

Exploring the contributing and constraining factors of a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Government of Namibia

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Abstract

Organisations do not operate in a vacuum because they need their best assets (employees) to bring their best talents and manage them at the workplace. Organisations mostly lack a talent management strategy, leading to resignations, attrition, and dismissal of employees. The study's primary goal was to explore the key factors, including constraining and enabling factors for a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in Namibia.

Although numerous studies on talent management have been done in Namibia, the literature indicates limited research on talent management strategy in the Namibian Government. The main motivation was to explore the reason for such a phenomenon. For the purposes of this study, a constructivist stance with a philosophy grounded in an ontological paradigm was selected as the methodology. Data were collected from 15 experts through an interview schedule and analysed using thematic analysis.

The study revealed three major constraining factors for a talent management strategy: budgetary, bureaucratic, and environmental. Further, the study suggested that the contributing factors for talent management strategy were management support, alignment of talent management to business strategy, promoting talent management culture, training and development.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

According to Lievens and Chapman (2019), a talent management strategy is a proposal of action to optimise employee performance. This means optimising performance in the broadest sense and includes a plan of action to bring individuals on an accelerated path to improve productivity by classifying gaps in skills and other job resources early on. A talent management strategy makes it simple to source talent, assess skills and experiences, onboard new hires, manage employee strengths and recognise and reward top performers. Tansley (2011) further argues that a talent management strategy helps identify and fill missing key skills, supports a productive and engaged workforce, and drives business results. The strategy further seeks to recognise, grow, retain and deploy individuals considered particularly valuable to an organisation.

To be effective, a talent management strategy needs to be aligned with the business strategy and objectives (Barkhuizen, 2015; Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020.) Silzer and Dowell (2010) argue that it must be driven by business strategies and managed as a core business practice. The strategy must contribute to the organisation's competitive advantage (Collings and Mellahi, 2009) and achieve organisational capability, sustainability and growth (Armstrong, 2016).

1.2 Problem statement

Numerous studies on talent management have been done in Namibia, including studies such as leadership's mindset on talent management (Shingenge and Saurombe, 2021), talent management and employee engagement (Barkhuizen and Gumede, 2021), talent management and voluntary turnover (Barkhuizen and Gumede, 2021), talent management practices (Filippus and Schultz, 2019) and the effect of talent management on employee retention (Amushila and Bussin, 2021). However, none of these studies directly explore the constraining and contributing factors to developing a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government; hence, there was a need to conduct the study to gain a deeper understanding of talent management in Namibia.

1.3 Research objectives

The study's main objective was to explore the key factors of a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in Namibia's Government. This was supported by three secondary research objectives focusing on the constraining and contributing factors to developing a talent management strategy.

Secondary research objectives

- To explore the stages that should be included in a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government.
- To explore the constraining factors of a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government.
- To explore the contributing factors of a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government.

The paper provides a concise overview of the concept of talent management strategy, the study's methodology, the findings and recommendations, and the managerial implications of the study.

2. A talent management strategy

Ingsih and Astuti (2019) as well as Aina and Atan (2020) postulate that a talent management strategy is a plan of action to enhance employee performance optimally. Hair, Page and Brunsveld (2019) further postulate that finding talent, evaluating skills and credentials, onboarding new employees, managing employee strengths, and recognising and rewarding top performers are all made easier with the help of a talent management strategy. All the activities involved in building a talent pool through a talent strategy must be incorporated into the broader organisational strategy (Shahi, Farroksheresht, Taghipourian and Aghajani, 2020; Bagheriy and Nasiri, 2019; Claus, 2019). Employees who experience a talent management strategy and system that is based on an inclusive philosophy are likely to feel more supported and valued by their organisation. Consequently, such employees are more inclined to contribute positively towards talent management goals (Meyers and Van Woerkom, 2014).

Lewis and Heckman (2006) mentioned that there are three distinct perspectives regarding talent management:

- The first perspective defines talent management as a collection of typical human resource department practices, functions, activities or specialist areas such as recruiting, selection, development and career and succession management
- The second perspective on talent management focuses primarily on the concept of talent pools by focusing on the internal workforce. Employees who experience a talent management system that is based on an inclusive or stable philosophy are likely to feel supported and valued by their organisation because they work in surroundings that are generally appreciative of their talents.
- A third perspective on talent management focuses on high-performing talent.

