their personal family and professional needs because this practice will increase the number of leave days that can be used by academic staff throughout the year. In addition, providing adequate resources enables employees to meet the required performance standards. Accordingly, the selected Windhoek PTIs should provide laptops for teaching purposes

and ensure that lecturers have the software they need to provide a quality service to students. Due to limited office space, the common rooms used by academic staff should be divided into individual working spaces equipped with soundproof glass to assist academics' concentration when using these areas. Implementing such formal HR practices for working conditions and WLB will create a conducive environment that promotes WLB, improves performance and increases employee development while retaining academic staff in the selected Windhoek PTIs.

The HR practice for employee relations and involvement was classified as informal mainly due to the lack of employee involvement, unsolved employee conflicts and the ineffective absenteeism monitoring system. It is important to note that employee relations and involvement help maintain a positive relationship between the employer and the employees and make teamwork possible in the PTIs' work environment. Therefore, the study proposes that the selected Windhoek PTIs consistently implement disciplinary and grievance procedures and fair performance evaluation processes, enhance employee involvement and participation, and establish an effective absenteeism monitoring system to enhance employee relations and involvement. Consistent implementation of disciplinary and grievance procedures will enable the selected Windhoek PTIs to foster a transparent and fair working environment where all employees are treated equally. When all employees perceive that they are being treated, they can communicate their grievances and cooperate in solving them because they trust the system. Employee involvement and participation can be enhanced by creating good communication channels within the PTI institutions. Management should ensure that information involving academic staff, such as the PTI vision, mission, values, and institutional policies, is effectively communicated to them. There also is a need to encourage two-way communication because this process will enable management to be aware of the academic staff's opinions and ideas and create a sense of ownership among the academic staff. Furthermore, implementing a more up-to-date absence monitoring system can help maintain attendance while reducing the current perception of micromanagement among academic staff. This transformation to formal HR practice of employee relations and involvement will help to foster healthy employee relationships between the employer and the employees, thereby helping to combat the challenges (employee turnover, employee performance, absenteeism, and reduced employee development) currently experienced by the selected Windhoek PTIs.

The HR practice for recruitment and selection was classified as informal mainly due to a lack of transparent employment equity and the inconsistent application of the recruitment and selection

policy. Given this fact, the study suggests that the selected Windhoek PTIs should promote employment equity. This practice can be achieved by including the employment equity statement in their job advertisement that indicates the lack of discrimination in the PTIs' policies (O'Brien et al., 2016:616). This policy is particularly beneficial for PTIs since many are known for the practice of nepotism and favouritism (Shava, 2017:110; Lwendo & Isaacs 2018:19), and the formal recruitment process will clear such perceptions before candidates commence their application process. In addition, the recruitment and selection methods should not be compromised even when the selected Windhoek PTIs employ "headhunting" as a recruitment method, and posts that need immediate placement can conduct online interviews with prospective candidates. The dangers of not conducting such an interview include being a misfit in the job, which can lead to poor performance, absenteeism, and employee turnover.

The HR practice employed for remuneration in selected Windhoek PTIs has been described as informal due to perceived low salaries and lack of fringe benefits. Competitive remuneration motivates academic staff to remain in a PTI instead of searching for more lucrative positions. Consequently, this study suggests that selected Windhoek PTIs should offer competitive remuneration packages and pay academic staff a market-value salary to reduce employee turnover. Furthermore, the selected Windhoek PTIs should provide fringe benefits such as medical aid, pension, gratuity and housing allowance (accommodation is expensive in Windhoek). Given that these fringe benefits can be divided proportionally between the employer and the employee, giving full benefits to academic staff will be a heavy financial burden due to the limited financial resources in selected Windhoek PTIs. Hence, this transformation process will result in a competitive salary that can retain academic staff and eliminate their need to perform part-time jobs, thereby reducing absenteeism, increasing academics' commitment to personal development and improving employee performance.

The HR strategy of the selected Windhoek PTIs drives the transformation from the informal to the formal HR practice. The HR strategy is a strategic plan developed and implemented by an institution to manage its employees effectively. It comprises well-defined policies and processes that aim to optimise the utilisation of HR within the institution (Gratton & Truss, 2003:74). Therefore, it guides the HR professionals in the development and implementation of policies that will be used for the management of employees, aligning them with the organisational goals and contributing to its long-term success. The developed policies outline the guidelines and principles governing HR practices. However, this study found that the HR strategy of selected Windhoek

PTIs only focuses on recruiting highly qualified candidates and maintaining a conducive working environment that can retain such staff. This strategy has limited HR practices that can retain employees, resulting in selected Windhoek PTIs experiencing negative work behaviour because of informal HR practices that are not linked to the HR strategy. The selected Windhoek PTIs should develop an HR strategy encompassing HR practices designed to retain academic staff. These PTIs will then develop policies that will promote the implementation of formal HR practices (i.e., the formal implementation of performance management and recognition, career development and growth, working conditions and WLB, employee relations and involvement, recruitment and selection and remuneration practices) and this process will lead to positive outcomes.

### **7.3.3 Outputs**

The outputs in the last phase of the Formal HRM practices model for PTIs result from the transformation phase through which the HR practices have been transformed from informal to formal HR practices. The formal HR practices (as listed in Section 7.3.2 above) will enable the selected Windhoek PTIs to experience such positive work behaviour as improved employee performance and development and reduced absenteeism, all of which help to address the problems currently faced by these PTIs (absenteeism, performance deterioration and a decline in employee development). Therefore, the selected Windhoek PTIs need to adopt this model.

