

TANULMÁNYOK / STUDIES

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Strategies of overcoming barriers to talent management: an African tribal perspective

Africa as a continent has lost its talent to the international countries due to the brain drain. Limited research has been done on the African perspective on talent management under the tribal authorities. Strategies to get beyond these barriers and establish a more welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for tribal talent is necessitated. The purpose of the paper was to determine the strategies needed to overcome the barriers to talent management from an African tribal leadership perspective. Further, to determine how to attract and retain talent from an African tribal leadership perspective. Traditional leaders representing their respective tribes in the North-West Province were interviewed in the form of focus group discussion. A non-probability judgemental sampling was used for the study: a non-probability judgmental sampling method was used to identify traditional leaders in the North-West Province, and a thematic analysis was applied to analyse the data. Succession planning was highlighted in the findings of the study as a complicated matter. Furthermore, poor rural and socioeconomic development were identified as the push factors of the best performers and skilled individuals from the local communities. African leaders should recognise the human capital, which encompasses the skills, knowledge, and abilities of their citizens, because is a crucial factor for economic development and social progress.

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Introduction

Much research has been done on talent management (TM from a Western perspective, however there are still an array of shortcomings on the concept. Evidence can be found in academic work and articles on TM on a global and macro level (Robbins & Judge, 2023). The world continues to face the crisis of talent and TM. Tansley (2011) refers to talent as the human capability to reach the greatest heights. A plethora of studies done in relation to TM has indicated that an African perspective is still lagging behind on the concept with much attention being dedicated to Western Perspective (Feng & Jansen, 2021). The fundamental principle of African leadership as described by Mbigi and Maree (2014) is culture. April et al. (2010) conducted their studies on Afrocentric paradigms which put more emphasis on collectivism as a way of doing things in a traditional society. Hanges et al. (2016) conducted a leadership study on cultural diversity and cross-culture which revealed that leaders have influence in the politics, economy and social aspects and it is also the gateway through which changes are facilitated because they are capable of influencing others. Docquier (2017) stated that Africa as a continent has lost its talent to the international countries due to the brain drain. Limited research has been done on the African perspective on TM under the tribal authorities. The primary purpose of the paper is to determine the strategies needed to overcome the barriers to talent management from an African tribal leadership

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perspective. Further, to determine how to attract and retain talent from an African tribal leadership perspective. Determining and removing any obstacles or difficulties that can prevent tribal talent from being recognised and evaluated. These difficulties may include a lack of opportunities, prejudice, cultural biases, restricted access to resources, or inadequate acknowledgement of tribal talent. Strategies to get beyond these barriers and establish a more welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for tribal talent is necessitated.

Literature review

Talent management from an African perspective

Talent management (TM) is not aligned with strategic management. In a way, TM can be used for knowledge management, sustainability, organisational effectiveness and efficiency as well as for a competitive advantage. Various scholars (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Meyers et al., 2017) define TM as the process of identifying, attracting and retaining talent. Adamsen (2016) further elaborates on TM as the process of enhancing the human capability thereby performing capacity building through incorporating talent acquisition, development and deployment. In contrast Cappelli and Keller (2014) and Collings et al. (2017) perceive TM as critical for optimal organisational performance.

Africanisation is a way of defining and interpreting African identity and culture (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). It involves integrating different cultures into one to form unity for evolution and transformation. Africanisation gives the sense of belonging and embracing one's culture. Patriotism remains at the fore in Africanisation. The traditional values and norms are taught at school from different levels and offered in one's mother tongue. However, the mother tongue is not compulsory in the liberal society which is the reason why education plays a pivotal role. The key success factor of Africanisation is primary socialisation. Barkhuizen et al. (2014) defines primary socialisation as the process whereby the child learns the traditional customs, values and norms that should be reflected on their behaviour in accordance with culture. Family plays an important role in this instance of primary socialisation. Furthermore, Afrocentric and Eurocentric worldviews differ. Afrocentric worldview focuses on the African cultural values with the perception that the African history has been undermined, with the Western world being considered as more superior to that of the African world. Moreover, the Afrocentric world applies collectivism, whereas the Western worldview applies individualism.

