THE INFLUENCE OF WORKING CONDITIONS ON TURNOVER AMONG YOUNGER ACADEMICS IN A RURAL SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The problem this study investigated was high rates of employee turnover, that works against university plans to recruit and develop younger academics to replace the folk of academics who are nearing their retirement. The primary objective of the study was to investigate the influence of working conditions on turnover among academics in a rural South African university. The study was premised within interpretivism paradigm. One-to one interviews with four open ended research questions were used to foreground the voices of six younger academics who were purposefully sampled. Qualitative data was analyzed using content and narrative analysis. The research findings revealed working conditions, namely, infrastructural and social aspect; condition of work; remuneration package and rewards; and undesirable workload as factors that impact on younger academics' turnover. This study recommends a large scale study to examine the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics. Furthermore, this study recommends that working conditions of temporary and part-time younger academic staff should be closely monitored internally and externally. The systems need to be created by the offices of the vice chancellor through human resources units for internal monitoring of circumstances under which younger academics work. Furthermore, Higher Education South Africa should also prioritize the monitoring of human resources utilization and monitor university compliance to Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Labor Relations Act, particularly as they affect younger academics.

Keywords: Turnover, Younger Academics, Part-Time and Temporary Academics, Pay Structure, Basic Conditions of Employment Younger.

INTRODUCTION

In the knowledge economy, knowledge retention is a primary requirement that drives organizations with the inclusion of higher education to "*Foster innovation and improve efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness*" (Dube & Ngulube, 2013). Their study further reveals challenges of male academic domination; with staggering progressions of African academics and scholars starting to show-up. The retention of competent and experienced academics is equally important as retention f younger ones; if universities strive towards academic human capital and academic excellence. This call was made clear to the Department of Higher Education to roll out two different retention strategies, one aimed at retiring academics; and the other on younger academics. This is a clear indication that higher education requires strategies to retain and address turnover among academics because "*The retention of human resources is critically important in organizations and institutions where financial sustainability and survival depend on scarce human and specialist skills*" (Pienaar & Bester, 2008).

The strategies proposed by Dube & Ngulube (2013) would become handy to address a growing staffing challenges in South African Public Universities on attracting younger people into academia in greater numbers, and keeping and utilizing many academic staff members who are close to their retirement (Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2013). The same policy reveals that Participation rates in universities are expected to increase from the current 17.3 per cent to 25 per cent– that is, from just over 937 000 students in 2011 to about 1.6 million enrolments in 2030 (DHET, 2013, xiv). The Departmental plans indicates continuous increases of student enrolments from 2013 to 2030 (DHET, 2013, Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2016), and this will be made possible through the introduction of free higher education for the poor. The increases in enrolments are normally not accompanied by increases in academic staff; and leaves universities with shortages of academic staff. In putting the Departmental intentions and direction in perspectives, the Parliamentary Monitoring Group. (2016) highlights new plans on the expansion of student enrolments as means for successful access by individuals willing to further their education in universities; and the Department's zeal to improve quality of higher education by improving the capacity of academic staff for effective "*Curriculum development, student success, teaching and learning; and research and innovation. The Department rolled-out "Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework [SSAUF]*" that provides for "*Developing future generations of academics and building staff capacity*" (DHET, 2015):

In the mist of the South African university's massification caused by increased undergraduates and postgraduate students' enrolments, there was prevalence of exodus of experienced and competent academics due to retirement. HESA (2019) reveals that "*About one fifth of academics are due to retire in less than a decade, including nearly half of the professoriate*." This HESA report further alludes to the massive challenges of filling the vacant positions because of "*Insufficient numbers in the existing academic and postgraduate pipelines to replace them*" (HESA 2019). Apart from involuntary turnover caused by death and retirement, there is a significant exodus of lecturers from previously disadvantaged universities to privileged universities. This exodus leaves the less privileged universities experiencing critical shortages of academic staff in various disciplines. The loss of competent and experienced professors and younger and promising academics leads to the disruption of university reputation and value creation to the stakeholders. For universities to thrive, they need experienced and future academics who serve as crucial human capital. Productive human capital adds to the positive outcomes and value of a tertiary organization (Wright & McMahan 2011). The loss of strategic human capital that is the primary university asset essentially cripples the proper functioning of universities, its reputation to its clientele base, and ultimately suffers from low levels of clientele loyalty.

