

**ATTRACTING AND RETAINING SCARCE SKILLS THROUGH SCARCE
SKILLS ALLOWANCE IN THE BOTSWANA PUBLIC SERVICE: A CASE
STUDY OF CITY OF FRANCISTOWN COUNCIL**

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my loving husband, Kago Damien Thapa, who is a pillar of my strength and to my two beautiful kids, Amantle and Atang, who bring so much joy to my life.

To my mother Ms Mosetsanagape Sepora and my parents in law, Damien and Adelaide Thapa.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is a true reflection of my own research and has not and will not be submitted for any other degree in any other institution of higher learning. All reference materials have been acknowledged in the bibliography.

Tshepang

Thapa

DATE: _____

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

BIDPA- Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis

BOPA- Botswana Press Agency

DPSM- Directorate of Public Service Management

DLGSM- Department of Local Government Service Management

HIV/AIDS- Human Immuno Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

HR- Human Resources

IT- Information Technology

NDP 9- National Development Plan 9

NDP 10- National Development Plan 10

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ABSTRACT

The thesis is about the attraction and retention strategy implemented by the Botswana Public Service. The strategy, which is a scarce skills allowance, is intended to attract and retain Botswana Public service employees who possess skills which are scarce in terms of the Botswana Public Service. This allowance has been in place since April 2008 after the realisation that the public service was challenged with attracting and retaining employees with scarce skills. These skills include professions such as Accounting, Economics, Information Technology, Medical, Engineering and Legal. The study is case of city of Francistown council which is part of the Public service and boasts of different departments within which the different types of skills and professions are found. The study intended to establish the effects of the implementation of scarce skills allowance in the Botswana public Service. There has been recognizable positive effect from the implementation of the allowance although from the study it has been found not to be enough to be able to attract and retain employees with scarce skills. As people are generally not motivated by the same things the implementation of the allowance has been found to have a need to be augmented with other strategies in order to be able to attract and employees with scarce skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the Study

Most of the developing countries around the world are grappling with a problem of acute shortage of skilled manpower in critical areas of the economy on top of an increase in the demand for essential goods and services. This is more prevalent in the public sector where there are a large number of skills shortages and a high rate of employee turnover in critical areas. As a result of these skills shortages in critical areas of the economy, there is high competition for people who possess the skills which are in short supply.

As noted by Booth and Snower (2004, p.8), “The supply of skills has not responded fully to the rising demand, leaving firms to experience significant skill shortages.” The shortage of skills is seen within the professional and technical areas which Hendry (1995, p.285) explains thus, “Professional and technical workers cover a wide range of occupations and jobs, including solicitors, doctors, accountants, teachers and lecturers, engineers, Information Technology specialists, and scientists.” He further explains that these are critical to the dynamic performance of the economy, and represent a heavy investment by individuals and society in their skills. Hence, there is stiff competition among organisations which in most cases results in the private sector entities outsmarting public organisations by offering their employees and those willing to join them attractive remuneration packages. In further explaining the term professional, Dessler (2008) says it is those employees whose work involves the application of

learned knowledge to the solution of the employer's problems. They include lawyers, doctors, economists and engineers.

Botswana, just like other developing countries, is also faced with the problem of shortage of skilled manpower within the public service. The challenge that the Botswana Public Service is facing regarding shortage of skilled manpower is common within both the central and local government. The professions which are regarded as scarce in terms of the Botswana Public Service include Medical Doctors, Dentists, Engineers, Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Pharmacists, Veterinarians, Chartered Accountants, Laboratory Scientists and Technicians, Speech Therapists, Aircraft Pilots, Information Technology Professionals, Legal Professionals and Economists (Directorate of Public Service Management, 2008). OECD (1994, p.3) defines the public sector by saying, "In general, the term public sector covers all the various administrative bodies and agencies for which public finance is the main source of income. This includes central government, local authorities, health and social services, defence, police and education, but excludes public entities which are financed by their own revenues."

In an effort to attract and retain people with scarce skills, the Botswana Public Service, through the Public Service Management Directive No. 2 of 2008, introduced a scarce skills allowance in April 2008. All people who are currently benefiting from the allowance will continue doing so until evidence no longer indicates that the skill is in short supply (DPSM, 2008). As previously mentioned,

the challenge that the Botswana Public Service is facing as regards the skills shortage is seen within both the central and local government, hence a case study of one of the local authorities which is the City of Francistown Council.

The Botswana Public Service consists of employees who hold posts on fixed establishment in any of the different ministries or departments. These are normally employed through the different service Acts of government (Department of Public Service Management, 2008). It is for the above reason that local authorities (i.e. district/urban councils, district administration, land boards and tribal administration) and in particular the City of Francistown Council, which is the case study, are regarded as part of the public service as it falls under the Ministry of Local Government.

1.2 City of Francistown

Francistown is the second largest city of Botswana after the capital city Gaborone and is located on the eastern side of the country. Originally Francistown was a town and was declared a city in 1997. The city has a population of about 115 000 inhabitants. The City of Francistown is an administrative district and administered by City of Francistown Council under the direction of the Ministry of Local Government. The City Council is mandated with services that include maintenance of roads, provision of primary health care, primary education, municipal and recreational facilities.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In order to improve its capacity, the Government of Botswana continues to train its employees and citizens at large. For example, training of professional accountants is provided by Botswana Accountancy College, a private sector college largely subsidized by the Government of Botswana. The staffing of the public service started from humble beginnings, with clerks ascending to positions of authority. With more college and university graduates completing their studies, the calibre of staff improved, especially the administrative cadre, but some ministries are still suffering serious shortages of technical experts (Botswana Institute for Development Policy Administration, 2006). Student enrolment has been seen to be increasing in tertiary institutions from 20,011 in 2003/4 to 31,129 in 2007/8 (NDP 10, 2010). It is against this background that BIDPA (2006) also notes that, “There have been dramatic, rapid increases in the number of Botswana with Secondary and Tertiary qualifications, as well as technical and professional qualifications, although the latter are still in short supply (BIDPA, 2006, p.90). This leads to skills shortages in some critical areas within the public service and the economy as a whole.

Despite some achievements in the past four decades in training and developing human resources, Botswana continues to be faced with the problem of inadequate supply of people qualified in technical and science-related fields (BIDPA, 2006). The Botswana Public Service has over the years been experiencing challenges of shortage of certain skills. This has not been an exception for local authorities. The problem of scarce skills has undermined performance both at local and central government. It has possibly been aggravated by a brain drain,

resignations by personnel with scarce skills who opt to work for the private sector and inability to fill vacancies for long periods. As a result of the above, Government introduced the scarce skills allowance, whose main aim is to attract and retain personnel with scarce skills.

This study, therefore, seeks to find out the effects of the allowance in the City of Francistown Council and by extension the Botswana Public Service. No study has been done so far to look at the effects of scarce skills allowance in terms of staff retention within the Botswana Public Service. The issues to be looked at are whether or not there has been any significant change in terms of attracting and retaining scarce skills within the City of Francistown Council since the introduction of the allowance.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to establish the effects of the introduction of scarce skills allowance on skills shortages in the City of Francistown Council. In an attempt to meet the objectives the study looked at the following questions:

- Is the City of Francistown Council facing any challenges in attracting and retaining people with scarce skills?
- What have been the effects of the introduction of Scarce Skills Allowance?
- Are there other possible measures that can be put in place to attract and retain scarce skills in the City Council as well as the Public Service at large?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will go a long way in bringing to light pertinent issues that can assist public policy makers to make informed decisions pertaining to attraction and retention of employees with scarce skills and also employees whose skills are not necessarily scarce but play an important role within organisations. It has also tried to find other possible measures that the public service can use other than the use of scarce skills allowances to retain scarce skills. In addition it has reflected on perceptions surrounding the implementation of the scarce skills allowance which will assist government in going forward with the implementation of the allowance.

Most importantly, the study will also contribute to the existing literature on Human Resources Practices in Botswana. As this is the first study to look at the effects of scarce skills allowances in terms of staff retention within the Botswana Public sector it will fill the existing gaps in literature and contribute to knowledge.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Since this is a case study of the City of Francistown Council, it is not easy to generalise to the entire population (be it district/urban councils or the public service in general). This is mainly because a case study only permits one to generalise to theory.