Understanding the African tribal context

It is important to explore the unique cultural, social, and historical aspects of African tribes and how they shape TM practices. This includes examining the values, norms, traditions, and belief systems that influence talent identification, development, and retention within the tribal context. The critical factors to consider for African tribal context, as analysed by Harahap and Choirunnisa (2023), are as follows:

- *Diversity of African Tribes:* Africa is a vast continent with diverse ethnic groups and tribes. It is essential to acknowledge and understand the wide range of tribes present, each with its distinct culture, language, traditions, and social structures (Harahap & Choirunnisa, 2023). Cultural diversity may result in xenophobia, tribalism and racism.
- *History and Origins:* Exploring the historical context of African tribes helps to understand their origins, migration patterns, and interactions with neighbouring tribes (Harahap & Choirunnisa, 2023).
- *Cultural Practices and Beliefs:* African tribes often have rich cultural practices and beliefs that are deeply rooted in their history and environment. These can include religious rituals, ceremonies, dances, music, art, storytelling, and traditional healing practices (Nanda & Warms, 2019). Examining these aspects helps to appreciate the diversity and significance of tribal cultures.

- *Social Organisation and Kinship Systems*: Tribal societies typically have unique social structures and kinship systems that influence their social interactions and roles within the community. Understanding concepts such as lineage, clan systems, age sets, and hierarchical arrangements can provide insights into how power, authority, and decision-making are distributed (Nanda & Warms, 2019).
- *Subsistence Patterns and Economic Activities* (Nanda & Warms, 2019): Different African tribes have traditionally engaged in various subsistence patterns and economic activities based on their geographic location and available resources. These can include agriculture, pastoralism, hunting and gathering, fishing, and trade. Analysing these practices sheds light on the economic dynamics within tribal societies.
- *Political Systems and Governance* (Nanda & Warms, 2019): Examining the political systems and governance structures of African tribes is crucial for comprehending their social and political organisation. Some tribes have traditional systems of leadership, while others have experienced the influence of colonial and post-colonial political frameworks. Studying these aspects helps to grasp tribal governance and decision-making processes.
- *Intergroup Relations and Conflict Resolution*: African tribes often have intricate relationships with neighbouring tribes, involving trade, alliances, conflicts, and mechanisms for resolving disputes. Investigating intergroup dynamics provides insights into the historical and contemporary interactions between tribes and their impact on social cohesion (Nanda & Warms, 2019).
- *Challenges and Modern Influences*: Understanding the tribal context should also encompass an examination of the challenges faced by these communities in the modern world. These challenges may include globalisation, urbanisation, environmental changes, political marginalisation, and socioeconomic disparities (Nanda & Warms, 2019). It is important to note that Africa is a diverse continent, and each tribal context is unique. Therefore, specific details, case studies, and regional variations should be considered to acquire better understanding of individual African tribes under specific contexts.

African tribal leaders often face challenges in TM due to limited financial and infrastructural resources. Insufficient funding for education, skills development programs, and research institutions can hinder the effective nurturing and retention of talent. Leaders need to address resource constraints to create an enabling environment for talent development. Strategy and policies for TM shapes the organisation and can be used for retention, success planning and individual development for psychological-contract fulfilment and employee relationship (Aryee *et al.*, 2015). Understanding the challenges and opportunities in TM helps African tribal leaders shape their strategies, policies, and interventions. By addressing the challenges and capitalising on the opportunities, leaders can create an environment that fosters talent development, innovation, entrepreneurship, and regional integration, contributing to sustainable economic growth and development across the continent. Strategies to overcome these obstacles and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for tribal talent and retention.

Strategies to overcome barriers on talent management by African tribal leaders

African tribal leadership often operates within traditional structures and systems. Exploring how these traditional structures impact TM is essential. This can involve discussing the roles and responsibilities of tribal leaders, the influence of customary practices, and the interplay between modern TM approaches and traditional values. The following are the strategies to explore on how traditional structures can impact TM within African tribal leadership:

Roles and Responsibilities of Tribal Leaders

Tribal leaders play a crucial role in TM within traditional African societies. They often serve as custodians of cultural values, norms, and traditions (Logan *et al.*, 2019). Their responsibilities may

include identifying and nurturing talent within the community, facilitating skills development, and guiding individuals towards leadership roles. Tribal leaders act as mentors and role models, instilling a sense of pride, identity, and purpose in the younger generation.

Influence of Customary Practices

Traditional customary practices, rituals, and ceremonies can influence TM within tribal leadership. These practices often emphasise communal values, respect for elders, and collective decision-making. Customary practices can shape talent development by emphasising the importance of cultural knowledge, traditional skills, and community-oriented contributions (Logan et al., 2019). They provide a framework for transmitting knowledge and skills from one generation to another. Tribal leaders attract talent from a different angle and counteract the turnover, with people so eager to work with the leader that they will take a pay cut. The best approach for decolonisation of narratives which harnesses the indigenous knowledge and customary practices and harmonise the different cultural practices uprooted from socio-cultural and socio-political relationships. The strategies and approaches for decolonisation harmonise the relationship between socio-cultural and with socio-political factors (Lyons et al., 2020).