Additionally, the arrow linking work behaviours (improved performance, reduced absenteeism and increased employee development) to employee retention in the proposed formal HRM practices model (see Figure 7.1 above) proposes that if selected Windhoek PTIs promote these formal HR practices that create positive work behaviours, they are likely to retain their academic staff and reduce employee turnover.

### **7.4 Summary**

Retaining academic staff is crucial in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, and this applies equally to the Namibian PTIs. Implementing formal HR practices can help retain academic staff. Therefore, this study has proposed a formal HRM practices model that will enable the selected Windhoek PTIs to transform from their current informal HR practices to formal HR practices that will create positive work behaviours (improved employee performance and development, reduced absenteeism) and, thereby, retain their academic staff. This initiative will benefit both the PTIs and their stakeholders.

The next chapter will provide concluding remarks concerning the research objectives, recommendations, study limitations, suggestions for future research, and the study's contributions to the HR body of knowledge.



## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 Introduction

The chapter begins by presenting concluding remarks that address the research objectives. Based on these remarks, the chapter will offer recommendations that stem from the conclusions reached. The chapter then will outline the limitations of the study, make suggestions for future research, and note the study's contribution to the HR body of knowledge. Finally, the chapter will summarise the entire thesis.

#### 8.2 Concluding remarks regarding the research objectives

This study has concluded that generations X and Y dominate (92.39%) the academic staff in selected Windhoek PTIs. Moreover, most of these academics (90%) were not motivated to remain working for their PTI due to ineffective HR practices (career development and growth, working conditions and work-life balance, performance management and recognition, recruitment and selection and remuneration) that triggered job dissatisfaction (85% of the respondents) leading to the challenges that these selected Windhoek PTIs face.

However, the study aimed to address five research objectives outlined in the introductory chapter, which are as follows:

- To determine the HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover.
- To ascertain how these HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in these PTIs.
- To identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in these PTIs.
- To determine the obstacles hindering employee development in these PTIs.
- To recommend a formal HRM practices model that can be adopted by Namibian PTIs to improve employee retention.

Therefore, the following conclusions were drawn under each objective.

### **8.2.1 The HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover**

The study concluded that the following informal HR practices adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs have negatively affected employee turnover: performance management and recognition, remuneration, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement and recruitment and selection. These HR practices are informally implemented, thus triggering employee turnover. The performance management and recognition processes lack recognition for good performance. Remuneration was pronounced low because it was not based on the current market value and lacked fringe benefits. There are some good working conditions and WLB practices in selected Windhoek PTIs, but excessive workload and lack of job security resulted in increased employee turnover. The unreasonable workload that made the academic staff work outside contractual hours and during weekends affected their WLB. The absence of a career development and growth policy affected career development and growth policy, resulting in a lack of clarity in career progression pathways. The selected Windhoek PTIs do not provide financial support for formal learning and development, adversely affecting academics' career development and growth. Despite acknowledging the positive aspects highlighted by the study respondents regarding the implementation of the HR practice for employee relations and recognition, there was a prevailing perception of unfairness in the performance evaluation process because employees expressed a lack of involvement due to the PTIs' failure to effectively communicate the organization's vision, mission and values to them. Furthermore, despite a disciplinary and grievance procedure for resolving conflicts in these selected Windhoek PTIs, there were unsettled conflicts. Performance deterioration has had a negative impact on employee turnover because when academic staff's performance deteriorates, there is a likelihood that they will leave their PTI.

### **8.2.2 HR practices contributing to performance deterioration among selected Windhoek PTIs' employees**

The study ascertained that the HR practices contributing to performance deterioration among selected Windhoek PTI employees were performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB (workload). Although the academics are appraised annually, this process is not linked to any formal/consistent appraisal method. There is a need for an approach that incorporates the views of all the people who interact with the academic staff members while completing their duties. Similarly, the selected Windhoek PTIs lack the feedback mechanism,

compromising the HR practice's implementation for performance management and recognition. The academics' excessive workload has contributed to their performance deterioration because of the absence of a formal workload policy that has compromised the HR practice for working conditions and WLB. It is important to note that even a moderate decline in employee performance deterioration can increase employee turnover.

### **8.2.3 Factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs**

Regarding the factors that contributed to absenteeism among employees in the selected Windhoek PTIs, this study statistically proved that an increase in informal performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, employee relations and involvement are associated with increased absenteeism in these Windhoek PTIs. Consequently, the implementation of the HR practice for performance management and recognition lacked recognition for academic staff for good performance, thus prompting academic staff to prioritise part-time jobs and neglect their primary job, resulting in increased absenteeism. Likewise, the academic workload and limited leave days during the year affected the HR practice for working conditions and WLB. These practices have caused fatigue, lack of WLB and burnout in the selected Windhoek PTIs. Due to the lack of a policy that promotes career development and growth, academic staff are absent to meet work deadlines and satisfy their need for personal growth. The implementation of HR practices for employee relations and involvement lacked effective absenteeism management policies, and thus, there were unresolved conflicts in these PTIs.