Sourcing information from relevant key participants was very difficult because such information was deemed or classified as confidential. In addition some participants were not willing to participate. Out of the forty five participants who were targeted only twenty two participated willingly in the study. There may also be a likelihood

that some of the people who are benefiting from the new intervention may have given misleading information in an attempt to protect their interests. In other words, self reporting bias cannot be ruled out. This may be a result of the fact that not employees of the City of Francistown Council benefit from the allowance. Some occupations are regarded as scarce while others are not considered as such, and it is those that are not regarded as such who are not given the scarce skills allowance.

1.7 Chapter Outline

The study is outlined by different chapters which form the basis of the research. Chapter 1 as shown above introduces the study by outlining its objectives, significance, what motivated the study and how it is informed. Chapter 2 is the Literature Review which provides the study with information already presented by other scholars and researchers. Literature review highlights what others have documented which is related to the study. The Research Methodology is in Chapter 3 and indicates the type of study. It shows how the research has been designed, the population and sample used, instruments used in the collection of data and how the data has been analysed. Chapter 4 presents the research analysis and findings. These are presented in tables with notes to explain the findings. Chapter 5 is conclusions and recommendations by the researcher. These have been informed by the preceding chapters. It indicates the views of the researcher.

1.8 Conclusion

Skills shortages form the basis of this study. It has been noted that there are indeed certain skills within the Botswana Public Service which are scarce and the situation is not peculiar to Botswana alone. While attempts to come up with solutions to the

situation are made, a lot of challenges are encountered. Of the many solutions that could be put in place, the study is informed by the introduction of the scarce skills allowance by the Botswana Public Service. Despite having introduced the allowance in April 2008, it is evident that skills shortage still persists in the Botswana Public Service, with many reasons identified. The study uses City of Francistown Council as a case study because of the diversity of local authorities. It is within local authorities that a lot of skills regarded as scarce are found unlike in other government departments or ministries where certain skills would be peculiar to one Department or Ministry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature on Human Resources and Organisational Development issues broadly cover the aspects of scarce skills in the Public Service. In addition, literature on the

Botswana Public Service has been used in this study, although there is not much literature on scarce skills in particular for Botswana as there has not been any study done since the implementation of the scarce skills allowance. The literature indicates that there is a gap between what is available and what is desired. As Booth & Snower (1996, p.8) state, “The supply of skills has not responded fully to the rising demand, leaving firms to experience significant skill shortages”. This explains why some skills which are essential to today’s economy are in short supply. For example, “The Botswana public service’s growth in size and occupational mix during National Development Plan 9 was not matched with skills development in the relevant areas. Although Government spent more than a quarter of a billion Pula every year on the training of Public Officers, there were still severe skills shortages in many areas” (National Development Plan 10, p. 94).

When shedding light on the situation in Zambia, Colclough (1997, p.97) states that “Recruitment and retention of good staff has been a particular problem in some jobs, particularly so in the cases of accountants, information technologists, and engineers.” This suggests that, such a problem is not common to Botswana alone but a worldwide problem, especially in the developing countries.

Botswana has not been an exception as also noted by the Attorney General, Dr Athaliah Molokomme. She was quoted saying that, “In the case of our chambers, we are able to attract fresh university graduates into the lower ranks of state counsel, but once they have acquired some experience, and maybe a masters degree (at government expense), they leave for what they perceive to be greener pastures in the private sector” (Botswana Press Agency 2008).

2.2 Overview of the Botswana Public Service and Local Councils

Botswana became independent in 1966 after 81 years of colonial rule in which the public service was the most important institution in the management of the state. At that time, the public service was relatively small but growing fast and it expanded rapidly thereafter. Initially there was dominance of expatriate officers especially from Britain. Botswana officers were found at the lowest echelon of the service, mostly in clerical, secretarial and teaching areas (Edge & Lekorwe, 1998). “Councils had always been understaffed, creating serious problems for the district planning system. Some councils had no option but to employ unqualified personnel, which led to poor plan implementation” (Edge & Lekorwe, 1998, p.180).

From the above, it can be noted that the public service started very small with a few educated citizens. With the growth of the economy and globalisation creeping in, it has forced Botswana to be competitive in the world market. This has created such problems as skills shortage which emanate from critical parts of the economy which have to be administered with expertise. With little Botswana trained in some of the critical skills, it has caused a stretch between government and the private sector to compete for the little pool of skills that is available. “The government plays an important role in the economy in that it is the largest employer and investor. As of March 2001, formal sector employment was estimated at 270, 331 people. The government is also the largest investor in the economy through investment in various development projects and programs” (Kamoche, et al, 2004, p.20). On this note it shows the great responsibility that government has. Some of the projects require

certain skills which if in short supply may pose a challenge in terms of implementation of such projects.

However, what is interesting is that the Botswana Government continues to strive to strike a balance in so far as skills are concerned. The intentions of the government with regard to the formulation and implementation of a national human resource strategy are captured succinctly in the National Development Plan (NDP) 10 which states that, “The National Human Resource Development Strategy will provide the basis for matching skills with labour market demands. This will enable Botswana to produce an adequate supply of qualified, productive and competitive human resources that will meet the national labour market needs and allow for any surplus skilled labour to participate in the global labour markets” (NDP 10, p.94). It goes on to highlight some of the challenges faced during NDP 9, and those identified were in the production of graduates who had skills that were relevant to the country’s changing economic and social development and who were able to compete in the global labour markets.

Organisations in Botswana use different payment structures and policies to reward employees. For example, the pay structure in the public sector is based on a salary structure, while the private and parastatal sectors are free to design their own payment system and policies according to the labour market and what they are able to afford. This gives the private and parastatal sectors a competitive edge over government. As a result, where there are skills shortages, the private sector is able to win a lot of these, leaving government to do with the little that is available.

2.3 Causes of skills shortage

The spread of HIV/AIDS is one of the major challenges facing Botswana. HIV/AIDS is affecting the most productive segments of the population and is depleting the country of limited human and financial resources. In an effort to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, Employers are expected to conform to the National Policy on HIV/AIDS and Employment, which is aimed at preventing and minimising the spread of HIV/AIDS in the workplace (Kamoche, et al, 2004).

Other factors that lead to skills shortage emanate from where the public service and the local councils of Botswana originated. From the start, just a few number of citizen employees were trained. The number of citizens trained in skills regarded as scarce currently does not match the demand. A number of citizens who were trained at the start of independence enrolled in fields which currently are not on demand. The skills regarded as scarce are on demand the whole world, and as such competition for such skills is global.

2.4 Effects of Skills Shortage

Booth and Snower (1996) explain that skill shortage affects productivity negatively as in some instances organisations are forced to wait longer to fill positions. Organisations may find it hard to induce workers to work hard as those who have skills in short supply have outside options. Furthermore, when skills are in short supply, it translates into significant losses for the organisation in terms of poor-quality work, increase in employee accidents, and customer complaints (DeCenzo & Robbins, 1999).

In Australia, it is now generally accepted that skills shortages in key occupational areas are hindering future economic growth. The technology skills shortage is forcing many employees to look further afield for staff (Foreshow, 2008). Such an example indicates that the problem of skills shortages is worldwide, and if countries are to be competing for such skills it is those who have good attraction and retention strategies that will benefit from the pool of people with scarce skills. High turnover is associated with skills shortages, as organisations continue to compete with each other for these skills.

Robbins, et al (2003) note that high turnover rates result in increased recruiting, selection and training costs. “In businesses in which human capital plays a crucial role, an organisation that suffers dramatic turnover is in trouble. That trouble may lead to changes in the HR blueprint of the firm, in an attempt to save the organisation” (Baron & Kreps, 1999, p.494). When people leave an organisation, they create a vacuum that must be filled immediately. They take with them a certain amount of intellectual capital that takes time to replace. “Turnover is an unforgiving organisational demon with a lot of stamina. When it launches its stealthy attacks, productivity declines, quality suffers, customer loyalty is strained, costs increase, profits decline, and competitive advantage slips (Preziosi, 2007, p.11). It should however be noted also that some level of labour turnover is healthy and desirable.