Interplay Between Modern Talent Management Approaches and Traditional Values

African tribal leaders often navigate the interplay between modern TM approaches and traditional values (Jyoti & Rani, 2014). While modern TM approaches emphasise skills development, meritocracy, and individual aspirations, traditional values prioritise collective well-being, communal harmony, and respect for authority. Tribal leaders strive to strike a balance between these approaches, integrating modern practices without compromising their cultural heritage and community centred values. TM model complements the modern talent management by focusing on hiring the best candidates and considers career development for optimal performance of the organisation. The modern talent management approaches look beyond the talent identification thereby taking into consideration other strategies of TM which include attraction, training and development, succession planning and retention (Collings et al., 2017; Khilji et al., 2015).

Recognising Local Expertise and Knowledge

Traditional tribal leadership recognises the value of local expertise and knowledge in TM (Uge et al., 2019). Tribal leaders often possess deep knowledge of their communities, including their strengths, talents, and unique cultural practices. They draw upon this knowledge to identify, nurture, and promote talent within the community. Tribal leaders may prioritise local knowledge and skills, blending modern approaches with traditional practices to develop talent rooted in their cultural context (Lyons et al., 2020). Both local language and wisdom embraces culture thereby taking into consideration the philosophy, values, norms, ethics, rituals, beliefs, habits, and customs (Rohmadi & Hartono, 2011: 284). Thus, tribal leaders are a source of reference for local wisdom and for cultural norms and values which govern the behaviour.

Community Participation and Decision-making

TM within tribal leadership often involves community participation and decision-making. Tribal leaders engage the community in identifying and developing talent, seeking consensus and collective input (Musavengane, 2019). This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and belonging among community members, ensuring that talent management efforts align with the community's needs and aspirations. Community participation promotes a sense of belonging and ownership when one is engaged in decision making.

Addressing Gender Dynamics

Traditional tribal structures can influence gender dynamics in talent management. Some tribal societies may have specific gender roles and expectations that affect the opportunities available for men and women (Allen et al., 2019). Tribal leaders play a crucial role in challenging gender disparities, promoting gender equality, and creating opportunities for women's talent development. They can advocate for inclusive practices and empower women to participate fully in talent management efforts.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Tribal leaders prioritise the preservation of cultural heritage in talent management. They recognise that cultural practices, artistic expressions, and traditional knowledge are integral parts of talent development (David et al., 2020). Tribal leaders may support initiatives that promote cultural preservation, such as traditional arts and crafts, storytelling, and indigenous knowledge systems. By preserving cultural heritage, they ensure that talent development remains connected to the community's roots and collective identity. Understanding the impact of traditional structures on talent management within African tribal leadership is essential for appreciating the complex dynamics at play. By navigating the interplay between traditional values and modern talent management approaches, tribal leaders can create environments that nurture talent while preserving cultural heritage and community cohesion. They play a vital role in identifying, developing, and promoting talent within their communities, shaping the next generation of leaders grounded in their cultural traditions.

By valuing and leveraging cultural assets, tribal leaders demonstrate innovative approaches to talent development within their communities. They preserve cultural heritage, incorporate traditional knowledge, promote cultural arts and crafts, and foster community participation. Through these efforts, tribal leaders ensure that talent development is deeply rooted in cultural identity, strengthening both the individuals and the community as a whole. By addressing these aspects, a comprehensive discussion on how African tribal leadership overcomes barriers in TM can be conducted. It is important to recognise the diverse approaches taken by different tribal communities, as the challenges and strategies employed may vary significantly. From an African tribal leadership perspective, the attraction and retention of talent can be approached in various ways. Such practices may differ across different tribes and regions.

Research method

The study adopted a phenomenological qualitative research design because of its ability to provide comprehensive information on human experience. A phenomenological qualitative research approach aims to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon as it occurs in the real world with the purpose of understanding it from the perspective of an individual furthermore, the approach investigates the everyday experiences of human beings while suspending the researchers' preconceived assumptions about the phenomenon. The targeted population was the tribal councils which includes the traditional leaders and tribal authorities from the North-West Province in South Africa. The study was conducted in the North-West Province in three districts, namely: Ngaka Modiri Molema District (NMM), Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District (DRSMD), and Bojanala District (BD) where the villages are situated. The researcher targeted the rural areas consisting of villages where traditional councils are situated. The following traditional leaders representing their respective tribes in the North-West Province were interviewed, as shown in Table 1, in the form of focus group discussion.