For this study, the focus was on general talent as part of an inclusive approach. The literature acknowledges the importance of aligning the talent management strategy with the overall human resources strategy, which must further align with the organisational strategy. Shahi *et al.* (2020) further postulate that a talent management strategy includes various human resources activities such as succession management, employee engagement, talent and leadership development, coaching, policy, procedures and creative assignments that collectively must form part of the talent management strategy. However, it is noticeable in the literature that numerous scholars in talent management have identified various constraining and contributing factors in crafting a talent management strategy.

2.1 Constraining factors of a talent management strategy

Kashrood (2020) and Masri and Abubakr (2019) argue that managing talent is often a constraint for managers, even though it is recognised as a strategic imperative in human resource management. Numerous constraints may significantly impact the success of any talent management strategy and must be carefully considered in the development phase.

2.1.1 Leadership and managerial constraints

According to Kravariti and Johnston. (2020), effective and efficient leadership is a prerequisite for all economic, political, and organisational systems to succeed. Leadership is essential in ensuring that personnel are supported and the necessary resources (human, financial, and technology) are available (Kravariti *et al.*, 2020; Collings, Mellahi and Cascio, 2019). To achieve institutional strategic goals, management must set up the required conditions that guarantee the institution has the right personnel with the right abilities in the right job categories at the right time (Hao, Farooq and Zhang, 2018).

2.1.2 Talent retention

Kaplan (2020) noted that managing and retaining talent is a constraining factor for numerous organisations. Public institutions often face difficulties retaining talent because of better opportunities in the private sector and abroad.

2.1.3 Lack of benefits and compensation

According to Freitas, Caldeira-Oliveira, Teixeira, Stefanelli and Teixeira (2020), the absence of incentive systems lowers people's drive to attempt new things or accomplish more. Hao *et al.* (2018) postulate that compensation plans can be directly linked to performance and talent management to ensure that benefits, incentives, and compensation align with the objectives and strategies of the organisation.

2.1.4 Lack of employee engagement

According to Al-Haraisa and Al-Haraiza (2021), employee-organisational engagement is one of the most important metrics for firms in the twenty-first century. Organisational leaders must understand the dynamics of their workforce to pinpoint concrete, implementable levers that will raise employee engagement and achieve employee organisational alignment. According to Graham and Ramires (2018), successful talent management strategies and policies that show a dedication to human capital lead to engaged workers, better productivity, and decreased employee turnover.

According to Yadiati (2019), most employees feel their input and suggestions are not considered throughout the organisation's planning and decision-making processes. A negative impact is possible if employees do not participate fully or even contribute in a small way (Hossin, Hosain, Frempong, Adu-Yeboah and Mustafi, 2021).

2.1.5 Resistance to change

According to Yadiati (2019), top managers who provide the basis for programme implementation frequently become impediments by not encouraging trust between people and institutions. It is widely recognised that middle managers, administrators, and staff are often identified as the key role players in resisting change. Changing their behaviour and attitude will be pivotal for implementing talent management initiatives (Abdul, 2020).

2.1.6 Resource constraints

Al-Haraisa *et al.* (2021) argue that a lack of confidence in the entire system will be caused by inadequate infrastructure, technology, finance, and human resources. The lack of resources required to implement a talent management strategy can often negatively impact the strategy and foster an unfavourable advancement environment.

2.1.7 Lack of utilising information communication technology in talent management

Ziadah (2021) suggests that one of the difficulties some managers and human resource professionals encounter is a lack of expertise in leveraging ICT for talent management. ICT can be used successfully and efficiently to complete all areas of personnel management, including enhancing performance reviews and aligning individuals with personal or corporate goals (Radwan, 2020). Alsawalhah (2020) argues that the main goal of human resources information systems is to serve its "clients" by providing accurate and timely information.

