**Exploring overqualification: reasons for its existence and how to retain
overqualified employees**

Carla Da Silva-Nel

91054924

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ABSTRACT

Overqualification in South Africa has increased over the past years and will continue to increase due to limited job opportunities in the country. Overqualified employees, if managed properly, can benefit organisations as they have excess capacity and skills that possibly provide them with a competitive advantage. However, retaining these employees is a challenge. Research on retention strategies has not looked at the retention of overqualified employees specifically and in South Africa, research on underemployment has focussed on time-based underemployment and not overqualification. The study looked at the reasons for the existence of overqualification in a South African context and how organisations can retain these employees using elements of the reward model. A qualitative study was conducted by interviewing overqualified employees currently performing administrative roles and their managers. The study found that the poor economic situation in South Africa and the need for job security are among the reasons for the existence of overqualification. The main reasons to stay or leave an organisation are career development opportunities and challenging and stimulating work. The reward model of an organisation can mitigate this turnover if it is aligned to those aspects that overqualified employees value. The study provides insights that will enable organisations to make better use of their capabilities.

KEY WORDS

Overqualification

Psychological contracts

Retention

Total rewards system

Underemployment

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Considering South Africa's high unemployment rate, one may think that any job is better than no job at all, but is that the case? Among the effects of unemployment is underemployment, i.e. people employed in jobs that they are overqualified for, or working for less hours than they would want to or even taking on jobs outside their sphere of expertise (Thompson, Shea, Sikora, Perrewe and Ferris, 2013). This phenomena has social, psychological and economic implications for employees and implications for organisations with respect to their recruitment, management and retention strategies (Thompson et al, 2013).

Unemployment results in, among others, many young people choosing to stay in tertiary education for a longer period as they struggle to find employment and thus hope that more job opportunities will open up in time or taking on student jobs as an interim. This may result in them forming part of the overqualified group of underemployed once they do enter the labour market (Cable and Hendey 2009) as they may already possess higher qualifications than is required. Unemployment also results in older, qualified people, who may be unemployed due to retrenchment and already possess years of experience and qualifications, seeking job opportunities and being willing to take on jobs that they are overqualified for (Cable and Hendey 2009). Underemployment and overqualification in particular can thus be a result of a lack of job opportunities and resultant unemployment.

Beukes et al (2016) refers to two types of underemployment, i.e. time-based and overqualification underemployment. A time-based definition of underemployment refers to individuals who are employed for fewer hours than they are willing and able to work for. Overqualification refers to individuals who are employed but their skills are underutilised or they are overqualified for the job that they are employed in. Erdogan, Bauer, Peiro and Truxillo (2011) define overqualification as "a situation where the individual has surplus skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience, and other qualifications that are not required by or utilized on the job" (p.217).

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Underemployment is described by Thompson et al (2013) as "unemployment's forgotten relative" (p.113). This seems to be the case in South Africa where, due to high unemployment rates, the attention and focus has been on job creation and not necessarily on the types of jobs created (Beukes, Fransman, Murozvi and Yu, 2016). Beukes et al (2016) further highlight that "the capacity of the labour force is therefore often disregarded" (p.2). It seems that the focus of research in South Africa has also been on the unemployed and not on the underemployed or specifically the overqualified (a form of underemployment).

Only three local studies; namely Yu (2009), Schoeman, Botha and Blaauw (2010) and Mathebula (2013); have been done on underemployment in South Africa – none of which addressed overqualification (Beukes et al, 2016). Yu (2009) provided an analysis of underemployment (using a time-based definition) using the first three Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) data sets released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) in 2008. Schoeman, Botha and Blaauw's (2010) study analysed the role that labour conflict plays in macro underemployment in South Africa, also using the time-based definition of underemployment. Mathebula (2013) also conducted an analysis of underemployment (using a time-based definition) using the QLFS third quarter data released by Stats SA in 2012.

Beukes et al's (2016) study, however, looked at the nature, extent and trends of underemployment using both time-based and overqualification definitions and using data from the 1995 to 1999 October Household Surveys (OHS), 2000 to 2007 Labour Force Surveys (LFSs) and the 2008 to 2014 QLFSs conducted by Stats SA. Beukes et al's (2016) study showed that the number of underemployed (using the overqualification definition) increased from 1.5 million in 1995 to 4.3 million in the last quarter of 2014. Also, the study showed that the share of underemployed (as a result of overqualification) as a proportion of the employed increased from 15.7% to 27.9% in the same period. For the purposes of this research, the researcher focused on the overqualification dimension of underemployment and use Erdogan et al's (2011) definition thereof: "a situation where the individual has surplus skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience, and other qualifications that are not required by or utilized on the job" (p.217).

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The growing trend of underemployment as a result of overqualification is not necessarily negative if the organisations that employ these people are able to fully utilise their skills and create the opportunities that will motivate them to stay and grow within the organisation (Erdogan et al, 2011). Research has shown that higher job performance can in fact be expected from overqualified employees when they are managed properly (Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi and Wang, 2015) and that hiring and retaining overqualified employees can result in a company gaining competitive advantage (Luksyte, Spitzmueller, and Maynard, 2011; Thompson et al, 2013).

From the studies above it seems that organisations have a role to play in addressing overqualification. The retention and reward strategies of organisations can create the enabling environment that results in overqualified employees electing to stay. The important consideration for organisations is to determine which aspects of a reward model will support a positive response from overqualified employees thus enabling the organisation to benefit from their excess capacity.

1.2 PURPOSE FOR THE STUDY

The growing trend of underemployment as a result of overqualification in South Africa is a concern which is not receiving attention possibly due to a continued focus on unemployment in the country instead. While unemployment is an important issue in the South African economy, it is also important to consider the reasons for the existence of overqualification in the economic landscape and what can be done to retain employees in this category to ensure they make a meaningful contribution to the economy and their own lives as well as add value to the organisations that they are employed in.

The purpose of the study is to analyse the reasons for applying and accepting a job in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in or leave an organisation. Internationally, a number of research articles have been published on overqualification although very little research on the topic has been done in South Africa. On the topic of retention and rewarding of employees, however, there is extensive literature published in South Africa and internationally. Therefore this study wants to explore this phenomenon in the South African context.

The study will be focused on gaining deeper insights into the reasons for the existence of overqualification in South Africa and how to retain overqualified employees

specifically. The study also intends to establish to what extent organisations use elements of the reward model to retain overqualified employees and whether this has been successful. Furthermore, the researcher intends to determine the extent to which an overqualified employee's decision to accept a position for which he/she is overqualified for is based on organisational or other factors. Similarly, the extent to which an overqualified employee's decision to stay/leave an organisation is based on organisational or other factors and how the reward model affects this decision.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Overqualified employees can make valuable contributions to organisations due to their excess capacity and skills and thus introduce innovations that can provide organisations with the competitive edge that they need to stay ahead in the market (Erdogan et al, 2011). According to Davis (1993), one of the problems with hiring the overqualified is retention; i.e. keeping them interested and satisfied. It therefore seems that a retention strategy to address overqualified employees is needed in organisations where they are employed and thus it becomes important to conduct a study to determine what overqualified employees consider when deciding to stay or leave an organisation.

1.4 EVIDENCE OF THE PROBLEM

A global survey conducted in 2006 by the International Trade Union Confederation found that 24% of South African workers believed at the time that they were overqualified (O'Connell, December 2010). Stats SA started reporting on underemployment in South Africa in 2008 in the QLFS. According to the survey's figures for the last quarter of 2014, 11.4% of employed South Africans are underemployed (using the time-based and overqualification definitions discussed above) (Beukes et al, 2016). About 64% of the underemployed are due to overqualification (Beukes et al, 2016). The growing number of overqualified employees requires focussed attention to ensure not only that these employees make a meaningful contribution to the economy and their own lives but also that organisations are able to positively benefit from their excess capacity.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

South Africa's unemployment rate is currently reported as 27.7%, which is the highest rate reported since September 2003 (Statistics South Africa, June 2017). As a

consequence of South Africa's increasing unemployment rate, the underemployment rate will increase and thus the number of overqualified employees will also increase. The study conducted by Beukes et al (2016) shows that underemployment as a result of overqualification has increased over the years. Overqualified employees can benefit organisations that are successfully able to utilise their excess skills and capacity and thus the retention of these employees needs to be explored. Therefore, the intention of the study is to gain insights into the reasons for applying and accepting a job in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as insights into the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in or leave an organisation and in relation to this, and assess the reward model.

Sub-problem 1

Explore the aspects leading to overqualification and leading to the decisions of individuals to apply for and accept positions for which they are overqualified for.

Sub-problem 2

Identify and assess the retention and reward model that an organisation uses to respond to overqualification and assess to what extent it is successful and aligned to the expectations of overqualified employees.

1.6 THEORETICAL NEED FOR THE STUDY

Economists were the first to investigate underemployment as a job status and over time the literature on the topic has grown, particularly in developed countries. South Africa, forming part of the group of developing countries has noted an increase in underemployment and particularly the number of overqualified employees and thus this different context (developing country instead of a developed country) makes for interesting research. At the same time, insights gained in literature indicate that there is value in employing overqualified employees and may even provide organisations with a competitive advantage. Liu et al (2015) highlights the need for future research to explore the factors that motivate overqualified employees to engage in positive behaviours at work, such as making useful suggestions and providing creative solutions. Thus, how organisations use elements of the reward model to recruit and retain overqualified employees becomes relevant and important to study.

The study will give guidance on how underemployment, in particular overqualification, relates and impacts unemployment in the South African context. It will explore whether

organisations can manage/utilise overqualified employees more effectively so that this can help with the growth of the organisation and thus enable it to create more jobs for the entry level skills, thereby addressing unemployment.

The theoretical basis for the study is to explore the applicability of theory on underemployment as a result of overqualification in the South African context and the alignment of existing reward model elements in retaining overqualified employees. It will be theoretically beneficial to understand how organisations employ reward model elements to retain overqualified employees and thus ultimately benefit from their excess skills and capacity. Gaining insights into the relevance of literature on overqualification to the South African context with a deeper understanding of the variables at play and the extent to which these variables interact and contribute to the theoretical body of knowledge.

1.7 LAYOUT OF THE DOCUMENT TO FOLLOW

The chapters to follow present a detailed literature review outlining the theoretical basis and debates on the research topic. This is then followed by research questions that provide the research focus area and have been derived from the literature reviewed. The research methodology and design is then explained in detail in the subsequent chapter and thus outlining the research process followed. The last three chapters present the research findings, discuss the findings in detail and outline the conclusions drawn from the research.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the reasons why the topic of underemployment as a result of overqualification is a concern in South Africa, how overqualified employees can add a lot of value to organisations and why the research is thus needed. Overqualification is an issue that affects the economic landscape of countries and the organisations in these countries that employ or consider employing overqualified employees. The possibility that overqualified employees can benefit organisations and even provide them with a competitive advantage is a valuable insight that the study will explore. The study will draw insight into what drives overqualification and what organisations can do about it. The literature review to follow outlines the prevailing scholarly arguments on the topic, thus providing the theoretical foundation for the study.

2. THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the reasons why the topic of underemployment as a result of overqualification is a concern in South Africa, how overqualified employees can add a lot of value to organisations and why the study is thus needed. This chapter outlines the prevailing scholarly arguments on the topic, thus providing the theoretical foundation for the research by conducting a literature review.

The focus of this chapter is on laying out what underemployment and overqualification are, what contributes to its existence as well as the positive and negative impact thereof on affected employees and organisations. Taking into account that overqualified employees can add value to organisations if their excess skills and capacity is effectively used, this chapter will also cover the retention and reward models used in organisations. The literature review begins by defining underemployment and overqualification.

2.2. DEFINITIONS OF UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND OVERQUALIFICATION

Underemployment is a multi-dimensional construct that economists first investigated as a job status using the time-based and wage-related definitions because of their impact on the economic growth of countries (Russel, Ferris, Thompson and Sikora, 2016). The first dimension relates to the time-based definition (Russel et al, 2016). The second dimension, which also arose in economics, is defined by Russel et al (2016) as "underpayment or wage underemployment" (p.127), which refers to earning a lower salary than what was previously earned "or earning 20% less than peers in similar jobs" (Russel et al, 2016, p.127).

Overqualification is a subset of underemployment and regarded as the third dimension of underemployment. According to Russel et al (2016), overqualification refers to "some aspect of mismatch between skill, experience, and/or education level" (p.127) of the individual when compared to the requirements of the position held/applying for.

Erdogan et al (2011) provide a similar definition for overqualification, namely "a situation where the individual has surplus skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience, and other qualifications that are not required by or utilized on the job" (p.217).

Overqualification is the mismatch of qualification (education), experience and skill between the employee and the job that he/she is employed in, i.e. the employee has more qualifications, experience and skills than the job requires (Russel et al, 2016). The phenomena may occur involuntarily due to social or economic reasons (e.g. retrenchment) or voluntarily due to personal reasons (e.g. a new mother wanting to take on less work responsibilities) (Erdogan et al, 2011). Interestingly, the phenomena has not only been observed in developed countries but also in developing countries (Shen and Kuhn, 2013). Whether the overqualification is voluntary or involuntary, it can still result in lower job satisfaction, lower organisational commitment and intentions to leave the organisation (Liu et al, 2015 and Erdogan et al, 2011).

2.3. THEORIES GUIDING OVERQUALIFICATION

A number of theories have guided studies on overqualification. These include human capital theory, human resource architecture theory, person-environment fit theory, person-job fit theory, relative deprivation theory, equity theory and theory on psychological contracts (Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, Martinez, 2015; Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016).

2.3.1. Human Capital and Human Resource Theories

Human capital theory outlines that people invest in their training and education and at times deliberately vary their work experiences across sectors with the expectation that this knowledge and experience will provide them with increased financial rewards. In relation to this, human resource architecture theory indicates that organisations manage employees differently based on the value and uniqueness of their human capital (i.e. knowledge, training and experience). Knowledge, training and experience are used as signals of existing human capital capability or potential human capital capability. According to Kulkarni et al (2015), since training and experience are the most tangible signals, they are then used in considering someone for employment in an organisation. Overqualification from the lens of human capital theory is puzzling as people are not expected to invest in education and training that they are not going to utilise (Brynin and Longhi, 2009).

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2.3.2. Person-environment fit and Person-job fit Theories

Person-environment fit job theory refers to congruence between a person's characteristics and the attributes of their work environment (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson, 2005). A dimension of person-environment fit is person-job fit theory. According to Luksyte et al (2016), there are two types of person-job fit, namely the needs-supplies fit and the demands-abilities fit. The needs-supplies fit outlines how well the job environment fulfills a person's goals, values and aspirations. The demands-abilities fit outlines how well the knowledge, skills and abilities of the person match the requirements of the job. When these aspects match, the research shows that positive work outcomes can then be expected (Kulkarni et al, 2015). Since overqualified employees have more knowledge, skills and training than the job requires, they do not suffer from a demands-abilities misfit. However, this type of misfit may result in overqualified employees being screened out of a job during the recruitment and selection phase (Martinez, Lengnick-Hall, and Kulkarni, 2014). They may also suffer from a needs-supplies misfit as the work environment may possibly not fit their goals, values and aspirations (Luksyte et al, 2016). Therefore, improving the needs-supplies fit of these employees may result in positive work outcomes to the benefit of the organisation.

2.3.3. Relative deprivation and Equity Theories

Relative deprivation theory outlines a person's feeling that he/she has been relatively deprived in comparison to a certain standard. In the case of overqualification, the standard would be that the overqualified person should occupy a better position than the one that he/she currently occupies because of his/her knowledge, training and skills (Kulkarni et al, 2015). As a person improves his/her level of education and skills, there is an expectation that the type of job occupied will also improve. When this does not occur, it may trigger feelings of deprivation relating to among others status, rewards and autonomy (Kulkarni et al, 2015).

Equity theory, as outlined by Robbins and Judge (2015) explains how employees "compare their job inputs and outcomes with those of others and then respond to eliminate any inequities" (p.233). Inputs include education and experience while outputs include pay, promotion and recognition (Robbins and Judge, 2015). Overqualified employees may feel that they are not getting the career development opportunities and financial rewards that equate to their level of education and

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experience and thus lead them to for example refrain from putting more effort into their existing position (Kulkarni et al, 2015).

It seems from the above literature review that the mismatch between inputs and outputs in the case of overqualified employees may thus result in negative responses in the workplace.

2.3.4. Psychological Contracts

A psychological contract is the unwritten and often unspoken expectation that an employee has with respect to his job and employer. As an example, overqualified employees may have the expectation that they will be considered for opportunities such as participation in projects and promotions due to their excess capacity but this expectation may not be met in reality leading to job dissatisfaction (Kulkarni et al, 2015).

Furthermore, a study conducted by De Vos and Meganck (2009) revealed that an employer's fulfillment of promises about career development opportunities (part of the psychological contract) had the highest influence on an employee's decision to leave/seek other employment.

The theories that have guided studies on overqualification point to mismatches between inputs provided by overqualified employees and the subsequent return on these inputs. These mismatches can result in unmet expectations leading to feelings of unfairness and ultimately job dissatisfaction for these employees. Using these theories as a foundation, it then becomes important to look at the construct of overqualification more closely.

2.4. OVERQUALIFICATION

The overqualification construct has grown due to changes in the economy and workforce, which have resulted in people finding they need to take on jobs that they are overqualified for (Erdogan et al, 2011). Recruiters and hiring managers have more regularly been faced with the decision as to whether to consider overqualified employees for positions. Often, they hesitate to employ these applicants due to concerns that they will become easily bored, leave and possibly use the appointment only as a springboard for better opportunities (Erdogan et al, 2011 and Cable and Hendey, 2009). The study conducted by Russel et al (2016) found that of all the

dimensions of underemployment, overqualification, particularly in relation to skills, has the most negative impact on job satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation.

2.4.1 Negative and Positive Aspects of Employing the Overqualified

There are a number of negatives related to hiring or having in your employment overqualified applicants such as lower career, job and life satisfaction; higher turnover intentions; negative job attitudes; lower organisational commitment and higher stress levels (Erdogan et al, 2011 and Thompson et al, 2013). Liu et al (2015) also indicate that stress experienced by overqualified employees may result in possible engagement in negative behaviours, also referred to as counterproductive work behaviours (CWB), which could put their careers in jeopardy. CWBs could include "intentionally working slowly, spending excessive time on tasks unrelated to work, and speaking poorly about one's organisation" (Liu et al, 2015, p.256).

Johnson, Morrow, and Johnson (2002) found in their research that the lack of career growth often experienced by overqualified employees, has a negative impact on Affective Organisational Commitment (AOC), which is defined as the employee's emotional attachment to the organisation. Furthermore, they found that the lack of career growth resulted in a decline in achievement as a value and subsequently a drop in an employee's investment in his/her career.

Erdogan et al (2011) also outline a number of positives related to hiring or having in your employment overqualified applicants, such as the fact that they could be prime candidates for future roles; they have the capacity to perform better than their less-qualified colleagues; they are better able to work independently; they can make valuable contributions beyond the requirements of their existing jobs; they have lower levels of absenteeism; they learn faster and are thus more easily trained and are known to have increased sales.

Similar positives are also outlined in the study by Thompson et al (2013), namely that overqualified employees are pools of talent that may be considered for future leadership roles, they enable organisations to respond quickly to human resource challenges due to their existing excess capacity and they serve as an important training and mentoring resource. It has also been found that overqualified employees can utilise their excess skills, experience and knowledge to contribute positively to organisations (Russel et al, 2016). A longitudinal study on overqualified employees in

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Germany also found them to be healthier, more work and career-minded, more likely to participate in on-the-job training and more likely to stay in the same organisation than other employees (Kulkarni et al, 2015).

Erdogan et al (2011) and Russel et al (2016) qualify that the positives outlined above emerge on the condition that employees are encouraged to use their qualifications to enrich their jobs, are empowered by their managers and that the employee's overqualification is valued by the organisation. Empowerment of these employees, in particular, can moderate dissatisfaction (O'Connell, 2010). The researchers Erdogan et al (2011) and Russel et al (2016) found that the employment of overqualified people may produce increased innovation and result in creative challenges to the way work is being done. One way of doing this may be to utilise these employees in projects where new ideas and ways of doing business are being discussed/developed for implementation in formal processes. A recent study done by Luksyte et al (2016) found that overqualified employees "become creative when they feel supported and appreciated and successfully negotiate developmental ideals" (p.646-647). This study also found that the opportunity to mentor others has an impact on the creativity of overqualified employees. It seems that overqualified employees can be an asset to organisations that value creativity.

From the literature reviewed, it seems that a number of factors affect whether overqualified employees engage in positive or negative behaviours. These may be personal, organisational or other factors. If overqualified employees, however, can be motivated to engage in positive behaviours, organisations can benefit greatly from employing them as they can add substantial value to an organisation's capacity. Therefore, managers should consider applications from overqualified employees.

2.5. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE APPOINTMENT OF OVERQUALIFIED EMPLOYEES

The decision to appoint overqualified employees is dependent on the views and experiences of the individuals making the decision as well as organisational factors such as the organisational culture as well as policies and procedures.