Table 1:Summary of demographics of the population

Tribal authority Code	Code	Sub-district	Position	Gender
Traditional Authority 1	TA 1	Ramotshere Moiloa (NMMD)	Tribal Council	Four Males
Traditional Authority 2	TA 2	Ramotshere Moiloa (NMMD)	Tribal Council	Five Males
Traditional Authority 3	TA 3	Mahikeng (NMMD)	Tribal Council	Eight Males
Traditional Authority 4	TA 4	Taung (DRSMD)	Tribal Council	Ten males and one female
Traditional Authority 5	TA 5	Moses Kotane (BD)	Tribal Council	Twelve Male
Traditional Authority 6	TA 6	Moses Kotane (BD)	Tribal Council	Ten Male
Traditional Authority 7	TA 7	Moses Kotane (BD)	Tribal Council	Three Male
Traditional Authority 8	TA 8	Moses Kotane (BD)	Tribal Council	Twelve Male

Source: Own compilation

A non-probability judgemental sampling was used for the study: a non-probability judgmental sampling method was used to identify traditional leaders in the North-West Province. A judgemental sampling allowed the selection of individuals who are likely to provide information relating to the research problem. The tribal authorities were chosen from the database of the house of traditional leaders to represent the villages where communities are led by traditional leaders and herdsmen which form part of the traditional council. Prior to data collection, the researcher briefly explained the consent form and requested the participants to sign the forms in conformance to the ethical principles. Further, the researcher translated the research questions into Setswana, the participants' first spoken language to avoid any misunderstanding, also considering that some of the participants were elderly persons who could not read and write. The literacy level of the participants varied from literate, semi-illiterate to relatively illiterate with indigenous knowledge as a common factor. Also, Setswana was the relevant language to use hence the researcher had to translate the research questions from English to Setswana to accommodate those who could not understand, read and write English. Lastly, a focus group discussion was used to collect data from the participants and the group ranged from 12-14 members. The sample size was made up of the eight villages in the North-West Province representing the three districts, as shown in Table 1. The researcher continued to do research until data saturation was reached because the study was qualitative in nature. Data saturation means the continuous collection of data until the additional data does not propose new themes or offer any new information. Raw data was recorded in the form of video or audio. The researcher was the facilitator by leading the traditional councils on the discussion on a topic of barriers to TM and strategies used to overcome the barriers. Note-taking and tape-recording during the session were used for capturing the verbatim discussion. Data extracted was analysed using Atlas.ti and this enabled for the coding of data into themes and codes.

Results and discussion

This phenomenological qualitative study was based on structured interviews held in the form of a focus group discussion with tribal authorities, as shown in Table 1. The steps involved in data analysis were to scan the data to extract main themes and other relevant opinions that may not fall

within the predetermined initial themes but may be important for further analysis. Different themes were identified, and the data was then classified into themes and subsequently codes, as indicated in Table 2. Furthermore, the researcher focused on the most important aspect of each theme and which aspects of the data set it covers, creating a coherent narrative of how and why the coded data within each theme provides unique insights, contributes to the overall understanding of larger questions, and interacts with other themes. A list of codes was developed through the analysis and clustered into two broader themes that are of relevance to this paper.

Table 2:Layout of themes

Research question	Theme	Codes
How do we overcome barriers on talent management from African tribal leadership perspective?	4.1. Barriers to talent management and the strategies to address the barriers	4.1.1 School curriculum 4.1.2 Land, farming and mining 4.1.3 Tourism 4.1.4 Natural resources
What are the complexities of talent attraction and retention from African tribal leadership perspective?	4.2. Complexity of talent attraction and retention	4.2.1 Talent acquisition 4.2.2 Talent attraction 4.2.3 Talent retention 4.2.4 Talent development and training 4.2.5 Succession planning

Source: Own compilation

Barriers to talent management and the strategies to address the barriers

School curriculum

The school curriculum promotes equity from national up down to the local level since it is standardised. The curriculum is designed to accommodate every learner irrespective of the gender, class and race. The curriculum serves as an enabler for growth and development in terms of learning without compromising quality. Beyond development and growth, the curriculum creates a culture of learning and collaboration. One respondent (TA05) pointed out:

“...gone are days when school curriculum has value as compared to the Bantu education. Previously, the school curriculum was not debatable and was very inclusive. Today, the revised curriculum aligned with school policy is weak as rand compared to dollar. I propose that school curriculum be revised and reverted”.

