

## Implementation of Talent Management Strategies in Higher Education: Evidence from Botswana

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**ABSTRACT** The present study examined talent management practices of private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Botswana. The prime objective of this study, therefore, was to investigate the different talent management strategies PHEIs in Botswana employ to effectively manage talent. This quantitative study utilized a survey design in which data were collected from a stratified random sample of 300 respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed statistically with the aid of the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Results of this study showed that talent management strategies of private higher education institution in Botswana are still work in progress due to lack of knowledge and ability by managers in these institutions to plan and implement talent management programs.

### INTRODUCTION

Researchers have shown that higher education institutions lag behind industry in talent management practices (Lynch 2007) and that for many of these institutions, talent management is a relatively new and untapped opportunity despite its importance in offering these institutions a proven and practical way for driving competitive advantage (Cobb 2007). Despite the noted and accepted importance of talent management in institutional effectiveness (Bhatt and Behrstock-Sheratt 2010; Conti 2008; Wellins et al. 2012) little is known about the range of talent management strategies that are deployed to support institutional operations particularly in higher education institutions in Botswana. The issue, therefore, poses a huge challenge to higher education because the current pace of change and the complexity of activities in higher education now require that institutions have agile talent management practices and processes not only to succeed but to also attain competitive advantage (PMI 2013). The issue is confirmed by the fact that in periods of high competition, attracting, developing and retaining qualified talent is crucial for institutional success (Lavania et al. 2011). Literature showed that retaining key talent in institutions has now become a major challenge that is leading to a number of higher education institutions resorting to an unsustainable strategy of being poachers of talent instead of developers of talent (Asset Skills 2012; Conti 2008; O'Callaghan 2008). Literature, further

shows, that for talent management to be effective, it should be carefully planned in line with specific anticipated changes in institutions rather than taken as a one-size-fits-all proposition (Success Factors 2013). This is further confirmed by a number of authorities who attested to the fact that careful recruitment, retention and development of talent is a critical aspect of motivated staff performance, quality student learning and institutional success (Conti 2008; Imazeki and Goe 2009; Leithwood et al. 2004; Ortlieb and Sieben 2012; Rivkin et al. 2005).

### Literature Review

#### *Talent*

Talent is defined as those individuals in organisations who can make a difference to organisational performance either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest level of potential (Bhatnagar 2007; McCartney and Worman 2013; Ortlieb and Sieben 2012). Talent is also defined as the people who are technologically literate, globally astute and operationally agile (Beechler and Woodward 2009; Brown 2014), that is, the best and the brightest or those employees who fall in the top 10% to 20% of organisational members in terms of value (the "A" players) (Bradford 2005). A more comprehensive definition of talent is given by CIPD (2012) which defined talent as consisting of those individuals who can make a difference to organizational perfor-

mance either through their immediate contribution or, in the longer-term, by demonstrating the highest levels of potential, that is, those people in organizations that possess skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, good judgment, right attitude, character, as well as drive and who are always willing to learn and grow (DEA 2009; Fitzgerald 2014). Talent, therefore, refers to those organizational members who have relevant knowledge and skills, are self-starters and demonstrate organizational commitment.

### ***Talent Management***

Talent Management (TM) has been identified as a key strategic issue in organizations (Clark 2009; Innovation and Growth 2013; Turner and Kalman 2014). This is so because organizations that fail to redefine their employee value proposition always have problems in attracting, developing and retaining top talent (Ernst and Young 2010; Baqtayan 2014; Veloso et al. 2014). Talent management has been conceptualised in different ways. Among some of the definitions that help to clarify, what actually the talent management is, are those given below. Talent management is a systematic attraction, development, engagement/retention and development of individuals with high value to the organization (Campbell and Smith 2010; Lawler 2008; McCartney and Worman 2013; MOR n.d.; Smyley and Wenzel 2006). Talent management is also defined as the process that deals with the identification and development of all talent, especially, high potential talent for future assignments, positions or projects (Campbell and Smith 2014; Clark 2009; Cobb 2007; Fitzgerald 2014). When talent management included workforce planning, talent acquisition, professional development, performance management, retention strategies and succession planning, it is referred to as integrated talent management (Fitzenz and Davison 2002). The premise of talent management is that the employees are every organization's most valuable asset (Cobb 2007), implying that employees should always be at the center of all talent management functions of every success-focused organisation. Another more illuminating definition of talent management is that it is a dynamic, ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing and developing talent for the future critical roles to ensure continuity and optimal organizational performance (Heidke

2006). Ulrich et al. (2013) explored that successful talent management will occur when there is a convergence of talent management knowledge, Human Resources (HR) or People Business partner insight, specialist HR expertise and business objectives.

