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THE MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS FOR THE BENEFIT OF AN ORGANISATION

BY
THOBELA TERRENCE JAVU

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER'S IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Business School

Research Supervisor: Dr. A. Werner

January 2014

DECLARATION

‰ Thobela Terrence Javu, hereby declare that;

- The work in the treatise is my own original work;
- All sources used or referred to have been documented and recognised; and
- This research has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognised education institution.+

13 January 2014

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THOBELA TERRENCE JAVU   DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The main research problem in this study was to identify strategies that could assist South African companies in managing knowledge workers for their optimal benefit. To achieve this goal, the following actions were taken:

- A literature study was conducted to identify the best strategies that South African companies could use to manage knowledge workers for optimal benefit;

- Following the literature review interviews were concluded with key people in the human resource and recruitment industry to determine how a knowledge worker was defined in their organisations as well as to probe what management and human resources strategies were used to manage knowledge workers to their full potential;

- The interviews, in addition to the literature study, also served as a basis for a survey questionnaire, which was used to probe the views of knowledge workers to determine tools and strategies managers use to manage them.

The empirical results from the study showed some concurrence with best strategies suggested from the theoretical study. In essence, the study revealed that knowledge was well managed in the organisations where the study was conducted and that the knowledge workers were motivated and productive. However, it appeared that there was uncertainty around the remuneration, rewards and recognition of these employees, which could ultimately reflect in less promising levels of commitment and lower levels of retention.

The main findings were that:

- knowledge workers should be recognised for their good performance by providing financial incentives;

- knowledge workers should be provided with opportunities to continuously develop their competencies but be allowed to craft their own developmental experiences;

- knowledge workers should be empowered by delegating tasks to them that carry decision making responsibility and affect innovation; and

- Managers and knowledge workers should continuously have performance and organisational development discussions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHARACTERISTICS, EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

LIST OF CHARTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of knowledge workers in a competitive world, dominated by technology and information, is becoming a focus point of attention for most businesses who want to remain competitive in the global world.

A problem with knowledge workers is that they have scarce skills which increase their mobility and they should therefore be managed in a way that will want them to remain in the organisation.

Knowledge workers share characteristics that make them different from other employees they also have high expectations of the employer (psychological contract) although organisations also have high expectations of them. Issues related to knowledge workers that specifically need to be addressed are job design, motivation, career development, performance management, leadership and remuneration (Canada, 2011, p.459).

Dychtwald, Erickson and Morison (2006, p.25) point out that in today's business world leaders are more than ever before facing the challenge of managing workforce supply and demand. This is as a result of significant and unprecedented changes in the workforce composition and technological change. There are also more opportunities for knowledge workers to negotiate the terms of their employment due to the global demand for knowledge workers and skills shortages. Dychtwald, Erickson and Morison (2006, p.28) further mention that human resource's responsibility will be to provide expert, enlightened counsel to the CEO and executive team on all workforce matters. They must maintain and develop the organisation's human assets to provide the right talent in the right place at the right time.

Covey (2004, p.16) mention that today's problem is that managers are still applying the industrial age control model to knowledge workers. This is because many of those in leadership or managerial positions manage people in the same way as they manage things. Managers do not see the true worth and potential of people who are managed, and managers do not possess a

complete, accurate understanding of human nature. He further mentions that when knowledge workers are treated as physical objects, managers insult and alienate them, which depersonalizes their work and they create low trust, and a unionized, litigious culture.

To increase job depth and flexibility for knowledge workers Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, Du Plessis, Ngalo, Van Hoek and Botha (2011) suggest that organisations need to create opportunities for knowledge workers to gain more control in their jobs, make more decisions themselves and solve problems on their own.

For organisations to succeed and be more competitive in the twenty first century they need to have a work place that is conducive for productivity and they must also have an engaged workforce. Dychtwald, Erickson and Morrison (2006, p.208) cited that satisfaction does not equal engagement. They mentioned that engagement is about passion and commitment and the willingness to expend one's discretionary effort on the employer's success. Engaged employees identify with the task at hand, their enthusiasm infects others, their activity generates as well as consumes their energy and they care deeply about the outcome.

The above discussion illustrates the importance of knowledge workers in a competitive world dominated by technology and information. It also postulates that to retain knowledge workers and to gain optimal benefit from their knowledge and skills, they need to be managed in a specific way. In this respect, the design of jobs, management of knowledge workers and the organisational culture, need to receive careful attention.

Therefore, key issues related to knowledge workers emerge for 21st century organisations: how to manage knowledge workers, how to retain them and how to ensure that their knowledge become part of the intellectual capital of the organisation (Tripathi, 2010, p.2).

The above discussion therefore presents the basis for the exploration of the main problem of the study.

1.2   MAIN PROBLEM AND SUB-PROBLEMS

The purpose of this research was to identify strategies that could assist South African companies in managing knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of their organisations.

The following sub-problems have been derived from the main problem.

Sub-problem one:

What is a knowledge worker? What are the characteristics and expectations of knowledge workers and what role do they play in the success of an organisation?

Sub-problem two:

What is a knowledge worker as defined at four human resource and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth and what strategies are used at these companies to manage knowledge workers?

Sub-problem three:

What best practice management strategies could organisations utilise to exploit the full potential of knowledge workers and satisfy their unique needs and expectations?

Sub-problem four:

To what extent, based on the perceptions of knowledge workers, are these best practice management strategies utilised by the four human resource and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth?

1.3 CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE THEORETICAL STUDY

Figure 1.1 presents a conceptual model of the theoretical study, and specifically of the independent and dependent variables.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual model - theory

Independent variables

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
˜ Supportive Organisational culture
˜ Motivation
˜ communication network
˜ Opportunities for exercising creative potential
˜ Mentoring and coaching

HR strategies
˜ Job design
˜ Recruitment, selection and orientation
˜ Performance management
˜ Reward and remuneration
˜ Training and development

Dependent variables

Engagement of knowledge workers

Achievement of organisational goals

Satisfaction and retention of knowledge workers

The above model in Figure 1.1 provides an understanding of both best management strategies for utilising the full potential of knowledge workers and HR strategies for optimal utilisation and retention of knowledge workers. This model will be discussed in Chapter two of the study.

1.4 DELIMINATION OF RESEARCH

A study is delimitated to make the study more manageable. However, omitting some topics does not mean that there is no need to research them.

1.4.1 Selected organization

The empirical study was conducted with four human resource and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth. These were Kelly Group, Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources, Themba Kunye Recruitment Services and Khulisa Connection Recruitment and Human Resources.

1.4.2 Target population

The study was targeted at knowledge workers, managers of knowledge workers and human resources managers.

1.4.3 Geographic delimitation

There area that was chosen for the research was the Eastern Cape.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to:

- To define the concept of ±knowledge workerq by means of a theoretical study;

- To investigate the role that knowledge workers play in an organisation;

- To identify the characteristics and expectations of knowledge workers;

- To conduct interviews with key people in the human resource and recruitment industry to determine how a knowledge worker is defined in their organisations as well as to probe what management and human resource strategies are used to manage knowledge workers to their full potential;

- To identify, based on a theoretical study, best practices for managing knowledge workers; and

- To conduct an empirical study at four human resource and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth using questionnaires to probe the perceptions of knowledge workers of the strategies used at these companies to manage knowledge workers.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN OBJECTIVES

This section deals with aspects relating to research design and research methodology.

Figure 1.2 illustrates the research design used for this study.

Figure 1.2: Research design
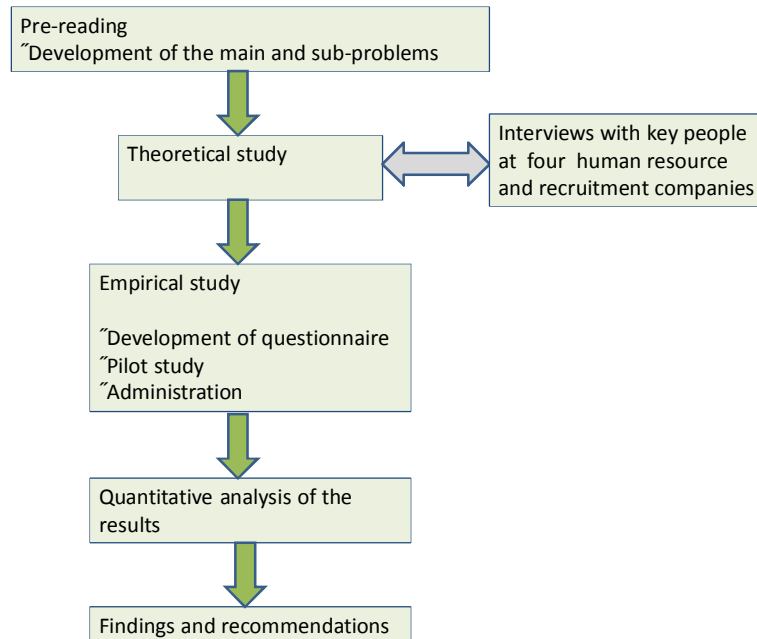
Figure 1.2 illustrates that after the pre-reading was done, main and sub-problems were formulated. A secondary literature review was then conducted using articles, books, journals, periodicals, dissertations, theses and library reference services. The theoretical study focused on the unique characteristics and competencies of knowledge workers and best practice human resource and management strategies that could be used to manage and retain knowledge workers to the benefit of the organisation.

To supplement the theory, interviews were conducted with key role players at four human resource and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth who were asked about their perceptions of the definition of the concept ±knowledge workerq in the context of their organisation, and the strategies used at these organisations to manage and retain knowledge workers to the benefit of the organisation.

A questionnaire was constructed and knowledge workers were surveyed to establish their level of understanding of the role of knowledge workers in the organisational success and their perceptions of the management and human resource strategies used for the management of knowledge workers.

The results of the survey were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet and then statistically processed by means of the graphs and tables.

The results were analysed and recommendations were made for the management of knowledge workers in general and specifically for the human resource and recruitment companies where this study was conducted.

With this study, a contribution was made to the success of these human resource and recruitment companies by identifying strategies that could be used to manage knowledge workers in a proper manner for the optimal benefit of the organisation.

1.6.1. Research methodology

A mixed method approach, consisting of a qualitative and quantitative approach, was used which allows for collection of data, including a theoretical study, interviews and a survey.

A theoretical study was conducted to create an understanding of best practices and strategies that organisations could use to optimise the full potential of knowledge workers and satisfy knowledge workers unique needs in the work place.

Interviews were conducted with four senior managers from human resource and recruitment organisations in Port Elizabeth, to get a general idea of what was regarded as a knowledge worker and general strategies used to optimise the contribution of knowledge workers and meet their needs. The interviews supplemented the data collected from the theoretical study.

For the empirical study, a survey was conducted with a questionnaire as data gathering instrument. The questionnaire was hand-delivered to the designated target group at each of the four companies. The target group consisted of employees who were knowledge workers and these employees performed core work at these companies and were directly involved with the customer. A covering letter stating that the survey was anonymous, that the names of the participants were not required and that participants confidentiality would be guaranteed accompanied the questionnaire.

1.7   DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The following concepts that appear in the title, main problem and sub-problems were briefly explained to prevent different interpretations.

1.7.1 Knowledge

Gray (2004, p.185) mention that to survive and thrive in an organisation requires a considerable amount of knowledge of various kinds. He identified three types of knowledge, namely dictionary knowledge, recipe knowledge and axiomatic knowledge. Directory knowledge is knowledge about cause and effect relationships, processes and how to do things. Recipe knowledge covers recommendations, improvements and repair strategies and is composed of cognitions about what should be done to improve things or what should be done in case something goes wrong. Finally, axiomatic knowledge covers basic assumptions that have influenced organisationsqexistence.

According to Bogdanowicz and Baily (2002, p.125), in the new business world, knowledge has emerged as an asset to be valued, developed and managed. This knowledge is as a result of efforts by knowledge workers, in whom knowledge resides. This knowledge is brought by individuals to the organisation, knowledge which they acquired through education, training, and experience. When individual knowledge workers leave the organisation, they take their knowledge with to the next employer and they also take additional knowledge acquired there as well.

Knowledge, in the context of this study, refers to the knowledge brought into the organisation by different knowledge workers, which is the knowledge they have acquired by educating themselves through training interventions they took to up skill their knowledge and knowledge they have gained through different experiences.

1.7.2 Worker

Workers hire out their labour potential, such as energy, skills, knowledge and abilities to perform certain tasks on behalf of the organisation (Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk & Schenk 2007, p.620). %Worker+, as mostly referred to in this study, refers to a knowledge worker, who exchanges mostly cognitive skills for rewards.

1.7.3 Knowledge worker

According to Horibe (1999, p.xi), knowledge workers are people who use their heads more than their hands to produce value. They add value through their ideas, their analyses, their judgement, their synthesis and their design. Holman, Wall, Clegg, Sparrow and Howard (2005, p.134) define knowledge workers as individuals who, through their inimitable knowledge and skills, generate new knowledge that creates competitive advantage for employers.

1.7.4 Strategy

Harvey and Brown (2001, p.431) assert that strategies are courses of action organisations use to achieve major objectives. It refers to all the activities that lead to the identification of the objectives and plans of the organisation and is concerned with relating the resources of the organisation to opportunities in the larger environment.

1.7.5 Management

Drucker (2007, p.8) state that management is the task of making people capable of joint performance. Another management task is to assist employees to perform their tasks better by making their strength effective and their weaknesses irrelevant.

1.7.6 Organization

According to Werner et al (2011, p.21), organisation refers to a planned system of activities by organised people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose, through division of labour and function and through hierarchy of authority and responsibility.

1.7.7 Knowledge management

Knowledge management is the process of managing both explicit and implicit knowledge in an organisation. Its main purpose is to improve storing, creation, sharing and use of such knowledge in the organisation and so to improve performance of knowledge workers and the organisation as a whole (¥ik , Boras & Tomi 2008, p,3).

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Organisations are continuously under pressure to perform due the challenges posed by the increase in global competition. These challenges have a significant influence on the way knowledge workers are managed.

The study of managing knowledge workers is not a new phenomenon. However, various factors necessitate the on-going research of this problem. This study focused on knowledge workers in the field of human resources management, and specifically in human resource and recruitment companies.

Appropriate HR and management strategies are required to gain the most from the potential of knowledge workers and at the same time, retain their knowledge in the organisation.

Therefore, this study is important and the results can be used by managers and HR managers responsible for managing knowledge workers. It can also be used by scholars who study knowledge workers and the impact knowledge workers have on organisations.

Knowledge workers play an important role in the success of their organisation if they are looked after and are given opportunities to use their own initiative, work in teams, and flexibility is provided to make their own decisions.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The treatise includes the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and structure of the research report

The research topic is explained and a background is given followed by the problem statement, significance and delimitations of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature review/theoretical framework

In this chapter, the literature consulted is demarcated and discussed

The views from the interviews conducted with the key people from the four human resource and recruitment companies are presented.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

A theoretical explanation of the methodology applied to conduct the research is given.

Chapter 4: Empirical results

This chapter deals with the results of the empirical study, which are interpreted in order to arrive at conclusions. The main findings are highlighted.

Chapter 5: Discussion conclusions and recommendations

This chapter provides an overview of the main findings, to indicate how gaps, as identified in the literature, were covered and whether the research objectives had been attained. Areas for further research are also identified.

CHAPTER TWO

**THE CHARACTERISTICS, EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT
OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS**

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive world and globalization, work is becoming more complex and more unpredictable. These unpredictable and complex conditions result in decision making that is more decentralised. Knowledge workers use their minds to choose decisions that are complex (Firestone & Elroy, 2003, p.241).

Because of the continuous change in the global trade and South Africa competing with the international world for talent it is critical for South African organisations to pay more attention to their knowledge workers and invest in more human resource interventions to attract and maintain knowledge workers.

Tripathi (2010,p.1) maintains that in today's competitive business world businesses can no longer use cost focus as their competitive advantage, as this can no longer be a differentiation strategy. If businesses want to win over their competitors they need to manage the knowledge of every employee and particularly the knowledge of knowledge workers, as their knowledge must be converted into a pool that the entire business can benefit from.

This chapter provides a theoretical overview of knowledge workers, their characteristics and expectations, and best practice management strategies that can be used to manage them.

2.2. KNOWLEDGE WORKER DEFINED

Before dealing with characteristics of knowledge workers it is necessary to define what a knowledge worker is.

Horibe (1999, p.xi) defines knowledge workers as those people who use their heads more than their hands to produce value. They add value through their ideas, their analyses, their judgement, their synthesis and their design.

Knowledge workers work with their knowledge and those of other knowledge workers communicated through information systems. Knowledge workers also work with organisational and technical

knowledge encoded in programs, routines and managerial discourse (Swan, Newell, Scarbrough & Hislop, 1999, p.7).

