

# A Conceptual Analysis of The Effective Career Development of Young Academics

Boitumelo Makhubele<sup>1,\*</sup>, Musawenkosi Donia Saurombe<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, Orcid: 0000-0002-4287-7498.

<sup>2</sup>Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, Orcid: 0000-0002-2923-2863.

## Keywords

Career development  
Employee value proposition  
Employer branding  
Young academics

---

## Abstract

Traditionally, the academic profession has globally been characterised as being for more seasoned and mature professionals, who after acquiring practical expertise in their respective vocations, would enter the academic arena to disseminate the knowledge they acquired over the span of their careers. This is corroborated by how conventional academics were often perceived as fountains of knowledge and wisdom from which students would drink, as per the orthodox teaching philosophies. However, with the ageing academic workforce, there is growing pressure on higher education institutions to secure and create a highly talented cohort and pipeline of academics. Using a conceptual research methodology, this paper sought to explore effective ways of developing young career academics into the talent pool that South African higher education institutions need to ensure sustainability in the future. The main findings of this paper were that a reputable employer brand, an attractive EVP and a distinguishable employment experience is critical towards the effective career development of young academics. The paper contributes to the existing literature on the career development of young academics.

---

---

\*Corresponding Author

<sup>1\*</sup> mdsaurombe@uj.ac.za

<sup>2</sup> bmakhubele@uj.ac.za

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa continue to experience challenges regarding the number and capacity of academic staff (The Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2018). Amongst other things, this has been attributed to the increasing access to higher education by many previously disadvantaged demographic groups and the ageing workforce (Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021; DHET, 2018). About a decade ago, extensive evidence suggested that the country was grappling with an impending staff crisis as almost half of its senior academics were expected to retire in the subsequent decade (DHET, 2015). The crisis is further exacerbated by the slow rate at which the pipeline of academics is being replenished to meet the demands of the sector (Subbaye, 2018).

At a national level, one of the strides taken to improve succession planning in higher education was the introduction and implementation of the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) in 2015 (DHET, 2015). The nGAP is a programme under the DHET that aims to support universities in recruiting and developing a new generation of talented academics (DHET, 2015). The recruitment process is carefully designed to ensure that there are balanced equity considerations and that younger people who are below the age of 40 are the prioritised beneficiaries of the programme (DHET, 2018). The programme is, to date, the most extensive within the Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF).

Despite efforts at a national level however, HEIs seem to have been less successful at developing and retaining a talented pool of new generation academics (Zacher et al., 2018). For example, Borotho (2023) reports that although the nGAP has created several posts since its implementation, nearly a quarter of the beneficiaries of the programme have already left academia. According to Barnes et al. (2021), universities continue to lose key talent due to an array of problems such as poor infrastructure, limited funding and less competitive remuneration packages in this sector and in comparison, to other organisations in the private and public sector (Barnes et al., 2021; Musakuro & de Klerk, 2021; Pienaar & Bester, 2008). These challenges may be more discouraging to younger people whose needs tend to be more intricate than middle-aged and senior academics and are thus, more challenging to navigate (Barnes et al., 2021).

Using extant literature mainly from past empirical studies, this paper sought to theoretically explore an amalgamation of the best practices that the South African higher education sector can adopt to ensure the creation, availability and development of an exceptional talent pool of young academics who will continue to bridge the gap that continues to widen between the demand for and accessibility to higher education and the availability of exceptional scholars who can carry the duty and responsibility that comes with the profession.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

The sustainability of the higher education system is dependent on the adequate preparation of emerging and talented potential academics (Chaacha & Botha, 2021; DHET, 2018). While the DHET recognises this and has made phenomenal strides in staffing local universities with a good cohort of young and highly talented academics, universities still grapple with attracting, effectively developing and retaining the acquired talent (Lesenyeho et al., 2018). Over and above the graduates who are reluctant to pursue an academic career (Barnes et al., 2022), HEIs must still compete with other sectors for the minimal available top talent (Barnes et al., 2021). This is despite the persisting problems in higher education, placing the South African university system under immense pressure and propelling the urgency to employ other strategies to make up a new generation of academics. HEIs, which were predominantly more inclined to employing more senior scholars, need to undergo customisation in terms of the employment experience of younger academics if they are to stay ahead of the increasing global war for talent (Barnes et al., 2022; Hollywood et al., 2020).

This study was primarily motivated by the fact that South African universities remain confronted with the challenge of ensuring that the new generation of academics are developed to transform and evolve universities in line with the future staffing and sustainability needs. The authors further opine that these higher education institutions grapple with improving institutional work environments and cultures, thus alienating younger academics and impeding their successful assimilation and retention within the sector.

## **1.3. Research objectives**

The aim of this research was to theoretically explore the effective ways of developing the careers of young academics.

The objectives of this research were to:

- Explore how higher education institutions can develop an attractive employer brand.
- Propose an employee value proposition for young academics.
- Explore the support structures that create a distinguishable employment experience for young academics.

## **2. Literature Review**

The following literature review entails a delineation of the pertinent theoretical framework which underpins this study, as well as extant knowledge on the key concepts of the study as outlined in the research objectives above.

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The authors have chosen the systems thinking framework (STF) as the underpinning theoretical framework for this research. The STF draws from systems theory, which aims to explore and explain phenomena as a system with dynamic and interdependent components (Lai & Lin, 2017). While the

systems theory has been applied across career theories, it was only through the introduction of the STF by Patterson and McMahon (1999) that it was used to develop a more integrated framework for career development (Lovasz, 2020; Patton & McMahon, 2006).

The STF illustrates a range of interconnected content and process influences of career development (Lovasz, 2020; McMahon, 2011). The content influences refer to three interconnected systems, namely, the individual, social and environmental-societal systems which all occur within the context of time, linking the past, present and the future (McMahon, 2011; McMahon & Patton, 2019). The individual system is central to the STF and depicts a range of intrapersonal influences on career development such as age and values (Patterson & McMahon, 2006); The social system includes influences such as family, peers and workplaces and refers to the people or institutions people interact with and that may influence career development (McMahon & Patton, 2022) and the environmental-societal system includes career development influences such as, the employment market, globalisation, and political decisions amongst other things. The process that influences career development on the other hand, accounts for the dynamic and complex nature of career development by incorporating recursiveness, change over time, and chance (McMahon & Patton, 2018). Recursiveness refers to the notion that each system is an open system subjecting each system to influence by and interaction with other systems; the change influence acknowledges that change occurs over time in and between systems and that the nature of influence changes over time while chance is incorporated to take cognisance of the influence of unexpected natural or unnatural events on career development (Lovasz, 2020).

