

Attrition and Retention of Senior Academics at Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa: The Strategies, Complexities and Realities

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ABSTRACT The competition for top academics across the higher education and research landscape of South Africa has assumed a prominent dimension and this phenomenon has resulted in the ever increasing attrition of this category of employees from one institution to the next. This paper seeks to identify and evaluate factors that facilitate the attrition and retention of senior academic employees in South African universities. The study adopted survey research method using quantitative research design. A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather primary data from respondents. The study examines the influence of certain work attributes on the retention of 255 senior academic staff in 10 universities across South Africa. Results of the study indicates that most of the respondents place greater importance on challenging work, inter-personal relationship, access to research resources and job security. Results are discussed in terms of the implications for retention practices in the universities.