Respondent (TA06), emphasized that:

“School curriculum channels the children. The school curriculum policy is not applied accordingly. There are schools that do not have teachers to teach certain streams e.g. commerce. Local teachers have relocated to urban areas because there are no enough resources for attraction and retention. School buildings are too old and not maintained and no access to internet or Wifi. Previously, the teachers used receive the allowance by working in rural areas, but the allowance was withdrawn by the current minister of basic education as from the year 2022. There are no incentives to attract teachers to work in rural areas. Solution proposed is that there is a need for rural development programme for schools in villages. The school curriculum need to be redesigned to fit into todays ‘world. Things really look bad. Freedom has opened room for disappointment in our society. There is a need to collaborate with the relevant stakeholder for sustainable development...”

Both respondents share the same sentiments on the school curriculum that it needs to be revised so that it fits the purpose. They propose that the school curriculum be redesigned taking into consideration the previous one so that it be comprehensive for the benefits of learners with different backgrounds and for career advancement. The school curriculum can incorporate

different fields of study and be standardised for the benefits of learners at different locations in line with equity and inclusion regardless of demography. Everyone should be given equal access to development opportunities, recognition and career advancement. Redesigning the curriculum will bridge the gaps identified between education and employment, improve the employability of graduates and foster a talent pool that meets industry requirements (Ferns et al., 2019).

Land, farming and mining

The wealth of the local communities in rural areas depends on the use of land, farming and mining. These assets generate revenues for both economic development and sustainable livelihood. Job opportunities emerge from farming and mining. Most of the areas in North-West Province have minerals (natural resources). Furthermore, the Province is well known for maize meal and cattle farming. The land can be used for so many things, for example forestry and fisheries to in the places where there are rivers and dams.

One respondent (TA01) explained:

“The land was taken away from the hands of the traditional leaders by the today’s government. We were covered by CLARA Act. The land was under the control of the traditional leaders until the political interference.”

In contrast, respondent (TA02) mentioned that:

“The land is still controlled by the traditional leaders. It is up to the community leaders to look after their asset before we remain in a state of absolute poverty.”

Respondent TA06 concurred with respondent TA01 by stating that:

“We used to have power on the land allocation and use but no more since the governance structure oversight the importance of land be controlled by the community leaders with no political interference. Similar thing is happening in the mines and farming. Mines are situated in our community but our children are left behind for the job opportunities. The introduction of acts and policies was a way of suppression our local economic and community development. We lease the land to the foreigners who owns mines around our community for mining.”

The respondents indicated that the power and authority had been taken away from the traditional leaders since the new democracy. Tribal leaders formed partnerships with foreigners who owned mines for community development. Tribal leaders promote community development initiatives that allow talented individuals to make a positive impact on the community's well-being. These initiatives can include projects related to education, healthcare, infrastructure development, or environmental sustainability. By emphasising the opportunities for individuals to contribute to community development, tribal leaders showcase the potential for personal and professional growth within the community. Examining the political systems and governance structures of African tribes is crucial for comprehending their social and political organisation. Some tribes have traditional systems of leadership, while others have experienced the influence of colonial and post-colonial political frameworks. Studying these aspects helps to grasp tribal governance and decision-making processes.

Tourism

Tourism generates revenues and attracts talent at local levels. Tourism embraces culture and economy in the country. The preserved buildings for tourism like museums and game reserves, and parks for instance need to be well maintained for attraction. The diverse cultural heritage and natural landscapes attract both international and domestic tourists. Currently, tourism contributes 8.6% of South African Economy and provides for 9.2% of total employment in the country according to Statistics South Africa. Respondent TA06 alluded that:

“Most buildings are dilapidated in this community because authority and power are with local government. The heritage sites which were used to embrace our culture and generate revenues are neglected. I recommend that government looks into this matter because criminals are using

these sites for criminal activities. There is an airport, museum, hotels that generate revenue but with local community not benefitting from this. Our children are not given first preference for any job opportunities.”

Respondent TA08 explained that:

“Tourism attract people outside of North-West Province and even globally. Our district is well known as the tourist area in the province and attract many because there are caves, museum, game reserve, National Parks nearby airport and hotels. Furthermore, places that attract tourist are dams and rivers still in this district. Priority for job opportunities are not given to the local community members but to the people who have a skill and knowledge for job requirement”.