Tripathi (2010, p.5) defines a knowledge worker as a ‰manager, a supervisor, or a clerk who is actively involved in thinking, processing information, analysing, or recommending procedures based on experience and cumulative knowledge+.

Organisations employ knowledge workers who enter the workforce with skills and knowledge which they usually obtained through formal education. Knowledge workers apply their knowledge and experience, which they have developed through deeper experience and broad practice-based solutions, to solve problems in a different context or to solve diverse problems (Jackson, Hitt, & Denise, 2003, p.105).

According to Grantham and Ware (2007, p.1), the key to a thriving innovation based economy is talent, and this talent comes from knowledge workers. The emerging economic development paradigm focuses on making companies attractive to knowledge workers, and is founded on the belief that an organisation that attracts talented people will generate enough jobs to retain employees and develop a strong organisation.

Drucker (2007, p.60) state that knowledge workers have mobility, they own their means of production (which is their knowledge) and their performance is not motivated by money alone.

Kinnear and Sutherland (2000, p.1) mentioned that knowledge workers are more important to the long term success than the short-term success of the organisation. Mahmood and Ali (2011,p.27) support this view and further emphasise that it is the obligation of the organisation to take care of their knowledge workers in order to take advantage of their knowledge, otherwise they will lose a valuable asset and this knowledge asset.

Mahmood and Ali (2011, p.27) mention that a knowledge worker is an intangible resource of the organisation and the output received of knowledge workers will be qualitative in nature. Therefore, knowledge workersq productivity cannot be measured according to quality produced in a specified time. Comparing to traditional productivity measurement, where productivity of workers is measured in terms of quality, the scenario of knowledge workers is different, as mentioned above.

Knowledge workers understand how their contribution can be enhanced in the organisation. They put their best abilities to the test and they challenge and achieve (Serrat, 2010, p.2).

According to Davenport (2005, p.33), knowledge workers are a key source of growth in organisations they work for. New products and services, new approaches to marketing, new business models are all because of knowledge workers.

Davenport (2005, p.37) state that knowledge workers always try to make themselves better. Knowledge workers take pride in what they do and they always want to be productive.

According to Bergeron (2003), cited by ¥ajeva (2007,p.648), knowledge workers bring their competencies, skills, knowledge and attitudes to the organisation in exchange for pay, benefits, recognition, a sense of contributing to something greater, an increased sense of worth, opportunities to work with and learn from others.

For the purpose of this study and based on the above information, the term knowledge worker will be defined as an employee who has knowledge, skills, expertise and learning in a special field or area of work.

2.3. CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPECTATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS.

Existing theory provides diverse views on knowledge workers. Jackson, Hitt, and Denise (2003, p.105) maintained that managers are knowledge workers. Furthermore non-management knowledge workers perform functions such as planning, integration, coordination, invention and innovation free from supervision.

Point to be noted by managers of knowledge workers is that knowledge workers dont like to be told how to do things as their jobs require creativity, innovation and problem solving. It is hard to measure productivity and quality on the work of knowledge workers as knowledge workers do not do the same job. Furthermore, a knowledge workers position requires continuous learning and improvement because knowledge workers use their knowledge to create, distribute or apply explicit as well as implicit knowledge. To lose a knowledge worker in the organisation is like losing an organisations capital (Reboul, 2006, p.9).

According to Covey (2004, p.14), knowledge workers are the link to all of the organisation's investments. They provide focus, creativity and leverage in utilizing those investments to better achieve the organisations objectives.

Erne (2011, p.61) mentioned that first attempts in understanding knowledge worker's productivity is based on the fact that, in every domain, there will be knowledge workers who are able to continually and repeatedly achieve outstanding results, as compared to average performers.

According to Drucker (1999, p.83), there are six major factors to determine knowledge worker productivity and these are:

- Knowledge workers are considered productive with regards to specific tasks rather than jobs. Knowledge workers are not job-bound but they apply their skills where they can make the best contribution or biggest difference. It can therefore be project-oriented.

- Knowledge workers take responsibility for their own productivity and knowledge workers manage themselves as they prefer having autonomy.

- Continuing innovation has to be part of the work, the task and the responsibility of knowledge workers. Knowledge workers are creative and they are change agents.

- Knowledge workers engage in continuous learning but also teach others.

- The productivity of knowledge worker focuses on quality and not on quantity.

- Knowledge workers are treated as assets rather than costs. Knowledge workers want to work for the organization in preference to all other opportunities.

Knowledge workers transform business and their personal experience into knowledge by capturing, assessing, applying and disseminating their knowledge within the organisation to solve specific problems (Tripathi, 2010, p.1).

Knowledge workers know how to independently identify and find material in today's information knowledge society. Knowledge workers are able to distribute this information within the

organisation. They use information to answer questions, solve problems, complete writing assignments and generate ideas.

Knowledge workers possess a communication skill that makes them to work well with one another for goal setting, decision making and idea generating purposes. Knowledge workers are characterised by close contact with customers, supervisors, subordinates and team mates.

At all times knowledge workers are interested in finding information, memorising that information and applying that information to their work situations. There is an increasing pressure of new technological changes which consistently calls for knowledge workers to continuously change the way they achieve their work. Knowledge workers have the desire to apply their talents towards bringing new information and new technologies into their work.

According to Beugre (2002), cited by ¥ajeva (2007, p.647), knowledge workers will easily generate knowledge and share this knowledge with others within the organisation when they are intrinsically motivated. However, knowledge workers who are extrinsically motivated always tend to generate less knowledge and are less likely to share their knowledge.

The main learning points from the above information are that knowledge workers:

- seek employability and are lifelong learners and mentors to others;

- develop their knowledge through education, experience and socialisation;

- demonstrate specialised and deep knowledge;

- are more intrinsically motivated by challenging work and recognition.

2.4. MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Knowledge workers are pivotal change agents in organisational development by borrowing, adapting and producing knowledge for sustainable change management. Attending to knowledge workers unique characteristics, developmental and managerial needs and

retention considerations are of critical importance (Canada, 2011, p.459).

Jackson, Hitt and Denise (2003, p.78) identified six key characteristics for the understanding and management of knowledge workers and these characteristics may vary from one job to another. These characteristics are based on the theory of Oldham and Hackman. These characteristics will be discussed below:

- **Task identity**

Knowledge workers can achieve task identity when work is designed so that the tasks of all performing elements, such as individuals, teams and business units, have a clearly articulated relationship to the effectiveness of the larger knowledge system and to other performing units and so that the sequence of assignments allows individual knowledge workers a greater understanding of the overall system over time (Jackson, Hitt & Denise, 2003, p.109).

- **Task variety**

Designing work for knowledge workers requires an understanding of how specialised knowledge is and how knowledge workers add value in an organisational context and what kind of adjacent knowledge needs to be coordinated to increase knowledge contribution.

Knowledge workers can achieve task variety as they apply deep skills in several contexts over a period of time. Furthermore, task variety may be achieved when knowledge workers develop broad skills through diverse assignments, perform more aspects of the process or focus on the integration of the system (Jackson, Hitt & Denise, 2003, p.111).

- **Task significance**

Task significance refers to the belief that one¢s work makes a difference or has an impact on customers. Because of the complexity it is difficult for knowledge workers to see how their personal work is significant.

Managers of knowledge workers can enhance perception of significance if they can create a direct link to the customer for

knowledge workers so that they can understand the customerʼs needs and see how the customer perceives value.

A feedback system that allows knowledge workers to see the impact of their teamʼs and unitʼs work on business performance can enhance knowledge workers perception of the significance of their work to the company.

Knowledge workers also gain a greater feeling of significance when their work assignments are sequenced so that they get experience in various units and can see how units depend on each other (Jackson, Hitt & Denise, 2003, p.111).

- **Job feedback**

Knowledge workers tend to work in a variety of networks and teams and collaborate across boundaries. They receive feedback from multiple sources most of time. Through multiple source project reviews, knowledge workers individually and collectively learn how other knowledge workers experience their contribution and get feedback about how to improve it (Jackson, Hitt & Denise, 2003, p.112).

- **Autonomy**

Jackson et al (2003, p113) mentioned that autonomy is the critical issue for professional knowledge workers. Autonomy is an independent application of sound professional knowledge using acceptable standards and practices.

Huang (2011, p.937) found that knowledge workers have more motivating work characteristics including learning, autonomy and significance than other workers.

Davenport (2005, p.37) mentioned that knowledge workers possess a lot of power and managers should not impose directives on them. If managers impose directives on them which they do not want they may put up with it for a while, but eventually they will look for a job that gives them the more autonomy they want and they think deserve.

- **Growth and development**

One of the most important or key elements in the lives of knowledge workers is personal growth and development. They consistently seek personal growth in their work and career and

organisations who compete on knowledge have demanding requirements for organisational learning and improvements (Jackson et al 2003, p.113).

Building growth and development into work will always contribute to knowledge workersq satisfaction and commitment as well as top performance. Organising of work groups and designing of work processes allow knowledge workers to learn from each other and transfer practice from one part of the organisation to another.

- **Network building**

According to Jackson et al (2003, p.115), network building should be an explicit work design characteristic in the organisation as networking is the basis for increasing social capital through the resources derived from relationships in the organisation.

It is critical for managers of knowledge workers to understand that knowledge workers rely on their personal networks to develop their competencies, become personally visible in the organisation and become aware of opportunities and operate effectively in the interdependent knowledge system. Knowledge workers derive a sense of professional identity and peer support from their knowledge communities.

All knowledge workers posses factual and theoretical information. For example, a sales representative possesses factual knowledge concerning the product he or she sells and theoretical knowledge about how to attract customers to buy the product.

According to Ahmed and Catherine (2003, p.7), the following are characteristics of knowledge workers and these, together with factors that influence their productive behaviour, must be examined closely by managers of knowledge workers:

- **Knowledge workers are highly individualistic in terms of giving priority to their personal growth. Companies need to provide opportunities for their career advancement**

Knowledge workers place a great deal on investments that companies make in their intellectual enhancement.

- **Knowledge workers are informal. Operational autonomy is crucial for them to extend their intellects**

Managers should not try to exert control over knowledge workers. Instead, they should direct knowledge workers as if they are unpaid volunteers. They should think of knowledge workers as if they are tied to the company by commitment to the goals and aims of the company.

- **Knowledge workers are entrepreneurial. Accountability is an effective motivator for them to work on their own initiatives and achieve tasks**

Knowledge workers, while working for the company, use their entrepreneurial skills to be innovative, to develop new products or new lines of business.

Knowledge workers should be allowed to be accountable for the quality of their work and cost of their operations and time. Knowledge workers are also accountable for their contributions to the company, learning and career.

- **Knowledge workers are highly involved in their professional tasks. Companies need to strengthen their association and identification as a member of the company and a member of their professional society.**

Knowledge workers believe in the importance of their work. To increase knowledge worker productivity, companies need to associate knowledge worker professional undertaking with company development tasks.

- **Knowledge workers are inquisitive. They are more likely motivated by challenging tasks that attract their personal interest**

Knowledge workers are motivated by tasks that are highly interesting and challenging to them.

Knowledge workers bring their skills and knowledge to the company. They expect the company to provide attractive environment that helps them to find their passion and work on the type of work that appeals to their interest.

- **Knowledge workers are highly intuitive. Companies need to develop performance systems that effectively measure their productivity and affirm their contribution over a longer time**

Management of knowledge workers needs to devise justified evaluation and feedback to knowledge workers. An effective performance and feedback system is crucial to knowledge workers since appreciation of their creative undertakings and affirmation of their achievement is an effective motivator indicator.

2.5. KNOWLEDGE WORKERS LOYALTY AND COMMITMENT

Smith and Rupp (2002,p.251) indicated that, for knowledge workers loyalty means to be committed and completely steadfast in one's allegiance to a company or a person and to beliefs, practices and relationships that benefit all involved.

May, Korczynski and Frenkel (2002, p.776) mentioned that the key concern for management of knowledge workers is to manage knowledge workers' commitment to the organisation as intellectual and human capital.

In order to understand the importance of the quality of the employment relationship for knowledge creation, the focus should be on the mechanism through which the relationship is linked to the development of knowledge worker commitment. Knowledge worker commitment is a critical mechanism driving innovative behaviour among themselves. Furthermore, there is strong evidence to suggest that the link between the psychological contract and commitment is heavily influenced by the role of the knowledge worker's manager and, in particularly fairness with which they allocate resources (Thomson & Heron, 2005, p.389).

May, Korczynski and Frankel (2002, p.77) agree with Thomson and Heron that one of the major factors affecting commitment, work effort and job satisfaction of knowledge workers is the way management organizes them.

If organisations wish to get commitment from knowledge workers it is important to encourage positive experiences at work. This could lead to affective commitment from knowledge workers as knowledge workers will feel being supported and valued (Giauque, Resenterra & Siggen, 2010, p.191).

Knowledge workers feel grateful for the support they receive from the company by showing a stronger commitment to their employer; this is because the perceived organisational support leads to an increase in felt obligation and to consolidation of the social exchange that it links to commitment (Giauque, Resenterra & Siggen, 2010, p.191).

Thomson and Heron (2005, p.384) argue that the quality of employee commitment, which is important for knowledge creation, is dependent on the interaction of two important internal relationships. These relationships are the perceived quality of the employment relationship such as the psychological contract and the perceived fairness of organisational policies and practises such as organisational justice. In the latter dimension, the emphasis is on the role played by managers in creating a felt fair working environment for knowledge workers.

Thomson and Heron (2005, p.386) further argue that managerial behaviour and attitudes are critical in shaping the context in which knowledge creation and innovation can prosper. The perceived fairness of managers, as evidenced through followersq assessment of organisational justice, will be critical in influencing knowledge worker commitment and in most cases knowledge creation.

Furthermore, there is a psychological contract in knowledge workers commitment that captures the extent to which the employee believes the organisation has delivered its side of the bargain. This simply means that employees are evaluating whether the outcomes they have received in terms of training, rewards and job satisfaction are fair in relation to the obligations they have made to the organisation (Thomson & Heron, 2005, p.387).

According to Hawkins (2000), cited by Smith and Rupp (2002, p.251), the top five drivers of knowledge worker commitment are:

- Managementqs recognition of the importance of personal and family life;

- Opportunities for personal growth;

- Satisfying customer needs;

- Communications about benefits; and

- Skills keeping pace with job requirements+.

It is also important to note that salary probably has an effect on the degree of commitment of knowledge workers. Furthermore, rewards influence the organisational commitment of knowledge workers. Knowledge workers stay in an organisation can be partly explained by a positive perception of organisational justice namely an adequacy between the components of the compensation such as salary, wage structure and social benefits and the system of compensation management (Giauque, Resenterra & Siggen, 2010, p.192).

According to Thompson and Heron (2005,p.384) when managers succeed in developing high quality relationships with knowledge workers based on procedural and interactional justice they are more likely to create the conditions where knowledge workers commitment and knowledge creation can take place.

Storey and Quintas (2001, p347-8), as cited by Hislop (2003, p.192), mention that developing the trust, motivation and commitment of knowledge workers represents one of the key issues in relation to the management of knowledge workers. This is important because knowledge workers with high levels of organisational commitment are less likely to leave than workers with low levels of organisational commitment. Knowledge workers with high levels of commitment are also likely to be highly motivated and will in most cases be more willing to share their knowledge within the organisation.

The main learning points from this section in terms of study are:

- Loyalty for knowledge workers means to be committed to either an organisation or a professional belief;

- Knowledge worker commitment is a critical mechanism driving innovative behaviour among knowledge workers;

- Major factors affecting commitment, work effort and job satisfaction of knowledge workers is how they are organised;

- Psychological contracts influence knowledge workers commitment;

- Rewards influence the organisational commitment of knowledge workers;

- Knowledge workers with high levels of organisational commitment are less likely to leave.

Considering that knowledge workersq commitment is not a given and that knowledge workers seek stimulation opportunities, attention should be given to the retention of knowledge workers.

2.6. STRATEGIES FOR RETAINING KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

According to Carleton (2011, p.465) knowledge worker retention should be one of the top priorities in organisations, especially with rising skilled labour shortages. In todayøs changing environment organisations need to shift away from relying on pay and incentives to retain knowledge workers. Instead organisations need to foster learning and engagement to retain these workers.

2.6.1. Create a motivational environment

According to Drucker (2007, p.60), what motivates knowledge workers is what motivates volunteers. Volunteers have to get more satisfaction from their work than paid employees, precisely because they do not get a pay check. They need, above all, challenge. They need to know the organisationøs mission and to believe in it. They need continual training and they need to see results.

Amar (2004,p.90) believes that for managers of knowledge workers to be effective in exciting knowledge workers, they have to develop a working understanding of the mind and behaviour of their knowledge workers; thereafter they work according to a model that updates their own practice based on the results of the dynamics of their specific motivation system.