2.5 How to attract and retain scarce skills

People are the public sectors’ greatest asset. Attention to that asset will enable it to survive and to rebuild new administrative structures resilient to current demands (Watson, 1997). In many companies with a high degree of scarce skills, one of the

most cost effective tactics in the battle for scarce resources is to attract and retain the most able and skilled employees within the organisation. “Retention is clearly a key factor in the overall success of an organisation’ (Preziosi, 2007, p.17). Attracting involves presenting and positioning an organisation as a desirable work-place and developing and executing recruiting strategies. One means that is usually used to attract employees is to have competitive pay structures. Bok (1993, p.10) explains that, “Some occupations, such as scientific research, violin playing, or professional athletics, need special intelligence or special skills. Because relatively few people possess these talents, the demand for their services often exceed the supply, and the price they can charge increases accordingly.”

In the case of the Botswana Public Service, it is noted that, “Attraction and retention of scarce skills continued to be a major problem during NDP 9 resulting in Retention and Remuneration Policy and Strategies being developed. Several incentives, including allowances, were introduced and external recruitment agencies were contracted to facilitate recruitment of manpower with the required skills” (NDP 10, p.109). This probably explains why the Botswana Public Service has introduced the scarce skill allowance. “Some groups of workers with scarce skills, for example, computer specialists or medical officers, will have to be paid the market rate, irrespective of job evaluation or grading, if their services are to be secured and retained” (Livy, 1988, p.266).

This suggests that in as much as there may be other differing attributes regarding attraction and retention of employees with scarce skills, good remuneration is also very important. An indication of why the implementation of the scarce skills

allowance was seen as a good move by the Botswana Public Service. The allowance, from the study has been an attempt to move salaries of employees with scarce skills at par with that of their counterparts in other industries. Even though from the research it has shown that to some extent it has managed to attract and keep a sizeable number of employees with scarce skills, it will take time to understand the pattern created by the implementation of the scarce skills allowance.

In favour of rewarding for certain skills, Stredwick (2000) notes that employee retention under such a strategy generally remains high and saves on recruitment costs. He further notes that a shortage of key skills can have the effect of increasing pay rates. “This applied at the end of the 1980s due to the need to cope with the problems expected to occur with the arrival of the Millennium” (Stredwick, 2000, p. 289). The reward structure can be set at the top of the market range at all levels of the organisation.

It appears that pay is one of the most important enablers for organisations to attract and retain people with critical skills. The private sector is known to pay relatively higher than the public sector and thus presenting the latter with a great challenge of competing with the former. Baron and Kreps (1999) highlight that firms that pay premium wages and provide premium perks find that, among other benefits include reduced turnover and a more committed workforce. It has been noted that in Africa, leaving for higher earnings is the most likely cause of turnover among those whose job skills are in short supply (Blunt & Popoola, 1990).

Companies that do not pay well become the training grounds for those that pay well. “Sometimes an individual who is working at another firm is a particular attractive hire. This is generally the case when the individual has some idiosyncratic set of skills. It is the unusual nature of the skills that make raiding another firm, rather than hiring from the pool of self-announced applicants attractive” (Lazear, 1998, p.209). This can be likened to what Cappelli (2008) has identified as a problem in retaining talent that, as long as some competitors continue to rely on poaching outside talent, the ability of any individual employer to develop and retain talent is hampered.

Key employees are often provided with additional incentives to ensure their retention. It is for this reason that the existence of some skills which are regarded as scarce cannot be ignored because strategies have to be in place to have these people on board. This is further explained by Du Toit (2009) that any company’s remuneration strategy or system is aimed at attracting and retaining employees who can contribute to sustainable business growth.

2.6 Effects of Scarce Skills Allowance

The allowance may be seen to have advantages, however it may also have its disadvantages. “While adjustments to the wage structure may well affect shortages in the longer term, the response from the supply of skilled labour would take time to show through” (Booth & Snower, 1996, p. 152). One of the advantages of paying for skills is that it encourages skills acquisition. The skill-based pay program rewards individuals for skill acquisition. Zingheim, (cited by Berger, 2004, p.373) says, “In the case of Botswana, this should mean young people from secondary schools may be

encouraged to enrol for courses in the fields which are currently in short supply at tertiary institutions and this will inevitably increase the pool of skills deemed scarce.

According to Vroom's Expectancy Theory, employees respond to attempts to motivate them on an individual basis in their own specific situation. They may not need additional pay or they may not value the particular reward (Stredwick, 2000). In addition, Zingheim, (cited by Berger, 2004, p.373) says, "People with scarce skills commonly prefer a compelling future that is based on continuing change and even business revolution or total pay at risk in exchange for significant breakthrough innovation. This reward model may not be attractive to everyone." This is also confirmed by Baron & Kreps (1999, p.35), "One size does not fit all when it comes to HR systems."

It can also be said that the allowance may lead to low productivity as a result of disgruntlement. Some employees see it as discriminatory especially those who do not receive the allowance or those said to be not possessing scarce skills. In other instances some professions feel they have been left out as they also believe their skills are scarce. For example, it had been reported in the media that, physiotherapists have joined nurses and other professionals to register their protest over their exclusion from receiving the scarce skills allowance announced by the Government of Botswana in April 2008 (Chwaane, 2008). This was at the start of the implementation of the scarce skills allowance.

It should however, be noted that physiotherapists are now considered and benefiting from the allowance "Managers very often do not like to tell employees who among

them have the must-keep critical skills and whose capabilities may be less essential” (Berger & Berger, 2004, p.378-9). Distinctions between classes of employees can have negative effects on the organisation. Differences, particularly those of status, should be minimised if not eliminated (Kraut & Korman, 1999).

In some instances, some labour bodies and in particular the Botswana Public Officers Employees Union has been quoted as saying the allowance is discriminatory against some of its members (BOPA, 2008). Looking at the issue the other way round one could argue that differences will always surface in remunerating employees no matter what the circumstances are. “It should be recognised that the conditions necessary for the equalisation of wage rates are not fulfilled in practice. In reality, workers are not homogeneous because of differences in natural ability, skills and training” (Hardwick, et al, 1994, p.297).

When an organisation pays for skills, pay is determined by the skills of the employee rather than the job to which the employee is assigned. The system rewards employees for skill acquisition and not necessarily on output (Schuster & Zingheim, 1992). This scenario can negatively impact on the performance of an organisation if those who benefit from the skills that they have are not necessarily best performers. On the other hand although it seems to cost more to pay for skills than to pay them for the jobs they do, the practice can increase organisational effectiveness.

Arrnstrong (1996) further argues that the problem with paying for skills is that the emphasis on inputs that skills are rewarded even when they are not delivering results.

Skills should only be valued if they are used productively and the analysis and evaluation process should take account of this.

At the start of the introduction of scarce skills allowance, there was fear that it would crowd out the private sector. However some analysts believed it was a good move and would not affect the private sector in any way. The concern probably emanated from the fact that the public sector, regarded as a single organisation, is the largest employer of the work-force and can have a considerable impact on the level of wages, productivity and investment in the economic system (Hardwick, et al, 1994).

2.7 What else can be done to attract and retain scarce skills?

Attracting key personnel can be very challenging, and the challenge can be overwhelming to most organisations. It is for this reason that there has to be strategies in place in order to be able to attract and to maintain key personnel. This can be drawn from Bruce & Pepitone (1999) that it takes more than top salaries to keep key employees from leaving. “Pay is not the most important thing that makes organisations attractive or unattractive places to work. However, it is much more important than whatever comes third or fourth” (Schuster & Zingheim, 1992, p.18).

Similar sentiments are expressed by Berger (2004, p.351) when he mentions that, “There are those who believe that compensation is of secondary importance to most people in their decisions to stay at or leave organisations. There are others who believe that compensation is the primary tool for attracting and retaining talent.” A lot of research in Organisational Behaviour has noted that satisfaction with a reward is a

function of how much is received and also that feelings of satisfaction are influenced by comparisons with what happens to others (Lawler, 1983).

Retaining key employees is not just about money. It is a matter of creating an environment where your employees feel right- a culture that suits them (Bruce & Pepitone, 1999). In the same vein, Andrews (1988) notes that personnel services, personnel evaluation, retirement arrangements, collective bargaining and health and safety measures should be looked at holistically in order to retain employees. There are some uncontrollable personnel factors that cause some to leave, but there is also much that an organisation can do to ensure high profitability of retention (Preziosi, 2007) “Some people are more valuable than others to the company and the manager’s job is to make sure the company is able to get and keep the best possible employees” (Berger & Berger, 2004, p.379).