### ***Rationale for Talent Management in Higher Education***

Literature alluded to a number of issues that necessitated the need for talent management in higher education (McCartney and Worman 2013). These include: increased competition among higher education institutions (both public and private); are needed to map the talents of the existing workforce; need to address future leadership; recruitment and retention challenges institutions face; changes in demographics and external labour markets; skills shortage (7 out of 10 organisations currently reported a rise in the number of unsuitable applicants); and under-utilisation of expertise of existing workforce. The need, therefore, for more effective, robust and agile talent management strategies in higher education cannot be overemphasised. The importance of effective talent management practices to organizations can, therefore, be explained in the context of benefits that accrue from it (Capelli and Keller 2014; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 2014) which included: a) Reduction of recruitment costs as staff turnover is reduced; b) effective knowledge management and transfer; c) delivering of cutting edge services and products; d) creation of competitive advantage; e) reducing enterprise risk (one employee in hand is worth 200 in resumes); f) improved client retention (clients value relationships and talented people value and maintain client relationships); and maintenance of adequate staff capacity.

### ***Current Trends in Talent Management in Higher Education***

The following three talent management trends help to illuminate the reason why higher education institutions particularly private higher education institutions needed to seriously engage in a paradigm shift regarding their talent management strategies if they are to succeed in their operations and achieve competitive advantage (Hewitt 2012). The first trend is that, the

literature showed, performance and reward programs in higher education are disconnected to be able to support effective and robust talent management due to the fact that only 48% of higher education institutions use systematic performance management processes to assess and improve staff performance. Besides, of these 48%, around 20% consistently: (i) ensure that rewards and recognition link to the attainment of institutional, departmental and individual performance goals; (ii) differentiate pay significantly between high-potential and non-high-potential employees; and (iii) align rewards within the context of a total reward strategy that included compensation, benefits and development opportunities for talent in the institutions.

The second trend is that focus on leadership development and succession planning in higher education while increasing, is still very slow as a result of the following reasons (Hewitt 2012): (i) only 47% of human resources department personnel in higher education institutions work hand-in-hand with faculty and departmental managers to support key institutional talent management initiatives meaning that a silo approach to talent management is used in most of the higher education institutions; (ii) only 31% of higher education institutions reported adequacy of staff with requisite skills and capabilities for the purpose of planning and to being able to lead leadership development and succession planning initiatives; (iii) only 23% of higher education institutions held their management accountable for poor talent management in the institutions; (iv) only 10% of higher education institutions have succession plans that go 2 to 3 people deep for leadership roles and; (v) only 11% of higher education institutions use their succession plans to fill leadership positions with most preferring to offer the position to external recruits at the expense of the tried and tested in the institutions. The third and final trend is that commitment to monitor talent engagement in higher education institutions is still low as (i) only 36% of higher education institutions identified talent management engagement as within the top five strategic priorities of the institutions; (ii) slightly more than 37% of higher education institutions gather and analyse institutional data to monitor talent management among employee knowledge and skills and roles and responsibilities; and (iii) of the 37% above who gathered and analyzed institutional data,

only 42% used the data consistently to improve talent planning and engagement.