¥ajeva (2007, p.648) stated that knowledge workers should be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Neither of the two should be left out of the reward system to motivate the knowledge worker.

¥ajeva (2007, p.648) further summarised main motivations of knowledge workers into five domains.

Figure 2.1 Main motivators of knowledge workers

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Motivators of knowledge workers

- *Provide meaningful work experiences: The work motivators*: stimulating work, excitement, inherent satisfaction, task achievement, intellectual stimulation, variety seeking and self expression. Managers of knowledge workers need to assign jobs to knowledge workers that excite them about work. Knowledge workers should see it to be meaningful, challenging and the one that brings personal visibility on its acceptance and execution. Lastly, knowledge workers should have the ability and support to complete it

- *Provide personal growth and learning opportunities: The personal growth and continuous learning motivators*: career development opportunities, enabling knowledge workers to acquire skills to increase their employability, and opportunity to learn. Managers of knowledge workers should realize that the most effective knowledge workers are those who continuously have new opportunities to learn, assume experiences and strengthen their portfolios.

- *Provide the autonomy and personal freedom motivators*: operational autonomy, freedom to plan and work independently, flexible leadership. Managers of knowledge workers should understand that the very nature of knowledge workerœs job requires autonomy and freedom.

- *The status and recognition motivators*: recognition, opportunities for self actualization, respect, responsibility, a sense of relatedness. Knowledge workers value motivators of status and recognition. Knowledge workersq jobs constantly require them to collaborate and share ideas with other knowledge workers. Managers should recognise knowledge workers otherwise they will be reluctant to share their knowledge and expertise.

- *The monetary motivators*: salary, bonuses, incentives. Organisations should offer a competitive salary that will motivate knowledge workers to remain loyal.

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Figure 2.1 Main motivators of knowledge workers
Source: Šajeva (2007, p.649)

Amar (2004,p.91) agrees with ¥ajeva¢s model and further emphasises that motivating behaviour drivers of knowledge workers is meaningful work itself, such as the assignments or projects they get. Knowledge workers, to be motivated in their perception, want to see how important the work is that they would be doing. Is it exciting? Is it challenging? Would they succeed at it? Whom will they be working with? Would it result in being surrounded by the best? Would the assignment be in an organisation where there is respect, trust, fairness and good management? Finally, what would the experience bring as outcomes, for example rewards, recognition, career advancement, learning and satisfaction.

According to Amar (2004, p.91), managers need to understand the drivers of motivating behaviour of knowledge workers and he %classified+ these drivers into five groups:

i. **The sociological driver**. The example of this is knowledge workers who go to work to satisfy their sociology or to be in the company of those whom they like.

ii. **The psychological driver**. In the knowledge work environment, instead on money, self has become the prime positive reinforcer. The example of this is that some managers who have strategically used self-esteem in assigning jobs to their knowledge workers have succeeded in motivating them to innovate and give higher productivity.

iii. **The generational driver**. Younger knowledge workers are keen to take on responsibility, are quicker to move up the hierarchy and become successful. These younger knowledge workers are knowledge workers of the newer generations, Generations X and Y.

iv. **The knowledge work driver**. Innovation is their main competitive advantage. Employers should be making innovation a high priority in their organisations. Every new job should be designed to incorporate the use of human knowledge to innovate what is done and how it is done. Managers should simply look for knowledge workers who have useful knowledge and are motivated to apply it for the benefit of the organisation.

v. **The cultural driver**. Work culture has been seriously impacted by the revolution in the integration of

advancements and efficiencies in computing and telecommunication technologies into work processes. This type of knowledge workers is at the forefront of this process and need resources and opportunities to act as a change agent.

¥ajeva (2007, p.649) mentioned that for any business in today¢s competitive world, one of the critical challenges is how to retain key knowledge workers. He gave eight recommendations for managers of knowledge workers to apply for retaining of knowledge workers:-

a) **Understand the individual differences of workers**; a good starting point for managing knowledge workers is for managers of knowledge workers to understand that people contribute different skills to the organisation and they need to be managed differently. An example to this effect will be to understand that knowledge worker¢s primary motivation for sharing information might be to accrue recognition and rewards, whereas another knowledge worker might be primarily motivated by desire to help his or her colleagues.

b) **Give recognition for performance**; Heathfield (2007), cited by ¥ajeva (2007,p.649), mentioned that managers of knowledge workers need to understand that employee recognition is a communication tool that reinforces and rewards the most important outcomes people create for the company. The right recognition gift delivered to the right knowledge worker at the right time can inspire workplace motivation and true knowledge worker loyalty.

c) **Provide more interesting and challenging work**; Bragg (2001), cited by ¥ajeva (2007,p.649), mentioned that to keep knowledge workers motivated, knowledge workersq managers need to understand that they should continually look for ways to keep their interest and offer them new challenges.

d) **Build communities of practices**; Beugre (2002), cited by ¥ajeva (2007, p.649), stated that one of the best practices for providing an environment of continuous learning is to facilitate the emergence of communities of practice.

e) **Provide flexible leadership**; Managers of knowledge workers need to understand how to motivate and inspire knowledge workers so that more ideas are created.

f) **Provide training and developing opportunities; build a learning organization**; Managers of knowledge workers should not only concentrate on opportunities for informal learning but also a formal training and development approach focusing on the development of intellectual capital. Knowledge workers need to be exposed using different thinking skills and styles to generate new ideas effectively.

g) **Foster an open communication climate**; Knowledge workers must have an opportunity to be involved in planning, decision making, taking calculated risks, making mistakes without fear of punishment and receiving fair rewards and recognition for performance.

h) **Create an enjoyable work environment**;

Knowledge workers like to work in an environment that is enjoyable, they can get burned out if the work environment is totally serious and strictly business.

2.6.2. Reward and recognise

According to Markova and Ford (2011, p.813), knowledge workers carry knowledge as a powerful resource which they own. In general, knowledge workersq creativity is a source of business success but only when they are willing to apply their abilities, share their know-how, and devote time to challenging tasks. Organisations have to find ways to encourage knowledge workers to use their competencies for the prosperity of the organisation. One of these ways is the design and implementation of adequate rewards systems.

With years of education and learning, knowledge workers are likely to develop intrinsic interest in their occupation and value rewards that acknowledge such interest (Markova & Ford 2011, p.814).

According to Giauque, Resenterra and Siggen (2010, p.191) rewards influence organisational commitment. Staying in an organisation can be partly explained by a positive perception of organisational justice, namely an adequacy between the components of the compensation, such as salary, wages structure, social benefits and the system of compensation management.

Sahraoui (2002, p.161) states that knowledge workers are also attentive to the benefits that can result from their involvement in planning activities. If they do not perceive a link between rewards

and performance, knowledge workersq input into the planning process will be hindered, driving them to withhold some of their critical knowledge and skills. Furthermore, knowledge workers will only utilize their knowledge and skills if they perceive that the reward system emphasizes specific attributes that are conducive to rewards.

2.6.3. Provide new learning opportunities

According to Giauque, Resenterra and Siggen (2010, p.187), companies have the responsibility to provide knowledge workers with development opportunities to enhance their employability in exchange for high levels of performance.

Chen (2010,p.391) mentioned organisations should also provide social support at work for their knowledge workers and a form of mentorship, training, caring benefit and supportive work relationships and this in return provides greater career opportunities and enhanced career satisfaction for knowledge workers. Knowledge workers who perceive high levels of organisational support will report greater career satisfaction than those who perceive low levels of support.

Developing and maintaining knowledge workers means ensuring they are at the top of their game, and ready for innovation and problem solving. Organisational learning and development should be welcomed and integrated with formal and informal sources of knowledge (Carleton, 2011, p.464).

Donnelly (2006, p.88) believes that work life balance is an equally important factor alongside professional development, study support, potential for career progression, and client contact opportunities. The attainment of a work life balance is a highly significant issue amongst knowledge workers.

Knowledge workers consider continuous professional development. For them to stay at the forefront of their professional fields they must be constantly aware of any developments within their particular disciplines and professions and they need to participate in activities that offer the opportunity to further their own professional development (Robertson & Hammersley, 2000, p.246).

It is however recognised that the people management practices required here are focused less on direct intervention such as identifying relevant courses, seminars and workshops to attend for knowledge workers, but more on basic housekeeping, administrative type activities, for example, providing the necessary financial resources (which in some cases can be considerable) or making bookings. Knowledge workers are expected and required to determine for themselves which courses are of particular relevance to them for their own professional development (Robertson & Hammersley, 2000, p.247).

Robertson and Hammersley (2000, p.247) further indicated that knowledge workers had to be trusted to know what developmental activities were appropriate for them. They must also be trusted to organise their own workloads in order to undertake any further professional development they considered necessary without any significant disruption of project work occurring.

According to Kinnear and Sutherland (2000, p.1), organisations who rely on knowledge workers for their business success need to understand or gain insight into the commitment of knowledge workers in order to retain them.

Businesses succeed by owning human capital assets and knowledge workers (Horwitz, 2004, p.9). Horwitz further mentioned that knowledge workers are in short supply all over the globe, therefore organisations need to ensure they utilize effective human resources practices to gain commitment from these knowledge workers.

There are three critical measures that are perceived to be contributing to knowledge workers commitment to their organisations and these are related to opportunities for personal commitment, working with colleagues from whom one can learn and, lastly, the freedom to work independently (Kinnear & Sutherland 2000, p.1).

Smith and Rupp (2002) argue that, to capture knowledge workers commitment and loyalty and to build team spirit, it is critical to provide a coherent, carefully developed and clearly articulated set of corporate values.

The main learning points from this section are that:

- Retention of knowledge workers should be one of the top priorities in organisations;

- Organisations need to foster learning and engagement to retain knowledge workers;

- Knowledge workers have to get more satisfaction from their work;

- To retain knowledge workers they should be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated;

- Knowledge workers must be encouraged to use their competencies for the prosperity of the organisation;

- Knowledge workers staying in an organisation is partly explained by a positive perception of organisational justice;

- Knowledge workers are also attentive to the benefits that can result from their involvement in planning activities;

- Organisations have the responsibility to provide knowledge workers with development opportunities;

- Organisations should also provide social support at work for their knowledge workers and a form of mentorship; and

- Work-life balance is an equally important factor to knowledge workers to remain motivated and to want to stay with the company.

Considering the above strategies to retain knowledge workers, it is evident that human resources management strategies are critical for the management and retention of knowledge workers.

2.7. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMAL UTILISATION AND RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Giauque, Resenterra and Siggen (2010,p.185) suggest that human resource managers can help businesses to improve organisational behaviour, such as staff commitment, competency and flexibility, which in turn can lead to improved staff performance.

Thite (2004, p.30) believes that one of the critical challenges of human resources in organisations is to attract the attention and resources towards people issues and make every manager responsible for successful people management.

According to Horwitz, Heng, Quazi, Nonkwelo, Roditi and Van Eck (2006,p.789), human resource strategies for knowledge workers extend beyond conventional human resource practices; it requires innovatively crafted, flexible, updated and workable strategies, to adapt to complex and a frequently changing institutional and competitive environment.

Thite (2004, p.29) stated that, for organisations to have a competitive advantage in the knowledge economy, they need to take care of their intellectual capital and people management should naturally become an integral part of corporate strategy and a key responsibility for all managers.

Human resource policies and strategies should encourage a continuous learning, self-development opportunities and knowledge sharing as a strategic way to retain the tacit knowledge of knowledge workers (Horwitz et al, p.789).

For the human resource strategy to be successful in managing knowledge workers it has to assure knowledge workers that they are working for a caring, nurturing and trustworthy organisation (Thite, 2004, p.32).

Thite (2004, p.33) further mentioned that another key strategy in building a trustworthy human resource strategy and philosophy is through fairness. Knowledge workers care as much about fairness of all processes as they do care about the outcome of fairness itself.

According to Greengard (1998, p.90) cited by Nor and Rosline (2006, p.4), there are seven ways to ensure that knowledge management takes hold within the firm with the help the human resources department:

- The first is to provide human resource executive support;

- Establishing cross-functional teams to map knowledge and plan an initiative;

- The human resource department need to ensure that a process of knowledge transfer is in place;

- The human resource department is responsible for developing and providing the suitable technology in order to make knowledge management flourish and nurture a sharing culture;

- The human resource department also by needs to demonstrate the value of knowledge management by encouraging a buy-in attitude; and

- The human resource department needs to view knowledge management as a work in progress rather that just as a corporate image.

¥ik , Boras and Tomi (2008, p.4) further mentioned that, in managing knowledge workers effectively and efficiently, organisations need efficient, effective and proven human resources, especially in:

- **Job design**: it is important for the human resources department to design jobs that meet the needs of both the organisation and the knowledge worker. These jobs must be motivating, complex, various, significant, autonomous and using regular feedback.

- **Recruitment, selection and orientation**: for effectiveness and efficiency it is important during recruitment, selection and orientation of knowledge workers to pay attention to knowledge workers personal characteristics.

- **Performance management**: this is the process of permanently improving performance of individual knowledge workers, such as abilities, activities and outputs and this is also for the organisation as a whole. This process of performance management has three reaping stages namely performance agreement, performance management and performance appraisal. This is conducted to ensure that workers abilities, activities and outputs meet expected objectives of the organization.

- **Compensation**: to effectively and efficiently manage knowledge workers, the applied compensation system must be fair and stimulating to retain knowledge workers and motivate them to create, share and use their knowledge in the organisation, voluntarily and mutually.

The monetary and non-monetary compensation should also motivate knowledge workers to their performance, knowledge, skills, abilities and experience.

- **Training and development**: to effectively and efficiently manage knowledge workers, it is important to motivate workers to permanent and systematic training and development of their knowledge, skills, abilities and experience.

The Human Resource Department should ensure that workers who have specific knowledge, skills, abilities and experience should be involved in the process of workersq training and development. This further helps to increase motivation of the workers and improve conditions of voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organisation.

Thite (2004,p.35) further indicated that, in the organisational context, learning takes place at the individual, group and organisational level and human resources facilitate learning at all these levels. He mentioned that ‰at the individual level, human resources is entrusted with the responsibility of recruiting and retaining knowledge workers who can develop right competencies, both in technical and behavioural areas. Human resources need to motivate through a range of performance management and reward measures to convert their expert mental models into explicit knowledge. At the group level, human resources need to enable knowledge workers to work in autonomous teams both within and outside organisational boundaries sharing mental models. At the organisational level, strategy, system, style and staff need to work in tandem to create a knowledge conducive learning atmosphere.+

Therefore, the HR department plays a crucial role in the managing and retention of knowledge workers. Human resources also play a critical role in helping businesses to improve organisational behaviour. HR also plays a crucial role in encouraging a continuous learning for knowledge workers. Human resources also play a role of assuring knowledge workers that they are working for a caring, nurturing and a trustworthy organisation. They further motivate knowledge workers through a range of performance management and reward measures. The next section focuses on a synopsis of best management strategies for maximising the potential of knowledge workers.

2.8. BEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR UTILISING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

According to Jalaldeen and Jayakody (2006), cited by ¥ajeva (2007, p.648), knowledge workers value professional freedom, integrity, innovativeness, opportunities to learn and career development.

Chen and Edgington (2005,p.280) mentioned that, as markets continue to aggressively evolve and while knowledge creation processes typically involve some monetary and opportunity investment, managers need decision making criteria to evaluate knowledge creation processes for their knowledge workers, as these are highly complex and therefore should be carefully managed.

- **Providing a supportive organisational culture**

According to Acsente (2010,p.282), capitalising on the talent of knowledge workers entails creating a culture built on trust, respect, creativity, self direction, intrinsic motivation, team work and knowledge sharing, learning and dynamic change.

Martins and Terblanche (2003, p.71) mentioned that recruitment, selection and appointment and maintaining knowledge workers are an important part of promoting the culture of creativity and innovation in an organisation. The values and beliefs of management are reflected in the type of knowledge workers that are appointed.

According to Ramsey & Barkhuizen (2011, p.159), a strong supportive organisational culture is crucial for optimising the expertise of knowledge workers because it is an integral part of the general functioning of an organisation. It also brings about the innovation that is a requirement for sustaining competitive advantage.

Supportive mechanisms should be present in the culture of an organisation to create an environment that will promote creativity and innovation for knowledge workers. Rewards and recognition and the availability of resources such as time, information technology and creative people are mechanisms that play this role in organisations employing knowledge workers (Martins and Terblanche, 2003, p.71).

Martins and Terblanche (2003, p.72) further mentioned that %tolerance of mistakes is an essential element in the development of an organisational culture that promotes creativity and innovation of knowledge workers+. This can be done by rewarding success and acknowledge failure by creating opportunities to openly discuss and learn from mistakes.

According to Kanter (1983), quoted by Kubo & Saka (2002, p.262), organisations should create an organisational culture that empower knowledge workers and appeal to their inner drive.