For the Botswana Public Service, one of the intentions of the NDP 10 is to invest in training and developing employees as a means of attracting and retaining human capital, as well as getting better returns from the investments. This arose from the Vision 2016 pillar of ‘An Educated and Informed Nation’, which is to provide an adequate supply of qualified, productive and competitive human resources (Ministry of Finance, 2009). The Human Resources Development Policy seeks to increase the tertiary education gross enrolment ration from the current 11.4 % (2007/8) to a minimum of 17 % by 2016 and then to a further minimum of 25% by 2026 (Ministry of Education and Skills Development, 2008).

Armstrong notes the following as some of the strategies that can be implored in improving retention rates; Pay, Rewards, Satisfying Jobs, Recognition for Performance, Training, Career Development, Good Management and Supervisory skills, Recruitment, Selection and Promotion strategies that are good as well as over marketing of the organisation itself (Armstrong, 1992).

Another way of attracting and retaining employees is to use the employer of choice approach. This is used on the realisation that employees with scarce skills are in a competitive labour market and that it is essential to provide better terms and conditions which are better than those offered by competitors. To this end, Cappelli (2008) opines that making an organisation less attractive for competitors to poach employees is another way that can be used to improve retention.

In trying to answer the above statement of “How else scarce skills can be attracted and retained”, Klinvex, et al, (1999) had this question to ask. “What makes a company a great place to work? It is a combination of monetary and nonmonetary rewards, of tangible and intangible benefits. It is the right mix, the right package. That is what makes a desirable applicant want to come to work for you” (Klinvex, et al, 1999, p. 37). They further mention that organisations should be made great places to work for, and part of doing that is having innovative recruiting processes so as to be able to attract the kind of employees and in this case those with scarce skills. (Klinvex, et al, 1999). Other means that can be used are exit interviews which are seen as a means by which issues surrounding staff retention can be investigated (Sutherland & Canwell, 2004). By so doing, strategies can be put in place to attract and retain the required skills.

2.8 Conclusion

From the introduction, there was indication that there is not much literature that deals specifically with scarce skills in the public service. In spite of this, the subject of scarce skills is discussed broadly in a lot of Human Resources Management texts. The literature indicates that indeed, certain skills are scarce the world over. This makes one appreciate the fact that the challenge lies with different employers including the Public Service to ensure that such skills are attracted and retained for the benefit of service provision.

There is indication that there is a rising demand of certain skills which makes them scarce as they are in short supply. In the case of the Botswana Public Service, this has also come as a result of not having many people trained in the field regarded as scarce. The greater problem is recognised on the retention side because of the large number of employees who resign for what is termed “greener pastures”.

An overview of the Botswana Public Service shows that it started very small, hence a number of few trained personnel at the time. The impact of these skills shortages is negative on the performance of the public service. This therefore means government coming up with strategies to overcome the problem. There are different types of measures that are noted in the literature which are used by different organisations. Scarce skills are indeed scarce and should be recognised as such. This is a strategy used mostly as it lies on competition.

On the other hand, the strategy can have negative effects as noted that in some instances those who do not benefit may view it negatively. Also of importance is to note that, the scarce skills allowance may not necessarily attract and retain all people with scarce skills as this is dependent on preferences of an individual.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The Research methodology highlights the steps followed in conducting the study. The study, which was based on a case study of the City of Francistown Council, used qualitative methods to collect and analyse the data. The study concentrated on public servants with scarce skills and employed by the City of Francistown Council. The participants were drawn from the different departments or sections of the Council which shows the diverse nature of Local Authorities. The interview method with the help of questionnaires was the main instrument used in collecting the data. The chapter also indicates the ethical considerations implored.

3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive qualitative approaches. Qualitative researchers collect data in the form of written or spoken language. The research method was seen to be important for the study as the researcher structured questionnaires for all the participants to try and elicit information with open-ended and close-ended structured questions.

3.3 Population

Blanche, et al, (2006) say that the population selected should be those to whom the research question applies. The study was confined to the City of Francistown Council as a case study. The target population was employees who are in departments covered by the scarce skills allowance. These departments have four hundred and fifty six (456) established positions which attract the scarce skills allowance (DLGSM, 2008). The population was purposely selected as it represents all the different types of skills regarded as scarce.

3.4 Sample

A sample is a subset of the whole population which is actually investigated by a researcher and whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population (Bless, et al, 2006). For the purpose of this research, purposive stratified sampling was used. "Stratified sampling is used to establish a greater degree of representatives in situations where populations consist of subgroups or strata" (Blanche, et al, 2006, p. 136). The stratification was done according to departments within which scarce skills fall. The sampling method was seen to be the best to be used for such a study as

within the selected population there are different subgroups which are formed by the different types of skills which are part of the study. This is shown as per the below table;

Table 1: Stratified Sampling of the participants

DEPARTMENT	TOTAL NO. OF STAFF	NO. THAT WAS TO BE INTERVIEWED	ACTUAL NO INTERVIEWED
Primary Health	140	14	5
Legal Services	24	2	2
Physical Planning	70	7	3
Economic Planning	50	5	4
Accounting/Treasury	45	5	5
Buildings	90	9	1
Information Technology	37	4	2
TOTAL	456	46	22

In addition to participants who took part in the questionnaire survey, two (2) key informants were interviewed. These are; Human Resources Personnel of the City of Francistown Council and an official from the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) were also interviewed since they coordinate all the public sector reforms.

3.5 Research Instruments

For the purpose of this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted supported by use of questionnaires. Interviews were guided by open ended questions while the questionnaires contained both structured and open ended questions. “Open ended questions leave the participants completely free to express their answers as they wish, as detailed and complex, as long or as short as they feel appropriate” (Bless, et al, 2006, p. 130). The questionnaire was administered in the form of an interview except

in cases where the participants were not at ease to respond in the presence of the researcher. The questionnaire tried to elicit information on the following:

Section 1: Background of participant

Section 2- Why there is skills shortage in the public service and its effects

Section 3- Views on the proposed scarce skills allowance

Section 4- What other initiatives could be implemented

Interviews for key informants elicited the following information:

Section 1- Challenges faced by the City Council/ and or the Public Service in attracting and retaining scarce Skills.

Section 2- Reasons why people with scarce skill leave the public service and how it affects operations

Section 3- Views on scarce skills allowance

Section 4- How these challenges can be remedied

3.6 Procedure

Firstly permission was sought from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and with the office of the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Francistown Council to conduct the study.

Questionnaires had a covering note of introduction to all participants informing them of the objectives of the study and requesting for their participation.

Interviews were conducted by appointment and with the consent of all the participants. In cases where the participants are unable to respond to the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher, questionnaires were left with participants.

3.7 Data Analysis

The researcher analysed data from questionnaires by making use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. The data was first coded and captured in the software for analysis. Data from participants was analysed by first searching for themes and categories that emerged. Coding is a method of representing categories and values of a variable so that responses are converted to a form suited to statistical analysis. Data becomes more manageable by grouping similar responses (deVaus, 2002).

3.8 Research Ethics

In line with research ethics, permission was first sought by the researcher to interview participants. The participants were informed of their right to remain anonymous. According to Bless, et al, (2006, p.142) “The principle of Autonomy incorporates the freedom of individuals’ action and choice to decide whether or not to participate in research”. No participant was forced to take part in the study. Participants were also allowed to discontinue their participation at any time without giving any explanation and without facing any punitive action. This was the case with some participants who had agreed to take part in the study but at some point requested to be left with the questionnaires which were never responded to. Most importantly, all data collected was only used for the purpose of this research.

3.9 Conclusion

The study used qualitative approaches to collect data. The study was done by collecting data by using questionnaires and also interviewing key participants. Both close-ended and open ended questions were used and questionnaires administered by the researcher.

The population under study represented employees of the City of Francistown Council with scarce skills. Data analysis was by use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences and all Research Ethics were taken into consideration.

4. RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data and discusses the research findings from the respondents. The data was collected between the months of July and August 2010. Out of the 46 targeted participants, 22 managed to participate in the study. The remaining number of the targeted participants did not participate in the study, due to different reasons such as unwillingness to participate.

Data was collected from questionnaires and from interviewing key participants. The chapter covers biographical data of the respondents. It also includes responses from close-ended and open-ended questions. The analysis is tabulated with frequencies and percentages to enhance clarification. The open-ended items of the questionnaires and interviews were analysed by short descriptions in order to interpret the findings.