### ***Drivers of Talent Acquisition and Retention in Higher Education***

What drives talent to join a particular institution and to stay for longer periods is an issue shrouded in debate and controversy in higher education (McCartney and Worman 2013; Shaffer 2008). A number of drivers have been identified as key drivers of talent acquisition and retention in higher education, given in their order of priority (Salt 2007; Shaffer 2008; Towers 2012). Towers 2012). The top driver is viewed as base pay. Watson (2014) argues that the reason why employees join and leave organisations is mismatch with organisational cost management. The second driver is job security. Job security especially in volatile business environments is viewed as the second most important driver for employees joining or leaving organisations (Shaffer 2008; Watson 2012, 2014). Employees are viewed as being hesitant to join organisations which do not assure them of a long term job opportunity. Watson (2014) further argues that stress and anxiety about the future are common. The third most important driver according to Watson (2014) is opportunities for career advancement. Employees always want upward mobility at the workplace and any workplace that does not have clear prospects for this advancement always suffers from high staff turnover (Salt 2007; Watson 2012). The fourth driver of talent acquisition and retention that is viewed as important is opportunities for learning and development. The work environment has become very dynamic requiring new knowledge and skills from employees more often than before. Watson (2014) shows that employees require a work environment that empowers them with new knowledge and skills through career development opportunities. The fifth and final driver is opportunity for challenging work (Shaffer 2008; Watson 2012). Research shows that employees get bored and demoralized by mundane job tasks that do not make them utilise their full potential (Watson 2012).

### ***Talent Management Approaches***

Literature pointed to a number of approaches that higher education institutions can use for effective talent management (Asset Skills 2012).

Out of these methods, CIPD (2010, 2012) identified two methods namely the single ladder and the multiple ladder approaches which it says can help organizations gain competitive advantage. The single ladder approach to TM (Talent Management) involved the organization using one talent pipeline that focuses on the development of potential leaders or recognized professionals. More specifically it involves the attainment of qualifications, being a member of a professional body and having a certain number of years of experience for one to be recognized as talent. The multiple ladder approach to TM involved having multiple pipelines for different groups of staff in the organization such as graduates, senior management, and general staff, with the main goal being to nurture a wide range of skills (CIPD 2012; Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013).

### ***Effective Talent Management Strategies in Higher Education***

Success Factors (2013) provided a number of strategies that are critical in helping higher education institutions effectively manage talent. The importance of these TM strategies in harnessing the unique talents of individual employees and converting the potentials into optimum organizational performance has been recognized in literature (Asset Skills Barometer 2011; CIPD 2014; Newman 2012; O'Berry 2012; Oracle Corporation 2014).

The first strategy is linking talent management to institutional growth. Deploying the right talent strategies has been seen as speeding up progress and helping in the management of institutional growth. There are a number of management tactics that are critical in this frame, to ensuring effective management of institutional growth. Maximizing productivity is one such tactic. There is need for regular communication and meaningful feedback from performance management sessions are practices that can improve task execution by employees leading to an increase in productivity needed for growth. Performance management sessions have been observed to provide opportunities to discuss, measure, and improve employee performance which is a key for institutional growth.

Further, there is a need to keep people aligned and this is ensured by keeping all institutional members on the same level of understanding with regards to the goals and tasks of institu-

tional growth through effective communication. Besides, it is made possible by assigning people into roles and positions their skills and knowledge best fit, institutions are able to motivate their employees and ensure productive performance for institutional growth (Lavania et al. 2011; Pitt-Catsoupes et al. 2009). It is also important to incentivize exceptional performance by giving employees a stake in the success of the institution. This has been viewed as a certain way to unlock employee potential and commitment. To be able to achieve the above, institutions need to have a clear and transparent compensation management strategy that makes it easier to monitor employee progress and reward top performers accordingly (Carvin and Main 2012; Huselid and Becker 2011; Lavania et al. 2011).

It is also important to replicate great talent through effective recruiting. Higher education institutions should always seek to hire talent which replicated their top performers who are able to fit into the institution's unique culture (Lavania et al. 2011). Resources should also be made adequate. The importance of resources when deploying employees to quickly meet the growth demands of the institution can never be over-emphasized. There is a need to create bench strength needed for institutional growth. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly streamlined and a clear succession plan developed to help the institution in effectively mapping internal talent against future needs. Scaling employee data management is also vital. The Human Resources Department must always keep the employee data base updated to ensure employees' skills, and competencies are known and can be quickly deployed where and when needed (Lavania et al. 2011).