### **8.2.4 Obstacles hindering employee development within selected Windhoek PTIs**

This study found a positive relationship between performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, career development and growth with employee development. If these HR practices are positive in an institution, they can promote employee development. This study, therefore, established that employee development was hindered by performance management and recognition HR practices that lacked a feedback mechanism to communicate the strengths and weaknesses of the academic staff. As a result, there was no direct link between the weakness identified by the PA process and the employee development programmes offered to academics in the selected Windhoek PTIs. In addition, the employee development policies did not promote modern ways of implementing employee development activities, adversely affecting academic staff participation in these activities. Furthermore, the study noted that the HR practice

governing working conditions has two factors that hindered employee development in the selected Windhoek PTIs, i.e., work overload and work policies. In this regard, academics' overloaded work schedules impacted their willingness to engage in development activities because they had to meet numerous work deadlines. Furthermore, this study discovered that work policies seem to target a limited number of academic staff. The selected Windhoek PTIs also faced challenges of limited financial resources to implement employee development activities, which reduced the availability of such programme activities in these PTIs. Consequently, the academic staff perceived that their PTIs were not committed to providing training and development activities. This view was unsurprising because family-owned institutions like these selected Windhoek PTIs are known for maximising profit.

### **8.2.5 Retention strategies adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs**

Regarding the retention strategies adopted by the selected Windhoek PTIs, the study concluded that these PTIs implement a few HR practices to retain academics, such as recruitment and selection, career development and growth, performance management and recognition, employee training and development, working conditions and WLB. However, the fact that some of these informal HR practices are not documented has resulted in their inability to reduce employee turnover absenteeism and improve employee performance and development. For this reason, the study has recommended a formal HRM practices model (see Figure 7.1 above) that these selected Windhoek PTIs can adopt to improve the retention rate of their academic staff.

### **8.3 Recommendations**

Based upon this study's findings, the selected Windhoek PTIs are implementing informal HR practices such as working conditions and WLB, career development and growth, performance management and recognition, recruitment and selection, employee relations and involvement, employee development and remuneration. Additionally, due to the academic staff's changing environment, some HR practices that need to be considered to make their environment favourable do not exist, for example, wellness programmes to improve employee retention, employee performance, employee development and reduce absenteeism. The recommendations that the selected Windhoek PTIs should implement will be given per HR practice since they affect all the challenges faced by these PTIs.

### **8.3.1 Working conditions and WLB**

Working conditions and WLB in selected Windhoek PTIs proved to have a positive effect on employee turnover, absenteeism and employee development. However, these PTIs are not retaining academic staff because of work overload, lack of job security and poor allocation of leave days. Therefore, this study makes the following recommendations:

#### *8.3.1.1 Work overload*

- There is a need for a work management system (WMS).
- Academic staff should be involved in developing the WMS to avoid resistance during implementation.
- The WMS should include teaching and learning, research, research supervision, administration, community engagement and academic citizenship.
- There is a need to benchmark the working hours with other Namibian HEIs.

#### *8.3.1.2 Lack of job security*

- Namibian employees who have completed their probation period should be employed permanently, especially at PTI-1, to avoid staff being employed on a contract basis.
- PTI-2 and PTI-3 should move away from 2-year contracts to at least 5-year contracts for foreign employees.

#### *8.3.1.3 Poor implementation of leave days*

- Academic staff should be able to take their leave days during students' vacations at the end of the first semester because this practice will reduce their fatigue, especially at PTI-1 and PTI-3. Instead of using the entire semester break for employee development, the selected Windhoek PTIs can allocate half of this period for academics' leave and the other half for employee development to avoid disruptions during the semester.
- There is a need to increase the number of days that can be used as leave days during the year (January to November) because this will help to promote WLB.

### **8.3.2 Career development and growth**

This process of career enhancement enables employees to progress into positions with constantly expanding duties, prestige, rewards, and responsibilities (Maurya & Chatterjee, 2018:32). The HR

practice of career development and growth has proven to retain employees, promote employee development, increase performance, and reduce absenteeism. To achieve these results, the selected Windhoek PTIs should:

- Have a written career development and growth policy that includes individual career planning, a clear career pathing in the PTI, career counselling services and accurate job profiling.
- Promote research in their PTI; for example, where affiliation fees are needed, the PTI should pay a certain percentage, e.g., 50% of the costs.
- Have a policy promoting career development and growth by communicating with the WMS.
- Offer academics financial help for studying programmes that their PTI does not offer. PTI-2 and PTI-3 pay the full cost for academics to participate in their programmes, whereas PTI-1's academics are given a rebate for engaging in such programmes. When looking at the programmes the selected Windhoek PTIs offer, most academics already possess these qualifications; thus, they do not benefit from such programmes.
- Sabbatical leave should be promoted in these PTIs.

### **8.3.3 Performance management and recognition**

Employee performance is guided by achieving the expected task and meeting the standards laid out by an institution. It is important to note that for academics to meet the required standard, the selected Windhoek PTIs must implement a formal performance management system and ensure the availability of job resources for academics.

#### *8.3.3.1 Implementation of the performance management system*

- The selected Windhoek PTIs should have a separate performance management policy for academic and non-academic staff because they are appraised differently.
- The PA process should involve all stakeholders involved with academic staff. For example, the selected Windhoek PTIs should fully implement the 360-degree appraisal system.
- These PTIs should formulate performance goals that enable the academic staff to perform to expectations without over-exerting themselves.

- Academics should be appraised at the end of each semester because this process helps to identify areas of weakness early, and corrective actions can be implemented before the end of the year.
- Academics should receive feedback regarding their strengths and weaknesses. Their strengths should be recognised with financial or non-financial rewards. A development plan should be implemented to overcome areas of weakness, and these limitations should guide the development activities provided by the PTIs.