Lecturer's turnover intention has become the most pressing issue in many rural and less privileged universities in South Africa. The challenge of academic staff turnover is not affecting South African higher education only, but it is a common phenomenon in other parts of the world. For example, Mkulu (2018) reveals low remuneration as primary causes of academic staff turnover in Tanzania. A "*Delay in payment in private universities; a wanting leadership style; lack of job security; and low academic staff career development*" (Mkulu, 2018) were also identified as challenges in higher universities that contribute to staff turnover. When higher education in developing countries encounter challenges of academic retention, universities in developed countries such as University of Cologne has established itself in support of German Federal Government in developing world class talent management (Chandrachud & Athavale,

2015). This university represents the best talent management programs that are means to retain and mitigate turnover intentions among academics. On the other hand, the University of Pennsylvania talent management strategies are meant to inspire "*Academic staff to raise the excellence bar by creating space for various opportunities for academics to "progress in their career path through mentoring, career coaching, leadership programs and cohort-based programs for emerging leaders and administrative professionals; and skill enhancement training sessions for managers.*"

In periods of high student enrolments and perpetual staffing challenges by rural universities in South Africa, poaching of talent from disadvantaged to disadvantaged universities is common. Academics hired in disadvantaged institutions, once they have gained adequate experience, are lost to preferred institutions that are commonly those historically privileged universities. Preferred institutions are those with good facilities; good governance; and attractive payment structure and fringe benefits. Furthermore, such institutions with good talent management become poachers. The poaching of academic staff (both experienced and younger and talented), results with loose of qualified and skilled employees; and the universities strive in achieving the transformation agenda as promulgated in Vision 2010 and African Union Vision 2063 is prematurely aborted.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on turnover by younger academic staff; and the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics in a rural South African university'. Furthermore, this study offers alternative ways in which the social reality of academic staff turnover could be examined. In lieu of the above, the primary objective of this paper was to investigate the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics in a rural South African university. The study strives to respond to the primary research question, 'primary research question on how 'does working conditions influence turnover among younger academics in a rural South African university'.

The status of the current university resourcing still reflects black and white universities of the apartheid South Africa era. The Black universities were less resourced to ensure that they lagged behind, as discriminatory in nature apartheid propaganda that was. The current democratic government has failed in addressing higher education backlog in physical and social infrastructure and teaching and learning resources, and this perpetuates staff turnover

THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the influence of working conditions on turnover among academics in a rural South African university. In attempt to attain this primary purpose, three secondary objectives were set, namely:

1. To examine the general impact of working conditions on turnout among younger academics
2. To examine how the nature of work impacts younger academics turnover.
3. To establish if remuneration packages and reward impact younger academics turnover.
4. To ascertain how workload impacts younger academics turnover.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The study sought to answer the main research question on how does working conditions influence turnover among academics in a rural South African university.

1. Do you think the working conditions have influence on younger academics' turnover?

2. How does the status of work influence younger academic turnover?
3. Does workload impact on younger academics' turnover? Motivate
4. Does remuneration structure and rewards impact on younger academics' turnover? Motivate

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem this study investigated was high rates of employee turnover, that works against university plans to recruit and develop younger academics to replace the folk of academics who are nearing their retirement. The high rates of academic turnover, works against university plans to recruit and develop younger academics to replace the folk of academics who are nearing their retirement. Academic turnover is not a new experience in South African higher education. The problem of academic turnover is reverberated by university mismanagement that is evident by their negligence on developing appropriate HR policies; bad employee appointment practices; and failure to implement policies with subsequent poor internal monitoring of lower and middle managers.

High employee turnover has serious repercussion on quality, consistency and stability in higher education (Selesho & Naile, 2014). Academic turnover is not a desirable phenomenon in higher education because it results with high cost of recruitment of new academics to fill-up vacant position; and it leads to loss of top academic performers in teaching and learning as well as in research. However, the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics in rural universities; is a topic with dearth of literature.