4.2 Demographic Details

Table 2: Gender of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	11	50.0	50.0	50.0
Female	11	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

According to the above table, male and female participants were equal in number. This shows 50% representation of gender from the participants. The reason for this may be that, both male and female have scarce skills within the City of Francistown Council. It also indicates that the education system in Botswana provides access to everyone despite gender.

Table 3: Age category of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30	14	63.6	63.6	63.6
	31-40	4	18.2	18.2	81.8
	41-50	1	4.5	4.5	86.4
	51-60	3	13.6	13.6	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants were from the age category of 20-30, which is 59.1% followed by the age group of 31-40 which is 18.2 %. A sizeable number is from the young age category. This may be due to the fact that, in the past years people opted for professions which are currently not regarded as scarce. Young people are now opting for scarce professions.

Table 4: Highest level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	1	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Degree	19	86.4	86.4	90.9
	Masters	2	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Majority of participants hold at least a Degree in their education (86.4%). Only one participant is a Diploma holder and two, are Master's degree holders. This is due to the fact that, most of the skills regarded as scarce in the Botswana Public Service are held at Degree level. The Botswana Government sponsors its citizens for Tertiary Education up to Degree level and most of these are absorbed into the Public Service after completion. Those trained for Masters Degree are few and require to have served in the Public Service for a certain period of time. Masters Degree is still not considered a prerequisite in the Public Service as Degree Holders can progress up to the last upper salary scale. From the Literature Review, it has been noted that the Botswana Public Service's growth in occupational mix during NDP 9 was not matched with skills development in the relevant areas. Although government spent more than a quarter of a billion Pula every year on the training of Public Officers, there were still severe skills shortages in many areas.

Table 5: Field of Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Accountant	2	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Dental	1	4.5	4.5	13.6
	Medical Doctor	1	4.5	4.5	18.2
	Economic Planner	1	4.5	4.5	22.7
	Economist	2	9.1	9.1	31.8
	Engineer	1	4.5	4.5	36.4
	Engineer	1	4.5	4.5	40.9
	Engineer	1	4.5	4.5	45.5
	Finance Officer	1	4.5	4.5	50.0
	ICT	1	4.5	4.5	54.5
	Internal Auditor	1	4.5	4.5	59.1
	Internal Auditor	1	4.5	4.5	63.6
	IT analyst	1	4.5	4.5	68.2
	Lawyer	1	4.5	4.5	72.7
	Legal	1	4.5	4.5	77.3
	Pharmacy Technician	1	4.5	4.5	81.8
	Physiotherapy	1	4.5	4.5	86.4
	Psychologist	1	4.5	4.5	90.9
	Quantity Surveyor	1	4.5	4.5	95.5
	Statistician	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Different occupational skills are listed in the above table. Respondents are from different fields of activity representing the different types of departments covered by Scarce Skills Allowance within the City of Francistown Council. This may be an indication that, although there are skills considered scarce in the Botswana Public Service, most if not all of the professions listed as scarce have employees occupying the professions.

The other reason could be that, Local Authorities by nature are diverse because of the nature of their mandate. As a result, all fields of occupation are bound to be found in the City of Francistown Council. This may be different for a Government department or ministry as professions found there are those relevant to the affairs of the particular department or ministry.

Table 6: Years in service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5	14	63.6	63.6	63.6
	6-10	2	9.1	9.1	72.7
	11-15	2	9.1	9.1	81.8
	above 16	4	18.2	18.2	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

The survey shows participants have different years of experience. However, a majority are from the category of 1 to 5 years (63.6%) followed by above 16 (18.2%). The table above represents the number of years of service of the participants. This is related to the age category where it has shown that the number of participants were of a relatively young age, hence the number of service shows that those with a maximum of five years in service represent a larger percentage.

4.3 Is there a skills shortage in the Public Service?

Table 7: Table showing participants' response as to whether there are scarce skills within the City of Francistown Council

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	22	100.0	100.0	100.0

To this question, all respondents believe that certain skills are scarce (100%). This indicates the current reality within the City of Francistown Council and the Botswana Public Service. The literature review has revealed that currently there is a gap between what is available and what is desired. The supply of skills has not responded fully to the rising demand, leaving organisations to experience significant skill shortages (Booth and Snower, 1996). The study reveals that indeed there are skills shortages in certain fields, which is shown from both the literature review and survey.

Table 8: Response to why there are scarce skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of capacity by government to train people in critical skills	3	13.6	14.3	14.3
	Not enough students enrolling in the said area/field at tertiary level	5	22.7	23.8	38.1
	Brain Drain	2	9.1	9.5	47.6
	No training institutions offering the specific skills with in the country	4	18.2	19.0	66.7
	High demand for such skills	7	31.8	33.3	100.0
	Total	21	95.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	4.5		
Total		22	100.0		

To this question 31.8% of the participants believe that there is high a demand for such skills. Another major reason is not enough students enrolling in the said areas at tertiary education. Lack of sufficient training institutions for scare skills is also another reason pointed out by some respondents. The table depicts different reasons why there are scarce skills within the Botswana Public Service. Seven participants believe there is a high demand for such skills, which may be related to the literature review, that there is a high competition for such skills. The same sentiments are shared from the Literature review which indicates that since a few Batswana have been trained in some of the critical skills, it has caused a stretch between government and the private sector to compete for the little pool of skills that is available.

Table 9: Table showing participants' response on their job satisfaction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very satisfied	1	4.5	4.5	4.5
Satisfied	11	50.0	50.0	54.5
Unsatisfied	10	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

To this question, 50% of the participants are satisfied in their job where 45.5% are not. Only 4.5% are highly satisfied in their job. Satisfaction of employees will always differ as there are many factors involved. What may be a satisfier to one individual may be not to another. However, the table shows satisfaction of employees, which may not necessarily be related to shortage of skills.

Table 10: Table showing relationship between gender and job satisfaction

Gender * How would you rate your job satisfaction Cross tabulation

			How would you rate your job satisfaction			Total
			Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	
Gender	Male	Count	1	5	5	11
		% within How would you rate your job satisfaction	100.0%	45.5%	50.0%	50.0%
	Female	Count	0	6	5	11
		% within How would you rate your job satisfaction	.0%	54.5%	50.0%	50.0%
Total		Count	1	11	10	22
		% within How would you rate your job satisfaction	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

From the analysis above, it shows that there is no significant link between gender and job satisfaction. However, it can be concluded that females are a little more satisfied than males in their current job.

Table 11: Table showing whether Government was their employer of choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	45.5	45.5	45.5
	No	12	54.5	54.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

This survey shows that majority, which is 54.5% of the participants do not prefer Government jobs. However, 45.5% are still happy with government. While 10 participants opted for government, 12 participants would have preferred to work elsewhere. Government as the largest employer is not always a preferred employer. This may be related to its pay structures which are lower compared to the private sector.

Table 12: Table depicting different reasons why they preferred Government or otherwise

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Did not have a choice.	2	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Employees' skills cannot be explored fully in government.	1	4.5	4.5	13.6
	Government to be the best to get experience.	3	13.6	13.6	27.3
	Job security and pension.	2	9.1	9.1	36.4
	Low remuneration.	3	13.6	13.6	50.0
	Main Employer.	2	9.1	9.1	59.1
	Job security.	1	4.5	4.5	63.6
	Prefer Private sector.	4	18.2	18.2	81.8
	Preferred private sector.	1	4.5	4.5	86.4
	Self employment.	1	4.5	4.5	90.9
	Wanted to contribute to the development of the country.	1	4.5	4.5	95.5
	Private Sector more diverse.	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Different opinions have emerged from this survey. The most rationale answers are:

People prefer to work in private sector according to 18.2% of the participants.

Low remuneration by government is also a factor according to 13.6% of the participants. This has also been identified in the literature review. The different pay structures that are used by organisations in Botswana allows flexibility for the private sector and the parastatal sector to set competitive pay packages leaving government lagging behind in salaries.

Some people chose government because they did not have any other choice at the time of seeking first employment. This can also be picked from the literature review which has noted that government is the largest employer and investor. As a result it is able to absorb a large number of employees even those who do not desire to be employed by government but simply because at the time of seeking employment it may be the available employer.

However, 13.6% of the participants are happy with working for the City Council because of training opportunities, best place to develop their career and some want to contribute to the development of the nation.