#### *8.3.3.2 Job resources*

- To promote privacy and a quiet academic environment, the selected Windhoek PTIs should divide their open-plan office areas into individual workstations separated by soundproof glass.
- The offices should be furnished with office desks and chairs that promote ergonomics.
- Academics should be provided with adequate teaching equipment, such as laptops, projectors, and copiers, especially at PTI-2 and PTI-3.
- Lecture rooms should be equipped with air conditioning due to Namibia's high temperatures during the summer months.
- The selected Windhoek PTIs should provide students and academics with subscribed software for data analysis (e.g., SPSS, Atlas.ti and Strata).

#### *8.3.3.3 Institutional support*

- The selected Windhoek PTIs' WMS, career development and growth policies should inform their performance management policy.

### **8.3.4 Recruitment and selection**

This HR practice enables the PTIs to recruit the right candidate for the post to avoid future misfits, resulting in absenteeism, performance deterioration and employee turnover. When the PTIs use "headhunting," the formal selection process should be followed. The selected Windhoek PTIs should also place job advertisements on hiring platforms to provide a larger pool of prospective employees, including non-discriminatory statements.

### **8.3.5 Employee development**

The academic environment is changing drastically, and the academic staff needs to remain competitive in the 4IR because it will benefit employees and employers. Therefore, this study proposes that:

- To be effective and yield good results, job shadowing should involve all the academic staff (Namibians and foreign academics) joining the selected Windhoek PTIs with limited experience.
- The selected Windhoek PTIs should have an employee development policy that promotes the advancement of every employee. This policy should be combined with career development and growth aspects because this process will improve employees' performance effectiveness.
- There should be a yearly budget for employees' development activities.

### **8.3.6 Remuneration**

The HR practice for remuneration has a role in motivating employees, fostering a positive organisational culture, attracting and retaining employees. To achieve these goals, this study recommends that the selected Windhoek PTIs should:

- Offer a competitive salary that includes fringe benefits, especially PTI-2 and PTI-3, which currently do not offer any fringe benefits. Due to their limited resources, the selected Windhoek PTIs should contribute a certain percentage towards such fringe benefits, but less than what Namibian public HEIs offer. These fringe benefits could include a housing allowance since accommodation is costly in Windhoek, medical aid and a pension fund for Namibians. In contrast, foreign employees could be given a gratuity for every five years of service.
- Academics should be paid a salary during vacation periods. This recommendation applies especially to PTI-2.

### **8.3.7 Employee relations and involvement**

Employee relations are paramount in today's workplace, as institutions strive to adopt HR practices that promote good employee relations. The study proposes that

- The selected Windhoek PTIs should consistently implement the disciplinary and grievance procedures, and the employees should be aware of these procedures.



- Academic staff should be involved in all the issues that involve them.
- There is a need for a workers' committee to represent employee interests since there is a feeling in HEIs and PTIs that the trade union that is supposed to represent academics comprises most teachers; thus, most of the academics' concerns are not addressed (Amupanda, 2019:1).
- An efficient absenteeism system should be used to monitor absenteeism, ensuring academic staff do not perceive that their autonomy has been compromised because of micro-supervision.

### **8.3.8 Wellness programmes**

Wellness programmes are essential in the selected Windhoek PTIs due to the academics' current overloaded work schedules. Over time, such a process will trigger stress and burnout, even though these aspects are not always evident.

## **8.4 Study limitations, implications and suggestions for future research**

Although this research process was planned before its execution, various limitations were identified when conducting it. These deficiencies included the scarcity of studies and publications specifically targeting Windhoek PTIs, which led the study to draw more literature from Namibian public HEIs. This practice enabled the study to generalise relevant insights while recognizing the necessity for further research to cultivate a more tailored and comprehensive understanding of HRM practices for PTIs. This process allowed this study to generalise some insights on the informal implementation of HR practices in Namibian HEIs, linking them to PTIs.

Furthermore, the selected Windhoek PTIs have other branches in different parts of Namibia; however, this study was only conducted in their main Windhoek campuses. Therefore, HR professionals need to be cautious when generalising the findings of this study to all PTI branches in Namibia because of geographical differences.

Furthermore, the formal HRM practices model for improving employee retention that was proposed by this study was customised for PTIs, whereas in Namibia, public HEIs are also facing problems of employee turnover (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Boparikar & Smith, 2019; Deloitte, 2015; Pieters et al., 2022).

Therefore, there is a need for a further comparative study that adopts an explanatory sequential design on the HR practices that impact employee turnover in both private and public HEIs in Namibia. This process will enable the sector to have a model that can be used in the Namibian HEIs to decrease the rate of employee turnover.

### **8.5 Research study's contribution to the HR body of knowledge**

Namibia is a growing economy, and its need to achieve its Vision 2030 calls for HEIs to produce high-quality graduates who will meet the industrial demands. Hence, employee turnover in PTIs can affect the accomplishment of Vision 2030. The study thus proposes a formal HRM practices model for employee retention that Namibian PTIs can adopt. Some authors previously have conducted similar studies in Namibia (Amushila & Bussin, 2021; Boparikar & Smith, 2019; Deloitte, 2015; Pieters et al., 2022), but these were conducted within public Namibian HEIs. Subsequently, this study will shed light on the implementation and components that can be included in the formal HRM practices/policies to yield a positive outcome from the perspective of PTIs with their limited resources, hence breaking ground in the PTI environment. This process was previously conducted by Meyer (2017) but from a South African perspective. Furthermore, this study showed how the Namibia Labour Act should be implemented to contribute to formal HRM practices in Namibian PTIs. Even though this study used a previously untested instrument, there were domains such as performance management and recognition, working conditions and WLB, employee relations and involvement, career development and growth, employee development and absenteeism that had a Cronbach Alpha more significant than 0.7, and so can be used and adapted by other researchers for their research instruments.