Research on turnover among younger academics in rural universities is limited, and studies in South Africa and elsewhere have focused primarily on factors that influence employees' retention and turnover (Iqbal, 2010; Mokoditoa, 2011; Theron et al., 2014, Selesho & Naile, 2014; Reyes et al., 2019) causes of high academic turnover (Seeletse & Thabane, 2016) causes and effects of staff turnover (Chabaya et al., 2014). It is this dearth of literature, that caused the researcher to notice the topic of inquiry. This study aimed at closing a gap, by investigating the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature was reviewed with the purpose of elucidating the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics. The literature was reviewed to achieve the three primary objectives, firstly, to define the concepts younger academics and employee turnover'? Secondly, the description of working conditions and how they influence employee turnover. Lastly, three important factors of working conditions which this study has interest on, namely, nature of work; pay structure; and workload caused by massification.

Younger Academics and Employee Turnover

The concept younger academics refer to university employees who enter the academic employment immediately after postgraduate qualifications, without any previous job experience. Younger academics refer to higher education employees who were born after 2018, and they are also called Generation Y academics, academic millennials, academic difital nattives or Dot com academic generation (Aruna & Anitha, 2015).

The concept younger academics are defined based on age and characteristics of the job. They further reveal that academic profession is "*Inherently associated with expert knowledge*"

and credibility. Employee turnover is also referred to as staff attrition. On the other hand, the concept employee turnover is used in for purposes of measuring behaviors and relations of *employees* when they leave the organization. Price (1977) defines employee turnover as "*The ratio of the number of organizational members who have left during the period being considered divided by the average number of people in that organization during the period*". This study adopted a simple definition of employee turnover that it is when employees leave their job. To further clarify the concept, WeiBo et al. (2010) define the process of employee turnover, using the traditional attitude model, that it starts with the quit process caused by job dissatisfaction; followed by job search, then evaluation of jobs offered; that result with occurrence of turnover behavior.

Working Condition

Working environment together with job satisfaction, reward and work engagement (Chaacha, 2017) are factors that influence turnover. In responding to the question on what is working conditions; literature reveals that it refers to physical environment; nature of work and condition of employment. The primary focus of this study was on the nature of work (employment status) and conditions of work (payment package and workloads); as working conditions that influence turnover among younger academics in rural South African university, are examined.

In similar study conducted in Ireland, it revealed a positive relationship between working conditions and employment status. In this study highlights that employment status such as contracts and part-time work, are variable that leads to bad working conditions. This study reveals high attrition levels of casual workers and employees in blue collar jobs who are less educated than permanent and employees in white collar jobs. Many studies support study, on established trend of the influence and relationship between working environment and job satisfaction on employee turnover. In contrary, the study by Bakotic & Babic, T. (2013) reveals "*No statistically significant difference in overall job satisfaction between workers who work under difficult working conditions (at the facility) and those who work in normal working conditions (in the administration)*". Furthermore, the effects of local and global transformation that changed South African higher education landscape, resulted with "*Lack of induction/training; working with underprepared students; unmanageable workloads; issues of race and power; challenges for female academics; and frustrations regarding slow institutional change*" resulted with employee turnover (Portnoi, 2015). In such situation, where working conditions become a push factor, universities rely on individual's subjective factors and nature of work to retain its employees. Working conditions determines employee's job satisfaction, and unsatisfied employees embark on turnover.

Literature reveals remuneration structure and rewards as one of primary reasons for academic turnover (Iqbal, 2010; Chabaya, 2014; Barkhuizen et al., 2017; Dorasamy & Letooane, 2015). In order to control academic turnover, universities need to "*Clearly communicate expectations about rewards, working environment and productivity standards and then deliver on the promise*" Iqbal (2010). When higher education plans for salary packages and rewards; they need to be informed by Equity Theory that stresses employees' tendencies and behavior of inclination towards higher paying jobs than less paying jobs (Molotsi, 2012). Academic turnover most often than not benefits previously advantaged universities, because novice and experienced academics seek security of tenure and sufficient remuneration in such universities. Barkhuizen, et al. (2017) confirm that "*Universities with an established cadre of researchers with essential*

skills and knowledge and who have development opportunities, already enjoy a competitive advantage over other HEIs". Furthermore, Academic turnover was found to be influenced by low remuneration packages and lack of clear organizational policies on career support and development (Dorasamy & Letooane (2015).