2.1.8 Lack of a conducive work environment

The lack of institutional efforts to foster an atmosphere where employees are aware of and committed to the organisational direction, strategy, and goals is one of the challenges to effectively implementing a talent management strategy and programme. Al-Wafi (2019) postulates that creating such an

environment requires a comprehensive, coordinated framework or strategy with interconnected components to enhance employee-organisational alignment. The interrelated components should include a "fit for purpose" organisational structure, competent leadership, people systems and processes that encourage the proper behaviours, and a positive organisational culture. Chan (2021) argues that the interrelated factors determine staff engagement levels, which affect customer experiences and, ultimately, the organisation's performance.

2.1.9 Lack of inclusive organisational culture

Culture influences how individuals behave, interact, and relate to one another (Agarwal and Gupta, 2018). Mtshali *et al.*(2018) postulate that the facilitation of decision-making by all employees at all organisation levels and vertical interactions among its groups is hampered by an organisational culture that does not value high performance, teamwork, and excellence. As a result, the organisation will undoubtedly produce fewer results.

2.2 Contributing factors of a talent management strategy

2.2.1 Cultivating a learning culture

According to Gomes and Ramires (2013), formal and informal learning are essential for assisting individuals in realising their full potential within an organisation and in upcoming positions. Choosing a flexible learning management system enables one to tailor learning for individuals, teams, or entire departments, thus fostering a healthy learning culture that provides access to employee training needs (George, 2023).

2.2.2 Setting up competency frameworks

Competency frameworks are key to effective people management (Caligiuri and Lowton, 2020). From the moment of hiring until the end of an employee's employment with the company, they serve as the foundation for one's understanding of the abilities they possess and the skills they require in the workplace. Frameworks play a significant role in the performance management process by giving employees objective goals to motivate them to learn specific new skills for promotions and new responsibilities.

2.2.3 Supporting modern performance management

To implement a successful talent management strategy, one must also understand how people perform in the organisation (Burkus and Osula, 2011). Performance management systems will be vital to talent management since they provide a clear picture of the data and analytics about the people with clear indicators of any performance difficulties and similarly strong staff performances.

2.2.4 Planning career development

Career development aims to support employees in realising their potential, whereas performance management concentrates on improving the workforce's skills and abilities (Chaudhry, Rizwan, Nisar, and Siddique, 2016). Efendi, Ansar and Fattah (2020) emphasise the need for managers or supervisors to advise staff members of opportunities within the company and assist them in creating a clear development path based on their goals.

2.2.5 Training and development

According to Armstrong (2020), career development is the accumulation and cultivation of skills and knowledge that allow professionals to advance or grow in the field of their choice. Employees will be less likely to leave if they believe they are growing and learning. On the other hand, when staff members feel they are not progressing, they search outside the organisation for new employment alternatives (Gujarati, Elnikety, He, McKinley and Brandenburg, 2017). Coaching makes high performers less likely to leave a company, and leaders become more involved and driven (Kaliannan, Darmalinggam, Dorasamy and Abraham, 2022).

2.2.6 Organisational commitment

Bagheri *et al.* (2020) point out that employees are less likely to want to leave an organisation if they are more dedicated. These "highly committed" workers were found to have a greater desire to stick with the business, a better motivation to show up for work, and a more upbeat attitude toward their profession. Claus (2019) concludes that "commitment is significantly and inversely related to employee turnover." According to Collings *et al.* (2019), when firms work to promote a commitment-based mentality, the risk that an employee may look for work elsewhere is reduced.

2.2.7 Superior-subordinate relationship

Any successful programme requires the full support of senior management, who must also act as good role models for their subordinates (Kashrood, 2020). Kaplan (2020) postulates that workers tend to stay when they have strong bonds with their co-workers since a good learning environment results in greater retention rates.

2.3 Conclusion

Barkhuizen and Gumede (2021) indicate that implementing talent management strategies requires a comprehensive understanding of the organisation's culture, values, and goals. It is also clear that talent management should be integrated with other learning and development programmes and that the leadership and the workforce need informal and formal learning opportunities and interventions. Developing talent management strategies will assist organisations in harnessing the benefits of talent management.