### **8.6 Conclusion**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the informal HR practices adopted by selected Windhoek PTIs in Namibia and propose a formal HRM practices model that these PTIs can adopt to reduce employee turnover and absenteeism while improving performance levels and promoting employee development. The thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter laid down an overview of the research setting and its objectives by outlining the background of the study, the problem statement and research objectives and stating how the thesis was organised. Since Namibia gained its independence in 1990 and how it is striving to improve the HEI sector, the HEI sector contributes to Namibia's economic development. PTIs currently dominate this sector, and therefore, if PTIs' challenges are not addressed, they will not contribute as expected to the

Namibian economy. Therefore, this study investigated the challenges faced by selected Windhoek PTIs to propose an HRM practices model that will improve staff retention. Chapter 1 outlines the study's five-fold objectives as follows: to determine HR practices adopted by PTIs that negatively affect employee turnover; to ascertain how HR practices contribute to performance deterioration among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs; to identify the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in selected Windhoek PTIs; to determine the obstacles hindering employee development within the selected Windhoek PTIs; and to recommend a formal HRM practices model that Namibian PTIs can adopt to improve employee retention. The research questions were deduced from these research questions.

In Chapter 2, the study presented the theories underpinning the study, a comprehensive literature review on HR practices that have negatively impacted employee turnover, absenteeism, employee development and performance management, thereby causing performance deterioration. Gaps in prior literature were determined, and the current study attempted to fill these deficiencies while adding value to the HR body of knowledge. Based on the studies conducted by several authors, the reviewed literature showed that the HR function has transformed due to globalisation, the development of technology and changing demographics. However, HEIs are striving to meet the demands of the changing environment but are facing challenges in implementing the HR practices ideal for the 21st century. The literature review noted retention strategies such as training and development, performance management, career development and growth, positive organisational culture, employee involvement, leadership, total reward model and recognition programmes. Unfortunately, Namibian HEIs have adopted few of these retention strategies and, thus, are losing their academic staff. In this regard, recommendations have been made to retain academic staff in Namibia's public HEIs. Nevertheless, the retention strategies need to be customised for Namibian PTIs, and an outline of how these processes should be implemented must be provided.

In Chapter 3, this study further reviewed the literature relating to Namibian HEIs with a focus on three selected Windhoek PTIs, identified in this study as PTI-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3 and the components of the Namibia Labour Act of 2007 that promoted formal HR practices in the workplace. The reviewed literature revealed that the formation of PTIs was based on accomplishing Namibia's Vision 2030. This chapter noted limited literature on how the implementation of informal HR practices negatively affects employee turnover while influencing performance deterioration, absenteeism and employee development deterioration in Namibian

PTIs. The literature review was derived from the studies conducted within public Namibian HEIs. They highlighted many causes of employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and a decrease in employee development. Furthermore, this chapter focused on the availability of resources for academics and students, the policies implemented by the selected Windhoek PTIs (PIT-1, PTI-2, and PTI-3), and their impact on the problems identified by the study. Chapter 3 then developed the study's conceptual framework, and the hypotheses were generated from this framework.

Chapter 4 of this study presented the way the study was conducted. The study used pragmatism for the research paradigm. It then combined the inductive and deductive approaches for the research approach. This practice allowed the researcher to understand the importance of HR practices and the value attached to them by employees while enlightening the relationship between informal HR practices and employee turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism, and employee development. The mixed research approach (convergent parallel design) was adopted for the research method because it utilised the advantages of both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Therefore, this descriptive research design allowed the study to describe the HR practices in selected Windhoek PTIs using quantifiable and narrative descriptors. The study participants comprised academic staff from three selected Windhoek PTIs; the sample size was one 179, which was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table. The study used a closed and open-ended questionnaire and structured interviews to collect data to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was distributed using Survey Monkey, and the interviews were conducted using the Zoom online platform. Eight HR business partners were interviewed for this study. The study used Atlas ti.22 and Stata (version 17) for data analysis, and the joint display analysis was adopted to integrate the qualitative and quantitative results. This research methodology chapter also described how the research ethics were met to ensure the study was conducted ethically.

Chapter 5 of this study presented and analysed the research results in three segments – quantitative, qualitative and joint display analysis – because the study adopted a mixed research methodology. This chapter then presented the descriptive and inferential statistical results and the narrative analysis. The data was diagrammatically presented using bar charts, pie charts, box and whisker plots, tables, and Sankey diagrams to enhance an understanding of the study findings. Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to ascertain the reliability of the study's results and

confirm the internal consistency of the questionnaire in addressing the research objectives. The reliability coefficient was 0,9576, above 0,7, indicating high internal reliability and consistency.

Chapter 6 discussed the study's results in relation to the reviewed literature on employer turnover, performance deterioration, absenteeism and employee development. In consideration of the objectives of the study, this chapter thematically discussed the following issues in relation to the three selected Windhoek PTIs: distribution of the demographic data, the HR practices adopted that negatively affect employee turnover and contribute to employees' performance deterioration, factors contributing to absenteeism among employees, obstacles hindering employee development and the adopted retention strategies.

Chapter 7 of this study proposed a formal HRM practices model to retain academic staff. This process will enable the selected Windhoek PTIs to transform from the informal HR practices they are currently implementing to formal HR practices that will create positive work behaviours, i.e., improved performance, reduced absenteeism and increased employee development, thereby retaining academic staff in PTIs.