Massification in the university as means to achieve United Nations Mellinium Goals; and White Paper on Higher Education, resulted with increased students' enrolment and increased workloads in rural universities (Mapesela & Hay, 2006; Hornsby & Osman, 2014; Manik, 2014; Wet, 2016). Massification was not only a South Africa challenge, but affected other African states such as Zambia (Kanyengo, 2009) and Kenya (Ng'ethe, et al., 2012). In an attempt to address challenges brought along by massification in Zambian higher education, Kanyengo, (2009) recommended dual mode of curriculum delivery, introduction of virtual learning to supplement face-to face delivery. If African higher education should have operationalise such a proposal, COVID-19 shutdown would not have affected lecturer-student interaction much. The study by Hornsby & Osman (2014) reveals increased academic workload as the result of massification; And in addition, more pressure is put for seeking new pedagogy for large classes that compromises student learning and quality education.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was premised within an interpretivism paradigm. This paradigm allows the researcher to examine turnover of academic staff in higher education through "*Recognition of the subjective component in human action*" (Chowdhury, 2014). In this paradigm, the researcher uses perceptions and experiences of the participants to construct and interpret an understanding of the practical social challenges (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Qualitative research is interconnected to interpretivism (Thanh & Thanh, 2015) because it affords the researcher access to participants' lived experiences and perceptions within the context of university employment (Creswell, 2007; Hammersley, 2013; Pham, 2017). Interpretivism paradigm and qualitative research afforded the researcher space to examine academic staff multiple interpretations of turnover and retention in the HEIs in South Africa, specifically focusing on one rural and historically disadvantaged university. Mostly importantly, the researcher gained deeper understanding of academic staff turnover and retention within the context of HEIs (Hammersley, 2013).

One-to one Interviews with four open ended research questions were used to foreground the voices of six younger academics that were purposefully sampled. Open-ended interviews offered the researcher opportunity to probe through follow-up questions. A total of six research participants, three males and three females were purposively selected, on the basis of the representation of different schools on campus; and of their past and current job status as part-time or temporary employees in the period 2012 and 2018. The researcher captured notes during interviews. In some cases, the researcher has to phone to get clarity on some interview notes. At the final stage, compiled notes were emailed to each participant for validation.

Data from interviews were analyzed using content and narrative analysis. Content analysis requires the researcher's judgement in the determination of the hidden messages conveyed in the narratives (Smith, & Taffler, 2000). Narative analysis is used in this study to supplement content analysis in making sense of the participants' lived experience (Burck, 2005).

As skilful and experienced qualitative researcher, I used some strategies to address human factor in research. Validity was achieved for various aspects of research, and this study complied with four validity principles of qualitative research, namely, (1) setting the research questions

that are "*Valid for both the participant and the reader*" (Pyett, 2003); (2) understanding that in-depth interviews offers quality of insight, not mere numbers of participants who prescribe to the theme (Wainwright, 1997); (3) getting multiple perspective and reflecting experiences of the younger academic turnover from six different schools, guard against "*Interviewer bias and against privileging of any one type of information*" (Warr & Pyett, 1999); (4) ensuring that each perspective is valued, and by keeping such perspective intact, as reflected in four tables below (Pyett, 2003).

RESULTS

Data from interviews were categorized per question in Tables 1 to 4. Themes were derived from the research questions used. The narratives in Tables 1-4 are detailed and self-explanatory. In the Tables, P1-P6 represents Participant 1-6. Detailed reflections of lived experiences summarized and displayed in Tables 1-4, were documented in the next item, discussion.