Both respondents indicated that attractive places at local community exist, but however there are still buildings that are not maintained. Tribal leaders aim to provide modern amenities and improve the quality of life within the community without compromising cultural values. This can involve initiatives such as improving infrastructure, healthcare facilities, access to clean water, and recreational opportunities. By balancing modern amenities with the preservation of cultural values, tribal leaders create an environment that appeals to talented individuals seeking a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle. Tribal leaders leverage cultural tourism and cultural exchanges to develop talent and generate economic opportunities. They collaborate with tourism agencies, organisations, and institutions to promote cultural tourism initiatives that showcase traditional practices, lifestyles, and artistic expressions (Ostonov et al., 2020). Cultural exchanges allow community members to interact with individuals from different cultures, fostering cross-cultural learning and talent development.

Natural resources

Countrywide the natural resources are an asset. The North-West Province is well known for minerals and maize meal farming which attracts everyone including the foreigners. At local level, they still practice forestry and fishery because it is regarded as indigenous knowledge but needs licencing. There is a water valley and falls which attract the foreigners for tourism and make contributions to South Africa’s economy. The problem that local community members are facing which affects the country is shortage of water when it is not raining which also affects grazing. Respondent TA07 stated that:

“There are minerals, slate, rivers surrounding our area which we perceive as our wealth, but we are not in control. These minerals attract foreigners in our land. Previously, we had no shacks but because everyone come into our community to look for the jobs ...villages are turned into informal settlement because of these minerals. Movement is not restricted in our country...everyone can pass through with or without passport.

Respondent TA06 concurred with respondent TA07:

“Minerals are the reason why we have cultural diversity and we are multilingual, for example: in mines we speak fanagalo which is the mixture of languages. Our African brothers and sisters come and work at home. Resources are not managed locally by the tribal authorities.”

Respondent TA02 reiterated that:

“Shortage of water is a challenge. Villages struggle with water as a result of the use of boreholes, rivers and dams for survival. The talented youth go es to urban areas to avoid the challenge of water and sanitation. Majority of local community members use pit toilets. There are only few who use the flushing system. Therefore, the environment is a push factor of talent attraction and retention. The residents fail to take care of the environment. Despite the overarching challenge of water, there are people who still do littering in the rivers and the dams. The use of the pipe system which replaced reservoir has increased theft. The local community members steal the pipes. Climate change (extreme temperature) is a challenge. Therefore, lack of resources and poor environmental management pushes people out of the villages”.

Most respondents support each other about the natural resource's problems e.g. environmental hazards and other problems. Partners can contribute resources, such as funding, infrastructure, technology, and training opportunities, to support talent development initiatives and build the capacity of tribal communities to implement and sustain effective talent management frameworks. Conducive environment is a pull factor, and the opposite is the push factor. Push factor – pushes and flashes away talent, whereas pull factors- attract talent and retain it.

Complexity of talent attractions and retention

Talent acquisition

Talent acquisition is way of talent identification. Talent can be identified from the child as young the toddler but not maintaining that talent makes it impossible to retain it in future. For instance during child development stage as early learning centre the teacher can identify that the characteristics of the child reflect the social work knowledge and be encouraged so that the child grows up with that capability of social care and provide motivation in any form. One respondent TA07 indicated:

“...talent acquisition is a scarce resource in our village. We cannot identify talent and retain it because of lack of knowledge and poor infrastructural development to attract local community members even the foreigners. For example, we still have dilapidated and vandalized buildings”.

Further, respondent TA06 stated:

“It is not easy to identify the talent. We are still struggling to identify talent and with the socio-economic problems that we are faced with making matters worse.”

Both respondents indicated that talent identification is a problem in villages and even if identified it is still difficult to attract talent due to poor socio-economic development and infrastructural development. Thus, both rural and economic development can empower the local communities to retain the talent and their children to plough back to their communities. Talent acquisition is one of the elements of talent management under the human resource management (Ansar & Baloch, 2018; Mahfoozi et al., 2018) defined as the strategic approach used to identify and attract talent and identify the highly skilled individuals. Talent identification can be done in the form of recruitment, selection and appointment.