The proposed formal HRM practices model can potentially transform PTIs' employee retention strategies. By transitioning from informal HR practices to formal ones, PTIs will likely observe improved employee performance, reduced absenteeism and increased employee development among their academic staff. The model's adaptability to the specific needs of PTIs ensures its relevance and potential for long-term impact. Finally, adopting the formal HRM practices model can positively influence the overall quality and reputation of Namibian PTIs by developing quality graduates who will enable a more stable academic workforce for Namibia's Vision 2030.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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P.O. Box 1906 • Bellville 7535 South Africa • Tel: +27 21 4603291 • Email: fbmsethics@cput.ac.za  
Symphony Road Bellville 7535


Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	<b>FACULTY: BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES</b>
--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------

The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC) on 20 October 2020, ethics Approval was granted to **Sibonginkosi Saruchera (219495831)** for a research activity **Doctor of Human Resource Management** at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	<b>Human Resource Practices in Selected Private Tertiary Institutions in Windhoek, Namibia</b>  Lead Supervisor (s): Dr L Gie and Prof B Rust
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Comments:

Decision: **APPROVED**

 Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	21 October 2020 Date
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Clearance Certificate No | 2020FOBREC809

## **APPENDIX B: HR PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **HR PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Participant

May you kindly assist me in answering this online questionnaire. You are receiving this email because you are the one who has information that will address the research objectives of the study and you are also affected by the HR practices that are implemented by your institution.

I am a registered Post graduate student at Cape Peninsula University of Science and Technology (CPUT) in the Faculty of Business Management Science. In my research I am in a stage of collecting data via online questionnaires. This email serves as a request to please assist in answering a short survey. If you wish to participate in this research, read and sign the consent below.

To complete the question, kindly click on the link below. The due date is Monday 6 September 2021.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KPTKLG6>

For any queries, please contact me via my email

Thank you in advance for assisting me in this regard.

Kind Regards

Sibonginkosi Saruchera  
Post Graduate Student

## **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

**Research Title:** Human resource practices in selected Private Tertiary Institutions in Windhoek, Namibia.

**Researcher:** Sibonginkosi Saruchera

**Supervisors:** Dr Liiza Gie and Prof Braam Rust

### **Introduction:**

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Sibonginkosi Saruchera from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards a Doctoral thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are:

- (a) The ones who have the information that will address the research objectives of the study.
- (b) The ones who are affected by the HR practices that are implemented by your institution.

The information below gives details about the study to help you decide whether you would want to participate.

### **Purpose of the Research:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the HR practices used in Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) and then propose an HR practice model that could be adopted by Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) in Namibia to reduce employee turnover and absenteeism while improving performance levels and promoting employee development. The study further aims to recommend HR practices that promotes employee retention within PTIs in Namibia. This will also make Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) in Namibia an employer of choice.

### **Research Method:**

This research study is limited to selected Namibian Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs), Windhoek it will comprise of academic staff and staff members in the HR department. The questionnaire will be administered online using Survey monkey to participants, with their permission.

### **Potential Benefits:**

The research outcomes and proposed HR practice model will benefit the employers by reducing employee turnover, absenteeism at the same time improving performance and promoting employee development. The employees will also benefit as the system will be allowing career development, they will also have job satisfaction and job security which in turn will improve service delivery to students.

### **Statement of Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality of responses will be ensured, and no person will be prejudiced for participating in this study, while quality control and secure storage of data will be maintained. All participants will remain anonymous, and no probability of harm is expected. Names of the institutions will not be disclosed in the research.

**Procedures (questionnaire):**

If you volunteer to participate in this study the following will be done:

1. Questionnaires will be distributed via e-mail to the lecturers.
2. Participants will be given three weeks to complete the questionnaires,
3. After two weeks a reminder e-mail will be sent for the due date.
4. Follow-up will be done for those who failed to submit the questionnaire within three weeks.
5. Respondents will be thanked for their time and information provided for this study.

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

Tick the appropriate column		
Statement	Yes	No
1. I understand the purpose of the research.		
2. I understand what the research requires of me.		
3. I volunteer to take part in the research.		
4. I know that I can withdraw at any time.		
5. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me as a result of my participation or non-participation.		
6. Comment:		

**Contact Information:**

If you happen to have any questions about the research before or during the study you are free to contact Sibonginkosi Saruchera at (264) 813893372 or at sibongimpofu@gmail.com.

**Participant:** You can sign the consent form if you wish to participant in this research. However, if you happen to feel uncomfortable during the process, you will be free to withdraw your participation at any time without having to give a reason.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Instruction for research participants.**

Please put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box that reflects your answer.

**SECTION A: Biographical Information**

1. Age

18 – 25     26 – 35     36 – 45     46 – 55     56 – 65

66 years and above

2. Gender

Male

Female

3. Occupation (questionnaire only for academics)

Lecturer

Senior Lecturer

Professor

4. Length of service at a Private Tertiary Institution (PTI)

0 – 1 year

2 – 3 years

4 – 5 years

6 -7 years

8 – 9 years

10 and above

5. Highest qualification obtained

Grade 12 / High School Certificate

Undergraduate Diploma / Degree

Honors Degree/ Postgraduate Diploma

Master Degree

Doctoral Degree

**SECTION B: Human resource practices at the workplace**

**Please indicate the provision of these HR practices at your institution.**

Please respond to the following statement by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
1. The institution applies a career development policy that enables employees' career growth.				
2. The career progression pathway is clear within the institution.				