Table 1 WORKING CONDITIONS	
Research question 1: Do you think the working conditions have influence on younger academics' turnover?	
P1	Poor working conditions are inflicting younger academics than experienced ones. Majority of younger academics are on part-time or temporary employment contract, except the fewer NGA employees. They are not happy of their casual and contractual jobs because it denies them many of university benefits than permanent academics. This cause them to search for better offer somewhere.
P2	I am part-time lecturer, and I was not allocated office, to prepare my lectures, and keep students scripts and important information. I requested for office, and the practice is that part-time lecturers are not allocated offices, they work from home. I find it very difficult to manage my work as I should be.
P3	Academics who are on casual contracts are at the mercy of head of departments, who are expected to recommend them in future. This expose them to unfair labour practices. When this happens, they quietly search for job in the industry or in other universities.
P4	Working five years as part-time, has made many of younger academics to search for greener pastures.
P5	Working as a younger academic, you are often not treated as an equal and you are exposed to poor labour practices. One day when I stood-up for my rights, my head of department told me that I quote: 'I will flush you in toilet, like you never existed'. Such utterings made me to start planning my exit
P6	People like adventures and explorations. Apart from poor working conditions, younger academics turnover is cause by need to experience new workplaces, new people and new cities.

Table 2 STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT	
Research question 2: How does the status of work influence younger academic turnover?	
P1	Majority of younger academics are left in their casual position for many years, the longest I know was in casual appointment for twelve years. Majority exit because they are offered a permanent position in other universities or in public or private sector. No one cares our situation, no management nor union has helped.
P2	I was offered part-time lectureship in January 2013 after graduating with an honours degree, and I was 21 years old. I was part-time lecture until 2018.
P3	Every employee needs job security. If individual perceives its lack in their current jobs, they are inclined to quit.
P4	I was told of my part-time offer that it is still standing, after four years without change in the conditions of work, nor condition of employment. And I accepted. No change in pay structure, and I accepted without engaging or negotiating something better. As a part time lecturer you don't attend departmental and school meetings, however, you are expected to implement resolutions taken [in those meetings".
P5	I was on part-time position for three years and then offered temporary post in 2014, with stipend of static R15-000 per month, for five years. Again I felt that there is something wrong with the temporary academics pay

	structure. I was a master's graduate with three years' experience, but this has not changed much of my pay structure, and I was left with financial difficulties. I was deprived multiple allowances and subsidies that this university gives to permanent staff members, such as medical fund, pension funds, and allowance to attend conferences.
P5	I feel like I am used, and not worth enough. Remaining in casual employment cause me work stress. I don't see my future in academia, if status quo remains.

Table 3 REMUNERATION PACKAGE AND REWARDS	
Research question 4: Does remuneration package and rewards impact on younger academics' turnover? Motivate	
P1	I am paid peanuts, but still holding to my current academic position because of high unemployment in the country, with lack of job opportunities.
P2	I was paid a minimum of R3,500 and R6,500 per month. I was given a module with 280 students. I was paid per lecture session I attended; and tests, assignments and project I administered and marked. During the month of January, July and December, with little or no lectures, I was paid almost nothing. I used to live through strict budget for almost five years. I was kept in part-time lectureship, even after two years as masters' degree holder. In October 2018, I was promised a better offer in one university in Gauteng Province, and I leave without hesitation.
P3	My pay is too small and I don't qualify for many university benefits because of my employment status.
P4	My friends I earning five times my salary. They sometimes think I am better off cause of the nature of the status and prestige of the post. My pay classify me as one the working poor.
P5	I remained a temporary lecturer for five years, until in January 2019 I got myself permanent employment in the same university. Still my salary structure was not comparable with the market pay structure. My salary was then increased to R20,000 which I strongly believe is too small and cannot significantly change my living conditions for best. I am not happy, because students' teachers I teach, get entry salary of R23,000 with only undergraduate qualification. I have intentions to quit and look for greener pastures with good working conditions and better remuneration".
P6	My present job does not offer much, and nobody cares about our welfare. Unions are not succeeding to help us. The best way is to seek greener pastures somewhere.