2.5.1. Individual Factors

Certain factors may influence individual decisions to appoint overqualified employees (Martinez et al, 2014). These factors include information relating to the

previous performance of the overqualified employee in another position for which he/she was overqualified for. If this information shows that the employee previously performed well, the tendency will be to employ the overqualified applicant. Another factor is where the applicant communicates that he/she is intentionally and voluntarily applying for a position for which he/she is overqualified for. The reasons for voluntary overqualification may vary from being a 'tied' spouse, i.e. where it suits the applicant to apply for a position for which he/she is overqualified for due to the applicant spouse's career situation; to wanting to pursue greater family and childcare responsibilities or even wanting to pursue other studies. Individual factors may also include the recruiting manager's previous experiences with employing overqualified employees. If the experiences were positive, the overqualified employee is more likely to be considered for appointment than if the experiences were negative.

2.5.2. Organisational Factors

Martinez et al (2014) indicate that certain organisational context factors can also influence the decision to employ overqualified employees. These include labour market conditions such as high unemployment or labour shortage conditions. High unemployment conditions may result in more resistance to employing overqualified employees due to a high supply of labour and thus the ability to screen out overqualified employees. The opposite may occur in labour shortage conditions as the predominant need to fill positions may promote the employment of overqualified employees. A counter-argument is also presented that due to the existence of many overqualified applicants in the job market during conditions of high unemployment, they may in fact be viewed positively.

Martinez et al (2014) argue that overqualification may be more acceptable in knowledge-intensive jobs as the excess capacity can be useful in the future. They also argue that individuals may be viewed as overqualified in certain circumstances and not in others, e.g. an individual may be viewed as overqualified when applying for a sales position but not when applying for an information technology position. This is dependent on the policies and procedures of the relevant organisation.

Another organisational context factor is that of organisational policies and practices as they direct and partially limit certain practices. Organisations that hold a policy to promote internally first before seeking external candidates will be more

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willing to employ overqualified employees due to existing future career development opportunities. Organisational policies and procedures also affect job designs such as the ability to combine two positions to create a more challenging and enriched job for an overqualified employee (Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016). Policies and procedures relating to recruitment methods may allow or limit managers from assigning these employees to challenging projects, especially those requiring them to acquire new skills or exposing them to work with another department. They may also allow or limit managers from asking overqualified employees to assist in implementing their ideas and from allowing them more autonomy in performing their work (Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016). Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2016) also advise that managers should let overqualified employees know that their input is valued by soliciting ideas from them and refraining from views that they want their positions as this will prevent their full utilisation.

The nature of an organisation's policies and procedures determines whether there will be a positive or negative impact on overqualified employees but could also potentially influence the productivity of the departments where overqualified employees are employed. Organisations that allow for job enrichment, informal leadership and mentoring roles in relation to overqualified employees will benefit from their commitment and positive input (Russel et al, 2016; Gallo, 2011). Similarly, Liu et al (2015) believe that managers wanting to improve the organisation based self-esteem (OBSE), i.e. employee's worthiness feelings in an organisation, should among others allow them more job autonomy and include them in decision making. Ultimately, overqualified employees who are allowed to operate in this context will experience increased job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation (Russel et al, 2016).

It seems that if the positives can be brought out in overqualified employees, organisations can benefit greatly from employing them. This is important when considering the current move towards a more knowledge based economy where organisations require additional human resource knowledge, capabilities and skills to remain competitive or even acquire a competitive advantage (Kulkarni et al, 2015). Overqualified employees represent a potentially valuable but underutilised human resource base in an organisation that can be mobilised in difficult economic times (Thomas et al, 2013). However, the difficulty with hiring the overqualified is retention and it is therefore important to review the use of retention and reward models by organisations.

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2.6. RETENTION MODELS

A retention model is a strategy or system that attracts, develops, retains and utilises people with the required skills and ability to meet current and future business goals (Hausknecht, Rodda and Howard, 2009).

2.6.1. The Development of Research on Retention Models over Time

Hausknecht et al (2009) outline the development of research that influenced retention models in history as having started in the 50's with March and Simon's (1958) theory of organisational equilibrium which describes the drivers of employee turnover as the "desirability of movement and ease of movement" (Hausknecht et al, 2009, p.5). The former refers to job satisfaction while the latter refers to available alternative job opportunities.

In the early 70's, Porter and Steers (1973) introduced a model linked to employee turnover, which included a number of work-related and personal factors. These factors include extrinsic rewards (e.g. salary and benefits), advancement opportunities, constituent attachments (e.g. effective management and positive relations with colleagues), investments (e.g. length of time in the organisation) and non-work influences (e.g. family and/or community responsibilities).

In the late 70's Mobley, Griffeth, Hand and Meglino (1979) added two key factors to Porter and Steers' (1973) model for employee turnover, namely job satisfaction and organisational commitment. An employee who identifies with the goals and values of an organisation and is involved in the processes and/or activities of an organisation is committed to it. By the 80's, Price and Mueller (1981) also updated the model by including distributive justice (drawn from equity theory), i.e. employee satisfaction is linked to the comparison made between their job inputs (e.g. effort, qualification and experience) and outcomes (e.g. salary and advancement opportunities).

A number of other retention constructs have emerged over time such as flexible work arrangements, organisational prestige (linked to being an 'employer of choice') and location of the workplace (Hausknecht et al, 2009). Maertz, Boyar and Pearson (2012) also added location attachment as a retention motive in their study to Maertz and Griffeth's (2004) 8 Forces Framework, which consists of eight retention motives relating to personal, organisational and other factors outlined in table 1 below.

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Table 1: 8 Forces Framework (Maertz and Griffeth, 2004).

1. Affected Forces	Emotional commitment and satisfaction with the organisation.
2. Contractual Forces	Psychological contract obligations to the organisation and perceptions of contract violations reducing obligations.
3. Calculative Forces	Employees calculate their opportunities to achieve their goals and values at the current organisation.
4. Alternative Forces	Existence of alternative job opportunities.
5. Behavioural Forces	Perceived costs (tangible or psychological) of leaving.
6. Normative Forces	Expectations of family or friends of whether the employee should stay or leave the organisation.
7. Moral Forces	The value that employees internalise with respect to staying or leaving an organisation (e.g. show of weakness or strength).
8. Constituent Forces	Relationship with constituents such as managers and colleagues (e.g. positive or negative).

2.7. TOTAL REWARDS SYSTEM

Rewards are key to attracting, retaining and motivating talented employees (Bussin & Van Rooy, 2014; Warnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015). To be effective, total rewards need to be both financial and non-financial in nature (Bussin & Van Rooy, 2014; Warnich et al, 2015). Financial rewards include monetary rewards such as salary, bonus and commission as well as benefits such as life insurance, medical aid, paid leave and pension (Warnich et al, 2015). Non-financial rewards include flexible working hours and working environment, personal growth opportunities, interesting and challenging work as well as autonomy in performing your work (Warnich et al, 2015). Bussin and Van Rooy (2014) submitted that non-financial rewards are part of the psychological contract that exists between the employer and the employee.

The key elements in the total rewards system identified in the Warnich et al (2015) model are provided in the folowing figure.

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Figure 1: Warnich et al's (2015) total rewards system model (p.403).
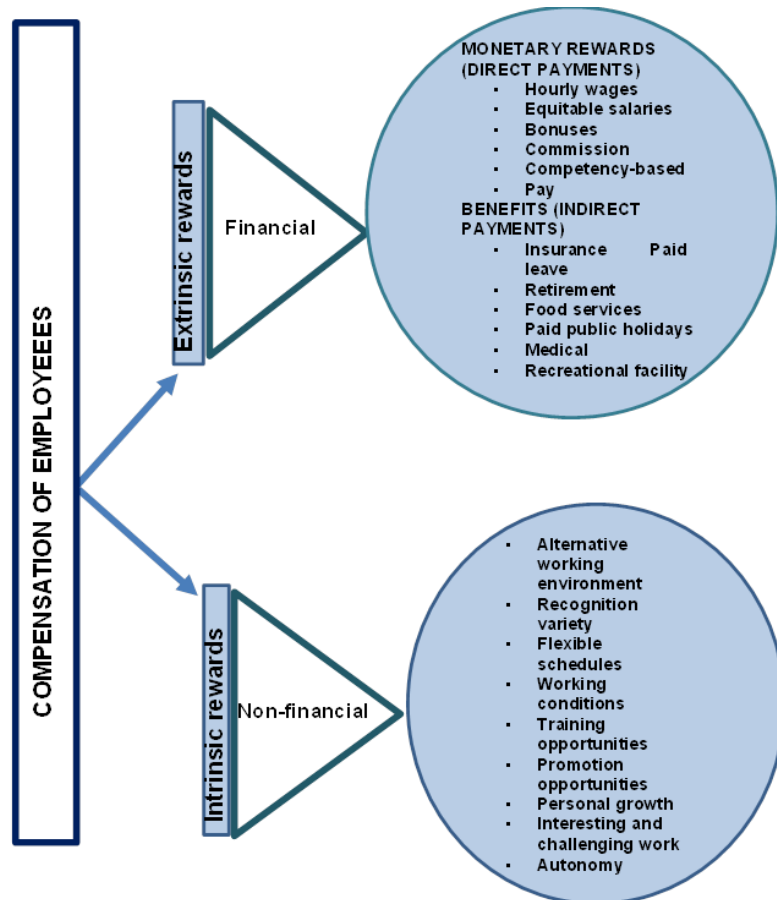
2.7.1. Objectives of a Total Rewards System

The objective of a total rewards system, such as the one outlined in Warnich et al's (2015) model is to attract, retain and motivate talented employees as well as comply with legal requirements.

The main form of attracting talented employees is salary (an extrinsic, financial reward). The reason being that it is easier to compare salaries being offered by various companies than it is to compare intrinsic, non-financial rewards such as working conditions. Furthermore, people looking for work often know very little about various potential employers. Thus, companies try to remain competitive as preferred employers by offering similar salaries to those being offered by other companies in the market (Warnich et al, 2015).

To retain talented employees, organisations need to ensure that there is equity with regards to rewards offered – both intrinsic and extrinsic. The perception of inequity will

result in employees wanting to leave. According to Warnich et al (2015), the perception of inequity is a stronger predictor of employee turnover in companies than job satisfaction. Thus, a total rewards system needs to be perceived as equitable to enable the retention of talented employees.

A total rewards system that is perceived as equitable, is just as important in motivating talented employees. Employees expect that their performances will equate the rewards that they will receive from the organisation. Should there not be a relationship between performance and rewards then performance will drop as the employee will not see a need to excel. Thus, organisations need to ensure that accurate appraisals are done by managers, rewards are directly linked to high performance and that managers provide detailed feedback that enables employees to assess which parts of their performance requires improvement (Warnich et al, 2015).

The final objective of a total rewards system is to comply with legislation. South African legislation such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No.75 of 1997 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act, No.11 of 2002 which regulate aspects of the rewards system such as minimum wage, hours of work, overtime pay and non-discriminatory pay practices (e.g. equal pay for equal work) (Warnich et al, 2015). Legislation affects the reward system of an organisation as it forms a non-negotiable part of the reward strategy.

Warnich et al (2015) developed the 10 Cs, outlined in table 2, which organisations can use to assess the effectiveness of their rewards system.

Table 2: 10 Cs to assess the effectiveness of the rewards system (Warnich et al, 2015, p.408).

Quality	Criteria
Competitive	Is competitive in the external environment to recruit and retain employees
Convergent	Is convergent with essential skills and values and overall business strategy
Contributory	Pays for contribution and performance
Customised	Is customised and customisable to the specific requirements of individual employees
Committed	Encourages motivation and commitment in employees
Communicated	Is well-communicated, comprehended and received by employees
Cost effective	Is both affordable and cost effective
Changeable	Is adaptable to changing needs
Controlled	Is managed and administered efficiently
Compliant	Is legally compliant, internally equitable and fair

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Attracting and retaining talented employees in key to an organisation's capacity building and ultimate success. The literature reviewed details how retention models have evolved and adapted to changes in employee needs over time. This has led to an understanding that an organisation needs to implement a total rewards system that is equitable and has both financial and non-financial rewards as this will appeal to the extrinsic and intrinsic needs of employees. The total rewards system is thus already applied at recruitment stage.

2.8. APPLICABILITY OF A RETENTION STRATEGY

Just as a rewards system is already applied at the recruitment stage as a form of attracting employees to an organisation, similarly a company's retention strategy is not only developed for current employees but begins to be applied at the point of recruitment. The strategy then covers the new employee's orientation into active employment, his/her lifespan in the organisation and ceases to apply at the point where the employee leaves the organisation.

2.8.1. Recruitment Stage

Bussin and Smit (2013) indicate that retention should be initiated at the recruitment stage by ensuring that the advert contains the attributes of the organisation's ideal candidate, the job description is clear and behavioural assessments form part of the recruitment process. Selection techniques can include personality tests which can be used to identify individuals with personality traits that best fit the organisation and job being applied for (Steel, Griffeth and Hom, 2002; Liu et al, 2015).

Davis (1993) highlights that managers should consider a number of factors in the recruitment phase before appointing overqualified candidates. For example, the transformational quality of the candidate; i.e. the capacity to grow and learn as well as adapt to change. Another factor to consider is whether the candidate has experience and training that is relevant to the business/industry and can be leveraged by the same business/industry. If the candidate has experience and training that can immediately be leveraged in the position being applied for that would constitute an immediate benefit to the organisation. Managers should also consider whether the organisation has the resources to enable the candidate to be productive. Also, whether the organisation is sufficiently flexible to allow the candidate to grow. This approach is referred to by Kulkarni et al (2015) as hiring for the organisation rather than for the job.

The above considerations are supported by Gallo (2011) who recommends that hiring managers consider the broader organisation as well as its current and future talent when deciding whether to appoint an overqualified candidate. Gallo (2011) also recommends that consideration be given to how the job can be shaped to accommodate the candidate's skills set. Also, where there are organisational contextual factors at play such as where the organisation can offer training opportunities and internal mobility opportunities, overqualified employees should be considered for employment (Kulkarni et al, 2015; Martinez et al, 2014).

2.8.2. Employee Orientation Stage

An element of a retention model that can be introduced to new employees during orientation is realistic job previews using for example expectation-lowering training (Steel et al, 2002; Liu et al, 2015). This type of training makes new employees aware of the impact of unmet job expectations and allows them to share their previous experiences with this phenomena. It reduces employee turnover and is particularly effective on new employees with little or no previous work experience (Steel et al, 2002; Liu et al, 2015).

2.8.3. Active Employment Stage

Creating and maintaining a working environment that attracts, retains and develops good employees is crucial to retention (Bussin and Smit, 2013). This is not only the physical environment but also ensuring that there are policies and practices in place that translate the organisation's founding ethics and values.

According to a study conducted by De Vos and Meganck (2009) employees, in general, value the following (in order of importance) most: career development opportunities, social atmosphere, job content, financial rewards and work-life balance. The same study also found that HR managers believed the key retention factors (in order of importance) to be the following: training, career perspectives, financial rewards, performance management and communication. The two views clearly differ. HR managers are more concerned with those factors that they believe cause employees to leave instead of those factors that cause employees to stay. The misalignment often results in ineffective retention strategies.

Bussin and Smit (2013) add that developing effective employee relationship strategies is important to resolving the misalignment. This can be done by training managers and supervisors on how to work effectively with people, understanding what attracts people to your company, finding out what can be improved and developing employee support strategies. These strategies are based on the premise that employees want to excel but to do so they need to be adequately resourced and also require moral and mental support. Lastly, Bussin and Smit (2013) propose that organisations implement effective employee remuneration strategies that among others link remuneration to performance and include flexible employee benefits that appeal to a changing workforce.

Organisational practices, particularly those formalised in policies and procedures can enable retention. Examples of these would be allowing job enrichment - the redesign of a job to make it more challenging and thus more satisfying, allowing managers to assign overqualified employees to challenging projects, allowing them to assist in implementing their ideas and allowing them more autonomy in performing their work (Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016; Steel et al, 2002; Liu et al, 2015). These types of practices will ultimately benefit the organisation through among others higher productivity, greater profitability and higher employee retention which could ultimately become a competitive advantage should competitors not have the right people motivated to perform (Schuler and MacMillan, 1984).

Schuler and MacMillan (1984) add that the ability of an organisation to attract and retain the right people improves its capacity to implement critical projects. The study conducted by Hausknecht et al (2009) further suggests that retention interventions developed for specific groups of employees may be valuable as they found differences in for example the retention interventions most valued by high performing employees versus those valued by low performing employees. Similarly, Bussin and van Rooy (2014) advocate that it would be beneficial for organisations to find ways of segmenting the workforce and applying retention interventions specific to particular groups.

From the literature study above, it seems that some research has been done into how to motivate overqualified employees and thus positively make use of their excess capacity in an organisation. However, the research on retention strategies seems to have focussed on employees in general or on high/average or performing employees and not on overqualified employees specifically. A study will be conducted on the key factors that can be used by organisations to retain overqualified employees and thus enable the organisation to benefit from their excess capacity and skills.

2.9. SUMMARY

The preceding discussion outlines the contrasting schools of thought on whether the employment of overqualified employees heeds positive or negative outcomes for organisations. It is evident that a number of factors affect whether overqualified employees engage in positive or negative behaviours. These may be personal, organisational or other factors. Chapter 3 presents the research questions, which have been developed out of the overqualification aspects discussed in chapter 2. It provides the focus area of the study on which research subjects will be interviewed to provide insights into overqualification and the retention of overqualified employees.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to analyse the reasons for applying and accepting a job in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in or leave an organisation. To address the purpose of the study, the following research questions were developed to guide the focus of the research:

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the reasons influencing a decision to apply and accept a job for which one is overqualified for?

The question seeks to gain insight into interviewees' reasons for applying and accepting a job which they are overqualified for. These reasons could relate to organisational, personal, economic and environmental elements.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave?

The question seeks to uncover reasons relating to the organisation that interviewees consider important in making the decision to stay or leave. The question also seeks to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of the overqualified employee in the organisation.

3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What elements of the reward model are used to attract, retain and motivate employees?

Retention strategies differ in organisations. The question seeks to establish which reward model elements are in use and which of these overqualified employees consider important to retain and motivate them. The researcher will also seek to determine whether there is alignment between the organisation's reward model and

what overqualified employees consider key in making the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

3.5 SUMMARY

Overqualification is a very broad topic that cannot be fully researched in the time allocated for this study. The decision was thus taken to focus the research on the three research questions and thereby also narrow the scope of the study. The focus areas of the research were to explore the reasons for applying and accepting a job for which one is overqualified for as well as the organisational factors that then affect the decision of overqualified employees to stay or leave an organisation. The research then explored the elements of a reward model that are in use, which of those overqualified employees most value and to what extent there is alignment between the two. The research also explored to a limited extent whether overqualified employees and their managers had the same views on overqualification. The following section, i.e. chapter 4, presents the research methodology used by the researcher to answer the research questions.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology followed by the researcher to answer the research questions outlined in chapter 3. The research followed a semi-structured approach where interviews were conducted with research participants. The participants were overqualified employees currently fulfilling administrative roles and their managers.

The nature of the research was qualitative and exploratory as the purpose was to gain insights into the reasons for applying and accepting a job in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as insights into the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in an organisation. This chapter will further outline the chosen methodology.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The choice of research method is determined by the objective of the research. Since the objective of the researcher was to uncover insights into the reasons for applying and accepting a job in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as insights into the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in an organisation. The objective is explorative in nature.

Exploratory studies work well in instances where the researcher wishes to discover unexplored elements about a particular subject which he/she does not fully understand, which is the case in this study (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). Exploratory studies also provide insights into the subject matter that inform more detailed and focussed future studies (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). Qualitative research metods are exploratory in nature. Thus the choice of research methodology was qualitative and exploratory.

In line with the exploratory nature of the study, an inductive approach was applied in analysing the data collected. The inductive approach operates from the premise that all data within the context of the study should be gathered as evidence (Potter, 1996).

This analysis approach supports exploratory methods. Saunders and Lewis (2012) define induction as "a research approach which involves the development of theory as a result of analysing data already collected" (p.108-109).

Additionally, the scope of the research was confined to overqualified employees currently performing administrative roles to provide the context of the study. This enabled the researcher to observe and provide explanations to the phenomena of overqualification within a particular setting. The research intended to provide the best explanations to the research questions within the context of the study.

Due to time constraints, the study constituted a cross sectional research design as it provided insights at a point in time and not over a series of time intervals (Saunders and Lewis, 2012).

4.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

4.3.1 Ontology

Ontology relates to how a researcher views social reality. This view could be from two basic ontological perspectives. Firstly, the researcher treats social interactions as a response to external stimuli. Secondly, the researcher treats social reality as constructed by the individuals who interact with and make sense of the world through those interactions. In this research, the researcher applied the second ontological perspective as answers to the research questions are sought in the experiences of the research participants and the researcher's perception plays a role in interpreting social interactions. Thus the researcher's ontological stance is that knowledge is acquired by the shared experience of others within the situation under research.

4.3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is about how ontological perspectives come to be known and shared. Where the ontological perspective involves the researcher interpreting the social interactions based on interviewees' experiences, the epistemological dimension is interpretivist. Saunders and Lewis (2012) explain that interpretivism "relates to the study of social phenomena in their natural environment" (p.106). It is based on an understanding of what the world is, and also provides for an idealistic and socially constructive approach. A constructivist paradigm enables the reconstruction of understandings of the social world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Schwandt (2001)

indicates that "constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experiences" (p.30).