The content and process influence on career development presented in the STF helped contextualise this study. For example, age and values that are incorporated in the individual system consider the dynamics of different age groups. Furthermore, certain age groups tend to have a level of cohesiveness in their values or what they appreciate (Lyon et al., 2005; Swanepoel & Saurombe, 2022), which in turn, highlights the importance of this study's objectives to explore what would be appeal to and be appreciated by young academics. Using the STF as a frame of reference, the significance of how the workplace and the sector itself can influence and should consequently be customised to not only develop but retain these young academics is also highlighted. In addition to this, the STF captures the need to be cognisant of the impact of time, the changing context of the academic profession and the subsequent impact of the development on young academics (Musakuro & de Klerk, 2021).

## **2.2 An attractive Employer Brand for young academics**

Although there has been progress in the entry of young people in academia, there is a notable regression success in the HEI efforts to create a new generation of academics as this group tends to leave academia before the completion of or shortly after they have participated in the academic development initiatives or programmes (Borotho, 2023; Matongolo et al., 2018). This defeats the efforts by the DHET and universities of creating a pipeline of new academics. According to Radzevičienė and Sokolova (2020), HEIs are competing against and tend to lose talent to other organisations in the corporate and public

sector. This is because HEIs are at an unfair competitive disadvantage as they are competing for the best talent while plagued by problems that present HEIs as less favourable employers of choice (Higher Education South Africa [HESA], 2011). These problems include but are not limited to less competitive remuneration packages offered in comparison to the corporate sector for the same level of education and skills; lack of infrastructure; limited funding and work overload due to limited staff (HESA, 2011; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Musakuro & de Klerk, 2021; Saurombe et al., 2017b). These problems have made it difficult for HEIs to attract and retain talent, especially young talent (Barnes et al., 2021; Lesenyeho et al., 2018). This in turn, has propelled HEIs to review their traditional human resource practices and efforts to present academia as an attractive choice of employment develop a new generation of academics (Radzevičienė & Sokolova, 2020).

According to Hanover Research (2014) and Matongolo et al. (2018), HEIs are now paying more attention and making efforts to build an employer brand to navigate through the war for talent. While the practice of developing an employer brand was originally and continues to be predominantly used in corporate to help organisations compete for prospective clients and employees, HEIs cannot ignore the impact of and are prioritising employer branding (Matongolo et al., 2018; Mohammad & Shubhangim, 2021). Originally coined by Ambler and Barrow (1996), an employer brand refers to the total functional, economic and psychological benefits an organisation uses to appeal to employees. Wahba and Elmanadily (2015) further define it as the internal and external communication of the organisation's unique attributes and benefits. It is the deliberate act to create and market an idea or image about an organisation that is appealing and relatable to existing and potential employees (South African Board of People Practice [SABPP], 2019). According to Radhumbu et al. (2014) and Tripathi et al. (2017), some of the employer brand activities that are helpful in attracting prospective employees include the organisation's efforts to convey that it offers developmental opportunities, good compensation and that there is a desirable organisational culture that promotes a fair and an open work environment.

Nationwide, the creation of an employer brand is continuously being recognised as a critical strategy to attract, engage, and retain talented employees (Radhumbu et al., 2014; Pauer, 2016). Employer branding is likely to attract employees who are best fit for the organisation and will be motivated to achieve organisational goals (SABPP, 2019). This is because building an employer brand enables the organisation to distinguish itself from other organisations and presents the organisation as a desirable employer (Wahba & Elmanadily, 2015). Unsurprisingly, Ewing et al. (2002) and Mohammad and Shubhangi (2021) argue that the importance and impact of employer branding will grow in future, to an extent where it becomes a primary strategy for organisations to simultaneously attract new and existing employees.

### **2.3 An attractive Employee Value Proposition for young academics**

Pawar (2016) and Radzevičienė and Sokolova (2020) posit that a core element in the development and presentation of the employer brand is through the development and presentation of an employee value proposition (EVP). To understand and communicate the employer brand, the EVP must first be well developed and understood as it guides employer branding strategies or activities (Mandal & Krishnan, 2013). An EVP is typically developed as a point of reference for organisations when they communicate their branding (Pawar, 2016). While the employer brand focuses on conveying messages that will attract prospective employees, an EVP delivers the actions and behaviours for prospective and current employees (Hatun, 2013).

According to Matongolo et al. (2018) and Radzevičienė and Sokolova (2020), an EVP refers to the total organisation's culture, value systems, policies and behaviours intended to attract and retain both current and potential employees. It constitutes the total distinctive benefits an organisation offers and represents what internal and potential employees associate the organisation with (Mandal & Krishnan, 2013). An EVP represents the value that is offered to employees, which in turn, influences individuals to stay committed to the organisation (Swanepoel & Saurombe, 2022). Extending on the definition of an EVP, Hatun (2013) and Pawar and Charak (2014) describe the EVP as the benefits, work characteristics and rewards that are offered by organisations to employees in return for their skills, experiences and contribution to the success of the organisation.

To capture the essence of an EVP, Sibson Consulting created a Reward for Work (ROW) model to capture rewards or benefits an organisation can offer employees by outlining five elements of an EVP, namely: the work environment and affiliation, work content, work-life balance, benefits and remuneration (Browne, 2012). The work environment and affiliation refers to the feeling of belonging to the organisation such as identifying with the organisational culture, values, colleagues and leaders; work content is concerned with the fulfilment employees derive from their work and includes challenging work; work-life balance entails the long term opportunities employees have to develop and advance in their careers and also includes having flexibility and autonomy with work; benefits refers to the indirect compensation such as time-off and health benefits while remuneration speaks to the direct financial rewards that employees receive for their work (Browne 2012; Radhumbu et al., 2014). According to Matangolo et al. (2018), an EVP remains instrumental in attracting, recruiting and retaining the best talent in industry. Furthermore, an EVP is associated with positive organisational outcomes such as improved employee engagement and a decrease the turnover rates (Swanepoel & Saurombe, 2022).

## **2.4 Support structures that create a distinguishable employment experience for young academics.**

To grow a new generation of academics and as a systematic response to mitigate the challenges related to the composition and capacity of academic staff, the DHET in South Africa along with academic institutions are developing and facilitating different strategies towards the academic career development of a new generation of talented academics who will contribute to the success and advancement of HEIs (Moosa, 2020). Academic career development is the process used to develop scholars in the areas of research, teaching and/or administrative roles within academic and higher education contexts (Herman & Sehoole, n.d.; Saurombe et al., 2017a). Focus on developing these areas is critical as academic staff are expected to undertake these roles throughout their careers. For example, a professor would be expected to lecture students, conduct research and hold an administrative role such as serving on a committee (Zachera et al., 2018). According to Barnes et al. (2021), academic career development plays a significant role in the results, level of educational services provided, and the quality of scientific research achieved by academic institutions. Barnes et al. (2021) and Theron et al. (2014), further postulate that academic career development is fundamental for HEIs to achieve their strategic objectives and failure to invest in the development of academic careers has dire consequences for HEIs. Similarly, Shar et al. (2020) argued that the academic profession is central to the functioning of HEIs and that without well qualified academic staff, academic institutions will struggle to ensure quality and sustainability in the long-term.