3. Research methodology

Research philosophy

The research paradigm takes a constructivist stance with a philosophy grounded in an ontological paradigm. Fouche, Strydom and Roestenburg (2021) and Van Manen and Van Manen (2021) postulate that ontology focuses on the nature of existence, the composition of reality as a whole, and the world we study. A constructivist stance promotes the understanding of the meaning participants give to their life experiences (Fouche *et al.*, 2021). Schwandt and Gates (2018) postulate that the value of constructivism lies in its ability to allow for learning from a single unit of analysis in a real-life setting. Using a constructivist approach, the study design aims to understand the world of the research participants by interacting with them. The methodology aims to harness the unique contribution of individuals' thoughts and ideas on talent management strategies for a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government.

Research approach

Miles and Huberman (2019) assert that qualitative research methodology aims to provide the researcher access to the target audience members' perspectives through immersion in a culture or setting and face-to-face interaction with the study subjects. This research approach was more suitable because it allowed the researcher to investigate the topic, exploring the details, difficulties, and tones that other methods may not capture. Moreover, it provided a rich, in-depth understanding of the social, cultural, and contextual factors facing a talent management strategy in the selected Ministry.

Sampling

Unit of analysis

According to Joe and McKensie (2020), a unit of analysis is defined as the environment in which research is conducted, which can be physical, social, or experimental. The research was conducted with a selected government minister in Namibia, uniquely characterised by a clear mandate contextualised within relevant legislation.

Target population

Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Van Manen and Van Manen (2021) describe a population as the total number of individuals with similar features which are significant to the researcher. The Division of Human Resources Management, consisting of 24 staff members who oversee all human resources activities in the Ministry, was selected from among the population. This division portrays the typical characteristics of an ordinary human resources section, including strategy, planning, development and overseeing execution of all HR activities. Most staff members possess a minimum Diploma in Human Resources Management and are involved with various human resources activities.

Sampling method

A non-probability, purposive convenience sampling technique was applied to select the sample. Creswell (2015) indicates that in purposive sampling, the researcher selects people (expert panels or sites) to best aid in understanding the phenomenon.

The following inclusion criteria were used to choose 15 participants for the study:

- Only staff working in the HRM department.
- Only staff with at least a diploma or higher in human resources or any other relevant qualification.
- Employees who have worked in the Ministry for at least five years.

Data collection method

De Vos *et al.* (2017) indicate that data collection is the actual observation and taking notes of the phenomena in qualitative research. An interview schedule was used to collect data for the study through one-on-one interviews. All interviews were recorded by means of an electronic recording device and transcribed afterwards. This method provided the opportunity to collect information containing rich data from expert panels in the selected Ministry.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), thematic analysis is a technique for analysing qualitative data focusing on a data set to find, evaluate, and report recurrent themes. The data were then organised into an Excel spreadsheet in a way that can facilitate the analysis. The Excel spreadsheet provided the opportunity to search for phrases and words that appeared to be the same based on the data set and responses from participants on a talent management strategy. Simple colour coding was used to identify themes (Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019).

Trustworthiness

The study used a transparent coding process to ensure that the research process was logical, traceable and documented to ensure dependability (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012). According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), confirmability is determined by checking the internal consistency of the research product. In the present study, this was achieved by ensuring that the data are available so that other researchers or reviewers can access or audit them to ensure that the results were not fabricated.

Ethics

The researcher obtained written approval from the selected Ministry, academic institution and participants in the study. All information was treated with the utmost confidentiality, and data were secured in a password-protected environment.

4. Results and findings

The data presented were collected by interviewing 15 participants with a diploma or master's degree relevant to human resource management and an average of 8 years of experience in the Ministry. The researchers identified three main themes and ten sub-themes from the participants' combined responses.