The second strategy is linking talent management with new institutional or departmental projects. New projects such as introducing a new curriculum means navigating through the unknown and required an institution to have a plan of how employees will ensure success (Success Factors 2013; Ford et al. 2010). There are a number of talent management tactics that are critical to the success of new institutional or departmental projects. Centralizing the employee data base is one such tactic. The human resources department should develop an updated centralised employee data base to ensure employees' profiles can easily be accessed and a

recruitment strategy should be developed. As institutions grow, they need a recruitment strategy that clearly defined who to recruit, how and when. There is also a need to align employees with goals to ensure all institutional members share institutional goals and work hard towards achieving those (Ford et al. 2010). Communication should be used to help existing employees to understand the vision and new recruits to understand where they fit in the scheme of things and keeping all members focused. Since, the change as the institutions grow breeds uncertainty, the use of performance management with clear coaching and meaningful feedback helps to keep all employees focused and engaged. It is also important to adjust compensation based on market conditions. Incentive-based compensation that rewards employees for concrete results is an important driver of effective talent management in higher education institutions. It is important for institutions to retain best talent. Career development plans that helped employees to grow in their profession, helped to show employees what is in it for them hence assuring the same employees that change is good for everybody and programs should be put in place to develop people from within (Success Factors 2013). New ways of doing things required that employees learn new skills hence in-house training complementing formal training is critical to successful execution of new tasks.

The third strategy is linking talent management with institutional efficiency. This referred to doing more with less (Success Factors 2013). Tactics to achieve this alignment included quality hires. Hiring the best talent in the beginning helped institutions to save on costs of replacing a mediocre employee and thus, positively affected the productivity. It is also important for an organization to ensure information on demand. Institutions should ensure that all members are able to access critical operational information at the click of a button and that information sharing becomes the culture of the institutions (Innovation and Growth 2013). A case of a privileged few in the access to key operational information is a recipe for demotivation and frustration among employee which has disastrous consequences on the retention of top talent.

The fourth strategy is linking talent management with institutional innovation. Growing an institution through innovation changes the nature of institutional activities and hence success depends on how employees will cope (In-

novation and Growth 2013; Success Factors 2013). Important talent management tactics to help employees cope with institutional changes include introducing ERP systems. This ensured that institutional data and processes are streamlined and efficient. In targeted hires, institutions should target hiring the right people with the potential to challenge and change the way things are done. There should be emphasis on developing skills internally. A culture of continuous learning that provides challenging problems motivate employees to think outside the box and is a good strategy for retaining talent. Institutions should also reward innovation. Compensating people who come up with innovative ideas improves employee engagement, motivates performance and fosters retention of top talent and creating collaborative teams (Innovation and Growth 2013). Workers should be encouraged to work together and share knowledge and this is an important talent management tactic.

### **Objective of the Study**

The study examined talent management strategies of higher education institutions in Botswana.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Quantitative Study**

This exploratory study was an attempt at examining talent management strategies of private higher education institutions in Botswana, a branch of the higher education sector in Botswana. The study adopted a quantitative approach which emphasises objective measurements and numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires or surveys and focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing findings across groups of people (Babbie 2010). The overarching aim of a quantitative approach in this study was to classify features, count them, and use statistical tools in an attempt to explain what is observed (Babbie 2010). A structured questionnaire adapted from MOR (n.d.) that uses a five-point Likert scale was used as the main source of data collection.

### **Pilot Testing**

The research instrument was pilot tested using fifteen people, that is five from each of

the academic, administrative and support divisions from the five participating institutions. Recommendations from the pilot test were incorporated into the instrument before it was administered.

### Population and Sampling

All 1350 staff members of the 5 PHEIs who are academic, administrative and support staff members were chosen as the population of the study. A sample of 300 participants was selected using the stratified random sampling technique. In this technique, the population was first divided into three strata of academic, administrative and support staff then simple random sampling was done in each stratum to select 175 academic staff, 92 administrative staff and 33 support staff as participants in the study. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to the three categories of respondents. Out of these 300 questionnaires, 227 questionnaires were returned; a return rate of 75.7%.

### Data Collection

Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data.

### Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical tools were used to assist in the presentation and analysis of data.