- **Provide opportunities for networking and sharing their skills and expertise**

According to Scott (2005, p.258), by uncovering autonomy, information can be gleaned about how knowledge workers carry out their day-to-day duties. The duties of knowledge workers are somewhat unique. Knowledge workers must, through their own creativity, experience, and knowledge, establish a network of connections within the organisation that are not prescribed by the organisation or their managers, to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Scott (2005, p.260) identified four types of networking structures that can be adopted by managers of knowledge workers:

- **Communication network**

In order for knowledge workers to gain and transmit knowledge they must interact with others in the organisation. The communication network represents exactly that. The communication network %who talks to whom+ in an organisation is the vehicle through which work is accomplished.

Furthermore, knowledge workers are identified by performing work that is mostly unstructured and organisationally contingent and which thus reflects the changing demands of organisations more than occupationally defined norms and practices. Knowledge workers, therefore, must make network links outside of the formal structure of the organisation in order to complete their tasks.

- **Formal structure**

Corman (1990), cited by Scott (2005, p.260), ‰argues that formal structure is a set of prescribed relationships dictated by an organisation. These relationships define the minimal and obligatory communication necessary to accomplish a formal structure+.

For organisations or managers of knowledge workers to maintain a formal structure, there must be communication and connection along hierarchical relationships in order for those relationships to be reinforced. The delegation of work and the production of work must be communicated along the hierarchy of the organisation.

- **Professional organisational network**

Professional interactions occur to maintain and to promote the organisation and make decisions based upon what is best for the organisation. These interactions are directed at achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation.

- **Social organisational network**

The role of the organisation has been changing. This then means that job performance and the work environment are no longer just about a match between the job and the skill possessed by the individual or the knowledge worker. It has been found that individuals who are able to fulfil their social needs will have better morale, satisfaction and commitment to the task at hand.

Scott (2005,p.262) further mentions that ‰knowledge workers communicate with other knowledge workers, thereby creating a network; their shared use of words and concepts through the interaction yields a shared identity as an organisational collective, due to the fact that through interaction, their shared attitudes, beliefs and concepts will spread through contagion to each member of the network+.

For knowledge workers, therefore, shared meaning should be present due to the fact that they must constantly engage in

interaction across the network. In this sense, they may have a high degree of participation due to their need for constant interaction.

- **Providing opportunities for exercising creative potential**

Robertson and Hammersley (2000,p.243) came with the idea that there is a need for new ways of managing knowledge workers by suggesting that human resources management per se is insufficient and should instead be replaced by the concept of human potential management, with human beings as the focus. They go on to suggest that human potential management distinctive features are a concentration on self-management, which fosters people's potential and enables them to use it, thus creating advantages for both the knowledge worker and ultimately the organisation.

In addition, the idea that human potential management is an integrative, continuous process of developing knowledge workers capabilities differs from the human resources management belief that knowledge workers are resources to be utilized as business needs dictate. The writer acknowledges that in order to operationalise human potential management there needs to be continuous updating of organisational policies, structures and systems which enable employees to autonomy.

- **Using the mentoring and coaching potential of knowledge workers**

According to Maruta (2012, p.40) most knowledge workers need to be specially nurtured to gain such a capability with time consuming training. Because of the diversity of knowledge work, there is no universal training program applicable to nurturing knowledge workers in any field. Therefore, knowledge workers are nurtured through working with senior associates in the assigned work area such as on-the-job training.

Maruta (2012, p.40) further mentions that on-the-job training can deliver a really successful result only if a good un-nurtured trainee knowledge worker is trained by a good trainer. A good trainee knowledge worker is a person who has a strong will for

improvement and a good trainer is a person who can give appropriate advice with a good method at the right time.

Many trainee knowledge workers tend to be passive. A good performer cannot always be a good trainer. Those who are good performers do not always understand what advice is appropriate for non-performing trainee knowledge worker. Even worse, only a few senior associates have useful know how for the trainee knowledge worker to learn. Thus, management should understand that handing trainees over to senior employees does not always yield the expected result (Maruta, 2012, p.40).

- ▪ **Using performance management strategies that empower**

Serrat (2010,p.1) states that managers of knowledge workers should not make a mistake wanting to make knowledge workers perform as for knowledge workers it is not a matter of making them work harder or more skilfully as they are naturally dedicated.

Managing knowledge workers is the process of influence. Managers must remove obstacles to performance and channel effort to areas that will make knowledge workers contribute to the achievements of organisational objectives (Serrat, 2010, p.1).

In conclusion, the knowledge worker is a worker who has knowledge, skills, expertise and learning in a special field or area of work and they are a key source of growth in organisations they work for.

Knowledge workers donȼ like to be told how to do their work as their jobs require creativity, innovation and problem solving and their positions require continuous learning and improvement because knowledge workers use their knowledge to create, distribute or apply explicit as well as implicit knowledge.

Knowledge workersq values close contact with customers, supervisors, subordinates and team mates. They are always interested in finding information, memorising that information and applying that information in to their work situations.

One of the most important or key elements in the life of knowledge workers is personal growth and development and organisational

human resources managers should always try to promote this type of environment.

Managers of knowledge workers need to understand that such people rely on their personal networks for many purposes and they should be given that space and support to network within and outside their organisations. In return they feel grateful for that type of support from their organisation by showing a stronger commitment to the organisation.

Managers of knowledge workers should always try to develop trust, motivation and commitment with knowledge workers.

Organisations should make retention of knowledge workers one of their top priorities, especially with the rising skilled labour shortages across the globe.

Reward systems should be fair and conducive, as knowledge workers will only utilize their knowledge and skills if they perceive that.

Part of retaining knowledge workers within the organisation requires that development opportunities within their particular disciplines and professions should be made available.

For organisation to have a competitive advantage in the knowledge economy, they need to take care of their intellectual capital.

Human resources should try to promote fairness in all processes within the organisation as knowledge workers care about the outcome of fairness.

Human resources also play a crucial role in encouraging continuous learning and life learning for knowledge workers.

A strong supportive organisational culture is crucial for optimising the expertise of knowledge workers because it is integral part of the general functioning of an organisation.

In the next paragraph, the interviews conducted at four companies are presented.

2.9. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH KEY PEOPLE AT DIFFERENT HUMAN RESOURCE AND RECRUITMENT CONSULTING FIRMS IN PORT ELIZABETH.

The purpose of the study was to identify the characteristics of knowledge workers and to identify best management strategies for utilising the full potential of knowledge workers. To supplement the theoretical study, interviews were conducted with selected key people at four human resource and recruitment consulting firms in Port Elizabeth. A semi-structured interview was used:

The questions with answers obtained during the interviews are presented below.

2.9.1 Interviews with Kelly group branch manager

An interview, as described above, was conducted with the Branch Manager at Kelly Group and this person was a senior manager for the Eastern Cape Branch.

The following questions were asked and the subsequent answers were obtained:

Question 1: In your opinion, what is the profile of a knowledge worker in terms of Kelly Group?

Answer: Adaptable to change, good communication skills, empathy, good administration skills and with high energy levels.

Question 2: What are the best management practices for using the optimal potential of knowledge workers?

Answer: Setting of clear goals and inspect what they expect. Furthermore, incentives for exceptional performance.

Question 3: How do you retain knowledge workers at Kelly Group?

Answer: Knowledge workers are recognised within the company and group. The company provides a variety of growth opportunities, training, financial incentives and overseas trips.

Question 4: How do you keep your knowledge workers motivated at Kelly Group?

Answer: We keep them motivated by financially rewarding them, giving them time off for good performance. Those who go the extra mile are given meals and drinks vouchers monthly.

Question 5 (a): Does Kelly have a skills profile of each knowledge worker?

Answer: Yes

Question 5 (b): Are these skills profiles in line with the future goals of the Kelly Group?

Answer: Yes

Question 6: What training and development opportunities are there for knowledge workers at Kelly Group?

Answer: Continuous job related training. The company has a group skills department in Johannesburg that deals with training and development of knowledge workers. The company further pays for studies for knowledge workers.

Question 7: Is formal coaching and mentoring provided to knowledge workers?

Answer: Yes

Question 8: Have you had knowledge workers leaving Kelly Group due to lack of opportunities for them to utilise their expertise?

Answer: I do not know

Question 9: How is good performance of knowledge workers recognised at Kelly Group?

Answer: The company provides financial incentives and pay for overseas trips to top performers.

Question 10: How do you as a manager give performance feedback to knowledge workers?

Answer: By keeping track of their output daily and giving continuous feedback. We have also key performance areas meeting monthly.

Question 11: How do you empower knowledge workers at Kelly Group?

Answer: By providing training and delegating to them.

Question 12: Explain how the productivity of knowledge workers is measured at Kelly Group?

Answer: By setting goals for activities and set goals for financial or billing performance.

Question 13: In what ways are knowledge workers directly exposed to customers?

Answer: They deal with customers on a daily basis or on a continuous basis, through client visits, calling clients and emailing customers.

Question 14: Please rate the following activities in order of their effectiveness in developing employees (1 being most important and 6 being least important)

Answer:

Job rotation	5
Stretch assignments	4
Coaching	1
Mentoring	3
Training and development	2

It is clear that at Kelly, a knowledge worker was considered as someone who brings his/her competencies to work, someone who is skilled, such as having good communication skills and good administration skills. They were also regarded as people who can add value through their adaptability to change and they are people with high energy levels that are willing to take the company to the highest level and, through their skills and knowledge, they create competitive advantage for the organisation.

Furthermore, Kelly used different strategies to use the full potential of knowledge workers for their organisation and to satisfy knowledge workers unique needs, such as setting clear goals for knowledge workers and once those goals are met the company then incentivise knowledge workers for their performance.

To further satisfy knowledge workers unique needs, they recognised good performance from their knowledge workers; this is done by providing a variety of growth opportunities for knowledge workers within the group. Kelly also provided training and development opportunities within the company for knowledge workers to up-skill themselves.

Furthermore, to manage knowledge workers efficiently Kelly managers of knowledge workers keep track of work done by knowledge workers and performance or productivity feedback is provided continuously through weekly and monthly meetings.

Knowledge workers at Kelly are fully engaged and they deal with clients directly on a daily basis, through visiting clients, identifying client's needs, using their own initiatives to assist clients needs, making sure that clients are properly billed for work done, servicing their own clients and maintaining their own clients.

In the development of knowledge workers Kelly provides coaching and mentoring, training and development. This further boosts knowledge worker productivity and confidence to the organisation.

2.9.2 Interviews with Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services CEO.

An interview, as described above, was conducted with the CEO at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services.

The following questions were asked and the subsequent answers were obtained:

Question 1: In your opinion, what is the profile of a knowledge worker in terms of Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: The skilled personnel within our business. Those who hold key and critical positions within our business and lastly, those who add value to those key positions.

Question 2: What are the best management practices for using the optimal potential of knowledge workers?

Answer: Job profiles are used and also a performance management system is in place to measure key focus areas.

Question 3: How do you retain knowledge workers at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: The company provides career progression opportunities. The company also skills their knowledge workers and they also provide incentives for such staff.

Question 4: How do you keep your knowledge workers motivated at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: It starts with self motivation and the company always provides a conducive and exciting working environment for the knowledge workers to stay. The owner of the business is a role model to the knowledge worker, and this keeps knowledge workers motivated within the business.

Question 5 (a): Does Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services have a skills profile of each knowledge worker?

Answer: Yes

Question 5 (b): Are these skills profiles in line with the future goals of the Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: Definitely, as these contribute to the bottom line. The company recruits and profiles each and every position so knowledge workers know exactly what is expected of them.

Question 6: What training and development opportunities are there for knowledge workers at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: The industry continuously changes and the company took a step to provide continuous training to its knowledge workers. Every knowledge worker within the business is registered to study. The company also has a skilled development facilitator who also assists knowledge workers with their training needs.

Question 7: Is formal coaching and mentoring provided to knowledge workers?

Answer: Not formal mentoring. However the company takes new interns and formal mentoring is only provided to them.

Question 8: Have you had knowledge workers leaving Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services due to a lack of opportunities for them to utilise their expertise?

Answer: Cannot say they leave because of lack of opportunities. Some of the knowledge workers leave in this organisation and some of them come back

Question 9: How is good performance of knowledge workers recognised at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: The company recognises knowledge workers. I call them in and say job well done when they have done something extra

ordinary. The company also incentivises knowledge workers for good performance.

Question 10: How do you as a manager give performance feedback to knowledge workers?

Answer: The company has a standard procedure where we meet on Mondays and Wednesdays. These are one-on-one meetings and in these meetings performance feedback is given.

Quarterly we hold group meetings to discuss issues pertaining to challenges and lack of thereof.

Question 11: How do you empower knowledge workers at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: I trust them and give them freedom to perform. The company has an open door policy. Knowledge workers are given freedom in terms of flexible hours, they come to work whatever time they wish to and leave whenever they want to leave as long as they achieve their target sets at the end of the day.

Question 12: Explain how the productivity of knowledge workers is measured at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: The Company works with targets and knowledge workers need to perform based on these targets set as per their employment contract.

Question 13: In what ways are knowledge workers directly exposed to customers?

Answer: Knowledge workers seek their own customers, service them, collect from them and bill their own customers and they have to maintain their own customers.

Question 14: Please rate the following activities in order of their effectiveness in developing employees (1 being most important and 6 being least important)

Answer:

Job rotation	2
Stretch assignments	1
Coaching	2
Mentoring	2
Training and	1

development	

It is clear that at Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources Services, a knowledge worker was considered as skilled and knowledgeable individual, who used their skills and knowledge to add value to their organisation.

Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources Services used various strategies and tools to ensure that they get their knowledge workers to use their full potential while they are in their employment. Firstly, they used job profiles to ensure that knowledge workers fully understood what was expected from them. These job profiles set clear guidelines as to the key performance areas. Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources further used performance management to push knowledge workers to perform at their utmost best.

Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources Services further complimented their strategy by ensuring that the knowledge workers who met and exceeded their expectations in terms of their job profile and company expectations were compensated adequately. They do this by paid incentives to their knowledge workers, such as commission for meeting targets and further incentives for exceeding targets.

Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources Services, by doing this, wanted to ensure that they retained their knowledge workers. Other strategies to retain their knowledge workers included providing career progression opportunities and multi-skilling their knowledge workers to ensure that they were relevant to the industry and to the business.

Furthermore, it was also clear that Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources Services kept their knowledge workers engaged by giving regular personal performance feedback.

Knowledge workers at Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resources Services were empowered by ensuring that they dealt with clients directly, they serviced their own clients, billed their own clients and used their own skills to maintain their own clients.

2.9.3 Interviews with Themba Kunye Recruitment Services CEO.

An interview, as described above, was conducted with the CEO at Themba Kunye Recruitment Services.

The following questions were asked and the subsequent answers were obtained:

Question 1: In your opinion, what is the profile of a knowledge worker in terms of Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: Key people in our organisation who drive the vision of the organisation forward. These are talented people in our business, such as payroll specialist consultants. These are people with good working skills, who are target driven and have good interpersonal skills.

Question 2: What are the best management practices for using the optimal potential of knowledge workers?

Answer: We provide good leadership, management and coaching to them. Knowledge workers are made to be part of the planning and organising team in the organisation.

Question 3: How do you retain knowledge workers at Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: The company find it difficult to retain knowledge workers as we are a small company. We look at how we can make knowledge workers own things within the organisation, such as something that they can own up to for example something that can be their brain child.

Question 4: How do you keep your knowledge workers motivated at Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: Knowledge workers get motivated by us as leaders. We ignite knowledge workers for their jobs. We always make sure that knowledge workers are fully utilised, such as they use their skills fully, making sure they do what they are passionate about. Allowing them to be flexible by doing their own thing.

Question 5 (a): Does Themba Kunye Recruitment Services have a skills profile of each knowledge worker?

Answer: No. We do not have that formally because we are a small company. We provide more counselling to our knowledge workers.

Question 5 (b): Are the skills profile in line with the future goals of the Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: We try employing entry personnel in our organisation who can grow to be knowledge workers and these people will then meet that profile.

Question 6: What training and development opportunities are there for knowledge workers at Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: Our knowledge workers, such as payroll specialist, we take them for training programmes, seminars and workshops so they could understand new legislation pertaining to their area of work. We also use Service Seta accredited training programs to which we send our knowledge workers.

Question 7: Is formal coaching and mentoring provided to knowledge workers?

Answer: We use informal coaching and mentoring. This is when and where it is needed.

We are engaging into devising more formal coaching and mentoring as we are taking new learners so they can understand what is exactly expected of them.

Question 8: Have you had knowledge workers leaving Themba Kunye Recruitment Services due to lack of opportunities for them to utilise their expertise?

Answer: Yes, quite a few and this is because of lack of further opportunities. The contributing factor as well is lack of competitive salary.