Table 13: Table depicting different preferred employers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Government	6	27.3	27.3	27.3
Parastatal	4	18.2	18.2	45.5
Private Sector	11	50.0	50.0	95.5
Others	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Private sector is the major sector where people wanted to work. Their percentage is 50. Followed by government (27.3%). 18.2% preferred the Parastatal sector and 4.5% wanted to be self employed. The private sector is the preferred employer most probably because it is known to be paying better than government. The literature review has noted that in Africa leaving for higher earnings is the most likely cause of turnover among those whose job skills are in short supply.

Table 14: Reasons for the preferred employers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Private sector well paying and have other incentives.	10	45.5	45.5	45.5
To develop ICT in the country.	1	4.5	4.5	50.0
Government has job security.	4	18.2	18.2	68.2
To work competitively.	5	22.7	22.7	90.9
Parastatal provide high remuneration and benefits.	1	4.5	4.5	95.5
Government provides training opportunities.	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

The reason why the private sector is the preferred employer of choice is because it offers better salaries and other incentives.

Table 15: Table showing participants' response as to whether they have ever thought of leaving Government employment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	17	77.3	77.3	77.3
No	5	22.7	22.7	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

This is a very interesting response which shows that 77.2% wanted to leave their current job at some point in time. This goes to show that there is a high possibility of turnover within the City Council. Retention is not guaranteed.

Table 16: Reasons why employees would want to leave the Public Service

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid To earn as much as peers in other sectors.	6	27.3	27.3	27.3
For green pastures.	1	4.5	4.5	31.8
Lack of equipment.	1	4.5	4.5	36.4
Less room for growth.	2	9.1	9.1	45.5
Low remuneration and job satisfaction.	3	13.6	13.6	63.6
No recognition in government.	1	4.5	4.5	68.2
Poor remuneration and working conditions.	1	4.5	4.5	72.7
Self employed.	1	4.5	4.5	77.3
Stress and inconsistent progression in Government.	1	4.5	4.5	81.8
To improve ICT in Private Sector.	1	4.5	4.5	86.4
Want better pay.	2	9.1	9.1	95.5
Working for challenges and diversification.	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that the major reason employees wanted to leave government was because of low remuneration and job satisfaction. (13.6% low remuneration and job satisfaction, 9.1% is for better pay).

Table 17: Participants' responses as to whether the public service is able to attract and retain scarce skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1	4.5	4.8	4.8
	No	20	90.9	95.2	100.0
	Total	21	95.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	4.5		
Total		22	100.0		

This study shows that 90.9 % of respondents believe that Public service is still not able to attract and retain scarce skills. An example that can be sighted from the Literature review is that given by the Attorney General who has noted that they are able to attract fresh university graduates into the lower ranks of state counsel, but once they have acquired some experience, they leave for what they perceive to be greener pastures in the private sector.

Table 18: Participants' response as to how service delivery is affected

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of project implementation.	2	9.1	9.5	9.5
	Low productivity.	8	36.4	38.1	47.6
	High costs to organisation.	1	4.5	4.8	52.4
	Lack of capacity to complete projects on time.	2	9.1	9.5	61.9
	Poor service delivery.	8	36.4	38.1	100.0
	Total	21	95.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	4.5		
Total		22	100.0		

Lack of good remuneration and benefits and other factors lead to low productivity (36.4%) and poor service delivery (36.4%). In the literature review, it has been noted that skill shortage affects productivity negatively as in some instances organisations are forced to wait longer to fill positions. This may lead to lack of project implementation and poor service delivery.

4.4 Views on the implementation of the Scarce Skills Allowance

Table 19: Table shows participants' responses as to the effects of the Introduction of the scarce skills allowance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of motivation	2	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Divisions among employees.	5	22.7	22.7	31.8
	Good remuneration.	1	4.5	4.5	36.4
	Helped to stabilise the income.	1	4.5	4.5	40.9
	It has created a friction between employees.	1	4.5	4.5	45.5
	It has managed to retain some skills.	6	27.3	27.3	72.7
	It managed to retain Senior employees only.	1	4.5	4.5	77.3
	Leave for green postures.	1	4.5	4.5	81.8
	More should be done to progress.	1	4.5	4.5	86.4
	Remuneration is not at par with the international market.	3	13.6	13.6	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

To this question, 27.3% agreed that it has managed to keep some skills, however, 22.7% believe that it has created division among employees where some get high remuneration through this allowance and others not, even though they have the same level of qualification. This brings about disgruntlement as noted from the literature review.

Table 20: Participants' responses as to whether the introduction of the allowance was a good initiative

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	16	72.7	72.7	72.7
No	6	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

To this question, 72.73% agree that definitely it is a good move to attract and retain scarce skills. This makes salaries of employees with scarce skills higher. With the allowance, the salaries may compare to those of the market. There is some kind of inducement. This has also been noted from the literature review that some groups of workers with scarce skills will have to be paid the market rate if their services are to be secured and retained.

Table 21: Table indicating how the allowance has been a good initiative

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4.5	4.5	4.5
A sizeable number of skills are being retained.	9	40.9	40.9	45.5
Allowance is good but temporary.	2	9.1	9.1	54.5
Certain jobs need special skills so the allowance is important.	1	4.5	4.5	59.1
Good idea but salaries still remain uncompetitive.	1	4.5	4.5	63.6
Lack of recognition and motivation.	1	4.5	4.5	68.2
Low remuneration and benefits.	2	9.1	9.1	77.3
Poorly administered.	2	9.1	9.1	86.4
Rate of retention has not improved.	1	4.5	4.5	90.9
Salaries should be increased across the board.	1	4.5	4.5	95.5
With the allowance pay will be better.	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	

A sizeable number of skills are being retained through scarce skills allowance as seen from the responses of 40.9% who agreed to this opinion. Various other suggestions also emerged. According to some respondents, scarce skill allowance is still not enough to retain employees compared to private or parastatal organisations, lack of recognition, lack of motivation and poor administration also hinder the retention strategy. This may be related to sentiments shared from the literature like for example it has been noted that it takes more than top salaries to keep key employees from leaving. Pay has not been necessarily seen as the most important thing that attracts or retains employees. Although it plays a pivotal role, it is not sustainable enough.

Table 22: Responses as to whether there are any discrepancies in the dispensation of the allowance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	13	59.1	59.1	59.1
	No	1	4.5	4.5	63.6
	Not sure	8	36.4	36.4	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

This study shows that most of the participants are of the view that there is a discrepancy in the dispensation of the allowance. 59.1% of the participants believe that there is a discrepancy in the dispensation of the allowance. As noted in the literature review, at some point after the implementation of the allowance some occupations felt that they were left out while they are also scarce. An example of such as noted in the Literature Review is that of Physiotherapists who complained that they were not recognised as scarce when in actual fact they are scarce. It has also been noted that the Physiotherapists are now benefiting from the allowance.

Table 23: Advanced reasons supporting the belief that there are discrepancies in the dispensation of the allowance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Allowance varied in percentages	9	40.9	40.9	40.9
	Different pay in different skills	9	40.9	40.9	81.8
	People with the same skill but not all getting the allowance	4	18.2	18.2	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

According to participants, there are variations in the payment of different skills. There are people who have the same qualifications and not getting the same allowance. There are instances where some employees holding the same qualifications are not given the allowance while in some instances some hold qualifications but are said to be not performing the tasks that justify them to be given the allowance.

Table 24: Participants' views on whether the allowance is fair or not

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fair	7	31.8	31.8	31.8
	Unfair	10	45.5	45.5	77.3
	Not sure	5	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

The above table and chart shows that scarce skill allowance is an unfair dispensation in the public sector. Of all the participants, 45.5% believe it is unfair compared to 31.8% of participants who believe that it is fair. For those who believe the allowance is fair, it can be linked to what has been noted from the literature review. Some groups of workers with scarce skills will have to be paid higher in order to retain them.

Table 25: Reasons as to why participants' think the allowance is unfair

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Discriminates	6	27.3	27.3	27.3
	Because some skills are scarce	2	9.1	9.1	36.4
	Different pay structure for the same qualification	7	31.8	31.8	68.2
	Inconsistency	2	9.1	9.1	77.3
	other skills are saturated so no need of scare skill	1	4.5	4.5	81.8
	scare skills should be recognised	3	13.6	13.6	95.5
	some skills are not recognised even though they are scarce	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

The study shows that the main reason is that those with same qualifications are not recognised equally. This is very unfair according to most respondents. The literature review has indicated that some employees see the allowance as discriminatory especially those who do not benefit from the allowance. From the Literature review, there is indication that distinctions between classes of employees can have negative effects on the organisation as it can affect the overall employee motivation.