In this study, the purpose was to gain insights into the reasons for applying and accepting a job in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as insights into the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in or leave an organisation. This was done by interpreting the experiences of interviewees, as relayed by them in the interviews, within their environment. The interpretivist epistemology was thus the most suitable approach to achieve the researcher's objectives.

4.4 POPULATION

The research population comprises overqualified employees of all races, ages and gender who are employed in a single organisation in South Africa. To qualify to participate in the study, participants need to fit the definition of overqualification used in the study, which is that of Erdogan et al (2011), i.e. "the individual has surplus skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience, and other qualifications that are not required by or utilized on the job" (p.217). The entire research population could not be used due to time constraints, limited resources and the inability to identify and contact everyone in the research population.

4.5 SAMPLING

4.5.1 Sampling Method and Size

For this study, only overqualified employees currently performing administrative roles across disciplines and their managers were selected. The researcher had access to the sample size and thus the sample was initially identified using non-probability sampling such as convenience sampling as the researcher had already identified potential participants and thereafter snowball sampling, where interviewees identified other potential participants.

It is important that a sample is homogeneous as it provides representativity of the population that the sample is drawn from. A homogeneous sample also ensures that the findings of the study are confined to the scope of the study. Homogeneity of the selected sample for this study was ensured by including overqualified employees who

currently perform administrative roles. Overqualified employees who perform other job roles were not included in the study neither were employees who did not fit the overqualification definition used in this study.

The researcher intended to interview fifteen people but data saturation was reached at twelve. The researcher interviewed ten overqualified employees currently in administrative roles and two of their managers. Data saturation was used as the determinant for the cut-off point. Interview consent forms (Appendix B) were sent to prospective interviewees for their approval prior to the interview sessions to confirm their participation.

4.6 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis, i.e. what one wants to measure or study, in this study were employees who applied and accepted a job in an organisation for which they were overqualified for as well as the reasons that would make these employees want to stay in an organisation.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION

4.7.1 Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

The data was collected from in-depth, semi-structured interviews of overqualified employees currently in administrative roles and their managers. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) explains the two types of qualitative interviews, as follows: "Unstructured, non-standardised or in-depth interviews involve a broad agenda which maps the issues to be explored across the sample, but the order, wording and way in which they are followed up will vary considerably between interviews. In semi-structured or semi-standardised interviews, the interviewer asks key questions in the same way each time and does some probing for further information, but this probing is more limited than in unstructured, in-depth interviews" (p.111). Saunders and Lewis (2012), however, highlight that the researcher can change the order of questions and elect to ask or not ask certain questions depending on relevance to the interviewee. In the case of this study, the researcher opted not to ask certain questions, particularly in the case of the managers interviewed, as not all questions were relevant to them.

Interviews lasted on average just over an hour. The researcher explained the key themes of the interview to the participants focussing on the research questions to direct

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thinking. The interviews were recorded and the type of questions asked were open-ended questions to illicit more information from the interviewees. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed by coding the data using Atlas.ti. Common themes emerged and are reported on in chapter 5.

4.7.2 Interview Guideline

The first part of the interview guideline consisted of demographic data relating to the participants. In this part, it was important to capture the qualification and working experience of the interviewee as well as whether the qualification had been obtained through full-time or part-time studies. This information confirmed whether the interviewee met the overqualification definition used in the study and was used in the data analysis.

The second part of the interview guideline consisted of open-ended sub-questions guided by the broader research questions. The interview guideline (attached as Appendix A) was circulated to a few people who would not form part of the study to test whether the questions could be clearly understood or needed to be refined to reduce ambiguity. Some refinement of questions was done as a result of inputs received in this process.

4.7.3 Interview Pilot

Prior to initiating the live interviews, the researcher selected two interviewees with whom the interview guide could be piloted. The purpose of the pilot was to ascertain the duration of the interview and the type of data that could be collected in the live interviews.

The pilot enabled the researcher (also the interviewer in this study) to gain insight into the prospective interview process and rectify any shortcomings. The pilot enriched the use of the interview instrument by ensuring that the eventual interview process ran smoothly and that the questions were clearly understood by all interviewees. The data collected during the pilot was discarded and did not form part of the research data analysed.

4.7.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis approach used in this study is inductive analysis. In this approach, as outlined by Potter (1996), the researcher initially makes observations and then identifies patterns in the observations, which are categorised. The inductive approach operates from the premise that all data within the context of the study should be gathered as evidence (Potter, 1996). At this stage, the researcher is able to make observations. The researcher then leaves the observation stage and moves into the data analysis stage where the patterns in the observations made are drawn and categorised (Potter, 1996).

In this study, all data within the context of the study was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were set out in such a way that the responses to the sub-questions could easily be linked to the research questions. The researcher made notes of her observations during each interview. All interviews were transcribed and first level analysis of data was done on each interview using Atlas.ti software to manage the data collected and code it inductively. At this stage, new categories were identified and information was added to existing categories. Once data saturation was reached, no more interviews were conducted.

A second-level analysis was then done on the categorised data, thus developing common themes among the categories and thereby addressing the research questions. Data was transferred from Atlas.ti to Excel to produce tables for each theme, i.e. outlining the number of times that a particular theme had been mentioned. Finally explanatory analysis was conducted where, among others, patterns and linkages in the data were explained (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

4.8. CREDIBILITY AND DEPENDABILITY

An important criteria in determining the quality of the research process undertaken in a study is its trustworthiness, which is determined by among others establishing credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Potter, 1996).

4.8.1 Credibility

Qualitative researchers use the term credibility which has the same meaning as validity. Validity refers to 'the accuracy (or the truthfulness) of the data' (Potter, 1996, p.192). Credibility essentially relates to whether the study measures what the researcher designed it to measure. The research instrument must be accurate.

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According to Potter (1996), credibility in qualitative research is established through 'triangulation, rechecking with data sources and interobserver reliability' (p.229). Interobserver reliability refers to the consensus among multiple observers regarding the same phenomena (Potter, 1996).

Potter (1996) explains triangulation as the process of gathering data from several different sources with the purpose of establishing whether there is a common perspective. Different types of triangulation have been noted; namely data source triangulation where the researcher attempts to identify whether the data remains the same across contexts, investigator triangulation where different researchers investigate the same occurrence, theory triangulation where different theories are applied to the same data set and methodological triangulation where different methods are applied to the same data set (Zivkovic, 2012). Triangulation provides assurance on the credibility/validity of the study undertaken.

In this study, credibility was safeguarded by using data source triangulation and interobserver reliability, i.e. the viewpoints and experiences of individual participants were either substantiated or not substantiated by those of other participants. The participants interviewed were from different departments and organisations and thus the researcher was able to get different viewpoints on the same problem. The themes developed came from different viewpoints. Credibility was also safeguarded by rechecking the data with some of the interviewees to ensure that data gathered was correctly understood and interpreted by the researcher.

4.8.2 Dependability

Qualitative researchers use the term dependability which has a similar meaning as reliability. Reliability refers to 'the consistency and stability of the measures' (Potter, 1996, p.192). Dependability is therefore the extent to which the same results will be achieved if the same study is conducted at another time using the same research instrument and procedure.

To establish dependability, qualitative researchers are required to provide in-depth reporting on the research process followed (Shenton, 2004). This includes covering the research design and implementation, the operational details of how data gathering was conducted as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the research process in the study (Shenton, 2004).

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Dependability was ensured in this study by covering the elements outlined by Shenton (2004) using supporting evidence such as outlining the research problem formulation (chapter 1), presenting the interview guideline (Appendix A), making the interview recordings and notes taken by the researcher available as well as providing evidence of the data analysis (chapter 5 and category and themes list – Appendix 2).

4.8.3 Transferability

Qualitative researchers use the term transferability which has the same meaning as external validity. External validity is the extent to which one study can be applied to another research context (Shenton, 2004). Transferability is therefore the extent to which one study is application to another situation and population.

To enable a determination to be made about whether the study is transferable to another situation, a detailed and in-depth description of the study and particularly its context is required (Potter, 1996; Shenton, 2004). Shenton (2004) suggests that this detail should include information regarding 'the number of organisations taking part in the study and where they are based; any restrictions in the type of people who contributed data; the number of participants involved in the fieldwork; the data collection methods that were employed; the number and length of the data collection sessions; the time period over which the data was collected' (p.70).

According to Potter (1996), the use of inductive analysis increases transferability of the study to other contexts as the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee is more explicit and provides a better description of the context.

Transferability of this study to another situation and population was not tested although the detail required for transferability (recommended by Shenton, 2004) is part of the reporting. Also, inductive analysis was applied in analysing the data for the study, which may assist with transferability. Although the findings and insights presented by this study pertain to overqualified employees currently in administrative roles, there are opportunities to explore this further in a different context and thus test transferability.

4.8.4 Confirmability

Qualitative researchers use the term confirmability which has the same meaning as objectivity. To ensure objectivity, the findings of the study need to be based on the

ideas and experiences of the data sources and not on the researcher's own views (Shenton, 2004). A detailed and in-depth description of the process followed in the study and supporting evidence thereof enables the establishment of the presence of confirmability. Triangulation also adds to confirmability as it removes the researcher's own bias from the equation.

Confirmability of this study was not tested through for example the conducting an external audit. However, the detailed description of the research process followed is reported on and the use of data source triangulation in this study supports confirmability.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher submitted all the required consent forms and documentation to the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) for ethical clearance consideration as is required by the university. Ethical clearance (attached as Appendix C) was granted prior to data collection being initiated.

Participants in the study were given a written description of the purpose, scope and objectives of the study. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could revoke their participation at any stage in the study. The confidentiality of information shared by participants was stated upfront and they were not coerced nor incentivised in any way to participate in the study.

The study was carried out in a way that ensures the confidentiality of not only the individual interviewees but also their organisations. The interview questions were based on the practices of their respective organisations and no confidential organisational information was used or requested for the study.

Consent was sought from interviewees to record interviews prior to interviews being conducted and the confidentiality of interviewees was retained throughout. Recorded interviews and transcriptions were stored using a numbering system; e.g. interviewee 1, interviewee 2, etc.; to ensure confidentiality was retained.

All interviewees signed GIBS' informed consent letter to confirm their consenting participation in the study. The consent letter is attached as Appendix B.

4.10 LIMITATIONS

As much as qualitative research provides insight into a particular phenomena, caution must be exercised in generalising these insights to other situations/contexts (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). Furthermore, the use of non-probability sampling methods introduces bias into the research. In light of this, the following limitations were identified:

- Transferability of this study was not tested and thus the research findings are confined to the scope and context of the study.
- The sampling choice introduced bias as all the participants (with the exception of one) were employed in the same organisation. Furthermore, the two organisations that interviewees were employed in were both governmental organisations, only two of the interviewees were male and only two of the interviewees were managers. Therefore, some sample diversity was lost.
- The research could have benefitted from covering overqualified employees currently in various roles. However, time and money constraints meant the research was confined to overqualified employees currently in administrative roles.
- The study constitutes a cross sectional research design as it provided insights at a point in time. The same findings may not be applicable at another time. This would need to be tested.

4.11 SUMMARY

The research followed a qualitative research method. It was exploratory in nature with the objective to gain insights into the reasons for applying and accepting a job in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as insights into the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in an organisation. Initially a convenience sampling method was applied as the researcher had already identified potential participants and thereafter snowball sampling. The interview guideline developed was circulated to a few people for input on clarity of questions and to reduce ambiguity. Some refinement of questions was done whereafter the interview instrument was piloted to ascertain the duration of the interview and any potential challenges. All interviews were transcribed and analysed thus developing common themes for further analysis in relation to the research questions. The limitations of the study were

identified. The following section, i.e. chapter 5, presents the results from the interviews conducted to answer the research questions.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results in response to the research questions in chapter 3 obtained using the research methodology discussed in chapter 4. The first part of this chapter provides an overview of the sample that formed part of the study. This is followed by an outline of how the data was organised and analysed as well as the responses to each of the research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results, thus providing a consolidation of the research findings.

5.2 SAMPLE OVERVIEW

Ten overqualified employees currently in administrative roles and two managers of overqualified employees were interviewed by the researcher. Twelve interviews were conducted as data saturation was achieved.

The interviewees came from various disciplines in their organisations and the sample chosen is demographically diverse. This was done to ensure data source triangulation and interobserver reliability. Table 3, which follows, shows the distribution of disciplines that the participants in the sample were drawn from.

Table 3: Distribution of interviewees by discipline.

Discipline	Number of candidates interviewed
Administration	1
Enforcement	3
Ethics	1
Finance	1
IT	1
Risk Mitigation	2
Security	3
Total	**12**

Table 4 below shows the distribution of managers and overqualified employees interviewed.

Table 4: Distribution of interviewees by function and discipline.

Function	Discipline	Number of candidates interviewed
Managers	Risk Mitigation	1
	Security	1
Overqualified employees	Administration	1
	Enforcement	3
	Ethics	1
	Finance	1
	IT	1
	Risk Mitigation	1
	Security	2
Total		**12**

As previously indicated, the interviewees are also demographically diverse to ensure that their perspectives are equally diverse adding to data source triangulation and interobserver reliability. Table 5 below shows the gender distribution of participants while table 6 outlines their age ranges and table 7 provides the distribution per race group.

Table 5: Distribution of interviewees by gender.

Gender	Discipline	Number of candidates interviewed
Female	Administration	1
	Enforcement	3
	Ethics	1
	Finance	1
	IT	1
	Risk Mitigation	1
	Security	2
Male	Risk Mitigation	1
	Security	1
Total		**12**

Table 6: Distribution of interviewees by age.

Age	Discipline	Number of candidates interviewed
20-29	Ethics	1
	Finance	1
	Security	1
30-39	Enforcement	3
	IT	1
	Security	1
	Risk Mitigation	1
40-49	Administration	1
	Risk Mitigation	1
	Security	1
Total		**12**

Table 7: Distribution of interviewees by race group.

Race	Discipline	Number of candidates interviewed
African	Enforcement	2
	Ethics	1
	Finance	1
	IT	1
	Risk Mitigation	2
Coloured	Administration	1
	Security	1
White	Enforcement	1
	Security	2
Total		**12**

The research sample also comprised of participants with different levels of tertiary education and years of working experience. This diversity not only adds to the diversity of perspectives needed to ensure data source triangulation and interobserver reliability but the information was also used by the researcher to confirm the overqualification of participants, specifically with regards to the ten overqualified employees that participated in the study. Tables 8 and 9 respectively outline the highest levels of education and years of working experience of the participants in the study.

Table 8: Distribution of interviewees by highest level of education.

Highest level of education	Discipline	Number of candidates interviewed
National Diploma	Enforcement	3
	Risk Mitigation	2
	Security	1
Degree	Finance	1
	IT	1
	Security	2
Honours Degree	Administration	1
	Ethics	1
Total		**12**

Six of the ten overqualified employees interviewed studied full-time for their qualifications while four studied part-time while in the positions that they are currently in.

Table 9: Distribution of interviewees by years of working experience.

Years of working experience	Discipline	Number of Candidates interviewed
0 - 5 years	Ethics	1
	Finance	1
	Risk Mitigation	1
6 - 10 years	Enforcement	1
	IT	1
11 - 15 years	Enforcement	1
	Security	2
16 - 20 years	Administration	1
	Enforcement	1
	Risk Mitigation	1
21 - 25 years	Security	1
Total		**12**

5.3   DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

In this study, all data within the context of the study was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were set out in such a way that the responses to the sub-questions could easily be linked to the research questions. The researcher

made notes of her observations during each interview. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. First level analysis of data was done on each interview using Atlas.ti software to manage the data collected and code it inductively. The inductive approach applied involved the researcher using the data collected to gain insights and draw conclusions in relation to the research questions identified. At this stage, new categories were identified and information was added to existing categories. Once data saturation was reached, no more interviews were conducted. Figure 2 shows how the number of new themes identified reduced as the interviews progressed until no new themes could be identified.

Figure 2: Number of themes identified per interview.
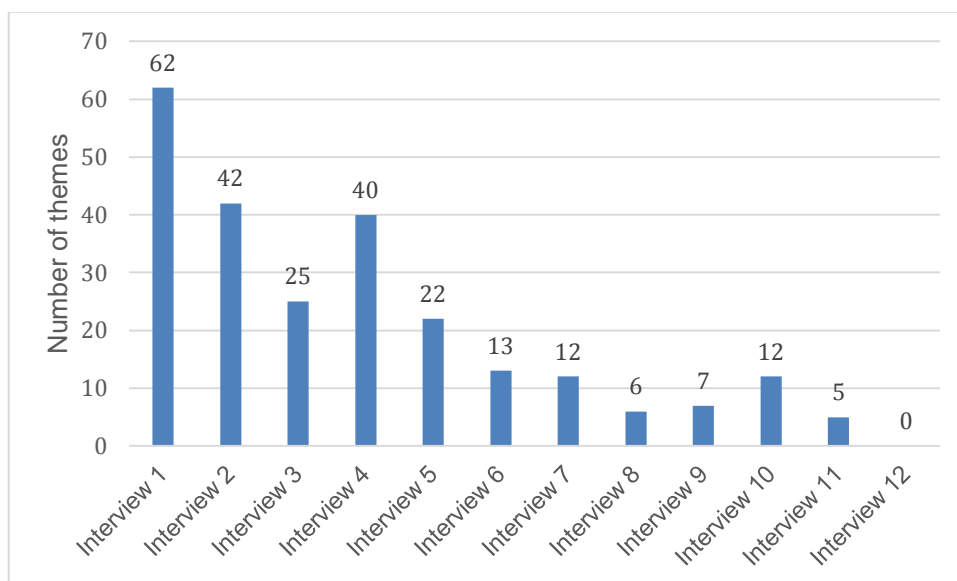
A second-level analysis was then done on the categorised data, thus developing common themes among the categories and thereby addressing the research questions. The research questions presented in chapter 3 were used as a guide to focus the interviews. Data was transferred from Atlas.ti to Excel to produce tables for each theme, i.e. outlining the number of times that a particular theme had been mentioned. Finally the researcher drew conclusions from the insights gained and then compared them to the theory on overqualification, retention and rewards covered in chapter 2 to determine whether the data was confirming or contradicting the theory.

The researcher's conclusions were substantiated by directly quoting the interviewees on key points, indicating the number of interviewees that had commented on a theme and the number of times that the theme had been mentioned. A ranking (as per the number of times mentioned) of themes discussed per research question was also

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developed by the researcher to summarise the conclusions. Finally explanatory analysis was conducted where, among others, patterns and linkages in the data were explained (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The results that follow are presented as per each research question as outlined in chapter 3.

5.4   RESULTS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the reasons influencing a decision to apply and accept a job for which one is overqualified for?

The question seeks to gain insight into interviewees' reasons for applying and accepting a job which they are overqualified for. These reasons could relate to organisational, personal, economic and environmental elements.

5.4.1. Career development opportunities

The view that there would be career development opportunities in the organisation where the overqualified employee had applied for and accepted a position for which he/she is overqualified for was cited as the main reason for applying and accepting the position. All ten overqualified employees and one of the managers interviewed cited this as a reason. The interviewees also made mention that they believed that once they got into the organisation, there would be growth and other opportunities that the organisation would provide. This was key to their reason to apply and accept a position for which they were overqualified for.

Box 1: Selected responses regarding career development opportunities from overqualified employees.

"…I also thought that there would be more growth or career advancement." (Interviewee 2)

"I accepted it based on it's a big company, organisation there is there is a lot of opportunities and exposure to different things." (Interviewee 4)

"…I think because the organisation has different divisions, and also you just see the possibility of growing within the organisation. So it's not like it is limiting and that there are more opportunities other than going outside and checking for something

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else." (Interviewee 6)

"I came from a teaching background which was very restrictive, and I was looking for a position where I could grow and develop and come out of the teaching environment." (Interviewee 7)

"…I had that thing that once I am in that position I am going to give it my all, work hard, study and I will grow within the organisation." (Interviewee 12)

One of the managers interviewed also provided a view that candidates apply and accept positions that they are overqualified for due to the perception that there is potential for growth in the organisation.

Box 2: A particular response regarding career development opportunities from one of the managers interviewed.

"I think in a government organisation overall it is a thing of people that if I can get my foot into government at least it is safe and because in government there's so many different fields, at least I am in the working field and I can grow from there. And also because it is a big organisation." (Interviewee 10)

The number of times that overqualified employees and managers mentioned career development opportunities as the reason for applying and accepting positions, for which they are overqualified for, is provided in table 10.

Table 10: Number of times career development opportunities were mentioned in relation to applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	1
Overqualified employees	42
Total	**43**

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5.4.2. Job Security

Job security emerged as the second most mentioned reason for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for. Eight of the overqualified employees and the two managers interviewed cited this as a reason. Interviewees indicated that they were struggling to get shortlisted and interviewed for positions as jobs were scarce. Thus, they took the position that they were overqualified for to secure a job and thus be able to provide for their families in the future. They generally believed that there would be career opportunities for them once they were inside the organisation. The interviewees also made mention of having previously been employed in temporary positions and thus seeking permanent positions as well as having the need to be employed.

Box 3: Selected responses regarding job security from overqualified employees.