4.1 Theme 1: Stages of a talent management strategy

Sub-themes	Verbatim responses
The importance of talent management	<p>Participant 2 added: <i>"Its high time for the Ministry to identify high-potential individuals within the Ministry and provide them with opportunities for growth and advancement. Having a well-thought-out succession plan ensures that leadership positions are filled by capable individuals from within the Ministry. One more thing, the Ministry needs to implement a fair and transparent performance appraisal system to recognise and reward outstanding work. Regular feedback and performance evaluations are essential to motivate and engage employees"</i>.</p> <p>Further, Participant 4 stated that: <i>"The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism plays a crucial role in preserving and protecting our natural resources and promoting sustainable tourism. Therefore, it is paramount for the Ministry to have a robust talent management strategy in place. This strategy should focus on attracting and retaining highly skilled individuals who are passionate about environmental conservation and have the necessary expertise to tackle the challenges faced by the Ministry. Additionally, the talent management strategy should also prioritise continuous training and development to ensure that employees stay updated with the latest developments in the field. By investing in training and development programmes, the Ministry can ensure that its employees are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively address emerging environmental issues. Furthermore, offering competitive compensation packages and opportunities for career advancement can help attract and retain top talent in the field of environmental conservation"</i>.</p>

<p>The talent management process</p>	<p>Participant 3 stated that: <i>"Talent management process entails determining the essential competencies and skills needed by the organisation and then locating the best candidates to carry out the organisational plan. To be clear, the organisation looks at an individual's skill set rather than their personal qualities to determine which talents are most significant. The organisation conducts audits at the executive level and bases decisions on next moves on the findings. The most crucial step is determining the necessary abilities. In essence, after they are recognised, it's critical to determine who possesses the knowledge and aptitude to guide and advance them. It is critical to draw in, nurture, and keep talented and high-potential individuals"</i>.</p> <p>Participant 10 described the talent management process in organisations <i>"as a constant process that involves attracting, acquiring and developing, keeping as well as elevating these personnel while concurrently meeting the criteria of the organisation. It is not limited to only attracting talented individuals. For instance, in order to compete and draw exceptional people away from rival institutions, an organisation must provide these people with an offer that will surpass their wildest expectations in order to get them to join and stay with the organisation. Going to considerable efforts to hire a single person is ineffective; instead, you should have a devoted, engaged employee who contributes value and is genuinely productive. Talent management is essentially a comprehensive (all-inclusive) procedure that affects a person's admission to the institution as well as their departure from it"</i>.</p>
<p>Alignment of talent management strategy to succession planning</p>	<p>Participant 1: <i>"As a strategy to cultivate or tap the knowledge from the experts, the Ministry needs to establish a systematic approach to managing knowledge within the institution by identifying potential leaders and grooming them for the future. It is clear that talented employees will continuously seek employment that offers market-based compensation, to ensure that they do not leave the Ministry without transferring the necessary skills and knowledge. Additionally, offering rewards to experts as part of recognition and appreciation to experts also retains talent"</i>.</p> <p>Participant 3 and Participant 6 agreed that apprenticeship programmes earmarked for</p>

	recent graduates enrolled in upskilling programmes, which enable gifted graduates to showcase their potential and assess their skills without being fully bound by contract terms, should be implemented.
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All the participants acknowledged the importance of a talent management strategy at the Ministry, although they did not yet have a proper strategy. The participants suggested that the talent management strategy be linked to succession planning, by which the organisations offered each new staff member a clear path to professional advancement, providing opportunities through training, development, and coaching. The fundamental goal of talent management is to enhance people's innate ability to learn, think, relate, and act (Radwan, 2020). This strategy can benefit the organisation by providing employees with long-term employment within a talent management strategy.

By encouraging employees to develop their talents, the company shows interest in them, which can gain their loyalty. Employees will put in more effort and contribute more to the company's goals when they feel they will progress in their roles. Barkhuizen and Gumede (2021) support this, postulating that a talent management strategy can benefit organisations. Staff members are assured of long-term employment under this strategy. The company shows interest in its employees by assisting them in developing their talents and winning their loyalty. Employees will work harder and contribute more to the company's goals when they feel they will advance in their roles (Amushila and Bussin, 2021).

Lastly, the participants noted the importance of an instrument that company executives can use to monitor and assess performance and identify talents through a performance scorecard generated from the organisational goals and objectives. Using performance scorecards, leaders may help individuals meet their KPIs and the organisation's goals.