Table 26: Table indicates whether employees see the allowance as motivation enough to retain them

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	3	13.6	13.6
	No	19	86.4	86.4
	Total	22	100.0	100.0

This allowance is not at all an incentive to keep employees in their current job according to 86.4% of the participants. Rewarding for skills may not be attractive to everyone. This could mean that in as much as government has introduced the scarce skills allowance, it is not necessarily true that it will retain employees with scarce skills as some may not be induced by the allowance but other things. Another

argument that can be put up is that even if the allowance somewhat increases ones earnings, the money is still not enough compared to other sectors of the economy.

Table 27: Depicts reasons why the allowance is not seen as an incentive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Allowance is temporary. It can be terminated.	6	27.3	31.6	31.6
	I am being recognised for my contribution.	2	9.1	10.5	42.1
	Working environment should be changed. Money alone not a motivator	6	27.3	31.6	73.7
	Allowance is not enough, Salaries should be reviewed.	5	22.7	26.3	100.0
	Total	19	86.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	13.6		
Total		22	100.0		

The reasons advanced by participants were that the allowance is temporary and can be terminated at any time. This was according to 27.3% of participants, while 27.3 % are of the view that money alone is not sufficient. The other reason is that, the allowance is still little in comparison with salaries offered by the private sector. As already noted from the Literature review that satisfaction with a reward is a function of how much is received and also that feelings of satisfaction are influenced by comparisons with what happens to others.

The above indicate that government's effort to try and retain employees with an allowance is not enough. A lot needs to be done as it shows employees are still not satisfied, as such retention is still not guaranteed

4.5 What other initiatives can be put in place to attract and retain scarce skills

Table 28: Participants' responses as to what motivates them

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Good remuneration and benefits	4	18.2	18.2	18.2
	Training opportunities	5	22.7	22.7	40.9
	Job security	9	40.9	40.9	81.8
	Progression	2	9.1	9.1	90.9
	None	2	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

The important motivational factor to stay with the City Council is job security, as shown by (40.9%) of the respondents. Some believe that government provide training opportunities for progression.

Table 29: Indicates other initiatives that can be implored in attracting and retaining scarce skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Training Opportunities	4	18.2	20.0	20.0
	Good remuneration and benefits	13	59.1	65.0	85.0
	convert the allowance to a permanent emolument	1	4.5	5.0	90.0
	Restructuring the Public Service	1	4.5	5.0	95.0
	Introduction of reward system	1	4.5	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	90.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	9.1		
Total		22	100.0		

The study shows that remuneration and good working conditions are important factors when employment is concerned. The above table shows that 59.1% believe that good remuneration and benefits can attract and retain scarce skills. Government must provide training opportunities for their career improvement. Another one suggestion is the introduction of a reward system. The literature review shares the same sentiments that retaining key employees is not just about money. It is a matter of creating an environment which suits employees.

4.6 Feedback by Key Informants

Two key informants, being the Principal Personnel Officer in the City of Francistown Council and a Reforms Officer the Directorate of Public Service Management took part in the study. It is clear that government does realise that indeed some skills are scarce. From the interviews held with the key informants, it was noted that there is a high demand for scarce skills. Government is facing a challenge with having to retain these scarce skills because of the high demand in the economy, some leave for better salaries and of course government competes with the private sector for these skills. This situation has had a great impact on certain government projects, has led to poor service delivery as well as become a cost to the Public Service.

According to the participants, the Introduction of the Scarce Skills Allowance has to some extent helped retain some skills. Although as the Reforms Officer mentioned that there has not been any study done to determine the effects of the allowance, figures of those leaving the public service have relatively gone down compared to when the allowance was not in place. In some instances, the public service is even

able to attract those in the private sector. The Government continues to work on finding other strategies that can be put in place which are more sustainable.

4.7 Conclusion

Twenty-two out of forty-six participants were involved in the study. The participants were 50% equal in terms of gender, which was a fair representation. The age category ranged between 20-60 years, with most of the participants in the 20-30 years bracket. The same pattern is seen in the number of years in service. A high percentage of the participants had a few number of years working for the public service. All but one participant had at least a degree as the highest level of education attained. A fair share of different fields of occupation benefiting from the allowance was represented.

From the study it shows that all the participants agree that there is a skills shortage within the City of Francistown Council and out of the many reasons brought out, the most common one was that there is high demand for such skills within the local economy, hence the shortage.

In terms of satisfaction on the job, 50% said they are satisfied, while there was no significant link between gender and job satisfaction. At the same time, most participants (54.55%) had not wished to join the public service but the private sector because of better salaries and benefits. 90.9% of the participants believe that the public service is not able to attract and retain scarce skills. This results in low productivity and affects service delivery.

The participants are of the view that the scarce skills allowance was a good initiative because a sizeable number of employees with scarce skills are now being retained. However, some believe the allowance alone is not enough as most of the participants stated that even though they benefit from the allowance, it is not enough to keep them with the City Council. Employees would want to keep government employment since it offers job security.

There is indication that money seems to be the most important factor that motivates employees and from the study there is great concern that salaries are not so satisfying because they are low. Another factor identified is that, employees value training as well as job security which is inherent in the Botswana Public Service, at least for now. Although the allowance has been seen as a welcome development, since it is temporary and can be terminated at any time, this does not sit well with employees as they cannot totally depend on it. This makes the allowance not so attractive, hence there is a chance of employees finding other jobs where they will be remunerated higher and assured of stability in terms of income.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

By looking at the literature noted in the research, it appears that pay is the most influential in attracting and retaining any employee be it one whose skills are scarce or not. This therefore means most governments will face great challenges in as far as attracting and retaining skills which are critical for the growth of the economy.

The supply of skills is heavily dependent on flows through the higher education system. This takes time leading to lags in supply and hence becomes a problem for society, sectors, and firms (Hendry, 1995). For the public sector to improve efficiency and effectiveness there needs to be a variety of changes in pay and industrial relations systems. “The ability of a public sector agency to recruit, retain and motivate competent employees is affected by its compensation policies” (Risher & Randow, 1998, p.55).

The above scenario is no exception for the Botswana Public Service as seen from the study. From the study it is noted that the City of Francistown Council is grappling with skills shortages in certain fields of occupation which are seen as key in today’s economy. The City of Francistown Council which is mandated with ensuring service delivery to the city dwellers faces a great challenge which is made worse by shortage of certain skills.

The study shows that, indeed employees do recognise that there is a problem of scarce skills within the public service. Various reasons have been picked out from the study, the most common reason however, is that the Public Service does not pay as much as the Private and the Parastatal Sector. Participants believe their peers working outside government earn a lot more than them.

The above situation which participants believe is hindering the City of Francistown Council and the public service at large to attract and retain scarce skills has shown to have a great impact on the performance of the public service. It is however, commendable to note that government has shown concern about the situation by

attempting to act on the problem. The introduction of the scarce skills allowance by government was an attempt to attract and retain scarce skills. The general view of both the participants and key informants was that the introduction of the allowance was a good initiative which will help in attracting and retaining scarce skills.

Results show that, employees and supervisors think that the problem of turnover has slightly gone down. The key informants have noted that the allowance has stabilised the problem of turnover so far, although it will take time to realise the pattern it may take. On this note, one could however argue that all organisations have been struggling financially because of the economic downturn, and as such there has not been much recruitment taking place. That could be another reason why employees have not been leaving government and not necessarily because of the allowance.

On the other hand, while it appears that the allowance has been a good initiative in trying to address the situation, there is still need to review the initiative. The participants believe government should come up with a more robust strategy which will be in place for a sustainable period of time. This is so because the scarce skill allowance is temporary and as such can be terminated at any time. It is for this reason that participants felt they could not depend on the allowance as it is not reliable. Others further argue that, the allowance is still not enough to bring salaries of employees with scarce skills at par with salaries of peers working outside government. For the above reason, participants believe employees with scarce skills continue to leave in large numbers. The private sector continues to be competitive in terms of attracting a large number of employees with scarce skills.