"…when the offer came to be honest I had already doubts about me getting the permanent post so when it came I didn't think twice about it. That's why even the time frame that they required for me to respond, I responded within two days and said on the fourth day I would start." (Interviewee 1)

"…also because it is government. Most people feel like there is security in government, but also, because of the organisation itself, because of its reputation and opportunities, I guess." (Interviewee 6)

"Well, I just saw that nothing is actually coming up. I'm not being called for interviews. I'm not even getting you know those annoying emails, 'We regret to inform you ...'
Interviewer: Yeah.
Interviewee: Yeah. I wasn't even getting those. So rather than just, after the contract ended, just sitting at home doing nothing up until something comes up. If I didn't know what was going to happen.
Interviewer: Yes, so rather accept a job.
Interviewee: A job.
Interviewer: Even if it's not on the level in, not the kind of work you studied for?
Interviewee: Yes. I think another problem which was working against me is most jobs require experience." (Interviewee 8)

Both managers interviewed also had the view that candidates apply and accept positions that they are overqualified for due to a need for job security.

Box 4: Selected responses regarding job security from the managers interviewed.

"I think in a government organisation overall it is a thing of people that if I can get my foot into government at least it is safe and because government there's so many different fields, at least I am in the working field and I can grow from there. And also because it is a big organisation." (Interviewee 10)

"I think one of the things is job security, because the organisation doesn't retrench. They will keep their employees, because as I have mentioned earlier that the economy of the country is going down so people will want that job security and the other thing will be benefits I think." (Interviewee 11)

It was also found that four of the ten overqualified employees interviewed were previously underemployed (having been employed in temporary positions) and six of them (including the four that were previously underemployed) were previously employed in positions for which they were also overqualified for.

Box 5: Selected responses regarding previous overqualification and underemployment from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"I just accepted the offer because it was my first real job, the other jobs were temporary. So this was my first permanent job, yes." (Interviewee 9)

"I think I was still overqualified. I had a higher certificate at the time. I was in a contract position. A temporary contract kind of employment and I was looking for a permanent position." (Interviewee 12)

The number of times that overqualified employees and managers mentioned job security as the reason for applying and accepting positions, for which they are overqualified for, is provided in table 11.

Table 11: Number of times job security was mentioned in relation to applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	4
Overqualified employees	21
Total	**25**

5.4.3. Challenging and Stimulating Work

Another job-specific organisational element that was provided as a reason for applying and accepting positions for which one is overqualified for was challenging and stimulating work. Nine out of the ten overqualified employees interviewed cited this as a reason. The overqualified employees interviewed were of the view that although they were overqualified for the postions, they would still be given the opportunity to learn new systems and processes or even learn other work in the value chain.

Box 6: Selected responses relating to challenging and stimulating work from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"Because sometimes it's all about taking initiative and wanting to learn more because I also do things that are outside of my job description like I've asked to learn more about maybe verifying because sometimes I deal mostly with the verifiers." (Interviewee 1)

"My expectations was that I continue to learn more and I am given a chance to do other difficult jobs, deal with difficult job situations, and be allowed to take, not necessarily chances, but make decisions and be trusted with them." (Interviewee 3)

"It was just that I wanted to learn, because I just had been exposed to one certain thing at the company I was working at. The rest of the things, when working for my father, I basically did everything, but it was not formal structure because my father ran his own business. So, yeah, I wanted to be more familiar with how things are run in big organisations and processes, process wise, because, basically, what I studied was not just cost and management accounting is not just cost accounting it is applied to basically any department or section where you make something efficient…" (Interviewee 4)

Neither of the managers interviewed raised challenging and stimulating work as a reason for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

The number of times that overqualified employees mentioned challenging and stimulating work as the reason for applying and accepting positions, for which they are overqualified for, is provided in table 12.

Table 12: Number of times challenging and stimulating work was mentioned in relation to applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	0
Overqualified employees	21
Total	**21**

5.4.4 Benefits

Six of the ten overqualified employees interviewed and one of the managers cited the benefits that an organisation has to offer as a reason to apply an accept a position for which one is overqualified for. The benefits cited included medical aid, pension contribution, study bursaries, housing allowance, leave (vacation, study and maternity) and group life policies that provide educational support to the children of employees after death. The benefits that the organisations had were attractive to the overqualified employees interviewed and influenced their decision to apply an accept a position that they were overqualified for.

Box 7: Selected responses relating to benefits from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"I think there are courses within the organisation that one has to like apply for, also the good part about where I am now, is, the company also will finance me if maybe I want to study something but it must be in line with what the company does...yes." (Interviewee 1)

"For me X is a very respectable organisation, and I believe it has dignity and every person would wish to work in such an organisation, and another thing is that it has benefits, which are good enough for a person to really not mind working here until their retirement." (Interviewee 3)

"Well, the benefits were good because it is a government institution." (Interviewee 5)

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> *"Well, for starts, in South Africa you cannot go without medical aid. It was the first. And then housing allowance as well, and also pension." (Interviewee 5)*

One of the managers interviewed also cited benefits as a reason that would influence a decision to apply and accept a position for which one is overqualified for.

Box 8: Particular response relating to benefits from one of the managers interviewed.

> *"I think one of the things is job security, because the organisation doesn't retrench. They will keep their employees, because as I have mentioned earlier that the economy of the country is going down so people will want that job security and the other thing will be benefits I think." (Interviewee 11)*

The number of times that overqualified employees mentioned benefits as the reason for applying and accepting positions for which they are overqualified for is provided in table 13.

Table 13: Number of times benefits were mentioned in relation to applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	1
Overqualified employees	12
Total	**13**

5.4.5 Organisational Aspects

A number of organisational aspects were cited as reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for. These include the reputation of the organisation, the size of the organisation and whether it is a governmental or private organisation. Large organisations were viewed favourably by overqualified employees as they were associated with career development opportunities and opportunities to grow. Also, government organisations were viewed favourably by overqualified employees as they were associated with job security since government is not known to retrench employees in difficult times.

Eight of the ten overqualified employees and one of the managers interviewed cited some type of organisational aspect as a reason for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

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Box 9: Selected responses relating to organisational aspects from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"For me X is very respectable organisation, and I believe it has dignity and every person would wish to work in such an organisation, and another thing is that it has benefits, which are good enough for a person to really not mind working here until their retirement." (Interviewee 3)

"…I accepted it based on it's a big company, organisation there is there is a lot of opportunities and exposure to different things." (Interviewee 4)

"…For some reason I always had this impression that X was one of the best government departments. So when I got the offer from X to me it was like…that kind of department I would want to be in, grow in and develop within. Though I did not really know much about the organisation, it is just that I had that perception and from what you'd hear other people said about X when comparing it to other public institutions." (Interviewee 12)

One of the managers interviewed also provided a view that candidates apply and accept positions that they are overqualified for due to certain organisational aspects that they find favourable and linked to things such as career development opportunities and job security.

Box 10: Particular response relating to organisational aspects from one of the managers interviewed.

"I think in a government organisation overall it is a thing of people that if I can get my foot into government at least it is safe and because government there's so many different fields, at least I am in the working field and I can grow from there. And also because it is a big organisation." (Interviewee 10)

The number of times that overqualified employees and managers mentioned organisational aspects as the reason for applying and accepting positions for which they are overqualified for is provided in table 14.

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Table 14: Number of times organisational aspects were mentioned in relation to applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	1
Overqualified employees	9
Total	**10**

5.4.6 Economic Aspects

Economic aspects were also cited as reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for. Four of the ten overqualified employees and both managers interviewed cited economic aspects as forming part of the reason for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

The economic aspects mentioned included the limited job opportunities and poor economic situation in South Africa, the need to improve their own financial security and being the sole breadwinner in a family.

Box 11: Selected responses relating to economic aspects from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"…I have to take care of myself and I had to take care of my family as well because our sole breadwinner passed on while I was still a graduate, so I had to take care of my mom and my child." (Interviewee 3)

"…I had dependents. I come from a very poor background, so to me that was an opportunity. In my family I am the only person who is working. My brothers and sisters, I am the only... At that time I was the breadwinner, it was me, my child, my brother and my sister. So I had to do it. It was a breakthrough, not only for me but for the whole family." (Interviewee 12)

Both managers interviewed were of the view that economic aspects were key in influencing the decision to apply and accept a position for which one is overqualified for.

Box 12: Selected responses relating to economic aspects from the managers interviewed.

"The shortage of work out there …and it's very difficult as a manager if you are sitting with CVs and you know the person is overqualified, but is such a good

> *candidate and you know the work will be done…" (Interviewee 10)*
>
> *"I think one of the reasons is the rate of unemployment in our country, because if people are sitting at home not doing anything they will grab anything that comes their way, so if those positions are the only ones that are available then people will apply just to make sure that they make a living." (Interviewee 11)*

The number of times that overqualified employees and managers mentioned economic aspects as the reason for applying and accepting a position for which they are overqualified for is provided in table 15.

Table 15: Number of times economic aspects were mentioned in relation to applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	3
Overqualified employees	6
Total	**9**

5.4.7 Intentions of overqualified employees upon entry to an organisation

All the overqualified employees interviewed, with the exception of one, had intentions to stay and grow in the organisations that they had joined. Only one interviewee indicated that his/her intention was to use the position as a stepping stone to move to another organisation. Of those who had the intention to stay, three indicated that them staying would be dependent on whether there was potential to grow. Also, another three indicated that they would want to stay but move to another division in the organisation. Only three of the ten overqualified employees interviewed confirmed that they were actively seeking other employment.

Furthermore, seven of the ten overqualified employees interviewed indicated that their expectations coming into the positions that they were overqualified for were not met. Their expectations were founded in their initial views/beliefs that organisational aspects (reputation, size and private versus governmental organisation) would enable their career development and expose them to challenging and stimulating work that would be offered once inside the organisation. The expected growth and learning opportunities did not materialise for the majority of the overqualified employees interviewed.

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5.4.8 Conclusion

There was general agreement among the overqualified employee interviewees that career development opportunities was the main reason for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for. Managers, however, ranked this reason lower (in third place). Job security as well as challenging and stimulating work emerged as the second most important reasons as per the ranking of overqualified employees. Managers, however, ranked job security as the main reason for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for, while challenging and stimulating work was not even considered as a reason by them. This can be seen in tables 16 and 17.

There is a clear difference in the views of managers and those of overqualified employees. This becomes particularly clear with challenging and stimulating work, which was not even considered as a reason by the managers interviewed as well as the difference in the ranking of career development opportunities.

Table 16: Ranking (as a result of number of times mentioned by overqualified employees interviewed) of reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

Overqualified Employees Interviewed		
Rank	**Reason**	**Number of times mentioned**
1	Career development opportunities	42
2	Job security	21
2	Challenging and stimulating work	21
3	Benefits	12
4	Organisational aspects	9
5	Economic aspects	6

Table 17: Ranking (as a result of number of times mentioned by managers interviewed) of reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

Managers		
Rank	**Reason**	**Number of times mentioned**
1	Job security	4
2	Economic aspects	3
3	Benefits	1
3	Organisational aspects	1
3	Career development opportunities	1
4	Challenging and stimulating work	0

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Table 18: Total sample's ranking of reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for.

Combined		
Rank	**Reason**	**Number of times mentioned**
1	Career development opportunities	43
2	Job Security	25
3	Challenging and stimulating work	21
4	Benefits	13
5	Organisational aspects	10
6	Economic aspects	9

Figure 3: Number of times reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for were mentioned.
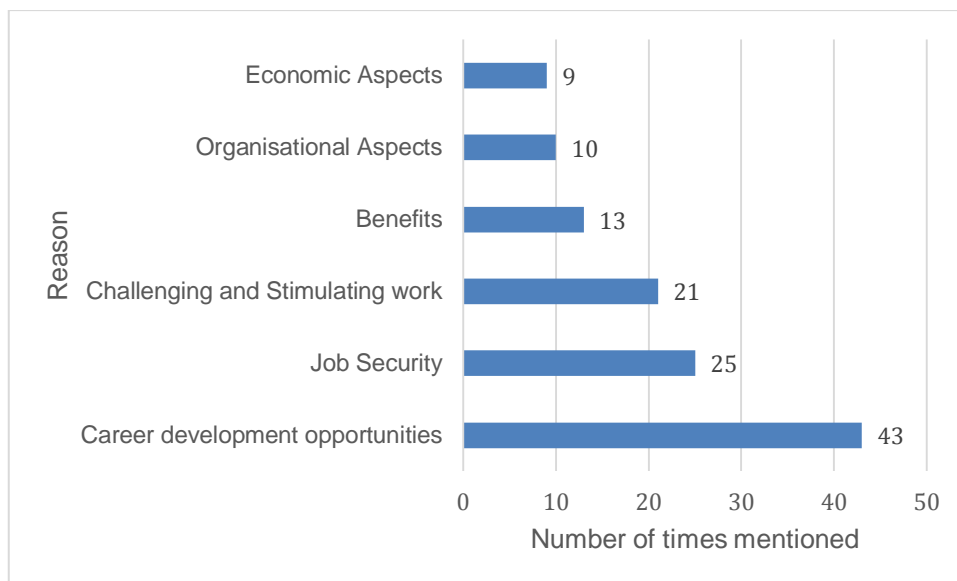
5.5 RESULTS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave?

The question seeks to uncover reasons relating to the organisation that interviewees consider important in making the decision to stay or leave. The question also seeks to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of overqualified employees.

5.5.1 Career development opportunities

Career development opportunities may influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation depending on whether there are opportunities to develop (in which case they would stay) or not (in which case they would leave). All ten

overqualified employees and both managers interviewed cited career development opportunities as a the main reason to stay or leave an organisation.

Box 13: Selected responses relating to career development opportunities from the overqualified employees interviewed.

> *"What can influence my decision to stay, like I said before is the growth... I want to grow; I want to learn more so by learning more I can also teach others." (Interviewee 1)*
>
> *"…maybe present them with more challenges; allow them to do more in their work. Give them more exposure, experience wise, because sometimes you find that they are overqualified, but experience wise they are always doing the same job in the office, they do not do anything beyond that. I also believe, not necessarily creating new jobs, but a structure does contribute to that; where you feel the structure is not a good one, there is no opportunity for movement or anything, then you feel like stuck." (Interviewee 3)*
>
> *"…I feel that the development, they call it talent management now, the concept is actually flawed if you look at it because they say personal development. To me, personally, I'm developing myself, but they making training part of your KPI, but there is nothing that they can teach me in terms of my job, which is administrative that is going to make me better." (Interviewee 4)*
>
> *"I think I've mentioned earlier on that overqualified employees open themselves up to abuse. And that if organisations don't have the proper career pathing for their employees, they stand to lose those employees because the job would be used, especially with the younger generation, the job would be used as a stepping stone. In older people like myself, it is for security. But in the younger generation it's job hopping." (Interviewee 7)*
>
> *"The organisation is not offering me, I don't want to say opportunities, but it is growth opportunities or exposure. At some point I even applied for the Graduate Programme knowing that it will be a downgrade, a step back for me, but I was willing to do that, with the hope that at least with that I will be exposed to other things, I will be building a career. Right now it feels like I am just redundant." (Interviewee 12)*

The two managers interviewed not only agreed that career development opportunities are a key aspect in deciding to stay or leave an organisation, they also had ideas on how the organisation could improve on providing career development opportunities for overqualified employees as they felt limited in what they could do.

Box 14: Selected responses relating to career development opportunities from the managers interviewed.

"In X they had a thing that you put all your qualifications, Y also tried it once, you put everything on the system. So when Y want to roll something out, they don't need to get external people, they can look on that system and say we already have people that are qualified in this what we want to do and then give people an allowance. So you going to the project…you are getting a project allowance and we finishing the team because we are using your skills. Where now we outsource and we use outsourced people when we have people in the organisation, people that can do it…So we can save the organisation money and we can make the people feel they are worth something, they are working on this special projects for the team and utilise their skills which they acquired through studies." (Interviewee 10)

"But the difference with these ones is because they are grabbing anything so that they can make a living. So if the organisations can maybe look at the qualifications, maybe have a program where the employees can capture their qualifications. If they are looking for someone within a certain division, I am not saying that the positions must not be advertised and candidates must not apply for those positions, but they must at least first look internally." (Interviewee 11)

"I think the other thing that will help is when you have an overqualified person depending on the environment that you work in, maybe rotate the person so that that person can be exposed in different areas within the organisation. But depending on the sensitivity of the information that the person will be working with, because by doing that if anything comes, even if it is not within the same division that person will have experience to apply." (Interviewee 11)

The number of times that overqualified employees and the managers interviewed mentioned career development opportunities in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation is provided in table 19.

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Table 19: Number of times career development opportunities were mentioned in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	9
Overqualified employees	54
Total	**63**

5.5.2 Treatment by manager

The treatment of the overqualified employee by his/her relevant manager could influence the employee's decision to stay or leave. Nine of the ten overqualified employees interviewed and both managers interviewed cited this as a reason that could influence the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

This treatment could be positive. Examples of positive treatment cited are listed in table 20. This type of treatment from the manager would influence overqualified employees to stay. The treatment could be negative. Examples of negative treatment cited are listed in table 20. This treatment would influence overqualified employees to leave. In general, mention was more frequently made of negative treatment than positive treatment, as outlined in table 20.

Table 20: Number of times positive and negative treatment cited by interviewees.

Positive treatment		Negative treatment	
Input is valued	13	Abuse of additional skills	6
Recognition	10	Cheap labour	6
Appreciation	4	Input not valued	4
New ideas encouraged	4	Lack of openness to new ideas	4
Recognition for qualification obtained	4	Recognition lacking	4
Input is considered	2	Fear of losing skill	3
Feel appreciated	1	Unfairness	3
		Manager feels threatened	2
		Mentoring lacking	2
		Mind shift required	1
		Questioning working methods	1
		Unclear expectations of employee	1
		Commitment not valued	1
		Communication lacking	1
		Conflict	1
		Feeling unappreciated	1
		Manager does less and gives you more	1

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		Victimisation	1
Total	**38**	**Total**	**43**

The overqualified employees interviewed raised experiences such as their inputs not being recognised as they were viewed by managers as coming from an administrator. Their experiences were that their role in the organisation was being used to discount their inputs. Interviewee 4 experienced conflict with the manager due to him feeling threatened by the excess knowledge and skills of interviewee 4. The latter resulted in interviewee 4 becoming withdrawn and actively seeking other employment. More than one interviewee described being used as cheap labour for their excess skills.

Box 15: Selected responses relating to treatment by manager from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"The fact that, like I said, that your input isn't acknowledged but at the end of the day, you're still expected to explain what is aren't efficient and why things aren't being… And also, people don't always take you… I don't know how to explain… They don't always take it as at face value, they always read into something. So, if you would say: "this is not… We've been doing this like this, but there's a better way of doing it" It's as if you are insulting someone. They don't take it…" (Interviewee 4)

"It's giving the opportunity and the platform to…or raising issues and actually supporting the… obviously within certain policies, if you raise something and you come up with something, give the necessary support to actually implement the improved solution." (Interviewee 4)

"I think even sometimes you need to let people go…you allow that gap because sometimes it does happen that people are happy with having people that are overqualified within a unit, maybe things get done faster. There are certain skills that come from people who are overqualified. They do things more professionally, better, like technically. There is an element that a person brings because they studied/ educated and that needs to be recognised and people must not be afraid to let go of such people like now you have this thing of cheap labour that are working, and you are holding on to them. So I think sometimes it gets to that point where it's like management of the organisation is, let me say management because it will be in a certain unit, hey are happy with having people that are doing more for less because you will be underpaid, so…" (Interviewee 6)

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> *"By providing opportunities to go on courses that are maybe restricted. For example, we have a course for managers on level 12. So to allow people on lower levels to develop these skills. And also I think providing mentorship. In our organisation you don't find that a lot of managers are good mentors. So providing mentorship to overqualified people, so that they can develop in the skills as well because I think a lot of the time we look at the skills that you bring to the organisation and not how skills are can be enhanced for us to go on to the next level." (Interviewee 7)*
>
> *"And sometimes not just money, but actually saying you're doing more, just appreciation from... a simple thank you for doing more than what you're getting paid for." (Interviewee 8)*
>
> *"Where my ideas are valued, where you are taken seriously and you are not viewed as an Administrator. Where you are viewed as a person with a brain that works. And that doesn't happen quite a lot." (Interviewee 12)*

Both managers interviewed also cited the treatment of the overqualified employee by his/her manager as an important aspect in influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. They also admitted to giving them additional work as they grasp tasks quicker and are able to finalise them faster.

Box 16: Selected responses relating to treatment by manager from the managers interviewed.

> *"…for me as a manager, I am talking for myself, you do tend to give people a little more work to do because you get the results. It is not right but sometimes you have shorts in and you rather…so from management you sometimes do overload as well, because they have the capability to do it." (Interviewee 10)*
>
> *"…what I have identified is that most of the people who are overqualified and they are in those positions, it is people who make sure that their job is done on time. They deliver on time. It will be people who always ask for more, it has helped a lot because even in cases where other people who are performing other roles are not coping, those people are there to assist." (Interviewee 11)*

The number of times that overqualified employees and the managers interviewed mentioned treatment by manager in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation is provided in table 21.

Table 21: Number of times treatment by manager was mentioned in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	6
Overqualified employees	34
Total	**40**

5.5.3 Challenging and Stimulating work

All ten overqualified employees and both managers interviewed cited the existence or non-existence of challenging and stimulating work as an aspect that could influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. The existence of challenging and stimulating work was described as motivating by the overqualified employees interviewed. They also expressed continuous learning as stimulating.