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
3. The institution provides a policy for promotion.				
4. I am fairly rewarded compared to similar jobs outside my organisation.				
5. The institution provide fringe benefits (housing allowances, transport allowances, etc)				
6. Generally, employees enjoy good working relations within the institution.				
7. Employees receive recognition for good work performance.				
8. Salaries are always paid on time.				
9. Salaries are paid during vacation period.				
10. The institution cares about its employee welfare.				
11. I can accrue leave days and use them when there is need.				
12. The institution has a written procedure for managing disciplinary cases.				
13. The institution has a written procedure for resolving grievances.				
14. The institution participates in annual salaries negotiation with employees.				
15. The institution has a formal policy on academic workload to ensure equitable distribution of academic activities amongst lecturers.				
16. In order to meet my job requirements I often work longer hours than stated in my contract of employment.				
17. I frequently work during weekends to complete my weekly tasks.				
18. My job does not negatively impact on my family life.				
19. The institution provides job enrichment to its employees.				
20. Innovation and autonomy are encourages within the institution.				
21. The institution provides employees with training and development.				
22. Employee are provide with assistance on work related issues.				
23. The institution values its employees.				

24. List the factors which can influence you to leave the organisation.

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Please respond to the following statements on factors influencing absenteeism by ticking(✓) in the appropriate box	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
25. The institution provides a good working environment.				
26. I absent myself because of personal reasons.				
27. I have an acute medical condition that needs me to stay away for work.				
28. The institution has systems to monitor absenteeism.				
29. The organisation has a culture of absenteeism so I adopted the culture.				
30. There is job satisfaction among employees.				
31. The medication that I am using makes me not to come to work sometimes.				
32. The institution meets employees' expectations.				
33. Stress makes me not to go to work sometimes.				
34. Burnout and fatigue makes me not to go to work				

35. List the other reasons that can influence from not going to work.

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HR practices hinder employee development at your institution.

Please respond to the following statement by ticking(✓) in the appropriate box	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
36. The institution has a workload policy that encourage employee development.				
37. The institution has the HR department that can facilitate employee development.				
38. The institution reward for additional qualifications.				
39. The institution sponsorship its employees for formal learning and development.				
40. Supervisors provides proper performance feedback to employees that identifies areas of development.				
41. The institution has a training and development policy that promote employee development.				
42. The institution has a learning culture.				
43. I am not motivated to learn.				
44. I have fear of taking responsibility of personal development.				

45. What are the other factors hindering training and development at your institution?

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Please indicate the provision of these HR practices at your institution. (Performance Management)

Please respond to the following statement by ticking(✓) in the appropriate box	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
46. Top management communicates the vision, mission and values of the institution to employees.				
47. Employees who are not performing well are provided with training and development to reach the required job standard.				
48. Employees are provided with all the job resources that are required in order to complete their work.				
49. The institution has a performance management policy.				
50. The performance evaluation is fair and consistent.				
51. Grievances are resolved amicably.				
52. Employees agree on performance objectives set by management.				
53. Employees are given written on the job description on commencement of employment.				
54. The institution provide training to evaluators and employees.				
55. The institution offer opportunity for advancement in some posts (Head of department, principal/dean, and research coordinator).				
56. The institution document a summary of employee performance.				
57. Performance management is linked to performance improvement process.				
58. The institution has a policy which promote training and development.				
59. The institution implements an annual performance management appraisal system.				
60. The institution provide feedback on performance				
61. The institution provides coaching and mentoring to improve employee performance.				

62. What are the practices hinder employee performance in your institution?

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63. List the factors which can influence you to remain in the organisation.

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Thank you for your participation.

## APPENDIX C: HR PRACTICES INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Consent to participate in a research study

**Research Title:** Human resource practices in selected Private Tertiary Institutions in Windhoek, Namibia.

**Researcher:** Sibonginkosi Saruchera

**Supervisors:** Dr Liiza Gie and Prof Braam Rust

### Introduction:

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Sibonginkosi Saruchera from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards a Doctoral thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are:

- (a) The ones who have the information that will address the research objectives of the study.
- (b) The custodians of the HR policies and practices.

### Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the HR practices used in Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) and then propose an HR practice model that could be adopted by Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) in Namibia to reduce employee turnover and absenteeism while improving performance levels and promoting employee development. The study further aims to recommend HR practices that promotes employee retention within PTIs in Namibia. This will also make Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs) in Namibia an employer of choice.

### Research Method:

This research study is limited to selected Namibian Private Tertiary Institutions (PTIs), Windhoek it will comprise of academic staff and staff members in the HR department. An interview will be conducted to HR staff of different Private Tertiary institutions (PTIs) in Windhoek.

### Potential Benefits:

The research outcomes and proposed HR practice model will benefit the employers by reducing employee turnover, absenteeism at the same time improving performance and promoting employee development. The employees will also benefit as the system will be allowing career development, they will also have job satisfaction and job security which in turn will improve service delivery to students.

### Statement of Confidentiality:

Confidentiality of responses will be ensured and no person will be prejudiced for participating in this study, while quality control and secure storage of data will be maintained. All participants will remain anonymous and no probability of harm is expected. Names of the institutions will not be disclosed in the research.

**Procedures (Interview):**

If you volunteer to participate in this study the following will be done:

6. Describe the main research procedures to you in advance, so that you are informed about what to expect.
7. Treat all interviewees with respect by conducting all the online interviews within the scheduled time;
8. Conduct an introduction with the interviewee in order to break ice.
9. All the interviewees will be asked for permission to record the interviews and also take some note where applicable.
10. In a case where there is no clarity, the interviewees will be allowed to ask for confirmation or clarity of words/sentences/phrases to ensure accuracy of the data collected;
11. Participants will be told that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs;
12. Participants will be given the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer or feel uncomfortable with;
13. Participants will be told that questions do not pose any realistic risk of distress or discomfort, either physically or psychologically, to them;
14. At the end of each interview all the interviewees will be thanked for their time and information provided for this study;
15. Participants will be debriefed at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study).