Table 4 Increased workload	
Research question 3: Does increased workload impact on younger academics' turnover? Motivate	
P1	Two of my academic friends decided to exit their job, and continued as post-graduate students. As I am speaking, they are full professors somewhere else, when I am still stuck here with my part-tome contractual work and my PhD". They were tired of high workloads in academia.
P2	I am teaching three undergraduate modules; one honours module and I am supervising three honours students. This is too much. The professors are teaching only one module, and supervise 5 postgraduate students. Something should happen, to address this situation. I fail to concentrate on my studies.
P3	My overload is too much. I am not helped, instead my head of department has given me research project, with 15 students. I am afraid, I won't graduate my PhD on record time.
P4	I am experiencing challenges with high administrative workloads. I am teaching two modules one with 465 students and the other with 276, eight periods per week. The fact that I am a doctoral student is not even considered.
P5	I am appointed on part-time lectureship contract, and I am over-burdened with heavy academic loads. I always ask myself if there is policy in the university of equal distribution of duties; and if it exist, I always ask myself the question on what are programs monitoring doing, if they find staff members with workloads I am having. My plans for exit are at final stages. My completion of studies will be my exit point.
P6	I am highly overloaded. I don't have life anymore. Apart from, academic workloads, my supervisor needs two articles published in accredited journal at the end of the year. I am telling, this is not possible. My personal life suffers, because of high workloads.

DISCUSSION

This item discusses research findings that emerged from one-to-one interviews (as summarized in tables 1-4) that were used to foreground younger academics voices on the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics. From four questions, four themes were formulated for systematic presentation and discussion of the research findings.

The first research finding revealed poor working conditions and how they manifested in different types of unfair labor practices; and inadequacies in the allocation of university resources. Young academics' vulnerability exposes them to unfair labor practice. Participant 5 puts vulnerability and unfair practices in perspectives by highlighting that: "*Working as a younger academic, you are often not treated as an equal and you are exposed to poor labor practices. One day when I stood-up for my rights, my head of department told me that I quote: 'I will flush you in toilet, like you never existed'. Such utterings made me to start planning my exit.*"

Younger academics need to exercise their rights by reporting such accidents to relevant structures and courts, particularly when they are undignified and discriminated on the basis of age, expertise and experience. Unfair labor practice is forbidden by South African legislations, and Labor Relations Act in particular.

Inadequacies in the allocation of university resources was found to be a work condition challenge that can also affect retention or turnover of employees. The university tendencies of allocating lesser resources to part-time academics, when they expect them to be productive like other academics is not a fair practice at all. Again, universities are contravening the Basic Condition of Employment Act that prescribes minimal conditions for employees and workplaces. Participant 2 alludes that: "*I am part-time lecturer, and I was not allocated office, to prepare my lectures, and keep students scripts and important information. I requested for office, and the practice is that part-time lecturers are not allocated offices, they work from home. I find it very difficult to manage my work as I should be*"

Indeed, younger academics require offices and other strategic university resources like other academics to function as required. Receiving departments should be ready to receive new employees with well-furniture offices coupled with necessary ready-to-use electronic gadgets (laptop, 3G, and external memory) needed by nature of their jobs. The infrastructural and social aspects of working conditions as revealed by participants as turnover factors.

The second research finding focused on how working conditions or nature/status of work influences turnover. This research finding, revealed that younger academics serve as casual employees who are appointed on part-time and temporary contractual basis; and that such appointments are continued for prolonged period of time. Participant 1 attested to poor conditions of employment by reflecting that: "*Majority of younger academics are left in their casual position for many years, the longest I know was in casual appointment for twelve years. Majority exit because they are offered a permanent position in other universities or in public or private sector. No one cares our situation, no management nor has union helped.*"

In support, Participant 2 highlights that: "*I was offered part-time lectureship in January 2013 after graduating with an honors degree, and I was 21 years old. I was part-time lecture until 2018.* "Fourie (2008) supports this finding that majority of younger academics in one South African rural university are offered casual work on part-time contracts and often on temporary basis for unnecessarily prolonged periods. In addition, HESA (2011) report reveals this situation as 'stringent working conditions'. It was evident that these younger academics expected intervention for betterment of their job offers by management and unions; including DHET and

Department of Labor, but to no avail. However, nothing is done to help the situation. Policies are formulated, but manpower for execution and policy's implementation, monitoring and compliance is not visible.