Talent attraction

Talent attraction is the opposite of talent retention. Poor infrastructure and socio-economic development are the main cause of children leaving their homes. Poor access to technology and internet also chase away the children from their homeland in today's society. Digital transformation is still lagging behind in villages and one of things that attract youth due to globalisation. Attractive strategies counteract turnover and a pathway through retention. Attractive strategies for the organisation include employee engagement, upward mobility, staff recognition, performance appraisal, career development, motivation of employees and satisfactory pay level. Talent attraction and retention add value to the organisation. Globally, talent is a scarce resource. Locally, Africa has lost skilled individuals and professional during the war and continues to face the same challenge. Respondent TA04 alluded that:

“Lack of rural and economic development lead to state of absolute poverty and talent loss.

There is nothing that attract foreigners because buildings are not renovated. They are just abandoned and neglected. Poor maintenance of infrastructure counteract talent attraction as a result our children have left their homeland. I propose that we maintain the available resources and lobby support from external stakeholders for talent attraction and retention”.

In concurrence with Respondent TA08, Respondent TA05 mentioned that:

“Poor maintenance of roads and buildings make it impossible to attract talent and retain it.

Technology e.g. access to internet has driven our children outside of their homeland.”

African leaders encounter competition from global markets that attract African talent with promising job prospects, higher salaries, and better infrastructure. This competition can make it challenging for African countries to retain their skilled workforce. Leaders need to develop strategies to create attractive opportunities within their own countries, providing a conducive environment for talent to flourish. TM serves as a mechanism for business success and competitive advantage in a competitive market of the twenty-first century). African leaders recognise the transformative potential of digital technologies in talent management. They embrace the opportunities presented by e-learning platforms, digital skills development, remote work, and digital entrepreneurship. Leaders can leverage digital transformation to overcome geographic limitations, reach a wider talent pool, and equip individuals with the digital skills needed for the future job market (Feng & Jansen, 2021).

Talent retention

Talent retention results from job satisfaction in the organisation. Poor communication systems and employee disengagement lead to talent turnover but once the employees are fully participating in the organisation in any form then they will remain the organisation. Motivational factors play a pivotal role. Job satisfaction is defined as an employee's positive feeling towards his or her own job based on the evaluation done on its characteristics (Robbins & Judge, 2023). Job satisfaction has a multitude of contributing factors. Factors such as promotion, fair payment, and good working conditions encourage the employees to stay at the workplace without experiencing the pressure of thinking about leaving the organisation. Respondent TA04 indicated that:

“...talent attraction serves as catalyst for talent retention. No ways that old buildings will attract talent. Teachers are leaving villages and work in urban areas because of poor maintenance of classrooms and no access to internet. We still use pit toilets at schools. Poor water and sanitation remains as a threat to retain talent locally. Villages are left behind.”

In addition, respondent TA03 stated that:

“Safety of the people living in villages is at stake. There are areas where we do not have electricity installed and water. The reservoirs are not taken care of. Tap water system introduced for development is poorly maintained. Previously, we used water mills which gave us no problem. Today, we run out of water and even drink water that is not purified which pose as threat to our health. Hence, talent retention is a challenge. The environment does not allow one to live in that situation.”

Respondent TA01, said that:

“It is impossible to retain the traditional leaders because the election happens at community level but following the family tree which is guiding tool. Members from royal family are the only one who can be appointed as the traditional leader. The appointment is done by COGTA in collaboration with the office of the Premier. The traditional council is also elected applying the 60/40 rule. Retention is impossible. Tribal authorities is not like politics whereby South African citizen vote for their President”. On the other hand, retention of employees in our public institution depend on the individual's level of satisfactory at work”.

The response from Respondent TA01 indicated the level of knowledge on retention strategy and further enlightens the research that traditional leaders are not politicians but royal family members. Talent retention is the opposition of intention to quit. Furthermore, it entails ability to learn and grow. Learning is a continuous process, so individuals need to be empowered through training and development programs when there is a need. Talent retention is defined as an organisation's ability to reduce attrition rate. It is further described as a mechanism used to reduce turnover.

Talent training and development

Training and development is the foundation for both personal and organisational development. Further, it improves on performance and is cost effective once mentoring and coaching are well

monitored. Training and development can be considered as a refresher course for those who have been on the system and for induction to new ones. Moreover, the policies and guidelines are frequently being revised which then call for training. Respondent TA04 said:

“Tribal authorities had trust funds to award for learners that deserve to further their studies but today we longer have. Training and development is lagging behind at local and community level.”

Supported by Respondent TA08:

“Training and development is a serious problem. Most of the organisations both private and public are left behind when coming to training. Digital transformation for online learning is impossible since well internet is not easily accessible in areas where there is no network.

Transformation is going to take time. Illiteracy also impede development.”