A national effort taken by the DHET towards the academic development and creation of a pipeline of academics is through the nGAP (Hlengwa, 2019). The NGAP is a six-year induction and developmental programme for newly appointed lecturers who are embarking on an academic career (Hlengwa, 2019). The programme was implemented in South African Universities in 2015 to increase the academic staff complement and is intended to develop the teaching, research and social engagement of early-career academics (DHET, 2017). Early career academics are those individuals who are new to academic roles, are within the first five years of their first appointment in academia and are typically in the establishment phase of their careers (Lesenyeho et al., 2018; Zachera et al., 2018). According to Borotheo (2023) and DHET (2018), the nGAP is transformative in nature and aims to develop underrepresented and previously disadvantaged groups such as Black, Coloured, Indian people and women. Priority is also to be accorded to young people who are 40 years or younger.

To align with the DHET and meet current and ongoing staffing needs, some HEIs are supplementing the DHET efforts with other initiatives. The University of South Africa for example, launched their first young academic programme in 2008 aimed at individuals aged 35 and younger and focused on aspects such as developing an understanding of academia and teaching excellence (Sadler & van Jaarsveldt, 2012). The result of the programme was the improvement of young academics' understanding of the structures and policies supporting higher education institutions and a significant improvement in the

understanding of teaching and learning approaches and tools (Sadler & van Jaarsveld, 2012). Similarly, Moosa (2020) found that the initiatives of external training and professional development implemented in HEIs was helpful for the personal and career development of early career academics.

Other efforts that are being undertaken by other HEIs toward the development and support of young academics include but are not limited to, mentoring and coaching. In a systematic review of academic career development, Zachera et al. (2018) found that one of the most popular and effective initiatives taken by academic institutions was the implementation and reliance of early-career academics' mentoring. In another study to investigate the impact of the nGAP in a university, Moosa (2020), found that mentors served as champions for early career academics by assisting with supervision and advice. Mentoring assisted with aspects such as interacting with colleagues, engaging with students, supervision advice and research (Moosa, 2020). Geber (2003) postulates that mentoring in academic institutions is important as it enables individuals to easily transition from being students to serving as fully fledged academics. Furthermore, mentoring contributes to the motivation and performance of individuals and are instrumental in their learning and development (Asian Development Bank, 2017).

### 3. Research Methodology

The authors used a conceptual research design to achieve the objectives of this research. Despite its limitations, such as the lack of empirical results or findings offered, the conceptual research approach is praised for its ability to build and expand on existing theory and broaden researchers' scope of perception (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015).

The authors specifically adopted the following research methods in compiling this paper, as subsequently substantiated in Table 1. below

**Table 1: A breakdown of the conceptual research design**

<b>Empirical research</b>	<b>Conceptual paper equivalent</b>
Theoretical framing	Choice of theories and concepts used to generate novel insights
Data (source, sample, method of collection)	Choice of theories and concepts analysed
Unit of analysis	Perspective; level(s) of analysis/aggregation
Variables studied (independent/dependent)	Key concepts to be analysed/explained or used to analyse/explain
Operationalisation, scales, measures	Translation of target phenomenon in conceptual language; definitions of key concepts
Approach to data analysis	Approach to integrating concepts; quality of argumentation

Source: Designing conceptual articles: four approaches (Jaakkola, 2020).

*Choice of theories and concepts analysed:* The STF theory was analysed in this study, within the context of the career development of young academics. The theoretical framework of the study was particularly discussed in terms of its relevance to the development of young academics in the establishment of their careers.



*Perspective; level(s) of analysis/aggregation:* The paper aggregated the specific constructs identified as most pertinent to the development of young academics' careers, that is, employer branding, employee value proposition and support structures which create a distinguishable employee experience for these young academics.

*Key concepts to be analysed/explained or used to analyse/explain:* The authors used the key constructs identified in this study, as outlined above, to analyse and explain the critical aspects to be considered by higher education institutions when seeking to enhance the career development of young academics.

*Translation of target phenomenon in conceptual language:* In the absence of empirically collected data, the authors synthesised the main concepts derived from various sources of literature to provide a broader perspective of the research topic through the amalgamation of multiple key constructs.

*Approach to integrating concepts; quality of argumentation:* In line with the previous point, the authors used the existing literature and theory as a basis for their argument regarding the constructs identified as best practices to be implemented towards the effective career development of young academics. The voice/argument of the authors, substantiating the literature, is evident in the discussion of the findings.

Further to the above points, the authors used a conceptual model approach in this paper. The purpose of a conceptual research methodology is to create a theoretical/conceptual model which highlights specific constructs thought by the researcher(s) to predict certain relationships within a particular topic (Cornelissen, 2017). In this instance, the authors developed a conceptual model showing how the employer branding, employee value proposition and support structures for customising the employee experience of young academics, influence the career development of young academics. A model approach fundamentally uses a figure/model to depict and summarise the key aspects considered in the study (Payne et al., 2017), which has been demonstrated by the authors of this paper in figure 1.

## **4. Results and Findings**

### **4.1 The development of an attractive employer brand**

Studies show that an employer brand is an important consideration made before joining or staying committed to an organisation. In their study, Tripathi et al. (2017) found that the brand or image of the employer was one of the factors that was significantly correlated with intentions to join an organisation among college students between the ages of 18 and 26. Similarly, a survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) (2011) with over 4000 graduates who were aged 31 or younger across 75 countries found that the employer brand was one of the key factors for wanting to be part of an organisation. Lesenyeho et al. (2018) on the other hand, investigated and found that amongst nine factors, employer branding was identified as the third most important in ensuring the commitment of early career academics to HEIs.

According to Theron et al. (2014) and Mabaso and Dlamini (2018), compensation remains a critical factor that forms part of an employer brand and attracts people to an organisation. However, it is often not always the only or first priority for young academics (Shar et al., 2020). Therefore, the authors posit that while compensation is a significant aspect within employment, it should not take away from or ignore other important factors that attract and encourage the loyalty of employees. For example, one important aspect HEIs can focus on is building the reputation value of the institution. According to Tripathi et al. (2017), the organisation's reputation plays an important role in a prospective employee's choice to join the organisation. Echoing this, Mičik and Mičudová (2018) postulate that an organisation's brand is closely linked to its reputation and to achieve an effective employer brand that attracts prospective employees, organisations must be able to present the organisation as a reputable brand. To demonstrate the value of an employer brand, Radzevičienė and Sokolova (2020) posit that when universities achieve good rankings, employees gain a sense of status and pride having worked for a university with a high ranking.