4.2 Theme 2: The constraining factors of a talent management strategy

Sub-themes	Verbatim responses
Budgetary constraints	Participant 5 also stated: " <i>Talent management at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism is challenged by several factors. These include budget constraints, making it difficult to offer competitive compensation, training, and recruitment efforts</i> ". Participant 11 stated: " <i>Limited financial resources is one of the most constraining</i> "

	<p><i>factors that hinders the effective implementation of talent management. Budget constraints affect the Ministry's potential to attract, hire, and keep top talent, invest in training and development programmes and implement competitive compensation and benefits packages".</i></p>
<p>Bureaucratic processes in the government ministries</p>	<p>Participant 13 stated that: <i>"Bureaucratic processes and hierarchies within the Ministry can hinder the implementation of innovative talent management strategies, making it difficult to adapt to changing workforce needs. As a result, the Ministry may struggle to keep up with industry advancements and emerging technologies".</i></p> <p>Participant 14 also mentioned: <i>"Complex bureaucratic procedures and administrative red tape which can slow down recruitment, promotions and talent development efforts".</i></p> <p>In agreement with other participants, Participant 15 echoed that <i>"The pace at which the recruitment process takes place within the Ministry also compromises the talent management strategy. For instance, if the potential applicant applies for a vacant position in the Ministry and at the same time applies in the private sector, there is a high chance that a recruitment process in the private sector will be concluded first than that of the Ministry. This limits the chances of the Ministry acquiring the best talent".</i></p>
<p>Environmental constraint factors</p>	<p>Participant 13 asserted that <i>"Organisations must foster a work environment that values a leader who is inclusive, team-oriented, and sympathetic and who can strike a balance between encouraging the best performance and putting people's welfare and future growth first. This cannot be accomplished by one-time training; instead, the more suitable strategy enables career development. During those times, knowledge can be integrated through career development programmes and experimentation with novel skills or behaviours is encouraged".</i></p>

Although talent management is a growing aspect of strategic human resource management, managers still face limitations in this area (Kashrood, 2020; Masri and Abubakr, 2019). The study found that bureaucracy does not provide flexibility and innovation, a major constraining factor for a talent

management strategy. This is further exacerbated by budgetary constraints and the routine nature of the job that limited growth opportunities.

4.3. Theme 3: The contributing factors of a talent management strategy

<p>Management support towards talent management</p>	<p>Participant 5 said, "<i>The commitment of the ministry to creating a conducive work environment plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining talented individuals</i>". Besides, Participant 8 mentioned that "<i>There is no doubt that leadership plays a vital role in the successful implementation of every organisation's initiatives or strategy. To ensure the sustainability of the talent management strategy, it is imperative that management provide guidance and financial and moral support toward this strategy</i>".</p> <p>Participant 11 uttered: "<i>Support by management; management should be proactively involved in the work of their subordinates to enable them to identify their weaknesses and suggest possible remedial actions</i>".</p>
<p>Align talent management with business strategy.</p>	<p>Participant 6: "<i>...the strategy should start with alignment with mission and goals of the Ministry whereby the talent management strategy should be closely aligned with the Ministry's mission and goals. This means ensuring that the recruitment, development, and retention of talent are geared toward supporting the Ministry's objectives, such as environmental conservation, sustainable forestry, and promoting tourism</i>".</p> <p>Participant 9 suggested: "<i>Without a doubt, a talent management initiative must be directly in line with the mission and goals of the business in order to be useful. The mission and goals of the Ministry should be tightly correlated with an effective personnel management plan, which should concentrate on attracting, nurturing, and retaining talent that can successfully contribute to these goals</i>".</p>
<p>Promoting talent management culture</p>	<p>Participant 9 stated: "<i>The organisation can enhance talent management culture by being innovative and integrating talent development into your corporate culture. Verify the mission</i></p>