Box 17: Selected responses relating to challenging and stimulating work from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"…overqualified people they get bored because they're doing the same thing every day so for me not to get bored...that's why I'm saying I want to learn more about the work that is being done by people within the chain that I'm on...so if I'm given that opportunity I wouldn't get bored within the post that I'm in." (Interviewee 1)

"I enjoy challenges so I would involve myself in things that I should not involve myself with but I do it merely because I said it's a new learning experience I am a fast learner so I learn systems and processes very quickly and I make it my job to find out something if I don't know I would call around and check the policies to make sure that I am in line with the organisation expectancy and I think that the fact that I am at my age and I am still willing to learn whether it would be attending internal Academy courses or whether it's external." (Interviewee 2)

"…maybe present them with more challenges; allow them to do more in their work. Give them more exposure, experience wise, because sometimes you find that they are overqualified, but experience wise they are always doing the same job in the office, they do not do anything beyond that." (Interviewee 3)

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> *"Because you must be stimulated in your job. When your job no longer is stimulating, you start looking for other things. For a lot of other people, it's the internet, it's Facebook, it's things outside the organisation." (Interviewee 7)*
>
> *"And I will just say if your managers are giving… like recommending you for other projects so that you can at least do something challenging not the same routine, boring thing that you always do every single day." (Interviewee 8)*
>
> *"I think management have that, I don't want to use the word power, have that authority. They can decide that we are going to train you, we are going to expose you to this and that. Okay X I am giving you this thing, I know you do not how to do it, but let's do it. Give small challenging work." (Interviewee 12)*

Both managers interviewed also held the view that providing overqualified employees with challenging and stimulating work would influence them to stay in an organisation.

Box 18: Selected responses relating to challenging and stimulating work from the managers interviewed.

> *"They also get that experience. So whenever they want to do, they can say I worked on this project, this is the experience that I gained in this field. If we could use for example now marketing if communication have a big marketing campaign, utilise people in the organisation that can do it." (Interviewee 10)*
>
> *"I think it also depends on what is done in that organisation, because I believe that a person will be employed to do certain roles and as a manager if you see that a person, you will already be having a background of why that person is employed in that position and you will try and expose that person to other things so that if there are any higher positions that are available, even if it is not within the organisation, a person can apply. And by that you will be helping that person to get experience and to get exposure in not only what he has applied for." (Interviewee 11)*
>
> *"I think one of the things will be not to limiting them only on what they were appointed to do, giving them space to learn more." (Interviewee 11)*

The number of times that overqualified employees and the managers interviewed mentioned challenging and stimulating work in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation is provided in table 22.

Table 22: Number of times challenging and stimulating work was mentioned in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	4
Overqualified employees	28
Total	**32**

5.5.4 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction, although not an organisational aspect, also influences the decision to stay or leave an organisation. The majority of overqualified employees interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs. Six of the overqualified employees interviewed indicated that they were currently **not** satisfied with their current jobs, while three indicated that they were satisfied and one was unsure.

Three of the overqualified employees interviewed indicated that they were actively seeking other employment, while five indicated that they would want to stay in their current organisation but move to another division.

Box 19: Selected responses relating to job satisfaction from the overqualified employees interviewed.

> *"Interviewee: I'm considering leaving.*
> *Interviewer: Yes.*
> *Interviewee: If the correct opportunity comes my way. It's just that I have been applying and all the responses I get back is then sorry, in our department we're only looking for this type of person or that type of person." (Interviewee 4)*
>
> *"Maybe you consider what you know and studied, and then if it is not really aligned with what you are currently doing there is sort of unsatisfied gap because now you are doing work because it is in front of you, there is nothing really motivating you. As much as you know how to do the job, you are not being challenged." (Interviewee 6)*
>
> *"The current position, the one that I'm hired to do I am not satisfied. Not even close to being satisfied." (Interviewee 12)*

Only one of the managers interviewed cited job dissatisfaction as influencing a decision to leave but indicated that overqualified employees would only temporarily engage in negative behaviour due to job dissatisfaction.

Box 20: Particular response relating to job satisfaction from one of the managers interviewed.

"It do happen, but it is a situational thing. When something happens, like I am not getting paid for this work that I am doing, I'm also going to be like the rest of the people and not do it, then they calm down and focus. I think it's more a situation frustration that happen." (Interviewee 10)

The number of times that overqualified employees and the managers interviewed mentioned job satisfaction in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation is provided in table 23.

Table 23: Number of times job satisfaction was mentioned in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	1
Overqualified employees	22
Total	**23**

5.5.5 Benefits

A number of benefits that the current organisation has were cited as influencing overqualified employees to stay. Examples of these benefits are leave (vacation, study and maternity), medical aid, funeral cover, bursaries, life policy that provides educational support for the children of employees and group life policy.

Two overqualified employees indicated that their bursaries were declined as a result of their level in the organisation which was influencing their decision to leave the organisation.

Nine out of ten overqualified employees and one manager interviewed were of the view that the benefits that an organisation offers influences the decision of an overqualified employee to stay or leave.

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Box 21: Selected responses relating to benefits from the overqualified employees interviewed.

> *"Because you can go to another organisation, they promise you money then there's no group life and stuff... your family won't be taken care of. One thing for sure, one needs to think about the life after death...how your family will survive, how your kids will go to school after you are dead, because we need to like... the person in my position, I need to... I need my children to get the kind of education that I couldn't, that my parents could not afford." (Interviewee 1)*
>
> *"...positives for me it's still the benefits because I am not married and the big thing is when you do get married you've got maternity leave which is fully paid, it would be the fact that we actually have the 13th cheque and we still get the performance bonus, the medical aid and the government pension fund. A nice thing also is the mere fact that we have the 24 days leave, annual leave and the study leave is also very good, I think the benefits is the big factor right now that's keeping me…" (Interviewee 2)*
>
> *"This organisation provides funeral covers, which I am paying way less than if I had taken that on my own with a service provider. Then another thing is that my child's educational needs would be taken care of should I die, and that is very important, there are things such housing allowance too, which also helps." (Interviewee 3)*
>
> *"And also the Group Life. The benefits are good and I am told that if you leave X you forfeit some of the benefits and the medical aid as well. I am a member of vitality and if I leave X and the company that I go to doesn't have Discovery, my gym membership will be discontinued." (Interviewee 9)*

One of the managers interviewed was also of the view that benefits influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation.

Box 22: Particular response relating to benefits from one of the managers interviewed.

> "…They will keep their employees, because as I have mentioned earlier that the economy of the country is going down so people will want that job security and the other thing will be benefits I think." (Interviewee 11)

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The number of times that overqualified employees and the managers interviewed mentioned benefits in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation is provided in table 24.

Table 24: Number of times benefits were mentioned in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	1
Overqualified employees	21
Total	**22**

5.5.6 HR policies and procedures

HR policies and procedures relating to recruitment, transfers and secondments also influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. Seven out of ten overqualified employees and both managers interviewed were of the view that the HR policies and procedures of an organisation influence the decision of an overqualified employee to stay or leave.

The overqualified employees interviewed cited a number of limitations on career development as a result of HR policies and procedures. Examples given of these are the employment equity policy which limits career progression to certain race groups; the bursary policy which restricts certain study approvals to certain grades of employees; recruitment policy which does not favour internal promotion and has a strong emphasis on experience as well as the policy on secondments and transfers which does not encourage managers to second employees with relevant skills to projects. Two overqualified employees also mentioned that HR policies and procedures were incorrectly and inconsistently applied.

Box 23: Selected responses relating to HR policies and procedures from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"…negatives that would want or make me leave is the fact that I feel that X has invested in me with my studies but yet when there are vacancies that you apply for you don't even get shortlisted you don't even get a regret to inform you, or no explanation to why your CV didn't even make the list. There is no feedback from the employer, you don't know how to improve your CV. Well, I have never been called for an interview so I can't really say I could not ask them whether my interview skills need to be upskilled." (Interviewee 2)

> *"We hope so, but I have my doubts because the recruitment phase was done not correctly, because I spoke to other people in the same position and HR never reviewed our CVs so based on the link that we were given the selection you've made you are only considered for those divisions, you are not considered based, for example I could have been considered for finance because I have got the financial background, my CV was never given to the GE." (Interviewee 2)*
>
> *"Yes, so now I need to develop myself by identifying something else, but the opportunity won't … It's very slim that that opportunity will come your way to actually go into the… because the personal development or talent management policy doesn't really make provision for that. For moving. It might state that, but in practice it doesn't really work like that." (Interviewee 4)*
>
> *"Because after the last time, they said: 'You know what, we're just looking for black females.' So then…" (Interviewee 4)*
>
> *"I think organisations would benefit more, we know how things, economy is, we know that you have to follow recruitment processes and all those kind of things. But if organisations were to take people like us with the same salary packages and everything and use us to do other, like place us in other positions then they would save on the salary bill." (Interviewee 12)*

The two managers interviewed also had ideas on how the organisation could utilise HR policies and procedures to improve career development opportunities for overqualified employees.

Box 24: Selected responses relating to HR policies and procedures from the managers interviewed.

> *"In X they had a thing that you put all your qualifications, Y also tried it once, you put everything on the system. So when Y want to roll something out, they don't need to get external people, they can look on that system and say we already have people that are qualified in this what we want to do and then give people an allowance. So you going to the project…you are getting a project allowance and we finishing the team because we are using your skills. Where now we outsource and we use outsourced people when we have people in the organisation people that can do*

> *it…So we can save the organisation money and we can make the people feel they are worth something, they are working on this special projects for the team and utilise their skills which they acquired through studies." (Interviewee 10)*
>
> *"I think the other thing that will help is when you have an overqualified person depending on the environment that you work in, maybe rotate the person so that that person can be exposed in different areas within the organisation. But depending on the sensitivity of the information that the person will be working with, because by doing that if anything comes, even if it is not within the same division that person will have experience to apply." (Interviewee 11)*

The number of times that overqualified employees and the managers interviewed mentioned HR policies and procedures in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation is provided in table 25.

Table 25: Number of times HR policies and procedures were mentioned in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	4
Overqualified employees	15
Total	**19**

5.5.7 Work environment

A positive or negative work environment can influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. Eight of the ten overqualified employees interviewed indicated that the environment at work could influence an employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. None of the managers interviewed cited work environment in this context.

Interviewees cited examples of a positive work environment as follows: social engagement is encouraged; care and concern for employees is shown; positive social atmosphere; there is work-life balance and flexible working hours. This environment would influence overqualified employees to stay.

Interviewees also cited examples of a negative work environment as follows: a hostile environment where there is distrust among employees and a lack of care and concern for employees. This environment would influence overqualified employees to leave.

Box 25: Selected responses relating to working environment from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"I think my current views at the moment I'm enjoying what I'm doing based on because of the kind of people that I'm working with, we are a team... since I'm a team player I think I'm fitting well within this, the current environment that I'm in." *(Interviewee 1)*

"Secondly I would say with all the changes, I don't have an issue with change. My problem is the way that they are going about it, not once did they think of the impact on everyone's wellbeing, all the uncertainties, the lack of communication from the management because I went through the disbandment of the unit, I went through the suspension of my direct manager, I went through the senior manager being declared redundant and being moved, I had three acting managers in two and a half years. So all of that makes you want to not stay because it's been like a three-year period I don't want to say insecurity but it is still a form of insecurity and I just believe that the organisation is not looking after the employees that are committing themselves to further development." *(Interviewee 2)*

"There are lots of social aspects or team-building aspects that we didn't have before that we now have which makes it a better organisation. So I think I've seen them improve from where they were to where they are right now." *(Interviewee 7)*

"You know what, I think the one thing is if the working environment is, a person is happy when they are at work they would want to come to work and would want to stay in that, in that environment. However, if when you come to work and you're very unhappy, you'd want to leave that would be an even big pusher for you to leave this place. You're already overqualified here and you're unhappy also so what would be the point of you staying even if they do offer you more money. I don't think most people would want to stay if they're not happy where they are." *(Interviewee 8)*

The number of times that overqualified employees interviewed mentioned work environment in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation is provided in table 26.

Table 26: Number of times working environment was mentioned in relation to the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	0
Overqualified employees	16
Total	**16**

5.5.8 Positive aspects of overqualified employees

All interviewees cited a number of positive aspects about overqualified employees, as follows: possess additional knowledge and skills; give attention to detail; tend to perform well; are continuous learners; enhance their existing roles; provide creative solutions to problems; are curious, diligent and dedicated; develop themselves and do not wait to be developed; do not require development for the position that they are overqualified for; are efficient and effective; are already familiar with the organisational culture, systems and processes; are able to take decision; have initiative and are innovative; know where to add value; can mentor others; have a need to add value and to use knowledge; professional; quick to learn and understand; can teach others as well as volunteer for challenging work.

These positive aspects were highlighted as being very benefitial to organisations, divisions in organisations and specific projects/tasks.

Box 26: Selected responses relating to the positive aspects of overqualified employees from the overqualified employees interviewed.

"I enjoy challenges so I would involve myself in things that I should not involve myself with but I do it merely because I said it's a new learning experience I am a fast learner so I learn systems and processes very quickly and I make it my job to find out something if I don't know I would call around and check the policies to make sure that I am in line with the organisation expectancy and I think that the fact that I am at my age and I am still willing to learn whether it would be attending internal Academy courses or whether its external." (Interviewee 2)

"I still appreciate the fact that I am consulted in certain things and with the current

acting manager he would hand random tasks to me with things that are not done, drafting of formal things that go to external parties or drafting of communications that being sent to other divisions based on events happening. So I think it's the mere fact that you are being acknowledged for the fact that you are competent and you actually do know more about a subject or a scenario than what the next person would know. So for me that's still the nice thing that I am still acknowledged for my work performance and my knowledge." (Interviewee 2)

"My expectations was that I continue to learn more and I am given a chance to do other difficult jobs, deal with difficult job situations, and be allowed to take, not necessarily chances, but make decisions and be trusted with them." (Interviewee 3)

"But then, also, if you have a job to do, I want to do it to the best of my ability. So, irrespective of what it is… But if you see something that is not right or… And you want to improve so that your section of the work improves and it's better and highlighting certain things is not acknowledged or taken seriously and then at the end of the day you need to answer, but why isn't this correct, but you've highlighted certain things, but you don't have the power to implement…" (Interviewee 4)

"But in all fairness, I think I have grown, because I have been exposed to different things, even though it was not my section of the work. I was a bit forward in saying I will volunteer for this and I will volunteer for that, but at least I've gained more knowledge so in that case I've grown." (Interviewee 4)

"Because I think I'm a lifelong learner. I'm always looking for something to make my job better, easier, more fulfilling." (Interviewee 7)

Both of the managers interviewed also cited a number of positive aspects about having overqualified employees in your team.

Box 27: Selected responses relating to the positive aspects of overqualified employees from the managers interviewed.

"New ideas. And also a lot of time you find you don't have to explain yourself.
Interviewer: They catch on quickly.
Interviewee: Very quickly and they understand what you want." (Interviewee 10)

> *"I think something that's new. Something for organisation start, something that you as a unit start new, they work very well on things like that." (Interviewee 10)*
>
> *"…what I have identified is that most of the people who are overqualified and they are in those positions, it is people who makes sure that their job is done on time. They deliver on time. It will be people who always ask for more, it has helped a lot because even in cases where other people who are performing other roles are not coping, those people are there to assist." (Interviewee 11)*
>
> *"Yeah, they also come with ideas. The other thing is when you appoint those people in those positions they try and improve the systems that are in place." (Interviewee 11)*

The number of times that overqualified employees and the managers interviewed mentioned positive aspects about overqualified employees is provided in table 27.

Table 27: Number of times that positive aspects were mentioned about overqualified employees.

	Number of times mentioned
Managers	17
Overqualified employees	93
Total	**110**

5.5.9 Conclusion

The overqualified employees interviewed were in general agreement that career development opportunities was the main aspect to influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. Managers agreed with this ranking. Treatment by manager emerged as the second most important aspect to influence such a decision as per the ranking of overqualified employees. Managers again agreed with this ranking.

Managers and overqualified employees interviewed differed in their rankings of HR policies and procedures as well as work environment. Managers provided a higher ranking to HR policies and procedures whereas the overqualified employees

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interviewed provided a higher ranking to work environment. This can be seen in tables 28 and 29.

The difference in the ranking of HR policies and procedures and work environment can be ascribed to the fact that managers viewed themselves as dependent on these policies and procedures to implement certain practices while the overqualified employees interviewed believed managers have powers to implement. The result was a higher ranking of HR policies and procedures by managers.

Table 28: Ranking (as a result of number of times mentioned by overqualified employees interviewed) of organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave.

Overqualified Employees Interviewed		
Rank	Reason	Number of times mentioned
1	Career development opportunities	54
2	Treatment by Manager	34
3	Challenging and Stimulating work	28
4	Job satisfaction	22
5	Work environment	16
6	HR policies and procedures	15

Table 29: Ranking (as a result of number of times mentioned by managers interviewed) of organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave.

Managers		
Rank	Reason	Number of times mentioned
1	Career development opportunities	9
2	Treatment by Manager	6
3	Challenging and Stimulating work	4
3	HR policies and procedures	4
4	Job satisfaction	1
5	Work environment	0

Table 30: Total sample's ranking of organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave.

Combined		
Rank	Reason	Number of times mentioned
1	Career development opportunities	63
2	Treatment by Manager	40
3	Challenging and Stimulating work	32
4	Job satisfaction	23
5	HR policies and procedures	19
6	Work environment	16

Figure 4: Number of times organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave were mentioned.
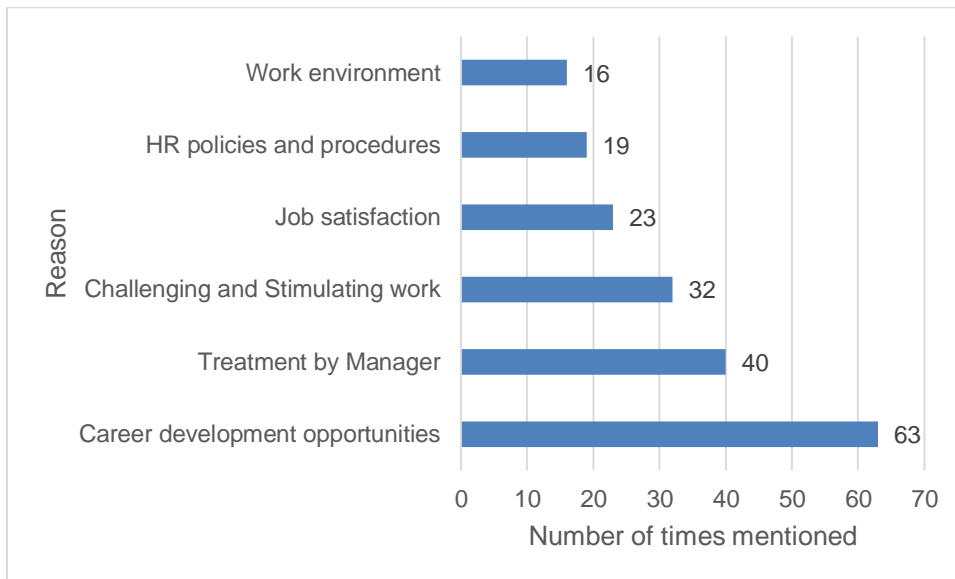
5.6 RESULTS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What elements of the reward model are used to attract, retain and motivate employees?

The question seeks to establish which reward model elements are in use and which of these overqualified employees consider important to retain and motivate them. The researcher will also seek to determine whether there is alignment between the organisation's reward model and what overqualified employees consider key in making the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

5.6.1 Attraction, retention and motivation

Interviewees were asked to rank a list of reward model elements in order of their importance as key in attracting, retaining and motivating overqualified employees. Table 31 outlines this ranking by the various interviewees. It is clear from the ranking that the overqualified employees interviewed believe that career development opportunities followed by challenging and stimulating job content are believed to be the most important reward model elements in attracting, retaining and motivating them. The managers interviewed differed in their view of the ranking of particularly work-life

balance, which they ranked in last place whereas overqualified employees ranked it in third place.

Table 31: Ranking of reward model elements by overqualified employees and managers interviewed.

Summary of Ranking		
Manager Ranking	**Employee ranking**	**Reason**
2	1	Career development opportunities
1	2	Challenging and stimulating work
5	3	Work-life balance
4	4	Financial rewards
3	5	Social Atmosphere at work

Box 28: Selected responses regarding career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating job content from overqualified employees.

"The career development didn't bother me initially as much because we were exposed to such different areas when we used to be a bigger unit so you were exposed to different parts of each unit, so then I wasn't really concerned about it because I was learning everyday something new. Now it's becoming an issue to me because I am not moving up anywhere I am not learning anything new, so that and I think if you are at my level and any person whose overqualified if you at least get some work stimulation or some challenge just to make your brain think for once then that wouldn't bother you as much. Yeah and if I have to think back that never bothered me because of the possibilities and everything I was learning at the time." (Interviewee 2)

"…because when it comes to challenging and stimulating job content, once you get used to your job and there is no growth or you don't deal with any new challenges, you will feel it is boring and you need to move elsewhere, whereas you can actually deal with such in the same job, and then career development and opportunities is important to better you in your current role or to make you a better candidate for an even better position. And you feel that the organisation does not only care that you can do the job, but it cares that you can actually get better at doing it and move further." (Interviewee 3)

"…the reasons will be the same for career development to say that you need not…it becomes boring when you have to do one thing each and every day. So if you are in

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a working environment that is challenging and that is stimulating or the job that is challenging and stimulating you tend to enjoy your work. It becomes interesting." *(Interviewee 9)*

Box 29: Selected responses regarding financial rewards from overqualified employees.