Another important focus area for academic institutions to present to young academics is the training and development of young academics. Mabaso and Dlamini (2018) postulate that a critical aspect in attracting new talent to organisations and motivating young academics is creating opportunities for career development. Accordingly, Lesenyeho et al. (2018) investigated and found advancement opportunities as one of the main factors that attracted early career academics to HEIs. Although most institutions fully fund the training initiatives such as sponsoring the undertaking of a Ph.D. or facilitating mentoring and coaching initiatives to encourage staff to stay committed, a considerable number of staff are still leaving for better opportunities outside academia (Matongolo et al., 2018).

According to Hollywood et al. (2020), the ability to conduct and publish research is considered a critical predictor of career development and success in academia in HEIs across the globe. While this is the case however, a study by Stupnisky et al. (2016), found that the responsibility of research activities generated reports of anxiety and helplessness among academics. Therefore, the authors posit that more should be done to make the process of developing the research capabilities of young academics easier. For example, opportunities for and the encouragement of collaborative research has been identified as an important strategy for developing and promoting the careers of early career academics (Lesenyeho et al., 2018). The authors therefore opine that more efforts should be channelled into encouraging and pairing more senior academics to take initiative and collaborate with younger academics. DeRosier et al. (2013) on the other hand, found that the creation of opportunities to participate in career development conferences has led to the development of young academics and an increase in research projects, publications, collaborations and grant awards amongst other things. Therefore, more should be done to facilitate such development. Another method for effectively developing academics is creating networking opportunities. According to Lesenyeho et al. (2018), networking serves as a peer support

for early career academics and allows them to connect and collaborate with numerous academics who are also in different disciplines.

The authors further posit that HEIs should go beyond the traditional training or development strategies and invest in a variety of developmental methods or strategies for young academics. Unlike before, when industry experience was a prerequisite to attaining employment in the academic sector, greater emphasis is now being placed on entering the industry with higher postgraduate qualifications such as master's and doctoral degrees (Barnes et al., 2021). Consequently, younger people worry about falling behind their peers regarding industry experience when joining academia, especially those who transition into full-time academic careers soon after their tertiary studies (Hollywood et al., 2020; Torralba, 2020). The authors suggest that introducing short/part-time/interim internships would be beneficial, whereby universities leverage their corporate partnerships to continuously enhance young academics' ongoing industry involvement and activity to enhance their pragmatic exposure and knowledge (Cheng et al., 2022; Magagula et al., 2020). This would, in turn, help bridge the gap between the theory that young academics teach in their modules and the perpetual and rapidly changing industry practices, as other studies supported (Cheng et al., 2022; Magagula et al., 2020).

There are other ways that academic institutions can build an employer brand and attract young academics, which include but are not limited to developing a thoughtful recruitment strategy, innovative work practices and the provision of technological resources (Saurombe et al., 2017b; Tripathi et al., 2017; Chaacha & Botha, 2021), however, the study outlined the prioritised benefits attracting young people to organisations, strategies that have received little attention and more unconventional ways to develop young academics.

#### **4.2 The development and implementation of an attractive EVP**

According to Hatum (2013), an EVP is unavoidably a critical tool to communicate, attract and retain top young talent. Although there are a variety of benefits and rewards that are appealing to young people, the authors provide insight into the benefits that are aligned to the changing dynamics in the world of work and aligned to the younger generation labour market trends. Santiago (2018) argues that that each generation brings a unique set of characteristics, qualities and values into the organisation. The authors therefore posit that it crucial that organisations are on par with the employee composition to ensure that they offer the appropriate EVP to them.

According to Noe (2020) and Raeder and Gutner (2014), Generation Y, also referred to as millennials, are born between 1982 and 1995 are expected to dominate the world of work in the near future. They are characterised as hardworking, achievement orientated individuals who require information, feedback, career advancement opportunities, seek meaningful work and show a lot of concern for teamwork and the community (Santiago, 2018; Swanepoel & Saurombe, 2022). Organisations will be

expected to accommodate some of the values, interests and concerns of young people if they are to attract and retain them (Hutum, 2013; Swanepoel & Saurombe, 2022).

For example, more efforts could be invested in providing opportunities for young people to make an impact in society and a difference in the world through the organisation (Santiago, 2018). A study by Deloitte (2018), found that Generation Y wants to be part of organisations that contribute positively to society. In addition to this, Lesenyeho et al. (2018) found that contributing, specifically to student's lives, the community and the existing pool of knowledge were indicated as the second most important factor by early career academics in HEIs. Therefore, it may be important for organisations to introduce and allow this cohort to work on projects that support corporate social responsibility (Hatum, 2013). Another component that can be incorporated into the EVP for young people is the assignment of work that is intellectually stimulating or challenging and ensuring that they are recognised for their efforts (Lesenyeho et al., 2018; Tripathi et al., 2017; Kwiek, 2017). According to Browne (2012), work content is a critical motivator for younger generation employees, therefore, it is crucial that institutions find a way to keep young people challenged.

Drawing from the STF, the authors suggest that the key to providing a valuable EVP for young academics is in HEIs understanding what the common individual push factors are among young academics and striving to align their EVPs to that. In addition to this, the social and environmental-societal influences must also be considered.

### **4.3 Creating support structures that enable a distinguishable employment experience for young academics**

The STF, which the authors have adopted as the theoretical framework of this study, argues that career development is all-encompassing as it does not solely focus on the job itself or the individual but also considers other aspects of an employee's life (McMahon & Patton, 2019). Such an approach duly appreciates that employees' work is also affected by elements outside their working environment. As such, it is essential for employers to holistically support their employees to get the most out of them at work (McMahon & Patton, 2019). Therefore, the authors suggest that beyond providing programmes and initiatives that align to individual values and enable young academics to successfully execute their roles, more support structures that consider other aspects of their lives and enable and support the development of young academics, are required.

A significant point of contention between employers and employees in all sectors for several years has been regarding the awarding of paid maternity and – relatively more recently – paternity leave (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2014). For many decades since the gradually increasing acceptance of women in formal workplaces, particularly before the introduction of various legislations protecting this group of employees (Earnest & Young (EY), 2018/2019; ILO, 2014; Nkomo et al., 2023), women were penalised for reproduction and childbearing (ILO, 2014). While males and females are

both essential parties to this process, females bear the greater responsibility and participation (Ma, 2022). They consequently bear the greater brunt regarding the associated negative ramifications of employment continuity and career advancement (ILO, 2014; Karabchuk, 2021; Saurombe & Zinatsa, 2023). The authors posit that to a considerable extent, higher education institutions could get the most out of their younger academic employees if they support them during their years of reproduction and childbearing. For instance, universities could consider combining sabbatical leave – employment offering predominantly idiosyncratic to the academic employment experience and one of the sector’s most attractive provisions – with maternity and possibly, paternity leave. Thus, instead of young academics waiting until they are seniors in their academic profession, they could opt to forfeit such opportunity for the option of using it during the critical stages of their children’s upbringing (such as soon after birth and in the first year of a child’s life). These assertions are similarly supported by literature, though scant (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 2021a; University College London (UCL), 2022).