	<p><i>statement of your organisation".</i></p> <p>Participant 12 suggested: <i>"The ministry's emphasis on continuous learning and career advancement opportunities further enhances talent management by providing employees with the necessary resources to develop their skills and grow professionally".</i></p> <p>Participant 15 stated: <i>"The ministry should create an open work culture where the opportunities for development, learning on the job, coaching, rewards embedded in a culture of employee engagement".</i></p>
<p>Developing training and development programmes</p>	<p>Participant 8 mentioned that <i>"Training and talent development are accomplished through coaching support, specific tasks, and classroom instruction. Project specific assignments help employees become more competent because they give them practical experience in organising, overseeing, and completing projects. Alternative programmes that effectively increase employee competency include job rotation, coaching, and mentoring in addition to job enrichment and expansion".</i></p> <p>Participant 9 suggested: <i>"The impact of continuous capacity building in terms of talent management cannot be overlooked. The Ministry should therefore prioritise and continuously invest in training and development programmes to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to address current and emerging environmental challenges".</i></p>

The study results show that since the talent management strategy facilitates the realisation of the organisation's vision, it must align with the organisational strategy. In this regard, Agarwal and Gupta (2018) postulate that talent management decisions can impact an organisation's competencies and overall success. The talent management plan should be designed with this perspective in mind, drawing in and maintaining the necessary talent for the organisation.

The results further demonstrate that a talent management strategy thrives where the talent management culture is promoted. The talent management system programme's objective of fostering a culture of excellent behaviour will be aided by organisational culture, which serves as a model for individual behaviour inside the company. The participants agreed that for a successful talent management strategy and system to be implemented, top management and leadership played a crucial

role. Leadership is essential in ensuring that personnel are supported and the necessary resources (human, financial, and technology) are available (Kravariti and Johnston, 2020; Collings, Mellahi and Cascio, 2019). The success of the organisation's talent management strategy, system and programme depends on top management setting policies, regularly setting an example of outstanding behaviour, and ensuring line managers at all levels understand the significance of the strategy and programme. The contributing factors to talent management were found to be management support, alignment of talent management to business strategy, promoting talent management culture and key position identification.

5. Managerial implications

The results of this study demonstrate how employee behaviour can impact the optimal performance of talent management strategies. According to the results, the talent management process is successful when employees actively seek out learning and growth opportunities, demonstrate a commitment to their work and the organisation as a whole, foster positive working relationships with their colleagues, are open to receiving feedback, comprehend it, and act upon it. These factors positively impact an employee's productivity and commitment to the organisation.

The study also identified training and development as contributing factors to a successful talent management strategy. According to the study results, analysing each talent's training needs and development is essential to improving training and development effectiveness. The efficacy of training and development initiatives will boost the pool of available personnel equipped to occupy strategic roles within the company.

6. Conclusions, limitations and future research

6.1 Conclusions regarding the research objectives of the study

The study's main objective was to explore the key elements of a talent management strategy for the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism.

Objective 1: To explore the stages that should be included in a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government.

The Ministry currently does not have a defined talent management strategy. With a talent management strategy, the Ministry can offer each recruit a clear path to professional advancement. Such a strategy can also guarantee long-term employment for employees under the scheme. By encouraging employees to develop their talents, the Ministry can show its interest in the employees,

which in turn gains their loyalty. Employees will put in more effort and contribute more to the company's goals when they feel they can progress.

The study further concluded that talent management is a systematic strategy (process) the organisation uses to draw in and, ideally, choose the finest candidates for each open job. To maintain a steady flow of talent into the organisation to increase worker productivity, it is also important to attract, engage and develop exceptional people, lead and eventually retain high-potential and high-performing personnel. Thus, the process/steps in talent management should involve assessing talent needs, attracting the right talent, recruitment, onboarding, employee engagement, retention and succession planning. In addition, the study concluded that aligning talent management strategy with succession planning is important. To guarantee the proper implementation of talent management strategies, all participants agreed that the organisation's talent development plans should align with the succession plan.