Question 9: How is good performance of knowledge workers recognised at Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: Recognition and special incentives. ‰We donɫ have much better ways for knowledge workers that far exceeds their targets.+

Question 10: How do you as a manager give performance feedback to knowledge workers?

Answer: We always have a one-on-one session with knowledge workers where I give feedback about their performance. We have a frank discussion, everything is discussed and knowledge workers also share what their frustrations are so we can see how can we improve. This is used for feedback for both the company and the knowledge worker.

Question 11: How do you empower knowledge workers at Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: As someone who deals with them on a day-to-day basis, I always try to be step ahead of them as this empowers them. As their manager, I need to empower myself in terms of knowing more about the industry and share that knowledge with them. The company has an open space where we share information and by doing this, knowledge workers get empowered and knowledgeable.

Question 12: Explain how the productivity of knowledge workers is measured at Themba Kunye Recruitment Services?

Answer: Output is measured on targets, measured in terms of customer relations, measured in terms of revenue per month. We measure performance by also monitoring the number of phone calls from customers complaining about our service from our knowledge workers. Customers talk about contract staff assigned as to whether they are provided with protective clothing for example.

Payroll is also an issue of deadline, paying off of creditors, releasing of salaries. We look at whether our knowledge workers meet these requests on a regular basis.

Question 13: In what ways are knowledge workers directly exposed to customers?

Answer: Knowledge workers deal with customers from getting business from customers, to maintaining customers. Customers are free to interact with staff at any level.

Question 14: Please rate the following activities in order of their effectiveness in developing employees (1 being most important and 6 being least important)

Answer:

Job rotation	1
Stretch assignments	4
Coaching	5
Mentoring	5
Training and development	4

It is clear here from the interview with Themba Kunye, CEO of that according to their profile, knowledge workers were those employees who held special skills and expertise at Themba Kunye. Furthermore, according to Themba Kunye, knowledge workers were considered as those workers who were valuable assets to their business, those who drove the company vision and helped the company gain a competitive advantage.

According to Themba Kunye, knowledge workers played a crucial role in the success of their business and they were made to be part of the planning and organising team in the organisation.

To exploit the full potential of the knowledge workers, Themba Kunye involved them to be part of planning and organising them in to teams. Furthermore, informal coaching and mentoring were provided to knowledge workers to see them mature and grow.

Themba Kunye realised that knowledge workers valued close contact with customers or clients. Therefore, knowledge workers at Themba Kunye dealt with customers such as from getting business from customers, to maintaining customers. Customers were free to interact with staff at any level and at any given time without having to consult with management.

Themba Kunye also realised that one of the most important elements in the life of knowledge workers was personal growth and development. They, therefore, sent their specialist knowledge workers to training programmes, seminars and workshops so that they could understand new legislation pertaining to their area of work. They also used services of SETA accredited training programmes.

Finally, Themba Kunye further realised that it's not only about developing knowledge workers, engaging knowledge workers but they went further than that to make sure they retained knowledge workers though they were a small company with few resources to do so. They incentivised knowledge workers who achieved their performance plan.

2.9.4 Interviews with Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services HR Manager.

An interview, as described above, was conducted with the HR Manager at Khulisa Connection.

The following questions were asked and the subsequent answers were obtained:

Question 1: In your opinion, what is the profile of a knowledge worker in terms of Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: Knowledge workers are key talent within our business. They specialise in their own disciplines. They work unsupervised but deliver on expectations and do their job well. Knowledge workers are professionals in their own disciplines and use their knowledge and skills to carry their responsibilities and the vision of the organisation.

Question 2: What are the best management practices for using the optimal potential of knowledge workers?

Answer: Providing knowledge workers with opportunities to use their talent to their fullest. Support them when pursuing their endeavours with the organisation and show interest in the career growth. Provide them with exciting challenges and tasks so they could grow in their careers. Allow them to manage themselves and just provide leadership.

Question 3: How do you retain knowledge workers at Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: Pay them for what they deserve and be flexible in terms of structuring their salaries. We provide them with share options so they can see they are valued by the organisation.

We treat them with respect and integrity and we have an open door policy where their voices are heard and their ideas are implemented if they are in line with the vision and serve any purpose in our company.

Question 4: How do you keep your knowledge workers motivated at Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: By always providing challenging work assignments and they are treated as business partners. We allow them to work flexible work hours as long as they achieve their targets and mandates.

Question 5 (a): Does Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services have a skills profile of each knowledge worker?

Answer: Yes

Question 5 (b): Is the skills profile in line with the future goals of the Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: Yes, when we create a position, that position will have a full skill profile for that specific position. This then help to keep track of all skills of our knowledge workers.

Question 6: What training and development opportunities are there for knowledge workers at Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: We send knowledge workers to short training courses, seminars and workshops provided by our training partners that are in line with each and every knowledge workers line of work. The purpose is to keep them up to date with new developments in their line of expertise and disciplines. Some of the training is provided with APSO which is the association and some of the training is provided by Services SETA and lastly by our training partner LabourNet.

Question 7: Is formal coaching and mentoring provided to knowledge workers?

Answer: Yes, the formal training and coaching is provided to new recruits. With regards to existing knowledge workers, informal coaching and mentoring is used.

Question 8: Have you had knowledge of workers leaving Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services due to lack of opportunities for them to utilise their expertise?

Answer: Yes, but not a lot, I would say one in fifty.

Question 9: How is good performance of knowledge workers recognised at Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: Appraising those who achieve exceptional results. Those who meet below standard are then coached and mentored to do better. We always recognise top achievers by incentivising them.

Question 10: How do you as a manager give performance feedback to knowledge workers?

Answer: By having weekly and monthly performance feedback. This is done with the knowledge worker and the line manager,

where performance gaps are discussed and recommendations made.

Question 11: How do you empower knowledge workers at Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: By giving them freedom and resources to achieve their set targets. Providing career growth opportunities.

Question 12: Explain how the productivity of knowledge workers is measured at Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services?

Answer: By meeting or achieving their set targets.

Question 13: In what ways are knowledge workers directly exposed to customers?

Answer: Knowledge workers source their own customers, service their own customers and maintain their own customers.

Question 14: Please rate the following activities in order of their effectiveness in developing employees (1 being most important and 6 being least important)

Answer:

Job rotation	2
Stretch assignments	5
Coaching	3
Mentoring	3
Training and development	5

It is clear from the feedback of the interview with Khulisa Connection that they considered knowledge workers as key employees within their business. These people were specialists and they worked unsupervised but delivered on expectations of their job and used their knowledge and skills to carry their responsibilities and the vision of the organisation.

To ensure that knowledge workers were retained within the business Khulisa Connection ensured that they empowered their knowledge workers by sending them to seminars and workshops provided by various training partners and these training interventions were designed to be in line with each and every knowledge worker's line of responsibility.

Furthermore, to get full potential of knowledge workers Khulisa Connection used various strategies such as allowing knowledge workers to plan their work and implement their plans in accordance to agreed performance measures and these they discussed with their immediate manager and signed a performance agreement to monitor achievement.

Further strategies used by Khulisa Connection to get full potential of knowledge workers were through giving knowledge workers flexible time and incentives for good performance and appraising unsatisfactory performance. Feedback was regularly provided to knowledge workers to ensure they knew if gaps existed in their performance.

2.10. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a theoretical overview of knowledge workers such as defining knowledge workers, looking at strategies that can be used by organisations to get optimal potential of knowledge workers and strategies that organisations can use to motivate and retain knowledge workers.

Results from interviews with different managers of knowledge workers from the four companies sampled in Port Elizabeth were also presented in this chapter. The results from the interviews suggested that the four organisations sampled had different views as to how they define knowledge workers according to their different perspectives.

Furthermore, the results from the interviews showed some common practices used by the various organisations in managing their knowledge workers, in rewarding them and in training them. This could be because these organisations followed the same industry norms, standards and practices.

The following chapter provides a theoretical overview of research methodology and the type of research methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to describe the research methodology that was used during this study. This chapter focuses on professional research and design, the population, the questionnaire, survey and survey response rate.

The empirical research of this study consisted of a survey, in which a questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool. The development of the questionnaire was used to determine tools and strategies managers use to manage knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of the organisation at the four selected Port Elizabeth based recruitment and human resources firms.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Prior to describing the research methodology used for this study, it is necessary to consider the following question:

What is research?

Lancaster (2005, p.20) mention that research provides a key basis for developing knowledge and it is used as a way of helping to define and refine knowledge in different subject areas. Salkind (2000, p.3) agrees with Lancaster's definition by further indicating that research is a process where new knowledge is discovered.

Collis and Hussey (2009, p.3) stated that research:

- is a process of enquiry and investigation;

- is systematic and methodological; and

- increases knowledge.

A further distinction that needs to be noted in answering the research question is the distinction between research methodology and research design as these two can bring confusion.

Research methodology: Brynard and Hanekom (2006, p.6) mentioned that the researcher in research methodology describes whether qualitative or quantitative methods of data collection are to be used. Furthermore, it should state the technique for the data

collection and their measurements. This section presents strategies that are followed during the research, for example, whether the questionnaire will be constructed first, then the data will be analysed, followed by the writing of the relevant chapter. Collins and Hussey (2009, p.11) agreed with Brynard by further exploring that research methodology should highlight the entire process of the research study.

Research design: Collins and Hussey (2009, p.11) mention that research design is the starting point, where the researcher needs to determine the research paradigm. In the research paradigm the researcher gives a framework that guides how the research will be conducted. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995, p.63) define research design as the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step. The researcher in research design drafts a programme that guides the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting the observed facts.

The research design utilised for this study emerged from identifying the main problem and sub-problems, and the objectives.

The main objective of this study was:

To identify strategies for managing knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of an organisation

An analysis of the main problem resulted in the identification of four sub problems.

Sub-problem one:

What is a knowledge worker? What are the characteristics and expectations of knowledge workers and what role do they play in the success of an organisation?

Sub-problem two:

What is a knowledge worker as defined by four human resource and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth and what strategies are used at these companies to manage knowledge workers?

Sub-problem three:

What best practice management strategies could organisations utilise to exploit the full potential of knowledge workers and satisfy their unique needs and expectations?

Sub-problem four:

To what extent, based on the perceptions of knowledge workers, are these best practice management strategies utilised by the four human resources and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth?

In order to resolve sub-problem one to four, a theoretical study was conducted and presented in Chapter two. To supplement the theoretical study interviews were conducted with four managers in the human resource and recruitment organisations where the empirical study was conducted. The purpose of these interviews were to get the views of the managers of what they considered as the characteristics of knowledge workers and how they managed knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of their organisations. Information presented from these interviews was used as a basis to develop the survey questionnaire that was used as the primary data gathering tool in this study.

3.3. THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical study was conducted by means of a survey. The survey was conducted among knowledge workers from four human resource and recruitment organisations in PE. A survey questionnaire, which served as the measuring instrument, was developed for this purpose. Lancaster (2005, p.146) states that survey research is used as a data collection method where data can be collected from large numbers of respondents. Wegner (2010, p.28) points out that there are four approaches to gathering survey data:

   a) Personal interviews;

   b) Postal survey;

   c) Telephone survey; and

   d) E-survey.

For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was hand-delivered to thirty-five respondents and only twenty-five responded. In this section, the population, the questionnaire, the survey and the research response rate are discussed in detail. The biographical information collected during the survey is also presented and discussed.

3.3.1. Population and sampling

The population for the study included knowledge workers and managers from four human resource and recruitment organisations from PE. This included one branch manager from the Kelly group (PE branch), two business owners, one from Ikamva Recruitment and Human Resource Services and the other one from Themba Kunye Recruitment and Placement, one human resource manager from Khulisa Connection and knowledge workers from the mentioned four organisations. Because these were specialist companies, they employed less people. The population consisted of payroll specialists, recruitment and sourcing specialists, head hunting specialists, IT sourcing specialists, a labour relations specialist, human resource specialists, and engineering sourcing specialists. A total of thirty-five questionnaires were distributed.

While the researcher was planning the study the decision was made as to whether to include the whole population or only part of the population in the empirical study.

According to Wegner (2010, p.6), a population is every possible item that contains a data value of a random variable under study. Wegner further described sampling as a subset of items drawn from a population.

Researchers use sampling because in it is not always possible to record every data value of the population, for various reasons such as cost, time and item destruction (Wegner, 2010, p.7).

For the purpose of this study, the entire population was used.

3.3.2. The questionnaire

According to Nardi (2003, p.59), a questionnaire is a more reliable tool for surveying large samples of respondents in short periods of time, and they are less expensive. Salkind (2000, p.136) also believes questionnaires save time as they allow individual respondents to complete questions without any direct intervention from the researcher.

Salkind (2000, p.136) listed four advantages of using questionnaires:

   a) Questionnaires can be sent through mail, and the researcher can survey a broad geographic area.

b) Questionnaires are cheaper.

c) Respondents can be more willing to be truthful because their anonymity is guaranteed.

3.3.2.1. Development of the questionnaire

A questionnaire was used as a data collection method in this study and was based on the main learning points from the theoretical investigation recorded in Chapter Two of this study. Furthermore, interviews were used for a preliminary investigation of the views of managers of knowledge workers about the tools and techniques they use in managing their knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of their organisations. The results of the interviews were reported in Chapter Two under section 2.9 of the study report.

According to Lancaster (2005, p.138), the following are key aspects to consider in the design of a questionnaire:

- The range and scope of questions to be included;

- Question types, for example, open or closed questions;

- Content of individual questions;

- Question structure;

- Question wording;

- Question order.

With regards to implementation and administering the questionnaire, the following must be taken note of by the researcher:

- Method of administering, e.g. face to face versus non-personal;

- Methods of distributing or returning the questionnaire, e.g. telephone, mail or computer based; and

- Methods of recording responses.

Wegner (2010, p.31) mentioned that the questionnaire should consist of three sections, such as administrative section, demographic (or classification) section and information section. He provides the following specific pointers:

- Include a question only if it contributes to the research objectives;

- Avoid redundant questions;

- Avoid ambiguous questions

- Avoid leading questions, because they provide biased responses;

- Wherever possible, particularly in the case of self-administered questionnaires, fixed alternative questions are recommended. Open-ended questions may add value to the findings, but they are difficult to analyse statistically, so they should be used sparingly;

- Arrange questions in a logical sense;

- Try to keep questions short and simple;

- Stay away from using jargon in a consumer-based survey;

- Never use questions that will require calculations from the respondents;

- Use filter questions to guide respondents through various sections of the questionnaire;

- Provide clear and concise instructions;

- Provide specific questions and they should address only one issue. Vague questions results in ‰oisy+, meaningless data;

- Do not use emotive language in questions. This prevents biased responses;

- Always try to carefully word questions dealing with sensitive issues so as to avoid offending the respondents or encouraging non-response;

- Always consider the ability of the target population to understand and respond adequately to the questionnaire when wording questionnaires;

- Questionnaires must be worded carefully to ensure that appropriate type of data are captured for the envisaged statistical analysis;

- Lastly, always pilot a questionnaire before carrying out the full survey. The pilot survey often highlights weaknesses in a questionnaire, which can be improved.

The above guidelines were followed for the questionnaire design in this study. The questionnaire was carefully designed with regards to content, statement compilation and structure. The questionnaire was submitted to the research supervisor, an expert in the field of organisational behaviour, to scrutinise. In addition, a pilot study was conducted among five prospective participants. The purpose of the pilot study was to pre-test the questionnaire on a small section of the population, and to ensure consistency at all times. The pilot revealed there were questions that were similar where respondents answered the same way which was a form of ensuring data reliability.

3.3.3.2. Reliability and validity of the measuring instrument

According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005, p160), reliability and validity are most important concepts in the context of measurement.

Validity

Salkind (2000, p113) mention that validity is the quality of a test doing what it is designed to do. Leedy (1997, p32) cited that validity in a measuring instrument has to do with the soundness, the effectiveness of the measuring instrument.

Salkind (2000, p113), Delport et al (2005, p160), Leedy (1997, p33) all describe various forms of validity that should be considered by researchers to ensure integrity of their research instrument. These types of validity are summarised below:

- **Face validity** refers to how representative the measuring instrument to the universe that is being measured.

- **Criterion validity** refers to valid and reliable criterion.

- **Content validity** refers to the extent to which the measuring instrument is portrayed to represent exactly the critical core areas that are critical to the subject matter.

- **Construct validity** determines the degree to which a measuring instrument successfully measures a theoretical

structure. The theoretical study also contributes to the construct validity of the questionnaire.

- **Internal validity** refers to the freedom from researcher bias in forming conclusions in the light of collected data; and

- **External validity** refers to the extent that conclusions about the research can be generalised to the broader population and not merely to the sample selected.

The following actions were adopted to improve the content, face and construct validity of the questionnaire:

The development of the questionnaire was based on the literature review in Chapter Two and the information gained through the structured interviews conducted with senior managers at the four selected organisations. As indicated, the questionnaire was developed under the guidance of an expert in the field of organisational behaviour and research.