## RESULTS

### Analysis of Results

The prime aim of this study was to examine talent management strategies of private higher education institutions in Botswana. A questionnaire that uses a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SDA) was used for data collection. Analysis of findings was done item by item. Results collected from the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

**Table1: Table of results**

<i>S.No. Item</i>	<i>SDA</i>	<i>DA</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
1 Talent management strategies at my institution ensure that employees are engaged and committed to the institution	17%	31%	19%	12%	21%
2 People hired at the institution work hard for the institution	23%	33%	13%	16%	15%
3 Best performers at the institution are known	13%	25%	17%	33%	12%
4 After being hired, people get up the learning curve quickly	25%	18%	23%	33%	1%
5 Institutional leadership has a deep conviction that talent is key to institutional success	27%	25%	21%	23%	4%
6 Institutional members are provided with opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge through strong staff development programmes	0%	17%	21%	37%	25%
7 The institution is able to attract top talent	13%	25%	20%	25%	17%
8 Competencies for key position have been defined	17%	25%	29%	21%	8%
9 The best people are made to perform the most important jobs	20%	38%	21%	13%	8%
10 We retain the our top talent	13%	37%	25%	17%	8%
11 Employees are given opportunities to do what they do best	17%	46%	25%	8%	4%
12 There is low staff turnover in our institution	16%	33%	16%	16%	19%
13 The institution is flexible in developing and managing talent	12%	25%	21%	17%	25%
14 Managers at all levels of the institution provide honest and thorough feedback to employees on an ongoing basis	4%	33%	29%	21%	13%
15 Managers in the institution spend at most 20% of their time on talent-related issues	4%	25%	42%	12%	17%
16 Individual development plans are in place for everyone in the institution	8%	19%	15%	46%	12%
17 Managers are held accountable for developing talent	21%	25%	33%	17%	4%
18 A plan is in place in the institution to deal with labour and skill issues in the future	25%	20%	35%	20%	0%
19 There are set standards to monitor the effect of talent management strategies in the institution	5%	29%	38%	17%	11%
20 My institution has a scheme for incentivising exceptional performance	25%	25%	13%	25%	12%

For ease of analysis, SDA + DA = DA, SA + A = A so that in the end analysis was done based on the summarized 3-point scale of Agree (A), Neutral (N) and Disagree (DA). This analysis format enabled data to be discussed in three main groups of agreed, neutral and disagreed making it easy and more effective to detect the trend of data.

### ***Talent Management Strategies***

The findings revealed that 33% of respondents agreed that talent management strategies of their institutions ensured that employees were engaged and committed to their institutions while 48% disagreed and 19% remained neutral.

### ***People Hired at the Institution***

The study further showed that, 31% of respondents agreed that people hired by the institution work hard while 56% disagreed and 13% remained neutral.

### ***Best Performers are Known***

The table shows that 45% of respondents indicated that the best performers were known at their institutions while 38% disagreed and 17% remained neutral.

### ***Getting up the Learning Curve Quickly After Being Hired***

It is clear on the table that 34% of respondents agreed that after being hired, people got up the learning curve quickly while 43% disagreed and 23% remained neutral.

### ***Institutional Leadership***

The table, further informed that 27% of respondents agreed that institutional leadership in private higher education institutions had a deep conviction that talent is critical to institutional success while 52% did not agree and 21% remained neutral.

### ***Opportunities to Further Develop***

It is clear on the table that 62% of higher education institutions provided institutional members with opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge through strong staff development programs while 17% disagreed and 21% remained neutral.

### ***Institution Able to Attract Best Talent***

The table showed that 42% of respondents agreed that their institutions were able to attract top talent while 38% disagreed and 20% remained neutral.

### ***Competencies for Key Positions***

On the issue of competencies, 29% of respondents agreed that competencies for key positions in their institutions had been clearly defined while 42% disagreed and 29% remained neutral.

### ***Best People Made to Perform Important Jobs***

On the placement of staff members on important tasks, 21% of the respondents confirmed that the best people performed the most important jobs while 58% indicated that the best people were not made to perform the most important jobs in the institutions and 21% remained neutral.

### ***Retaining Top Talent***

On top talent retention, 25% of respondents agreed that private higher education institutions retained top talent, while 50% disagreed and 25% remained neutral.

### ***Employees Given Opportunities***

The table displayed that 12% of private higher education institutions gave employees opportunities to be creative and innovative to do what they think is best and 63% disagreed whilst 25% remained neutral.

### ***Low Staff Turnover***

On the issue staff turnover, 35% of respondents agreed that there was low staff turnover in private higher education institutions and 49% felt that there was high staff turnover whilst 16% remained neutral.