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

<b>Tick the appropriate column</b>		
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
7. I understand the purpose of the research.		
8. I understand what the research requires of me.		
9. I volunteer to take part in the research.		
10. I know that I can withdraw at any time.		
11. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me as a result of my participation or non-participation.		
12. Comment:		

**Contact Information:**

If you happen to have any questions about the research before or during the study you are free to contact Sibonginkosi Saruchera at (264) 813893372 or at sibongimpofu@gmail.com.



**Participant:** You can sign the consent form if you wish to participant in this research. However, if you happen to feel uncomfortable during the process, you will be free to withdraw your participation at any time without having to give a reason.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

## Interview guide

### Section A (Biographical information)

6. Age

- 18 – 25     26 – 35     36 – 45     46 – 55     56 – 65   
66 years and above

7. Gender

- Male                       Female

8. Occupation

- HR Officer                       HR Director                       HR Manager

9. Length of service at a Private Tertiary Institution (PTI)

- 0 – 1year                       2 – 3years                       4 – 5 years   
6 -7 years                       8 – 9 years                       10 and above

10. Highest HR qualification obtained

- No qualification                       Certificate                       Diploma   
Undergraduate degree                       Honors Degree/ Post graduate diploma   
Master degree                       Doctoral Degree

### SECTION B

1. What is the aim of the institution's HR strategy?

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2. During exit interviews, what reasons were given by staff for leaving the institution?

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3. What processes do you follow when filling a vacant position?

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4. What are the factors contributing to absenteeism among employees in your institution?

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5. How does HR monitor unauthorized absenteeism?

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6. How is performance management implemented at your institution?

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7. To what extent are employees recognized and rewarded for good performance?

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8. What training and development opportunities does your institution offer its employees?

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9.To what extend are employees training linked to their job requirements?

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9. What employee retention strategies are applied at your institution to retain its employees?

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Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX D: DECLARATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

### DECLARATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Human Resources Management

in the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences

at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, District Six, Cape Town

entitled:

**HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES IN SELECTED PRIVATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN  
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

By Sibonginkosi Saruchera

Supervisor: Dr L. Gie

has been subjected to an English language edit (excluding the Appendices)

by Dr Barbara Basel

(This document required extensive editing, these edits still have to be implemented  
by the student.)

D.Litt. University of Pretoria,  
MA Potchefstroom University,  
BA UNISA

Vice President of the Council of English Academy of Southern Africa

Associate Member Professional Editors' Guild

Past Lecturer in English Literature, Linguistics, Communication and Business

English for 10 years at Pearson Institute for Higher Education (previously Midrand  
Graduate Institute), Cape Town Campus.

Academic Editing – PhD, MBA, MComm, MEd, MPM and Master's in Graphic Design  
Theses, External Examiner for MEd Thesis.

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22 August 2023

**APPENDIX E: DECLARATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING**

**EDITING CONFIRMATION**

To whom it may concern:

This memo serves to confirm that the manuscript/research project detailed below has been language-edited and/or proof-read.

Regards,

-SM001-

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SM (Cert. Lang. Ed.)  
Language Editor

\*\*\*\*\*

**Manuscript Title:**

Human resource practices in selected private tertiary  
institutions in Windhoek Namibia.

**Author:**

SIBONGINKOSI SARUCHERA

**Issued on:**

24/07/2024

Disclaimer:

The editors/proofreaders make(s) no claim as to the accuracy of the manuscript contents nor the objectives of the author. While all possible efforts have been made to ensure the text as edited is readable and grammatically correct, the author(s) have the option to accept or reject suggestions and trackable changes made to the document before submission.

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sarchcot@gmail.com:

## APPENDIX F: CERTIFICATE OF VERIFICATION FOR QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

# Certificate of Verification for Quantitative Results

This is to certify that the quantitative results presented in the Thesis, *Human resource practices in selected private tertiary institutions in Windhoek, Namibia*, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) have been verified by Dr Zvifadzo Matsena-Zingoni, a qualified statistician. The results verification process involved a thorough examination of the statistical analyses conducted by the researcher.

### Details of Verification:

**Thesis Title:** Human resource practices in selected private tertiary institutions in Windhoek, Namibia

**Candidate:** Sibonginkosi Saruchera

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

**Field of Study:** Human Resource Management

**University/Institution:** Cape Peninsula University of Technology

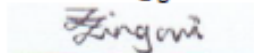
**Date of Verification:** 12 June 2023

The verification process included the following:

- ✓ Reviewing the research methodology and data collection techniques used in the study.
- ✓ Checking the accuracy of data entry, cleaning, and preparation.
- ✓ Ensuring appropriate statistical tests and techniques were applied to the research questions and hypotheses.
- ✓ Verifying the correctness of calculations, summary statistics, and inferential analyses.
- ✓ Confirming that the results were correctly interpreted and appropriately presented in the thesis.

Based on this thorough verification process, I confirm that the quantitative results presented in the thesis are accurate and reflect the analyses conducted by the researcher. Any discrepancies or concerns have been addressed and rectified during the verification process.

Dr Zvifadzo Matsena-Zingoni  
Biostatistician, PhD  
zmatsena28@gmail.com



12/6/2023