Reliability

A measuring instrument is reliable when it consistently yields similar results when administered under the same conditions at different times (Leedy, 199: p35).

According to Saunders, et al (2003, p309), although the analysis is done after data is been collected, reliability also needs to be considered at the questionnaire design stage, such as test re-test, internal consistency and alternative form.

The above authors mention that test re-test of reliability is obtained by administering the questionnaire twice to respondents. This approach has its own disadvantages such as respondents might be hesitant to complete the same questionnaire twice. In this study a different approach was used to overcome these limitations. This was achieved by conducting a pilot study which served the purpose of a test-retest. The responses collected from the pilot study were compared to compare to those from the survey to make a judgement about the reliability of the questionnaire.

Internal consistency measures are then obtained by correlating the responses to each question in the questionnaire with every other question in the questionnaire to test reliability (Collis & Hussey, 2009, p206).

An alternative method measures reliability by comparing respondentsq responses to alternative forms of the same questions (Saunders et al, 2003, p310). They further deliberate that this method should be used sparingly as it does not always yield good results and invites resistance from respondents.

3.3.3.3. Questionnaire covering letter

Attaching a covering letter to the questionnaire helps the researcher explain the purpose of the study to the respondents.

Saunders, et al (2003, p306) provided the following practical guidelines in designing a covering letter:

- Type of paper - good quality, official letter head, including address, telephone number and email address (if possible);

- Maximum length of letter - one side (12 point font size);

- Date - in full i.e. 23 July 2013;

- First set of messages - why recipients response is important, how long it will take to complete;

- Second set of messages - promises of confidentiality or anonymity;

- Third set of messages - how results will be used;

- Final set of messages - whom to contact if have any queries, who to return completed questionnaire to and date of returning the questionnaire;

- Closing remarks - thank respondents for their participation; and

- Name and title - yours, including forename and surname;

In the questionnaire used for this study a covering letter was compiled to explain and incorporated all the above suggestions. The covering letter is attached herewith as Appendix 1. As the questionnaire was distributed by hand, the researcher did not have to seek full ethical clearance from the university and the completion of Form E (Attached as Appendix 3) was deemed adequate.

3.3.3. Administering the questionnaire

For the empirical study, a survey was conducted with a questionnaire as the data gathering instrument. The questionnaire was hand-delivered to the designated target group at each of the four companies. The target group consisted of employees that performed core work at these companies and were directly involved with the customer. A cover letter stating that the survey was anonymous and that the names were not required and that participants confidentiality would be guaranteed accompanied the questionnaire.

The Branch Manager at Kelly kindly undertook responsibility for issuing the questionnaire to the all knowledge workers at the Port Elizabeth and East London branch of Kelly. The CEO of Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services also kindly agreed to issue the questionnaire to the knowledge workers at Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services. The CEO at Themba Kunye Recruitment and HR Services issued the questionnaire to the knowledge workers at Themba Kunye. Lastly, the Human Resource Manager at Khulisa Connection also assumed responsibility for issuing the questionnaire to the knowledge workers at Khulisa Connection.

The researcher briefed all four of these people at the four companies with regards to the manner in which the questionnaire was to be completed. Respondents were issued with the questionnaire by the responsible person, by hand, at each of the four companies which allowed the responsible person an opportunity to explain to the respondents how to complete the questionnaire. The explanation given respondents upon receipt of the questionnaire was further supported by the covering letter that was attached to each questionnaire.

Administrating questionnaires by hand helps save time, response rates are raised because of the personal contact and difficulties with the questionnaire can be clarified with the responsible person (de Vos et al, 2005, p168).

3.3.4. Response rate

The covering letter and questionnaire were delivered to a total of thirty five (35) knowledge workers and only twenty five (25) questionnaires were returned. This is a response rate of seventy one per cent (71%) which can be considered as acceptable. Table 3.1 indicates the response rate.

Table 3.1 REPONSE RATE

Companies	Questionnaires issued	Questionnaires received
Kelly Group	13	10
Ikamva Recruitment and HR Services	8	6
Themba Kunye Recruitment Services	7	4
Khulisa Connection Recruitment and HR Services	7	5
Total	35	25 (71%)

3.4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In section A of the questionnaire respondents were required to provide information about their gender, age, racial group, whether they were employed on a permanent basis or on a fixed term contract, job category, highest qualification and length of service.

The information obtained from these questions in section A is presented and discussed below.

3.4.1 Gender Composition

Question 1 required respondents to indicate their gender. The results to this question are visually presented in Chart 3.1.

Chart 3.1: Gender composition
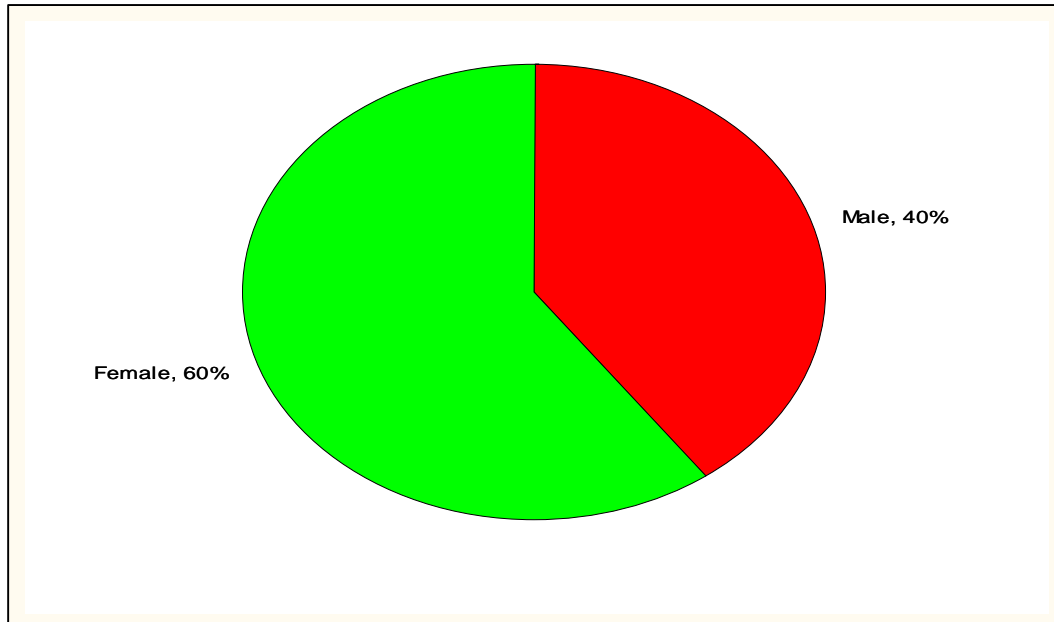
It is clear from Chart 3.1 that the respondent group consisted of more female than male respondents. This might display that the industry preferred to employ more female employees. However, both genders were adequately represented in the study.

3.4.2 Age Composition

Question 2 required respondents to indicate their age. The results to this question are visually presented in Chart 3.2.

Chart 3.2: Age composition
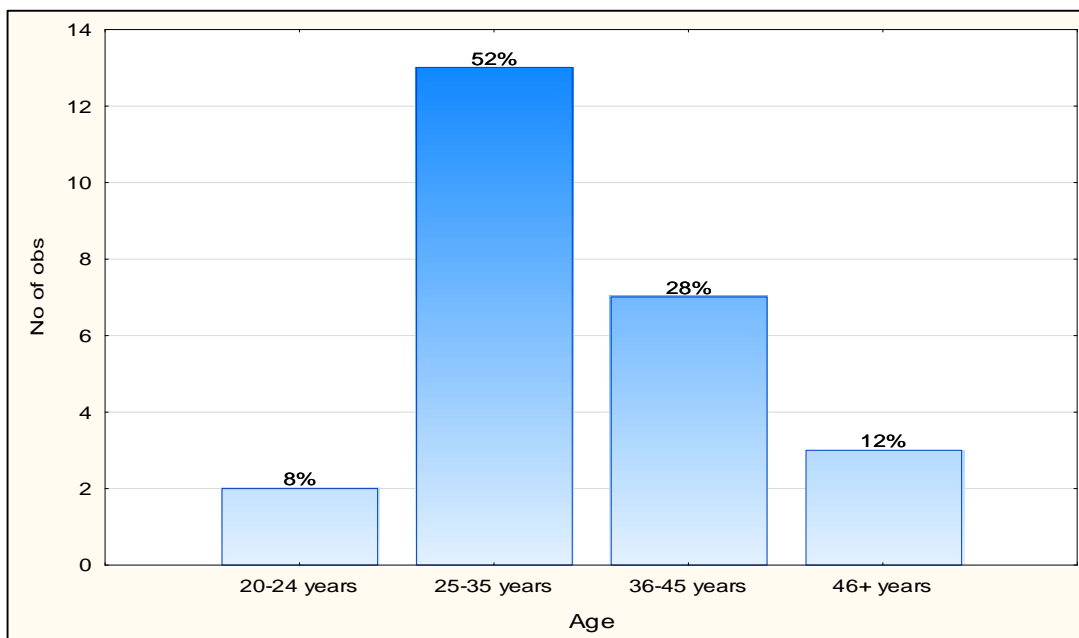
It is clear from the chart that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 35 years.

3.4.3 Racial group

Question 3 required respondents to indicate their racial group. The results to this question are visually presented in Chart 3.3.

Chart 3.3: Racial group
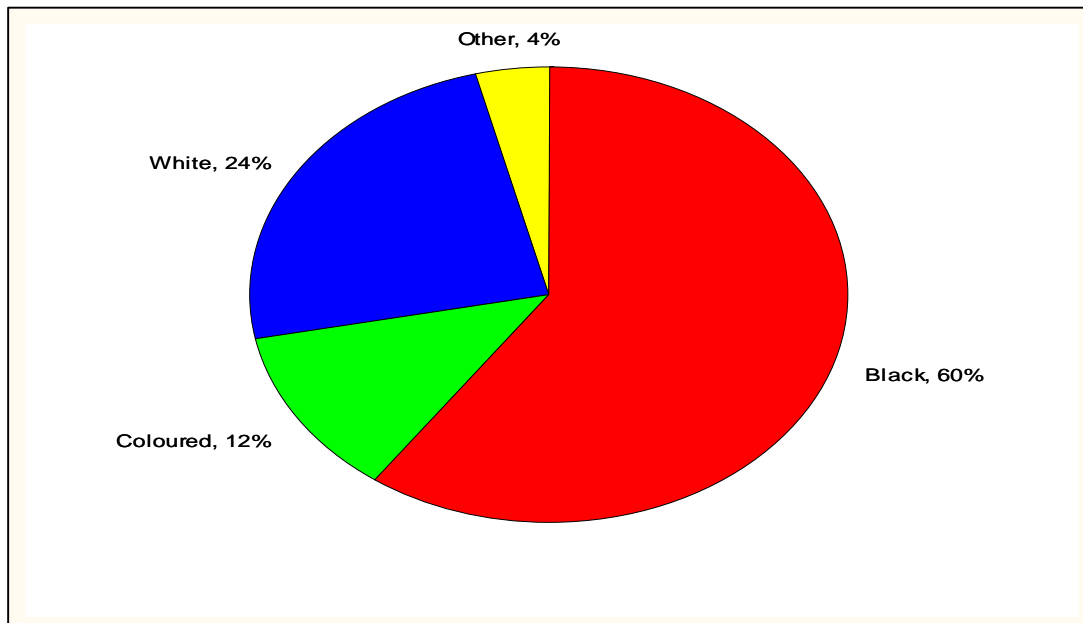
Most of the respondents (60%) were black, followed by white respondents (24%) and then by coloured respondents (12%) and the remaining four per cent (4%) represented respondents from other racial groups.

3.4.4 Employment types

Question 4 required respondents to indicate their employment type. The results to this question are visually presented in Chart 3.4.

Chart 3.4: Employment types
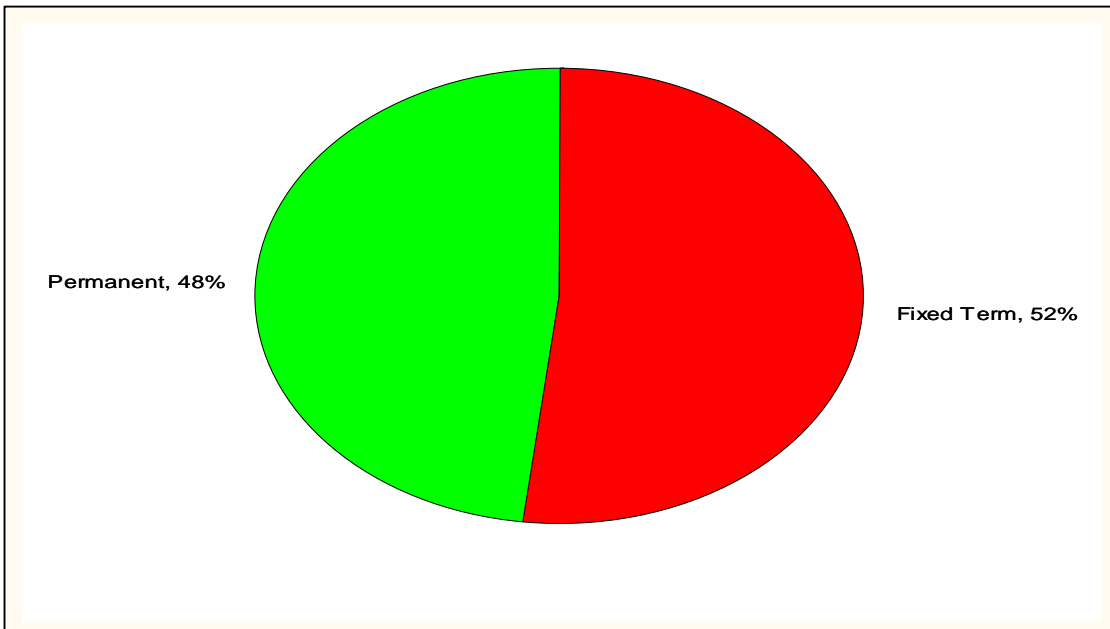
The results show that almost an equal number of respondents were permanent (48%) and on fixed term contract (52%).

3.4.5 Job category

Question 5 required respondents to indicate their employment type. The results to this question are visually presented in Chart 3.5 below.

Chart 3.5: Job category
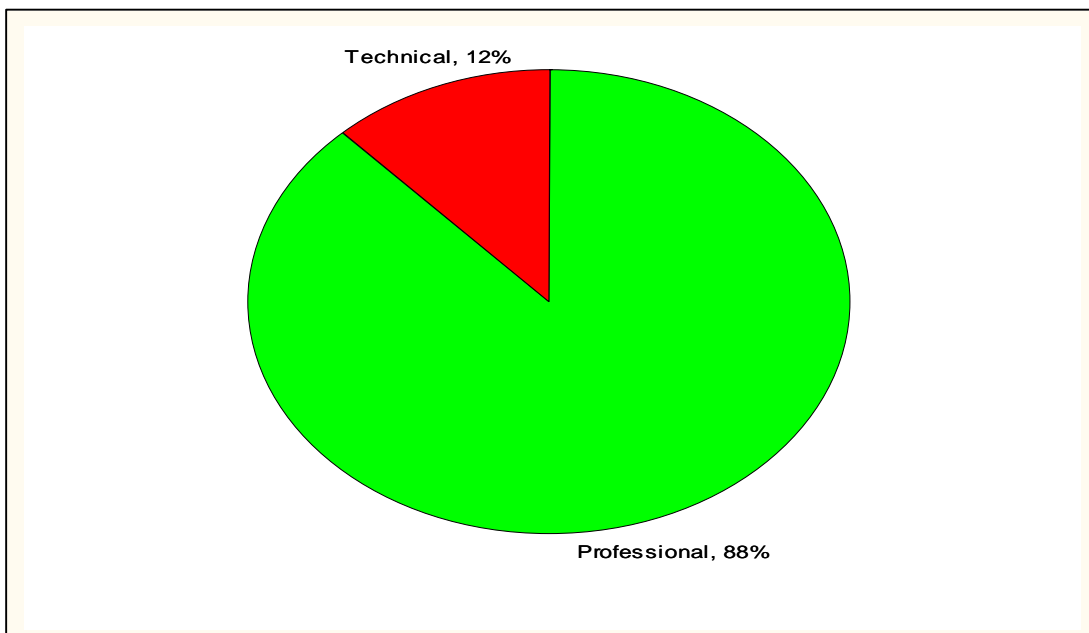
It is clear from Chart 3.5 that more professional respondents than technical respondents were employed in these companies.

3.4.6 Highest qualification

Question 4 required respondents to indicate their highest qualification. The results to this question are visually presented in Chart 3.6.