Objective 2: To explore the constraining factors of a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government

This study concluded that talent management had budgetary, bureaucratic, and environmental constraints. According to the study results, all participants reported that budgetary constraints were the major hindrance to organisational talent management. The study also concluded that bureaucracy in government ministries was one of the major constraints to implementing talent management strategies. This was due to leadership not promoting a talent management culture or an environment that supported talent management. Finally, the study discovered that environmental constraints were one of the factors that hindered talent management in the Ministry. The participants indicated that the current working environment at the Ministry was not conducive to talent management. The participants indicated that due to bureaucracy, the work environment did not promote innovation and flexibility for employees to exercise their best skills.

Objective 3: To explore the contributing factors of a talent management strategy in a selected Ministry in the Namibian Government

The study concluded that the contributing factors to talent management were management support, alignment of talent management to business strategy, promoting talent management culture, and training and development. The study's conclusions indicated that senior management was essential to effectively implement a talent management system. The effectiveness of the organisation's talent management system programme was contingent upon the top management's establishment of policies, consistent modelling of exceptional behaviour, and assurance that line managers at all levels recognised the program's importance. The study's findings also demonstrated that an effective talent management approach flourished in environments that supported a talent management culture. Implementing talent management strategies will be facilitated by integrating them into the company

culture. Organisational culture, which acts as a model for individual behaviour within the company, will support the talent management system program's goal of cultivating a culture of exceptional behaviour.

6.2 Limitations of the research

This research had certain limitations. Only one government ministry was included in the original sample. This implies that the findings are not transferable to other government ministries. Secondly, due to the limited sample size, the researchers could not discern variations in talent management and retention according to demographic factors. Finally, the lack of talent management research in the national public sector made it challenging to interpret the findings.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

Provision of resources

All the participants attributed the poor implementation of talent management strategies and programmes to budgetary constraints. Al-Haraisa and Al-Haraizah (2021) indicate that sufficient financial resources should be allocated to promote talent management and related activities.

Involving employees in decision-making

It is suggested that the Ministry should involve staff members in decision-making to a larger extent. A significant portion of participants said that they were excluded from decision-making processes that impacted their job performance. Hence, Armstrong (2020) strongly argues that senior management should permit employee participation in decision-making, goal-setting, teamwork, and other processes through mutual consultation to accomplish organisational success through talent management.

Training and development

The findings showed that training and development contributed to a successful talent management system. As a result, senior management in the Ministry needs to ensure that the training methodologies used are those most appealing to the staff. Kaliannan *et al.* (2022) indicate that evaluation should be done after each training programme to ascertain its efficacy and make necessary modifications.

Revising HR Policies

The study's findings showed that there was more bureaucracy in the government ministries, which hindered the implementation of a successful talent management system. The human resources policies

of the Ministry, particularly the talent management policy, need to be revised. Caligiuri and Lowton (2020) postulate that when policies are updated and improved, the result is improved working conditions that motivate staff members to work hard and stay with the company.

Employee engagement

The public sector's cultural framework does not naturally prioritise employee engagement, even though it is essential to the success of talent management initiatives. According to Armstrong (2020), by extending inputs, employee engagement improves decision-making. Additionally, it strengthens a person's commitment to the decisions made during the decision-making process and enhances employee engagement, motivation, and communication at work.

Implementing 360 performance management appraisal

It is suggested that the Ministry should use a 360-degree performance appraisal method. Masri and *Abubakr* (2019) argue that a 360-degree performance review can help each individual identify their areas of strength and weakness as well as provide insight into areas of their job that require professional development.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

Because a qualitative research design was chosen for this study, related research in the future may use quantitative methodology to investigate, for example, the demographic differences in how talent management strategies are perceived. Furthermore, as this study was carried out as an internal inquiry at the selected Ministry in the Namibian Government, subsequent research may focus on all of the government ministries in Namibia. It is suggested that more research be conducted on talent management strategies as this analysis did not cover all relevant ground.

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PROFESSIONAL EDITING
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To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that I was the language editor of the proposal:

*Exploring the contributing and constraining factors of a talent management strategy in a
selected Ministry in the government of Namibia*

by

Moses Shikonekeni Nghifikwa, Cecile Schultz and Henk de Jager

Amendments made (or not) by the authors after the completion of editing fall outside the scope of my work. Confirmation and checking of the originality and accuracy of this paper remain the responsibility of the author/s.

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