"…also the financial aspect of it, because at the same time you're leaving your family saying you're going to work so you need to be able to take care of them, to meet their needs." (Interviewee 1)

"…people probably feel that they are appreciated and seen, and that people appreciate their efforts." (Interviewee 5)

"You need to make a living. There's bonds to be paid, there's this and that, there's the kids, the school. You need to make a living. So that is important." (Interviewee 12)

The two managers interviewed differed slightly in their ranking of challenging and stimulating job content as well as career development opportunities but also ranked them in the first two spots.

Box 30: Selected responses from managers regarding career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating job content.

"Growth path is where they are. That they know there is a growth path…because of their qualifications they need to be challenged. I mean why will you go and study and why will you get qualified if you don't…?" (Interviewee 10)

"…if you are overqualified you would like to perform challenging roles. That's why I mentioned earlier that to retain those people, it is good not to limit them to what they are only supposed to be doing, but to give them more and they will feel challenged." (Interviewee 11)

Although the two managers differed in their view of the reward element that should rank third – the one ranked financial rewards while the other ranked social atmosphere at work in the third position. The latter manager (Inteviewee 11) made a proposal in

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relation to financial rewards that could motivate overqualified employees. This proposal is captured in the following box. It therefore seems that both managers interviewed believe that financial rewards are an important reward element for overqualified employees.

Box 31: Selected response from a manager regarding financial rewards

"…the annual increase if it can be paired with their performance, because I have mentioned earlier on that those people in my view they give their all. And when the annual increase is done it is always standard, it is not paired with the performance. So if it can be paired with the performance I think it is one of the things that can motivate them, because if you are overqualified and you are in a minimal position then the possibility is that you are less paid." (Interviewee 11)

5.6.2 Conclusion

Although all the interviewees, with the exception of one, came from the same organisation, they were split in their views on whether the reward elements that overqualified employees value were aligned to what was offered in their organisation. Five of the eleven employees that discussed alignment believed that there was alignment and six employees believed that there was no alignment. This may be linked to the fact that the organisation that most of the interviewees were employed in had undergone a recent restructuring, which some respondents were more positive than others about.

There is a difference in the views of managers and those of overqualified employees. This becomes particularly clear with the ranking of work-life balance, which was ranked last by managers but third by employees. There was agreement on the fact that career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work are the most important elements for overqualified employees.

Table 32: Ranking by overqualified employees interviewed of reward model elements.

Overqualified Employees Interviewed	
Rank	**Reason**
1	Career development opportunities
2	Challenging and stimulating work
3	Work-life balance
4	Financial rewards
5	Social Atmosphere at work

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Table 33: Ranking by managers interviewed of of reward model elements.

Managers	
Rank	**Reason**
1	Challenging and stimulating work
2	Career development opportunities
3	Social Atmosphere at work
4	Financial rewards
5	Work-life balance

Table 34: Total sample's ranking of of reward model elements.

Combined	
Rank	**Reason**
1	Career development opportunities
2	Challenging and stimulating work
3	Work-life balance
4	Financial rewards
5	Social Atmosphere at work

5.7 SUMMARY

Chapter 5 presented the findings in relation to the three research questions outlined in chapter 3. The first research question sought to gain insight into interviewees' reasons for applying and accepting a position which they are overqualified for. Six reasons were identified and are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Number of times reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for were mentioned.

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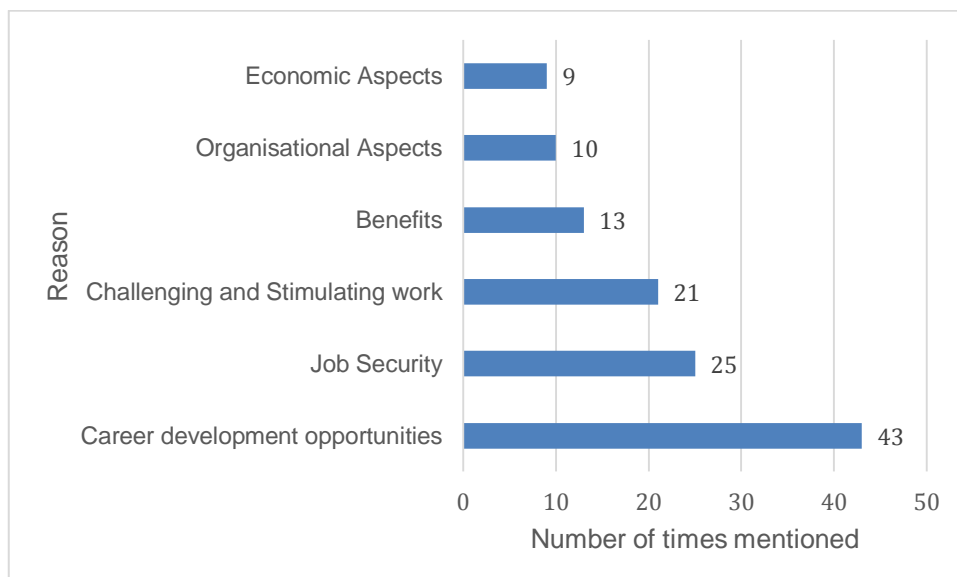
The above findings confirms various sources in the literature review, which indicated that organisations should consider a number of aspects before hiring overqualified employees to ensure that they can be accommodated and will not easily become bored and frustrated (Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016; Russel et al, 2016; Gallo, 2011; Davis, 1993; Kulkarni et al, 2015; Martinez et al, 2014).

The second research question sought to uncover reasons relating to the organisation that interviewees consider important in making the decision to stay or leave. The question also sought to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of overqualified employees in an organisation. Six main reasons were identified and are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Number of times organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave were mentioned.
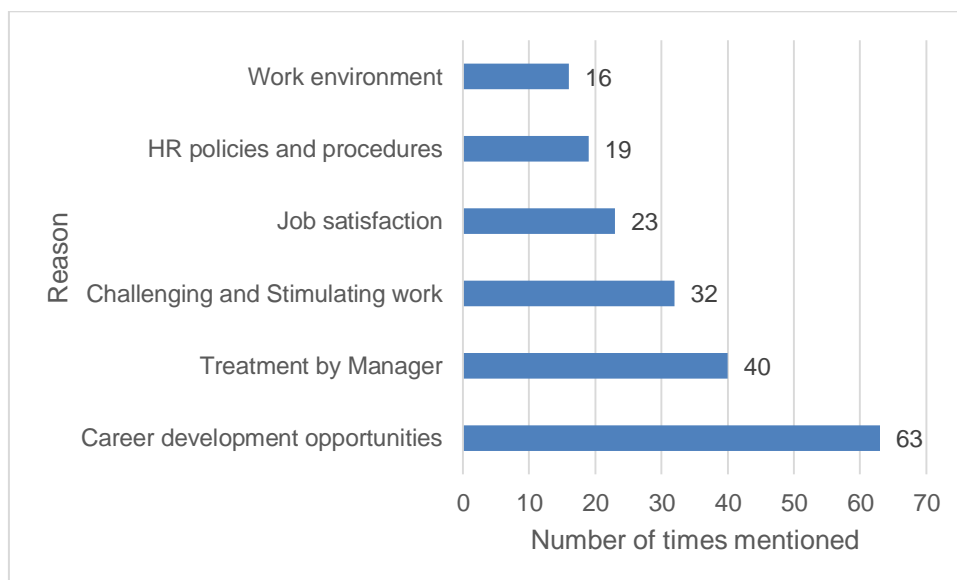
The above findings support the study by De Vos and Meganck (2009) which revealed that an employer's fulfillment of promises about career development opportunities (part of the psychological contract) had the highest influence on an employee's decision to leave or actively seek other employment. However, it did not support Johnson et al (2002) in relation to that the finding that lack of career growth often experienced by overqualified employees, has a negative impact on Affective Organisational Commitment (AOC).

The third research question sought to establish which reward model elements are in use and which of these overqualified employees consider important to retain and

motivate them. It also sought to determine whether there is alignment between the organisation's reward model and what overqualified employees consider key in making the decision to stay or leave an organisation. The final ranking of the reward model elements is provided in table 35.

Table 35: Total sample's ranking of of reward model elements.

Combined	
Rank	**Reason**
1	Career development opportunities
2	Challenging and stimulating work
3	Work-life balance
4	Financial rewards
5	Social Atmosphere at work

The above findings are similar to but also differ from the study conducted by De Vos and Meganck (2009) on employees, in general, which found that they value the following (in order of importance) most: career development opportunities, social atmosphere, job content, financial rewards and work-life balance.

In the next section, chapter 6, the findings will be discussed in the context of the literature review in chapter 2 with the purpose to meet the objectives of the research project outlined in chapter 1.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings presented in chapter 5 are discussed in relation to the research objectives presented in chapter 1 and the three research questions outlined in chapter 3. The findings will be discussed in the context of the literature review covered in chapter 2.

The research objectives of the study were to analyse the reasons for applying and accepting a position in an organisation for which one is overqualified for as well as the reasons that would make an overqualified person stay in or leave an organisation. To address these research objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- **Research question 1**

  What are the reasons influencing a decision to apply and accept a job for which one is overqualified for?

- **Research question 2**

  What are the organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave?

- **Research question 3**

  What elements of the reward model are used to attract, retain and motivate employees?

The discussion of the findings follow using a similar format to the one used in chapter 5.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the reasons influencing a decision to apply and accept a job for which one is overqualified for?

The question seeks to gain insight into interviewees' reasons for applying and accepting a job which they are overqualified for. These reasons could relate to organisational, personal, economic and environmental elements.

6.2.1 Discussion of research question 1

The following six reasons, in order of importance, were identified by the study as key in influencing the decision to apply and accept a job for which one is overqualified for:

1. Career development opportunities
2. Job Security
3. Challenging and Stimulating work
4. Benefits
5. Organisational Aspects
6. Economic Aspects

Career development opportunities

Career development opportunities featured as the most important aspect to influence an overqualified employee's decision to apply for and accept a position for which he/she is overqualified for. The overqualified employees interviewed believed that once they entered the organisation, there would be growth and other opportunities provided. This was an important reason in their decision to apply and accept positions for which they were overqualified for.

The perceptions that these employees had when applying and accepting positions that they were overqualified for turned into expectations that then took the form of psychological contracts. These unwritten and often unspoken expectations that employees have with respect to their jobs and employers were in this instance founded in their initial views/beliefs that organisational aspects (reputation, size of the organisation) would enable their career development and expose them to challenging and stimulating work that would be offered once inside the organisation.

As per the findings, the majority of the overqualified employees interviewed (seven out of ten) indicated that their expectations were **not** met. Kulkarni et al (2015) points out that should expectations (e.g. that they will be considered for promotions due to their excess capacity) not be met, it may result in job dissatisfaction. The findings show that the majority of overqualified employees interviewed (six out of ten) expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs.

One of the managers interviewed was also of the view that the perception of the potential for growth influenced the decision of overqualified employees to apply and accept positions that they were overqualified for. However, the ranking of career

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development opportunities as a result of the responses from managers was only in joint third place with other aspects. Thus, they did not view this aspect as important an influence on the decision as other aspects such as job security and economic aspects.

The lower ranking of this aspect by managers indicates that they are not considering the candidate's career development and future value to the organisation when recruiting. This type of approach is referred to by Kulkarni et al (2015) as hiring for the organisation rather than for the job. Kulkarni et al (2015) and Martinez et al (2014) suggest that overqualified employees should be considered for employment where the organisation can offer training opportunities and career development opportunities. Gallo (2011) also supports this approach and recommends that hiring managers consider the broader organisation as well as its current and future talent when deciding whether to appoint an overqualified candidate. It seems that this approach is not followed by the managers to the detriment of the career development expectations of overqualified employees.

Job Security

Beukes et al (2016) refers to two types of underemployment, i.e. time-based and overqualification underemployment. The time-based definition of underemployment refers to individuals who are employed for fewer hours than they are willing and able to work for. The study found that four of the ten overqualified employees interviewed were previously underemployed (having been employed in temporary positions) and six of them (including the four that were previously underemployed) were previously employed in positions for which they were also overqualified for. Having been in either a time-based or overqualification form of underemployment previously meant that these employees were more willing to take on a permanent position for which they are overqualified for as it provided them with more job security.

Job security emerged as the second most mentioned reason for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for. Apart from some of the employees interviewed previously finding themselves in temporary positions, they also indicated that they were struggling to get shortlisted and interviewed for the positions that they were applying for as jobs were scarce and highly contested. Thus, they took a position that they were overqualified for to secure a job and thus be able to provide for their families. They also generally believed that there would be career opportunities for them once they were inside the organisation.

The findings also show that job security followed by economic aspects was ranked highest by the managers interviewed. Managers indicated that South Africa's high unemployment rate caused applicants to more willingly take on positions that they are overqualified for in order to secure a job. South Africa's unemployment rate is currently reported as 27.7%, which is the highest rate reported since September 2003 (Statistics South Africa, June 2017). In this economic environment, being able to secure a job becomes very important to an applicant even if there is not an exact skills match.

Challenging and Stimulating work

Challenging and stimulating work was ranked third as an aspect that influenced the decision of overqualified employees to apply and accept a position for which they are overqualified for. The overqualified employees interviewed were of the view when applying and accepting positions that although they were overqualified for these postions, they would still be given the opportunity to learn new systems and processes or even learn other work in the value chain.

However, neither of the managers interviewed mentioned challenging and stimulating work as a reason. The managers did not view this aspect as having any influence on the decision to apply and accept a position for which one is overqualified for. This indicates that the quality of the candidate in relation to how he or she would improve the organisation's capacity was not considered by the managers at recruitment stage. Schuler and MacMillan (1984) highlight that these considerations are important as the ability of an organisation to attract and retain the right people improves its capacity to implement critical projects.

Davis (1993) recommended that managers consider factors that will improve the organisation's capacity such as the candidate's ability to grow, learn and adapt to change as well as relevant experience and training in the industry that the organisation can leverage. He also recommended that managers consider whether the organisation has the resources to enable the candidate to be productive and whether the organisation is sufficiently flexible to allow the candidate to grow. If these aspects are not considered, which they weren't by the two managers, it results in unmet expectations for the overqualified employees and unsatisfied capacity needs for the organisation.

As previously indicated, the expectations of overqualified employees interviewed were founded in their initial views/beliefs that organisational aspects (reputation, size of the organisation) would enable their career development and expose them to challenging and stimulating work that would be offered once inside the organisation. Kulkarni et al (2015) points out that should expectations not be met, it may result in job dissatisfaction and the findings show that the majority of overqualified employees interviewed (six out of ten) expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs.

Benefits

The fourth most important aspect cited in influencing the decision to apply and accept a position for which one is overqualified for are benefits. The main benefits cited included medical aid, pension contribution, study bursaries, training and leave (vacation, study and maternity). These benefits were attractive to the overqualified employees interviewed and influenced their decision to apply an accept positions that they were overqualified for. The responses from managers interviewed seem to be in agreement with overqualified employees resulting in their ranking of benefits in joint third place with career development opportunities and organisational aspects.

Four of the ten overqualified employees interviewed had made use of the study bursaries (and study leave) to study part-time, thus adding to their qualifications while in the positions that they had applied and been accepted for. Once they had qualified, their expectations to be promoted were further raised. Brynin and Longhi (2009) outline that overqualification from the lens of human capital theory is puzzling as people are not expected to invest in education and training that they are not going to utilise. Human capital theory states that people invest in their training and education and at times deliberately vary their work experiences across sectors with the expectation that this knowledge and experience will provide them with increased financial rewards. When this does not happen, it causes job dissatifaction as was found in the responses from overqualified employees.

The overqualified employees interviewed also had expectations that their qualifications and experience would get them prioriy consideration in the allocation of work and opportunities. Apart from qualifications, the overqualified employees interviewed held years of experience ranging from 0-5 years up to 21-25 years. In relation to this, human resource architecture theory indicates that organisations manage employees differently based on the value and uniqueness of their human capital (i.e. knowledge,

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training and experience). Knowledge, training and experience are used as signals of existing human capital capability or potential human capital capability. The experiences of the overqualified employees interviewed contradicts human resource architecture theory in that they indicated that their experience and qualifications are not being valued in their organisations.

Organisational Aspects

Organisational aspects ranked fifth among reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for. Organisational aspects refers to the reputation of the organisation, the size of the organisation and whether it is a governmental or private organisation. Interviewees highlighted the good reputation of the organisation that they had applied and accepted a position in. In this regard, Hausknecht et al (2009) indicate that organisational prestige, i.e. being an 'employer of choice', is used to retain employees. In the study, the perceived good reputation of an organisation attracted prospective employees to apply for and accept positions that they were overqualified for in the organisation.

Large organisations were also viewed favourably by the overqualified employees interviewed as they were associated with having multiple disciplines and thus offering career development opportunities and opportunities to grow. Also, government organisations were viewed favourably by overqualified employees as they were associated with job security since government is not known to retrench employees in difficult times. The responses from managers interviewed ranked organisational aspects in joint third place with benefits and career development opportunities.

Economic Aspects

The last aspect cited as influencing the decision to apply and accept a position for which one is overqualified for is economic aspects. Economic aspects cited by interviewees include the limited job opportunities and poor economic situation in South Africa, the need to improve their own financial security and finding themselves as the sole breadwinner in a family.

According to Erdogan et al (2011), the overqualification construct has grown due to changes in the economy and workforce, which have resulted in people finding they need to take on jobs that they are overqualified for. This was supported by the findings

in this study where economic aspects brought on the need among overqualified employees for job security and thus their willingness to apply and accept positions for which they were overqualified for. The findings also support the model and findings by Warnich et al, 2015 that talented employees are attracted by financial rewards. Both managers interviewed were strongly of the view that economic aspects were key in influencing this decision and thus their responses ranked this aspect second after job security.

As a consequence of South Africa's increasing unemployment rate, the underemployment rate will increase and thus the number of overqualified employees will also increase. The study conducted by Beukes et al (2016) shows that underemployment as a result of overqualification has increased over the years.

6.2.2 Conclusion

Managers viewed job security and economic aspects as being the main reason for a person applying an accepting a position that they were overqualified for. Overqualified employees, however, viewed career development opportunities, job security as well as challenging and stimulating work as the main reasons influencing the decision. This difference in views highlights the psychological contracts that employees have when entering an organisation which, in the case of the overqualified employees interviewed, were generally not met. Also, as a result of managers not considering career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work aspects at recruitment stage, overqualified employees become dissatisfied and the capacity of the organisation is not improved. The latter is outlined in literature as a positive spin-off when hiring overqualified employees.

6.3   RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave?

The question seeks to uncover reasons relating to the organisation that interviewees consider important in making the decision to stay or leave. The question also seeks to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of the overqualified employee in the organisation.

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6.3.1 Discussion of research question 2

The following six reasons, in order of importance, were identified by the study as key in influencing the decision of an overqualified employee to stay in or leave an organisation:

1. Career development opportunities
2. Treatment by manager
3. Challenging and stimulating work
4. Job satisfaction
5. HR policies and procedures
6. Work environment

Career development opportunities

A study conducted by De Vos and Meganck (2009) revealed that an employer's fulfillment of promises about career development opportunities (part of the psychological contract) had the highest influence on an employee's decision to leave or actively seek other employment. This study is supported by the findings as career development opportunities were the main aspect cited by overqualified employees interviewed as influencing their decision to stay or leave an organisation. If opportunities exist to grow and develop in an organisation, they would want to stay. However, if such opportunities do not exist, they would want to leave. The findings futher supported Warnich et al's (2015) total rewards system model, which outlines a number of non-financial rewards (extrinsic rewards) that were raised by interviewees as important, e.g. working environment, personal growth and challenging work.

Of the ten overqualified employees interviewed, nine entered their organisations with intentions to stay and grow their careers. Of these nine, three indicated that they would continue to stay if there was potential for career growth. While, another three indicated that they would want to stay but move to another division in the organisation as they felt that there were prospects for career growth in the organisation but not in the divisions that they were employed in. In relation to this, only three of the overqualified employees interviewed confirmed that they were actively seeking other employment outside the organisation.

Johnson et al (2002) found in their research that the lack of career growth often experienced by overqualified employees, has a negative impact on Affective Organisational Commitment (AOC), which is defined as the employee's emotional

attachment to the organisation. The findings in this study do not fully support this research as three interviewees indicated that they would want to stay but move to another division in the organisation as they still felt that there were prospects for career growth in the organisation. Furthermore, only three of the overqualified employees interviewed confirmed that they were actively seeking other employment outside the organisation.