It is also important to note from the study that, most of the participants were new into the public service and also relatively young in terms of age. It is these participants who have indicated dissatisfaction with the government from their responses. Most of the participants who were happy with government were those who had stayed long with government, older in terms of age and nearing retirement. As much as they agreed that the public service did not pay well and that the allowance was not enough, the main reason for preferring government was job security which is not guaranteed in the private sector.

Conclusions also derived from the study were that, respondents felt that the allowance is not administered in a proper manner. There are certain discrepancies which have been noted. There are certain employees who have the same qualifications and are not receiving the allowance. However, the key informant from Directorate of Public Service Management clarified the matter by saying that is the case which the Directorate was dealing with on a case by case. She noted that different ministries were sending in requests for their employees to given the allowance and in some cases employees were left out.

The design of compensation programmes for professional employees is a problem for many organisations. They develop fairly accurate perceptions of the kinds and the quality of work their peers are performing in other kinds of work setting and of compensation and non compensation rewards these peers are receiving. From their perception-based measurements (equity theory), either they achieve greater satisfaction from their current jobs or they become dissatisfied with their jobs or work environment. Pay is not necessarily a motivator, as it is seen that more challenging

jobs and employee regulations often make sense than do financial incentive plans (Dessler, 2008).

Some other reasons which were picked as reasons why government failed to attract and retain scarce skills were non-conducive working environment and little or no progression and lack of other benefits which are seen in the private sector. From the study it should also be noted that the Government of Botswana has made a considerable effort in training its employees although certain skills which are considered as key are still in small numbers.

From the study it can be concluded that, although there are many other strategies that need to be put in place, pay is the most important. The scarce skills allowance was a good initiative which will go a long way in ensuring attraction and retention of employees with scarce skills.

5.2 Recommendations

Having undertaken the study as well as reading related literature on the study, the following recommendations could be of use in trying to address the problem of attracting and retaining scarce skill.

1. It is clear from the study that generally public servants are not satisfied by their salaries. As such, government should undertake a survey to determine what the market is paying and review salaries for the whole public service.
2. Government should review the implementation of the scarce skills allowance to ensure that all employees who should benefit from the allowance are not left out. This should reduce disgruntlement and low productivity as some

people may decide to sit back and not perform if they are left out when other people with the same qualifications are benefiting.

3. Government should work with training institutions to determine courses that are currently in short supply and have a large number of students enrolled for such courses. In addition, courses that are currently in over supply should be limited to a few number of students.
4. Employees must continue to be trained to meet the ever growing challenges in the industry.

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APPENDICES

I. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

My Name is Tshepang Thapa, a final year Master of Administration student with the University of Namibia. As part of my study I am doing a research thesis on a Topic: **“Attracting and Retaining Scarce skills through scarce skills allowance in the Botswana Public Service: A Case Study of City of Francistown Council.”** I would like to request for your participation in the study by answering this questionnaire. Please note that your participation is voluntary and I assure you

that you will remain anonymous. All information obtained from the questionnaire will be used for the purpose of the study only.

PART 1: BACKGROUND/DEMOGRAPIC INFORMATION

1. Gender

A. Male

B. Female

2. Age category

A. 20-30

B. 31-40

C. 41-50

D. 51-60

3. Highest level of education attained

A. Certificate

B. Diploma

C. Degree

D. Masters

E. PhD

4. What is your field of occupation? _____

5. Years in service?

A. 1-5

B. 6-10

C. 11-15

D. 16 (and above)

**PART 2: WHY IS THERE SKILLS SHORTAGE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE
AND ITS EFFECTS**

6. In your view, do consider certain skills within the Public Sector and in particular the City of Francistown Council scarce?

A. Yes

B. No

7. If answer to 6 is Yes, why is there such a situation?

A. Lack of capacity by government to train people in for critical skills

B. Not enough students enrolling in the said areas/ fields at tertiary institutions

C. Brain Drain

D. No training institutions dealing with specific skills within the country

E. High demand for such skills

8. How would you rate your job satisfaction?

A. Very satisfied

B. Satisfied

C. Unsatisfied

D. Very much unsatisfied

9. Was Government your first employer of choice?

A. Yes

B. No

10. Please give reasons to answer in 9?

11. Given a choice upon completion of your tertiary education, where would you have wanted to work?

- A. Government
- B. Parastatal
- C. Private Sector
- D. NGO
- E. Other (Please specify) _____

12. Please give reasons to answer in 11

13. Have you ever thought of leaving your current employer at one point?

- A. Yes
- B. No

14. If yes, why?

15. Is the City of Francistown Council able to retain and attract these scarce skills?

A. Yes

B. No

16. If answer to question 15 is no, what is the reason?

A. Low remuneration and benefits

B. Lack of promotion/recognition

C. Unconducive working environment

D. Lack of motivation

E. Other (please specify)

17. How does this affect service delivery?

A. Lack of project implementation

B. Low productivity

C. High costs to organization

D. Lack of capacity to complete projects on time

E. Poor service delivery

PART 3: VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED SCARCE SKILLS ALLOWANCE

18. In your view, what have been the effects of the introduction of scarce skills allowance?

19. Would you say the introduction of the allowance was a good move by Government in so far as attracting and retaining scarce skills is concerned?

- A. Yes
- B. No

20. Please elaborate

21. Are there any noticeable discrepancies or variations in the dispensation of the allowance?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not sure

21. If answer to 21 is yes, please elaborate

22. Would you say the scarce skills allowance is a fair or unfair dispensation as regards all public servants?

- A. Fair
- B. Unfair
- C. Not sure

23. Please give reasons to answer in 22

24. Do you consider the allowance an incentive enough to keep you in your current job?

- A. Yes
- B. No

25. Please explain why

PART 4: WHAT OTHER INITIATIVES CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN SCARCE SKILLS?

26. What motivates you to stay with your current employer?

- A. Good remuneration and benefits
- B. Training opportunities
- C. Job security
- D. Progression
- E. Other (please specify) _____

27. In your opinion, what else do you think can be done to attract and retain scarce skills within the Public Service?

Thank you very much for your participation.

Tshepang Thapa

II. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

My Name is Tshepang Thapa, a final year Master of Administration student with the University of Namibia. As part of my study I am doing a research thesis on a Topic: **“Attracting and Retaining Scarce skills through scarce skill allowance**

in the Botswana Public Service: A Case Study of City of Francistown

Council.” I would like to request for your participation as a key informant in the study by answering to this questionnaire. All information obtained from the questionnaire will be used for the purpose of the study only.

PART 1: BACKGROUND/DEMOGRAPIC INFORMATION

1. **Position** _____

2. **Name of Organisation** _____

PART 2: WHY IS THERE SKILLS SHORTAGE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ITS EFFECTS

3 . In your view, do you consider certain skills within the Public Sector and in particular the City of Francistown Council in short supply/scarce?

A. Yes

B. No

4. If answer to 3 is Yes, why is there such a situation?

A. Lack of capacity by government to train people for critical skills

B. Not enough students enrolling in the said areas/ fields at tertiary institutions

C. Brain Drain

D. No training institutions dealing with specific skills within the country

E. High demand for such skills

5. Is the City of Francistown Council and the Public Service at large able to retain and attract these scarce skills?

A. Yes

B. No

6. If answer to question 5 is no, what is the reason?

A. Low remuneration and benefits

B. Lack of promotion/recognition

C. Inconducive working environment

D. Lack of motivation

E. Other (please specify)

7. How does this affect service delivery?

A. Lack of project implementation

B. Low productivity

C. High costs to organization

D. Lack of capacity to complete projects on time

E. Poor service delivery

PART 3: VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED SCARCE SKILLS ALLOWANCE

8. In your view, what have been the effects of the introduction of scarce skills allowance?

9. Would you say the introduction of the allowance was a good move by Government in so far as attracting and retaining scarce skills is concerned?

A. Yes

B. No

10. Please elaborate

11. Are there any noticeable discrepancies or variations in the dispensation of the allowance?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not sure

12. If answer to 11 is yes, please elaborate

13. Would you say the scarce skills allowance is a fair or unfair dispensation as regards all public servants?

A. Fair

B. Unfair

C. Not sure

14. Please give reasons to answer in 13

PART 4: WHAT OTHER INITIATIVES CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN SCARCE SKILLS?

15. In your opinion, what else do you think can be done to attract and retain scarce skills within the Public Service?

Thank you very much for your participation.

Tshepang Thapa