The authors believe that, especially for young female academics, the opportunity to take sabbatical leave soon after the completion of maternity leave would allow a smoother transition back into the workplace and possibly substantially reduce the likelihood of postpartum depression, as supported by Falletta et al. (2020), Kornfeind and Sipsma (2018) and Richardson et al. (2019). For young male academics, the option to take sabbatical leave soon after their paternity leave or shortly after the mother has returned from maternity and sabbatical leave (in cases where both partners are young academics) would forge and encourage stronger family and social systems. This would consequently reduce the traditional caregiver role strain on career-oriented mothers, especially in their younger years (Madgavkar et al., 2019).

One of the lessons employers in various sectors learnt from the work-from-home setup during the Covid-19 pandemic was that the physical presence of employees is not automatically equivalent to satisfactory or superior productivity (CIPD, 2021b). The authors of the current research posit that higher education employers could customise the sabbatical leave of young academics in a way that would allow them to have a set of deliverables during that period, which does not require their presence at the physical place of work. For instance, only being to fulfil the research output aspect of their work (as is usually the case in a conventional academic sabbatical leave context) (Ioppolo & Wooding, 2022; UCL, 2022), except to a reduced extent than in the case of a typical academic sabbatical. The authors believe this would allow young academics to commit more time and attention to raising their children in the early and often most critical stages of their lives. The authors also acknowledge that measures would have to be established by higher education institutions to ensure that these provisions of a customised employment experience for young academics are not to the employer’s detriment (CIPD, 2021a).

Several employers globally recognised as employers of choice have gone to great lengths in supporting the overall life situations of their younger employees, including offering on-site day-care facilities to

improve their work-life balance (Hein & Cassirer, n.d.; University of South Australia (UniSA), n.d.). The authors posit that higher education institutions could benefit from providing day-care services to their younger and/or childbearing employees. This would save them the time, cost and frustration of traveling distances (sometimes in the opposite direction of work) to drop their children at day-care and other early childhood care and schooling facilities (Hein & Cassirer, n.d.; UniSA, n.d.). This would also mean that parents would have more peace of mind regarding the safety of their children. Many universities offer their employees the benefit of a full or partial subsidy for their children at the tertiary level (Saurombe et al., 2017b); however, it is often overlooked that while this may attract more senior academics, younger academics are often unable to cash out this benefit.

The authors posit that it would behoove higher education institutions to offer an alternative benefit to attract younger academics who would be more interested in assistance with child-care options during their childbearing years. This would ensure a more customised and desirable employment experience for younger academics. A bonus for higher education institutions would be creating another income stream, mainly where employers keep their day-care facilities open to external persons (Hein & Cassirer, n.d.), though offering subsidised rates to their employees.

While there may be other aspects to consider or include when developing a support structure for customised employment experience for young academics, the authors chose to focus on these critical elements delineated above. In summary, these elements include a combination of paid maternity/paternity and adjusted sabbatical leave during reproductive/childbearing years and an on-site day-care service. The authors' choice of these elements (especially the first) was influenced by the indication that they have thus far been underexplored in the literature (Madgavkar et al., 2019). Yet, they are some of the most significant considerations of young academics when contemplating a full-time and long-term academic career (Barnes et al., 2021; Torralba, 2020). The authors further believe that these aspects would help support the sustainable career development of young academics.

#### **4.4 A conceptual model towards the effective career development of young academics**

Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual model inferred from the research objectives, and in accordance with the discussion delineated in the sub-sections immediately above. The model thus suggests that the development of an attractive employer brand, the development and implementation of an attractive EVP and the development of a distinguishable employment experience through the relevant support structures for young academics, would result in the more effective career development of young academics.

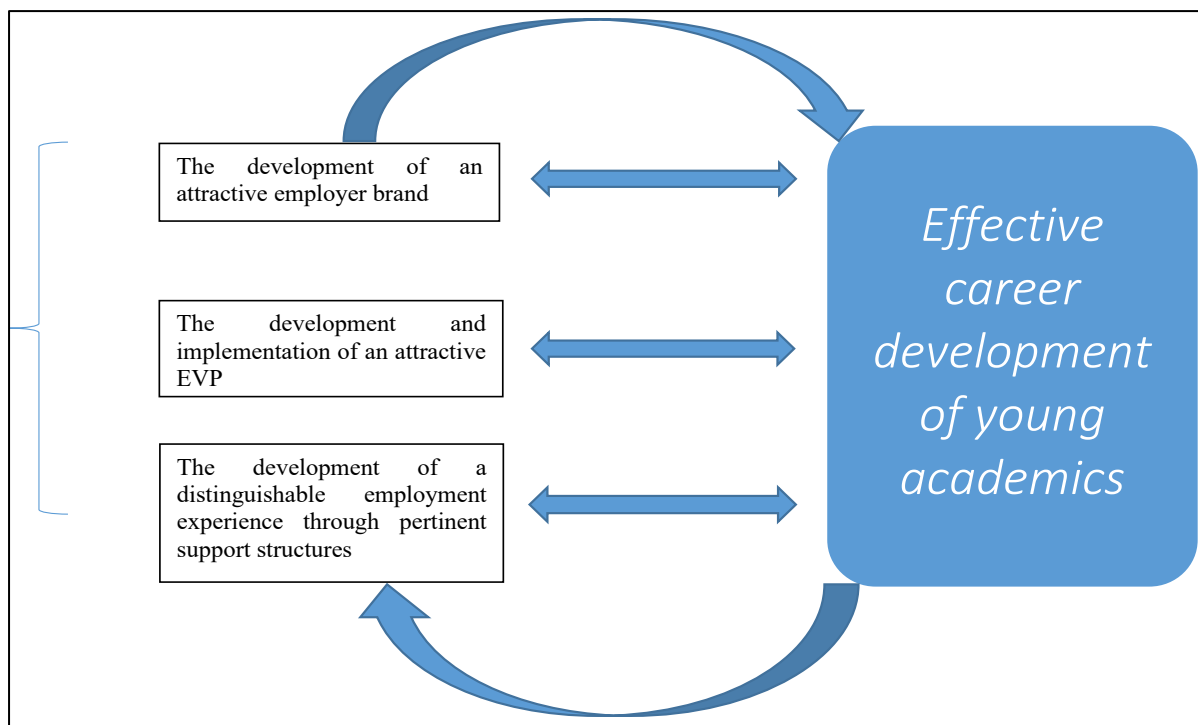


Figure 1: A framework for the career development of young academics  
 Source: Authors' own construction

## 5. Managerial Implications

The study provided a more integrated approach to the development of young academics and a more coherent point of reference for higher education. Through exploring the employer brand, the study practically challenges organisations to go beyond the traditional structures of developing young academics and encourages the exploration and facilitation of the less popular methods of development such collaborations and networking. The study further encourages higher education institutions to investigate what younger academics value and appreciate and align the employee value proposition to retain this talent. The study further provides an unconventional perspective to creating a customised employment experience by introducing a combination of maternity/paternity and sabbatical leave to support the development of young academics. The authors believe that the adoption of these aspects would facilitate better career development of younger academics, thus addressing the ongoing crisis of an ageing academic population.