### ***Institution is Flexible in Developing and Managing Talent***

The table showed that 42% of respondents agreed that private higher education institutions were flexible in developing talent and 37% of the

respondents felt that the institutions were too rigid in their talent development and management strategies while 21% remained neutral.

### ***Managers at All Levels***

On the issue of managers and provision of feedback, 34% of respondents agreed that managers at all levels in their institutions provided honest and thorough feedback to employees on an ongoing basis and 37% of the respondents disagreed and 29% remained neutral.

### ***Managers in the Institution***

On time spent on talent-related issues, 29% of respondents agreed that managers in their institutions spent at most 20% of their time on talent-related issues and 29% of the respondents disagreed while 42% remained neutral.

### ***Individual Development Plans***

Regarding the issue of individual development plans, 58% of the respondents agreed that individual development plans were in place for everyone in the private higher education institutions and 27% of the respondents disagreed while 15% remained neutral.

### ***Managers are Held Accountable***

On managers' accountability for talent development, 21% of the respondents agreed that managers in their institutions were held accountable for developing talent and 46% of the respondents disagreed that managers in their institutions were held accountable for talent development while 33% remained neutral.

### ***A Plan is in Place in the Institutions***

On the existence of plans to deal with talent needs, 20% of the respondents agreed that there were plans in their institutions to deal with future labor and skills needs and 45% of the respondents disagreed with the view that there were any such plans in their institutions while 35% remained neutral.

### ***There Are Set Standards***

Regarding set standards, 28% of the respondents agreed that their institutions had set standards to monitor the impact of talent manage-

ment strategies and 34% of the respondents disagreed that such standards existed while 38% remained neutral.

### ***My Institution has a Scheme***

On the existence of incentive schemes, 37% of respondents agreed that their institutions had schemes for incentivising exceptional performance and 50% of the respondents disagreed that such schemes existed in their institutions and 13% remained neutral.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study produced several major findings. Firstly, it showed that private higher education institutions have problems attracting and retaining talent and that talent management strategies of higher education institutions in Botswana are not effective in motivating employees to work hard which could be caused by poor planning. Research pointed to the fact that for talent management to be effective, it should be carefully planned in line with specific anticipated changes in the institutions rather than taken as a one-size-fits-all proposition (Success Factors 2013). The above is, further confirmed, by a number of authorities who attested to the fact that careful recruitment, retention and development of talent is a critical aspect of motivated staff performance, quality student learning and institutional success (Leithwood et al. 2004; Rivkin et al. 2005; Imazeki and Goe 2009). It was mentioned in the research that there is a lack of commitment by staff to work hard to ensure institutional success. This could be as a result of poor or inadequate communication that fails to help existing employees to understand the organizational vision and also to help new recruits to understand where they fit in the skim of things (Success Factors 2013). Literature informs that to ensure a better performance by employees, institutions should keep all (not some) institutional members on the same level of understanding with regards to the goals and tasks of institutional growth through effective communication, as well as by assigning people into roles and positions their skills and knowledge best fit (Lavania et al. 2011; Pitt-Catsoupes et al. 2009).

However, another reason for failure by even the talented employees to perform to expectation in these institutions could be that institu-



tions do not have clearly articulated career development plans that help employees to grow in their profession, help to show employees what is in it for them and to assure employees that what is being done in their institution is good for everybody (Success Factors 2013). Developing employees' skills internally through the development of a culture of continuous learning that provides challenging problems, motivates employees to think outside the box and is a good strategy for not only ensuring employees work harder but also for retaining talent (Success Factors 2013). There is a lack of standards set in the institutions to monitor the effects of talent management strategies in the institutions which, again, is confirmation of the assertion by Hewitt (2012) that there is very little monitoring of talent management in terms of how they ensure a fit among employee skills and roles and responsibilities. Another major reason that is contributory to demotivated performance by employees in higher education institutions is that the work climate is too restrictive affecting employee creativity. Such a restrictive environment destroys employee innovation, demotivates employees and the results in high staff turnover (Hewitt 2012; Lavania et al. 2011).