Both managers interviewed not only agreed that career development opportunities are a key aspect in deciding to stay or leave an organisation, they also proposed ways in which the organisation could provide career development opportunities for overqualified employees. The proposals included a central database of skills in the organisation from which participants for new projects could be identified and overqualified employees could then gain exposure and experience on these projects. Other proposals included prioritising internal employees when recruiting for vacancies in the organisation and rotating employees to expose them and allow them to gain experience in different areas within the organisation. These proposals would require a review of HR policies and procedures to be implemented.

Treatment by manager

The findings show that the second most important aspect to influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation is the treatment by his/her relevant manager. In general, the findings show that interviewees mentioned more negative than positive treatment by their managers.

Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2016) indicated that managers should let overqualified employees know that their input is valued by soliciting ideas from them and refraining from views that they want their positions as this will prevent their full utilisation. This was confirmed in the findings of this study. The overqualified employees interviewed indicated that they wanted their inputs to be valued and recognised by their managers. Also, interviewee 4 cited conflict with the manager due to him feeling threatened by the excess knowledge and skills of interviewee 4. The latter resulted in interviewee 4 becoming withdrawn and actively seeking other employment.

The findings also show that interviewees experienced that their role in the organisation, i.e. administrator, was used by managers to discount their inputs. Overqualified employees also mentioned on six occasions that their excess skills were being used as

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cheap labour. In relation to this, both managers interviewed admitted to giving overqualified employees additional work as they grasp tasks quicker and are able to finalise them faster. The latter were cited as positive aspects of overqualified employees by interviewees but the experience of overqualified employees interviewed was negative, i.e. that they were being treated as cheap labour.

If an overqualified employee is not provided with career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work, feelings that he/she has been relatively deprived in comparison to a certain standard may emerge, i.e. relative deprivation theory. In the case of overqualification, the standard would be that the overqualified person should occupy a better position than the one that he/she currently occupies because of his/her knowledge, training and skills (Kulkarni et al, 2015). As a person improves his/her level of education and skills, there is an expectation that the type of job occupied will also improve. When this does not occur, it may trigger feelings of deprivation relating to among others status, rewards and autonomy (Kulkarni et al, 2015). The findings support this in that the interviewees expressed feeling as if they were being used as cheap labour. In other words, they feel that they are using skills in their work that they are not being rewarded for.

A number of positive aspects about overqualified employees were cited by interviewees. Erdogan et al (2011) and Russel et al (2016) qualify that these positives emerge when employees are encouraged to use their qualifications to enrich their jobs, are empowered by their managers and that the employee's overqualification is valued by the organisation. Empowerment of these employees, in particular, can moderate dissatisfaction (O'Connell, 2010). This was supported by the findings in the study where overqualified employees interviewed cited the importance of their input being valued and considered, recognition and appreciation from their managers, encouragement of new ideas and receiving recognition for their qualifications. Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2016) further found that overqualified employees are creative when they feel supported and appreciated.

The researchers Erdogan et al (2011) and Russel et al (2016) found that the employment of overqualified people may produce increased innovation and result in creative challenges to the way work is being done. One way of doing this may be to utilise these employees in projects where new ideas and ways of doing business are being discussed/developed for implementation in formal processes. This was supported in the findings as both managers interviewed indicated that ovequalified

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employees introduce new ideas, improve existing systems and work well in starting new things (e.g. projects).

Challenging and Stimulating work

Gallo (2011) recommended that consideration be given to how the job can be shaped to accommodate the overqualified employee's skills set so that their work is challenging and stimulating. This can be done by allowing them to participate in projects, providing them with opportunities and allowing job enrichment (Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016; Steel et al, 2002; Liu et al, 2015). With the exception of job enrichment, the other proposals on how to enable challenging and stimulating work were supported in the findings and proposed by the managers interviewed. Job enrichment involves allowing the redesign of a job to make it more challenging and thus more satisfying. Job enrichment was not cited by the interviewees and is probably not a practice in their organisation.

The findings support the importance of challenging and stimulating work. All interviewees (overqualified employees and managers) cited the existence or non-existence of challenging and stimulating work as the third aspect that could influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation.

The existence of challenging and stimulating work was described as motivating by the overqualified employees interviewed. They also expressed continuous learning as stimulating. Both managers interviewed also held the view that providing overqualified employees with challenging and stimulating work would influence them to stay in an organisation.

Job satisfaction

The study conducted by Russel et al (2016) found that of all the dimensions of underemployment, overqualification, particularly in relation to skills, has the most negative impact on job satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation. The findings partially support this study. The majority (six of the ten) of overqualified employees interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs. The lack of loyalty to the organisation was not necessarily supported as five of the overqualified employees interviewed indicated that they would want to stay in their current organisation but move to another division.

The job satisfaction of overqualified employees can be explained in equity theory, as outlined by Robbins and Judge (2015) where a comparison is made between job inputs and outcomes, which is what the overqualified employees in this study did. Inputs include education and experience while outputs include pay, promotion and recognition (Robbins and Judge, 2015).

The job satisfaction of overqualified employees can also be explained in person-job fit theory and particularly the needs-supplies fit, which outlines how well the job environment fulfills a person's goals, values and aspirations (Luksyte et al, 2016). They may suffer from a needs-supplies misfit as the work environment may possibly not fit their goals, values and aspirations (Luksyte et al, 2016). Interviewees cited unmet expectations with respect to career goals and aspirations, in particular.

The findings show that job satisfaction was cited as an aspect that also influences the decision to stay or leave an organisation. Only one of the managers interviewed cited job dissatisfaction as influencing a decision to leave but indicated that overqualified employees would only temporarily engage in negative behaviour due to job dissatisfaction. This is contrary to the findings of Kulkarni et al (2015) that overqualified employees may feel that they are not getting the career development opportunities and financial rewards that equate to their level of education and experience and thus lead them to for example refrain from putting more effort into their existing position.

Benefits

A number of benefits that the current organisations of interviewees have were cited as influencing overqualified employees to stay. Examples of these benefits are leave (vacation, study and maternity), medical aid, funeral cover, bursaries, life policy that provides educational support for the children of employees and group life policy.

Four of the ten overqualified employees interviewed had made use of the study bursaries (and study leave) to study part-time, thus adding to their qualifications. However, two other overqualified employees interviewed indicated that their bursaries were declined as a result of their level in the organisation, which was influencing their decision to leave the organisation.

Generally, the benefits that the organisations had were viewed by interviewees as a reason to stay in the organisation. Benefits form part of an organisation's retention

strategy and the findings show that the benefits were attractive to interviewees and were influencing their decision to stay in the organisation and instead seek career development opportunities by merely moving to another division.

HR policies and procedures

Organisational policies and procedures can direct, limit and partially limit certain practices as well as enable retention. The study found that HR policies and procedures relating to among others recruitment, transfers and secondments do impact on and thus influence an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation.

The overqualified employees interviewed cited limitations on career development as a result of HR policies and procedures. These included the employment equity policy, which limits career progression to certain race groups as well as the bursary policy, which restricts certain study approvals to certain grades of employees.

Both managers interviewed proposed changes to HR policies and procedures that could provide career development opportunities for overqualified employees. The proposals included the following:

- Setting up a central database of skills in the organisation from which participants for new projects could be identified and overqualified employees could then gain exposure and experience on these projects.
- Rotating employees to expose them and allow them to gain experience in different areas within the organisation. The policy on secondments and transfers does not encourage managers to second employees with relevant skills to projects.

The above proposals are supported by Luksyte and Spitzmueller's (2016) observation that policies and procedures relating to recruitment methods may allow or limit managers from assigning these employees to challenging projects, especially those requiring them to acquire new skills or exposing them to work with another department.

The managers interviewed also proposed that internal employees be prioritised when recruiting for vacancies in the organisation. The current recruitment policy does not favour internal promotion and has a strong emphasis on relevant experience. Luksyte and Spitzmueller's (2016) observed that organisations that hold a policy to promote internally first before seeking external candidates will be more willing to employ

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overqualified employees due to existing future career development opportunities. The overqualified employees interviewed were appointed despite there not being a policy to promote internally first.

Work environment

According to Luksyte et al (2016), there are two types of person-job fit, namely the needs-supplies fit and the demands-abilities fit. The needs-supplies fit outlines how well the job environment fulfills a person's goals, values and aspirations. The demands-abilities fit outlines how well the knowledge, skills and abilities of the person match the requirements of the job. When these aspects match, the research shows that positive work outcomes can then be expected (Kulkarni et al, 2015). Overqualified employees may suffer from a needs-supplies misfit as the work environment may possibly not fit their goals, values and aspirations (Luksyte et al, 2016). The findings show that overqualified employees view work environment as influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. The managers interviewed, however, did not cite work environment as an influencing aspect at all.

Overqualified employees interviewed cited examples of a positive work environment as follows: social engagement is encouraged; care and concern for employees is shown; positive social atmosphere; there is work-life balance and flexible working hours. This work environment fits their goals, values and aspirations and would influence them to stay. Examples of a negative work environment provided by interviewees included a hostile environment where there is distrust among employees and a lack of care and concern for employees. This work environment does not fit their goals, values and aspirations and would influence overqualified employees to leave.

6.3.2 Conclusion

The managers and overqualified employees interviewed viewed career development opportunities, treatment by manager as well as challenging and stimulating work as the main reasons influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. The difference in view came with the ranking of HR policies and procedures, which managers ranked in third place while the overqualified employees interviewed ranked lower (in sixth place). The difference was explained by interviewees as managers who indicated that they were dependent on HR policies and procedures to effect practices that could enable career development opportunities for overqualified employees. The overqualified employees, however, indicated that managers had

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powers to implement certain practices that would enable them to gain experience and exposure.

Another finding was that managers did not view work environment as influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. They may thus be missing out on a potential retention aspect that overqualified employees regard as important.

All the aspects identified as influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation should form part of an organisation's retention strategy.

6.4   RESEARCH QUESTION 3
What elements of the reward model are used to attract, retain and motivate employees?

Retention strategies differ in organisations. The question seeks to establish which reward model elements are in use and which of these overqualified employees consider important to retain and motivate them. The researcher will also seek to determine whether there is alignment between the organisation's reward model and what overqualified employees consider key in making the decision to stay or leave an organisation.

6.4.1 Discussion of research question 3

According to Davis (1993), one of the problems with hiring overqualified employees is retention; i.e. keeping them interested and satisfied. It therefore seems that a retention strategy to address the needs of overqualified employees is required in organisations where they are employed. The retention and reward strategies of organisations can create the enabling environment that results in overqualified employees electing to stay. The important consideration for organisations is to determine which aspects of a reward model will support a positive response from overqualified employees thus enabling the organisation to benefit from their excess capacity.

The study found that the following reward model elements, in order of importance, are important to overqualified employees in relation to their retention and motivation:
1. Career development opportunities
2. Challenging and stimulating work

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3. Work-life balance

4. Financial rewards

5. Social atmosphere at work

According to the study conducted by De Vos and Meganck (2009) employees, in general, value the following (in order of importance) most: career development opportunities, social atmosphere, job content, financial rewards and work-life balance. The findings show that in the case of overqualified employees, career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work (i.e. job content) are the key reward model elements that will motivate and retain overqualified employees, thus differing slightly from the findings of De Vos and Meganck (2009). The findings also differ with respect to social atmosphere at work, which was ranked last by overqualified employees while work-life balance was ranked third. The findings show that the managers interviewed agreed with the findings of De Vos and Meganck (2009) as they too ranked work-life balance in last place.

Rewards are key to attracting, retaining and motivating talented employees (Bussin & Van Rooy, 2014; Warnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015). To be effective, total rewards need to be both financial and non-financial in nature (Bussin & Van Rooy, 2014; Warnich et al, 2015). The findings support this as both financial and non-financial rewards were listed as important aspects of the reward model for overqualified employees with financial rewards ranking fairly low in fourth place.

To retain talented employees, organisations need to ensure that there is equity with regards to rewards offered – both intrinsic and extrinsic. The perception of inequity will result in employees wanting to leave. According to Warnich et al (2015), the perception of inequity is a stronger predictor of employee turnover in companies than job satisfaction. Thus, a total rewards system needs to be perceived as equitable to enable the retention of talented employees. In this regard, two overqualified employees mentioned that HR policies and procedures were incorrectly and inconsistently applied which had resulted in them losing faith in the system.

Financial rewards

Financial rewards include monetary rewards such as salary, bonus and commission as well as benefits such as life insurance, medical aid, paid leave and pension (Warnich et al, 2015). Bussin and Smit (2013) propose that organisations implement effective

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employee remuneration strategies that among others link remuneration to performance and include flexible employee benefits that appeal to a changing workforce. This was supported in the findings. As outlined in box 32, one of the managers proposed that annual increases be linked to performance as high performing overqualified employees would then, in addition to the bonus, be rewarded.

Box 32: Selected response from a manager regarding financial rewards

"…the annual increase if it can be paired with their performance, because I have mentioned earlier on that those people in my view they give their all. And when the annual increase is done it is always standard, it is not paired with the performance. So if it can be paired with the performance I think it is one of the things that can motivate them, because if you are overqualified and you are in a minimal position then the possibility is that you are less paid." (Interviewee 11)

The above is supported by Warnich et al (2015) who observed that a total rewards system that is perceived as equitable, is important in motivating talented employees. Employees expect that their performances will equate to the rewards that they will receive from the organisation. Should there not be a relationship between performance and rewards then performance will drop as the employee will not see a need to excel. Thus, organisations need to ensure that accurate appraisals are done by managers, rewards are directly linked to high performance and that managers provide detailed feedback that enables employees to assess which parts of their performance requires improvement (Warnich et al, 2015).

Other benefits cited as advantageous, which employees only became aware of once in the organisation include housing allowance and a group life policy that provides educational support to the children of employees after death.

Non-financial rewards

More non-financial rewards than financial rewards were identified as important reward model elements in relation to the retention and motivation of overqualified employees, namely career development opportunities, challenging and stimulating work, work-life balance and social atmosphere at work. The findings support Warnich et al's (2015) observations that non-financial rewards include flexible working hours and working environment (work-life balance), personal growth opportunities (career development

opportunities), interesting and challenging work (challenging and stimulating work) as well as autonomy in performing your work.

Bussin and Van Rooy (2014) submitted that non-financial rewards are part of the psychological contract that exists between the employer and the employee. This was confirmed by the findings where the non-financial rewards were presented as expectations coming into the organisation that may or may not have been met resulting in overqualified employees wanting to stay or leave an organisation.

Alignment of reward model

Although all the interviewees, with the exception of one, came from the same organisation, there was only a slight majority view (six of the eleven interviewees) that there was misalignment between the reward elements that overqualified employees value and what was offered in their organisation. The diverse views on alignment/misalignment may be linked to the fact that some of the overqualified employees interviewed, despite having indicated dissatisfaction with their jobs, indicated that they would want to stay but move to another division in the organisation. The view expressed was that there are opportunities within the organisation but not in the division that they found themselves in.

The slight majority view of misalignment may also be due to ineffective employee relationship strategies (Bussin and Smit, 2013). To develop these strategies, managers need to be trained on how to work effectively with people, to understand what attracts people to an organisation, finding out what can be improved and developing employee support strategies (Bussin and Smit, 2013). These strategies are based on the premise that employees want to excel but to do so they need to be adequately resourced and also require moral and mental support (Bussin and Smit, 2013).

6.4.2 Conclusion

A study conducted by Hausknecht et al (2009) suggests that retention interventions developed for specific groups of employees may be valuable as they found differences in for example the retention interventions most valued by high performing employees versus those valued by low performing employees. Similarly, Bussin and van Rooy (2014) advocate that it would be beneficial for organisations to find ways of segmenting the workforce and applying retention interventions specific to particular groups. This was also somewhat supported by the findings for overqualified employees. Although

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there were similarities with the study conducted by De Vos and Meganck (2009) on employees, in general, there were also differences. The similarities were with respect to the findings on career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work, while the differences were with respect to social atmosphere at work (ranked last by overqualified employees) and work-life balance (ranked third).

6.5   SUMMARY

Figure 7 provides a visual representation of the findings. The common themes have been matched with the same colour coding for ease of reference and listed as per their rankings throughout the research questions. It is clear that career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work are a common themes thoughout and thus key in retaining overqualified employees. Financial considerations only feature when applying an accepting a position but not when deciding whether to stay or leave. At this stage, the non-financial rewards receive more consideration, e.g. work environment, treatment by the manager and how formal HR policies and procedures impact on the overqualified employee's goals. A reward model can support the retention of overqualified employees when it caters for the aspects that they value most as highlighted in figure 7.

Figure 7: Visual representation of the findings.
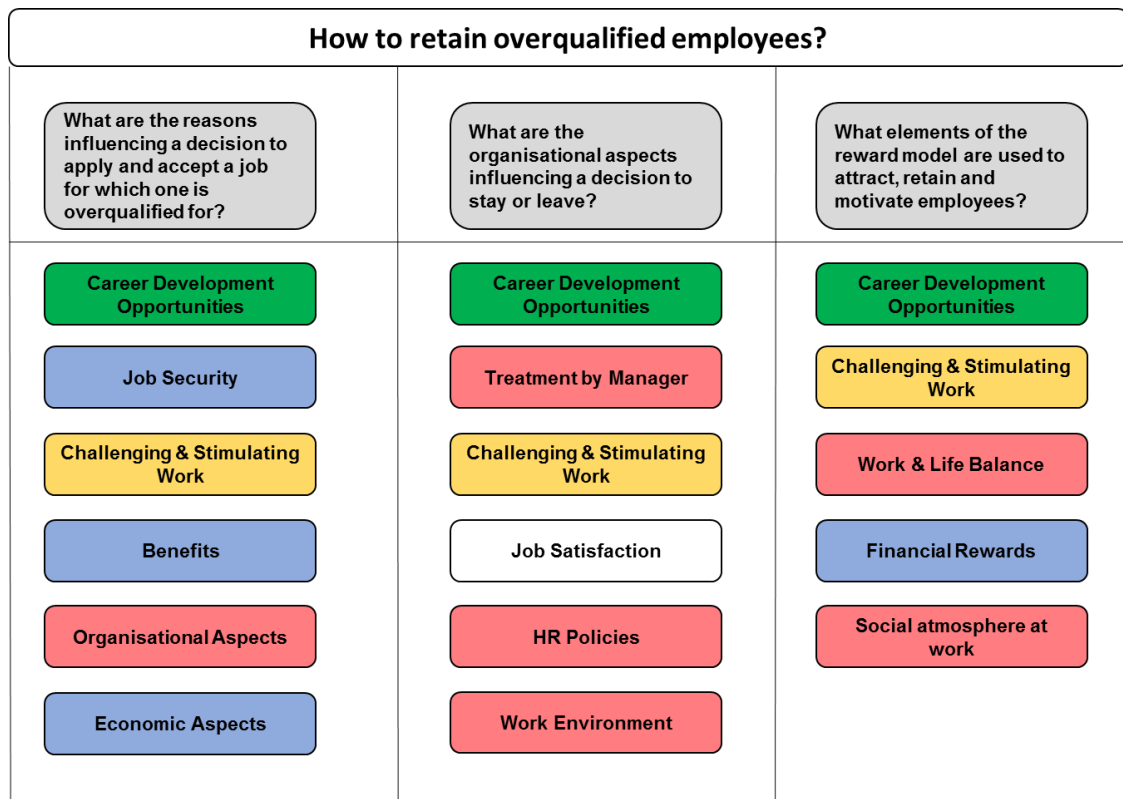
This chapter discussed in detail the findings presented in chapter 5 for the research questions presented in chapter 3. The following conclusions were drawn for each research question. With respect to research question 1, career development opportunities, job security as well as challenging and stimulating work were the main reasons influencing the decision of an overqualified employee to apply and accept a position for which he is overqualified for. With respect to research question 2, career development opportunities, treatment by manager as well as challenging and stimulating work were the main reasons cited as influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation. Lastly, with respect to research question 3, the key reward model elements for overqualified employees are similar to that for all employees with respect to career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work, while the differences were with respect to work-life balance, which overqualified employees viewed as more important than social atmosphere at work. There was a slight majority view that there is misalignment between the reward elements that overqualified employees value and what was offered in their organisation.

The following chapter provides a conclusion to the research and links this back to the objectives outlined in chapter 1.

7.   CONCLUSION

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the findings presented in chapter 5, which are the result of the implementation of the research methodology outlined in chapter 4, within the context of the literature review presented in chapter 2 with the purpose to answer the research questions posed in chapter 3.

This chapter further concludes the findings, provides insights for management on overqualification and makes recommendations for further research.

7.2   RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The growing trend of underemployment as a result of overqualification is not necessarily negative if the organisations that employ these people are able to fully utilise their skills and create the opportunities that will motivate them to stay and grow within the organisation (Erdogan et al, 2011). Organisations have a role to play in addressing overqualification. The retention and reward strategies of organisations can create the enabling environment that results in overqualified employees electing to stay. The important consideration for organisations is to determine which aspects of a reward model will support a positive response from overqualified employees thus enabling the organisation to benefit from their excess capacity.

The study focused on gaining deeper insights into the reasons for the existence of overqualification in South Africa and how to retain overqualified employees specifically. The study also intended to establish to what extent organisations use elements of the reward model to retain overqualified employees and whether this has been successful. The study narrowed its focus to the reasons for applying and accepting a position for which one is overqualified for as well as the organisational factors that then affect the decision of overqualified employees to stay or leave an organisation. The study explored the elements of a reward model that are in use, which of those overqualified employees most value and to what extent there is alignment between the two. The study also explored to a limited extent whether overqualified employees and their managers had the same views on overqualification. The following are the principal findings of the study.