## 6. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

This study provided information on the effective career development of young academics. This was pertinent when considering the growing demand of academics coupled with the declining staff capacity that follows the ageing academic cohort nearing retirement and simultaneously increasing access to education and the enrolment of students. The study particularly explored how academic institutions can attract young academics through the development of an attractive employer brand and employee value

proposition, as well as the development of a distinguishable employment experience for young academics, through the relevant support structures. The findings of this study acknowledge the traditional approaches to developing young academics while also highlighting alternative ways that can be explored going forward.

The nature of the study was conceptual and thus presented limitations where practical or empirical evidence supporting the findings and the model are concerned. Therefore, future research is encouraged, to practically evaluate – whether qualitatively, quantitatively, or using mixed methods – the impact of some of the existing strategies regarding the career development of young academics that still receive inadequate attention, and possibly further suggest new/unexplored strategies and recommendations. Further research should particularly be done to explore the viability of some of the less conventional suggestions such as the combination of parental leave with sabbatical leave.

## REFERENCES

- Amber, T., & Barrow, S. (1996). The employer brand. *Journal of brand management*, 5(3), 185-206.
- Archer, L. (2008). Younger academics' constructions of 'authenticity', 'success' and 'professional identity'. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(4), 385–403.
- Barnes, N., Du Plessis, M., & Frantz, J. (2021). Career Management Programmes for Academics in the Higher Education Sector: A Re-aim Systematic Review. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 35(5), 4-22.
- Barnes, N., Du Plessis, M., Frantz, J. (2022). Career Competencies for Academic Career Progression: Experiences of Academics at a South African University. *Frontiers in Education – Higher Education*, 7:814842. [https://doi: 10.3389/educ.2022.814842](https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.814842).
- Borotho, M. (2023, April 20). *South Africa to review flagship academic redress scheme*. <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-africa-south-2023-4-south-africa-to-review-flagship-academic-redress-scheme>.
- Briscoe-Palmer, S., & Mattocks, K. (2021). Career Development and Progression of Early Career Academics in Political Science: A Gendered Perspective. *Political Studies Review*, 19(1), 42–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929920925664>.
- Browne, R. (2012). *Employee value proposition*. In *Beacon Management Review*.
- Chaacha, T.D., & Botha, E. (2021). Factors influencing intention to leave of younger employees in an academic institution. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronsbestuur* 19(0). <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.vo19i10.1.519>
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). (2021b). Flexible working: lessons from the pandemic. *CIPD*. Available at [https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/flexible-working-lessons-from-pandemic-report\\_tcm18-92644.pdf](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/flexible-working-lessons-from-pandemic-report_tcm18-92644.pdf).
- Cheng, M., Adekola, O., Albia, J., & Cai, S. (2022). Employability in higher education: a review of key stakeholders' perspectives. *Higher Education Evaluation and Development*, 16(1), 16-31. <https://doi.org/10.1108/HEED-03-2021-0025>.
- Cornelissen, J. (2017). Editor's comments: Developing propositions, a process model, or a typology? Addressing the challenges of writing theory without a boilerplate. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(1), 1-9.



- Deloitte. (2018). *2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey* [Data set]. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-2018-millennial-survey-report.pdf>
- Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET]. (2015). *Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF)*. Pretoria, South Africa: DHET.
- Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET]. (2018). *Revitalizing and transforming the academic profession. Standard operating procedures for the new generation of academic's programme (nGAP)*. DHET.
- DeRosier, M., Kameny, R., Holler, W., Davis, N. O., & Maschauer, E. (2013). Career progress in online and blended learning environments. *Academic Psychiatry, 37*, 98-103. <https://doi:10.1176/appi.ap.11070137>.
- Earnest and Young (EY). (2018/2019). *Maternity Leave Practical Experiences Evaluating implementation and experiences of employees in accessing the benefit and knowledge of maternity leave rights: A report for the Department of Labour*. Available at <https://www.labour.gov.za/DocumentCenter/Research%20Documents/2018/Evaluating%20experiences%20of%20women%20in%20accessing%20maternity%20benefit%20and%20knowledge%20of%20maternity%20leave%20rights.pdf>.
- Ewing, M.T., de Bussy, L.F., de Bussy, N., & Berthon, P. (2002). Employment branding in the knowledge economy. *International Journal of Advertising, 21(1)*, 3–22.
- Falletta, L., Abbruzzese, S., Fischbein, R., Shura, R., Eng, A., & Alemagno, S. (2020). Work Reentry After Childbirth: Predictors of Self-Rated Health in Month One Among a Sample of University Faculty and Staff. *Safety and health at work, 11(1)*, 19–25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shaw.2019.12.006>.
- Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Geber, H. (2009). Research success and structured support: developing early career academics in higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education 23(4)*, 674–689. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC37555>.
- Geber, H. (2003). Fostering career development for black academics in the new South Africa. In F.K Kochan & J.T Pascarelli (eds.), *Global perspectives on mentoring*, 107-128.
- Gilson, L. L., & Goldberg, C. B. (2015). Editors' comment: So, what is a conceptual paper? *Group and Organization Management, 40(2)*, 127-130.
- Hanover Research. (2014). Trends in higher education marketing, recruitment, and technology. Available at <http://www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Trends-in-Higher-Education-Marketing-Recruitment-and-Technology-2.pdf>.
- Hanover Research. (2015). Best practices in improving reputation and brand recognition in higher education. Available at <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/insights-blog/best-practices-in-improving-reputation-and-brand-recognition-in-higher-education/?org=higher-education>.
- Hatum, A. (2013). Attracting millennials to the workplace. In: *The New Workforce Challenge* (pp 63-98). London: Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137302991\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137302991_4).
- Hein, C., & Cassirer, N. (n.d.). Workplace solutions for childcare. ILO. Available at [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/event/wcms\\_145935.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/event/wcms_145935.pdf).
- Herman, C., & Schoole, C. (n.d.). Research and PhD Capacities in Sub-Saharan Africa: A South African Report. International Higher Education: British Council. Available at [https://www2.daad.de/medien/der-daad/analysen-studien/research\\_and\\_phd\\_capacities\\_in\\_sub-saharan\\_africa\\_south\\_africa\\_report.pdf](https://www2.daad.de/medien/der-daad/analysen-studien/research_and_phd_capacities_in_sub-saharan_africa_south_africa_report.pdf).