Both participants indicated there is work needed around training and development. They also indicated that digital transformation is lagging behind. Trainings and development follow after the performance review to harness the skills and knowledge of the employees or as corrective action based on the gaps identified. Heinen and O’Neill (2004) mentioned that career development, mentoring and coaching occurs during this stage for growth, changes and empowerment which then lead to succession planning for strategic positions.

Despite, the remove comma efforts and money involved in training and development, it is not always the case that after training, retention and attraction will be guaranteed. It can turn into a threat to the same organisation and even an opportunity to the competitors to grab for the competitive advantage. African leaders recognise the transformative potential of digital technologies in talent management. They embrace the opportunities presented by e-learning platforms, digital skills development, remote work, and digital entrepreneurship (Kunter & Holzberger, 2014). Leaders can leverage digital transformation to overcome geographic limitations, reach a wider talent pool, and equip individuals with the digital skills needed for the future job market (Feng & Jansen, 2021).

Succession planning

Retention is critical to maintain the best performers in the organisation. The weakness of currency, no promotions and bonuses drives away the best performers of the organisations which then result in skills gap. Knowledge and talent management is at stake succession planning if not properly done. Motivational factors plays a very crucial part in succession planning to retain the skilled and qualified employees. Job satisfaction is defined as an employee’s positive feeling towards his or her own job based on the evaluation done on its characteristics (Robbins & Judge, 2023). Job satisfaction has a multitude of contributing factors. Factors such as promotion, fair payment, and good working conditions encourage the employees to stay at the workplace without experiencing the pressure of thinking about leaving the organisation. These factors are concrete indicators of organisational effectiveness. Furthermore, extrinsic and intrinsic job components are determining factors of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Respondent TA06 supported:

“Succession planning is difficult once retention is not happening. The highly skilled individuals have left their homeland to work in urban areas where infrastructure is not a problem”.

Respondent TA08 supported:

“Poor maintenance of infrastructure and weak currency chased away our children from homeland. High performers left for greener pasture which then again result in talent loss locally.”

Respondent TA04, emphasised that:

“People leave our village because of lack of resources. Available resources are not taken care of. Government of today does not provide sufficient resources in the village. Previously, our resources were taken care of. For instance, one Professional Nurse left the village because of the tyre burst caused by potholes. During Bophuthatswana time, our road were in good condition”.

Whilst respondents TA04 alluded that lack of resources and poor maintenance chase away the skilled personnel and cause them to leave their homeland, Respondents TA07 and 08 share the same sentiment that poor infrastructure is a push factor for succession planning. Succession planning targets the potential candidate within the organisation, suitable to do the job for the vacant post considering experience and knowledge about the job (Khilji et al., 2015). The traditional approach used for succession planning is matching the individual with the senior position available, whilst the modern approach considers the senior position competencies. Continuous learning and work-life balance forms part of competencies that the employer looks for in the individual for the leadership position. The organisation can foster the culture of learning through empowerment programs e.g. executive leadership training which forms part of the requirements for senior positions. Human capital approach for succession planning can be taken into consideration for the individual development which will benefit the organisation (Lecouste et al, 2017). The smooth transitioning and change management occurs easily once the employee is promoted within the same organisation for senior position which is cost effective.

Conclusion and recommendation

In summary the themes discussed above, talent attraction and retention are complex in the tribal authorities and their communities. The respondents elaborated intensively on the key element of talent management and how they are affected: talent acquisition, talent attraction and retention, training and development, succession planning. Therefore, talent attraction and retention have so many problems which further result in complexity. Reverting from the previous themes political interference in the form of laws and regulations (acts, policies and guidelines) has complicated matters. African leaders recognise the transformative potential of digital technologies in talent management. They embrace the opportunities presented by e-learning platforms, digital skills development, remote work, and digital entrepreneurship. Leaders can leverage digital transformation to overcome geographic limitations, reach a wider talent pool, and equip individuals with the digital skills needed for the future job market (Feng & Jansen, 2021). Succession planning was highlighted in the findings of the study as a complicated matter. Poor rural and socioeconomic development were identified as the push factors of the best performers and skilled individuals from the local communities. Succession planning targets the potential candidate within the organisation suitable to do the job for the vacant post considering experience and knowledge about the job. African leaders should recognise the human capital, which encompasses the skills, knowledge, and abilities of their citizens, because is a crucial factor for economic development and social progress. Traditional leaders can apply human capital to understand the effective way of managing and harnessing talent at local level for sustainable growth.

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