Chart 3.6: Highest qualification
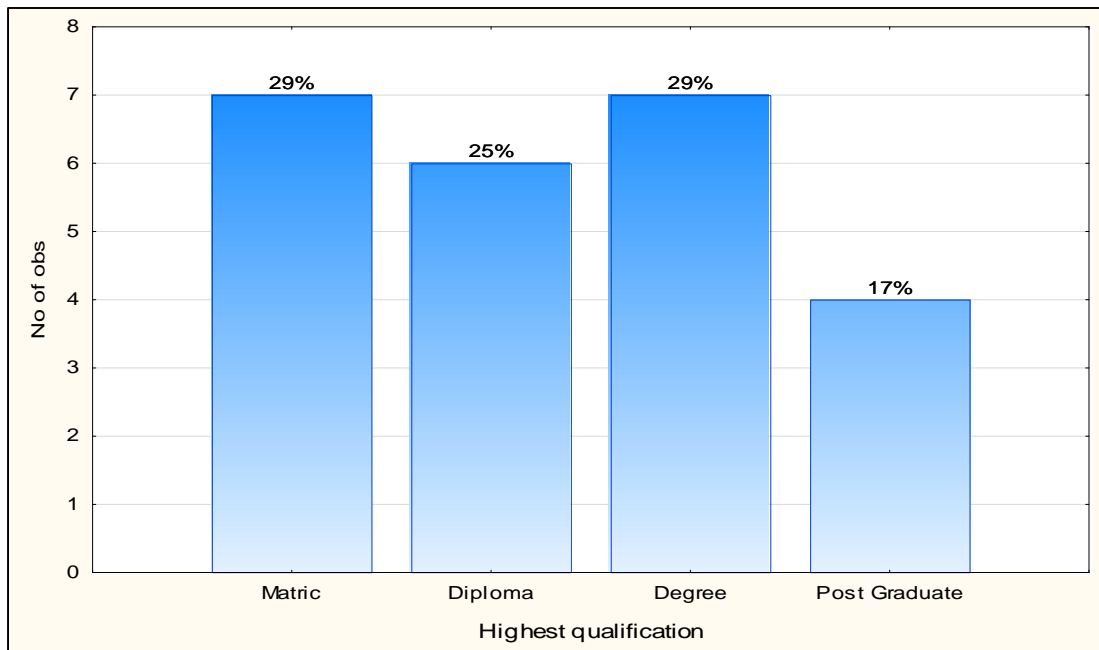
It is evident from Chart 3.6 that the most of the respondents (71%) had a post-matric qualification.

3.4.7 Length of service

Question 7 required respondents to indicate their years of service. The results to this question are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Length of service

	FREQUENCY	**PERCENTAGE (%)**
Less than a year	5	20
2-5 years	15	60
6-10 years	2	8
11-15 years	3	12
TOTAL	**25**	**100**

Chart 3.7 visually present the respondents in terms of years of service.

Chart 3.7: Length of services
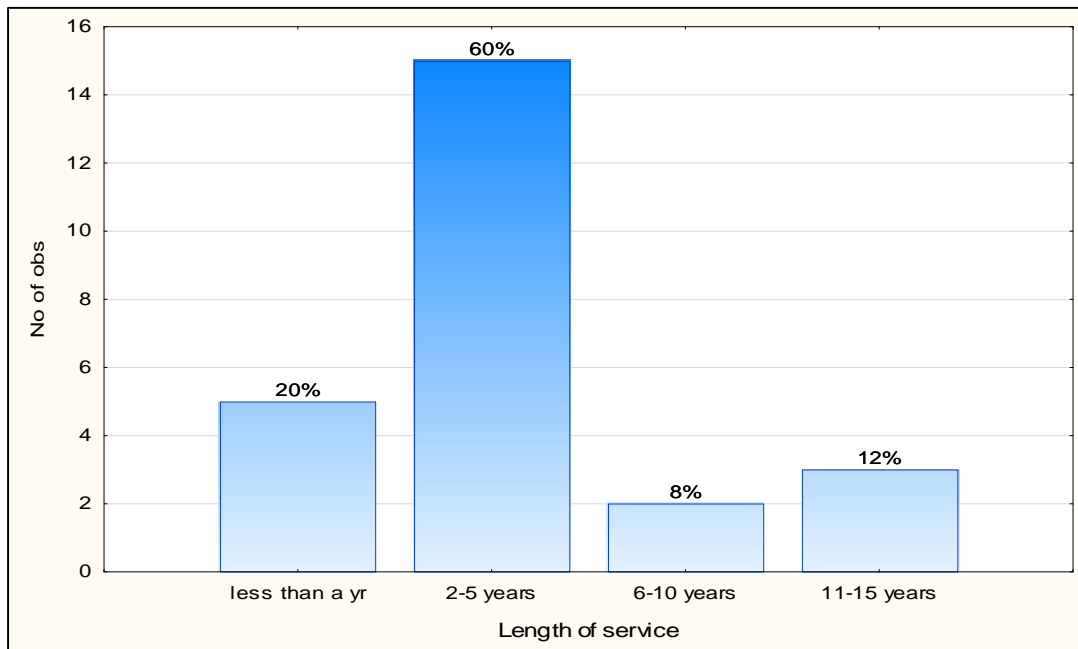
It is evident from Table 3.2 and Chart 3.7 that the average years of service was 2 to 5 years.

3.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter gave an overview of the research methodology used in this study. A quantitative research design, with a questionnaire

as a data collection tool, was the dominant approach with a qualitative research design as a less dominant approach with interviews conducted with key people at the four selected companies. The questionnaire was administered to knowledge workers at the four human resource and recruitment companies.

The demographic profile of the respondents, based on information elicited in Section A of the questionnaire, was also presented. The respondents represented both genders, were mostly black, between the ages of 25 and 45, divided between permanent and fixed term employment, mostly professional, with qualifications ranging from matric to post-graduation and a length of service of mostly between two and five years.

In the next chapter, the responses received on the survey are presented and analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

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4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology that was used in the study. In this chapter, the data collected in the empirical study is analysed, presented and interpreted.

Microsoft Excel functions have been used to group the data obtained from the Likert scale based questionnaire. Tables were used to illustrate the results received from the respondents. These tables were used to provide inference to the information and support explanations of the findings in order to clarify and bring an understanding to the collected pieces of information.

The empirical study was aimed at resolving Sub-problem four:

Sub-problem four:

This sub-problem was addressed by means of a survey, with a questionnaire as the means of data collection instrument, to establish the best practices and strategies that management could use to exploit the full potential of their knowledge workers. The questionnaire was administered to knowledge workers at four human resource and recruitment organisations.

The results of the study are presented in the same order as the sections and statements appear in the questionnaire, except the results for Section A which were presented in the previous chapter. The questionnaire consisted of seven sections, namely:

Section A - Demographic information

Section B - Rewards, remuneration and recognition of knowledge workers

Section C - Retention of knowledge workers

Section D- Productivity

Section E- Performance management

Section F - Motivation

Section G - Human resource strategies

The results of the study were interpreted in line with the results of the literature review.

4.2. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the raw data obtained from the survey. The descriptive data included measures of central tendency. Sections B to G of the questionnaire were developed according to a Likert . type scale and for each item, the respondents had to indicate their views, selecting either strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree. Numerical values ranging from one (Strongly disagree), two (Disagree), three (Uncertain), four (Agree) to five (Strongly agree) were used to enable the quantitative analysis of the results obtained from the study.

4.2.1 Mean scores and standard deviations for Section B (Rewards, remuneration and recognition of knowledge workers)

The theoretical study revealed that knowledge workers want to be rewarded and compensated fairly for their contributions as this influences their organisational commitment, such as staying in the organisation (Giauque, et al, 2010, p.191). ¥ik   et al (2008, p.4) noted that high achievers perceive money as an indication of success rather than as a commodity.

Table 4.1 depicts the means and standard deviations of the scores obtained for section B.

Table 4.1: Rewards, remuneration and recognition of knowledge workers

NO	REWARDS, REMUNERATION AND RECOGNITION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
B01	My remuneration package matches the responsibilities that I have.	25	3.40	0.71
B02	Knowledge workers are fairly rewarded for their performance.	25	3.40	0.87
B03	I am praised when I do a good job	24	3.83	0.87
B04	There is a clear link between excellence and remuneration.	25	3.24	0.83
B05	I am rewarded for successfully accomplishing organisational goals.	25	3.60	0.87

An analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the variables in Section B revealed an aggregate mean of 3.49. This aggregate mean reflects uncertain responses with a slight tendency towards agree, as is also evident when the mean scores of the statements in this section are compared. It is evident that a narrow spread of responses was received for this section (standard deviation ranging from 0.71 to 0.87), indicating agreement among respondents with regard to items in this section.

The responses to this section are mixed, as the respondents indicated that they were praised when doing a good job and that they were rewarded for accomplishing organisational goals but the other statements received responses that reflected uncertainty. When studying the statements, it appears that these uncertain responses relate to equity as the statements involve contain words such as ₌matchesq ₌fairlyq and ₌linkq (between performance and goals).

4.2.2 Mean scores and standard deviations for Section C (Retention of knowledge workers)

The theory revealed that retention of knowledge workers was a challenge for many organisations (Kinnear & Sutherland, 2000, p1).

Table 4.2 depicts the combined means and standard deviations of the scores obtained for statements related to retention.

Table 4.2: Retention of knowledge workers

NO	RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
C01	I have a promising future in this organisation	25	3.16	0.90
C02	My company develops knowledge workers for long term employment at the company.	25	3.60	1.04
C03	I hardly ever think of leaving my company	25	3.24	1.01
C04	I feel positive about my future at my company	25	3.40	0.96
C05	Flexible working arrangements are offered to attract and retain knowledge workers.	25	3.44	0.92
C06	The company tries their best to ensure that knowledge workers will not want to leave the organisation.	25	3.44	1.04

An analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the variables in Section C revealed an aggregate mean of 3.38. The results show that the respondents were not clearly committed to staying with their companies and that their companies did not focus on retention strategies. It is evident from the results that the respondents felt that they were developed for long-term employment. This reflects a challenge that organisations often have in terms of developing employees who then look for more challenging opportunities. It is evident that a narrower spread of responses was received for this section (standard deviation ranging from 0.90 to 1.04), indicating strong agreement among respondents with regard to items in this section.

4.2.3 Mean scores and standard deviations for section D (Productivity)

Innovation and creativity is imperative in a competitive environment (Drucker, 1999, p.83). Knowledge workers are individuals who take pride in what they do and they are always productive (Davenport, 2005, p.37). Knowledge management, in essence, is the creation, distribution, sharing and utilisation of

knowledge with the aim of creating excellence and attaining organisational goals (Grantham & Ware, 2007, p.1**)**.This section measured the extent to which organisations used the knowledge of knowledge workers and engaged in knowledge management.

Table 4.3 depicts the combined means and standard deviations of the scores obtained for section D.

Table: 4.3: Productivity

NO	PRODUCTIVITY	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
D01	My manager and I regularly discuss the improvement of productivity levels.	25	3.80	0.91
D02	Productivity is regularly measured at my company	25	4.12	0.67
D03	The physical working conditions at my company support productivity.	25	3.64	0.99
D04	I am encouraged to be innovative in my job	25	4.00	0.76
D05	My company has a culture that promotes excellence	25	3.80	0.71
D06	My goals are aligned with the vision/mission	25	4.32	0.69
D07	Employees are encouraged to form high performance teams.	25	3.92	0.81
D08	Focus placed on continuously quality improvement.	23	3.96	0.71
D09	I am encouraged to act as a change agent	25	3.92	0.57
D10	I am encouraged to serve as a mentor to others	25	3.72	0.98
D11	I am encouraged to share my experience with others.	25	3.92	0.81
D12	I am encouraged to generate information that will benefit the corporation	25	3.84	0.85
D13	I am encouraged to develop the intellectual	25	3.88	0.93

	capital of the company.			
D14	I am empowered to influence the decision making of more senior managers.	25	3.40	1.19

An analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the variables in Section D revealed an aggregate mean of 3.87. This indicates a tendency towards agree, as is evident when considering the mean scores of the statements to this section. Only one statement obtained an 'uncertain' response. This was D14 (I am empowered to influence the decision making of more senior managers). The respondents indicated that they were encouraged to generate and share information with others, and utilise the information for the benefit of the organisation. Their goals were aligned with the vision/mission of the company and they acted as mentors to others, also in a team context.

The standard deviation was relatively narrow for statements that received 'agree' responses, while statement D14 on empowerment to influence the decisions of senior management, obtained a standard deviation of 1.19, which indicated slightly more disagreement on this statement.

4.2.4 Mean scores and standard deviations for section E (Performance management)

The theory has indicated that the performance management of knowledge workers is more challenging as they want to be empowered to set their own goals and want more autonomy (Serrat, 2010, p.1). Performance management also implies rewarding and recognising employees, although this aspect has been covered separately in Section B of the questionnaire, which was discussed in paragraph 4.

Table 4.4 depicts the combined means and standard deviations of the scores obtained for section E.

Table 4.4: Performance management

NO	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
E01	My manager and I clarify my job expectations together.	25	4.04	0.73
E02	I am trusted to manage my own performance	25	4.20	0.65
E03	My manager encourages me to constantly achieve new goals.	25	3.92	0.86
E04	I do get feedback on my performance	25	3.92	0.76
E05	I am coached to develop the necessary competencies in my job	25	3.72	0.89
E06	My manager is supportive	23	4.13	0.92
E07	Good performance is encouraged through the provision of rewards	25	3.68	0.75

An analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the variables in Section E revealed an aggregate mean of 3.94. This indicates a tendency towards agree, as is evident when considering the mean scores of the statements to this section. The respondents indicated that their managers were supportive, and that they were constantly encouraged to achieve organisational goals and that their managers clarified job expectations with them taking part.

It is evident that a narrow spread of responses was received for this section (standard deviation ranging from 0.65 to 0.92), indicating strong agreement among respondents with regard to items in this section.

4.2.5 Mean scores and standard deviations for section F (Motivation)

The theory has indicated that knowledge workers are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated and none of the two should be left out of the reward system to motivate knowledge workers (¥ajeva, 2007, p.648).

Table 4.5 depicts the combined means and standard deviations of the scores obtained for section F.

Table 4.5: Motivation

NO	MOTIVATION	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
F01	There are open channels of communication at my company	25	3.88	0.83
F02	I consider career growth, learning and development as important motivational factors in my job	24	4.13	0.68
F03	My skills and talents are properly utilised in my job	25	3.96	0.68
F04	My job is exciting and challenging	25	4.04	0.73
F05	I am free to come up with new ideas on how to improve my work	25	4.00	0.71
F06	I feel respected here at my company	25	3.88	0.60
F07	I get involved in decisions that affect my job	23	3.96	0.73

An analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the variables in Section F revealed an aggregate mean of 3.98. This indicates a tendency towards agree, as is evident when considering mean scores of the statements to this section. The respondents indicated that they considered career growth, learning and development as important motivational factors, and that their jobs were exciting and challenging and that they were encouraged to come up with new ideas on how to improve their jobs.

It is evident that a narrow spread of responses was received for this section (standard deviation ranging from 0.60 to 0.83), indicating strong agreement among respondents with regard to items in this section.

4.2.6 Mean scores and standard deviations for section G (Human resources strategies).

The theory indicated that human resources strategies should be developed to help organisations to improve organisational behaviour of their knowledge workers and that these strategies should help address issues of staff commitment, competency and

flexibility, which in turn could lead to improved staff performance (Giauque, et al, 2004, p.30).

Table 4.6 depicts the combined means and standard deviations of the scores obtained for section G.

Table 4.6: Human resource strategies

NO	HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
G01	I understand the HR strategy and goals of my company	25	3.76	0.83
G02	I am allowed to question rules and procedures	25	3.36	0.81
G03	There is a direct link between performance and incentives at my company	25	3.64	0.70
G04	There are equal opportunities for promotion within my company	25	3.36	0.86
G05	Kelly acknowledges and utilizes my skills and training	25	3.76	0.66
G06	There are visible career progression paths within my company	25	3.44	0.77
G07	Disciplinary policies are fairly applied	25	3.60	0.71
G08	Performance appraisals are fair and consistent	25	3.60	0.71
G09	New staff receive adequate orientation to help them settle down	25	3.48	1.08
G10	A climate of participation in decision making is created	25	3.84	0.55
G11	Staff loyalty at my company is recognised	25	3.48	0.77
G12	Knowledge workers are recognised for the effort they put into the company	25	3.72	0.74

An analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the variables in Section G revealed an aggregate mean of 3.59. This aggregate

mean reflects uncertain responses with a slight tendency towards agree, as is also evident when considering the mean scores of the statements in this section. It is evident that a narrow spread of responses was received for this section (standard deviation ranging from 0.55 to 1.08), indicating agreement among respondents with regard to items in this section.