Apart from casual work and prolonged periods before full employment, younger academics have tendencies to stay on bad jobs, and exposing themselves to job stress when they can get offers in industries of other educational institutions. Participant 4 stresses that: "*I was told of my part-time offer that it is still standing, after four years without change in the conditions of work, nor condition of employment. And I accepted.* "Young academics' perceived job status and security; and their believe that they will be considered when post is available, keeps then in bad jobs. They even forget of their exposure to job-related illnesses (Burgard & Lin, 2013). However, other participants sensed a need to quit their current job that poses health peril. Participant 3 states that: "*Every employee needs job security. If individual perceives its lack in their current jobs, they are inclined to quit.*"

Research finding one and two reveals that younger academics are vulnerable to abuse by nature on employment contract and seniors (Kelsky, 2017; Hardy, 2018); and the monitoring bodies of such fraternities are silent, and have left this situation for long without any intervention. A lack of internal and external monitoring and control by university senior management; and Department of Higher Training, and HESA (ILO.2018) was found to fuel the situation. In the same breath, Pienaar & Bester 2015) highlight that "*The university leaders "should find ways of addressing the career dilemmas of academic staff*".

The third research finding reveals that compensation packages and rewards influence younger academics' turnover. Participant 3: highlights that *"My pay is too small and I don't qualify for many university benefits because of my employment status".* Participant 1 reveals that the salary structure, and emphasizes by revealing that*: "I was paid a minimum of R3,500 and R6,500 per month…. I used to live through strict budget for almost five years*. In order to case make this crystal clear, Participant 1 classified payment structure as the lost by indicating that *"I am paid peanuts, but still holding to my current academic position because of high unemployment in the country, with lack of job opportunities.* Younger academics are underpaid and their pay structure is unattractive with limited work benefits (HESA, 2011; Theron, Barkhuizen & Du Plessis, 2014). In support, ILO (2018) highlights that "*The increasing use of temporary contracts has produced groups of academics appointed on less favorable terms than those on the tenure track*". This study acknowledges a need for creation of jobs and reduction of unemployment as key economic and social prospects for South Africans. It needs to be stressed, however, that jobs that turn academics into "*Working Poor*" category are not desired at all.

The fourth and last research finding revealed that younger academics operate under stringent working conditions; they are overburdened with heavy loads of academic and administration duties, that is linked to their high levels of turnover. Participant 2 reveals that *"I am teaching three undergraduate modules; one honors module and I am supervising five honors students. This is too much. The professors are teaching only one module, and supervise 5 postgraduate students*. To augment such a claim, Participant 3 reveals that *"my overload is too much. I am not helped; instead my head of department (HOD) has given me research project, with 15 students.* Participant 4 states that: *"I am experiencing challenges with high administrative workloads. I am teaching two modules one with 465 students and the other with 276, eight periods per week. The fact that I am a doctoral student is not even considered."*

Younger academics that were recruited from postgraduate programs, are given workloads that disturbs their studies. Thomsen, Jarbøl & Søndergaard (2006) provides evidence of

"*Excessive workload, uncertain career opportunities and lack of funding*" as primary barriers to younger academic turnover. The challenge of heavy workloads and lack of support system for postgraduate students is a serious concern for postgraduates who study and work at the same time.   Havenga & Sengane (2018) revealed high workload and difficulty in securing bursary or scholarship to finance younger academics postgraduate studies as significant impediments.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the influence of working conditions on turnover among academics in a rural South African university. Four research questions were raised, namely, do you think the working conditions has influence on younger academics' turnover? How does the status of work influence younger academic turnover? Hoes workload impact on younger academics' turnover? Motivate. And, does remuneration structure and rewards impact on younger academics' turnover? Motivate. The research findings confirmed the influence of working conditions on younger academics' turnover. The research illuminated aspects of working conditions, namely, infrastructural and social aspect, condition of work or status of work, workload and remuneration package and rewards and were found to be impact on younger academics' turnover. This study recommends a large scale study to examine the influence of working conditions on turnover among younger academics. Furthermore, this study recommends that working conditions of temporary and part-time younger academic staff should be closely monitored internally and externally. The systems need to be created by the offices of the vice chancellor through human resources units for internal monitoring of circumstances under which younger academics work. Furthermore, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) should also prioritize the monitoring of human resources utilization and monitor university compliance to basic conditions of employment and labor relations act, particularly as they affect younger academics.

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