- Higher Education South Africa (HESA). (2011). *A Generation of Growth: Proposal of a National Programme to Develop the Next Generation of Academics in South African Higher*.
- Hlengwa, A. (2019). How are institutions developing the next generation of university teachers? *Cristal studies in teaching and learning*, 7(1). <https://doi:10.14426/cristal.v7i1.170>.
- Hollywood, A., McCarthy, D., Spencely, C., & Winstone, N. (2020). 'Overwhelmed at first': the experience of career development in early career academics. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 44(7), 998-1012, <https://doi: 10.1080/0309877X.2019.1636213>.
- International Labour Organisation (ILO). (2014). *Maternity and Paternity at Work: Law and practice across the world*. ILO. Available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_242615.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_242615.pdf).
- Ioppolo, B., & Wooding, S. (2022). How academic sabbaticals are used and how they contribute to research – a small-scale study of the University of Cambridge using interviews and analysis of administrative data [version 1; peer review: 1 approved with reservations]. *F1000Research*, 11(36). <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.74211.1>.
- Jaakkola, E. (2020). Designing conceptual articles: four approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 10, 18-26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-020-00161-0>.
- Karabchuk, T., Trach, T., & Pankratova, V. (2021). Motherhood wage penalty in Russia: Empirical study on RLMS-HSE data. In *Gendering Post-Soviet Space* (pp. 235-255). Springer, Singapore.
- Kochanski, J.T. (2004). How business operating models drive talent development. *World at Work Journal*, 13(3), 26-33.
- Kornfeind, K. R., & Sipsma, H. L. (2018). Exploring the Link between Maternity Leave and Postpartum Depression. *Women's health issues: official publication of the Jacobs Institute of Women's Health*, 28(4), 321–326. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.whi.2018.03.008>.
- Kwiek, M. (2017). A generational divide in the academic profession: A mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to the Polish case. *European Educational Research Journal*, 16(5), 645–669. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1474904116689684>
- Lai, C., & Lin, S. (2017). Systems theory. In *the International encyclopaedia of organizational Communication*. <https://doi.10.1002/9781118955567.wbieoc203>.
- Lesenyeho, D. L., Barkhuizen, E. N., & Schutte, N. E. (2018). Factors relating to the attraction of talented early career academics in South African higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(0), a910. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v16i0.910>.
- Lovasz, M. M. (2020). Systems Theory Framework: A culturally responsive model for career guidance. *Career Convergence*. Available at [https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news\\_article/290948/\\_PARENT/CC\\_layout\\_details/false](https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/290948/_PARENT/CC_layout_details/false).
- Ma, X. (2022). Parenthood and the gender wage gap in urban China. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 80, 1-14. *Communication*. <https://doi: 10.1002/9781118955567.wbieoc203>.
- Mabaso, C.M., & Dlamini, B.I. (2018). Total rewards and its effects on organisational commitment in higher education institutions. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v16i0.913>
- MacGregor, K. (2008). SOUTH AFRICA: Challenges of equity, ageing, expansion. *University World News*. Available at <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20081214092139847>.
- Madgavkar, A., Manyika, J., Krishnan, M., Ellingrud, K., & Yee, L. (2019). *The future of females at work*. The McKinsey Global Institute.

- Madgavkar, A., Manyika, J., Krishnan, M., Ellingrud, K., & Yee, L. (2019). The future of females at work. The McKinsey Global Institute.
- Magagula, K., Maziriri, E. T., & Saurombe, M. D. (2020). Navigating on the precursors of work readiness amongst students in Johannesburg, South Africa. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 46(1), 1-11. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v46i0.1778>
- Mandal, A., & Krishnan, S. K. (2013). Creating a compelling employee value proposition. *Human capital*, 38-42.
- Manning, P.K. (2007). Chapter 2: A dialectic of organisational and occupational culture. *Sociology of Crime, Law & Deviance* 1(8), 47-83.
- Matongolo, A., Kasekende, F., & Mafabi, S. (2018). Employer branding and talent retention: perceptions of employees in higher education institutions in Uganda. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 50(5), 217-233.
- McMahon, M. The Systems theory framework of career development. (2011). *Journal of employment of counselling* 48(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2011.tb01106.x>
- McMahon, M., & Patton, W. (2018). Systemic thinking in career development theory: contributions of the Systems Theory Framework. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 46, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2018.1428941>.
- McMahon, M., & Patton, W. (2019). The Systems Theory Framework: A Systems Map for Career Theory, Research and Practice. In: Athanasou, J., Perera, H. (eds) International Handbook of Career Guidance. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25153-6\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25153-6_5).
- McMahon, M., & Patton, W. (2022). The Systems Theory Framework of career development: News of difference and a journey towards acceptance. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 31(3), 195–200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162221120464>.
- Mičík, M., & Mičudová, K. (2018). Employer brand building: Using social media and career websites to attract Generation Y. *Economics and Sociology*, 11(3), 171-189. <https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-789X.2018/11-3/11>.
- Mohammad, Y., & Shubhangi, B. (2021). University brand as an employer: demystifying employee attraction and retention. *XIMB Journal of Management*, 18(1), 26-41. <https://doi.org/10.1108/XJM-08-2020-0061>.
- Moosa, R. (2020). Early career academic development and talent management in the South African higher education context. In E. Heinrich & R Bourke (Eds.). *Research and Development in Higher Education: Next generation, Higher Education: Challenges, changes and opportunities*, 42 (pp 73-84).
- Musakuro, R.N., & de Klerk, F. (2021). Academic talent: Perceived challenges to talent management in the South African higher education sector. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19(0). <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v19i0.1394>.
- Myers, K.K., & Sadaghiani, K (2010). Millennials in the Workplace: A Communication Perspective on Millennials' Organizational Relationships and Performance. *Business Psychology*, 25(2), 225-238.
- Naidoo-Chetty, M., & du Plessis, M. (2021) Job Demands and Job Resources of Academics in Higher Education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12 (article 631171). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.631171>
- National Disability Services. (n.d.). Handout 9 – customised employment process document. Available at [https://www.ideaswa.net/upload/editor/files/handout\\_9\\_customised\\_employment\\_-\\_process\\_document.pdf](https://www.ideaswa.net/upload/editor/files/handout_9_customised_employment_-_process_document.pdf).