The responses to this section are mixed, as the respondents indicated that they understood their organisationsq HR strategies and goals and that there was a direct link between performance and incentives at their organisations. They further agreed that their skills were acknowledged and utilised, disciplinary policies were fairly applied across the organisation, performance appraisals were fair and consistent, that a climate of participation in decision making was created and lastly that they were recognised for their efforts . Other statements received responses that reflected uncertainty. When studying the statements, it appears that these uncertain responses relate to flexibility, growth and recognition as the statements contain works such as ±questioning rulesq ±equal opportunities for promotionq ±visible career progression pathsq and ±recognition of staff loyaltyqwithin these organisation.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, statistical analysis and interpretation of the results from the empirical study were presented and discussed. The quantitative research findings were summarised, integrated and reflected upon in an expositional manner.

The results revealed that there were mixed reactions, specifically for statements in Section B and in Section G of the questionnaire.

In the next chapter, final conclusions are drawn, recommendations made, and areas for further research suggested.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the final chapter was to reflect on the research endeavour and summarise what had been accomplished by the research project. This chapter also focused on problems that were encountered in the research process and the limitations of the study. Finally, recommendations for further research are outlined.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In this section, the main problem and sub-problems are repeated to indicate which actions were taken to address each problem. The main findings related to each sub-problem are reiterated.

The main purpose of this study was to identify strategies that could assist companies in managing knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of their organisations.

In order to resolve the main problem, sub-problems were developed and discussed in various chapters of this study. The sub-problems and a brief discussion are provided below.

Sub-problem one: What is a knowledge worker? What are the characteristics and expectations of knowledge workers and what role do they play in the success of an organisation.

Sub-problem two: What is a knowledge worker as defined at four human resource and recruitment companies and what strategies are used at these companies to manage knowledge workers?

Sub-problem three: What best practice management strategies could organisations utilise to exploit the full potential of knowledge workers and satisfy their unique needs and expectations?

Sub-problem four: To what extent are these best practice management strategies utilised by the four human resources and recruitment companies?

Sub-problem one and three were addressed through the literature review.

The literature revealed that a knowledge worker is an employee who is a lifelong learner, an employee who develops his/her knowledge through education and experience and is more instrinsically motivated by challenging work and wants to be recognised for his/her contribution to the organisation. The literature further revealed that knowledge workers are characterised by close contact with customers, subordinates and other team mates.

The literature also revealed that a knowledge worker is a worker who has knowledge, skills, expertise and learning in a special field or area of work and is a key source of growth in organisations s/he works for. One of the most important or key elements in the life of a knowledge worker is personal growth and development and organisational human resource managers should always try to promote this type of environment.

Knowledge workers are valuable assets to the organisation as they help the organisation to gain competitive advantage through their knowledge and skills, as revealed by the theory. The literature study also revealed that knowledge workers should be recognised for their good performance by providing financial incentives, by providing them with continuous job related training, and for those who go the extra mile, empower them by delegating tasks that carry decision making responsibility, Managers of knowledge workers should provide continuous feedback on their performance.

The literature further revealed that the human resource department play a crucial role in the managing and retention of knowledge workers. The HR department plays a critical role in helping businesses to improve organisational behaviour. It also plays a crucial role in encouraging continuous, life learning for knowledge workers, and also plays a role of assuring knowledge workers that they are working for a caring, nurturing and a trustworthy organisation. The HR department further motivates knowledge workers through a range of performance management and reward measures.

Sub-problem two was addressed by means of interviewing the managers at four human resource and recruitment companies. The interviews revealed that the four organisations sampled shared different views as to how they define knowledge workers according to their different perspectives.

Furthermore, the results from the interviews showed some common practices used by the various organisations in managing their knowledge workers, in rewarding them and in training them. This could be because these organisations followed the same industry norms, standards and practices.

Sub-problem four was addressed by means of conducting the empirical study. This was done through a survey with a questionnaire as the data gathering tool. The survey focused on remuneration, rewards and recognition; commitment and retention strategies, productivity and knowledge sharing, performance management and motivation of knowledge workers.

The empirical study revealed that knowledge workers at the companies where the survey was conducted had mixed feelings about remuneration and rewards. They did feel praised and rewarded but the link between performance and rewards were not clear. The results also raised questions around retention as the respondents did not indicate a clear commitment to the company and they also showed uncertainty around retention strategies used in the company. The results revealed that knowledge was well managed in these companies, and that the respondents did get opportunities to generate and share information, work in teams, act as change agents and mentors, that their performance was discussed and measured and that an innovative and supportive culture existed in these organisations. It also appeared that performance was well managed through aligning goals with the vision of the company, measuring performance, giving feedback, facilitating and rewarding performance. Lastly, the results revealed high levels of motivation among the respondents.

In conclusion, it was evident that the results obtained from the interviews were congruent with that of the empirical study. The interviews did reveal that the retention (commitment) of knowledge workers were a challenge for these companies, but that they did take steps to create an environment for growth, development, communication, sharing and recognising performance.

Based on the above findings, recommendations are provided for the management of knowledge workers for the benefit of organisation.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the results from the empirical study, it is suggested that more attention be given to rewards, remuneration and recognition as there was a mix of responses among respondents with regards to rewards and remuneration. The types of remuneration that organisations should look at are for example, profit sharing, where knowledge workers will get share of the profit their organisations make. This will give them a sense of ownership and more accountability.

Organisations should also consider putting more effort into recognising performance of their knowledge workers, such as overseas trips for best performing knowledge workers, sponsored international and local soccer, rugby or cricket tickets to watch international soccer, rugby or cricket games. Even though these rewards do not always mean significant financial gain, it demonstrates appreciation and care. Ideally, rewards should be linked to performance outcomes.

Furthermore, knowledge workersq achievements should be celebrated and made well known by the entire organisation or with the group of companies and this should also be used as part of the organisationqs succession planning strategy.

It is further recommended that more effort be put into strategies for retaining knowledge workers as results from the empirical study showed that knowledge workers were not committed to staying with their companies despite their companies investing in developing them for life long employment. This was due to the fact that their companies did not focus on retention strategies.

To retain knowledge workers, management need to put emphasises on compensation of knowledge workers. Knowledge workers should be treated as investors in to the business, as they invest their knowledge and skills in the business. Therefore, they seek the best return on their investment. They invest their time and energy with an employer.

Figure 5.1 presents a total rewards model that could be used as a guide by organisations seeking to address gaps in the remuneration, reward and recognition of knowledge workers

Figure: 5.1 Total rewards model
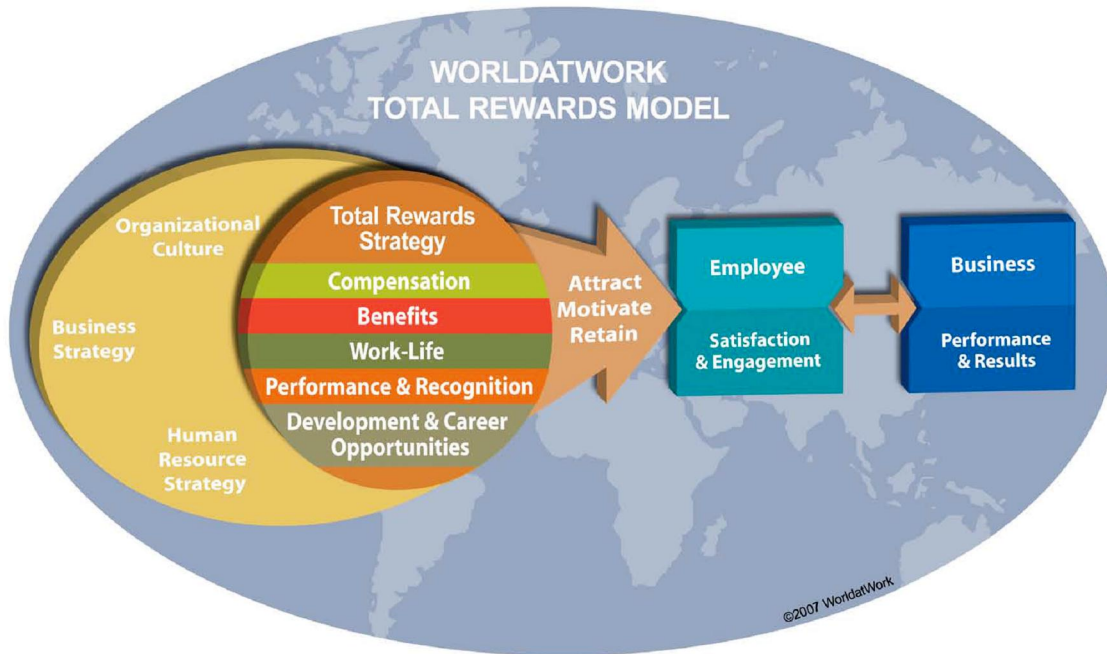
Sources: Worldatwork (2011)

The model shows that compensation can be a combination of tangibles, such as market-related fixed salary and variable pay, for example, share schemes or commission structures plus benefits such as healthcare, retirement schemes and generous leave allowances. This is in line with the recommendation made earlier.

Rewards can also include intangibles such as learning and development opportunities for example paid-for-studies and overseas courses. Management of knowledge workers should also provide an environment where opportunities to grow are visible. This can relate to personal or professional development for them. Managers need to assist them to develop a career plan, upwards, laterally, or even relocating them. It should be remembered that knowledge workers consider themselves free agents, plotting their escape to start own ventures. If their entrepreneurial skills are recognised and rewarded they are less likely to defect. It is therefore recommended that the focus is placed on entrapreneurship that benefits the company.

The theoretical study indicated that for knowledge workers organisations must not be too prescriptive in terms of their learning experiences but managed learning on a more individualised basis, allowing knowledge workers to craft their own experiences. It is, however, suggested that organisations ask knowledge workers to submit proposals for their exposure and learning and that knowledge workers need to demonstrate how such proposed learning is aligned with the vision and goals of the organisation. Commitment is more ensured when training and development is company-specific, implying related to the industry and expertise that the company is known for.

Managers need to have career conversations with knowledge workers. Managers need to know their talent, for example, what they can do and where they can develop. Managers need to give perspective and feedback on talent goals. Managers should discuss present and future trends in the organisation to clarify competence and knowledge needed for future growth and always discuss multiple career options with knowledge workers to empower them and make them feel and know that they are recognised.

Companies should provide training and development opportunities. Further, linked to this, is the provision of mentoring, the main purpose of which should be learning and growth, the transfer of knowledge of organisational values, and methodologies. This brings strong trust relationships where confidentiality is allowed. Preferably a senior person from another division should be appointed as mentor and not a sub-ordinate-superior relationship as this can create conflict as well as an in-ward focus. The mentor can get the knowledge worker to think about the situation in new ways and use own experiences to guide and advise.

Organisations should also consider job enrichment. However, this must be individualised. What enriches one knowledge worker can be less challenging for another knowledge worker. Managers of knowledge workers need to have conversations with them, to discuss their job situations and how to enrich these situations. Here managers can establish wide-spread participation, by giving knowledge workers a platform to come up with new ideas and solutions to problems, get them involved in budgets and employment decisions, and rotate them between assignments.

Managers should always provide frequent feedback, as knowledge workers want to receive and give feedback as often as every day.

It is further recommended that senior managers form closer bonds with knowledge workers, and to their opinions and ideas.

5.4 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following areas for future research have been identified:

a) The study delivered interesting and encouraging results, but was restricted to the human resource and recruitment companies in Port Elizabeth. Similar studies could be conducted in other areas and with other industries.

b) While knowledge workers are already considered knowledgeable and experienced, and taking responsibility for their own development, it would be interesting to probe their perceptions of the ideal mentoring model for knowledge workers, with cognisance of the type of mentor, the mentor-protégé relationship and the type of interventions that will benefit knowledge workers.

5.5 PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS

No major problems were experienced during the duration of the study. Minor problems related to the administration of the questionnaire and specifically to obtaining an adequate number of responses. This problem was overcome by a follow-up survey.

A limitation of the research was that it focused only on the human resource and recruitment industry. This industry in general employs specialists but in terms of head counts it employs fewer employees. To overcome this problem, the researcher conducted interviews with key people in the selected sampled organisations in the industry.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Managers and organisations should constantly be in search of strategies and practices of managing knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of their organisations. These strategies should focus on remuneration, rewards and recognition, knowledge management, performance management and the retention of knowledge workers.

The human resource department has an important role to play in setting up best strategies for managing and retaining knowledge workers.

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Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

B u s i n e s s   S c h o o l
L e a d e r s   f o r   t o m o r r o w

APPENDIX 1

Dear Respondent

I am a post-graduate student studying towards my MBA (Masters in Business Administration) at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The topic of my research project is ***The management of knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of an organisation***.

It will be appreciated if you could answer a few questions in this regard, which should not take more than fifteen minutes. Please note that the questionnaire is completed anonymously. Please submit the completed questionnaire by **23 August 2013.** We thank you in advice for your contribution in this study.

Should any clarification be needed please do not hesitate to contact me.
e-mail: thobela77@webmail.co.za / tjavu@salga.org.za

Thank you very much.

Mr TT Javu
Supervisor: Dr A Werner (Tel: 041 504 3749)

APPENDIX 2

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SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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Please supply the following information by making an 'X' in the appropriate block.

1. **Gender**

Male		Female	

2. **Age bracket**

20 . 24		25-35		36-45		46+	

3. **Racial group**

Black		Coloured		White		Any other, please specify	

4. **Employment type**

Fixed term contract staff member	
Permanent staff member	

5. **Job category**

Academic		Professional		Technical	

6. **Highest qualification**

Matric		Diploma		Degree		Post-graduate Degree	

7. **Length of service**

Less than a year	2. 5 years	6 . 10 year	11 . 15 years	16 + years

SECTION B: REWARDS, REMUNERATION AND RECOGNITION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by making an 'X' in the appropriate box.

	REWARDS, REMUNERATION AND RECOGNITION	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	My remuneration package matches the responsibilities that I have					
2	Knowledge workers are fairly rewarded for their performance					
3	I am praised when I do a good job					
4	There is a clear link between excellence and remuneration					
5	I am rewarded for successfully accomplishing organisational goals					

SECTION C: RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

RETENTION	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree

1	I have a promising future in this organisation					
2	My company develops knowledge workers for long term employment at the corporation.					
3	I hardly ever think of leaving SALGA					
4	I feel positive about my future at my company					
5	Flexible working arrangements are offered to attract and retain knowledge workers.					
6	The company tries their best to ensure that knowledge workers will not want to leave the organisation.					

SECTION E: PRODUCTIVITY

	Perceptions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	My manager and I regularly discuss the improvement of productivity levels.					
2	Productivity is regularly measured at my company					
3	The physical working conditions at my company support productivity.					
4	I am encouraged to be innovative in my job					
5	My company has a culture that promotes excellence					
6	My goals are aligned with the vision/mission					
7	Employees are encouraged to form high					

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	performance teams.					
8	Focus placed on continuously quality improvement.					
9	I am encouraged to act as a change agent					
10	I am encouraged to serve as a mentor to others					
11	I am encouraged to share my experience with others.					
12	I am encouraged to generate information that will benefit the corporation					
13	I am encouraged to develop the intellectual capital of the organisation					
14	I am empowered to influence the decision making of more senior managers					

SECTION E: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

	Perceptions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	My manager and I clarify my job expectations together					
2	I am trusted to manage my own performance					
3	My manager encourages me to constantly achieve new goals					
4	I do get feedback on my performance					
5	I am coached to develop the necessary competencies in my job					
6	My manager is supportive					

7	Good performance is encouraged through the provision of rewards					

SECTION E: MOTIVATION

	Perceptions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	There are open channels of communication at my company					
2	I consider career growth, learning and development as important motivational factors in my job					
3	My skills and talents are properly utilised in my job					
4	My job is exciting and challenging					
5	I am free to come up with new ideas on how to improve my work					
6	I feel respected here at my company					
7	I get involved in decisions that affect my job					

SECTION E: HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGIES

	Perceptions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I understand the HR strategy and goals of my company					
2	I am allowed to question rules and procedures					
3	There is a direct link between performance and incentives at my company					
4	There are equal opportunities for promotion within my company					
5	My company acknowledges and utilizes my skills and training					
6	There are visible career progression paths within my company					
7	Disciplinary policies are fairly applied					
8	Performance appraisals are fair and consistent					
9	New staff receive adequate orientation to help them settle down					
10	A climate of participation in decision making is created					
11	Staff loyalty at my company is recognised					
12	Knowledge workers are recognised for the effort they put into the company					

Is there anything else that you would like to add in terms of the management of knowledge workers for the optimal benefit of the organisation?

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Thank you for your assistance, it is appreciated.

Thobela Terrence Javu