7.3 PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

7.3.1 Reasons for the existence of overqualification

The study found that the main reasons for the existence of overqualification, which emerged in the reasons why people apply and accept positions that they are overqualified for can be categorised into two categories: organisational elements and economic elements. The organisational elements are career development opportunities, challenging and stimulating work as well as organisational aspects (reputation, size and private versus governmental organisation). The economic elements are job security, benefits and economic aspects (limited job opportunities, poor economic situation in South Africa, the need to improve financial security and sole breadwinner). The findings also support the model and findings by Warnich et al, 2015 that talented employees are attracted by financial rewards.

The economic elements also support the view that as a consequence of South Africa's increasing unemployment rate, the underemployment rate will increase and thus the number of overqualified employees will also increase. The increase in overqualification in South Africa over the years was confirmed in the study conducted by Beukes et al (2016).

The organisational elements are embedded in psychological contracts that employees hold when entering an organisation which, in the case of the overqualified employees interviewed, were generally not met. Organisations need to be aware of these expectations and ensure that their managers consider them when hiring overqualified employees. The literature review highlighted that organisations should consider the following when hiring overqualified employees: whether the organisation holds a policy to promote internally first before seeking external candidates; allows for job enrichment, informal leadership and mentoring roles; whether the job can be shaped to accommodate the candidate's skills set; the organisation is sufficiently flexible to allow the candidate to grow; the organisation has the resources to enable the candidate to be productive; as well as the organisation can offer training opportunities and internal mobility opportunities (Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016; Russel et al, 2016; Gallo, 2011; Davis, 1993; Kulkarni et al, 2015; Martinez et al, 2014). The study found that the hiring managers did not consider these aspects when recruiting the overqualified employees interviewed. As a result, the overqualified employees interviewed became dissatisfied with their jobs.

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7.3.2 Organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave

The study found that the organisational aspects influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation are: career development opportunities, treatment by manager, challenging and stimulating work, HR policies and procedures and work environment (e.g. social engagement is encouraged; care and concern for employees is shown/not shown; positive social atmosphere; work-life balance; flexible working hours; as well as hostile environment where there is distrust among employees). The study confirmed De Vos and Meganck's (2009) study, which revealed that an employer's fulfillment of promises about career development opportunities had the highest influence on an employee's decision to leave or actively seek other employment.

The culimination of how these organisational aspects are experienced by overqualified employees is job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The findings of the study show that the majority of overqualified employees interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs, which implies the organisational aspects identified as influencing their decision to stay or leave are not effective.

Furthermore, the study found that managers are dependent on HR policies and procedures to effect practices that could enable organisational aspects such as career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work. However, other organisational aspects were identified as influencing the decision to stay or leave which are not necessarily dependent on policies and procedures such as treatment by manager and work environment. The findings on the importance of manager's treatment of the overqualified employeed confirmed Luksyte and Spitzmueller's (2016) findings that managers should let overqualified employees know that their input is valued by soliciting ideas from them and refraining from views that they want their positions. The study also found that managers did not view the work environment as an aspect influencing an overqualified employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation.

To enable the organisational aspects identified to facilitate the retention of overqualified employees, HR policies and procedures (e.g. recruitment, transfers and secondments) need to be reviewed and managers need to be trained on how to work effectively with

people, to understand what attracts people to an organisation, to find out what can be improved and thus develop employee support strategies (Bussin and Smit, 2013).

7.3.3 Reward model elements and alignment

The study found similarities and differences between the reward model elements that overqualified employees value and those that employees, in general, value. The comparison was made with the findings from the study of De Vos and Meganck (2009), which assessed the reward model elements valued by employees in general.

The similarities were with respect to the importance of career development opportunities as well as challenging and stimulating work, which both studies found as important. The differences were with respect to work-life balance, which overqualified employees valued more than social atmosphere at work, contrary to the findings by De Vos and Meganck (2009). It was also found that both groups ranked financial rewards in the same position (fourth place). In light of some of the differences found, it may be valuable to develop a retention intervention that is specifically for overqualified employees as was also suggested in the study conducted by Hausknecht et al (2009) and proposed by Bussin and van Rooy (2014).

The reward model element that was found to be effective is financial rewards and specifically the range of benefits that organisations provide. The reward model elements that were found to be ineffective were the non-financial reward elements, i.e. career development opportunities, challenging and stimulating work, work-life balance and social atmosphere at work. However, there was only a slight majority view (six of the eleven interviewees) that there was misalignment between the reward elements that overqualified employees value and what was offered in their organisation. The only slight majority view of misalignment may be linked to the fact that some of the overqualified employees interviewed, despite having indicated dissatisfaction with their jobs, indicated that they would want to stay in their organisations but move to another division in the organisation. The view expressed was that there are opportunities within the organisation but not in the division that they find themselves in.

The reward model was therefore found to be partially effective and partially aligned but requiring attention, particularly with respect to non-financial rewards if it is to enable the retention of overqualified employees. As previously stated, this would mean a review of

HR policies and procedures and the training of managers to develop employee support strategies (Bussin and Smit, 2013).

7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

The findings of this study point to a number of actions that management can take to enable the retention of overqualified employees.

The first action would be to train managers on how to work effectively with people, to understand what attracts people to an organisation, to find out what can be improved and thus develop employee support strategies (Bussin and Smit, 2013). This action would address poor treatment by managers and enable managers to improve the work environment as well as give effect to non-financial rewards.

The second action would be to review HR policies and procedures to introduce the following:

- Prioritisation of internal employees when recruiting for vacancies in the organisation. The recruitment and employment equity policies would need to be reviewed to allow this to be effectively implemented.
- Recruitment for new projects and initiatives to be done through the secondment of employees to projects for the period that the projects are running. A central database of skills would need to be developed from which candidates for the projects could be identified. The policy on secondments and transfers would need to be reviewed to allow this to be effectively implemented.
- Allow access to bursaries for studies that will benefit the broader organisation without the employee's level being a limitation.
- Allow job enrichment and subsequent job evaluation.
- Reskill overqualified employees (as they are quick learners) to work in areas that are core to the organisation and where there is a lack of skills or in areas where the organisation wants to grow in future.

The third and last action would be to train managers in the reviewed HR policies and procedures to ensure that when they recruit for new vacancies and they are considering appointing an overqualified employee, they take into account whether the organisation holds a policy to promote internally first before seeking external candidates; allows for job enrichment, informal leadership and mentoring roles; whether the job can be shaped to accommodate the candidate's skills set; the organisation is sufficiently flexible to allow the candidate to grow; the organisation has

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the resources to enable the candidate to be productive; as well as the organisation can offer training opportunities and internal mobility opportunities (Luksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016; Russel et al, 2016; Gallo, 2011; Davis, 1993; Kulkarni et al, 2015; Martinez et al, 2014).

7.5   RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The following research limitations were identified:

- Transferability of this study was not tested and thus the research findings are confined to the scope and context of the study.
- The sampling choice introduced bias as all the participants (with the exception of one) were employed in the same organisation. Furthermore, the two organisations that interviewees were employed in were both governmental organisations, only two of the interviewees were male and only two of the interviewees were managers. Therefore, some sample diversity was lost.
- The research could have benefitted from covering overqualified employees currently in various roles. However, time and money constraints meant the research was confined to overqualified employees currently in administrative roles.
- The study constitutes a cross sectional research design as it provided insights at a point in time. The same findings may not be applicable at another time. This would need to be tested.

7.6   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following is suggested as possible future research:

- Using the results of this study to conduct a quantitative study that will provide broader insights into the reasons for the existence of overqualification in South Africa and how to retain overqualified employees.
- The study was confined to overqualified employees currently performing administrative roles. It would be of interest to establish if overqualified employees, irrespective of their roles, held the similar views and to conduct a comparison.
- To repeat the study in a private organisation and thus establish if the views are similar or differ from those overqualified employees in governmental organisations.

7.7　SUMMARY

The study found that candidates are willing to apply and accept positions that they are overqualified for due to the poor economic situation in South Africa such as limited job opportunities and the need for job security. They enter organisations with the expectation that there will be career development opportunities and that they will be exposed to challenging and stimulating work. However, once in the organisation, limited career development opportunities as well as the lack of challenging and stimulating work creates job dissatisfaction and become the main reasons for wanting to leave. The reward model of an organisation can mitigate this turnover if it is aligned to those elements that overqualified employees value. The study found that there may be value in developing a retention intervention that is specifically for overqualified employees, which will enable organisations to make better use of their capabilities.

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9.   APPENDICES

9.1 APPENDIX 1: GUIDELINES

9.1.1 Appendix A: Interview Guideline

<u>INTERVIEW GUIDELINE</u>

BACKGROUND & BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. **What is your current age?**

2. **Note gender and race**

3. **What is your nationality?**

4. **What is your highest level of education?**
   o   Matric
   o   Diploma
   o   Undergraduate Degree
   o   Honours degree
   o   Postgraduate Diploma
   o   Masters Degree
   o   Doctoral Degree
   o   Other (please specify**)**

5. **How many years of working experience do you have?**

6. **In which discipline are you working?**

   o   Finance
   o   Human Resources
   o   Information Technology
   o   Marketing
   o   Operations
   o   Projects
   o   Research and Development
   o   Sales
   o   Other (please specify)

7. **What is the minimum qualification required for your current job?**
   o   Matric
   o   Undergraduate Degree or Diploma
   o   Honours degree

- o Postgraduate Diploma
- o Masters Degree
- o Doctoral Degree
- o Other (please specify**)**

8. **What is your current job description?**
9. **Did you study part-time or full-time? If part-time, were you in your current position while studying?**
10. **Do your qualifications/skills exceed the minimum requirements for your current job?**

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the reasons influencing a decision to apply and accept a job for which one is overqualified for?

1. What made you decide to apply for a position that you are overqualified for?
2. What made you accept a position that you are overqualified for when the offer was made?
3. What are the organisational aspects that made you arrive at your decision?
4. Do you have any personal reasons (independent of the organisation) that made you arrive at your decision?
5. Are there any other reasons that you would like to share with me that added to your decision to apply and accept a position that you are overqualified for?
6. What expectations did you have coming into this position?
7. How have these expectations been met/not been met?
8. How long did you intend to stay when you joined the organisation?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave?

1. What is your view of your current work situation with regards to job satisfaction?
2. Are you considering staying or leaving the organisation and why?
3. What are the organisational aspects that make you arrive at your decision?
4. Do you have any personal reasons (independent of the organisation) that you have considered in making your decision?
5. To what extent are your personal reasons influenced by organisational aspects?
6. If the organisational aspects met your personal needs, would that influence your decision to stay or leave?

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7. Are there incentives that you find attractive which would influence your decision to stay or leave?

8. Are there any other reasons that you would like to share with me that adds to your decision to stay or leave?

9. What benefits are there for organisations in retaining overqualified employees?

10. What is the basis of your viewpoints (in 9) – did you talk to overqualified employees making such decisions or did you use a formal information gathering process in the organisation?

11. What would make you want to engage in positive behaviours at work e.g. making valuable suggestions and providing creative solutions?

12. Is there anything that you (as a manager)/management could do within the organisation to influence overqualified employees to stay?

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What elements of the reward model are used to attract, retain and motivate employees?

1. What aspects of the reward model do you consider key in attracting, retaining and motivating you/overqualified employees?
    o Career development opportunities
    o Social atmosphere at work
    o Challenging and stimulating job content
    o Financial rewards
    o Work-life balance
    o Other (please specify)

2. Why do you think these aspects are key in attracting, retaining and motivating you/overqualified employees?

3. What is the basis of your viewpoints (in 1 and 2) – did you talk to overqualified employees making such decisions or did you use a formal information gathering process in the organisation?

4. With regards to overqualified employees staying or leaving the organisation, what do you think are the reasons in making that decision?

5. What is the basis of your viewpoints (in 4) – did you talk to overqualified employees making such decisions or did you use a formal information gathering process in the organisation?

6. What do you think the alignment is between what the organisation offers and what overqualified employees (you) say they (you) are staying or leaving for?

9.1.2 Appendix B: Interview Consent Letter

INTERVIEW CONSENT LETTER

Dear participant,

I am conducting research on the reasons for the existence of employees who are overqualified for their positions and how organisations could retain these employees for their excess capacity. Overqualified is defined as: 'a situation where the individual has surplus skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience and other qualifications that are not required by or utilised on the job'. In particular, the research is focussed at trying to understand the perceptions and experiences of overqualified employees as well as the aspects that could assist in retaining these employees for their excess capacity.

You have been selected to participate in the research for your insight into this topic. Our interview is expected to last about an hour. Please note that **YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY AND YOU CAN WITHDRAW AT ANY TIME WITHOUT PENALTY**. All data collected through this research, including the identity of participants, will be kept confidential. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor, Dr Arnold Beyleveld or me. Our contact details are provided below.

RESEARCHER	**SUPERVISOR**
Carla Da Silva-Nel	Dr Arnold Beyleveld
91054924@mygibs.co.za	Arnold.Beyleveld@bcx.co.za
0832898446	0832639274

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

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9.1.3   Appendix C: Ethical clearance letter

03 August 2017

Carla Da Silva-Nel

Dear Carla,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee

9.2 APPENDIX 2: CATEGORY & THEMES LIST

CATEGORY	TOTAL THEMES
Autonomy	9
Benefits	35
Career development	140
Challenging and stimulating work	77
Economic	14
Expectations	44
Financial Rewards	35
HR policies and procedures	24
Job satisfaction	36
Job security	32
Organisation	17
Positives of Overqualified People	110
Treatment by Manager	56
Work Environment	39
TOTAL	**668**

THEMES	TOTAL NUMBER OF TIMES THEME MENTIONED
13th cheque	4
abuse of additional skills	6
actively seeking other employment	4
additional knowledge	5
additional skills	10
additional skills development	7
after school child care	1
alignment no	5
alignment yes	6
allow utilisation elsewhere in the organisation	1
Annual leave days	2
appreciation	4
appropriately qualified prioritised	1
Attention to detail	1
Autonomy	6
autonomy lacking	3
awareness of decision taken	1
Benefits	22
best performance	1
best personal performance	2
Bread winner	4
Bursary opportunities	9

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Bursary opportunities declined due to grade	2
care and concern	5
career development limited	10
career development opportunities	46
Caring organisation	3
challenging work	38
challenging work lacking	3
change in career path	1
cheap labour	6
Choice	1
comfortable	1
commitment	1
commitment not valued	1
communication lacking	1
Conflict	1
Conflicting values	1
conflicting with policy and legislation	1
Continuous learning	14
create enhanced roles	1
create opportunities for others	1
Creative solutions	9
Curiousity	1
Dedication	2
developing themselves not waiting to be developed	2
development elements exist in theory	4
Diligence	1
Distrust	1
do not need development	1
Drives excellence	1
Educational support for child	2
effectiveness	5
efficiency	10
encourage social engagement	3
engage manager	1
engagement encouraged	1
enhanced job	17
equity limitations	3
exact fit	1
expectations	11
expectations not met	8
experience gained	10
exposure	16
familiar with organisational culture	4
familiar with organisational processes	4
familiar with organisational systems	2

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fear of losing skill	3
Feedback lacking	1
feel appreciated	1
feeling bored	2
feeling demotivated	2
feeling discouraged	2
feeling pressure	1
feeling stuck	3
feeling unappreciated	1
financial independence	1
financial rewards	24
financial rewards lacking	3
followed spouse who relocated	1
Forums for suggestions	2
frustration	6
Funeral cover	1
get to know colleagues in a social environment	2
good decision making	1
good problem solving	1
government institution	4
grade limitation	3
Group Life policy	5
growth	36
Growth lacking	8
hostility	1
Housing allowance	2
impactful job	1
Improved Financial security	4
inconsistent application of HR policies and procedures	1
Incorrect application of HR policies and procedures	1
inherently good	1
initiative	5
innovation	3
input is considered	2
Input is valued	13
Input not valued	4
Insecurity	1
intellectual stimulation	3
intention to leave	2
Intention to stay	5
internal locus of control	1
invested in training	1
job advert inaccuracy	1
Job fit not considered	1
job rotation	3

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job satisfaction	6
job security	12
know where to add value	1
Lack of care and concern	1
lack of openness to new ideas	4
lack of relevant experience as a limitation	4
large organisation	4
Learning new things	7
limited job opportunities	5
List of all skills in the organisation	1
Location	6
Long-term stay	1
loyalty not valued	1
luck	1
make a difference	5
Management interventions	19
manager does less and gives you more	1
manager feels threatened	2
Maternity leave	1
Medical aid	12
mentoring lacking	2
mentoring others	2
mind shift required	1
more value for money	1
motivation	5
move out of family home	1
need to add value	3
need to be employed	11
need to grow	3
need to use knowledge	12
negative behaviour is temporary	1
new ideas	3
new ideas encouraged	4
new ways of doing things	3
no career development	1
No integrity	1
No job satisfaction	8
No other options	1
not on par with peers you studied with	2
only do what is expected	1
Opportunity	14
opportunity limited	5
Opportunity to learn	8
other factors	1
Others also affected	1

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overqualified considered if no others available	1
overqualified considered if previously unemployed	1
parking	1
pension	4
Performance bonus	8
performance linked annual increase	1
Permanent Position	8
Personal development	9
Personal development not implemented	3
Personal needs for a home and family	1
planning to seek other employment	3
Poor change management	1
poor economic situation	7
Positive behaviour	11
Positive work environment	7
Positives of overqualified people	27
Possible promotion	2
previously overqualified	6
previously underemployed	5
pride in work	4
professionalism	2
projects	2
promises of growth potential	3
Promises of permanency	1
promote internally	2
promotion allowed	1
purely administrative role	1
questioning working methods	1
quick grasp of what needs to be done	2
Quick learners	4
Quotable Quote	74
reached a ceiling	2
Reasons for accepting	29
Reasons for applying	15
Reasons to leave	20
Reasons to stay	42
recognition	10
recognition for qualification obtained	4
Recognition lacking	4
Reputation of the organisation -good	8
retention	2
return on investment	2
reward model	11
role limitation	3
rotate monthly half day off on a Friday	1

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routine work	1
RQ1	117
RQ2	187
RQ3	68
secondments	2
seeking other stimulation	3
skills identification	1
social atmosphere at work	14
specialisation	1
stay but change Divisions	6
stepping stone	5
stimulating job content	19
structure is a limitation	1
Study leave	2
talent management	3
talent management implementation lacking	1
Teaching others	2
team building	3
Teamwork	1
temporary position	2
time off work to socialise at work	1
timeously	1
to be mentored	3
Training courses	5
Training courses restricted	1
transfer	2
Transparency lacking	2
unclear expectations of employee	1
unclear reporting lines	1
underutilised	3
unemployment	2
Unfairness	3
Unsuccessful applications	2
Very quotable quote	57
victimisation	1
volunteer for challenging work	3
Wellness support for family	2
Wellness support for member	2
withdraw	3
Work goals	1
work life balance	6
working hours	1
workings of large organisation	1
younger generation vs older generation	1
TOTAL:	**1622**

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9.3 APPENDIX 3: CONSISTENCY MATRIX

Title: Exploring overqualification: reasons for its existence and how to retain overqualified employees

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	LITERATURE REVIEW	DATA COLLECTION TOOL	ANALYSIS
1 What are the reasons influencing a decision to apply and accept a job for which one is overqualified for?	**B**eukes et al, 2016 **B**rynin and Longhi, 2009 **D**avis, 1993 **E**rdogan et al, 2011 **G**allo, 2011 **H**ausknecht et al, 2009 **K**ulkarni et al, 2015 **L**uksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016 **M**artinez et al, 2014 **R**ussel et al, 2016 **S**chuler and MacMillan, 1984 **W**arnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015	Questions 1-8 under heading 'Research Question 1'	Coding of interviews. Analysis and ranking of most mentioned themes. Number of interviewees commenting on the theme presented. Highlighting pertinent quotes.
2 What are the organisational aspects influencing a decision to stay or leave?	**B**ussin and Smit, 2013 **D**e Vos and Meganck, 2009 **E**rdogan et al, 2011 **G**allo, 2011 **J**ohnson et al, 2002 **K**ulkarni et al, 2015 **L**iu et al, 2015 **L**uksyte and Spitzmueller, 2016 **O**'Connell, 2010 **R**obbins and Judge, 2011 **R**ussel et al, 2016 **S**teel et al, 2002 **W**arnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015	Questions 1-12 under heading 'Research Question 2'	Coding of interviews. Analysis and ranking of most mentioned themes. Number of interviewees commenting on the theme presented. Highlighting pertinent quotes.
3 What elements of	**B**ussin and Smit,	Questions 1-6	Coding of

the reward model are used to attract, retain and motivate employees?	2013 **B**ussin & Van Rooy, 2014 **D**avis, 1993 **D**e Vos and Meganck, 2009 **H**ausknecht et al, 2009 **W**arnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015	under heading 'Research Question 3'	interviews. Analysis and ranking of most mentioned themes. Number of interviewees commenting on the theme presented. Highlighting pertinent quotes. Ranking of reward elements.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Name of Author

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Signature of Author

_____

Date of Signature

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