- Nkomo, L., Saurombe, M.D., Maziriri, E.T. (2023). Female Representation in Technical Roles Within the Performing Arts Industry. In: Mayer, CH., *et al.* Women's Empowerment for a Sustainable Future. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25924-1\\_25](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25924-1_25)
- Noe, R. (2020). *Employee Training and Development* (8th Ed.). New York, United states: McGraw Hill.
- Patton, W., & McMahon, M. (2006). The Systems Theory Framework of Career Development and Counselling: Connecting Theory and Practice. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 28(2), 153-166.
- Pawar, A., & K.S. Charak. (2014). A study and review of employee value proposition: A tool of Human Resource Management. *Review of research*, 3(6).
- Payne, A., Frow, P., & Eggert, A. (2017). The customer value proposition: Evolution, development, and application in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(4), 467-489.
- Pienaar, C., & Bester, C. (2008). The retention of academics in early career phase. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 6(2), 32-41.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers (2011). *Millennials at work: Reshaping the workplace*. Retrieved from <https://www.pwc.com/co/es/publicaciones/assets/millennials-at-work> .
- Radhumbu, N., Chikari, G., Sivotwa, G., & Lukasa, J.P. (2014). Use of employer branding as a tool for attracting and retaining talent: Evidence from private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Botswana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(28).
- Radzevičienė, A., & Sokolova, A. (2020). *Employer branding as recruitment and retention tool for universitates* [Paper presentation]. International conference of education and new developments.
- Raeder, S. & Gutner, A. (2014). What young people expected from their work. In K. Adamczyk & M. Wysota (Ed.). *Functioning of young adults in a changing world* (pp 145-157). Libron: Kraków.
- Raithel, S., & Schwaiger, M. (2015). The effects of corporate reputation perceptions of the general public on shareholder value. *Strategic Management Journal*, 36, 945– 956.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2248>.
- Richardson, D. M., Steeves-Reece, A., Martin, A., Hurtado, D. A., Dumet, L. M., & Goodman, J. M. (2019). Employee Experiences with a Newly Adopted Paid Parental Leave Policy: Equity Considerations for Policy Implementation. *Health equity*, 3(1), 117–123.  
<https://doi.org/10.1089/heap.2019.0007>.
- Riesen, T., Morgan, R. L., & Griffin, C. (2015). Customized employment: A review of the literature. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 43, 183-193. <https://doi:10.3233/JVR-150768>.
- Shah, R. K. (2019). Effective Constructivist Teaching Learning in the Classroom. Shanlax *International Journal of Education*, 7(4), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v7i4.600>.
- Shah, I.A., Yadav, A., Afzal, F., Shah, S.M.Z.A., Junaid, D., Azam, S., Jonkman M., De Boer F., Ahammad, R., & Shanmugam, B. (2020). Factors Affecting Staff Turnover of Young Academics: Job Embeddedness and Creative Work Performance in Higher Academic Institutions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11(Article 507345).  
<https://doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.570345>.
- Sadler, E., & van Jaarsveldt, L.C. (2012). An Evaluation of a young academic development programme at the university of South Africa. *Commonwealth youth and development*, 10(2), 29-47.

- Santiago, J. (2019). The relationship between brand attractiveness and the intent to apply for a job: A millennial's perspective. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, 28(2), 142-157. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-12-2018-013>.
- Saurombe, M. D., Barkhuizen, E. N., & Schutte, N. E. (2017b). Management perceptions of a higher educational brand for the attraction of talented academic staff. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 15(0), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v15i0.831>.
- Saurombe, M., Barkhuizen, N., & Schutte, N. (2017a). Determinants of a talent life cycle for academic staff in a higher education institution. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 6(2), 279-294.
- Saurombe, M.D., & Zinatsa, F. (2023). Governing policies and factors affecting the labour market integration of female accompanying spouses. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 7:1084390. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.1084390>
- Subbaye, R. (2018). Teaching in Academic Promotions at South African Universities: A Policy Perspective. *High Educ. Pol.* 31(2), 245–265. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-017-0052-x>.
- Stupnisky, R.H., Pekrun, R., & S. Lichtenfeld, S. (2016). New Faculty Members' Emotions: A Mixed-method Study. *Studies in Higher Education* 41 (7): 1167–1188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.968546>.
- South African Board for People Practice. (2019). *Employer value proposition* [fact sheet]. [https://cct.mycpd.co.za/SABPP/FactSheets/2019/fact-sheet\\_february-2019\\_wit.pdf](https://cct.mycpd.co.za/SABPP/FactSheets/2019/fact-sheet_february-2019_wit.pdf).
- Swanepoel, K. & Saurombe, M.D. (2022), The significance of an employee value proposition in the retention of teachers at selected South African private schools. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences* 25(1), a4358. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v25i1.4358>.
- The Department of Higher Education and Training, South Africa. (2015). A comprehensive, transformative approach to developing the future generations of academics and building staff capacity. Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF). Available at <https://www.justice.gov.za/commissions/feeshet/docs/2015-Staffing-SAUniversitiesFramework.pdf>.
- Theron, M., Barkhuizen, N., & du Plessis, Y. (2014). Managing the academic talent void: Investigating factors in academic turnover and retention in South Africa. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 40(1), 01-14.
- Torralba, J. M. (2020). 10 rules to survive in the marvelous but sinuous world of academia. Elsevier Connect. Available at <https://www.elsevier.com/connect/10-rules-to-survive-in-the-marvellous-but-sinuous-world-of-academia>.
- Treuren, G., & Anderson, K. (2010). The Employment expectations of different age Cohorts: is Generation Y really different? *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 19(2), 49-61.
- Tripathi, V., Yadav, V., & Srivastava, A. (2017). *Employer branding: Strategic move towards attracting young talents*. SSRG International Journal of Economics and Management Studies (SSRG-IJEMS), 4(5). <https://doi.org/10.14445/23939125/IJEMS-V4I5P110>.
- University College London (UCL). (2022). After parental leave. *UCL Human Resources*. Available at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/policies-advice/parental-leave-toolkit/after-parental-leave>.
- University of South Australia (Unisa. (n.d.). Childcare at Unisa. Available at <https://www.unisa.edu.au/student-life/support-services/childcare-at-unisa/>.
- Wahba, M., & Elmanadily, D. (2015), Employer branding impact on employee behavior and attitudes applied study on pharmaceutical in Egypt. *International Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 4(6), 145-162. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.11/2015.4.6/11.6.145.162>.

Zacher, H., Rudolph, C., Todorovic, T., & Ammann, D. (2018). Academic Career Development: A Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*.  
<https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/qk9j7>.