One major finding of the research is that not all the best performers were known in higher education institutions which is confirmation to the trend in higher education talent management highlighted by Hewitt (2012) that almost half of human resources department personnel in higher education institutions do not work hand-in-hand with faculty and departmental managers to identify and support key institutional talent. This tendency characterizes a silo approach to talent management. According to Success Factors (2013), the human resources department should develop an updated centralized employee data base to ensure employees' profiles, especially, with regards to the best performers can easily be accessed. The above argument is supported by Lavania et al. (2011) who posited that the Human Resources Department should always keep the employee data base updated to ensure employees' skills and competencies are known and can be quickly deployed where and when needed.

Further, it is shown in the research that it was not an easy task to go up the ladder in private higher education institutions in Botswana after being recruited, a situation that frustrates

highly talented employees into leaving. Literature showed the root cause of this delayed progress could be that employee induction, a process which formally introduces into and teaches new employees about the culture and processes of the institutions, is not adequately done, if it is even done at all. According to Success factors (2013), newly recruited members should always be shown how and where they fit in the institution's scheme of things for them to be able to grow and get up the learning curve quickly. The research further informed that there was very little conviction among the top leadership of the institutions that talent is key to the success of their institutions and this is confirmed in the research results by Hewitt (2012) which demonstrated that only 36% of higher education institutions identified talent management and engagement as within the top five strategic priorities of the institutions. Results of the study also shown that there are clearly defined plans to deal with employee labor and skills issues in the institutions which confirmed the assertion by Hewitt (2012) that of the 37% who gathered and analyzed institutional data for the purpose of talent management, only 42% use the data consistently to improve talent engagement.

Other major findings of the research included that private higher education institutions not having adequate programs to improve the ability of their members through skills and knowledge development which is contrary to assertions by the Success Factors (2013) that a culture of continuous learning by supporting employees through both internal and external learning programs is an important talent management strategy critical to institutional success. Further, it is shown in the research that higher education institutions have problems in attracting top talent, which confirmed the results of research by McCartney and Worman (2013) that showed that 70% of higher education institutions reported a rise in the number of unsuitable applicants. Results displayed that competencies for key positions are not clearly articulated and that it is not always that the best performers are made to perform the most important jobs. This information showed that institutions have problems in clearly articulating roles and responsibilities of employees and confirmed the research results by Hewitt (2012) showing that slightly more than 37% of higher education institutions gathered and ana-

lyzed institutional data to monitor talent management in terms of the fit between the skills and positions that members are assigned to hold. The above is exacerbated by the fact that managers are not held accountable for poor talent management as confirmed in a research by Hewitt (2012), which showed that only 23% of higher education institutions held their management accountable for poor talent management in the institutions and hence these managers spend very little time on talent management related issues in the institutions.

The final major finding of the study is that private higher institutions had either no or very limited schemes for incentivizing exceptional performance of employees. This is confirmation of the findings by Hewitt (2012) showing that performance and reward programs in higher education are disconnected to be able to support effective and robust talent management strategies. It is, further confirmed, in literature that only 48% of higher education institutions use systematic performance management processes to assess staff performance (Hewitt 2012) and of these 48%, around 20% (a) consistently ensure that rewards and recognition link to the attainment of institutional, departmental and individual performance goals; (b) differentiate pay significantly between high-potential and non-high-potential employees; and (c) align rewards within the context of a total reward strategy that included compensation, benefits and development opportunities for talent in the institutions.

### CONCLUSION

It can, therefore, be concluded out of the above findings that talent management strategies currently being used in most of the private higher education institutions in Botswana, are overall ineffective as they are unable to engage, motivate and ensure talent retention and improved performance at their institutions. Evidences of the ineffectiveness of talent management strategies in most of the private higher education institutions included the fact that: it takes too long for new recruits to be inducted to understand the culture and procedures of their institutions, there is a lack of prioritisation of talent management activities on the part of institutional leadership, there is high staff turnover in these institutions, institutional managers in

these institutions spend very little of their time on talent-related matters, because, they are not held accountable for talent management, and also that, here is a big disconnect between rewards and performance in these institutions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above conclusions, it can be recommended that:

- ♦ Leadership in private higher education institutions need to familiarise themselves more with talent management strategies, especially with regards to how they can be successfully implemented to attract and retain talent.
- ♦ Talent management issues must be at the top of the agenda in all institutional meetings to ensure that all members understand and capture the importance of the strategies.
- ♦ Institutional managers in private higher education are needed to be held accountable for all talent management problems so that they begin to respond by spending more of their time on talent-related matters.

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